Strategies Used by Rwanda's Simultaneous Interpreters to Render Cultural-linguistic Aspects in Taboo Expressions

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Abstract

Interpreting taboo language from and into Kinyarwanda, English and French can lead to poor quality renderings if a combination of linguistic and cultural factors is unattended to. This study aimed to explore the strategies used by Rwandan interpreters to render cultural-linguistic aspects found in taboo expressions from and into Kinyarwanda, English and French. The paper drew on a set of 'equivalence theories' in the field of translation (Baker, 2011; Nida, 2000; Vinay and Darbelnet, 1995), the skopos theory (Basnett & Lefevre, 1990) as well as the bottom-up and top-down models (Hatim and Mason, 1997). Renditions by 20 Rwandan interpreters using the simultaneous mode were recorded, transcribed, coded and analysed. The findings revealed that most Rwandan interpreters resorted to the 'literal strategy' to render taboo expressions with the effect that the meaning of the source text (ST) sometimes got distorted while translating vulgar and derogatory language, insults, euphemism, and vulgar proverbs. The findings also revealed that in an attempt to cope with interpreting taboo language, it is not enough to rely on a single strategy, that is to say interpreters should use a combination of strategies in order to improve the quality of their renditions.

Keywords: *Interpreting, translation, simultaneous mode, taboo language, equivalence theories*

Introduction

A language reflects its speakers' cultural norms and taboos (Nitisari et al., 2023). As a result, interpreters should not ignore this fact because doing so would automatically lead to producing renderings that are unfaithful and, sometimes, offensive to their audience. For purposes of achieving quality renderings, interpreters of taboo expressions are urged to uphold the ethical code of conduct that stresses the principle of faithfulness between the

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source and target languages (Viezzi, 2020). This study was conducted in Rwanda where four languages occupy the status of official language, namely Kinyarwanda, Kiswahili, French and English.

Since 2019, Kigali has been ranked by the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) as the second most preferred destination in Africa in hosting international conferences and events (Kagina, 2023). Thus, conference interpreting has become so coveted in Rwanda that academic programmes in translator and interpreter training at the University of Rwanda (UR) both at bachelor's and postgraduate programmes have started contemplating the introduction of a 'Community Interpreting module' as one of the ways of filling in gaps in the translation curriculum.

It should be noted that, like many African countries, Rwanda has no national ethical code of conduct for translators and interpreters (Ngarambe, 2023). However, Rwanda's interpreters, like other professionals such as doctors, lawyers and teachers should, for all intents and purposes, abide by ethical translation rules and regulations while discharging their professional duties. The international interpreter code of conduct states that interpreters should be faithful to the source language (SL) by avoiding to add or omit anything in the source (SL) and target languages (TL) (Seleskovitch, 1989). Interpreters achieve this by preserving the tone, register and meaning of the source language (Pöchhacker (2004). In addition, interpreters are encouraged to demonstrate a high level of inter-cultural sensitivity by considering different perspectives that include style, cultural content and language registers (Kalina, 2015).

Given the fact that most language cultures forbid people from explicitly expressing certain feelings, words, gestures and actions through the use of taboo expressions, most interpreters who render taboo expressions into other languages find themselves in a dilemma of whether to render them or not because of their offensiveness (Murebwayire, 2012). Taboo expressions cover a variety of expressions that include but not limited to swear words, insults, body excretions and sexual organs (Kagabo, 1992).

While some interpreters in Rwanda may ignore rendering taboo expressions for fear of being associated with bad lack and indecency (Ngirabakunzi, 2005), others choose to render them literally, thereby mitigating their intended figurative meaning or losing it completely altogether. This leads them to commit errors of misinterpretation, under-interpretation or over-interpretation. They end up contravening the interpreter's ethical code of conduct. This paper delves into the mechanisms of proper decision making by interpreters who may be confronted with cultural-linguistic challenges while rendering taboo expressions.

