

Overcoming the barriers through literal and descriptive translations: Examples of Kanga names

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Abstract

Kanga names are presented using Swahili pithy sayings, riddles and proverbs. The names communicate the culture and philosophy of the Swahili people, especially those dwelling along the coast of the Indian Ocean, their perceptions on women and the way women view themselves. There are attempts to translate these texts from Kiswahili into English for various reasons. Since the texts are cultivated in the Swahili culture and philosophy, establishing equivalents in English is a major challenge. Translators of such texts apply some techniques to achieve their objectives. This paper appreciates the application of literal and descriptive translations in translating these cultural expressions.

1. Introduction

Translation refers to the process of rendering written source language texts from the source language into the target language. One of the major aims in translation is to reproduce various text types including technical, literary, legal, religious, scientific and political texts in another language so that they are available to a wider range of readers of the target language (Malangwa, 2010 and Malangwa, 2005). Paz (1992) argues that translation has provided models and inspiration to the target culture. It is used to facilitate communication in the import and export transactions, tourism, official document exchange, reporting, presenting papers, articles, and even in translating textbooks. It is for such purposes cultural texts, such as Kanga names, have been translated into various languages.

However, experience shows that the translation of cultural texts as well as specialized and technical texts is not an easy task. This is due to the fact that languages differ in the ways they organize the world. The concepts of one language may differ enormously from those of other languages, especially when the languages are structurally and genetically different. The bigger the gap between the source language and the target language in terms of culture, scientific and technological development, language families as well as in other forms of living, the more difficult the process of translating between the two (Malangwa, 2008). The problematic areas include cultural texts, technical and specialized texts. In the cultural texts the problematic expressions include pithy sayings, style, riddles, proverbs, idioms, and other forms of artistic presentations.

However, the more challenges translators face, the more creative they become. Through various researches and practical translations, translators are discovering translation tools, strategies, methods and procedures for handling different situations in translation

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(Pinchuck, 1977; Newmark, 1988 and Malangwa, 2010). It is because of the challenges in the fast pace world that computer-assisted translation or machine translation was introduced in order to facilitate the translation process. Moreover, it is because of the non-availability of equivalent words, terms and cultural expressions that some translation procedures, such as transposition, literal translations, modulation, descriptive equivalents, adaptation, transcription, calque and componential analysis, have been introduced in the field of translation (see for example, Pinchuck, 1977 and Newmark, 1988). These translation techniques are mainly used to create some equivalents in the target language for the non-equivalent terms and expressions of the source language text. Cultural expressions such as riddle, proverbs and idioms, which are used in the Kanga names, create a major challenge to the translators and consequently the translators resort to applying some translation procedures to achieve their goal. The translation procedures applied in the translation of Kanga names and which are discussed in this study are descriptive and literal translations.

2.0 Kanga and Swahili culture

The Swahili society is characterized by the habit of wearing Kanga, among other cultural practices. This is especially practiced by Swahili women. Ali and Ali (n.d) clarify that the term Kanga is purely a Swahili word referring to a rectangular piece of pure cotton cloth with a border all around it, printed in bold designs and bright colours.¹ Yahya-Othman (1997) concurs with this definition by saying that Kanga is a piece of printed cotton fabric, with dimensions approximating 1.5 m by 1 m, with a border along all the four sides, and a central part (although this is not always the case) of a different design from the border. Kangas are usually bought and worn as a pair, called a 'doti' in Swahili language. In addition, a typical Kanga consists of a wider border (which is called 'pindo'), the central motif (called 'mji'), and the writing or an inscription (called jina). Some of the features described here are illustrated by Kanga pictures in Appendix I.

Furthermore, it should be noted that a Kanga is not just like any other rectangular piece of cloth, no matter how colourful it may be. It is in fact an artifact of the Swahili culture and as such it is designed with extreme care to appeal to its users and to convey the intended message. The artifact can be seen from mji and jina. Ali and Ali (n.d) argue that mji and jina are two features that usually give the kanga its local name and consequently its popularity. Mji occupies the most important area of Kanga but save for its colours and the art, its popularity may be overshadowed by the context of the jina. The jina is usually printed in uppercase letters and in colours that match the central motif and most likely on a white background to improve its readability. An interesting thing is that Kanga names are often proverbs, idioms or pithy sayings and riddles. Yahya-Othman (1997) asserts that few Kangas are designed for special issues such as important national events, raising social awareness and issues related to religious celebrations. A closer examination shows that, in any case, the Kanga names reveal the Swahili culture and other contextualized issues.

