

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN THE TRANSLATION OF NORTHERN
SOTHO IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS INTO ENGLISH**

By

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A Thesis submitted for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Northern Sotho

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DECLARATION

I, Tlou Phestus Meso, declare that the thesis, AN ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN THE TRANSLATION OF NORTHERN SOTHO IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS INTO ENGLISH, submitted for the qualification, Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Northern Sotho in the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education at the University of Venda is my own independent work in both conception and execution, and that I have not previously submitted the same work at any university. All sources that I have used or quoted herein have been indicated and duly acknowledged by means of complete references.

ABSTRACT

Human beings the world over benefit from sharing experiences and knowledge through language. African languages have now demonstrated that they also have capacity to transmit intellectualism that advances human progress and knowledge beyond human borders. Words such as *ubuntu*, *imbizo* and *lobola* have broken bonds of linguistic superiority. But is it possible to translate the linguistic superiority into English without acculturation? This study adopts the qualitative research method to present a detailed descriptive analysis of the socio-cultural framework of the Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions. It adopts Nord's (1997/2000) Functionalist Approach of translation within Descriptive Translation Studies to engage in a critical analysis of a clearly defined collection of Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions. Despite the fact that Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions can be rendered in the English language through translation, they may (still) remain foreign to the English culture. The study assumes that the translation of idiomatic expressions should be taken above the limits of narrow microtextual context analysis and consider the broader macrotextual context (Lindfors, 1978). The study distances itself from the notion of 'equivalence', between the source text and the target text, as propagated by linguistic-orientated theorists such as Catford (1965), Nida and Taber (1969) and House (1977).

Keywords: Acculturation. Culture. Descriptive Translation Studies. Equivalence. Functionalist Approach of Translation. Idiomatic Expressions. Translation. Translation Strategy.

Table of Contents

DECLARATION	i
ABSTRACT	ii
CHAPTER 1	1
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY	1
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Background of the study	1
1.2 Statement of the problem	4
1.3 Rationale and motivation of the study	4
1.4 Aim and objectives	5
1.4.1 Aim	5
1.4.2 Objectives	5
1.5 Research questions	5
1.6 Significance of the study	5
1.7 Definition of terms and concepts	6
1.7.1 Translation	7
1.7.2 Culture	9
1.7.3 Acculturation	10
1.7.4 Idiomatic expressions	11
1.8 Organisation of the Study	13
1.9 Conclusion	14
CHAPTER 2	15
LITERATURE REVIEW	15
2.0 Introduction	15
2.1 Oral tradition	15
2.2 Contextualising idiomatic expressions	17
2.2.1 Defining idioms	18
2.2.3 Proverbs as figures of speech	23
2.2.4 Metaphors as figures of speech	25
2.3 Defining culture specific items	26
2.4 Classification of idiomatic expressions	28
2.4.1 Transparent metaphors	28
2.4.2 Semi-transparent metaphors	28
2.4.3 Opaque metaphors	29
2.4.5 Semi-idiom	30
2.4.6 Literal idioms	30

2.5	Reflection on language and culture	33
2.6	Aspects of culture in translation	36
2.7	The role of culture in translation of idiomatic express	40
2.8	The role of translator in translation and culture	42
2.9	Problems of translating idiomatic expressions	43
2.10	Strategies of translating idiomatic expressions	48
2.10.1	Using an idiom of similar meaning and form.....	49
2.10.2	Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form.....	53
2.10.3	Translation by paraphrase.....	58
2.10.4	Translation by omission.....	60
2.10.5	Borrowing the source language idiom.....	62
2.10.6	Compensation.....	64
2.10.7	Literal translation.....	64
2.10.8	Free translation.....	66
2.10.9	Combination.....	67
2.10.10	Transposition.....	67
2.10.11	Integration.....	67
2.11	Nord's (1991) Model for Source Text Analysis	67
2.12	Theoretical frameworks	68
2.12.1	Geertz (1973) interpretation of cultures.....	69
2.12.2	Functional translation (Skopos Theory).....	71
2.13	The concept of meaning in translation	73
2.14	Conclusions	75
CHAPTER 3		77
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY		77
3.0	Introduction	77
3.1	Research design	77
3.2	Research methodology	80
3.3	The research approach	83
3.4	Insider outsider perspective	84
3.4.1	Insider or outsider: to be or not to be.....	86
3.5	Aim and Objectives	88
3.5.1	Aim.....	88
3.5.2	Objectives.....	88
3.6	Population and sampling	88
3.6.1	Population.....	89

3.6.2	Sampling.....	89
3.7	The goal of qualitative research.....	91
3.8	Qualitative research is constructive and symbolic.....	92
3.9	Data collection	93
3.9.1	Survey	93
3.9.2	Questionnaire as qualitative data collection tool	95
3.10	Data analysis methods	97
3.11	Quality criteria	100
3.11.1	Credibility	100
3.11.2	Dependability	101
3.11.3	Transferability	101
3.11.4	Confirmability	101
3.12	Research ethics.....	102
3.12.1	Respect for participants' rights and dignity	103
3.12.2	Informed consent.....	103
3.12.3	Confidentiality	103
3.12.4	Opting out.....	103
3.12.6	Permission to undertake the study	104
3.13	Conclusion.....	104
CHAPTER 4		106
DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION		106
4.0	Introduction	106
4.1	Demographic information	106
4.1.1	Participants gender	107
4.1.1.1	Student participant's gender.....	107
4.1.1.2	Language Practitioner participants' gender.....	108
4.1.2	Participants age.....	110
4.1.2.1	Participants Age	110
4.1.3	Participants race.....	111
4.1.4	Participants level of study/education.....	111
4.2	Presentation and discussion of themes.....	113
4.2.1	Theme 1: Adversity	113
4.2.2	Theme 2: Family life.....	118
4.2.3	Theme 3: Community life	124
4.3	Conclusion.....	144
CHAPTER 5		145

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS	145
5.0 Introduction	145
5.1 Summary of the chapters.....	145
5.2 Findings of the study.....	151
5.2.1 Findings guided by emerging themes.....	151
5.2.2 Findings guided by major themes.....	153
5.3 Recommendation	160
5.4 Concluding remarks.....	160
BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES.....	162

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the general introduction of this study. It outlines the background of the study, statement of the problem, rationale and motivation of the study. It also states the aim and objectives of the study. Research questions developed based on the objectives are also provided. It also demonstrates the significance of the study and presents the definitions of the terms and concepts as they apply to this study. This chapter is concluded by providing a clear organisation of the proposed study.

1.1 Background of the study

Languages as communication tools are carriers of both linguistic and cultural aspects and have become a fertile ground upon which collaborative and interdisciplinary research is carried out. Idiomatic expressions as figures of speech are found in all languages across the globe and they express meaning specific to their culture. Nengovhela (2017:17) concurs that “idioms and fixed expressions are culture-based units of language”. Thus, they carry a meaning that is known and accepted by a particular cultural group. They are vital carriers of culture in the communities. They are important components of every society and its language. Idiomatic expressions are fixed combinations of words whose meaning is different from the meaning conveyed by the individual words (Towse & Knight 2009; Mojela, 2004; Cain & Owens, 2016). Thus, idiomatic expressions function as a whole and have a special meaning different from the ordinary meaning of each separate word. The meaning of a whole (expression) is different from those of individual words. This makes the translation of idiomatic expressions problematic.

Culler in Baker (2011) stresses the fact that languages are different and are not mere nomenclatures but articulations of the realities of the speakers. If language were simply a nomenclature for a set of universal concepts, it would be easy to understand and translate utterances expressed in different languages. Thus, it would be easy to translate from one language to another. Although languages pervade social life as principal vehicles for the transmission of cultural knowledge and are the primary means by which individuals gain access to the contents of others' minds, “one language may differ radically from those of others and each language articulates the world differently” (Baker, 2011:9). Therefore, when

people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds interact, the problem encountered in communication becomes complex. Gouws and Prinsloo (2005:158) argue that “the lexicon of a language does not necessarily develop parallel to the lexicon of any other language”. That is, when one language acquires a word for a particular concept, it does not imply that the next language will also acquire a word for that concept. Idiomatic expressions are not exempted from this situation. This communication complexity and difficulty is brought about by various factors such as culture and context, leaving translators with several challenges when executing their duties of bridging the translation gap across cultures. For example, when translating idiomatic expressions and other forms of fixed expressions between English and Northern Sotho, there are cultural phenomena and expressions not readily available in the target culture, resulting in translation problems or constraints.

This study focuses on the difficulties of translating idiomatic expressions (cultural symbols) as accepted symbols of communication in society, and the following serves as an illustration of this effect.

1. *Monna ke tau.*

- (a) A man is a lion.
- (b) A man loves and/or eats meat a lot.

2. *Monna ke nku, o llela teng*

- (a) A man is a sheep, he cries within himself.
- (b) A man is like a sheep, he doesn't cry publicly when he is in trouble.
- (c) A real man is strong and courageous, he doesn't expose his problems publicly.
- (d) One cannot predict the real man's emotional status by his facial appearance.

A translator who is not familiar with the cultural background knowledge of Northern Sotho is likely to produce (a) in 1 above and provide either (a) or (b) in 2 as translation. However, this will be misleading to the target readers. This is because (a) in 1, and both (a) and (b) in 2, are literal meanings and do not carry the intended meaning relation with the source text. The complexity of the source text, 1 for example, is due to the fact that *monna* (man) is metaphorically compared to a lion. Therefore, the carnivorous characteristics of a lion which *monna* possesses as explained in this expression will help the translator to decode (get a

full understanding of) 1, so that he can trigger the speaker's intended meaning, which is (b). The meaning (characteristics) of the term 'lion' (meat eating or the love of meat) carries the meaning of the expression. However, the bravery character of a lion as the king of the jungle could also be incorporated as figurative meaning of the expression 1.

Looking at (a) and (b) in 2, the translator has been unsuccessful in executing his duties. The literal meaning of (a) and (b) is awkward and makes little or no sense. The accurate meaning of 2, is (c) and (d) as it carries the entire meaning of the expression.

This is because *monna* (man) in 2, is metaphorically compared to a sheep. In both 1 and 2, the translator failed to identify and differentiate between figurative and literal meanings of the expressions and individual words within the expressions. The translator's lack of Northern Sotho cultural background knowledge prevented him from decoding the expressions above.

The cultural analysis of the expression in 1 and 2, is important to the background and cultural knowledge of the Basotho. Answers to the following questions will be of assistance for the translator to capture the meaning of 1 and 2.

- Why *monna* (man) is metaphorically compared to both a sheep and a lion?
- What are the characteristics of both a lion and a sheep as explained in these fixed expressions, which a man possesses?
- Are all the individual users of these expressions familiar with these characteristics?
- What is the real 'meaning' of the term *monna* (man) as used in these expressions?

The cultural background of these expressions will help the translator to answer the above question. As symbols of culture, African idioms, proverbs, metaphors and other fixed expressions originated from oral tradition. They reflect both the past and present, and are as "relevant to contemporary society as they were to traditional society" (Stewart, 2005:iv). Although these figures of speech are currently recorded to preserve them for posterity; traditionally, they were passed on by word of mouth from one generation to another. Contemporary authors are aware of this heritage contained in communal wisdom of cultural societies. They exist in large numbers within various texts. Stewart (2005:v) further argues that "in order to understand the full meaning and cultural significance of an African proverb, it may be necessary to decode it". Thus, it is important to discover the figurative meaning because the literal meaning (translation) often fails to capture its true meaning.

This background demonstrates the need for a translator to master both linguistic and extra-linguistic factors involved in the process of translating idiomatic expressions. The statement of the problem is outlined below.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Every language is firmly rooted in its own conceptual system. It follows, therefore, that what is acceptable in one culture may not be so in another. Moreover, two words of the same form that correspond to two different meanings may have different historical roots (Finegan, 2004). Hence, translating to and from languages of different historical roots is no simple matter as the original is embedded in the cultural literary system of the source language, which is often different from the cultural literary system of the target language. Given that idiomatic expressions are culture-specific units of language, it is even more difficult to translate them because of their cultural uniqueness. "It is through figurative modes of thought that a culture signifies its unique view of the world; it is this uniqueness which presents the greatest problem for the translator of idiomatic expressions" (Charteris-Black, 2003:125). In addition, Pedersen (in Trosborg, 1997:109) maintains that: "the translation of idioms is as difficult as it is central". Larson (1984:143) argues that "idioms should be translated with great care". The translator must first be sure of the meaning of the idiomatic expressions and then be able to look for the natural equivalent way of expressing the meaning of this expression as a whole. It is helpful to consider the significance of realising how the expressions originated, that is, the cultural root of the meaning of the idiomatic expressions. In translating between English and Northern Sotho, there are cultural phenomena and expressions not readily available to the target culture, resulting in translation constraints.

The following subsection introduces the rationale and motivation of the study.

1.3 Rationale and motivation of the study

Working with both undergraduate and postgraduate students at the Department of African Languages and the Department of Linguistics, Translation and Interpreting in the School of Languages and Communications of the University of Limpopo has alerted the researcher to a number of challenges in the translation of idiomatic expressions from Northern Sotho into English. The way translators and/or student translators apply translation strategies opens up a number of gaps in their exercise of producing the most acceptable products. The gap is

largely visible in the translation of idiomatic expressions. The meaning of the source text (ST) is easily lost and thereby disseminates distorted message to the target reader (TR). It takes much effort to make the target reader (TR) understand and appreciate Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions and their respective cultural aspects. There is no clear model of translation analysis hence the need of this study.

The following subsection provides aims and objectives of the study.

1.4 Aim and objectives

1.4.1 Aim

The aim of the study is to present a descriptive analysis of the role of culture in the translation of Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions into English.

1.4.2 Objectives

- To examine the translation strategies used in the translation of idiomatic expressions from Northern Sotho into English.
- To establish taking regards for cultural aspects during the translation of idiomatic expressions from Northern Sotho into English.
- To determine if there is flow in reading the translated idiomatic expressions from Northern Sotho into English.

1.5 Research questions

- What are the translation strategies used in the translation of idiomatic expressions from Northern Sotho into English?
- Do translators take regard for cultural aspects during the translation of idiomatic expressions from Northern Sotho into English?
- Is there a flow in reading the translated idiomatic expressions from Northern Sotho into English?

1.6 Significance of the study

The significance of the study relates to its potential to contribute to, and extend, the scientific body of knowledge (LoBiondo-Wood & Haber, 2002).

This study contributes to the body of knowledge in the field of culture, translation, language studies and cross-cultural communication amongst others. The study also benefits both students and researchers in this field and provide translators in practice with translation strategies that serves the intended purpose within the African languages context and beyond. The study familiarises the readership population with various translation problems and strategies to be adopted when dealing with such translation challenges. The study, as well suggest solutions that lexicographers and terminologists will apply in their daily professional tasks.

Although linguists and translation scholars have attempted to study translation of African language idiomatic expressions into English, little has been done with regard to the role of culture in translation of Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions into English. This study, therefore, closes this gap.

The findings and recommendations of this study will equip not only both translators and student translators with comprehensive translation information (strategies) to understand the relationship between SL and TL culture, but also both Northern Sotho and English scholars, lexicographers, terminologists, subject specialists and linguists.

1.7 Definition of terms and concepts

This section indicates how the researcher interprets and uses the identified key concepts in the research report. This exercise calls for analysis, explanation and exploration of the implications of one's own and others' definitions of the terms in order to derive clarity on what they mean in the context of the research study. Keywords and concepts that capture the focus of the research study form the central part of the research report. This is very important, because some concepts or terms are often used in different meanings by different authors. Provision and definition of key terms and concepts in a research report ensure that the reader uses them with a specific meaning and does not read with one set of definitions in mind, only to find out later that the author is using a different set (White, 2005:77). There is a need to clarify similar and related concepts and draw a line in-between in order to construct a more suitable and relevant term as detailed below.

1.7.1 Translation

The study adopts the definition of 'translation' within the functionalist theory of translation as expounded by scholars like Nord (1992). This scholar argues that principle such as fidelity concerns intertextual coherence *translatum* and the ST, and stipulates that some relationship must remain between the two. Munday (2012: 8) defines translation as:

The process of translation between two different written languages involves the changing of an original written text (the source text or ST) in the original verbal language (the source language or SL) into a written text (the target text or TT) in a different verbal language (the target language TL).

Newmark (1988:5) delineates translation as "rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text". Nida and Taber (1982:12) share the same sentiment as they define translation as "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". Catford (1965:20) demarcates translation as the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL) while Hatim and Munday (2004:6) delimit translation as "the process of transferring a written text from source language (SL) to target language (TL)". Moreover, Rabin (1958:123) concurs that "translation is the process by which a spoken or written utterance takes place in one language which is intended and presumed to convey the same meaning as a previously existing utterance in another language". On the other hand, Venuti (1995:17) who embraced Nord's Functionalist Approach of Translation defines translation as "the process by which the chain of signifiers that constitute the source language text is replaced by a chain of signifiers on the target language which the translator provides on the interpretation". Sadeghi (2010:3) outlines the qualities of translation, which form the basis of its definition as follows:

A good translation is easily understood, fluent and smooth, idiomatic, translation conveys to some extent, the literary subtleties of the original, distinguished between the metaphorical and the literal, reconstructs the cultural or historical context of the original, a good translation makes explicates what is implicit in abbreviations, and an illusions to saying, songs and nursery rhymes, for last criteria that good translation will convey, as much as possible, the meaning of the original text.

In the same breath, Soemarno (1988:15) warns translators of the challenges that they would encounter by pointing out that "a translator would face many kinds of difficulties in their work;

for example, difficulties related to the meaning; lexical meaning, grammatical meaning, contextual or situational meaning, textual meaning and sociocultural meaning”.

Hewson and Martin (1991:25) present their definition highlighting cultural aspects, and define translation as “the exploration of an unbridgeable gap and of a tension between cultures, variable according to the historical time and the socio-economic motivations of the assessment”. Translation can thus be finally defined as “the individually and interculturally motivated choice according to target language socio-cultural norms of a target text by a mediator among sets of homologically related paraphrastic options” (Hewson & Martin, 1991:25, 33). Nord (1991:17) says, “it may seem pointless to consider the possibility of matching one translation with one particular ST, or even offering any criteria for an optimum translation”, because of the multiplicity of functions and recipients’ expectations.

The definitions provided above establish that translation is an effort intended to find meaning equivalence in the target text. This study maintains that translation is not a mere linguistic transference of lexical items from one language to another. Above all, translation does not necessarily imply the transference of syntactic patterns only but the meaning of a message conveyed in a communicative act. This is supported by the fact that different languages also have different grammar, different word orders, sometimes even words for which other languages do not have any equivalents. This is also because each language is firmly rooted in its culture, as drawn from Bell’s (1991:13) definition of translation as “the expression in another language (or target language) of what has been expressed in another, source, preserving semantic and stylistic equivalences”. This implies that when one language acquires a word for a given concept, it does not imply that the next language will also acquire a word for that concept (Gouws & Prinsloo, 2005). In this instance, Alberts (2001:2) maintains that due to the culture-specific nature of some text, “not all utterances can be translated successfully from one culture to another”. This is because culture-specific utterances present somewhat a double-edged sword to the translator. This study therefore identify and discuss translation problems as encountered by the translator of the ST into the TT in Northern Sotho. The study views translation as the production of a functional text via intercultural cooperation promoting a communicative act that involves interaction, progress and transfer to produce a text that ensures maintenance of a relationship with a given ST.

1.7.2 Culture

Culture is a multifaceted concept that has often been used to refer to a group of people who share similar views and interpretations of their world. People identify with many cultures (often-called cocultures) simultaneously, and not every member of a particular culture shares all of the same cultural beliefs (Martin & Nakayama, 1999). From a communication perspective, culture consists of shared experiences, negotiated meaning, and provides a way to deal with ambiguity and uncertainty (Samovar & Porter, 2001). The Longman Online Dictionary of Contemporary English (2022) defines culture as beliefs, ways of life, art and customs that are shared and accepted by people in a particular society. Thus, culture is the attitudes and beliefs about something common that is shared by a particular group of people residing in a particular location. Every society has its own particular culture, a way of its own life. Culture describes the manner in which a particular society conducts itself and the way it uses language to communicate. In addition, culture is also viewed as “forms of things that people have in mind, their models for perceiving, relating and otherwise interpreting them” (Lui, 2012:24). This study adopts the definition of culture as Geertz (1973:89) expounds:

It denotes a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about their attitudes towards life.

Geertz (1973) expounds the notion that the process of making meaning is intensely determined by a community. Culture is the attitudes and beliefs about something common that is shared by a particular group of individuals living in a particular geographical location. Hofstede (1994) argues that culture influences individuals behaviour and it governs the social behaviour of a specific society and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively. Culture and language “directly influence the way information is processed, interpreted and judged by the receiver” (Acar, Taura, Yamamoto & Yusof, nd). It is the total range of activities and ideas of a group of people with shared traditions, which are transmitted and reinforced by members of the group. Culture is also viewed as the attitudes, feelings, values and behaviour that characterise and inform society as a whole or any social group within it. It is a local belief and a way of life. Therefore, it and its symbols (language or idiomatic expressions) should be studied from within the local community. In the same line, Winch (1970:111) concurs that:

In any attempt to understand culture (a way of life) of another society, therefore, an investigation of the concept (culture) – their role in the life of society – must always take a central place and provide a basis on which understanding maybe built.

Translators should be conscious and consider translation as a cultural phenomenon. Thus, they should not translate out of their preconceptions. According to Turlikhanovna, Serikbaevna, Serikbaevna, and Amanbaevna (2013) reflection of the impact of translation of history human culture and development of cross-cultural relations is a significant issue of cultural studies. The history of translation is based on relation between language and history.

The phenomenon of translation provides culture with an opportunity to spread out, that is, transfer units from one language to another, peculiar values of definite culture, and at the same time enriches one culture with values of another. Hence, the researcher views translation as a bridge in cross-cultural communication that leads to civilizations of cultures. Guided by the argument above, it can thus be concluded that culture is not only the vehicle of communication and without cultural knowledge; the interpersonal communication may not be properly managed. Culture plays a crucial role in the translation and interpretations of idiomatic expressions. Further discussion on the context of translation and the relation of language, culture and translation is found in chapter two.

1.7.3 Acculturation

According to Redfield, Linton and Herskovits (1936:149) acculturation “comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups”.

People get used to their own culture, but as they meet with other people from different cultural backgrounds they tend to consider it strange or unfamiliar culture. In the state of regarding other people’s cultural activities as unfamiliar they may feel cultural shock. Cultural shock refers to disorientation accompanying exposure to an unfamiliar way of life; and to minimise cultural shock and enjoy your life in the host country you should learn the new culture and be acculturated. Acculturation is learning a new culture. It is a process whereby an individual is socialised into an unfamiliar or new culture (Zakaria 2000). People identify with many cultures (often-called cocultures) simultaneously, and not every member

of a particular culture shares all of the same cultural beliefs (Martin & Nakayama, 1999). Acculturation is understood within the context of translation of Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions into English. From a communication and translation perspectives, culture consists of shared experiences and negotiated meaning and provides a way to deal with ambiguity and uncertainty (Samovar & Porter, 2001). Intercultural communication theories provide a valuable lens through which to understand the cultural norms and values of those from another region, country, or cultural group. The one-theory-fits-all approach to intercultural communication is impossible in global contexts. Excellence theory might be able to account for understanding international practices of public relations (Grunig, 1992; Vercic, Grunig, & Grunig, 1996).

1.7.4 Idiomatic expressions

Idiomatic expressions are found in all languages across the globe and use figures of speech to communicate figurative senses (meaning/message) specific to their culture. Idiomatic expressions are therefore vital carriers of culture in the communities. These idiomatic expressions are important components in every society. An idiomatic expressions possess single basic meaning, for example, the meaning to which the idiomatic expressions is basically meant to refer, but each expression consist of numerous word items (Al-Shawi & Mahadi, 2012; Mojela, 2004). Each of these individual words in the expression have their own meaning, which typically varies from the figurative meaning of the idiomatic expression. Bridging to semantics, the principle of compositionality states that “the meaning of an expression is a monotonic function of the meaning of its parts and the way they are put together” (Cann, 1993:4). The meaning of a complex expression is determined by the meaning of its parts and how they are arranged. To idiomatic expressions, it is entirely different for they function as a unit. By definition, idiomatic expressions and not compositional.

The Oxford Dictionary (2018) defines idiom as a group of words established by usage as having a meaning not deducible from those of the individual words. “An idiom is a kind of complex lexical item. It is a phrase whose meaning cannot be predicted from the meanings of the morphemes it comprises” (Langacher, 1968:79). Sharing the same sentiment, Larson (1984) and Svensén (1993), argue that idiomatic expressions are fixed combination of words whose meaning is different from the meaning conveyed by the individual words. Thus, idiomatic expressions function as a whole and have special meaning that is different from

the ordinary meaning of each separate word. The meaning of a whole expression is different from those of individual words. For example, the English and Northern Sotho idiom 'caught between two stools' and '*goba le pelo tše pedi*' respectively, refers to when one finds it difficult to choose between two alternatives and in both languages. The meaning of this expression has nothing to do with its individual words; stool(s) or (chair(s), a piece of furniture for one person to sit on and /or *dipelo* or *pelo* (heart(s) an organ that pumps blood through one's body. However, if the idiom(s) were to be literally translated, the end product will not make sense to the target readers as it will read as follows, *go hwetšwa gare ga ditulo tše pedi* and 'to have two hearts', respectively. Therefore, idiomatic expressions convey "sensitive meanings not expressed in other lexical items" (Larson, 1984:142). They are phrases, constructions or expressions that are recognised as a unit in the usage of a given language, and either differ from the usual syntactic patterns or have meanings that differ from the literal meanings of their parts taken together.

Baker (2018) defines idioms as frozen patterns of language which allow little or no variation in form, and frequently convey meanings which cannot be derived from their individual word. Idiomatic expressions are natural artistic utterances of a particular language and are special forms of speech that are peculiar to the instinct of that language. They are also considered as peculiar uses of particular words, and particular phrases or turns of expressions which, from long usage, have become stereotyped (McMordie, 1972). In the same view, Baker (2011:68) stipulates those fixed expressions "encapsulate stereotypical aspects of experience and therefore perform a stabilizing function in communication". Collins English Online Dictionary (2020) further describes an idiom as "linguistic usage that is grammatical and natural to native speakers of a language". Along this line, Baker (2011:68) thinks that:

A fixed expression [including idiomatic expressions] evokes in the mind of the reader or hearer a range of associations connected with the typical contexts in which the expression is used. It is precisely this feature which lies behind the widespread use of fixed and semi-fixed expressions in any language.

Idiomatic expressions are linguistic usage that are grammatical and natural to native speakers of a language. Their meanings are cultural oriented and can only be deduced from a cultural perspective for they form an intricate part of a particular language, and specifically, a way of presenting its people's culture. Idiomatic expressions can be viewed as a language of a people of a particular region or the usual way in which the words of a particular language

are joined together to express specific thoughts. Therefore, only the native speaker and members of a society sharing the same culture can effectively associate and connect with the typical context in which an idiomatic expression is used.

Idiomatic expressions are social constructions to mould and shape human identities, and to effect social change. They are used to guide one towards societal accepted behaviour. Idiomatic expressions that are used to describe human nature and human behaviour abound in the languages of the African continent. Sometimes they are used to caution people against forms of behaviour, and at other times idiomatic expressions are used as encouragement (Steward, 2005). The researcher is of the view that the meaning of idiomatic expressions is culturally located and culture is locally situated. Hence, they often present translators with translation difficulties and they should be viewed and translated in their cultural contexts. The culture-specific nature of idiomatic expressions present translators with translation difficulties and serves as cross-cultural communication barriers.

1.8 Organisation of the Study

This section presents the research plan outlining the specific research focus and proposes the direction the study took to achieve its aim and objectives. It outlines an indication of how the various elements of the study fit together and the logical development of the investigation per chapter. The study adopts the following creative processes.

Chapter 1: Present the introduction, statement of the problem, research questions, significance of the study, definition of terms, and limitations of the study.

Chapter 2: Outline the review of related literature and research related to the problem being investigated.

Chapter 3: Present the methodology and procedures used to gather data for the study.

Chapter 4: Present the results of analyses and findings to emerge from the study.

Chapter 5: Contain a summary of the study and findings, conclusions drawn from the findings, a discussion, and recommendations for further study.

1.9 Conclusion

This introductory chapter outlined the background and motivation of the study. It described the research problem and review of literature relevant to this study. It also defined key terms not only relevant to the study but also within the context of use in this study. The aim and objectives as well as the research questions of the study are also described.

The chapter below briefly deliberates the notions relevant to the study; the derived conceptual framework and the literature evaluated and summarised on descriptive analysis of the role of culture in the translation of Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions into English, in accordance to the objectives and questions of the research outlined in Chapter one.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter critically reviews literature and examines the theoretical framework of the study. They are important because they contribute in providing context for this research within the field of culture and translation, in particular, translation of idiomatic expressions. The literature review also shows data on how much the field of translation studies is researched. Literature review refers to “the systematic process in terms of which relevant sources of information about the research topic and its associated critical research variables were searched, identified and processed” (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delpont, 2011:16-18). The chapter presented literature review relevant to the research problem and specific research objectives. It focused on the review of the literature on the topic under study and the findings by other scholars on the research topic.

This chapter reviews the literature related to the study with the purpose of providing the “background to [the study] and justification for the research undertaken” (Bruce, 1994:218). The researcher – from scientific sources - attempts to “extracts and synthesises the main points, issues, findings and research methods which emerge from a critical review of the readings” (Nunan, 1992:217) to build a coherent argument which leads to the descriptive analysis of the role of culture in the translation of idiomatic expressions (Rudestam & Newton, 2007:63). Said differently, the researcher puts the study in perspective to check what translation and linguistic scholars present regarding the role of culture in the translation of idiomatic expressions and to identify models and theories that are applicable to the current study.

2.1 Oral tradition

Miller (1980:2) denotes to an oral tradition as the “narrative describing or purporting to describe eras before the time of the person who relates it” while Vansina (1985:27) delineates oral traditions as “verbal messages, which are statements from the past beyond the present generations, and emphasises that the messages must be oral statements spoken or sung”. King (2019:43) maintains the recollections of oral history from “the past should be commonly known in a given society and should be transmitted over a period longer than the contemporary generation”. King (2019:44) further adds that “proverbs and

riddles are another type of oral traditions, which to some extent allude to the history of the society concerned”.

Although longstanding, oral tradition remains thriving, relevant and meaningful for countless African communities and still viewed as the “supreme widespread means of human communication transmitting art, knowledge and philosophies including historical and cultural traditions of a given society” (Dor, 2014:19) and further explores some oral tradition examples like legends, sayings, proverbs, metaphors, folktales and customs. In the same breath, Ilmi (2015:97) repeats “the wisdoms or philosophies indigenous to Africa can be found mostly in oral traditions conveyed through language, folktales, proverbs, songs, ceremonies, cultural artefacts, performing arts, myths and customary law”. World Affairs Council of Houston (nd:1-2) echoes the messages of oral history “may be passed down through speech or song and may take the form of folktales and fables, epic histories and narrations, proverbs or sayings, and songs”. Moreover, “oral traditions make it possible for a society to pass knowledge across generations and help people make sense of the world and are used to teach children and adults about important aspects of their culture” (ibid:nd:1).

Furthermore, proverbs as resources of communication enhancement, “they serve as ingredients in the soup, for instance, without which the soup would lack palatability” (Yakubt, 2019:3). In essence, proverbs are used to spice human statements during conversations (Agyekum, 2010). According to Yakubt (2019:3) “across cultures, proverbs are orally ‘woven’ by incorporating both human and nonhuman entities such as plants, animals and other creatures in the natural environment” as Finnegan (1970) implied that proverbs flourish in imageries and metaphorical implications. Various animals – both wild and domestic, plants and other artefact are relied upon to ensure the figurative and didactic nature of idioms and proverbs to metaphorically portray several human behaviours and characteristics (Agyekum, 2010; Yakubt, 2019).

In addition, Packer, et al., (1990:1) further state that “Lions live in fusion social units [prides]”. Arguing for prides cooperation and individual variation in hunting tactics, Stander (2010:445) mentions that:

Group hunts generally involved a formation whereby some lionesses (wings) circled prey while others (centres) waited for prey to move towards them. Those lionesses that occupied ‘wing’ stalking roles frequently initiated an attack on the prey, while lionesses in ‘centre’ roles

moved relatively small distances and most often captured prey in flight from other lionesses. Each lioness in a given pride repeatedly occupied the same position in a hunting formation. Hunts where most lionesses present occupied their preferred positions had a high probability of success. Individual hunting behaviour was not inflexible, however, but varied according to different group compositions and to variations in the behaviour of other individuals present. Group hunting by terrestrial carnivores such as the lion (*Panthera leo*) is thought to reduce problems of locating and subduing large prey (Bertram 1979; Lamprecht 1981; Packer 1986), and to improve kill efficiency.

Stander (2010)'s argument advocates for unity (teamwork) and cooperation within the agreed strategy towards the intended goal amongst lions as hunters. These characteristics of lions as social beings are observed by cultural societies and construct expressions that resemble them. This study looks at the role of culture in the translation of Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions – clichés, idioms, metaphors and proverbs - as artefacts of oral traditions.

2.2 Contextualising idiomatic expressions

As far as intercultural and /or cross-cultural translation is concerned, there is always an ever-green gap or challenges that are difficult to be bridged when translating idiomatic expressions from SLC into the TLC. Clichés, metaphors, idioms, proverbs and their counterparts “are an inalienable part of each language found in large numbers in most of the languages. Since the meaning of these collocations cannot be understood from the literal meanings of their constituent parts, this yields an array of problems in the process of understanding and translating them” (Oualif, 2017:22). Farahani and Ghasemi (2012:17) believe that language is “a social phenomenon and each language has its own culture. Language and culture improve at the same time in a society” and there are cultural items that exist or have improved in one language which may not exist in another language.

Such items include amongst other figures of speech such as clichés, metaphors, idioms and proverbs which are rooted in the culture of a language. For Farahani and Ghasemi (2012:17) they are embedded in “culture, customs, history, religion, local conditions, cultural background, and even geography of a nation”. Their meaning are rarely (correctly) understood “without the help of the cultural knowledge of the language”; moreover, “one may not be able to comprehend the cultural items, in particular, idioms and proverbs without knowing the history behind them” (Farahani & Ghasemi, 2012:17).

Considering the above, these culture specific items: clichés, idioms, metaphors and proverbs are generally referred to as idiomatic expressions in this study as they are discussed below. Translation of these items could be trickier than imagined as they are embedded in the tradition of a given society. Most of the translators, according to Farahani and Ghasemi (2012) encounter difficulties during the translation of idioms and proverbs in a STC as they are not familiar with their cultural and historical backgrounds. Hence, this study is focusing on the role of culture in the translation of Northern Sotho Idiomatic Expressions into English.

2.2.1 Defining idioms

Svensén (1993:108) considers idioms to be “fixed combinations or a fixed group of words with a special meaning which is different from the meanings of the individual words”. On the other hand Gouws (1999:72) refers to an idiom as “fully-fledged lexical items, idioms represent the lexicalization of specific semantic values. Because this lexicalization is a language specific process two languages will not necessarily have idioms to convey the same meaning”. Hinkel (2017:46) an idiom is a “phrase peculiar to a language; a peculiarity of phraseology approved by the usage of language, often having a significance other than its grammatical or logical one”. Moreover, Longman online dictionary (2022) defines idioms as “a group of words that has a special meaning that is different from the ordinary meaning of each separate word”. Likewise, McMordie (1954:4) defined idiom as “a number of words which, taken together, mean something different from the individual words of the idiom when they stand alone”. To successfully discover the meaning of an idiomatic expression, it would be helpful to look beyond the literal meaning of its constituents. For example, “in order to work out the meaning of ‘every cloud has a silver lining’, it would not help to look at the meaning of each word in the phrase, but focus beyond the literal meaning” (Stamenkoska, 2017:86). Richards and Schmidt (2002:246) clearly define an idiom as “an expression which functions as a single unit and whose meaning cannot be worked out from its separate parts”. For example, the meaning of the idiom ‘to have a bee in one's bonnet’ is ‘to be continually occupied with, or obsessed by, one idea or thing’. This meaning has nothing to do with the meanings of the separate words of which the idiom is composed.

Kizi (2020:32) alludes “the meaning of idiom is diverse from the strict meaning of the idiom's person components and it is known that idiomatic expressions carry self-assertive implications”. Larson (1984:20) views an idiom as “a string of words whose meaning is

different from the meaning conveyed by the individual words. According to Oualif (2017:23) idioms “are linguistic expressions or lexical items that have got a vast territory in a way that they can include many cultural aspects such as religious beliefs, culture-specific items, superstitions, and different ideologies of the people from diverse societies and nations”. Stamenkoska (2017:87) adds that “idioms are inseparable part of popular culture, found in lyrics, newspapers, horoscopes, comics, etc”. For others, idioms “are present not only in fiction, but also in academic prose and similar expository writing” (Biber et al. 1999: 1025). They are essential elements of any language in order to keep the local and cultural colour of that language. Along these lines, Ghaffari (2001:2) “without using idioms, the language becomes harsh and unattractive, hence it can be said the words are like a skeleton of the language and the idioms are like its soul. Therefore, incorrect translation of idioms leads to damaging the soul of the language”.

