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Impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on the Translation Profession in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the impact of AI on the translation profession with a focus on the social behavioral changes towards its practitioners, and the potential opportunities that AI presents for the future of translation in Nigeria. The study is based on the premise that human translators may lose their relevance, visibility, perception, consideration, and overall professional status before translator employers or clients due to the proliferation of AI tools in the Nigerian translation market. The objectives are to (1) determine the current place of human translators in Nigeria, (2) identify, analyze, and describe the impact of AI on the Nigerian translation market, and (3) identify emerging roles, skills, and competencies of this era and to propose adaptive measures to the stakeholders. The study draws data from observation, 52 questionnaires and 8 interviews administered to translators and clients backed up by the Theories of professionalization, AI job replacement theory, and de-professionalization theory. Findings revealed that the Nigerian translation market is transitioning into an AI-human collaboration as most organizations use AI to carry out their translations, pricing is now disorganized and unregulated as clients believe translators get help from AI. Findings also showed that AI will not replace human translators as more organisations still employ human translators. The research thus recommends that translators must diversify their competencies in other fields to help them stay afloat, enhance their soft and technological skills, and create a specialized niche of expertise. On the other hand, to the other key players in the industry (the schools, NITI association, and policymakers) the study recommends a fruitful collaboration that will involve, reviewing the translator training curriculum to include present-day trends and promoting policies that will further regulate the market and use of AI tools.

Keywords:

Translation profession, Artificial Intelligence, Professionalization, de-professionalisation.

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RÉSUMÉ

Cette étude vise à explorer l'impact de l'IA sur la profession de traduction, en mettant l'accent sur les changements de comportement social à l'égard de ses praticiens, et sur les opportunités potentielles que l'IA présente pour l'avenir de la traduction au Nigeria. L'étude part du principe que les traducteurs humains risquent de perdre leur pertinence, leur visibilité, leur perception, leur considération et leur statut professionnel général auprès de leurs employeurs ou de leurs clients en raison de la prolifération des outils d'IA sur le marché nigérian de la traduction. Les objectifs sont (1) de déterminer la place actuelle des traducteurs humains au Nigeria, (2) d'identifier, d'analyser et de décrire l'impact de l'IA sur le marché nigérian de la traduction, et (3) d'identifier les rôles, aptitudes et compétences émergents de cette époque et de proposer des mesures d'adaptation aux parties prenantes. L'étude tire ses données de l'observation, de 52 questionnaires et de 8 entretiens administrés à des traducteurs et à des clients, étayés par les théories de la professionnalisation, du remplacement des emplois par l'IA et de la déprofessionnalisation. Les résultats ont révélé que la plupart des organisations utilisent l'IA pour effectuer leurs traductions de manière indépendante, la tarification est maintenant désorganisée et non réglementée car les clients croient que les traducteurs obtiennent de l'aide de l'IA. Les résultats montrent également que l'IA ne remplacera pas les traducteurs humains, car de plus en plus d'organisations continuent d'employer des traducteurs humains. L'étude recommande donc aux traducteurs de diversifier leurs compétences dans d'autres domaines afin de se maintenir à flot, d'améliorer leurs compétences générales et technologiques et de créer une niche d'expertise spécialisée. D'autre part, l'étude recommande aux autres acteurs clés du secteur (les écoles, l'association NITI et les décideurs politiques) une collaboration fructueuse qui impliquera de revoir le programme de formation des traducteurs pour y inclure les tendances actuelles et de promouvoir des politiques qui régleront davantage le marché et l'utilisation des outils d'IA.

Mots-clés : profession de traduction, intelligence artificielle, professionnalisation, déprofessionnalisation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has brought about rising concerns in many professions. There are currently interesting ongoing debates on whether or not AI is a threat to human jobs in many professions around the world and translation is no exception. On the one hand, Lin (2023) believes that “AI-equipped machine translation tools can handle most part of the translation” leaving us wondering what then will translators do. On the other hand, Mandaric (2022) also argues that translators will no longer be needed in the near future as most translation tasks can be done independently by AI tools which are frequently evolving.

Worth noting that Nigeria is a multilingual country with over 223.8 million inhabitants with over 512 spoken languages according to Ethnologue (Foluke Ifejola, 2016). Although English is the official language, the three major national languages are Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa. Furthermore, its diplomatic relations with other non-English speaking nations have further increased its linguistic needs and the diverse nature of the Nigerian linguistic context demonstrates the need and existence of translation services in the country.

However, in recent years, the translation profession in Nigeria has undergone significant changes due to advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology. This is because Nigeria is fast becoming a digital environment. Okechukwu Effoduh J. (2021) on *Policy Brief Towards A Rights-Respecting Artificial Intelligence Policy for Nigeria*, states that: ‘Nigeria can be considered an artificial intelligence (AI) champion on the African continent, being the first country in the region to institutionalize a National Centre for AI and Robotics

(NCAIR)...’This confirms that:“As of September 2021, there are about seventy-five (75) private organizations in Nigeria (businesses, start-ups, etc.) that are using, creating, or adopting Artificial Intelligence systems in their work.’ - Paradigm Initiative, Fact Sheet on Artificial Intelligence in Nigeria” Okechukwu Effoduh J. (2021).

Yet, debates mainly focus on what AI tools can do better than human translators, highlighting a valid concern on the possibility of job replacement. However, none has yet tried to study the social behavioral changes of all the key parties involved; translators, clients, and consumers; to ascertain whether or not AI is a threat. This study therefore examines the problem that human translators may lose their relevance, visibility, perception, consideration, and overall professional status before translator employers or clients. This is the gap this research aims to fill while using the Nigerian translation market as a case study. With the current status of AI users in Nigeria allowing anyone to independently handle tasks outside their field of expertise, it has become imperative to study the impact of this phenomenon. This means that given the proliferation of AI tools in the Nigerian translation market, human translators may lose their relevance, visibility, perception, consideration, and overall professional status before translator employers or clients.

This article therefore endeavours to answer these two questions: what is the place of human translators in today’s Nigerian translation market and how has AI impacted the visibility, consideration, perception, and remuneration of professional translators in Nigeria today?

The main objectives of this study are to determine the current place of human translators in the Nigerian translation market and to identify, analyze, and explain the impact of AI on the overall status and relevance of professional translators in Nigeria.

1.1. Empirical Review

While limited studies have been carried out on the status of the translation profession in Nigeria, interesting ongoing debates exist on the impact of AI on translation around the world. For example, Caner Cetiner’s work ‘*On the Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Translation: Sustainability of Translation as a Profession*’ centers around the sustainability of the translation profession amid AI trends. This study’s objective was to address the changing role of translators within the scope of translator competencies due to the developments seen in machine translation systems. Cetiner discussed developments in machine translation systems and their effects on translation as a profession emphasizing translator competencies. Post-editing levels and criteria for these levels were equally addressed while comparing the competencies required of translators and post-editors using the competence frameworks designed by PACTE and EMT groups (Cetiner: 2021).

