

Sesotho Translation as a Cultural Phenomenon

Edwin Joseph Mohatlane

*University of the Free State, Department of African Languages, P. O. Box 339,
Bloemfontein, 9300, South Africa
E-mail: mohatlaneej@ufs.ac.za*

KEYWORDS Culture. Functional. Domesticate. Foreignise. Acceptability

ABSTRACT The problems regarding intercultural communication are considered in the context of cultural and linguistic barriers encountered in translations from English to Sesotho. The analysis of these translation problems is based on the examples taken from the various sources in Sesotho translation. In discussing these problems, the researcher clearly illustrated that the pitfalls of translation underpins the importance of knowledge of the culture with which one is attempting to communicate. Within the context of the translation process, the researcher's main focus is to reflect how influential culture can be in letting the translator to make meaningful choices and translate successfully. Translating from English to Sesotho has always been based on the equivalence principle. As a matter of fact, therefore, the English source texts were translated in such a manner that a word for word translation approach was applied. The introduction of the functionality principle in translation has brought about the whole idea of a cultural turn. The paper reports on the influence of culture in the translation of the English source texts to Sesotho target texts. The results therefore show that culture is a significant component in the translation process as a result of which the end product becomes functional and effective within the communication system of the target readership. The paper strongly recommends a thorough consideration of culture and language conventions of the target readership as part of the text analysis prior to the actual text translation itself. The paper justifies the fact that translation is not only a linguistic transference but also a cultural transference. The complexities of translation are brought about by lack of mastery of culture of both the source text (ST) and the target text (TT).

INTRODUCTION

The influence of culture in the translation process has not been given enough attention by many Sesotho translators for a long time. It has been long taken for granted that translation deals only with language. Translating from English to Sesotho has always been based on the equivalence principle. As a matter of fact, therefore, the English source texts were translated in such a manner that a word for word translation approach was applied.

On the basis of the above, Snell-Hornby (1988:39) maintains that the exclusion of cultural aspect from the discussion of translation theory is due to the view of the traditional approach in linguistics which draws a sharp dividing-line between language and "extra-linguistic reality" such as culture and situation, among others. Within the context of this particular work, language is perceived as an integral part of culture.

The paper aims to reflect the role of culture in translation. The researcher moves from the premise that translation does not occur in a vacuum but within a specific cultural context. The analysis and discussions of the selected texts are based within the framework of the theory of functionalism.

With the theory of functionalism as backdrop, the researcher intends to highlight the fact that a functionally successful and meaningful text is perceived as culturally sensitive to the socio-cultural and linguistic needs of its target group. The paper recommends strongly that for the future development and improvement of translation in South Africa, cultural transference should be perceived as one of the basic features of translation.

The paper purports that as part of the pre-translation activities, the cultural context of the source text should first be determined after which the translation process can then commence.

The results therefore show that culture is a significant component in the translation process as a result of which the end product becomes acceptable and accessible within the communication system of the target readership. The paper strongly recommends a thorough consideration of culture and language conventions of the target readership as part of the text analysis and that it should be taken care of prior the actual text translation itself. Culture will be expressed within a particular socio-cultural context. This suggests that there is a water-tight relationship between text and context. This is the principle that needs to be taken into cognisance within

the translation process to yield meaningful and functional translation results.

Aim of Study

As the researcher has already alluded to the fact that Sesotho translations were not necessarily based on the socio-cultural context of the target text during the translation process, it is the aim of this paper to reflect on the pivotal role that the establishment of the socio-cultural context plays in the transference of the source text to the target text. In the same way, as the researcher understands that nature does not allow vacuum, the translation process of a text cannot be divorced from its socio-cultural context.

Bassnett and Lefevere (1990) move from the premise that:

Translations are never produced in an air-lock where they, and their originals, can be checked...untainted by power, time, or even the vagaries of a culture. Rather, translations are made to respond to the demands of a culture and of various groups within that culture (Bassnett and Lefevere 1990: 7).

If translation is defined as source text induced text production, translation into a foreign language will always be an instance of intercultural communication. It is at this stage where the researcher can once more account for the notion that translation is not only a linguistic but also a cultural transference.

Subsequent to the process of cultural transference, Venuti (2000) maintains the view that a translated text can either be domesticated or foreignised. It is entirely the choice of the translator to resort to either the source text structures (foreignisation) or the target text structures (domestication). It therefore implies that the translator should thoroughly know the language and culture of the two languages within which he operates.