Idioms are defined in the Collins English Dictionary (2006) as ‘an expression such as a simile, in which words do not have their literal meaning, but are categorized as multi-word expressions that act in the text as units’. In Longman Idioms Dictionary (2022) idioms are referred to as “a sequence of words which has a different meaning as a group from the meaning it would have if you understood each word separately”. Oxford online dictionary (2022) views idiom as “a group of words that has a special meaning that is different from the ordinary meaning of each separate word. For example, ‘under the weather’ is an idiom meaning ‘ill’”. In addition, Oualif (2017:23) advises that “idioms should not be broken up into their elements because they are sometimes referred to as a fixed expression” and further provide these examples to support this argument “conceited as a barber’s cat” refers to having a high or exaggerated opinion of oneself or one’s accomplishments and can be translated into Arabic as *مثل مغرور الطاووس*. Here there is nothing to do with the cat or the barber. We can see that if this idiom will be translated word by word it will make no sense to the readers”.

Baker (2018) builds on this definition, adding that idioms are “frozen patterns of language which allow little or no variation in form” (2011:67). This frozenness, for Stamenkoska (2017:86) means “idioms have fixed structures which cannot be changed by adding words or substituting elements: we cannot say it’s raining cats and ducks, nor can we say it’s raining dogs and cats”. Referring to this fixedness pattern, Thornbury (2006:99) alludes “idioms are formulaic. They are used and understood as if they are a single unit”. Adding up, Newmark (1988:104) refers to idioms as ‘extended’ metaphors asserting that an idiom

has pragmatic and referential functions where “the pragmatic function is to appeal to the senses, to interest, to surprise, to delight, while the referential function is to describe a mental process or state, a concept, a person, an object, a quality or an action more comprehensively and concisely than is possible in literal or physical language”.

Along these lines, Baker (2011:67) says that:

Idioms and fixed expressions are at the extreme end of the scale from collocations in one or both of these areas: flexibility of patterning and transparency of meaning. They are frozen patterns of language which allow little or no variation in form and, in the case of idioms, often carry meanings which cannot be deduced from their individual components.

For Abas and Amos (2021:1), Barker (2011) “implies that an idiom is a form of figurative language that can have both, a literal and a figurative meaning”. On the other hand, Murdoch (2017) mentions that fixed expressions - unlike idioms - generally have more transparent meanings and their meaning could easily be deduced from their constituent words. For Murdoch (2017:3) salutations like ‘happy birthday’ and ‘merry Christmas’ and greetings such as ‘yours sincerely’ or ‘yours faithfully’ are examples of fixed expressions that commonly occur in and are associated with specific occurrences, such as social events and written correspondence respectively and which are to be literally interpreted”. However, Baker (2011:67–68), insists that “in spite of its transparency, the meaning of a fixed expression [...] is somewhat more than the sum meanings of its words” and that “the expression has to be taken as one unit to establish meaning”. Barker (2011:67–68) further alludes that:

A fixed expression evokes in the mind of the reader or hearer a range of associations connected with the typical contexts in which the expression is used. It is precisely this feature which lies behind the widespread use of fixed [...] expressions in any language. They encapsulate stereotypical aspects of experience and therefore perform a stabilising function in communication.

Sharing the same sentiment, Murdoch (2017:3) mentions “wishing someone a ‘merry Christmas’ is thus not just a reference to their religious beliefs and the polite thing to do on twenty fifth December, but also evokes a range of emotions and feelings related to family, happiness, gift giving, good food and wine, et cetera”.

Baker (2011:67) further states that idioms are frozen patterns of language, which allow little or no variation in form and carry meanings, which cannot be deduced from their individual components. Baker also mentions that idioms allow “no variation in form under normal

circumstances” and that a translator cannot do any of the following with an idiom Baker (2011:67-68):

- Change the order of the words of an idiom. The way the words are put together is fixed and they cannot change their place. For example, ‘go to rack and ruin’ not ‘go to ruin and rack’.
- The word in an idiom cannot be omitted. For example, ‘shed crocodile tears’ not ‘shed tears’.
- There are no extra words that might be added to an idiom. For example, ‘have a narrow escape’ not ‘have a narrow quick escape’.
- No word in an idiom can be replaced by another word. For example, ‘out of sight, out of mind’ not ‘out of sight, out of heart’.
- The grammatical structures of an idiom cannot be changed. For example, ‘ring the bell’ not ‘the bell was ringed’.

However, Khalil (nd:2-3) notes that “an idiom usually has started as a phrase having a literal meaning which then starts to be used in a figurative way”. As a result, Al-Haddad (1994:217), argues differently that “there must be some relationship between the meaning of most idioms and the meanings of their constituents at some time in the past, and, if not, they would not have been expressed by them”. Along the change in meaning over a period of time, Svensen (2009:190) observed that: “originally, all idioms had a more or less literal meaning, which then became more and more figurative, finally ending up as expressions where the original meanings of the individual components had faded”. Svensen (2009:188) further states that “the concept [of an idiom] is sometimes more widely defined, for instance to include compounds where the meaning cannot be inferred from the meanings of the elements, for example, ‘headlong”.

Paying attention to the expression ‘a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush’, someone not familiar with this idiomatic expression is likely to be confused by it. According to Murdoch (2017:2) if one “pressed to suggest a meaning for it, they would most probably suggest that it has something to do with birds and hunting – neither of which strictly pertain to the meaning of the idiom as used”. Martin (2016), the origin of the expression does pertain to birds, particularly falcons, but the meaning of the expression has evolved such that it no longer pertains specifically, or even at all, to birds or falconry. This validates that idiomatic expressions are word established by usage; thus, the change in meaning occurs through the use of the expression, it takes on a certain meaning with time (Svensen, 2009; Khalil, nd)

The idiom, according to Oxford dictionary (2022) means “it's better to be content with what you have than to risk losing everything by seeking to get more”. According to Murdoch (2017:3) the idiomatic expression ‘a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush’ means “any advantage is better than none, so it is clear that its meaning has nothing to do with birds, whether in your hand or somewhere in the bush as the words suggest”.

2.2.2 Clichés as figure of speech

Scholars have opposing views on the relevance of clichés in today's channels of communications. Clichés as symbols of language channels only negative reactions “being disqualified and strongly perceived as a deviation from the aesthetic imperatives promoted under the auspices of the Romanticism” as Stroia (2016:14) mentioned and also argues “on a very basic level and through a narrow perspective, clichés are perceived only as over-used, outworn expressions, being rejected and infused with negative connotations. However, recently, clichés have been positively assigned an argumentative functional as well as phatic function”.

On a positive note, Stark (1999: 454) mentions that “when the writer uses a cliché, the writer participates in a kind of recognizable cultural substratum. Admittedly, as a commonplace expression, the cliché does not create new epistemic insights, and it does not give rise to tremendous aesthetic pleasure. What the cliché does accomplish in discourse is a sometimes slight, sometimes powerful connective pathos”.

Zijderveld (1969) views clichés as vital cultural structures amongst the coagulation of modern fractured society. Nevertheless, Nattinger (1980:338) differentiates between clichés and idioms saying “clichés are similar to idioms in that they too consist of patterns that are relatively frozen; they are unlike them in that the patterns usually consist of larger stretches of language and that their meaning is derivable from the individual constituents: there's no doubt about it; a good time was had by all”. Amossy (2002:481) concurs that clichés consist of “frozen figures provoking an impression of déjà-vu, of repetition, banal effects of style condemned as such. They differ from *topoi* or received ideas in that they appear in a lexicalized, formally recognizable verbal shape”. However, from acquisition and comprehension point of view, clichés are understood as “predictable linguistic patterns (ranging from semi-fixed to fixed ones) and characterized by high frequency. Thus, as cliché would qualify a wide range of prefabricated language, formulaic language ranging from sayings, catchphrases, idioms, lexical phrases” (Stroia, 2016:15) and sometimes “it is hard

to identify their exact meanings which is usually reliant on the context in which they are used". Storia (2016) further provides the following example of clichés: 'every rose has its thorn', 'good things come to those who wait', 'all that glitters is not gold', 'pretty as a picture' and 'busy as a bee'.

Van Cranenburgh (2018:34-35) defines a cliché expression as "a fixed, conventionalized multi-word expression which has become overused to the point of losing its original meaning or effect" and further classified them as:

fixed: the expression in the form that is recognized cannot be changed, or only to a limited degree by filling in specified open slots. Conventionalized: i.e., the phrase is recognized by many speakers as a unit, instead of being put together word for word. Overused: this aspect is crucial but subjective and therefore harder to pin down. Many other multi-word expressions are accepted as a normal part of the lexicon, while cliché expressions are marked as formulaic, tired, unoriginal, et cetera.

Merriam-Webster (2016) in Jordan-Baker (2016:2) defines cliché as "a phrase or expression that has been used so often that it is no longer original or interesting and something that is so commonly used in books, stories, etc., that it is no longer effective". On the other hand, Hamawand (2016:115) maintains that cliché is "an expression which is apparently compositional, but in reality it is no. Because clichés are too often used, they are stored as complete units in the minds of speech participants. They are easy to retrieve for the speaker and easy to decode for the hearer. Like an idiom, a cliché is stored in a mental lexicon in ready-made form".

For Hamawand (2016) clichés are non-compositional linguistic symbols and in being so, are mentally stored in a different manner to compositional objects. Clichés are non-compositional because the individual lexical items that compose the phrase do not predictably contribute to the meaning of the sentence "closely related to their non-compositionality, clichés, along with idioms and proverbs display partial analysability".

2.2.3 Proverbs as figures of speech

Given that indigenous knowledge remains relevant in the development of nations in numerous sectors of life and it provides a profounder understanding of cultures; thus ensuring cultural amalgamation and unity (Ogbebor, 2011, Ajani, Mgbenka & Okeke, 2013). Nkosi (2016) adds that indigenous knowledge aids to nurture the relevant skills and values leading to a sustainable future. Proverbs aid in the attainment of accepted behavioural

principles reinforced in “traditional moral and wisdom expressions required for the growth and development of societies” (Fayemi, 2009:28). Ebrahimi (2020:2) agrees that proverbs are the integral part culture and identity of a society, “the richness and extent of which is indicative of the extent of cultural richness and the level of advancement and development of a nation”. As symbolic cultural expression, proverbs are used to preserve and disseminate a society’s rich culture as a way of life and history (Amate, 2011; Omoera & Inegbeboh, 2013)

Farahani and Ghasemi (2012:17) indicate “idioms and proverbs are embedded in the culture of a language. Their roots are in culture, customs, history, religion, local conditions, cultural background, and even geography of a nation”. Indigenous knowledge is the time-tested knowledge enshrined in the cultural practices of indigenous people based on their life experiences and observations in their natural environment (Kim et al., 2017). Adom, Chukwuere, Addo, Tabi-Agyei and Thulla (2021:44) remind “one of the indigenous knowledge systems rooted in African philosophy is proverb”. Moreover, they consider African proverbs as “the most ubiquitous genre of folklore [and] are instructional vehicles through which the cultural values in African societies are imparted to generations” (Adom et al., 2021:44). Longman online dictionary (2022) concurs that a proverb is “a short well-known statement that gives advice or expresses something that is generally true” and provide the expression ‘a penny saved is a penny earned’ as an example of a proverb. Proverb is a brief, wise phrase of human thought and experience, recited to express a meaningful warning, wise judgment and/or a moral teachings containing accepted culturally-specific valued truths and beliefs evolved from generations (Tchimboto, 2015; Dipio, 2019; Gyan, Abbey & Baffoe, 2020). On the other hand, Ebrahimi (2020:2) states that “the importance of proverbs is because wisdom is a wisdom that manifests itself in the lives of people and has an inseparable connection with the people” and their culture.

Proverbs are like mirrors that reflects the attitudes of different peoples and societies, and in fact the meanings and concepts of the virtual and the metaphor used in proverbs and revelations are like a scene in which different nations and nations have their own modes of sadness, bring joy, grief, thoughts, superstitions, beliefs and traditions into it (Al-Timen, 2015). Boateng (1983:332) remarks that ancestors play a significant role in giving the proverb strength, phrase like “it is the ancestors that said...” is occasionally used before a proverb to indicate their origin from the ancient past. Boateng (1983:331) points out that

proverbs are “validators of traditional procedures and beliefs” and warns that the rejection of black African heritage will leave the black African with a feeling of lost identity.

It is evident that different traditional groups have dissimilar cultures; as a result, there are problems on relationship among nations and the shared understanding their differing languages. The strategies of “translating proverbs and synopsis as part of language and culture play a significant role in communicating, despite the fact that some cultural reflections sometimes apply in the above interpretations because of the inappropriateness of the methods of translating neglected” (Ebrahimi, 2020:1). Given that proverbs are symbols of culture and the goals of translation is to promote and facilitate communication across cultures, disregarding the cultural aspects of proverbs in translation could “reduce the scientific and cultural values of translated works” (Ebrahimi, 2020:1). It is for this reason, the study also considers the role of culture in the translation of Northern Sotho proverbs amongst other idiomatic expressions.

2.2.4 Metaphors as figures of speech

Longman dictionary (2022) views metaphor as “a way of describing something by referring to it as something different and suggesting that it has similar qualities to that thing”. Kovecses (2010:ix) defines metaphor as “a figure of speech in which one thing is compared to another by saying that one is the other”. For Dickins (2005:228) metaphor is “a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is used in a non-basic sense, this non-basic sense suggesting a likeness or analogy with another more basic sense of the same word or phrase.”

Costandius (2007:3) borrowed Aristotle definition of metaphor indicating that “in metaphor ‘something is something else’ and metaphors consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else; the transference being either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or on grounds of analogy”. Costandius (2007:3) presents the following metaphoric comparison example to edify Aristotle’s views.

“Ali is a lion” is a comparison between “Ali” and the animal “lion”. Although the intention is to convince the addressee that the person mentioned is strong and courageous, the entire identity of the animal is transferred to “Ali”. In fact, “Ali” cannot be an animal and the animal could not be a human. It is a breaching of facts to achieve rhetorical impact. Moreover, the established bonds between those entities can mitigate the accuracy of the similarity aspect since “Ali” and the “lion” do not share all the characteristics of each other.

From this comparison, Costandius (2007) infers that highlighting and hiding elements is a crucial part of metaphors establishment. Holding the idea that metaphors form part of our everyday conversations, Domowitz (1992:82) regards metaphors and proverbs as “central to the art of public speaking”. Costandius (2007:3) holds a view that “African cultures and languages are rich in heritage and metaphors which can be employed successfully in visual communication. African oral communication is rich in metaphors, proverbs and other forms of figure of speech which are disseminated into African culture”. According to Costandius (2007) metaphors reflect the underlying values of a culture and play an essential role in communication as they offer an understanding and experience of one thing in terms of the other. Like culture, they influence the way people perceive things and act.

Furthermore, metaphors, like idioms and proverbs, form a large part of everyday language in communication that “have been recognized as rhetorical devices that compare two seemingly different objects” (Meryem, 2010:22). The two “are culture-specific aspects of a particular language” and have the power of likening and “could not be understood if they are taken literally” (ibid, 2010:22). During translation, the non-existence of a direct one to one correspondence in the TL of a particular idiom in the SL is the result of culture-specific metaphors. Along this line, Maalej (2005: 215) submits:

Culture-specific metaphors are best represented in phraseology. Native language idioms and set phrases can blend together ethno-specific concepts pertaining to the world view of its speakers, to their national character, as well as their traditional social relations, thus becoming an embodiment of national dispositions and spiritual values. They are presented metaphorically indirectly and figuratively, which is why culture-specific metaphors produce idioms that have no corresponding counterparts in another language.

2.3 Defining culture specific items

Although the notion of culture-specific items have been elaborated and discussed by a number of different translation scholars, the lack of terminological uniformity suggests the need to be delineated once more (Janaviciene, 2016:4834). Therefore, the varieties of the term of culture-specific items include the following: Newmark (1998) refers to culture-specific items as cultural words, Florin (1993), Robinson (1997), Schäffner & Wiesemann (2001) and Mikutyte (2005) labels them as realia, while Baker (1992) employs the term culture-specific concepts. Shifting to the meanings of these intertwined terms according to various scholars, Baker (2018:21) defines culture specific concepts as “source-language words [that] express concepts totally unknown in the target culture”. Such concepts may

relate to religion, social customs or a type of food. Gudavičius (2009:94) states that non-equivalent lexis is “the notions of specific cultural realia that do not have equivalents in other languages, since other cultures do not have those things or concepts in their life”. He makes further comments on these non-equivalent lexis items, saying that they are of great importance in the cognition of the material and spiritual culture, therefore such lexis can be categorized into two groups: material and spiritual. Mikutyté (2005) presents the definition of realia as follows “unique items or experiences, material and spiritual elements of a culture, inherent to a specific ethnic group, a country or a region, which usually have no equivalents in other cultures or languages”.

The notion itself clearly states the link between the source language and culture and the target language and its culture, referring to “words and combinations of words denoting objects and concepts characteristic of the way of life, the culture, the social and historical development of one nation and alien to another” (Florin 1993:123). Translations of culture-specific items are not limited to language, expanding the idea that culture-specific items do not have exact equivalents in other languages because they have been formed on historical and a local basis, which is unique to every culture (ibid.). A similar idea is supported by Tymoczko, (1999:45) stating that “cultural elements in a literary work are metonymic evocations of the culture as a whole, including its material culture, history, economy, law, customs, values and so on”. In this study this concept is referred to as “culture-specific items” as well as its abbreviation (CSI). Aixela (1996:58), views CSIs as:

those textually actualized items whose function and connotation in a source text involve a translation problem in their transference to a target text, whenever this problem is a product of the nonexistence of the referred item or of its different intertextual status in the cultural system of the readers of the target text.

Translation of CSI has been one of the most debatable issues in translation studies as they pose many problems for the translator. Cultural specific items are words or phrases that are formed by cultural diversity. There are numerous cultures in the world and this cultural diversity can also be observed in societies’ literary writings. These words and phrases are difficult to transfer into the target text because they may have very peculiar meaning and colour in their own culture but may not find the same equivalence in the target culture. Thus, they may not create the same effect for the target reader. Different cultures have different manifestations (Bagheridoust & Mahabad, 2017). In other words, some concepts and items are bound to a specific culture and country and do not exist in any other (Terestyenyi, 2011).

Therefore, it is important to understand these items within cultural context in order to translate them successfully. The translator's task is to create the same effect of the source text in the target text, thus s/he makes some decisions in translating process so as to preserve or change the cultural items while transmitting them in an appropriate way. In other words, these words and phrases call for special translation treatment. Many scholars have studied on some strategies for translation of culture specific items to guide translators in this challenging translation process. Idiomatic expressions – clichés, idioms, metaphors and proverbs – are considered culture specific items within the context of this study.

2.4 Classification of idiomatic expressions

Moon (1998: 20-23) categorised idiomatic expressions into three classification based on semantics arguing “idioms are metaphors” and sub-classified as: transparent metaphors Semi-transparent metaphors and opaque metaphors.

2.4.1 Transparent metaphors

These are idiomatic expressions whose meaning could be simply deduced because they evoke a literal meaning to the target readers. Moon (1998) present the expression ‘to feel like a fish out of water’ which implies feeling awkward and ‘to swim with sharks’ implying danger, as examples. For Knight et al., (2008:281) transparent idiomatic expression allows semantic analysis of the expression which “involves retrieving alternative meanings of keywords and computing a nonliteral meaning of the phrase”. Transparent idioms are also referred to as ‘decomposable or semantically analysable’ have clear overlap between the literal and figurative meaning of the phrase. The expression ‘to speak your mind’ could be analysed to derive its meaning to ‘express one’s feelings or opinion frankly’.

2.4.2 Semi-transparent metaphors

These are types of idiomatic expression where the relation between the literal and figurative meaning is not easy discovered or straightforward. According to Moon (1998) special knowledge is required for one to discover the meaning of expressions of this nature. Referring to the expression ‘to throw in the towel’ as an example; moon (1998:22) mentions “an English First Language student who is familiar with boxing might understand the meaning of throw in the towel, as this idiom is based on the literal meaning of throwing a towel into the ring where the fight takes place, signalling that a fighter can no longer continue. For the learner with no interest in this sport, however, the connection is lost”.

2.4.3 Opaque metaphors

Moon (1998) believes these types of idiomatic expressions are not only obstruct comprehension, they are usually origins of communication breakdown and one could not successfully interpret them without being familiar with their etymology. Using the expression 'to spill the beans' Stamenkoska (2017:87) cautions "imagine the predicament which might arise if a learner does not understand when instructed not to spill the beans, especially since the idiom has nothing to do with beans, or even food at all. It is, therefore, unrealistic to expect students to use opaque idioms". However, Knight et al., (2009:281) add that some idiomatic expression "could not be worked out word by word". These types of expressions are typically referred to as opaque idioms also referred to as 'non-decomposable or semantically non-analysable'. For example, it is not possible to determine that 'to bite the dust' means 'to cease to exist' by analysing the components words in the phrase.

Moons (1998:22) classifications of idiomatic expressions "represents a continuum rather than discrete categories" implying "the degree of transparency of idioms is not easily determined and overlapping in categories may occur" (Stamenkoska, 2017:86). On the other hand, Knight et al., (2009:281) present that "the ability to analyse the internal semantics of the phrase aids idiom comprehension. Semantic analysis is thought to be particularly useful for comprehending transparent idioms because the literal meaning of a phrase may help to cue its figurative meaning".

Moreover, Fernando (1996:35) also categorizes idiomatic expressions into three categories "based on their figurativeness literal, semi-literal and pure". Fernando (1996)'s classifications correspond with those of Moon (1998): transparent, semi-transparent and opaque idioms, respectively. However, Fernando (1996:71) further classifies idiomatic expressions according "to form into idioms of invariance and those of little variance". Stamenkoska (2017:87) echoes "variance here refers to the degree of flexibility or fixedness in form" where idiomatic expressions of little variance could slightly change such as the expression 'he drives me mad/crazy/nuts/insane'. Such expressions has slots for a number of fillers. In addition "variation may occur in the morphological form of the verbs to ensure concord such as these expression 'I won't change my mind. Has she changed her mind?'"(Stamenkoska, 2017:87).

Idioms differ in their degree of fixity and opaqueness. As Cacciari (1993: 31) points out, it seems reasonable to adopt the view that idiomaticity is rather a matter of degrees in which

the literal and figurative idioms are the ultimate extremities. So idioms are classified into different categories on the basis of their degree of opacity. Fernando (1996:35-36) also categorised idiomatic expressions into three sub-classes: pure idioms, semi-idioms and literal idioms which goes hand in hand with those of Moon (1998: 20-23) opaque metaphors, semi-transparent metaphors and transparent metaphors respectively.

2.4.4 Pure idiom

Pure idiom is a type of “conventionalized, non-literal multiword expression” whose the phrase’s meaning cannot be comprehended from the sum of its constituent meanings. In addition, idioms are said to be opaque.

2.4.5 Semi-idiom

Semi-idiom which has at least one or more literal element and one with non-literal meaning.

Therefore, this type of idioms is considered partially opaque.

2.4.6 Literal idioms

Literal idioms are semantically less complex than the other two, and therefore easier to understand. However, these expressions do qualify as idioms because they cannot be changed or allow only restricted variation. In addition, literal idiomatic expressions are considered to be transparent as they can be interpreted on the basis of their parts” (Fernando, 1996:60).

Cacciari and Glucksberg (1991) suggested a functional approach to idiomatic expression based on their semantic transparency and their degree of compositionality; it is believed that idiomatic expressions could be non-compositional, partially compositional and fully compositional. Given the above, it is worth branching to semantic and look at the principle of compositionality as it states: the meaning of an expression - complex phrase - is determined solely by the meanings of its parts and their syntax – how they are arranged.

Glucksberg (2001:73) mentions that:

In non-compositional idioms, no relations between the idiom’s constituents and the idiom’s meaning can be discerned, as in the idiom ‘cheesecake’ to refer to ‘pinup art’ [...]. In partially compositional idioms, some relationships between an idiom’s constituents and its idiomatic meaning can be discerned and exploited. Although one could not infer the meaning ‘to die’ from the literal meaning of ‘kick the bucket’, the idiom’s literal meaning does constrain its use and comprehension. [...] In

fully compositional idioms, the constituents map directly onto their idiomatic referents, as in the idiom ‘pop the question.

In an attempt to determine which between compositional expressions and non-compositional expressions are easier to understand, Kovacs (2016:89) found that “for compositional idioms, the result of linguistic analysis corresponds with the idiomatic meaning, and therefore their comprehension is facilitated. In the case of non-compositional idioms, the linguistic and idiomatic meanings do not correspond; hence their comprehension becomes more difficult”. Hence, compositional idiomatic expressions are more easily understood than non-compositional ones.

According to Glucksberg (2001:74), idiomatic expressions could be classified based on their level of transparency. Thus, the extent to which the meaning of an idiom could be predicted from the meanings of its elements. Glucksberg (2001:74) differentiates opaque and transparent compositional idiomatic expressions, saying that,

...in compositional-opaque idioms, the relations between an idiom’s constituents and its meaning may be opaque, but the meanings of individual words can nevertheless constrain both interpretation and use. For the idiom kick the bucket, the semantics of the verb to kick can constrain interpretation. Kicking is a discrete act, and so one could not say he kicked the bucket all week, even though one could say he lay dying all week.

Glucksberg (2001:74) further states in the case of compositional-transparent idioms, “there are one-to-one semantic relations between the idiom’s constituents and components of the idiom’s meaning. In the idiom break the ice, for example, the word break corresponds to the idiomatic sense of abruptly changing an uncomfortable social situation, and the word ice corresponds to the idiomatic sense of social or interpersonal tension”.

Above and beyond non-compositional, compositional-opaque, and compositional-transparent idioms, there is also the quasi-metaphorical type. According to Glucksberg (2001:74) the quasi-metaphorical expression expresses meaning through “their allusional content, calling in one’s mind prototypes or stereotypes referring to certain situations, actions, or people: ‘they can simultaneously refer to an ideal exemplar of a concept and characterize some event or situation as an instance of that concept. For the concept doing something prematurely, for example, one might use the metaphorical idiom crossing one’s bridges before coming to them”. In the same vein, Cacciari and Tabossi (1993) these quasi-metaphorical idioms are based on similar communication strategy as metaphors in contexts

such as ‘my lawyer is a shark’ or ‘my job was a jail’. In addition, the shark refers to merciless, ruthless people, while jail alludes to unpleasant circumstances.

On the level of opacity of idiomatic expressions, Kvetko (Kvetko 2009: 106–107) indicates “there are pure or demotivated idioms, so-called phraseological fusions, where there is no connection between the meaning of individual constituents and the meaning of the whole idiom, for instance: red tape, kick the bucket, hair of the dog that bit you, white elephant”. On the Semi-opaque or partially motivated expressions there “are figurative idioms, phraseological unities with a certain connection between the meaning of individual words and the meaning as a whole, such as in add fuel to the flames, put one’s card on the table, have a free hand”. Last, Semi-transparent or semi-idioms are viewed “as phraseological combinations, where one of the constituents is used in figurative, idiomatically bound meaning, while the other has a literal, direct meaning: promise somebody the moon, foot the bill, lie through one’s teeth”.

According to Makkai (1972), as cited in Fernando (1996), there are two types of meaning: idioms of encoding and idioms of decoding. The idioms of encoding are those idiosyncratic lexical combinations that have transparent meanings and can be easily understood even by non-native speakers. Providing an example with the translation of the expressions kill two birds with one stone, into Arabic. The idioms of decoding refer to those non-identifiable and opaque lexical expressions by using only independently learned linguistic conventions. This type of idioms can be further classified into lexemic and sememic. Lexemic idioms include strings of words like a) phrasal verbs (to come up with, to turn off, etc ...), b) phrasal compounds (black ice, black road), c) incorporating verbs (man-handle) and d) pseudo-idioms (spick and span, kit and kin). Whereas sememic idioms usually convey pragmatic meanings related to a particular cultural environment. They include a) proverbs (A bird in hand is worth two in the bush) and b) familiar quotations (not a mouse stirring).

Larson (1984) believes that there are two primary kinds of meaning; namely, Explicit and Implicit meanings. He states that these two primary kinds of meaning can be further categorized into three sub-categories (Larson 1984:41-43):

- Referential meaning in which a specific word “refers to a certain thing, event, attribution or relation which a person can perceive or imagine”;
- Organizational meaning that deals with some aspects of surface structure and grammatical points of the sentence;

- Situational meaning that is the meaning of an utterance in given communication.

On the other hand, Nida (1964), as cited in Munday (2001), advances the following categorization:

- Linguistic meaning that borrows some elements of Chomsky's (1957) model and the fact that meanings are arbitrary;
- Referential meaning that is called denotative meaning;
- Emotive meaning that is called connotative meaning and deals with extralinguistic factors and the figurative meanings that a word may concern.

Another classification of meaning types deals with Koller's (1979) equivalence in which he proposes five types of meaning for the corresponding equivalents:

- Denotative equivalence deals with linguistic content of a text and Koller names it 'content invariance';
- Connotative equivalence deals with a feeling or idea that is suggested by a particular word although it is not necessarily a part of that word's meaning;
- Text-normative equivalence is related to different text types in which texts behave in different ways;
- Pragmatic equivalence which deals with the influence of the text on the target language audience;
- Formal equivalence that concentrates on "the form and aesthetics of the text and meaning.

It is worth mentioning that although all the scholars aforementioned have come up with different categorizations, they have all determined a kind of meaning that deals with a meaning type related to "non-linguistic" or "extra-linguistic" aspects of words. That is, all scholars have got a categorization which refers to idiomatic expressions of a language. For example, in the meaning types stated above, Larson's (1984) "situational meaning", Nida's (1964) "emotive meaning" and Koller's (1979) "connotative meaning" are related to the domain of idioms and fixed expressions.

2.5 Reflection on language and culture

The most basic function of language is the expressive function which allows the transfer of ideas - communication with others – amongst interlocutors. Thus, languages are viewed as principal communication tools used to exchange meaning from one individual to another.

Rabiah (2012) believes that language is a system formed by various components that are fixed and can be patterned, not randomly arranged. The systematic nature of language is as well systemic in a sense that as a single system, language consists of numerous subsystems that vary from one language to another.

Akbari (2013:13-13) mentions “languages are systems of verbal symbols – vocal and/or written, organized by particular rules (grammar) and used by particular rules (grammar) and used by particular communities in order to develop and communicate their thoughts and affections”. In the same breath, Carlson (2001) views languages as highly complex and are based on rules relating symbols to their meanings, which forms an infinite number of possible innovative utterances from a finite number of elements.

Reporting from Rabiah (2012:6), Keraf (1997:1) argues that “language is a means of communication between members of the community in the form of a symbol of sound produced by the speech organ”. It is established that “languages are different from each other, they are different in form having distinct codes and rules regulating the construction of grammatical stretches of language and these forms have different meanings” (Bell, 1991:6). Another varying factor making languages unique to a particular society is culture. (Newmark, 1998: 94) views culture as “the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression”. For Geertz (1973), culture is a means by which people interact with each other.

Abbasi, zadeh, Janafaza, Assemi and Dehghan (2012:84) believe that “language is used to maintain and convey culture and cultural ties”. Vermeer (1989) states that ‘language is a central part of culture’. In the same vein, Ebrahimi (2020:1) clearly states that “language is formed in the context of culture; on the other hand, the culture of a society is reflected in the language's mirror. Language has a cultural backbone as a communication tool”. Different ideas stem from differing language use within one's culture and the whole intertwining of these relationships start at one's birth”. Language, according to Abbasi et al., (2012) may refer also to “the specifically human capacity for acquiring and using complex system of communication or to a specific instance of such a system of complex communication”.

When studying the communication and/or the use of language symbols - such as idiomatic expressions - of a particular cultural group of people, it is not a wise idea to focus only on the language and the communication process because there are other important elements such as culture (Akbari, 2013). Akbari (2013:13) further articulates “language, as a part of

the cultural core, is at the heart of culture. What people do with language – narrative, poetry, songs, plays, etc – are soft expressions of a culture; they are faces of culture”. In addition, Ilmi (2015:97) argues that the wisdom indigenous to Africa could be found in oral traditions conveyed through “language, folktales, proverbs, songs, ceremonies, cultural artefacts, performing arts, myths and customary law”. Ilmi (2015) believe that Africans are good in oral transmission of knowledge from one generation to another and idiomatic expression are amongst powerful adages used to share wisdom. Said differently, it is through oral traditions that Africa people managed to pass knowledge from generations to another without writing. Oral traditions “help people make sense of the world and are used to teach children and adults about important aspects of their culture” (Ilmi, 2015:98). Idiomatic expressions are not exempted from this scenario(s) of oral traditions.

Looking at the relationship between language and culture, Abbasi et al., (2012:84) argues “relationship between culture and language is deeply rooted”. Thus, language and culture are interrelated and interdependence as Akbari (2013:13) adds “language is an expression of culture and individuality of its speakers”. Considering the integral close relationship of both language and culture, both Abbasi et al., (2012) and Akbari (2013) believe it is vital to consider both in the process of translation. Abbasi et al., (2012:83) further state “as languages and culture are complimentary of each other, and cultural features of every region is different, translators not only should concentrate on how to convey the same meaning, but also attempt to show the dissimilarities between two cultural perspectives”. This study also aims to expose challenges brought forward by such cultural dissimilarities during the translation of Northern Sotho idiomatic expression into English as Horvathova (2014) believes that every idiomatic expression has its own historical and cultural background. It is also established that “translation is a kind of activity that inevitably involves at least two languages and two cultural traditions” (Toury, 1978/1995:200).

Along this lane, some scholars believe that idiomatic expression as symbols of culture are rather not only problematic to translate but also difficult to learn. Considering that “a good knowledge of idioms in terms of their true meanings as well as their cultural associations” is necessary for comprehension and effective translation; although are used in everyday communications idiomatic expressions “constitute a problematic area for both foreign learners of English and translators (Khalil, nd:3).

Language, according to Luhmann (1981:125) “the medium that extends our understanding of communications beyond basic perception is language. It uses symbolic generalizations to replace, to represent or to put together perceptions and to solve the resulting problems of mutual comprehension. In other words, language specializes in creating the impression of mutual understand as the basis for further communication, however fragile the grounds for that impression may be”.

“Dissemination [of information] may be achieved though the medium of writing but also through the use of other procedures designed to preserve information in a fixed form. The selective influence of such media on culture can hardly be overestimated, since they enormously expand the store of memorized data available for traditional communication, while at the same time restricting it through selectivity”.

2.6 Aspects of culture in translation

According to the Descriptive Translation Studies Theory, Toury (1995:24-25) defines translations as:

... a kind of activity which inevitably involves at least two languages and two cultural traditions, i.e., at least two sets of norm-systems on each level. Thus, the ‘value’ behind it may be described as consisting of two major elements: 1) being a text in a certain language, and hence occupying a position, or filling in a slot, in the appropriate culture, or in a certain section thereof; 2) constituting a representation in that language/culture of another, pre-existing text in some other language, belonging to some other culture and occupying a definite position within it.

Nord’s (1997) Functionalist Approach of Translation to critical analysis is that a competent translator while taking into account his background as a critical recipient and translator reads every new ST. He uses this experience as a framework to which he adds the results of each subsequent ST reception. “His knowledge of the source culture (SC) must enable him to reconstruct the possible reactions of an ST recipient (in case the TT *Skopos* requires an “imitation” of the ST functions by the TT), whereas his knowledge of the target culture (TC) allows him to anticipate the possible reactions of a TT recipient and thereby verify the functional adequacy of the translation he produces” (Nord, 1991:11). Nord’s (1997:12) position to critical analysis “entails that in order for the TT to achieve its specific purposes, it is necessary that the translator fulfil the following requirements:

- (i) to have sufficient knowledge of both source and target language and culture; and
- (ii) to know how to deal with both languages in order to analyse the ST, produce a TT and develop research to complete his/her work”.

Nord’s (1997:72) Functionalist Approach of Translation reinforces two points expected from a TT: “Functionality of the TT but also loyalty towards the ST sender and his intention. Being ‘loyal’ in Functionalist terms means to be in tune with the ST intention, and not simply with the structure of the ST. Each text must have a different function, but the translator must be loyal to its intention, adapting the structure of the TT to a different function (*Skopos*), if this is the case”. In order to have a clear idea of what the ST is about and what its intention is, the translator has to analyse the ST carefully. According to Nord’s (1997:11) Functionalist Approach of Translation approach to critical analysis:

The professional translator reads every new ST in the light of his experience as a critical recipient and translator. This experience forms a framework into which he integrates the findings of each new ST reception. (...) His knowledge of the source culture (SC) must enable him to reconstruct the possible reactions of an ST recipient (in case the TT *Skopos* requires an “imitation” of the ST functions by the TT), whereas his knowledge of the target culture (TC) allows him to anticipate the possible reactions of a TT recipient and thereby verify the functional adequacy of the translation he produces.

Nord (1997:61) says, “Languages exist in various geographical varieties”, providing specific signs for language variation in specific contexts, influencing how the translator must analyse the ST. In this respect, some aspects must be highlighted besides linguistic ones. Cultural and political conditions must be identified precisely as well as the process of intercultural communication:

- (i) who produces the ST;
- (ii) who orders a translation of the ST;
- (iii) the ST itself;
- (iv) who receives the ST and translates it;
- (v) the TT itself; and
- (vi) who reads the TT (Nord, 1997:61).