In another study; ‘*Are Translators Afraid of Artificial Intelligence?*’ carried out in Bulgaria, Vassil Kirov & Bagyryan Malamin examined the attitude of Bulgarian translators toward AI and how it will change their profession. The research question focused on the extent to which Bulgarian translators are aware of AI features, and feel threatened by its development and encroachment into their professional field. According to Vassil Kirov & Bagyryan Malamin (2022), Bulgarian translators perceive artificial intelligence and automatization as threats to the profession believing that digital technologies and AI will modify the profession by replacing human translators on the technical part of the job. It was generally believed that the job of translators will be seriously impacted by digitalization and AI. Changes which would occur in different dimensions such as introduction of new instruments for automatization, new ways of finding jobs and tasks, and an increase in freelance jobs compared to full-time employment (Vassil Kirov & Bagyryan Malamin: 2022).

In the same vein, Madaric conducted a study on ‘*The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on the Translation Profession. A Case Study of Microsoft Translator*’. The primary objective is to explore the implications of artificial intelligence (AI) on the translation profession, specifically through a case study of Microsoft Translator. The research assesses how AI technologies, particularly machine translation systems like Microsoft Translator, have impacted translators and the process of translating and how the impact has changed the role of translators. This includes examining both the benefits and challenges posed by AI in translation tasks, as well as understanding how these technologies are reshaping the landscape of language services (Katarina Mandarić: 2022).

It is worthy of note that this literature highlights strong areas affected by the rising proliferation of AI tools in the translation market. On one hand, they highlight the changes in attitudes, roles, and competencies of the translators themselves, and on the other hand, they demonstrate changes in the translation output (i.e the product) and changes in the process of translating which entails changes in the translation workflow as more people resort to tools to facilitate the tasks. However, not much emphasis is laid on the translation profession and how artificial intelligence trend influences the behavioral changes of all the key players of the translation industry; translators, associations, clients/employers, consumers, etc. This is why our work aims to fill this gap by studying the Impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on the Translation Profession in Nigeria.

1.2. Definition of Key Concepts

In this section, we will define the key concepts of our study which are: translation as a profession, Artificial Intelligence (AI), translator identity, and Evolution of the Translation Market in Nigeria from the pre-AI era.

1.2.1. Translation as a Profession

Translation is a multifaceted concept with various designations and definitions. While many scholars in translation studies view the concept as either a product or a process, some describe it as a profession. For example, Echeverri (2008) believes that translation Professionals:

- *“Have a disciplinary knowledge base ratified by a recognized educational institution.*
- *Have practical experience in translation work.*
- *Account for their knowledge, skills, and actions.*
- *Demonstrate autonomy and personal responsibility.*
- *Adhere to collective representations and norms.*
- *Belong to organizations that value and legitimize their work.”* (Echeverri, 2008). This definition by Echeverri describes a translator professional as one with distinct characteristics such as standard educational training in the field, substantial experience, ability to work independently, belonging to a recognized association, and respect for their codes of ethics.

Equally, Kujamäki (2023) in his article, defines professional translation as any economic activity that involves a client needing a translation and a translation service professional who supplies the translation for remuneration. Here, translation is described as a marketplace that involves the interaction between a buyer (the client) and the seller (the translator professional) for which payment is provided for the translation (the product) that is purchased and offered.

1.2.2. Artificial Intelligence (AI)

This study will not be complete without defining artificial intelligence within the context of the translation exercise and profession. Artificial Intelligence, also called AI, is a technology that stems from the changing industrial revolutions the world has experienced. In the essay on Life in the AI Era, Careglio affirms that:

‘The Fourth Industrial Revolution, also known as Industry 4.0 is the trend toward a union between physical assets and advanced digital technologies like the Internet of Things (IoT), AI, robots, drones, autonomous vehicles, 3d printing, cloud computing, and others, that are interconnected, having the possibility to communicate, analyze and act.’ - Davide Careglio et al. (2022)

According to another scholar, John McCarthy (2007), artificial intelligence (AI) is “*the science and engineering of making intelligent machines especially intelligent computer programs. It is related to the similar task of using computers to understand human intelligence, but AI does not have to confine itself to biologically observable methods*”. Although this definition explains that AI is the process of making actual machines that understand human intelligence, it does not categorically fit into the focus of this study. Therefore, we adopt the definition of Merriam-Webster. (n.d. 2024) which defines AI as the capability of computer systems or algorithms to imitate intelligent human behavior. This means that in translation, machine translation tools such as Google translate, Deepl, Reverso Context, Lingvanex, etc., as well as CAT tools such as SDL Trados, Wordfast, PHRASE, etc., can be said to be artificially intelligent as they are capable of imitating the human brain in carrying out translation tasks with a certain level of independence and precision.

1.2.3. Evolution of the Translation Market in Nigeria from the Pre-AI Era

In translation, the translation market refers to the relationship between the supply of translation (provided by translators and translation firms) and the demand for translation (comes from customers). Gouadec (2007) defines the translation market as:

The translation market can be ‘defined as a sum of innumerable market segments, some clearly identified, other hazy’. In other words, the translation market has identified segments like language combination pair, the direction of translation, etc., and unidentified segments like degree of specialization, volume of translation work, translation rates among others.

According to Gouadec (2007), the translation market is a combination of identified and unidentified segments, including language combination pairs, translation direction, degree of specialization, volume of work, and translation rates.

While the focus of this study is to discover whether or not the translation profession in Nigeria is under threat by AI, it is also pertinent to first establish a case that the translation industry in Nigeria is a professional one and therefore could suffer the threat of extinction due to the AI trends.

Translation in Nigeria dates back to the pre-colonial era when, informally, the then-traditional rulers depended on griots (or polyglots) to interpret greetings and conversations (Bandia, 2001). This was followed by the colonial era where there was the need for interpretation to facilitate communication between the British colonialists and the traditional rulers, as well as the subjects (Ukoyen 1979, Bandia 2001).

After independence, there was a rise in the demand for translation and interpretation in Nigeria as a result of Nigeria’s language policies which favoured English, Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa as the country’s official lingua franca as well as the bilateral relations with other

nations and international organizations (Afolabi & Oyetoyan: 2024). The Nigerian Association of Translators and Interpreters (NATI) which is currently known as the Nigerian Institute for Translators and Interpreters (NITI) was created. The existence of this association further proves that the translation market in Nigeria has been in existence and operational even in the pre-AI era. The institute's parent organization, NATI, is believed to have been admitted as a member of the International Federation of Translators (FIT) in 1981.

However, today, NITI is open to polyglots with academic degrees and to language students. This means that bilinguals and multilinguals can still take up translation orders in many formal and informal settings within Nigeria without necessarily having any academic or professional qualifications.

2. Theoretical Framework

In this study, we used the theories of professionalization, the AI job replacement theory, and the theory of de-professionalization.

