CATEGORIES OF SHIFTS IN THE TRANSLATION OF THE ENGLISH HOLY BIBLE (NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION) INTO DHOLUO BIBLE: MUMA MALER MAR NYASAYE (1976)

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Abstract: This paper describes the categories of shifts in the translation of the English Holy Bible; *New International Version* (NIV) into Dholuo Bible *Muma Maler mar Nyasaye* (1976). The aim is to evaluate the relevance of the translator's style in rendering a religious text into the target language and the overall implication on the translation theory and practice. The data is collected through document analysis and Focus Group Discussions. We analyzed forty rank shifted segments purposively from six books from the source and target text based on the Relevance Theory by Sperber & Wilson (1986). The analysis is limited to rank-shifting at the level of clauses utilized in the source language which is translated into the target language. The data is analyzed using content analysis and descriptive method. The following categories of shifts are identified; structure shifts, unit shifts, class shifts and intra-system shifts. This study offers insight to bible translators to understand that since shifts are unavoidable in translation, they should aim to produce a target text that is as accurate and precise as possible to guard against loss of meaning. To do this, translators must understand the original source text and

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transfer it faithfully and accurately. Moreover, bible translators must understand the context of both the source text and the target text since context plays a great role in rendering translation.

Keywords: English Holy Bible; Dholuo; categories of shifts; religious texts

1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to describe the categories of shifts in the translation of the English Holy Bible; *New International Version* (NIV) into Dholuo Bible *Muma Maler mar Nyasaye*. The investigation focuses on the shifts in clauses that are identified in the source text and the target text. Reiss (1989) places emphasis on equivalence at the communicative level stating that the transmission of the predominant function of the source text is the determining factor by which the target text is judged. In the same vein, available evidence reveal that a relevant translation should aim at "describing the many shifts and transformations that translations produce" (Pym 2010: 120). Thus, we set to evaluate the categories of shifts that emerges in the data when translating the English Holy Bible (NIV) into the Dholuo version (*Muma mar Nyasae*). This is because, translations of religious texts have played a significant role in the historical dissemination of the divine message, (Gazar & Tajari 2020). It must therefore be in line with sound belief and be as exact and precise as possible, as it is a potent tool for missionary work. The original Source Text (ST) must be understood by translators in order to faithfully, accurately, and completely translate it into the Target Text (TT) without changing or deleting any of the original information. However, when translating religious materials from English to Dholuo, translators may frequently run into problems. This is because, these two languages belong to very different language families; the former an Indo-European, and the later a Nilo-Saharan language. In this paper, we investigate whether the translator of the RL maintains the relevance of the ST message in the rank shifted clauses.

2. Dholuo Language

Dholuo is a Nilotic language spoken by the Luo people in the Nyanza region of Kenya. The Southern Sudan is thought to be the cradle land of the Nilotic group of linguistic communities, which includes the Luo Languages like Turkana, Samburu, Kipsigis, and Nandi spoken in Kenya; Dholuo and Maasai spoken in Tanzania and Kenya; Padhola and Acholi spoken in Uganda; and Dinka Pari and Nuer spoken in Sudan are all part of the Nilo-Saharan language group (Odoyo 2013; Adhiambo 1990; Okombo 1997). The Luo community in Kenya is bordered by Kuria and Abagusi on the south, Nandi and Kipsigis on the east, and the Luhya group on the north shore of Lake Victoria. Although the Luo people are geographically dispersed throughout several parts of Nyanza, they are organized into numerous clans, including Joka Jok, Joka Owiny, Joka Omollo, and Luo Abasuba.

For starters, Nida (1964) notes that one of the most important issues in religious translation is locating the precise or appropriate lexical term with the same cultural

element. Translators are compelled to make adjustments in the process of translating in an attempt to attain equivalency, which may result in meaning gain or loss. This may be due to the linguistic differences between the ST and the TT. Furthermore, the cultural disparities between the speakers of the two languages could cause meaning to be distorted during the translation process. In order to determine if the shifts cause meaning gain or loss, we outline the categories of shift that arise during the translation process of the English Holy Bible NIV into Dholuo Bible *Muma Maler mar Nyasaye* (1976).