As can be noticed, the process of producing translations is far from simple and involves different participants, including readership. Such a process cannot be related simply to the purpose of the ST, but mainly to how the TT is going to operate in the target context based on the communicative function of the ST.

According to Nord's (1997:9) Functionalist Approach of Translation "the function of the TT is not arrived at automatically from an analysis of the ST, but is pragmatically defined by the purpose of the intercultural communication." In the realm of the Functionalist Approach, the whole process for the production of a target-text oriented translation moves from the analysis of the ST to the recipient of the TT, all the steps being paramount. Nord (1991:72) says that a TT can be featured in two different ways:

- (i) "a document of past communicative action in which an SC sender made an offer of information to an SC recipient by means of the ST," and
- (ii) "an instrument in a new TC communicative action, in which a TC recipient receives an offer of information for which the ST served as a kind of model." The second feature describes a target-oriented ideal TT: There is the presence of the ST marked, but not as the main basis for the TT production. The ST serves as a 'model' for the TT production.
- (iii) the fact that the translation is called an 'instrument', marking the pragmatic aspect of target-text oriented translations.

In addition, it is also argued that the primary purpose of translation is to convey a meaning of the TLT as similar to that of the SLT and that "the structures of the SL will be preserved as closely as possible, but not so closely that the TL structures will be seriously distorted" (Bassnett-McGuire, 1980: 2). Newmark (1981:7) adds that translation is "a craft consisting in the attempt to replace a written message and/or statement in one language by the same message and/or statement in another language". The TLT should not be the imitation of the structure of the SL in a way that makes it grammatically incorrect or otherwise sounds awkward or not natural.

Bassnett-McGuire (1980) and Newmark (1981) share the same sentiment on these translation definitions, as their arguments are congruent with each other. Despite the multiplicity of viewpoints that have been expressed within the field of translation studies,

there are some points of agreement among them. Along this lines, Mustonen (2010:12) posits that,

There are three prevailing features which seem to characterize the essence of contemporary translation, its aims and goals. One view is that free translation should be adopted as opposed to literal, word- for-word translation. The second widely accepted view is that the meaning and content of the message should be prioritized over the form of the message. The third view that most translation theorists recognize is that translation always involves some kind of loss of meaning.

Contemporary scholars of translation also believe that the goal of translation is not the replacement of SL with those of the TL but focuses on the communicative function of the text (Bassnett and Lefevere, 1998). Scholars' advocates free translation over literal translation. Nida and Taber (1969:105) mentions that when a message is translated from the SL to TL, the content always takes precedence over the form and must be preserved at all costs. On the same breath, Vehmas- Lehto (2002:26) is of a view that free translation convey "the informational content of the message and preserving the style of the original", but it also takes equal notice of the target language's exigencies". Retaining the meaning of the SLT is far more important than the form of the text; thus, the form of the SLT could always be altered to a particular extent. The meaning of the SLT during the translation process is prioritised over the form. Mustonen (2010:12) further summarised that,

Translation should therefore always aim at conveying the meaning of the original message as carefully as possible, even if it means transformations in the form or changes in the syntactic structure. Of course ideally, the original sentence structure should be preserved, but due to differences between two languages, this is often simply not possible.

In addition, there is the acknowledgement of - the unfortunate event - possible loss of meaning in translation is unintended. Translations may only be approximate because any translation assignment is likely to result in some loss of meaning. The text may explain phenomena that are specific to the environment and culture of the source language area, for example, which could result in these losses (Newmark, 1981). The other reason for the unfortunate loss of meaning during translation process is due to "two languages, both in their basic character (langue) and their social varieties (parole) in context have different lexical, grammatical and sound systems" (Newmark, 1981:7-8). Moreover, Bell (1991:6) emphasised that "since such a thing as an absolute synonymy between words of two languages does not exist, something is almost always lost in the translation process". This

loss of meaning is agitated by the “significant linguistic and socio-cultural differences between different languages and cultures” (Wills, 1982: 41-42).

2.7 The role of culture in translation of idiomatic express

Idiomatic expressions are natural and significant part of every language and are used in everyday conversations. Horvathova (2014) believes that every idiomatic expression has its own historical and cultural background. Horvathova (2014:96) further mentions that Idiomatic expressions “are dependent on culture and the culture is therefore one of the most important parts in comprehension of idiomatic meaning”. Given that “translation is a kind of activity that inevitably involves at least two languages and two cultural traditions” (Toury, 1978/1995: 200). One could argue that, biculturalism and/or bilingualism if not multiculturalism is a necessity for the translators. Oztemel and Kurt (2017:303) postulate that translators “are supposed to have a good mastery of not only both languages but also both cultures” because they are entrusted with the responsibility to transmit cultural dissimilarities from the SL culture into the TL culture. In addition, for the efficiency of the TT the translator should be familiar with “the culture, customs, and social settings of the source and target language speakers” the diverse speaking styles and the social norms of both SL and TL (Akbari, 2013:13). This awareness could increase the quality of the translations to a greater extent.

Akbari (2013:13) proposes that during “translation from one language to another, the culture of both languages in the process of translation is influential and the translator should contemplate “to what extent the culture is in the text and to what extent the language is in culture”. Abbasi et al., (2012:83) believe an effective translator “should simultaneously be aware of the cultural factors, views and tradition in order to consciously consider the chronological orders, explicit meaning, development of related disciplines, historical and religious background of the source text”.

Scholars considers translation as a cross-cultural communication activity. Supporting Mary Snell-Hornby (1992) in Katan, (2014:21) views that translators are “cross-cultural specialist”, Hatim (1997:123) concurs “the task of the translator is to allow at least two distinct rhetorical functions to co-exist in one”. Hence, the translator is “expected to have a brilliant mastery of both source and target language and culture” (Oztemel and Kurt, 2017:303). On the cross-cultural translation role, Koksai and Yuruk (2020:327-328) state “in the world that is

increasingly intertwined, translation fulfils a role by breaking down language [and cultural] barriers". From the professional point of view, "translators play a role as intercultural communication experts, mediators, and the bridge between people, cultures, and opinions" (Koksal & Yuruk, 2020:327-328). Translation is not only a language practice activity; it is also a cultural transfer activity and /or a cross-cultural communication activity.

Considering the most advocated close relationship between language and culture – as mentioned somewhere, Brown (2000:177), argues "a language is a part of a culture, and a culture is a part of a language; the two are so intricately interwoven that one cannot separate them without losing the significance of either language or culture". As a result, the translation process is regularly challenged with distinct cultures which results in difficulties in conveying ST implicit cultural aspects into the TT. In this regard, Mohseni and Mozafar (2013:27) concur "translation of idioms which are culture specific items is one of the most challenging tasks for translators. Since idioms are deeply rooted in the SL culture and their meaning and form may change in the process of translation from one language to another, translators should exercise care in handling such cultural items".

Moreover, "this challenge arises from the fact that each language and culture is unique and some elements in a language may not have the same equivalence or may have an unclear equivalence in another language" (Oztemel & Kurt, 2017:303). According to Jakobson (1959/2000: 114) "in translation there is ordinarily no full equivalence between code-units". Oztemel and Kurt (2017:303) are of a view that this cultural dissimilarities between SL text and TL text contribute to "the lack of full equivalence which causes some challenges for the translator. It can be stated that one of the biggest challenges for translators is the rendering of cultural specific items which are embedded in the source culture".

In this instance, the biculturalism character of translators comes into play in this scenario since they are expected to cross across cultures. Contemplating that translation involves two languages and two cultures. Khalil (nd:8) advised that "the translator possesses a good cultural background concerning the idiomatic expressions he may be faced with. A lack of such a background may hinder him from grasping the real image and the comprehensive idea and/ or meaning behind any idiom having a cultural specification". Sadiq (2008:50) comments "having a good cultural background about idioms is a necessity which is supposed to make the translator not only get the true and complete meaning behind idioms, but also" to enable him to find equivalent idioms having the same or similar functions in the

TL In the same vein, Sadiq (2008:51) further assimilates “cultural background has been looked upon as a must in translating idioms if the translator seeks to produce a truly effective target language text. The cultural background is the only way out to translating idioms in an equivalent way”.

Rather, translation encompasses a transposition of cultural values from one language into another. Nida (1964:147-163) states that translating “can never be discussed apart from the cultures of respective languages, since languages are themselves a crucial part of culture.” It is perhaps true to assume that the translator is befuddled with myriads of difficulties in decoding cultural signs which “can be more problematic for the translator than semantic or syntactic difficulties” (Gonzalez 2004:123).

2.8 The role of translator in translation and culture

Recently, some translation scholars put more emphasis on cultural factors in translation. They maintain that translation is not only a process of cultural transplantation, but also an activity of intercultural communication (Wang, 2004; Blazyte & Liubinene, 2016) where translators are viewed as catalysts of cross-cultural communication process. As mentioned earlier, translation process involves both the transfer of language and culture. To be more exact, culture exhibits the essential activity during the process of translation. That is to say, the essence of translation is a kind of cultural activity. On the one hand, translation is a kind of cross-cultural communication while translators play the role of cross-cultural communication specialist (ibid, 2016). Translation, from the perspective of communication theory, is a way of conveying messages and exchanging information from one distinct culture to another (Yousefi, 2017). More precisely, it is an intercultural communication between the author and the translator, and between the translator and the readers of the target language. On the other hand, translation is a medium of cultural exchange. The purposes and characteristics of translation lie in cultural and ideological exchanges (ibid, 2016). The urge of people in different communities, nationalities, regions and countries to get to understand each other makes translation a necessity. In the translation history, materials characteristic of human wisdom and human culture became the target of translation. Since knowledge of one country is expressed to another mainly in foreign language, translation is constantly an important means of acquiring and spreading knowledge (Janaviciene, 2016). We may even assume that most cultural systems in the world cannot have developed so far without the aid of translation.

Modern globalization, rapid developments, international relations and other factors require people to communicate not only in-between their own countries and cultures, but in the international and intercultural medium (Blazyte & Liubinene, 2016). Thus, contacts with unfamiliar, foreign and sometimes even alien cultures are an inescapable part of contemporary life. Needless to say, such a clash of cultures sometimes calls out for misunderstandings, as Nida (1964:130) presumes that “cultural differences pose much more complicated and severe problems for translators than differences of language systems do” and Aixela (1997:53) posits that “each linguistic or national-linguistic community has at its disposal a series of habits, value judgments, classification systems, etc. which sometimes are clearly different and sometimes overlap”.

Cultural overlaps, obviously, do not cause problems, however differences pose great challenges to translator as mediators between those cultures. It is from this point that translation scholars draw an implication that “translation is a cross-cultural communicative act which enables different cultures to interact” (Zhang, 2013:1919). Larson (1984) claims that “translator needs to understand beliefs, attitudes, values, and the rules of the source language audience in order to adequately understand the source text and adequately translate it for people who have a different set of beliefs, attitudes, values, and rules” (Larson quoted in Zare-Behtash & Firoozkoobi, 2010:1). Thus, the cultural translation calls not only for considerate translation strategies, but also for an adequate competence of a source culture, the knowledge of cultural subtleties, and, of course, the ability to notice such items of a culture in a broader context. Mediators between cultures, most frequently they are translators or interpreters, have to deal with such differences and take into account cultural norms when translating. Sometimes cultures overlap, meaning that SL and TL cultures are closely related and do not have significant distinctions, however cultures with bigger gaps are threatened to misunderstandings, whereas due to globalization encounters of such cultures are inevitable.

2.9 Problems of translating idiomatic expressions

It is established, - from the above - that translation as a cross-cultural communication activity plays a crucial role in transferring meaning from one culture to another. It is also established that idiomatic expressions are cultural specific units of a language and every language as its own culture and every culture has its own language, and the two are closely related if not interdependent and interrelated (Nengovhela, 2017, Oztemel & Kurt, 2017) and that cultural

dissimilarities poses challenges on the translation table (Charteris-Black, 2003; Baker 2018).

It is through “figurative modes of thought that a culture signifies its unique view of the world; it is this uniqueness which presents the greatest problem for the translator of idioms” (Charteris-Black, 2003:125). According to Aixela (1996: 58) culture specific items are “those textually actualized items whose function and connotation in a source text involve a translation problem in their transference to a target text, whenever this problem is a product of the nonexistence of the referred item or of its different intertextual status in the cultural system of the readers of the target text”. Gouws (1999:72) considers idioms to be “fully-fledged lexical items, idioms represent the lexicalization of specific semantic values. Because this lexicalization is a language specific process two languages will not necessarily have idioms to convey the same meaning”.

Translation of cultural specific items and/or symbols like idiomatic expressions (idioms, metaphors and proverbs) has been one of the most debatable subjects in the field of translation studies as they pose many problems for the translator (Oztemel and Kurt (2017:304); (Nengovela 2017; Horvathova, 2014; Aoxela, 1996; Fadwati, 2020). The translation of this cultural symbols “are difficult to transfer into the target text because they may have very peculiar meaning and colour in their own culture but may not find the same equivalence in the target culture; thus, they may not create the same effect for the target reader” (Oztemel & Kurt, 2017:304). Sharing the same sentiment, Barker (2018:68) indicates that “idioms and fixed expressions which contain culture-specific items are not necessarily untranslatable. It is not the specific item an expression contains but rather the meaning in conveys and its association with culture-specific context which can make it untranslatable”.

Although Larson (1984:143) recommends “the translator must first be sure of the meaning of the idiom and then look for the natural equivalent way to express the means of the idiom as a whole”, it is highly difficult if not sometimes impossible to find the exact cultural equivalent in the TL culture because every idiom has its own culture and every culture has its own idioms. According to Sadeghi and Farjad (2014:248) during the translation of idiomatic expressions the major problem for translators “is to find an appropriate equivalent idiom in form and meaning at the target language to be same as source language because each language has its own idioms, it is hard to find the exact equivalent”. The problems of

translating idiomatic expression ascribes to various factors “related to the nonliteral meanings of idioms or to the odd word grouping of some idioms, or rather to the rigid word order of some idioms” (Khalil, nd:3). Al- Haddad, (1994:218) presents more factors such as: “insufficiency of teaching techniques followed in this very area, inadequacy of the criteria of textual frequency, the foreign learning situation in which English is learned, and lack of cultural assimilation on the part of the students’ translators”.

The translator “has a two- fold responsibility laid on his shoulder; first, like foreign learners, a good mastery of idioms in terms of meanings and cultural backgrounds is required. Then, and most importantly, he is asked to give equivalent idioms in the target language to which he is translating, taking into account the cultural differences that may arise between both languages”. According to Barker (2018:65) “the main problems that idiomatic and fixed expressions pose in translation relate to two main area: the ability to recognise and interpret an idiom correctly and the difficulty in rendering various aspects of meaning that an idiom or fixed expression conveys into the target language”. The difficulty of translating idiomatic expressions “arises from the fact that words of an idiom should not be translated literally” Khalil (nd:4) as Newmarks (1988:125) mentioned that “idioms are never translated word for word”. Larson (1984:20) warned that “the real danger comes in translating an idiom literally, since the result will usually be nonsense in the receptor language”. The focus during the translation of idiomatic expressions should be on the figurative meaning of the expression rather than those of the individual words to avoid the awkwardness of the TT.

According to Barker (2018:65) “the main problems that idiomatic and fixed expressions pose in translation relate to two main area: the ability to recognise and interpret an idiom correctly and the difficulty in rendering various aspects of meaning that an idiom or fixed expression conveys into the target language”. Based on the first problem highlighted by Baker (2018), the ability to recognise and interpret an idiom correctly, Khalil (nd:4) believes it is “due to the fact that not all idioms are to be recognized easily. Some idioms are easier to recognize than others”. Generally speaking, the more “difficult an expression is to understand and the less sense it makes in a given context, the more likely a translator will recognize it as an idiom”. (Baker, 2018:65).To overcome such difficulty, according to Khalil (nd:4), the translator may initially opt to render literal translation to see whether the meaning fits with that of the ST. If the meaning of literal translation does not fit and/or is of no sense, the translator could then recognise the text as an idiomatic expression and deal with it as such.

Furthermore, Baker, (2018:65) put forth two situations where an expression could be easily recognisable:

- When the idioms violate truth conditions, and
- When the idioms include expressions which seem grammatically ill-formed.

Baker, (2018: 65-66) adds "the more difficult an expression is to understand and the less sense it makes in a given context, the more likely a translator will recognize it as an idiom" and she further categorizes two hard-to-be-recognized cases in which an idiom might be misinterpreted:

- Some idioms are misleading, and
- An SL (Source Language) idiom may have a very close counterpart in the TL which seems similar on the surface but has a totally or partially different meaning.

Along these lines, Khalil (nd:4-5) presented challenge occurring on the translation table as 'an expression having two meaning'; the literal and figurative meaning and "this happens most often when the idiomatic expression is based on a physical image. This is usually found in idioms where parts of the body are involved". To validate this arguments, Khalil (nd:5) borrowed the following examples from Seidl and McMordie (1988: 220): 'a slap on the face', 'Keep one's head above water' and 'a pain in the neck'. All the three expression contains two meanings according to Khalil (nd) which are both literal and figurative. According to Khalil (nd) the expression 'a slap on the face' figurative meaning relates to 'a sudden and unexpected rejection, defeat, and/or disappointment'. And the expression 'to keep one's head above water' literally means 'to prevent one from sinking into the water', and figuratively means to 'to keep out of debt, out of difficulty'; while the expression 'a pain in the neck' could either mean 'a physical pain' on one's body part, literally or figuratively 'an irritating or annoying person'.

In the same vein, Cain; Towse and Knight (2009:280) confer "an idiom is a form of figurative language that can usually have both a literal and figurative meaning, depending on the context" and Amos and Abas (2021:1) adds "it implies that an idiom is a form of figurative language that can have both, a literal and a figurative meaning" and present this sentence as an example to validate their argument: 'Alex spilled the beans', might refer to 'someone tipping out the contents of a jar of beans' (literal) or 'revealing a secret' (figurative)". To them, "idioms are not easy to understand - especially for non-native speakers, because their

meanings are usually metaphorical. This characteristic of idioms makes them strange and difficult to understand for English learners” (Amos & Abas, 2021:1).

The context in which these expressions are used will determine the intended meaning and the context shall guide the translator to make a decision regarding the strategy to adopt in dealing with the expression at hand. After recognising the idiomatic expression in the text at hand, the translator encounters other problems when “attempting to render them into the target language and such difficulties involve, above all, selecting the most appropriate strategy for translating idioms” (Khalil, nd:5).

Moreover, Baker (2018:65-71) classifies problems of translating idiomatic expressions into into four sub- categories: a) an idiom or fixed expression may have no equivalent in the target language; b) an idiom or fixed expression may have a similar counterpart in the target language, but its context of use may be different; c) an idiom may be used in the source text in both its literal and idiomatic senses at the same time; and d) the very convention of using idioms in written discourse, the contexts in which they can be used, and their frequency of use may be different in the source and target languages.

Awwad (1990:57-67) reflects two areas of difficulty when translating idioms: a) misinterpreting the intention of the writer or speaker and b) recognizing the cultural differences among languages. This consideration goes hand in hand with Nida (in Sans 1990:103) who insists on the existence of three presuppositions which must underline the semantic analysis:

- “- No word (or semantic unit) ever has exactly the same meaning in two different utterances.
- There are no complete synonyms within a language.
- There are no exact correspondences between related words in different languages”.

According to Horvathova (2014:96), Nida rejects the possibilities of perfect communication and emphasises that all context of communications are different; moreover, “indicates that the cultural fact symbolised by a word provides the denotative meaning, whereas the emotional response in the culture is the basis of connotative meaning”. This view perfectly suits to the nature of idiomatic expressions and the adoption of strategies necessary for their translation.

2.10 Strategies of translating idiomatic expressions

It has been established that the translation of idiomatic expressions is a thorn in the translators' flesh due to the cultural dissimilarities of the TLC and the SLC for each has its own cultural and historical background. Bell (1991: xv) believes that translation is "the transformation of a text originally in one language into an equivalent text in a different language retaining, as far as possible, the content of the message and the formal features and functional roles of the original text". Sadeghi and Ferjad (2014:247) echoes "translation is a process of substituting a source language text by a target language text with preserving the meaning and content of the original text as possible as it is". During the process of attempting to translate idiomatic expression, Baker (2011:71) declares "once an idiom or fixed expression has been recognised and interpreted correctly, the next step is to decide how to translate it into the target language". To accomplish this task, the adoption of an accurate strategy is required. In the same vein, Baker (2018:64) mentions "a lack of adequate knowledge of translation strategies leads to mistranslation especially when it comes to idiomatic expression, because idioms of one language hardly match with idioms of other language".

The Longman online dictionary (2022) defines the term strategy as "a planned series of actions for achieving something" and technique "a special way of doing something". The two terms are usually used interchangeably because they are meant for the same purpose. However, for the purpose of this study, the term strategy shall be used as it simply refers to "a general plan of action for achieving one's goals and objectives" (Nickols, 2011:4). Strategies are usually formulated for long-term goals, objectives and functional activities. In the context of this study, a translation strategy is a solution tool adopted to transfer meaning from SLC to a TLC. Along the same line, Baker (2011:6) mentions "strategies are not preconceived, nor are they suggested as ideal solutions; they are identified by analysing authentic examples of translated texts in a variety of languages and presented as 'actual' strategies used rather than the 'correct' strategies to use". Novalinda (2019:13) "lack knowledge of translation strategies will lead to mistranslation especially when it comes to idiomatic expression". Krings (1986:18) defines translation strategy as "translator's potentially conscious plans for solving concrete translation problems in the framework of a concrete translation task". Lorsch (1991:76) also views translation strategy as "a potentially conscious procedure for the solution of a problem which an individual is faced with when translating a text segment from one language to another". These scholars share a sentiment

on the notion of consciousness and that it is significant in distinguishing strategies adopted by the translators and on the provision of a solution to the problem. Cohen (1998:4) proclaims that “the element of consciousness is what distinguishes strategies from these processes that are not strategic”. Venuti (1998:240) designates translation strategies “involve the basic tasks of choosing the foreign text to be translated and developing a method to translate it”. He employs the concepts of domesticating and foreignising to refer to translation strategies. Jaaskelainen (1999:71) views strategy as “a series of competencies, a set of steps or processes that favour the acquisition, storage, and/or utilization of information” and that strategies are “heuristic and flexible in nature, and their adoption implies a decision influenced by amendments in the translator's objectives”. According to Leppihalme (1997: 28), translation strategies are “means which the translator, within the confines of his/her existing knowledge, considers to be the best in order to reach the goals set by the translation task”. Considering a number of strategies is “more likely to lead to successful translations than routine use of one strategy only” (Leppihalme, 1997:78).

Baker Strategies to an attempt to overcome/close the cultural gap in the translation of idiomatic expressions Baker (2011:71-78) presented that following problem-solving translation strategies:

2.10.1 Using an idiom of similar meaning and form

This strategy usually referred to as total equivalence and it is the most advocated strategy for translation idiomatic expression for it provides the most natural TL idiom which has the same meaning and form as the original SL idiom. This strategy, according to Baker (2011:76) “involves using an idiom in the target language which conveys roughly the same meaning as that of the source- language idiom and, in addition, consists of equivalent lexical items”. Although the strategy suggests the best-case scenario, Baker (2011:76) warns “this kind of match can only occasionally be achieved”.

Along this line, Murdoch (2017:1) presents the following example using the English (SL) expression “give the devil his due” translated to Afrikaans (TL) as ‘*Gee die duiwel wat hom toekom*’. Murdoch (2017:1) argues that this expression as it is translated into Afrikaans as idiom also represent a literal meaning. According to the Murdoch (2017) the TL idiom ‘*Gee die duiwel wat hom toeko*’ means ‘*gee aan elkeen die eer wat hom toekom*’ while the SL idiom ‘give the devil his due’ means ‘to acknowledge the talent or the success of an opponent or unpleasant person’. Because both these definitions are essentially the same,

this then adheres to Svensen’s (2009:258) definition of full equivalence as “there is complete agreement between [the] two expressions in [English and Afrikaans] as regards content and usage”.

Given that this kind of matching could only be arrived at in certain occasions, Khalil (nd:6) believes this matching occurs when both the SL and the TL belong to the same language family due to cultural similarities, a matter which facilitates translation. In occasions where the SL and the TL belongs to two historical and cultural background such as English and Arabic are involved, “it is not advisable to resort to total equivalence since the source language idiom and the target language idiom may have distinct cultural implications” (Khalil, nd:6). The author further shared the following examples of English idiomatic expressions translated into Arabic idiomatic expressions with the same form and meaning (Khalil, nd:7).

To shed crocodile tears

يبكي بدموع التماسيح

To fish in troubled water

يصطاد في الماء العكر

To digest ideas

يهضم الافكار

Figure 2.1 Examples of idioms using similar meaning and form

Along these lanes, Fadwati (2020:201) based on the below adopted table, Fadwati (2020) present examples of idiomatic expressions found in the Fast and Furious: Hobbs and Shaw movie translated from English into Indonesia. Accordingly, the expression ‘keep the mouth shut’ is a total Equivalence – the use of an idiom with similar meaning and form – with Indonesia expression ‘*tutup mulut*’ in Bahasa Indonesia while the familiar phrase ‘time flies’ is translated into ‘*waktu berjalan cepat*’ (Fadwati, 2020).

No.	Idiomatic expression (SL)	Meanings (TT)
1	But not paying the enough to keep their mouth shut.	Tapi tak dibayar untuk tutup mulut.
2	Time flies.	Waktu berjalan cepat.

Table 2.1 Examples of idioms using similar meaning and form

Furthermore, Chen (2020:30) agrees that it is rare to find total equivalence of the same form and meaning between English and Chinese language because idiomatic expression are “culture-specific, that is, they depend very much upon a specific social or ecological setting” (Chen, 2020:30). Although people belong to dissimilar linguistic and cultural background; they usually “share the same social experiences, emotions and feelings about the things in the universe, some idioms in one language [may] have equivalents in another language” (ibid, 2020:30). As a result, the author argues that some English idiomatic expressions correspond to Chinese idioms both in form, image, figure of speech and meaning”.

Nengovhela (2017:130) concurs that although it is possible to find matching idiomatic expressions from languages with different cultural and linguistic background “it does not mean that all idioms have immediate equivalents in the target language. Some idioms have direct equivalents in the target language that share the same structure and meaning”. To support these arguments, Nengovhela (2017) presented the following examples between English and Tshivenda. (64)

Idiomatic expression (SL – Tshivenda)	English back translation	Meaning (TL – English)
<i>U laṭa thawula.</i>	To throw towel.	To throw in the towel.
<i>U oma ṭhoho.</i>	To harden head.	To be hard-headed

Table 2.2 Examples of idioms using similar meaning and form

According to Nengovhela (2017) the expression ‘*u laṭa thawula*’ is regularly used during interactions in Tshivenda. The throw in the towel in the boxing ring is a symbol of accepting defeat. Hence Nengovhela (2017) argued that the expression mean giving up on the goal or something being pursued; hence it I translated as ‘to throw in the towel’ in the TL.

The Tshivenda idiomatic expression *u laṭa thawula* translated as ‘to throw in the towel’ in English and the expressions *U oma ṭhoho* translated as ‘to be hard-headed’ have similar meaning and form with their counterparts in the TL. For Nengovhela, these examples support the linguistic theory of transaction that could be considered to be faithful translation because “it is one which only contains elements which can be directly derived from the ST wording, avoiding any kind of explanatory interpolation or cultural adjustment which can be justified on this basis” (Nida & Taber, 1969:134).

One who is described as hard-headed, is practically determined to achieve a goal identified without allowing any possible destruction (sentiment) against their goal. A head-headed or “*o oma ṭhoho*” individual “is someone who will not change their mind easily or who does not engage in reasoning. It is a person who has his/her mind set on something and who cannot easily change without an argument” (Nenghovela, 2017:131).

Mustonen (2010) confirms that English and Finnish idiomatic expressions differ in terms of character and imagery; however, there are few corresponding idioms in Finnish similar to those in English. Mustonen (2010:66-7) found that

Finnish idioms use surprisingly often the same kind of figurative ideas to express the same meaning. A number of English idioms were translated with a precisely or partly similar Finnish idiom. This is rather surprising insofar as idioms are usually language-specific expressions, which more often than not cannot be understood in another language as such. However, Finnish and English seem to contain a number of idioms which are the same or almost the same in both languages.

Some examples of English idiomatic expressions translated into Finnish idiomatic expression are below.

English	Finnish
He'll be eating out of your hand	hän syö kädestäsi
We were heading here towards treacherous waters	lähestyimme vaarallisia vesiä
Suddenly all ears	äkkiä pelkkänä korvana
The salt of the earth	maan suola
Rub salt in my wounds	hieroa suolaa haavoihini
Cleared the air	puhdisti ilmaa
Lays his cards on the table	lyö kortit pöytään

Table 2.3 Examples of idioms using similar meaning and form

According to Mustonen (2010) the above examples are well-established and widely used idiomatic expressions in both English and Finnish. Idiomatic expressions such as ‘eat out of someone's hand’, ‘the salt of the earth’, ‘rub salt in one's wounds’ and ‘clear the air’ have equivalents in Finnish. Around this arguments, Nida and Taber (1969:106) detailed that idiomatic expressions frequently “suffer a great deal of semantic adjustments in translation, since it is highly unlikely that the same type of peculiar expression will have the same meaning in another language”. However, Mustonen (2010) found that various English idiomatic expressions do actually have the same kind of expressions with the same form and meaning in Finnish.

2.10.2 Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form

Baker (2011:78) insists that the strategy “is often possible to find an idiom or fixed expression in the target language which has a meaning similar to that of the source idiom or expression, but consists of different lexical items”.

This strategy involves translating ST idiomatic expression into its equivalent TT idiom which conveys the same meaning, but has a different form. Baker (2011) believe it is possible to acquire an idiom in the TL which shares the similar meaning to that of the SL idiomatic expression consisting of different lexical items. In this case, “the lexical items of idioms are not preserved, it is translated as a semantic equivalent” (Manipuspika & Winzami, 2021:116).

Idiomatic expression (SL, Afrikaans)	Idiomatic expression (TT, English)
1 Ek meneer en jy meneer, wie sal die wa smeer	2 If two ride on a horse, one must ride behind 3 Masters two will not do 4 I stout and thou stout, who shall bear the ashes?

Table 2.4 Examples of idioms using similar meaning but dissimilar form

According to Murdoch (2017:5) idiom (1) means ‘*as almal baas wil wees, wie sal dan Klaas wees?*’ in Afrikaans where *Klaas wees* is defined as ‘*n mindere wees*’ (Odendal et al., 1985:558). This idiom has (2), (3) and (4) as possible Translation Equivalence in English. According to Murdoch (2017), these, idiom (2) means ‘when two people do something

together, one of them will be the leader and the other will have to be subordinate', which is exactly the same as the Afrikaans definition where Klaas is the 'subordinate'. Here there are partial equivalence as per Svensen (2009:258) defines "as there is some, but not complete, agreement between [the] two expressions in [English and Afrikaans] as regards content' .

In such a case where more than one translation equivalent is available to the translator in the target language, it is up to the translator to pick the one, which they feel best, fits into the TT in order to convey the meaning of the idiom in the ST:

Idiomatic expression (SL, English)	Meaning (TT, Afrikaans)
5 His fate is sealed	6 Sy lot is beslis 7 Dis klaar met kees

Table 2.5 Examples of idioms using similar meaning but dissimilar form

A further example of this would be translating idiom (5), which has two partial equivalents in Afrikaans, namely idioms (6) and (7), where the former is a more formal register and the latter more informal. The choice of translation will then depend on what context the original English idiom was used in.

The most recommended translation strategy for idioms is translating them with a natural target language idiom which has the same meaning as the original source language idiom. The following are illustrative examples of ST idiomatic expressions which have been translated into their TT counterparts which carry the same meaning, but differ in their forms according to (Khalil, nd:9).

On pins and needles / On tenterhooks	على احر من الجمر
To jump on the bandwagon	يركب الموجة / يساير التيار
To carry coals to Newcastle	يبيع الماء في حارة السقاين

Figure 2.2 Examples of idioms using similar meaning but dissimilar form

Looking at the Partial Equivalence strategy using the idiomatic expression with similarity in meaning but not in form; Fadwati (2020) presented these examples as per the table adopted.

No.	Idiomatic expression (SL)	Meanings (TT)
1	It's freaking me out right now	Aku jadi kaget.
2	All-right touch down in two	Kita akan mendarat
3	if you can't break out of a shitty prison like this	Kalau ibu tak bisa kabur dari penjara jelek ini
4	I can't pull this off we both know it	Kita tak bisa lakukan ini berdua
5	We didn't mean to knock things down	Kami tak sengaja menjatuhkan barang- barang

Table 2.6 Examples of idioms using similar meaning but dissimilar form

The expression 'freak me out' is similar with 'crack up' which displays emotional breakdown meaning. Fadwati (2020:201) argues that "it is similar with touchdown that can be translated into arrival which has the same meaning of having a moment of an aircraft's landing. Meanwhile, break out also can be translated into escape that breaking free of control". These idiomatic expressions shares similar meaning; hence, they are identified as using 'idioms of similar meaning but dissimilar form'. Although the literal meaning of the expression 'knock things down' would be '*mengetuk barang ke bawah*' which will sound awkward for the TR; to maintain similar meaning between the ST and TT, the idiomatic expression 'I didn't mean to knock things down' is correctly translated as '*menjatuhkan*' into Indonesia (Fadwati, 2020).

According to Nengovhela (2017). The strategy of using an expression of 'similar meaning but dissimilar form' grants the translator opportunities to bridge the language and cultural gap between the SL and the TL. The following were presented as examples between Tshivenda (SL) and English (TL).

Source language expression	Partial translation	meaning
<i>U pwasha luṭanga.</i>	To break bamboo-tree.	To shake hands with a wife's best friend. To squeeze a lemon
Mulomo na lwanzhe u a wela.	Mouth and ocean it can cross.	Actions speak louder than words.

Table 2.7 Examples of idioms using similar meaning but dissimilar form

Referring to the above presented examples, Nengovhela (2017) argued that the idiomatic expression used in the TL are of different form compared to those of the SL but they do share the meaning. The attention- in this strategy is payed to the function of the TT as Nengovhela (2017:133) emphasised that.

This strategy pays attention to the meaningful equivalent in the TL that denotes the same meaning as the one in the SL. The attention is not on the SL as a yardstick of the translation process, but on finding the equivalent that is communicative in the target language. In terms of the *Skopos* theory, the process of translation is determined by the function of the product.

On idiomatic expression using dissimilar form but sharing the same meaning, Mustonen (2010) presented examples of those different in form although they partly have similar image. In addition, Mustonen (2010) presented examples of idiomatic expressions translated from English into Finnish which contain partly the same form but the same meaning.

English	Finnish
On the warpath	sotajalalla
Was out of her league	paini väärässä sarjassa
On the brink of taking wing	oli saamassa ilmaa siipien alle
Keep my head	pitää pääni kylmänä
She was bad medicine	hän oli vaarallista lääkettä
You raked him over the coals	taisit grillata häntä

Table 2.8.1 Examples of idioms using similar meaning but dissimilar form

Although the above idiomatic expressions are of dissimilar form they make use of partly similar images to express the same idea. On the similarity between the English and the Finnish idioms Mustonen (2010) states that “each of the English idioms above has been translated with a Finnish idiom which contains at least one same element as the English one” while sharing the same meaning. Moreover, some English idiomatic expressions acquire figurative meaning in Finnish when they are extended or modified slightly. For instance, the English expression ‘take wing’ becomes an idiom in Finnish when it is extended to ‘get air under its wings’ (*saada ilmaa siipien alle*). Similarly, the English idioms keep one's head and out of one's league, have similar, slightly longer corresponding idioms in Finnish: pitää päänsä kylmänä (keep one's head cold) and painia väärässä sarjassa (wrestle in the wrong league). All these examples share one element which is used figuratively (‘wing’ – ‘siivet’, ‘head’ – ‘pää’ and ‘league’ – ‘sarja’) according to Mustonen (2010).

Mustonen (2010) also mentions that, although various English idiomatic expressions have equivalent Finnish expressions which contain the same or partly the same image, there a number of idiomatic expressions which different in these two languages. Below are some examples of English idioms and their Finnish translations which differ from each other in terms of their literal meaning:

English	Finnish
lying on my feet	kirkkain silmin valehtelemisessä
piece of cake	helppo nakki
I got his drift	ymmärsin yskän
Three sheets to the wind	hyvässä laitamyötäisessä
The last straw	viimeinen pisara
In debt to the eyebrows	korvia myöten veloissa
He's got a stick up his butt	näyttää vähän seipään nielleeltä
This is a hell of a note	nyt on piru merrassa
Not for all the tea in China	en kuuna päivänä
Got the show on the road	otti ohjat käsiinsä

Table 2.8.2 Examples of idioms using similar meaning but dissimilar form

Despite having entirely different forms, the above expressions share the same figurative meaning. The English idiomatic expression above have Finnish equivalents that use entirely different forms to express the same meaning. For instance, 'lie on one's feet' (meaning 'obnoxious lying') has a completely different equivalent in form - in Finnish: *valehdella kirkkain silmin*, i.e. 'lie with bright eyes'. 'Piece of cake' has the equivalent Finnish idiom *helppo nakki* ('easy sausage') and have a stick up one's butt has a corresponding Finnish idiom, *näyttää seipään nielleeltä* (whose literal meaning is 'look like s/he's swallowed a pole') according to Mustonen (2010).