2.1. Theory of Professionalisation

The theory of professionalization refers to the process by which an occupation or field becomes recognized as a profession, typically involving the establishment of formal training, certification, ethical standards, and regulatory bodies. In other words, professionalization is the process of transforming a trade or occupation into a profession of the highest integrity and competence. It involves establishing acceptable qualifications, professional associations, and professional certification. Given that there are several theoretical approaches to the theory of professionalization, this research focuses on two of them for this work: the Trait theory and the theory of Control.

2.1.1. Trait theory of professionalization

The trait theory states that an occupation becomes a profession when it exhibits certain characteristics, such as adherence to a code of ethics, a body of theoretical knowledge, licensure or registration, and loyalty to colleagues. The essence of the trait approach is that it sees professions as occupations that have a set of characteristics in common that differentiate them from other (non-professional) occupations. Therefore, in examining the translation profession in Nigeria, especially in light of advancements in artificial intelligence (AI), understanding these traits becomes crucial for assessing how translators can maintain their relevance and authority. As AI continues to evolve, it raises questions about the status and role of professional translators, and focusing on developing these traits will be critical for Nigerian translators seeking to maintain their professional identity and ensure their services remain indispensable.

2.1.2. Control theory of Professionalisation

Control Theory, particularly as articulated by Eliot Freidson (2001), emphasizes the role of power dynamics in establishing and maintaining professional status. The theory of control focuses on the relationship between an occupation and other labor market components and institutions. It suggests that the more control practitioners can exert over their work and the market, the more professionalized the occupation is. Professions are characterized by powerful associations, which can exert both internal control (over knowledge and training required for entry into the field) and external control (working conditions and relations with clients).

In summary, the control theory of professionalisation is relevant in this study, in that it helps us examine the current status of market regulation, identity preservation, licensure and recognition, market dynamics management, and control over the practitioners in the Nigerian translation market.

2.2. Theory of Artificial Intelligence Job Replacement

The theory of AI job replacement believes that advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) and automation technologies may lead to the displacement of human workers in various industries. According to Huang and Rust (2018) on the theory of AI job replacement, AI replaces human labor in service tasks at the task level, rather than the job level. As AI technology advances, it progresses to the point where it can take over all of the tasks within a job, leading to the complete replacement of human labor.

The theory also posits that there are four types of intelligence required for service tasks: mechanical, analytical, intuitive, and empathetic. These intelligence are listed in the order of difficulty with which AI masters them. Mechanical intelligence refers to tasks that involve physical or manual labor, such as repetitive actions or basic movements. Analytical intelligence involves tasks that require data analysis, problem-solving, and logical reasoning. Intuitive intelligence refers to tasks that involve understanding and interpreting complex information, making judgments, and creative thinking. Empathetic intelligence involves tasks that require emotional understanding, empathy, and interpersonal skills. While this study agrees that translation services fall under the analytical and intuitive intelligence categories, susceptible to a job replacement threat, it cannot be concluded that AI will completely replace human translators in the translation industry. This is true because as previously explained, AI in translation only manifests through computer software, or websites such as DeepL, ChatGPT, Google translate, etc. and these cannot independently function without human intervention and control. Therefore in terms of AI job replacement in Translation, the fear tilts more towards the loss of autonomy for translation professionals as these AI tools allow uncertified individuals with little or no background in translation to handle translation tasks and projects thereby reducing the professional's relevance, remuneration and control over his market. The incidence of this theory in this study is that it serves as a guide towards determining the threat level of AI on the translation profession in Nigeria. It helps us identify what intelligence category Translation belongs, and the possibility of getting easily replaced by AI in the nearest future.

2.3. Theory of De-professionalisation

The theory of de-professionalization is the idea that certain professions or occupations are losing their status, authority, and autonomy due to various factors such as technological advancements, globalization, and changes in the labor market. Proponents of this theory argue that as these professions become more standardized, regulated, and commodified, they lose their professional autonomy and independence. The relevance of this theory in our study is that it guides the research towards the possibility that the Translation profession in Nigeria is being de-professionalized. This means that, with this theory, the researcher is guided to discover whether or not the translation profession in Nigeria is at the stage of de-professionalization due to factors like the emerging AI trend in the country and around the globe.

3. Methodology

This research uses both quantitative and qualitative methods, to collect data through random population sampling. This section presents the size of the population, the sampling techniques, and data collection instruments.

3.1. Population Size

For this study, a total sample of 60 respondents was selected. These 60 participants are distributed as follows: 39 translators (independent and in-house), and 21 clients or companies and/or non-governmental organizations. A larger population of the target respondents are Nigerians while the others are expatriates employed in the Nigerian market.

3.2. Sampling Technique

The target population in this research was based on random from the key players of the translation market in Nigeria for the questionnaires and purposeful for the interviews using the questionnaire method and semi-structured interviews to collect data from a population of 60 respondents. Therefore, the target population of this work is made up of freelance and In-house translators (including freelance, employed, certified, and uncertified translators) and translator employers in a random figure from commercial companies, international organizations, NGOs, private translation firms, Embassies, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs etc., while the interviews were carried out with prominent and highly experienced translators within the Nigerian Institute for Translators and Interpreters (NITI).

3.3. Data Collection Instruments

To acquire the data needed to properly carry out this work, we used questionnaires and semi-structured interviews to collect the data. First, this research created two separate questionnaires to be administered to translators and clients respectively. Hence, about 52 questionnaires were administered cumulatively. In the same vein, a semi-structured interview was carried out with the 8 purposefully selected participants who are experienced translators and members of the NITI association in Nigeria.

These instruments were used to identify the current status of the translation industry in Nigeria, given the rising use of AI-equipped machine translation tools. It equally seeks to determine the social consideration, remuneration rate, and current challenges faced by translators of this era in Nigeria.

3.4. Method of Data Processing and Analysis

The data collected from the field was first processed using an Excel Spreadsheet to carry out any verification if need be on the database. Once fully coded, the data were exported to SPSS version 25 (IBM 2017) for further consistency, range, and validation checks. Here, the quantitative data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools. The descriptive statistical tools used are frequency count and percentages. To test the hypotheses of the study, particularly hypotheses one and two, the Chi-Square test was used to depict significant differences to determine if the translation profession in Nigeria is under threat and if AI is having a negative impact on the translation profession. On the other hand, the qualitative data derived from the open-ended and interview questions were analysed thematically using themes, frequency, and quotations. Finally, findings were presented using tables, and figures, and all inferential statistics were presented at a 95% confidence interval.

3.5. Ethical Consideration

In every scientific research, it is expedient that ethical standards are highly respected, especially in data collection procedures and presentation. In this regard, a sufficient amount of information was provided to the respondents before collecting their responses. The participants were not compelled to partake in the research unwillingly. They were equally given assurance that their privacy or personal data would be carefully protected, thus, their responses were treated anonymously.

Thus, all the participants who took part in this research consented to doing so and all the authors whose research influenced this study are acknowledged and validly referenced in the bibliography.

