

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE TRANSLATED LUVALE VERSION OF THE ZAMBIA NATIONAL ANTHEM

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Received 19 Feb.; Published 31 March 2018

ABSTRACT

This article critically analyses the translated version of the Zambia National Anthem, from English into Luvale, one of the 72 languages of Zambia. As Bassnet (1) indicates, “Translation involves far more than replacement of lexical and grammatical items between languages”. Critical examination of translated texts has often revealed that what the source language perceives as very important may not be considered as relevant in the target language. The translator ought therefore to be preoccupied with conveying the overall meaning of the source text. Critical discourse analysis theories provide the insights into semantic relations that exist between the source text (ST) and target text (TT). This study has attempted, through linguistic analysis of the source text, to establish existing semantic and formal equivalence relations between the Luvale translated version of the Zambia national anthem and the original English version. In analysing the English source text and Luvale target texts, this research work took into account both the macro and micro levels of text analysis. In addition to analysing linguistic and semantic relations between the English and the Luvale texts, this paper has also highlighted some cultural relations. The research discovered that modulation, omission, transposition, concision and other procedures were used. From the analysis, the translators of the Zambia national anthem, from English into Luvale, seem to agree with Bell (2) that “something is always lost in the process and translators can find themselves being accused of reproducing only part of the original and so betraying the author’s intentions”. It is for this reason that scholars like Munday (3) have argued that it is not always possible to maintain all the semantic and structural nuances of the source text.

Key words: Luvale version–Zambia national anthem–critical examination–textual analysis–semantic equivalence relations

1 INTRODUCTION

Zambia has been a unitary state since its independence in October 1964 and has had only one national anthem which is sung at official gatherings not only as a symbol of national identity and patriotism, but also as a symbol of liberation from colonial powers. The Zambia national anthem was translated from the official language (SL), English, into most of the seventy two vernacular languages found in the country. Marten and Kula (4) [4] explain that the local languages were “important for national political and ethnic identities”, and therefore needed to “be fully employed in the building of the nation and her national identity”, even though English was “seen as the only non-tribal alternative available to serve as a vehicle to national unity” (4), According to Venuti (5) “Translating is generally seen as a process of communicating the foreign text by establishing a relationship of identity or analogy with it”. The language used when singing the national anthem in Zambia is mostly determined by the geo-

graphical location as well as the nature of the gathering. This study has attempted to critically examine existing semantic and formal equivalence relations between the English version and Luvale version of the Zambia national anthem through text analysis. According to Nida (6), the message in the target language must be “tailored to the receptor’s linguistic needs and cultural expectations. As a matter of fact, a textual analysis of any translated text would show whether the translator opted for a literal or free translation and whether the translator managed to convey the source text message to the target audience. Bell (2) says that “either way, it seems that the translator cannot win”. Munday (3) adds that “it is impossible to preserve all the nuances of meaning and structure”. The “source and target texts may not only differ semantically but also in linguistic features as well as cultural disposition” as observed by Chishiba et al. (7) in their analysis of the English and Bemba versions of the Zambia national anthem. However, scholars like Newmark (8) often use such

expressions as “equivalent message, equivalent textual material, and similar, like, parallel, equal, identical, comparable, synonymous or analogous”. This article focused on the various strategies the translator(s) used during the translation process to produce comparable semantic and formal equivalence relations between English, the source language, and Luvale the target audience language. This paper is divided into the following sections: Introduction, Translation Processes, Objective of the Study, Methodology, Source and Target Texts, Critical analysis, Results and Conclusion.