Theoretical Framework

The two theoretical constructs that informed this study rotate around the 'equivalence theories' in translation studies (Nida, 1964). Equivalence refers to fact that the source text (ST) and the target text (TT) should share a certain degree of similarity, also called 'sameness' (Panou, 2013). These theories are conceived differently by different scholars. For example, Nida and Taber (2004) look at the notion of equivalence from both the 'formal and dynamic' perspective. On the other hand, Newmark (1988) looks at equivalence from the 'semantic and communicative' viewpoint (Newmark, 1988). As for Baker (1992), equivalence is established at different levels of translation, that is to say, at word, phrase, grammar, text and pragmatic levels.

As for the *skopos* theory (Basnett 2014; Nord, 1997), apart from translating or interpreting utterances by focusing exclusively on linguistic factors, a shift was marked towards considering 'functional and sociocultural' factors. In other words, the translation/interpreting process should reflect cultural norms of the target audience, its expectations, values and life experiences. In the *skopos* theory, translation decisions are also determined by the translation purpose. The intention of the *skopos* theory is to avoid literariness in translated texts. It substitutes linguistic approaches with cultural factors, hence moving from words, sentences and texts towards culture. This is what Snell-Hornby (1990) referred to as the "cultural turn" in translation.

Nida's 'formal equivalence' theory refers to the strategies that seek to preserve the vocabulary and grammatical structures of the source text (ST) in order to produce translations that are as faithful (accurate) as possible to the original text. Translation scholars in favour of this strategy argue that it minimises the translator's inputs and biases (Nida and Taber, 2004).

However, to achieve dynamic equivalence, a translator renders a text into the target language (TL) by focusing, first and foremost, on the meaning intended for the audience (sense-for-sense) rather than relying on the word-for-word strategy (Nida and Taber, 2004). In other words, in dynamic equivalence, translators do not preserve the grammar, vocabulary, structure and idioms of the source text (ST). Dynamic equivalence allows greater flexibility of expression by the translator/interpreter. In this connection, Nida and Taber (2004: 107) stress the interplay between the formal and dynamic equivalence strategies as follows:

> […] No single theory of translation provides a coherent set of […] propositions used as principles to show how translation works" [….]. In fact, several theories combined help […] in understanding the nature of translating or assessing particular translated texts.

In consonance with Nida's formal and dynamic theory, other translation scholars have suggested two similar translation approaches that can be resorted to while handling translation problems. For example, Hatim and Mason (1997), suggest that a mixture of 'bottom-up and top-down models' should be used to determine the 'starting point' of rendering meaning. Translators/interpreters may either be influenced by simple words and/or phrases or by the 'text' itself which should be viewed as a 'communicative event' located within a broader context of culture.

However, according to the 'top-down model', a translator should start by analysing the text from the macro level to the micro level. In other words, from text to sign (Snell Hornby, 1988: 69). Hatim and Mason's model of the translation process (Hatim and Mason, 1997) suggests that before starting any translation task, the top-bottom approach should be given precedence. Hence, they argue that 'text types and context should be used as starting points while discussing any translation problems and strategies.

Elsewhere, Halliday (1985: xvii) argues in favour of the translator's judgement to determine whether either meaning or form should be resorted to first. He argues:

> A text is a semantic unit, not a grammatical one […] meanings are realized through wordings and without a theory of wordings […], there is no way of making explicit

one's   interpretation of the meaning of a text. […] A text is a meaning unit not a form unit, but meaning is realized through form and without understanding the meaning of individual forms, it is difficult to interpret the meaning of the text.

The Concept of Linguistic Taboos

The online Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary defines a taboo as a cultural or religious custom that does not allow people to do, use or talk about a particular thing as the former tend to find it offensive or embarrassing. In other words, breaking a cultural taboo is negatively perceived by society as something that may even bring about punishment. The dictionary further notes that taboo words are considered offensive and/or shocking because they refer to sex, the body, people's race or insults.