4. Presentation of Findings

The findings of the study on the impact of artificial intelligence on the translation profession in Nigeria cover the two research questions: What is the place of human translators in today's

Nigerian translation market and how has AI impacted the translation profession in Nigeria today? The findings presented here will enable us to determine whether or not the translation profession in Nigeria is under threat, and the impact of the use of AI translation tools on the relevance, public perception, client consideration, professional identity, and remuneration of professional human translators in Nigeria.

4.1. Research Question One: What is the place of human translators in today's Nigerian translation market?

Table: 1

Clients' Opinions on Activities in the Organisation Needing Translation Services

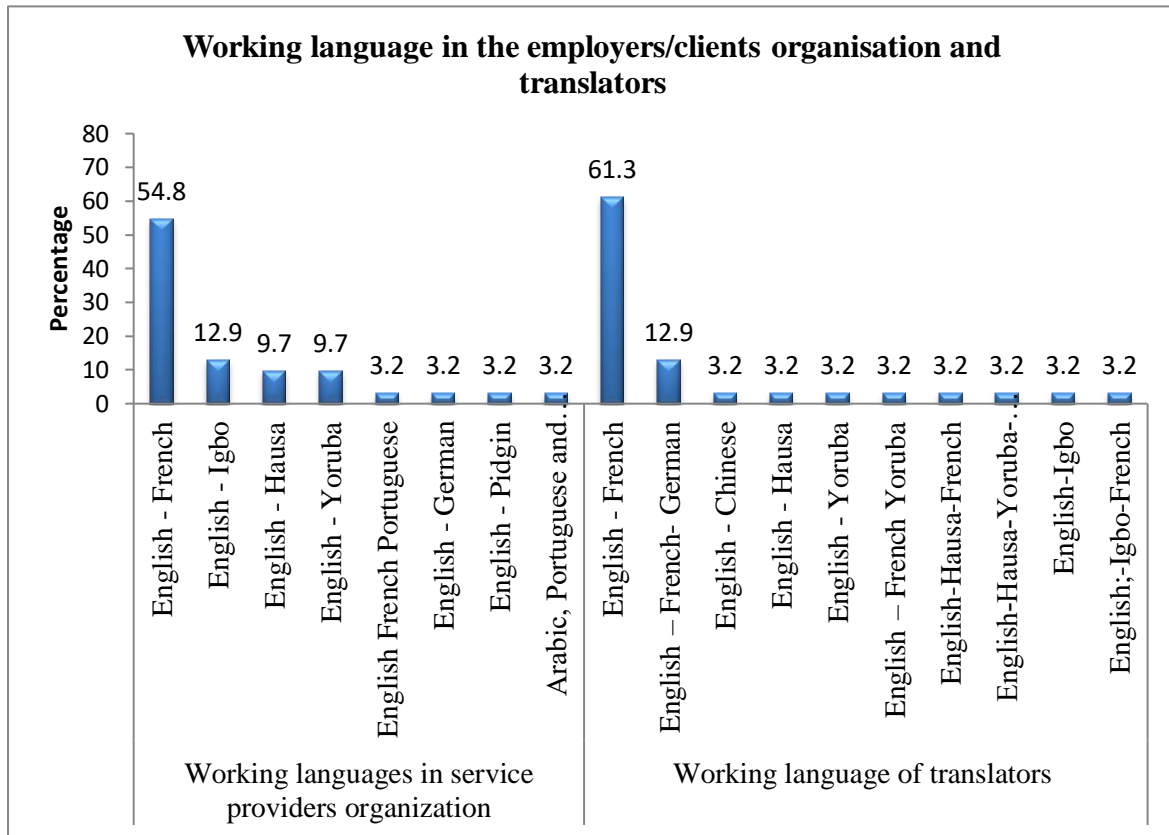
Activities in the organization needing translation services	Frequency	Percentage
Education and training	9	17.3
International relations and (or) Diplomacy;	9	17.3
Humanitarian actions	7	13.5
Banking and Finance or Accounting	6	11.5
Travel and (or) Tourism	6	11.5
Lecturing	5	9.6
Media and Journalism	5	9.6
Religious activities	5	9.6

Source: survey of translators in Nigeria 2024

Based on the activities in their organizations that need translation services, 17.3% of clients mentioned education, training, international relations, and (or) diplomacy. Moreover, 13.5% mentioned humanitarian actions, 11.5% of equal percentages highlighted banking and finance or accounting, travel/tourism, and 9.6% mentioned lecturing, media and journalism, and religious activities.

Figure: 1

Working Languages in Clients and Translators

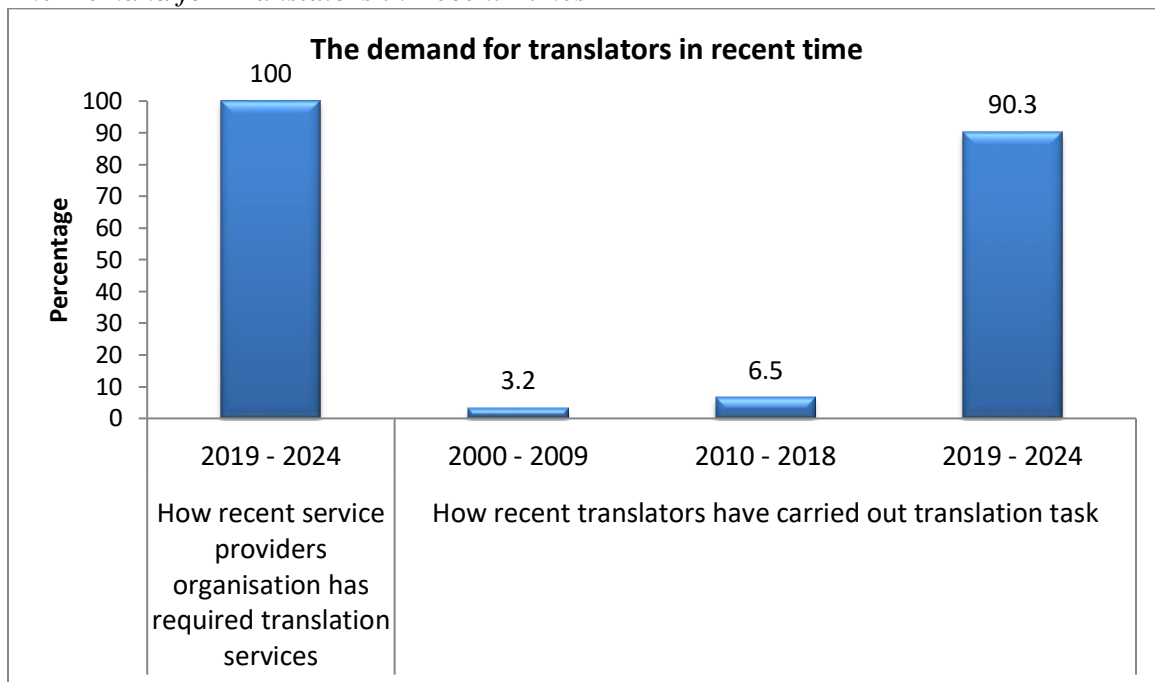


Source: survey of translators in Nigeria 2024

Concerning the working languages for translators and in the clients’ organization findings showed that English and French is the dominant language pair in the employer’s organization and for translators, making a proportion of 54.8% and 61.3% respectively. The service employer’s organization also used local languages like Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa as working languages and a few translators were competent in translating in Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo. In addition, few organizations used foreign languages like German, Portuguese, and Spanish and few translators were up to the task of translating some foreign languages like Chinese, Turkish, and German.