Apart from its protective and decorative role, Kangas are all about communicating the message. The writings that are printed on the Kanga are usually of central significance and it is the one that makes people buy it. Hanby and Bygott (2006) argue that even though the Kanga is quite cheap, it is still a main part of Swahili culture. For those versed in Swahili and Kanga culture the name is of key importance when buying any Kanga. A man buys for his wife a Kanga in appreciation of her and the fondness they share, a Kanga with a saying like, 'Japo Kidogo Chatosha kwa Wapendanao', literally Even a little is enough for those in love, 'Mpende Akupendaye' literally You should love those who love you (i.e. love is reciprocal), 'Hakuna Kisicho Doa'- There is nothing without a flaw, 'Embe Mbivu Huliwa Kwa uvumilivu'

¹ <http://www.gicom.com/hassan/kanga.html>

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directly translated as A ripe mango is eaten slowly. These sayings and proverbs have a significant impact to a woman who receives such a Kanga from her husband. There is also a common saying in Swahili community which goes 'Mke hapigwi kwa ngumi na mateke ila kwa Kanga' literally meaning 'A wife is never beaten by using a fist or kick but by Kanga'. Such sayings are intended to encourage men to buy their wives Kangas or discouraging maltreatment of wives once the message is read.

Kanga is considered as one of the important clothes that are part of the Swahili arts and crafts. Majority of the women wear or buy a Kanga that bears a message they want to send across. This can be a message of love, appreciation, precaution, acknowledgement, warning, prayer, reassurance, thank you or just an act of self-expression. There are some messages that indicate that the person wearing the Kanga is not in good terms with another person. Zawawi (2005) emphasizes that because of the significance of the messages written on them and their communication power, Swahili speaking people do not just buy Kangas because of their color or beauty but are mostly lured by its message. This presupposes that a Kanga should be made with extreme care in order to appeal to its users. If the cloth doesn't bear an interesting message or a message that cuts across then it doesn't deserve to be a Kanga and can be used as a baby diaper or an apron for the kitchen.²

In that regard, Kanga names are effective tools of communication, especially among women as well as between women and other members in the society. This communication is achieved through the use of indirect language (i.e. proverbs, pithy sayings and riddles). Kingfisher (1997) argues that women tend to avoid face-to-face confrontation, and instead prefer the most indirect methods, those which protect them from direct challenges. Zawawi (2005) affirms that with a Kanga you can indirectly say what you want to your neighbour, rival or others. In this indirect communication the addresser and addressee are always safe. In addition, by using the indirect communication they have always the option of denying that the Kanga name was not intended for any particular person and thereby save embarrassment (Mazrui & Shariff, 1993, Obeng, 1997 and Yahya-Othman, 1997). As with all utterances of this kind, the interpretation of the communication conducted within a context depends on the previous incidents, relations between the addresser and addressee, and the specific occasion warranting the presentation.

Apart from being used as shawls, headscarves, veils or beddings, Kanga can be used as curtains/blinders, bed covers or table cloths, floor mats, prayer mats and baby coats as well as gifts to significant others. The latter usually have messages of love showing how much the person giving the Kanga values the person receiving it. Kanga that have abusive messages are never given out as presents. Women in rural areas use Kangas as aprons when doing farm work and when fetching water. Further, Muslim women use Kangas as veils during prayer sessions (Hanby and Bygott, 2006 and Zawawi, 2005). Just like in western campaigns during election where print t-shirts are used for sending their messages to voters, Kangas are used as important tools for mobilizing people in the Swahili community during national elections and other political engagements. Whereas t-shirts apply equally well to men and women, Kangas are more appealing to women. Kangas are often used in political rallies as a form of identity for people supporting a particular party or candidate. In addition, they are also used to mobilize people during public health campaigns as well as creating awareness on various developmental programs. Generally, Kanga as an art form as well as beautiful, convenient garments, have become an integral and significant part of Swahili society and culture.

² http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swahili_culture.

