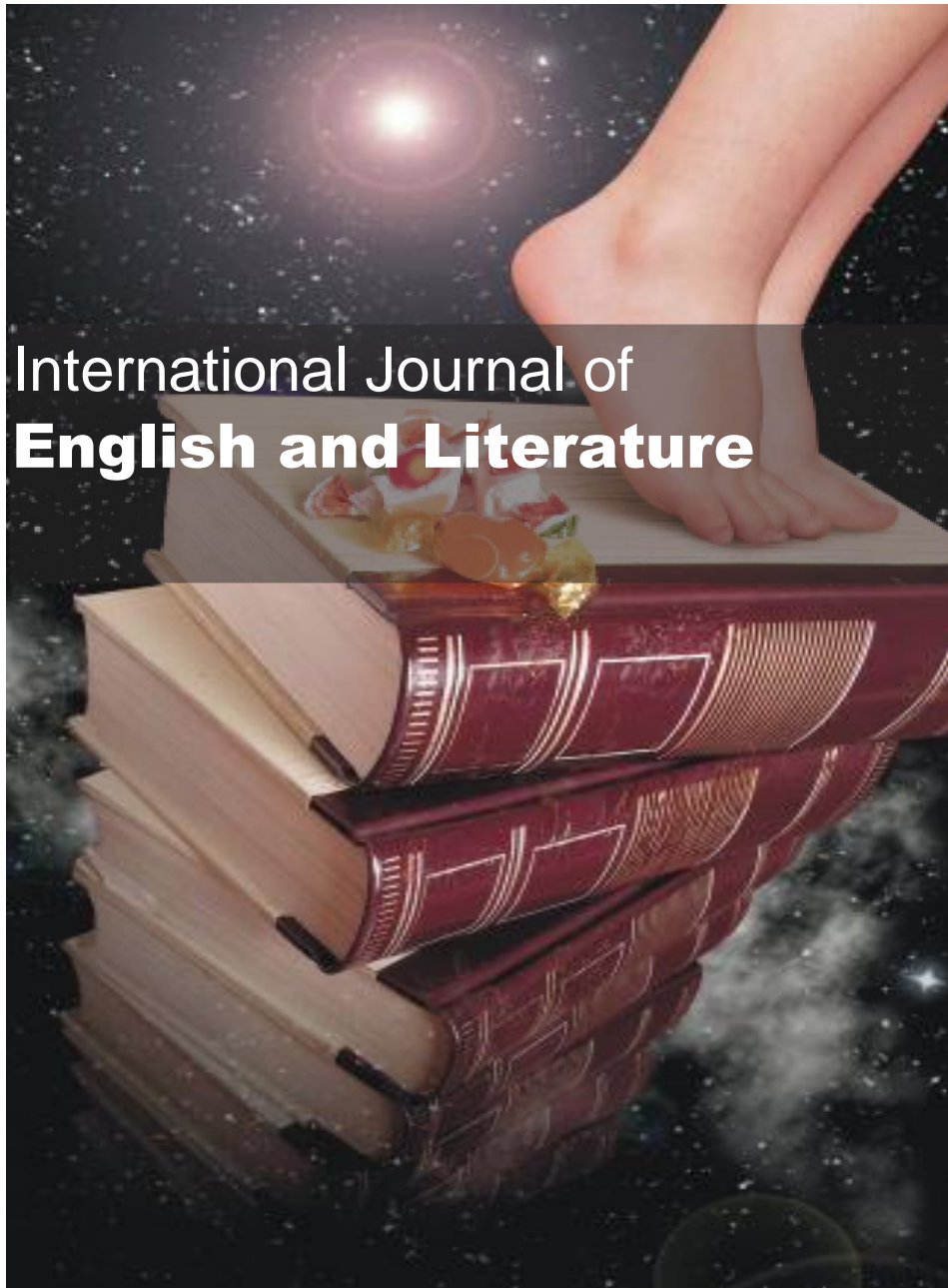


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Full Length Research Paper

The importance of listening to minority groups especially street children

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The voices of minority groups have been ignored for too long! Who are they? Why and how should we listen to them? It is imperative to listen carefully and thoughtfully to the voices of everyone; especially those who belong to minority groups. This article summarized and analysed recent published literature on street children and thus it is not a new fieldwork. However published research unquestionably indicated that there exists a paucity of information which gives an ear to minority, primarily street children. It is crucial that everyone, moreover professionals and policy makers, pay particular attention to and consider the voices of these children; above all when they formulate policies that pertain to their growth and development. Listening is necessary to try to understand the lives and varying perspectives of these children. Although it is difficult and demanding, it is strongly suggested that professionals, policy makers and indeed all citizens, heed the voices of these children to bring about meaningful and productive change because listening helps to properly identify the needs, the feelings, the goals, the ideals, and the vision of minority groups. Listening also facilitates people to glean a better and clearer understanding of the mindsets of street children on different issues, notably the social, moral, ethical and educational areas and how these affect them. Most of all, listening can render assistance in the formulation of recommendations and the consequent implementation of diverse programmes. Listening will better inform governmental and non-governmental agencies that often establish programmes without the input of the very people they are intended for. Through the process of listening and discernment, social architects would find themselves in a better position to design programmes that would meet the needs of children and in so doing, enhance their standard of living in some of the following areas: social, intellectual, religious and educational.

Key words: minority groups, street children, listening, advocacy.

INTRODUCTION

There has been an increasing emergence of minority groups and street children over the past decades. Although very little is still known about them, they are often negatively depicted and are subsequently treated

with apathy, indifference, and disdain. With the support of literature, this paper revealed some of the characteristics of street children. It presented possible definitions and showed the complexity in attempting to listen to them. It

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is the firm view that if people are more informed about the lifestyle of minority groups and street children, they may become more sensitive to their needs.

