

International Journal of Language, Literature and Gender Studies  
(LALIGENS), Bahir Dar- Ethiopia

Vol. 7 (2), Serial No 16, October, 2018: 94-107  
ISSN: 2225-8604(Print) ISSN 2227-5460 (Online)  
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/laligens.v7i2.9>

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**Deverbalising The Biblical Text for Translation and Interpreting**

**Ezuoke, Chukwudinma Oguchi**

Department of Foreign Language and Translation Studies  
Abia State University, Uturu  
E-mail: [revmonsieur50@gmail.com](mailto:revmonsieur50@gmail.com)  
Phone: +2348036807426

**Abstract**

Deverbalisation is the technique of sentence decomposition in order to arrive at sentence meaning. Every sentence is made up of words, which in themselves could be lexical or grammatical. These two forms of the word blend according to the rules of grammar of the language to give rise to phrases, clauses and sentences of differing forms and types. In deverbalising a text, lexical items and expressions are studied and comprehended either as vocabulary, belonging to everyday usage or as terms, belonging to specific disciplines for the purpose of talking about themselves. Sentential constructions are viewed syntactically as having denotative or surface meanings of every day usage or as having connotative, literary, deep-structure meaning. Terms and connotative expressions lead the text translator and interpreter into terminological research and supplementary reading, in order to arrive at the adequate meaning of the text. Deverbalisation is so important because translation or interpreting is a re-expression of what is comprehended textually. Comprehension itself has to do with selecting the essentials in a text. The essentials in a text would include the theme and sub-themes, ideas, messages, information, doctrines, phenomena and concepts contained in it. Therefore, comprehension becomes a “given” in translation and interpreting through deverbalisation.

**Introduction**

*The Bible* from which the term “*biblical text*” is derived has an age-long established claim of unity and this paper does not seek to refute this claim. Rather, that *The Bible* in its unity is a composite of various

textual constituents in terms of dominant characteristic features and functions is a fact which its translator and interpreter must take cognizance of, being conscious of the translational parlance that no two texts are translated or interpreted the same way. These are essential facts which this paper seeks to highlight.

The paper upheld the two testamental divisions of *The Bible* and their sub-categorizations as books of the law, the prophetic books and the writings for the Old Testament (OT) division as well as the gospels and the epistles for the New Testament (NT) division as texts. The paper classifies these text groupings of *The Bible* by their dominant features either as persuasive, futuristic, literary, narrative or expository. The didactic unity of *The Bible* by function is sustained.

A critical look is taken at deverbalisation at lexical, syntagmatic and terminological levels. The paper adopts techniques of literary analysis to consider studies on biblical characters, poems and space. As in corpora linguistics, the paper uses a number of corpora to buttress its views.

### The Biblical Text

*The Bible*, which in the words of Okorocho (1990, p.8) is “the standard or the rule of faith and practice” as designated by “early church fathers” is made up of books of the Hebrew Canon commonly called *The Old Testament (O T)*. The O.T is subdivided into the books of *law*: five (5) in number, the books of the *Prophets*: seventeen (17) in number, twelve (12) books of history and five (5) books of *Writings*, making a total of thirty-nine (39) books.

The second division of *The Bible* is called *The New Testament*. According to *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* (2008), New Testament is:

The name given to the Second Part of the Bible, comprising 27 documents written by eye-witnesses of Christ or by their contemporaries. The title implies a contrast with the O.T. the sacred Scriptures which the church inherited from Judaism. The name New Testament can be better translated “new covenant”, and denotes an agreement established by God which man can either accept or reject but cannot alter.

The 27 writings of the New Testament (NT) are sub-categorised into 4 *Gospel* books and Acts of the Apostles, 13 *Epistles of Paul and General Epistles* of Peter, James, Jude, John, *Hebrew* and the Prophetic book, *Revelation*.

### Characterizing the Biblical Text

Text characterization is that aspect of text-linguistics that categorises text according to (i) its subject matter (ii) objective or function (iii) physical trait. Text characterization is vital to translators and to interpreters, by implication, according to Ezuoke (2013, p.167), in the attempt to specify the adequate level and hierarchy of equivalence that is adequate in the translation task.