Studies have been carried out on the linguistics, philosophy and the sociology about the Kanga, Kanga names and their relation to the Swahili Society (Hilal, 1989; Beck, 1995; Yahya-Othman, 1997; Zawawi, 2005 and Hanby and Bygott, 2006). In most of the studies, the medium used for writing is English and other languages other than Kiswahili. Since the names are originally in Kiswahili, the writers or scholars tend to translate them into English or any other language of the article. In those writings, the original Kanga names presented parallel with their target language translations. The translations offered for the Kanga names are a point of interest for this article. As noted earlier, Kanga names are idiomatic expressions, proverbs, pithy sayings and riddles, which are all rooted in the Swahili culture and context. This makes the translation a bit challenging. In principle, translators need to find an equivalent idiomatic expression, proverb and riddle in the target language (Baker, 1992). However, translating such expressions into another language of a different culture makes the exercise complicated. There is always a challenge of establishing an equivalent for a cultural expression in another language spoken in a society of a different culture. A study of Kanga names translated from Kiswahili into English indicates that there is a frequent use of literal and descriptive translations. The option for these translation techniques could have been dictated or motivated by the lack of ready equivalents in the target language as well as the insufficient skills and knowledge about the target language and culture. These practices offer an interesting area of study to be described and systematized.

3.0 The concept of cultural texts and translation

The concept of culture here is understood as the way of life and its manifestations peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression (Newmark, 1988). This means that every culture is unique in itself; it includes language, art, music, religion, dress, rituals, laws, norms, values and beliefs. African culture is incredibly interesting because it is very diverse. Palmer (2006) argues that African culture is incredibly interesting because it is so diverse. Every country is a mix of tribes each with their own unique language and culture. Culture is developed and learned because we are not born with a particular cultural understanding. It is our learned culture that creates our strong sense of the physical and behavioral characteristics that reflect us and those that signify others. Culture somehow implies that rituals, climate, values, and behaviors are bound together into a coherent whole. This is to say, in order for a society to be identified as a cultural entity, it should have shared patterns of ideas, behaviors and beliefs and these should be guided by norms, values and roles, and should be reinforced by rites, rituals, taboos, jargons.

Newmark (1988) categorizes cultural expressions into ecology (those of flora, fauna, hills, winds and plains); material culture (including food, clothes, houses, towns and transport); social culture (work and leisure); organizational customs, activities, procedures, concepts (such as political and administrative, religious and artistic expressions); gestures and habits. According to this categorization, Kanga names fall under concepts, specifically the artistic expressions. Newmark further proposes two techniques which can be used in establishing the equivalents of cultural expressions, which are transference and componential analysis. With transference, he argues that it gives the cultural expression a local color, keeping cultural names and concepts, while the componential analysis excludes the culture and highlights the message. With Newmark, the emphasis is on giving the cultural concept a local color and highlighting the message. While this is true, literal translations communicate the message in a way that can be understood easily. This argument means that cultural expressions can be handled differently, using a variety of transfer techniques or procedures, in addition to transference and componential analysis.

Baker (1992) believes that it is necessary for translators to have knowledge about semantics and lexical sets and the value of the words in source language. This enables them to suggest equivalents that best express the concepts presented. Baker further notes that a translator can develop strategies for dealing with non-equivalence in semantic fields and other expressions. The strategies that Baker proposes may be similar to the translation procedures for dealing with cultural expressions suggested by Newmark (1988). Mizani (2011) argues that long debate have been held over when to paraphrase, when to use the nearest local equivalent, when to coin a new word by translating literally, and when to transcribe. All these “untranslatable” culture-bound words and phrases continue to fascinate translators and translation theorists. Various translation techniques are revised to handle various situations and texts. It is argued here that the techniques have been very productive in handling what was referred as untranslatable expressions.

4.0 Theoretical perspective

This study examines the translation of Kanga names using a skopos theory which was introduced by Hans Vermeer in the mid 1980s. Skopos is a Greek word for ‘aim’ or ‘purpose’. The word Skopos was entered in translation theory in a technical sense to refer to the purpose of translation and translation practices. Above all the skopos theory focuses on the purpose of translation, which determines the translation method and strategies that are to be employed in order to produce a functionally adequate result. That means, knowing why a source language is to be translated and what function a target language will be are crucial for the translators and translation specialists or scholars. The basic underlying ‘rules’ of this theory include that (a) A translatum (or target text) is determined by its skopos (its purpose), (b) A target text is an offer of information in a target culture and target language. This relates the source language text and target language text to their function in their respective linguistic and cultural context. The translator is once again the key player in the process of intercultural communication and production of the translatum (Munday, 2005). Hervey, Higgins, Cragie and Gambarotta (2005) maintain that in deciding which textual variables to prioritize, the translator has always to ask: what is the purpose of the source text, and what is the purpose of the target text? These questions imply two other questions: what kind of text is the source text, and what kind of a text should the target text be? The texts chosen for this paper (i.e. Kanga names) illustrate the importance of these questions in deciding the strategies. The choice of literal and descriptive translation for the pithy sayings, proverbs and riddles was guided by the purpose.