1.1 TRANSLATION PROCESSES

Translation processes which some scholars have referred to as translation shifts or translation procedures have been defined by Nida and Taber (6) as “the smallest linguistic changes occurring in the translation of the source text (ST) into target text (TT)”. They refer to methods or strategies that are applied by translators in their quest to achieve semantic or formal equivalence as they transfer elements of meaning from the Source Text to the Target Text. Vinay and Darbelnet (9) proposed two strategies (methods) and seven procedures, namely, ‘direct translation’ and ‘oblique translation’. Direct translation includes borrowing (loan words), calque and literal translation. Unlike oblique translation, direct translation does not involve any stylistic procedures. Oblique translation encompasses transposition, modulation, equivalence and adaptation. Research in the field of translation studies has shown that it is possible for the translator(s) to use multiple translation procedures to translate one text (5). Consequently, it is not unusual to find translated texts that have been produced as a result of a cluster of procedures. Furthermore, translation procedures are employed by translators in order to achieve semantic or formal equivalence between the Source Language and Target Language in the translation process. Despite the vast number of translation procedures that exists, the current study was limited to exploring only those that were used by the translator(s) of the Zambia national anthem original English version into Luvale in their attempt to conform to the stylistic demands and grammatical conventions of the two languages. According to Baker (10), a translator will, first of all, “need to start by decoding the units and structures of the source text which carry the meaning. Katharina Reiss (11) and cited by Hermans (12) identifies only three different types in relation to their functions in language. She explains that the first category of texts is meant to convey information; the second is used for self-expression, whereas the third type of texts appeal to someone to do something. The proponents of Skopos theory would argue that every translation is written for a purpose (13).

2 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study was primarily to establish, through textual analysis, whether the content and style of the original text was preserved in the translated Luvale text. The second objective was to establish, as far as possible, the levels of semantic and formal relations between the English source text and the Luvale target text of the Zambia National Anthem at both macro and micro levels.

3 METHODOLOGY

The present study employed a comparative text analysis methodology, and is framed within the descriptive translation studies theory (DTS) which has been present on the translation studies field since the 1970s. DTS takes much of its impetus from the work of Even-Zohar’s and his polysystem theory (14). In view of this, quantitative approach was used to complement the qualitative approach because the study sought to identify and quantify the procedures used in an attempt to establish the level(s) of semantic and formal equivalence relations between the Zambia national anthem in English and the Zambia national anthem in Luvale. In this regard, therefore, the English version of the Zambia national anthem shall be referred to as the source text (ST) and the Language will be referred to as source Language (SL); while the product shall be referred to as target text (TT) and the Language as target language (TL). Using the quantitative approach, the results of the analysis will be tabulated to show the frequency with which the translator(s) of the TT employed the translation procedures settled for.

4 SOURCE AND TARGET TEXTS

4.1 Zambia National Anthem in English

4.1.1 Stanza 1

Stand and sing for Zambia, proud and free,
Land of work and joy in unity,
Victors in the struggle for the right,
We have won freedom’s fight.
All one, strong and free.

4.1.2 Stanza 2

Africa is our own motherland,
Fashioned with and blessed by God’s good hand,
Let us all her people join as one,
Brothers under the sun.
All one, strong and free.

4.1.3 Stanza 3

One land and one nation is our cry,
Dignity and peace ’neath Zambia’s sky,
Like our noble eagle in its flight,
Zambia, praise to thee.
All one, strong and free.

4.1.4 Chorus

Praise be to God,
Praise be, praise be, praise be,
Bless our great nation,
Zambia, Zambia, Zambia.
Free men we stand
Under the flag of our land.
Zambia, praise to thee!
All one, strong and free.

4.2 Zambia National Anthem in Luvale

4.2.1 Stanza 1

Twimbenu nakwalissa Zambia
Tuzachile hamwe nangolo,
Tunalu makhava osena,
Hitunasokoka,
Tulinunge mwose.

4.2.2 Stanza 2

Africa hilifuchi lyetu,
Vatuhana kuli Kalunga,
Twivwasanenu tuvosenana,
Tuzachile hamwe,
Tulinunge mwose.

4.2.3 Stanza 3

Kuunda chiyangililenga,
Mumiyachi yose mu Zambia,
Nge kwaze mwatelemba mwilu,
Alisenu Zambia,
Tulinunge mwose.

