

A Study on Figurative Mistranslation in The Kikamba Bible

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Abstract

This paper examines the figurative mistranslation in the Bible. Translation is a process that necessitates a complex and discourse processing for it to be successful. It is a decision-making process which is under constraints such as time, space, quality of information, context and culture among others. Translation is the mediation between the writer and the target language reader in order to relay the message of the source text into the target text successfully. Mistranslation is the unsuccessful transfer of the source message into the target text. A descriptive research design was used to obtain information from a sampled population. The Bible is divided into two sections; the Old and the New Testament. It is further categorized into seven sections. Purposive sampling was used to select one book from each category that used figurative language and one chapter from each book to form the sample for the study. Data was collected through careful study of the English Revised Standard Version Bible to identify figurative use of language and the Kikamba Bible to analyse how they were handled. The study established three types of figurative use of language; fixed expression, metaphors and similes. The main cause of mistranslation is the use of idiomatic expressions in the source text. The study recommends that the translator needs a good background on the metaphorical language use in the Bible and the Kikamba needs to be re-translated to capture the meaning clearly. It is hoped that the research will be a contribution to applied linguistics in the area of translation, specifically on figurative language.

Key Words: *figurative language, mistranslation, source text, target text, the Bible and Kikamba.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Benjamin (1997) argues that translation serves to continue the life of the ST and not to reproduce its meaning in the TT, it extends the meaning of the ST. In the Bible translation, therefore, the translation in English is thought to be an extension of Greek and Hebrew. In the same line Kikamba translation is an extension of other Bible versions. For any translation to be deemed 'good translation' the message of the ST should be harmonized with the message of the target text. This can be achieved through the use of literalism which is defined by Lefevere (1977) in the following terms:

'real translation is transparent it does not hide the original, it does not steal its light but allows the pure language as if reinforced through its own medium to fall on the original work with greater fullness. This lies above all in the power of literalness in the translation syntax, and even this point to the word and not the sentence, as the translators original element', (Lefevere 1977: 102).

Rosenzweig and Buber (1994) argue that the originality is key in translating, features of the original text should be preserved in the target text for the work to be considered as a translation. They assert that,

'the Old testament has never before been translated by writers seeking to return to the concrete fundamental meaning of each individual words, previous translators have been contented to put down something 'appropriate' something corresponding ... we take seriously not only the texts semantic characteristics but also its acoustic ones. It became clear to us accordingly that the text's abundant alliteration and assonance could not be understood in aesthetic terms alone, often if not always it is passages of religious importance in which assonance and alliteration thus help make this emerge more vividly (Buber and Rosenzweig, 1994: 168).

This concept is important in this paper since the Bible is basically written to pass the same message to all the readers and thus originality is a key issue, the form and the content are important in communicating the message of the ST, and therefore they should be considered during translation.

Linguistic approach to translation according to Nida (1964) focus on the languages involved in the translation, that is, the source and the target language. The linguistic approach views translation as a process that involves two languages which should be studied well to understand their structure and how they construct meaning before it is carried out. While communicative perspective views translation as a means of communication which should follow the steps of a communication process, in which the message from the source text is communicated to the audience of the target text through translation. The message in the source text is decoded then encoded in the target text by the translator. Thus the study of translation should be based on a communication theory and hence the Relevance theory which is a theory of communication is used to explore the objectives of this study. Nida (ibid) emphasis the need for similar response of both the readers of ST and TT since the translator's goal is to achieve equivalent effect which is echoed by Gutt (1991).

Language is a code that is embedded in the socio-cultural context and figurative use of language is rooted in the culture. Meaning and interpretation of figures of speech are culture-specific, even when a similar figure exists in two languages it may be used in different contexts. For example in a simple simile like 'as white as wool' in some communities the sheep has dirty white wool. Culture is wider than language. In the bible it is recorded that 'the days of a man are few', and that 'we shall see Jesus soon', 'He is coming soon'. These concepts must have figurative meaning and therefore different religious faiths will interpret them differently. In the original Bible culture then the 'time' concept is likely to be different from many other cultures. During interpretation, therefore, there is need for foot notes to offer clarification. When culture is involved in translation it makes it difficult. Language cannot exist outside the culture, but is part of the culture.