La typology des textes, l'identification du but d'un texte et la fonction du texte sont très utiles aux traducteurs dans la tentative de spécifier l'hierarchie du niveau d'équivalence adéquate pour effectuer une tâche de traduction.

By text is meant what *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* (2012) defines as:

a segment of written or spoken language that has the following characteristics:

1. It is normally made up of several sentences that together create a structure or unit, such as a letter, a report or an essay (however one-word texts also occur, such as DANGER on a warning sign).
2. It has distinctive structural and discourse characteristics.
3. It has a particular communicative function or purpose.
4. It can often only be fully understood in relation to the context in which it occurs.

These prove that a biblical text is any part, excerpt, extract lifted, quoted or cited *verbatim verbo*, from any part of the 66 books of *The Bible*, comprising of the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament, whether as word, phrase, clause, sentence verse, paragraph, page etc.

In characterising texts Akakuru (1995, p. 43) x-rayed three text typologies, notably (i) *Gile's dual typologies of pragmatic and literary texts* (ii) *Reiss' tertiary typologies of informative, expressive and operative text*. *Ladmiral's tertiary typologies characterizes texts into scientific, philosophical and literary texts*.

Therefore, to characterise the biblical text, this paper adopts the theories of modern text-linguistics and the above 3-text typologies for application to various sections and constituents of *The Bible* as follows:

**Texts of the Law:** A legal text is persuasive or prescriptive, declarative, obligatory, affirmative and deductive. These also include all imperative statements of *The Bible*. "The thou shalt" and the "thou shalt not". *Le Décalogue* (The Ten Commandments), is illustrative. **Texts of Prophecy:** Books of prophecy and statements of prophecy share the same characteristics with legal texts of *The Bible*. The difference is that whereas legal texts of *The Bible* are progressive from present to future, prophetic texts or texts of prophecy are futuristic. The entire (17) books of the O.T prophets and *Revelation* form majorly, this category of text.

**Historical Texts:** This category of texts is informative, objective, denotative, narrative and respects the narrative structure of background, event, climax and anti-climax. They include the O.T. History books, Gospels and Acts of the Apostles, primarily.

**Poetic Texts:** Poetic writings or poetic texts of *The Bible* are literary, stylistic and formal. Being literary, they enjoy the creativity of the author. Poetic texts are stylistic, enjoying poetic license which is the use of words in context i.e. *langage*, making the text connotative with the use of figures of speech such as

similes, metaphors, ironies, apostrophe, rhetorics, hyperboles, proverbs, adages, flash-backs, etc. Their formal nature makes room not only for the usual versification of *The Bible* but to a pattern of lineation in verses. The form also makes room for indentation, a cut-out of a number of verses to create a unity of idea. This is most clearly illustrated in Psalm 119 with sub-headings of the Hebrew alphabets: *Aleph, Beth, Gimel etc.* In some other psalms, *Selah* is used to create such thematic units, separating the preceding thematic unit from the succeeding one. See Corpus 1 as an example:

### Corpus 1

#### A Literary Analysis of Psalm 23

In verse (1) the poet and psalmist introduces his shepherd whom he calls “The Lord” to us. This verse is metaphorical because shepherds tend sheep, not humans. In verses (2) and (3) the poet/psalmist sustains this metaphor as he outlines the functions of his shepherd to him: (i) leading him beside quiet waters (ii) restoring his soul (ii) guiding him in the paths of righteousness. In the last line of verse (3) the psalmist/poet establishes purpose: “for his name’s sake.”

In verse (4) the psalmist/poet sharply changes focal point and subject of discourse (his Shepherd/Lord) and begins to talk about himself, without considering the psychological impact of this change, on the reader, as he, the Psalmist/poet breaches the cogency rule. This is part of poetic license: “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.” The location: “valley of the shadow of death” is not known in geography, unless he means the Valley of Megiddo in the Middle East, where the Gog/Magog war (Armageddon) would be fought (Ezekiel 38, 39). Otherwise the psalmist/poet would be invoking a supernatural location of human destruction relative to Abyss.