4.2.4 Chorus

Lemesenu,
Thengi, thengi, yetu,
Natuhane,
Zambia, Zambia, Zambia,
Twasokoka,
Twemana na lipandelo,
Alisenu Zambia,
Tulinunge mwose,

5 CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE LUVALE VERSION

The Luvale version of the Zambia national anthem has tried as faithfully as possible to reflect the original English text. However, In the translation of line one, some variations can be noted. For example, while the English version has “Stand and sing of Zambia proud and free”, the Luvale version has “twimbenu nakwalisa Zambia” which can be translated as “let us sing and praise Zambia”. The word “Zambia has been borrowed from English without any modification. Despite the two versions acknowledging the idea of ‘singing’, the Luvale version does not reflect the aspect of standing. Hence, the verb ‘stand’ and the phrase ‘proud and free’ are not captured in the translation. Clearly, there is ellipsis which Munday (3) describes as a replacement of an item by nothing. In other words, there is deletion which according to Baker (10) refers to “the omission of a lexical item due to grammatical or semantic patterns of the receptor language”. Deletion was used because of cultural gap between English and Luvale. The phrase ‘stand and sing of’ is apparently a cultural symbol of victory for the British people since the Napoleonic wars. Victory in the Luvale culture was accompanied by ululations, jumping and dancing.

The second line of stanza one of the English version “Land of work and joy in unity” has been translated into Luvale as “tuzachilehamwe mangolo” (let us work together with strength). The words land and joy have been omitted in Luvale. The aspect of joy is incorporated in ‘hamwe’ (together), implying that people cannot work together in unity if they are not happy. This could also be considered as an instance of structural adjustment taking place. Structural adjustment is another strategy used to achieve equivalence between the source language and the target language. In Line three of stanza 1, the English version reads “victors in the struggle for the right”, but the Luvale version says “tunalu mukhavaosena” literally meaning “we have fought all the struggles”. The aspect of victors has not explicitly been captured in the Target text, the Luvale translated version. This could possibly be due to the fact that the Luvale language version already has connotations of victory.

The fourth line of stanza 1 brings out the strategies of adaptation, borrowing and omission. Whereas the Source English text has “We’ve won freedom’s fight”, the Luvale text says “hitunasokola” translated as “now we are free”. Despite adaptation and borrowing being at play, there seems to be a gap in the target text. The English sentence ‘we’ve won freedom’s fight’ explicitly shows the kind of fight that resulted into victory while the Luvale version simply states that ‘now we are free’. The question is: free from what? The target text has not only omitted the aspect of fighting but also the aspect of what was fought for to claim the freedom. While one might argue in favour of the transposition procedure, which involves replacing one word category with another without changing the meaning of the text (9), the translated text “hitunasokola” cannot in this case be said to be the correct and full representation of the English phrase “we have won freedom’s fight”, neither semantically nor structurally.

There is disparity between line 5 of stanza one in the English version and Line five of the Luvale text. The English phrase ‘all one, strong and free’ is not exactly the same as the translated TT ‘tulinunge mwose (let’s unite in everything)’. As can be seen in the two phrases of the ST and TT, there is no mention of strong and free in the TT. Adaptation as well as modulation procedures have been used, in the Target Text. Modulation involves changing the form of the message through a change in perspective. An alteration of this kind may be required in contexts where a literal or transposed translation still sounds unidiomatic or awkward in the TL, despite being a grammatically correct utterance.

In the second stanza of the national anthem, the content of the Target Text is literally the same as that of the Source Text. ‘Africa is our own motherland’ in English and ‘Africa hilifuchi lyetu’ (Africa is our motherland) in the Luvale version. The translator used the literal translation procedure. Literal translation, which is also referred to as word for word translation, relies on the direct transfer of a text from the SL into a grammatical and meaningful text in the TL. Using this procedure, the translator focuses predominantly on adhering to the linguistic rules of the target language (Walinski, 2015). Adaptation and borrowing are again seen at play as translation procedures in the second line of the second stanza in the Luvale translation. The translator simply writes ‘vatuhana kuli kalunga’ (given to us by God) against the ST (English) ‘fashioned with and blessed by God’s good hand’. While both phrases acknowledge Africa

as given by God, the TT has not fully captured some of the salient words like ‘blessed’ and ‘good’. Vinay and Darbelnet (9) insist that due to structural and metalinguistic variations between languages, certain stylistic features may not always be attained without upsetting the lexis or the syntactic order in the target language. The translator has a duty to compensate for the omitted words in order to convey the meaning of the source text as faithfully as possible. The omission of ‘blessed’ and ‘good’ has created a challenge for the translator. The notion of ‘vatuhana’ in Luvale can neither represent nor replace ‘blessed’ and ‘good’.