2.10.3 Translation by paraphrase

Scholars agree that this strategy is the most commonly used in the translation of idiomatic expressions. Baker (2011:80) agrees this is "by far the most common way of translating idioms when a match cannot be found in the target language, or if it seems inappropriate to use idiomatic language in the TT because of differences in stylistic preferences of the source and target languages". This strategy includes explanation in the TT the meaning of an idiomatic expression in the ST in the absence of a suitable equivalent idiom in the TLC or depending on the context, if the use of an idiom is not appropriate in the TT. Said differently, this is usually done when the translator is confronted with idiomatic expressions in the SLC which has no corresponding idiomatic expressions in the TLC or more often, when it is difficult to find an idiomatic expression in the TLC that matches the one used in the SLC.

Khalil (nd) and Fadwati (2020) advises that this strategy should be applied only when the translator is running out of option but only to paraphrase. Moreover, this this strategy is best applied to such idiomatic expressions which are less culture- specific than others. Otherwise, the cultural flavour will be lost. In this scenario, Khalil (nd:13) presents the following examples.

A hard nut to crack	مسألة مستعصية / قضية شائكة
To walk on air	تغمره السعادة/ يشعر بسعادة غامرة
To live from hand to mouth	يحيا حياة الكفاف
Wrong end of the stick	نقيض المراد
Sound in wind and limb	في أتم صحة
Have no backbone	ضعيف الإرادة أو الشخصية

Figure 2.3 Examples of translating idioms by paraphrasing

On the same breath, identifying examples of translation by paraphrasing as per the table below, Fadwati (2020) found that the expression ‘champagne problem’ is accurately translated as ‘*pembawa masalah*’ arguing that the expression ‘champagne problem’ could not be translated literally signifying that champagne is a drink. However, “champagne problem means that a condition that deal with a war, disaster, and particular issues which give many problems and dilemma” according to Fadwati (2020:202) while presenting another example using the idiomatic expression ‘cheeky bugger’ as is translated as ‘*anak naka*’ into Indonesia.

No.	Idiomatic expression (SL)	Meanings (TT)
1	You might call a champagne problem	Kau bias menyebutku pembawa masalah.
2	Then you'll seriously slip in mum	Berarti ibu sudah tak ahli
3	You cheeky bugger	Dasar anak nakal
4	Decks, i'm just having a bit	Decks, ibu hanya bersenang-senang
5	Dont use your pea- sized brain	Jangan pakai otak kecilmu
6	You might call a champagne problem	Kau bias menyebutku pembawa masalah
7	You taking it easy on me	Kau tak bertarung serius.
8	The point is we need to get on.	Intinya kita harus mengurusnya sekarang.

Table 2.7 Examples of translating idioms by paraphrasing

The author further argues that “there is no equivalence meaning of ‘cheeky bugger’ since it is a pure idiomatic expression of American guy which has a meaning of thoughtful and

honest but innocent. In this movie, that expression is translated into ‘*anak nakal*’ since the actor tries to tease her mother by saying impolite words” (ibid: 2020:202).

The use of paraphrasing strategy in translation is aggravated by the lack of direct TT equivalent expressions in the TL; sometimes the strategy is applied for stylistic reasons. This strategy could - to a particular extent - negatively influence the strength of the intended ST meaning and/or message as the idea is to transfer the sense instead of the cultural flavour. Nengovhela (2017) believes the *Skopos* theory concurs that translation does not necessarily have to aim for equivalence because the vitality is in achieving the translation purpose. The below example is presented to advocate for the above arguments.

Source language expression	Meaning
<i>Ho penga ngozwi.</i>	The madness that a child is born with.

Table 2.8 Examples of translating idioms by paraphrasing

The idiomatic expression *Ho penga ngozwi* severally reappears in Tshivenda conversations referring to a child with unacceptable behaviour, which is difficult if not impossible to refrain from.

2.10.4 Translation by omission

Although the ‘translation by omission of a play on idiom’ strategy “involves rendering only the literal meaning of an idiom in a context that allows for a concrete reading of an otherwise playful use of language” (Baker, 2011:84); the translation by omission strategy suggests neglecting the idiomatic expression completely in the TT. Thus, the strategy recommends the deletion or disappearance of an idiomatic expression in the TT altogether. Baker (2011:85) pronounces “an idiom may sometimes be omitted altogether in the target text”, for reasons such as “no close match in the target language, its meaning cannot be easily paraphrased, or for stylistic reasons”.

Davies (2003: 79) views this strategy as “deletion of an ambiguous or questionable cultural reference altogether, so that no trace of it is found”. Although the omission strategy may sound or look rather harsh, actually the omission of some cultural reference and expressions in some context does not entirely harm the TT (Baker, 2018:49). In addition, Baker (1992:49) “If the meaning conveyed by a particular item or expression is not vital enough to the development of the text to justify distracting the reader with lengthy explanations, translators can and often do simply omit translating the word or expression in question”. In some

occasion, the translator might consider the idiomatic expression not necessary for the comprehension of the TT or the target reader. In these instances, the omission strategy could be preferred by the translators if they “consider the CSI unacceptable on ideological or stylistic grounds, or they think that it is not relevant enough for the effort of comprehension required of their readers, or that it is too obscure and they are not allowed or do not want to use procedures such as the gloss, etc.” (Aixela, 1996: 64).

This strategy is mostly applied to those languages belonging to two distinct cultural and historical background. To emphasise it is on rare occasions that this strategy could be adopted when translating between language originating from similar cultural and historical background. Van der Merwe (2001:69) is of a view that “because both English and Afrikaans are Germanic languages with mutual origins, it is sometimes possible that an idiom be translated directly from English to Afrikaans, while maintaining the same idiomatic meaning”.

To some scholars, this strategy exposes the translators’ weaknesses in failure to render the SLC reference into the TLC or TT. Dimutriu (2004) submits that whenever the translator prefers to adopt the omission strategy over all other translation strategies available, this may be perceived as the translators’ failure to overcome cultural difficulties. Aksoy (2002:92) echoes that “unless it is rare and compulsory, whether it is important or not within the text’s coherence, the translator is not advised to use the strategy of ‘deletion’ as it may raise doubts about the respect to the writer”.

Although Fadwati (2020) adopted this strategy, on the contrary Fadwati (2020) agrees that the translation by omission is used when there is no equivalence to replace the source text in the target text. The idiomatic expression is usually omitted when the deletion does not affect the meaning of the TT and still sound natural and acceptable. Within these brackets – based on the table, (Fadwati, 2020) argues the expression ‘black ops’ and ‘petty rivalries’ are deleted because they do affect the meaning of the TT in any way. To Fadwati (2020:202) the meaning of the word ‘black’ is ‘illegal secret of military’ and ‘petty’ is when “someone must deal with unimportant thing or small business”.

No.	Idiomatic expression (SL)	Meaning [translation equivalence] (TT)
1	She then proceeded to kill her entire black ops squad	Kemudian dia menghabisi seluruh pasukannya
2	Then it's like someone lights a match, right in the middle of your chest	Lalu dadamu akan terasa terbakar.
3	I mean you think you'll be able to put aside any petty rivalries to save the world	Apa mereka bisa mengesampingkan persaingan untuk keselamatan dunia

Table 2.9 Examples of translating idioms by omission

Although the instances of application of this strategy were found in the literature. The study distances it from this strategy.

2.10.5 Borrowing the source language idiom

Baker (2011) proposes the usage the SL idiomatic expression exactly as it is without translating it. Baker (2011:79) further denotes “just as the use of loan words is a common strategy in dealing with culture-specific items [...], it is not unusual for idioms to be borrowed in their original form in some contexts”.

Robinson (2003:2014) advised translators on some ‘do’s and don’ts, the most significant of which is to “use the idiomatic vernacular of the TLC, not borrowing from the SLC”. De Corte (2003:70) points out that borrowing “serves to fill a lexical gap, [and] enriches the language”. As an oldest method of translation is also “one of the ways in which a language renews its lexicon” (ibid:143). Nonetheless, “borrowing is such an engrossing method of translation that is quite manifest in literary productions” (Thawabteh, 2014:243). Newmark (1988:81) considers borrowing to be

the process of transferring a SL word to a TL text as a translation procedure. It is the same as Catford’s transference, and includes transliteration, which relates to the conversion of different alphabets: e.g. Russian (Cyrillic), Greek, Arabic, Chinese, etc — into English. The word then becomes a ‘loanword’. Some authorities deny that this is a translation procedure, but no other term is appropriate if a translator decides to use an SL word for his text, say for English and the relevant language.

Borrowing basically means that the translator makes a conscious choice to use the same expression in the TT as it is found in the ST. This is usually the case when there is no equivalent term in the target language.

Murdoch (2017:5) submits “while this strategy might seem counterintuitive, in the absence of a full or partial translation equivalent, the idiom or other type of fixed expression in its source language form may be largely familiar to target language readers and thus understandable as is. This may even be the case where a suitable equivalent does in fact exist”. To support this argument, Murdoch (2017) says an expression like ‘absolutely fabulous’ could be translated into Afrikaans as ‘*absoluut fantasties*’. Murdoch (2017:5) adds “but this phrase does not capture the essence of the word ‘fabulous’. This is similar to trying to translate *lekker*, or any expression containing *lekker* into English, where, although a suitable equivalent may exist, the word *lekker* just means so much more”.

In instances where the simple preservation of the SL cultural reference could lead to obscurity, the translator could decide “to keep the original item but supplement the text with whatever information is judged necessary” (Davies, 2003:77). Thus, provide a suitable explanation of the ST. Davies (2003) divides addition into two categories: ‘addition inside the text’ and ‘addition outside the text’. Aixelá (1996) referred to these additions as ‘extra-textual gloss’ and ‘intra-textual gloss’. According to Oztemel and Kurt (2017:308) “the former one is explanation given outside the text such as footnote, preface, etc., [and] the latter is giving the explanatory information within the text itself”.

On the application of borrowing as a translation strategy, Chen (2020:30) mentions that the expression ‘fish in troubled waters’ could be translated into Chinese as ‘*hún shuǐ mō yú, chèn huǒ dǎ jié*’ and ‘the boy was between a rock and a hard place; he had to go home and be whipped, or stay in town all night and be picked up by the police’ could be translated into Chinese as ‘*zhè hái zǐ jìn tuì liǎng nán, tā yào me huí jiā āi dǎ, yào me zài zhèn shàng guò yè bèi jǐng chá zhuā qù*’.

Chen (2020:30-31) further advises that:

During the translation, it is better to discover the idioms in the TL which contain the similar contents, forms, metaphors or other rhetoric devices with the SL. They usually have the same literal meaning or figurative meaning and convey the same implicated meaning. That is to say, when such idioms in two languages embedded with the same cultural information, borrowing method of translation can be employed.

2.10.6 Compensation

The term technique as it described as ‘a special way of doing something’ by Longman dictionary (2020) is brought here by Hervey and Higgins (1992). Hervey and Higgins (1992:35) describe compensation as a “techniques of making up for the loss of important ST features through replicating ST effects approximately in the TT by means other than those used in the ST”. With the same tone, Vinay and Darbelnet (1995:341) views compensation as “the stylistic translation technique by which a nuance that cannot be put in the same place as in the original is put at another point of the phrase, thereby keeping the overall tone”. According to Baker (2011) compensation refers to the omission or play down of some text like cultural references at the original position as it occurs in the ST and introduce it somewhere else in the TT. This strategy “is not restricted to fixed expressions and may be used to make up for any loss of meaning, emotional force or stylistic effect which may not be possible to reproduce directly at a given point in the target text” (Baker, 2011:86). Compensation in translation occurs when the lost meaning of the SLT or metaphor in one part of the text is compensated in another part of the TLT.

Zhang and Wang (2010:882-887) put forward strategies which can be applied when translating idioms. Amongst this strategies, Zhang and Wang (2010) incorporated borrowing and omission which are not listed below because they are discussed above.

2.10.7 Literal translation

Literal translation describes a word-for-word translation that sticks close to the ST. It usually sounds unnatural in the TL and hard to read as it does not convey the meaning of the SL text. Scholars have opposing opinions on the merits of this translation strategy when it come to the translation of idiomatic expressions. Although some scholars believe that literally translating idiomatic expression could cause great damage to the TT. Chen (2009:164) argues differently “literal translation is usually employed in the complete representation of the original when the original almost accords with the target language in the form of vocabulary, grammatical structure and rhetorical device, which means literal translation is a way by which the rhetoric, national and regional characteristics are kept in the target language”. The goal of this strategy is to preserve the natural meaning of the SL idioms, while not transgressing the linguistic principles of the TL.

During the adoption of this strategy, Translators as cross-cultural communication specialist should do their best to retain “the figurative image, rhetorical devices and the national characteristics of the original idioms” (Chen, 2009:164) so that meaning and form of the SL are not changed. Sometimes, equivalent translation can be found, but mostly only similar idiomatic expressions. For, Nida, (2001:28) believes “finding satisfactory equivalents for idioms is one of the most difficult aspects of translating” mostly because of the cultural gap existing between SLC and TLC.

Although languages belonging to different historical and cultural background experiences huge cultural and linguistic dissimilarities (Meso, 2016); averse Chen (2009) observes there are some instances where they share similar views hence there are several English idiomatic expressions that could be literally translated into foreign languages. Chen (2009:165) adds “language universal and cultural similarities are two factors in the objective world which enable across-cultural communications. People of different languages may share the same feelings, emotions and ways of thinking, because people of different nations experience the same things in the unique nature”. Some English idiomatic expressions could be translated literally without causing misunderstanding when the translated text TT shares the same literal meaning or figurative meaning and implicated meaning with the SL text (Chen, 2009). In terms of idiomatic translation, Chen (2009) advocates for the adoption of literal translation method in some instances. Chen (2009:164-165) further argues that literal translation could “keep the original form and images of English idioms without causing confusion in meaning” and present the following examples to support these submissions.

For instance:

A wolf in sheep’s clothing” is translated literally into “Pi Zhe Yang Pi De Lang”; “To pull chestnut out of the fire” is translated literally into “Huo Zhong Qu Li” and “To be led by the nose” into “Bei Qian Zhe Bizi Zou”. “Break the record” is translated literally into “Da Po Ji Lu”; What’s more, literal translation transfers the original cultural information effectively and conveys the implicated meaning without misunderstandings aroused and narrows the gaps between two languages, and at the same time, interests in reading can be greatly enhanced. For instance, “A rolling stone gathers no moss” is translated literally into “Gun Shi Bu Sheng Tai”, it implies that a person who is constantly moving and changing from one place or occupation to another will never gain a steady, established position. And “Packed like sardines” is translated literally into “Ji Dei Xiang Guan Tou Sha Ding Yu”, it is a preferred version of translation because it fulfils the function of communicative translation yet retains the original flavor of the source idiom, when the implicated meaning of the idioms can be easily inferred, the idioms can be understood literally by

the reader. In this case, these kinds of idioms can be rendered through the employment of literal translation. The most important point of literal translation lies in the function of keeping the full flavor of English idioms.

Literal translation strategy is further subdivided into literal translation with annotation, direct translation and amplification as they are briefly outlined below.

2.10.7.1 Literal translation with annotation

When the need arises, the annotation explains the historical background of an idiom or its origin is completely explained.

2.10.7.2 Direct translation

Original images and figurative meanings of target language idioms correspond with those in the original form or an idiom of the original language does not lead to cultural deformation in literal translation and can be accepted by readers of the target language.

2.10.7.3 Amplification

The word amplification could mean increasing a volume and/or refer to the action of enlarging upon or adding detail to something or a statement. To Horvathova (2014:99) this strategy means “adding necessary words in the translation without changing the original meaning and helps the target readers deepen their understanding of the translated text”. In instances where the simple preservation of the SL cultural reference could lead to obscurity, the translator could decide “to keep the original item but supplement the text with whatever information is judged necessary” (Davies, 2003:77). Davies (2003) divides addition into two categories: ‘addition inside the text’ and ‘addition outside the text’. Aixela (1996) referred to these additions as ‘extra-textual gloss’ and ‘intra-textual gloss’. According to Oztemel and Kurt (2017:308) “the former one is explanation given outside the text such as footnote, preface, etc., [and] the latter is giving the explanatory information within the text itself”.

2.10.8 Free translation

Free translation is applied when using different expressive forms to put across meanings in the source language. Newmark (1988:46) says that this type of translation renders the content rather than the form of the ST. It is a type of paraphrase which can be much longer than the original text. Free translation reproduces the matter without the manner, or the content with the form of the original.

2.10.9 Combination

This strategy uses the combination of both literal and free translation. It is worth mentioning that free translation can on one hand erase the misunderstanding and make the translated version easily understood, while on the other hand the exotic flavour in the original text can get lost.

2.10.10 Transposition

This strategy refers to transferring the translation of a certain part to another place in the text for the purpose of the overall arrangement of the sentences and the meaning is guaranteed. Goes hand in hand with compensation.

2.10.11 Integration

The strategy is applied when one is integrating the meaning of the source language idiom with the meaning of some other part in the text as a whole. To a particular extent, this strategy also goes hand-in-hand with compensation as discussed above.

2.11 Nord's (1991) Model for Source Text Analysis

Some translation Scholars agree that before embarking on any translation process the translator should analyse the text comprehensively, "since this appears to be the only way of ensuring that the ST has been wholly and correctly understood" (Nord, 2005:1). On text analysis, Seresov and Brevenikova (2019) are of a view that each text is created for a purpose, to carry a particular communication intent. It is not as an end in itself, it aims to bring content-specific information to a certain group of readers. Text comprehension process could not be limited to the external characters of the text (what we see and hear). Seresov and Brevenikova (2019:3) further state that

Part of the understanding is also the specific situation in which the text originates. Moreover, the understanding process involves the source text culture in which the author lives, and which is explicitly or implicitly included in the text itself, and of course, the recipient's culture for whom the translation product is intended. In order for the translation as a product to fulfil the role for which it is intended, the text has to be understood by the recipient.

Text comprehension remains a complex process involving both the SL and TL, various situations and two distinct cultures. This process is participated by several persons;

consequently, the translator must consider numerous factors during translation and has to be able to understand the intent and requirements of several communication participants.

Nord (1991:1) highlights the importance of having “a model of source-text analysis which is applicable to all text types and text specimens, and which can be used in any translation task that may arise”. According to the author, such a model can give the translator the knowledge they need to understand the purpose and characteristics of the ST, making it easier for them to do a general analysis of the ST and give more explicit instructions as they work on the translation. Such a “model should therefore be:

- (a) general enough to be applicable to any text; and
- (b) specific enough to take account of as many universal translation problems as possible” (Nord, 1991:2).

In general, the translator will be able to select translation techniques that can be better appropriate to the aim of a specific translation with the implementation of such a model based on functional criteria. These translation strategies, according to Nord (Nord, 1991.), are chosen depending on the intended purpose of a particular translation.

Nord’s (1991:17, 91) Model for Source Text Analysis maintains that it is difficult to delimit what text is functional in a specific context without thinking about the readership, since “a text can have as many functions as it has recipients”. It is possible to say that a functional text is characterised by “a combination or ‘configuration’ of features”, which can be constituted by both extratextual (pragmatic) and intratextual (semantic, syntactic, and stylistic) elements.

2.12 Theoretical frameworks

The effectiveness of translation within the scope of this study is determined by its ability to serve its intended purpose as Nord (1997) postulate. The study follows qualitative research method and is underpinned by Nord’s (1997) Functionalist Theoretical Framework with a mix of Geertz’ (1973) theory of interpretation of cultures as the conceptual structure within which the research is conducted. Both these theoretical frameworks constitute the blueprint for the collection and analysis of data and their end goal if functional communication. The interpretivist methods of this study is drawn from Geertz’ (1973) propositions on the notion of ‘thick description’ in his theory of interpretivist of cultures. The participant’s perceptions

of the role of culture is described and analysed based on Geertz (1973) interpretivism of culture.

Willig (2009:149) postulate that qualitative research method “is concerned with meaning in context and it involves the interpretation of data”. The role of the qualitative researcher “requires an active engagement with the data, which presupposes a standpoint or point of departure. This means that qualitative research acknowledges a subjective element in the research process” (Willig, 2009:149). Qualitative research is a useful approach to demonstrate how translation problems occur in Northern Sotho language and how culture manifests itself as the underlying factor behind such problems, and in particular when translated into English. Nord’s (1997) Functionalist theory and Geertz’ (1973) theory helped the researcher to establish whether translators take regard of both linguistic and cultural aspects during the translation of idiomatic expressions from Northern Sotho into English and if there is a flow in reading the translated idiomatic expressions from Northern Sotho into English?

According to Nord’s (1997) a translation that serves both the linguistic but mostly the cultural interests of its speakers will be perceived as functional within the limits of this study. Translation is not only a linguistic but also a cultural transference of meaning. Nord (1997) further put emphasis on the dynamics of the culture that characterises both the source text and the target language or text. Interpretivism refers “to approaches emphasising the meaningful nature of people’s participation in social and cultural life” (Epstein, 2012 in Seale, 2012:24). Whereas thick description in this context seeks to explain facts in details, interpretivism (of culture) involves a search for meaning (Gertz, 1973).

Meaning, according to the interpretivist stance, is a collaborative process in which the parties involved in the communication encounter agree on the meaning they ascribe to their actions (Seale, 2012). Communicative and cultural competence on the side of the translator (translation strategies) has the potential to improve the meaning-making process of the role of culture in translation of idiomatic expressions.

2.12.1 Geertz (1973) interpretation of cultures

Geertz (1973:5) regarded culture as a concept that “is essentially a semiotic one. Believing that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun” and “culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search

of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning”. It is within this webs (participant’s cultural setting) data will; be collected and analysed.

Geertz’ (1973) ‘thick description’ is important for this study because it was used to analyse the cultural meaning embedded in idiomatic expressions specifically because idiomatic expression are culture-specific items of a language. Geertz’ thick description in this study aimed to elucidate the cultural meanings and challenges encountered during translation of idiomatic expressions.

Given that idiomatic expressions are units of culture, an attempt to understand them is inseparable from the investigating elements of culture, and that culture affects the understanding of human action in society (Bracken & Thomas, 2010:222). It is for this reason the researcher argued for the thick descriptive analysis of the role of culture in translation of idiomatic expression. The Geertz interpretivist methods included in the study aimed at acquiring the experiences including the perceptions of the informants about the role of culture in the translation of idiomatic expressions.

In the same breath, Schwandt (2001:192) further argues that “nonetheless, the idea of acquiring an ‘inside’ understanding”- the actors’ definitions of the situation - is a powerful central concept for understanding the purpose of qualitative inquiry”. Given that the participants experience and perceptions are of critical importance, the researcher used use Geertz interpretivist and method ‘thick description’ to examine culture in this study and to gain insight about the experiences of participants in this study. It has been possible to also demonstrate how translation problems occur in Northern Sotho language and how culture manifests itself as the underlying factor behind such problems.

Geertz’ ‘thick description’ advocates for the analysis of experience; Geertz (1986:373) purported that “no one is ever really short of experience” and that “we all have very much more of the stuff than we know what to do with ...”. Geertz (1986:57) also argued for a balance between two concepts, ‘experience-near’ and ‘experience-distant’. The focus on the ‘lived experience’ of participants (from their viewpoint). The aforementioned concepts about experience, according to Geertz (1986), are important in the analysis of cultural symbols. He referred to ‘experience-near’ as a scenario where someone is part of a culture and thinks, feels and acts in a manner that other people in the same culture would understand. Thus, the experience-near in this study relates to the insider position (or the

emic view) of the informants. 'Experience-distant', on the other hand, refers to a distant investigation of culture in order to acquire a deeper understanding of meaning.

Put clearly, Ponterotto (2006:543) presents a functional definition of the concept 'thick description':

... it refers to the researcher's task of either describing and interpreting observed social action (or behaviour) within its particular context. The context can be within a smaller unit (such as a couple, a family, a work environment) or within a larger unit (such as one's village, a community, or general culture). Thick description accurately describes observed social actions and assigns purpose and intentionality to these actions, by way of the researcher's understanding and clear description of the context under which the social actions took place. Thick description captures the thoughts and feelings of participants as well as the often complex web of relationships amongst them. Thick description leads to thick interpretation, which in turn leads to thick meaning of the research findings for the researchers and participants themselves, and for the report's intended readership. Thick meaning of findings leads readers to a sense of verisimilitude, wherein they can cognitively and emotively "place" themselves within the research context.

Thick description refers to the detailed account of field experiences in which the researcher makes explicit the patterns of cultural and social relationships and puts them in context (Hollaway, 1997). Given that idiomatic expressions are culture-based units of language and need to be translated with care, they cannot be exempted from the above scenario. Thick description is described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as a way of achieving a type of external validity. By describing a phenomenon in sufficient detail one can begin to evaluate the extent to which the conclusions drawn are transferable to other times, settings, situations, and people. Translation or the Skopos of translation is not exempted given that the target readership should be able to comprehend the target text and interpret it as being adequately coherent with their own communicative situation and culture.

2.12.2 Functional translation (Skopos Theory)

Vermeer's (2002:221) presents an explanation for the term *Skopos* as "a technical term for the aim or purpose of a translation". The author seems to be hammering home the point that the translator must clearly define the purpose of a given translation effort. The translator might hopefully generate a TT that meets the client's needs as well as the readerships after learning the purpose of the translation. Following the *Skopos* Theory and the Functionalist Approach, the translator need to be conscious of his/her actions and decisions. Skopos theory is a theory of translation by Vermeer (1978). According to Vermeer the process of

translation is determined by the function of the TT. This function is specified by the translation brief. *Skopos* is the Greek word for 'purpose'. Thus, *Skopos* is a technical term for 'aim' or 'purpose' of a piece of translation. This theory (*Skopos*) states that the goal of the translational activity is the fundamental principle that governs the translational process. It is also argued that any action has an inherent definition that includes the concept of intentionality (Nord, 1997).

Vermeer (2002) grants the orientation of each text, (i.e., the ST is oriented towards the source culture, and the TT is oriented towards the target culture). This orientation defines the role of both ST and TT. Vermeer (2002:223) elucidates this factor by stating that

source and target texts may diverge from each other quite considerably, not only in the formulation and distribution of the content but also as regards the goals which are set for each, and in terms of which the arrangement of the content is in fact determined.

This distinction is important when translating Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions into English as the SL and TL belong to different cultural and situational settings. It is assumed that idiomatic expressions are symbols of culture and translation is translating cultures. Intentions can be analysed from sender's point of view while function can be analysed from the receiver's. This functionalist approach, "elevates translation to the position which the function of the translated text in the TT is given priority as the communication activity" (Baloyi, 2015:36). *Skopos* theory prioritise the interest of TR. As a result, the process of translation is determined by the function of TT. Translation has to reproduce the cultural features of the SL text in a way that attracts the target reader's attention as the original text does. Every translation activity should be determined by its *Skopos*. Thus, "the end justifies the means" (Reiss and Vermeer in Munday (2001). Vermeer in Nord (1997:100) further describes the *Skopos* rule as follows:

Each text is produced for a given purpose and should serve this purpose. The *Skopos* rule thus reads as follows: translate/ interpret / speak / write in a way that enables your text/translation to function in the situation it is used and with the people who want to use it and precisely in the way they want it to function.

Skopos of a text is unavoidable in translation. The TT should be acceptable in a sense that it is clear within the target reader's context. The TR should be able to comprehend the TT and interpret it as being adequately coherent with their own communicative situation and culture. Moreover, Nord (2001:152) states that:

A text is made meaningful by its receiver for its receiver. Different receivers (or even the same receiver at different times) find different meanings in the same linguistic material offered by the text. We might even say that a 'text' is as many texts as there are receivers of it.

For example, the Northern Sotho expression *ngwana yo o a fiša* have different meaning in different context. This expression might mean that 'the child is sick' in a context of culture while in context situation – in conversation between teenage boys –the expression will mean 'a girl is beautiful' (Meso, 2015).Functionalist is a major shift from a linguistic equivalence to functional appropriateness. Skopos theory is not exempted.

This chapter briefly deliberated the notions relevant to the study, the derived conceptual framework and the literature evaluated and summarised on descriptive analysis of the role of culture in the translation of Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions into English, in accordance to the objectives and questions of the research outlined in chapter one. The following chapter focuses on research methodology.

2.13 The concept of meaning in translation

Longman online dictionary 2022 defines the concept meaning as “the thing or idea that a word, expression, or sign represents”. Barsalou, Yeh, Luka and Olseth, (1999:1) It certainly appears that “there should be a relationship between concepts and meaning, but it is not entirely clear what this relation is”. It is assumed that concepts are individuals psychological representations of categories such as 'apple' and 'chair'; while meanings are individuals understandings of words and other linguistic expressions, such as 'apple' and 'large chair'(Barsalou, et al., (1999). Furthermore, Barsalou, Yeh, Luka and Olseth, (1999:1) believe that “concepts and meanings are at least roughly equivalent, with the meaning of an expression being its conceptual representation in human knowledge”. From recognising the content of an expression or concept, the meaning of the associated expression follows.

The concept of meaning is critically important in translation studies since the entire translation process is focused on rendering meaning from one language to another. The TT are expected to have similar meaning as the original texts. It is generally agreed that the goal of translation is to convey the meaning of a text from the SLT into the TLT. Larson (1984:36) conditions that before one could engage into a translation activity s/he must know there are different types of meanings. Newmark (1977, as quoted by Chesterman 1989: 134), posits that “meaning is complicated, many-levelled, a network of relations”. Therefore,

the concept of 'meaning' could not refer to one specific type of meaning because there are several different types of meanings.

Bell (1991:83) allude that, already "the meanings of words themselves are rather problematic, since a straightforward or one-to-one correspondence between the words of two different languages does not exist". A major challenge in translation surrounds "the relationships of similarity and difference between concepts [and the words that express them] do not always necessarily coincide in the languages involved in the translation" (Bell, 1991:91). Words also have connotative meanings, which are associational, extremely subjective, and are not necessarily shared by the entire speech community. This is another challenge according to Bell (1991). On the connotations meaning, Bell (1991) states that, because words and phrases have different implications for different people, it can be challenging to convey the correct connotation to a target language audience while translating.

Nida and Taber (1969) separate three types of meaning to be considered during the translation process; 'grammatical, referential and connotative meaning'. According to Nida and Taber (1969:34), grammar is usually understood as a mere set of arbitrary rules about how words are put together. However, since the same grammatical construction can be used to express various different relationships, it inevitably can have a number of different meanings (Nida & Taber, 1969). Hence, grammar does carry some meaning, too. Referential meaning, on the other hand, is indicated by words which refer to objects, events and relations (ibid: 56). Finally, the connotative meaning refers to individual's emotional reactions to items of a language, since each word also carries a set of associations (ibid: 91).

Vehmas-Lehto (2002:74) suggests four dissimilar types of meaning which are found relevant to translation: 'denotative, connotative, pragmatic and intralinguistic meaning'. Connotative meaning is the word's associated meaning, while denotative meaning relates to the meaning inherent in the language. Typically, connotations are emotionally charged (either positively or negatively), and they elicit responses. Vehmas-Lehto (2002) opinions that it is important for the translator to be familiar with both the denotative and the connotative meaning of the words, because at times two words which are equivalent in their denotative meaning, can have very different connotations in two different languages.

On the pragmatic meaning the focus is on the relationship between linguistic signs and language users (Vehmas-Lehto, 2002:75). According to different diverse elements, such as differences in the participants' ages, socioeconomic status, levels of education, and other characteristics, the relationship between the expression and the participants could differ. Intralinguistic meaning, according to Vehmas-Lehto (2002:76) is “the meaning which refers to the relations between the units of the language. This meaning can be expressed by different grammatical elements, such as case suffixes, prepositions, tense and word order”. The intralinguistic meaning is usually not transferred to the target text, since imitating the source language structures could make the translation “unintelligible to the target language reader” (Vehmas-Lehto, 2002:77).

The concept ‘meaning’ as complex as it is in translation has various interpretations in translation studies and various types of meanings to be considered during translation process are suggested. Mustonen (2010:15) advises that the “translators must not only know the semantic meaning of the source language words, but also consider such aspects as the connotative, cultural or grammatical meaning, for instance”.

Moreover, in the translation of idiomatic expressions there is a dire need to consider the figurative meaning of expressions at all times. Nida and Taber (1969:87) state, “each term has a certain primary, literary meaning, but some terms may also have additional, figurative meanings”. These alternative (figurative) interpretations of the phrase may differ significantly from its original meaning.

Nida and Taber (1969:88) point out that figurative meanings are culture specific. Therefore, the translator must be able to discern the expression’s figurative meaning in addition to its literal meaning. However, Baker (1992:63) considers idioms and fixed expressions as “two different categories under the multi-word units. Idioms are seen as frozen patterns of language which allow little or no variation in form, and often carry meanings which cannot be deduced from their individual components”.

2.14 Conclusions

The chapter focused on the literature review wherein different scholars whose studies were relevant to this study were reviewed. The chapter revealed that idiomatic expressions and other forms of oral traditions that “alludes to the history of the society concerned” (King, 2019:44) transmitting art, knowledge and philosophies including historical and cultural traditions of a given society beyond the contemporary generations. As far as intercultural

and /or cross-cultural translation is concerned, there is always an ever-green gap or challenges that are difficult to be bridged when translating idiomatic expressions from SLC into the TLC. Both the SLC and TLC is influential in the process of translation and the should determine “to what extent the culture is in the text and to what extent the language is in culture” (Akbari, 2013:13) Thus, the role of culture is unavoidable during the translation of idiomatic expressions. The focus was also on the theoretical framework, where Nord’s (1997) Functionalist Theory underpinning was discussed. Geertz’ (1973) Interpretive Theory of Culture is also adopted as a supporting theory. Amongst other things, Nord (1977) functionalist theory helped in the realisation that translation is indeed not only a linguistic but also a cultural transference of meaning. While Geertz thick description helped to elucidate the cultural meaning and challenges encountered during the translation of idiomatic expression. It was through the guidance of this theoretical frameworks that the meaning-making process of the role of culture in the translation idiomatic expressions was realised. Amongst other things, the chapter contextualised and classified idiomatic expressions according to their various categories.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter provides insights into the research design, theoretical framework and research methodology used to gather and analyse data to provide answers to the research questions of the study. Credibility of the study and ethical considerations will also be dealt with in this chapter. It focuses on the design selected for the study, the sampling procedure used, research instruments, data collection, interpretation and analysis. The selection of the research methodology as described in this chapter is determined by the aim and objectives of the study as discussed in Chapter 1.

3.1 Research design

Bryman (2012:630) describes paradigm as “a cluster of beliefs and dictates which for scientists in a particular discipline influence what should be studied, how research should be done, and how results should be interpreted”. By following a particular paradigm, researchers adopt a specific way of studying phenomena relevant to their field. It is important for a researcher to know and understand the research paradigm – as guiding principle - ascribed to because it determines what questions are considered worthy of investigation and what processes are required for the answers to these questions to be acceptable (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2016).

This study employs an interpretivism paradigm. Interpretivism is also sometimes referred to as constructivism because it “emphasises the ability of individuals to construct meaning” (Nieuwenhuis, 2017:60). In the same breath, interpretivist believe that “reality is not objectively determined, but is socially constructed” (Kelliher, 2005 in Nieuwenhuis, 2017:60). It is assumed that by studying people in their social context or natural environment, there is a greater opportunity to understand the perceptions they have of their own activities (Nieuwenhuis, 2017:60). The main idea on which this paradigm rests is that people are fundamentally different from objects. Consequently, individuals could not be studied in the same way that objects are studied in the natural sciences. This is because, unlike objects, human beings are not static, they change with changing time and are constantly influenced by the environment in which they find themselves in. It does not make sense to “study human beings in laboratory setting, as people do not live in laboratories”,

and as they are always influenced by the things that are happening in their environment (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2016:27).

Nieuwenhuis (2017:61) posits that “interpretive social science studies generally attempt to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them”. It is for this reason, the study attempts to provide descriptive analysis of the role of culture in the translation of Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions into English. Furthermore, Nieuwenhuis (2017:61) proposes that the interpretivist perspective is based on the following assumptions:

- Human life can only be understood from within
- Social life is a distinctively human product
- The human mind is the purposive source or origin of meaning
- Human behaviour is affected by knowledge of social world
- The social world does not exist independently of human knowledge

On research design, Flick (2011:65) outlines that it is “a plan for collecting and analysing evidence that will make it possible for the investigator to answer whatever questions he/she has posted”. In the same breath. Kumar, (2011:396) “as a procedural plan that is adopted by the researcher to answer questions validly, objectively, accurately and economically”. Research design is a well-designed plan carry out to ensure that the evidence collected enables a researcher to answer the research questions (test theories) in a convincing way and as clearly as possible. This goal will best be achieved through a comprehensive theoretical framework presented in this study. Design is the structure of the proposed research as it provides the “glue that holds all of the elements in a research project together, in short it is a plan of the proposed research work” (Akhtar, 2016:68) and assists in answering the research questions. “The research design provides the components and the plan for successfully carrying out the study” (Nengovhela, 2017:73). Research design is the conceptual structure within which the research is conducted; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection and analysis of data. Research design is a comprehensive plan for data collection and analysis in an empirical research project (Bhattacharjee, 2012; Kothari & Grag, 2014). Research design is the plan and structure of investigation, conceived to obtain answers to research questions (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). Argued differently, Collins in McKendrick (1990:256) contends that research designs are merely guidelines for the investigation of an activity and are not hard-and-fast rules that cannot be broken. He warns

that the design chosen should be the appropriate one in order to yield the best results for the problem being investigated.

