

*Research Article*

## Challenge of Translating “Snow” in Yoruba Bible and its Influence on Congregational Singing among Yoruba Christian Worshipers

**ABSTRACT**

The word snow in Isaiah 1:18b which was transliterated as *sno* in the second line of the refrain of the hymn “What Can Wash Away My Sins?” in Yoruba Baptist hymnal poses a challenge of understanding to Yoruba Christians who lacked the expression of snow in the Yoruba language. The Quantitative research method was used with a questionnaire as an instrument of gathering data in Ogbomoso land, Nigeria. Findings revealed that 96% of respondents have never seen snow except on television and in pictures while 4% have physically seen it. 74% of respondents had a different Yoruba word for snow as against 24% which translation corresponds with *Bibeli Yoruba*. While testing the respondents’ understanding of the transliterated word for snow in The Yoruba hymnal, 32% have a full understanding of the word, 40% partially understood it, 10% have little understanding and 12% did not understand the word at all. It is being recommended that unfamiliar words in the Yoruba hymnal should be contextualized to enable users of the hymnal understand the message of the hymns in context.

**Keywords:** Translation, snow, Yoruba hymnal, Yoruba

**INTRODUCTION**

Bible translators have undoubtedly contributed immensely to people’s knowledge of God’s word, for without their laudable efforts, a vacuum would have been created in the comprehension the word of God in different languages. The Nigerian church is highly indebted to Bishop Ajayi Crowther, a slave boy who was rescued by the abolitionist and was privileged to become literate, converted to Christianity, trained, and eventually ordained the first African Bishop. “He single-handedly translated the Bible into *Bibeli Yoruba*, and supervised a committee of Europeans and Yorubas to ensure the translation of the complete Bible into Yoruba in 1884”<sup>2</sup> His efforts in translating the Bible into Yoruba and other Nigerian languages in left an indelible mark in the minds of the beneficiaries of his labour which contributed to the numerical and spiritual growth of churches planted then and now.

The Bible is revered among Yoruba Christians of Nigeria, though its usage is for different purposes. While some use it as a protective charm by placing it under their pillows or under the pillow of a new born child, only a few devote time to reading the contents of the Bible. Some who read the Bible however, find it difficult to understand certain words or phrases or clauses due to their incompatibility to Yoruba culture or language; this poses a challenge to the correct understanding and subsequent interpretation of such aspects of God’s Word.<sup>3</sup> Until the introduction of Good News Version of the Yoruba Bible; Bishop Ajayi Crowther’s translation of the Bible was the only Yoruba mother tongue Bible; and it had its hermeneutical challenges. J.E.T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor opines that mother-tongue Bibles give Ghanaians/

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<sup>2</sup> Samuel Oladiipo Kolawole, “Functionalist Theories and their Relevance to Yoruba Bible Translation” *Time Journals of Arts and Educational Research* 1, 3 (2013):14

<sup>3</sup> Samuel Oladiipo Kolawole, “Functionalist Theories and their Relevance to Yoruba Bible Translation” 14

Africans the opportunity to interpret Scripture from their own world-view.<sup>4</sup> With the translation of the Bible into the mother-tongue, Yoruba Christians have the opportunity of reading the Bible and interpreting it from their own world-view. The translation of the Bible into easy to read version known as *Bibeli Iroyin Ayo* has contributed immensely to the understanding of the texts of the bible.

The *Bibeli Iroyin Ayo Pelu Apokirifa (Good News Bible with Apocrypha)*, was published by the Bible Society of Nigeria, Lagos, in 2005 and edited by Rev, Father Anthony Dewale Ojo and Archbishop of Ibadan Diocese, Felix Alaba Job. The version is written in a modern-day/contemporary Yoruba language spoken in everyday conversation and in a clear and simple Yoruba language.<sup>5</sup>

Hymns are inspirations derived from the word of God, which are sung at different occasions and serve different purposes. The translation of the word *snow* at the refrain of the hymn “What Can Wash Away My Sin?” into the Yoruba version of the hymn affects people’s understanding of the word “*sno*” in the context of the hymn.

