Chapter IV

Comparative Analysis of Source and Target Texts: Shifts, Norms and Strategies in the translation process

4.1. Introduction

Two postgraduate students of translation at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) were selected to translate extracts of these stories from English into French: Roland Ngam Nkwain, an African (Cameroonian) and regular reader of postcolonial texts and Virginie Caura with her first language knowledge of French. This split of competence was a good starting point, as both cultural and linguistic problems would be raised.

The translators were asked to translate the texts for their specific audiences i.e. French speaking children of France and Cameroon. They were free to select an approach and free to decide whether or not to make changes in the target texts. In fact, what we expected was good text-production proficiency and communicative competence, and the ability to re-write or re-phrase texts for their respective audiences (target children readers) to allow them to fully understand the source culture as represented in the original texts. To this end, a number of questions are investigated here:

- Can translation be given a cross-cultural understanding and description?
- What is the impact of the target-culture system on what gets translated, and why? and how?
- How can a translator deal with the issue of culture in translation?
4.2. Selected extracts (cf. Appendix 2 and 3)

Two extracts are presented in which we examine the underlying ideologies. These extracts were chosen because they include issues of culture, racism, and social class conflict, which are common sites of ideology. The first extract shows how the writer gives his already known readers (Kenyan children) an opportunity to explore cultural and political issues. What is striking about it is how he uses his verbal narrative to expose the evils of capitalism. His story takes the form of a conflictual dialogue between Nene, the child hero, and Mwendanda, the rich man. The child is represented as a miserable boy exploited by Mwendanda, for whom he works, and describes an incident in which the latter does not pay him the little money he wants for bread. In this extract Mwendanda extends the iconic power of the male (coloniser) symbolised by his power to decide (decision-making). Nene, in his status of a child and worker, is obliged to surrender and goes away hungry. The second extract concerns white versus black conflict in Kenya, but is also about issues pertaining to African identity. Nene, the main character, is represented here as the one who helped his colleagues survive when they got mysteriously lost in the forest on their way to the museum in Nairobi. Generally, the museum is a place where people keep cultural or historical artifacts for remembrance. It is concerned with restoring the past. In this case, the failure to reach Nairobi can be viewed as a failure of most Kenyans to remain faithful to traditional ways. The reader will also find it difficult to believe that Pious Brainwash, the school founder, refuses to reward the cleverest boy (Nene) who knows the local geography and helped other children escape from danger but instead recompenses him by sending him away from school claiming that he is a terrorist. In this extract the writer expresses his views on the political system of Kenya in the 1950s. This is demonstrated by the fact that Nene is constructed by the writer as having no ability to act, whereas Pious Brainwash is constructed as powerful. He stands as the hallmark of a paternalistic order of discourse. The story suggests that paternalism was strongly alive in the Kenya of the colonial reign. From the same extract, one also hears Mother Wacūr singing. Knowing that Africans sing both when happy and depressed to ease their pain or express their joy, this character reflects African culture (folklore, tradition and customs). This shows that both men and women were expected to act as revolutionaries within the resistance movement in Kenya. As a result, the meaning of masculine and feminine gender identities was transformed. This perhaps marks the beginning of Kenya’s women’s liberation. The position of Mother Wacūr in this story is perhaps “reminiscent of the golden age of Gikūyū history when women
ruled their homesteads until the men revolted” (Nama, 1986:79). That is why this woman spends much of her time inculcating traditional values into the teenage boy. It follows, therefore, that the story depicts the role played by other members of the society within the struggle for independence. It is true that women and children played an important role in the liberation of Kenya; their invisibility was a tool of resistance. They were effective couriers who infiltrated the enemy zones to assist men (Mau Mau) with what they needed (guns, food, and so on). Nene and his mother are examples of such women and children.

