

**LANGUAGE DYNAMISM IN ENGLISH – NORTHERN SOTHO / NORTHERN  
SOTHO – ENGLISH BILINGUAL DICTIONARIES: A CASE OF TRANSLATION  
EQUIVALENCE**

By

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## DECLARATION

I Tlou Phestus Meso, declare that the mini-dissertation entitled **Language Dynamism in English–Northern Sotho/Northern Sotho–English Bilingual Dictionaries: A Case of Translation Equivalence**, hereby submitted by me to the University of Limpopo, is my own work and that all sources that I have used and quoted have been indicated and duly acknowledged by means of complete references.

.....

Signature

.....

Date

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate my efforts to my adorable sisters, brothers and nephews, Tlou Curthbeth, Noko Daphney, Matlou Juliet, Morakane, Lethabo Ophelia, Semakaleng Fortunate, Leruo Brain, Katlego, Puno Tlou-Junior, Mphileng, Pheladi, Bontle Matšipa, Nakeng and Ditheto Meso.

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- I am also exceptionally grateful to the Lord Almighty God, for in Him, nothing is impossible.

## **ABSTRACT**

This study reveals that language dynamisms affect the compilation of Northern Sotho – English bilingual dictionaries. In this regard, the study shows that the role of translation equivalence cannot be taken for granted. To fully grasp what translation equivalence entails, the study compared formal equivalence with dynamic equivalence. Although there are merits in adopting foreign terms and concepts, the study investigates the problem lexicographers and terminologists of English–Northern Sotho or Northern Sotho–English bilingual dictionaries encounter and suggests possible solutions. Different strategies and procedures for dealing with non-equivalence between the source and target languages are also discussed.

Lastly, the study recommends that language dynamism is inevitable if Northern Sotho is to thrive as one of the functional languages in the world. The consequences of shunning dynamism are dire as this might lead to language death.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Any living language constantly changes, either progressively or regressively. People's linguistic knowledge is not static. As a language is learned or lost, it merely adapts to ever changing constraints of the speaker's mind and to the conditions of social milieu. Trask (1996) regards every language that people use as changing constantly. A good example is English that has been changing throughout its history and continues to change today.

Language dynamism occurs everywhere and affects all of us in the universe. In the light of this statement, the study examines language dynamism that affects translation equivalence in bilingual dictionaries such as the *Pharos: Popular Northern Sotho/English Dictionary* by Kriel (1997) and *Pukuntšu: Sesotho sa Leboa/English* by Mojela (2010).

#### **1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

In this dynamic world, new words, pronunciations and grammatical forms are constantly coming into use. At the same time, old words, old forms and old pronunciations are gradually dropping out of use (Trask, 1994). Looking at the above statement by Trask, one can tell that indeed languages are not static; they are dynamic and this dynamism is spawning language changes in vocabulary. However, not all old words drop out of use as they also gain new meaning. New words are constantly coined to describe new concepts as they arise in our fast changing surroundings. Lexicographers need to be aware about the challenges brought about by language dynamism and record these changes and growth in languages. In other words, lexicographers need to adjust and update bilingual dictionaries as the need

arises. For instance, the lemma *crazy* as indicated below in (1 a-b) illustrates this point:

- (1) a. Ohh ohh ohh Jesus.  
(I) am so in love with you.  
You drive me *crazy*.  
I can't stop thinking about you...
- b. Peter is *crazy* about Maria.

The meaning of the word *crazy* above might be confusing to non-speakers of English and might not be used correctly in some instances because it has gained new meaning in contemporary language used by the contemporary generation. The lemma *crazy* does not only mean *mad* or *angry* as one might think, but also shows enthusiastic feeling of love. The speaker or singer in (a) above, expresses the mood of enthusiasm he has for Jesus and in (b), Peter is in love with Maria. This is validated by *Macmillan Monolingual Dictionary* (2013) below:

- (2) a. Crazy about someone.  
(Very much in love with someone)
- b. Crazy about something.  
(Very enthusiastic about something)

It must be noted that the meaning of words depends on how they are used and the context in which they are used. Looking at the above examples from *Macmillan Monolingual Dictionary*, it is evident that the meanings of the lemma *crazy* are not limited to a bad mood (angry and mad) but also reflect a positive mood (love, like and interests). Interestingly, the translation equivalence of the lemma *crazy* in Northern Sotho – English dictionary as provided by Kriel (1997:210) appears as follows:

(3) crazy – *gafago, tsenwa*.

The translation equivalent of the lemma *crazy* in (3) above does not include or say anything about *love, like* and *interest* like *Macmillan Monolingual Dictionary* in (2) above does. Looking at (3), the dictionary will hardly be useful to anyone who will encounter the word *crazy* as used in (1) and (2) above. The conclusion here is that it seems that African bilingual dictionaries are outdated in terms of language dynamism. Responding to this need, the translation equivalents of the lemma *crazy* can be presented in this manner:

(4) crazy – *rata; kganyoga; gafago; tsenwa*

Looking at (4) above, one may conclude that lexicographers of English – Northern Sotho bilingual dictionaries are faced with a challenge of updating their work. It is of vital importance to include *rata* and *kganyoga* as translation equivalents of the lemma *crazy* so that the dictionary users will also understand the meaning of the source language form. One would agree as stated above that old words gain new meanings over time.

The following articles also shed light on the matter:

(5) Ngwana yo o a *fiša*, ijooo she is hot (Vuma, 2008).

(This child is hot, ijooo o a *fiša*).

(6) She is hot (from a movie named White Chicks, 2004).

(O a *fiša*).

When one looks at the articles (5) and (6) above provided with their translations below them, one realises that the translations are correct but the speakers in article (5) did not literally mean that *this child is hot*. This is a conversation between two teenage boys aged between 17 and 19 years talking about a 16 year old girl (Ledile) whom Thapelo (speaker in article 5) is sexually attracted to and wishes to be in an affair with. In article (5), by *ngwana* the speaker does not mean a *child* but refers to a

*girl* and by *fiša* and *hot* the speaker does not refer to a *state of producing heat (hot)* but refers to *beauty*. In short, the speaker was saying *this girl (Ledile) is beautiful*. The same applies to the speaker in (6) where by *hot* refers to *beauty*.

Northern Sotho and English speakers who are not familiar with contemporary language influenced by language dynamism will be confused by the meaning of the words *ngwana*, *fiša* and *hot* in the way they are used in the above context. In order to close this existing gap, lexicographers need to revise bilingual dictionaries on a regular basis.

### **1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM**

English–Northern Sotho/Northern Sotho–English bilingual dictionaries have not handled language dynamism properly. The study attempts to show where this applies and how it can be resolved.

### **1.5 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

#### **1.5.1 Aim of the study**

The aim of this study is to examine language dynamism in English – Northern Sotho/Northern Sotho–English bilingual dictionaries. The researcher intends to achieve the aim by focusing on the following questions:

- What are the challenges brought about by language dynamism in bilingual dictionaries?
- How should dynamic equivalence be presented in English–Northern Sotho/Northern Sotho–English bilingual dictionaries?
- How should lexicographers update bilingual dictionaries to meet the dictionary users' expectations?

## **1.5.2 Objectives**

Objectives of this study are as follows:

- To identify the challenges brought about by language dynamism in bilingual dictionaries in English–Northern Sotho/Northern Sotho–English bilingual dictionaries.
- To indicate the way in which dynamic equivalence is presented in English – Northern Sotho/Northern Sotho–English bilingual dictionaries.
- To ensure that lexicographers become aware of language dynamisms so that they can adjust and update bilingual dictionaries in a user-friendly manner.

## **1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The qualitative research method was used to gain understanding of the study.

### **1.6.1 Data collection**

#### **1.6.1.1 Primary sources**

The primary sources in this case were the English–Northern Sotho and Northern Sotho – English bilingual dictionaries themselves, namely:

- a. Pharos: Popular Northern Sotho Dictionary.
- b. Sesotho sa Lebowa Pukuntšu.
- c. Oxford Pukuntšu ya Sekolo.
- d. South African Multi-Language Dictionary.

#### **1.6.1.2 Secondary research method**

Through the secondary research method, textual analysis method was used in this study. The researcher consulted bilingual dictionaries and lexicographic textbooks, journals, dissertations, as well as relevant websites to gather information.

## **1.7 DATA ANALYSIS**

Data collected in this study were analysed by describing what language dynamism entails. The comparative approach was also used to analyse the data seeing that various bilingual dictionaries came under scrutiny.

## **1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The study is of great significance because it investigates and suggests solutions that lexicographers might use when they encounter challenges when updating bilingual dictionaries. This study also familiarises dictionary users with the role of language dynamism in dictionaries.

Although linguists have attempted to study language dynamism, little has been done with regard to language dynamism in English–Northern Sotho/Northern Sotho–English bilingual dictionaries. This study is therefore undertaken to close this gap.

The examination of language dynamism in bilingual dictionaries will equip dictionary users with comprehensive lexicographic information to understand the relationship between formal and dynamic equivalence.

## **1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethical issues are the concerns and conflicts that arise over the proper way to conduct research. Ethics defines what is or not legitimate to do, or what moral research procedure involves (Neuman, 2003). Therefore, the study was conducted based on the following ethics which needed to be taken into consideration when the researcher interacted with the respondents. In this study, there was no harm whether physical or psychological to the respondents. In fact, in this case, the study relied on textual analysis, and there was no need to consult respondents.

## **1.10 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY**

Chapter One serves as general introduction to the study. The chapter provides the background of the study, statement of the problem and research methodology. The chapter also highlights the aim and objectives of the study as well as the significance of the study.

Chapter Two presents the review of different scholars in relation to language dynamism in English–Northern Sotho/Northern Sotho–English bilingual dictionaries and the treatment of translation equivalence.

Chapter Three deals with research design and methodology of the study.

Chapter Four treats the presentation of translation equivalence.

Chapter Five presents the findings, conclusion and recommendations of the study.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this chapter is to review literature related to the impact of language dynamism in bilingual dictionaries. This chapter analyses various factors that contribute to language change. On bilingual dictionaries, the review focuses on challenges faced by lexicographers and the accuracy of translation equivalence. Since a good literature review should be comprehensive, critical and contextualised (Hofstee, 2006:9), in this regard, the researcher contextualises the literature through detailed discussions and where necessary uses relevant examples.

Communication is a purposeful activity. Thus, a conversation is not something that “happens” but is a communicative action carried out by people to interact; share opinions, insights, experiences, and perspectives aiming to convey meaning. Communicative purposes are directed at other people who play the role of receivers from speakers. Communication takes place through a variety of media and in various situations, is limited by factors such as space, time and place. Each specific situation determines what and how people communicate. Situations are not universal but embedded in a cultural habitat, which in turn conditions the situation. As a result, considering different factors, interlocutors choose a language that suits them best in a given situation and this contributes to language dynamism.

#### **2.2 CULTURE AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT**

The Longman Online Dictionary of Contemporary English (2014) defines culture as the beliefs, way 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 (generation). Every generation has its own particular culture, a way of its own life. Culture describes the manner in which a

particular generation conducts itself and the way it uses language to communicate. Culture is naturally educative and creative. Culture's creativity involves the use of the imagination or original ideas to create something (Oxford English Dictionary, 2014). Therefore, culture differs from one generation to another. It is dynamic and changes with time. The same applies to language use. The way language is used in a particular generation at a given time may not always remain like that. Language use is fashionable and changes with time depending on the culture of each generation influenced by factors such as the social media, code-switching, language shift, evolution, and other factors.

According to Smith (1966), every living individual constantly communicate with others. In contemporary society different people communicate in different ways, as do people in different societies around the world; and the way people communicate is the way they live. It is culture. In this regard one realises that communication and culture are inseparable (ibid). This is also applicable to language and culture as people communicate through language and through other codes of human interactions.

Sharing the above-mentioned sentiment, Shohamy (2006) states that "individuals make decisions about the use of language according to what suits them best in a given context as language is personal and individual". Individuals choose words and ways to use them to express meaning in different conversations, at different points in time, in different contexts and domains. For example, in soccer language, when one says *this player is kgomo* (cow) (*sebapadi se ke kgomo*), it does not imply that the player is a cow as suggested by the presentation from Kriel (1996) below:

(1) **kgomo** – cow

Speakers of both Northern Sotho and English who are not familiar with soccer language will not understand what the speaker implied by *this player is kgomo*. One can conclude that regardless of the word used, what is important is that the message must be conveyed clearly.

All languages depend on words and sentences having meaning, every word and sentence is associated with at least one meaning. Accordingly, semantic theory must be able to assign to each word and sentence the meaning(s) associated with it in that language (Kempson, 1977). In the case of words, Kempson's theory essentially means writing a dictionary. But in the case of bilingual dictionary, the situation is more complex because of language dynamism. This leaves lexicographers with the work of updating dictionaries accordingly.

### **2.3 LANGUAGES AS LIVING ORGANISMS**

Most of us, according to Hyltenstam and Viberg (1994), are familiar with ways of talking about languages where they are depicted as living organisms – languages are born, they grow, develop, and die. We may conceive of languages as being more or less distantly related to each other, they have parents and sisters, and they share no genetics with unrelated languages.

Only languages such as Latin, that have ceased to 'live', are static and fossilised. Living languages are in a continuous motion, adapting to the social contexts in which they are used. They take form as different registers or lects, they appear in the written or spoken mode, and above all, they move with time, changing chronologically (Hyltenstam & Viberg, 1994).

Based on the above statement, languages, like human beings have factors that contribute to their growth and death. Languages, like human beings have factors that contribute to their survival on earth. They are born, grow and die like individuals. Individuals need food and shelter to survive. Likewise languages need speakers who will feed them to grow and become stronger and keep growing. Individuals who are without food suffer from malnutrition and die suddenly. The same applies to a language without speakers.

There are different factors that contribute to people's death such as sicknesses although some die due to natural causes and others by murder. Some languages disappear because of various reasons such as economic, political, speaker's negligence or attitudes and natural death.

A language dies when its speakers give up speaking it in favour of some other languages (Trask, 1996). Such a situation occurs when two or more languages come into contact with another language which is considered more prestigious. Some speakers of African languages believe that English is a language of business, and a passport to success in the wider world (Trask, 1996).

## **2.4 TRANSLATION EQUIVALENCE**

Newmark (1988:5) defines translation as "rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text". Nida (1982:12) shares the same sentiment as he defines 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". Therefore, translation refers to a kind of communication process that provides equivalence between the source text (ST) and the target text (TT). It is generally agreed that the fundamental requirement of any kind of translation is to guarantee that the message is satisfactorily transmitted from the source language to the target language. This means that, the translator should try his or her best to reproduce the equivalent message of the original text in the target text so that the target text reader can understand the source message adequately.

Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) view equivalence-oriented translation as a procedure which "replicates the same situation as in the original, whilst using completely different wording". They also suggest that, if this procedure is applied during the translation process, it can maintain the stylistic impact of the source language (SL) text in the target language (TL) text. According to them, equivalence is therefore the ideal method when the translator has to deal with proverbs, idioms, clichés, nominal or adjectival phrases and the onomatopoeia of animal sounds. With regard to equivalent expressions between language pairs, Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) claim that they are acceptable as long as they are listed in a bilingual dictionary as "full equivalents". In a case where there is no literal equivalent for a particular ST word or sentence, then it is up to the translator to choose the most suitable way to render it in the TT.

According to Nida and Taber (1982), there are two different types of equivalence, namely, formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence. Formal correspondence (equivalence) “focuses attention on the message itself, in both form and content, unlike dynamic equivalence which is based upon “the principle of equivalent effect” (Nida & Taber, 1964:159). The two above-mentioned theorists provide a more detailed explanation of each type of equivalence.

## **2.5 DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCE**

Dynamic equivalence is defined as a translation principle according to which a translator seeks to translate the meaning of the original in such a way that the TL wording will trigger the same impact on the TT audience as the original wording did upon the ST audience. Nida and Taber (1982:200) argue that “frequently, the form of the original text is changed; but as long as the change follows the rules of back transformation in the source language, of contextual consistency in the transfer, and of transformation in the receptor language, the message is preserved and the translation is faithful”. Both these scholars consider dynamic equivalence, as a more effective translation procedure. Despite using a linguistic approach to translation, these scholars are much more interested in the message of the text or, in other words, in its semantic quality.