Within the parameters of this paper, the researcher aligns himself with the views of Katan (1999) that culture addresses three salient categories of human activity. The personal category refers to whereby the researcher, as an individual, thinks and functions as such. The collective implies the function of target readers in a social context and the expressive refers to society's self-expression. Language is the only social institution without which no other social

institution can function; and therefore it underpins the above three pillars upon which culture is built.

The paper intends to reflect the effectiveness and the functionality of translation if done within its proper cultural context. In doing so, it will also be clear how a text that is taken out of context or simply on word-for-word basis distracts the expression of its intended purpose and meaning. Bassnett (1991:23) is of the opinion that an attempt to impose the value system of the source language culture onto the target language culture is dangerous ground. It is argued that when translating, it is important to consider not only the lexical impact on the target text reader but also the manner in which cultural aspects may be perceived and make translating decisions accordingly, appropriately and functionally.

METHODOLOGY

It has already been implied that the paper will be discussed within the functional translation theory. The understanding and the guiding principle in this venture is that this particular theoretical framework will be more meaningful in this case to assess the effectiveness of translation on the target readership. The paper is based within the parameters of the Sesotho texts as target texts only. In other words, only those texts in Sesotho language (among other African languages) will be analysed in this paper for the sake of discussions of the dynamics of culture in Sesotho translation. The language combination that the researcher hopes to deal with is English-Sesotho. Newmark (1988:94) defines culture as "the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression". The understanding of this definition will serve as the guiding principle within which the role of culture in Sesotho translation will be contextualised.

The researcher made a thorough analysis of a source text. For this purpose the researcher applied specific choices in order to produce a meaningful translation. In this way, the researcher concurs with Gentzler (2001) that the translator has a free choice to make in the translation process. The translator is bound by the fact that he is confronted with a culture-bound text to seek for possibilities of choice in trying to

solve the translation problems that he encounters. The choice of cultural strategy may result in source-culture bound translation (the translation stays within the source language culture – so called *foreignisation*).

The target culture-bound translation (the translation stays within the target language culture – so called *domestication*) or in a “*hybrid*”, where the translation is a product of a compromise between two or more cultures. Culture-based Sesotho source texts from various fields are translated from English to Sesotho. In the case where two translations are possible, the two translation options will be discussed with a view to express the role of culture in the translationability of the text(s).

OPERATIONALISATION

By virtue of the given method outlined as in 3 above, the paper presents a robust discussion of the given translations in this work as divided into two components. As part of the first component, the researcher presents and analyses short English texts derived from different sources or fields. As the second component of this paper, the researcher focuses on one long English source text that is derived from a local newspaper in the Free State Province in South Africa. Even though these texts are diversified, they have something in common, namely, being based on the source text culture. This is precisely the reason the translator decided on them in order to reflect the power of culture on the translationability of a source text.

First Component

It must be recalled that the English source texts within this category are selected on the basis of being culture based and presented within a particular context. A total number of eleven texts have been identified to illustrate the effects of culture and context in the translation process.

Text 1

Source Text: It rains cats and dogs

Target Text 1: *Pula e na ka dikatse le dintja*

Target Text 2: *Pula e na haholo*

Target Text 3: *Pula e na ditlwebelele*

As part of the socio-cultural context of the ST, the researcher endeavoured to establish the origin of the idiomatic expression. The transla-

tor considered the original background information that led to the English idiomatic expression (applied as the source text) that has to be translated. Here follows the background information related to the above idiomatic expression:

In the olden days the country folk who stayed on the outskirts of London used to bring along their cats and dogs with them to the city of London when they came shopping. These pets were locked up safely in kennels along the banks of the Thames River whilst the owners did their shopping. On a fateful day in 1928, it started raining incessantly. Thames burst its banks. Central London was flooded. The country folk could not collect their pets. The flood was so strong that it ripped open the pet-kennels. The dead cats and dogs were swept along by the force of the flood. They floated all over the place. Evidently, those who witnessed the spectacle thought that it was ‘*raining cats and dogs*’.

Comment

Readers for whom the message is intended, can then realise that knowing the cultural context of the source text is quite crucial in dealing with a culture based, source oriented text. As part of the necessary pre-translation phase, the translator has to be fully engaged to identify the context in which the source text is based. Otherwise, the whole meaning and intention of the text to the target readership would be compromised.

With this kind of background, the translator managed to come to the understanding of the situation, that the rain fell very heavily. In the case of TT1, the translator merely communicates the meaning of the text as the basic meaning. In this case, what is important is the meaning and not necessarily the structure or manner of presentation. The translator opted for a word to word translation and that complicates the expression of the logic and accessibility of the text. This view is verified by the fact that the structure of the text looks unusual. In this case, the researcher can talk of a ‘*hybrid*’ translation that has been applied under the full conscience of the translator.