In the 4th line of verse (4) the psalmist/poet establishes an effect of cause on the preceding lines of the same verse. Changing his focal point from himself back to the Shepherd/Lord: (i) for you are with me (ii) your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

There is an indentation after verse (4), grouping verses (1-4) together, and verses (5 and 6) apart. In verse (5) we see another set of direct functions of the Shepherd/Lord, not of his insignia, to the psalmist/poet: (i) prepares a table before him in the presence of his enemies. (ii) He anoints his head with oil. In these two statements, the Shepherd/Lord is the subject while the psalmist/poet is the object. Suddenly, an extraneous element: “Cup” flies into the discourse, from nowhere: “My cup overflows.” This is another case of poetic license, an authorial idiosyncrasy in poetry.

Verse (6), which is the last verse begins with an assertive deduction from the functions of the Shepherd/Lord as enumerated all through the lyrical poem: “Surely, goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life;” then, he concludes with a vow: “and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

### Commentary

The poem, Psalm 23, is a eulogistic lyrical poem in which the psalmist/poet eulogizes the prowess and benevolence of his Lord whom he also calls his shepherd. It is a poem in which the poet expresses confidence in the now, resilience in the face of death and a very bright hope for the rest of his life, all

deducible from the current display of strength and goodness by his Lord. The lyrical poem (Psalm) is a subjective text. It is an invocation of the emotion “self” of the author – Psalmist as evident in the use of the first-person subject pronoun: “I”, its object form: “Me” and the first person singular possessive adjective: “My”.

**Expository Texts:** These are *exposés*. They are analytical and evaluative, discussing in detail certain provisions and content of other books of *The Bible*. They are essentially expository in nature and include mostly the Epistles.

### The Biblical Text’s Didacticism and Hybridity

The biblical text is a didactic text. *Dictionnaire du didactique du français (1990)* sees the term “didactic” as that which seeks to teach, what is good for teaching:

Par son origine grecque (didaskain: enseigner), le terme de didactique désigne de façon générale ce qui vise à enseigner, ce qui est propre à instruire. Comme nom, il a d'abord désigné le genre rhétorique destiné à instruire, puis l'ensemble des théories d'enseignement et d'apprentissage.

*Chambers 21st Century Dictionary Revised Edition (2006)* defines didactics as (1) *intended to teach* (2) *too eager or too obviously intended to instruct, in a way resented by the reader, listener, etc.* *The Bible* itself establishes its didactic function as follows:

All Scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

“Scripture,” here, means “Holy writings” which are the constituents of *The Bible*. This goes to say that both legal, prophetic, historical, poetic and analytical texts of *The Bible* are didactic by function. The biblical text, therefore, is a hybrid text by reason of its multiple themes, functions and styles.

### Deverbalising the Biblical Text

Deverbalisation is the stage in the process of translation and interpreting that involves breaking down a translation unit in order to arrive first at comprehending the text and subsequently in re-expressing the text in the target language. According to Boisson (2005) deverbalisation is an explicit compositional process in which the meaning of each word is bound to the meaning of its neighbouring syntagm (logical form) to obtain the fine meaning of the sentence.

La deuxième conception nous fait atteindre cette FL de façon linguistiquement plus réaliste, à savoir non-pas par un fiat du logicien, mais par un processus compositionnel explicite dans lequel le sens de chacun des mots est combiné au sens de son voisin de syntagme (sa “soeur”), et ceci de proche en proche, pour obtenir in fine le sens de la phrase.

Here, Boisson proposes two levels of deverbalisation: first at word level and second at the level of syntagm. Word level speaks of a decomposition of constituents of a word to arrive at its meaning. For

example, co-wife, co-footballer, re-examine, reformulate, revisit, bilateral, bi-cabinet, bipolar etc which semantically point to: fellow, carrying out an action a second time and a set of two, respectively. Other examples may include: political (having to do with politics), evangelism (having to do with gospel spread or move), academic (having to do with studies and training), etc.

The second level is syntagmatic, having to do with the horizontal relationship between words to form a sentence. Our first approach in this view is collocation as in the words of Bowker and Pearson (2002): “Collocations are characteristic co-occurrence patterns of words, and they feature quite prominently in SP. Simply put, collocations are generally regarded as words that ‘go together’ or words that are often ‘found in each other’s company’” (p. 22).

For example, (i) bid collocates with specific greetings such as: farewell, good night. (ii) Grant collocates with request. (iii) Accept collocates with apology. (iv) Project collocates with execute, etc.

