

TRANSLATION AND EDITING OF ARABIC-ISLAMIC MANUSCRIPTS IN NIGERIA: A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TRANSLATION UNIT OF WAZIRI JUNAIDU HISTORY AND CULTURE BUREAU IN SOKOTO (WJHCBS)

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ABSTRACT

The research focusses on the translation and editing of Arabic-Islamic Manuscripts in the translation unit of the Waziri Junaidu History and Culture Bureau, Sokoto (WJHCBS). Since the establishment of the bureau in 1973, the unit was created with a view to translating and editing some of the Manuscripts collected to either Hausa or English for the benefit of the public. Since then, some few manuscripts were translated and at long run the unit is no more producing translated or edited copies of the manuscripts. Despite the significance of the unit in fostering the Sokoto Caliphate literature and production of the translated/edited copies of the manuscripts the unit has now been abandoned and turns out to be like a closed factory which only exists by name. In view of the above, the research attempted to examine the situation of the unit, a brief history of the unit, the manuscripts available in the unit, procedures of translation and editing of the manuscripts, translated/edited copies of manuscripts in the unit, problems and challenges towards translation and editing of the manuscripts in the unit. Lastly, findings, recommendations and conclusion are provided.

1. INTRODUCTION

Islam as a divine religion encourages Muslims to search for knowledge and to put it into practice. It is mentioned in the glorious Qur'an that Allah created people and made them to live in different continents of the world, to speak different languages and to appear in different races. This is with a view to acknowledging, recognizing and understanding each other as human beings. The Messenger of Allah Muhammad (SAW) equally, encourages Muslims to search for knowledge even if it is from China and as well urges them to learn how to speak other languages in order to be able to learn good things from them and spread the teachings of Islam among them. Abdul (1980: pg.115) expressed that, Caliphate of Ma'amun remains memorable for his love of scholarship to which he shows deep concern to the men of learning and encouraged scholarly discussions in his palace.

He also made a tremendous effort in the creation of the famous Bait al-Hikmah (the House of Wisdom) with various departments of learning, where many Greek and ancient works were translated to Arabic language for the accessibility of common man. There is no doubt that the establishment of Bureaus and Archives in Nigeria for the preservation of historical materials, government official records and Arabic-Islamic Manuscripts of the Sokoto Jihad leaders is in line with the aim of establishing the famous Bait al-Hikmah in the past by Caliph Ma'amun, that is for preservation of the manuscripts and their accessibility of common man for various purposes.

Hence, Waziri Junaidu History and Culture Bureau, Sokoto is one of the important repositories in Nigeria which receives many visitors for academic and tourism purposes from within and outside the country. It is divided into departments of Arabic Manuscripts, of Translation, of Museum, Archives Section and Library.

The main focus of this research is the Department of Translation. The task of this Department is to translate, edit or provide commentary to the available Arabic-Islamic manuscripts collected by the Bureau. But presently, none of these tasks is being carried out by the unit, because of the problems militating against the unit. Therefore, the research attempted to examine the situation of this unit in connection with translation/editing of Arabic-Islamic manuscripts of the Sokoto Jihad Leaders and to suggest solution to those problems.

2. STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

There exist different works on Arabic and Islamic manuscripts and the centers in which they are preserved. This is with a view to detecting the state and problems of Arabic manuscripts preservation in Nigeria. Translation/Editing is an important method of preserving Arabic-Islamic manuscripts. The questions that the research attempts to answer are:

1. Of what significance is the Translation unit of WJHCBS to the society?
2. What could be the procedures of translating/editing Arabic-Islamic manuscripts in the unit?
3. How are the manuscripts translated/edited being recorded in the unit?
4. What are the major problems affecting the unit?
5. How could the problems affecting the unit be tackled?

3. AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The Aim of this work is to examine the condition of the translation unit in the WJHCBS, with special reference to the task of the unit to translate/edit the available Arabic-Islamic manuscripts collected in the Bureau.