Nida's (1964) view of translation as a linguistic discipline led to the shift from philosophical to linguistic equivalence in translation. In this approach three notions were introduced in translation. The first one is intralingual translation which involves signs of the same language. Secondly, the interlingual translation or translation proper which is concerned with verbal signs in different languages. And thirdly is the intersemiotic or transmutation which involves the interpretation of verbal signs of non-verbal signs system, which is beyond the word. In the intersemiotic translation, Snell-Horby (2006) points out that:

'what is significant for translation studies as assessed from today's perspective is however that it goes beyond language in the verbal sense and does not look merely across languages' (Snell-Horby, 2006: 21).

Intersemiotic is reflected in some Bible translations which incorporates non-verbal elements such as maps, pictures and drawings among others which are used to help the readers understand the information conveyed in the original text. These features carry metaphorical meaning that needs to be translated into the target text.

Another theorist in this area is Levy (2000) who categorized translation methodologies into two that is, the illusionists and anti-illusionist. The illusionary translations are written by adapting the target audience readership that is allowing flow of ideas and comprehensibility within the target language culture. In the anti-illusionary translation, for the target text to be a translated document it has to retain some features of the source text; the focus is more on transporting the ST to the TT as a whole. According to Levy (2000) the TT retains semantic and aesthetic value of the ST rather than the form. The retaining of the aesthetic value is of importance in translating figurative language. Nida (1964) who supports the concept of dynamic equivalence asserted that the deep structure is classified and reconstructed semantically and stylistically in the TTL surface structure. According to Nida and Taber (1969), the translator needs to ascertain the likely effects of the source text upon its readers and re-establish an equivalent effect upon the target readers which is referred to as the equivalent effect. This is summarized by Nida and Taber (ibid) as:

"Translation consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style, (Nida and Taber, 1969).

The stylistic element is carried in the use of figurative language, for example in the use of metaphors, similes, poetic verses and the use of repetition among others.

Nida's (1964) contribution to linguistic theory through the dynamic equivalence has greatly impacted on Bible translation, which allows the translator to choose on a figure of speech that has an equivalent impact within the current language use or drop it and use normal language that conveys the meaning, but equivalent effect on both the ST audience and TT may not be achieved because the TT will be narrowed to only one interpretation.

Reiss and Vermeer (1984) assert that multiple purpose of translation is what determines whether the translation is good or not, and the Skopos theory sheds light on the translator's question; 'which is the best way to translate the Bible?' According to Nord (1997), what makes the translated version good is whether it is fit for the purpose.

According to Vermeer (1996) the main aim of the translator is to fashion the TT so that it is functional in the target audience community in terms of importance. It does not necessarily need to be equivalent but should serve the purpose in the TT, he uses the term 'dethroned' to indicate that it is not the ST in the TT but a text that serves the target audience. Snell-Hornby (2006) states that translation is dependent upon its skopos (purpose) and that one text can be translated in different versions depending on the purpose of translation. This gives guidance on the best way to translate the Bible whose message is determined by the meaning and not necessarily the form. This however depends heavily on the type of the text, for example, with poetic texts (which are characterized by the use of figurative language) the form and content are used together to create meaning and the translator should find a procedure to transfer both in the TT.

The translator needs to take into account two aspects of the original during translation, that is, its form and its meaning; by retaining the form of the original as an aid to conveying its meaning which is useful in poetic texts. Other scholars view retaining form as a hindrance to effectively and accurately communicating the message of the ST into the TT. The form consists of the structural components of the SL (Beckman and Callow, 1974). Different languages use different forms to convey the same meaning, the translators must decide on the best way of conveying the meaning of the original whether by retaining the form of the original or by translating into a form that is natural for the receptor language, regardless of whether or not it corresponds to the form of the original.

The meaning of the original is best communicated by translating it into a linguistic form which is similar to that of the original language, that is, the target text corresponds to the source text form. The source text and the target text may correspond in terms of the genre; song with song, poetry with poetry, narrative with narrative and proverbs with proverbs or with figures of speech; a metaphor with a metaphor, a simile with a simile, an idiom with an idiom among others. It is an approach of translation that is source context oriented. Fee (1985:33) describes it as 'keeping the historical distance intact'. Nida (1964) meant the same thing when he argued that;

'a gloss translation of this type is designed to permit the reader to identify himself as possible with a person in the source-language contexts and to understand as much as he can the customs, manner of thoughts and means of expression' (Nida 1964;159).