### The Yoruba Bible

The Yoruba language is classified among the Kwa language sub-group of the Niger-Congo family. The Kwa subgroup is distributed among the West African sub-region and within Nigeria. This includes languages like Yoruba, Itshekiri, Igala, Edo, Urhobo, Igbo, and Igbira, among others.<sup>6</sup> The Yoruba language is a tonal language spoken by the Yoruba in Oyo, Ogun, Osun, Lagos, Ondo, Ekiti, Kwara, Kogi and the Edo States of Nigeria. Pockets of Yoruba people are found in the Benin Republic. Although there are variations in dialects used by “a more or less limited number of people of a special community, who are in direct contact with each other”<sup>7</sup> there is the central Yoruba which is understood by all Yorubas their dialectical differences notwithstanding.

Yoruba Bible (*Bibeli Yoruba*) is written in central Yoruba that makes it easy for all Yoruba speaking populace to read. Language changes and grows as the society changes due to diffusion of culture through marriage or economic reasons that may lead to the borrowing of vocabularies from other tribes which are assimilated slowly depending on the frequency of their usage. For instance, Yorubas use the word *talaka* or the poor, which is a borrowed Hausa word *talakawa* meaning the poor. It does not pose any contextual challenge since it has a place in the recipient’s culture. Bible translators seek to discover the right word for a particular context as Kenneth Gangel citing Carson opines that the most literal of translations has to decide what word best suits the original, make decisions about idioms and search out the appropriate syntax in the receptor language,<sup>8</sup> in order to convey the meaning of the truth of the word of God.

The Bible translated into the Yoruba language by Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther is titled *Bibeli Yoruba* (Yoruba Bible). His aim for translating the Bible was for people to read the word of God and respond to Him appropriately. According to Samuel Oladiipo Kolawole, the translation of the Bible into Yoruba and other languages was necessitated by the spread of the gospel into the nooks and crannies of Nigeria.<sup>9</sup> The efforts of Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther was significant in helping converts from idol worship know God through His word. Jide Komolafe opines that:

In Nigeria, the vernacularization process received its most rigorous affirmation through the indigenizing principles of Henry Venn, CMS secretary from 1842 to 1872. However, the African impetus came from Samuel Ajayi Crowther, the first African bishop and the able linguist who remained “the most important influence” in the production of the Bible in the Yoruba language. Crowther was equally a pioneer in translating substantial literature into the Yoruba language. The significance of this vernacularization of Scripture for the Yoruba has always been appreciated.<sup>10</sup>

In spite of some challenges associated with the translation of the Bible into the Yoruba language, the effort is highly commendable. “Though translation of the Bible into the Yoruba language is a reflection of the socio-political, economic and spiritual life of the people”<sup>11</sup> the climatic and cultural dimension poses a challenge of the correct translation of the concept under consideration. One of the challenges is the translation of the English word *snow* in Isaiah 1:18 and its translation into the Yoruba hymnal, which influences worshippers’ understanding of the hymn.

### Perception of “Snow” Among Yoruba

The word “snow” is culturally and climatically alien to Nigeria; hence, translators used words that best express the term to convey its meaning. Samuel Ajayi Crowther and his team must have had some headache finding an appropriate

<sup>4</sup> J. E. T. Kuwornu-Adjaottor, Mother-Tongue Biblical Hermeneutics: A Current Trend in Biblical Studies in Ghana. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies* 3 (4): (2012): 577.

<sup>5</sup> Samuel Oladiipo Kolawole, “Functionalism Theories,” 14

<sup>6</sup> Ischei, Elizabeth A. *History of Nigeria* (New York: Longman Inc., 1983)

<sup>7</sup> Khokhlova, I.N. “Contact Variantology: Problems of National Language Variety Terminology” in *Saudi Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* (Dubai: Scholars Middle East Publishers, ISSN 2415 – 6256), 16 – 17.

<sup>8</sup> Kenneth O. Gangel “Bible Translations” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Christian Education*, ed. Michael J. Anthony (Grand Rapids: Baker Academy, 2001), 79.

<sup>9</sup> Samuel Oladiipo Kolawole, “Functionalism Theories and their Relevance to Yoruba Bible Translation”, 14.