The objectives of this work are as follows:

1. To assess the role of the translation Unit of the WJHCBS in the translation/editing of Arabic-Islamic manuscripts of the Sokoto Caliphate.
2. To ascertain the procedures used in translating/editing of the manuscripts in the Unit.
3. To find out the major problems affecting the Unit.
4. To suggest solutions to the problems militating against the Unit

4. METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

The research is a study of the Translation Unit of WJHCBS, it is therefore not empirical and no statistical tools or mathematical formula have been applied, rather it is deskwork based on the following:

- Search for available literature relevant to the research in which published and unpublished materials like various books, magazines, journals, newspapers, previous research projects, papers presented at various seminars, workshops, symposia, and conferences were consulted.
- Interview was conducted with a number of respondents among the former and present staff of the Waziri Junaidu History and Culture Bureau, Sokoto.
- The researcher visited some preservation centers within Nigeria like the University of Ibadan, National Archives Kaduna, Arewa House Kaduna and Northern History Research Scheme. A.B.U, zaria.ect. This is with a view to finding vital information useful to the research.

5. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HISTORY BUREAUS IN NIGERIA

The establishment of preservation centers in Nigeria as History Bureau, Museum, Archives or Centers could be traced back to 1950. Nigeria's independence in 1960 gave rise to the development of history bureaus and other preservation centers in different parts of the country. J.C. Enwere (1983 : p 2-3) opined that in 1914, the British Colonial officer showed concern over the condition of public archives in the West African colonies but was stopped from taking any action by the outbreak of hostilities between Britain and Germany. However, in 1936 significant steps were taken by the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Ormsby-Gore who informed various British Administrations in West Africa and elsewhere that the preservation of historical records must be regarded as one of the first duties of Colonial Government". Hence, a number of circulars were circulated referring to the implementation of the scheme to establish central African archives.

In 1954 an archival institution was established in Nigeria at Kaduna and was called the 'National Archives Kaduna'. In Sierra Leon a similar institution was established in 1957 before the independence. The University of Ibadan was regarded as the pioneer institution in the collection and preservation of the indigenous Arabic manuscripts in Nigeria. The University established a Center for Arabic-Islamic Documentation (C.A.D.) in 1953 with a view to ensuring the collection, preservation, arrangement and documentation of Arabic manuscripts in Nigeria.

In 1964, the Northern History Research Scheme (N.H.R.S) established at the Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. The scheme is aimed at collecting and preserving indigenous materials and conducting research on the history of Northern Nigeria. Another important preserving center was the National Museum Jos. It was established in 1952 with a view to collecting and preserving indigenous historical materials throughout the country.

But the collection and preservation of Arabic Manuscripts in the Museum began later in 1954. The Arewa House, Kaduna is another important center of preserving Arabic and Islamic manuscripts as well as historical documents relating to Northern Nigeria. It was established in 1970. In 1973 Waziri Junaidu History and Culture Bureau Sokoto was established purposely to collect and preserve the fast deteriorating records of the State, so as not to be lost forever.

In 1980 Katsina History and Culture Bureau was established with similar objectives as the above mentioned Bureaus. After the creation of Kebbi and Zamfara states in 1991 and 1996 respectively, History Bureaus were established in each of them (Balarbe; 1982: p62-72).

Another important center was the History and Culture Bureau, Kano. It was established in 1974 by the Kano State Government to replace the then Kano Arts Council due to its limited responsibilities that included dances, entertainments and songs. Among the objectives of the Bureau are

to manage the public archives of the State and to encourage, collect and preserve all historical materials relating to the State (Isah; B.A Project U.D.U.S, 2002. P. 14).

The objective of the center is to provide facilities for a wide range of advanced historical studies in the African and associated fields, with particular reference to the evolution of the institutions of Nigerian Society and the intellectual traditions associated with them.