Another point of view through which we can consider syntagm is particles and how they collocate with verbs. Ndimele (1999) in defining particles states, “This refers to a residual class of words which are usually invariable in form, and which cannot fit neatly “into classification of parts of speech” (p. 106).

Examples of particles include: “*To*” which indicates the infinitive mood in English. For example, *to* walk, *to* run, *to* dance, etc. Another particle is “*Not*” which marks negation. For example, she is *not* coming. Another group of particles are found in phrasal verbs. These are preposition-like words that are placed after verbs. Ndimele (1999) lists the following as examples: phone *up*, run *into*, take *off*, climb *down*, push *over*, etc. The verbs in these expressions on this list are known as phrasal verbs. Quirk (1976, p.348) asserts that the meaning of each of these expressions cannot be obtained from the surface structure, rather from the deep structure level, making them literary and connotative:

Phrasal verbs vary in the extent to which the combination preserves the individual meaning of verb and particle. In instances like give in (‘surrender’), catch on (‘understand’), and turn up (‘appear’), it is clear that the meaning of the combination cannot be predicted from the meanings of the verb and particle in isolation.

Akmanjian, Demers, Farmer and Harnish (2010, p.592) add that this syntagmatic concatenation varies from language to language. It defines particles thus:

1. In English, a word that combines with a verb to create an expression with an idiomatic meaning (e.g. up in call up).
2. In other languages, various kinds of affixes or function words; the class of particles must be defined separately for each language.

The concern here in deverbalising the biblical text is that attention must be paid to this kind of word-relationship in the source text, to understand how it functions. What is said above is exemplified in French, where *Larousse dictionnaire des difficultés de la langue française* (2006) states that the particle “de” and its derivatives (*du, des, d’*) are onomastic particles, (having to do with proper nouns), written with initial capital “De, Du, Des or D’):

De” particule onomastique... - Du, des ne s’ommettent en aucun cas, et l’article contracté, qui fait partie intégrante du nom prend la majuscule seule après une préposition: Les, vers de Du Bellay (mais de Joachim du Bellay), Le dictionnaire de Du Congo. Les “Bigrarrure” de Des Accords. Si la particule n’est pas nobiliaire, elle doit s’écrire dans tous les cas avec une majuscule: Charles Du Bos.

The onomastic behaviour of these particles makes them to be written in initial capitals, as distinct from the prepositional function of the same words as in *Les vers de Joachim Du Bellay* (The Poems of Joachim Du Bellay) “de” functions as preposition, whereas “Du” functions as onomastic particle, which in some cases is an index of nobility (*nobiliaire*). Still on French particles, Schoonians (2014, p.2) in <https://journals.openedition.org/cognitextes> Cognitexte: Revue de linguistique cognitive Volume 11/2014 writes:

Notre argumentation vise à démontrer que, malgré les différences syntaxiques, l’emploi du terme particule de démodulation se justifie pour faire référence aux particules françaises. En nous appuyant partiellement sur une analyse de corpus, nous montrons que les différences entre les particules allemandes et françaises en termes de positionnement sont en réalité moins grandes que ne le suggèrent les thèses de Waltereit et d’Abraham.

Schoonians as quoted above explains that irrespective of differences in positioning, particles exist in French syntax as in German, contrary to the views held by Waltereit and Abraham. Schoonians argues further in his work that particles in French syntax could be positioned at the initial, median or final positions of a sentence. In the quotation below, Schoonians lists the following as particle markers in French: *donc, quand même, seulement, simplement, tout de même, un peu, etcetera*, which could also function as modal elements, similar to those of German:

Il existe certainmenet en français des marqueurs ressemblant fort aux particules de démodulation allemandes, tout sur le plan formel que sur le plan fonctionnel. Les exemples incluent donc, quand même, seulement, simplement, tout de même, un peu, etcetera. En effet, en plus de leur emploi de base (qui est le plus souvent adverbial), tous ces éléments peuvent fonctionner comme des éléments modaux comparables aux particules de démodulation allemandes.

Our concern in this section of our study is to prove that deverbilising a sentence or a segment of a sentence (phrase or clause), according to its syntagmatic relationship and grammatical function, leads to discovering meaning. It is pertinent to know when a grammatical word, through its relationship with its neighbors, functions as particle, adverbial, preposition etcetera, thus leading to meaning.