4.3. Analysis of texts

The methods described in chapter III are applied with an orientation toward translation. The analysis is carried out in the following way: (a) a textemic analysis of the ST, followed immediately with (b) a comparison of the TT with ST, and (c) a generalising description of differences between TT/ST). As far as the CDA is concerned, its ten questions are followed, but they are selected according to the texts. Questions 8 and 10 are omitted in our discussion. They are of minor importance in these analyses.

4.3.1. Textemes

4.3.1.1. (A) Lexical categories

As part of his work, the translator deals with the lexis in the original text. Van den Broeck refers to such textual features as ‘textemes’. A ‘texteme’ is by definition “any sign, which carries a textual function” (Van den Broeck, 1985:57). The analysis and translation of lexis both in the target texts and their sources follows Fairclough’s questions of which the first one is:

(1) What experiential values do words have?

Let us first of all remark that it is difficult to define the ‘experiential meaning’ of words with absolute certainty. This is because “the nature of language is such that, in the majority of cases, words have ‘blurred edges’; their meanings are, to a large extent, negotiable and are only realised in specific contexts” (Baker,1992:17). When analysing Njamba Nene and the flying Bus, words such as terrorist, freedom fighters, land used in this text have both experiential and expressive meaning depending on the context. They have experiential value in the sense that they have history behind them and are used because of this experiential value they embody.
The French translations of these terms are rather different. They read as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST: Terrorist</th>
<th>TA: Terroriste</th>
<th>TB: Terroriste</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land</td>
<td>Terrains</td>
<td>Terre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom fighters</td>
<td>(Omitted)</td>
<td>Combattants de la liberté</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To get at the question of experiential value in translation, we could appeal to context. If we consider, for example, the word(s) ‘Freedom fighters’ omitted by Translator A in his translation (by mistake) and rendered by B as ‘Combattants de la liberté’, these words are unlikely to make sense to the target child reader. Translator B although close to the original is not contextualised. An additional explanation needs to go with the translation of ‘freedom fighters’ so that the child may understand. For example, ‘- freedom fighters - people who fought to help Kenyans get their freedom or independence’. This is to expand on and explain what this word might mean, thus giving it its experiential value. The translation of such words requires that the translator “perceives the meanings of words very precisely in order to render them into another language. This forces him/her to go beyond what the average reader has to do in order to reach an adequate understanding of a text” (Baker, 1992:17).

Apart from experiential values, words also have relational values. Fairclough’s second question is **(2) What relational values do words have? Are there euphemistic expressions? Are there markedly formal or informal words?**

The following construction ‘very wealthy man’ in *Njamba Nene’s Pistol* gives the idea of a relation to the word ‘rich’ or ‘bourgeois’ often used in texts dealing with the social class conflicts that appear in this text.

The Kenya described in this story is in a period where there is no equality in the distribution of income, property and power. The writer wants to show that while some people had lost their property, were unemployed and living in fear of the colonial reign, others (white
settlers and Indians) were enjoying life and becoming richer and richer. That was the capitalist economy of exploitation by the white settler.

If we consider an utterance such as:

“He was a very wealthy man”.

We see that it is only the hearer's implicit knowledge that will help him/her understand this sentence. The reader who is aware of Kenyan history of the 1950s will easily infer that this very wealthy man was one of those exceedingly rich Indian people who lived in Kenya during that period and exploited black people. In this regard ‘very wealthy man’ simply means ‘bourgeois’ or ‘capitalist’ and is used here as a ‘euphemism’ which is “a metaphorical or metonymic use of an expression in place of another expression that is disagreeable or offensive” (*SIL International online Dictionary*). The writer did not want to use the words *bourgeois* or *capitalist*. He may have wanted to adapt the text to the level of children’s language or simply avoid sounding too negative. The use of very wealthy man is appropriate for a children’s text in this context.

Reading our translated texts, Translator A seems to have failed to grasp the notion of implicature behind the construction. The French passage reads, thus, slightly differently from the original. Perhaps this implicature was not clear to him. He omitted the adjective ‘very’ an element that conveys the idea of the clash between two opposing groups, one very rich and the other very poor. An alternative translation may be ‘Il était un homme extrêmement riche’ rather than ‘Il était riche’. Translator B, however, seems to be aware of this adverb, which she translates with ‘très’ (riche) i.e. ‘very’ (rich).