In a nut-shell, the Northern part of Nigeria commonly used the title History Bureau as a center for preserving historical materials and records. Usually, a section is provided particularly for the preservation of Arabic and Islamic manuscripts. While in the southern part of Nigeria, museums are commonly used to preserve historical materials like traditional dresses, weapons, sculptures

6. ESTABLISHMENT OF WAZIRI JUNaidu HISTORY AND CULTURE BUREAU SOKOTO

According to Tarihi Bulletin (1982: vol. 1 p.22) The establishment of an archival institution in Sokoto State in 1973, was Cultural and practical in the sense that it was realized that something had to be done to collect and preserve the fast deteriorating records of the State if the very source materials of the state's history were not to be lost forever. Ahmad (an interview: 10:00am 15/02/2016) explained that It was the efforts of Waziri Junaidu that led to the establishment of Sokoto History Bureau, as he was the first person who privately started the collection of manuscripts of the famous founders of the Sokoto Caliphate. He as well, founded a Museum in his library at his residence at Gidadawa Area in Sokoto. This was around 1966 before the Nigerian civil war started. The Library was named Dar- al-Buhus (Research House). It contains Arabic and Ajami Manuscripts and different objects of historical significance like swords, clothes, utensils and farming tools.

The Sokoto Local Authority Council decided to take it over from Waziri Junaidu and moved to the abandoned building of the first clinic in Sokoto, opposite the prison Yard at Gidan Yari area. However, Waziri Junaidu did not allow all the manuscript to be taken away from his Library; rather, he retained a good number of them. Thus, the Library still has some significant collection of the manuscripts. Initially, the Bureau was not located in a single building as it is today. Two people were employed to take care of the museum and to take visitors round and explain to them about the historical materials kept there. The collections were very few at the beginning and were not properly displayed. They were kept in wooden cases placed against the walls of the building. Later, in 1975, the Sokoto State History Bureau which was established in 1973 took over the museum from the Sokoto Local Authority, marking a new stage in the museums history.

The then Central Officer of the Sokoto History Bureau was at Diplomat area, along Sultan Abubakar III Road. Both the Archive and Arabic manuscripts division were in this place. In 1984, the military rule of Governor Garba Duba, merged the Bureau under the Ministry for Social welfare and all the materials were shifted to the site of the Social welfare which lacked enough space to accommodate the materials. This led to the loss of valuable manuscripts and records. In 1988 the Archive, the Manuscript division and the museum were shifted to the permanent site of the Bureau at Unguwar Rogo area along Ali Akilu Road in the present Sokoto South Local Government Area. This was during the governorship of Ahmad Muhammad Daku. In 1997, the Bureau was renamed as 'Waziri Junaidu History and Cultural Bureau, Sokoto.

7. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSLATION OF THE WJHCBS

The Bureau was established by the North western state History Bureau Edict, 1973 A3 and the main objectives of the Bureau was clearly mentioned as per below:

- To organize and undertake archeological works and exhibitions in the State;
- To provide and maintain a comprehensive research library for Nigerian and foreign researchers in the field of history;
- To review all research papers pertaining to the State which are intended for publication as well as for academic qualifications;
- To conduct, direct and promote research and to act as a co-ordinating agency for research in all matters relating to the history of the State;
- To act in an advisory and consultative capacity on matters pertaining to the history of the State;
- To accept from any person, authority, any work of history which meets its required standard;
- To encourage private individuals or scholars to write on matters of historical importance;
- To establish and maintain museums throughout the State;
- To lay down the rules under which foreign researchers may use the Library in the State;
- To organize or conduct lectures or demonstrations and to provide instructions in history;

- To publish or sponsor the publication of any literature, periodical or newspaper or book relating to the history of the State;
- To accept, hold and administer any subscriptions or any gift or property for any purpose connected with the Bureau;
- To affiliate with other institutions of a generally similar character;
- To carry on all activities, the undertaking of which appears to the Bureau to be necessary, advantageous or expedient for the performance of its functions.