<sup>10</sup> S. Jide Komolafe, “Of Translation, Vernacularization, and Appropriation: Reevaluating Bishop Ajayi Crowther in Yoruba Spirituality,” April 13, 2012, <http://saharareporters.com/2012/04/13/translation-vernacularization-and-appropriation-reevaluating-bishop-ajayi-crowther-yoruba>,

<sup>11</sup> Samuel Oladiipo Kolawole, “Functionalism Theories,” 15.

word for the term in Yoruba Bible (*Bibeli Yoruba*) since they lacked appropriate vocabulary within the context of this translation. People’s languages emanate from their culture as they “develop ways to interact with their environment, that is, the land, water and climate. It influences the way people do things”<sup>12</sup> and their worldviews which are expressed through their languages. Ideas and vocabularies are developed based on people’s perception of culture. Nord, proposing a functionalist approach to bible translation opines that the approach “sees translation as a communicative action carried out by experts in intercultural communication. The translator plays the role of a text producer aiming at some communicative purpose.”<sup>13</sup> Every child that grows up and interacts within Yoruba culture acquires the language concept and relates within the culture should be able to understand the Bible in the Yoruba.

The environment plays a prominent role in the life of the people as their interactions within the environment affect their perceptions of the activities within it. People’s environment can influence language development, as well as the understanding of some concepts presenting a foreign concept such as snow in the Yoruba Bible, affected people’s understanding as the research carried out revealed. Samuel Oladipo Kolawole opines that “The most peculiar difficulty in the task of translating the Bible into Yoruba has traditionally been the dilemma between the historical and synchronic approaches in the analysis, description and translation of the Source Language culture into the receiving culture.”<sup>14</sup> If the concept translated in the bible is foreign to the recipient’s culture, it will not convey the accurate meaning the author had in mind. Samuel Oladiipo Kolawole enunciates that:

Hermeneutics is very relevant to the translation of the Bible because the translator has to fully understand and accurately interpret the source language text and transfer information and decisions based on his linguistic and cultural knowledge as well as experience of the translator about the text to be translated. It is, however, to be noted that understanding and interpreting the meaning of any translation discourse involves three factors which include the author, the text and the reader and since translation involves the decoding of the original discourse and encoding of the target discourse, both carried out by the translator, adequate interpretation is a strong requirement for judging whether a piece of translation succeeds or fails. An interpretative approach is a significant approach that has been used by Bible translators.<sup>15</sup>

It could be argued that based on the focus of this paper, the translator of the Bible into Yoruba lacked the adequate vocabulary to express the concept which ordinary Yoruba Bible reader may not fully grasp unless the passage is explained to such an individual. The principle of associating the concept with experience comes to play in understanding a particular text. Snow is defined as the “precipitation in the form of ice crystals which originate from clouds when temperatures are below freezing point (0 degrees Celsius, or 32 degrees Fahrenheit) when water vapour in the atmosphere condenses directly into ice without going through the liquid stage.”<sup>16</sup> The nature of Nigerian weather suggests that the country is not a snow prone country, the climatic change notwithstanding. Jos and its environs in the Plateau State of Nigeria are the only places that are chilly throughout the year. The cold period is experienced between late July and August, and harmattan having its toll between late November and January (February on some occasions). Though Jos’ chilly weather can get as low as seven degrees Celsius, Nigerian weather has never reached a freezing point to make the people experience snow. Occasionally during a heavy downpour, there have been cases of hailstones falling. This is not snow as hailstones melt within the rain and eventually are not all that visible to many people.<sup>17</sup> The translator of the word snow in Isaiah 1: 18<sup>b</sup> rendered the word from the perspective of hailstone, which was confirmed by the research conducted by the writer.

## Methodology

The research employed quantitative research method to generate and gather data for analysis from the target population of older and younger adults within Ogbomoso land, an ancient town that is densely populated by Yorubas. Due to the nature of the study, sixty respondents were purposively sampled considering the level of understanding of Yoruba by the older generation and the younger generation who prefer speaking English to Yoruba language. The respondents were purposively sampled to test their understanding of the Yoruba concept under study. The data collection instrument was questionnaire designed in a way to aid objective response to the variables of the instrument. The questionnaire was designed in such a way that the respondents were able to choose from different options provided for each question based on their opinions. The data was analysed using frequency distributions and percentages that were eventually presented in bar charts using Google Sheets.

<sup>12</sup> Allison M. Howell, *A Daily Guide for Language and Culture Learning*. (Jos: Nigerian Evangelical Missionary Institute, 1990), 3.