Figure: 2

The Demand for Translators in Recent Times



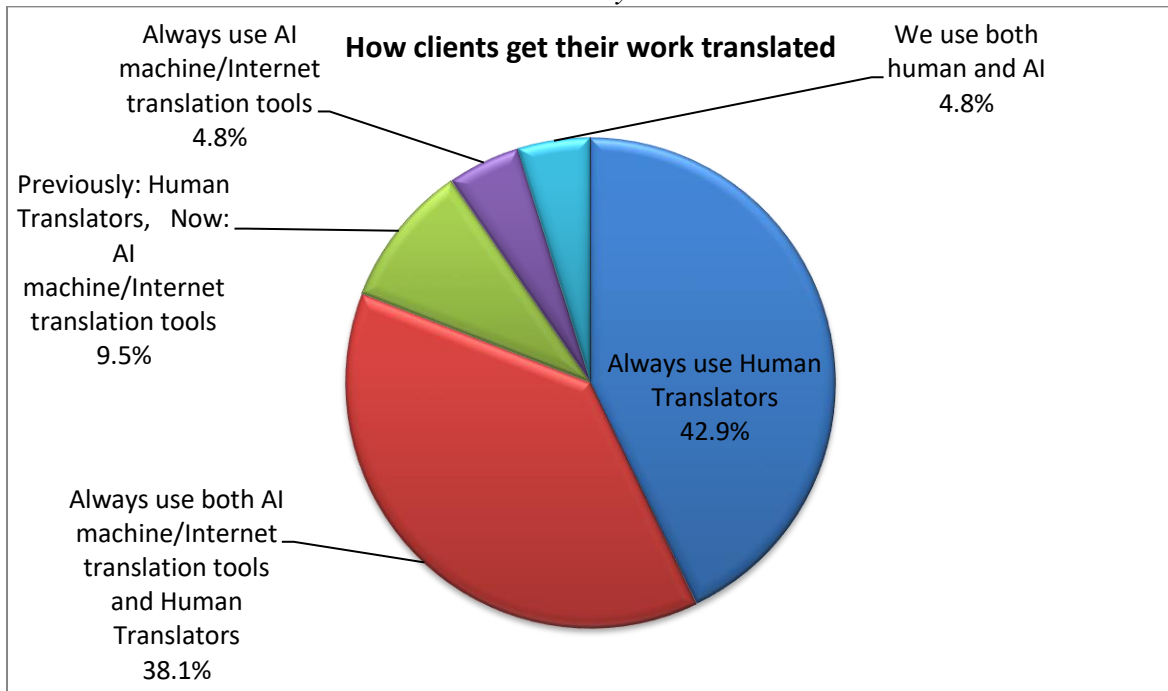
Source: survey of translators in Nigeria 2024

With respect to the demand for translators in recent times, findings showed that all translation service employers 100% (21) have demanded translation service from 2019 -2024 and the majority of translators 90.3% (28) have carried out translation tasks between 2019 -2024. This shows that human translation is still highly needed by different organizations.

4.2. Research Question Two: How has AI impacted the translation profession in Nigeria today?

Figure: 3

How Clients Get their Work Translated Recently

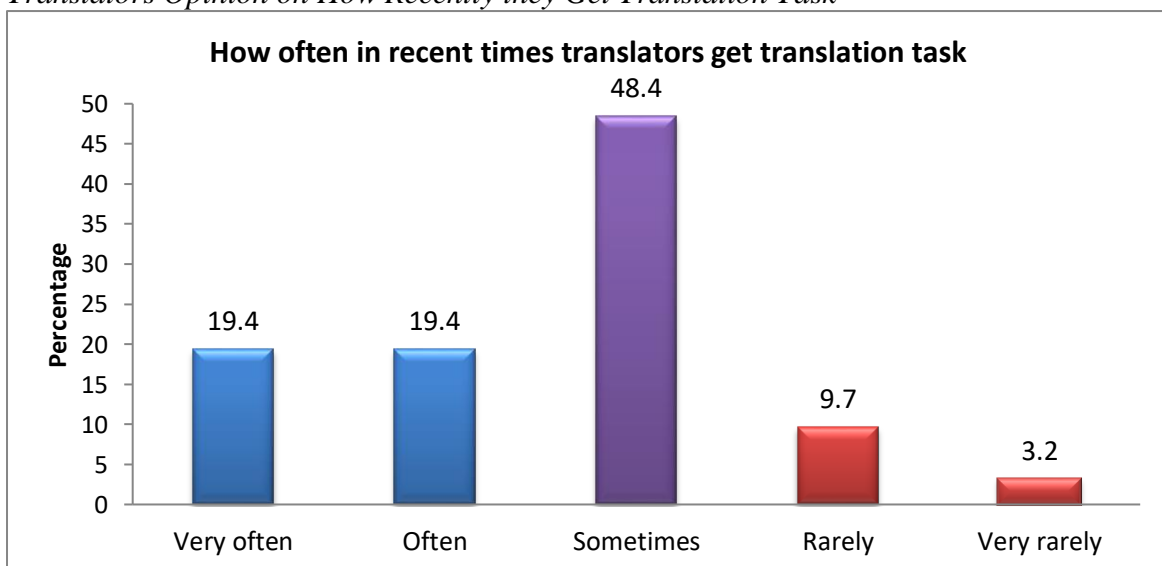


Source: survey of translators in Nigeria 2024

Based on how clients get their work translated, 42.9% (9) said they use only human translators while 38.1% (8) always use both AI machine/Internet translation tools and Human Translators, 9.5% (2) currently use only AI machine/Internet translation tools and not human translators as in the past, 4.8% (1) always use AI machine/Internet translation tools and 4.8% (1) used both human and AI. Cumulatively, 85.8% (18) of the clients still seek the service of human translators despite a good number of them using AI.