In view of the above definition, an utterance or word may be considered as a taboo in one culture but not necessarily in another (Ngirabakunzi, 2005). This is why interpreters should be cautious while rendering them. For example, in the Netherlands, it is taboo to address people by their first name initially although this is not the case in Rwanda. On the other hand, according to Bigirumwami (1974), Rwanda has some deep-rooted cultural taboos that subscribe to several behavioural, sexual, religious and scatological classifications. These taboo expressions apply to human beings, animals, men, women, boys, girls, children and adults.

Other outstanding Rwandan scholars have also attempted to analyse the nature, use and functions of linguistic taboos in Kinyarwanda and how their offensiveness can be mitigated while translating them (Murebwayire, 2012; Kagabo, 1992; Sibomana, 1991; Bigirumwami, 1974). The latter, for example, compiled a list of linguistic taboos in the Rwandan culture. On the other hand, Sibomana compiled a variety of insults in Kinyarwanda. As for Kagabo, he made an in-depth analysis of *gutsîinda*, a strategy used to mitigate the offensiveness in linguistic taboos. A study by Nkejabahizi, (2000) explored the use of sexual symbolism through metonymic substitution procedures. Lastly, Murebwayire studied the aggressive aspects of verbo-scatological and verbo-sexual expressions in Kinyarwanda.

Kagabo (1992) points out three rules that govern the use of euphemisms in Rwandan culture. These include respect, fear and decency. the rule of *gutsîinda* is based on the concept of respect and whomsoever transgresses it is liable for punishment. In other words, those who overstepped the prohibition of *gutsîinda* (read in traditional Rwanda) subjected their descendants to cancerous diseases such as dermal ulcers known as *ibyuûzukuru*. As for the rule of fear, it refers to a direct consequence of the cultural notion of *umwaâku* (bad luck) or 'misfortune' that results from uttering a taboo word (Kagabo, 1992). Accordingly, in the Rwandan society, some people, animals and things are attributed the character of bringing bad luck. In other words, when someone has to name them, they automatically use a technique of euphemism to tone down the effect of the taboo word. In this context, the Rwandan clan of the *Abacyaâba* is identified with its totemic representative, *impyisî* (hyena), euphemistically called *Biheehe* or *Mahuumâ* (the screamer). Still within the framework of popular beliefs, the names of certain diseases whose virulence was legendary in Rwanda remained taboo to utter to avoid attracting them to oneself. Among these, were diseases like *iserû* (measles), *ibinyorô* (yaws) and *mburugu* (syphilis) also called *umwaâtsi* 'grass'.

Lastly, the rule of decency also governs *gutsîinda* in Rwandan society. Kagabo (1992) asserts that the privileged domain of the taboo deals with everything related to sexuality (sexual

organs, sexual behaviour, etc.), excretory functions as well as their products. Every Munyarwanda is expected to be *imfûra* (respectful) and to exalt this virtue in his or her physical and linguistic behaviour. However, it should be pointed out that most euphemistic terms relating to sexuality and scatology have become part of everyday speech and are no longer felt euphemistic. This is the case of using the Kinyarwanda term *kwîituma* for *kunnya* (to relieve oneself) and *kwîihagarika* for *kunyâara* (to urinate).

As for Vetter cited in Ngirabakunzi (2005:14), "taboos can be classified as behavioural or linguistic but both categories are controlled by culture and have different types of sanctions dictated by the society". In the case of Kinyarwanda, "sexuality taboo words have an impact on their hearers and readers as well as their users, but the latter end up being marginalised because they somehow become taboo in their own community" (Ngirabakunzi, 2005:62). For example, using taboo language in Rwanda is banned in public speaking practices because it is considered as being culturally rude and impolite.

The present study seeks to complement earlier studies by exploring the subject of linguistic taboos from the point of view of interpreting their meaning during simultaneous settings from and into Kinyarwanda, English and French.

