

Optimality in Sesotho Translation

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*

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ABSTRACT Sesotho translators sometimes fall short to express optimally acceptable translations. The objective of this paper is therefore to demonstrate the translator's role in constituting an optimally and culturally acceptable translation. In terms of the optimality theory, the translator has to deal effectively and efficiently with the emerging translation challenges. Translation identifies itself as a decision-making process. The translator has to undertake conscious decisions throughout the translation process to meet the needs of his target readership. With a view to develop a meaningful translation, decisions should be based on identified variables and ordered in a particular sequence. The results in this paper prove that failure to deal with the constraints effectively may eventually culminate in the production of a translation of poor quality. It may, perhaps, even operate against the loyalty principle towards the intended target readership. Otherwise, optimality in translation is based on the premise that a good translation is associated with good translator's decisions regarding the text type, intended target readers, the context and the purpose of translation. It is only in this context that a functionally and culturally acceptable translation is delivered. Such an optimal translation is socially expected to be linguistically accessible to its intended readers. The paper suggests strong recommendations on the part of Sesotho translators to mind taking meaningful decisions so as to ensure that they produce optimal Sesotho translations.

INTRODUCTION

Translation identifies itself as a constraint-driven process. The constraints that affect the translator can arise from the text itself, the language, the field from which the source text (ST) is derived or even the culture. Darwish (2004) defines a translation constraint as:

"... any factor in the translation process that limits the realisation of an optimally approximated translation".

The constraints pressurise the translator to act and to make meaningful choices in order to realise optimality in translation. In most of the Sesotho translations, our translators sometimes fail to deal with the challenging constraints effectively. Lefevere (2006) contends that there are challenges in the transfer process as embedded within the translation constraints as he states that:

"there is always a context in which translation takes place, always a history from which a text emerges and into which a text is transposed."

The paper demonstrates the role of decision-making in Sesotho translation. The results reflect strict correspondence between good decision-making and the ultimate production of an optimally functional translation. In the same

vein, the opposite is also true in the sense that poor decision-making in dealing with the translation constraints breeds less acceptable translations. Such low quality translations are normally characterised by Nord (2002) as circumventing their obligation to express loyalty to the target group they are meant to serve. It is for this reason that Jumpselt (2002) considers translation as a decision-making process involving choice between variables. As a result, it sometimes influence the translation as the end-product to be poorly presented and somewhat tend to be unacceptable. Ideally, the translator has to deal with the arising translation constraints in such a manner that eventually he would present a culturally acceptable and a linguistically accessible product. The notion of constraints and the conditions under which translation decisions are made within a translation system at the translator level remains poorly understood and largely neglected in translation studies today. Translators seem to have a narrow view of these constraints and do not judge them contextually and holistically in understanding the effects of decision-making. Their views are too sketchy instead of being all-inclusive. These particular contentions are to be reflected in this paper with a view to put Sesotho translation into its proper perspective.

Aims of the Study

As indicated in the introduction, Sesotho translators sometimes operate erroneously, particularly at the level of the translation process when dealing with the translation constraints. In the light of the above, it is therefore the aim of this paper to discuss the problems that Sesotho translators encounter and how they manage to tackle them to produce successful translations. Successful translation will be understood as translation that maintains optimality. Optimality in the Collins Concise Dictionary (2001) is defined as:

“the most favourable point, degree or amount of something for obtaining a given result. It is the best result obtainable under specific conditions.”

The paper will also demonstrate the various ways in which the translator deals with the linguistic, contextual as well as the cultural constraints. As also part of the objective of this paper, the researcher intends to reflect a binding relationship between decision-making in translation and the formulation of an optimal translation.

There are many decisions that the translator is normally faced with in the translation process, but, of importance is that good decisions have to be made for optimally and culturally acceptable translations to be finally delivered. In this regard, Chesterman (1997) moves from the premise that the translator's good decision-making is dependent on his cognitive status and this also influence the cognitive element of translation as one of the basic characteristics or memes of translation. Neubert (1991:25) shares the same sentiments in showing the necessity of the translator's right frame of mind particularly in conscious decisions during the translation process as he propounds that:

“It is commonly believed that translation process is meanwhile a complex thinking process.”

It is imperative in this paper to reflect the relationship between language and culture in order to express the optimality in Sesotho translation. As a matter of necessity and in relation to the above statement, Schaffner (1995:1) opines that:

“Language is part of culture, and in fact it is the most complex set of habits that any culture exhibits. Language reflects the culture, and

in many respects constitutes a model of the culture.”