## **2.6 FORMAL EQUIVALENCE**

Formal correspondence consists of a TL item which represents the closest equivalent of a SL word or phrase. Nida and Taber (1982) make it clear that there are not always formal equivalents between language pairs. They therefore suggest that these formal equivalents should be used wherever possible if the translation aims at achieving formal rather than dynamic equivalence. The use of formal equivalents might at times have serious implications in the TT since the translation will not be easily understood by the target audience (Fawcett, 1997). Nida and Taber (1982) further assert that formal equivalence usually distorts the grammatical and stylistic patterns of the receptor language, and hence distorts the message, so as to cause the target audience to misunderstand or to labour unduly hard.

## 2.7 MONOLINGUAL DICTIONARY

According to Barnbrook (2002), a monolingual dictionary is designed to be used by learners of a particular language. In this regard, this means that the English monolingual dictionary is designed for English native speakers (learners). Basing the argument on the fact that an English monolingual dictionary is not only used by English native speakers, but by everyone familiar with English, one can argue that a monolingual dictionary is designed for anyone who is familiar with the language. Monolingual dictionary uses only one language in the entry. The following presentation in the Oxford Online Dictionary (2014) demonstrates this.

**Magnesium** - the chemical element of atomic number 12, a silver-white metal of the alkaline earth series. It is used to make strong lightweight alloys, and is also used in flash bulbs and pyrotechnics, as it burns with a brilliant white flame (Symbol: **Mg**).

A monolingual dictionary has double purposes which must be taken into consideration (Barnbrook, 2002). On the one hand, it is the object of lexicographer's work irrespective of whether the purpose of the dictionary is description, interpretation or explanation. On the other hand, it is the instrument by which this work (description and explanation etc.) is done.

## 2.8 BILINGUAL DICTIONARY

De Sousa (1995:129) defines a bilingual dictionary as a "plurilingual dictionary which registers the equivalences of meanings in two languages". Bilingual dictionaries are seldom diachronic and usually alphabetic in arrangement. According to Mphahlele (2001), a bilingual dictionary records two languages at the same time. He (Mphahlele) maintains that in a bilingual dictionary, one language is recorded as a source language whereas the other is the target language. This kind of dictionary supplies the source language forms (lemmas) with the target language equivalents.

A bilingual dictionary consists of an alphabetical list of words or expressions in one language (source language) for which, ideally, exact equivalents are given in another language (target language). The purpose, according to Landau (1989:7), is to “provide help to someone who understands one language but not the other”. The following example as presented by Kriel (1996: 144):

(2) **sekgoba** – space, gap, area, slavish

From the above example by Kriel (1996), it is evident that the translation equivalents of the lemma *sekgoba* (which are space, gap, area, slavish) are in the target language. In this case, Northern Sotho serves as a source language whereas English serves as a target language.

Bilingual dictionaries may be mono-directional or bi-directional; that is, they may go in one direction only, for example from English to Northern Sotho, or be combined with another dictionary that goes from Northern Sotho to English. In this case, there are two dictionaries. There are also dictionaries in which the entry words are translated into two other languages (trilingual dictionaries) or more than two other languages (multilingual). Bilingual, trilingual and multilingual dictionaries show how words and expressions in a source language can be reproduced in target languages.

## **2.9 LEMMA**

According to Crystal (2003), a lemma is a word listed at the beginning of a dictionary entry which generally consists of a headword and is somewhat more of a common unit of lexical analysis among lexicographers.

A lemma is normally defined as a collection of all the inflected forms of what is, conceptually, a single word (Haskell, 2003). An example of a lemma is the word *swim* (of which swim is the base form). This consists of the base form *swim* together with the inflected forms *swims*, *swimming*, *swam*, *swum*, each of which is a different

type. The noun set *swim* (base form) and *swims* (inflected form) is generally regarded as constituting of a separate lemma as Haskell (2003) states.

## 2.10 LANGUAGE SHIFT

Language death occurs in unstable bilingual or multilingual speech communities as a result of a language shift from a regressive minority language to a dominant majority language. A language is said to be dead when no one speaks it any more. It may continue to have existence in recorded form, of course traditionally in writing, more recently as part of a sound or video archive (and it does in a sense 'live on' in this way) but unless it has fluent speakers one would not talk of it as a 'living language' (Crystal, 2000:3). Thus, it is the speakers who determine the future of a native language.

One can argue that it is not only languages that are being phased out but also words of a particular living language(s). This comes as a result of factors such as technological development, for example, the word *letsikangope*, refers to a small hole created on the outside wall of the house (mostly at the top) that serves to let light and air into a dwelling space. Buildings with *letsikangope* are not found among African communities in this century any more. As a result, the word *letsikangope* is hardly known by the present generation and is therefore hardly used among the communities. Because of technological and infrastructure development, *letsikangope* has been replaced by the word *window* which serves the same function.

One can conclude that any normal language changes throughout its lifetime just as individuals change throughout their lifetime. Speakers encounter new things they want to talk about, and may study and inter-connect with members of other language communities. In the process, they often need to develop new vocabulary and routinely creatively develop new meanings for old words. In this language dynamism process, speakers gradually borrow words from one language to another and develop new meanings for old words and sometimes new grammar along the way, coin new words, and lose old words.



## 2.11 BORROWING

Hoffer (2002) defines borrowing as the process of importing linguistic items from one linguistic system into another, a process that occurs any time two cultures are in contact over a period of time.

According to Hoffer (2002), borrowing implies that one language takes a concept from another language and makes it a permanent part of its own system. The borrowing of a linguistic form or concept from another language is implied to be permanent. Borrowed concepts are integrated (established) into the borrowing language as *lefastere* (window) is established in Northern Sotho and *lobola* (a Zulu word meaning a bride price, traditionally paid with cattle) is well established in English.

It is clear that English and Afrikaans languages have been sources from which other languages have borrowed (see examples below). To illustrate this, Northern Sotho, Sesotho, Setswana, isi-Xhosa and isi-Zulu borrowed from Afrikaans to refer to *table* and from English to refer to *bicycle* and *bible* as presented by Kotze, Groble, Moeketsi, Roux, Saule and Tajaard (1991) below:

### (3) **table**

Afrikaans to Northern Sotho

**tafel** – tafola

Afrikaans to Sesotho

**tafel** – tafole

Afrikaans to Setswana

**tafel** – tafole

Afrikaans to isi-Xhosa

**tafel** – itafile

Afrikaans to isi-Zulu

**tafel** – itafula

(4) **bicycle** and **bible**

English to Northern Sotho

**bible** - bibebe

**bicycle** – paesekela

English to Sesotho

**bible** - bebele

**bicycle** – baesekele

English to Setswana

**bible** - beibebe

**bicycle** - baesekele

English to isi-Xhosa

**bible** – ibhayibile

**bicycle** - ibhayisikili

English to isi-Zulu

**bible** – ibhayibheli

**bicycle** - ibhayisikili

Like many ethnic groups around the world, the Northern Sotho speakers have had a long history of contact with other language groups (English and Afrikaans speakers), with resultant borrowing of words from their languages. The researcher views borrowing as a natural process, and not the degradation of a language. Instead,

borrowings may give some witness to the economic, cultural and political interchanges that speakers of one language have had with other language groups.

To illustrate, *tafola* (table) is obviously borrowed from the Afrikaans word *tafel* (table). The word is now well established into Northern Sotho, as seen by how it follows the rules of Northern Sotho phonology and morphology. The fact that Northern Sotho has borrowed an Afrikaans word for the concept *table* and English word for the concept *bible*, and not French or other languages is an interesting detail. Therefore, one can begin to trace the types of inter-cultural situations obtaining at the point in history when Northern Sotho speakers first wanted to refer to 'table' and 'bible'.

By languages coming into contact, Hoffer (2002) implies that the speakers of those languages come into contact in some way. Noting that the speakers do not have to be physically in contact, writing is a means by which authors share language with their readers. As a result, borrowing has an impact on language dynamism in bilingual dictionaries.

## 2.12 SEMANTIC CHANGE

On semantic change, Yeniterzi and Wijaya (2013) argue that as people use words in new contexts, the meanings of the words change gradually, often to the point that the new meaning is radically different from the original usage. These authors validate their statement with the example below:

*Awful* originally meant 'awe-inspiring, filling someone with deep awe', as in the awful majesty of the Creator. At some point it becomes something extremely bad, as in an awfully bad performance, but now the intensity of the expression has lessened and the word is now used informally to just mean 'very bad', as in an awful mess.

Linguistic changes occur slowly and gradually over time and one cannot identify when and at which period of time these changes occur as well as what changes

occur in which part(s) of language transition. As words change semantically, this change is reflected in the way the words are being used.

As the researcher mentioned before, some words also change semantically, not in their original meanings but change in a way that they acquire additional meanings or are used to refer to other named objects over time. For example, the word *fiša* was used originally to refer to having a high degree of heat or a high temperature, but it is now also used to refer to beauty among the Northern Sotho community (teenagers in particular).

There are several groups of words that also change semantically and such words get additional meanings and are used for other named objects over time. The difference between these words from the first group of words is that their original meaning is still widely used, but additional uses of the words are introduced over time. For example, words such as *busted*, *mouse* and *disinterested* gained additional meaning. The word *busted* to the grandparents of today's generation, was simply slang for *broken*. The last decade or so reinvented *busted* to mean that someone was caught, probably doing something wrong. If a store detective noticed someone stealing a candy bar and nabbed him or her, he or she would be simply *busted* and probably be in big trouble. But the meaning of the word *busted* has changed yet again. This time, to say someone is *busted* means that they are ugly. While a *mouse* was used originally to refer to a small long-tailed animal, the word is now also used to refer to a hand-operated electronic device that controls the movement of the cursor or pointer on a display screen. The word *disinterested* was commonly employed to mean *not interested*, however, *disinterested* today has a precise, useful meaning of "neutral, unbiased".

Words may get additional meanings and these meanings may suppress the original meaning after a while (Yeniterzi & Wijaya, 2013). For instance, the word *gay* originally used to refer to feelings of being *carefree*, *happy*, or *bright and showy*. Today, the word *gay* largely refers to a homosexual person or the trait of being homosexual. Furthermore, the word *gay* is used to describe man attracted to members of the same sex. The word *gay* is rarely used to refer to the latter meaning and now when it is used the first meaning that comes to people's minds is the

homosexual man. In addition, to call someone a *bully* was, originally, to effectively say *good fellow* or *darling*, it was a term of compliment and endearment that could be used to refer to either sex. It was only in the seventeenth century that this mate became someone who showed off his good deeds whereas a century later the same word refers to the intimidating tyrant (oppressor) of the weak.

## **2.13 SOCIAL MEDIA**

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010:61), social media are “a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content”. Web 2.0 is described ‘as a platform whereby content and applications are no longer created and published by individuals, but instead are continuously modified by all users in a participatory and collaborative fashion’. So Web 2.0 might be seen as the ideological and technological foundation of social media (ibid).

On the other hand, Henderson and Bowley (2010: 239) define social media or Web 2.0 “as collaborative online applications and technologies that enable participation, connectivity, user-generated content, sharing of information, and collaboration among a community of users”. This definition includes most of the characteristics associated with social media identified by Mayfield (2008) who is of the view that social media encourages contribution and feedback (participation), is open to feedback and participation (openness), facilitate two way communication (conversation), facilitate formation of community groups or (community), and facilitate connections through links to other sites, resources and people (connectedness) (Mayfield, 2008:5). Dye (2007: 38), refers to social media users as Generation C where C stands for content, and could also stand for creativity or consumption or connected.

Social media are an integral part of life that encapsulated all internet based technologies and practices that people use to interact; share opinions, insights, experiences, perspectives, and media themselves. Social media are tools that catalyse communications across the globe; they provoke thought, dialogue and action around countless issues. Social media can be used by all areas of society;

business, politics, media, advertising, police, and emergency services. Below are some prominent examples of social media:

**Facebook**

**Twitter**

**WhatsApp**

**Mxit**

**WeChat**

**To-go**

## **2.14 LANGUAGE AND ORTHOGRAPHY OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

Orthography is defined by Coulmas (2003: 35) as a standardised writing system with respect to a set of graphic symbols (graphemes), such as signs, characters, letters, as well as diacritics, punctuation marks, et cetera. It also includes a set of rules or conventions, such as orthographic rules and pronunciation rules, rules for writing word boundaries, punctuation rules, capitalisation rules, et cetera.

One can argue that orthography is not only a system but an art for representing a language in written form, the study of spelling and how letters combine to represent sounds and form words. Orthography encompasses more than the symbols, that is; characters, numbers and/or letters that represent the sounds. Orthography also covers relative placement of these symbols, word breaks, punctuation, diacritics, capitalisation, hyphenation and other aspects which might be regulated in a written standard of a given language. Therefore, the researcher shares the same sentiment with Coulmas (1996:379) that “all orthographies are language specific”.

Orthographies of several languages are continually endangered by the ever-changing orthography of social media. English serves as a good example of an

endangered language affected by several factors including social media. For example, words are replaced by symbols (letters, emoticons and numbers). The study refers to the following example from social media orthography where the words *sad* and *smile* are respectively represented by the emoticons below:

(5) Sad



smile



The words *for*, *to* and *too* are examples of words which are replaced or represented by numbers whereas *too* and *to* are both represented by 2 as illustrated below:

6. For – 4.

To – 2.

Too -2.

Below are examples of words represented by letters and some of the letters within words are replaced by letters as illustrated below:

7. You – u.

Be – b.

Love – lov or lv.

Thanks – thnx or tnx.

In the word *thanks*, the letter *k* is replaced by *x* whereas *h* and *a* are omitted with *k* replaced by *x*. For the word *love*, some users omit *e* whereas others omit both *e* and *o*. The use of words depends on interlocutors' preferences as people choose words that suit them best in a given situation. Some combinations of letters represent phrases whereas others represent sentences as illustrated below:

8 **wuw** - who are you with?

**wud** - what are you doing?

**wtv** - watching television.

**paw** – parents are watching.

In the above examples, each letter represents a word as demonstrated below:

10 **p** - parents

**a** - are

**w** - watching

There are also letters which are combined with numbers to form words as illustrated below:

11 See you late - c u l8t

See you later – c u l8r

Furniture for you – furn4u

In the above examples, the word *see* is represented by the letter *c* and *you* by *u* and *late* and *later* by *l8t* and *l8r* respectively. In the sentence *furniture for you* furniture is represented by *furn*, *for* by *4* and *you* by *u* respectively. One can conclude that sentences are transformed into words whereas words are further transformed into letters and/or numbers. Thus, the orthography of a living language is not static.

Looking at the orthography of social media, one can conclude that, culture differs from one generation to another. This is the way of communication in the present generation as the orthography of any living language is ever-changing. Thus, language is used to create group membership that determines exclusion or inclusion. This suggests that only a particular group of individuals can understand the language of social media, as Shohamy (2006: 6) confirms that “language portrays the diverse personalities of different people”.

When it comes to orthography (language) usage in social media, social media users have a variety of choices of language use influenced by space, time and speed (conversation pace) with the aim of conveying a meaning to one another (Chisenga & Chande-Mallya, 2012). During conversations, social media users do not take into



consideration the correct usage of orthography (syntax, spelling etc.) and linguistic factors of the language used. In this case, they use language according to what suits them best in a given context. Some of these choices originate from social media users themselves; others are influenced by the surrounding environment, especially by what other social media users perceive as appropriate and convenient.

One can conclude that social media have transformed the English language and made misspelling the norm. This is validated by Hordle (2010) who maintains that;

Chatrooms and social websites encourage bad spelling. As people type at speed online, there is now a "general attitude" that there is no need to correct mistakes or conform to regular spelling rules. But this means that children who have been brought up with the internet do not question wrongly spelt words. The study says: "The increasing use of variant spellings on the internet has been brought about by people typing at speed in chatrooms and on social networking sites where the general attitude is that there isn't a need to correct typos or conform to spelling rules.

The use of symbols instead of words reduces the length of sentences and is considered as a conversation catalyst by social media users. Although social media users argue about the consistency of some symbols (for instance, letters; love – lov/lv), they share the same sentiment because the orthography of social media strives to maximise the efficiency of communication and is a common language that facilitates communication efficiently (Mayfield, 2008).

## **2.15 CONTEXT OF CULTURE AND CONTEXT OF SITUATION**

Language and culture are interrelated, interdependent and are also connected with context. Malinowski (1923: 494) argues that context is annexed with language in that language is presented and acquires sense in some context. The social and cultural features of the human communication process are also based on context construction. Context is the situation of speech in which people conduct speech intercourse. In specific situation, context can restrict and explain the utterance interpretation. Also context can infer the implication and complement of the utterance meaning which is omitted.