<sup>13</sup> Nord C. “Bridging the Cultural Gap. Bible Translation as a Case on Point.” *ACTA Theologica*, 22, (2002), 115

<sup>14</sup> Samuel Oladiipo Kolawole, “Functionalist Theories,”<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

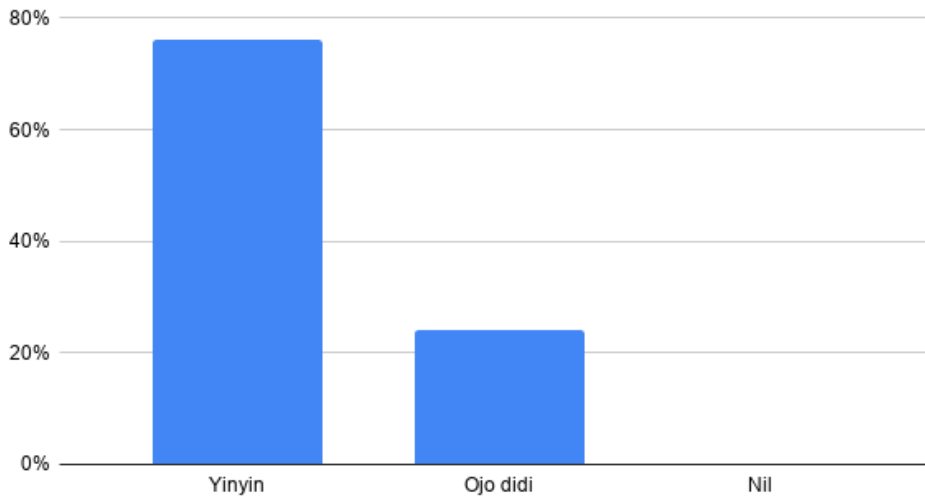
<sup>16</sup> All About Snow”, National Snow and Ice Data Centre, accessed March 3, 2020, <https://nsidc.org/about/monthlyhighlights/2012/11/all-about-snow>

<sup>17</sup> The writer had the experience of being hit by hail stones when caught in a heavy downpour. Hailstones are crystal clear and are of different sizes and iced, which Nigerians refer to as ice block.

**Findings**

Findings of the study revealed that 96 per cent of respondents have never seen snow except on television and in pictures while 4 per cent have physically seen it. 74 per cent of respondents had a different Yoruba word for snow as against 24 per cent which translation corresponds with *Bibeli Yoruba*. While testing the respondents’ understanding of the translated word for snow in The Yoruba hymnal, 32 per cent have a full understanding of the word, 40 per cent partially understood it, 10 per cent have little understanding and 12 per cent did not understand the word at all.

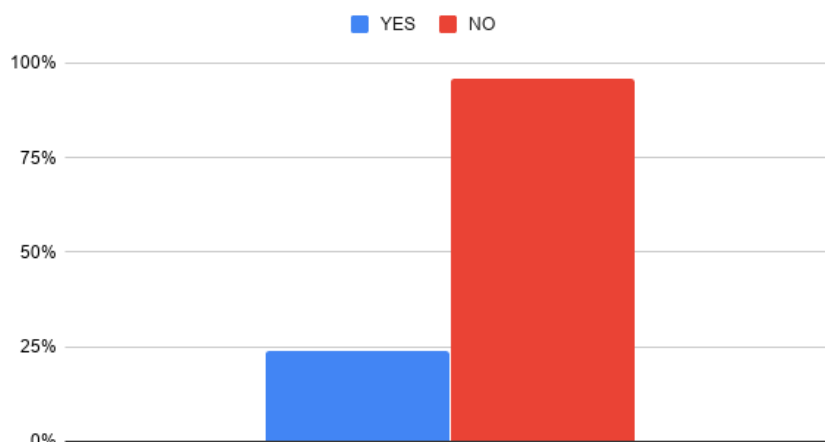
Respondent's translation of snow in Yoruba



Source: Field Research (2020) FIG 1: Respondents’ Translation of Snow

The findings of the research carried out revealed that 76 per cent of respondents indicated that the best translation for “snow” in the passage is *yinyin* and 24 per cent indicated *Ojo didi*, being the translation given by *Bibeli Yoruba*. *Yinyin* meaning hailstone<sup>18</sup> is conceived to be something iced (iced block). It is common to hear old parents instructing their children not to put their corpses inside *yinyin* (morgue), to express their dislike for being frozen before committal. Where 76 per cent have an impression of hailstone whenever they read the verse in the English Bible, irrespective of the version, the understanding is already distorted. The 24 per cent who indicated that snow is *ojo didi* simply agreed with the way it is put in Yoruba Bible. Literally, *ojo didi* implies “frozen rainfall.” In the mindset of average Yoruba bible readers, it is only at the level of imagination because they have never seen snow physically other than in motion pictures.