Comparison between Translation and Interpretation

While rendering written or spoken discourse from the source to target languages, translators and/or interpreters are supposed to use the most faithful linguistic and non-linguistic resources to enable their audience get the exact meaning expressed in the source text. In other words, both the translation and/or interpreting processes should lead to producing tests that subscribe to the principle of equivalence between SL and TL texts (Nida, 2001). It is with reference to the above principle that Pöchhacker (2004) views interpreting as a form translation where renditions in the TL are produced orally on the basis of real time presentation from SL utterances.

On the other hand, Pöchhacker (2004) describes interpreting as a process of decoding meaning in the SL text and re-encoding it in the TL. He notes that various activities take place in the process of translation. These include assessing several aspects of the source language such as grammar, lexical and syntactic items, idiomatic expressions, and so on. Translators and interpreters are also supposed to compare all these with the language cultures involved.

Nida and Taber (2004) add that the translation process should be viewed as a communicative event cautioning that each language has its own building blocks, its phrasal patterns, its word order, and its techniques. These enable words to be combined into phrases, clauses and sentences within a framework of a communication situation. In addition, each language has its discourse markers and its special methods of identifying discourse types such as in poetry, proverbs and songs.

However, the major difference between translation and interpreting is that whereas translation focuses on written content, interpreters deal with the oral discourse uttered in real time before a real audience (Pöchhacker, 2004). In discharging their duties, translators/interpreters may resort to working tools like electronic or paper data bases, dictionaries, and so on. Another difference is that interpreters depend on their short-term

memory to organise their linguistic output, while trying to remember the content intended to be interpreted (Gile, 1995).

Whereas this paper recognises the fact that translation is indeed different from interpreting, however, according to the 'theory of equivalence', both of them draw on the same theoretical framework, considering that the source text (ST) and the target text (TT) rendered from it should share a certain degree of 'sameness' (Panou, 2013). In this study, the common framework underpinning translation and interpreting was based on different forms of equivalence: formal and dynamic equivalence (Nida, 2000), semantic and communicative equivalence (Newmark, 1988), linguistic- and target-oriented equivalence (Panou, 2013).

Strategies Used in Interpreting Taboo Expressions

This study applied Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) translation strategies to analyse the renderings by the investigated interpreters. This decision was based on two reasons. First, Otto Kade cited by Pochhacker (2004:10) equates interpreting with translation:

> Interpretation is a form of translation in which the SL text is presented only once and thus cannot be reviewed or replayed, and the TL text is produced under time pressure, with little chance for correction and revision.

Secondly, even if the TL text cannot be corrected or revised by the speaker, it can be recorded, transcribed and presented in written form for eventual analysis as was done to the data collected.

Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) direct strategies of translation include borrowing, calque and literal translation. Direct strategies are used when the structural and conceptual features of the target and source languages are compatible, that is to say when the two language cultures are very close. With borrowing, words are used without translating them into the TL, especially when such words lack a TL equivalent. Venuti (2000: 85) argues that borrowing "introduces flavour of the source language culture into a translation". A calque is always quoted as a special type of borrowing. The former is also referred to as 'loan translation' where words, expression and phrases are loaned to the TL and are translated literary. The last technique that falls under the direct translation techniques is the literal translation or word-for-word translation.

On the other hand, Vinay and Darbelnet's oblique strategies of translation are applicable when direct translation may be judged to alter meaning. Oblique translation is of five categories: transposition, modulation, equivalence adaptation and compensation. In transposition, translators are free to change the syntax of sentences while retaining the same meaning. In otherwise, transposition helps to deal with grammatical shifts (Newmark, 1988) whereby verb phrases can be transformed into noun phrases in the TL or the passive can be translated with the active voice. Translators resort to this strategy in order to maintain the semantic and idiomatic coherence between the SL and TL.

As for modulation, translators' resort to it in order to adjust (modulate) a point of view in order to ensure that the translation flows naturally with a sense of nativeness (Newmark, 1988). Unlike transposition, modulation entails translating categories of thought rather than grammatical categories. In some modulations, transformations can occur at the level of meaning from positive to negative forms, or even from singular to plural and vice-versa.

Modulation can also occur at three levels: at word level, at prepositional level and at message level (Newmark, 1988).