Figure: 4

Translators Opinion on How Recently they Get Translation Task

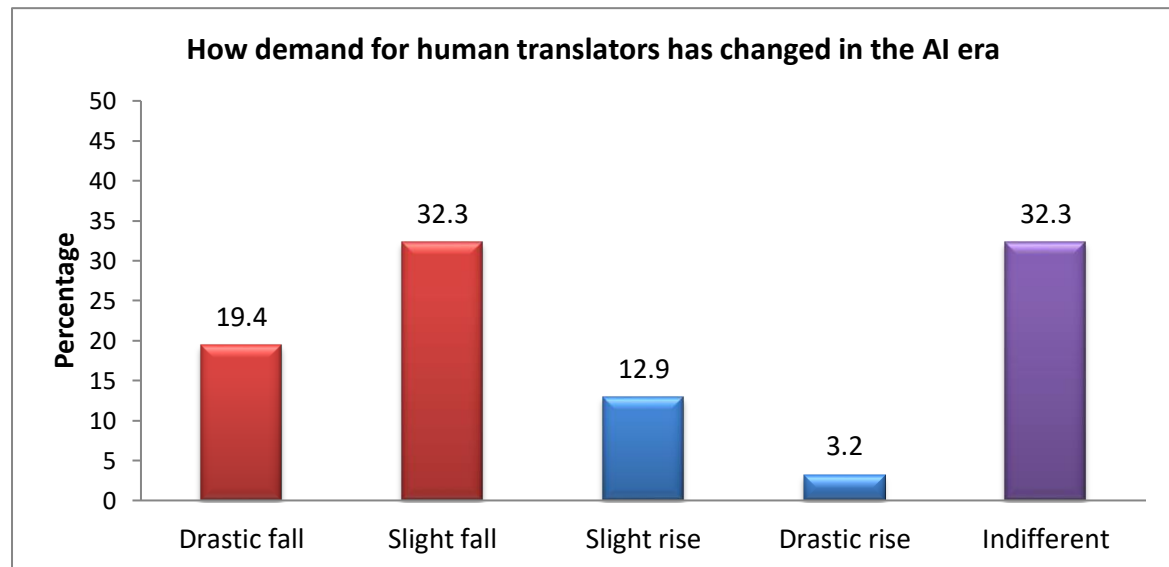


Source: survey of translators in Nigeria 2024

Moreover, based on how often the translators get translation tasks in recent times, cumulatively, 38.8% (12) get it frequently, while 48.4% (15) get it sometimes, and 12.9% (4) rarely.

Figure 5

Translators View on the Changes in Demand of Human Translators in AI Era



Source: survey of translators in Nigeria 2024

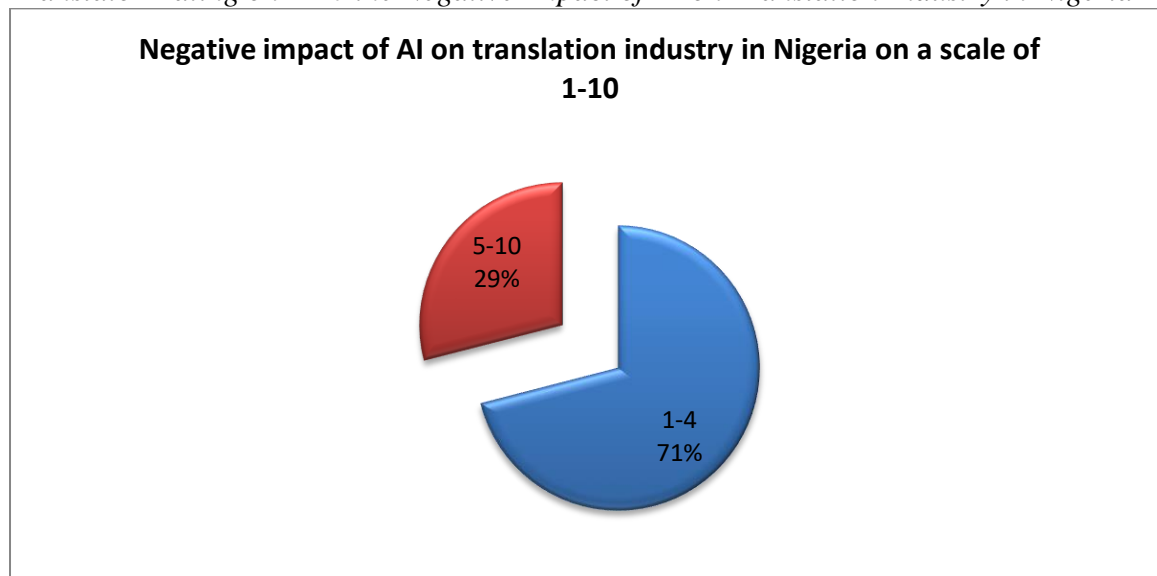
Based on how the demand for human translators has changed in the AI era, cumulatively, 51.7% (16) of translators indicated a fall while 16.1% (5) indicated a rise, and 32.3% (10) were indifferent.

Moreover, for translators that said there has been a fall in the demand for human translators in recent times, the reason most respondents gave is that clients now do translation by themselves using AI as depicted in the statement “*Many people can easily use AI to translate direct sentences. So if the conversation is done in a conventional lexical, there's no need to engage a professional or instructor. Technology takes care of it.*”, “*People who want to translate professional documents totally trust Google because it tends to translate word for word which can cause loss of meaning of the intended message of the document to be translated.*” Other reasons were that AI is faster and more accurate to an extent and make the task easy.

Translators who indicated a rise in human translators said a combination of humans and AI has made services rapid and enhanced competition with AI.

Figure: 6

Translator Rating on 1-10 the Negative Impact of AI on Translation Industry in Nigeria



Source: survey of translators in Nigeria 2024

Despite AI has been reported by some respondents to have an added advantage in translation, the translators were also asked to rate on a scale of 1-10 how AI has negatively impacted the translation industry in Nigeria and 71.0% (22) of them rated it from 1-4 and 29.0% (9) 5-10. This implies that the negative impact of AI on the translation industry is not that colossal but the negative impact was accepted by all respondents.

Table: 2

Translators' Opinion on the main Challenges Facing Nigerian Translators in the AI Era

	Frequency	Percentage
Fewer contract jobs since people use AI	20	32.8
More post-editing jobs due to poor AI output	15	24.6
Shorter deadlines	12	19.7
More Jobs in local languages than in international languages	5	8.2
Poor social perception	5	8.2
Lower price bargains since most clients are aware of the existence of AI.	2	3.3
Lack of experience in using AI	2	3.3

Source: survey of translators in Nigeria 2024

Based on the translators'opinions on the main challenges facing Nigerian translators in the AI era, 32.8% mentioned less contract job since people use AI as depicted in the statement “*The emergence of AI has compromised the quality of translation in the sense that everyone now thinks he or she can translate forgetting that AI churns out is only a raw material. The translator with the knowledge he acquired during his studies and years of professional services has to refine that raw material produced by AI to make it consumable product. It appears that nowadays clients are more interested in the raw material because they are unwilling to pay for translation services.*”

Table: 3

Clients' and Translators Opinion on Remuneration

Clients	In terms of remuneration, how are translators paid in your organization? (If applicable)	Frequency	Percentage
	Per task	11	52.4
	Monthly	5	23.8
	Hourly	2	9.5
	Per word	1	4.8
	(Not applicable)	2	9.5
Translators	In terms of remuneration, what is the payment frequency?		
	Per task	24	77.4
	Monthly	5	16.1
	Hourly	1	3.2
	Per word	1	3.2

Source: survey of translators in Nigeria 2024

With reference to how remuneration of the translators is done, the dominant payment method is per task as indicated by 52.4% (11) of clients and 77.4% (24) of the translators themselves. The next payment method is monthly as indicated by 23.8% (5) of clients and 16.1% (5) of translators. Hourly and payment per word translated are the least payment method used.