It is an approach that retains ambiguity in cases where the ST can be interpreted in more than one way and thus a literal rendering is used which enables the target reader to recover the two meanings that the source target reader would have discovered.

One major problem of the Bible translation is the fact that the people interpret it as an ancient text using contemporary presuppositions in the light of their point of view as though it is addressed to their own cultural context (Cheung, 2013). for example the fact that 'Jesus did not go to school' and was wiser than the scribes should not be used to mislead, but foot notes should be added to indicate that He was a supernatural being, formal schools may not be mentioned in the original Bible but medical doctors like Luke are mentioned which means there were formal learning and careers. The modern translators could find a room to elaborate on the contemporary issues that are implied in the Bible though not brought out clearly. A good translator should link the disconnect of the culture of the Bible with modern issues.

On the contrary, functional approach in translation puts into consideration the receptor context and views the translation in a way that it will yield the same meaning or response that was intended for the source language readers to the target language readers. This is explored in this paper in the way the translator uses the context to interpret the meaning before relaying it into the target text. It puts the responsibility for avoiding context-based misinterpretation upon the translators, for example, in case of figurative language if the figure in SLT will be meaningless or lead to misinterpretation in the TLT then the translator should take the responsibility of finding an equivalent figure and if it is not possible then it can be omitted altogether in the TLT. It allows the translator to make numerous interpretive decisions.

Van der Merwe (1999) argues that with a community that reads the Bible most of its readers will prefer a functionally equivalent type of translation but a small group of serious Bible readers would prefer a more literal approach in which less of the interpretive decisions are made for them. He also argues that the translation needs to provide the reader with enough explanatory notes on the historical and cultural factors to help them interpret

the contextually implied information correctly without unnecessary processing efforts. These notes help to enlarge the contextual environment of the target readers and hence improving their comprehension.

Guo (2012) describes culture as patterns of traditions, social habits and values which entails the entire ways of a society, while Vermeer (1992) states that culture constitutes of the totality of norms, conventions and opinions which determines the behavior and the results of the behavior in a given community. The establishment of the behavior and its results are done by the language and thus culture and language are inseparable. Translation is therefore necessitated by the exchanges between cultures, and hence the translation process is a medium for and a product of cultural exchange, (Huang, 2014). Figurative language is culture based, one expression or an image may have different meanings depending on the culture in which it occurs. Ndlovu and Sibanda (2014) acknowledge that practical translation involves some basic realities that are reflected in the culture of both the ST and the TT. Castello (2014) states that the impossibilities of translation are inherent in the language because different languages create different world views.

Figurative Language

According to Nida (1975), the figurative word refers to a word which is used in place of another meaning or expression which is not its synonym but with which it has an association of ideas often mediated through a supplementary component such as idioms, simile and metaphors. In translating the figurative language, not only requires the knowledge of the language and cultures of both source and target language, but also choosing the appropriate word and translation strategies.

Baker (1992) lists four difficulties in translating the figurative language. First, a figurative language has no equivalent in the target language. Second, a figure of speech might have the same equivalent in the target language, but may vary with the context. Third, a figure of speech in the source language may be translated literally and idiomatic in the target language. Fourth, the use of figurative language in writing discourse, context and frequency of usage may differ with the source language and the target language. Baker also suggested two strategies

for translating the figurative language. First, using a figure of speech that is similar in meaning and form. Second, the use of figurative language is similar in meaning, but differ in form and the last is translated by the paraphrase. According to Baker, translation by paraphrasing is most often used when an equivalence match cannot be found in the target language.

In the process of translation, the translator as possible as he or she could, will try to maintain the figurative language of the source texts. Each word represents a specific meaning in the language. The use of a specific image from the source language into the target language will have a negative impact on the target reader if it's not correctly translated. This is because the translators might have misinterpreted the use of images that are specific to a source language and cultural resources. For example, the word 'wool' to refer to 'white as snow' in the ST (source texts). The term 'wool' may not be understood by the audience because this element is not in the culture or it may be of a different colour. To overcome misinterpretation of the meaning, the translator has to use a term or an image that is familiar in the target language and can be understood by the audience in the target texts (TT).