Vinay and Dalbernet (1995) suggest the equivalence strategy as the most suitable strategy to translate idioms, metaphors, clichés, proverbs, adverts and slogans. In this strategy, the translation is reformulated by using an equivalent expression in the TL. By applying the principle of equivalence, translators enjoy the latitude of deviating from the way meaning is expressed in the source language. Thus, the equivalence principle helps to replicate the same situation as in the original (Vinay & Dalbernet, 1995). It can be concluded that the equivalence principle is very popular while translating taboo words.

The last translation strategy is adaptation which, according to Newmark (1988), supports the use of a "culture-friendly" idea while translating. It is also known as 'cultural substitution' or 'cultural equivalence'. The translator relies on his knowledge of the two language cultures to strategy of adaptation to express an idea in a way that is familiar or appropriate to the target language culture.

Other strategies suggested elsewhere is the literature reviewed (Shahla & Fahimeh, 2010) include the compensation strategy (deletion of taboo expression) or the use of broad words (super-ordinates) to replace a specific taboo word (hyponyms) with the closest non-taboo lexicon in the target language. This may require 'coinage of words or expressions' or even innovating whole paragraphs by paraphrasing to preserve both text and meaning coherence in the target language (addition and/or omission).

Quality Assessment in the Field of Interpreting
This study aimed at proposing cultural-linguistic strategies that would lead to improving the quality of renditions by interpreters, especially while rendering taboo cultural expressions from one language to another. In this context, several scholars have suggested a set of criteria for quality assessment of interpreting tasks (Pöchhacker, 2001; Gile, 1995; Schjöldager, 1996; Bühler, 1986). According to Pöchhacker (2001), the core criterion of quality interpreting is associated with product-oriented perspectives, that is to say the primary focus of interpreting is to achieve equivalence or faithfulness between the ST and TT utterances. As for Gile (1995), he argues that interpretation quality can be viewed as a weighted sum of several components. These include fidelity of the target-language speech, quality of the interpreter's linguistic output, quality of the interpreter's voice and prosodic characteristics in terms of delivery, and the quality of their terminological choice. Schjöldager (1996) argues that quality assessment by interpreters is determined by comprehensibility, delivery, language coherence, plausibility and loyalty. The former emphasises comprehensibility and delivery at the top of the hierarchy. Lastly, Bühler (1986) points out that assessment of interpretation quality covers native accent, pleasant voice, fluency of delivery, logical cohesion of utterance, sense of consistency with the original message, completeness of interpretation, correct grammatical usage and use of correct terminology. It should be noted that the above aspects were not used in analysing the utterances produced by the investigated interpreters because the analysis was based on the generated transcribed utterances.

Methodology

A descriptive case study design was used to analyse the linguistic and sociocultural data generated by Rwanda's interpreters. The study adopted a qualitative approach to generate and interpret data in form of renditions by simultaneous interpreters in Kigali with varying levels of competence and experience in the field of interpreting. The collected data were recorded, transcribed, coded and analysed using the thematic analysis method. A sample of 20 interpreters were purposively selected to participate in the study. Interpreting sessions were organised by the researchers who asked the interpreters to render pre-recorded material imbued with taboo content. The recorded material which appeared in either Kinyarwanda, English or French was deliberately prepared by the research team. The researchers made appointments with interpreters at their place of work in Kigali. The criterion for choosing the participants was that they had to speak Kinyarwanda, English and French and to demonstrate that they had used these languages in their previous work experience.

Extracts of recorded utterances comprised themes depicting taboo expressions. The latter reflected the themes of sex and sexual organs (scatology), ethnicity, racism, derogatory language, insults, genital organs, and obscene literature related to excremental material. Each recording covered between 3 to 5 minutes maximum. The interpreters had the latitude to fully or partially interpret the recorded material. They were asked to listen to the recordings and render them into the language of their choice using the simultaneous mode (Kinyarwanda, English and French).