With TT2, the translator is both interested to transfer the meaning as well as preserve the form in which the text at the level of ST has been presented. It is clear that TT2 suggests that the

ST is, in fact, an idiomatic expression. The translator had to make his own choice of translating as TT1 or rather as TT2. The choice of method of translation is dependent on the depth of embeddedness of culture in the ST. Of course, the ST culture poses translation problems but then the translator in this case presented two options from which he would choose only one. In the last option (TT3), the translator used the figurative version of TT2. The custodians of Sesotho language would be intelligible and competent enough to access the intended message. This view is supported by the fact that TT3 is in line with the Basotho culture and conforms to the Sesotho language structure.

Text 2

Source Text: The Casual Day Welfare Organisation estimates that 3.5 million people are disabled in the country.

Target Text: *Mokgatlo wa Thekolohelo wa Letsatsi la Pokello ya Dithuso o lekanya hore batho ba holofetseng ba dimiliyone tse 3.5 naheng ena ya rona.*

Within the context of the given text above, the word "Casual Day" is a source culture specific term. It is clear that the translator had to transform Casual Day not as word for word translation but act on the basis of the normal purpose of the day. The notion of Casual Day does not form part of the Basotho culture and it therefore poses translation challenges on the part of the translator. In trying to find the suitable translation strategy, the translator considers the context in which this specific concept is used. Seeing that on Casual Day people usually collect funds to assist the needy, the concept is translated as such. It becomes evident that good translation should not be based on words, but should focus beyond words, namely, the context in which those words are used. It should also be evident that the translator has over-translated in order to contextualise the translation within the target Sesotho culture.

Comment

On the basis of the above, the researcher makes an analogy that the more a text is culture based, the more it causes huge translation problems on the part of the translator. However, the translator cannot dismally fail to translate the text as he/she would then decide whether to retain the source text cultural and linguistic struc-

tures or whether he should completely transform it into the target text culture. In doing so, the translator would even be guided by the nature of the target group he/she translates for.

Text 3

Source Text: Right of admission reserved

Target Text 1: *Tokelo ya ho kena e baba-letswe*

Target Text 2: *Tokelo ya ho kena e na le moedi*

This is a common notice that is normally put at the entrances of public centres. The idea here is to notify people about the restricted level of authorisation of entrance at a specific public place. As the researcher indicated before, the role of the translator is to make proper choices of strategies and methods of translation before commencing with the actual translation process.

In the first instance (TT1), the translator decided to go word for word in order to express the intended meaning to the target readership. The translation appears to emulate source text structures and as such it does not quite satisfy the needs of the target readership. It does not optimally qualify to express the intended message very competently and comprehensively. The meaning is therefore not balanced.

In the second instance (TT2), the translator translates it in such a manner that it fits the linguistic and cultural pattern of the Sesotho target readership. As a matter of fact, the translation then appears functional and more communicable than the first translation attempt. What is fundamental to notice is that the translator adapted the text in such a manner that it appears to be the second origin.

Comment

Source text oriented texts are liable to yield source text oriented translation (as in TT1). This implies that even though the translation is meant for the Sesotho readers, it does not fit within the conventions of their language structures and their culture in general. To pluck a further from Venuti (2000), the translation is foreignised and hard to fit into the structures of the Basotho culture. It is also ideal to realise that the translation in this case becomes contaminated translation language or *translationese* and also becomes less meaningful to be communicable and accessible to the targeted language group.

In the case of the TT2, translation is modified and domesticated to fit into the socio-cultural pattern of the typical Sesotho linguistic tradition. As indicated above, the translation distinguishes itself as the second origin. It means that it does not show that it is derived from the source text but stands as the original source text in Sesotho language for Basotho target readers.

Text 4

Source Text: Parking is at owner's risk.

Target Text 1: *Ho emisa koloi mona ke boikgethelo ba monnga yona.*

Target Text 2: *Ho kgina pere mona ke boikgethelo ba monnga yona.*

This is yet another notice meant to give visitors a piece of information regarding the house rules of a specific place of interest or accommodation centre. Seeing that among the traditional Basotho people cars were not the prime means of transport used, the word 'parking' tends to be problematic to translate. It tends to be a translation problem in the sense that it is not in line with the life pattern and experiences of the traditional Basotho people. However, it is in line with the current and modern Basotho living style and as such could be translated with that kind of background in mind (as in TT1 above).