Firth (1957:111) asserted that linguistics is the study of meaning and that meaning cannot be divorced from the social context or context of situation. The framework developed by Firth includes the participants in the situation, their actions (both verbal and non-verbal), the effects of the verbal action, and other relevant features. Halliday (1973:49), like Malinowski, looks at language as behavior potential, an open-ended set of possibilities. “The context of culture is the environment for the total set of these options, while the context of situation is the environment of any particular selection that is made from within them” (Halliday, 1973: 49).

Context of situation, according to Halliday (1989:6), is the environment of the text, the set of meanings that are possible/probable (potentially available) in a given situation. The context of situation consists of three components: scene, manner and communicator. These elements interact with each other and limit the choice of forms.

Any word of a given language usually has more than one meaning due to change and development of society, science and technology. It is hardly possible for one to have a clear and correct comprehension, if one understands the word in isolation. The same sentence used in a different time, place or under a different situation might have different effects on people’s comprehension. Therefore, one needs to attain some relevant knowledge and understand it (sentence) according to the context. Therefore, meaning is determined by the context.

Choices of words are influenced by the surrounding environment, as well as by a variety of contextual considerations. The uses of language express and represent the unique individuality and personality of language users as they attempt to communicate and create meanings in ways that suit them best. Thus, when a language is used to convey a meaning within a given conversation, each individual has a personal and unique way and style of using language with regard to content, topics and ideas.

According to Malinowski (1923:478–479), the context of culture refers to the social and cultural background which language forms depend on as language is the carrier of culture, as well as a part of culture. These two aspects are interrelated and interdependent. Malinowski (1923:479) argues that “language must be deep-rooted

in a given culture; conversely, the social culture is unavoidably reflected by context.” In a given context of culture, when language is used to communicate, one must follow certain conventional rules for social communication.

This is demonstrated in the following examples:

12 (a) Sehlopha sa Malose se ja sa Thibedi ka kgwele ya  
Maoto.

(b) Puleng o ja lešela matsšatši a lehono.

If one does not notice the contexts in which these word(s) “*ka kgwele ya maoto*” and “*lešela*” are used in 12 (a) and (b) respectively, one would not know that the word *ja* in (a) means to defeat whereas *ja* in (b) means to dress well.

The same applies to the phrase below:

13 (a) Out in the west where men are men.

If one does not notice these words: *in the west*, one will not be able to know that the second *men* refers to *cowboys* who are a sort of men employed to look after cattle in the western part of the United States.

The cultural context in which human communication occurs is perhaps the most defining influence on human interaction. Culture provides the overall framework wherein humans learn to organise their thoughts, emotions, and behaviours in relation to their environment. Although people are born into a culture, it is not innate, it is learned. Culture teaches one how to think, conditions on how to feel, and instructs one how to act, especially how to communicate (interact) with others. This context sets criteria concerning relevance, adequacy and correctness which in turn determine both the production and the understanding of the linguistic utterances conveyed by communicators. Context plays an important role in utterance interpretation.

## 2.16 FALSE FRIENDS

False friends are a real problem for language learners. Even so, little research has been done on the identification of the difficulties language learners have when it comes to the use of these words. In this case, Holmes and Guerra Ramos (1993: 88) state that “false friends are words in two or more languages that are orthographically or semantically similar but do not have the same meaning”. Similarly, Chamizo-Domínguez (2008) points out that “the term false friends refers to the specific phenomenon of linguistic interference consisting of two given words in two or more given natural languages that are graphically and/or phonetically the same or very alike; yet, their meanings may be totally or partially different”.

Chamizo-Domínguez (2008:1) includes partial difference in meaning which is neglected by Holmes and Guerra Ramos (1993:88) and Allan (2009). The partial difference in meaning is visible in the example below (Pedro, 2002:1834).

Take for example the German word *Flanell* and the English word *flannel*. In German *Flanell* is used to refer to a certain type of cloth, in English to a certain type of cloth, but also to a cloth with a certain function (a wash-cloth for washing the body). The metonymic link that is exploited is the one between material and function. Furthermore, *flannel* can be used metaphorically in English to mean ‘evasive talk’. As this example shows, the two languages seem to have exploited certain meaning potentials in different ways: whereas ‘the German language’ stayed with the ‘literal’ meaning of *flannel* and did not venture any further into semantic space, ‘the English language’ moved along a metonymically and metaphorically structured semantic path and produced a word with multiple meanings.

Therefore, false friends could be defined as a language one (L1) word that is formally similar to a language two (L2) word in spelling and/or pronunciation but whose meanings are totally or partially different in both languages. In this case, L1 may be Northern Sotho and L2 being Setswana. One can argue that, as a result of

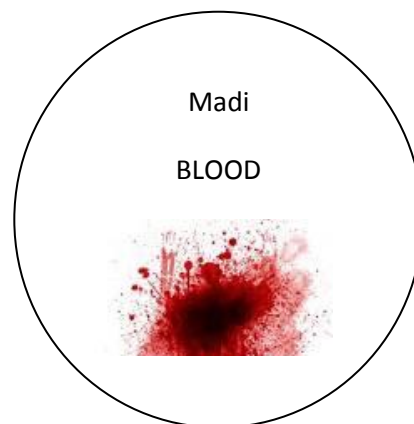
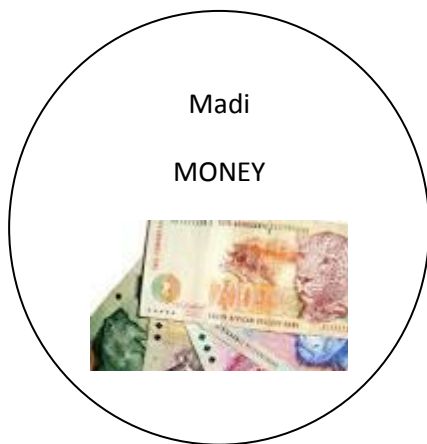
language dynamism there are two types of false friends, one with totally different meanings and the other with partial difference in meaning. Language practitioners including lexicographers need to take into consideration this vast change as it impacts language dictionary users and language learners.

For example, below are false friends with totally different meanings using the word *madi* from Northern Sotho and Setswana respectively:

(14)

Setswana

Northern Sotho



The above example illustrates false friends with total differences in meaning as they lay emphasis on the semantic divergence existing in both languages. This type of a false friend is also visible in the field of sport-related terms; the words *football* denotes different events and things in South Africa and the United States. In both countries, *football* is a game played between two teams of eleven players. However, American *football* is played with an oval ball moved along the field by running with it or throwing it while South African football consists of kicking a ball into the other team's goal.

The phenomenon of "false friends" is hardly known to most language learners. These tricky words seem to form an inseparable part of second language acquisition and are obstacles which occasionally trap even those highly proficient in their

second language, including translators and lexicographers. These false friends need to be dealt with within both the fields of language teaching and translation studies.

## **2.17 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER**

From the above discussion, different scholars conclude that languages are dynamic and not static in nature. Their dynamism is influenced by the surroundings that enable the participants in the communication process to interact. A word of a given language usually has more than one meaning due to change and development of society, science, and technology. Ultimately, these natural language changes also affect bilingual dictionaries. Strengthening the accuracy of translation equivalence, lexicographers need to take context into consideration because it plays an important role in language interpretation.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter outlines the research methodology of the study. Emphasis will be on the research method, population and sampling, data collection and data analysis. Ethical considerations and measures to provide trustworthiness are also discussed in this chapter.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Parahoo (1997:142) describes research design as a strategic plan of conducting research. Research design is the engine of research findings and report. Furthermore, Burns and Grove (2003:195) define a research design as a blueprint for conducting a study with maximum control over factors that may interfere with the validity of the findings. This study has adopted the descriptive and exploratory design underpinned by the qualitative method.

##### **3.2.1 Research method versus methodology**

Research is known as a scientific and systematic search for information on a particular subject. It simply refers to the search of knowledge. Research methods are the various procedures, schemes and algorithms used in research. All the methods used by a researcher during a research study are termed as research methods (Rajasekar, Philominathan & Chinnathambi, (2013:50). Research method includes different methods that are adopted for conducting research. Thus, research methods are the methods the researcher adopts for conduction the research processes.

Research methodology is the scientific way of solving the research problem. It is a science of studying how researchers conduct research scientifically (Rajasekar, Philominathan & Chinnathambi, (2013:50). The researcher equips himself with the various steps adopted to study a research problem within methodology, together with the important logic behind them. Hence, it is not only important for the researcher to know the research methods, but also the methodology. Methodology can also be defined as the study of methods by which knowledge is acquired.

According to Polit and Hungler (2004:233), methodology refers to ways of obtaining, organising and analysing data. Methodology decisions depend on the nature of the research question. In this study, methodology refers to how the research was done and its logical sequence. The main focus of this study was to examine language dynamism that affects translation equivalence in bilingual dictionaries; therefore the research approach was qualitative.

Furthermore, methodology is described as organised methods of doing something. According to Burns and Grove (2003:488) and Babbie (1992:89), methodology is an important tool of research that includes tools and techniques such as, the research design, population, sample, methodological limitations, and data collection and analysis. Henning (2004:36) describes methodology as a logical and consistent group of methods that complement one another and are able to deliver data and findings which will reflect the research question and suit the purpose of the study.

### **3.2.2 Qualitative research**

According to Merriam (2009:13), qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed. For instance, in this case the research focuses on how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world. Sharing the same sentiment with Merriam (2009:13), Parahoo (1997:59) concurs that qualitative research emphasises the experiences of people as well as stressing uniqueness of the individual. Qualitative research is also described as “a systematic subjective approach used to describe life experiences and situations to give them meaning” (Burns & Grove, 2003:19).



Some scholars do not only concentrate on the individual's experience but also the environment they (individuals) find themselves in, as Holloway and Wheeler (2002:30) indicate. They describe qualitative research as "a form of social enquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experience and the world in which they live". Similarly, Polit and Hunger (1995:517) describe qualitative research as holistic, as it is concerned with individuals in their geographical locations.

Burns and Grove (2003:356) do not only describe qualitative research as holistic but also as inductive, subjective and process - oriented methods used to understand, interpret, describe, and develop a theory on a given environment. Qualitative research is mostly associated with words, language and experiences and is not limited to numerical results or statistics. It is also described as a systematic, subjective approach used to describe life experiences and giving them meaning (Burns & Grove, 2003:356; Morse & Field, 1996).

Streubert and Carpenter (1999:17) argue that the researcher's participation in the study adds to the uniqueness of data collection and analysis. The researcher was involved and immersed in the study to become familiar with it. The involvement of the researcher helped to provide solid descriptions from the narrative data gathered from text (secondary sources). Giving examples from bilingual dictionaries, the researcher focused on the explanations of various entries. According to Holloway & Wheeler (2002:3), complete objectivity is impossible and qualitative methodology is not completely precise because human beings do not always act predictably. The texts are a product of authors' views and will be reflected in such texts.

### **3.2.3 Advantages and disadvantages of qualitative research**

According to Burns and Grove (2000:388), the strength of qualitative research lies in its descriptive or exploratory nature and it stresses the importance of context and the subject's frame of reference. Qualitative research is exploratory in a sense that it is not limited to numerical results; it can explore topics in great depth and detail.

Frequently, the openness of mind required gives a qualitative researcher the freedom to explore research questions from many angles. The common advantage of qualitative research methods is that they are economical and not time consuming. This is due to the use of small samples. Researchers can complete their investigations more quickly and at a lower total cost than they can with quantitative methods. Another advantage is the comprehensiveness of the data.

Regardless of potential advantages of qualitative research, one cannot ignore its potential disadvantages and the sample size limitations. The common disadvantage of qualitative data is that it normally lacks generalisability. This is due to the use of small and non-statistically drawn samples. The information generated by qualitative research techniques cannot be generalised to larger groups of individuals. This lack of representativeness of the target population severely limits the use of qualitative information in helping decision makers select and implement strategies.

Small sample sizes make it virtually impossible for researchers to extend findings beyond the group used to collect the data. Another sample size disadvantage is that the data generated through qualitative methods are limited by their inability to distinguish small differences. On the other hand, small samples do not allow researchers to be in a position to evaluate the impact of small differences. This is because researchers are forced to analyse qualitative data at aggregate (collective), and not disaggregate levels. Aggregation of the findings eliminates the opportunity to discover small differences and their impact. However, Holloway and Wheeler (2002:128) argue that sample size does not influence the importance or quality of the study.

#### **3.2.4 Contextual research**

Contextual studies focus on specific events in “naturalistic settings” (Burns & Grove, 2003:32). Thus, contextual research is based on the fact that it studies the phenomena in terms of its context. According to Mouton (1998:133), research can be described as contextual if the study is made of occurrences in their immediate environment or context. Context implies the conditions and situations of an event. The context is an important aspect in qualitative research. According to Holloway

and Wheeler (2002:34), context includes the environment and situations in which the study takes place as well as the culture of the participants and location.

This study is contextual in that it focuses on the factors influencing the language dynamism in a case where words have different meanings in different settings depending on the context they are used in (see 2.15).

### **3.2.5 Comparative research**

According to Heidenheimer, Hecllo and Adams (1983:505), comparative research is the act of comparing two or more things with a view to discovering something about one or all of the things being compared.

A common challenge in comparative research is that the data sets in different dictionaries may not use the same categories, or define categories differently. However, this challenge did not prevent the researcher to continue with the study as it did not arise as a surprise.

The aim of comparative research is to identify similarities and differences between social entities. In this study, the researcher compared Northern Sotho/English and English/Northern Sotho bilingual dictionaries with English monolingual dictionaries. As a result, the researcher considered this study as comparative research.

### **3.3 SAMPLING**

Polit et al. (2001:234) define a sample as “a proportion of a population”. This refers to a portion that represents the whole population with which to conduct a study. In this study, a total number of 4 Northern Sotho/English Bilingual dictionaries were used. The researcher selected these texts based on their relevancy in the study as they deal with lexicographic issues.

### **3.4 DATA COLLECTION**

Data that were already collected by other scholars were critically important in this study. This included bilingual dictionaries, lexicographic text books, dissertations, artefacts, and relevant websites.

### **3.5 DATA ANALYSIS**

According to Burns and Grove (2003:479), data analysis refers to the research mechanism for reducing and organising data to produce findings that require interpretation. Data analysis is not limited to description of the results only because it is transformed and extended (Burns & Grove, 2003:382).

Bilingual dictionaries were also scrutinised and interrelated with the data collected. While scrutinising the bilingual dictionaries, the researcher identified and described important features of data interrelations. Coding was used to expand the analyses. This entailed using themes, sub-themes and categories into which the lemmata would be classified. In this regard, Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) indicate that qualitative data can be analysed through thematic extent which deals with coding, explanation and reviewing.

### **3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

As the study relied mainly on textual analysis, there was no need to interview respondents. However, all the sources used in this study have been duly acknowledged.

### **3.7 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER**

In this chapter, the research design and methods were described, with emphasis on research methods, population and sampling, data collection and data analysis as well as ethical considerations. The study made use of the descriptive method to analyse data also ensuring that the results were trustworthy. Chapter four discusses presentation of translation equivalence.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **PRESENTATION OF TRANSLATION EQUIVALENCE**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter focuses on the presentation of translation equivalence with reference to Northern Sotho-English and English-Northern Sotho bilingual dictionaries. The emphasis is on strategies to supply functional translation equivalents. The researcher starts his argument by associating languages with living organisms such as plants and scrutinises the use of transliteration as a translation strategy.

#### **4.2 LANGUAGES AS LIVING ORGANISMS**

The Longman Online Dictionary of Contemporary English (2009) defines evolution as “the scientific idea that plants and animals develop and change gradually over a long period of time”. The Macmillan Online Dictionary (2015) defines evolution as the scientific theory according to which types of plants and animals change gradually over long periods of time through a process known as natural selection to become more suitable for their environment. Similarly, the Oxford English Online Dictionary (2015) describes evolution as “the process by which different kinds of living organisms are believed to have developed from earlier forms during the history of the earth”. However, Futuyma (1986:600) defines evolution as follows:

In the broadest sense, evolution is merely change, and so is all-pervasive; galaxies, languages, and political systems all evolve. Biological evolution is change in the properties of populations of organisms that transcend the lifetime of a single individual. The ontogeny of an individual is not considered evolution; individual organisms do not evolve. The changes in populations that are

considered evolutionary are those that are inheritable via the genetic material from one generation to the next. Biological evolution may be slight or substantial; it embraces everything from slight changes in the proportion of different alleles within a population (such as those determining blood types) to the successive alterations that led from the earliest protoorganism to snails, bees, giraffes, and dandelions.