With the above opinion as background, the paper proposes that translation is not only a linguistic but also a cultural phenomenon. Finally, the paper reflects the functionalist view that the degree of loyalty displayed by the translator towards his target readership and the fidelity principle that the translation maintains is of cardinal importance to develop an optimally acceptable and linguistically accessible translation as the intended end-product.

Literature Review

The optimality theory has been popularised by Darwish (1999) in his theory of constraints in translation. Perspectives on optimality theory have been taken further by the various scholars such as Jumpelt (1961), Holmes (1974), Levy (1967) as well as Toury (1985). These scholars maintain somewhat different views but only agree on one common contention, namely, that decision making is the backbone of translation. They collectively agree that translation presupposes challenges. It is therefore incumbent upon the translator to apply the relevant strategies to solve the problems encountered.

In the analysis of the optimality theory, Jumpelt (2002) opines that translation deals with decision making in order to make optimally relevant choices between variables. In this paper, the researcher endeavours to demonstrate the role of different variables in the production of an acceptable translation. Levy (1967) maintains the same view as Jumpelt even though he takes it further by approaching it from the perspective of the game theory. In the same way, Holmes (1974) discusses the concept of optimality by presenting the concept of a hierarchical system of correspondences in translation decision making.

The modern contemporary views by translation critics such as Toury (1985), Wilss (1994) and Lorsch (1995) also confirm the contention that decision-making is central in the translation process. In a more general sense, the scholars in both the earlier as well as the modern periods, define the optimality theory as decision making and as the basis of translation. It is also worth to observe that these scholars accept translation as a norm-governed behaviour and finally approach translation from the socio-cultural per-

spective. They also agree that decision-making serves as a quality assurance mechanism leading to an optimal translation.

METHODS (*MODUS OPERANDI*)

The paper was supposed to be discussed within the context of the macro textual level and perhaps brought down to the micro textual level. In doing so, the researcher opines that it would be prudent to show how optimality relates to a Sesotho text at both levels. However, within the parameters of the writing of this particular paper, the researcher decided to continue discussions only on the texts at micro level. It should not be construed that translation operates only at micro syntactic textual level.

Translation does operate beyond word or sentence level. The basic purpose underlying this choice is to demonstrate that optimality caters for all the texts derived from the various fields. It is for this reason that texts to be analysed in this paper would be derived from the various fields; such as religion, language, culture, journalism, to mention only a few.

Our discussion will be based on the optimality theory as propounded by Darwish (2004) that translation is a continuous process that is affected by the degree of indeterminacy a source language text might present. This conception would also be supported with thoughts from the various scholars as already specified in the literature review. In all the texts selected, the researcher is interested in the translator's decision making in selected texts to realise the optimal translation. The ambition of the translator should always be to satisfy the needs of the target group he translates for.

The researcher considers the role of culture, context, text type, purpose of translation, as translation variables in this work, as starting points of prime importance. The analysis of the selected texts is performed with the understanding that making good decisions serves as the backbone of translation. With this contention as the backdrop, Gutt (2000) is of the view that:

"Whatever decision the translator reaches is based on his intuitions or beliefs about what is relevant to his audience (target group)."

In other words, there is no way that an optimal translation can be identified among the available translation options without considering the power of decision-making in translation.

As part of the method to be applied and as a matter of principle, the constraints (external and internal) must be removed in order to generate alternatives that achieve the objectives of the translation process within a defined scope, parameters and strategies. The researcher will randomly select any relevant text to be analysed, check for linguistic and cultural constraints and determine the relevant strategy for application. In other words, the analysis will be presented in such a manner that the type of text, context, the target group and other variables would be identified. The discussion focuses on the role of these variables and their effect on optimality in translation.

As indicated before, constraints can either be external or internal but within the scope of this paper only the internal constraints will be focused. In a nutshell, the external constraints are those that relate to the structural outlook of the source text whereas the internal are those that are directed primarily at the internal linguistic and cultural content of the text. The latter are the variables that we hope to deal with at the level of the translation process.

As background to the understanding of this presentation, the researcher intends to align this paper with the propositions made by Darwish (2004) in his optimality theory of translation. Darwish (2004) opines that decision-making is of cardinal importance in dealing with the challenges of the translation constraints. As a matter of necessity, an optimal translation should be construed as preserving the cultural expectations and the social pursuits of its target readership.