Various scholars maintain that research design is not related to any particular method of collecting data or any particular type of data. Different design logics are used for different types of study. Any research design can, in principle, use any type of data collection method and can use either be quantitative or qualitative data. Research design “deals with a logical problem and not a logistical problem” (Yin, 1989:29). Based on this argument, there is nothing intrinsic about any research design that requires a particular method of data collection. This study adopted descriptive design to ensure that the evidence obtained enables the researcher to answer the research question (s) as clear as possible.

This study is descriptive in nature and has adopted qualitative approach. The primary purpose of descriptive research design is to describe a phenomenon and its characteristics. Descriptive research design is applied to provide an accurate description of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2009/2014). Davis (2016:75) states that the “goal of descriptive research is to describe the characteristic of phenomena, relations between variables or relationships between phenomena as accurately as possible”. According to Kumar (2011:10), a “descriptive study aims to describe a situation, problem or phenomenon systematically; or provide information about certain phenomena, such as living conditions of a community”. As results, this study describes the role of culture in the translation of Northern Sotho idiomatic expression.

The effectiveness of translation within the scope of this study is determined by its ability to serve its intended purpose (Nord, 1997). The study follows qualitative research method and is underpinned by Nord’s (1997) Functionalist Theoretical Framework with a mix of (as a supporting theory) Geertz’ (1973) theory interpretation of cultures as the conceptual structure within which the research is conducted. Both these theoretical frameworks constitute the blueprint for the collection and analysis of data. The interpretivist methods of this study drawn from Geertz’ (1973) propositions on the notion of ‘thick description’ in his theory of interpretivist of cultures. The participant’s perceptions of the role of culture are described and analysed based on Geertz’ interpretivism of culture while the effectiveness of translation strategies are determined by Nord (1997) theory.

Willig (2009:149) postulates that qualitative research method “is concerned with meaning in context and it involves the interpretation of data”. “The role of the qualitative researcher requires an active engagement with the data, which presupposes a standpoint or point of departure. This means that qualitative research acknowledges a subjective element in the research process” (Willig, 2009:149). Qualitative research is a useful approach to demonstrate how translation problems occur in Northern Sotho and how culture manifests itself as the underlying factor behind such problems, and when translated into English. Nord’s (1997) Functionalist theory and Geertz’ (1973) theory assists the researcher to establish whether translators take regard of both linguistic and cultural aspects during the translation of idiomatic expressions from Northern Sotho into English and if there is a flow in reading the translated texts.

According to Nord’s (1997) functionalist theory a translation that serves both the linguistic and the cultural interests of its speakers will be perceived as functional within the limits of this study. Translation is not only a linguistic but also a cultural transference of meaning. Whereas interpretation of culture seeks to explain facts in details as it involves a search for meaning (Gertz, 1973; Epstein, 2012 in Seale, 2012).

Meaning, according to the interpretivist stance, is a “collaborative process in which the parties involved in the communication encounter agree on the meaning they ascribe to their actions [or symbol]” (Seale, 2012:24). Communicative and cultural competence on the side of the translator (translation) has the potential to improve the meaning-making process of the role of culture in translation of idiomatic expressions.

3.2 Research methodology

Research methodology as a vital tool of research consists of tools and techniques such as research design, population, sampling, type of research, data collection and data analysis, “upon which the entire research will be based” (Babbie, 1992:89). Research methodology refers to “a general approach to studying research topics” (Silverman, 2000: 88). It is not amazing that Ahuja (2001:120) describe a research design as “a plan to describe how, when and where data are to be collected and analysed”.

To find out the most appropriate results of a study, the researcher involved an explicit, disciplined and systematic research approach. The researcher selected a suitable research method to facilitate the gathering of necessary data and the analysis to provide answers to

the research questions. In this study, the researcher uses a non-experimental research design, and adopts a qualitative research approach that is descriptive and contextual to describe the role of culture in translation of Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions in context.

Qualitative research approach is inductive in nature, and the researcher generally explores meanings and insights in a given situation (Levitt et al., 2017). According to Creswell (2009) qualitative research is an effective model that occurs in a natural setting and permits the researcher to develop a level of detail from high involvement in the actual participant's experiences on the role of culture in the translation of idiomatic expressions. Denzin and Lincoln (1991:3) describe the qualitative method as "multidimensional in focus" involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This method studies things in their natural settings with the aim of understanding and explaining the findings. Fortune and Reid (1999) concur that the researcher uses a qualitative design in an attempt to gain a first-hand, holistic understanding of the phenomena under investigation (the role of culture in translation of idiomatic expressions) by means of a flexible strategy of problem formulation and data collection, shaped as the investigation proceeds

Qualitative research is deeply rooted in an anti-positivist and interpretive research paradigm. Qualitative research is a more holistic approach and "often involves a rich collection of data from various sources to gain a deeper understanding of individual participants, including their opinions, perspectives, and attitudes" (Nassaji, 2015:129). Qualitative research collects data qualitatively, and mostly apply qualitative method of data analysis. This often involves an "inductive exploration of the data to identify recurring themes, patterns, or concepts and then describing and interpreting those categories" (ibid, 2015:130).

Qualitative research is "an inquiry process of understanding based on a distinct methodological tradition of inquiry that explores a social or human problem and the researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports, detailed views of the informants and conducts the study in a natural setting" (Creswell, 2009:249). Qualitative research aims for depth rather than quantity of understanding, since this is actually the kind of independence and natural growth of action that the researcher needs to capture (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004). The researcher needs to hear from the participants, what are the roles of culture on translation of idiomatic expressions.

Mohajan (2018:1) contents that qualitative research consists of “a set of interpretive material practices that makes the world visible”. It is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). It is a type of social science research that collects and works with non-numerical data that seeks to interpret meaning from these data that help the researcher to understand social life through the study of targeted populations or places (Punch, 2013). It is the observations and interpretations of people’s perception of different events, and it takes the snapshot (reflects) of the people’s perception in a natural setting (Gentles et al., 2015). It investigates local knowledge and understanding of a given program, people’s experiences, meanings and relationships, and social processes and contextual factors that marginalize a group of people. It is less structured in description, because it formulates and builds new theories (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). It focuses on words rather than numbers, this type of research observes the world in its natural setting, interpreting situations to understand the meanings that people make from day to day life (Walia, 2015).

Mohajan, (2018:2) state that Qualitative research is a form of social action that stresses on the way of people interpret, and make sense of their experiences to understand the social reality of individuals. It makes the use of various data collection tools (interviews, journals, observations and open-ended questionnaires) to obtain, analyse, and interpret the data content analysis of visual and textual materials, and oral history (Zohrabi, 2013). It is exploratory, and seeks to explain ‘how’ and ‘why’ a particular social phenomenon, or program, operates as it does in a particular context. It tries to help us to understand the social world in which we live, and why things are the way they are (Polkinghorne, 2005).

With the adoption of Qualitative research, the researcher aims to provide a detail understanding into human (participants) behaviour, emotion, attitudes, and experiences (Tong et al., 2012). It is used to explore the behaviour, perspectives, feelings, and experiences of people, and what lies at the core of their lives. The basis of this study lies in the interpretive approach to participant’s social reality, and in the description of their lived experience as human beings (Atkinson et al., 2001).

The researcher is interested in participants’ perspective’ belief, experience, and meaning systems attached to the role of culture in translation of idiomatic expressions. Qualitative research does not include statistical analysis and empirical calculation (Brink, 1993). The roots of qualitative research lie in social and cultural anthropology, philosophy, psychology,

history, and sociology. The goal of the qualitative tradition is a 'deep understanding of the particular' (Domholdt, 1993). The purpose of qualitative research is to describe and interpret issues or phenomena systematically from the point of view of the individual or population being studied, and to generate new concepts and theories. The choice of qualitative research methodology of this study is directed by the questions being raised (Viswambharan & Priya, 2016).

Burns and Grove (2009) have provided their opinions that qualitative research is a systematic and subjective approach to highlight and explain daily life experiences, and to further give them proper meaning. The study will adopt a qualitative research method to focus on the translation of idiomatic expressions and fixed expressions between English and Northern Sotho translation amongst translators, making it germane to understand what transpires on the translation table when such intercultural and inter-linguistics interactions take place. In order to achieve this, as the study is designed as multidimensional in focus, the qualitative research design was underpinned by Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) as a data interpretation technique.

In order to gain a better understanding of the dynamics of the translation of idiomatic expressions, the methods of observation and post-consultation was also used. According to Wimmer and Dominick (1983:116), qualitative research uses a "flexible questioning approach". Although a basic set of questions are designed to start the project, the researcher can change questions or ask follow-up questions at any time. Thus, questions might be self-developed by the researcher and the sequence reorganised as the situation demands. Data collected via closed-ended questionnaires were presented and analysed to identify themes to further strengthen the findings from the TCA.

3.3 The research approach

This study adopts qualitative research approach. This research approach is chosen because the study focuses on a complex phenomenon that occurs in a natural setting. Qualitative research is described as "a form of systematic empirical inquiry into meaning" (Shank, 2002:5). By systematic it means 'planned, ordered and public', following rules agreed upon by members of the qualitative research community. By empirical, it means that this type of inquiry is grounded in the world of experience. Inquiry into meaning declares that researchers try to understand how others make sense of their experience. Denzin and

Lincoln (2000:3) claim that “qualitative research involves an interpretive and naturalistic approach”. Thus, qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

For Polkinghorne (1989) the distinguishing features of qualitative research are that it relies on linguistics (word) rather than numerical data, and employs meaning-based rather than statistical forms of data analysis. In addition, all qualitative research is naturalistic; that is, it focuses on natural settings where interaction occurs, in other words, viewing social life in terms of process that occur rather than in a static term. In the same vein, Berg (2007:7) points out that qualitative research “properly seeks answers to questions by examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit these settings”. Qualitative researchers, then, are most interested in how humans arrange themselves and their settings and inhabitants of these settings make sense of their surroundings through symbols, rituals, social structures, social roles, and so forth. At the heart of qualitative research lies the extraction of meaning from data (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011:151), for example the social meaning people attribute to their experience, circumstances and situations, as well as the meanings people embed into text and other objects. Thus, qualitative research is itself characterised by an interpretive approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

3.4 Insider outsider perspective

The role of the researcher in qualitative research is to attempt to access the thoughts and experiences of study participants. To achieve this, the research setting description remains an important aspect of data collection and analysis (Geertz, 1973) and so is the description of the researcher’s position and reflexivity. According to Mamabolo (2021), it is important for the qualitative researcher to demonstrate whether is of emic (insider) or etic (outsider) perspectives throughout the research process.

Qualitative work requires researchers’ reflection, both before and during the research process, as a way of providing context and understanding for readers (Seal, 2012). When being reflexive, researchers should not try to simply ignore or avoid their own biases (as this would likely be impossible); instead, reflexivity requires researchers to reflect upon and clearly articulate their position and subjectivities (world view, perspectives, biases), so that readers can better understand the filters through which questions were designed and/or asked, data were collected and analysed, and findings were reported. From this perspective,

bias and subjectivity are not inherently negative but they are unavoidable; as a result, it is best that they be articulated up-front in a manner that is clear and coherent for readers.

The research took place at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus) amongst university students, lecturers and language practitioners - as described under population and sampling - where the researcher adopted both insider and outsider perspectives. Although, the research participants were of various social status (occupation, age, qualifications), they were all Northern Sotho native speakers. The researcher as an insider to the research setting is a former student and a lecturer within the same Faculty of the University of Limpopo.

The status of the researcher as an insider was also based on the fact that the researcher had been a member of the university for the past fourteenth years (both as a students and staff (at the time of writing) and is a native speaker Northern Sotho and understand the different dialects of Northern Sotho used by the research participants. Higginbottom and Liamputtong (2015:167) are of a view that “ethnically matched researchers may confer both advantages and disadvantages. Advantages may include knowledge of community norms, values and language, but conversely some ethno-cultural groups may be reluctant to engage with members of their own community for fear of breaching confidentiality”.

Maykut and Morehouse (1994:123) postulate that

the qualitative researcher’s perspective is perhaps a paradoxical one: it is to be acutely tuned-in to the experiences and meaning systems of others - to indwell - and at the same time to be aware of how one’s own biases and preconceptions may be influencing what one is trying to understand.

The researcher position in the group or area being studied remains relevant to all approaches of qualitative research as the researcher plays such a direct and intimate role in both data collection and analysis. Dwyer and Buckle (2009:55) argues that whether the researcher is an insider, “sharing the characteristic, role, or experience under study with the participants, or an outsider to the commonality shared by participants, the personhood of the researcher, including her or his membership status in relation to those participating in the research, is an essential and ever-present aspect of the investigation”.

Although the researcher - as insider - is a native speaker of the language and part of the culture under study, one might not understand the subculture, which points to the need for

bracketing assumptions. The researcher gathered data with both ‘eyes open’ as someone who knows nothing about the phenomenon being studied (Asselin, 2003). Rose (1985:77) concurred, “There is no neutrality. There is only greater or less awareness of one’s biases. And if you do not appreciate the force of what you’re leaving out, you are not fully in command of what you’re doing”.

A critique of researchers’ roles has developed “in response to a greater consciousness of situational identities and to the perception of relative power” (Angrosino, 2005, p. 734). Postmodernism emphasizes the importance of understanding the researcher’s context (gender, class, ethnicity, etc.) as part of narrative interpretation (Angrosino, 2005).

3.4.1 Insider or outsider: to be or not to be

Serrant-Green (2002:38) state that “there appear to be as many arguments for outsider research as against, with the same issues able to be raised in support of outsider research, as against it”. Moreover, Kanuha (2000:444) postulate that:

for each of the ways that being an insider researcher enhances the depth and breadth of understanding a population that may not be accessible to a non-native scientist, questions about objectivity, reflexivity, and authenticity of a research project are raised because perhaps one knows too much or is too close to the project and may be too similar to those being studied.

Insider perspectives derived from the researcher considered to be a member of the population the study is being conducted from (Kanuha, 2000; Mamabolo 2020) so that the researcher shares culture, identity, language, and experiential base with the study participants (Asselin, 2003). To a particular extend, outsider perspectives could be the opposite (Mamabolo 2020); they are taken by the researcher who is not a member of the population being studied. The complete membership role provides insider researchers with a certain amount of legitimacy and/or stigma (Adler & Adler, 1987). The insider role position frequently allowed the researcher more rapid and more complete acceptance by the participants. Therefore, participants were more open with the researcher and allowed greater depth to the data gathered as a result.

Adler and Adler (1987:85) declared that the difference between researcher and participant has “traditionally existed more strongly in theory than in practice” and that “objectification of the self has occurred in the analysis rather than the fieldwork”. Adler (1990) replaced the

emphasis on 'objective' data by focusing on the advantages of 'subjective' aspects of the research process; however, being an insider has its own potential limitations in research.

On permanent researcher's position, Adler and Adler's (1987:73) mentions that in this "ultimate existential dual role", researchers might struggle with role conflict if they find themselves caught between "loyalty tugs" and "behavioural claims" (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007:70). Multiple roles could result in role confusion when the researcher interprets and analyses data from a perspective other than that of researcher (Asselin, 2003). The role confusion can occur in any research study but there is a higher risk when the researcher engages research setting or participants through a role other than that of researcher. Furthermore, Mamabolo (2020) stresses that researchers usually find it difficult to position themselves either as insiders or outsiders during data analysis when data is collected from participants with various social status (qualifications, occupations and age)

Dwyer and Buckle (2009:58) emphasises the importance of insider perspective as follows:

The benefit to being a member of the group one is studying is acceptance. One's membership automatically provides a level of trust and openness in your participants that would likely not have been present otherwise. One has a starting point (the commonality) that affords access into groups that might otherwise be closed to outsiders. Participants might be more willing to share their experiences because there is an assumption of understanding and an assumption of shared distinctiveness; it is as if they feel, you are one of us and it is us versus them (those on the outside who don't understand).

The insider position is highly beneficial as it affords access, entry, to research settings and participants and a common ground from which to begin the research, it has the potential to hinder the research process as it progresses (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). It is possible that the participant will make assumptions of similarity and therefore fail to explain their individual experience fully. It is also possible that the researcher's perceptions might be clouded by his or her personal experience and that as a member of the group he or she will have difficulty separating it from that of the participants. To avoid undue influence and discrepancy that might affect the data collection and analysis, the data collection tools were designed and guided by the core aspects of the participant's experience and not the researcher's.

There are merits and limitations to be weighed regarding the insider versus outsider position of the qualitative researcher. Being an insider might raise issues of undue influence of the

researcher's perspective, but being an outsider does not guarantee resistance to the influence of the researcher's personal perspective. Furthermore, although there might be caveats to being a member of the group studied, for many access to the group would not be possible if the researcher was not a member of that group. The positive and negative elements of both were carefully considered.

Furthermore, one does not have to be a member of the group being studied to appreciate and adequately represent the experience of the participants. Instead, it is viewed that the core ingredient is not insider or outsider status but an ability to be open, authentic, honest, deeply interested in the experience of one's research participants, and committed to accurately and adequately representing their experience. As insider, the researcher is still an outsider who is conducting research.

3.5 Aim and Objectives

The aim and objectives of the study are outline below.

3.5.1 Aim

The aim of the study is to present a descriptive analysis of the role of culture in the translation of Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions into English.

3.5.2 Objectives

- To examine the translation strategies used in the translation of idiomatic expressions from Northern Sotho into English.
- To establish taking regards for cultural aspects during the translation of idiomatic expressions from Northern Sotho into English.
- To determine if there is flow in reading the translated idiomatic expressions from Northern Sotho into English.

3.6 Population and sampling

This section describes the population used in the study and the process utilised in selecting a sample. Unless the population is extremely small, a sample is usually drawn from the population. The sample in this study is small enough to provide a manageable volume of

data, but accurately represents the population since some valid inferences will be drawn from the sample results.

3.6.1 Population

Target population is defined as defined components that are emphasised on by the researcher and from which data is gathered (Creswell, 2003). Population is the total group of people or entities from whom information is required (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:186). Polit and Hungler (1999:37) refer to the population as “an aggregate or totality of all the objects, subjects or members that conform to a set of specifications”. Population is the sum total of people or set of items and events the researcher desires to study. In the same breath, Burns and Grove (2003:213) describe population as “all the elements that meet certain criteria for inclusion in a study”. Parahoo (1997:218) argues that population is the “total number of units from which data can be collected”, such as individuals, events or organisations. For the purpose of this study, the population consists of lecturers and students in the School of Languages, and Communication of the University of Limpopo and Language practitioners in the National Lexicography Unit of the Department of Sports Arts and Culture based at the University of Limpopo.

3.6.2 Sampling

A sample refers to “a subset of a population that is considered to be representative of the entire population” (Pascoe, 2014:135). Polit *et al.* (2001:234) define a sample as “a proportion of a population”; while Burns and Grove (2003:31) describe sampling as “a process of selecting people, events or other elements for conducting a study”. Polit and Hungler (2002:234) add that in sampling a portion that represents the whole population is selected, that is, a part of a portion for inclusion is selected in the study. Concerning sampling, Neuman (2014:246) is of the view that researchers choose cases (sample) to examine in detail, and use what they learn from the sample to understand the population or a much larger set of cases. Neuman (2014:247) qualitative sampling, the researcher’s “goal is to deepen understanding about a large process, relationship, or social scene”. A sample provides valuable information or new aspects about the population of interest. Thus, researchers’ sample to open up new theoretical insights, reveal distinctive aspects of people or social settings, or deepen understanding of complex situations, events, or relationships (ibid, 2014).

Sampling is the process used to identify a portion of the population for the study. In qualitative research, it is generally based on non-probability sampling and purposive sampling rather than probability or random sampling approaches. The goal of sampling procedure in survey research is to obtain a sufficient sample that is representative of the entire population (Ponto: 2015).

The sampling procedure was purposeful as highlighted in chapter one already. In purposive “sampling participants are selected because of some defining characteristic that makes them the holders of the data needed” for the study (Maree, 2010:79). According to De Vos et al. (2017), purposive sampling is the type of sampling method that is based entirely on the researcher’s judgment based on participant’s characteristics or attribute that serves the purpose of the study. A nonprobability purposive sampling will be used to select the participants of the study. Advocating for purposive sampling, Pascoe (2014:142-143) maintains that:

...with purposive sampling, we purposefully choose the elements that we wish to include in our sample, based on a set of characteristics. We will look at our research question, and determine what characteristics from the population are important for the research. We would the carefully select a sample from the population that have these characteristics, and we would disregard those that do no. The advantage of this method of sampling is that we can ensure that each element of our sample will assist with our research, because each element fits with the population parameters. If the element does not fit, we can disregard it.

Sharing the same sentiment, Burns and Grove (2003:255) describe purposive sampling as a sampling method whereby researchers use their own judgment to select the participants of the study. Polit, Beck and Hungler (2001:467) describe non-probability sampling as “the selection of sampling units from a population using non-random procedures such as convenience, purposive and quota sampling”. The researcher will choose participants that meet the eligibility criteria set for the study. Eligibility criteria are the reasons or criteria for including the sample in the study (Polit & Hungler 2004:290). Neuman (2014:247) maintains that in qualitative research, “it is their relevance to the research topic rather than their representativeness which determines the way in which the people to be studied are selected”. The eligibility criteria of this study require all the participants to have a minimum of two years of practice (experience) as language practitioners or lecturers and post graduate students (Honours and Masters). All participants were native speakers of Northern Sotho. The eligible sample (participants) in this study are as follows:

- 3 Language practitioners based at the *Sesotho sa Leboa* (Northern Sotho) Lexicography Unit with a minimum of two years' work experience.
- 3 Translation Studies and Linguistics lecturers based at the University of Limpopo with a minimum of two years' work experience.
- 3 Northern Sotho lecturers based at the University of Limpopo with a minimum of two years' work experience.
- 30 post graduate students enrolled for Honours and Master degree in Northern Sotho and Translation and linguistics.

This study involves the description of Northern Sotho culture that the researcher is interested in exploring to get a better understanding of idiomatic expressions from participants' frame of reference. The above-mentioned participants are not only representatives of the entire population but are relevant in this study because they deal with linguistic issues regularly in their respective professions. These participants were selected to best inform the research questions of this study and enhance understanding of the role of culture in the translation of Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions. The raw data collected from participants helped the researcher to understand their lived experiences and the importance of those experiences. The secondary data of idiomatic expressions were collected from a book named: *Marema-ka-dika: tša Sesotho sa Lebowa*, Rakoma (1978). Furthermore, through the secondary research method, textual analysis method will be used in this study. The researcher will consult translated materials, monolingual and bilingual dictionaries and linguistic textbooks, journals, dissertations as well as relevant websites to gather information.

3.7 The goal of qualitative research

Researchers often refer to qualitative research as a 'whole-world experience', because it is "interested in the depth of human experience, including all the personal and subjective peculiarities that are characteristic of experiences" and meaning associated with their symbols of communication such as idiomatic expressions (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014:174). Adding to that, De Vos et al (2002:79) concurs that the qualitative research paradigm in its broadest sense "refers to research that elicits participant accounts of meaning, experience or perception" they (participants) attach to a particular phenomenon like idiomatic expressions. The researcher is interested in participants' experiences and meaning they attach to idiomatic expression and aims to collect and analyse data from the

participants' views. Makamu (2017:90) suggest that qualitative research present “prescriptive data in the participants own written or spoken words”

In addition to critical analysis of the participants understanding of the role of culture in the translation of Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions, the researcher intends to understand, explore and describe how participants experience, perceive and attach meaning to idiomatic expressions. This ultimate aim together with the research questions were considered when selecting data collection and data analysis methods. In the same breath, Strydom and Bezuidenhout (2014:174-175) propose that “it is crucial that your data collection method allow you to achieve the desired outcomes of your study, as anticipated in the research goal and question that you [the researcher] have formulated”. The researcher selected the data collection methods with a purpose of providing thick description of the role of culture in the translation of idiomatic expression from the participants' point of view. According to Strydom and Bezuidenhout (2014) aligning the researchers' data collection, analysis and interpretation methods to the research goal and question is of critical importance in ensuring validity and trustworthiness of the study.

The researcher adopted qualitative data collection methods, which involved the thick description of the Basotho people culture to explore their symbols of communication. The methods allowed the researcher to gain better understanding of these symbols of communication (idiomatic expressions) – directly from the selected sample – of the way of life of the Basotho cultural group. These methods also allow the researcher to study idiomatic expressions from the participants' frame of reference.

3.8 Qualitative research is constructive and symbolic

Bezuidenhout and Cronje (2014:232) uphold that

when we say that qualitative data collection and interpretation are constructed and symbolic, we mean that both the researcher as research instrument and the participant interpret phenomena subjectively and express it symbolically. This refers to social constructionism and symbolic interactionism.

On the other hand, according to Du Plooy-Chillers (2014:29), interpretivists believe that

... reality is a social construction and that it is dependent on the meaning that people ascribe to their own experience and interactions with others. According to interpretivists, the social world is what people perceive it to be. It is fluid and fragile and changes as people's perceptions change.

Data was interpreted subjectively from the participants' frame of reference and the researcher ensured thick description of these symbolic tools of interaction was presented. However, the process of data analysis and interpretation remained systematic and rigorous (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014). "Qualitative researchers view participants subjective experience as symbolic and constructed through social interaction" (ibid, 2014). The researcher emphasises "the social dimension of symbols and views meaning as a product of social life" by means of important symbols of language like idiomatic expressions in a society (ibid, 2014:232).

This study was concerned with an inquiry into the role of culture in the translation of Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions into English and the construction of reality by establishing taking regards for both linguistic and cultural aspects during the translation of idiomatic expressions. By viewing reality as constructed and expressed symbolically, the researcher set out to deconstruct idiomatic expressions as an attempt to understand how the meaning of the subjective experiences of the Basotho people was created and expressed symbolically (see the deconstruction of the expression '*tau tš'a hloka seboka di šitwa ke nare e hlotš'a*' under theme 4 (family life) page....). "Deconstruction, as a method of analyzing text, is the process through which the researcher takes text apart to understand how meaning is constructed" (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014:232). The researcher is of a view that idiomatic expressions contain the embedded meanings associated with culture that participants experience subjectively. Hence, some expressions are deconstructed to provide their detailed description.

3.9 Data collection

This section covers the procedures and methods that were followed during data collection.

3.9.1 Survey

The researcher adopted survey as the principal data collection method of the study to access the participant's lived experiences and their understanding of the role of culture in translation of Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions by asking a series of questions through a self-designed questionnaire. The responses provided through this tool were clear and unambiguous, and provided the researcher with the opportunity to describe the phenomena and its characteristics as accurate as possible.

Fink (2003:61) recommends “qualitative survey analysis for the exploration of meanings and experiences of participants”. On the other hand, Check and Schutt (2012:160) define survey research as “the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions”. Adding to that, Fellegi (2003:1) earlier mentioned that “a survey is any activity that collects information in an organised and methodical manner about characteristics of interest from some or all units of a population using well-defined concepts, methods and procedures, and compiles such information into a useful summary form.” Survey research allows for a various method to recruit participants, collect data, and utilize various methods of instrumentation. Survey research can use both quantitative and qualitative research strategies or both strategies (mixed methods). According to Singleton and Straits (2009) surveys in qualitative research, are often used to describe and explore human behavior, surveys are therefore frequently used in social sciences, humanities, sociological and psychological research. This type of survey – for the purpose of this study - does not count the number of people with the same characteristic but it establishes the meaningful variation within the population.

Fellegi (2003:1) further states that a survey

...can be thought to consist of several interconnected steps which include: defining the objectives, selecting a survey frame, determining the sample design, designing the questionnaire, collecting and processing the data, analysing and disseminating the data and documenting the survey.

Qualitative survey research tools, refers to a data collection tool that consist of multiple number of questions designed to gather information about a relatively large group of people. It is a very popular research tool and is often used to gather demographic information (age, gender, race, income, level of satisfaction, and so on) as well as data about people’s attitude, opinion, impressions, levels of satisfaction and so on” (du Plooy-Cilliers2014:148). It is clear that qualitative survey research is a useful and genuine research tool with rich benefits that will help the researcher to describe and explore idiomatic expressions and constructs meaningful findings. Pondo (2015:171) concludes that “survey research, like all research, has the potential for a variety of sources of error, but several strategies exist to reduce the potential for error”. The researcher is aware of the potential sources of error and strategies to avoid them has put in place. A survey research tool was used to provide participants experiences by asking a series of questions through a self-designed questionnaire (see addendum one).

3.9.2 Questionnaire as qualitative data collection tool

Pondo (2015:170) believes that “survey research may use a variety of data collection methods with the most common being questionnaires and interviews. This study uses questionnaires as its data collection tool. Questionnaires may be self-administered or administered by a professional, may be administered individually or in a group”. Du Plooy-Cilliers and Cronje (2014:152) indicate, “Questionnaires often use close-ended questions”. This study used self-designed questionnaire, which includes a series of closed-ended questions reflecting the research aims and research questions to collect data from participants identified in the sample. Series of items on the questionnaires includes demographic questions such as age, gender, race, occupation, level of study, and so on.

Paper form questionnaires were distributed to students’ participants and electronic format questionnaires were mailed to lecturers and language practitioners’ participants. However, some lectures preferred paper format questionnaires. A combination of both, gave the participant (excluding students) the option to choose their preferred method. Using a combination of methods of survey administration helped to ensure better sample coverage and allowed flexibility during data collection process.

With a permission of the Heads of departments and lecturers concerned, the researcher (with the help of research assistant) collected data through a ‘group administration survey’ during lecture periods in the lecture hall. A group administration survey according to du Plooy-Cilliers and Cronje (2014:151) occurs “when a group of people who make up your sample all fill in the questionnaire at the same time during one session”. As requested, the researcher was granted 40 minutes of 90 minutes’ lecture period to collect data in all 8 different sessions. In all sessions, the first 10 minutes were used for self-introduction (and that of the research assistant), explaining the purpose of the research and clarifying question when necessary. While the last 5 minutes for collection of questionnaires. The questionnaires were filled within 25 minutes in all sessions. Lecturers who preferred paper format questionnaires filled and return them in the same day while those (including language practitioners) who preferred electronic format returned them within 48 hours.

The response rate in this type of setting was high while the data collection time was short and the questions were clarified as aroused. Self-administered mailed and group administered questionnaires were relatively low cost and practical for the identified sample.

Each item on the questionnaire were designed to be easy to read and understand. The wording and position of each item were carefully considered to avoid ambiguity because it could influence participant's answers. Participants were provided with an opportunity to tick boxes or the most relevant answer(s). Du Plooy-Cilliers and Cronje (2014:152) are of a view that questionnaires are very useful tools of research because "they simplify responses, and people are usually more willing to tick boxes than they are to type out long answers". They further emphasise that researchers should keep the following series of advises in mind when constructing a questionnaire (ibid, 2014:152):

- Always include an introduction in which you explain who is doing the survey and why you are doing the survey. When possible, provide the respondents with good reasons why it will be worth their while to fill in the questionnaire. Clear and comprehensive questionnaire introduction was included.
- Assure respondents of confidentiality or anonymity. All participants were assured of both confidentiality and anonymity.
- Indicate the estimated time it will take to complete the survey. 25 minutes was estimated time to all participants. However, most of the participants completed the survey within 25 minutes.
- Provide clear and simple instructions. Try not to include too many instructions either, otherwise your respondents will get confused. Clear instructions were provided as items were designed to be easy to read and understand.
- Make sure that you use clear, simple and respectful language and keep in mind the problems that can be caused by wording of questions. The wording and position of each item were carefully considered to avoid ambiguity. Thus, statements were designed to probe one piece of information only – that means one thing to all participants.
- Use logical sequence and group questions on similar topics together. Identify the topics you wish to gather data on. Unless otherwise, idiomatic expressions related to similar topic (theme) were grouped together and they were all related to the research aim.

- Do not include too many questions. People are more willing to complete a short questionnaire than a long one. Thus, fewer questions will ensure a higher response rate. Also, only as questions related to your research question (hypothesis). Only questions related to the research aim and research questions were asked. The questionnaire included as few questions as possible which asked for information that participants can provide with some degree of accuracy, and be free from bias and not lead respondents to any particular answer.
- Consider asking for demographic characteristics at the end. If we start we them, people often loose interest. Demographic characteristics are essential to the survey hence they are included in the questionnaire. However, for the purpose of this study, were included in the beginning.
- Always thank your respondents for completing your questionnaire. Participants' efforts were appreciation while collecting the questionnaires.
- Always try to pre-test your questionnaire to see whether it is understandable and clear. The researcher, with the help of the research assistant and the promoter, pre-tested the questionnaire for readability and to check if they are clear and understandable.

The above series of advises suggested by du Plooy-Cilliers and Cronje (2014:152) came handy when developing the questionnaire. Given that each item on the questionnaire were designed to be easy to read and understand. Participation was satisfactory and participants were willing to participate for they were only required to read understand the question and tick the most appropriate answer rather than having type out long answers. The researcher finds the questionnaires not only relevant and useful but also reliable and flexible for this study.

The following sub-section discusses data analysis methods employed in this study.

3.10 Data analysis methods

In this qualitative study, the researcher analysis data to explore and understand the meaning participants ascribe to idiomatic expressions in order to present a descriptive analysis of the role of culture in the translation of Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions into English. The

terms ‘thematic analysis’ and ‘qualitative content analysis’ are used interchangeably in this study. Both these terms refer to content as text and the process involved in the analysis is the same.

De Vos et al. (2011:397) expounds that in data analysis one should be interested in “reducing the capacity of raw information, sifting significance from trivia, identifying key patterns, and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what data reveal. It is the process of bringing structure, order and meaning to the mass collected data”. In the same breath, Burns and Grove (2003:479) describe data analysis as “a mechanism for reducing and organising data to produce findings that require interpretation by the researcher”. Data analysis is a systematic process of scrutinizing data with the purpose of presenting meaningful findings. To achieve this purpose, this study adopts thematic analysis to analyse the collected data. In addition, the study adopted Braun and Clarke’s (2006:101) proposed six steps of conducting qualitative content analysis (mentioned below) to put in place the structure, order and meaning to the collected data in the reduced and organised form. Themes were developed following these adopted steps. During the analysis, the study also adopted interpretivist methods drawn from Geertz’ (1973) propositions on the notion of ‘thick description’ in his theory of interpretive of cultures to provide the descriptive analysis of the role of culture in the translation of idiomatic expressions. The notion of ‘thick description’ advocates for the analysis of experience (Geertz, 1986:373). Furthermore, the adoption of Geertz’ thick description effectively assisted the researcher to critically analyse the elucidated cultural meanings and challenges encountered during translation of idiomatic expressions.

Qualitative content analysis is defined as “a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text of data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005:1278). Qualitative content analysis in this study involves the systematic descriptive analysis of the role of culture in the translation of Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions into English to provide an in-depth understanding of, both linguistic and cultural aspects/challenges occurring on the translation table. The researcher identifies subjective themes and patterns that emerge from data (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014). The researcher approaches data in an interpretative paradigm with the goal of providing a thick description of idiomatic expressions as mirrored in the data. Mckee (2001:140) in Strydom and Bezuidenhout (2014:191) refers qualitative

content analysis “as a textual analysis, which is an educated guess of the most likely interpretations of a text”. Strydom and Bezuidenhout (2014:191) further maintains that “qualitative content analysis is mostly inductive approach which researchers can use to develop theories or test existing theories”.

The focus of a thematic content analysis is on themes and patterns that the researcher can discern from the dynamic behaviour of participants (Merton, 1967). Themes are units that emerge from patterns such as conversational subjects, language, recurrent behaviours, meanings, and emotions (Taylor & Bogdan, 1989). Thematic analysis is used to explore and identify overt and covert themes and patterns embedded in a particular text (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014), and “It minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail. However, frequently it goes further than this, and interprets various aspect of research topic, (Braun & Clarke, 2006:79). Through thematic analysis the researcher pays attention to unique themes illustrating the variety of the meanings of idiomatic expressions. These themes are then linked to the literature and theoretical framework described in chapter interpreted within specific context. The researcher groups data together into chunks and then assign them to broader categories of associated meanings (see theme of family life (4.2.2) and wisdom (4.2.4) for example). To give data some sense of order, the researcher structures the data into codes and themes, which can then be applied to all the text (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014). As a result, some patterns embedded in the text were revealed and led to the establishment of more (sub) categories.

Bezuidenhout and Cronje (2014:235) suggest that “the most prudent way to discuss the process of data analysis is to present it systematically and in the form of sequential steps”. As a result, some researchers proposed and developed steps to deal with thematic analysis.

Braun and Clarke’s (2006:101) proposed six steps of conducting qualitative content analysis, as follows:

- Becoming familiar with data.
- Generating initial codes.
- Searching for themes.
- Reviewing themes.
- Defining and naming themes.

- Producing the report.

