

An Evaluation of Cultural Concepts in Swahili Translated Texts: An Example of Walioteuliwa by White

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Abstract

This paper evaluated the cultural religious translated concepts in Walioteuliwa. This book is read and studied among the SDA believers and interpreted differently among the same believers of same denomination. The objective of the study was to evaluate the difficulties in translating cultural concepts from English into Kiswahili. The study was qualitative and quantitative. Therefore, the following cultural concepts were analyzed: ecological, material culture, religious concepts, linguistic concepts, figures of speech and proverbs. Seven SDA churches were purposefully selected to take part in the study. The respondents filled out questionnaires and the leaders were interviewed. The actual sample size was 140 participants. Thus, 42 church leaders and 98 church goers were involved. Participants who read and write in Kiswahili only participated in the study. The skopos theory guided this research. It states that the process of translation is determined by the function of its product. Thus, that function is specified by the addressee. The results of this study showed that the strategies used by the translator posed problems in translated cultural concepts among the readers of the selected text. Therefore, this study contributed to the understanding and interpreting of cultural concepts in religious texts.

Keywords: Cultural Concepts, Ecology, Material Culture, Figures of Speech

Introduction

Culture plays a significant role in translation. It influences the process of translation by impacting the choices made by translators and the understanding of the target audience. Cultural terms, such as specific vocabulary and concepts, pose challenges in translation, as they may not have direct equivalents in the target language (Sedanur, 2015). Translators act as cultural mediators, navigating the differences between two cultural systems and ensuring that the message conveyed in the source text is effectively communicated in the target text (Laetitia & Ilse, 2006). The paper discusses the difficulties of translating cultural concepts in religious texts. Scriptures and religious texts function as the backbone of a religion. They provide structure, clarity and a means of perpetuating the religion and also enable the rapid proliferation and establishment of the religious beliefs. Keeping the scripture in a safe, accurate and comprehensible format has always been an essential aspect of ensuring the survival and the spread of a religion. Many sacred scriptures written in ancient languages would remain incomprehensible to most readers without translation, thereby creating the need to translate them and thus make them accessible and suitable to the needs of various populations from various cultural contexts. Therefore, this paper assessed the following concepts: culture, ecology, material culture, linguistic, figures of speech and proverbs.

Research Objective

- To evaluate cultural religious translated concepts in *Walioteuliwa* by White

Theoretical Framework

This paper was guided by the *skopos* theory. This theory was founded by Vermeer (1989). The word *skopos* comes from the Greek word meaning "intention to translate". The theory considers the translation activity as a purposeful act. The action should target the receiver in the culture and environment of the reader. According to this theory, translating is producing the target text, taking into account the target audience, the recipient and the target environment (Schaffner, 1998).

According to Vermeer (1989), no source text has only one correct and acceptable interpretation. Therefore, each interpretation must declare its purpose, that is, to explain its intention of translating. The objectives of the target text (TT) are not necessarily the same as those of the source text (ST). This theory has five basic pillars as described by Vermeer & Reiss (1984) in Munday (2001):

- Linguistic and cultural contexts of the languages involved may make the roles of translated text (TT) and that of ST different.
- The role of translating TT in the target culture is not necessarily the same as that of ST in the original culture.

The pillars of this theory placed emphasis on the target text. The *skopos* theory states that all translation decisions should be made in relation to the target of the receiving text. This situation was deliberately made in the source text to bring credibility to the translation process (Reiss 1990).

Methodology

The design of this study was descriptive and statistical. These two approaches were mutually reinforcing and complementary. A descriptive approach was able to explain the understanding and interpreting of content in the selected text. Also, the approach provided a guide to extract and explain the opinions of the involved believers. On the other hand, the statistical model provided a guide to analyze the questionnaire and presentation of the research results.

Area of Study

The SDA denomination in Kenya has two Union conferences: West Kenya Union Conferences (WKUC) and East Kenya Union Conference (EKUC) according to the administrative boundaries of SDA, on 10.10.2015). The Union (WKUC) included the Central Nyanza Field Conference (CNFC), Kenya Lake Conference (KLF), Ranen Conference RC), Western Kenya Conference (WKC), Northwest Kenya Conferences (NWKC), Nyamira Conference (NC) and South Kenya Conference SKC). The EKUC union included: Central Kenya Conferences CKC), Central Rift Valley Conferences (CRVC) and Kenya Coast field (KCF). According to this study, the WKUC union was only involved. The union was purposely selected because it has a long history of the church compared to that of EKUC (Mbwana, 2014). Based on the WKUC union, the following seven towns were selected: Kisumu, Homabay, Ranen, Eldoret, Kitale, Nyamira and Kisii. In each town, one representative church was selected to obtain a representative data easily. Furthermore, the participants seemed to have similar characteristics and problems of understanding and interpreting the selected text. The small sample was of great advantage as measurement error and bias were easily controlled and errors were easily detected.

Sample Size

The participants were interviewed and filled questionnaires on the cultural aspects that hindered their understanding and interpretation of the translated messages found in the selected text. This study targeted a total of 4,010 participants and a prospective sample of 1497. According to this study, the following formula (Kothari, 2004) was used to determine the sample size:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 pq N}{e^2 (N-1) + Z^2 pq}$$

$$p = 0.5, q = 0.5, Z = 1.96, e = 0.5$$

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Use of symbols:

e = (Expected error)

n = The sample size

N = Total number of participants

p = Probability that every participant selected the required information

q = Probability that every participant selected has no required information

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5 \times 4010}{(0.1)^2 (4010-1) + 1.96^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}$$

$$= \frac{3851.204}{26.19866667}$$

$$= 147$$

$$= 147$$

Sample distribution was done as below in tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Sample distribution of leaders

Town	Conference	Churches (Kiswahili)	Selected church	Elders	Pastors	Teachers	Deacons
Eldoret	WKC	2	1	1	1	3	2
Kitale	NWKC	2	1	1	1	3	2
Kisumu	CNC	2	1	1	1	3	2
Homabay	KLF	2	1	1	1	3	2
Ranen	RC	2	1	1	1	3	2
Kisii	SKC	2	1	1	1	3	2
Nyamira	NC	2	1	1	1	3	2
Total		14	7	7	7	21	14

(Researcher, 2019)

In Table 1, the distribution and size of the study sample were tabulated. On the upper side of the table, targeted towns, conferences, churches, the number of elders, Pastors, teachers and deacons involved in the research. A total of 49 leaders were involved in the study.