Optimality theory therefore deals with the dynamics of decision-making at the level of the translation process. It focuses more to the how (the strategy) the translator would apply to articulate the language in the manner that the reading public would finally accept it as culturally acceptable and linguistically accessible.

OPERATIONALISATION

Let us now pause a bit and actually enter into the world of choices, the world of decision-making, the world of translation itself as suggested by Darwish (2004) – and perhaps demonstrate how within the parameters of the Sesotho language it applies. Holmes (1974) discusses the concept of a hierarchical system of

correspondences in translation decision-making. We remind ourselves that in the opinion of Nord (1997) the translator should first compare the ST (source text) and TT (target text) profiles defined in the commission, such as the intended text function and the addressees, to determine where the two texts may diverge before starting the translation process. Gutt (2000) maintains that:

“Whatever decision the translator reaches is based on his intuitions or beliefs about what is relevant to his audience (target group).”

In order to demonstrate the role of decision-making in translation, as a reaction to the translation constraints, the researcher decided to use the following texts (derived from the various fields):

Text 1

ST: God said; “Let us make people in our image, to be like ourselves.” And the Lord God formed a man’s body from the dust of the ground and breathed into it the breath of life. And the man became a living person.

TT: *Morena Modimo a re: A re bopeng motho ka sebopeho sa Oona. Morena Modimo a bopa motho ka lerole le tswang mobung, ka dinkong tsa hae a budulela moya wa bophelo, mme motho ya eba sebopuwa se phelang.*

The above text is derived from the English and Sesotho children bible. In the analysis of the above text with reference to the premise from which Darwish (2004) moves, we realise the following:

Comment

Firstly, the translator is charged with the responsibility of translating for the children (not adults). He then decided to pitch the language standard at the level that would be suitable for the children. The language used is simply common, everyday language usage and not typical Bible language meant for adults. Munday (2001) believes that text-processing has to do with trying to find out what happens in the mind of the translator. It refers to the translator’s choice of an optimal translation.

That the translation communicates loyal information, though it does not necessarily characterises itself as a word for word translation. According to Nord’s loyalty principle, the

translation in this case appears to be of optimal and cultural acceptability.

Unlike in the case of the same text being directed to adults (as in the original Sesotho translated Bible), this translation becomes more comprehensive and involves few Bible language complexities. This particular translation is very concise as it is meant for children. We therefore realise the effects of making a good decision to make up for the language interests of your target group. This is where the whole issue of functionality of the text as suggested by Nord (1997) is of cardinal importance in the optimality in Sesotho translation.

Text 2

ST: It rains cats and dogs

TT1: *Pula e na ka dikatse le dintja*

TT2: *Pula e na haholo*

TT3: *Pula e na ditlwebelele*

TT4: *Ho na pula ya matlopotlopo*

The given source text is actually an English idiomatic expression that merely means that it rains heavily. As part of the discussions around the socio-cultural context of the ST, the researcher endeavoured to establish the origin of the idiomatic expression. The translator considered the original background information that led to this particular idiomatic expression (applied as the source text) that has to be translated and analysed. The researcher provides a background information on which the above idiomatic expression is derived as follows:

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

In the analysis of this text and in relation to the understanding of the role of decision-mak-

ing in translation, we can comment on the following:

In the first instance, the translator needed to verify the context within which the text is presented. The reason is simply to ensure that the process is performed within its relevant socio-cultural context. The text merely communicates information that it rains heavily.

Establishing the text type had been the first choice the translator had to make. In this case, the text obviously appears to be an idiomatic expression;

As the second choice, the translator had to make a decision whether to translate it word for word, probably to try to maintain the same structural outlook as in the ST. The translator decided that if he intends to keep to the same linguistic format, he would then sacrifice the overall intended message of the text (as in TT1). In other words, the message would be distorted and tend to be less acceptable;

The translator then needed to make another decision. He then decided to translate it as TT2 and TT3. The translation option (TT2) is a simple declarative statement that is intended to impart information, whereas TT3 is a figurative expression. The translator finally decided on TT3 to match the style of the ST as figurative expression, but at the same time retaining the same logical meaning in terms of the intended message.

At the end of all these decision-making activities, the translator managed to produce the optimal translation that characterises itself as culturally acceptable and linguistically accessible as in TT3 “*Pula e na ditlwebelele*” meaning that “it rains heavily”. It is an optimal version because it captures both the semantic and the structural features relevant to the source text. Above all, this translation option is quite functional and culturally relevant to the target readership. Within the context of optimality theory of translation, the final product qualifies to satisfy the language and cultural expectations of its intended target group.