Clients' Opinion on Payment in Dollars to Translators

- ✓ 250 dollars per day conference rate.
- ✓ 0.5 dollars per word.
- ✓ 25 dollars per page of 250 words
- ✓ 50 dollars per page
- ✓ The price is between 10 to 20 dollars per page.

As revealed by clients/employers, the payment in dollars for translators ranges from 10 dollars per page to 50 dollars, and the pay per day for a conference is 250 dollars. For clients who pay per word, the price is 0.5 dollars per word which is then multiplied by the total number of words translated and payment made.

Table: 12

Clients' Opinions on if they will Employ and Pay Translators Same Amount of Money despite Using AI

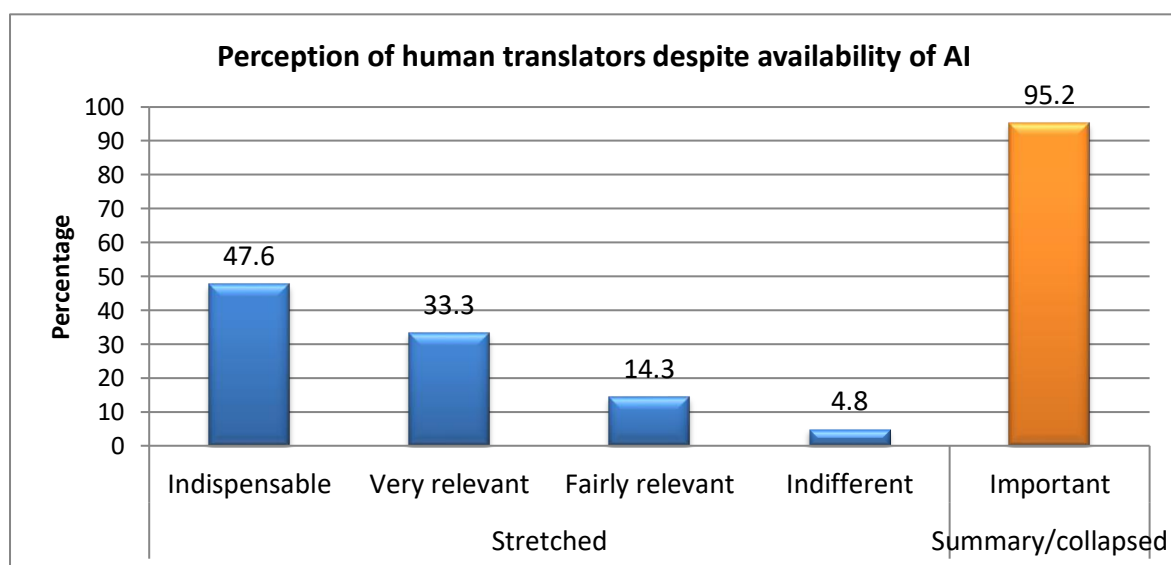
	Frequency	Percentage
Will you still pay translators the same knowing that they had help from AI technology?		
Yes	8	38.1
It depends on the type of text	7	33.3
No	4	19.0
No response	2	9.5
Will you still employ human translators knowing that you can translate yourself using AI technology?		
Yes	14	66.7
It depends on the type of text	4	19.0
No	1	4.8
No response	2	9.5

Source: survey of translators in Nigeria 2024

Moreover, when employers/clients were asked if they will pay same amount of money to translators even AI is used in the translation process, cumulatively, 71.4% (15) of them said yes with some saying it will also depending on the type of text. Moreover, majority of clients also indicated 85.7% (18) indicated that despite them been able to use AI to translate by themselves, they will still employ human translators while 4.8% (1) completely denied. This again shows that despite AI, majority of service providers will still need human translators.

Figure: 10

Perception of Human Translators despite Availability of AI



Source: survey of translators in Nigeria 2024

Furthermore, when the clients were asked how relevant a human translator is to their organisation, 47.6% (10) said is indispensable, 33.3% (7) said very relevant, while 14.3% (3) indicated fairly relevant and 4.8% (1) indifferent. Cumulatively, almost all the clients/employers 95.2% (20) still see human translators important despite AI.

Table: 13

Translators Opinion of AI Implication on Pricing and Market Competition in the Translation Industry

What are the implications of AI on pricing and market competition in the translation industry	Frequency	Percentage
Market and Pricing are now disorganized and unregulated	13	41.9
Market and Pricing are still intact and regulated	8	25.8
Market and Pricing have greatly deteriorated	5	16.1
Market and Pricing have greatly improved	3	9.7
Yet to notice any impact	2	6.4
Total	31	100

Source: survey of translators in Nigeria 2024

Furthermore, based on the translators opinion of AI implication on pricing and market competition in the translation industry, 41.9% (13) of them said the market and pricing are now disorganized and unregulated while 16.1% (5) said it has greatly deteriorated, 25.8% (8) said still intact and regulated, and 9.7% (3) said it has greatly improved.

Table: 14

Translators Opinion on How they are Considered

In terms of prestige, how are human translators now considered	Frequency	Percentage
Professionals whose relevance is indispensable	10	32.3
Needed sometimes, depending on the technicality of the text	20	64.5
I don't know	1	3.2
Total	31	100

Source: survey of translators in Nigeria 2024

In terms of consideration and overall status of the translation profession recently, 32.3% (10) of the translators said they are seen as professionals whose relevance is indispensable while 64.5% (20) said they are needed sometimes depending on the technicality of the text.

4.3. Interpretation Of Findings And Discussion

This section presents the interpretation of data presented and analyzed above. This data interpretation focuses on the key aspects of the objectives of the study which have been earlier investigated. These are on the current place of human translators in Nigeria, the impact of AI on the perception, consideration, and overall status of Nigerian translators, and the future prospects of the profession.

4.3.1. Demand and Supply of Translation Services

The findings from the data analyzed demonstrate a good level of demand and supply of translation services between translator employers and translators. The translators sampled indicated carrying out translation tasks for private, government, international, and religious

organizations as well as NGOs. On the other hand, clients confirmed needing translation services in fields such as education, diplomacy, humanitarian action, and international relations. Moreover, findings showed that English and French is the dominant language pair in both employers' organizations and for translators making up 54.8% and 61.3% respectively. With respect to the demand for translators in recent times, findings showed that all translation service employers (100%) have demanded translation services between 2019 and 2024. Responses from interviews also reveal this fact as the majority admit to receiving translation tasks in recent times. This proves that there is a continuous demand for translation and that the place of human translators in Nigeria is not yet threatened despite AI.