Furthermore, Zhang and Wildemuth (2009:309-311) proposes eight steps in the process of qualitative content analysis, as follows:

- Prepare the data.
- Define the coding unit to be analysed.
- Develop categories and a coding scheme or conceptual framework.
- Test your coding scheme on a sample text.
- Code all text.
- Assess your coding consistency.
- Draw conclusions from the coded data (interpret your data).
- Report your methods and findings.

Braun and Clarke's (2006:101) and Zhang and Wildemuth (2009:309-311) steps of discussing the process of qualitative content analysis are not dissimilar. However, this study adopts Braun and Clarke's (2006:101) proposed six steps.

3.11 Quality criteria

To achieve quality criteria in this study, the researcher strived to maintain the level of trust some level amongst all research participants and himself. In qualitative research, trustworthiness is viewed as the process of constructing validity and reliability (Streubert-Speziale & Carpenter, 2003). Because this qualitative study accurately conveys participants' experiences, views and understanding of Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions' it is regarded as dependable. For the purpose of this study, the "notion of trustworthiness evaluates the quality of qualitative research on the basis of credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability" as outlined below (Bless, Higson-Smith & Sithole, 2013:236).

3.11.1 Credibility

Credibility is among the most essential quality criteria of qualitative research (de Vos et al., 2011). As advised, credibility was applied to ensure the study findings represent the truth and actuality of the study as expressed by the participants' (Bless et al., 2013). Credibility establishes when participants identify the findings as presented in the research as their

personal experiences and views (Streubert-Spenziale & Carpenter, 2003). To ensure that the findings of the study portray the experience and the reality of Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions as viewed by participants, the researcher “demonstrated the suitability and general internal logic of the research questions, the study design, data collection method, and the approach of the data analyses performed”.

3.11.2 Dependability

Dependability as a research criterion is used to gauge trustworthiness in qualitative research. Dependability stresses that the researcher as a study leader have a responsibility to properly create and adhere to a concise research plan which is “logical, well documented and audited” (de Vos et al., 2011:420). This criterion was achieved by obtaining reliable findings (Streubert-Speziale & Carpenter 2003). For the sake of dependability, the researcher ensured that “each step has been thoroughly and carefully completed” (Bless et al., 2013:237). Dependability has to do with reliability and consistency of results (Holloway, 2005). Thus, if the study could be repeated in a similar social setting with similar members, the results would be the same.

3.11.3 Transferability

External validity and transferability are connected. It refers to the chance that the study's conclusions applied to similar circumstances will have a similar significance (meaning) to others in similar circumstances (Bless et al., 2013). Whether research findings can be applied to different contexts depends on their transferability (de Vos et al., 2011). The researcher explicitly and in-depthly describe the place from which the data was gathered, as required by this criterion. Through the Insider and Outsider perspective, the researcher identified himself and his relations with participants (Bless et al., 2013) (see insider and outsider perspective, section 3.6). In an effort to be transparent, the researcher disclosed the methods used in the study in a clear manner. The methodology stated what, why and where the study was conducted.

3.11.4 Confirmability

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) in Maree (2016:125), confirmability is “the extent to which the conclusions of the study are formed by the participants and not the researcher bias, incentive, or interest”. The researcher using verbatim quotes from the subjects established verifiability. Additionally, it was made sure that the study's methodology was

free of prejudice and consideration of one's own feelings. Throughout all stages of the study, fairness was upheld and the researcher was impartial.

3.12 Research ethics

Ethics is concerned with “what is right or wrong” according to a certain cultural group of individuals. According to Louw (2014) there are several significant ethical difficulties that have an impact on research participants. The following moral factors were taken into account for this investigation.

Ethics are known as the moral standards that direct a person's behaviour. Doing what is morally and legally correct in research is usually referred to as practicing research ethics. In reality, they are standards of behavior that set boundaries between what is morally correct and inappropriate. Research is defined as “a process of discovery leading to new ideas, successfully disseminated” (The Research Excellence Framework, 2014).

Research involves several stages and the research methodology revolves around ethics. At various stages of research process, researchers are expected to address a variety of ethical considerations. However, ethical issues in this study aroused at all stage of the research (Bickman& Rog, 2009).

Moral principles largely dictate how research is conducted, despite the fact that only a few parts of research ethics have been spelled out in this chapter. The importance of ethical considerations has grown significantly among the research community in social sciences. The importance of ethical issues in social science research has increased as a result of rising public concern over the scope of the investigation and changes to the law governing data privacy and human rights.

Despite primarily involving human participation in social sciences research, various social science disciplines include a range of methodologies and moral dilemmas. In addition to allowing the researcher's personal ethical judgements in addition to the professional ethics, ethical standards may also allow decisions to be guided by shared values and experiences.

Studies involving personal information are regarded as being the most delicate. The common denominator for researchers' relationships with participants and all other stakeholders, according to Resnik (1998), is research ethics. The ethical conduct of

research is up to the researchers themselves. At every level of the research process, they must take care of all the ethical concerns.

3.12.1 Respect for participants' rights and dignity

All participants have both legal and human rights mandatory to be respected by the researcher. Both participants' rights were not violated during the process of this study and they were treated with respect, regardless of their diverse characteristics being, age, gender and or level of study. None of the participants was forced to participate against their free will.

3.12.2 Informed consent

Participants have a right to be informed about the research's purpose, "how it will effect them", the risks and advantages of taking part, as well as the fact that they have the option to withdraw from the study at any point if they so choose(Bless, et al., 2016:32).

The researcher ensured – through detailed explanation - that all participants understand the research purpose and that it was for academic purposes. A consent form had to be signed by each participant before data gathering operations could continue.

3.12.3 Confidentiality

Confidentiality in social sciences research is viewed as an "ethical requirement in most research. Information provided by participants, particularly sensitive and personal information, should be protected and not made available to anyone other than the researcher"; thus "ata collected from participants should at all times be kept under secure conditions" (Bless, et al., 2016:32).

Participants' personal information was kept private and protected. Information about participants was never given to anyone but the researcher, and it was always kept safe. The data was protected from uses outside the scope of the study.

3.12.4 Opting out

The freedom to withdraw from the study whenever they wanted, without having to give a reason, was assured to participants. However, none of the participants declined to take part in this study at any point. Thus, the participants were comfortable to participate.

3.12.5 Anonymity

Bless, et al., (2016:33) link the principle of anonymity with confidentiality. They advise that the “participant’s data must never be associated immediately and obviously with his or her name or any other identifier” and habitually, researchers should assign a symbol or a number “to a participant’s data to ensure that the data remain anonymous. Anonymity applies to all aspects of the research process, from the first time that the researcher makes contact with a potential research participant, to the publication of reports and findings” (Bless, et al., 2016:33).

3.12.6 Permission to undertake the study

Permission was given from the University of Venda and all Gate Keepers in light of the study’s qualitative nature, which involves using people as the information source. An Ethical clearance letter (certificate) was obtained from the University of Venda Research Ethics Committee of the University of Venda. To access the participants with a purpose of collecting data; a permission letter(s) were attained from both the Department of Linguistics, Translation and Interpreting of the School of Languages and Communication at the University of Limpopo. The other permission was granted from the Sesotho sa Leboa Lexicography Unit before the initiation of any data collection for the study (see attached appendixes).

3.13 Conclusion

This chapter began with a discussion of the qualitative research paradigm and design adopted in the study. The research method, theoretical framework, the research approach and the researcher’s position as a data collection tool – ‘insider outsider perspective’ was also discussed. Population and sampling as well as the goal of qualitative research were clearly outlined. The chapter also explained how the researcher entered the field and the steps (methods) that were taken during data collection and analysis. On this breath, the chapter described the researched tools used to collect data and method used to analyse data collected. The last part of this chapter discussed the guidelines and procedures followed in order to ensure quality in qualitative research design which are quality criterion and ethical considerations. This chapter was a key to providing the inclusive processes and

procedures followed to accomplish this study including the detailed description of the participants and how they were sampled. The elements of this chapter helped the researcher to accurately structure the study, present, interpret and analyse the data as well as presenting the findings, recommendations and conclusions of this study as clear as possible.

The next chapter deals with presentation, analysis and interpretation of data

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the data presentation, analysis and interpretations. The chapter is structured into two main parts. First, it addresses the demographic information of participants. This information enabled the researcher to comprehend various experiences of the different individuals, both students and language practitioners. The demographic section consists of participants' gender, age, race and study level. Second, a presentation and discussion of themes as they emerged: adversity, family life, community life and that of both domestic and wild animals. Idiomatic expression under each theme analysis was carried out focusing on the role of culture in the translation of Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions into English. The researcher accomplished this task by looking at the relationship between the literal explanation or definition and the cultural background of each idiomatic expression.

4.1 Demographic information

Petersen (2000:27) describes “demographic information as the socio-economic characteristics of a population expressed statistically, such as age and gender”. Thus, demographics are characteristics of a population under study. According to Longman dictionary (2020), demographic profile is information about the population characteristics of a particular place.

Demographics information presents characteristics such as race, ethnicity, age, gender, educational level, profession, and occupation, amongst others. This section provides data regarding research participants, and helps to determine whether the study participants are representative sample of the target population. Given that “a subset of a population that is considered to be representative of the entire population” (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014:135). The sampled participants of this study are representative of the entire population because they are holders of relevant qualification (in African Languages: Northern Sotho and/or Translation studies), and are all of the Basotho tradition and Northern Sotho native speakers.

Participants - as a larger group - are split into groups and subgroups based on their characteristics. The first group of students consist of 84 (88%) students enrolled for various programmes from two different departments of the School of Languages and Communications at the University of Limpopo. The second group consists of 11(12%) Language Practitioners, which are Lectures and Lexicographers. Both the groups form a total of 95 (100%) participants; 57 (60%) females and 38 (40%) males. The biographical details are outlined below.

4.1.1 Participants gender

4.1.1.1 Student participant's gender

Understanding the diverse levels of perception and attitudes between males and females depends heavily on gender. The gender of study participants is described in this section. The percentage breakdown of male and female student participation is shown in the chart below.

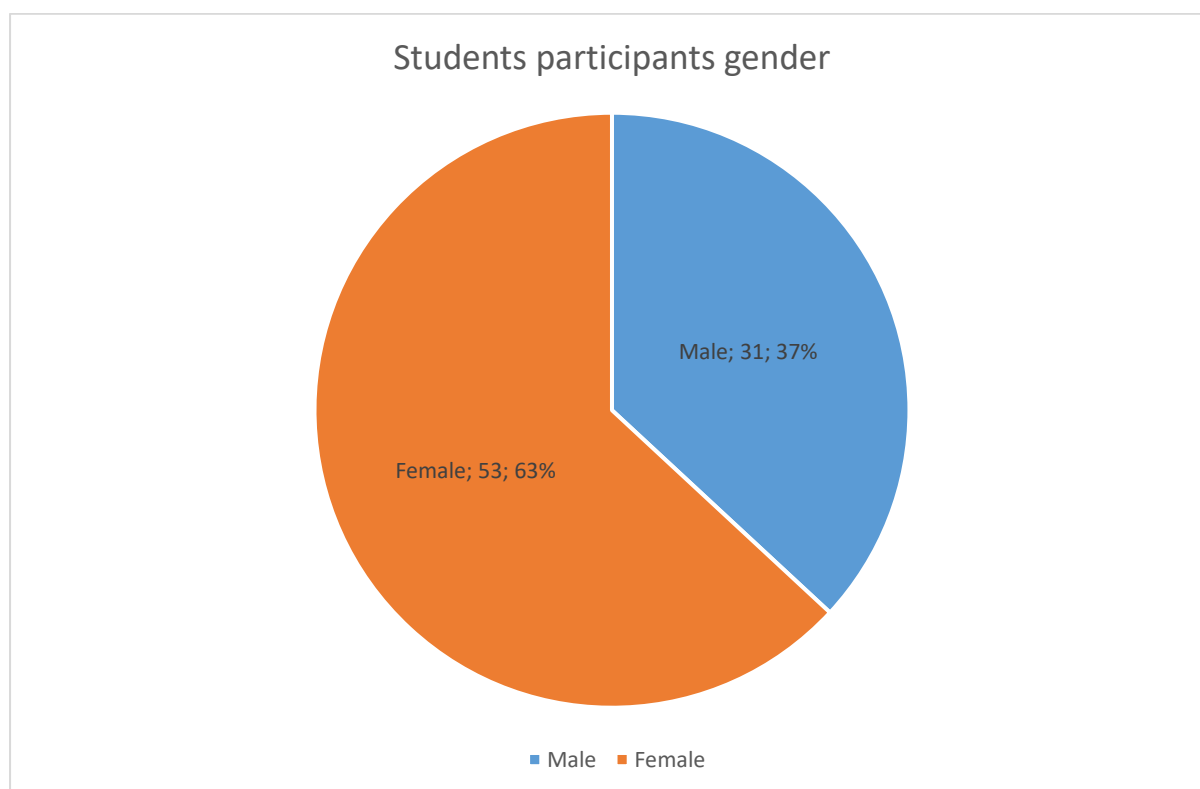


Figure 4.1 Student participants' gender

The chart above illustrates that more female students (53/63%) participated in the study while male students (31/37%) where of the minority. All classes from different departments

are composed of larger number of female students; hence majority of student participants are females. This results to a total of 84 (100%) students, both males and females.

4.1.1.2 Language Practitioner participants' gender

Given the importance of describing the participants' gender and that this subgroup consists of Lecturers and Lexicographers, the below graph accounts to their gender characteristics.

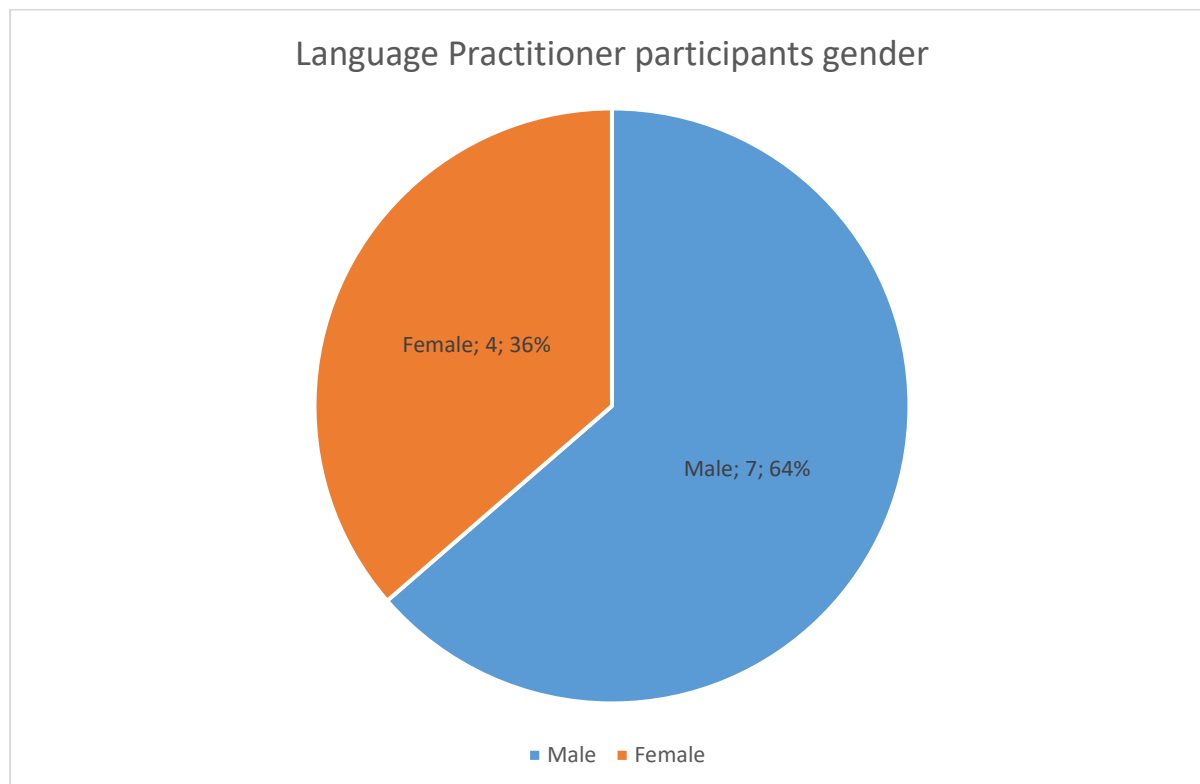


Figure 4.2 Language Practitioner participants' gender

Language practitioners who participated in the study are 11 in total. The graph above illustrates that 7 of 11 Language Practitioners are males, and that accounts to the highest percentage of 64.0 %, while females are of the minority being 4 accounting for 36.0% of this subgroup.

Total participants gender

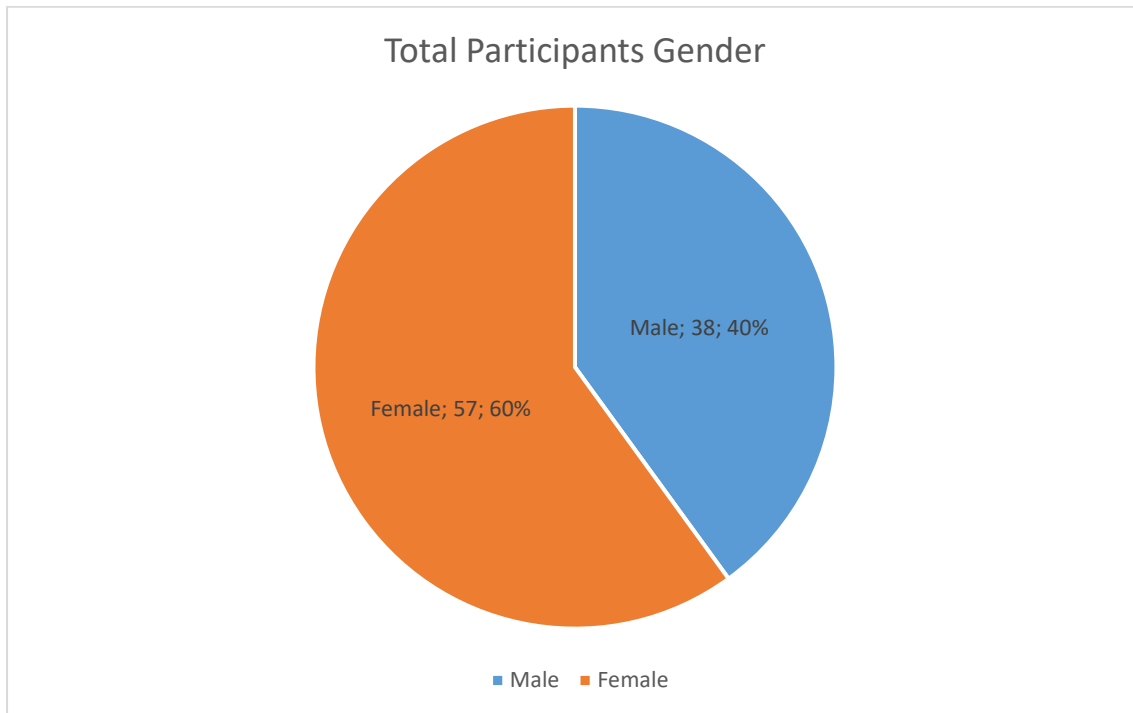


Figure 4.3 Total participants' gender

Given that, the total of participants is 95; amongst them 57 of them are females amounting to the majority with 60% while 38 where males counting to minority with 40%.

The below chart summarises the participants' gender.

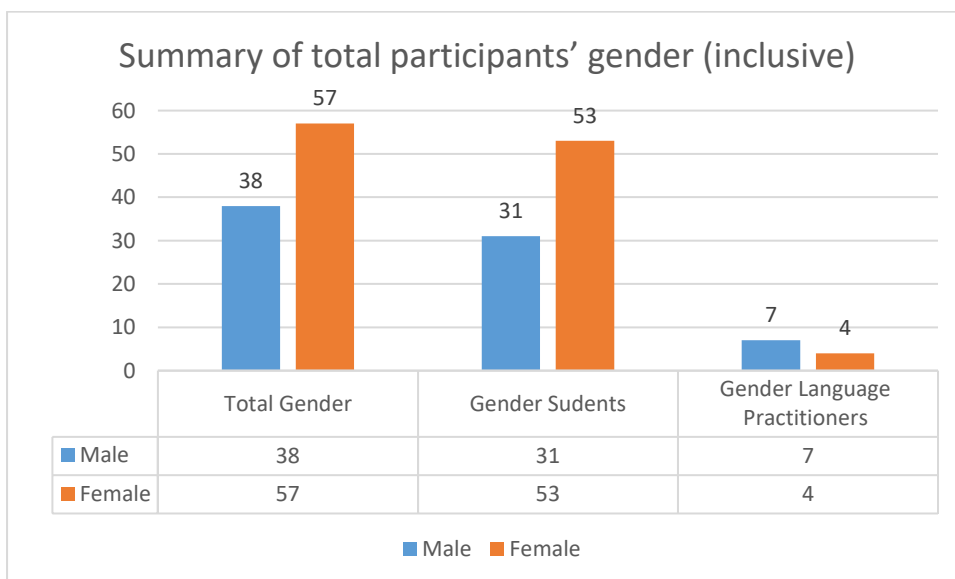


Figure 4.4 Summary of total participants' gender (inclusive)

4.1.2 Participants age

4.1.2.1 Participants Age

This subsection aims to determine the age of all participants who participated in the study.

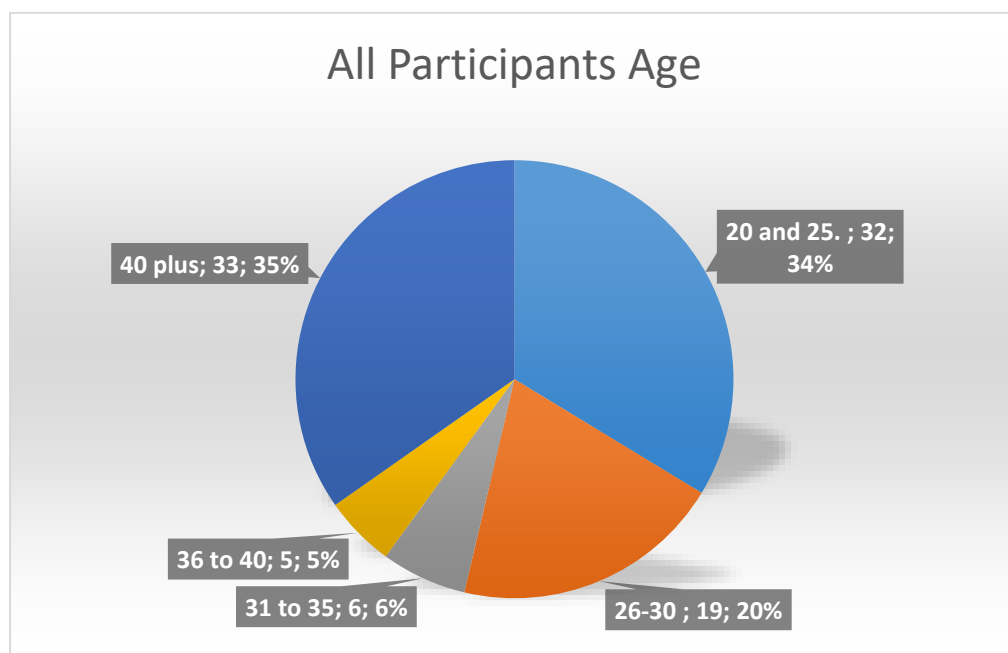


Figure 4.5 All Participants Age

All participant's age was grouped into five categories. 32 students which accounts for 38.1% of the participants, constituting the highest group, were between the ages of 20 and 25. Other groups in descending order were of age 26-30 years with 19 students constituting 22.6%, age 31–35 years accounting for 6, constituting 7.1% of the participants, 36-40 years with 3 students constituting 3.6% and 24 students, accounting for 28.6% were of age 40 and above. No participant was not sure of his age. In addition, only 2 Language practitioners are between the age of 36 – 40 and all 9 are above the age of 40.

4.1.3 Participants race

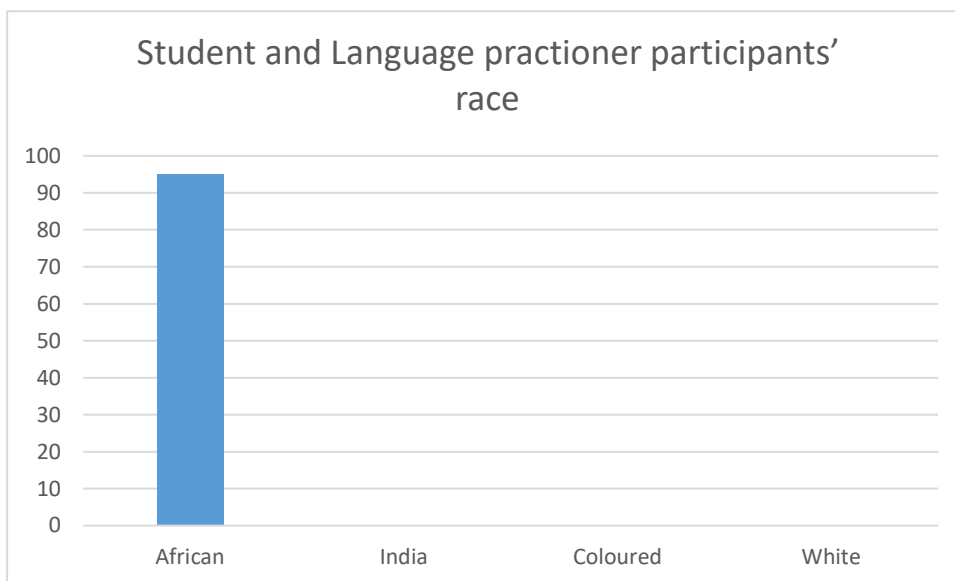


Figure 4.6 Participants race

Race and home language are crucial factors in determining one's culture because culture affects a wide range of issues. Understanding people's perspectives and experiences regarding a certain phenomenon is made easier by the participants' race and home language. As a result, all participants were native speakers of Northern Sotho. Thus, they were all black Africans.

4.1.4 Participants level of study/education

Student participants' level of study

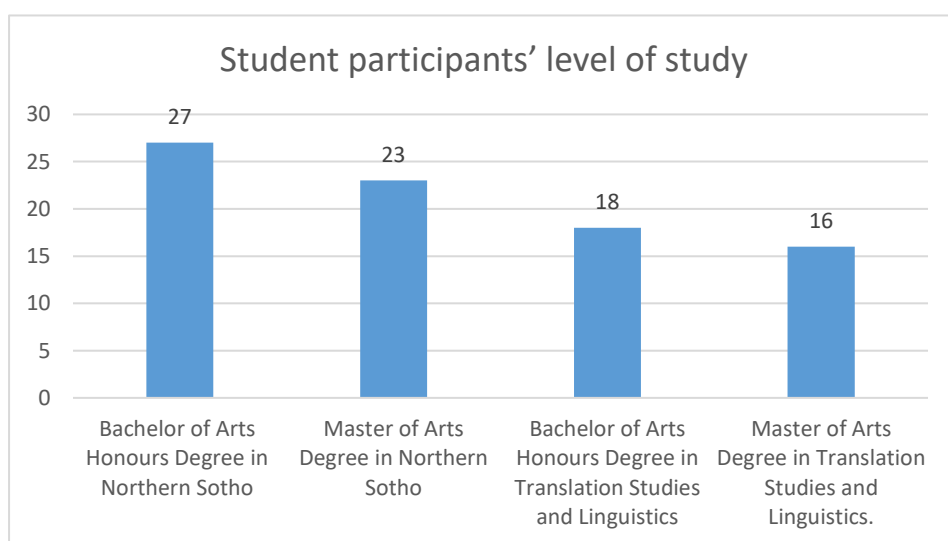


Figure 4.7 Student participants' level of study

The above paragraph indicates that majority 45 (53.6%) of students' participants were enrolled for Bachelor of Arts Honours degree while the minority 39 (46.4%) were enrolled for Master of Arts degree. Details are provided below.

Student participants consist of students enrolled for both Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree and Master of Arts Degree. One should note that, those enrolled for Honours degree hold Bachelor of Arts Degree in the programme they are enrolled for. From these participants, 50 students' participants are from the Department of African Languages; 27 were enrolled for Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree in Northern Sotho while 23 were enrolled for Master of Arts Degree in Northern Sotho. In addition, 34 students' participants are from the Department of Translation Studies and Linguistics. From this sub-group, 18 were enrolled for Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree in Translation Studies and Linguistics while 16 were enrolled for Master of Arts Degree in Translation Studies and Linguistics. These subgroups form the sum total of 84 student participants.

Language practitioners level of education

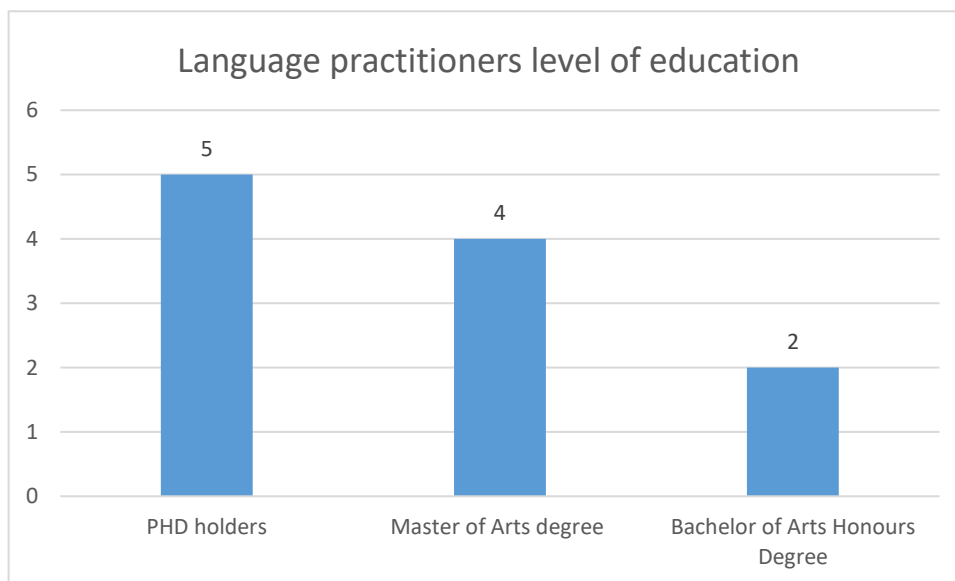


Figure 4.8 Language practitioners level of education

The highest qualification holders are PhD holders which are 5 and amount to 45.5% followed by 4 Master of Arts degree holders amounting to 36.4% and 2 Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree holders counting to 18.1%.

4.1.5 Summary of bibliographic details

Given that, the total of participants is 95. Amongst them, 57 are females amounting to the majority with 60 % while 38 were males counting to minority with 40%. All 95 participants hold Bachelor of Arts degree. The following section discusses themes as they emerged.

4.2 Presentation and discussion of themes

This section deals with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data according to themes.

4.2.1 Theme 1: Adversity

Northern Sotho idiomatic expression		English back-translation		Potential translation/s		Meaning of the idiomatic expression	
1	<i>Go tla nkgga go se gwa bola.</i>	a)	There will be a bad smell even though nothing is rotten.	b)	As long as the rotten object is not identified and removed there will always be a bad smell.	c)	To smell a rat.

Table 4.1 Example one

Northern Sotho idiomatic expression		English back-translation		Potential translation/s		Meaning of the idiomatic expression	
2	<i>Moepa-lebitla o a ikepela.</i>	a)	One who dig the grave digs for oneself.	b)	One who digs the deeper grave is likely to stuck (buried) in it	c)	Make one's bed and lie in it.

Table 4.2 Example two

All the participants (100 %) concur that the translation equivalent for the idiomatic expressions 1) and 2) is c). The translator has adopted the strategy using an idiom with similar meaning but different form to identify the equivalence in the target language.

The majority of participants argue for c) as the accurate equivalence for the expressions 1) and 2). This confirms that the translator was successful in executing the duties and considered both the literal and the figurative meanings of these idiomatic expressions to supply the target user with the functional equivalent of 1) and 2). The translator identified the equivalent for the SLC idiomatic expression in the TLC of the same meaning but dissimilar form. This is because the translator has considered the following during the translation process:

- the basic meaning of the expression,
- the relationship between the literal meaning of the expression and figurative meaning, and
- The cultural background of the individual components (words) of the idiomatic expression.

The equivalent (c) is considered functional in this context because it carries the similar meaning with the idiomatic expression 1) as intended by the author which is 'to realize or be suspicious that something is wrong in a particular situation' or to 'foresee danger'. The translator has considered the basic meaning of 1) and the relationship between the literal meaning of the expression and its figurative meaning. These relationships could be explained as follows: *Monkgo* (smell) is associated with *go bola* (to rot/expire). Anything that is rotten smells and it illustrates that something is not well with the rotten object. A smell or anything rotten is not appreciated by human beings hence it is usually avoided because it produces an uncomfortable awful (unpleasant) smell. Therefore, the expression 1) is used by the Basotho people to caution others to be careful of possible danger, something unwelcome or deception in a particular situation.

Similarly, the expression 2) is used to caution people of the danger of aiming to cause misfortune to others because such misfortune usually occurs to the initiator. That is to say, 'being unkind to others usually has a detrimental effect on oneself as well'. It is important to note that the Basotho - culturally - use the graves to bury the dead. Considering the relationship between the literal meaning and its figurative meaning of the idiomatic expression 2) '*Moepa-lebitla o a ikepela*' and the cultural background and/or the usage of *mabitla* (graves) by the Basotho, one will be able to comprehend the figurative meaning of

2). This expression '2) is used as an unsympathetic manner of telling someone to accept (suffer) the unpleasant consequences of his or her actions or decisions to the bitter end - even if it's harmful or no longer meets one's desired need. Hence, the expression c) is considered to be the accurate equivalence of the expression *Moepa lebitla o a ikepela*; as all (100%) participants indicated.

The following idiomatic expression further explains the importance of considering the literal and cultural background to fully comprehend the expression.

Northern Sotho Idiomatic Expression		English Back-Translation		Potential Translation/s		Meaning of the Idiomatic Expression	
3	<i>Go ya ga maotwanahunyela.</i>	a)	To go to a small feet shrink	b)	To migrate to a place called <i>ga Maotwanahunyela.</i>	c)	To kick the bucket.

Table 4.3 Example three

The entire 100% of both students and language practitioners concur with the translator that c) serves as the correct equivalence for the expression 3) as indicated above. However, the same could not be said with the below example 4) below (which will be discussed later). Looking at example 3) *Go ya ga Maotwanahunyela*, the translator successfully identified the equivalence for this idiomatic expression as c). To effectively identify the equivalence, the translator had to answer the following questions concerning the expression in order to retrieve to correct figurative meaning of the expression:

- What is the basic meaning of this idiomatic expression?
- What is the literal meaning of this idiomatic expression?
- Why did this idiomatic expression acquire this meaning?
- What is the meaning of the words *maotwana* and *hunyela*?
- How are these words related to 'death'?

Answering the questions posed with the attempt to comprehend the idiomatic expression 3), guided by the participants' perception and/or understanding of this expression one may argue as follows: the meaning of this idiomatic expression is 'to die', which is completely different from its literal meaning derived from the literal meaning of the individual words

which constitute it. This is supported by Langacher (1968:79) as he describes idioms as “a kind of a complex lexical item. It is a phrase whose meaning cannot be predicted from the meaning of the morphemes it comprises”. Furthermore, Baker (1992:63) states that they “frozen patterns of language which allow little or no variation in form and often carry meanings that cannot be deduced from their individual components”.

The literal meaning of this expression is 'to go to the place called *'ga maotwanahunyela'*, which makes little or no sense. Tracing back to the cultural background of 3), the expression acquired its meaning from the traditional method used by the Basotho people when burying their dead. The corpse is put in an upright position in the grave with the knees up against the chest (*go hunyela*) facing west with the whole body covered by the skin of a beast slaughtered specifically for this purpose. In addition, the word *hunyela* means 'to shrink', or in this case, 'to bend or to squeeze the body in a sitting position in the grave with the chin leaning on the knees'. *Maotwana* (literally meaning 'small feet') refers to the feet of a corpse which are 'shrunken up' in the grave before being covered by soil. Consideration of various aspect of this idiomatic expression including the cultural knowledge of the Basotho people enabled the translator to effectively execute his duties. It is evident that language is closely related to culture as Vermeer (1989) emphasises that language is part of culture. Translation crosses cultural borders to communicate meaning expressed by idiomatic expressions as Toury (1978:200) asserts that “translation is a kind of activity that inevitably involves at least two languages and two cultural traditions”. Similarly, the translator managed to identify the partial equivalent for the SLC idiomatic expression in the TLC.

The following idiomatic expression emphasises the deep-rooted relation of culture and language and reveals the role of translation as a cross-cultural communication tool.

Northern Sotho Idiomatic Expression		English Back-Translation		Potential Translation/s		Meaning of the Idiomatic Expression	
4	Ya se rage e tla tlatša kgamelo.	a)	If it does not kick, it will fill the milk container.	b)	If the cow which is being milked does not kick away the milk container and spill the milk, the milking process will go on well and the container will ultimately be filled with milk.	c)	If things go well (there are no disturbances), great things will happen.