3. Shift in Translation

A translation shift occurs when a textual equivalency is not formally parallel to its source (Machali 2012). As a result of the translator's efforts to determine translation equivalence between two distinct language systems, shifts ought to be positively reinterpreted. Shifts are all the necessary steps that a translator must take and intentionally employ in order to translate a text from one language to another. According to Newmark (1981), changes involving both specific and generic meaning are among the most frequent meaning shifts observed during the transfer process. These changes could occur in either way. A shift could be the outcome of the different systems of two languages. There may be a vocabulary or structural difference. Meaning changes as a result of language changes. Thus, it may be concluded that there are two types of meaning shifts that frequently result in inaccurate translation.

Translation shifts can originate from two main sources; shifts that are text-centered in the source language and those text-centered in the destination language (Machali 2012). In addition, the text-centered shifts cause three types of changes, these are; changes in grammar, changes in coherence, and changes in the text. The fundamental issue pertaining to establishing efficacy, pragmatic appropriateness, and referential explicitness is caused by the target language's text-centered shift. Machali (ibid) further categorizes the translation shifts into two types: required shifts and voluntary shifts. One type of shift that happens when there is no formal correspondence in the translation is called an obligatory shift (Newmark 1981). It's the kind of shift where grammar controls when it occurs. The optional shift comes next. It's the kind of change that results from a translator's judgment. This shift is said to as optional because there were more equivalent clauses that the translator might have selected based on the reader's orientation within the target language text. Furthermore, every language has a unique framework. During the translation process, the rules of one language do not always translate to their equivalent in another (Sipayung 2018; Itieba et al. 2023a). Every language uses different linguistic methods to express ideas. The existence of disparate rules and structures among languages causes the translation shift.

Therefore, a translator may enhance clarify by the use of their linguistic skills, leading to a gain in meaning. According to Machali (2012), a translator's wisdom leads to discretionary alterations in translation, and the translator may have selected a more equivalent sentence. Conversely, changes in translation can sometimes cause the meaning of the original language to be lost or distorted. According to Sipayung (2018),

changes in translation can have an impact on the degree of translation accuracy. Because Dholuo and English are from distinct language families, there will probably be a translation shift that could lead to either meaning gain or meaning loss.

4. Methodology

The primary data from this study came from key informant interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) while the secondary data was gathered through document analysis, library research and internet search. We collected 120 rank shifted clauses using Machali's (2012) classification of translation shifts. Thereafter, systematic random sampling was used to select 40 clauses for analysis by picking every third clause. The data collection tools used generated qualitative data from 30 native speakers of Dholuo who were sampled through snowballing method. These research tools were considered necessary for gathering in-depth and relevant data. Moreover, these instruments helped ensure that the data obtained was not subjective. Data was analyzed using content analysis. Presentation of data was done systematically based on the different categories of shifts that were identified. This was followed by a descriptive narration.

5. Findings and Discussion

The aim of this paper was to describe the categories of shift that emerge in the data when translating from the ST into the TT. From the collected data, the following four categories of shifts were established: unit shifts, class shifts, intra-system shifts and structure shifts.

Unit shifts
Unit shifts are rank alterations in which the translation equivalent of a unit in the ST is a unit in the TT of a different rank. According to Machali (2012) unit shifts are deviations from formal correspondence in any TT grammatical category that is considered to hold the same place within the TT system. The following extracts on unit shifts were identified for analysis.

Extract 1: Proverbs. 6:24
ST: Keeping you from your neighbour's wife, from the smooth talk of a wayward woman; (p. 640)

This is a clause that translates into a sentence that expresses a complete thought.