Line three of second stanza reflects some level of semantic equivalence despite the wording. The translator has used a combination of procedures, namely, borrowing, transposition, as well as modulation. ‘Twivwasanenu tuvosenana’ literally translated as ‘let us all agree’ may not exactly mean the same as ‘let us all her people join as one’. There is some element of ‘togetherness’ in the two terms in both languages through the words agree and join. The translated sentence has not fully addressed the focus of the original text. According to Nida and Taber (1982:200), the form of the original text may be changed, as long as the change follows the rules of back transformation in the source language and the contextual consistency in the transfer. Another aspect of modulation procedure can be noted in line four of the second stanza. The Source Text reads ‘brothers under the sun’ while the Luvale Text reads ‘tuzachilenu hamwe (let us work together). The two versions share the aspect of unity. The term ‘brother’ has been preferred to depict unity. There is modulation whereby the word is somehow equated to the Luvale expression ‘tuzachilenu hamwe’ (let us work together).

The whole of stanza three is predominantly characterized by borrowing, literal translation and modulation procedures; For instance. ‘kuunda chayangililenga’ (peace to continue prevailing) as compared to the Source Text ‘one land and one nation is our cry’. Though at a glance the two phrases don’t seem to display a common thought, in reality they do. The ST ‘one land and one nation is our cry’ implies unity which the people should fight for and embrace. Modulation has been used in the Target Text through the word ‘kuunda’. There is also a case of calque. The translator has borrowed and adopted the pattern of the ST in the TT. The same thing can be said about line two of the third stanza. The Luvale text ‘mumiyachi yose mu Zambia’ (in all the tribes in Zambia) is a direct translation of the ST phrase. ‘Dignity’ and ‘peace’ are however modulated in the TT phrase. The Target Text phrase ‘mumiyachi yose mu Zambia’ has been translated literally as ‘in all tribes in Zambia’; in place of ‘dignity and peace neath Zambia’s sky’. The two phrases do not seem to match. The TT phrase in this case can only make sense when it is linked to the preceding line (line one). Despite modulation being used, the translator seemed to have partially translated the phrase.

The translator, in line three of stanza three, has opted for borrowing, adaptation and literal translation procedures. A close look at the two version shows that the two are similar. The sentence ‘nge kwaze mwatelemba mwilu’ (like a noble eagle in its flight/flying) has been literally translated from the ST. The translator has also used the adaptation procedure. This kind of procedure is among the preferred ways of translating in those functional contexts where more emphasis is laid on preserving the verbatim of the origin

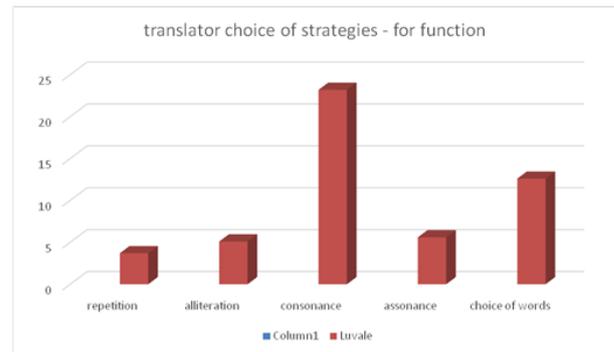


Figure 1. Figure 1 Translator choice of strategies - for function

text than attaining stylistic elegance Vinay and Darbelnet (1958). The translator in lines four and five has simply settled for the borrowing procedure in which the TT is simply a shift from the ST. ‘alisenu Zambia’ and ‘tulinunge mwose’ (Zambia, praise to thee and All one, strong and free) are borrowed from the ST structurally and semantically.