Corpus 2 below illustrates the meaning problems arising from a syntactical disarrangement of a biblical text.

### Corpus 2

	Biblical Text	Syntactical Disarrangement
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a.	Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see (Heb. 11:1) NIV)	Faith is now! Whatever you believe God for and you do not receive immediate answer to it, is no exercise of faith because faith is now.
b.	Pray without ceasing (I Thess. 5:17) KJV	Prayer has no over dose.
c.	Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree for anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my father in heaven (Mat. 18:19) NIV	Let us join our hands together in this prayer according to Mat. 18: 19.

**Analysis of corpus 2:** The misinterpretation of *Corpus 2 (a)* stems from the syntactical re-ordering of the biblical text. It is the movement of “Now” from the superior position (initial) which makes it to function as a connector to the preceding chapter ten (10), to an inferior position (final), making the word “Now” an adverb of time, leading to a misinterpretation of the biblical text.

The sentence in *Corpus 2 (b)* suffers a typological maladjustment. The biblical text in its entirety is transposed from an imperative statement to a declarative one. The text produced, on the contrary, has no equivalent effect on the source text (ST), neither is it its direct equivalent. When compared with John 16:24 “...Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.” and “But when you pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking” (Mat. 6:7KJV), it becomes evident that “over dose” which is a pharmacological term for excessiveness neither translates nor interprets “without ceasing” which is a term of continuity, without time restriction, as against what is obtainable in Judaism’s “Time of Prayer”. Dickson Teachers Bible (2010) in a commentary on Acts 3:1 has this to say on time of prayer:

God’s testimony of the truth of Christianity continued after Pentecost. For some time after the establishment of the church in Acts 2 Christians went to the Jewish temple to teach that Jesus was the Messiah. They did this primarily to preach to and teach those who gathered there during set times as this time of prayer at 3.00pm (2:46; 5:42; See Dn. 6:10; 9:21; Lk 1:10)

“Pray without ceasing”, therefore is one of Jesus’ “Law reforms”, removing restrictions on time of prayer, just as he reformed the laws of marriage and divorce (Matt. 19:1-8); adultery and fornication (Matt. 5:27,28); murder (Matt. 5:21,22), etcetera. “Prayer has no over dose” contradicts Jn. 16:24 quoted above because praying same prayer when the petitioner’s joy is complete on the subject matter of prayer is praying in excess – prayer over dose. Mat. 6:7 forbids repetition in prayer, an over dose of discourse in the process of prayer. Isa. 59:1 supports this claim: “Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear.” Repetition in the place of prayer therefore presents itself as a way of saying that God is hard of hearing or does not understand promptly because repetition as a literary technique is used for emphasis to drive the point down to the subconscious being of the writer’s audience.

Point (c) of our corpus interprets agreement as joining of hands: a literal, physical and corporal action (joining of hands) for an abstract, ontological activity (To agree). This semiotic translation (dramatization) contradicts I Sam. 16:7:

But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart.” NIV

Again, *The Bible* in Jer. 17:10 states: “I the Lord search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve.” NIV

Writing on rules for interpreting biblical texts, Evans (1964, p.36) stated:

The more one studies The Word of God, the more one recognizes a divine unity running through the Scriptures which is a proof of its inspiration. The phrase “ the whole tenor of Scripture ” means a gathering together of all the passages bearing upon any one subject and comparing them the one with the other, thereby arriving at the teaching of “ the whole Scripture ” on that given subject. For example, if an expositor were to speak on justification by faith as though it freed us from holiness, such an interpretation must be rejected, because it contradicts the main design and spirit of the Gospel.

The above two biblical texts reveal that God cannot perceive an activity of the mind (agreement) through a physical demonstration. This is meant for man. Rather, God perceives human realities from the ontological stand point. The example (c) of our corpus could be interpreted intralingually by this group of words: meeting of the mind, hearts going after one thing, hearts coming together on a subject matter etcetera in a praying process.

### **Deverbalising Biblical Terms**

Sager (2004, p.259) offers a clear perspective on terms, distinguishing them from lexical items:

Just as lexicology is a study of lexical items generally referred to as words, so terminology is the study of terms. Terms together with words and proper names, constitute the general class of lexical items. But whereas names refer individually to objects and people, and words refer arbitrarily to general objects – both inside the linguistic system and in the real world (Saussure, 1916), terms refer generally to specific concepts within particular subject fields and therefore constitute a sub-system of knowledge.