The translation of Kanga names here is assumed to be purpose-based. The translators of Kanga names translated these texts for academic or communicative purposes. Newmark (1988) argues that cultural expressions are unlikely to be understood and the translation strategies for this kind of concept depend on the particular text-type, purpose of the translation, requirements of the readership or client and the importance of the text. Thus, the translation of Kanga names, which are artistically presented, was made possible through the application of literal and descriptive techniques in order to achieve the purpose. Hervey et al (2005) argues that paying due attention to the nature and purpose of the target text guarantees a degree of bias which helps to prevent the excessive source language bias that so often defeats the purpose of target text. In the chosen source text, for instance, the purpose is to persuade the purchaser and/or wearer that she has chosen wisely and should do so again. Presumably, the target text has a different purpose, that is, telling the target text readers what is communicated through Kanga names. This means that even if the target text is not faithful to the stylistic features of the source text, it has been faithful to the purpose of the target text.

Newmark (1988) introduced contextual factors for translation procedures and techniques which include the purpose of text, motivation and cultural, technical and linguistic level of readership, importance of referent in the source language text, setting, newness of word/referent and future or referent. In other words, these are among the factors affecting translation methods, strategies, techniques and translation products, which are also hypothesized to affect the translators of Kanga names. Newmark further states that operationally translating the source language into a suitable form of target language is part of the translator’s role in intercultural communication but deviations can be tolerated because of various factors, including those listed above. This means, in the translation of cultural texts, such as the translation of Kanga names, the application of literal or descriptive translations can sometimes lead to certain deviations from the original texts. In this context, the deviations are argued here to be caused by the lack of ready equivalents as well as the need to fulfil the purpose.

5.0 The Translation of Kanga names into English

Kanga names have been translated into English by various individuals in various publications including papers or articles, books and websites.³ The purpose of translating these texts was generally to facilitate communication to the target language readers. Ali and Ali (n.d.) acknowledge that most of the Kanga names were sent to them by various readers of their webpage so that they could translate for them into English.⁴ As noted earlier, translations of Kanga names involve the application of some transfer techniques due to the fact that they are rooted in the source language culture and philosophy, and therefore, some of them lack equivalents in the target language. Through this study, it has been established that the commonly used techniques are literal and descriptive translations. The data for this study are strings of the source language texts identified by their target language texts. These texts are analyzed under two sub-themes, literal translations and descriptive translations.

5.1 Literal translations

A literal translation is a kind of translation that follows closely the form of the source language. It is a process of rendering a text from one language to another through “word-for-word” translation rather than conveying the sense for sense. Hervey et al (2005) argue that literal translation is the source language oriented style of translation in which the literal meaning of all words in the source text is taken as if straight from the dictionary, but the conversions of the target language grammar are respected. In other words, literal translation occurs when the source language grammatical constructions are converted to their nearest target language equivalents, but the lexical words are translated singly, out of context. The following are some of the literal translations of the Kanga names which were observed in this study:

Table 1: Samples of Literal Translations

SL Texts	TL texts
Sisi sote abiria dereva ni Mungu	We are all passengers, God is the driver
Ukila nanasi, tunda lingine basi	Once you taste a pineapple, you'll never go for any other fruit
Nilikudhani dhahabu kumbe adhabu	I thought of you as gold but you are such a pain
Mtu ni watu	A person is people
Na kweli!	True Indeed!

³ The researcher has drawn the data from all these sources and resources. The websites that were visited include [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kanga_\(African_garment\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kanga_(African_garment)), <http://news.journekenya.com/general/my-african-kanga/>, <http://www.bellaonline.com/articles/art20679.asp>, <http://www.mambomagazine.com/in-deep/tradition/top-5-most-heartbreaking-kangas> and <http://news.journekenya.com/general/my-african-kanga>. Also some of the data was drawn from the books and articles found in the References. The selection of the data to be used in this writing was through random sampling.