Table 2: A sample Distribution of Believers from seven WKC SDA Churches in Western Kenya.

Kanisa	Town	Conference	Believers (Register)	Believers (Actual)
Kisumu South SDA	Kisumu	CNC	600	15
Kibomet SDA	Kitale	NWKC	400	10
Manyatta SDA	Ranen	RC	560	14
Central SDA	Edoret	WKC	700	17
Owiro SDA	Homabay	KLF	450	11
Nyanchwa SDA	Kisii	SKC	800	19
Central SDA	Nyamira	NC	500	12
Total			4,010	98

(Researcher, 2019)

Table 2 shows names of the seven churches, the towns, the number of believers in each church register and the number of believers selected to participate in the study. The total target population of the study was 4,010 and the number of believers was 98.

Data Collection

Data was collected using the following research methods: questionnaires, interviews and document analysis. 98 believers and 21 teachers filled in the questionnaires. Seven elders, seven pastors and 14 deacons did structured interviews which were both open ended and closed questions. Teachers were purposely involved in the study due to their frequent use of the selected book in handling believers' classes. Elders and pastors were interviewed because they have a high level of understanding of identifying understanding and interpreting constraints found in the selected text and had doctrinal and principles of the church.

Results and Discussions

The results section of this research paper contains a description about the main findings of the research, whereas the discussion section interprets the results for readers and provides the significance of the findings.

Translating Ecological Concepts

Ecology is a linguistic discipline that examines the relationship between language and the environment (TUKI, 1990). Likewise, ecology is a study that examines the relationship between plants, animals, people and their environment (Collins, 2023). Differences between languages and environments cause problems in translation as illustrated in example below:

Example 1

ST: Galaxy (The chosen, (pg 13).
(Walioteuliwa, uk.13)

TT : Kundi la nyota la mbali, mbali sana.

In example 1 (i), the word *galaxy* was translated as *kundi la nyota la mbali, mbali sana*. According to the skopos theory, the translation focused on the needs of the target readers within their culture (Raiss & Vermeer, 1984). A galaxy is a collection of gas, dust and billions of stars and their main systems that are bound together by the force of gravity (Rubin, 2018). The word galaxy its equivalence in the Kiswahili language is *golo*, but the translator translated it in an explanatory manner so that it could be understood by the readers. Likewise, these creatures are not found in the target community and therefore, the reader would face the dilemma of getting a complete picture of the referenced environment. See another example:

Example 1 (ii)

ST: Dragon
(The Chosen and the called, pg 17).
(Walioteuliwa, pg. 21)

TT: Joka

In example 1 (ii), the word *dragon* refers to an imaginary *snake-like* creature that is used in ancient stories in many cultures around the world (Smith, 1918). Beliefs about the creature vary from one region to another; but the dragon in western culture since the Middle Ages, is a creature that has wings, horns, four legs and that has the ability to release fire from its mouth. Likewise, in western culture, the dragon is referred to as a giant, who can be stopped by heroes or holy people. Therefore, *dragon* and *joka* are two different creatures. Although the translator focused on the goals of the target community and assigned the equivalence of *dragoni* to *joka*, to a large extent he did not give a complete picture of the original author's message. The *snake* described in ST is different from the one in TT. Therefore, regarding the displacement, the translation violated the principle of culture according to the theory of skopos (Reiss & Vermeer, 1984). Thus, the readers did not make the correct interpretation and understanding of the transferred message.

On the other hand, in Kiswahili culture, the dragon has no wings, has four legs with above average intelligence. In Swahili society, a dragon is referred to as a dragon, which is a long and thin animal, with

scales and no legs, that crawls and lays eggs and is poisonous (TUKI, 1990). Due to ecological differences, the target community does not have the animal referred to in the ST, so the reader had a problem understanding and interpreting the target message comprehensively.

Contributing to environmental differences, Nida (1945) says that when translating ecological terms in religious texts, translators encounter many problems arising from environmental differences. Adding, as well, Newmark (1988) explains that the distance of the territorial scope brings ecological differences resulting from cultural gaps and the distance of source language and recipient language. This situation occurs because the fauna found in the regions of Africa and Europe are in two different ecological systems. See example:

Example 1 (iii)

ST: Messiah
(*Walioteuliwa*, pg. 54)

TT: Masiya

The word *Messiah* was rendered as *Masiya* in example 1 (iii). In the transfer, the translator focused on the goals of the host community. However, the context of the use of the concept of the *Messiah* led to different trends and perspectives. For example, in the book *The Called and Chosen* (pg .65), the Israelites expected the coming of the Messiah but had their own different understanding of the messiah who will fulfil their prophecy. They did not expect the Messiah who would come, would be an ordinary and humble man, born in a cowshed, to poor parents who could not pay the cost of a guest room.

According to their expectations, they wanted a king who could save them from slavery and rule of the Romans whom they hated. Based on this, the Messiah who was prophesied to come was not the one the Israelites expected. This misunderstanding was caused by different environmental perspectives and thoughts, both divine and secular environment. Therefore, the believers faced problems in the interpretation of the message due to the differences in ecology. Look at another example:

Example 1 (iv)

ST: ...Not bowed the knee to *Baal*.

TT: ... Hawajampigia magoti *Baali*.