Following Fairclough’s third question (3) ‘What expressive value do words have?’ this value goes together with what Baker (1992) refers to as expressive meaning. Expressive meaning cannot be judged as true or false. This is so because “expressive meaning relates to the speaker’s feelings or attitude rather than to what words and utterances refer to” (Baker, 1991:13). The words discussed in previous lines display a contested expressive meaning depending on the value attached to them by language users.
Words with expressive value can be classified in two groups: words with positive connotations and words with negative connotations. Example can be given here of the words such as:

1. God - positive meaning (see Njamba Nene & the flying Bus),
2. Terrorists – negative meaning (see Njamba Nene & the Flying Bus),
3. Pistol - negative (see Njamba Nene’s Pistol).

The above words are ideologically contested. The expressive value they embody is difficult to determine both for the critic and the translator. Terrorists, for example, do not regard themselves as such. They claim to be ‘freedom fighters’. The same applies to the word pistol - a firearm that is held and fired with one hand - which is also generally given a negative connotation. At first glance, this word appears in the text as a weapon used by the Mau Mau to kill others (especially white people). However, the Mau Mau regarded it as their “bread of life” rather than a weapon of destruction. The Mau Mau leader, General Rûheni says:

We are fighting a battle so that our children can stop scavenging for stale bread with dogs and cats in rubbish pits and dustbins. A gun [Pistol] in the hand of a freedom fighter is the bread of life (Ngugi, 1986a: 32).

Similarly, the word “God” is also used in different contexts with different expressive meanings. It is difficult to determine whether in his speech Nene is referring to the absolute God known among the Gîkîryû as Ngai, i.e. the supreme One. He may also be referring to Gîkîryû and his wife Mumbi (which literally means creator), the first man and woman above often referred to as mythical gods. In terms of fertility, the first woman is given the status of god and is venerated. Other words such as Bururi, Murungu, and Mwenenyanga are also used in Gîkîryû to express or mean ‘god’. Views may vary widely on whether the child is referring to Ngai (God) or to any other ‘god’. It has been argued by theologians that for Africans anything can become a ‘god’: a spirit, an animal, a stone, a tree, etc. can equally be worshipped and venerated as gods.
The two French translations are much close to the original:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ST: Terrorist</th>
<th>TA: Terroriste</th>
<th>TB: Terroriste</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>God</td>
<td>Dieu</td>
<td>Dieu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pistol</td>
<td>Pistolet</td>
<td>Pistolet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

But because of the expressive meaning that lies behind these words, the decision is to whether ‘God’ should be translated as ‘dieux’ (small gods e.g, Mumbi) as opposed to the absolute God. This applies also to ‘terrorist’ translated by TA and TB as Terroriste. Nothing is wrong with this translation since this is the word used by the original writer. But we think that rendering this word by ‘liberateurs’ can also be acceptable if we consider that the intention of the original writer was not to portray Mau Mau as terrorists, but others people referred to them as terrorists. It follows, therefore, that the translator can either translate the word as liberateurs’ (i.e. ‘freedom fighters’) or ‘terroristes’ by providing a footnote to show that this is how these people were labelled by their opponents. So, translating such words depends on how one interprets the feelings and intentions of the original writer.

