

Communication Strategies Adopted During Sermon Interpretation in the Pentecostal Churches in Vihiga County, Kenya

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Abstract

Interpretation is one of the reflective professional undertakings fraught with linguistic challenges. Apparently, the challenge is prominent in multicultural and multilinguistic religious contexts. In these contexts the interpreters often adopt communication strategies to facilitate the transfer of messages. In the Pentecostal churches, sermon delivery is perceived to be characterized by unsolicited responses and other forms of disruptions. Although studies have been carried out concerning the interpretation of sermons in the Pentecostal churches, scholarly investigations are inadequate regarding the communication strategies adopted by the interpreters during sermon delivery. This paper examined the communication strategies adopted by the interpreters of sermons in Pentecostal churches in Vihiga County. The paper was guided by Marianne's The Interpretive Theory of Translation. The descriptive research design was employed and the target population consisted of the preachers, interpreters and the congregants of Pentecostal churches in Vihiga County. Purposive sampling was employed to select five churches namely Deliverance Church, City Harvest, International Vision Centre, Pentecostal Assemblies of God and Christian Outreach church and from each church, purposive sampling used to select a preacher, an interpreter and five congregants constituting thirty five study respondents. Audio-video recording, guided interviews and structured observation were adopted to collect data. Thematic content analysis was embraced in analyzing qualitative data. The findings showed that the interpreters employed different communication strategies during sermon delivery. The study concluded that lexical addition, stage movement and mimicry, repetition, rewording, stage movement, restatement, assuming complete authority, co-preaching and maintaining rhythm were the communication strategies employed by the interpreters during sermon delivery in the Pentecostal churches in Vihiga County. It is recommended that the interpreters should strive to be conversant with the theological doctrines of the Pentecostal churches so that the communication strategies comply with the traditions of sermon delivery in the Pentecostal churches.

Key Words: Communication strategies, Pentecostal Churches, Sermon, Interpretation, Interpreters, Vihiga County

Introduction

Like other forms of communication, interpretation is arguably a multi-faceted linguistic activity encompassing a sender (source language), a channel and a recipient (target language) (Qian, 2014). The basic purpose of interpretation is to facilitate the conveyance of the meaning as envisaged by the speaker. More often than not, the interpreter converts the source code to the target code that can easily be meaningfully interpreted by the audience (Holbert, 1991). This is not, however, adequate to fulfill the communication purpose as communication does not just simply imply the conversion of speech signals, words or utterances. As conceptualized by Angelelli (2016) communication is an all-encompassing activity involving power relations, interface between the audience and the speaker, contextual elements, form of utterances, the intended gist or meaning, gesticulation, tone and mood of utterances. Indeed interpretation should supersede the mere conversion of words from one language to another. Although these extra features are important during interpretation, language proficiency and rendition accuracy are important guiding principles in interpretation.

Bartow (1995) avers that the interpreter ought to conceptualize the elaborate meaning of the speaker's message prior to interpretation. To do this the interpreter needs to be well versed with the subject matter, the communicative setting, and the implicit and explicit information. However, Hymest (2021) is of the opinion that the interpreters are generally insensitive to these cues which would enhance their capacity to be accurate in their interpretations. Qian (2014) has conceptualized interpreting as a process that involves the basic conveyance of the semantic connotations from the communicator to the audience. For the transfer of the meaning to be complete, all the different types of meanings (lexicology, grammar and rhetoric) and their implications have to be comprehensively considered and properly relayed (Hatim & Mason, 2010). This makes communication undoubtedly a pragmatic concern during interpretation. In a multilingual setting, the interchange clearly depicts the speakers who transmit the message from their linguistic setting and the interpreter picks up for eventual relay to the audience or listeners in their language (Doriani, 1996). Thus, the interpreter occupies a cardinal transmission point connecting two different languages. As postulated by Herbert (2021) the interpreters can effectively play their connecting role if they are able to discern clearly the intents of the speaker and the different needs of the audience. Immink (2004) perceives communication as a social interaction characterized by impulsiveness and ingenuity.

