



AFRICA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

CONCEPTUALIZATION AND TRANSLATION: AN INVESTIGATION
OF *HUIOTHESIA* IN THE PAULINE EPISTLES IN VIEW OF THE
KIKUYU FOLK THEORIES OF PROCREATION
AND ADOPTION

BY
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Approved:

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Robert J. Carlson", written over a horizontal line.

Professor Robert Carlson

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ABSTRACT

The motivation for this study was the desire to find how best to translate *huiiothesia* into Kikuyu, because its renderings in the existing Kikuyu translations are either generic or misleading. This is attributed to the receptor languages being relegated to only rendering what has been explicated using the cognitive resources of other mediating Western languages such as English. From the brief history tracing the role of the receptor languages in translation theory since the 1960s, none of the proponents propose the use of the cognitive resources of receptor languages in inferring the meaning of the original. This study recommends that receptor languages be brought to the translation table right at the start of the translation process as complementary tools in inferring the meaning of the original among other resources translators/exegetes engage with. This is because receptor languages are natural languages just like Western mediating languages, and the cognitive resources of any natural language can be exploited in inferring the meaning of the original text. This proposal calls upon translators/exegetes not just to reconstruct and analyze the conceptualization evoked by a biblical concept with regard to the conceptual universe of the author and the original recipients, but also to analyze the conceptualization evoked with regard to the speakers of a receptor language. The theoretical framework of Cognitive Grammar was chosen for the analysis of the data collected for the study. The choice of the theoretical framework was based on the quest to base the translation process on a linguistic theory which translators/exegetes can rely upon in the exploitation of cognitive resources of any language and culture in inferring the meaning of the original. Data was collected on the source language and on the receptor language. Further data was collected on the readings ratings of the translation of *huiiothesia* into Kikuyu in the 1965 and 2007 translations and the proposed translation among Kikuyu speakers. Data analysis on the source language focused on the description of the linguistic and cultural background of Paul and his recipients, the conceptualization evoked by *huiiothesia*, and the discourse context of *huiiothesia*. Data analysis on the receptor language focused on the description of the conceptualization evoked by *gūciarwo na mbūri* the Kikuyu label for adoption. The result of the analysis of the two conceptualizations revealed corresponding aspects and aspects specific to each conceptualization from which translators/exegetes can derive enriching ideas not easily accessible using the conceptual resources of Western mediating languages—ideas which might lead to richer schemas as the meaning of the original texts. The resulting adjusted schemas become the basis for clearer, more successful translations. The rating of the proposed translation of *huiiothesia* being *clearer* by most respondents showed the success of the recommended approach to translation. The byproduct of interpretation of biblical concepts using this approach in the process of Bible translation can lead to an outcome in which the receptor languages make a significant contribution to theological debates as attested in this study in the case of *huiiothesia* as a theological concept.