Listening to minority groups is intricate and labyrinthine. To listen carefully and attentively to minority groups, one must be willing to devote ample time and attention simply because it means paying very close attention to their utterances and voices. Listening is fundamental since it forms an integral component in trying to comprehend the lives of how minority groups, specifically street children, live. When minority groups and street children notice that people take a keen interest in their lives, they are sometimes eager to communicate their thoughts, emotions, feelings and aspirations.

Listening is a dynamic process. It is developmental and continuous. It requires a unique effort and skill because it is convoluted and complex. However, when carried out competently, it can create, renew and maintain concrete relationships and eliminate barriers. A review of the professional literature indicated that there is paucity of information on this topic. This non-empirical research entailed a constant review of several research papers, journal articles and books. A critical research method compared recent papers that related to this significant topic. This paper presented the value of listening to the voices of street children and did not conjure sensationalism.

Definition of minority groups

Wikipedia contributors (2022) opined that depending on the context, minority groups connote different usage. Nonetheless, they stated that minority groups can be understood according to demographic sizes based on characteristics or practices, such as: ethnicity, race religion, sexual orientation, or disability. Wikipedia contributors (2022) further added that these groups frequently face discrimination in the social, political, intellectual, religious and educational sphere of life. The editors of Britannica (2019) defined minority groups as a culturally, ethnically, or racially distinct group that coexists in a subordinate manner in each society. While the dominant group dictates who should be considered minority groups, it is still unclear what criterion is used to make such a prediction. However, the editors of Britannica (2019) further included that minority groups are generally separated and segregated socially, politically, and intellectually from the wider society. Depending on the given society, some minority groups may have a voice. Minority groups which are exclusively comprised of children continue to suffer on all levels of society. Chatham and Mixer (2021) admitted that although over the decades qualitative research incorporated children as participants, more needs to be done because ethnic minority children are yet to be represented. To better comprehend the views of children,

Chatham and Mixer (2021) examined the history of research with children. They concluded that trust is an essential component for gaining access to minority children. They also stated that the voices of children are vital. These voices can advance others to better comprehend the picture of the experiences of children. The voices of minority groups can inform policy makers about these children's ills. Zhou and Bankston (2020) hypothesized that minority children often lack the basic foundations for life. Many of them have little education and are stereotyped by society. Hamilton et al. (2020) claimed that because many minority children do not engage in physical activity, they are prone to all types of diseases. This type of behaviour is often carried into adulthood. Hamilton et al. (2020) further expressed that if this issue goes unattended, it can result in serious negative repercussions. It can cause chronic diseases relating to the liver, renal cells, breasts, endometrial, and colon and can even contribute to premature death. Similarly, White et al. (2021) opined that the lack of adequate nutrition can also precipitate diseases among children. White et al. (2021) believed that children from minority groups often experience poverty which puts them at a great disadvantage. They experience lower socioeconomic status, live in crowded houses and are prone to illness. This scenario is even more complex when some of these minority children are deemed as street children.

Definition of street children

It is not simple to accurately define street children. This process is complex, convoluted, and contentious. United Nations (2017) affirmed that street children are not a homogenous group. Their diversity may include age, gender, ethnicity, and nationality. This implies different experiences, risks and needs. Yin Cheryl Ng et al. (2022) explained that some of the children live on the streets and maintain little or no contact whatsoever with parents or significant others. Some work on the streets while others return to their homes at intervals. It is unsurprising that throughout the world nearly every country views them in different fashions. A review of the literature described them as an enigma and inconspicuous.

Consortium for Street Children (2021) hypothesized that they are unnoticeable in the world and are not treated with dignity and respect by many religious organizations, government officials and policymakers. Setyowati et al. (2021) claimed that they are considered rubbish by some because they roam the streets and rattle the neighbourhood with their rambunctious and boisterous behaviour. According to Setyowati et al. (2021), these children are marginalized and ostracized. Hence, they are constantly faced with all types of exclusion, discrimination, and exploitation at the social, political, intellectual and religious sphere of life. Reza and

Henly (2018) posited that life on the streets is wretched and miserable and these children are continually battered with filth, disease, violence, and poverty. Asante (2019) believed that there are limited options on the streets and these children struggle and battle for survival. Similarly, Bajari and Kuswarno (2020) narrated that because street children are connected to and identified with uproar, upheaval, and abominable crime, they are considered social outcasts. On the streets they are susceptible and vulnerable to the environment. Irawati et al. (2021) surmised that street children count on minimal support from family and significant others. They work on the streets and undesirable places like under bridges, parking lots and vacant land. Bwambale et al. (2021) merely defined them as individuals who literally inhabit the streets. Sah (2019) mentioned that they are constantly at high risk because they are unprotected and defenceless, are exploited and abused. They are also deprived and stripped of their rights and dignity and are disregarded and rejected by society. Sah (2019) also claimed that these children require proper guidance and direction all because their only goal and aspiration is to survive on the streets. With little education and vision, their future is wretched and miserable.

Ismael (2019) proffered countless reasons for the presence of children on the streets. Some of them included the loss of parents or significant others and the disintegration of family. Other reasons were extreme poverty, illicit drug abuse in the homes and excessive domestic violence. He further went to indicate that some adults literally send their children out to beg on the streets. Societal et al. (2021) also agreed that inordinate poverty and lack of parental guidance encourage children to live on the streets. Consortium for Street Children (2019) noted that although many people use the terms "street children" and "homeless children" interchangeably, they are by no means synonymous. There are certain differences as not all street children are homeless. Consortium for Street Children (2019) commented that some street children seek refuge and accommodation at drop-in centres and half-way houses; thus, children who are portrayed as street children are not necessarily homeless. They toil, recreate, and spend time on the street but do return to their family.