Table 4.4 Example four

Participants are of different views regarding the equivalence of this idiomatic expression. Majority (70%) of the participants agree with the translator that c) could serve as the communicative equivalence of the expression 4) while minority (30%) are of a view that b) could accurately serve as the equivalence for the expression 4). It is clear that participants are of different perception regarding the equivalence of the idiomatic expression *ya se rage e tla tlatša kgamelo* illustrated above.

Although b) expresses literal meaning which makes sense, one will be wrong to consider b) as the equivalence for 4) because it does not portray the real meaning of this expression. This explanation 'b)' is limited to the milking process and not applicable to various situation but the idiomatic expression 4) is meant to be used in various situation and was not constructed for this purpose only. Its limitation to the practicality of milking process compromises the gist of the message as intended by source language. Therefore, the

minority are not correct to advocate for b) as the equivalence for 4). However, the idiomatic expression 4) possess two meaning, both figurative and literal (transparent meanings).

The literal meaning or explanation a) and b) make little or no sense and may seem not to be important to the translator and/or target readers who concentrate on the figurative meaning of the expression 4) which is c) as illustrated by the majority of participants. Although the expression a) and b) might be meaningless, they are of critical importance in discovering how the idiomatic expressions 4) came into existence, which is the cultural background of the meaning of this idiomatic expression. The literal definitions a) and b) of the idiomatic expression helps to identify the relationship between the literal meaning of the idiomatic expression and its figurative meaning, and the cultural background of the individual words in this expression. The cultural definition of the idiomatic expression 4) reveals that its real meaning c) is metaphorically compared to the process of milking of a cow. This figurative meaning has nothing to do with milking cows and/or milk containers. The translator used compensation as a translation strategy to make up for any loss or meaning, emotional force, or stylistic effect, which was not possible to reproduce directly at this point (Baker, 1992:72).

The example discussed in theme 1 (adversity) confirms the fact that Northern Sotho idiomatic expression use known cultural words and objects in the form of metaphor to express figurative meanings. The following theme pays attention to the dynamics of family life as it is expressed figuratively

4.2.2 Theme 2: Family life

Humans being are social creatures that desire interaction with others. It is for this reason; family is an important factor of every human life. Bogenhold (2009:1096) confirms that “the third stage of Maslow’s introduced needs represents love needs and belongingness needs that aim at affected and emotional inclusion of human beings into categories such as family, work groups, partner-ships, or further social relationships”. Although it is expected that each family operate smoothly and happily, it is not always the case. Hence, we usually hear that every family has its own quarrels. The Basotho people has observed such dynamics and constructed idiomatic expression that defines this time of family life and attempted provide solutions for them. One will usually hear expressions like *tau tša hloka seboka di šitwa ke nare e hlotša*, as discussed below. The theme aims to describe the usage of these kind of expressions in the Basotho community as per the participants’ perception.

Northern Sotho Idiomatic Expression		English Translation	Back-Translation/s	Potential Translation/s	Meaning of the Idiomatic Expression
5	<i>Tau tša hloka seboka di šitwa ke nare e hlotša.</i>	a A divided pride of lions fails to prey a limping buffalo.	b	Divided pride of lions will fight amongst themselves and ultimately fails to prey on easy or weak target (animals).	c United we stand, divided we fall.

Table 4.5 Example five

The graph above illustrates that 72% of participants are in favour of c) as the equivalence of the idiomatic expression 5) while 28% argues against c) as the correct equivalence of 5). Amongst this 28%, 5% argues in favour of b) while 23% argues in favour of a) as the accurate equivalence sharing one to one meaning with the idiomatic expression 5). The researcher, as insider – Northern Sotho Speaker and a member of the Basotho community – concurs with the majority in this regard. However, one – for some reason – could not face out the minority’s perception. This is because the literal meaning/translation of 5) as expressed by a) and b) could seem not to be vital and meaningful because the focus is on the figurative meaning of the idiomatic expression. The attempt to discover the cultural meaning of 5) will be in vein without thinking of the importance of discovering how the expressions came into existence, which is attached and/or carried by the individual words of the expression 5). The literal definition a) and b) of the expression helps to restructure the cultural background of the idiomatic expression in the sense that the user will get to know the cultural background as to how, and why, the expression originated.

The Basotho people by origin does not live in isolation but they dwell in group (community) hence one who usually isolate oneself is usually could *tšhikanoši*. Like human being, lions do not exist in isolation but in groups called pride. This pride(s) of lions does not only live together; they live and hunt in cooperation, and eats together. Moreover, lions live in

cooperation in defence of their young and the maintenance of long term territories (Packer, Scheel & Pusey 1990). Packer, et al., (1990:1) further state that “Lions live in fusion social units [prides]”. Arguing for prides cooperation and individual variation in hunting tactics, Stander (2010:445) points out:

Group hunts generally involved a formation whereby some lionesses (wings) circled prey while others (centres) waited for prey to move towards them. Those lionesses that occupied ‘wing’ stalking roles frequently initiated an attack on the prey, while lionesses in ‘centre’ roles moved relatively small distances and most often captured prey in flight from other lionesses. Each lioness in a given pride repeatedly occupied the same position in a hunting formation. Hunts where most lionesses present occupied their preferred positions had a high probability of success. Individual hunting behaviour was not inflexible, however, but varied according to different group compositions and to variations in the behaviour of other individuals present. Group hunting by terrestrial carnivores such as the lion (*Pantheraleo*) is thought to reduce problems of locating and subduing large prey (Bertram 1979; Lamprecht 1981; Packer, 1986), and to improve kill efficiency.

Standers’s (2010) argument advocates for unity (teamwork) and cooperation within the agreed strategy towards the intended goal amongst lions as hunters. It is the relationship between literal meaning and the cultural background that illustrates the day to day pride’s hunting strategy as a way of their life (culture) that dictates how lions cooperate towards success during hunting.

The cultural background of the idiomatic expression 5) demonstrates that its real meaning, described in c) above, is figuratively compared to the pride’s hunting strategy. Understanding the lions’ lifestyle plays a centre role in helping the target readers to comprehend how the idiomatic expression came into existence as well as the figurative meaning of the expression. This is because the literal meaning (and the consideration of lion’s lifestyle) exposes the cultural root of the meaning of the idiomatic expression *tau tša hloka seboka di šitwa ke nare e hlotša*.

This figurative meaning c) has nothing to do with lions hunting approaches and prey(s), or limping buffalo to be precise. In this way, familiar wild animals or scenarios (events) within the Basotho culture are used symbolically in the form of metaphors, idioms and/or proverbs that acquire figurative meaning. In addition, one will usually come across expressions such as *Mpsa-pedi ga di šitwe ke sebata* (two dogs could not be overpowered by the beast) amongst the Basotho conversations. Idiomatic expressions such as this are used to

emphasise the vitality of cooperation amongst people who live together. The cultural background of the above-mentioned idiomatic expression helps target readers and non-mother-tongue speakers of Northern Sotho, who only know figurative meaning, also to understand its real background.

As stipulated above, 72% of the participants are familiar with the figurative meaning of the idiomatic expression 5) but one could not infer the same about the cultural background and its role towards comprehending this expression. There are many native and non-native speakers of Northern Sotho who know the meaning of 5) as it is used in conversations and found in publications such as Rakoma's *Marema-ka-dika: tša Sesotho sa Lebowa*, but who does not know how it (the expression 5) came into existence.

The idiomatic expression 5) as accurately translated as c) was constructed to inspire unity and collaboration amongst the Basotho people. The fundamental concept of these expression lies in the collectivist notion that if people who live and/or work together happens to isolate themselves from the team and work on their own instead of a team, they are each destined to fail or be defeated. As illustrated above with the expression '*mpša-pedi ga di šitwe ke sebata*', any Northern Sotho speaker will tell that the Basotho people use various idiomatic expressions to inspire unity and collaboration amongst themselves. It is for this reason speaker of Northern Sotho will usually say '*Bobedi bo bolaya noga*' as illustrated by example 6) below.

Northern Sotho Idiomatic Expression		English Back-Translation		Potential Translation/s		Meaning of the Idiomatic Expression	
6	<i>Bobedi bo bolaya noga.</i>	a)	Two kills a snake.	b)	Two individuals are likely to kill a snake successfully.	c)	Two heads are better than one.

Table 4.6 Example six

This expression is usually used to emphasise the importance of seeking help or second opinion. The literal meaning of the expression 6) as illustrated by a) and b) respectively,

indicates the practical and factual truth about the process of killing a snake. It is a fact if not the truth that when two or more people are killing a snake are likely to execute their aim effectively and quicker unlike one attempting to, alone. The snake under attack is unlikely to defend itself effectively because it will be attacked from different angles by different individuals. It is for this reason, the overwhelming 100% of participants deduce that c) is the accurate equivalence for the expression 6). The idiomatic expression 6) is used by the Basotho people to inspire collaboration amongst their members signifying that 'when two people work together they are more likely to solve a problem than one person working in isolation'. Therefore, to execute a task effectively, it is always advisable to get help from others when embarking on a project. It is common amongst the Basotho people to have conflicts and or misunderstanding amongst people who work and/or live together. The Basotho people as well grounded community with a well-established culture. Hence, they have idiomatic expression that are used to manage conflict amongst families and people who work together.

The following idiomatic expression is usually heard when a speaker of Northern Sotho uses the expression to confirm his experience of a family life. In most cases the speaker will say: *Kgomo go hlabana tša šaka le tee.*

Northern Sotho Idiomatic Expression		English Back-Translation		Potential Translation/s		Meaning of the Idiomatic Expression	
7	<i>Kgomo go hlabana tša šaka le tee.</i>	a)	Cattles of the same kraal stab one another.	b)	It is normal for cattle of the same kraal to fight amongst themselves.	c)	Every house has its own quarrels.

Table 4.7 Example seven

Considering the participants' opinion regarding the translation equivalence of the idiomatic expression 7), all participants (100%) are in agreement advocating for c) as the relevant equivalence for 7). Thus, c) convey the one to one meaning as it is intended by the source text. Thus, the translator has been successful in identifying the idiomatic equivalence in the target language that shares the same meaning although is of the different form.

Although this idiomatic expression is used to harmonies contentions amongst siblings, family members and/or people who work together; it also acknowledges that it is common to experience sibling rivalry and/or colleagues' conflicts or disagreements.

To successfully identify the equivalence in the target language the translator has considered the relationship between the literal meaning of the expression as explained in a) and b) and the cultural background of the Basotho people regarding the usage of this expression and how it came into existence. It is familiar to and customary for the Basotho people to own cattle as a major livestock, and to enjoy one of the benefits of observing their lifestyle or behaviour. Taking regard of the literal meaning of 7) as define by a), it is clear that the Basotho people has observed and compared both the behaviour of human beings with those of the cattle.

The cultural background of the idiomatic expression 7) and the relationship of its figurative and literal meaning demonstrates that its real meaning, explained in c) above, is symbolically compared to the cattle's behaviour during conflicts. However, the figurative meaning of 7) has nothing to do with cattle's behaviour as it (the behaviour) acquired figurative meaning. To produce this well-grounded equivalence of the expression 7) the translator has considered the role of culture in translation of this Northern Sotho expression. It is for this reason translation scholars argue that idiomatic expression translators must have a good mastery of not only both languages but also of both cultures.

The idiomatic expression 8) as illustrated below share the same sentiment with expression 7) as it emphasises that 'it is normal for members of every household to have disagreements'. It is accurately translated, as 'there is no river that flows without a sound'. Thus, there is no family that functions smoothly without having to quarrel at times.

Northern Sotho Idiomatic Expression		English Translation		Potential Translation/s		Meaning of the Idiomatic Expression	
8	<i>Ga go mohlopi wo o sa nego, mepipi ka moka e a na.</i>	a)	Rain penetrates all types of trees.	b)	Trees are not safer structure or objects to hide for the rain.	c)	There is no river that flows without a sound.

Table 4.8 Example eight

All participants (100%) identifies/identify c) is the equivalence for the expression 8). This idiomatic expression is also used to emphasise that it is normal to experience siblings' rivalry. One could also hear saying like 'hoes that dig together often knock each other'.

The following theme focuses on community life.

4.2.3 Theme 3: Community life

The ability to give birth to children is of a great value for African women. It is something one could pride herself with even when not married. It is better to be *lefetwa* (unmarried women who surpassed marriage age) than to be considered *moopa* (barren) within the Basotho community. It is even worse to be *moopa* for a married woman. It is the Basotho tradition that when a married woman could not give birth, her younger sister will be married as a second wife (*thlatswadirope*) with the purpose of giving birth to children. However, the ability to give birth for women guarantees not only the grooms family extension but also her safety when she grows up. That is to say, one will have those who take care of during her old age. It is for this reason one will often hear utterances such as: *go belega ke go ikoketša*.

Northern Sotho Idiomatic Expression		English Translation		Back-Potential Translation/s		Meaning of the Idiomatic Expression	
9	<i>Go belega ke go ikoketša.</i>	a)	To give birth is to increase oneself.	b)	Children are perceived as an extension of their family generation.	c)	To give birth to children is to add on to oneself.

Table 4.9 Example nine

Participants are of different views with regard to that translation equivalence of the idiomatic expression 9). The majority (65%) of the participants argues for c) as the translation equivalence while 20 % argues in favour of b) and the remaining minority 15% are in favour of a) as the relevant equivalent for the idiomatic expression 9).

Baker (2018) identified two occasions where the translator might encounter a problem while translating idiomatic expressions: “the ability to recognize and interpret an idiom correctly and the difficulty in rendering various aspects of meaning that an idiom or fixed expression conveys into the target language’. The minority of the participants’ failed to recognise the idiomatic expression 9) hence they misinterpreted it. Although the equivalent c) might look and sound similar to a) to a particular extent; the majority because of the following two reasons supports it: first, it maintains the idiomatic style of the source text. Second, because of its ambiguity and/or applicability in several contexts. The word ‘add’ refers to addition of resources when children are employed, addition of hand – allocation of duties and (also) addition in quantity. While the expression b) as supported by most of the minority is limited to quantity. It is for this reason(s) one argues that the minority failed to recognise and interpret the idiomatic expression 9) correctly.

It is a cultural norm for the Basotho people to value women with the ability to give birth to children because they (children) are not only the extension of the family generation but of great use. As children grow, parents are able to delegate some of their responsibilities to their children. In this way children are perceived as an extension of their parents. It for this reason the Basotho people regularly say: *bagologolo ba boletše ba re: ‘ga ba tswalwe, ba ate, mona-le-pelo ga a tsebje’*. This idiomatic expression encourages women not to limit themselves when giving birth to children for they do not know who (amongst the children) will have a [good] heart and/or will be of great benefit to them. The usage of the phrase ‘*go ba le pelo*’ (to have a heart) is derived from the idiomatic expression *go ba le pelo ye botse* as described by 10) below.

Northern Sotho Idiomatic Expression		English Translation		Back-Potential Translation/s		Meaning of the Idiomatic Expression	
10	<i>Go ba le pelo ye botse</i>	a)	To have a heart	b)	To have a beautiful heart	c)	Not to be cruel or cunning but being kind and merciful.

Table 4.10 Example ten

The overwhelming 100% of participants argues in favour of c) as the translation equivalent for the idiomatic expression 10). Thus, all the participants share the sentiment with the translator on the meaning relation between the source text and target text. However, the consideration of the cultural background of this expression remains important.

Most people are familiar with both the figurative meaning as well as the literal meaning of this idiomatic expression, but very few of them could trace its origin. The cultural background of the expression 10) confirms that Basotho tradition assign various functions to the various organs of the body. For instance, the heart is regarded as a governing factor in the life of a person. It is believed to assist one to make decisions. It is for this reason one usually hears utterances like *pelo ye nngwe e re ke mo hlabe, ye nngwe ya re aowa, mo tlogele*, 'one heart says I should stab him, the other one says no, leave him'. In this instance the heart is considered as a reprimanding factor. People who refrain from doing bad things; thus, people who execute kind deeds are also considered to have *pelo ye telele* 'to be patient while those who are impatient are considered to have *pelo ye nnyane* 'to have a small/short heart'. Undertaking bad things is also believed to be the work of one's heart, which is why we hear utterances like: *o na le pelo ye mpe*, 'He has a bad (evil) heart (He is too bad (evil)'. The Basotho people regard the heart as a guiding factor as far as security is concerned. This is reflected in statements such as the following '*ke rile ge ke swanetše go sepele, pelo ya ka ya gana*' (When I was supposed to go my heart refused)' In this manner, by stopping a person from taking the journey, the heart prevents him from possible danger. These are some of the traditional beliefs which are part and parcel of the Basotho culture associated with the role of the human heart. The interpretation of idiomatic expressions such as 9) and 10) gives evidence that like Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions are deeply rooted in the Basotho culture. The translator has adopted compensation strategy to make up for any possible loss of meaning and/or emotional force.

The following idiomatic expression illustrates how one forms part of his own society and inspire him to share his skills with others.

Northern Sotho Idiomatic Expression		English Back-Translation		Potential Translation/s		Meaning of the Idiomatic Expression	
11	<i>Motho o pepetšwe batho.</i>	a)	One is carried/raised for others.	b)	One is born for others.	c)	Every child is born to benefit members of his community.

Table 4.11 Example eleven

The majority of participants, 75% advocates c) while the minority of 25% advocates for b) as the translation equivalent for the expression 11).

It is the Basotho people's tradition that every child belongs to the community. It is for this reason that any child growing up within the Basotho community considered every elderly person as a parent and such a parent has the right to reprimand the child when s/he does wrong and or send a child for anything. The translator has successfully produced a communicative target text that clearly conveys that source text intended meaning. This is because every child is born with a particular unique skill and such skill should benefit members of his own society as he will benefit from those of others. As we often hear that 'every bird builds its nest with the feathers of others'. It is clear that the translator adopted paraphrasing as a strategy to translate idiomatic expression 11).

Northern Sotho idiomatic expression		English back-translation		Potential translation/s		Meaning of the idiomatic expression	
12	<i>Ngwana a llela nakana mokhura, sehla o mo nee.</i>	a)	A small child who cries for mokhura (datura) reed flute, cut it and give him.	b)	A boy who insists of playing with a small datura reed flute should be granted the	c)	A word is sufficient for the wise.

					opportunity to enjoy it.		
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Table 4.12 Example twelve

The idiomatic expression 12) has one-to-one meaning relation with the c) as per the participants' view. The overwhelming 100% participants shares this sentiment.

A flute is a musical instrument made of medium-sized animal (like Impala) bones or horns that produces sound when a stream of air directed across a hole in the instrument creates a vibration of air at the hole. This instrument is made of animal bone or horn for reliability and long survival. The flute is played within the Basotho culture during traditional events and for entertainment.

On the other hand, a *mokhura* tree has medium-sized branches with a shape like that of a sugarcane. Although a flute made with *mokhura* branch is beautiful, it shrinks with time especially when it directed to the sun (head). Furthermore, *mokhura* tree produces bitter liquid that could leave the skin with extremely itch bumpy rash. This flute leaves the lips itching after playing it and it is not as user-friendly and loud compared those made with animal bones and/or horns. It is for these reasons elders do advise their young boys not to admire playing *mokhura* flute. Because of stubbornness, boys do insist playing the *mokhura* flute. Hence, this expression.

This idiomatic expression is regularly directed to people who are rebellious and does not listen when they are told what to do or not to do. For instance, it is used when a child persist that things should be done as they wish or to people who usually persist taking their own road even when they are advice otherwise. It simply means, as you wish, so it shall be granted but you shall suffer the consequences alone. This idiomatic expression could also be used positively to inspire people to welcome advice, criticisms and/or corrections so that they do not develop incorrectly. This also refers to the timely correction of a developing child and the willingness to accept criticisms and advice. That a child should not be derailed by temporary things which might have devastating consequences.

Looking at the above explanations, it is evident that the cultural background of the idiomatic expression 12) is of critical importance for the translator to determine the relationship between the literal meaning of 12) as defined by a) and b); and its figurative meaning defined by c); and why did the idiomatic expression 12) acquire this figurative meaning. The literal meaning of the expression 12 as defined by a) and b) will seem to be meaningless and insignificant to the target readers who always focus on the figurative meaning 'c)' without thinking of the importance of finding out how the expressions came into existence, which is the cultural root of the meaning of the idiomatic expression. The literal explanation of the idiomatic expression assists to restructure the cultural background of 12) in the sense that the target readers will get to know the cultural background as to how, and why, this idiomatic expression was coined.

The following idiomatic expression is used to encourage man's polygamous character as it is accepted by the Basotho tradition.

Northern Sotho Idiomatic Expression		English Back-Translation		Potential Translation/s		Meaning of the Idiomatic Expression	
13	<i>Monna ke selepe, o lala a adimilwe.</i>	a)	A man is an axe, at night we lend one another	b)	A man, like an axe should be borrowed to be used from one family to another.	c)	It is culturally accepted for a man to be in a polygamous (polygyny) relationship.

Table 4.13 Example thirteenth

The idiomatic expression 12) has one-to-one meaning relation with the c) as per the participants' view. Irresistible, 100% participants share this sentiment.

By virtue of association, neighbours in the traditional villages of the Basotho people do borrow items (tool) like spade, axe, fork, wheelbarrow and others form of tools to run some household errands. These tools like an axe are borrowed from one household to another and are usually returned to the owner after use. As mentioned above, this is because the

Basotho people believe that ‘a bird builds its nest with the feathers of other’. Thus, no family could be completely self-sufficient.

The scenario explained above, best represent the literal meanings a) and b) of the expression 13) as outlined above. Furthermore, this scenario describes the relationship between the literal meaning of the idiomatic expression 13) and its figurative meaning as per the tradition of the Basotho people who live harmoniously together as neighbours. This scenario further describes the expected (accepted) polygamous characteristics or behaviour of a real man. The Basotho tradition permits men to marry more than one wife; thus, to be in a polygyny; and/or even being in multiple relationships.

Therefore, the cultural background of 13) reveals that its figurative meaning, in c) above, is metaphorically compared to the usage of an axe amongst the neighbours. This figurative meaning has nothing to do with an axe. It is evident that familiar objects within the Basotho culture are used metaphorically in the form of idiomatic expression to acquire figurative meaning. It is evident that the bicultural character of translators is a dire need in the translation of idiomatic expressions.

On the contrary, one will come across expressions that denies women the same latitude of being in polyandry marriage within the Basotho tradition. It is considered an abomination for women to attempt such act. Hence there are idiomatic expressions like ‘*mosadi ga se tšhemo ya mošate ga a hlagolwe ke letšema*’.

The following theme deals with African wisdom from communication perspective.

4.2.4 Theme 4: Wisdom

According to Ilmi (2015:97) the wisdom indigenous to Africa could be found in oral traditions conveyed through “language, folktales, proverbs, songs, ceremonies, cultural artefacts, performing arts, myths and customary law” as discussed in chapter two. Historians believe that Africans are good in oral transmission of knowledge from one generation to another and idiomatic expression are amongst powerful adages used to share wisdom. They are used to convey various lessons of life. The following theme focuses on idiomatic expressions that are considered to carry or convey mostly word of wisdom.

Northern Sotho idiomatic expression		English back-translation		Potential translation/s		Meaning of the idiomatic expression	
14	<i>O se bone thola boreledi teng ga yona go a baba.</i>	a)	Do not see (be deceived by) the softness of the wild apple for it is bitter inside.	b)	Do not be misled by the outer beauty of a fruit (individual) the interior (character) might be different.	c)	Not all that glitters is gold.

Table 4.14 Example fourteenth

All participants (100%) of this study concur that c) is the correct equivalent for the idiomatic expression 14). It is clear the translator has used a partial equivalence to translate the source text idiomatic expression. Thus, an idiom with similar meaning but dissimilar form has been identified as the target equivalence for the idiomatic expression 14).

Thola is an attractive glossy wild apple by appearance with a bitter taste inside. The below explanation looks at the relationship between the literal meaning of the idiomatic expression and its figurative meaning, and its cultural application (usage).

This idiomatic expression is regularly used to inspire individual to make informed decision not based on emotion or outer surface of the desired objects. It is also applicable to young men at marriage age as they are advised not to marry a woman they do not know better or based on their physical appearance for it is the heart (character) of a woman that matters in marriage because beauty fades. Thus, to caution young man that not everything that is attractive is beneficial or constructive. Put differently, this expression means 'the attractive exterior appearance of something or someone is not a reliable indication of its (their) true nature'. Hence this idiomatic expression '14)' is equivocated with c) for *thola* is a glossy and attractive but bitter in taste. People – women in this context – could possess these wild apple characteristics. Cultural application (usage) which explains the wider (practical) meaning of this idiomatic expression helped the translator to identify the correct idiomatic

expression in the target language. Therefore, the possible characteristics of a woman – in this context – is metaphorically compared to that of *thola*. Hence, the idiomatic expression 14) is associated with c) as its translation equivalence in the target language as all participants concur as such. The translator used partial equivalence by adopting idiomatic expression with similar meaning but different forms in the TLC.

The following wise Northern Sotho idiomatic expression is used to inspire people to make informed decisions.

Northern Sotho Idiomatic Expression		English Back-Translation		Potential Translation/s		Meaning of the Idiomatic Expression	
15	<i>O se ke wa tšhuma lekgeswa ka go bona phudufudu.</i>	a)	Do not burn the crupper because you see the steenbok (steinbuck).	b)	Do not turn down your crupper hoping to make another one with the steenbok skin that you did not kill (still alive).	c)	A bird in the hand is worth two in a bush.

Table 4.15 Example fifteenth

The participants (100%) have successfully identified c) as the translation equivalence for the idiomatic expression 15).

Lekgeswa (loin cloth for men) is man's traditional attires made of animal (wild or domestic) skin. The preferred skin to make a strong and comfortable *lekgeswa* is that of a *phudufudu* (steenbok). The steenbok - sometimes known as the steinbuck or steenbok - is a common small antelope found in Africa. It is, according to Furstenburg (2008:4) smooth-skinned with "a pale red-brown back and a contrasting bright white belly and inner thighs" and it is an "exceptionally fast runner and they scare easily, so when hunting you will need to remain as still as possible and be quick with your trigger". Because of this antelope smooth quality

skin, it is used for various purposes like to make traditional attires, floor mats (hide) and sometimes musical instruments like drums. Given that steenbok is an 'extremely fast runner and they scare easily' one could infer that it is not easy to hunt steenbok especially for the Basotho people who used to hunt with Dogs and other traditional weapons.

Given the above description of the steenbook, one could conclude that it is not wise to burn your *lekgeswa* with a hope of making the new one with the skin of the steenbok that is out of your reach. This idiomatic expression is used by the Basotho people to caution others of the value of what they literally have or own over what they desire to achieve or acquire. Thus, people should be content of what they have than running the risk of losing it all over the hope of getting something better. Idiomatic expressions are wise saying and important elements of the Basotho culture as Abbasi et al, (2012:84) concur that "language is used to maintain and convey culture and cultural ties". Moreover, translation is a complex process as "it is one way of bringing two cultures into contact with each other, and therefore the contact involves an integration of elements of one culture into another" (Vladimir, 1977) in Baloyi, (2015:255).

In order to understand the full (figurative) meaning and cultural significance of this idiomatic expression it is necessary to understand its literal meaning (explanation) as defined in a) and b).

Idiomatic expressions are natural and crucial elements of Northern Sotho as are used on daily conversations. The classification of *lekgeswa* and steinbook above as describes or exposes the cultural background of the idiomatic expression suggests that the relationship between literal meaning and the cultural background helped the target readers (participants) to correctly identify the equivalence. Therefore, the literal meaning of the idiomatic expression as it espouses the cultural background play the centre role in decoding the idiomatic expression.

It is without a doubt that the idiomatic expression 15) is accurately associated with c) as its equivalence in the target language. This idiomatic expression counsels against taking unnecessary risks as it suggests it is better to keep what you have - *lekgeswa* (made with a skin you might not like) than to risk getting more (a better skin) and ending with nothing (*phudufudu* that is out of your reach). Therefore, c) is of no exceptions. Both the references may be to falconry where *lekgeswa* and a bird in the hand (the falcon) was a valuable asset and surely of more value than the prey bush (*phudufudu* and birds).

The below idiomatic expression is used to caution people of the danger of being selfish or self-centred.

Northern Sotho idiomatic expression		English back-translation		Potential translation/s		Meaning of the idiomatic expression	
16	<i>Go fa ke go fega, wa kwa tlala, wa fegolla.</i>	a)	To give is to hang up, when the sun rise (in the morning) you shall take down from.	b)	To give is to pay tribute to those you respect.	c)	Giving is to serve a portion for one self.

Table 4.16 Example sixteenth

This is an old saying amongst the Basotho people that is used to caution one another of the danger of being selfish or self-centred. It is amongst the African cultures that one could not be completely self-dependent or self-sufficient. Hence you find popular words like ‘*Ubuntu*’ (in Zulu) that is used to describe the vital qualities of human compassion and humanity in Africa. The word *Ubuntu* is usually used in the Zulu expression ‘*Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*’ which literally means that one is (exists) because of others. Thus, ‘I am because we are’ or ‘I am because you are’. *Ubuntu* has its roots in the idea of togetherness in the African community and it is one of the building blocks of Basotho people. As a nebulous concept, *Ubuntu* is of shared humanity and oneness. It is for this reason one will regularly hear the Basotho people saying *Bagologolo ba boletše ba re ‘go fa ke go fega, wa kwa tlala, wa fegolla’*. The statement ‘*bagologolo ba boletše ba re*’ (great-grand fathers once said) indicates that this is an old saying that originated in the distance past not in the recent. However, the expression is used interchangeably with the expression ‘*go fa ke go fega, go tla re gosa, wa fegolla*’.

Deviating to the literal meaning of the expression 16) as explain in a) and b) and how the expression came about in the Basotho community; while women take care of the household errands at home, man will go out to take care of the castles and/or go hunting. On their return with the prey, it will be skinned and hanged up on the tree branch away from the dogs, for later use. That is because dogs might eat the prey if it will be within their reach.

They will 'later' unhang it to prepare a meal of their choice. *Go fa* (to give) and *go fega* (to hang) as it is in the idiomatic expression refers to 'saving' of 'reserving' in this context is to 'invest' and '*go sa / masa*' refers to 'morning' in this context 'later' while '*go fegolla*' literally refers to 'taking down from above – from the tree branch'. On the other hand, the phrase '*wa kwa tlala*' meaning '(later) when you are hungry'. Said differently, the literal meaning of this idiomatic expression explains that to give is to save or invest for oneself so that (later) when one is in need one will reap from his savings or investments. However, this idiomatic expression as it is used within the Basotho community it refers to the importance of helping others or giving to those who are in need and/or sharing one's resources with others. It inspires people to be generous instead of being selfish. This is because according to the Basotho people, kindness is reciprocated. When one gives to another it is like serving a portion for oneself because when in need, it is most likely that the one who has been helped will return the kindness. Hence, c) is identified as the most relevant equivalence of the idiomatic expression 16).

Furthermore, one could be suggesting that Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions are natural and crucial elements of the Sotho culture as are used on day to day conversations. The classification of the individual components of the idiomatic expression - and their meaning - as describes above exposes the cultural background of the idiomatic expression and suggests that the relationship between literal meaning and the cultural background helped the target readers (participants) to correctly identify the equivalence. Therefore, the literal meaning of the idiomatic expression as it espouses the cultural background play the centre role in decoding the idiomatic expression. Moreover, the meaning of individual components of an idiomatic expression and how they are arranged taken together with the cultural background of such expression leads one to a functional translation equivalence of an idiomatic expression; especially when one could not find an equivalent idiomatic expression in the target language - whether in the same form or not. Thus, when one should paraphrase or adopt other forms of translation strategies. It is then, therefore, not surprising that all participants identified c) as the equivalence for the idiomatic expression 16).

A healthy relationship is important for every societal survival. The Basotho community is of no exception. The following idiomatic expression is used to inspire members of the Basotho community to maintain good relationship with others at all times.

Northern Sotho Idiomatic Expression		English Back-Translation		Potential Translation/s		Meaning of the Idiomatic Expression	
17	<i>O se ke wa nyela didiba.</i>	a)	Do not defecate in the wells	b)	Do not pollute the well for you will fail to drink its waters (from it) when need arises.	c)	He who leaves behind the truth, returns to it.

Table 4.17 Example seventeenth

As it is explained in the above expression, it is always wise to live harmoniously with others for one will never know when will the need of others (favour) arise; moreover, because kindness is reciprocated. Thus, if you are kind to others they are likely to be kind to you when you are in need. Said differently, one should always be in good relation with others even when you are not residing with them permanently or migrating to another place. To inspire others to keep the good relation with others, the Basotho people usual use the idiomatic expression *o se ke wa nyela didiba* literally meaning ‘do not defecate in the wells’ which is figuratively used to encourage people to keep good relationship with other so they could get help from them when the need arises.

Looking at the background of this expression and how it came about nor the choice of component (words) it consists of: ‘*o se ke*’ means ‘you must never/not’; ‘*wa nyela*’ meaning ‘to defecate’ and ‘*didiba*’ means ‘wells’ as it is literally translated in a) and explained in b); as ‘do not pollute the wells for you will fail to drink its water (from it) when the need arises’. Quite frankly, this is because faeces have an unpleasant smell. It remains obvious that if one pollutes the wells, s/he will not drink (benefit) from them – soon. In simple terms one could say, ‘if someone who has done well in an area will be welcomed back when s/he returns’. Hence the idiomatic expression 17) is aligned with c) as its equivalence and all the participants’ wisely agrees as such. To retain the style of the source text, the translator has successfully paraphrased the idiomatic expression 17) as ‘he who leaves behind the truth, returns to it’.

Considering the literal meaning of the individual words of this idiomatic expression is made of - which are translated and explained literally in a) and b) respectively. It is evident that the relationship between the literal meaning of the idiomatic expression 17) and its cultural background does not only explain its wider meaning but also contribute towards the comprehension of its figurative meaning as described in c). The discussion above also suggests that the cultural background of the idiomatic expression is better explained by its literal meaning.

The following theme focuses of idiomatic expressions that ascribed to human nature.

4.2.5 Theme 5: Human nature

This theme desires to make one understand how human being live, their nature – including their ways of thinking, feeling and acting. Idiomatic expressions analysed in this theme focuses on the principles and approach or philosophy of life of the Basotho people.

Northern Sotho Idiomatic Expression		English Back-Translation		Potential Translation/s		Meaning of the Idiomatic Expression	
18	<i>Mphe-mphe e a lapiša, motho o kgonwa ke sa gagwe.</i>	a)	Borrowing is tiring; one could only be satisfied (fulfilled) by his own.	b)	Consistent begging compromises one's dignity and it is better to be content with what you have or work hard for more.	c)	Borrowing and lending spoils friendship.

Table 4.18 Example eighteenth

Although it is argued above that it is important to live well with others; not to be self-cantered for one could not be completely self-sufficient. Such expressions are used by the Basotho people to inspire humanity as they say *go fa ke go fega* translated as 'giving is to serve a

ption for oneself'. This saying does not encourage laziness or inspire people to rely on borrowing for survival, for that will be the abuse of others and their resources.

On the contrary – as it is argued somewhere that the Basotho people possess wisdom and have idiomatic expressions that addresses various circumstances – there are expressions that encourages self-reliance and/or hard work such as '*mphempe ya lapiša motho o kgonwa ke sa gagwe*' literally translated as 'borrowing is tiring, one could only be fulfilled by his own'. This idiomatic is used to caution people of the negative result of consistent results of lending and borrowing because such activities spoil relationships. Thus, good relation is of critically important in the Basotho culture. Lending and borrowing can lead to disharmony amongst people who work or stay together; to avoid spoiling relations by lending and borrowing, one is encouraged to preserve with farming because hands-out will never be of fulfilment. Thus, hand-out will help one in the short term, but in order to feel fulfilled, one needs to earn one's own living.

Therefore, it is arguable that, the description above suggests that the relationship between literal meaning and the cultural background of this idiomatic expression helped the participants to appropriately identify the equivalence of 18) as c). Therefore, the literal meaning of the idiomatic expression and its cultural background play the centre role in decoding the idiomatic expression.

Northern Sotho Idiomatic Expression		English Back-Translation		Potential Translation/s		Meaning of the Idiomatic Expression	
19	<i>Thibela-malwetši e phala kalafo.</i>	a)	Stopping disease is better than curing them.	b)	Avoiding bad company is better than dealing with the consequences.	c)	Prevention is better than cure.

Table 4.19 Example nineteenth

This idiomatic expression is one of the most popular saying within the Basotho Culture. Both its literal and figurative meaning carry valuable meaning. Thus, it is ambiguous. This idiomatic expression advises that 'it is important to stop something from happening in the

first place than to repair the damage after it has occurred'. People should avoid problems or solve them before they escalate out of control. It is also used to advise youth to distance themselves from dangerous affairs as it is usually said '*pudi ya ja leotša e fetetša tše dingwe*' (bad company corrupts good character).

Decoding the expression further, 'prevention is better than cure'. In the literal sense or health context, it is cheaper too. In fact, preventing future illnesses is important to the future sustainability of one's health and/or and preventing possible complications from existing health conditions. Therefore, it should not be surprising that all participants identified c) as the equivalence for the idiomatic expression 19) as the graph above illustrates. The translator has successfully identified an idiom with the same form and meaning in the target language. This is an ideal strategy according to translation scholars (Baker, 2018) but is not always applicable.