The biblical text by text taxonomy is a religious text, belonging to the discipline called religion. Therefore, to deverbalise the biblical text, difference must be struck between lexical items in general and terms. Corpus 3 below (*Acts 1:1,2*) will illustrate this claim:

### **Corpus 3:**

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.  
Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven  
and filled the house where they were sitting (NIV)

In the above corpus of two *Bible* verses, there is only one term: *Pentecost*, which ought to be deverbalised. The rest constituents of the corpus are general lexical items. Mba (2008, p.32) deverbalises the term “*Pentecost*”:

The second annual feast was celebrated fifty days after the sheaf of first fruits. This feast in the Old Testament was called the feast of Harvest of First fruits, or the Feast of Weeks. In the New Testament, it is called the Feast of Pentecost because Pentecost means fifty. Actually, it is the feast of the Harvest of First fruits; and what a mighty harvest it was...Christ was crucified on the 14<sup>th</sup>, resurrected on the 16<sup>th</sup>, and exactly 50 days later the promised Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost.

In justifying the Old Testament concept of harvest actualized in the New Testament, the author records that at the event of *Pentecost*, 3000 souls were harvested at first (including the Greeks recorded in John 12:20), secondly 5000, then a subsequent daily harvest of souls. This deverbalisation of our corpus leaves the translator or interpreter with the following equivalent options according to the context of his source text:

- (i) the number 50
- (ii) harvest
- (iii) the coming of the Holy Spirit

Biblical texts are replete with terms. The following are few examples: *Shibboleth* (*Judges 12:6*), *Mammon* (*Mt. 6:24; Lk. 16:9, 11,13; Shiloh* (*Gen. 49:10*) *Raca* (*Mt. 5:22*) etcetera. To deverbalise biblical texts, translators and interpreters should consider the use of bible dictionaries, dictionaries of theology and glossaries, lexicons including those of Aramaic, Hebrew and Greek, electronic term banks, specialized texts, bible commentaries etcetera.

### **Deverbalising the Setting of a Biblical Text**

Every biblical text was written within a geographical and time setting. According to Nwahunanya (2010), “Setting refers to the physical spatial location where the actions in a work takes place” (p. 17).

Klooster and Heirman (2011) in fibula wrote: “A second reason given by Bulhonz and Jahn is that space in literary fiction was often considered to have no other function “than to supply a general background against which the action takes place...”

These ideas about space (setting) is what Skulj (2004, p.22) in Primerjalna Knjizevnost (Ljubljana) 27/2004 refers to as reference frame for literature” and we also find deverbalising setting (space) a pertinent activity in translating and interpreting the biblical text. It includes issues on: *Geography*:

landscape, mountains, valleys, vegetation, climate, seasons and neighboring communities. The way of life prevalent within the biblical space, otherwise called *culture* must be taken into account, in the process including: family relationships, patterns of marriage, burial practices, belief systems, modes of feeding, dressing etcetera. *Economic system* within the space or setting is a relevant factor within the reference frame of Scriptures. These include occupations and professions, employment and labor systems, occupational tools and implements. Political and legal systems would refer to kings, their cabinets and armies, strategies of war, military officers, methods of resolving conflicts and disputes, legal system, judicial procedure, punishment of offenders and compensation for innocent citizens. *Time background* of a biblical text deserves attention during translation and interpretation of the text. Actual year of event, for example 573BC, 33AD and so on are necessary in this aspect of deverbalisation. Reign of kings, office period of priests and prophets are of great importance. For example, when David was the king of Israel, during the reign of Artaxerxes, when Abiathar was priest, in the days of Zachariah the prophet, etcetera. Events are also indices of time, such as: pre-exilic, exilic and post exilic periods, pre-war, war and post-war periods etcetera. All these must be understood before a biblical text could be translated or interpreted faithfully.