The French translation in the following lines is again a confirmation of how words embody expressive meaning. The use of superordinate and hyponym illustrates this much better.

| ST: Indian children | TT (1) les gamins indiens (hyponym) | TT (2) les enfants indiens (superordinate) |

In Njamba Nene’s Pistol Translator A chooses to shift from enfants (children) to ‘gamins.’ Enfants is a superordinate. The word gamin has more specific connotations. Sometimes a gamin is known in French as naughty, childish and playful. It can only be a naughty child who can defecate in the pit rather than using toilets. The hyponym relation between enfant(s) and gamin(s) at some point shows that gamin is more appropriate to this context than the superordinate enfant. The translators’ views of Indian children differ. To Translator B, they are just children while to A they are naughty children who defecate anywhere instead of using toilets and are, thus, referred to as ‘gamins’. This emphasises the ideological issue with reference to the translators’ decisions.
The expressive meaning of proper names is another dimension, which may strengthen the original text. It the name of a person, for example, raises expectations about who the bearer really is. The translator needs to find out or identify “what kind of person is behind a name” (Schogt, 1988:72) because the name may be ideologically significant.

Names in literary texts might reflect the real life situation. This means that there are subconscious links between persons who played a role in the life of the writer and some of his fictional heroes. If the same name is used for different heroes in successive books, for instance, Schogt argues that positive or negative connotations with that name may become apparent. (Schogt, 1988:74). This is found in Ngugi’s naming of his hero Njamba Nene (Lit. Elephant) successively in his three children’s books (Njamba Nene and the Flying Bus (Njamba Nene na Mbaathi i Malhagu) (1986a); (Njamba Nene and the Cruel Chief (Njamba Nene na Chibu King'ang'i) (1988); Njamba Nene's Pistol (Bathitoora ya Njamba Nene) (1986b). So, when Ngugi calls the protagonist of his stories Njamba Nene or elephant, some readers may easily connect this name to Strength. The same goes for the hero’s antagonist John Bull. His name says something about his personality. He personifies the harsh driving force of evil. He hates indigenous culture; he is stubborn and inflexible.

In some instances names are significant of political behaviour even though the persons bearing them are unaware of this. This is illustrated here by the name of the white settler, Pious Brainwash, who was commonly nicknamed Hangbelly because “he had a hanging belly, which he used to support with braces” (Ngugi, 1986b: 5). We should remember that his fatness and hanging belly as presented in this text are all ingredients in the production of power. They reflect a non-productive leadership based on gluttony.

Names given to buses in one of the texts also reinforce features of characters present during the colonial period. Thus, for example, the labels on the Buses GO AFTER MONEY and MONEY MATTERS appear as a political identification of British greed in Kenya. Most political analysts say that running after money was one of the main objectives of the colonial power in Africa. Here this greed is introduced metaphorically in the form of names.
However, chief Kigorogoru’s real name is not revealed. How he became chief is not revealed either. We are not told why his old name lost popularity and his new name became the favourite. The little we know about this man is that he was nicknamed Kigorogoru by pupils simply because he had a big Adam’s apple (which means Kigorogoru in Gikũyũ). This is an example of carnivalesque literature where “the teacher figure is mocked” (Mdallel, 2004:9). To fully understand this name, we need to go back to the Kenyan history of the colonial period. In fact, Chief Kigorogoru is one of the loyalists who had collaborated with the colonial government and all those who were on the winning side during the period 1952-1961. They also held many important positions, but were unfortunately seen by the majority of Kenyans as pure traitors (Buijtenhuis, 1973: 9-10).

The table below shows the considerable differences in the translation of names by the French translators. In Njamba Nene’s Pistol we have names such as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source text 1</th>
<th>Translator A</th>
<th>Translator B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Njamba Nene</td>
<td>Njamba Nene</td>
<td>Njamba Néné</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limuru Bata shoe comp</td>
<td>L’usine Bata shoe comp.de li…</td>
<td>L’entreprise de chaussures Bata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Githungur</td>
<td>Githungur</td>
<td>Gitoungouri.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gacerũ Mwendanda</td>
<td>Gacerũ Mwendanda</td>
<td>Gacerou Mwenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kimuucu</td>
<td>Kimuucu</td>
<td>Kimou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green Hotel</td>
<td>Green Hotel</td>
<td>Hotel vert</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jamba Nene and the Flying Bus provides, on the other hand:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source text 2</th>
<th>Translator A</th>
<th>Translator B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Bull</td>
<td>John Bull</td>
<td>John Taureau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GO AFTER MONEY</td>
<td>GO AFTER MONEY</td>
<td>CHERCHE L’ARGENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pious Brainwash</td>
<td>Louis Lavage-Cerveau</td>
<td>Père avagedecerveau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hangbelly</td>
<td>Grosduventre</td>
<td>Longventre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Translator B argues, for instance, that she decided to keep proper names of the characters, towns and cities in the story almost unchanged, although some adaptations were made to adapt their original pronunciations to the target language. For example, “Njamba Nene”
became Njamba Néné”. African names that are difficult to pronounce such as “Gacerũ Mwendanda” were shortened to ‘Gacerou, Mwenda’ and ‘Kimuucu’ was changed to ‘Kimou’ (see Appendix 1). According to her, this adaptation at phonetic level would make the text read more fluently in the target language. Despite these slight changes in names, the translator is convinced that the target reader will still hear the foreign sound.