Text 3

ST: Right of admission reserved

TT1: *Tokelo ya ho kena e babaletswe*

TT2: *Tokelo ya ho kena e na le moedi*

Regarding the context underlying this text, this is commonly known as a notice that is nor-

mally put at the entrances of most of the public centres. The idea here is to notify people about the restricted level of authorisation of entrance at a specific public place. As we indicated before, the role of the translator is to make a proper choice of a suitable translation strategy to deal with the emerging constraints before commencing with the actual translation process.

Comment

In the analysis of the above text, the researcher realises that the translator needs to make an ultimate decision that would be purposeful and acceptable to the target group. However, the following can be identified in the translation options:

The first translation option does not necessarily communicate the same message communicated by the source text. According to Baker (2001), the translator applied a word for word approach. We realise that the translator did not make a suitable choice of the translation strategy in order to faithfully express the same source text message. In the same vein, the translator could perhaps have not operated within the socio-cultural context of the source text. It can therefore not be said to be an optimal choice to ‘talk’ to the language interests as well as the cultural aspects of the target readers.

The second translation option identifies itself as the best choice as it captures effectively the message communicated in the source text. In this case we realise that knowing the socio-cultural context of the source text is an important and central variable around which the translation process becomes possible.

Text 4

ST: Kids who dice with death to school.

TT1: *Bana ba bapalang ka lefu ho ya sekolong*

TT2: *Bana ba itellang lefu ho fihla sekolong.*

As background statement, the source text is a paper derived from a newspaper paper and it merely refers to kids who sacrifice their life to cross a river to go to school to acquire education. The researcher reminds readers that translation (including Sesotho translation) is a decision-making process. With this kind of understanding as the backdrop, readers find another

instance where context plays a major role as a translation variable in the translation process.

For the translator to have succeeded in translating 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 translation in terms of the Sesotho culture. In the case of the first translation option, the intended message in the ST 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, the translation does not only become alien in terms of the meaning, but, it is presented outside the framework of the Basotho linguistic and cultural context. It is for this purpose that House (2001) makes a distinction between a source text oriented translation (covert) as well as the target based (overt) translation. In the interest of the intended readers, it was ideally for the translator to opt for the third option. It captures both the linguistic and the cultural aspects relevant to the target group.

In the second translation option, the translation is informed by the purpose of translation (as suggested by Nord (1997) to express the intended message. As a matter of fact, the translation tends to be acceptable and therefore functional to the intended target readership. If we again look closely to the translation approach that the translator applied in the second translation option, we realise that he 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 then it resulted in the final product being inaccessible and unacceptable to the target readers.

Comment

From the above translation, readers learn 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 strategy or approach that would be functional to express the determined purpose of translation. Of impor-

tance in all these, is that culture is the cornerstone in the transformation of the ST to the TT.

Text 5

ST: He lost his life in a car accident

TT1: *O lahlehetswe ke bophelo kotsing ya koloi*

TT2: *O hlokahetse kotsing ya koloi*

TT3: *O shwele kotsing ya koloi*

TT4: *O ile boyabatho kotsing ya koloi*

TT5: *O timetse kotsing ya koloi*

Based on a string of translation options for the given source text above, and within the context of translation as a decision-making activity; we realise that an optimal translation is the best result among the available possible options.

Comment

With regard to TT1, the translator decided to follow the same language structures as the source text. In other words, the TT1, according to Venuti (1995), seems to be source text-oriented and as such appears to be a *domestication* translation. However, in terms of the logic in the message communicated, this translation option does not appear to be optimal, acceptable and accessible to the Sesotho target readers as custodians of the language.

With reference to TT2, readers notice that the translator made a decision to seek for a better articulation of the same message in a more meaningful and acceptable manner. The socio-cultural background and his linguistic competence of the translator as a Mosotho, informs him to make such a decision. In terms of the philosophical and cultural history of the language speaker as well as his language ability as a Mosotho, it stands to reason that TT2 identifies itself as optimally and culturally acceptable and linguistically accessible than all the other options.

In the case of TT3, the translator will have to decide on the basis of the situation or place (where translation is made), but, of more importance, the nature of the target group he is translating for. It is normally unacceptable among the Basotho to talk of a person as having died as one would say in the case of an animal. There are specific instances where such an action word could be used but, it is not frequently used. In this case, we then realise that the translator is confronted with the cultural constraints. As a matter of necessity, the translator's decision is

based on his previous knowledge of the target group. It then appears that previous knowledge ensures inter-textuality in the production of an optimal translation.