Going by the objectives mentioned above, the significant role of the Department of Translation is to edit, translate and publish the manuscripts of the Sokoto Caliphate or any other literary work from the researchers and scholars of Sokoto State. Similarly, the Department shall edit some of the manuscripts for the stakeholders who may wish to publish the Arabic text of the manuscripts.

If this would have been done, it would have reduced the number of the unedited published copies of those literary works of the Sokoto Caliphate that are circulating in our markets and in the hands of many people. Some of these types of published copies are full of typographical and grammatical errors, missing of some words. The Bureau has the duty to realize the entire objectives mentioned above and hence, it was divided into four Departments as: Archive, Museum, Arabic Manuscripts and Translation. The Department of translation shall be the one to edit, translate and publish the available manuscripts in the bureau according to the need of the public.

The scope of the Department is not limited to only manuscripts in the Bureau but extends to all the literary works of individual scholars, researchers, students and government agencies at all levels. The Department can be upgraded to the point that it gives a lead to all the translation activities in the Sokoto State pertaining to literary works of any kind, government official records from various agencies like Judicial matters, Commerce and industrial issues, Mass media, Educational curricular matters like text books etc. that needs to be translated or interpreted orally or in writing for official and public purposes. Usman Bugaje (2015: pg. 143) trying to show our inability to apply the lesson from the Sokoto Caliphate literature, that the Christian Missionary Library of Congress of the United States of America is today the best Library in the World because it stocks every book or pamphlet ever published, no matter the language.

Similarly, the Sealley Oak College's library alone has almost every Muslim literature both classical and modern in any language, including Hausa, Yoruba and others. The point here is that, what are doing towards the development of our own centers? Like WJHCBS which supposed to be given much care to the point that the Bureau realizes all its objectives. In fact, we are doing very much less towards it.

9. SOME MANUSCRIPTS PRESERVATION CENTERS IN NIGERIA

As mentioned earlier that a number of preservation centers were established at different times and at various places in Nigeria. About four of those centers were visited by the researcher with a view to finding vital information about their translation Units if available, but none of these centers has the translation Unit. The centers visited are:

1. Center of Arabic documentation University of Ibadan, Ilorin
2. National Archives, Kaduna
3. Arewa House, Kaduna
4. Northern History Research Scheme, Ahmadu Bello University, Kaduna

According to Muhammad ('an interview' Archivist Arewa House, Kaduna, 26/01/2016, 10:30-11: 30am) there is no translation in the Arewa House but attempt was made in the year 2009 to create the translation unit but was not successful because of lack of competent and professional staff and that there was no enough fund from the government to realize the project. Mu'azu ('an interview' Librarian Northern History Research Scheme A.B.U Zaria, 25/01/2016, 3:00-4:00 pm) stated that the centers was with a view to collecting and preserving the manuscript of the Sokoto Caliphate Literature for research purpose, but there is no translation Unit. It mainly concerns with the collection and preservation of Arabic -Islamic manuscripts. Dalibi ('an interview' National Archives, Kaduna 26/01/2016, 2:00-3:00pm) express that the national Archives Kaduna has the largest collection of Arabic -Islamic manuscripts in Nigeria, but it has no translation unit.

It was purposely established to collect and preserve government and public records for historical, official and research purposes. Jimoh ('an interview' Coordinator Center of Arabic documentation university of Ibadan, Ilorin 13/01/2016, 12:30-2:00pm) explained that the Center of Arabic Documentation was the first to be established in Nigeria around 1953 , with a view to collecting and preserving Arabic-Islamic manuscripts of the Sokoto Caliphate and the similar literary works of the contemporary scholars in Nigeria. Though there is no translation unit in the Center, some manuscripts were edited and published in form of bulletin. We have a large number of the manuscripts

collection and we give a lead to whoever wishes to start collection and preservation of the manuscripts throughout the country. Some of the problems is that there are no enough funds from the government to run the activities of the center effectively.