There are issues of words with the same images, but different meanings. This is because when the same image is used, yet due to the difference in meaning between the two languages, will cause misunderstanding when translating. One of the strategy employed by the translator is using a simile of similar meaning and form, changing what is implicit to explicit. The strategy of translating metaphors to similes by using the word 'like' or 'as' to express the relation between the subject and the image was proposed by Larson (1998).

Barnwell (1986) offers two suggestions in translating figures of speech. First, identify the meaning, by considering the purpose for the figure of speech e.g. Is it for emphasis? What is the attitude of the speaker and what is the hearer's response? What is the effect of the figure of speech on the text? Secondly, the translator should consider how these aspects of meaning can be communicated in the receptor language and aim to achieve the same effect in the translation.

Mikre-Selassie (1995) asserts that figurative expressions or words with figurative meaning which are suitable in one language may not be used literally in another language with the same meaning. He advocates use of different words or expressions which are more suitable and natural for the language of the translation.

Metaphor

Metaphor is a figurative expression transferring the meaning from one thing to another based on their similarity (Proshina, 2008). A metaphor is also defined as a transference of some quality from one object to another it is an implicit comparison of two unlike objects and it carries an emotive function (Searle, 1979). Metaphors are inherent in a language and can easily escape the translator's attention. It is one of the features of imaginative writing and thus the translators must fully be aware of its sense and the emotive effect it produces through its image. Newmark (1992) states that the sense and image should be preserved as much as possible.

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2005), metaphor is the imaginative use of a word or phrase to describe something else, to show that the two have the same qualities. The comparison between the two unlike things or notions is implicit (Crystal, 1997).

For instance, 'Christ is a shepherd' is a metaphor which compares Jesus Christ to a shepherd. The point of similarity here is that both Jesus Christ and a shepherd have responsibility. Christ takes care of people and a shepherd takes care of sheep.

The metaphor may be single (one word) and extended (a collocation, a sentence, a proverb or a complete imaginative text). Metaphors can be translated through interlingual metaphoric transformations that changes the metaphor in different ways. For example, the use of metaphorisation in which a non-metaphoric word or a phrase in the source language is translated by the use of a metaphor. The translator in this case may introduce an idiom. The translator may also resort to demetaphorization or drop the metaphor in the source language and translate using a non-metaphoric expression. It should be the last technique that a translator applies when there is a case of phraseological lacuna in the target language. In another case the remetaphorisation can be used where a source language metaphor is translated by a metaphor in the target language. In such a case the image in the metaphor is fully preserved by use of full or partial equivalents (Proshina, 2008). Descriptive or explanatory translation is used when a metaphor in the source language appears to be obscure and not very crucial. The translator may also make use of a simile to translate a metaphor.

In translating metaphors, translators often maintain a metaphorical expression with the same image or substituting different metaphor in the target language that carries the same meaning as the metaphor in the source language. Metaphors can be maintained if it suits the target language. This means that if the expression is properly understood by the target audience, the metaphor can be translated directly into the target language metaphor (Larson, 1998). According to Larson a metaphor can also be translated without keeping the image of the metaphor. This means that the translator can ignore the image in the ST and translate the meaning directly with or without the use of the metaphor.

SIMILE

Abrams and Harpham (2012) stated that a simile is a comparison between two distinctly different things and it uses the words "like" or "as" to compare one object or idea with another to suggest they are alike. It is an open comparison eg the use of 'as white as snow'. A simile is a figurative expression that involves explicit comparison of two unlike things, to point a similarity, using a marker such as 'like' or 'as' (Crystal, 1997). Newmark (1981) postulates that similes are more precise, more restricted and usually less radical, less committed than metaphors, since they limit the resemblance of the 'object' and its 'image' to a single property. He argues that they are generally easier to translate than metaphors. For instance, 'wisdom shines like the light of dawn' is a simile that likens wisdom to the light of dawn. The point of similarity in this simile is that wisdom brings to an end ignorance, which could figuratively be compared to darkness, the same way the light of dawn brings to an end a night.

A simile can be compared to a metaphor. Nida (1964) stated that a metaphor is a figurative expression used instead of another to make an implicit comparison between the items referred to by two expressions, often based upon supplementary components. The expression is similar to a simile except that the comparison is explicit in simile. Cameron (1999) gives another meaning to metaphor when he stated that metaphors will of course be similes, and similes are metaphors that invite an explanation. Metaphors do not have the word like or as, but they are also comparisons that can often be rewritten as similes.