Physical contact with snow



Source: Field Research (2020) FIG 2: Respondents’ Physical Contact with Snow

<sup>18</sup> “Yinyin,” *A Dictionary of the Yoruba Language*, 29<sup>th</sup> Reprint (Ibadan: University Press Plc, 2008)

The figure above reveals that 96 per cent respondents indicated that they had never seen snow before except in pictures or movies while the 4 per cent who have had physical contact with snow claimed it was when they travelled to America. Snow is not part of the Nigerian climatic experience and can only be fully understood by those who have seen it and can describe its whiteness with which the passage likened the cleansing of the repentant sinner.

**Hermeneutical Challenge of Isaiah 1:18b**

Hermeneutics is the theory of interpretation of the art of understanding any written text.<sup>19</sup> Both the translation and interpretation of the word snow in Isaiah 1:18b pose a challenge to the Yoruba reader who has not had physical contact with snow from having a full grasp of the text. In the words of Samuel Oladipo Kolawole, “Not every reader of Yoruba would have an understanding of the words used and may therefore, give it a wrong interpretation and action”<sup>20</sup> though the assumption of understanding the context may be there. Olusayo B. Oladejo citing Ade Ajayi states that language relates to specific cultures and in translating the universal message of the Gospel into a given language, the issue of contextualizing the message into that culture cannot be overemphasized.<sup>21</sup>

**Table 1: Parallel Translation of Isaiah 1:18b**

English Bible (KJV)	Bibeli Yoruba (KJV)	Bibeli Yoruba Iroyin Ayo
“Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as <b>snow.</b> ”	“Bi ese yin ba ri bi ododo won o si fun bi <b>ojo-didi.</b> ”	“Bi ese yin tile pon bi ina yoo di funfun bi <b>efun.</b> ”

The table above is the rendition of Isaiah 1:18b in English and two Yoruba Bible Versions: *Bibeli Yoruba* and the *Bibeli Yoruba Iroyin Ayo*. The KJV *Bibeli Yoruba* renders the verse as “*Bi ese yin ba ri bi ododo won o si fun bi ojo-didi.*” It literally means if your sin is like the flower, they shall be white as frozen rain. *Ojo-didi* is still far from people’s understanding of snow. On the other hand, *Iroyin Ayo*’s rendition of “*Bi ese yin tile pon bi ina yoo di funfun bi efun*” is closer home to people’s understanding of the concept. “The approach in the translation here, that is, *Bibeli Yoruba Iroyin Ayo* is “functional” because it relates to the “expectations, needs, previous knowledge and situational conditions” of the receiver for whom it is intended, that is, the Yoruba people.”<sup>22</sup> *Efun*, the closest meaning associated with the concept of snow is functional in both translation and interpretation than *yinyin* (ice) which does not convey the clear meaning of the text.

Though *Bibeli Yoruba Iroyin Ayo* is close to the idea being conveyed in the text, what it likened to the whiteness that comes as a result of the cleansing of sin through the forgiveness that comes from God raises another question. “*Bi ese yin tile pon bi ina, yoo di funfun bi efun*” (Is. 1:18b *Bibeli Yoruba Iroyin Ayo*). The whiteness is likened to *efun* or chalk. The *efun* is white chalk that comprises of ground snail shell and white clay.”<sup>23</sup> *Efun* connotes moral cleanliness, hence used by a certain set of idol worshippers.<sup>24</sup> The complexity involved in Bible translation to the Yoruba language is addressed by “the theory of dynamic equivalence, which is useful for clarity purposes. This theory sets to reckon with the meaning, the content and not the form, with simplicity, clarity and explicit explanation of difficulties.”<sup>25</sup> In spite of the argument on the use of *efun* except for the younger generations who may not be able to identify *efun*, the average older generation can easily identify with the concept and conceive imagery of whiteness in their subconscious as they read, unlike *ojo didi* which is foreign to them.