Going by what is mentioned above, all the centers visited have no translation unit and from deep enquiry made by the researcher, there is no manuscript preservation in Nigeria that has the translation unit except WJHCBS. Furthermore, all the centers have a common problem which is lack of enough funds to run their affairs effectively. This is always attributed to failure of the governments to take the necessary action about them.

10. THE COLLECTED, TRANSLATED AND EDITED MANUSCRIPTS IN THE DEPARTMENT

According to Ibrahim (2013) three ways are used for the collection of the manuscripts. The three ways are as follows:

- a. Donation
- b. Purchase
- c. Copying / photography or photocopy.

a. Donation

This is a situation where by the custodian of the manuscript willingly donate the manuscript to the Bureau.

b. Purchase

Here, the Bureau uses money in exchange of the manuscript items from the owners.

c. copying / photography / photocopy

Digital camera and photocopier are used to snap or photocopy the manuscripts page by page in front of the owner if he refuses to donate or sell the manuscripts.

As stated above, the Department of Arabic manuscript is responsible for the collection and preservation of the manuscripts while the Department of Translation obtains the manuscripts intended for editing and translation. Therefore, only those manuscripts which were edited and translated are kept in the Department of translation. Since the creation of the Department, some of the manuscripts were translated from Arabic to either Hausa or English. But at the long run, the process of stopped because of some problems militating against the Department of Translation in particular and the Bureau in general.

According to Isah (an interview, 10/03/2016) after the establishment of the Bureau, later in 1979, he was appointed as the principal translator and the translation exercise began. A number of manuscripts were translated from Arabic to either Hausa or English. Some of them were published in the 'Tarihi the Bulletin of Sokoto State History Bureau' while others were published as books, but no attempt was made to translate those manuscripts written in Fulfulde to any other language. Below is the table showing some of the manuscripts edited and translated in the Department:

EDITED AND TRANSLATED MANUSCRIPTS

S/N	TITLE	AUTHOR	ORIGINAL LANGUAGE OF THE MANUSCRIPT	LANGUAGE TRANSLATED TO
1	Kitāb Nur al-Bāb	Shaykh Uthman b. Foduye	Arabic	Hausa
2	Kitābul Amri bi muwālātil Mumininwal Nahyi an muwālātil kafirin	“	Arabic	English
3	Hukmu Juhhāl Ahli Hausa	“	Arabic	English/Hausa
4	Irshād al-Ikhwān ila Khuruj al-Niswān	“	Arabic	Hausa
5	Siraj al- Ikhwān (Tarihi Bulletin vol. 2)	“	Arabic	Hausa
6	Kitāb al-Farq (Tarihi Bulletin vol. I)	“	Arabic	English
7	Kitāb Usūl al-Adab	“	Arabic	English/Hausa
8	Sard al-Kalām fi ma Jarā bainī wa baina Abdussalam	Sultan Muhammad Bello	Arabic	Hausa
9	Usul al-Siyasah (Bulletin vol. 2)	“	Arabic	English
10	Tanbih al-Sāhib alā Ahkam al-makāsib	“	Arabic	Hausa
11	Tanbih al- Ikhwan	Umar b. Muhd Bukhari	Arabic	English

12. PROCEDURES OF TRANSLATING/EDITING MANUSCRIPTS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSLATION OF WJHCBS

According to Isah ('an interview' a former staff of WJHCBS and the principal translator, 10/03/2016:10:00 am-12:15) since the creation of the Bureau in 1973 the Department of Translation was not functioning until in the year 1979 when he was appointed as the principal translator of the Department. He was the pioneer translator in the Department.