TT: *Ginyalo miyo ibed maber gi mon maricho* kendo itangi gi weche mamit mag mond jomoko nono. (p. 563)

The clause *keeping you from your neighbour's wife* does not express a complete thought, however, when translated into the target text it becomes *Ginyalo miyo ibed maber gi mon maricho* which expresses a complete thought. The source text extract does not express a complete thought because it does not have the subject and therefore begins with the verb. One would therefore ask what it is that keeps one from the neighbour's wife. The target text extract however begins with the pronoun *Gi* which means **they.** This pronoun acts as the subject therefore making it express a complete thought. This is therefore an upward unit shift. The translator's style helps the TT audience in comprehending the ST message with additional explication features in the rendered version. Another example of unit shift is analyzed in extract 2 below;

Extract 2: **Psalm 41:10**
ST:. . **b u t may you have mercy on me**, *LORD*; raise me up, that I may repay them. (p. 567)
TT:***A Ruoth Nyasaye, kecha***, *kendo changa mondo achulnigi kuor*. (p. 482)

In this extract, there is an upward unit shift where a clause translates into a sentence which is higher above in the rank scale than the clause. The source text extract does not express a complete thought because it begins with the conjunction **but**. Moreover, the subject **LORD** comes last. However, the target extract expresses a complete thought because it begins with the subject *A Ruoth Nyasaye* and not a conjunction. There is therefore an upward unit where a clause translates into a sentence which is higher above in the rank scale than the sentence. This style requires the translator to "consider the way in which individual sentences form part of the total structure" (Bassnett 2002: 115) and hence achieve the relevance of the TT product. However, it was revealed that the downward shift led to meaning loss in the TT as analyzed in extract 3 below;

Extract 3: Songs of songs 2:5
ST: Strengthen me with raisins. Refresh me with apples, for I am faint with love. (p. 681)
TT: *Hera nega*, ***omiyo duog chunya gi gik mamit*. (p. 606)

In this extract, the sentence, *strengthen me with raisins* translates into a clause *omiyo duog chunya gi gik mamit* in the target text. There is therefore a downward unit shift since a sentence that is higher in a rank-scale translates into a clause which is lower than the sentence in the target text. The source text extract expresses a complete though. The source text extract has an assumed subject that that explains why its meaning is complete. However, the target text extract does not express a complete thought because it begins with the conjunction *omiyo* which simply means **therefore**. The failure by the translator to explain the sentence led to meaning loss. As observed by Mudogo (2017) the individual translator's selection of lexical items from a host of alternative possibilities plays a significant role in attaining the relevance of the TT product. Given this, improper selections can result in the distortion of the ST message. Data from the Focus Group Discussions showed that the respondents failed to get the meaning from the translated version.

Intra-System Shifts

A break from formal correspondence is known as an intra-system shift, where a system in the source language has a distinct, non-corresponding system in the target language as its translation equivalent (Itieba, et al, 2023b). This change takes place on an internal system level. When there is a formal equivalent in both languages for a translation, there is an intra-system shift. Therefore, the system in every language consists of one or two terms, which can either be plural or single and have formal correspondence, but the formally equivalent terms in the system have different functions in different contexts. From the analyzed data we identified the following extracts on intra system shifts:

Extract 4: Songs of songs 7:8
ST: I said, I will climb the palm tree, I will take hold of it's **fruit.** (p. 684)
TT: *Emomiyo abiro idho yadhno mondo apon **olembene**. (p. 610)*

In the above extract, the singular noun **fruit** translates into *olembene* which is the plural of fruit. This type of shift did not lead to significant deviation of the TT message hence the extract was easily comprehended by the respondents. A similar trend is inferred from extracts 5, 6 and 7 as analyzed below;

Extract 5: Ecclesiastes 2:22
ST: What do **people** get for all the toil and anxious striving with which *they* labour under the sun? (p. 671)
TT: *Ere ohala ma **ngato** yudo kuom tich matek duto ma **obarorego** ndasi e pinyka?* (p. 599)

In this extract, the plural item **people** and the pronoun **they** translate into their singular forms *ngato* and *obarorego* in the target text.

Extract 6: Psalms 91:14
ST: … I will protect **him** for he acknowledges my name. (p. 600)
TT: … *Kendo nakony **jogo** mang'eya.* (p. 518)

In this extract, the singular pronoun **him** in the source text translates into the plural form *jogo* in the target text.