Findings

The findings are presented in 5 columns in Table 1 as follows: taboo expression in SL, its rendering into either French, English or Kinyarwanda as TL as well as the strategies used to render them.

Table 1: Interpreting Taboo Expressions from and into Kinyarwanda, English and French

Taboo expression in SL text	Interpretation into French as TL	Interpretation into English as TL	Interpretation into Kinyarwanda as TL	Strategy Used
Utâazi ikimûhatse, arora imborô ya sê igitsuûre		**INT 1:** An ignorant person ignores the advice of his master.		Equivalence, modulation
		INT 2: If you do not respect your master, you are as good as nothing.		Literal, equivalence
		INT 3: A foolish man ignores the orders of his master.		Literal, equivalence

Usâanze innyo isîinziriye agira ngo yiiboneye inkôvu		**INT 4**: If you see an anus, you can confuse it with a wildwood.		Literal,
		INT 5: Don't judge a book by its cover.		Equivalence
		INT 6: If you find a sleeping anus, you think you have found a scar		Literal
Umutwâ ararêengwa, agatwiika ikigega		**INT7**: A Mutwa can burn the granary.		Literal
		INT 8: This penis of your uncle you have to gaze at it properly, at the butchering I will reward you.		
Umwaâmi yaatâanze		**INT 9**: The king has deceased		Literal
In the land of the blind, a one-eyed man is a king			**INT 10**: *Mu gihûgu k'împumyi uûfite ijîisho rimwê aba arî umwaâmi*	Literal
			INT 11: *Mu gihûgu k'împumyi uw'îjîisho rimwê arayobora*	Literal
			INT 12: *Mu gihûgu k'împumyi uw'îjîisho rimwê arayobora*	Literal
Les Français sont aussi cons que les nègres			**INT 13**: *Abafaraansâ na bô baâri ibicûucu nk'âbiîrabura*	Adaptation
Mange de la merde			**INT14**: *Karye amabyî*	Literal

				INT 15: *Waa mabyî we*	
Le roi est malade				INT 16: *Umwaâmi yaabêeranye*	Modulation, adaptation
				INT 17: *Umwaâmi ararwâaye*	Literal
				INT 18: *Umwaâmi ari mu isasiro*	Adaptation
Qui fait caca dans le chemin marche dedans quand il revient				INT19: **Uwiîtuma** *muu nzira, iyô agarûtse ayakaandagiramô*	Literal, adaptation
				INT 20: *Ugûhima atîirêtse agusurira mûryaamye*	Equivalence, adaptation

The findings revealed the strategies used by the interpreters to render the investigated taboo expressions. It was found that most of them did not render the figurative meaning of taboo expressions. Instead, they rendered them literary. Hence, the quality of their renditions was sometimes judged to be inaccurate and unfaithful. The study further revealed that poor-quality renderings were caused, among other things, by the interpreters' inattention to a combination of linguistic and cultural factors while interpreting figurative expressions like metaphors, cliches, idioms and proverbs.

Analysis and Discussion
Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data collected. The themes included: vulgar and derogatory language, metaphors, euphemism, proverbs, Rwanda's traditional royal terminology and proverbial insults.

The presented data in Table 1 revealed that, on the one hand, many interpreters who used the 'literal method' to render vulgar language, proverbs, metaphoric and idiomatic expressions, produced unfaithful meaning. On the other hand, however, participants who resorted to a combination of strategies (modulation, adaptation, compensation and euphemism), succeeded in producing more accurate renditions. Table 2 summarises how the interpreters under investigation rendered derogatory and metaphoric language.

Table 2: Rendering Derogatory and Metaphoric Language

No	Source Language: Kinyarwanda	Target Language: English	Strategy Used
1	*Usâanze innyo isîinziriye agira ngo yiiboneye inkôvu*	If you see an anus, you can confuse it with wildwood	Literal
2	*Umutwâ ararêengwa, agatwiika ikigega*	A Mutwa can burn the granary	Literal

In Table 2, the metaphoric expressions in the SL (*innyo, inkôvu*) are rendered by replicating similar terminology in the target language. The impact was that the figurative meaning of the Rwandan proverb was lost in the TL. A cultural shock was therefore experienced by the TL audience because the word 'anus' carries taboo connotations in the TL.