A review of the literature described street children in a completely undesirable and distasteful manner. The research findings by Prasad (2021) postulated that more than a third of the street children asserted that they chose to live on the streets due to the fact that they were deprived of the affection of their family. As a result, they were disillusioned and distrustful of new acquaintances. Even the efforts to rehabilitate them by non-governmental institutions were seemingly impossible. As a result of this great mistrust that they have towards others, Prasad (2021) further mentioned that these children may circumvent issues before they reveal the whole truth. This type of behaviour often compounds their ability to achieve

their goals and desires.

Dutta (2018) asserted that life on the streets is a constant challenge for survival. According to Dutta (2018) it is paradoxical because, even though they may live in the major city, they are unable to enjoy the comforts of urban life.

Pratap and Singh (2021) believed that street children consistently crop up in several parts of the developing world. They further suggested that in as much as they are not properly protected and supervised by adults, they often end up on the streets. Pratap and Singh (2021) also claimed that street children wander the streets searching for food, water, clothing, and shelter. Their battle for survival is unceasing. In addition to neglect and exploitation, they are also prone to gang violence and various types of abuse. They are easy prey for the drug dealers and sex-traffickers and many of them are forced into prostitution (Parveen, 2019).

Listening to street children

Julien (2021) hypothesized that listening to street children is an art, skill, discipline and a way of life. He further explained that listening does not mean just giving advice and good counsel. It does not mean criticizing feelings.

Listening does not try to solve problems and troubles. Opined that it is a skill that some people must acquire and hone. When carried out accurately, listening can create and maintain positive relationships. Koščak et al. (2021) postulated that it is necessary to listen to children although communication with them still needs to be explored and researched in greater detail. Liu et al. (2022) believed that it is imperative to communicate and collaborate properly and effectively with street children. This channel of communication and collaboration ought to be transparent and engage the children as much as possible. Fyhn and Berntsen (2022) emphasized the value of active listening to children. They mentioned that some people may even need to learn how to listen and be non-judgmental. Julien (2021) put forward that listening can expose adults to certain language usage such as: similes, metaphors, and idioms and propel them into understanding the insight for certain jargon known and used by children in the majority. He further deduced that albeit listening is challenging and difficult as it is rewarding. Listening to the tone of children and observing their manner of behaviour in response to certain questions are of paramount significance. Yin Cheryl Ng et al. (2022) strongly advocated that people ought to create safe spaces for street children to speak of their own free will and without inhibition. They also figured that adults must learn how to listen thoughtfully and carefully. Julien (2021) believed that listening involves caring, reflecting and not casting aspersions. It also involves empowering children with a voice. He further added that listening is a necessary tool in trying to fully grasp the views and

perspectives of street children. Consequently, more prominence ought to be applied to this discipline. Too often listening is undervalued, underestimated, and oversimplified. In this contemporary society, many adults are preoccupied with their jobs and personal pursuits. They sometimes have to work for long hours, and this could hamper and obstruct their capacity and enthusiasm for listening. Fyhn and Berntsen (2022) admitted that both respect and listening are convoluted issues. Nonetheless, they were convinced that when adults listen with a respectful ear, a child-centered atmosphere is created. To effectively engage in this process, Skovsmose (2020) staunchly suggested that adults should weigh the interests, expectations, hopes, aspirations, and motives of children. In this way, the listening process becomes dynamic and interesting. It energizes and motivates children and moves them into speaking voluntarily and from the heart. Mithani et al. (2021) emphasized that it is essential that minority children are provided with a convenient and comfortable environment to share their stories.

Brookes (2018) recommended one of the ways to listen effectively to children is to encourage them in conversation. She suggested that there is value when children are coaxed to express their needs, wants and ways they can achieve them. This simple but important approach gives children a sense of purpose and belonging and consequently they are unafraid of engaging in the dialogue. Brookes (2018) further described that when children actively participate in conversation, they freely express themselves and personal growth and development are both evident. Walker and Misca (2019) firmly advocated that the voices of children must form part of the decision-making process. When this is accomplished in a proper manner, the end result is definitely that of a significant difference. It empowers children and provides them with a sense of autonomy and social competence. They finally embrace the distinct relationships between actions, decisions, and their consequences. They develop a deeper sense of responsibility and duty and in this way take ownership of their lives. It is convoluted but not impossible and so, it is only fitting that street children be afforded the opportunity to share their stories (Kaneva and Corcoran 2021). Therefore, listening to street children involves building trust and creating an environment of harmony (Ferguson, 2017). Church (2019) believed/recognized that the various communities can lobby with the government to uphold the rights of children.