There is no unilateral process to be followed and the people who are communicating often move back and forth as dictated by the discourse and socio-cultural contexts. These dynamics may undoubtedly complicate the inevitable difficulties and the inherent confusion for the interpreters unless they acted with ingenuity. It is, however, a matter of concern as to whether the interpretation of the sermons should be undertaken with creativity. This is because being ingenuous requires the interpreter to juggle around with the complexities, impulsiveness and unpredictability associated with sermon delivery particularly in the Pentecostal Churches. In the Pentecostal churches, the emphasis of the sermon is often anchored on the perceived spiritual fulfillments and godly living as experienced by the believers (Straniero, 2021). These churches are generally perceived to stress the cardinal guidance of the Holy Spirit directed by the theological conversations around spiritual baptism.

Pentecostalism is distinguished from other churches by the vibrancy of the worship where worshippers engage in robust body movements among other signs of spiritual fulfillments that tend to oppose or violate conventional human expression of godliness (Macchia, 2006). This makes Pentecostal churches rather unique in regard to the elicitation of the responses, usually expressed through unsolicited utterances and nonverbal behaviour. On their part, the preachers are often motivated to come down to interact with the audience to join the spiritually uplifted congregation in expressing spiritual jubilation. Although most Pentecostal churches have scaled down some of these interjections, the interpreters are, however, expected to relay the message in the required language amidst the unprecedented disruptions, clamors and uproars. Riccardi (1998) conceptualizes interpretation in religious contexts as an intermediary problem solver arising out of linguistic pluralism where the preacher's language is the problem and the language of the congregation is the solution. Thus, interpretation serves to solve this problem in the shortest time possible with relatively few cues so that communication continues uninterrupted. According to Hild (2016) the interpreters are called upon to keep the conversation going by keenly anticipating the preachers' message, organizing it correctly and uninterruptedly passing it on to the listeners within the shortest time possible. This problem cannot be solved without resorting to time-tested communication strategies. Brown (2015) conceptualizes communication strategies as mechanisms consciously applied by the interpreters to enhance the transmission of the message when known linguistic forms have unprecedentedly become unsuccessful in meeting the urgent communication requirements particularly in religious settings.

Globally, studies have examined the communication strategies (Ribadon, 2021) and it is evident that this is a diverse area of scholastic enquiry considering different aspects of interpretation in the religious contexts. Despite the diversity of research areas, there is a general consensus that the use of communication strategies is to enhance the transmission of the scriptural sermon message from the speaker to the congregation. In Africa, studies whose focus is on church interpretation are relatively many but inconclusive (Bitonge, 2022) as far as the use of communication strategies is concerned. In East Africa, the problems encountered by the sermon interpreters have been interrogated (Odhiambo, Musyoka & Matu, 2013) and communication strategies are used to solve the language related problems, preacher-related problems and audience based problems (Bitonge, 2022). However, no viably systematic studies have considered the communication strategies from the perspective of the sermon interpreters.

This has seen the role of the interpreters taken lightly in the ensuing scholarly investigations. It is, however, the contention of these studies that further studies are necessary as the theological import of sermon translation remain unproductive in spite of the presence of interpretational activities in the Pentecostal churches in Kenya (Kirimi, Muriungi, & Njogu, 2015). In most Pentecostal churches in Vihiga County, interpretation is carried out during sermon delivery. This is because there is tendency to deliver the sermons in English language and consecutively translated and interpreted into the local languages (Lunyore, Lulogooli) or Kiswahili. Like in other Pentecostal churches, communication strategies are often adopted to facilitate the transfer of the message from the preachers to the congregation. However, it is not clear which communication strategies are embraced in the Pentecostal churches in Vihiga County. Consequently, the paper examined the communication strategies used by the interpreters of the sermons in the Pentecostal churches in Vihiga County.

Communication Strategies in Interpretation of Church Sermons

The adoption of communication strategies has been emphasized by the fact that preaching in a cosmopolitan setting is inherently problematic and the problem is pronounced when the sermon is to be interpreted. This is why interpreters must be strategic by adopting appropriate strategies to facilitate the transmission of meaning during sermon interpretation. According to Alkhanji (2016) communication strategies pertain to the adaptation of the verbal or nonverbal mechanisms when the known communication approaches are not forthcoming, unavailable or inadequate. Faerch and Kasper (2014) comprehensively define communication strategies as potentially sentient plans for solving a problem in disrupted communication. The problems addressed by the strategies could be the product of poor planning, linguist inadequacy, execution based parameters or environmental/external factors. As a result diverse communication strategies have been considered in literature.