In the second utterance, the derogatory sentiments expressed to demean the *Mtwa* in the SL is not reflected in the TL because the English-speaking audience (TL) lacks the background knowledge on the message conveyed by the term 'Batwa'. Therefore, the SL utterance was not equivalently replicated by the interpreter. In other words, the rendered utterance is a mistranslation. This finding is corroborated by Vinay and Darbelnet, (1995) who argues that, when rendering proverbs, metaphors and idioms, meaning equivalence should be sought at the level of sense rather than image because equivalence is achieved when the meaning is the ST is replicated by using different wording (sense-for-sense) in the TL. This is demonstrated in Table 3 where a Kinyarwanda a vulgar proverb was rendered into English.

Table 3: Use of Euphemism to Render Vulgar Proverbs

Source Language: Kinyarwanda	Target Language: English	Strategy Used
Utâazi ikimûhatse, arora imborô ya sê igitsuûre.	**T1:** An ignorant person ignores the advice of his master.	Equivalence, euphemism, modulation and adaptation

In Table 3, the interpreter rendered a Rwandan proverb accurately by introducing an equivalent proverb in the English language that takes into account the figurative meaning of the SL proverb. In fact, the proverb was presented in a mitigated manner that did not shock any English-speaking audience. Hence, the rendering was accurately rendered. This rendition subscribes to and corroborates Nida's dynamic equivalence theory (Nida and Taber, 2004). The rendered content is therefore culturally acceptable because its taboo content was mitigated. Alternatively, this type of rendering also conforms to Snell-Hornby's *skopos* theory which takes into account the concept of "cultural awareness" in the SL utterance (Snell-Hornby, 1990). The interpreter at hand also resorted to the modulation and adaptation strategies to get rid of the literariness in the SL rendering. Modulation is used by a translator to adjust the SL point of view to fit the TL utterance so that the translation flows naturally, thereby giving the TL translation a sense of nativeness (Newmark, 1988).

In the literature reviewed, it has been shown that taboo expressions are emotionally and culturally charged (Ngirabakunzi, 2005). Therefore, what interpreters should note is that a taboo expression in language 'A' may not necessarily be taboo in language 'B'. Hence, interpreters should never be contented with using a single word-for-word (literal) strategy to render them. The interpreter's holistic knowledge of the culture of the two languages involved facilitates the interpretation of taboo expressions so that they do not shock the listening audience. This highlights the need for interpreter training in the University of Rwanda to focus not only on language issues but also on cultural issues. Cultural factors in form of taboo words in addition to non-verbal factors like gestures should form the cornerstone of the interpreter training curriculum.

The above data revealed that while interpreting utterances that are rich in taboo expressions, interpreters should take note of equivalence challenges at both linguistic and extralinguistic levels. This is corroborated by Mona Baker (2013) who argues that non-equivalence challenges between use SL and TL utterances can occur at word, phrase, sentence, text and pragmatic levels, especially while rendering idiomatic expressions and proverbs. Table 4 shows the importance of using euphemistic strategies while translating information related to the royal institution.

Table 4: Rendering Rwanda's Traditional Royal Terminology

No	Source Language: Kinyarwanda	Target Language: French	Strategy Used
1	*Umwaâmi yaatâanze*	*Le roi est malade*	Modulation, adaptation, euphemism
2	*Le roi est malade*	*Umwaâmi yaabêeranye*	Modulation adaptation, compensation
3	*Umwaâmi yaatâanze*	The king is deceased	Literal

In Table 4, the examples given reveal that while rendering Kinyarwanda utterances in foreign languages like English and French, interpreters should rely on their background knowledge to pay attention to euphemistic strategies which are resourceful in mitigating calamities that could befall members of the Rwanda's royal family, especially the king. In other words, while expressing the king's sickness or death, it is taboo in Rwandan culture (like in many African cultures) to say that kings fall sick or die as demonstrated in the above utterances.