DeVito (2006) mentioned that there are five stages in listening: receiving, understanding, remembering, evaluating, and responding. Delpit (1993) knew that listening is an aptitude which involves empathy and trying to appreciate the message others are conveying. Listening to the youth is intricate, sensitive and involves paying very close attention to their utterances. Listening, according to Julien (2021), is inherent in trying to envision

the lives of street children since these same children are more likely to communicate their thoughts and feelings to anyone willing and with the enduring patience to lend an ear. Julien (2021) also hypothesized that it is imperative to listen meticulously to the tone of street children and observe their mannerisms. Very often these emotions and behaviours are useful in coming up with a way to clarify the perspectives of children. Adler and Rodman (2010) and Gerrig and Zimbard (2008) thought that it is important to listen with a positive attitude since children sometimes have the innate way of cultivating analytical and constructive observations. In this way they can inadvertently react responsibly to the task of identifying factors that may somehow impede their immersion into the wider social community. Delpit (1993) emphasized that although listening to children is a necessary component in perceiving their views, it demands a very special skill and art. Delpit (1993) further added that listening calls for the active use of all the senses. Listening with heart and mind means being totally involved and committed to the relationship. It means being alert and tactful for the simple reason that adults often distinguish things not only through the eyes and ears, but also through their beliefs. According to Delpit (1993) listening to children could signify that adults may have to suspend and place their beliefs to one side. DeVito (2006) also supposed that listening with an open mind and heart benefits adults into better trusting and assessing the message. Listening with heart and mind means so much more than being attentive and discreet and putting beliefs on the back burner. It goes beyond mastering the jargon of children. It means being sincere and genuine. It indicates embodying children's lives and seeing the world from their perspective. Fine and Glassner (1979) also remarked that listening to children means more than possessing the qualities of sympathy and empathy. Bovee (2008) submitted that through listening adults can seek clarification, reflect on their personal feelings and even probe; but they must always try to succeed in their endeavour to separate opinions from facts. DeVito (2006) mentioned that listening with empathy enhances a relationship. He therefore proposed that adults try to empathise with children and in this way, they will inspire young ones to vent their emotions.

As mentioned above, listening can expose adults to certain language usage: similes, metaphors, and idioms – and guide them into understanding certain jargon that children use. Even when adults think they are fully equipped and can appreciate the jargon of children, Fine and Glassner (1979) cautioned that barriers could arise on the grounds that children's usage of slang is quite difficult for an adult to appreciate and even when digested correctly often comes out weird and unnatural to children when emitted by an adult. They further believed that even listening professionally must be timely only because an artificial and insincere attempt could prove to be devastating. Bovee (2008) and Adler and Rodman

(2010) offered some suggestions that could make listening that much easier. Take proper notes, make frequent eye contact, react with appropriate facial expressions, transmit nonverbal cues and above all else stay focused on the conversation. If possible, try to paraphrase mentally the salient issues and keep questions or points of disagreement until the appropriate moment. Most of all, value the listening relationship as an opportunity to learn.

Julien (2021) holds the firm view that listening is a necessary tool in trying to understand the views of street children. More prominence should be paid to this discipline, and it should not be underestimated, undervalued, and oversimplified. Julien (2021) also observed that children speaking with a tremor in their voice denote nervousness or anxiety. In this way, adults ought to be cognizant and appreciate the tremendous difficulty and great pain that some children experience when attempting to explain something that is very sensitive in nature to them. Listening can facilitate the acknowledgement of children and lead adults to the realization that children are frequently eager to share their testimony. They will only do so if adults are genuinely interested in them. Therefore, the need to clearly comprehend the voices of street children must never be underestimated. Of course, there will be times they may not be able to describe precisely what has happened owing to a lack of the necessary vocabulary. Some street children may even feel ashamed and embarrassed to speak about delicate issues. Nonetheless, adults must make it a point to believe the stories of street children until and unless investigation proves otherwise.

Advocacy

In simple terms advocacy means speaking and acting on behalf of oneself. It also means deciding what is best and pursuing that particular goal. Advocacy is not just about being afforded an effective voice along with interpersonal skills.

However, there are many people who do not accept minority groups and consider self-advocacy as important. On the other hand, advocates among minority groups find themselves in a constant battle for independence and recognition.

Several minority groups hold the view that street children should voice their cases on their own behalf. They are the ones who can best explain what they are experiencing. After all, it is their life, and they ought to make decisions that they themselves deem appropriate and describe their own unique journey thus far through life given the circumstances.

Advocacy may also mean challenging the current way of thinking. This may mean reorganizing political trends of thought. Giving children a voice means revolutionizing

the structures and the images that society has of street children.

It means emancipating children from the conventional and authoritative attitude that certain members of mainstream society may hold towards these children.

Julien (2022) resolutely supports and affirms self-advocacy and believes that street children are quite capable of making their own representation. Many street children are of the opinion that mainstream society is oppressive and intimidating and they do not trust them. Thus, street children must be afforded a voice. Having a voice is the only way they would achieve freedom. Being denied this voice makes the possibility of internalizing their disenchantment more real.

They tend to become more withdrawn from society, resentful and aggressive. Some of them harbour this disenchantment and the resulting pain, fear, confusion, negative self-esteem and the low expectations further compound their daily active lives.

United Nations (2017) in their document on the Convention to the Rights of the Child clearly outlined a policy and legal guidance for governments to protect street children. This document cited that these children have the right to associate and interact freely in public spaces without harassment by the law enforcers. Thomas De Benitez (2017) supported the idea presented by the United Nations (2017) and further mentioned that it could be used as an advocacy tool for street children. SCU (2020) cautioned that advocacy programmes, one of them being the introduction of sports, among street children involve the support of all. According to SCU (2020) when street children are engaged in sports, they create an awareness of themselves and the public tunes in more to their way of life and become more tolerant and passive towards them. Sports can minimize the gap that exists between street children and the public which can possibly create an environment of tolerance and peace between society and street children, (Meir and Fletcher, 2019, 2020; Richardson and Fletcher, 2020). Advocacy gives these children the opportunity to highlight how they live on the streets, (Kaneva and Corcoran, 2021). It also provides opportunities for children to cordially interact with each other, develop new skills, and receive informal education (Njoroge, 2017). Moreover, this exposure gives street children a tremendous sense of pride and satisfaction thereby giving their fragile ego a boost and empowering them. It also boosts their ego and empowers them, (Black et al., 2020, 2021; Dowse and Fletcher, 2018; Malcolm and Fletcher, 2017). When street children participate in sports it accentuates their talent, and this awareness can occasionally be made public through the media and other social platforms, (Corcoran et al., 2020). Dowse et al. (2018) suggested that there is a paucity of literature about sports, and its impact on street children. They further believed that this dearth of information clearly suggests that the voices of street children are not given due consideration.