However, the translator seems not to be aware of the fact that some of these changes could lead to contradiction in the mind of the child reader. The French Nénè (colloquial) means *boo* or *breast* or ‘idiot’ – *twerp*. In other words, French children may end up seeing the child hero of Kenyan literature as an idiot. In addition, the same translator dropped ‘nda’ in Mwendanda and ‘cu’ in Kimuucu. The deletion of the syllable *nda* and *cu* deprives these names from their harmonious rhythm, which we believe children would have enjoyed.

By contrast, Translator A chose not to translate names such as *Green Hotel* and *Limuru Bata Shoe Company*. Instead he provides his reader(s) with an explanation: *l’usine de Bata Shoe Company*. This would indicate to the target child reader that this name stands for a company called ‘Bata Shoe Company’. But for the French-speaker who does not know the meaning of the word “shoe”, the explanation provided by the translator will not help. It may have been appropriate if the translator had said “*l’usine de fabrication des souliers appelée Bata Shoe Company*”.

The second also presents names that can pose problems in translation. The first is *John Bull*. Translator A decides again to keep this name unchanged. This is perhaps due to the fact that French speaking children are familiar with English names like John, James, Peter, and so on. Given this situation, the name does not necessitate translation.

However, the name John Bull needs to be further explained as it has in itself an ideological significance. We are told that John Bull originated as a character in John Arbuthnot’s *The History of John Bull* (1712) and since then became widely known. His name frequently appeared in books, plays, periodicals titles, and as a brand name or trademark. He was also frequently used through World War II. Cartoonists helped develop this figure which sometimes
was depicted interacting with Uncle Sam (a business man from US who supplied the army during the *World War of 1812*) as friends or antagonists. Thus their names were selected as appropriate symbols or representations of their respective nations, namely Britain-America (see D’oooge, Graig 1999). This history suggests that Ngugi as both a researcher and writer used these two names, ‘John Bull’, on the one hand, and ‘Njamba Nene’, on the other, as personifications of the relations between the British Empire and its colony, Kenya.

Thus, one can argue that *John Bull* has a significance that cannot be rendered in French. Of course, the idea of not translating proper names is probably acceptable to many translators. Birgit Stolt argues, for example, that “sometimes we do unnecessary adaptation of names. We do it even where the foreign aspect of names can be of interest” (Stolt, 1978:137). Stolt suggests, therefore, that aids to comprehension notes, aids to pronunciation, and explanation of important names be utilised instead of adapting names.

Translator B, on the other hand, chose to translate the names. She translates ‘*John Bull*’ by *John Taureau*. This name sounds to her as a ‘descriptive name’, which, has to be translated. *John Bull* is not an ordinary character in the text; he is a real ‘bull’, which is a symbol of stubbornness. This is perhaps what led Translator B to her decision of translating the name. But if the translator had given thought to what we said earlier on about John Bull as a personification of Britain, perhaps, the name should not be translated for historical reasons. Perhaps a footnote or explanation could be provided as suggested by Stolt.

