GRAPHEME-PHONEME AND TONE REPRESENTATION AND THEIR EFFECT ON TRANSLATION: THE CASE OF THE 1959 NANDI BIBLE

BY

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DECLARATION

This dissertation is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

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ABSTRACT

Any good translation should pay attention to the complexities of the target language’s system. Owing to the complexity of the Nandi sound system, the proposed study looked at one criterion of a good writing system - maximum representation - by examining the graphemes used in the 1959 Nandi Bible so as to determine the effect that phoneme and tone representation has on the translation. Sampled texts were studied to identify lexical items that contain phonemes and tones with a high functional load, and are subject to various interpretations. To obtain this sample, the books of the Bible were classified into five major categories and twenty percent of the chapters of every third book in the category sampled. Out of these, forty lexical items were then categorized and presented to twenty native Nandi speakers of at least O-level education to read, as they were tape recorded, in order to test whether the representations do indeed pose a problem to the readers of the Nandi bible. The Relevance Theory was the basis of evaluation of the translation while the representation of the graphemes, phonemes and tone were illustrated using CV Phonology. Lexical access to phonological codes and meaning of homographs were accounted for by the Multiple Access Theory of lexical ambiguity resolution. Misrepresentations were analysed qualitatively using compilation sheets to categorise the misrepresentations, and tables to present the categories. SPSS version 16 was used to analyse the frequency of hesitations, pauses and repetition, and different renderings of homographs in the reading samples and results were presented in frequency tables and charts. The findings show that vowel phonemes and tone have been misrepresented in the Nandi bible and this affects reading. 52% of the readers read the target lexical items as expected, 35% read them differently while 13% read them incorrectly. 74% did not repeat nor hesitate while 26% either repeated or hesitated before or while reading the target lexical item.