**The Transliteration of “Snow” in Isaiah 1:18 into Yoruba Hymnal**

A dictionary meaning of transliteration connotes “transferring a word from the alphabet of one language to another.”<sup>26</sup> Through this process, people can “pronounce words and names in foreign languages.”<sup>27</sup> Transliteration becomes a tool when there is no word in the recipient’s language that best or readily conveys the thought of the writer. In music, in order to keep the rhythm of the music, transliteration becomes a necessity. A Christian hymn is a lyric poem, reverently conceived, designed to be sung, which expresses the worshipper’s attitude to God or God’s purposes in human life. It is simple and metrical in form, genuinely emotional, poetic and literary in style, spiritual in quality, and its ideas so direct and so immediately apparent as to unify a congregation singing it.<sup>28</sup> Congregational hymn singing implies the whole

<sup>19</sup> R.J. Coggins and J.L. Houlden, *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (London: SCM Press, 1999), 233  
<sup>20</sup> Samuel Oladiipo Kolawole, “Functionalist Theories,” 18  
<sup>21</sup> Olusayo B. Oladejo, “Reciprocal Impacts of Yoruba Culture on the Yoruba Bible” in *Ogbomoso Journal Of Theology*, XVII, no.2 (2021), 105  
<sup>22</sup> Samuel Oladipo Kolawole, “Functionalist Theories,” 18  
<sup>23</sup> “Efun – Yoruba Imports” accessed March 3, 2020 <https://yorubaimports.ecwid.com/Efun-p33027846>.  
<sup>24</sup> It is common to see Obatala priests in white. Chalk is used as body paints among some tribes in Nigeria during festivals.  
<sup>25</sup> Samuel Oladiipo Kolawole, “Functionalist Theories,” 17  
<sup>26</sup> “Transliteration” accessed March 3, 2020 <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/transliteration>  
<sup>27</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>28</sup> Barry Liesch, *The New Worship: Straight Talk on Music and the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996), 22

church singing in unison at the same time as being led by the song leader who selected a particular hymn for the service. George Janvier observes the communal nature of hymn singing in Nigerian churches. “Music in the church is communal, which is both African and Christian. Churches need to foster community participation in music and not be led by a small group of those who are particularly talented in music.”<sup>29</sup>

The hymn “*Nothing but the Blood*” written by Robert Lowry<sup>30</sup> is a popular salvation hymn in Yoruba Christian worship. The hymn was translated into Yoruba for the Yoruba congregation to appreciate the price Jesus Christ paid on the cross and to commit themselves to the Lord through the cleansing of their sins. The text of one stanza and its refrain of the hymn and its Yoruba version are as follow:

**English**

What can wash away my sin?  
 Nothing but the blood of Jesus  
 What can make me whole again?  
 Nothing but the blood of Jesus

**Yoruba**

Ki lo le w’ese mi nu?  
 Ko si l’ehin eje Jesu  
 Ki lo tun le wo mi san?  
 Ko si l’ehin eje Jesu

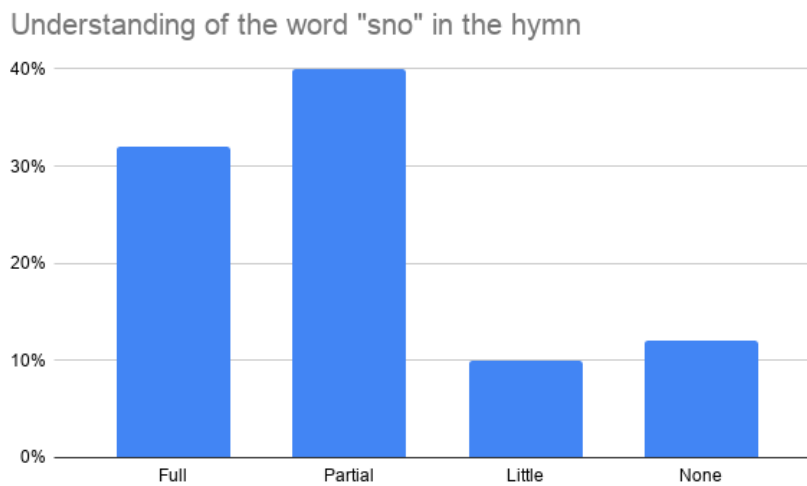
**Refrain**

O precious is the flow  
 That makes me white as snow  
 No other fount I know  
 Nothing but the blood of Jesus<sup>31</sup>

**Egbe**

A! Eje yebye  
 To mu mi fun bi sno  
 Ko si sun miran  
 Ko si l’ehin eje Jesu<sup>32</sup>