The concept of *Baal* in example 1 (iv), was derived as *Baali*. The word *Baal* is used in the Old Testament more than ninety times (Gregory, 2019). The Baal referred to in the Bible is the Baal of *Hadad*, who was an *Akkadian* and *Garitic* god associated with storms and rain. When the Israelites arrived in the promised land, Canaan, they were influenced by the culture of worshipping many gods such as Baal, *Maloch*, *Astarte* and other gods (Gregory, *ibid*). The changes were due to ecological differences that were influenced by the environment.

In the target community, the concept of worshipping more than one god appeared in different ways. Likewise, the worship of idols appears in different ways from one region to another. For example, Africans had all kinds of gods, such as spirits, the sun, the moon and so on. However, there are some communities that had one God such as *Ngai* (Agikuyu and Akamba), *Nyasae* (Luo and Abaluhya), *Engoro* (Abagusii),

Nyame (Akan), *Roog* (Serer), *Olodume* (Yoruba), *Chukwu* (Igbo) and *Mawu-Lisa* in the Fon and Dahomey communities (Gregory, *ibid*). Therefore, the transfer of culture hindered the understanding and interpretation of the message among religious believers.

Translating Flora

Flora is a collection of plants that are found in a certain geographical area (Ahmed, 2018). Ahmed continues to explain that the trees found in mountainous areas are different compared to those in the desert. That difference is caused by geographical differences and the environment in which the plants and trees were planted or grew naturally. Trees in a specific geographical system, affect people's attitudes, beliefs, ideologies and behaviors in different ways. Since English and Kiswahili are classified in different ecological systems, the translation of flora in the two languages caused translation problems among the readers of the selected text. The names of various trees and plants were used in the implementation of various activities and social events. See examples:

Example 2 (i)

ST

“You sweep men away,
the sleep of death,
they are like **a new grass** of the morning
through in the morning it springs up new,
by evening it is dry and withered.”
(Psalms 90: 5-6)

TT

“Wawafutilia mbali watu ka
Binadamu ni **kama nyasi zinazochipua a**
Asubuhi huchipua na kuchanua,
jioni zimekwisha nyauka na kukauka.
Hasira yako inatuangamiza;
tunatishwa na ghadhabu yako.

Example 2 (ii)

ST

“All men **are like grass,**
And their glory is like flowers of the field”

TT

“Binadamu wote **ni kama majani;**
uthabiti wao ni kama ua la shambani.”

Grass is used figuratively in example 2 (i) (Psalm 90:5-6, and Isaiah 40:6-8). In example 2 (i), people's lives were likened to grass, it blooms in the morning and withers in the evening. People's lives change like grass but God's word stands, it does not change. In the two translations the translator was not faithful in transferring the message from source language (SL) to translated language (TL). The challenge was due to the inexistence of ecological equivalence between the two languages. The word *grass* its equivalence in the target language is *majani*. This transference was purposeful according to the skopos theory but grass and majani do not have the same semantical connotations and thus the translated text rendered mismatch of information to the readers.

In the translation of the metaphor *glory is like flowers of the field* in example 2 (ii) above, was translated as *Binadamu wote ni kama majani; uthabiti wao ni kama ua la shambani*. In ST, the message is in plural, but in TT, it was presented in singular. That was a grammatical error that affected the meaning in TT

because the alliteration used was in singular form which is different from what was presented in ST. See another example below.

Example 2 (iii)

ST: “Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean.” TT: “Unisafishe kwa esopo, nami nitakuwa safi.”

(*Njia Salama*, pg 14),

Hyssop in example 2 (iii) is a tree that gives off the smell of perfume and dried branches used as pepper in Palestine and Egypt. The tree was used to purify the Jews. It was a sign of humility against the royal beauty of the Seda tree in the city of Lebanon (1 *Kings* 4:33). The tree is not found in the culture of the target community. Hence, the word *hyssop* was derived as *esopo* in the TL. Although the adaptation was made to meet the needs of the target audience, that *esopo* is a cleaning device and therefore, the reader was affected by the ecological differences.

For example, they missed the natural uses of the tree such as branches, pepper, purification and beauty. Regarding the translation, the stress of production was not taken into account. For example, Holz-Manttari (1984) said that translation must be guided by functional suitability based on the culture of the target community. Therefore, the displacement caused problems in the understanding and interpretation of the message in the selected text.

Culture and Geographical Concepts

Geographical features refer to natural features on land such as valleys and mountains, forests, glaciers and so on (<https://lisbdnet.com>). People perform roles based on their geographic environment. Geographical concepts include issues such as religion, attitudes, art and so on. The author of the selected text used geographical features such as mountains and valleys as well as cities. In the next section, those factors were analyzed and showed how they brought about the translation problems due to geographical differences. See an example:

Table 3: Examples of Mountains

Kiingereza	Kiswahili
Mt. Sinai	Mlima Sinai
Mt. Zion	Mlima Zayuni
Mt. Moriah	Mlima Moria
Hills of Galilee	Milima ya Galilaya

(*The Source: Njia Salama*)

The use of the names of mountains in the text indicated different meanings in different times. For example, Mount Sinai was known as the mountain of God. This is the place where Moses was given the ten commandments by the God of Israel, therefore, it was a holy mountain among Jews, Christians and Muslims (<http://en.wikipedia.org>). In (Exodus 19:20-25), it was known as the mountain of God where the Israelites met with their Creator.

Secondly, Mount Zion was known as the Mount of David (2 Samuel 5:7; 1 Kings 8:1). It was found outside of Mount Jerusalem. Mount Carmel was a historic mountain among the people of Israel. Prophet Elijah called fire from heaven and burned the gods of Baal and later showed the power of the true God in that mountain (1 Kings 18).