⁴ Ali, Hassan O. and Kassim O. Ali (n.d.) <http://www.glc.com/hassan/kanga.html>, accessed on 22nd February, 2011.

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Hapo umesema!	Now you are talking
Usinambie!	Don't tell me!
Wala si uongo!	You lie not!
Mpanda hila huvuna majuto	She who sows wiles will reap regrets
Paka wa jirani usimkaribishe ndani	Don't let the neighbour's cat into your house
Kibiriti chako katingishie kwengine	Go shake your matchbox somewhere else
Hunilishi hunivishi wala hunibabaishi	You neither feed me nor clothe me and you don't scare me
Umechezea tufali limekutoa kiburi	You have played with a brick which has stripped you of your arrogance

The data above shows a direct translation of the source language texts into the target language. For instance, the translation of *Mtoto wa nyoka ni nyoka* to *The child of a snake is a snake* (Instead of Like father like son) is a word for word replacement. The translators here are trying to follow closely the source language forms or words in the target language, with their basic semantic representations (See also the translation of *Kibiriti chako katingishie kwengine* - Go shake your matchbox somewhere else). Although there is a message presented artistically in the source language text, in the target language text there are ordinary words representing the message to the target language community. From these translations, the reader can easily guess the message behind each expression or Kanga name, even though the aesthetic features are somehow lost. One wishes to find a target language artistic expression matching the source language expression but because of the cultural constraints the message is rendered literally. See also in the following examples:

Table 2: More Samples of Literal translations

SL Texts	TL texts
Fimbo la mnyonge halina nguvu	A poor man's cane is not strong enough
Kikulacho kinguoni mwako	What "eats" you is in your dress
Kuku mgeni hakosi kamba mguuni	A new hen would always have a string tied to its leg
Lia na tabia yako usilaumu wenzako	Blame your character not your fellows
Machoni rafiki, moyoni mnafiki	Friendly in the eyes, a hypocrite in the heart
Mapenzi hudumu ukila zabibu	Love lasts if you eat grapes
Mcheza kwao hutunzwa	A person who plays at home gets awarded
Mimi na wewe pete na kidole	I and you are like a ring and a finger
Mke mwenza!! haa!! mezea!	Co wife! Ha! Just swallow it!
Msilale wanawake	Women do not fall asleep
Nazi mbovu harabu ya nzima	A bad coconut renders good ones bad
Naishi niwezavyo siishi mtakavyo	I live as I can afford not as you wish
Sichagui sibagui atayenizika simjui	I do not choose nor do I segregate, for I don't know who will attend to my funeral
Ukali wa jicho washinda wembe	An eye is sharper than a razor
Usilaumu sisimizi sukari haimalizi	Don't blame an ant, it will never finish the sugar
Kimya kingi kina mshindo mkuu	Prolonged silence has a strong bang
Jogoo wa shamba hawiki mjini	A country rooster would not crow while in town
Lisemwalo lipo	If it's being talked about then it's already here

The above translations are more examples of the direct translations of the source language texts in the target language. Barbe (1996) emphasizes that literal translation is sensitive to the original text and culture. It is relatively pure, direct, transparent, unmediated, independently verifiable, pre-interpretive, and without difficulties. This is because the translator imitates or uses the original as a basis to create a work that the source language author would have created. In addition, it exemplifies closeness and immediacy to the source language culture. That means, literal translations produce texts that stay closer to the source language text (Blanchot, 1990 and Berman, 1992). With this kind of translation, the readers of these translations are constantly reminded that they are reading a text that was written in another language and culture. Berman (1992) argues that throughout the history of translation, literal translation approach has been applied in the domain of literature and other cultural texts in order to maximize the experience of the foreign.

Literal translation helps to avoid losing the foreign flair and, consequently, to be able to experience the foreign. It also enriches the target language with pithy sayings, proverbs and riddles which are literally translated from another language.