Evolution is characterised by constant change on objects over a period of time, and so it is language evolution, for every language that people use changes constantly. Everything changes with changing times. This phenomenon is called evolution. There is a common idea that during evolution, roots of plants found in dry environments had to grow very deep in the soil to survive long periods of severe drought. However, there are a variety of adaptive strategies (Kummerow, 1981: 273). Among these, according to Kummerow (1981), “there are three types of root architecture that are described for perennial species. The first type, typical of succulent species, is made of shallow roots, not growing deeper than about twenty centimetres. The second type comprises both long roots growing parallel to each other, a few metres deep, and shallow adventitious roots designed for quick uptake of water after brief rainfalls. The third system is characterised by many lateral roots about one metre long, accompanied by very long taproots which can develop tens of metres long” (ibid).

During this process of evolution, objects including languages, adapt to survive or perish. When climate changes from a wet season to dry season, for example, some trees as living organisms, need to develop water storage organs to adapt and survive throughout the dry season. In other words, a well-established response of plants to drought is determined by its ability to survive during the dry season. The foregoing situation also happens to languages, their ability to develop technical vocabulary by translating new terms from language of transit will determine their either their growth or survival throughout the evolution. Thus, the future of African languages depends on their ability to develop their technical vocabulary. Therefore, language resistance to death relies on adaptive strategies African languages terminologists and lexicographers acquire throughout the evolution.

Furthermore, in the scientific study of plants (Botany) there are particular types of plants which grow better under the shadow whereas others mostly grow under and

climb high through other plants using them as a source of support in order to reach the canopy of such plants, with a purpose of accessing the sunlight. According to Lahaye and Civeyrel (2005), certain plants always grow as vines, while a few grow as vines only part of their life time. For instance, *poison ivy* and *bittersweet* can grow as low shrubs when support is not available, but will become vines when support is available. Therefore, plants grow differently in different situations (ibid).

Lianas are woody climbing vines that rely on external structural support for height growth to reach the available sunlight (Gentry, 1991). According to Schnitzer and Bongers (2002:223), Lianas compete with forest trees for sunlight, water and nutrients from the soil. Lianas use other plants (trees) and neighboring Lianas as supports, which often results in large tangles (Putz, 1984). Even in the absence of trees or other host species, Lianas can climb each other and effectively increase their height, avoiding being overtopped by other species (Putz, 1995).

A Liana is any of various long-stemmed, woody vines that are rooted in the soil at ground level and use trees, as well as other means of vertical support, to climb up to the canopy to get access to sunlight. According to these scholars' arguments, vine trees such as Lianas cannot grow high without support but they can use each other as a source of support. They emphasise that vine plants use other plants as a source of support to grow high with the aim of reaching the canopy of such plants to access the available sunlight.

Associating languages with plants, the researcher argues that languages as living organisms also encounter similar challenges in this global world with fast technological growths and innovation. As languages change with changing times, words were used in different centuries by different generations in different contexts. Some old words drop out of use while others gain new meanings, as languages are influenced by others. On the other hand, new words continue to be coined to describe new concepts as they arise. As a result, English enjoys the privilege as a terminology source language whereas African languages are often left behind because they lack technical vocabulary.

Languages can grow together or separately and/or differently in different situations. African languages can grow together with English as a source of support (source

language) for speedy development in this fast growing technological development. According to Roets (2001:1), for a language to develop, the daily growth of human knowledge in the science and technology of developed countries needs to be shared with developing countries.

This is also important as the status of a language depends on its possession of a technical vocabulary (Roets, 2001:1). The technical vocabulary of African languages will develop when technical terms are created in African languages. New African term equivalents in African languages will enable African language speakers to learn about science and technology in their mother tongue.

As a result, languages need to develop strategies in order to adapt and survive in this dynamic world. African languages are the most affected as they often lack technical vocabulary because most innovations are introduced in English. The challenge remains with terminologists and lexicographers to provide the appropriate equivalents in the given context.

In response to the underlying vocabulary gap between African languages and English as a terminology source language, African language terminologists and Lexicographers need to translate these foreign terms into mother tongue equivalents. This will enable expressing the vast number of new concepts and enable speakers of African languages to learn and communicate in the scientific language.

Mphahlele (2004) argues that African languages lack technical vocabulary and this necessitates the speedy development of technical terminology. It is clear that African languages need to grow using English and other foreign languages as sources of support. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996) recognises eleven official languages and nine of these languages are African languages. All official languages are deemed equal and should be treated as such. Therefore, African language terminologists and lexicographers should take advantage of this opportunity to develop the technical vocabulary of African languages to the status of English. In addition, the Language Policy and Plan sub-section (9) (2000:6) states that since language, as the fundamental instrumental of learning and teaching is at the heart of all education, learners should be strongly encouraged to use their



primary language as their main language of learning and teaching at all levels of schooling. However, this will only be possible if the technical vocabulary of African languages is developed to acceptable levels.

Although lexicographers and terminologists are faced with the challenge of supplying term equivalents for foreign international languages and updating bilingual dictionaries, the researcher associates languages with living organisms such as plants. The study argues that, using English as a support structure, African language terminologists and lexicographers can take advantage of and use English's well developed vocabulary to enrich African languages. This is due to the fact that many scientific texts are published in English (Mphahlele, 2004). In order to fulfil their task of providing the term equivalents for developed languages, lexicographers and terminologists need to be innovative and adopt appropriate methods or strategies of translation. This is because there is no fixed translation method or strategy that will be appropriate for all expressions.

### **4.3 FORMAL EQUIVALENCE VERSUS DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCE**

According to Newmark (1998), literal translation occurs when the source language's grammatical constructions are converted to their nearest target language equivalents, but the lexical words are again translated singly, out of context. Translating a text literally means preserving the form of the source text in the target language. The result of such a translation will be a grammatical expression in the target language because it is based on the form of a source language. One can argue that, this strategy prioritises the form of source language text. Although the source text does lack equivalents in the target language, in a case where equivalents exist in the target language for the source language text, such phenomena can best serve the translation purpose. However, it will not work for all expressions.

In this regard, lexicographers should bear in mind that what is important is not the word but the meaning of the word (message) uttered. The importance and end product of translation is communication. Below are examples of literal translations:

- (1) Malose o tswalela lebati.  
(Malose is closing the door).
  
- (2) Bana ba ralokela lebaleng la kgwele ya maoto.  
(Children are playing in the soccer ground).
  
- (3) Ka se ga gešo ke banna fela bao ba dumeletšwego go nwa bjala.  
(Only men are allowed to drink beer in my culture).
  
- (4) O rile ge a bala mphato wa bo šupa mmagwe a hloofala  
(When s/he was doing standard seven his/her mother died).

It is without a doubt that the translator has been successful in translating the above mentioned examples (1-4). The translator used word for word or literal translation. This method of translation does not work effectively in every situation. Therefore, in different situations the translators need to opt for the suitable translation method in order to be successful in their work.

Formal correspondence consists of a target language term which represents the closest equivalent of a source language word or phrase. Nida and Taber (1982) made it clear that there are not always formal equivalents between language pairs. They therefore suggest that these formal equivalents should be used wherever possible if the translation aims at achieving formal rather than dynamic equivalence. The use of formal equivalents might at times have serious implications in the target text since the translation will not be easily understood by the target audience (Fawcett, 1997). Nida and Taber (1982) themselves assert that “typically, formal correspondence distorts the grammatical and stylistic patterns of the receptor language, and hence distorts the message, causing the receptor to misunderstand or to labour unduly hard”. Thus, the translation method that works for one text might not work for the other text. The following example is an illustration of the above argument.

(5) Malose o ikutswa le mosadi wa Semenya.

(Malose is stealing himself with Semenya's wife).

(6) O be a theeditše ka tsebe tše pedi o kare ba bolela le yena.

(S/he was listening with two ears as if they were talking to him/her).

The word *ikutswa* in example (5) is derived from the word (verb) *utswa* meaning to *steal*. The word *steal* is defined as taking objects that belong to others without their permission. Although *steal* is the formal equivalent (closest translation equivalent) for the word *utswa*, the translator in the above example has been unsuccessful. The translator failed because s/he used literal translation instead of communicative strategy. This is because the speaker does not literally mean *Malose is stealing himself with Semenya's wife*. The translator did not consider the context and what the speaker implied when translating the text. The translator faced the same challenge in example (6) above, because s/he used literal translation which produced formal equivalence and distorted the meaning of the source text. The meaning of the source text is distorted since the target text is not communicative to produce the intended meaning.

The translator should have used the dynamic equivalent to translate the meaning of the original text in such a way that the target language wording would trigger the same impact on the target text audience as the original wording did upon the ST audience (Nida & Taber, 1982:200). Therefore, the above example should have at least been presented as follows:

(7) Malose o ikutswa le mosadi wa Semenya.

Malose is having an affair with Semenya's wife.

(8) O be a theeditše ka tsebe tše pedi o kare ba bolela le yena.

(S/he was listening attentively as if they were talking to her/him).

The translator of the above article used innovative approaches to ensure that the target text user is able to retrieve the intended semantic information. The examples above are functional and convey the speaker's meaning accurately. The researcher argues that the translator in the above example has been successful as s/he considered the context of the source text. The example below from Matthew Chapter 6 verse 11 illustrates the same challenge:

(9) Give us this day our daily bread.

(O refe lehono borotho bja rena bja ka mehla).

Bread is the staple food in Hebrew culture. Anything stable is steady and unlikely to change or move. A staple food, simply referred to as a staple, is a food that is eaten routinely by a particular community or society in such quantities that it constitutes a dominant portion of a standard diet. Porridge (*bogobe*) is the staple food in the Bapedi culture. Although *borotho* is the formal equivalent (closest translation equivalent) of the word *bread*, one may argue that, the translator was not accurate in the above example. The example above does not convey the speaker's meaning; therefore the end product is not functional. The translator needed to consider the context of culture in this regard. The example should at least be presented as follows:

(10) Give us this day our daily bread.

(O refe lehono bogobe bja rena bja ka mehla).

In situations such as this, translators need to be familiar with both the source language culture and target language culture to be successful in their work. If the Bible referred to bread, not as a staple food, then *borotho* as a formal equivalent will

serve a communication purpose. In this instance where *bread* refers to staple food, *bogobe* (*porridge*) conveys the accurate meaning of the source text and carries the cultural value of the target text. That is, when translating bread as food, and not as a staple food, *borotho* will serve as an accurate equivalent. The same challenges can be faced when translating the meanings of colour from one culture to another. The black colour is associated with bad luck and is a colour of mourning the dead. It is associated with death and is used predominantly in funerals in South Africa. However, ancient Chinese regarded black as the king of colours and honoured the black colour more consistently than any other colour. On the other hand, the white colour is associated with death and mourning the dead and was formerly worn at funerals, while in South Africa it represents purity and is worn by brides during wedding ceremonies. Translation is typically used to transfer written or spoken source language texts to equivalent written or spoken target language texts focusing on the message, not the word.

The translator in both examples (8) and (10) failed to reproduce the meaning of the source text because of the translation method used. It is evident that translators fail to reproduce the meaning of the source text in the target language because of the translation strategy adopted. Hence, familiar challenges are faced during translation of idioms. This is because some idioms are culture-bound.

#### **4.4 PRESENTATION OF IDIOMATIC EQUIVALENTS**

##### **4.4.1 Defining idioms**

According to Baker (1992:63), idioms are “frozen patterns of language which allow little or no variation in form and often carry meanings which cannot be deduced from their individual components”. Svensén (1993:108) describes them as a fixed group of words with a special meaning which is different from the meanings of the individual words. Idioms are fixed combinations of words having a special meaning not deducible from those of the individual words. Northern Sotho idioms usually start with the word *go* and *to be* in English, as presented below:

Examples of Northern Sotho idioms:

- (11) a. Go tsena pelong.  
(To be irritated).
- b. Go tsena bjang botala.  
(To disappear).
- c. Go tsena seretseng.  
(To be trapped in a problem and need to be rescued by others).
- d. Go tšewa ke phiri.  
(To die).
- e. Go tseba gore eng ke eng  
(To be knowledgeable).
- f. Go ja mollo/bogale.  
(To be extremely angry).
- g. Go ja dijo tša ditoro.  
(To hope for hopeless things).
- h. Go ja mamina.  
(To be extremely poor).
- i. Go hloka dinala.  
(To be lazy).
- j. Go ntšha phoka.  
(To urinate).
- k. Go ediša sefahlego.

(To be happy).

l. Go bulela pelo.

(To tell one your secrets).

m. Go tsena ka potleng.

(To be disrespectful).

n. Go tsena tsebeng.

(To make noise).

o. Go tshwa marapo.

(To calm down).

p. Go tšela pati.

(To curse).

q. Gotšhirimoga moetse.

(To be afraid).

r. Go swaya tsebe.

(To listen attentively).

s. Go tupa lerole.

(To relocate or migrate).

Examples of English idioms:

12.a. To turn tails.

(Go hlanola direthe).

b. To have a close shave.

(Go ntšha ka hlogo).

- c. To be down in the dumps.  
(Go nyama go fihla lehong).
  
- d. To let the cat out of the bag.  
(Go phuma sedielo).

#### **4.4.2 Problems of translating idioms**

Although all languages have idioms, it is not easy to find an equivalent in the target language that corresponds with the idiom in the source language in both form and meaning. This is because idioms may contain a culture-bound item and this poses a problem for the translator. According to Newmark (1988:28), "when translating idioms into idiomatic language, it is particularly difficult to match equivalence of meaning with equivalence of frequency". He believes that the main problems a translator faces, are not grammatical but lexical, that is words, collocations, and fixed phrases or idioms (Newmark, 1988). In addition, Davies (2004:193) mentions some of the problems translators may encounter in translating idioms and fixed expressions as follows:

- recognition of an idiom.
- no equivalent in the target language.
- a similar counterpart in the target language with a different context of use.
- an idiom used in the source text both in its literal and idiomatic sense at the same time, and
- difference between the convention, context and frequency of use in the source and target languages.

Baker (1992:65) shares the same sentiment with Davies (2004) who states that the main problems that idiomatic and fixed expressions pose in translation relate to two main areas. These are the ability to recognise 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.



According to Baker (1992), there are two cases which might lead to misinterpreting of an idiom, that is, when an idiom's literal meaning also makes sense and when there is an idiom in the target language which has a similar form but refers to a different solution. Furthermore, she mentions several problems a translator may encounter when translating an idiom (Baker, 1992:69-70) and these allude to the fact that;

- Some idioms may have no equivalent idiomatic expressions in the target language.
- Different languages may express the same meaning through a single word, an opaque idiom or a transparent fixed expression.
- An idiom may have a similar counterpart in the target language, but its context of use may be different; the two expressions may have different connotations, for instance, or they may not be pragmatically transferable.
- Sometimes an idiom in the source language refers to both its literal and idiomatic sense. Unless the target language idiom corresponds to the source language idiom both in form and in meaning, the semantic meaning of an idiom cannot be successfully reproduced in the target language.
- 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 language and target language.

#### **4.4.3 Strategies of translating idioms**

According to Baker (1992:73-74), it is not the specific items an expression contains which make it untranslatable or difficult to translate. That is, idioms and fixed expressions containing culture-specific items which are not necessarily untranslatable. The translator needs to find a figure of speech to be successful with his work. Regarding translation strategies, Baker (1992) presents four strategies for translating idioms which are discussed below.

##### **a. Using an idiom of similar meaning and form**

This strategy requires the translator to find an idiom in the target language which is equivalent to the source language idiom both in terms of meaning and form (lexical items). This strategy seems to offer the ideal solution, but it is highly difficult if not impossible for translators to find an idiom of similar meaning and form in target languages because languages are different and identify single concepts differently. Translators are likely to face this kind of challenge when both source language and target language do not belong to the same language family such as African languages and English owing to cultural differences. In the case where languages belong to the same language family, this strategy can be achieved in several occasions. In occasions such as this, the target language idiom should be similar not only in its form but also in meaning, because, sometimes a target language idiom that is of the same form as that of source language idiom may have a totally different meaning. Below are examples of idioms with same form and meaning from English to Northern Sotho, Xitsonga and Afrikaans respectively:

13. a. Motho o pepetšwe batho.  
(One is born for others).
  
- b. He who laughs last laughs longer.  
(Ntho ya morago ke ye kgolo).
  
- c. Actions speak louder than words.  
(Mintirho ya vulvula).
  
- d. Slip of a tongue.  
(Go thelelwa ke leleme).
  
- e. It rained cats and dogs.  
(Did het katte en honed ge reën).