Similarly, Translator A did not translate the bus’ name ‘*GO AFTER MONEY*’. Translator B rendered it as *CHERCHE L’ARGENT*. The latter translation is correct since the whole context of this story is centred on the colonial master’s greed. This means that it carries ideological significance.

Another attempt to translate names is the substitution of *Pious Brainwash* by *Louis Lavage-Cerveau* and *Père Lavagedecerveau*. In the first case the purpose of the translators is clear. In replacing *Pious* by *Louis* the target child is introduced to a very familiar local name. This can be justified because *substitution* is a good strategy to use “when the child reader cannot be expected to grasp an almost unpronounceable name” (Stolt, 1978:136). Here, however,
Pious is not difficult to pronounce. What is good, however, is his attempt to construct an ideology, deliberately choosing to deviate from the source text.

A more literal translation obviously presents itself as a workable solution in B’s rendition. For her Pious (self-righteous, religious, virtuous, and sanctimonious) is rendered by Père (Father in the sense of religion) and Brainwash by Lavage de cerveau. This name also carries a history with it. It reminds us of the concept of tabula rasa or blank slate whereby Africans were brainwashed and asked to detach themselves from their African roots. With this in mind, it becomes easier to understand why the rendering Pious by Père - a symbol of a colonial master promoting a legacy of cultural and racial amnesia - is appropriate to the context.

Two similar translations are put forward for “Hangbelly”: (A) “Gros du ventre” and (B) “Longventre.” The concept of “Hangbelly” carries a certain ideology with it so that not translating it would be regarded as “a very deviant kind of solution” (Newmark in Schäffner, 1999: 39). The belly, as Oittinen remarks, is a central “figure” in children’s literature” (Oittinen, 2000:55). This metaphor of “hangbelly” or “big stomach” is common in Ngugi’s children’s as well as adult’s books. We also find it in his Weep Not Child where Mr. Howlands is described as a tall, heavily built, with an oval-shaped face that ended in a double chin and a big stomach (Ngugi, 1964). The imagery used here is that of “belly and eating”. A man with a big stomach normally is sometimes perceived as someone who is greedy and eats a lot. In terms of politics, he is considered as a person who eats the government’s money (eating money is not used in its true sense). According to Achille Mbembe “belly” used in this context means “the right of capture and the redistribution of spoils, all these being metaphors common in the vernacular terminologies of power” (Mbembe, 1992:6). As Mr. Pious Hangbelly represents the white settlers, this implies that the colonial masters exploited African richness. It is not the game of translating names that matters, but the texture implicated in this process of negotiating context. In short, “when a name contains an appellative there is an option of translating it” (Klingberg, 1986:52).

We end this debate on names with a further example of geographical names. Geographical names such as Ngaindeithia and Kagerangoro do not normally need to be changed, but need, in our view, to be explained because they possess hidden meanings.
What strikes us about these two French translations is that the translators paid no attention at all to these names. In fact, *Ngaindeithia* means in Gĩkũyũ ‘God help me’ while *Kagerangoro* means ‘It kills you’. In other words, the mount where the forest is located is a dangerous area possibly because of wild animals. As such it can kill you and one can survive only by God’s grace. That is why many people rushed to see for themselves these children who had managed to find their way out from Ngaindeithia forest in Mount Kagerangororo. They wondered and asked “how did they manage to survive there for four weeks and not be eaten by wild animals?” (Ngugi, 1986b: 40) This clearly indicates that such names need an explanation. The target reader can guess, but, he/she will not know for himself/herself unless the translator provides an explanation.

We are not advocating here that names in literary texts should always be translated. Some translators are totally against the translation of names. Bravo, for example, claims that “the text should be left unchanged because that will help the child have a better understanding of other cultures” (Bravo in Klingberg et al, 1978:48). Following her comments, the target children must also learn to pronounce names from other cultures. Klingberg (1986), in contrast, is of the view that names should be translated. Having said that, however, does not mean that without the clues provided by names the translations will not be understood. The translator as Schogt remarks is free ‘to decide for himself [herself] which practical road to follow’ (Schogt, 1988:102).