There was no definite procedure that could guide the translator in his services rather; they only select one or two manuscripts at a time which they felt that there is need to translate. Two or three versions of the manuscripts will be obtained and read in order to refine and bring it closer to the original copy. After that, the translation to the desired language will take place. Isah said: "I and my assistants were not professionally trained to translate the manuscripts; we only carryout our services through our natural talent and long stay experience in service".

Up course, Isah can attempt the translation of the manuscripts because he is a Muslim scholar who received knowledge from many local Muslim scholars in and outside Sokoto State. Similarly, he attended and obtained a diploma certificate in Hausa, Arabic and Islamic Studies at the State College of Arts and Science Sokoto and he also obtained a Higher Certificate in English Language at London, England. After his retirement from service, the activities of translation in the Bureau stopped. But he continued with the translation at home and was able to translate and published about fifty manuscripts so far.

13. PROBLEMS MILITATING AGAINST THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSLATION

Since the establishment of the Bureau, no adequate preparation was made for its effective take-up. An interview with some of the former and present staff of the Bureau shows the magnitude of the problems militating against the Department of translation. Isa (an interview 10/03/2016) expresses that no adequate facilities were provided for the activities of translation of the manuscripts.

He was appointed as the Principal Translator with only one or two assistants, both of whom were not professionally trained for the task of translation. It was only Ahmad the Head of the Archive Department who was professionally trained for the task mentioned above. As at that time, there were no centers for training professional translators and no one of them was sponsored to go for example to Ghana or Sudan where there are centers that facilities skill acquisition programme on translation activities. There was no definite guideline in form of a code or manual for the translator.

However, they were able to translate some of the manuscripts from Arabic to either Hausa or English but no attempt was made to translate some of the manuscripts written in Fulfulde to other language because of lack of resource person who could do it. Ahmad ('an interview' Deputy Director WJHCBS, 06/04/2016, 11:00 am-12:17) stated that no sufficient fund is provided by the government to run the affairs of not only the Department of translation but the Bureau in general. Furthermore, the Department of translation should have been provided with the professional staff and all the necessary facilities but today the Department is not doing what it is expected to do.

14. CONCLUSION

A number of manuscript Preservation Centers were establish in Nigeria with a view to collection and preservation of Arabic-Islamic manuscripts of the Sokoto Caliphate Literature and other literary works of the contemporary Muslim scholars. The translation Unit of WJHCBS was established for the purpose of translation, editing and publication of those Arabic-Islamic manuscripts for the benefit of public. But, few of them were translated from Arabic to either Hausa or English language. No attempt was made to translate those manuscripts written in Fulfulde to any other language. The Unit in particular and the Bureau in general, suffered a serious neglect by the government; this led to some problems militating against its proffer management. Hence, government and other stakeholders in this matter should play their roles accordingly so that the objectives of the Bureau could be realized.

Summary of Findings

- Shortage of professional staff: In the course of this research it is discovered that there is no enough professional staff to render services in the translation Unit.
- Staff development: Apart from occasional seminars and conferences none of staff was sponsored to attend any skill acquisition programme at any of the centers of learning in and outside Nigeria.
- Inadequate funding: Financially, the Translation Unit cannot stand on its own and there is no enough fund by the State Government to carry out its services effectively.
- Lack of equipment: All the equipment such as photocopier, digital camera, binding machine, Duplicator are dilapidated and no new ones are provided for the services of the Unit.

- Only WJHCBS has Translation Unit among the manuscript preservation Centers in Nigeria.

15. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Staff should be sponsored to attend to skill acquisition programs on regular basis in order to discharge their duties effectively.
- Enough funding should be provided to the Unit by the government to carry out its services effectively for the benefit of the public.
- Modern equipment should be provided to replace the dilapidated ones for the purpose of translation and publication on regular basis.
- The Bureau should liaise with the mass media like radio and television centers in order to make the public aware of the vital materials preserved.
- Translation Unit should be well equipped with professional translators, and the Unit should take a lead in the production of the edited copies for the stakeholders who want to publish the Arabic version of the manuscripts

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