The chorus in the target language has mainly been a product of borrowing and adaptation procedures. However, much as the translator has managed to convey the general meaning of the source text, some key words of the ST have however not been translated accordingly. For instance, line three of the ST has not been, in any way, captured. Jakobson (15) claims that, in the case of interlingual translation, the translator makes use of synonyms in order to get the ST message across. Jakobson posits that “translation involves two equivalent messages in two different codes” (16). Therefore, a grammatical element may differ from one another to a greater or lesser degree, but this does not mean that a translation cannot be possible.

According to skopos theory, the prime principle determining any translation process is the purpose (skopos) of the overall translational action. Skopos theory focuses above all on the purpose of the translation which determines the translation methods and strategies that are employed in order to produce a functionally adequate result. This result is the TT, which Vermeer calls the *translatum*. Therefore, in skopos theory, knowing why an ST is to be translated and what the function of the TT is very crucial.

6 RESULT

Below are the of our textual analysis results in line with Nord’s normative analysis model, tabulating the distribution of choices of strategies used by the translator:

7 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this article looked at how the English national anthem has been translated in Luvale using different translation procedures with the aim of achieving semantic and formal equivalence. Translating a document from one language to another is not always an easy task, especially songs and poems. A number of challenges may be experienced. Michelle Jones (2014:15) says that “except in the field

Table 1. Table 1 Normative analysis results

strategy	alliteration	assonance	Choice of words	consonance	repetition
	11	12	27	50	8

Table 2. Table 2 Strategy choice for equivalence (a)

strategy	modulation	adaptation	Literal	compensation	omission	expansion
	6	3	3	0	4	1

Table 3. Table 3 Strategy choice for equivalence (b)

strategy	Pragmatic equivalence	borrowing	transposition	synonym	concision	calque	equivalence
	1	8	4	0	0	1	0

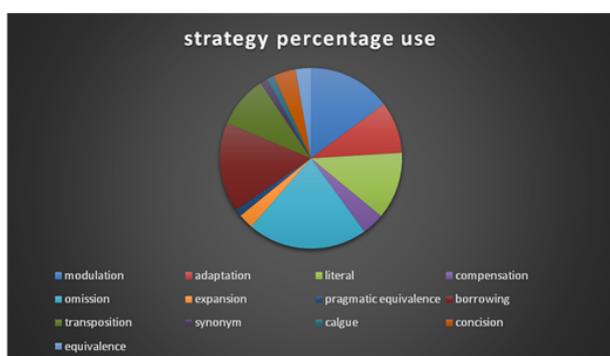


Figure 2. Figure 2 Overall use of strategies by the translators

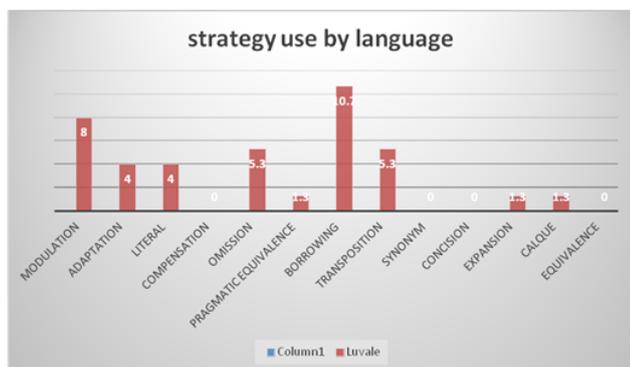


Figure 3. Figure 3 Strategy use by language

of science and technology, where accuracy is a must, very few words are monosemous in any given language”, meaning that “you cannot separate words from their context”. In other words, a term may mean one thing in English and something totally different in another language. Translation procedures seem to vary from scholar to scholar, with each one of them looking at different aspects of language. Baker acknowledges that, in a bottom-up approach to translation, equivalence at word level is the first element to be taken into consideration by the translator. A single word can sometimes be assigned different meanings in different languages and might be regarded as being a more complex unit or morpheme as seen

from some of the parts of the Zambia national anthem in Luvale.

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