The Kikamba Bible

The earliest Biblical translations in Africa were the missionaries. In Kenya it started in 1845 when Krapt, a German C M S missionary started his translations of the scriptures into Kiswahili, Kigalla and Kikamba. According to Waruta (1975), in Kenya the Bible was first translated in Kiswahili because it was the only written language in East Africa and had a rich oral tradition; there was a rich written Kiswahili literature in Arabic script. The missionaries were translating the portions of the Bible after studying the Kenyan languages. The second complete translation of the Bible was in Kikamba. In 1956 the Kikamba Bible was completed and published as *Maandiko Matheu Ma Ngai Metawa Mbivilia Nimo Utiano Mweu* (the Holy Scriptures of God Called Bible are the New Covenant). Its revision was completed in 1974 under the title *Mbivilia* (Bible). It uses the Kĩmasaku dialect of Kikamba. Another Kikamba Bible was translated by Mbiti alone under the title and completed in 2006. The third version was by a team of translators and published by the Kenya Bible Society in 2012 under the title *Mbivilia Uvoo Museo Kikamba Kya Ivinda Yĩ* (the Bible Good News the updated Kikamba) which used in this paper.

II. METHODOLOGY

A descriptive research design that falls under qualitative research approach was used in data analysis in this paper. The population included all the books of the Bible. The Bible has 66 books and is divided into two sections the Old Testament and New Testament. The Old Testament has 39 books and the New Testament has 27 books. The books are further divided into other categories.

For the purpose of this study the researcher adopted a classification by the Revised Standard Version of the Bible (Preface, 1952) which put the Bible books into seven categories:

Pentateuch (law) - Genesis to Deuteronomy, Historical books-Joshua to Esther, Poetical books – Job to Songs of Solomon, Prophetic books – Isaiah to Malachi and the Revelation, Gospel- Mathew to John, the early Church - the Acts and the Epistles -Romans to Jude.

The researcher purposively sampled one book from each category. A total of 7 books formed the sample for the study: Genesis, Judges, Matthew, Acts of the Apostle, Song of Solomon, Isaiah and Hebrews. This is to ensure that each category is adequately represented. Two chapters were purposively selected from each book forming a total of 14 chapters. The researcher based the analysis on two phases. The first phase involved the theoretical consideration in which the researcher was to read the selected chapters from each book using the Revised Standard Version Bible (2008) and the Kikamba Bible (2012) intensively to identify the lexical problems. The second phase involved categorizing the lexical problems. Lexical problems were analyzed using the Equivalence Theory by Nida (1964) and reviewed by Leonardi (2000), and the Relevance Theory proposed by Sperber and Wilson (1986).

Discussion

The figurative use of language such as metaphors and similes along with other morphological, syntactic and lexical components create a certain stylistic quality which needs to be preserved in the process of translation as it results to clear interpretation. The translator has to strive to get systemic equivalents in order to render the message of the original to the target text (Kvetko, 2009). In this paper the researcher concentrated on the translation of metaphors, similes and idiomatic (fixed expressions). It was evident from the data that the figurative use of language caused challenges to the translator.

1 Metaphors

Mistranslation at the level of the metaphor is experienced because metaphors express comparison in way or another, (Lycan, 2000). Davison (1978) and Searle (1979) argue that a metaphor does not have the anomalous meaning but it is a form or a way of indirect communication which means that the translator should interpret it first. The metaphor in the TT will therefore be the translator's version of the expression in the ST. If the metaphor is misinterpreted by the translator then the target audience will get the wrong meaning.

An example of a metaphor is demonstrated in Song of Solomon 1:13-14 in the following text;

ST: My beloved is to me a bag of myrrh
that is between my breasts.

TT: *Mwendwe wakwa kwakwa nĩ ta
kamũvuko ka mauta
me mũuke mũseo matewa
manemane,
kailĩlwe katĩ wa nondo
syakwa.*

B/T: my love to me is like a bag of oil
of good smell called
manemane
placed in between my breast.