For advocacy to be effective there must be drastic changes in society. To empower street children and give them a voice is more than merely permitting them to express themselves and provide their own comments and suggestions. It is a complete reorientation that forces society to value and appreciate their proposals and contributions to the wider society. It is important to note that advocacy for street children is not easy to attain. In several instances, street children are ignorant of the existence of those who make policies regarding their presence on the streets. Therefore, policy makers must be alerted. They must listen to the voices of street children. They must be aware of their concerns. If their voices go unheard, then their lives as a whole could be disregarded completely, and interests will not be effectively engaged. Advocacy among street children should foster an awareness of how they live. To simply express an interest in street children is insufficient. People cannot identify with them when they are not willing to confront issues and systems that contribute to their presence on the streets. Commitment without confrontation tends to fade quickly into fruitless sentimental commiseration. Commitment involves a diligent effort. This has its own measure of difficulty. It involves political action and critical analysis challenging the misinformed, ignorant prejudicial statements and ideas that are often prevalent within society about these children.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research methodology

This non-empirical research gathered relevant data through critical studies, systematic review and meta-analysis. Secondary sources were taken from central library books, journals, and the internet. A careful and thorough investigation of appropriate and relevant research techniques such as text criticism, critical examination of biographical studies, narrative analysis, creative writing as a research method, and internet-based research assisted this methodology. Pertinent and apt reading material were also gathered and thoughtfully analysed and evaluated academically and the importance of the findings informed this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A review of the professional literature indicates that few people pay great emphasis on listening. This becomes even more convoluted when people try to listen to minority groups and street children. Thus, this research is crucial because it offers scholars and researchers pertinent information and knowledge on how to actively listen to minority groups. The analysis of existing literature contributes to current knowledge and serves as catalysis to motivate, energize and inspire others to engage in the process of listening to minority groups. Because it enriches and enhances the research and academic scenario it can lead those who are interested in minority

groups in the right direction. Moreover, it can encourage and stimulate policy makers, non-governmental organization and all those who are interested in minority groups to be unafraid to render assistance.

Conclusion

It is the genuine desire that this paper will stimulate the minds and hearts of the public so that we can all realize that minority groups and indeed all children are the source of hope and could be the major factor for the development of a better society, nation, and indeed a better world.

This non-empirical research explored the complexity in arriving at a precise definition of minority groups and street children. It examined the significance of listening with great consideration to the voices of street children and advocacy.

It must be remembered that listening is more than just hearing and being attentive. It is more than being empathetic and demonstrating sympathy. It is more than expressing a desire to be committed. It means getting seriously and wholeheartedly involved in the lives of socially displaced children. Again, this is not easy. It is demanding, challenging and time consuming. Moreover, the paper highlighted that advocacy in an important component of listening. Too often programmes are designed for street children without even consulting them. Therefore, government institutions, non-governmental organizations and all those interested in assisting the well-being of street children should have a meaningful dialogue with them. Listening to their voices, concerns and perspectives is of paramount significance in order to chart a meaningful way forward. One must remember that street children, because they are able to survive the rigors of the streets, could be deemed the experts on street life. However, street children must make their voices heard.

They must also fight for their rights which is called advocacy. It is the genuine desire that this paper will stimulate the minds and hearts of the public so that we can all realize that minority groups and indeed all children are the source of hope and could be the major factor for the development of better society, nation, and indeed a better world.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflicts of interests.

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Review

Translation style: A systemic functional perspective

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Translation serves as an effective bridge connecting multiple cultures and provides convenience for people from different countries to understand foreign cultures. This article aims to analyze the essence of literal translation and free translation from the perspective of systemic functional linguistics. It argues that translation activities need to start from the characteristics of the source language and the requirements of the target language, and select different translation methods based on different text styles. This approach can improve the efficiency of translation work, provide strong guidance for translation practice, promote the dissemination of various cultures, and make certain contributions to the development of foreign language specialties.

Key words: Free translation, literal translation, functional perspective.

INTRODUCTION

Literal translation and free translation have been discussed hundreds of years all over the world. Even till today the dispute on this issue has not come to an end. Those who are in favor of literal translation argue that some original rhetoric and exotic style may be preserved through literal translation. They maintain that free translation expresses only the basic concept of the original, while the vibrant rhetoric of the original is lost. On the contrary, those who advocate free translation think that free translation is the only feasible translation method. They firmly believe that translation is an art.

This debate has a lengthy history, with passionate advocates on both sides. For example, early Western academics such as Erasmus, Augustine, and others advocated exact translation. Kumarajiva is regarded to be

of the free school of Chinese interpreters, whereas Dao'an looks to be literal and rigid. Yan Fu supported hermeneutic translation in contemporary China, whereas Lu Xun preferred a clumsy version to one that was open but inexact.