Thirdly, Mount Olivia is important in the lives of King David and Jesus Christ. This was the place where Jesus ascended to heaven after his resurrection (Acts 1:10-11), and also, it was the place Jesus will pass through when he returns for the second time (Zephaniah 14:4). Fourth, Mount Moriah was historical in Israelite society. Solomon's temple was built in the mountain of Moriah (Mt. Moriah).

Discussing about the importance of mountains, Paprocki (2020) says that the word mountain is mentioned more than five hundred times in the Bible. Many events between God and Jesus took place in the mountains and valleys. The mountains had religious symbols for Jews and Christians. It symbolized the closeness of God who lives in heaven. That is why the concept of mountains was taken seriously among the Old and New Testament communities (Paprocki, cited). However, the importance of mountains varied from one geographical area to another. The people who lived in those places were affected in terms of attitude, belief and ideology in relation to those mountains. Therefore, the reader of the target community struggled with the names of the mountains used in the selected text. Likewise, the target reader's attitudes and perceptions cannot be influenced and interpreted to the same extent as the host of the aforementioned mountains.

Translating Material Culture

In the selected text, the author used various materials that played different roles in society. According to Cohen (2016), material culture referred to the foods, statues, shrines, clothing, and art developed in a particular society. Thus, translating such material culture posed understanding and interpreting challenge among readers of the target community. See illustration below:

Table 4: Cultural and Environmental Materials

ST	TT	Remarks
Lyre (pg 66)	Fidla (uk. 80)	Uses differed.
The Cross of Calvary.	Msalaba wa Kalvari. (uk 81)	This logo was interpreted based on the ideology of the Christian community
The Lord's Supper	Meza ya Bwana	
Tower of Babel (pg. 40)	Mnara wa Babeli (uk, 47)	Contexts and environments differed The purposes of this tower varied
False gods (pg 46).	Miungu ya uongo (uk 57)	The gods worshiped in Israelite society differed from the target audience.
The ark of Covenant (pgs, 90).	Sanduku la Agano (uk, 113).	This device is not available in the host community
The ark of Noah (pg.90).	Safina ya Nuhu (uk.113).	This sacred instrument is not available in the target community.

(Researcher, 2019)

The data in Table 2, was analyzed in various ways. For example, the instrument *lyre* was translated as *Fidla* which mean violin. According to TUKI (2012), a *fidla* is a type of musical instrument that resembles a small guitar and is played with a bow. In ST, the *lyre* was a type of musical instrument like a small U-shaped lyre, with strings attached to a bar used mainly in ancient Greece. In that community it symbolized the god of prophecy and music. Also, the instrument had the meaning of the wisdom of moderation. Although both the *violin* and the *lyre* were used in the music field, their shapes and uses differed between source language (SL) and translated language (TL). For example, the concept of wisdom was not transferred to the target community. The accompanying culture of the device varied. Therefore, the way the device was understood and interpreted between the two languages was different. So, the reader of the TT had difficulty in understanding and interpreting the meaning of the *violin* in their culture. However, the translational role of TT in the target culture is not necessarily the same as that of ST in the source culture (Reiss & Vermeer, 1984).

The concept of *The Cross of Calvary* was translated as the *Msalaba wa Kalvari*. In the native society, the source represented the emblem of the crucifixion of Jesus. The emblem was also used as an identity of Christianity. In Christian culture, the cross represented the period of Jesus' repentance. According to the Bible, it meant the place of the skull (Holy Luke, 23:33). In the target community, the meaning of the cross was different. The symbol, which represented the gospel of salvation, was placed in the middle of the flames to emphasize the sacrifice of Christ, which is the main pillar of the Adventist faith. Due to these explanations, the symbol of the cross was understood and interpreted according to the culture of the society involved. Therefore, the transfer of the material caused problems arising from the functional differences of the material in the society. According to Holz-Monttari (1984) the act of translation was guided by the goal, as well as the influences from human interaction as a process of passing messages between SL and Recipient Language (RL).

The meaning of *The Lord's supper* was translated as *Meza ya Bwana*. According to the gospel, the *Lord's table* was the last meal that Jesus ate with his followers in the city of Jerusalem before being crucified on the cross (*Wikipedia*). It was organized as a memorial of deliverance from sin. Also, it is a symbol of the death of Jesus and the new covenants. The preparation of the last meal was done in a different environment and context compared to the Lord's table prepared in today's altars. The Lord's Supper (Sacrament) in the SDA church was made as a memorial of Jesus' death and his second coming. The difference showed that the translation did not take into account the culture of the target audience and therefore, conform to the principle of skopos that the role of translating TT in the target culture is not necessarily the same as that of ST in the original culture (Reiss & Vermeer, 1984). The *Tower of Babel* was another material example used in a select text (Selected, pg. 47). The tower was the original story that explained the nature of the world to speak many languages.

Cultural and Environmental Settings

Environmental and cultural settings vary from one community to another. Differences in concepts resulting from cultural integration cause problems in translation. For example, the institution of marriage was understood and interpreted in different ways among different communities. The issue of marrying more than one woman in African societies has existed for a long time. When the culture of the Christian religion arrived in Africa, the issue brought a cultural conflict. The affected group is the one who had already

married more than one woman before surviving or getting married. Therefore, translating the words and concepts that referred to the institution of inter-community marriage based on Christianity and Africanism caused problems arising from cultural and environmental differences in society. See an example:

Example 3

ST: Marriage	TT: Ndoa
ST: Homosexuality	TT: Ushoga
ST: Gayism	TT: Usenge
ST: Lesbianism	TT: Usagaji

The concepts listed in example 3, were based on the concept of marriage. The meaning of marriage on Christian grounds is between one husband and one wife. But in the target community, some Christians understood and interpreted marriage as a romantic relationship between a husband and more than one wife. There are also other groups that recognized homosexuality, *gayism* and lesbianism as marriage. Therefore, the concepts in example 3 were understood and interpreted in a complex manner because of the differences in cultural and environmental settings between the communities involved.