Extract 7: Psalms 116:15
ST: Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of **his faithful** *servants.* (p, 616)
TT:*Mano kaka lit ni Ruoth Nyasaye ka **ng'ate moro** otho.* (p. 536)

In the source text, the plural noun **his faithful servants** translate into the singular form *ng'ate moro* in the target text.
The data revealed that plural linguistic items in the source text translated into singular linguistics items in the target language and singular linguistics items in the source language also translated into plural linguistics items in the target language. Although the plural items translate into singular items and vice versa as shown in the extracts above, the message of the source text which is key in translation work is communicated

in the target language message. Machali (2012: Itieba et al. 2023a) asserts that meaning is the main component in translation work. In their analysis of the intra-system shifts and the quality of translation in 'the Maze Runner Novel," Kur'Anna, & Haryanti (2017) observe that though there are many intra-system shifts that occurred in the translation of the novel, the text belonged to good translation because the translation was dominated by acceptable level of accurate and readable data. Translation is considered to be relevant and applicable when it meets three criteria; accuracy, acceptability and readability (Itieba et al. 2023b). Accuracy means that meaning of the source text is transferred to the target text correctly and this involves choosing the correct words in order to reveal the same idea in the target language. Based on the above arguments, one would conclude that although intra-system shifts occur, the idea of the source text is transferred to the target text. One would therefore argue that the translators were mainly concerned with ensuring that the message of the source text is communicated in the target text without necessarily translating the singular and plural linguistic items as they are in the source text.

Class shifts

Class shift is a shift that occurs when the translation equivalent of a source language item is a member of a different class from the original item. It means that source language has a different class with target language. It can occur from a noun to an adjective, a verb in to adjective, and adjective into a verb. The study identified class shifts as indicated in extracts 8, 9 and 10 as analyzed below;

Extract 8: Psalms 15:2
ST: … who **speaks** the truth from their heart. (p. 549)
TT: *Bende ma **wechene** gin adier kendo ma onge miganga.* (p. 463)

In this extract, the verb *speaks* in the source text translates into a noun *wechene* in the target text.

Although the source text verb translates into a noun in the target text, no meaning loss has been realized. This is because the message of the source text is reflected in the target text.

Extract 9: Psalms 20:7
ST: Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the **name** of the LORD our God. (p. 553)
TT: *Ji moko ogeno kuom gechegi mag lweny. to moko kuom faresegi. Wan to wageno kuom **teko** mar Ruoth Nysasye!* (p. 467)

In this extract, the noun the **name** in the source text translates into an adjective *teko* in the target text. This brings about loss of meaning. This is because whereas the source text noun talks of God's name, the target text adjective talks of *teko* which means God's power. This brings about loss of meaning since there is a difference between God's name and power. In this extract therefore, the shift in class has resulted into meaning loss.

Extract 10: Psalm 47:3
ST: He subdues nations under **us.** (p. 571)
TT: *Kendo omiyo ogendni bedo e bwo **lochwa**.* (p. 486)

Here, the pronoun *us* in the source text translates into an adjective *lochwa* in the target text. The shift in class from the pronoun in the source text into an adjective in the target text in this extract results into meaning gain. This is because if the translator retained the class of the source text in the target text, the meaning that would be presented would be quite ambiguous.

For instance, the literal translation of the source text would have been; *kendo omiyo ogendni bedo e bwowa* which is ambiguous. In order to avoid the ambiguity, the translator therefore opted to shift the class. Paraphrasing is a translation strategy that not only eliminates ambiguities in the translation but also help the target audience get the source language meaning (Mudogo, 2017, Newmark, 1981). However, one would still argue that the translators should have transferred the source message as it is in the target message to achieve equivalence. Moreover, context played a great role in the translation process. This is because if literal translation was done then pronoun *us* would mean something different under different context. The translator therefore opted to shift the class into the adjective *lochwa* which would mean our power. The principles of the relevance theory by Sperber & Wilson (1986) therefore played a key role in these translations. This theory suggests that the process of communication succeeds because of the principle of relevance. Sperber & Wilson (1986) define relevance in terms of the following conditions; an assumption is relevant in a context to the extent that it's contextual effects in this context are large and an assumption is relevant in a context to the extent that the effort required to process it in this context is small. Therefore, relevance is dependent on the interplay of the two factors: contextual effects and processing effort.