4.3.2. The current place of human translators in Nigeria

On the current place of human translators in the Nigerian translation market, it is observed that the translation profession in Nigeria is transitioning into a more AI-human collaboration as organizations opt for AI-equipped tools.

Statistically, findings showed that most organizations 42.9 % (9) do make use of only human translators to carry out their translation tasks which is slightly above the 38.1% (8) of clients who make use of a combination of AI and human translators. In contrast, close to half of the translators 48.4% (15) which is significant do not get translation tasks often in recent times while 12.9% scarcely get it. Finally, a significant proportion of translators 51.6% (16) indicated that there is a fall in human translators in the era of AI. This could be attributed to a fall in the production of certified translators from translation institutions in the country. The above findings thus imply that the translation profession is still well-valued and relevant. However, the profession will transition into a more human-AI collaboration in order to enhance productivity. Therefore, findings show that the place and relevance of human translators are more impacted by the fear translators have that the emerging AI tools will replace them. Yet, the reality is that many clients or organizations still demand human translation services despite AI.

4.3.3. The Impact of AI on the Nigerian Translation Market

This study tested the impact of AI on the frequency of demand for translation, on the translation workflow, and pricing and remuneration.

Concerning the frequency of demand, 38.8% of translators claim they frequently get translation tasks while the majority, 48.4% get it sometimes. However, when asked how they get their translation task done, 42.9% of clients said they use only human translators while 38.1% always use both AI-equipped machine tools alongside human translators. This data shows a disparity between the quantity of demand for translation services and the quantity of supply by translators. From our observation, this is due to the poor regulation of the translation market. In other words, Translation services are still in high demand but supply is not always carried out by professional practitioners but rather, by bilingual nonprofessional translators who exploit AI tools. This means that the impact of AI on the translation profession is more on human behavior and perception than on the qualities that make up the profession.

Secondly, regarding the impact on translation workflow, findings from questionnaires show that 38.1% of translator employers use a combination of AI and human translators, and 64.5% of translators do manual translation with little aid from AI tools. Equally, the findings from the interviews show that all translators sampled use AI-equipped translation tools. This demonstrates a transition in the workflow from a completely manual translation process to a human-AI collaboration.

Finally, the impact of AI on pricing and remuneration in the Nigerian translation market is demonstrated by the findings drawn from both questionnaires and interviews. According to findings from questionnaires, the majority, 58.1% of translators believe that remuneration is fair as opposed to 6.4% who believe it is excellent. As a reason for this, 41.9% of them indicated that the market and pricing are now disorganized and unregulated as clients believe translators now get help from AI. Similarly, findings from the interviews show that although respondents could not identify a change in the pricing over the years, they believe pricing is highly influenced by the offer of the client and the translator's knowledge of the ethics of the profession, thus criticizing the lack of systemic regulation and structure that provides pricing templates for translation professionals.

As for the clients, when asked if they will pay translators the same despite getting help from AI, 71.4% of them said yes, while to some, it depends on the technicality of the text. In all, the majority, 85.7% of employers/clients indicated that despite the use of AI to translate within their organisation, they will still employ human translators. This reveals that even though AI have impacted the perception of translators, translation workflow, pricing and remuneration, the impact is not colossal.

4.3.4. Implications of Study

The findings of this study reveal that the negative impact of the emerging AI translation tools is more on the social behavior and perception of the translators about their profession rather than on the profession itself. This observation, is drawn from the comparison between the translators' perception of human translators in the AI era and that of the clients or employers. According to the findings based on how the demand for human translators has changed in the AI era, 51.7% of translators indicated a fall. Whereas, the majority of clients sampled, 42.9%, said they use only human translators to carry out their translation tasks. In addition, When clients were asked on the relevance of human translators in their organisation, the majority, 47.6% said they are indispensable this means, cumulatively, almost all the clients/employers 95.2% still see human translators as important despite the existence of AI tools. However, on the same question, the majority of the sampled translators, 64.5% said they are only needed sometimes depending on the technicality of the text. This contrast shows that the translators' perception of their profession is that of a decline in relevance. This could be owing to the fact that practitioners have little or no control over the activities in the market.

5. Recommendations

Following a detailed analysis of the sociological impact of AI on the translation profession in Nigeria, this section proposes possible solutions to the various key players so that steps can be taken towards improving the translator's professional status in the country and promoting a more productive collaboration between clients and human-translators. These players include translators, translation schools, and the Nigerian Institute of Translators and Interpreters (NITI).

5.1. Suggestions for Translators

As the translation industry increasingly incorporates artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, human translators face unique challenges and opportunities. To remain competitive and relevant, translators can adopt several strategies that leverage their unique skills while adapting to the evolving landscape. Artificial intelligence cannot function without human intervention. This means there are loopholes that human translators have to fill without which the AI tools become unreliable. The translators of this era must understand that mere mastery of their working languages is not enough to stay afloat. They must master their craft, the art of translating in a way that surpasses the quality of the output produced by AI.

5.2. Suggestions to NITI

First, NITI must assume its responsibilities and play the role of the market regulator to curb the market disorder where all and sundry takes up the translation task without license. This can be achieved in many ways; firstly, the association has to collaborate with the lawmakers of the country to enforce the National Language Policy where the presence of a translator is a right in key service areas of the country that was put out to promote equal inclusion of the Nigerian languages and section 36(6) (e) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 which stipulates the right to be provided a translator during any legal process. This will establish the identity of the human translator as not only a recognized profession by the state but also a necessity. Secondly, the NITI has to ensure respect and compliance with the Translator's codes of ethics in alignment with international standards such as the FIT, ISO, AIIC, etc. enforcing these codes of ethics will tighten the loose ends and limit the surge of random individuals from taking on translation jobs simply because of easy access to AI tools. Thirdly, the NITI can, following this research collaborate with translation employers including companies, organizations, or institutions. The purpose of this collaboration would be to enlighten them on the role and importance of human translators. This informative collaboration will actively assert the place and relevance of human translators in the AI era, strengthening the profession's visibility among key players.

6. Conclusion

The translation profession in Nigeria is at a critical juncture, shaped significantly by the rapid proliferation of artificial intelligence (AI) tools. This article has explored the implications of these advancements on human translators, examining their current status, the impact of AI on the translation market, and the social behavioral changes of its key players. This study established that Translation in Nigeria is a semi-structured profession with trained practitioners, a recognized association (NITI), and government policies demonstrating its relevance. The need for translation thus cuts across various sectors, allowing businesses, government agencies, educational institutions, NGOs, and others to communicate with their target audience effectively. However, the exponential increase in businesses, offices, and organizations using AI tools in Nigeria, has raised valid questions among practitioners of the affected professions. Translation is also highly impacted by these developments as individuals and companies see it as a cheaper alternative to human translators and also since it is believed that with AI translation tools, anyone can translate texts independently. The findings showed that market pricing, perception, consideration, visibility, and overall status are greatly affected. Nevertheless, the research highlights the possibility of the profession transitioning into a new profession that requires new competencies that would meet new market demands.

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