In TT4, knowledge of the language competence of the target group serves as the guiding principle for the translator to make conscious translation decisions. In this sense, it then becomes obvious that translation option (TT4) may not be the translation that is optimally and culturally acceptable.

Concerning the translation option (TT5), it may not be decided upon as the optimal translation as it is not commonly used among the Basotho. Instead, it is commonly used among the Batswana. On this basis, it therefore cannot optimally satisfy the language expectations and the socio-cultural needs of the Basotho. This does not necessarily mean that it is an incorrect or ungrammatical Sesotho expression, but in relation to TT2, it tends not to be the optimal choice.

Text 6

ST: If wishes were horses, burgers would ride.

TT1: *Haeba ditakatso e ne e le dipere, bakopi ba ne ba tla palama.*

TT2: *Monokotshwai ha o butswa ho ya ka ditakatso tsa tshwene.*

The above translation options clearly show 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.

In TT1, the translator decided to translate it word for word. In this way, the translator decided also to retain the source text linguistic structure. In the same vein, it is obvious that TT1 is also presented within the parameters of a source text culture. It therefore becomes difficult for the target text readers to accept this kind of translation as the optimal choice as it does not fit both the target language as well as the target cultural context.

In TT2, the translator had to go for another translation possibility. It is for this reason that the translator apparently decided to change the source text completely so as to conform to the target Sesotho language and culture. In other words, the translator is completely taking read-

ers 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 embedding of the source text, the translator apparently thought that domestication could be an ideal approach to reduce the foreign features thereof.

Comment

The above translation shows that an ideal translation approach to deal with a culture specific text is to transform it completely to the world of the target culture. The idea behind this move is, as confirmed by Nord (2002), 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. Pym (1992) opines that the chosen translation would be optimal although he does not suggest how the decision is made. For that matter, the target text readers would not even realise that it is a translated text. This characterises a functional and a culturally acceptable translation.

RESULTS

In all of the texts that have been analysed, the researcher reiterates the thoughts of Darwish (2004) that if the information presented by the source is easier and clearer to grasp, it would also affect the translation process as such. A summary of the results in this work is based on different variables identified in all the texts analysed. The first report to be given is that the clearer the information in the source text, the easier and more decisive the matching and focusing process it becomes.

The constraints that had been dealt with are presented and briefly discussed in the next paragraph. The most significant variables that had

been identified and thoroughly discussed in this paper are summarised and captured as results in this work.

Text 1 : Target group

The most crucial aspect is to determine aspect is to determine the relevant target group so as to determine the accessible language that would be reader-friendly to be optimally acceptable to the target readers.

Text 2 : Text type

Identifying the text type ensures the style that the translator would apply so as to yield positive results as the final product.

Text 3 : Interpretation of the message

The correct interpretation of the intended message is quite important towards producing an optimal translation that would be loyal, faithful and acceptable to the target group.

Text 4 : Context

The context is central towards the production of an acceptable translation. Translation that is out of its relevant context tends to be rather confusing, less reader-friendly and not optimally acceptable to the target readers.

Text 5 : Culture

Language is embedded in culture. Language cannot be divorced from its socio-cultural context. Therefore, the cultural aspect in any linguistic utterance always surface.

Text 6 : Style

If the ST is presented as an idiomatic expression, the TT would ideally be optimally meaningful if presented as an idiomatic expression too.

In terms of the variables identified and analysed in this work, it confirms the fact that translation is indeed a decision-making process. It is also obvious in the analysis of the various texts that in order to produce an optimal translation, the translator has to make choices. The translator should also decide as to which strategy will

be the most relevant to be appropriated as the optimal method. However, readers would also realise that within the translation process, it is sometimes imperative that some variables be compromised in order to realise optimality in Sesotho translation.

DISCUSSION

After dealing with all the translation options that we have analysed, the paper has demonstrated that the translator is charged with the responsibility to make optimal choices so as to finally produce the optimal translation. The optimal translation identifies itself as meaningful, loyal and maintaining faithfulness to the source text from which it is derived. This is precisely the reason that informs McCarthy (2002) to hold the view that:

“Optimality Theory is often seen as a theory of relations (Relations between the ST and the TT). There is now general agreement among translation researchers that decision-making plays an important part in both the translator’s performance and the quality of translation product.”