Structure shifts

When there are two languages—the ST and the ST— that have distinct structural components but formal correspondence, structure shifts take place. Therefore, a structure shift happens when the target structure has distinct element classes or the same class of components but in a different arrangement. Changes in structure can happen at any rank in grammar. The study identified the structure shift as analyzed in extracts 11 to 15;

Extract 11: Ecclesiastes 7:1
ST: A good name is better than **fine perfume.** (p. 674)
TT:*Nying maber be moloyo mo **mang'ue ng'ar**.* (p. 601)

In this extract, the modifier **fine** comes before the noun **perfume** in the source text while in the target text, the noun *mo* comes before modifier *mang'ue ng'ar*.

Extract 12: Ecclesiastes 10:1
ST: As **dead flies** give perfume a bad smell so as little folly outweighs wisdom and honour. (p. 677)

TT: *Kaka **lwang'ni motho** nyalo ketho mo mang'we ngar mi dum tik marach, e kaka fuwo matin nono bende nyalo ketho rieko maduong.'* (p. 603)

In the source text, the adjective *dead* comes before the noun *flies* while in the target text the noun *lwang'ni* comes before the adjective *motho*.

Extract 13: Songs of Songs 2:10

ST:	Before	them,	the earth	shakes. (p. 681)
	Adverb	Object	Subject	Verb
TT:	Piny	yiengni	e nyim	gi. (p. 606)
	Subject	Verb	Adverb	Object

In this extract, the adverb comes first then the object then the subject and the verb last in the source text while the subject comes first followed by the verb then adverb and the object last in the target text hence showing a difference in structure.

Extract 14 : Lamentation 1:4
ST: … her young women grieve and she is in **bitter anguish.** (p. 828)
TT: *… kendo nyige isando malich, mano kaka engi **thagruo malich.*** (p. 741)

In this extract, the adjectival phrase **bitter anguish** has the adjective + noun pattern. However, in the translated version **thagruo malich,** the patten is noun + adjective.

Extract 15: Proverb 12:7
ST: she makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed in **fine linen and purple.** (p. 646)
TT: *…ochueyo lewni ma ipedho e kitendni; ka achiel gi **lewni ma nengo** gi tek.* (p. 570)

In the extract above the ST the phrase 'fine linen' has the order Noun and adjective, but the equivalent ST *lewni ma nengo* has the order of adjective and noun.

It should be noted that the structure shifts lead to significant distortion of the ST meaning in the TT. This is possibly due to what Mudogo (2017) the obligatory linguistic differences between the languages in volved in the translation process. Nida (1964) argued that since no two languages are identical either in their meanings given to corresponding symbols or in the way in which such symbols are arranged in phrase or structure, it stands to reason that there can be no absolute equivalence between English and Dholuo because of their structural differences. Aji, et al., (2000) also note that translation shift is seen because of the existence of different rules and structures between languages.. Since English is an Indo-European language while Dholuo a Nilo-Saharan language, their structures are therefore very different. As such one can conclude that this is the reason for the occurrence of structure shifts.

6. Conclusion

There are different category shifts, namely, unit shifts, class shifts, structure shifts and intra- system shifts. Since English and Dholuo belong to two different languages

families, translation shifts occur and this results into both meaning loss and meaning gain. In this study however, more loss was experienced than gain. This conforms to Sipayung (2018) assertions that shifts in translation may influence lack of accuracy of translation level. To prevent meaning loss therefore, the translator can use the compensation translation technique to compensate for the translation loss and to achieve a compensational translation gain. Effective translation involves devising techniques for making up for the loss of the ST effect by recreating a similar effect in the TT. In doing so, relevance to the TT audience should be given prominence. In doing this, the message should be maintained. Venuti & Baker (2000) urge that in religious texts, the content is more important than the form and translators should give priority to the message.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research.

Ethical Standards

The author affirms this research did not involve human subjects.