According to Chesterman (2009) lexical addition is one of the strategies used by the interpreters. This includes the use of conjunctions, adverbs and phrases to link related and sequential sentences to compose a united text at both the syntactic and semantic levels. Repetition is another significant rhetorical device used when interpreting sermons (Wlison, 1998) in which the interpreters simply repeated what the preacher had rendered. It becomes a strategy when the repetition is not incongruent with the preacher. In other words the interpreter repeats a word or phrase that was said by the preacher. The extra effort directed to the repetition is a justification of its use as strategy and seemingly demonstrates ingenuity on the part of the interpreter. Seen this way, the intention of repetition is therefore a communication strategy that helps to simplify the linguistic problem in the context of sermon interpretation. According to Piller (2021) rewording is also frequently encountered in sermon interpretations. This can take different forms including rendering the text first and then rephrasing in a different way. Whatever form it takes rewording serves to illustrate the interpreters' linguistic prowess and care and concern for multilinguistic audience. Phelps (2020) affirmed that the complexities

surrounding morphology, semantics and syntax can present technical challenges to the audience when the text is to be interpreted hence the need for rewording.

Giannoutsou (2014) directed her analysis on the short consecutive church interpretations with an exclusive attention focused on altar calls in Evangelical services. The analysis showed that the altar calls created more interaction than monologic sermons. With an interactionist approach, the interpreter's interventions were found to facilitate the unfolding rhetoric and ritualized compulsiveness of the message, enabling the interpreter to work as co-preacher. This was made easier by the perceived cooperation between the preacher and the interpreter. However, the analysis fell short of ascertaining whether co-preaching was effective in supporting the transmission of the sermon. Tebble (2009) analyzed the communication strategies with a bias on discourse semantics, and the results pertaining to the lexical adjustments were found to be informative.

However, the orientation differed from this study because it was looking at the interpretation involving the communication between patients and doctors and not the preachers and congregation. Similarly, Bolden (2015) scrutinized the interpreter's communication strategies employed when medical histories were being gathered exclusively in the medical settings and the selective strategy mainly under the guidance of the doctor. It seems the doctor asked to have what was preferred to be interpreted. However, this communication strategy presents a risk as the interpreter was not an expert in the medical field and could as well have omitted crucial pieces of information required to make a medical opinion on the patient's health. As can be seen the results are inapplicable in the present study due to the conceptual and contextual differences.

Concerned about the problems interpreters face, Newmark (1988) proposed some linguistic modifications to help in achieving the target language uniformity. Mudogo (2017) posited that the utilization of the suitable interpretation strategies could help to achieve the intended purpose during sermon interpretation. Ivir (1987) suggests various communication strategies to help convey meaning in the context culture-specific terms including borrowing, definition, literal translation, substitution, lexical creation, omission and addition. Other scholars such as Hervey and Higgins (1992) have suggested the use of conversion, naturalization and synonymy, shift and transposition, modulation, compensation, reduction and expansion and paraphrase during interpretation. Altarabin (2015) noted that a skillful interpretation considers the source language word type, content and meaning in a way that does not breach the norms of the target language. This brings out the conclusion that meaning is an essential element in interpretation, so interpreters strive to achieve it through the use of various approaches in order to render the meaning into a target language. Similarly, Odhiambo et al., (2013) carefully looked at the consecutive interpreting in the Pentecostal churches with a focus on the communication strategies adopted to promote effective consecutive interpreting. Interpretation was found to be an important communication skill used to convey the message. However, the results did not reveal the communication strategies that were used to enhance communication in the translated sermon in the Pentecostal churches. This presented the impetus for this study.