In Song of Solomon 1:13 the metaphor was translated through the use of a simile using the unit change strategy and literal approach to retain the implied meaning but 'myrrh' is omitted and other additions are made. The challenge is that the lexical word myrrh is not lexicalized in Kikamba. The tree does not grow in Ũkambanĩ and therefore difficult to interpret the metaphor because the image of the tree is expected to create a mental picture in the mind of the receptor language reader. This mental picture is replaced with oil with a good smell. A descriptive approach has been used to quantify the term with some additional information. Reduction strategy was also used to reduce the metaphor to a simile. Clarity is still lacking because the word '*manemane*' is borrowed from Kiswahili and is not lexicalized in Kikamba. Although the basic semantic implied meaning that the speaker

adores the beloved is transferred to the TT, the comparison which renders the intensity of adoration is lost and thus the transfer is considered unsuccessful.

The metaphor in Song of Solomon 1:14 is also not fully transferred in the TT due to challenges of the image 'henna' which is not lexicalized in Kikamba.

NE: 37

ST: My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blossoms
in the vineyards of En-gedi.

TT: *mwendwe wakwa kwakwa nĩ ta*

Malaa me mũuke mũseo ma

mũĩ wa kwĩyanakavya wĩtawa ina

me mũũndani wa mĩsavivũ wa Eni-ngeti

B/T: my love to me is like

flowers with good smell of

tree of making oneself beautiful called ina

in the garden of grapes of Eni-ngeti

In verse Isaiah 1:14 the speaker compares the beloved with 'henna' which is a word borrowed from Arabic which is used to make dye that is used to color hair or tattoos (Oxford Dictionary, 2010). This is therefore a loan word in English and does not have an equivalent in Kikamba. For one to interpret a metaphor he or she must understand the image that is used in the metaphor so as to compare it with the concept that is abstract. The translator reduced the metaphor to a simile to translate it into the receptor language, the tree was transliterated using different letters but retaining the sound it had in the source language, (*ina*) and also by adding information to include the fact that the tree is used for beautifying oneself. The words 'cluster' and 'blossoms' are not rendered in the TT. Reducing the metaphor into a simile results to reducing its 'force' among the TT audience.

The other challenge was the word 'vineyard' which was translated as garden but a vineyard has the element of trees that are grown for beauty or for ornamental purposes, a place for outdoor activities (Advanced Oxford advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2010) which fits well in this context. The image creates a different picture to receptors of the TT from the one it created in the minds of the receptors of the ST which is a crucial principle in dynamic equivalence (Nida and Taber, 1982). So in this case the content is not fully transferred in the TT leading to a mistranslation error.

There is also a challenge in translation due to the structural use of the elements in the ST which is an ambiguous structure in the target language. For example, in Song of Solomon 1:3 the metaphor is literally translated leading to mismatch in translation.

TEXT

ST: your name is oil poured out;

TT: *na ĩsyĩtwa yangu nĩ ta mauta me*

mũũke mũseo monosye,

B/T: and your name is like oil with

good smell put,

The translator used a simile to translate the metaphor literally. The two have the same idea but a metaphor is more intense in terms of meaning than a simile which is an open comparison. Some theologians and philosophers of religion believe that the nature of a religious truth is such that it can only be conveyed metaphorically, and therefore there is need for the translator to come up with appropriate principles for interpreting religious texts in the source language metaphorically and not literally or word for word in order to transfer the same meaning and effect into the TT, (Blumenberg, 1960). This is a case of a metaphor that is tied in the religious interpretation since the 'anointing oil' has a connotative meaning in the Jewish culture, (Douglas and Tenny, 1987).

4.3.3 Similes

Bredin (1998) argues that a simile is a semantic figure based on comparison. He further adds that it is a mental process playing a central role in the way we think and talk about the world that we live in. An unfamiliar or abstract idea or object is compared openly with a concrete or familiar concept or idea. The similes reflected below used in the book of Isaiah 1:8

TEXT

ST: And the daughter of Zion is left
like a booth in a vineyard,
TT: *Ndũa ya Saioni ãtiĩtwe ãilyi ta,*
kĩvanda kũ mũũndanĩ wa
mĩsavivũ
B/T: village of 'Saioni' is left looking like,
a section/place in the garden of
grapes

The simile has been translated using a simile in which the image 'daughter' has been replaced with a village which is implied in the ST but not explicitly brought out. The expression 'the daughters of Zion' according to the translator represents the location which is compared with portion (booth in the ST) of a garden with grapes (vineyard in the ST). By changing the image to adapt to the TT the translator distorted the meaning of a 'booth' and the 'vineyard'. In terms of size the booth is made to be small and the vineyard which is translated as a 'garden' is more valuable than just a garden.