Northern Sotho Idiomatic Expression		English Back-Translation		Potential Translation/s		Meaning of the Idiomatic Expression	
20	<i>Sehlare sa moši ke go o katoga.</i>	a)	A smoke's medicine is to walk away.	b)	There is no better way to avoid smoke except walking away.	c)	Not all problems require solutions, some needs to be evaded.

Table 4.20 Example twenty

The majority of participants (90%) ascertain c) as the equivalence of the idiomatic expression 20) while the minority (10%) establish that b) is the correct equivalent. To resolve this difference of thought, the below paragraph explains how the idiomatic expression came into existence.

Fire - made of wood (firewood) or *dišu* (cow duck - traditional coal made with cattle faeces) is the most common energy resource used for cooking, as well as water and space heating by the Basotho communities. These resources used to make fire emits *muši* (smoke) as they burn, especially *dišu*. Inhalation of the smoke can cause uncomfortable awkward

feeling, and major eye irritation and sometimes one will feel like eye lenses are clouded. The young are usually frustrated by the smoke and when the elders realise that, they will utter utterances like 20) to help them to avoid this problem. The Basotho people usually impart this strategy to their young by saying ‘*sehlare sa moši ke go o katoga*’. That is to say, ‘walk away for a while and give fire a chance to mature on its own because as the fire matures the lesser the smoke it will produce’.

The idiomatic expression is used to caution people from attempting to solve all the problems especially those out of their reach (control). Thus, it is sometimes important and safer to walk away from a problem or association while it is still possible. A contemporary speaker or writer will adopt the expression ‘not all viruses need antiviruses to share the same sentiment for stylistic reasons. The popular English saying ‘respect a fool to avoid noise’ which means ‘to keep out of trouble, it is not necessary to argue with someone who lacks understanding or the ability to listen but it is better to pretend agreeing than making them mad or having to explain the flaw in their idea’.

Considering the literal meaning of the individual words of this idiomatic expression is made of - which are explained literally in the above paragraph and by a) and b), it is evident that the relationship between the literal meaning of the idiomatic expression 20) and its cultural background (the uses of fire and how smoke is emitted) does not only explain its wider meaning but also contribute towards the comprehension of its figurative meaning as described in c). The discussion above also suggests that the cultural background of the idiomatic expression is better explained by its literal meaning.

The following theme illustrate that the Basotho people use familiar animals symbolically to acquire figurative meanings and compares them with human being.

4.2.6 Theme 6: Animals (Domestic and wild)

Northern Sotho Idiomatic Expression		English Back-Translation		Potential Translation/s		Meaning of the Idiomatic Expression	
21	<i>Mosadi ke tšhwene o lewa mabogo.</i>	a)	A woman is a baboon her hands are consumed.	b)	A woman is a baboon, we benefit from	c)	A good wife is a diligent one.

					her hard work.		
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Table 4.21 Example twenty-one

All participants' postulates that a good woman is a diligent one as they delicately identified c) as the equivalence for the idiomatic expression 21. This expression emphasises that a woman should be resourceful and hardworking to be considered worthy of marriage or of high quality within the Basotho community.

The above idiomatic expression is normally heard when the speaker of Northern Sotho describes the qualities of a real woman. It is used to inspire women to unleash their full potential as hard workers and/or resourceful members of the community. The idiomatic expression *mosadi ke tšhwene o lewa mabogo* literally translated as 'a woman is a baboon, her hands are consumed' or 'a woman is a baboon, we eat (benefit from) her hands (what she produces)' compares a woman of a baboon. One could ask: how could a woman be compared to a baboon and how could her hands be consumed? One could further ask, what are the qualities of a Baboon that some women possess? To answer these mysterious questions, one will attempt to explain how this expression came into existence amongst the Basotho community, the following paragraph explains the characteristics of and/or the qualities of a baboon as observed by the Basotho people as well.

Baboons are intensely social animals and they "work hard to maintain their large, well-run families and insist on order in their households, brooking no disagreement from mates or children" (Ursinus, 2021). Leigh (2009:58) adds that baboons are "intelligent and shrewd, and they are highly adaptable individuals". Baboons are described as hardworking social being with the ability to run their families and adapt (survive) in various conditions; more like human beings, their hands have long flexible fingers and opposable thumbs that allows them to pick up and grasp object delicately. The Basotho people are familiar with this admirable quality of a female baboon hence this idiomatic expression was constructed in this manner.

It is these qualities of a baboon that a real woman's quality is measured against: the ability to adapt and survive in various condition, to work hard in order provide for their families. Women, according to the Basotho tradition are expected to be married from their family to

another and they should be able to adapt the in-laws' ways of life. As *makoti*, one is expected to run household errands and provide for the in-laws including her husband. A real woman is used here because not all women possess these qualities. According to Basotho custom women who lack these qualities are referred to as *motlapa or sebodyu* (lazy person). It is for this reason one will usually hear Northern Sotho speakers saying: '*yo yena ke motlapa wa bodikgai*' meaning that 'this one is the laziest person ever'.

This idiomatic expression clarifies the importance of the literal meaning a) and b) and the figurative meaning of this expression as well as the cultural background of the idiomatic expression and the background knowledge of the Basotho people regarding the baboon in order to fully comprehend this idiomatic expression.

The figurative explanation of this idiomatic expression indicates that the characteristic of a real woman is metaphorically compared to that of a baboon. Majority of the Northern Sotho speakers could be familiar with the figurative meaning of this expression as well as the literal meaning but very few of them could trace how it came into existence. Therefore, the literal description of the idiomatic expression assists to restructure the cultural background of this expression in the sense that the user will get to know the cultural background as to how, and why, the idiomatic expression originated.

Similar to the above expression, the following illustrate the characteristics of a real man.

Northern Sotho Idiomatic Expression		English Back-Translation		Potential Translation/s		Meaning of the Idiomatic Expression	
22	<i>Monna ke nku o llela teng.</i>	a)	A man is a sheep, he cries within himself.	b)	A man is like a sheep, he does not cry publicly when he is in trouble.	c)	A real man is strong and courageous; he does not expose his problems publicly.

Table 4.22 Example twenty-two

The idiomatic expression *Monna ke nku o llela teng* literally translated as ‘a man is a sheep; he cries within himself’ clearly indicates not only women are metaphorically compared to animals but the same applies to man. Moreover, the Basotho people use familiar animals – both domestic and wild – symbolically in the form of idiomatic expressions to acquire figurative meaning. Like the idiomatic expression 21) this expression also explains the importance of the relationship between literal meaning a) and b) and the cultural background of the idiomatic expression as well as the background knowledge of the Basotho people regarding their animal character observation in order to fully comprehend this idiomatic expression.

One could ask why is *monna* (man) symbolically compared to *nku* (a sheep) and what are the qualities or characteristics of a sheep that *monna* possesses? To resolve this mystery, one will attempt to explain how this expression came into existence amongst the Basotho community. The following paragraph explain the characteristics of and/or the qualities of a sheep as observed by the Basotho people.

It is familiar to and customary and/or part and parcel of the culture of rural Basotho people to own *dinku* (sheep) as part of their livestock. Although sheep are social domestic animals, they are “usually very quiet and gentle, holding themselves aloof (reserved) from the world” (Marino & Merskin, 2019:2) as compared to goats and other domestic animals. The Basotho people has observed this docile (quite) character of a sheep. This is because a sheep will remain quite when it is in difficult situation and /or being slaughtered. This docile character of a sheep is metaphorically compared to the expected behaviour a real man; hence this idiomatic expression was constructed in this manner. A real man is not expected to espouse his problem publicly and/or a real man does not go around telling people his problems according to this idiomatic expression.

The above demonstration displays that the word *monna* as it is used in this idiomatic expression does not refer to an ordinary man, but to the supposed characteristic of a normal man, which is metaphorically compared to that of a sheep. Similarly, to the above 21), majority of the Northern Sotho speakers could be familiar with the figurative meaning of this expression 22) as well as the literal meaning but very few of them could trace how it came into existence. Therefore, the literal description of the idiomatic expression assists to restructure the cultural background of this expression in the sense that the user will get to know the cultural background as to how, and why, the idiom or the proverb originated.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter presented biographical information of all 95 participants which comprises 84 students and 11 Language practitioners. Student population consist of both Bachelor of Arts Honours students and Master of Arts students while language practitioners' population comprised of Lectures from the School of Languages and Communication and lexicographers from the Sesotho sa Leboa National Lexicography Unit – of the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture - based at the University of Limpopo. This chapter also presented and discussed themes as they emerged. The discussion of themes prove that culture plays a crucial role in the translation of Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions. The bicultural character of translators is seen as a prerequisite. It is also noted that the relationship between literal explanations and the cultural background of each idiomatic expression assists in comprehending the figurative meaning of idiomatic expressions. Lastly, the Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions uses familiar words, object and scenarios symbolically to acquire figurative meanings.

The following chapter presents findings, recommendations and conclusions of the study.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.0 Introduction

The chapter focuses on the research findings, recommendations and conclusions of the study. The findings of this study are divided into two sections. This chapter also focused on the conclusion of the study by presenting the concluding remarks of the whole study based on what it entailed as well as summarising what the study touched on. The summary of the chapters looked into summarising the chapters of the study and outlined what each of these chapters focused on and contributed towards achieving the goal of the study. The chapter also presented the recommendations based on both sections of the findings of the study. The researcher defined what should be done on the translation table to best consider the role culture in the translation of Northern Sotho idiomatic expression into English. The chapter ends with concluding remarks as it argues that the objectives of this study have been achieved.

5.1 Summary of the chapters

This sub-section presents a brief overview of the study as the chapter summaries are presented below.

Chapter 1: Introduction and background of the study

This chapter marked the beginning and serves as the yardstick of the study. It presented the key introductory statements, the background and an argument the study is based on. The chapter argues for the vitality and relevancy of the study in contemporary society emphasising its significance in academic fields, corporate world and to the communities at large. It addresses the cross-cultural communication challenges occurring in social settings from a translation perspective. As the study focuses on the analysis of the role of culture in translation of Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions into English, the chapter briefly contextualised the purpose of the study to provide direction to the readers. The preliminary literature is provided in this chapter along with the methodology adopted and its justification. The research aim and objectives of the study together with the research questions were presented. Amongst others, the key terms and concepts as they apply to this study were also presented.

The research focused on the following objectives: to examine the translation strategies used in the translation of idiomatic expressions from Northern Sotho into English; to establish taking regards for cultural aspects during the translation of idiomatic expressions from Northern Sotho into English; and to determine if there is flow in reading the translated idiomatic expressions from Northern Sotho into English. The chapter – plan – helped the researcher to manage each chapter towards achieving the goal of the study. This chapter was concluded by providing a clear organisation of the proposed study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The chapter focused on the literature review wherein different scholars whose studies were relevant to this study were reviewed. The researcher attempted to “extracts and synthesises the main points, issues, findings and research methods which emerge from a critical review of the readings” (Nunan, 1992:217) to build a coherent argument which leads to the descriptive analysis of the role of culture in the translation of idiomatic expressions. The chapter also attempted to answer the main research questions as outlined in chapter one with the purpose of achieving the aim and objectives of the study. The chapter revealed that translation of idiomatic expressions remains a thorny activity on the translation table. Nord (1977) argued that translation is not only a linguistic but also a cultural transference of meaning; the review also revealed that in order for these challenges to be addressed, translators are supposed to have a good mastery of not only both languages but also source languages culture and target language cultures. Thus, the role of culture is unavoidable during the translation of idiomatic expressions. The study share sentiments with scholars like Akbari (2013:13-14) that “languages are expressions of culture [through] systems of verbal symbols [such as idiomatic expressions] – vocal and/or written, organized by particular rules (grammar) & used by particular rules (grammar) and used by particular communities in order to develop and communicate their thoughts and affections”. Geertz (1973:89) maintains that culture is “historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols [and] expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate”.

The focus was also on the theoretical framework, where Nord’s (1997) Functionalist Theory underpinning was discussed. Geertz’ (1973) Interpretive Theory of Culture is also adopted as a supporting theory. Amongst other things, Nord (1977) functionalist theory helped in the realisation that translation is indeed not only a linguistic but also a cultural transference of meaning. While Geertz thick description helped to elucidate the cultural meaning and

challenges encountered during the translation of idiomatic expression. It was through the guidance of these theoretical frameworks that the meaning-making process of the role of culture in the translation of idiomatic expressions was realised.

The chapter also looked into the following:

- classifications of idiomatic expressions (Idioms, proverbs and metaphors)
- problem associated with the translation of idiomatic expressions
- the role culture in the translation of idiomatic expressions; and
- Strategies for translating idiomatic expression.

The chapter revealed that the difficulty of idiomatic expression depends on its categories of idiomaticity because some expressions are easily identified while others are not easily recognised. The chapter also revealed that culture plays a crucial role in the interpretation and translation of idiomatic expressions as cultural elements of each language. It is alluded that Idiomatic expressions are not actually untranslatable; it is their culture-specific context which can make them difficult to translate. Various scholars suggested different translation strategies that could be useful on the translation table and concur that translation is a cross-cultural communication tool.

Al-Haddad (1994:217), sustains that “there must be some relationship between the meaning of most idioms and the meanings of their constituents at some time in the past, and, if not, they would not have been expressed by them”. Thus, Idiomatic expressions are constructed by words established by usage and throughout the use of the expression overtime, it acquired more various meanings. In the same breath, Svensén (2009:190) supports that “originally, all idioms had a more or less literal meaning, which then became more and more figurative, finally ending up as expressions where the original meanings of the individual components had faded”.

It is upon this basis that the study revealed that individual components of an idiomatic expression and its literal meaning are of critical importance in discovering how the idiomatic expressions came into existence, which is the cultural background of the meaning of this idiomatic expression and as to why the expressions acquire a particular figurative meaning. Moreover, the individual components of the idiomatic expression help to identify the

relationship between the literal meaning of the idiomatic expression and its figurative meaning as well as the cultural background of the individual words in this expression.

Barker (2011:67) idioms are “frozen patterns of language which allow little or no variation in form and, in the case of idioms, often carry meanings which cannot be deduced from their individual components”. The statement “idioms, often carry meanings which cannot be deduced from their individual components” by Barker (2011:67) suggests that individual components of an idiomatic expression are of less or no value in the interpretations of such an expression. The study is of a different view and suggests that the meaning of some idiomatic expressions are transparent and their meaning could be deduced by considering the meaning of their individual components and their relationship with their historical background.

Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

This chapter provides insights into the research design and research methodology used to gather and analyse data to provide answers to the research questions of the study. Credibility of the study and ethical considerations was also dealt with in this chapter. It focuses on the design selected for the study, the sampling procedure used, research instruments, data collection, interpretation and analysis. The selection of the research methodology as described in this chapter was determined by the aim and objectives of the study as discussed in Chapter 1.

This study employed the interpretivism paradigm also referred to as constructivism because it “emphasises the ability of individuals to construct meaning” in social settings (Nieuwenhuis, 2017:60). The researcher is of a view that, by studying participants in their social context or natural environment, provided a greater opportunity to understand the perceptions they have of the role of culture in the translation of idiomatic expressions and the meaning they assign to them. It is for this reason, the study realised the descriptive analysis of the role of culture in the translation of Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions into English. This study adopted descriptive design to ensure that the evidence obtained enables the researcher to answer the research question (s) as clear as possible. Given that the study is descriptive in nature, it adopted a qualitative research approach. Thus, it was through the research design adopted that the researcher managed to collect and analyse evidence which made it possible to answer the research questions of the study and come to the realisation of the objectives of the study. On research design, Flick (2011:65) supports that

it is “a plan for collecting and analysing evidence that will make it possible for the investigator to answer whatever questions he/she has posted”.

As Bezuidenhout (2016:75) stated that the “goal of descriptive research is to describe the characteristic of phenomena, relations between variables or relationships between phenomena as accurately as possible”. The study classified idiomatic expressions according to their nature and revealed that the individual components of the idiomatic expression helps to identify the relationship between the literal meaning of the idiomatic expression and its figurative meaning as well as the cultural background of the individual words in this expression. Thus, some idiomatic expressions are generally less fixed than others and have more transparent meanings that could be deduced from their individual components.

In this qualitative study, the researcher analysis data through thematic content analysis to explore and understand the meaning participants ascribe to idiomatic expressions in order to present a descriptive analysis of the role of culture in the translation of Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions into English. It was through the adoption of this approach that the researcher identified subjective themes (key patterns) and constructed of a framework to communicate the essence of what data revealed.

Qualitative content analysis in this study involved the systematic descriptive analysis of the role of culture in the translation of Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions into English to provide an in-depth understanding of, both linguistic and cultural aspects as well as the challenges occurring on the translation table. The researcher approached data in an interpretative paradigm and reached a goal of providing a thick description of idiomatic expressions as mirrored in the data.

Chapter 4: Data Presentation, analysis and interpretation

Data presentation, analysis, and interpretations are the main topics of this chapter. There are two main sections to the chapter. It started by addressing the participants' demographic information. The researcher was able to understand varied experiences of participants through demographic information, including students and language professionals. Participants' gender, age, race, and level of study are included in the demographic section. Second, a presentation and discussion of themes as they emerged; adversity, family life, community life and that of both domestic and wild animals. Idiomatic expression under each theme were analysed with a focus on the role of the Basotho culture in the translation of

Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions. The researcher attempted to accomplish this task by also looking at the relationship between the literal explanation or definition and the cultural background of each idiomatic expression.

Qualitative thematic content analysis enabled the researcher to analyse data to explore and understand the meaning participants ascribed to idiomatic expressions to present a descriptive analysis of the role of culture in the translation of Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions into English.

Chapter 5 Findings, recommendations and conclusions

The chapter marked the end of the research project. It focused on the research findings, recommendations and conclusions of the study. The findings of this study were divided into two sections. The first segment of the findings are constructed from the literature reviewed in chapter two while the second leg of the findings are deduced from the data collected, analysed and interpreted in chapter four. In summation, the first section finding from literature review argues that, although scholars like Baker (1992) regard and/or consider the individual components of the idiomatic expression insignificant in comprehension of the idiomatic expression as the focus on the figurative meaning. Against this view, the study argues for the vitality of individual components of the idiomatic expression as they help to identify the relationship between the literal meaning of the idiomatic expression and its figurative meaning as well as the cultural background of the individual words in this expression.

While the second leg of findings from chapter four, argues that Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions are used as a means of moral instructions at different levels of Basotho communities; they are of philosophical and practical relevance, mostly are short and brief and use familiar objects and/or animals to enable hearers or readers to memorise them easily. In addition, Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions are culture bound and originate from afar.

This chapter also focused on the conclusion of the study by presenting the concluding remarks of the whole study based on what it entailed as well as summarising what the study touched on. The summary of the chapters looked into summarising the chapters of the study and also outlined what each of these chapters focused on. The chapter also presented the recommendations based on both sections of the findings of the study. The researcher

defined what should be done on the translation table to best consider the role culture in the translation of Northern Sotho Idiomatic expression into English.

5.2 Findings of the study

The following subsections present findings following the study themes and emerging themes.

5.2.1 Findings guided by emerging themes

Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions originate from the oral tradition of the Basotho and were traditionally transmitted from one generation to another by word of mouth. Recently, they are recorded to preserve them for posterity. Books like *Marema-ka-dika tša Sesotho sa lebowa* is one of the examples.

Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions reflect both the past and present, and they are as relevant today as they were to the traditional society. They are used to convey various lessons of life in different levels of society. To comprehend the figurative meaning of and cultural role of Northern Sotho idiomatic expression, it is necessary to decode it because the literal translation often fails to capture its true meaning. For example, the expression *Kgomo go hlabana tša šaka le tee*, which means 'every house has its own quarrels' requires such decoding. This idiomatic expression is used to harmonies contentions amongst siblings, family members and/or people who work together; it also acknowledges that it is common to experience sibling rivalry and/or colleagues conflicts or disagreements.

Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions are of practical relevance. The expression '*Sehlare sa muši ke go o katoga*' translated as 'not all problems require solutions, some need to be evaded'; serves as a good example of a practical aspect of life. This idiomatic expression is used to caution people from attempting to solve all the problems, especially those out of their reach (control). Thus, it is sometimes important and safer to walk away from a problem or association while it is still possible and safe to do so.

Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions are also of philosophical relevance. The idiomatic expression '*mphempe e a lapiša, motho o kgonwa ke sa gagwe*' meaning 'borrowing and lending spoils friendship' portrays the philosophical significance of the Basotho idiomatic expressions. The expressions of this nature are used as guiding principles for behaviour to encourage self-reliance and/or hardwork amongst individuals.

They are also used to caution people of the danger of relying on lending and borrowing because it has the potential to spoil the relationships.

Most of the **Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions are short and brief** and use familiar objects and animals to enable hearers or readers to memorise them easily. For instance, '*bobedi bo bolaya noga*' meaning 'two heads are better than one'. This expression uses the snake as a familiar reptile amongst the Basotho community. The expression '*Ya se rage etla tlatša kgamelo*' translated as 'if things go well (there are no disturbances), great things will happen'; also uses a cow and *kgamelo* (milking container) as familiar object.

In addition to the usage of familiar objects and animals, Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions describe human nature abound in the use of idiomatic expressions as language elements. The expression '*tau tša hloka seboka di šitwa ke nare e hlotša*' translated as 'united we stand, divided we fall'; serves as an example. The fundamental concept of these expressions lies in the collectivist notion that if people who live and/or work together happen to isolate themselves from the team and work on their own instead of a team, they are each destined to fail or be defeated. It is of critical importance for people to live and/or work together to be united.

Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions are used as a means of moral instructions at different levels of society. They are used to encourage members of the society and at other times are used to caution individuals against particular forms of behaviour. The idiomatic expression '*Moepalebitla o a ikepela*' translated as 'Make one's bed and lie in it' is an example of expressions used to caution against certain behaviour. This expression is used to caution people of the danger of aiming to cause misfortune to others because such misfortune usually occurs to the initiator. That is to say, 'being unkind to others usually has a detrimental effect on oneself as well'. The idiomatic expression '*o se ke wa nyela didiba*' translated as 'who leaves behind the truth, returns to it'. To inspire others to rather keep harmonious relationship with others that spoil the relationship. This is because if you are kind to others they are likely to be kind to you when you are in need.

Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions are culture bound. The expression *go ya ga maotwanahunyela* translated as 'to die' serves as an example. Tracing back to the cultural background of this expression, it acquired its meaning from the traditional method used by the Basotho people when burying their dead. The lack of knowledge or historical practices of the Basotho culture might derail the translator in this context.

The natural environment is crucial to the Basotho people as there are several plants and animal idiomatic expressions highlighting various aspects of human conditions (see example 12,14,15 and 17); human nature, family life, community life, adversity and encouragement. In summation, Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions are used to for the following amongst the Basotho community:

- To guide moral instructions at different levels of society.
- To encouragement hard work and harmonious life style
- To convey various lessons of life
- African proverbs reflect both the past and present, and they are as relevant today as they were to the tradition society.
- Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions practical relevance
- Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions are also of philosophical relevance.

5.2.2 Findings guided by major themes

Given that acculturation is a process of learning a new culture. Translation serves a crucial role in making Northern Sotho culture universal; thus, bringing Northern Sotho culture in contact a foreign cultures. Therefore, translation of idiomatic expression links cultural units of one language with that of the other. Translation of idiomatic expression does not only transfer fundamental elements of culture but also it transfers foreign histories.

The translator's duties are not limited to eradicating cultural boundaries; it also crosses the barriers of cross-cultural communication. Idiomatic expressions as vital elements of Northern Sotho are embedded into the Basotho cultural ties. In summation, the study found the following.

- The study found that the individual components of an idiomatic expression and its literal meaning are of critical importance in discovering how the idiomatic expressions came into existence, which is the cultural background of the meaning of this idiomatic expression and as to why the expressions acquire a particular figurative meaning
- The individual components of the idiomatic expression helps to identify the relationship between the literal meaning of the idiomatic expression and its figurative meaning as well as the cultural background of the individual words in this expression.

- It is evident that the cultural background of the idiomatic expression is of critical importance for one to produce a well-grounded equivalence during the translation of idiomatic expression.
- The literal explanation of the idiomatic expression assists to structure or restructure the cultural background of the expression in the sense that the translator and the target readers will get to know the cultural background of the expression.

With reference to the above findings, the study argues that the individual components of the idiomatic expressions are of critical importance as they help one to determine cultural root and the figurative meaning of the expression. Thus, considered carefully, they expose the cultural background of the expression as to how, and why, the idiomatic expression was coined and (its usage in various contexts). Moreover, they are likely to improve the quality of translation.

Looking at example 3) *go ya ga maotwanahunyela* meaning 'to die'. The literal meaning of this expression is 'to go to the place called 'ga maotwanahunyela', which makes little or no sense. Tracing back to the cultural background of the expression 3), the expression acquired its meaning from the traditional method used by the Basotho when burying their dead as explained in 4.2.1. From these arguments, it is evident that the cultural background of this idiomatic expression comes handy in the comprehension of this expression. Moreover, the individual words illustrate how the expressions acquired their figurative meaning and how they came into existence.

As it is argued in example 4 in chapter four, the expressions a) and b) could be seen as meaningless and or of less value, they are of critical importance in discovering how the idiomatic expressions 4) (*ya se rage e tla tlatša kgamelo*) came into existence. The literal definitions a) and b) of the idiomatic expression helps to identify the relationship between the literal meaning of the idiomatic expression and its figurative meaning, and the cultural background of the individual words in this expression. The cultural definition of the idiomatic expression 4) reveals that its real meaning c) is metaphorically compared to the process of milking a cow. This figurative meaning has nothing to do with milking cows and/or milk containers. However, in the literal or practical sense, it is correct that 'If the cow which is being milked does not kick away the milk container and spill the milk, the milking process will go on well and the container will ultimately be filled with milk'. It is also correct that the explanation entails that, in this context, if things go well (there are no disturbances), great things will happen as identified as c) in 4 of 4.2.1. Thus, the set goal shall be achieved.

However, the application of c) in various context being in construction and students preparing for examinations, indeed great things shall happen. The goal will be achieved as the construction projects will be successfully completed and the student could pass the examination if there is no disturbance. It is also evident that the origin of the expression does pertain to the cow, particularly the milking process, but the meaning of the expression has evolved such that it no longer pertains specifically, or even at all, to the cow or the milking process at all. The example further confirms the fact that Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions use known cultural words and objects in the form of metaphor to express figurative meanings.

Furthermore, the individual components of the expression '*go tla nkgga go sa bola*' - as argued for in example 1) illustrate the relationship between the individual components of the idiomatic expression and its figurative meaning. As mentioned in example 1), the equivalent (c) is considered functional equivalent for the expression '*go tla nkgga go sa bola*'. It was further argued that the translator had the relationship between the literal meaning of the expression and its figurative meaning considered.

These relationships in expression 1) explained as follows: *monkgo* (smell) is associated with *go bola* (to rot/expire). Anything that is rotten smells and it warns that something is not well with the rotten object or within a dwelling area. A smell or anything rotten is not appreciated by human beings hence it is usually avoided. The bad smell usually caution people of the potential danger or discomfort situation. Therefore, the expression 1) is used by the Basotho to caution others to be careful of possible danger, something unwelcome or deception in a particular situation. In addition, Holmes (2020) warns that whenever there is a stinky or Skunk smell in the house, it's important to know what those odours are. "Dangerous odours warn of potentially lethal outcomes such as a natural gas leak, an electrical fire or septic gas" that smells like rotten eggs; "prolonged exposure of even low levels of hydrogen sulphide can cause health issues such as headaches, fatigue, dizziness and loss of appetite" (Holmes, 2020:np).

Therefore, explain in expression 1, the word *monkgo* (smell) is associated with *go bola* (to rot/expire) – something unpleasant and/or potential danger. It is therefore evident that the individual components of these expressions play a critical role in identifying the relationship between the literal meaning of the idiomatic expression and its figurative meaning.

5.2.3 Problems of translating Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions

Translation is generally a difficult task to accomplish and translating idiomatic expression makes it rather a thornier activity (Khalil, 2010). It is amongst the most problematic parts of language study. The study found the following problem associated with the translation of Northern Sotho idiomatic expression are:

- Lack of idiomatic expression with the same form and meaning in the target language. Identification of a potential idiomatic expression sharing the same meaning and form with that of the source language in the target language seems to be the ideal and most recommended strategy; but is not always applicable with Northern Sotho and English as they originate from different cultural backgrounds. In the context of this study, this strategy was applied in expression 19: *thibela malwetši e phala kalafo* translated as 'Prevention is better than cure' (see 4.2.5).
- Misinterpretation of the idiomatic expression caused by the lack of cultural and historical background of Basotho.

Historically, firewood is the most primary common preferred source of energy utilised for cooking, as well as boiling water and space heating within the Basotho community and in many developing countries. Some communities use cow dung (*dišu*) along with wood (*dikgonye*) to make fire. Both the *dišu* (cow dung) and *dikgonye* (wood) emits smoke which causes uncomfortable awkward feeling and major eye irritation and sometimes clouds the eye lenses with smoke. One who grew up around electrified households and/or is not familiar with this source of energy and the smoke produced by the resources used is likely to misinterpret the idiomatic expression – because of lack of experience or cultural background - such as example 20 as illustrated in chapter four. As a result, this lack of cultural knowledge, the transference of fundamental elements of Northern Sotho culture and histories or practices into English becomes difficult.

- The difficulty in translating some aspects of meaning Northern Sotho idiomatic expression conveys into English, such challenges are the results of the culture-specific context of the expression.

This challenge is illustrated in example 4) where participants are of different views regarding the equivalence of the idiomatic expression '*ya se rage e tla tlatša kgamelo*'. Majority of the participants argued that c) could serve as the communicative equivalent of the expression 4) while a minority were of the view that

b) could accurately serve as the equivalence for the expression 4). The minority misinterpreted the expression 4) and limited its meaning to the milking process which is not applicable to various situations while the idiomatic expression 4) is meant to be used in various situations and was not constructed for this purpose only. Its limitation to the practicality of the milking process compromises the gist of the message as intended by source language. From the cultural point of view, the minority could have been confused by lack of knowledge on how the Basotho traditionally milk a cow and/or because are familiar with the technological means of milking a cow using a Fore-stripping. Moreover, the minority failed to translate the resource *kgamelo* (milking container) as a culture specific item mostly because of their lack of cultural knowledge of how the Basotho traditionally milks a cow. Because of this lack of cultural historical knowledge, the transference of fundamental elements of Northern Sotho culture and histories or practices into English becomes difficult.

- Failure to recognise the cultural differences between Northern Sotho and English. Lack of cultural or traditional way of milking a cow could lead one to failure in recognising the equipment used during the process of milking a cow as compared to the technological way of milking a cow. The lack of knowledge of traditional resources used such as *letswa* (rope made with animal skin), *kgamelo* and others as compared to the usage of Fore-stripping could also hinder one from recognising the cultural differences. Holding the entire teat in hand and gently squeeze with your fingers starting with a thumb and index finger and squeezing the other fingers in turn. Moreover, as argued above, the Basotho community uses firewood as a source of energy while the Western energy was coal and other forms.

These arguments go hand in hand with Nida's (in Sans 1990:103) three presuppositions which must underline the semantic analysis: "no word (or semantic unit) ever has exactly the same meaning in two different utterances; there are no complete synonyms within a language; and that there are no exact correspondences between related words in different languages".

- The difficulty of recognising the idiomatic expression by the translator or the reader. This is because not all idiomatic expressions could be easily recognised. This difficulty is illustrated in expressions that portray the acts of revealing a secret such

as '*go phula sekaku*' translated as 'spill the beans'. In Northern Sotho and English respectively.

- Another challenge facing the translator or readers has to do with expression having two meanings: the literal, and the figurative meaning. This is found in expressions like '*go ya ga maotwanahunyela*' which literally means going to a location called '*ga maotwanahunyela*' and figuratively meaning 'to die'
- Lastly, the selecting the most suitable translation strategy for the translating Northern idiomatic expression into English.

The above arguments go hand in hand with Baker's (1992:65) consideration that "the main problems that idiomatic and fixed expressions pose in translation relate to two main areas: the ability to recognize and interpret an idiom correctly and the difficulties in rendering various aspects of meaning that an idiom or a fixed expression conveys into the target language".

5.2.4 Strategies used in the translation of Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions

Translation of Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions into English involves the exchange of cultural meaning from a source language culture into the appropriate target language culture and it requires a process of cultural comprehension. This process requires identification of the appropriate translation strategies.

This study reveals that the following strategies could come handy on the translation table during the translation of Northern Sotho idiomatic expression into English.

- Using an idiom of similar meaning and form
- Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form
- Paraphrasing (using a non-idiomatic expression)

Amongst the strategies outlined in chapter two, to determine the flow in reading the translated Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions from into English, the most prevailing translation strategies adopted in this study was paraphrasing and using idiomatic expressions with similar meaning but different form. There are rarely examples of the strategy with idiomatic expressions of similar form and meaning. Paraphrasing or using non-idiomatic expression is found to be the ideal strategy when there is no idiomatic expression of dis/similar form and meaning. However, there is no straightforward or predefined approach to cope with idiomatic expressions, but it is the situation, which decides which

strategy to be adopted, (Shojaei, 2012). This study distances itself from translation by omission.

5.2.5 The role of culture in the translation of Northern Sotho idiomatic expression

Most of the translation difficulties encountered during the translation of Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions into English are the results of source culture uniqueness and its differences with the target language culture. Put differently, the cultural gap between both the source language and the target language prevails as the translation problem. Northern Sotho culture is at the centre of problems arising during the translations of idiomatic expressions into English. Although it is found that translation is a cross-cultural communication tool, there are some limitations. It is due to the cultural awareness of both source language and target languages that the translator is able to produce a well-grounded idiomatic equivalence. This argument is in line with Chateris-Black (2003:25) remark that “It is through figurative modes of thoughts that a culture signifies its unique view of the world; it is this uniqueness, which present the greatest problem for the translator of idioms”. Baker (1992:68) is of a view that “Idioms and fixed expressions which contain culture-specific items are not necessarily untranslatable. It is not the specific items an expression contains but rather the meaning it conveys and its association with culture-specific context which can make it untranslatable or difficult to translate”.

In an attempt to overcome this challenge, one should take regard to the extent of the cultural interference in the idiomatic expression and classification of the expression itself. Translation assumed the role of transmitting cultural symbols between Northern Sotho English in this study. Idiomatic expressions are a vital language phenomenon and elements that compare and contrast Northern Sotho and English cultures and are a way of expressing ideas and feelings that are unique to their cultural group. Taking regards of the cultural background of Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions during translation determine the flow in reading the translated idiomatic expressions into English.

Culture as a way of life, familiarise translators with the historical background and traditions of Northern Sotho as a source culture language so that they (translators) are able to retrieve the figurative meaning of idiomatic expressions. Thus, considered carefully (historical background), disclosures the cultural background of the expression as to how, and why, the idiomatic expression was coined. This revelation has the potential to improve the quality of Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions translated into English.

The cultural differences of Northern Sotho and English present translation as an active factor in cross-cultural communication, exchanging cultures and cultural knowledge. This is because idiomatic expressions as language symbols are used to maintain and convey culture and cultural ties. Both Northern Sotho and English culture were found influential in the process of translating idiomatic expressions. Northern Sotho culture itself gives rise to its own restriction in transmitting the Northern Sotho idiomatic expression into English (Brooks, 1964). Therefore, one could argue that the objectives of this study have been realised.

5.3 Recommendation

The study recommends investigation on the historical background of Northern Sotho idiomatic expression. The investigations should among others cover the following aspects of idiomatic expression.

- The origin of idiomatic expressions, why and how the idiomatic expression was coined.
- The role played by the individual words in comprehension, translation and analysis of each idiomatic expression.

Although the study found the above recommendations critical in the study of idiomaticity, translation, linguistics and language practice in general; the above could not be investigated because they are outside the scope of this study. Additionally, the above aspects could not be covered in the study due to time constraints and economic resources.

5.4 Concluding remarks

This is the final chapter of the study and it served as the study conclusion. This study was undertaken to critically analyse the role of culture in the translation of Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions into English. The study concludes that language has a cultural backbone and it (language) could not exist without culture. Northern Sotho idiomatic expressions are symbolic elements of Northern Sotho language and are culture specific. Moreover, translation is a cross cultural communication activity.

Although idiomatic expressions are not easy to translate, they are intriguing to culture and are vital and influential symbols of communication. The translation strategies mentioned in 5.2.4 (using an idiom of similar meaning and form, using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form and Paraphrasing) found to work well during the translation of Northern

Sotho idiomatic expressions into English. Most of the problems of translating idiomatic expressions rest upon the cultural and historical differences between Northern Sotho (SL) and English (TL).

Although this study concurs with scholars that idiomatic expressions function as a whole and have special meaning different from the ordinary meaning of each separate word (Towse & Knight 2009; Mojela, 2004; Cain & Owens, 2016; Nengovhela, 2017; Baker, 1992, 2011, 2018). The study maintains that the individual components of an idiomatic expression and their literal meaning are of critical importance in discovering how the idiomatic expressions came into existence. The individual components of this contribute towards the comprehension of the idiomatic expressions and as to why the expressions acquire a particular figurative meaning. Taking regards cultural aspects during the translation of idiomatic expressions from Northern Sotho into English came handy in realising the goal of this study since there is a flow in reading the translated idiomatic expressions from Northern Sotho into English. As a result, the translated English (TT) expressions carry one-to-one meaning with those of Northern Sotho (SL).

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