This paper, regardless of historical dispute between the literal and free translation, will first reveal the nature of these two translation methods from functional linguistic point of view, and then put forward some suggestions for translation practice. Based on the characteristics of this article, linguistic methods, pragmatic methods, and empirical research methods were used for the study. Through the investigation of linguistic knowledge, the language phenomena and rules in translation were explored. Meanwhile, by combining the analysis of

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context and pragmatic rules, the meaning and expression methods to be conveyed in translation were studied, that is, the selection of translation methods. Finally, this article will choose translation examples for analysis, in order to study the translator's choices of translation strategies and methods during the translation process.

NATURE OF LITERAL AND FREE TRANSLATION

Matthiessen (2001:74) states a general guideline for the relationship between sensitivity and translation: the more information accessible to direct the translation, the more delicate the translation. He also claims that there is a typological principle at work: the larger the environment. Environment here alludes to the size and breadth to which the translator decides to encompass in his translation. The wider the environment, the more consistent the languages are likely to be; the smaller the environment, the more incongruent the languages are likely to be (Matthiessen, 2001:75).

According to Halliday (1994:15), a language is a complicated semiotic system made of numerous layers, or strata, and the rank scale in the English lexicogrammar is: clause-group/phrase-word-morpheme. Thus, the sentence, the most comprehensive element of grammar, has the broadest rank environment, while the morpheme has the narrowest rank environment. As a result, the sentence has the broadest rank context of translation rather than the morpheme or the word.

And, technically speaking, the broadest translation environment is that of system rather than structure; for example, there are likely to be fewer translation disparities between two languages' clause systems than between their clause structures. The most general environment is the broadest, while the most sensitive environment is the smallest. As a result, the most delicate translation setting is that of the most broad language systems—such as the general mood systems of 'indicate/imperative', 'declarative/interrogative'. It is to be anticipated that as the level of delicacy rises, so will the translation variations.

With the principle mentioned above, Matthiessen is commenting on the relationship from macroscopical point of view. He points out the ideal state of translation angle: from the maximal environment. Theoretically, it is reasonable because the larger the environment is, the more information the translation will cover. But this arouses another question: the more information for translation, the more difficult the task will be. So in practice, translators do not necessarily choose the largest environment for their translation. On the contrary, translators usually unconsciously choose the possible smallest environment. That is to say, they will automatically consider their task from the possibly highest delicacy of language. The translators usually intend to focus their attention on lexicogrammar, if not morpheme, for the first step for consideration. This again

leads to a question: what is the difference embodied in translation when translation environment varies from the largest to smallest?

For a long time, translation techniques have been characterized as falling somewhere between the extremes of literal and free. It is relatively simple to characterize these translation techniques, or strategies, for a stratified linguistic theory, such as Systemic Functional Linguistics, as the retention of characteristics and patterns on various language levels (Catford, 1965). There are three clear levels at which characteristics and patterns can be preserved: lexicogrammar, semantic grammar, and register. Preservation on the first would stipulate a relatively precise translation, while preservation on the last would define a relatively free translation. The exact interpretations are based on high delicacy (specific groups of units), whereas the free versions are based on low delicacy. In terms of the rank scale within lexicogrammar, preserving characteristics and structures on lower ranks, such as the morpheme, results in relatively exact translations, whereas preserving them on higher ranks results in relatively free translations. Consider the following translations:

1. 中国是个社会主义国家，也是个发展中国家。
(Translated by Wang Fuxiang)
China is a socialist country, and a developing country, too.
2. I'm getting chilled to the bone. What can Freddy be doing all this time?
冻死我了。弗莱蒂这半天是干什么去了？(Translated by Yang Xianyi)
3. The days are in the yellow leaf,
The flowers and fruits of love are gone,
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone.
年华黄叶秋，花实落悠悠。
多情徒自苦，残泪带愁流。(By an anonymous translator)

The literal degree decreases from 1 to 3. Translation 1 preserves the features of words of the source language. Translation 2 pursues equivalence on the level of clause. It adapts to Chinese in lexicogrammar scale so as to get an interpersonal equivalence. Translation 3 only preserves the image of the original poem. It abandons the corresponding elements and pursues equivalence neither in level of lexicogrammar or in the semantic, but in environment of register.

Table 1 illustrates the nature of free and literal translation in a systemic point of view:

Environment and nature of literal and free translation

The conventional distinction between "free" and "literal" translation is defined by levels of stratification, position, and axis. The more "literal" the translation—for example,

Table 1. Illustrates the nature of free and literal translation.

Stratification	Rank	Axis	
Context	clause	System	Free
Semantics	group/phrase	↑	↑
Lexicogrammar	word	↓	↓
Phonology	morpheme	Structure	Literal

Source: Author

word for word translation (rather than clause-based translation)—the smaller the environment; the bigger the environment, the more "free" the translation.

In theory, "free" translation is arguably the most efficient type of translation. However, independence varies in degree. As a result, we must consider how liberated we are in our rendering.

AUTOMATIZATION AND DE-AUTOMATIZATION

If the translation is "free," the translation environment is as broad as possible, such as semantics within context or even just context, as when the source material to be translated instantiates a register not found in the target language and it becomes necessary to try to find the nearest culturally equivalent context. This is not to say that there is no translation in smaller areas. Rather, it implies that translation within more limited contexts is automated. Halliday (1982:135) describes automatization as follows in relation to his study of dramatic dialogue: "language is likely to be fully automatized, with the words and structures and sounds being there in their automatic function of realizing the semantic selections in an unmarked way—getting on with expressing meanings without parading themselves in pattern of their own". Thus, words are translated as realizations of meanings, and sounds are translated as interpretations of words. In other words, the unmarked method of choices typically occur among the greater sensitivity or lower rank in the language system—within relatively narrow environment, which results in relatively literal translation.