Another observation that is clearly reflected in this work is that decision-making is both a limiting and delimiting factor in translation in that:

It restricts the choices available to the translator and sets direction and standard of the translation product;

It emphasises certain aspects and properties that are deemed important and deemphasises those that are less important in terms of function, purpose and the situationality of the translation product.

Toury (1995) did much to show the significance of decision-making as the backbone of translation. This implies that the translator has to calculate his chances of making a good choice among a number of options that he can apply. It shows also that a good choice justifies an optimal translation and presupposes acceptability and accessibility on the part of the target readers.

The paper has reflected on the availability of the constraints that need to be removed in terms of appropriate translation strategies. This view is confirmed by Darwin (1999) in his contention that:

“Translation is a process that is foiled by many constraints at different levels and vari-

ous stages. These constraints affect the perceived and desired quality of translation and dictate the choices and decisions the translator makes."

The observation cited above shows that there is a particular relationship between the translator's failure to deal with constraints and his realisation of an optimal translation. As a matter of necessity, Chesterman (1997) suggests that the decisions are made by means of a series of "strategies" in order to deal with textual constraints. In other words, if the translation constraints cannot be dealt with properly, then the resultant translation would not attain adequate optimality and acceptability on the part of the target readers.

CONCLUSION

Translators have an obligation to deal with the constraints and the various translation variables that they are faced with in order to produce optimal translations for the benefit of their respective target readers. In this paper, it is apparent that many of the pressing challenges and translation problems result from the divergence in cultural backgrounds between the target text and the source text readers. The paper has demonstrated that a skilled translator would deal effectively and efficiently with the constraints with a view to reach the purpose of translation, the intended message, the presentation embedded within the relevant socio-cultural context.

Translators that are not well-constructed are not conducive towards the development of the translation of the specific language community. The future prospects of African translations in general, and Sesotho translations in particular, are dependent on the vigilance of translators to be sensitive in dealing effectively and efficiently with the translation constraints. Whereas it is professional for the translator to be provided with the translation brief, translation can still be performed (without any brief), if translators can be sensitive to the cultural presuppositions, linguistic implications, text type, cultural context and, of course, other apparent constraints that are implied in the transfer of one language to another.

Finally, translation as a decision-making process has to operate on the translation variables for the translator to circumvent them and produce an optimal translation that distinguishes

itself as culturally acceptable and linguistically accessible to its intended target readers.

An optimal translation may not be the best translation option at all times and all places. It merely depends on the justification that the translator provides on the basis of decisions made. The principle that is crucial for the production of an optimal translation is ideally to identify the variables that are mostly relevant for the translation of the given text. This should be the starting point before any translation process can commence. Otherwise, dealing effectively with these variables serves as the basis for the realisation of the optimality in translation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In this paper, the researcher recommends that both the budding as well as the professional translators should take time to meticulously take decisions regarding the text type, the nature of the target group for whom the translation is intended, the context within which the text is based and the socio-cultural factors for both the source text and the target text.

It is also recommended that both the intra-textual as well as the inter-textual factors should be taken into a thorough consideration in the actualisation of the translation process. It is prudent to do so in order to establish coherence in the text (intra-textual references) as well as maintain and develop the optimal and the recognisable standard within the development of the Sesotho translation.

Optimality in Sesotho translation can be achieved if translators can put emphasis on the socio-cultural needs of the target readers (in terms of the loyalty principle in translation) but also be congruent and consistent in expressing the message communicated by the source text (the fidelity principle).

Based on the operationalization, observations and conclusions in this work, it would be prudent that henceforth translators should operate with the principle that choosing the best possible translation is the cornerstone of optimality theory approach. Without any doubt, the needs of target readers are crucial to determine the extent at which the translation is acceptable, optimal and accessible. The translational competence (on the part of the translator) serves as the ability to create a series of candi-

date translations (as we have seen in all the texts analysed) for a series of texts. Upon the production of the possible translations, the translators would then choose a target text quickly and justifiably from them.

Another principle of operation in translation that is strongly recommended is that if translation is a decision-making process, then it is also about compromise. It therefore means that the translator must decide what can be represented and what can be omitted. It is impossible to represent the features of the source text at once, and so some choices must be cautiously made.

Finally, the paper recommends that the current translation practices have to be re-contextualised. A meaningful approach is preferred where the translator has to make conscious translation decisions with a view to realise optimality in Sesotho translation.

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