**b. Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form**

In this case, according to Barker (1992), it is often possible to find a target language idiom or fixed expression which has a meaning similar to that of the source language idiom or expression, but with different lexical items. For example, the Northern Sotho expression *Khudu ga e lahle legapi la yona* and the English expression *a leopard cannot change its spots* use different lexical items to express the same idea (meaning): *people cannot change their personality or nature*. For example, *if one is bad he will always be bad*. In addition, for example, the Northern Sotho expression *mmala wa kgomo o bonagala namaneng* and the English expression *The apple doesn't fall far from the tree* use different form to express more or less the same meaning: *Children grow up to be similar to their parents*. For example, *if parents are bad the children are likely to be bad as well*.

It is not as easy as it looks for one to translate idioms from one language to another especially those that do not belong to the same language family. The translator needs to have a good cultural background of both source language and target language idiomatic expressions. Failure to understand the figurative meaning of the idiomatic expression will hinder the translator from finding the target language idiom or fixed expression which has a meaning similar to that of the source language idiom or expression. The following examples serve as illustrations.

14 a. Bobedi bo bolaya noga.

(Two kills a snake).

b. Bobedi bo bolaya noga.

(It is easy for two to kill a snake).

The translator in (14) above used literal translation to translate the idiom *bobedi bo bolaya noga* and he has not been successful in his work. It is evident that the literal meaning (a) makes little or no sense while the literal meaning in (b) has sense even though it does not serve the communication purpose nor convey the meaning of the proverb. Therefore, the example in (14) should have appeared as follows:

15 (a) Bobedi bo bolaya noga.

(Unity is strength).

Although, the figurative meaning of the proverb *bobedi bo bolaya noga* in (15) above is different from the literal meaning in (14) above, it gives the accurate meaning of the proverb and serves the communication purpose. It is also evident that, the translator in (15), unlike the one in (14), is familiar with the cultural background of both the source language and target language.

The meaning of the proverb *bobedi bo bolaya noga* is that, there is power in team work. This proverb teaches that when people come together and work together towards a common goal there is bound to be success. The same challenges might be encountered when translating the proverb below:

16 a. Mphiri o tee ga o lle.

(A single bangle does not make a sound).

b. Mphiri o tee ga o lle.

(A single bangle on the hand will not make a sound but two or more can make a sound).

Looking at the above examples in (16), it is evident that the translator was unsuccessful in doing his work as he failed to reproduce the meaning (produce the figurative meaning) of the proverb *mphiri o tee ga o lle*. Just like the translator in (14) above, the translator in (16) used literal translation to translate the proverb and therefore did not succeed in his work. It is evident that the literal meaning (16.a) makes little or no sense while the literal meaning in (16b) has more sense even though it does not serve the communication purpose nor convey the meaning of the proverb *mphiri o tee ga o lle*. The figurative meaning of the proverb *mphiri o tee ga o lle* simply means that *two people working together have a better chance of solving a problem than one person working alone*. The scenario presented below serves as an example.

*Patrick: may you kindly help me solve this trigonometric problem? Tebogo: Why ask me? I don't know anything about mathematics. Tebogo: Neither do I, but two heads are better than one.*

From the scenario, it is evident that although Tebogo is not good at mathematics, she believes that together they have a better chance of solving the trigonometric problem Patrick is faced with. The researcher argues that, the nearest proverbial equivalent for the proverb *mphiri o tee ga o lle* is *two heads are better than one* therefore, the example above should have been presented as follows:

17a. Mphiri o tee ga o lle.  
(Two heads are better than one).

The above presentation serves the semantic purpose. Although 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 (Baker, 1992), not all Northern Sotho proverbs have equivalence in English and that makes it more difficult for translators to translate proverbs from Northern Sotho to English. Davies (2004) argues that some idioms and proverbs have no equivalence in the target language. More examples and their equivalents of this nature are as follows:

- 18 a. Do not count your chickens before they are hatched.  
(Thari ga e šogwe ngwana a sešo a belegwa).
- b. Beggars can't be choosers.  
(Mošutelelwa ga a nabe).  
or (sa go fiwa sea thetelwa).
- c. Once bitten, twice shy.

(Lešilo ga le bethwe marago ga bedi).

- d. A bird in hand is better than two in the bush.  
(O seke wa tšhuma lekgeswa kao bona Pududu) or  
Bjang bja Pitsi ke bjo bo lego mpeng, bja hlageng e  
hwa nabjo).
- e. Not all that glitters is gold.  
(Lego lehubedu ga le hloke seboko) or  
(Molapo motle gao hloke semenya).
- f. When days are dark, friends are few.  
(A hudugile mantši, moka re bona ka moti go ele).

According to Baker (1992), some idioms may have no equivalent idiomatic expressions in the target language. Newmark (1988) states that “when translating idiomatic expressions into idiomatic language, it is particularly difficult to match equivalence of meaning with equivalence of frequency”. The researcher argues that, there are no fixed strategies prescribed for translators to translate proverbs and idioms. Therefore, it is up to the translator to opt for the functional strategies(s) while translating idioms. That is, the translator needs to use innovative approaches to ensure that the target reader acquires the intended meaning of the source text. However, in occasions such as these, Barker (1992)’s third strategy of translating idioms offers an ideal solution.

### **c. Translation by paraphrase**

Paraphrasing is considered the most common strategy in the translation of idioms when an equivalent cannot be found in the target language. In this strategy, According to Newmark (1988), the equivalent is reached by explaining the meaning of the SL idiom. Unlike the descriptive equivalent, here the explanation is more detailed. In other words, the translator elaborates more on the SL idiom to transfer its

meaning to the target language. To elaborate (accurately), the translator needs to have a good cultural background of both source language idiomatic expressions to produce a communicative expression. Failure to understand the figurative meaning of the idiomatic expression will hinder the translator from finding the target language expression which has a similar meaning to that of the source language idiom or expression in the target language. The following expressions serve as examples:

19 a. Ya se rage e tla tlatša kgamelo

(If it doesn't kick, it will fill the milk container).

b. Ya se rage e tla tlatša kgamelo.

(If the cow which is being milked doesn't 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. Ya se rage e tla tlatša kgamelo.

(If there are no disturbances, we will have positive results).

(If things go well, great things will happen).

The given meaning in example (19.c) expresses more or less the same meaning with the idiom. Therefore, the translator has been successful. The same light is shared by the idiom *monna ke nku o llela teng*. One can literally translate this idiom as *a man is like a sheep, he cries inside* or *a man is like a sheep, he does not cry publicly*. These literal meanings, do not in any way convey the semantic meaning of the proverb *monna ke nku o llela teng* and do not even convey its cultural value. The translator has failed to reproduce the meaning of the proverb *monna ke nku o llela teng*. At least the proverb could have been translated as *a real man is strong and courageous; he does not expose his problems publicly*. Therefore, one can conclude that, translators should translate idioms with great care. The translator must first be sure of the cultural value of a given idiom to retrieve the meaning of the idiom and

then look for the natural equivalent way to express the meaning of the idiom as a whole.

#### **d. Translation by omission**

In this strategy, an idiom can be omitted leaving no trace in the target language. According to Barker (1992), an idiom may be omitted when the translator finds that there is no close equivalent in the target language or when it is difficult to paraphrase or may be omitted for stylistic reasons.

Furthermore, Baker (1992:63) argues that idioms are frozen patterns of language which allow little or no variation in form and often carry meanings which cannot be deduced from their individual components. She excludes five things that cannot be done to an idiom because it may lose its meaning. These are as follows:

- a. *The translator cannot change the order of the words in an idiom.* The way the words are structured together in an idiom is fixed and they cannot change their place. The following expressions serve as example. In English they say:

*A rolling stone gathers no moss not a rolling moss gathers no stone.*

*All cats are grey in the dark not all cats are dark in the grey.*

*All is fair in love and war not all is love in fair and war.*

*A drowning man will clutch at a straw not a drowning man will straw at a clutch.*

In Northern Sotho there are expressions such as;

*Go wela ka nkgong ya bjala e sego go wela ka bjala ya nkgong.*

*Go wela mmung o botse e sego go wela botse o mmung.*

*Go wela motho dikodumela e sego go wela dikodumela motho.*

*Go ya monwana bothokgosela e sego go ya bothokgosela monwana.*

*Go wetša dinao tseleng e sego go wetša tseleng dinao.*



- b. *The translator cannot omit a word in an idiom.* Translators are not permitted to delete some of the words of a particular element. The following examples do apply in English as demonstrated.

*A hot potato not a potato.*

*Cost an arm and a leg not cost an arm a leg.*

*Cry over spilt milk not cry over milk.*

*Every cloud have a silver lining not every cloud have a lining.*

In Northern Sotho there are expressions such as;

*Go ya le melomo ya batho e sego go ya le melomo batho.*

*Go swara pelo ka seatle e sego go swara seatla ka pelo.*

*Go swara poponono ka diatla e sego go swara diatla ka poponono.*

*A go dupa eng Magokgokgo a sa ukame motho e sego a go dupa eng Magokgokgo a sa motho.*

- c. *The translator cannot add extra words to an idiom* as demonstrated through the English expressions below.

*When it rains, it pours not when it rains fast, it pours.*

*A leopard cannot change its sports not a leopard cannot change its dark sports.*

*Birds of a feather flock together not birds of a long feather flock together.*

*Don't bite the hand that feeds you not don't bite the hand that always feeds you.*

In Northern Sotho they will say:

*Go raga kgamelo e sego go raga kgamelo fela.*

*Go robala le dikgogo e sego go robala mosegare le dikgogo*

*Go robala le dikhuru e sego go robala le dikhuru disehla  
Go roba molala e sego go roba lesea molala*

- d. *The translator cannot replace a word in an idiom by another word. The following expressions in English serve as example.*

*Easy come, easy go not easy arrive, easy go.*

*Familiarity breeds contempt not familiarity breeds passion.*

*Necessity is the mother of invention not necessity is the father of invention.*

*Absence makes the heart grow fonder not presence makes the heart grow fonder.*

In Northern Sotho they say:

*Go robadiša mmutla e sego go robadiša ngwana.*

*Go robadiša kgogo boroko e sego go robadiša kgomo boroko.*

*Tšaka ya leihlo e sego tšaka ya lenao.*

*Tšhoma ya maserung e sego tšhoma ya magodimong.*

- e. *The translator cannot change the grammatical structure of an idiom. The following expressions in English serve as examples.*

*Who got meal look for rain not who got rain look for meal.*

*He teaches ill, who teaches all not ill teaches all, he was taught by him.*

*Bad news travel fast not faster travels bad news.*

*Ring the bell not the bell was ringed.*

In Northern Sotho there are expressions such as;

*A di je di šie marapo e sego a di šie marapo di je.*  
*Ditsebe tša masweswe e sego masweswe tša ditsebe.*  
*Bjala bot tagile moapei e sego moapei o tagilwe ke bjala.*  
*Boroko bja pudi bo hlakon e sego hlakong go boroko bja pudi.*

One can conclude that, idioms as linguistic forms are non-substitutable collocations that usually occur as more than single-word units and they exhibit semantic opacity (Larson, 1984). Idioms are fixed and can be recognised and understood by native speakers for they use language in a non-literal, metaphorical way, and that makes them a thorny issue, not only for language learners, but also for translators. In addition, the researcher argues that, since idioms are a vital part of every language, they deserve serious attention from the speakers. Therefore, as a language learner the more idioms you know, the more native-like your language will sound and by learning idioms one learns a lot about the culture of the community that speak a particular language.

#### **4.5 TRANSLITERATIONS AS AN OPTIONAL TRANSLATION STRATEGY**

Transliteration is the process of converting a term from the orthography of a source language to the orthography of the target language, usually in accordance with the orthographical conventions of the target language. According to Beesley (1998), the purpose of transliteration is to write a language in its customary orthography, using the exact same orthographical conventions, but using carefully substituted orthographical symbols. Although the aim of adopting transliteration is to keep the meaning of the source language culture, this goal is achieved at the expense of the target language culture and is just a duplication of the stem of the source language. That is, the source language stem is retained in the target language equivalent. The examples below are terms that were transliterated from English to Northern Sotho (Mojela, 2010):

20. **computer** – khumphutha (2010: 130)

**concrete** – khonkhoriti (2010: 130)

**chorus** – khorase (2010: 128)

**museum** – museamo (2010: 164)

**platinum** – platinamo (2010: 172)

The level of transliteration in the African bilingual dictionary as illustrated above, evokes concerns about the future of African languages. African languages remain static while English as a source language keeps rowing. Part of this concern is based on the possibilities that English terms will invade the African language space in such a manner that it will be difficult for African languages to retain their original form.

African language bilingual dictionaries are often limited in their coverage of scientific terms. There is a need to create translation equivalents for these terms. The creation of these term equivalents is not as simple as it may seem. Translation is not only the transmission of knowledge and the creation of understanding, but also the transmission of culture (Newmark, 1988). According to Mphahlele (2004), “this creation of terms should not be done haphazardly but systematically according to the general terminological principles”. It is therefore the responsibility of African language lexicographers and terminologists to close this prevailing gap. Faced with this challenge of creating scientific term equivalents, lexicographers and terminologists opt for transliteration as the quickest lexicographical and terminological procedure without taking into consideration the practical demands of the target user (Mphahlele, 2004). This, therefore, hinders the dictionary users from retrieving the semantic information in the target language.

Foreign words often occur in Northern Sotho bilingual dictionaries as term equivalents. This is the case for many categories of foreign terms, not just proper names but also technical terms including disease names such as *pneumonia and sinus*; and common words such as *formula, calculator, mathematics, fraction, microphone, telephone, television, computer, laptop and internet*. These words of foreign origin which are often transliterated into African languages in bilingual

dictionaries are not useful to the target users. Some of these terms are presented with inaccurate term equivalents as illustrated by Kriel (1997:198) in the example below.

21. **calculator:** *sebadi*, *seakanyi*, *kalekhulaithara*

Looking at the example above, the lexicographer and terminologist did not succeed in creating the term equivalent for the lemma *calculator*. The term equivalent *kalekhulathara* is a pure duplication of the stem of the source language term. As a result, the term equivalent *kalekhulathara* cannot, in many cases, assist Northern Sotho–English and English–Northern Sotho bilingual dictionary users to retrieve semantic information because a source language term is not established in Northern Sotho as target language. Transliteration often fails target users because it results in heavy borrowing as the foreign concept is not easily transmitted into the target language. In other words, the target user will not be assisted in any way because the term equivalent retains the source language stem.

In addition, Kriel (1997) supplied *sebadi* as a term equivalent for the lemma *calculator*. The researcher, once again argues that the lexicographer in this regard did not succeed (in example 21 above) because the term equivalent *sebadi* does not correspond with the original concept calculator, and does not have one-to-one meaning relation.

The Macmillan Online Dictionary (2015) defines a *calculator* as “a small piece of electronic equipment used for doing calculations” whereas the Oxford Online English Dictionary (2015) defines a calculator as something “used for making mathematical calculations, in particular a small electronic device with a keyboard and a visual display”. In simple terms, a calculator is an electronic object used to calculate. The calculator itself does not calculate, it is simply a device for helping a human being to calculate.

In Northern Sotho, *sebadi* is defined as *selo sa go bala* (an object that counts or reads) while an object that is used to calculate (*selo seo se šomišwago go balela*) can be described as *sebaledi*. In addition, *sebadi* is something that can count on its

own while *sebaledi* cannot calculate on it own. Below are examples of such expressions:

- 22 a. Nakedi is an excellent currency counter.
- b. Nakedi ke sebadi se hlwahlwa sa tšhelete.
- c. Nakedi ke sebaledi se hlwahlwa sa tšhelete.

- 23 a. Thibedi's calculator is broken, he will calculate with mine.
- b. Sebaledi sa Thibedi se robeile, o tla balela ka saka.
- c. Sebadi sa Thibedi se robegile, o tla balela ka saka.

Looking at the above examples, it is clear that both examples 22 and 23 (c) are grammatically wrong and do not make sense. As a result, they will be confusing to language learners. It is also clear that *sebadi* is s/he who or is an object that can count while *sebaledi* is an object used to calculate. A researcher specialising with honorific will rewrite example 23 and 24 (b) as *Nakedi ke mmabi yo hlwahlwa wa tšhelete*, however, this is not the main focus of this study. Therefore, the researcher argues that, *sebadi* cannot serve as the term equivalent for the lemma *calculator*. Therefore, example 21 could have been presented as follows:

24 c. **calculator** – sebaledi

The suggested term equivalent *sebaledi* corresponds with the original concept *calculator*, and displays linguistic correctness and accuracy as it adheres to the orthography of Northern Sotho. In addition, the lemma *calculate* should be presented with the term equivalent *balela*. Therefore, the target user would be able to deduce the meaning of the source language terms because there is a one-to-one meaning relation between the source language form *calculator* and the target language equivalent *sebaledi*. In addition, this would be aided by the *fact that* the stem of the

term equivalent is independent from the source language term. With regard to general guidelines regarding the acceptance of terminology, according to Roets (2001:10), the new terminology is acceptable if it has concept correspondence, adheres to orthography, is appropriate, keeps to the register of the main corpus of the dictionary, is not in any way taboo or offensive to any gender or culture group, shows conformity with or similarity to other entries, has aptness and easy identification with the specific subject field, et cetera.