However, there are some translation situations where the translation must be de-automatized. Halliday (1982: 135) adopts the term:

The term "de-automatization", though cumbersome, is more apt than "foregrounding", since what is question is not simply prominence but rather the partial freeing of the lower level systems from the control of semantics so that they become domains of choice in their own right. The de-automatization of the grammar means that grammatical choices are not simply determined from above: there is selection as well as pre-selection. Hence the wording becomes a quasi-independent semiotic mode through which

the meanings of the work can be projected.

The meaning produced by de-automatization must be brought out in translation. The bind to the wordings must be "liberated" to some degree, and particular attention must be given to a broader environment in order to carry out some more meaning potential. The more the translator's focus shifts from a smaller to a broader world, the more free the translation may be. This is most likely to occur in literary translation; even the level of sound may be de-automatized in poem translation. That is, poetry translation sometimes contains more 'free' elements (Qinghua, 2002:421):

登鹤雀楼
王焕之
白日依山尽，黄河入海流。
欲穷千里目，更上一层楼。

An ascent to stork hall

The setting sun behind the mountains glows,
The muddy Yellow River seawards flows.
If more distant views are what you desire,
You simply climb up a story higher.
(Translated by Yu Zhongjie)

On the stork tower

The sun beyond the mountains glows;
The Yellow River seawards flows.
You can enjoy a grander sight
By climbing to a greater height.
(Translated by Xu Yuancong)

Upward!

Westward the sun, ending the day's journey in a slow
descent behind the mountains.
Eastward the Yellow River, emptying into the sea.
To look beyond, unto the farthest horizon, upward! up
another storey!
(Translated by Weng Xianliang)

Obviously, the three editions of the same poem's translation have different environments for their translation. And strictly speaking, none of them can be labeled as "literal translation", because all of them have built their own poetic features by de-automatization. But the extents to which they "de-automatized" are not same. Compared with the other two, translation (1) bases more on the original lexical and clausal structures and thus is the most 'literal' one of the three(though it still cannot be entitled as a 'literal translation'); translation (3) adopts the largest environment and bases more on the image itself, so it is the 'freest' translation; and translation (2) is in between (1) and (3) in terms of the 'freeness' in its de-automatization.

In general, we can concentrate on the original material as phrasing and particularly attempt to interpret wording patterns at the lexical grammar level. The more 'literal' the lexicogrammatical rendering, the lower its position. Translation in relation to the stratification order is thus primarily a question of what we strive to maintain consistent and what we allow to change. The higher the rank goes upward, the 'freer' the translation will be.

TRANSFERRING META FUNCTIONS VS LITERAL TRANSLATION AND FREE TRANSLATION

The following definitions of literal translation and free translation may be derived from the preceding discussion: In terms of Systemic Functional Linguistics, literal translation is one that maintains lexicogrammatical qualities and structure to the greatest extent feasible within the limits of the target language system. The term "free translation" refers to translation that is not constrained by lexicogrammatical elements and structures. It retains certain characteristics of the original texts in the greater context. Both free translation and literal translation, in particular, are dynamic notions that should not be approached in a static manner.

Translation, from a systemic standpoint, is the preservation of the source texts' ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings. An ideal translation is the one that holds all of the three metafunctions of the source texts. However, in translation practice, we usually automatically set out from the ideational function for consideration. This is coincident with the 'automatization principle' discussed above. Ideational function is mainly realized by the concrete lexical items, from which we often unconsciously initiate our translation. The formal equivalence of lexical items in translation leads to the extreme form of literal translation which is always labeled as 'word for word translation'. Theoretically, it is impossible to get an absolute 'word for word' translation because there do not exist two languages that have exactly same typological structure. Thus, the expression of 'word for word translation' is usually used as a name of 'awkward translation'.

As stated in Section 2 and 3, literal translation closely related to higher delicacy of linguistic items. And since ideational elements contain the most delicate ones from morphemes and wordings to phrases and clauses, literal translation is essentially realized through the preservation of ideational elements, namely: Process, Participants and Circumstances. For example:

The mantle of your high office has been placed on your shoulder at a time when the world at large and this organization are going through an exceptionally critical phase.

(1) 全世界和本组织正处于一个异常危急的时期，这个崇高职务的重担落到了你的肩上。

(2) 整个世界和本组织处于一个异常危急的时期。在这样一个时期中这个崇高的任务就落到了你的肩上。

(Taken from Qinghua, 2002:38)

Both translations have preserved the main ideational elements of the source sentence, and in some sense both could be titled as literal translation. But strictly speaking, (1) holds more functional components of the source language than (2) does, for (1) is consistent with the original sentence at levels of wording, phrases and clauses. It has retained all the functional elements of the source sentence, as well as the logical relations among the functional components. On the other hand, (2) consists of two independent clauses. The Circumstance component of original sentence---when the world at large and this organization are going through an exceptionally critical phrase is turned into an independent clause, which makes translation structurally a little looser than the original sentence. In other word, translation (1) has transferred all the three meta functions of the original while translation (2) is not satisfying in perspective of transferring textual function. Hence, if we are asked to differentiate the two translations in terms of literal or free degree, we can get a conclusion that translation (1) is more literal than translation (2). And this shows a fact that literal translation and free translation are viable concepts and there is not an absolute criterion to define them. In normal conditions, a more literal translation preserves more structural features of the source language and thus a formal equivalence may be expected. In some sense, formal equivalence tends to hold functional equivalence, which is the very aim of the translation. That is why we put literal translation in priority. However, this does not mean that literal translation should always be adopted in translation. On the contrary, we sometimes have to abandon the original ideational components so as to get an interpersonal or textual equivalence in the translation. For example, due to different cultures, greetings in different languages may differ a lot from each other. In translation, we have to first of all consider the most important function the greeting plays---interpersonal function, and we'd better take this function in priority in

Table 2. The middle way between literal translation and free translation.