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on the interpretive theory of translation originally pioneered by Marianne in 2003. Marianne (2003) conceptualizes interpretation as a process involving understanding the message from the source text, interpreting it and then transmitting it to the audience. According to Marianne (2003) the criteria of interpreting cover accuracy, fluency, instantaneity and appropriateness. By being accurate, the interpreters attempt to be adeptly loyal to the real intentions of both the communicating parties. To ensure smooth flow of information the exchange between the speaker and the interpreter should consider the linguistic

contexts. To be fluent, the interpreter is required to be coherent while maintaining instantaneity. From the practical point of view the interpreter needs to maintain a relatively fast interpreting speed to minimize the possibility of communication discontinuity. Appropriateness is concerned with acting in conformity with the speaker's linguistic and social mannerism while being mindful of the needs of the audience. Marianne (2003) maintains that comprehension, reformulation and deverbilization of the meaning are complementary goals served by interpretation. It is on this basis that interpretive theory was considered suitable in understanding the communication strategies employed during sermon delivery.

Methodology

The study was based on the descriptive survey design which involved collecting data in order to answer a research question concerning a present reality. According to Kothari (2004) the descriptive survey design offers concrete and concise illustration about originality of a phenomenon as it is capable of making assessments about a given phenomenon. Descriptive studies systematically illustrate the phenomenon by looking at all the possible issues of concern (Darlington & Scott, 2021). This study made use of the descriptive research design which helped to examine the communication strategies employed during sermon interpretation in Pentecostal churches in Vihiga County.

The study was carried out in Vihiga County. Vihiga County is situated in the western region of Kenya. It is inhabited mainly by the *Banyore* people most of whom are members of the Pentecostal churches. In these churches sermons are often delivered through interpretation from the source language to the target language.

The population of the study comprised the preachers, the interpreters and church members in selected Pentecostal churches in Vihiga County. Purposive sampling was employed in identifying five Pentecostal churches. The main consideration was the multiethnic nature of the composition of the congregation and the use of interpretation during sermon delivery. The selection of the informants was informed by their knowledge in the languages involved during interpretation. The sample size consisted of 5 preachers, 5 interpreters and 30 congregants from the 5 Pentecostal churches. The members of the congregation included in the study represented the various demographic diversities such as ethnic community, gender, age and level of education. The respondents were coded to conceal their identity. The preachers were coded as P1, P2, P3, P4 and P5 while the interpreters were coded as INT1, INT2, INT3, INT4 and INT5 and the members of the congregation were coded as CONG1-----CONG30. The units of analysis were the tape-recorded interpreted sermons, interview with the preachers, interpreters and the congregations and observation guides.

The study used interview guides, audio-video recording and observation guide to collect data. Through audio-video recording the researcher was able to capture both verbal and nonverbal cues (Oakes & Ji, 2011). The audio-video recording captured all the sermon activities excluding prayers, testimonies and offertories. The researcher mainly recorded the sections of the sermons where interpretation was involved. The interviews were carried out to complement data obtained from the audio-video recording and observation guides. The interviews were conducted to gather data on communication strategies used during the sermon interpretation. The interviews were recorded to facilitate subsequent analysis. Observation guide provided a range of insightful information about the interpretation in the church settings, facilitating the collection of rich data from the complex and multiple interactions that took place during sermon delivery. Data collected through observation guide were on the communication strategies used by the interpreters of the sermon.

The study was qualitative in nature and employed qualitative data analysis methods and techniques. The tape-recorded sermons were transcribed and the extracts studied to identify the

communication strategies employed during sermon delivery. The data generated from the interview and observation guides were analyzed using thematic content analysis.

Findings and Discussions

The study examined the communication strategies used by interpreters of sermons in select Pentecostal churches in Vihiga County. Data gathered from the sermon interpreters, preachers and members of the congregation were analyzed. In the following subsections the strategies adopted by the interpreters are discussed.