Kriel (1999:198) presents *seakanyi* as another term equivalent for the lemma *calculator* and *akanya* as a term equivalent for the lemma *calculate*. Both terms are not accurate and do not display linguistic correctness of Northern Sotho. The Northern Sotho word *akanya* means to *suggest* or *predict*. Anything that *suggests* and/or *predicts* does not produce a reliable answer and from a mathematical point of view, a *calculator* produces reliable and accurate solutions. Therefore, the researcher argues that *akanya* cannot serve as a term equivalent for the lemma *calculator*. The example from Mphahlele (2004:345) in the table below shares the same light. However, for the purpose of this study, the researcher will focus on the word *formula* as an example.

### **Table 1**

**formula** – fomula

**fraction** – frakš'in

**equilibrium** – ekhwilipramo

**pictogram** – pictokramo

It is clear that the stems of the source language terms *formula*, *fraction*, *equilibrium* and *pictogram* are retained in the target language. In other words, the lexicographer just converted the orthography of source language terms (English) into the Northern Sotho (target language) orthography. As a result, the target user who is not familiar with the source language term will fail to retrieve the required information. As such,

the researcher argues that the term equivalent is not functional as it will not help the target user who is not familiar with the source term.

In cases where zero equivalence occurs, it is the responsibilities of African language lexicographers and terminologists to create target language equivalents of the source language term. "Zero equivalence entails a lexical gap", say Gouws and Prinsloo (2005:159). "That is, the lexical item that is supposed to be supplied as a translation equivalent could not be found in the target language". However, there is no term equivalent that will be found ready, that is, it is the responsibility of terminologists and lexicographers to create one where they are faced with a lexical gap.

According to Al-Kasimi (1977), a major problem confronting bilingual lexicographers is that the required equivalents in the target language cannot always be found. In such cases, where lexicographers are faced with lack of equivalents in the target language they often opt for transliteration. This terminological procedure has not succeeded in assisting terminology users to retrieve the required semantic information. The fact that a lexicographer cannot find the required equivalents does not mean that borrowing must be utilised (cf. Mphahlele 2001: 27). With regard to transliteration, Roets (2001: 9) states that:

A large number of equivalents are formed through transliteration, particularly in subjects such as Economics, Medicine and Physics. However, this does not mean that transliteration is the best solution. Although English is the language of transit in South Africa for most scientific and technical subjects, the English language has a limited use for young African learners." Transliteration should not be regarded as the first solution when supplying target language equivalents.

This can be validated by the fact that, most African learners do not understand English words. In this case, if transliteration is excessively used in terminology, there is no way in which learners will understand the stems of the English words retained as possible term equivalents. In other words, new target language term equivalents would remain foreign even when transliterated. This means that foreign concepts are



not understood in the target language. Transliteration could only serve a semantic purpose if the source language terms are known by target users and are well established in the target language (Mphahlele, 2004). With transliteration, it cannot be claimed that the term equivalents have concept correspondence. In most cases, new terms are incorporated into the orthography of a language after being considered as established borrowings in that language. This means that there is no way in which the newly transliterated equivalents can be considered to adhere to the orthography of a language, because they would not have been used in written language before (Mphahlele, 2004).

Mphahlele (2004:344) further argues that African languages lexicographers and terminologists should “avoid the excessive use of transliteration and always strive for new independent term equivalents having a one-to-one relation with the source language terms”. In other words, African languages terminologists and lexicographers are required to use innovative approaches to ensure that target language users receive sufficient guidance. This will enable African language speakers to learn and communicate effectively in scientific languages.

The new term equivalents should adhere to the orthography of the target language and also have concept correspondence with the source language terms (Roets 2001:10). The following example by Kriel (1999: 234) serves as a typical illustration.

## 25. **formula** – fomula

It will be incorrect to say that lexicographers have been innovative enough in supplying the term equivalent in the above presentation. The lemma *formula* is presented with the term equivalent *fomula* which retains the stem of the source language term. If international scientific terms are transliterated into African languages as presented by Kriel (1999) above, speakers of African languages might not be able to learn and communicate in scientific languages. This is because, if the target user is not familiar with the source term *formula*, s/he will fail to retrieve the semantic information and the presentation remains dysfunctional. Transliteration does not meet the translation purpose and needs of target language speakers. In

other words, the borrowed word which has not been established in Northern Sotho cannot assist the user to communicate successfully nor understand the meaning of the source term *formula*.

According to Mphahlele (2004:342), “if speakers of the target language are not familiar with the foreign concept or referent, terminologists should make sure that the concept is translated into the target language following the appropriate terminological procedures. These new terms should be the result of terminological, scientific and linguistic decisions taken by collaborators”. The Macmillan Online Dictionary (2015) defines a formula as a plan or method for dealing with a problem or for achieving a result while the Longman Online Dictionary of Contemporary English (2015) defines a formula as a method or set of principles that you use to solve a problem or to make sure that something is successful. In addition, the Illustrated Mathematics Online Dictionary states that:

In science, a formula is a concise way of expressing information symbolically as in a mathematical or chemical formula.

Looking at the above definition, *formula* can be defined as a method that indicates how things should be done systematically. A method is a way or a procedure of doing things. In Northern Sotho, the closest term equivalent for the lexical item *method* is *mokgwa* and for indicate is *taetšo* or *tšupetšo* as the closest term equivalents. *Taetšo* and *tšupetšo* are both synonymous and can replace each other in many occasions. For more illustrations, the researcher provides examples below.

26 a. Method that indicate how things should be done.

(Mokgwa wa go šupetša tsela yeo dilo di swanetšego go dirwa).

27 a. Method that indicate how things should be done.

(Mokgwa wa go laetša ka tsela yeo dilo di swanetšego go dirwa).

Looking at example (26) and (27) above, it is clear that example *a* has one-to-one meaning relation with *b* and *c*. Therefore, *mokgwa + šupetša = mokgwatšupetšo* or *mokgwa + laetša = mokgwataetšo*. In addition, *mokgwataetšo* or *mokgwatšupetšo* can be translated as indicating a method that indicates in simple terms, the *formula*. Therefore, the target user would be able to deduce the meaning of the source language terms because there is a one-to-one meaning relation between the source language form *formula* and the target language equivalents *mokgwataetšo* and/or *mokgwatšupetšo*. The stem of the term equivalents are independent from the source language term. Therefore, in this regard the researcher shares the same sentiment with Mphalele (2004: 344) who suggested the term equivalents presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2

**formula** – mokgwataetšo

**fraction** – palopalwana

**equilibrium** – mokgwatekatekano

**pictogram** – tshwantšhotšhupakgopolo

Based on the presentation in table 2 above, Mphahlele (2004) states that;

These suggested term equivalents display a balanced terminological procedure. When looking for term equivalents, the terminology user would be able to deduce the meaning of the source language terms because there is a one-to-one meaning relation between the source language forms and the target language equivalents. In this case the terminology user would achieve communicative equivalence. Because of their self-explanatory nature the supplied term equivalents have transparent meanings and are therefore easily comprehensible. As can be seen, the supplied term equivalents are independent from the original English terms, i.e. the stems of the source language terms have not been retained or borrowed when creating term equivalents. This is what terminologists, subject specialists and linguists should actually do when creating term equivalents. Transliteration should only be opted for if all measures to supply term equivalents have failed.

Northern Sotho lexicographers and terminologists should try to create new term equivalents that have a meaning relation with foreign terms, rather than adopting the transliteration principle as a lexicographical and terminological procedure at all times. This would help to develop the technical vocabulary of Northern Sotho because the technical vocabulary of a language develops when technical terms are created in that particular language (Roets, 2001). While transliteration is observed in different disciplines, it does not satisfy the needs of target language speakers and does not contribute to the development of the technical vocabulary of African languages.

#### **4.6 MERITS OF TRANSLITERATION AS A TRANSLATION STRATEGY**

Mphahlele (2001:27) maintains that, “the fact that a lexicographer cannot find the required equivalents does not mean that borrowing must be utilised”. In cases where zero equivalence occurs, the lexicographer should bear in mind that direct borrowing from the source language cannot serve any semantic purpose. That is, a borrowed word which has not been established in general language use cannot assist the user of the target language to communicate successfully (Mphahlele 2001:27). In other words, transliteration does not, in many cases, assist target users to retrieve semantic information or assist them to comprehend the source language term, unless such a source language term has already been established and accepted in the target language.

According to Crystal (2000), unless a language has fluent speakers one would not talk of it as a ‘living language’. That is, it is the speakers who determine the future of a native language. One can argue that it is not only languages that are being faced out but also words of particular living language(s). This is usually a result of factors such as technological development. For example, the word *letsikangope* is a small hole created on the outside wall of a house (mostly at the top) that serves to let light and air into a dwelling space. Buildings with *letsikangope* are not found among African communities in this century. As a result, the word *letsikangope* is hardly known by the present generation and is therefore hardly used among the communities. Because of technological and infrastructure development, *letsikangope* has been replaced by the word *window* which serves the same function (see 2.10).

Because of the difference between *letsikangope* and *window*, the researcher argues that the word *letsikangope* cannot be the translation equivalent of the word *window* as presented by Mojela (2010: 45) below:

#### 28. **letsikangope** – window

Although, *letsikangope* and *window* serve the same function they cannot serve as each other's translation equivalents. The word *lefastere* borrowed from the Afrikaans word *venster* (window) correctly serves as the translation equivalent for the lemma *window* in English/Northern Sotho bilingual dictionary. The word *tafol* borrowed from the Afrikaans word *tafel* (table) and has reached the maximum evolution (well established) in Northern Sotho. It has been accepted as a borrowed word and all Northern Sotho speakers are familiar with the term equivalent *lefastere* and not *letsikangope* referring to a *window*. Therefore, the example above should appear as follows:

#### 29. **window** – lefastere

Transliteration could only be opted for if speakers of the target language know or have heard of the source language terms. If this is not the case, transliteration would therefore just be a mere duplication of the source language terms. Therefore, the above presentation will be helpful to dictionary users and target language users to retrieve the semantic information of the source language term *window* because the source language term is known or well established in the target language. The same challenge can be faced regarding the lemma *bicycle*. The following presentation and its reversibility principle by Kriel (1997:74) serve as illustration.

- 30. a. **leotwana** – bicycle
- b. **bicycle** – leotwana

The word *leotwana* simply means a wheel. However, a motorcar and a motor-bike have wheels while a *bicycle* itself has two wheels. Therefore, one may ask how a *bicycle* should be called a *wheel* while it has wheels.

The Longman Online Dictionary of Contemporary English defines a wheel as one of the round things under a car, bus or bicycle that turns when it moves. A *bicycle* is defined as a vehicle with two wheels that you ride by pushing. The Oxford Online Dictionary (2015) defines a *wheel* (noun) as “a circular object that revolves on an axle and is fixed below a vehicle or other object to enable it to move over the ground”. A bicycle is defined “as a vehicle consisting of two wheels held in a frame one behind the other, propelled by pedals and steered with handlebars attached to the front wheel” (Oxford Online Dictionary, 2015).

Based on the above definitions of the word bicycle, one may conclude that *leotwana* (wheel) could not be the term equivalent for the source term *bicycle* for it will be confusing to English–Northern Sotho and Northern–English dictionary users. But the transliterated translation equivalent *paesekela* as presented below serves the communication purpose because *paesekela* as a translation equivalent is well established in Northern Sotho and Northern Sotho speakers are familiar with the source term *bicycle* and the object it refers to. Therefore, the above article (30) should at least appear as follows:

### 31. **bicycle** - paesekela

Both transliterations of the lemma *bicycle* and *window* render the exact contextual meaning of the original text in such a way that both content and language are readily acceptable and comprehensible to readership, and dictionary users in this case will successfully achieve functional communication. The same applies to the usage of *borotho* as a translation equivalent for *bread* instead of *senkgwa*. *Borotho* is well established in the Northern Sotho language and is mostly used by the present generation (majority) of Northern Sotho speakers. The latter are not familiar with the

term *senkgwa* which is gradually being phased out. *Borotho* is a borrowed term from the Afrikaans word *brood*.

#### 4.7 LIMITATIONS OF TRANSLITERATION AS A TRANSLATION STRATEGY

Transliteration is observed in different disciplines but does not satisfy the needs of target language speakers nor does it contribute to the development of technical vocabulary of African languages. Lack of technical vocabulary in African languages results in transliteration. The articles below illustrate transliteration challenges in Northern Sotho (Mojela, 2009):

32. <b>cabbage</b> – khabetšhe	(2010: 126)
<b>capitalism</b> : bokapitale	(2010: 126)
<b>gramophone</b> – keramofomo	(2010: 147)
<b>technical</b> - theknikale	(2010: 189)
<b>telegram</b> – thelekramo	(2010: 198)

Transliteration does not, in many cases, assist target users to retrieve semantic information unless such a source language term has already been established in the target language. That is, in situations where the target language speakers are not familiar with the source language term and the term equivalent of such a term is not established in the target language, such as *telescope* and *thermometer* as illustrated below, transliteration will just be a mere duplication of the source language term that hinders the target users from retrieving the semantic information in the target language. The table below serves as an example of mere transliteration that hinders African language target users to retrieve the semantic information.

Table 3

**address** – aterese

**spaghetti** – sepaketi

**satellite** – satellite

**satan** – sathane

In the above presentation, English-Northern Sotho and Northern Sotho bilingual dictionaries did not treat the technological and scientific terms in a way that the target language users would be able to understand the meaning of these terms. This is so, because the term equivalents are presented with the stem of the source language. Therefore, the target language users will not achieve the intended semantic information of the source language term. More examples of this nature are presented below:

33. **internet** - inthanete-

**tavern** – thabene

**hotel** -hotele

**syndicate** – sintikheithi

The lexicographer retained the stems of the source language terms as target language equivalents. This cannot assist the target language user to understand the source language term because the term equivalent remains foreign even when transliterated. The same challenge is also faced by Xitsonga; Tshivenda, Setswana and isiZulu terminologists and lexicographers when presenting term equivalents of different disciplines. Table 4 below has more examples in different languages.

Table 4

<b>English</b>	<b>Xitsonga</b>	<b>Tswana</b>	<b>Tshivenda</b>	<b>isiXhosa</b>	<b>IsiZulu</b>
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cabbage	Khavichi	khabetshe	khavhitshi	ikhaphetsu	ikhabisi
Hotel	Hodela	Hotele	hodela	ihotele	ihotele
Gas	Gasi	Gase	gese	igesi	igesi
television	Thelevixini	thelefišene	televishini	ithelevhizhini	ithelevhizhini
temperature	themparacha	tempheretšha	Themperetsha	ubushushu	ukushisa

When comparing African languages with English based on the above presentation, one will recognise that African languages lack lexical items to be presented as term equivalents against the source language terms. The absence of words that refer to particular items in a particular language is known as a lexical gap. Looking at the above presentation, it is evident that the creation of target language term equivalents for new foreign concepts is not an easy task. African language lexicographers and terminologists are always faced with a challenge or difficult task of supplying term equivalents for foreign international languages. One may conclude that, English enjoys worldwide recognition as a language of international scientific and technical communication. Furthermore, due to the fact that many scientific texts are published in English, it is often encountered as a source language in terminology (Mphahlele, 2004: 340). In addition, 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”.

According to Al-Kasimi (1977), the major problem confronting the bilingual lexicographer is that the required equivalents in the target language cannot always be found. Gouws (1999:26) states that zero equivalence entails a lexical gap. That is, the lexical item that is supposed to be supplied as a translation equivalent of the source language term is not present in the target language. This has been illustrated in the above examples (33). As a result, one would argue that when language X has a lexical item representing a particular concept, this does not necessarily mean that language Y will also have a lexical item representing such a concept. This is evident

when compiling dictionaries for African languages and English. English has many lexical items that represent various concepts in various disciplines while African languages lack most lexical items.