Source	Transferring	Target	Literal or Free
Ideational function	→	Ideational equivalence	Literal
Interpersonal function		Interpersonal equivalence	↕
Textual function		Textual equivalence	Free

Source: Author

translation. If it is literally translated, that is, based on ideational components, it will be probably misunderstood by the target language readers. In this condition, the translation should be target culture oriented so as to be comprehensible in target cultural background. Compare the following translation:

(Background: Two Chinese friends meet each other at the sidewalk in the afternoon. They are exchanging greetings.)

A: 老张, 吃了吗?

B: 还没有。你吃了吗?

A: 吃了。你上哪儿去?

B: 去超市买点东西。

A: 那你去吧。

①

A: Hi, Lao Zhang, have you had your dinner?

B: Not yet. Have you had your dinner?

A: Yes. Where are you going?

A: To supermarket to buy something.

B: Then you can go now.

②

A: Hello, Mr. Zhang, how are you?

B: Fine. And you?

A: Fine, too. You look very busy.

B: I'm hurrying to the supermarket.

A: See you later, then.

B: See you.

Clearly, translation ① is more literal than translation ②, but in a certain context, ② is more acceptable than ① to the target language readers.

Furthermore, a freer translation sometimes cannot only successfully transfer the ideational and interpersonal function, but also maximally preserve the original style:

天色渐昏, 大雨欲来, 车夫加紧赶路, 说天要变了(Qian, 1991:153)

1. The sky was becoming darker and darker. The storm was coming. The carriage puller ran faster, and said that the weather was going to change.

2. The sky gradually darkened at the approach of a storm. The rickshaw pullers quickened their pace, saying the weather was about to get worse.

The original language is coherent in the absence of any cohesive links. This is a distinct Chinese trait. As we can

see, ① translation produces a lexically and grammatically valid text, but it breaches several register and genre requirements of its target language. The text's lexical grammatical choices are often noted and read "foreign" in the target culture. As its translational environment, it chooses the clausal level. Though it has transferred all the constituents ideationally, it hasn't successfully transferred the coherent relationship contained in the source text from a point of view of textual function. Because Chinese tends to take covert cohesive devices to realize the coherence while English employs overt ones, we have to take use of English cohesive devices in order to transfer the textual function of the source text. The prepositional phrase and participle phrase in ② have not only carried the ideational meanings of the source texts but also expressed the logical relationships among the original clauses. That is to say, translation ② is a more appropriate than translation ①.

To summarize, literal translation and free translation are two dynamic concepts. Theoretically, literal translation requires formal correspondence of ideational components; free translation usually aims for contextual equivalence; and transferring interpersonal function often needs the middle way between literal translation and free translation. It can be illustrated by Table 2:

Meta functions and extent of literal or free translation

Neither the extreme of literal translation nor the extreme of free one is advisable in practice, for they will go too far from the main line in above figure. The following examples illustrate the two kinds of extremes in practice:

1. To kill two birds with one stone.

杀死两只鸟用一个石头。(Compare: 一石二鸟)

2. It may be safely assumed that, two thousand years ago, before Caesar (100 B.C.--44B.C.) set foot in southern Britain, the whole countryside visible from the windows of the room in which I write, was in what is called "the state of nature."

赫胥黎独处一室之中, 在英伦之南, 背山而面野, 槛外诸境, 历历如在几下。乃悬想两千年前, 当罗马大将恺撒来到时, 此间有何景物。计惟有天造草昧, 人功未施。(Translated by Yan Fu)

This article provides a detailed study and analysis of the

translation methods of literal translation and free translation using the perspective of systemic functional grammar. By exploring the origins of these two methods, their universality in translation work is revealed. Through explanations of automation and de-automation, it is shown that language is to some extent "free", and translation work liberates words from their constraints while conveying the meaning of the source language, especially in poetry translation, where translators have more freedom of expression. From the perspective of systemic function analysis, the appropriate translation method is chosen by combining the "explicit" and "implicit" translation characteristics and based on the three elements and three "meta functions" of systemic function.

SUMMARY

Literal translation and free translation are two translation methodologies or tactics. They are the expressive forms of language. Simply speaking, language is the form that people take and meaning is the content that people want to convey. As for the relationship between form and content, Li (2000:24) states that one form can convey numerous contents while one content can be expressed with numerous forms. The translator's goal in translating is to express the meaning of the source language in the target language. That is, we may translate one meaning into several forms.

Both literal translation and free translation can convey the same meaning from different angles. Without adequate context, it is often difficult for us to decide which form is better. Thus a good translator can never label him/herself as a literalist or freeist. Translation in fact is an encoding process with target language, swaying between literal translation and free translation.

The essence of the literal or free translation lies in the delicacy of the translation basis. The higher delicacy the translation bases on, the more literal the translation will become, and vice versa. Technically, a translator should always first of all consider literal translation---to focus his attention on transferring ideational function, for the same form is likely to convey the similar meaning. If literal translation fails to successfully convey the other two functions simultaneously, the translator should try to shift his focus to the other meta functions and take a freer translation. An excellent translation of a text is always the proper mingling of literal translation and free translation.

Literal translation and free translation also have some shortcomings, if literal translation transition will cause the target language readers difficult to understand; a free translation transition leads away from the original text. Therefore, we should consider carefully when analyzing the original text, and strive to translate a translation that is both faithful and suitable for readers.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflicts of interests.

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