5.2 Descriptive translations

Descriptive translation is the type of translation where the translator explains the behaviour or function of the idea or concept embodied in the SL text using words of the target language (Newmark, 1988 and Malangwa, 2010). Usually this results in long phrasings. In this situation, translation is more than the substitution of lexical and grammatical elements of the source text. It involves rendering the SL concept or message communicated using some descriptions or extended expressions (Trosborg, 1997 and Nord, 1996). In trying to render the cultural expressions of the Kanga names, translators sometimes try to describe the message found in the source language texts using target language words. The following data are part of the descriptive translations observed in the translation of Kanga names:

Table 3: Samples of Descriptive translation

SL Text	TL text
Kibaya changu si chema cha mwenzangu	Better my own, no matter how poor , than someone else
Paka wa jirani usimkaribishe ndani	Don't let the neighbour's cat into your house
Fitina yako faida yangu	Your bad words against me, actually benefit me or When you incite others against me, you actually benefit me.
Ukijua huu huu huujui	If you know some ways, some ways you don't know
Japo sipati tamaa sikati	Even though I have nothing, I have not given up my desire to get what I want
Naogopa simba na meno yake siogopi mtu kwa maneno yake	I'm afraid of a lion with its strong teeth but not a man with his words
Pole pole ndio mwendo	Slow, slow is the way to go/slowness is the better locomotion
Macho hayana pazia	Eyes have no screens, they see all that is within view
Mcheza kwao hutunzwa	A dancer among his/her own people will be rewarded

When one observes the translations provided in the table above, it can be noted that in the target text there are some additions (i.e. additional words which are highlighted) that are intended to give more clarifications on what is communicated in the source language text. For instance, in the first example, the phrase no matter how poor, is an additional emphasis. Similarly, all other translations in the table sound and/or look more descriptive than the source text. Observed also in the following translations:

Table 4: More Samples of Descriptive Translations

SL Texts	TL texts
Hasidi hana sababu	An envious person requires no reason to practice envy
Hata ukinuna buzi tumelichuna	You may be angry, but we've skinned the big goat!
Mtumai cha ndugu hufa masikini	A person who relies on his/her relative's property , dies poor
Mwenye wivu ajinyonge	The envious should hang herself/himself
Tulia tuishi wazuri haweshi	Calm down and live with me, pretty ones are never in short in supply
Ukistaajabu ya Musa utaona ya Firauni	If the acts of Moses make you wonder, wait until you see the acts of Pharaoh

In studying this data, it can be observed that the words or expressions in bold are additional emphasis in the target text. They give more elaboration of the source language message in order to help the target readers to understand well what is said in the source texts. The following interesting patterns were also observed:

Table 5: More Samples of Descriptive translation

SL Texts	TL texts
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Ukimkirimu Mola wako hukosi fungu lako	If you are generous to your God, you won't miss your share (of compensation)
Ukiona vyaelea vimeundwa	When you see them (vessels) afloat, somebody made them
Ukipata shukuru ukikosa usikufuru	When you get (something) be thankful and when you miss (something) do not blaspheme
Ukiujua huu, huu huujuu	If you know this one, you don't know this (other) one
Baba wa kambo si baba	A step-father (adoptive father) is not a father
Hapana siri ya watu wawili	A secret is no secret when shared by two people
Moto hauzai moto	Fire does not beget fire (because in the end, all it begets is ash).
Njia ya mwongo ni fupi	The way of a liar is short (i.e. he soon comes to grief)

In the above translations there is the use of brackets in the target language texts. These additional words or expressions in brackets are considered to be descriptive or additional information which is not found in the source texts. Whatever its good intention, translators should not give the readers, who need just to understand the source language message in their own target language, a task of choosing the right description or meaning. In that regard, translators are discouraged from putting some additional information or clarifications in their translations or suggesting any optional way of expressing a certain concept. It actually confuses the readers who need to understand the message smoothly.

5.3 Use of ready equivalents

It is common in real life situations to find speakers of different languages talking about a certain saying or proverb which is available in both languages. Although cultural expressions are a challenge in translating texts, sometimes different languages may share certain sayings, proverbs or riddles. In this situation, translators are usually excited and their task becomes easier. When studying the translations of Kanga names, the translators sometimes managed to establish the target language equivalent pithy sayings, riddles and proverbs as can be observed in the following data:

Table 6: Samples of Equivalent Cultural Expressions

SL Text	TL text
Bora kupata kuliko kukosa	Something is better than nothing
Subora ufunguo wa peponi	Heaven comes to those who wait
Wema Hauozi	Kindness is never wasted
Kawia ufike	Better late than never
Mapenzi hayana macho ya kuona	Love is blind
Maneno yako yaishe wala usiyazidishe	Not another word
Mla mla leo mla jana kala nini	Today's is the winner, not yesterday's
Mwenye kelele hana maneno	A noisy person is harmless
Kikulacho kiungoni mwako	The enemy is within
<i>Fimbo La Mnyonge Halina Nguvu</i>	Might is right

The above examples are just few of the expressions which have an equivalent expression in the target language. For translators, it is exciting to find an equivalent for a cultural expression. It was also interesting in this study to see that certain Swahili pithy saying and proverbs have equivalents in English. It can be argued here that although human languages are different, sometimes they have few elements in common. These are usually referred to as universals (Baker and Malmkjær, 2005).