The translation is made to fit the lifestyle of the contemporary Black people, who live mostly in urban areas. However, if it could be translated with the lifestyle of the traditional Basotho in mind, it could perhaps be translated as TT2 (*Ho kgina pere mona ke boikgethelo ba monnga yona*) and literally translated as "keeping the horse here will be the owner's choice"

Comment

The researcher shows in the texts given above that culture serves as the determining factor and the regulating principle in the translation of the given source text. Culture also affords the translator the opportunity to choose the method or strategy that would clearly create a meaningful translation. Translation options unfold the difference between middle class Basotho and the traditional Basotho in rural areas in terms of culture.

In TT1, reference is made to the parking of cars whereas TT2 is meant for the traditional Basotho readership. In the case of TT2, the translator substituted "car" with "horse" in or-

der to create an understanding of transport to a Mosotho reader. Therefore substitution has been applied to adapt the text to the targeted Sesotho cultural situation.

Text 5

Source Text: He went to the bank to cash a cheque.

Target Text 1: *O ile bankeng ho a tjhwatla tjheke.*

Target Text 2: *O ile bankeng ho a tjhentjha tjheke.*

The phrase "to cash a cheque" is source text culture specific and therefore poses translation problems because it is not necessarily lexicalised in the Sesotho language.

If the researcher looks at the first translation option (TT1), the researcher realises that the translator tried to translate the text in such a manner that it would be acceptable to the traditional Sesotho target readers. However, it shows that the cultural context in which the source text is based causes translation problems. In the case of the traditional Basotho socio-cultural context, the use of cheques had not been quite significant. Money had not been as precious as it is currently. Within the philosophy of life of the Africans (Basotho), the number of cattle that a Mosotho possessed, was of prime importance than the money itself. With this kind of context as background, it poses translation challenges on the part of the translator to translate a culture specific text of this nature.

As a matter of fact, it is apparent therefore that the translator decided to either try to indigenise or domesticate TT1 (to borrow Venuti's concepts) or to foreignise, that is to adapt it in such a manner that it would be more source text oriented (TT2).

Comment

Translation options reflect that TT1 is probably meant for the target readers who are familiar with the use of cheques for financial transactions. However, TT2 is aimed for those target readers who never used cheques but cash for their financial transactions. It once more confirms that the translator is engaged with the task of making decisions in dealing with culture based texts in order to succeed in transferring the intended message.

It then becomes clearer that such a culture specific text causes challenges to the translator

to either adapt the text to the target culture of the target text or else translate it by retaining the cultural pattern of the original source text. The target readers are commonly more comfortable to accept a translation that is target culture based more than a source text based translation.

Text 6

Source Text: If wishes were horses, burgers would ride.

Target Text: *Monokotshwai ha o butswa ho ya ka ditakatso tsa tshwene.*

The above translation clearly shows that the source text is in fact an English idiomatic expression. It is for this purpose that it becomes difficult for the translator to receive an appropriate translation strategy within the same kind of linguistic system. It is for this reason that the translator apparently decided to change it completely so as to conform to the target Sesotho language and culture. In other words, the translator is completely taking readers to the new world of the target situation so as to make the text to be functional and easily accessible to the intended readers. With this background as context, the translator decided to apply a target text oriented approach to translation. Nida (1995:118) puts it succinctly that:

The readers of a translated text should be able to understand and appreciate it in essentially the same manner as the original readers did.” For the translator to have opted for domestication as the translation strategy, it could have been that he had been influenced by its culture specificity. Upon realising the cultural embeddedness of the source text, the translator apparently thought that domestication could be an ideal approach to reduce the foreignness thereof.

Comment

The above translation shows that an ideal translation approach to deal with a culture specific text is to take it completely to the world of the target culture. The idea behind this move is, as confirmed by Nord (2001), to make the text to be functional and purposeful to the target readers. In this case, the researcher presents equivalent Sesotho idiomatic expression. The translation communicates the same intended message as in the source text situation. For that matter, the target text readers would not even realise that it is a translated text. This characterises a

functionally and a culturally acceptable and linguistically accessible translation..

Text 7

Source Text: Blood is thicker than water.

Target Text: *Mmetlakgola o e lebisa ho wa habo.*

The source text is actually an English idiomatic expression that implies that a person would always do favours to members of his family than other people. In the translation the idea projected above is then transferred to Sesotho. It is also obvious that this expression may be intelligible and culturally acceptable to the source language speakers but not necessarily so to the target readers.

It is for this purpose that the translator had to devise means of transferring the text to Sesotho speakers with a view to retain its basic meaning. However, the translation is presented within the language that would be more accessible and conform to the culture of the target readers. In doing so, the speaker had to make a choice of explicating the text with a view to make it more communicable to the Sesotho readers or try to be closer to the foreign source culture in the translation process. In other words, the translator decided on the meaning of the idiomatic expression. Thereafter, he decided on the possible available equivalent Sesotho idiomatic expression.