Translating Religious Concepts

The anthropologist Clifford Geertz famously described religion as a 'cultural system' composed of myths, rituals, symbols and beliefs created by humans as a way of giving our individual and collective lives a sense of meaning (Woodhead 2011, 124). Translating religious texts presents several challenges. These challenges include conveying specialized terms and cultural nuances, dealing with complex sentence structures, and addressing the absence of direct counterparts for certain concepts in the target language

The cultural and religious concepts in the selected text were understood and interpreted in ambiguity. For example, the translations and interpretations of the names of the gods posed challenges. Also, the local names of gods that referred to have deeper meanings and connotations that were sometimes difficult to understand such as: *Ngai, Engoro, Nyasae* and others. On the other hand, the names of foreign gods brought the concept of God's foreignness (alien God). The concept of a foreigner like Jesus in African societies brought the concept that Jesus is white. The transference hindered understanding and interpreting of these religious concepts. Therefore, the reader of the translation text interpreted those divine concepts as foreign because of environmental and cultural differences that exist between the involved languages according to Nida (1969). See an example:

Example 4

ST: Sanctity	TT: Utakaso
ST: Holiness	TT: Utakatifu

In example 4, the translations of *Sanctity* and *Holiness* were translated as *Utakaso* na *Utakatifu* respectively. *Sanctity* in ancient Egyptian society, was the state or quality of being holy or a holy place. In the target community, *sanctity* is the state of obtaining the blessings of Almighty God in order to be cleansed of sins, that is, to be purified (TUKI 2012). The challenge was caused by environmental and cultural differences between the Egyptian and Swahili communities. Therefore, the interpretation of *Sanctity* to be interpreted

as *utakaso* challenged the target readers because the basic meaning differed according to the differences in the environment and culture.

On the other hand, the word *holiness* had the meaning of living a life of *utakatifu*, having a life set apart, reserved for the glory of God. It was a life of discipline, attention according to righteousness (1 Peter 1:13).

And the concept of *holiness*, it was the state of *mtakatifu*. *Utakatifu* in general is a word used to refer to the relationship between people and their relationships (<https://www.Mmirriam-webster.com>). From this background, this meant that the interpretation of the concepts of *holiness* and *sanctity* would depend on the contextual usage of these concepts in the society involved. Also, this transference created controversy among SDA believers. For example, there is a group of believers who questioned the person of the Holy Spirit? Is the Holy Spirit described in the Bible a perfect God? and is God the Spirit the third member of the Godhead or Trinity? Therefore, it was evident that finding equivalences for the concepts of *Sanctity* and *holiness* in the target community was difficult because of different environmental and cultural trends influenced by different belief systems in language communities involved.

Religious challenges arose in interpreting the concepts of *utajiri* and *umaskini*. According to (<https://www.ox.ac.ke>), wealth is the appropriate accumulation of resources and valuable assets. Therefore, a person is rich (*tajiri*) if he has enough food, quality of life, clothing and shelter to live. And, *umaskini* is not having enough money to meet basic needs including food, clothing and shelter. See an example:

Example 5

ST: “Blessed be ye poor for yours is the Kingdom of God.”

TT: “Heri ninyi mlio maskini, kwa sababu ufalme wa Mungu ni wenu.”

(Luka 6:20)

The message in example 5, said that blessed are those who are poor, because the Kingdom of God will be theirs. In that passage, Jesus said that the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are poor. From Christian point of view, the message was understandable but in the target community, the concept was hard to understand and interpret. The target community believed that to be blessed was to be wealthy. The poor were regarded as a curse. Therefore, the concepts of poverty and wealth were understood and interpreted in different ways among the recipient language community in general. This misunderstanding was due to the differences in beliefs of people in two different religious culture.

Other religious problems emerged in the interpretation of the phrase *born again* (1 Corinthians 2:14). Born again is a phrase used by many Protestants to describe faith in Jesus Christ. It is a new state that manifested itself in the life of a Christian after receiving the teachings of Christianity

Culture and Translating Linguistic Concepts

The language of each society is, in fact, a part of its culture and reflects the important cultural features of the objects, institutions and actions of the given society. In order to understand the meaning of words, it is necessary to have social and individual perception. Culture and language are inextricably linked. You can't understand a culture without first learning a language. A specific language is usually associated with a

particular group of people. You interact with the culture of the language's speaker when you communicate in their language.

Cultural problems in translation arise as a result of the differences between the two languages in expressing identity and lifestyle. Translators will find it difficult to translate abstract or concrete concepts in the source language/culture (SL/C) which are completely unknown in the target language/culture (TL/C). The results of this paper showed that the problems found in translating cultural concepts were often related to: not understanding cultural expressions, not being able to achieve equivalence in the second language and the complexity of some cultural expressions. Culture gives language different interpretive contexts. For example, a concept that is transferred from one culture to another acquires a different meaning in the receiving language. Furthermore, those differences in meaning represent different meanings that can affect the interpretation itself. Linguistic problems resulting from environmental and cultural differences were assessed based on the following categories: Semantical, figures of speech, metaphors, smiles and proverbs.