Lexical Additions

Lexical addition was observed in the study in which the interpreters overtly made sure that the audience understood what the preachers said by adding connectives or other linguistic features to the textual and extra-linguistic components of the preachers' message. This is captured by INT4:

I know they don't like it.....what do you do if the audience is not listening.....I often find myself adding a word or two for difficult English words just to clarify....a point...If the preacher 'I am telling you'... I will say 'the speaker is saying that he is telling you'..... (INT4/2022)

From this excerpt is evident that the addition of lexical items served to illuminate and clarify unclear syntactic and semantic pieces of information. This is relevant in circumstances where the audience may be straining to get the sermon. INT4 further made the following observations:

When the preacher gives me little time, I always signal him to repeat what is not well understood if not I can add a word or two to make it clear (INT4/2022)

This confirms the assertion that the interpreters often tried not to leave any implicitness by ensuring the listeners understood the message. Similarly, the interpreters used metaphors and idioms to make the message explicit. This was evident when the preachers were alluding to sexually unpalatable words. This exemplified the interpreter's apparent zeal to assist the listeners to receive the preacher's message. As seen in the above verbatim, the interpreters often added some emphasis of emotion by appealing to the congregation.

Explication by Rewording

It is apparently difficult to undertake interpretation in the religious context without resorting to rewording. Hence, rewording was frequently encountered in this study. In order to reinforce the meaning conveyed in the sermon, the interpreters resorted to rewording perhaps as a stylistic feature. For example, P1 said:

.....the words he says are not exactly the words I say.....they sometimes say different things..... (P1/2022)

These results reflect a negative attitude towards the interpreters' use of rewording, but postulate that rewording demonstrated a concern for the interpreters to reach out to the modern as well as the liberal congregations who might be having a secular background and those who came from other diverse backgrounds. From the analysis of data it was evident that this was done to help the interpreters to address the needs of diverse congregations. This technique was influenced by the fact the local language lacked certain vocabulary for certain words. INT4 observed that:

'....You know Kiswahili is growing but Kinyore is not.....it is just stagnant and words like art, technology, mobile phones, internet evangelism, among others don't exist..' (INT4/2022)

From this excerpt it is evident that rewording was used to express the interpreter's role of bridging the technological advancements that may alienate some of the congregation.

Repetition of Words and Linguistic Structures

Another recurring strategy that was significant in conveying the message was repetition. This was used by the interpreters to make explicit what was meant by the preacher. CONG8 observed:

The words are repeated, the preacher says it in English and the same word is repeated without changing it while interpreting the text in Kinyore or Kiswahili.....other words are translated but particular words are just uttered in English....so they do not interpret everything (CONG8/2022)

As revealed in the foregoing excerpt, the interpreter consciously resorted to repetition even when the preacher had not made any such repetition during sermon delivery. Even when there was effective interpretation there was frequent attempt to repeat parts of the sermon that the interpreters perceived to be significant, which seemed to demonstrate an extra effort to enhance comprehension of the message. When asked why they frequently resorted to repetition, some respondents said that they simply did so to help affirm their central position in the whole process of communication.

Stage Movement and Mimicking Non-Verbal Behaviour

The study depicted through observation that the interpreters did not play a stagnant nor stable role, but rather migrant as the preacher. For instance, the interpreters often moved back and forth and kept re-positioning themselves. This implied that there were many instances suffice to conclude that the interaction took place uninterruptedly in spite of the shared goal of reaching out to the audience. Moreover, the preacher often stepped in whenever the interpreters' behavior missed out on the expectancy custom. For instance, INT3 noted that:

'when the preacher moved from one point to another I also did so... when he knelt down I also did so in conformity with what the preacher did...nearly everything...when he moved towards the crowd I also followed in the same way.....(INT3/2022)'

In these cases where the preachers were emotive and dramatized situations, the interpreters still sought to ensure that the audience captured the content and essence of what the preacher narrated in the same dramatic form. The strongest theme to emerge from the interviews with the respondents was the importance of mimicry. The non-verbal communication displayed by the preacher was diverse but gestures, change of tone, and movement were predominant and consciously deliberate. The interpreters emphasized the preachers' nonverbal behaviour to enhance the transmission of the message and mimicking these non-verbal behaviours served to bolster the need to be candid in interpretation during sermon delivery. In nearly all the interviews, the respondents acknowledged that mimicry was crucial in the communication process. Moreover, Barth (1991) acknowledged the importance of non-verbal communication within the prevailing homiletics and this was confirmed by INT3 thus:

Body language, facial expression, use of your hands, trying to emphasize.....use the feelings adopted by the speaker...eye contact, maintaining eye contact helps to flow as there are congregation who do not pay attention to the speaker but on the interpreters (INT3/2022)

From the foregoing assertion, it was apparent that the preachers were privy to the fact that mimicking their voice and gestures created a long impression on the audience. This is a common theme in the homiletic teachings that cite research findings regarding the impact created by nonverbal behaviour in terms of the enormous impact of the message communicated nonverbally. The opinion formed out of the mimicked gesture inevitably impacted the interpreted message and it is believable that mimicry was relevant during sermon delivery. This

is supported by the fact that the congregation also saw the preachers' gestures and expected the interpreters to also use the same gesture.

Restatement of Linguistic Structures

Restatement of the linguistic structures was employed by the interpreters to show their strong sense of obligation to deliver the message to the congregation. INT4 observed:

'I often switch to Kiswahili to hide my inability to express self, or share a joke to slow down the speaker. In certain instances, I often look at the audience to find out whether they are with me. This would have been made better if there were sign language interpreters.....at least I try to put it in a better way for the sake of the audience (INT4/2022)'

These findings show that the use of restatement as a strategy reflected the contrast as a distinctive stylistic characteristic displayed by the interpreters while paraphrasing sought to produce a message that was rather audience-oriented. An example of restatement is captured by the following data:

P: for you to be useful in the kingdom of God

*INT: ili muwe wa maana kwa ufalme wa mbinguni
(Kiswahili)...ili mmpe abandu abobukhala mubwami
bwo mwikukulu.*

From this data the interpreter was restating while interpreting the preachers' statement in the second part of the translated part. This promoted the conveyance of the message, making the additional information to be accepted by the audience at least as far as the interpreter was concerned. Restating the preacher-oriented communicative style emphasized the original message especially if the situational factors were factored in. Restatement can be compared to emphasis because it increases the explicitness of the target text just like it is in the source text. However, Murtisari (2016) does not seem to appreciate the uniqueness of explicitation perceiving it to be a universal practice preferred by language learners and untrained interpreters who consider it as an inherent language mediation strategy possessing some intrinsic constrictions when interpretation takes the simultaneous orientation.

Preaching Rhythm, Intonation, Pitch, Pace, Emphasis and Pause

The findings revealed the presence of the preaching rhythm in the preacher-interpreter interaction. For example, the interpreters used the suprasegmental features such as tone, pitch, stress and intonation used by the preacher to emphasize a given point as captured in the following excerpt:

P3: *Aha! They were all surprised at what God had done in their lives. They believed that He was a miracle working God.*

INT3: *Aha! Bosi besundukha nga babona amakhuwa ka Nyasaye yali nabakholere. Basubirira mbwe Nyasaye yali nende obunyali obwa okhukhola akalanyalikha*

The preacher used the exclamatory word 'aha' to emphasize the surprise of the people who had encountered a miracle. However, the interpreter could not get an appropriate exclamatory word in the Lulogooli to convey the intention, instead resorting to use the same word to rhyme with the preacher. Similarly, at the Lost Glory Restoration Church, the interpreter and the preacher displayed remarkable flow of rhythm characterized by adequate pace in which the interpreter mirrored the preacher's nonverbal cues. This was confirmed in an interview with INT2 where rapport and timing were reported to be the contributing factors towards the realization of preaching rhythm. From the assessment of the results, it was apparent that the interpreters generally trusted the preachers. Also CONG23 observed that:

I think our interpreters usually deliver the preachers' message well, in a simple way and without straining carefully adding any context required to provide meaning to the message, CONG23/2022

Based on these results, there was a perceived link between interpreting rhythm and effective interpretation. For the preachers who were unable to find a rhythm with their interpreters, one could visibly see that the interpreter was repeatedly asking for clarification. This created an avenue for distrust. However, the preachers did not visibly place blame for any problems in delivery on the interpreters at least as far as the responses of the audience were concerned.