The second simile was translated literally in the TT. The image 'a lodge' is substituted with 'a small house in the garden'.

NE: 42
ST: And the daughter of Zion is left
like a lodge in a cucumber field,
TT: *Ndũa ya Saioni ãtiĩtwe ãilyi ta,*
kasumba ke mũũndanĩ wa
mongũ
B/T: village of *Saioni* is left looking like,
a small house in the garden of
butter nuts.

Cucumber is grown in Ũkambanĩ and therefore has been literally translated. The attachment that religious culture has with cucumbers seems to be special, a highly regarded food among the Hebrews from whose culture the Bible draws its relevance. This can be referred in the Bible during their journey to Egypt they cried to Moses when they were faced with famine and remembered the cucumbers that they were eating in Egypt (Douglas and Tenny, 1987). The targeted audience is majorly the Akamba people who do not have a special attachment towards 'cucumber' as witnessed in their folklore, for examples in riddles and stories. It is a local food for the old and the poor folks in the rural areas. Similes are either literal or non-literal (Bredin, 1998). Though the image exists in both, it has different meaning in the two cultures thus the intense meaning is lost.

The third simile was literally translated word-for-word and the message of the source text was relayed in the target text as illustrated below:

TEXT
ST: And the daughter of Zion is left
like a besieged city.
TT: *Ndũa ya Saioni ãtiĩtwe ãilyi,*
ta ndũa ãthyũlũlũkĩtwe nĩ
amaitha.
B/T: village of 'Saioni' is left looking like,
like village surrounded by
enemies.

The 'city' is domesticated as 'village'. The two do not have the same implication although the idea of being 'fortified' is communicated.

A simile has a vehicle and a topic. The vehicle is the entity to which the topic is compared accompanied by a comparison marker and the similarity features are the properties shared by the topic and the vehicle, (Fromilhague, 1995). The makers help one to recognize similes easily in a text. Such markers include verbs, adjectives, nouns, prepositions and conjunctions. The markers result to different syntactic requirements on the constituents being compared, they are not interchangeable since they have different

meanings. This results to mistranslation at the syntactic and semantic levels in similes as seen in Isaiah 1:9 where the 'nouns' are used implicitly.

ST: we should have been like Sodom,
and become like Gomor'rah
TT: *twithiwa twathelile ta ndũa ya*
Sodomu
na ta ndũa ya Ngomolo
B/T: we would have been finished like the village of Sodom
And the village of Gomor'rah

In the simile the source text author claims that if a few of the people in this context were not spared then their end would have been like that of 'Sodom' and 'Gomor'rah'. The end of 'Sodom' and 'Gomor'rah' is implied and the reader can only connect the simile with the story in the Bible where both were utterly destroyed because the people who lived in them were continually sinning against God (Douglas and Tenny, 1987). The targeted audience can only interpret the simile that is literally translated if and only if they know the story of Sodom and Gomor'rah outside the text. These images created a gap because the translator did not make use of amplification strategy for clarity or foot note.

Challenges are intensified by the fact that similes serve different purposes, for example, they establish a link with the reader's general knowledge (Gutt, 2003). The readers targeted by the TT do not share the same general knowledge. This knowledge makes it easier to understand and readers also use it to reveal and interpret abstract or unfamiliar concepts by using the concepts outside the context that are known to them, for example, in Isaiah 1:18, a number of similes are used;

TEXT
ST: though your sins are like scarlet
TT: *ona vala nai syenyu ni ndune*
mũno,
B/T: although your sins are
very red.
ST: they shall be as white as snow
TT: *mũkathew'a mwĩthĩwe mwĩ eũ*
ta ĩa
B/T: you will be made white like
snow

The use of literal language to translate the simile in this case does not cause the impact to the targeted audience as it caused to the SL audience. The equivalent effect which is a principle in the equivalence theory (Gutt, 2000) is not achieved. A simile helps the reader to interpret the abstract or unknown concept from the concrete or the known concept (Fromilhague, 1995).

In the second one sin is compared with **crimson**, which is an abstract idea.

ST: though they are red like crimson
TT: *o na vala ni ndune ta nthakame,*
B/T: even though they are red like blood
ST: they shall become like wool
TT: *mũkeeĩvw'a ta wia wa ĩlondu.*
B/T: you will be made white like the wool of sheep.