Culture and Semantical Challenges

Differences in linguistic culture in translation texts appeared in the translation of poems in the selected texts. Surywinata (1982), basically, the translation of poems should be a semantic translation because they usually have a moral and descriptive structure. He continues to explain that in translating poems, linguistic, literary, creative, social and cultural problems emerge. According to Surywinata (cited) linguistic problems include contradictory meanings and syntactic structures that do not reveal themselves. The artistic beauty in literature is related to poetic structure, figures of speech and consideration of rhythms, rhythmic balance, scales and special expressions. See example:

Example 6

ST:

“The eyes of all wait upon **Thee**;
And **Thou** givest them their meat in due season.
Thou openest **Thine** hand,
And satisfiest the desire of every living thing.”
(Psalms 145:15, 16)

TT:

“Macho yao wote yakutazamia wewe;
Nawe huwapa chakula chao majira yake.
Hufunua mkono wako,
Humshibisha kila hai uradhi.”
(Zaburi 145:15,16)

In the poem in example 6, the pronouns were translated in various ways. For instance, pronouns: *thee*, *thou* and *thine* were translated as *wewe*, and *nawe* and *wako* respectively. Although the translation considered the goals of RT production, to a large extent it showed the differences in linguistic culture between Kiswahili and English languages. For example, *thee* is a formal, poetic or religious pronoun and refers to only one person such as God; showing respect and affection (Brown & Gilman, 1960). But the pronoun *wewe* in the target language, referred to one person, the second person without carrying connotative meaning as it was contained in the source language. The challenge occurred due to differences in linguistic culture. For example, among the languages of classical French, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese, the use of *thee*, *thou* and *thine* were used to represent different statuses of characters such as *old man*, *parent*, *employer*, *rich*, and *glory* (Brown & Gilma, 1960). Therefore, those semantic problems were due to cultural differences between the two respective communities.

The use of *Thou*, *Thee*, *Thy* and *Thine* in the example 6 above, reflected the style and practice in ancient texts. They were widely used in high fantasy, creative and historical texts (Celce-Murcia & Freeman, 1999). Therefore, they were substitutes for nouns used in Greek and Hebrew society to show the respect, status and personality of a person in society. They also showed levels of gentleness in society (Celce-Murcia & Freeman, 1999).

Another problem of the linguistic culture that featured in the selected text, was the translation of poems structures. A structure is the plan of the poem as a whole, the shape and balance of the lines in each stanza. In the selected text, poetic translation structures caused linguistic problems that arose from cultural differences in translation. For example, maintaining the original patterns of lines, syllabic metre and balances was a problem in translation that affected understanding and interpreting transferred messages.

The transfer of syllabic metre also created translational confusion. For example, the syllabic metres in the word *imputeth* are three *im-put-th*, which were translated as *a-si-ye-m-heshim-u*. In that translation, the number of syllabic metres is not the equal, secondly, the *th* sound in the word *imputeth* is not specified in the recipient language. The phoneme *th* was important in the source language because it represented a state of habit. The problem was due to differences in linguistic structures between the languages involved.

Culture and Figures of Speech

Figures of speech are used to describe a phrase or even a word that has been changed from its referential or original meaning to have another meaning (Wamitila, 2003). There are many types of figures of speech: metaphor, allegory, metonymy, animation and so on. In this study, only metaphors and similes were evaluated. A metaphor is a figure of speech that is similar to a simile but compares things or people but without using comparative conjunctions *such as*, *the same as*, *like*. And similes are figures of speech where two things are directly compared.

Translating Metaphors

There are many studies that have been done related to metaphors in linguistics and literature (Kian, 2022; Chita, 2020; Cheethan, 2016, and Haught, 2013). The word *metaphor* is originally from the Greek language (Metaphora) which means transfer (Al-Zoub et al, 2006). They continue to state that the process of translating metaphors is a problem that befalls translators and readers. That point is important to note because many ideologies, traditions and customs in Kiswahili culture differ from those in English, although all languages use metaphors. However, the results showed that the translation of metaphors causes problems due to differences in communicative contexts, which depends on the writer and the reader who have different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Dobrznska, 1996). See example:

Example 7

ST: “The blood of a Christian **is** a seed.”
(*Walioteuliwa*, uk.85)

TT: “Damu ya mkristo **ni** mbegu.”

In the example 7, The blood of a Christian was likened to the seed in a direct way. In religious culture, blood was associated with things that caused disaster or life (Eliade, 1990). Therefore, interpreting blood as seed was a controversial issue in the target community. The concept of seed in the Bible referred to increase and flourish (Jeremiah 31:27). The author meant that the more Emperor Nero continued to persecute Christians, the more they increased. That meant that blood was life. Although, the translation of RT created a semantic ambiguity resulting from the differences in the culture between the source and recipient communities, the translation was done objectively (Reiss & Vermeer, 1984).

Another example of a metaphor is seen when the SDA believers were assured that they are not others but true Adventists. See an example:

Example 8

ST: “You **are** a Seventh-day Adventist.”
(*Walioteuliwa*, uk 35),

TT: “Wewe **ni** Mwa-Adventista Msabato.”

The use of metaphors in example 8, assured the Sabbatarians that they are true Adventists and not others. McArthur (1992), said that the use of metaphors was achieved through relationships, comparisons and similarities of various concepts and objects. For example, the attitudes, behavior and actions of the Seventh-day Adventists gave their identity as Adventists (Larson, 1992). Therefore, the use of metaphors in language is something that confirms the normative partnership in creating images and tendencies that produced similar metaphors. Also, the metaphors are a summary of common human experiences in different cultures. Larson (cited) says that there are two types of metaphors: dead and living metaphors.

Translating Dead Metaphors

A dead metaphor was usually defined as an expression that is dead in meaning and application. This type of metaphor often refers to terms referring to space, scope and time, important parts of the body, ecological concepts and important human activities. The use of dead metaphors has faded because their long-used metaphorical meanings and their images are not clearly available. A figure of speech that has lost its force and imaginative effectiveness through frequent use. Larson (1992) has given the following examples of dead metaphors:

Example 9

- a) Tende guu la meza
- b) Mguu wa mtu au mnyama.