Comment

The source text has been translated in such a manner that it would not have any indication that it is derived from any English source text. In doing so, the translator then tried to bring forth the equivalent idiomatic expression that would both capture the meaning of the original source and at the same time conform to the Sesotho target culture. In this way, the translator hopes to ensure that the target readers are taken on board within the perspective of their specific language and culture as a result of which they may declare the text as culturally functional and communicable.

On the other side of the coin, it becomes clearer that Sesotho language may not necessarily be reckoned to be less developed in comparison to English as it can also be employed to communicate the same message (as in English) in terms of idiomatic expression as in the English source text situation. Furthermore, it im-

plies that people should be careful in their analysis not to make hasty decisions about the standard or rate of development of a specific language as languages are embedded in different cultures and can be interpreted differently. Sesotho language identifies itself here as having an equivalent idiomatic expression to capture the same meaning intended to the target readers.

Text 8

Source Text: He has tried through thick and thin to solve his financial problems.

Target Text: O lekile ka hohle ho rarolla mathata a hae a ditjhelete.

The source text is presented in such a manner that it indicates pure linguistic differences between the English source language and the Sesotho language. One of the glaring linguistic differences is the fact that someone who may be referred to, is implied to be a male person. The English source text implies masculinity through the use of a personal pronoun “he” but in Sesotho it is not necessarily an issue. In this way, the source text tends to be more comprehensive than the Sesotho target text even though the basic meaning is still balanced (thematic or semantic equivalence).

Comment

It appears that in English the text has been presented in a figurative expression whereas in Sesotho it is a mere declarative statement. It tends to show that the translator decided to make a choice of going the root of domestication in order to make the translation conform to the target language and culture of the target group.

Target readers therefore have a reason to believe that on the basis of this kind of presentation or translation strategy, the translator succeeded to reach the linguistic and socio-cultural needs of the Sesotho target readership.

We also realise that seeing that the source text is not deeply rooted in culture, it does not pose much challenges in translation as in the previous culture-based texts. The expression “through thick and thin” is simply translated as “*ka hohle*” (all over) in the target text. However, the translation is balanced as it implies the very same message as in the source text.

Text 9

Source Text: “Just swallow your pride and do your work,” replied the minister.

Target Text: *Letona le ile la araba ka hore a tlohele boikgantsho a etse mosebetsi wa hae.*

The translator decided to use reported speech in the translation of the above source text. This is indicative of the fact that the translator decided to contextualise it within both the Sesotho linguistic and cultural context. In this way, the translation happens to be functional to the intended Basotho readers.

Comment

It follows that the translator totally transformed the structure of the source text with a view to make it conform to the Sesotho linguistic as well as cultural context. It therefore implies that translation does not necessarily imply that it has to retain the same structure. Of importance, is that the same message that was intended for the source text readers should be presented in the manner that the target readers would perceive it as viable, culturally acceptable and linguistically accessible.

Text 10

Source Text: Kids who dice with death to school.

Target Text 1: Bana ba bapalang ka lefu ho ya sekolong

Target Text 2: Bana ba itellang lefu ho fihla sekolong.

As background statement, the source text (as paper derived from a newspaper) merely refers to kids who sacrifice their life to cross a river to go to school for the sake of education. For the translator to have succeeded to translate this text, it appears that he had two attempts out of which he needed to make a final choice of the most suitable and functional in terms of the Sesotho culture. In the case of the first translation option, the intended message appears to have been compromised. This is so because the translator decided to go word for word in this case. Being translated word for word, the translation loses its basic cultural context and as a result does not only become alien in terms of the meaning, but, it is presented outside the framework of the Basotho linguistic and cultural context.

In the second translation, the translator in terms of the presentation of the intended message followed the purpose of translation as suggested by Nord (2001). As a matter of fact, the translation tends to be acceptable and therefore functional to the intended target readership. If

the researcher again looks closely to the translation approach that the translator applied in the second translation option, the researcher then realises that the translator decided to transfer it completely to the target culture (domestication) whereas in the first instance, the translator tried to retain the source text culture in the translation (foreignisation) but resulted in the final product being non-communicable, non-functional and unacceptable.

Comment

From the above translation, the researcher learns that it is of utmost importance that prior to any translation process, the translator has to ascertain the purpose of translation. Once the purpose of translation as well as the culture within which the source text is presented has been determined, the translator will have the ability to proceed with the process. The translator would then choose the relevant translation method or approach that would be functional to express the determined purpose of translation. Of importance in all these, is that culture is the cornerstone in the transformation of the ST to the TT.