According to Roets (2001:1), “for a language to develop, the daily growth of human knowledge in the science and technology of developed countries needs to be shared with developing countries and, to this end, expressed in mother tongue terminology”. Therefore, African language lexicographers and terminologists have to create accurate new term equivalents in their mother tongue for the multitude of terms in English to close the prevailing gap. This will also develop the technical vocabulary of African languages and ensure appropriate guidance to African language bilingual dictionary users. In situations such as these, trying to cope with this challenge, lexicographers and terminologists often use transliteration as a lexicographical and terminological principle. In the process they often apply transliteration as the quickest lexicographical and terminological procedure without taking into consideration the practical demands of the target users (Mphahlele (2004). That is, translation needs to be communicative and satisfy the needs of target language speakers. The term equivalents should convey the same meaning as the source language. Given that transliteration does not adhere to most of the general guideline regarding terminology, it cannot be regarded as a balanced terminological procedure. With regard to this, Roets (2001: 10) warns that:

Do not grasp transliteration as a first, but a last resort — if all else fails. No matter if an equivalent may sound and appear like a brief explanation of a term." It is better if terminologists and subject specialists give a brief meaning definition of the source language term as an equivalent. A brief meaning definition of the source language term could assist users to retrieve the required information because a meaning definition carries a concept in itself. This would be far better than the mere listing of a transliteration as term equivalent.

Sharing the same viewpoint, Gouws and Prinsloo (2005) state that “zero equivalence often leads to the inclusion of surrogate equivalents”, that is, target language entry substituting a translation equivalent. These scholars argue that transliteration could only serve a semantic purpose if the source language terms are known or well

established in the target language. If not, the transliterated source language term could only remain as foreign term equivalents without any meaning or concept attached to them in the target language. Transliteration does not satisfy the needs of the target language speakers. In other words, this procedure fails the terminology user. To meet this expected need, the lexicographers should provide a brief meaning of the source language term. To validate the above arguments, the following articles are examined (Mojela, 2010):

34 a. **hotel** – hotele (2010: 151)

b. **syndicate** – sintikheithi (2010: 188)

The orthography of source language terms *hotel* and *syndicate* has been converted to the orthography of Northern Sotho. That is, the formation has been adopted to suit the morphology of Northern Sotho. However, the procedure used in the above presentation will not assist the English - Northern Sotho bilingual dictionary users to properly understand the intended meaning of the source language items unless the user is familiar with the source language terms *hotel* and *syndicate*. The terms *hotel* and *syndicate* do not exist in Northern Sotho as established forms. A brief description of the meaning of the source terms would have been better than a mere entering of *hotele* and *sintikheithi* as term equivalents. “The level of guidance the lexicographer should give in the treatment of the source language term will be determined by the nature of the lexical gap in the target language” (Gouws & Prinsloo, 2005: 161). In a case where the speaker of Northern Sotho is not familiar with the source term *hotel* and *syndicate*, the lexicographer will be expected to provide a comprehensive description and relevant examples of the source terms *hotel* and *syndicate*. In a case where the user is familiar with the terms, a brief description will be sufficient. The article below uses the term *hotel* as an example:

35. **hotel** – hotele

The absence of a translation equivalent in the above example indicates the existence of a lexical gap in the target language. This establishes a relation of zero equivalence. The existence of zero equivalence adds yet again to the challenges faced by Northern Sotho lexicographers because it will not be appropriate to present the above items without a treatment that will satisfy the needs of the English-Northern Sotho bilingual dictionary users. The above article should have been presented as follows:

36. **hotel** – hotele - lefelo leo basepedi ba patelago ditirelo tše bjalo ka go dula, go robala, go ja le tše dingwe.  
(a place where travellers pay for services such as staying, sleeping, eating, and others).

Regardless of the absence of the translation equivalent, the user is familiar with the source language term *hotel*; therefore a brief description of the source language term *hotel* serves the communicative purpose. The same challenges were faced by Kriel (1997), Mojela (2010) and Oxford English – Northern Sotho (2014) from various disciplines of study as presented in the table below below:

37 <b>cabbage</b> – khabetšhe	(Mojela, 2010:126)
<b>clinic</b> – kliniki	(Kriel, 1997:203)
<b>coffee</b> – kofi	(Kriel, 1997:203)
<b>garage</b> – karatšhe	(Mojela, 2010:126)
<b>restaurant</b> – restorente	(Oxford, 2014:472)
<b>school</b> – sekolo	(Kriel, 1997:300)

The absence of a translation equivalent in the above examples indicates the existence of a lexical gap in the target language. The linguistic gap exists in the above article and the references on the above articles are known to both the

speakers of the source and target languages. The source terms *cabbage*, *clinic*, *coffee*, *garage*, *restaurant* and *school* do not exist in Northern Sotho as established forms. Although, the target language speakers are familiar with the source language term, a brief definition of the source terms would be much better than just duplication of the stems of the source language terms such as *khabetšhe*, *kliniki*, *kofi*, *karatšhe*, *restorente* and *sekolo* respectively. In other words, the lexicographer has failed to provide the meaning of the source language terms as Gouws and Prinsloo (2005:161) advised. The above articles should have appeared as follows:

**38. cabbage** – khabetšhe - ke morogo-nthokolo wa matlakala a makoto a mmalana o matala goba phepholo.  
(a large round vegetable with thick green or purple leaves).

**clinic** – kliniki - ke lefelo leo ga ntšhi kalafo ye e itšego e fiwago batho bao ba sa hlokego go dula sepetlela.  
(a place, often , where a particular type of medical treatment is given to outpatients (people who do not need to stay in the hospital).

**coffee** – kofi – seno sa go fiša se tshootho sa tatso ye e galakago  
(a hot dark brown drink that has a slightly bitter taste).

**garage** – karatšhe - ntlo yeo e agetšwego go bea koloi,  
(a building for keeping a car in).

**restaurant** – restorente - ke lefelo lago rekiša dijo, gantši go jelwa gona  
(a place where people buy and eat meals).

**school** – sekolo - ke lefelo leo bana ba rutwago go lona.  
(an institution where children are taught).

A Northern Sotho speaker who is not familiar with the source language terms *cabbage, clinic, coffee, garage, restaurant* and *school* will easily retrieve the meaning of the source language terms because of the definitions provided.

The researcher suggests that, in addition to a comprehensive definition of the source language term, an example will complement the surrogate equivalent to serve the semantic purpose. The presentation should look as follows:

39. **synagogue** – sinagoge – moago yo o šomišwago ke ba Juta go obamela le go ithuta tša sedumedi  
(a building used by Jewish people for worship and religious study).

- moruti o phela a le sinagogeng.  
(the pastor is always in the synagogue).

**syndicate** – sintikheithi - sehlopha sa batho goba mekgahlo seo se šomago mmogo go fihlelela nepo e/selo se tee.  
(a group of people or organisations that work together to achieve a particular aim).

- *sehlopha sa dinokwane se phatlaladišwe*  
(a crime syndicate was demolished).

**cheque** – tšheke - letlakalana leo le gatišitšwego o ngwalago palo ya tshelete go lona, wa le saena, wa lešomiša bjalo ka tshelete go patela goba go lefela dilo.

(printed piece of paper that one writes an amount of money on, sign, and use instead of money to pay for things).

- letlakalana leo le gatišitšwego leka šomišwago go patela dilo legatong la tšhelete.

(piece of printed paper that one can use instead of money to pay for things).

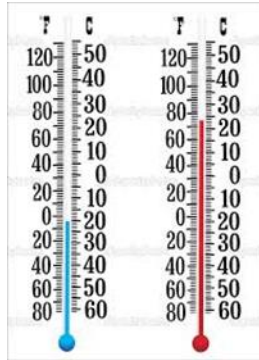
The stems of source language terms *syndicate* and *cheque* are retained as possible term equivalents. Although these new term equivalents *sintikheithi* and *tšheke* are transliterated, they are still foreign to the English-Northern Sotho bilingual dictionary and do not serve any semantic purpose. Although the term equivalents are presented with comprehensive description plus examples, the researcher argues that, in a particular instance a comprehensive description of a source language term with an example might not be enough. However, that might depend on the literacy level of the target user. Instead, the inclusion of pictures as part of the description of the source language term will easily assist the target users to fully understand the source language term. Therefore, the presentation, for example, might look as follows:

40 a. **thermometer** – themometha - setlabelo sa go ela thempheraithša.

(an equipment that measures temperature).

- themometha ere thempheraithša e feta 30°C.

(the thermometer reads that temperature is over 30°C).



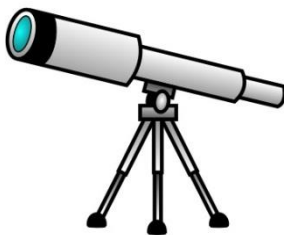
A picture of thermometer

(Seswantšho sa themometha)

b. **telescope** - theleskoupo - setlabelo seo se bopilwego bjalo ka tšupu, seo se dirago dilo tša kgole dibonagale o ka re ke tše dikgolo e bile di kgauswi (an equipment shaped like a tube, used for making distant objects look larger and closer)

- o tla bona ngwedi ga botse ge o ka lebelela ka theleskoupo.

(you can see the moon quite clearly, if you look through the telescope).



A picture of telescope

(Seswantšho sa theleskoupo)

Any Northern Sotho speaker who will come across the source language terms *thermometer* and *telescope* in an English - Northern Sotho and Northern Sotho – English bilingual dictionary with the above presentation will not struggle to retrieve the intended meaning of the source language term. It is without doubt that, a comprehensive description of the source language term which includes example(s) and pictures will assist the target users to achieve a communicative purpose whenever they come across a foreign term. The above presentation will help the



English-Northern Sotho bilingual dictionary users to properly understand the intended meaning of the source language items. In addition, the speakers of Northern Sotho may be able to learn and communicate effectively in scientific language and avoid communication embarrassment as a result of using the lexical item inappropriately.

#### **4.8 LANGUAGE EVOLUTION AND LANGUAGE DEATH**

Language death occurs in unstable bilingual or multilingual speech communities as a result of a language shift from regressive minority language to dominant majority language (Crystal, 2000). "A language is said to be dead when no one speaks it any more. It may continue to have existence in recorded form, of course, traditionally in writing, more recently as part of a sound or video archive (and it does in a sense 'live on' in this way), but unless it has fluent speakers one would not talk of it as a 'living language'" (Crystal, 2000). It is the speakers who determine the future of a native language. Such changes may proceed faster or even differently in one segment of a generation of its speakers than in another. Language death is a protracted change used to describe a community's loss of competence in a language. It denotes a process that does not affect all speakers at the same time or to the same extent. The critical criterion to identifying language death is the predication on the presence of the native speakers and on its transmission from one generation of speakers to another (Hagege, 2000). The Northern Sotho native speakers have shown evidence of loss of transmission of Northern Sotho vocabulary from one generation to generation. One can argue that is not only languages that are being faced out, but also words of a particular living language(s), as a result of factors such as technological development. According to Thomson (2001), history provides several instances of language death. To illustrate this point, the following example needs to be considered.

41. **radio** – seyalemoya

The present generation of the Northern Sotho speakers may not be familiar with the term *seyalemoya*. They are probably only familiar with the borrowed term *radio* and are comfortable referring to the concept as *radio*. The same view might be shared about the use of Xitsonga terms *miyobva* and *xiboma*. The terms *miyobva* and *xiboma* were used to refer to *bananas* and *bus* respectively but are gradually being phased out because a majority of the present generation is not familiar with them and are using the borrowed term *bananas* and *bazi* instead. It is likely that the present Xitsonga generation does not know that such a word exists because they have never heard of it at all. Below are examples in Northern Sotho:

- 42. **address** - tshupamabaka
- aeroplane** – folamatšhene
- bicycle** – peretshitswana
- motor-car** – sefatanaga
- helicopter** – sefofane
- radio** – seyalemoya

The Northern Sotho terms, *sefatanaga*, *tšhupamabaka*, *peretshitswana*, *folamatšhene* and *sefofane* are no longer used by the present generation of Northern Sotho speakers and very few of them are aware of their existence. The present generation use the borrowed terms when referring to the above-mentioned concept as they are presented below.

- address** - aterese
- aeroplane** – eropholaini
- bicycle** – paesekele
- motor-car** – mmototor/koloi
- helicopter** – hilokopotha
- radio** – radio

For a *motor-car*, some might use the term *mmotoro* or *koloi* rather than *sefatanaga*. What this implies is that Northern Sotho is slowly but surely losing its unique

character; with the likelihood that most of its concepts and terms will soon consist of borrowed terms.

## 4.9 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED WHEN PROVIDING TRANSLATION EQUIVALENCE

### 4.9.1 Cultural-specific concepts

According to Baker (1992:21), a source language may describe a concept that is totally unknown to the target culture. Such concepts may be abstract, religious, a social tradition or even food. The below examples serve as illustrations.

English to Northern Sotho:

**cake** – khekhe

**cheese** – tšhese

**calabash** – sego (Mojela, 2010:126)

Northern Sotho to English:

**sego** – calabash

**ntepa** – skirt

**hlogwana** – small head (Kriel, 1997: 41,90 &191)

The above examples provide items that display cultural differences. The terms *ntepa*, *sego* and *hlogwana* (as a baby disease characterised by a twitching head which is believed to be fatal if not treated early) are common among the native speakers of Northern Sotho whereas the terms *ice*, *cheese* and *cake* are common to English speakers. The same challenges are faced by Xitsonga and Tshivenda lexicographers. Examples of some of these terms are presented below.

<b>English</b>	<b>Tshivenda</b>	<b>Xitsonga</b>
<b>Camera</b>	Khamera	Khamera
<b>Generator</b>	Dzheneraitha	Jenaretara
<b>Journal</b>	Dzhenala	Jenali
<b>Quotation</b>	Khothesheni	Khothexini

More examples of different categories from Northern Sotho using both English and Afrikaans as source languages can be presented as follows:

#### 43. **Clothes**

Afrikaans to Northern Sotho translation:

**broek** - borokgo  
**doek** - tuku  
**hemp** - hempe  
**rok** - roko

English to Northern Sotho translation:

**jersey** – jeresi  
**panty** – phenthi

In the above examples, the word level equivalence in Northern Sotho is possible and the linguistic gap prevails. Northern Sotho speakers are familiar with the above items of clothing. However a brief definition would be sufficient. In the examples below, equivalence at word level is not possible:

**diramphašhane**

**lethebe**

**ntepa**

**setsiba**

Referential gap prevails in the above example. Therefore, the translator needs to provide the target users with comprehensive definition of the term *setsiba*, *ntepa*, *lethebe* and *diramphašhane* (see 8.9 below). The same challenges can be faced with the presentation of *lekokoro*, *kgodu* and *lewa* below (see 8.9).

#### 44. Food

**kgodu**

**lekokoro**

**lewa**

English native speakers may not be familiar with the type of food called *lekokoro*, *kgodu* and *lewa* because there are no word equivalents in English. Most types of food are transliterated into African languages, shown below.

**bacon** - peikhone

**banana** – panana

**custard** – khastate

**margarine** - matšerinne

**pudding** – phuting

**rice** – raese

**salat** – salate

**spinach** – sepenetšhe

#### 4.9.2 Non-lexicalised concepts in the target language

According to Baker (1992:21), some words in the source language may express a concept that is known in the target culture but not lexicalised. In other words, some

words have not been assigned in the target language to denote their meaning (Baker, 1992:21). In addition, Gouws and Prinsloo (2005: 158) state that “the lexicon of a language does not necessarily develop a parallel to the lexicon of any other language”. That is, when language X acquires a word for a particular concept it does not imply that language Y will also acquire a word for that concept. For example, the English words *internet*, *computer* or *file* are known to both speakers of English and Northern Sotho, but are not lexicalised in Northern Sotho. Here are some of the English words that are known by both English and Northern Sotho speakers but are not lexicalised in Northern Sotho (Mojela, 2010:153,156,157,164).

45. **ice** – aese

**museum** – moseamo

**jelly** – jeli

**jug** – jeke

**kilometre** – kilomithara

Some concepts, mostly proper names, which refer to individuals and objects can be transliterated from one language into another, sometimes the specific meaning that they carry, which do not exist in the target speech community, may be lost. In situations such as these, the translator may opt for translation by paraphrase using unrelated words. According to Baker (1992: 26-42), “the paraphrase strategy can be used when the concept in the source item is not lexicalised in the target language. When the meaning of the source item is complex in the target language, the paraphrase strategy may be used instead of using related words based on modifying a super-ordinate or simply on making clear the meaning of the source item”. This strategy refers to changes which take place in the internal structure of the noun phrase or verb phrase, although the source language phrase itself may be translated by a corresponding phrase in the target language. To illustrate this statement, the following medical terms are used as examples.