Example 9) (a and b) were a form of dead metaphor because the reader does not think of such a comparison. And Newmark 1988) has given the following examples of dead metaphors:

Example 10

- | | | |
|----|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| a) | ST: “At the bottom of the hill.” | TT: Chini ya mlima. |
| b) | ST: “Face of the mountain.” | TT: Mbele ya mlima. |
| c) | ST: Crown of Glory. | TT: Kibaji cha utukufu |

Examples in 10 (a-c) were obsolete. In the same way, the definition of those interpretations does not go along with the facts. For example, the sentence *at the bottom of the hill* was translated as *chini ya mlima*. ST clearly specified the place of the event but TT only mentioned the location of the event in general and therefore failed to transfer the basic meaning. The use of such expressions is no longer used in society as they were outdated. Newmark (1988) adds that their images have been lost and their use is no longer used in society. Therefore, the use of the dead metaphor in the selected text led to metaphorical problems that arose from environmental and cultural differences. Larson (1998) proposes some reasons why metaphors are hard to understand and cannot be translated literary. One of them is that the image used may be unknown in the receptor language, they are topical and point of similarity.

Translating live Metaphors

They are produced via coining or as neologisms fashionable in the source language community (Newmark, 1988). The use of active metaphors in translation texts was another factor that caused metaphorical problems that arose from cultural differences. Creative metaphor was defined as the expressions recognized by the readers after giving them special emphasis by considering the underlying meaning in the words used. Live metaphors are those which still carry metaphorical imagery so that they can only be understood after considering several aspects: the structure and the context. They are mostly found in literary texts; therefore, they are also called ‘creative metaphor’ (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980 cited in Trim, 2007). Literary works must provide lots of creative expressions, such as ‘metaphors’, which are originally created by the authors in order to make the stories more interesting, unique, and powerful. Results showed that translating live metaphors, was important in maintaining the aesthetic and the artistic value of the metaphor (form) since the metaphors are those which have both cognitive and aesthetic purposes (Newmark, 1988). Larson (1998) has provided the following examples of living metaphors:

Example 10

- | | |
|--|--|
| ST: “Jane’s decision is a nightmare for her sister.” | TT: Uamuzi wa Jeni ni kizungu mkuti kwa dada yake. |
|--|--|

In example 10, the emphasis was placed on the meaning of *kizungu mkuti* in relation to Jene's decision. By doing so, the reader gets the message of the sentence that Jene's decision is what made her sister unhappy. Similarly, ST was a direct speech while the TT was in report speech. Therefore, the structure of the reported text changed. These problems were caused by differences in language culture. See example:

Example 11

ST: “Conflict is an intruder, aberration, a mutation.”

(*Walioteuliwa, uk 3*)

TT : Mgongano ni uvamizi, ni mkengeuko ni mabadiliko.

In example 11, the message was presented in two different ways. For example, the message in ST, was direct while the same was passed indirectly in TT. In that example, the emphasis was placed on the *conflict* that led to aberration and deviation. Also, the conflict was given life, it was an intruder (an intruder) in ST. But in TT, conflict was translated as deviation and change. This transference made the translated text to mislead the target audience. For example, the conflict was an invasion, deviation and change and not an invasion as it is originally contained in ST. These problems stemmed from cultural differences in figures of speech, different language systems and different worldview systems (Zaja, 2021).

Translating Similes

Similes are figures of speech where two things are directly compared. Kerat (2005) defines similes as a figure of speech involving the comparison of one thing with another thing of a different kind, used to make a description more [emphatic](#) or vivid (e.g. *as brave as a lion*). Likewise, Bredin (1998) continues to say that similes show the mental processes that worked, the way the speaker thought and spoke about the world he lived in. The comparison of the concept led to decisions and judgments. Therefore, it made sense that the statement could be open or closed (Bredin, 1998). Explicit similes draw similarities between two things being compared. See example:

Example 12

ST: “I shall be whiter than snow.”

TT: Nitakuwa mweupe kuliko theluji.

In example 11, the sentence *I shall be whiter than snow* was translated *Nitakuwa mweupe kuliko theluji*. The concepts of *whiter* and *snow* were translated as *mweupe* and *theluji* respectively. The concepts were directly compared in a positive way. The use of alliteration in the text makes the message clearer and also shows semantic similarity that aims to encourage good behavior. Also, the allusions showed the mental processes that worked, the way the speaker thought and spoke about the world he lived in. Although the translator was guided by the goals of the target audience (Reiss & Vermeer, 1984), there were problems arising from ecological differences. The ecology of *snow* and *theluji* is different among the language communities involved. Closed similes also violate the effectiveness of open similes. Closed similes refer to characteristics for which comparison is intended without eliminating similarity (Margolis 1957). See example:

Example 12

ST: “I slept like a log of wood.”

TT: Nililala kama kipande cha mti.

In example 12, there are two concepts *slept* and *a log of wood* which are translated as *nililala kama kipande cha mti*. In this transference, the two concepts were directly compared in a negative way. The simile was

intended to warn against the act of *sleeping like a piece of wood*. Explaining the use of similes in texts, Fromilhague (1995) asserts that: similes convey something easily and accurately; they are like a mental device because it enables thinking or imagining the rhetorical world by creating relationships of similarity. Similes were also able to perform specific roles in the discourse depending on the type of audiences involved. Although similes are easily recognized in texts, their translations pose challenges among readers and, therefore, require great care (Pierini, 2007). Pierini claims that the roles of similes are complex because its translation involved semantic and pragmatic units resulting from cultural differences between the respective languages.

Translating Proverbs

A proverb is a short, traditional saying that expresses some obvious truth or familiar experience. A proverb is not an easy concept to translate due to its complexity of words. A biblical proverb is “a short saying that expresses a universal truth for practical, godly living.” The term “Proverb” comes from the Hebrew root word meaning “to be like”; hence, the book of Proverbs is full of comparisons illustrating how various simple concepts represent the fundamental truths of life. Ghazala (2014) says that proverbs are metaphors that refer to things. He goes on to say that proverbs have parts that have a fixed meaning; it cannot be translated or understood if the meaning is a single word but considering the internal and external meaning. For example, Meider (2004) defines a proverb as a short saying that is familiar to a certain group of people and that contains wisdom, truth, values and a cultural perspective, which is unchanging, has a reciting structure and is inherited from one generation to another. Zaja (2021) says that the generation of meaning can be presented in direct ways, complex ways and uniquely in language. Therefore, translating proverbs is a slippery or even difficult thing that is impossible when the translated meaning is rooted in its own specific culture. The complexity of translating proverbs was closely related to the many differences between the different languages involved in the translation process. Likewise, the differences emerged in linguistic categories, culture and environment. See example:

Example 13

ST; “The power of earth and like hell.”