Text 11

Source Text : Now is the time. Lets' talk *rub-bish*!

Target Text 1: Jwale ke nako. Ha re bue bosawana

Target Text 2: Jwale ke nako. Ha re bue ka matlakala

In this case, the researcher realises the role that context plays in the translation process. In the analysis of the first translation option, the researcher recognises that translation is out of context and hence it sounds foreign, indeterminate and somehow unacceptable. Within the cultural context of the Basotho, TT1 does not conform to the linguistic and cultural expectations of the Basotho.

The translator erroneously translated the source text outside the intended purpose. It tends to be a meaningless utterance that remains alien to the target readers. Furthermore, the researcher realises that the translator decided on word for word translation and as a result the translation resulted in being a *translationese* that identifies itself as culturally challenging and unacceptable to the intended target group.

In the second translation option, the translation happens to have been well-informed about the purpose of translation. Within the context of the correct purpose, the translator finally produced an appropriate and a meaningful translation that distinguishes itself as culturally acceptable and accessible. At both the linguistic as well as the cultural level, the TT2 appears to be functional and communicable to the target group.

Text 12

Source Text: Do everything in my powers to succeed

Target Text 1: Etsa sohle se matleng a ka ho atleha

Target Text 2: Etsa ka matla ohle ho atleha

The text is merely a common English saying that implies that one would try at all costs to succeed. The manner in which the language is used is relevant to the source culture but not necessarily so in Sesotho language.

It is for this purpose that the translator has to make a choice as to whether he/she retains the source culture introduced by the author or whether he/she introduces the readers' target culture. In TT1 the translator does not appear to have satisfied the purpose of translation and therefore translated outside the intended message embedded in the translation purpose. It is for this reason that the final product tends to be non-functional to the Basotho readership. The first translation option (TT1) seems meaningless as it is structured in such a way that it emulates the source text structures but sacrifices the underlying message that needs to be communicated to the target group.

In the case of the second translation option (TT2), the translator completely translated the source text in such a way that it fits the Basotho linguistic and cultural context. In this way, the translation eventually appears to be the second origin and tends to be quite accessible to the Basotho target readership.

Comment

Looking at the two translation options (TT1 and TT2) above, the researcher has a reason to believe that the purpose and culture of translation is quite significant as also maintained by Wierzbicka (1997). Primarily, culture produces the context within which the source text has to be translated. Of importance, is to note that knowing the purpose and culture of translation

will serve as the guiding principle in order to finally produce a meaningful translation that would be functionally acceptable to the intended readership.

The Second Component of Text Analysis

As the second component of this paper, the researcher presents a long source text with a view to highlight the significance of the purpose and culture in translation as a result of which the establishment of the relevant text type as well as the choice of appropriate translation method would be made.

The text is a technical text derived from a local newspaper in the Free State Province in South Africa. The translator has made text analysis prior the actual translation process and produced the translation presented as below:

The text is translated from English to Sesotho:

Text derived from *The Weekly Free State Province* 21-28 June 2013:

English Source Text

According to the report, this is because people do not always think about these children or understand what they need. Children and young people with disabilities often do not get the help they need to stay healthy.

"All children need good food, water, toilets they can use. Violence happens more to children with disabilities than other children," states the report. There are over two million people living with disabilities in South Africa. On the other hand, the Casual Day Welfare Organisation estimates that 3.5 million people are disabled in the country.

Sesotho Target text

Ho ya ka pehelo, hona ke hobane batho kamehla ba ne ba sa nahane ka bana bana kapa ba sa tsebe seo ba se hlohang. Bana le batjha ba holofetseng hangata ha ba fumane thuso eo ba e hlohang ho phela hantle ba kwenne.

Pehelo e beha hore bana bohle ba batla dijo tse lokileng, metsi, matlwana ao ba ka a sebedisang. Bana ba holofetseng ba hlekefetswa haholwanyane ho feta bana ba bang. Ho na le batho ba fetang dimiliyone tse pedi ba holofetseng mona Afrika Borwa. Ka lehla-kore le leng, Mokgatlo wa Boiketlo wa Letsat-

si la Meteno ya Bolokolohi o lekanya hore batho ba dimiliyone tse 3.5 ba holofetse naheng ena.

The researcher made an integration of domestication and foreignisation approaches in order to deal with cultural issues in the given source text. The culture specific aspects have been totally transformed into the Sesotho cultural situation. On the other side of the coin, some aspects are contextualised within the very source text culture. It therefore implies that the translator produced a "hybrid" translation.