### **Translation and Interpreting**

For the purpose of this study, we choose the sociolinguistic school of thought by Nida and Tabar quoted in Christina Nord (1997:1) to talk about translation: “Translating consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message”. This “closest natural equivalent” is what Nida and Tabar has referred to as “Dynamic equivalent”. According to Vanessa Loenardi (<http://en.wikipedi.org.org/Vanessa+Leonardi>):

Dynamic equivalence is defined as a translation principle according to which the translator seeks to translate the meaning of the original in such a way that the TL wordings will trigger the same impact on the TC audience as the original wording did upon the ST audience.

Bariki (2003, p. 259) tells us that “translation is a discipline that enjoys interesting links with a wide variety of disciplines”, asserting that translation is a “communicative event”. These accounts for why Akakuru (2003, p.95) described translation as: “a dynamic activity which call into play diverse but convergent competencies.” In the case of meaning-effect, Bariki (2003, p.561) stated that speech act, which is a communicative and pragmatic index is classified into the illocutionary act (coherent sentence), the illocutionary force (the implicature of a coherent sentence) and the perlocutionary effect (anticipated response from the interlocutor). As a rule, a translated text must be so linguistically and pragmatically coherent that it will produce the same meaning in the target language (TL) and the same effect (psychological, pragmatic, sociological, ideological) in the target audience (TA). Diverse but convergent competences refer to inter-disciplinary knowledge a translator must have in order to do an effective work: lexicography, communication, linguistics etc.

Schleiermacher (2007, p.43) viewed translation from the two forms of language: oral and written forms of language, whether intralingually or interlingually:

Yea, are we not often compelled to translate for ourselves the utterances of another who, though our compeer is of different opinion and sensibility? Compelled to translate, that is, wherever we feel that the same words upon our own lips would have a rather different import than upon or at least weigh here the more heavily, there the more lightly, and that, would we express just what we intended, we must needs employ quite differently words and turn of phrase; and when we examine this feeling more closely so that it takes on the character of thought, it would appear that we are translating.

This transportation of constituents of utterance in the same language, is intralingual translation, whether it is done to reduce or to strengthen the tenor or tone of speech and whether it is done to help comprehension, what is done is oral translation.

If these definitions appear arbitrary, interpretation being commonly understood to refer more to oral translation and translation proper to the written sort, may we be forgiven for choosing to use them thus out of conscience in the present instance, particularly as the two terms are not at all distant one from another.

Here, Scheleiermacher makes a terminological distinction; oral translation is what he calls interpretation and a written re-expression of statements is what he calls translation. Ekundayo (2009, p.8) differentiates translation from interpreting with the following words:

And we know that the user of translation may run from the poor teenage who wants his/her certificate or diploma written in one language translated into another for the purposes of employment, or recognition as an equivalent towards admission, to the big commercial enterprise or international organization for whom the translation of the material from one language into another is the order of the day. As for the employers of interpreters... they are more often than not very “heavy” users like the big international organizations, important arms of government, big professional organizations...and of course commercial organizations.

Ekundayo goes further to say: “What we are trying to say is that the user of the interpreter’s services is very rarely an individual. It is more likely than not a group, a large number of people, an assembly.” The “heavy” user population implies *audition/auditeurs* (listening/listeners) and this is oral, for interpreting. The translation of a certificate or diploma from the language of its writing into another confirms that translation is a written re-expression of text. These make us to infer that Bible Translators such as: Wycliffe Bible Translators, Bible Society of Nigeria (BSN) etcetera, Bible Commentators, authors of Christian theological texts, preachers, teachers and expositors of *The Bible*, jointly and severally are involved in the translation and interpretation of biblical texts.

### **Recommendation**

This paper recommends short term and long-term training and retraining of translators and interpreters of biblical texts, in the areas of text-linguistics, translatology, literary analysis, linguistics, cultural studies and theology to enhance faithfulness in the translation and interpretation of biblical texts.

### Conclusion

Biblical translation and interpreting is not a simple faith and theological activity: it is a complex activity that calls for the convergence of diverse competences such as text-linguistics, translatology, literary analysis, cultural studies, terminology, linguistics and of course theology. Deverbalisation which is the translational term for exegesis is the path-way to comprehension. This leads to equivalence research and the ultimate re-expression of the text, commonly called translation or interpreting. Deverbalisation is a multi-layered activity that begins at the word level of a sentence and runs through the entire text, maintaining the coherence and cohesion of the text. The interpretation of a biblical text produces a theological text.

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