6.0 Conclusion

From this discussion, it can be concluded that literal translation can be a means to an end or the end itself. It can be used as both a means of analysing the semantic value of each lexical item in the source language text and a tool of translating. Baker (1992) believes that it is

necessary for a translator to have knowledge about semantics and lexical sets. With this knowledge, s/he would appreciate the “value” of the word in a given knowledge system and the difference of structures in the source language and the target language. This allows him or her to assess the value of a given item in a lexical set. S/he can develop strategies for dealing with non-equivalence in semantic fields. The translation of Kanga names has been successful through literal translation. This technique has helped the translators to facilitate this cultural communication. Similarly, descriptive translation has been serving as a solution to non-availability of equivalents in translation. It puts more clearly the source language concepts to the target language audience. The two tools have been used creatively to achieve the translation of Swahili pithy sayings or riddles and proverbs into English. Had it not been the application of such means of transfer, it could not be an easy task for the translators to establish the target language texts. Equally important, the target language speaker establishes the concepts in the translations easily although literal and descriptive translations sometimes may produce unidiomatic or non-artistic expressions in the target text. Finally, literal and descriptive translations are based on the source text analysis in order to establish the target language equivalents. This means that the target text suffers somewhat from excessive source language orientations. The target language is usually enriched with pithy sayings and proverbs from the source language.

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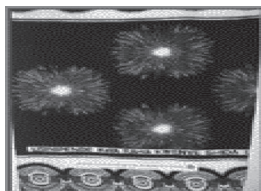
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Examples of Kanga names*

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Appendix I: Illustrative Kanga Pictures and Names



AJABU NAZI KAVU KUTAKA KUVUNJA JIWE
(It's strange for a dry coconut to want to break a stone)



USINIPENDE KWA RAHA KWENYE, SHIDA USINITUPE
(Don't just love me in good times, don't abandon me in bad times)



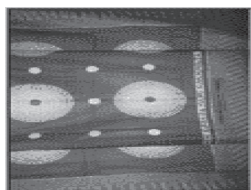
USIMLAUMU SISIMIZI SUKARI HAIMALIZI
(Don't blame the ant, it won't finish all the sugar)



UTABAKI NA CHOKOCHOKO UTAAMBULIA UKOKO
(By causing misunderstandings, you'll end up with leftovers)



SIRI NI YA WAWILI
(A secret is that of two people)



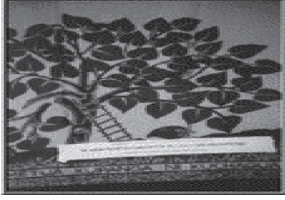
HERI KUNIULIZA KULIKO KUNICHUNGUZA
(Better ask me than spying on me)



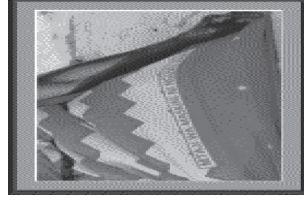
AHSANTE GARI YA MUHISHIMIWA WETU
(Thanks to his excellency's car)



APENZI HUDUMU UKILA ZABIBU
(Love lasts if you eat grapes)



USIONE NIMETUA KUPANGA NI KUCHAGUA
(I'm settled because to plan is to make choices)



MTAJI WA MASKINI NI NGUVU ZAKE
(A poor man's capital is his body strength)



MAPENZI HAYANA MACHO YA KUONA
(Love is blind)



SITALIPIZA NA WALA SITASAHAU
(I won't revenge but I won't forget)



UPENDO NA AMANI AMETUJALIA MUNGU
(Love and Peace is God given)



USIA WA MAMA NI MWONGOZO WA MAISHA
(Mum's Advices are Guidelines in Life)



MATATIZO NIMEYAZOEA
(Problems is Part of my Life)