Landers (2001:55) states that cultural transference presented through adaptation is less "functional" than a translation. This indicates the translator's free choice to try to produce an accessible and functional translation.

The social situations within which the contemporary Basotho operate, is such that it is no wonder to have a "hybrid" translation. This kind of end-product clearly reflects on the relationship of the source and the target readers in South African communities. The researcher reflects through translation that translation is a cultural and social phenomenon that encompasses a diversity of cultures that are linked together.

RESULTS

Sesotho translated texts out of their specific socio-cultural context result in *translationese* (meaningless translations) that are culturally unacceptable to the target group. English source texts that are translated with proper consideration of the socio-cultural context and other significant dimensions (such as traditions and linguistic competence of the targeted readership) end up as quality translation. The context determines the effectiveness of translation as the end product its functionality.

Newmark (1991:8) moves from the premise that words encoding cultural information are difficult to translate since they involve cultural knowledge and a cultural background. It is precisely at this juncture when the translator has to choose the method or strategy that will eventually yield the translation that 'talks' to the cultural interests of the target group.

Literal translation may not fully render the meaning of culture bound words because they do not have the same semantic range in the source and the target languages. Difficulties in

the translation of culture-bound concepts result from a number of linguistic phenomena, including the different semantic range of the cultural words in the source and the target languages; the absence of the cultural concept in the target language; the loss of meaning and the metaphorical meaning conveyed by many cultural words or expressions.

It appears that Sesotho language is effective to express whatever thought(s) that can be initiated through the English source language. It is not quite true that English is as vastly developed as Sesotho language can even fail to express what is expressed in English.

In other words, it is not necessarily the level of development of a language that affords the language the capacity to express the effective and functional meaning, but, of importance, the socio-cultural context within which the text is translated.

DISCUSSION

In the researcher's discussion of the analysis of all the source texts, there are quite a number of observations that can be cited. The researcher intends to focus only on the following with a view to illuminate the role of culture in translation:

With reference to the translation of text 8, the researcher realises that direct speech in English becomes reported or indirect speech in Sesotho language. However, the meaning or message remains the same. It is only that the method of articulation is different only to cover the cultural and linguistic interests of the target readership.

The immediacy effect that is embedded in the English source text in terms of direct speech is adapted to the Sesotho language situation where it merely becomes reported and construed to reflect on the past.

With reference to the translation of text 2 above, the use of a culture specific word and the whole concept of "Casual Day" does not surface within the philosophy of life of a Mosotho and his socio-cultural perspective. It then poses a translation problem. The solution that possibly could be applied to translate such a culture-specific concept, happens to be through explanation. Long explanations or descriptions enshrined in Sesotho translation result in Sesotho translations or target texts being longer

and more comprehensive than in the English source text(s). Possibly, such descriptions eventually result in over-translations that may or may not be functional in the interpretation of the intended message in the source text.

It therefore means explanations and descriptions are inherent features of Sesotho language. However, the paper observed that they should be used moderately, otherwise, they cause over-translations or unnecessary explicitations.

With reference to texts 5, 6 and 11, the researcher discussed texts with linguistic, socio-linguistic and cultural barriers. Linguistic, socio-linguistic and cultural aspects embedded in the source text sometimes serve as barriers for a meaningful, accessible and functional translation to take place. Such problems are usually encountered in the translation of English texts to Sesotho language. In the context of this paper, such problems were identified and analysed within the functionalist theoretical framework and matched against the target Sesotho culture.

With reference to texts 4, 6 and a long text in the second component of our discussion, the results reflect and reiterate the fact that translation is not only a linguistic transference, but, of importance, a cultural transference. In these texts, it is obvious that language and culture are inseparable and that every text exist within a specific socio-cultural context.

CONCLUSION

The paper has managed to demonstrate the influence of culture in the translation process of the various texts that have been analysed in this work. Indeed, the researcher has tried to provide the evidence to the fact that the role of culture has been applied minimally in Sesotho translation.

In some of the analysed texts in this work, it has been noticed that some of the source texts were translated word for word. The researcher identified the relevant translation options in the case where two or more translation options were provided. In this way, the researcher realises that the translator is expected to make meaningful choices that will lead to a culturally acceptable and linguistically accessible translation.

Culture has identified itself as a central and a vital feature in translation. In the case where translation is shown to lack understanding and mastery of the source text culture, it follows that

translators failed to produce meaningful translations. As a matter of fact, we can then conclude that translation requires knowledge of both the source text and the target text culture.

Any misinterpretation of the cultural aspect of the translated text, as maintains, influences the text to finally produce an unacceptable translation in terms of the expectations of target readers. Translations such as these are *translationese* and are judged from their cultural perspective.