The second line of the refrain: “*That makes me white as snow;*” is rendered “*to mu mi fun bi sno,*” reveals that the word snow was transliterated in Yoruba rendition. Except for the alphabet “w” that is missing in the *sno* of Yoruba version of the song, the pronunciation is still the same. It could be argued that since the translator lacked the vocabulary within the context of this hymn, he transliterated the word as *sno* though, in the Yoruba language, the rule of grammar is that two consonants do not follow each other. Rather it should be a consonant plus vowel. If it conforms to the rule of Yoruba grammar, it should be rendered as *sino* which may become meaningless to the reader. The writer tested people’s understanding of the word *sno* in the hymn, and the result of the findings is presented below:



Source: Field Research (2020) FIG 3: Respondents’ Understanding of the Word Sno in Yoruba Hymn

The figure above reveals respondents’ understanding of the word *Sno* in the Yoruba hymn *Ki lo W’ese Mi Nu?* Only 32 per cent of the respondents affirmed their full understanding of the word *sno* within the context of the hymn while 40 per cent have a partial understanding of the word, 10 per cent have little understanding and 12 per cent respondents do not understand the word at all. Most worshippers sing the hymn for its melody. The hymn, however, had been a tool used by

<sup>29</sup> George Janvier, *Leading the Church in Music and Worship, Second Edition* (Kaduna: Africa Christian Textbooks, 2007),16

<sup>30</sup> Robert Lowry “Nothing but the Blood” in Walter Hines Sims (Ed.), *Baptist Hymnal: Nigerian Edition* (Ibadan: Publication Department of Nigerian Baptist Convention 1995), 95

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> “Ki Lo Le W’ese Mi Nu?” *Iwe Orin ti Ijo Onitebomi ni Nigeria Pelu Orin Idaraya ati Majemu Ijo Wa, 11<sup>th</sup> Reprint* (Ibadan: Nigerian Baptist Convention 2002), 185

preachers to bring congregants to Christ. Ezekiel Ajibade believes that “music and the word are complimentary. Like the word of God, music remains a potent tool in converting many to Christ.”<sup>33</sup>

The assumption that people understand the hymns being sung by the congregation does not allow church leaders to evaluate people’s understanding of the text of the hymns they sing in the church. Samuel Auda claims that the “earliest Yoruba hymns were simply translations of European hymns”<sup>34</sup> which set the tone for transliteration of some words to maintain the tune and rhythm of the hymn. Imagery, metaphor or descriptive pictures that give a concrete view of an abstract concept which are coded and culturally bound may be difficult to understand and impossible to know the intended meaning<sup>35</sup> without someone explaining the concept.

## CONCLUSION

The paper examined the translation of the word “snow” in relation to the Yoruba language in the context of Isaiah 1:18. It tested people’s understanding of snow within the context of the biblical passage as well as in congregational hymn singing. Snow is relatively alien to Yoruba culture and Nigerian climate; hence the difficulty of the bible translator to find an appropriate word that best fits the word within Yoruba setting. The translation of *Bibeli Yoruba* of the word is far from people’s experience while that of *Bibeli Iroyin Ayo* is a bit closer to people’s understanding. However, the younger generation may find it difficult to understand the word *efun* used instead of *ojo-didi* of *Bibeli Yoruba*. The word snow in Isaiah 1:18 was used in the hymn What Can Wash Away My Sins? This hymn is evangelistic and is being used to call sinners to repentance. The translator of the hymn into Yoruba transliterated the word snow in the refrain of the hymn to *sno* removing the letter “w” to make it read Yoruba though the sound is still the English snow.

Many respondents do not have a deep understanding of the word in the hymn but only enjoy its melody. It will be appropriate if church leaders take a deeper look at the content of the message being delivered in the church either through the preached word or song to test whether their congregants really understand the content of what they read or listen to in the church. There are many Yoruba Christians who congregate in the church for worship who are still like the Ethiopian Eunuch who are whispering silently “unless someone explains to me, I cannot understand.” Hence, future translators need to take cognizance of the issues raised in this paper. Lastly, the responsibility of accurate interpretation of passages during sermons, bible study, services, hymn interpretations, and so on rests on Church leaders, Bible study leaders, Church musicians and worship leaders.

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<sup>33</sup> Ezekiel A. Ajibade, *Contextualization of Expository Preaching: Engaging Orality for Effective Proclamation in Africa* (Ibadan: The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso, 2018), 103

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