The use of intonation, pitch, pace and emphasis reflected the relationship between the preachers and the congregation on one side and the interpreters on the other. But this can be difficult when the pace is fast. INT2 concurred that:

For me I have once appeared to lose the preacher by keeping pausing...then appearing to tell the preacher that I did not understand what he was saying....the preacher slowed down and this helped me to catch up with him.....INT2/2022)

For the preacher, however, pausing can be a time of trying not to lose the flow of thought and it is significant since it is the moment when the interpreters will find time to inadvertently co-construct the sermon. Generally, it is during this time that the interpreters demonstrate whether the preachers actually presented the correct information. In the Pentecostal churches, the preachers might not have any idea whether what they have said is being transmitted accurately to the waiting congregation owing to the nature of the delivery of the sermons. During the pauses, the message must be thoroughly reviewed, misunderstandings cleared up and the message compared with parallel themes making the preacher's pause a time of reflection and contemplation. In the process, key scriptural concepts are matched to vernacular terms.

Assuming Complete Authority

The findings in regard to assuming complete authority, it was evident from the observations made by the researcher during the sermon delivery of the existence of instances when the interpreters assumed complete authority in their interaction with the preachers. For instance, at the Happy Church in Majengo, the interpreter remained alert and forthright when the preacher tumbled on something and momentarily lost touch with the entire process of sermon delivery. It was noticeable that the interpreter remained resolute acting as the preacher for that moment. These observations revealed the motive of assuming complete authority and the exceptional and particular circumstances when this happened. However, it was not clear whether the preachers granted the interpreters the authority or whether it was permitted by the church tradition. It was, however, evident that the Sermon Interpreters, in their participatory roles, were working worked together with the preachers to achieve a shared goal in the church. This is congruent with Goffman (2020) who averred that the role of the interpreters should be flexible and regularly respond to the unfolding situation.

Co-Predaching

It appears that the interpreters sometimes conveyed the message as if they were preaching it themselves, thereby acting as a co-preacher. Recurring patterns were evident where the interpreter actually used different clarifying information to function as a co-preacher. In these instances, the interpreters took up the responsibility to ensure that the congregation comprehended the message. It is also evident that the interpreter tended to complete any textual omissions, possibly on realization that the preacher had assumed that the congregation knew what he or she was talking about. This simply implied that the interpreters knew the audience

and recognized when they needed help, a further justification for holding common beliefs about spiritual orientation with the speakers and the listeners. This pointed to the fact that the interpretive strategies including co-preaching were employed purposely to facilitate the transmission of the message being communicated. This is congruent with Malmström (2015) who noted that the sermon interpreters employed different but specific strategies to cope with the linguistic constraints and cultural barriers, avidly to convey the preachers' message and to make it appealing to the audience. INT5 observed thus:

It is not just interpreting...it is also about helping the audience to relate what the sermon says with their own experiences.... you know the Bible talks about other cultures....the Galatians the Israelites the Philippians and so on...that are not the same as the Kinyore culture...with this in mind I have to be sensitive to the way words are used and I must know how the words fit into the culture of the Nyore people because there are obvious cultural challenges brought about by education, westernization and technology (INT5/2022)

These observations reveal that the work of the interpreters is simply to interpret but can always engage in supporting activities that may be perceived as co-preaching.

Conclusions

The paper examined the communication strategies used by the interpreters during sermon delivery in the Pentecostal churches in Vihiga County. The study revealed that the interpreters employed different communication strategies during sermon delivery. The study concluded that lexical addition, stage movement and mimicry, repetition, rewording, stage movement, restatement, assuming complete authority, co-preaching and maintaining rhythm were the communication strategies employed by the interpreters during sermon delivery in the select Pentecostal churches in Vihiga County.

It is evident that the communication strategies employed by the interpreters facilitated the transmission of message during sermon delivery in the Pentecostal churches in Vihiga County. In order to ensure that interpretation continues to serve its useful purpose in the Pentecostal churches, the following recommendations are made: i)The interpreters need to be conversant with the theological doctrines of the Pentecostal churches so that communication strategies adopted comply with the different types of the sermons rendered in the Pentecostal churches and, ii) communication strategies adopted should not contravene the cultural norms and the theological doctrines of the Pentecostal churches.

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