In this paper, the researcher has effectively demonstrated (in the analysis of the selected texts), that culture is an inherent feature of translation. With this point as backdrop, it is therefore incumbent upon the translator to effectively translate the text within its relevant cultural context.

The role of culture in Sesotho translations has been clearly demonstrated in this work. The theory of functionalism with its particular emphasis on purpose (*skopos*) and function has been efficiently applied to unfold the role of culture in the translation process. This kind of translation process culminates in a meaningful, reader-friendly and accessible translation as end-product.

In the analysis of the various texts, it has been clear that every text aims at a specific purpose (*skopos*). The translator managed competently and consistently to express the targeted purpose within the framework of the specified theory of functionalism. The researcher can then conclude at this stage that a culturally acceptable text is the one that reaches the targeted purpose and also operate within its relevant target text cultural context.

Many words of a language have a cultural referent that is culture specific to a speech community. The meaning of culturally marked words is often difficult to grasp without some cultural knowledge and poses translation problems, particularly when words are associated with cultural domains.

Translation is observed in this paper as a “re-coding” or a change of surface structure in representation of the deep structure underlying it. Words serve as an effective tool that reflects the author’s attitude, beliefs and his points of view. The paper has clearly demonstrated that language expresses cultural reality. This is presumably the reason that influenced the perception that language is essentially rooted in the

reality of the culture and that it cannot be explained without constant reference to these broader contexts of verbal utterance.” In all the analysed source texts, it is obvious that culture plays a prominent role to support the translation process to succeed.

It is also clear in this paper that the possibility of a meaningful and accessible translation depends on how deep the source text is embedded in the culture. The more source text oriented a translation is, the more challenging or difficult it becomes to translate it. The deeper a text is embedded in its culture, the more indeterminate and somehow difficult it is to work on.

The translator should take into account the purpose of the translation in translating the culturally-bound words or expressions. The paper reflected some of the basic observations presented as Sapir-Whorf hypothesis that language can only be interpreted within a culture. No two languages can be the worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different cultures.

Of importance is that the various texts analysed in this work were translated to express the relevance of the socio-linguistic as well as the socio-cultural context of the translation as the end-product. Finally, the paper sensitised readers about the necessity of prior translation analysis with a view to establish the cultural context within which it is based.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the above analysis and discussions, the researcher has come out with the following recommendations to be taken into consideration by both the budding as well as the professional translators:

Never divorce the text from its basic socio-cultural context. The demise of translation in South Africa is caused by ignorance on the significance of the cultural context of some of the Sesotho translated texts. Ideally, the researcher in this paper suggests that the cultural context has to be determined prior the translation process.

Refrain from a quick use of a dictionary in translating from one language to another as concepts in a dictionary are out of context and may not necessarily be functional to express the intended message. The intended message can only be communicable and functional to the intended target group within its cultural context.

Language and culture are closely related and both these aspects should at all times be considered during the translation process. It then implies that the interconnectedness between language and culture as inseparable entities should be taken into consideration during the translation process.

Back-translation should not necessarily be encouraged as it does not justify the competence of the translator. The translator feels incapacitated to express his knowledge and his application of his free choices. Forward translation is encouraged especially on matters that relate to translating within a particular cultural context.

Finally, the time has come that both budding and skilled translators should acknowledge the fact that translation is power. Badly formulated translations are a set-back on the social development of a specific society. On the other hand, good translations capacitate and empower target readers linguistically and socio-culturally.

Therefore, the time has come that translation among Africans, in general, and Sesotho translators, in particular; should promote their translation skills by embedding their translations

within the relevant socio-cultural context for their translations to be culturally acceptable and linguistically accessible.

REFERENCES

- Baker M 2000. *In Other Words*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bassnett S 1991. *Translation Studies*. London: Routledge.
- Gentzler E 2001. *Contemporary Translation Theories*. 2nd Edition. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- James K 2002. Cultural implications for translation. *Translation Journal*. VI: 4.
- Katan D 1999. *Translating Cultures*. Manchester: St Jerome Publishing.
- Landers C E 2001. *Literary Translation*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- Newmark P 1988. *A Textbook on Translation*. New York: Prentice Hall.
- Newmark P 1991. *About Translation*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Nida E 1995. Principles of correspondence. In: L Venuti (Ed.): *The Translation Studies Reader*. London: Routledge.
- Nord C 2001. *Translating as a Purposeful Activity: Functional Approaches Explained*. Manchester: St Jerome.
- Venuti L 2000. *The Translation Studies Reader*. London: Routledge.
- Wierzbicka A 1997. *Understanding Cultures through their Key Words*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.