Here again, the above analysis underscores the importance of cultural factors while rendering taboo expressions. This is corroborated by Nida and Taber (2004) who refer to euphemism as a softening strategy according to which the emotional harm and unpleasantness of the king's health are mitigated to safeguard his respect, sovereignty and royal uniqueness. They note that translating problems cannot be discussed without discussing the cultures of respective languages since languages and culture go hand in hand (Nida and Taber, 2004).

However, Nida (1864) cautions that the number of softened words should remain low to avoid distorting the style of the TT. Therefore, interpreters are advised to be careful when softening particular expressions in order to preserve the context and style of the source language text. In the same vein, Baker (1992) argues that it is harmless to resort to the compensation strategy (omission, gains or losses) when rendering a word or expression whose meaning is not vital enough to the development of the text. Compensation occurs when there is addition or loss of meaning, sound-effect, metaphors or lack of a pragmatic effect in the ST utterance. This addition or loss can be compensated for in the TL text (Newmark, 1988).

Lastly, the compensation strategy used avoided distracting the reader with lengthy explanations. However, censorship methods may result into some loss of meaning when words and expressions are added or omitted in a translation. Therefore, euphemism should

only be used as the last resort when producing appropriate translations (Baker, 1992). Hence, the rendering given in Utterance 3 (above) is culturally inaccurate (for a Rwandan audience) because, culturally speaking, Rwandan kings do not die, they simply pass on. Table 5 shows how proverbial insults were interpreted.

Table 5: Rendering Proverbial Insults

No	Source Languages: English, French	Target Language: Kinyarwanda	Strategy Used
1	In the land of the blind, a one-eyed man is a king	*Mu gihûgu k'împumyi uûfite ijîisho rimwê aba arî umwaâmi*	Literal
2	*Mange de la merde*	*Waa mabyî we*	Modulation, adaptation, compensation, equivalence
3	*Qui fait caca dans le chemin marche dedans quand il revient*	*Ugûhima atîirêtse agusurira mûryaamye*	Equivalence, modulation, adaptation, euphemism

In the first utterance in Table 5, the literal translation strategy used to translate the proverb did not replicate an equivalent proverb that conforms to the Rwandese cultural conventions. The Kinyarwanda-speaking audience would have easily understood a possible equivalent proverb like "In a difficult situation, a person with fewer skills is better than one with none." In other words, the interpreter rendered the English proverb literary without replicating the intended meaning for the TL audience.

However, in Utterance 2 the interpreter combined the strategies of equivalence, modulation and adaptation whereas in Utterance 3 euphemism was used to produce a similar expression that was not culturally offensive in the Kinyarwanda language.

These findings on translating proverbial insults are corroborated by Panou's study (Panou, 2013) that argued in favour of 'target-oriented' approaches as opposed to 'linguistic-oriented' approaches while rendering equivalence challenges in translation tasks. Panou argues that 'target-oriented' approaches that are culture-bound can produce more reliable and accurate solutions to translation/interpreting challenges.

Conclusion

The general objective of this study was to explore the linguistic and cultural strategies used in translating taboo expressions from and into Kinyarwanda, English and French. In achieving the above objective, the study drew on a set of equivalence theories in the field of translation as well as the *skopos* theory to explore the possibilities of using cultural devices while rendering taboo expressions in the simultaneous mode. The findings revealed that taboo expressions are figurative expressions that are culturally-bound and therefore very complex to render. This means that interpreters of taboo expressions should be linguistically and culturally knowledgeable in both the SL and TL cultures in order to faithfully render

them. It was found that by exclusively relying on a single interpreting strategy, interpreters ended up producing distorted, shocking and, sometimes, offensive meaning. This study has demonstrated that, in an attempt to accurately render taboo expressions, interpreters should alternate between direct and oblique strategies; they should also be equipped with linguistic, cultural and pragmatic knowledge that transcends the meaning of mere words.

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