**andrologist** – ngaka ya banna

**arthritis** – bolwetši bja marapo

**asthma** – bolweši bja mafahla  
**bathroom** - phaphusi ya go hlapela  
**cardiologist** – ngaka ya dipelo  
**diabetes** – bolwetjje ba swikiri  
**dentist** – ngaka ya meno  
**gynaecologist** – ngaka ya basadi  
**hematologist** – ngaka ya madi  
**hepatologist** – ngaka ya dibete  
**nephrologist** – ngaka ya dipshio  
**paediatrician** – ngaka ya masea  
**optometrist** - ngaka ya mahlo  
**ophthalmologist** – setsibi sa mahlo le tša pono  
**otolaryngologist** – ngaka ya dinko, ditsebe le kgokgolo

The above-mentioned English medical terms are not lexicalised in Northern Sotho. The translation strategy used - translation by paraphrase using unrelated words – is communicative and will help the target readers to get the semantic meanings intended.

#### **4.9.3 Semantic complexity in the source language**

A word does not have to be morphologically complex to be semantically complex. Baker (1992:22) states that a single word may sometimes express a complex number of meanings. The English words *nice*, *track* and *business* can be used to refer to different things on different occasions depending on the context and/or culture. The word *nice* might refer to *beauty*, *taste* and *favourable*; while the word

*track* might refer to *accuracy* and *song number* as illustrated on the tables below respectively:

Different meanings of the word *nice*

<b>Sentence</b>	<b>Meaning or reference</b>
He is wearing a <i>nice</i> jacket	Beauty
This beetroot is very <i>nice</i>	Taste
Today's weather is <i>nice</i>	Favourable

Different meanings of the word *track*

<b>Sentence</b>	<b>Meaning or reference</b>
You are on the right <i>track</i>	Accuracy
Play <i>track</i> number three on Oleseng's latest album	Song number

In addition, the meaning of the term *business* might be associated with an *organisation* (location and issues) and *profit* (money). An examination of the following expression serves as an example.

*The business of business is business.*

The term *business* appears three times in the above sentence and occupies 50% of the sentence. Each term *business* conveys its own meaning. The first *business* refers to *the purpose*, the second *business* refers to *business as a trading organisation* and the last one refers to *profit and/or money*. In simple terms, the above sentence reads as follows:



*The purpose of business is to generate profit.*

In the sentence *Thibedi runs his father's business*, the term *business* refers to a *trading organisation* while the term *run* refers to *facilitation* and *managing*. The sentence can be translated into *Thibedi o sepediša kgwebo ya papage*. The Northern Sotho *sepediša* might refer to *cause to walk, walk quickly, run* or *facilitate* (a meeting/business), and *mosepidiši* refers to a *leader* and/or *manager*.

#### **4.9.4 Source language, target language and divergent meaning**

According to Baker (1992:22), what could be an important semantic distinction of meaning in a particular language may not necessarily apply to another language. In this case, a target language may distinguish greater or lesser meanings than the source language. To elaborate on this challenge, the study examines the presentation below:

Everyone in my family respects *uncle* Sipho.  
(Ba lapa la gešo ka moka ba hlompha *malome* Sipho).

A Northern Sotho translator in the above translation is forced into an embarrassing guess, with every chance of getting it wrong. The cultural value of the lemma *uncle* in Northern Sotho is determined by the relationship of one's father with the referent (*uncle*). This is because the term *uncle* in Northern Sotho can be translated as *malome*, *ramogolo* and *rangwane* as presented by Mojela (2010:194).

**47. uncle:** *malome*, *ramogolo*, *rangwane*

The meanings of the word *uncle* in Northern Sotho depend on the relation between one's father and *uncle(s)*. Using the reversibility principle, the above article is presented as follows:

**48. malome** – *uncle*

**ramogolo** – uncle

**rangwane** –uncle

Any Northern Sotho–English bilingual dictionary user who is not familiar with the terms *malome*, *ramogolo* and *rangwane* will not be able to retrieve the semantic meaning of those terms. The lexicographer in this regard should use a brief description of the source language terms *malome*, *ramogolo* and *rangwane* to help the user to deduce the intended meaning of the source language terms. The presentation should have at least appeared as follows:

49. **malome** – uncle – Buti wa mma.

(Mother’s brother).

**ramogolo** – uncle – buti wa papa.

(Father’s elder brother).

**rangwane** – uncle – moratho wa papa wa monna.

(Father’s younger brother) .

Looking at the above article, the dictionary user would not struggle to retrieve the cultural value of the source language terms. Similar challenges might be faced when treating the lemma *aunt*. Like *uncle*, *aunt* also expresses different meanings when translated into Northern Sotho. It can mean *rakgadi* (father’s sister), *mmamogolo* (mother’s elder sister) and *mmane* (mother’s younger sister).

Because of their semantic difference, Northern Sotho terms *malome*, *ramogolo* and *rangwane* will never be used interchangeably in a sentence because they denote different meanings. For example, the English word uncle is translated in Northern Sotho as *malome*, *rangwane* or *ramogolo*. The English term equivalent *uncle* of the source language term(s) *malome*, *ramogolo* and *rangwane* does not carry the cultural value of the said source language terms. Therefore, it is of critical importance for the translator to provide the users with a brief description of the source language term. Indeed, cultural-specific concepts should be translated with

great care and the translator must first be sure of the cultural value to retrieve the meaning of a given cultural concept and then look for the natural equivalent to express the meaning of the concept as a whole.

#### **4.10 PRESENTATION OF CULTURE-SPECIFIC TERMS IN BILINGUAL DICTIONARY**

In presentation of culture-specific concepts, Baker (1992:21) mentions that the source language may describe a concept that is totally unknown in the target culture. In addition, Alberts (2001:2) argues that due to the culture-specific nature of some terms, not all words can be translated successfully from one culture to another. The article below is examined as presented by Kriel (1997: 119).

##### **50. ntepa – skirt**

According to Alberts (2001), it is also possible that a specific language group may use the same term (that is a linguistic symbol) to denote such a concept if it makes sense in the target language. But it seems that the lexicographer in the above example has not succeeded in translating the source term *skirt*. In Northern Sotho, the lexical item *ntepa* means *a triangular traditional skirt made of animal skin that hangs down from the waist to cover the buttocks* and this term is not used or known by the native speakers of English. Therefore, in no way could the term *ntepa* be given an English term equivalent, due to the prevalence of zero equivalence. The lexical item *skirt* presented as term equivalent does to convey the cultural meaning of the source term *ntepa*. In a case of zero equivalence, many lexicographers have used borrowing or transliteration as an alternative. However, borrowing of the source language term has not sufficed in assisting dictionary users to retrieve the required semantic information about the source language term.

Roets (2001:10) concurs with Gouws and Prinsloo (2005:159) who maintain that in the case of a linguistic gap, a brief definition of a source language term will be

sufficient and where a reference gap exists, the lexicographer will have to include a comprehensive description of a surrogate equivalent because the user needs more information to understand the meaning of the source language term. In other words, the definition of the source term representing the referent that is known to the target user will be brief while the definition of the source term representing the referent that is not known to the target language user will be more comprehensive. This is what lexicographers of bilingual dictionaries should do. In fact, the extent of the guidance given by the lexicographer in treating the source language term will be determined by the level of the lexical gap in the target language. In the case of a linguistic gap where the target language user is familiar with the source language term, a brief description of the source language term will be sufficient. A reference gap is established when the referent or concept is known to the speakers of the source language term while the speakers of the target language are not familiar with it. The same treatment will be expected from a lexicographer when treating the source language term *hlogwana* as an infant's disease. Native speakers of English are not familiar with term *hlogwana* as a disease and are presented with small head as an equivalent by Kriel (1997:41). For example, *ntepa* is only known to the Northern Sotho speakers and if this is to be translated into English, a comprehensive definition will be required so that the native speakers of English may get all necessary information regarding the source language term *ntepa*. The lexicographer has not been successful in supplying the meaning of the source term *ntepa*. At least, the example above should have appeared as follows:

51. **hlogwana** – small head. Ke bolwetši bjo bo kotsi bja masea bjo bo tsebegago ka go thebethe ga phogwana, bo kotsi ge bo ka se elwe hloko goba go alafiwe ka nako. (a baby (infant) disease characterised by the bumpin (twitching) head which is believed to be fatal if not treated early).

**ntepa** – skirt – ke setšwalo sa makgarebe sa go lekelela ka morago sa go dirwa ka letlalo phoofolo.

(a girl's triangular traditional skirt made of animal skin that hangs down from the waist to cover the buttocks).

The above description familiarises the target language speakers with the referent and the referent is fully described so that its meaning is comprehensive to Northern Sotho–English and English–Northern Sotho bilingual dictionary users. This will assist the user to have a good understanding when referring to the source language terms *n-tepa* and *hlogwana*. In other words, the user will be able to know the meaning and the function of the source language term because of the usage information that has been presented in the description. The articles below which fall under different categories do illustrate this view.

## 52. Houses

**thopantlo** –a house in which girls who attend an initiation school stay in.

(ntlo yeo makgarebe a dulago go yona komeng).

**sebowa** – a small house in which maize is stored immediately after the harvest.

(ntlwana yeo go bewang mabele ka morago ga puno).

## 53. Clothes

**setsiba** – crupper – a man's garment made of animal skin used for covering the private parts.

(setšwalo sa banna seo se dirilwego ka letlalo la phoofolo, sona se diretšwe go khupetša ditho tša senna).

**lethebe** – an attire made of tiger skin worn by kings only.

(ke setšwalo sa go dirwa ka letlalo la nkwe, se apara ke dikgoši fela)

**diramphašane** – sandals – sandals made from animal skin for both men and women.

(ke disentlelese tšeo di diretšwego banna le basadi ka letlalo la phoofolo).

#### 54. Food

**lekokoro** – seed of maize mealies cooked when they are dry

(ke dithorwana tša mafela tšeo di apeilwego di gomile).

**kgodu** – a type of porridge cooked with pumpkin and with maize meal

(ke mohuta wa bogobe bja go apewa ka lerotse le bupi).

**lewa** – a mixture of cooked dried seeds of maize and beans

(ke sejo seo se apeilwego ka dithorwana tšeo di omilego tša mafela le dinawa).

Gouws and Prinsloo (2005: 159) assert that in the case of a linguistic gap, a brief definition of the lemma will assist the dictionary user to retrieve the semantic

meaning where a reference gap exists. The lexicographer will have to include a comprehensive description of a surrogate equivalent that carries the cultural value because the user needs more information to understand the meaning of the source language term. In other, words, the definitions of the source terms *thopantlo*, *sebowa*, *setsiba*, *lethebe*, *diramphašana*, *lekokoro*, *kgodu* and *lewa* representing referents that are not known to English native speakers will be more comprehensive because the target user need more information about the lemmata. Therefore, in the above presentation, the translator has been successful. The strategy used enables the target language users to retrieve the intended semantic information of the source language terms. In this case, the English native speakers will know the exact meaning of the source terms, *thopantlo*, *sebowa*, *setsiba*, *lethebe*, *diramphašana*, *lekokoro*, *kgodu* and *lewa* respectively.

Although the examples above seem to be problematic due to lack of equivalents in the target language, there are few words in both English and Northern Sotho which do have some equivalents. Below are examples of such terms from different categories:

#### 55. Houses

**hospital** - bookelo

**classroom** - phaphoši

**church** - ntlokgethwa

**kitchen** – morale

#### 56. Food

**porridge** - bogobe

**vegetable** - morogo

**soft-porridge** - motepa

**milk** - maswi

**meat** - nama

**honey** - mamapo

**sweets** - dipongpong

**water** – meetse

#### 57. Clothes

**shoes** - dieta

**blanket** - lepai

**hat** - mongatse / kefa

The examples above do not pose translation problems as both English and Northern Sotho speakers are familiar with concepts and meanings. In addition, the said term equivalents are not ambiguous.

#### 4.11 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

English prestige has influenced a large number of African language speakers to adopt its terms and concepts by means of borrowing, neologism and transliteration. This has brought about a semantic shift in African language formation of technological and scientific words. This semantic shift has resulted in the change of African languages over a long period of time. Although there are some advantages resulting from this process, there are also challenges due to lack of requisite equivalents in African languages. For instance, there are two gaps of zero equivalence, namely lexical gap and referential gap. A linguistic gap occurs where a particular concept is known to the speakers of both language groups but the one language does not possess the lexical item to connote that particular meaning whereas the other language has such a lexical item. Furthermore, a referential gap



exists where the referent is known to the speakers of one language whereas the other language speakers are unfamiliar with it. In instances of this nature, it is suggested that the description of the source language term representing the referent that is unknown to the target users will be brief whilst the definition of the source language term representing a referent that is not known to the target user will be more expansive. This is because the target user requires more information about the source language term.

The chapter has also shown that in spite of the difficulties indicated above, Northern Sotho is benefiting from borrowing terms from other languages, especially English. However, borrowing as a strategy of translation should not be overdone as it might lead to the extinction of Northern Sotho as a language.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this chapter is to present a summary of findings and recommendations of the study. This begins with a presentation of a summary of each chapter of the study, as well as findings and recommendations regarding the importance of functional translation equivalence in bilingual dictionaries.

## **5.2 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS**

Chapter One served as a general introduction to the study. The chapter provided the background to the study, statement of the problem and research methodology. The chapter also highlighted the aims and objectives of the study as well as the significance of the study.

Chapter Two presented the reviews of different scholars' work in relation to language dynamism in English–Northern Sotho/Northern Sotho–English bilingual dictionaries and the treatment of translation equivalence. Literature related to various studies from scholars such as Smith (1966), Shohamy (2006), Hyltenstam and Viberg (1994), Trask, (1996), Newmark (1988) Nida (1982), and Taber (1982) was reviewed.

Chapter Three dealt with research design and methodology of the study. The chapter outlined the research methodology of the study. Emphasis was on the research methods, population and sampling, data collection and data analysis. Ethical considerations and measures to provide trustworthiness have also been discussed.

Chapter Four dealt with the analysis of translation equivalence. Formal and dynamic equivalents have been compared. The emphasis was on the presentation of idiomatic equivalents, scientific and technological equivalents, and culture-specific concepts. The Chapter also analysed the impact of transliteration on the treatment of scientific and technological terms in Northern Sotho–English and English–Northern Sotho bilingual dictionaries.

### 5.3 FINDINGS

The findings that the researcher arrived at with regard to this study are as follows:

- Most of the culture-specific items in Northern Sotho such as clothes and food, may not be literally translated, while some can be translated through transliteration and be supplied with surrogate equivalence.
- Idioms, proverbs and figures of speech may convey accurate messages with their target equivalents if they are translated through communicative translation method or through the first three strategies suggested by Barker (1992), namely:
  - a. Using an idiom of similar meaning but dissimilar form.
  - b. Translation by paraphrase.
  - c. Using an idiom of similar meaning and form.
- The vocabulary of languages, including Northern Sotho is in constant flux where old items drop out while others gain new meaning and new terms come in due to socio-economic factors.
- The lexical gap in the target language was not located in most cultural terms, that is, lexicographers would have used surrogate equivalents.
- Most of the bilingual dictionary users do not find these dictionaries user-friendly because most translation equivalents retain the stems of the source language words.
- Transliteration was regarded as the first solution of supplying term equivalents but not the last resort.

### 5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations of this study are as follows:

- When translating from the language of transit to African languages, the translation process should follow an acceptable terminology procedure that adheres to the orthography of African languages and this should be target user-oriented.
- Northern Sotho lexicographers should strive for the development of technological and scientific vocabulary of Northern Sotho by staying informed about emerging international developments in all fields. This should involve properly translating those forms from a language of transit into a mother tongue equivalent.
- In order to supply appropriate term equivalents, translators need to consider both context of culture and situation when doing their work.
- Transliteration does not necessarily assist in the development of technical language, that is, if transliteration is used excessively, the technical vocabulary of the target language will not develop. Therefore, transliteration should not be regarded as the first, but the last resort after all measures for supplying term equivalents have failed.
- Because the stems of source language terms are retained in the target language, transliteration may result in heavy borrowing. In other words, with transliteration a referent or concept may still be foreign to speakers of the target language. In this case, the user is not assisted in retrieving the required information. Therefore, the lexicographer should include a comprehensive definition of the source language term where the target reader is not familiar with the source language term.
- Transliteration could only be opted for if speakers of the target language know the referent or concept. In this case, the retained stem may display concept correspondence with the original source language term. A brief description of

the source language term should be included to complement the term equivalents.

- Lexicographers and terminologists should always strive for term equivalents that display accuracy and dependence on the orthography of the source language. Such term equivalents should have a one-to-one relation with the source language terms.

Lastly, the researcher recommends further study in this field, especially on examining strategies that could be utilised to ensure that there is a good balance between maintaining the roots of a language and adoption of new terminology.

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