In this simile the word 'crimson' was substituted with 'red as blood' and in other part of the same simile the white color has been compared with wool. Sheep in Ūkambanĩ are not generally white, they are not ideally kept for wool since they are a local breed that is purposely used for meat (Mwau, 2006). This led to ambiguity in the TT and loss of the concrete object used in the ST.

Some similes used images of real or concrete objects that did not exist in TT, as illustrated in Isaiah 1:30 the oak tree is not commonly grown in Ūkambanĩ or its value is not known in the targeted community. Its value and nature contribute to its meaning in the context.

TEXT
ST: For you shall be like oak
whose leaf withers

TT: *Nikwĩthĩwa mũkeethĩwa mũilyĩ*
ta mũtĩ wa mwalonĩ ũvovetye
matũ
B/T: for you will be
like a tree of *mwalonĩ* with withered
leaves.

In this text the city of Zion is likened to the 'oak' which is a tree known for its hard wood and typically grown in England and America according to the Oxford Dictionary (2010). The leaves of the 'oak' in this simile are said to wither, and this happens when a tree is not blossoming. The name used to translate the 'oak tree' is uncommon among the Akamba community and does not even exist in the Kikamba dictionary (Mwau, 2006). This image must have caused some challenge to the translator and the comparison is not clear leading to unsuccessful translation.

Similes are used in a specific structure and form especially in the poetic literature. Since languages differ in structure, challenges are witnessed in translating similes that appeared to be tied to the form. In the Song of Solomon 1:5 two similes are used which are structured parallel to each other.

NE: 49
ST: am comely like the tents of Kedar,
TT: *nĩ mũmbe nesa ta maeema ma Ketali*
B/T: am created beautiful like tents of *Ketali*

The image in the simile is a 'tent made of kedar' which is an abstract concept or place in the mind of the targeted audience and thus the message of the ST is not clearly rendered in the TT. The translator used naturalization to translate the image - Kedar, which did not make the image concrete and the intensity of the beauty is not relayed in the TT since the comparison is not clear. 'Tents' and 'beauty' are not comparable but some specific tents of 'Kedar' are used, which symbolically meant a shelter in the desert, sign of relief from the hot scorching sun, ((Douglas and Tenny, 1987)

The other simile used 'curtains of Solomon' as the image to show how beautifully the daughters of Zion were created. The reader can only comprehend the meaning of the image by relating it to the story of King Solomon and his splendour in the Bible.

TEXT
ST: am comely like the curtains of Solomon
TT: *nĩ mũmbe nesa ta wasia ĩla syĩ kwa Solomon*
B/T: am beautiful like the curtains that are there at Solomon's

The message would be made easier to comprehend by providing some communication cues in the TT.

The fact that, similes also have aesthetic function, that is, to talk about something in a creative way, poses a challenge. They generally communicate concisely and efficiently, (Fromilhague, 1995). The aesthetic is coupled with the formatting of the similes in a text. This formatting is changed in the TT and thus the aesthetic function is either not realized or realized in a different way.

Some of the images used in the similes are not lexicalized in Kikamba and others did not share the same extended or connotation meaning as in the ST. This led to the use of strategies to overcome the problems, such as reduction and literal translation among others that led to unsuccessful transfer of meaning from the ST to the TT.

III. Conclusion

From this discussion it can be concluded that the translation of figurative language in the Bible is meaning-based, the meaning of a figurative expression in the source text is re-expressed in the target text. Literal translation in the Bible leads to loss of meaning. It is important for figurative language in the bible to be translated accurately to cause the same impact to the targeted audience. The study recommends frequent translation of the bible to match with the culture which is dynamic and it should be done by experts in Bible translation as they have the skills and knowledge to translate figurative language and ensure that there is interpretive resemblance between the source text and the target text. To avoid mistranslation in the translation of figurative language translators should use words or sentence structures which are unambiguous. Words or sentence structures with more than one meaning are bound to be misinterpreted, therefore leading to loss of the meaning expressed in the source text. The study also recommends that the translation of figurative language in the Bible, should include important

objects which are contained in the target text. The omission of these objects leads to loss of the meaning in the target text. In cases where certain elements are peculiar to the natural environment, institutions and culture of the language area of the source text, the translation could use equivalent elements in the language area of the target text to avoid obscurity.

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