TT: Nguvu za dunia ni kama jehanamu

(*Walioteuliwa*, uk 82)

In example 13, there are two environmental concepts, *earth* and *hell* which were translated as *dunia* and *jehanamu* respectively. The translation encountered a syntactic problem, for example, in ST, there are two independent clauses that are joined by the independent conjunction *and*; those clauses include *the power of earth* and *the power of hell*. The clauses were translated as **nguvu za dunia na jehanamu**. The independent conjunction *and* in the source, texts were not translated, instead, the subordinative conjunction *kama* was used in TT. The transfer made the translation less correct grammatically. Another grammatical problem emerged in translating the proverb *The power of earth and like hell*, was that the proverb was translated as *nguvu za dunia ni kama jehanamu*. In the ST, the powers of the world were likened to hell while in TT, they were directly compared thus conveyed a misleading message. That challenge was due to environmental and cultural differences between the two languages involved. Another problem that emerged in translating of proverbs was the use of direct parallelism.

Example 14

ST: “The path of the righteous is as the light of dawn that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” (Proverbs 4: 18) (Classical).

TT: Bali njia ya wenye haki ni kama nuru ing'aayo, ikizidi kung'aa hata mchan mkamilifu (rasimi).

The classical proverb in example 14, the *path of the righteous is as the light of dawn that shineth more and more unto the perfect day* was translated as *bali njia ya wenye haki ni kama nuru ing'aayo, ikizidi kung'aa hata mchana mkamilifu*. That translation was based on the surface meaning which altered the target meaning. Lack of equivalents of *path* and *the light of dawn* which were translated as **kama njia na mchana mkamilifu**; rendered the translation pose understanding and interpretation problems due to direct comparison of the metaphor. The proverb can be translated as *njia ya mwenye haki ni nuru ya asubuhi inayoashiria mchana mwema*. Therefore, the mistranslation caused problems that arose in the process parallelism of words, phrases which were out of context. According to Baker (1992), lack of equivalents causes various difficulties in translation: cultural differences, lexicon, semantic complexity, plural meaning, superordinate word, lack of hyponym, differences in speech expression, different structures, use of words loan among others.

Proverbs are interesting, important, and complex. That is why so many different views have evolved to analyze them: the personal, formal, religious, literary, practical, cultural and cognitive views. These views have different goals that have been persuaded with different techniques, so they provide us with different information. Proverbs have been and remain most powerful and effective instrument for the transmission of culture, social morality, manners and ideas of a people from one generation to another. The reason behind the efficacy of them has been and remains a most powerful and effective instrument for the transmission of culture, social morality, manners and ideas of a people from one generation to another. The reason behind the efficacy of the proverb is that it is an aphorism, a wise saying based upon people's experience, and is a reflection of the social values and sensibility of the people.

Translating proverbs, the translator should know linguistic and non-linguistic features of both languages. Translating proverbs, the translator should know linguistic and non-linguistic features of both languages. By linguistic features we mean those elements which are not conveyed only through words, what is important here is culture. Each proverb conveys specific meaning in a specific context of situation. Therefore, a proverb should be rendered with care to carry the same cultural conventions in the original proverb. It is not reasonable to translate a proverb while just looking at the first meaning of its words in a dictionary. linguistic features we mean those elements which are not conveyed only through words, what is important here is culture. Each proverb conveys specific meaning in a specific context of situation. Therefore, a proverb should be rendered with care to carry the same cultural conventions in the original proverb. It is not reasonable to translate a proverb while just looking at the first meaning of its words in a dictionary.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the importance of culture in translation is that it emphasizes how tradition and geographic origin impact the context of language. When practicing translation, it is vital to be sensitive to the moral and spiritual values of words to find the most accurate equivalents in the new language. Cultural translation makes it possible to produce information that all parties involved can understand while maintaining respect for both the target audience and source language.

In this article, problems arising from cultural differences in the book of *Walioteuliwa* were addressed. Therefore, the following aspects were discussed: the concept of culture, ecological problems, geographical flora, material culture, linguistic culture, religion, figures of speech, metaphors and proverbs in translation.

The results of the evaluation confirmed that the cultural differences between SL and RL caused problems in the understanding and interpretation of the message among SDA believers who read and studied the book of *Walioteuliwa*. Also, the results showed that the translator did not take into account the differences in the environment and culture of the target audience. In addition, the results showed that although the selected texts were made with objectives (Reiss & Vermeer, 1984), the transference contained many translation challenges that need to be addressed.

In addition, the results showed that the product did not take into account communication faithfulness for the reader within the culture of the target community as Nord (2007) noted. This was evidenced by the strategies used by the translator of the selected book. Issues such as vague concepts of translation, 'dethroning' the source text, oversimplification and inapplicability to achieve equivalence for literary and religious texts are some of many shortcomings of Skopos theory.

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Amos 1:9

Job5:152

1 Corinthians 2:14

Numbers 20:14

Isaiah 55:1; 40:6-8; 7:23-25

Exodus 19:20-25; 2:11

Luke 23:33

Acts 1:10-11

Genesis 1: 27; 10:9-10; 13:8; 14:16

1 Peter 1:13-32

2 Samuel 5:7; 19:13

1 Kings 4:33; 8:1, 18; 9:13

Jeremiah 31:27

Psalms 90:5-6

Zephaniah 14: 4