A further lexical category is that of idiomatic expressions and metaphors. Fairclough’s fourth question to uncover these features is: **(4) What metaphors are used in this text?**

In *Njamba Nene’s Pistol*, we read this figurative expression: ‘*his cheeks were rounded*’. At first glance this expression looks like a mere description of Gacerũ Mwendanda. A close look at it shows, however, that it is both a description and a metaphor at the same time. The translators decided to translate this metaphor literally. They have retained the image of Gacerũ Mwendanda as somebody who must be admired because he is healthy:
There is nothing wrong with these translations. But the critical reading of this passage suggests that the source of the image is not really one of admiration. The implication is that he exploited too many people and as result he became very rich and fat. Taken from that angle, the French language would perhaps have preferred it to be translated as ‘ses joues étaient pendantes or ‘il était joulu’; rather than ‘ses joues s’arrondirent’ or ‘ses joues étaient bien rondes, which could probably mean nothing in French even though the translators have respected the original form. In short, these translations are too literal. The context needed to be taken into account in order to convey the figurative meaning of ‘cheeks well rounded’, which is here a caricature of a fat selfish man. The practice of translation is very complex when it comes to the identification of implied meanings in a given text. This once more confirms the idea according to which context has an important communicative function in translation.

The idiomatic expressions are not simply a question of vocabulary; they are interpreted as pragmatic devices. It is convenient to examine them here.

The translation of idioms is probably the most difficult part of literary translation. Idioms are ideological representations of social relations symbolised in norms of language. Michael Halliday claims that “a linguistic system functions as a metaphor for social processes as well as an expression of them” (Halliday, 1978:3). The following idioms are from Njamba Nene’s Pistol:

**ST**: (a) One cannot undo one’s destiny. (b) What god has willed, He has willed. (c) Do you think that I drill for money?

**TT (1)**: (a) L’on ne peut pas changer son destin (b) La volonté de Dieu ne peut être changée. (c) Tu penses que je fabrique de l’argent?

**TT (2)**: (a) On n’échappe pas à son destin (b) Ce que Dieu a voulu, il l’a voulu. (c) Penses-tu qu’il me suffit de creuser pour trouver de l’argent?
The above idioms may have similar counterparts in the target language in content though their forms may be different. However, one can argue that ‘One cannot undo one’s destiny’ is not really an idiom in English, it sounds like a translation from another language where it is an idiom. But what is important here is that its equivalent is found in French where it reads as ‘autrui ne peut changer mon [ton] destin mais peut le retarder’. It is worth noting that this idiom has a significant function in the source text. This is illustrated by the discussion below.

The writer’s argument that

[…] before Kigorogoru became a colonial chief, he had been a teacher at Njamba Nene’s school. It was Kigorogoru who had Njamba Nene sent away from the school, Njamba Nene had, therefore, been unable to complete his studies. And now he is dead? Njamba Nene said to himself. One cannot undo one’s destiny. What god has willed, He has willed...

leads to the view that Kigorogoru’s death seems to be something he deserves. For Nene, the child hero, Kigorogoru carries the responsibility for his sufferings (he caused his exclusion from TAPS school). On the other hand, Nene’s views may also be said to reflect God’s judgement on the oppressor that chief Kigorogoru represents in this context. The message the child conveys here is that even as chief Kigorogoru betrayed him, God showed himself to be in control of his (the boy’s) destiny. The child appeals here to Christian ideology. His ideas illuminate aspects of sermons he might have heard either at Sunday school or from his former Christian school - TAPS where he was presumably taught about God and His doctrine of punishment. For the boy, Kigorogoru’s bad will is punished by God. In this instance, “the idiomatic expression in the original has to be recognised” (Newmark, 1998: 261) because of its potential ideological meaning.

Baker suggests that “unless the target-language idiom corresponds to the source-language idiom both in form and in meaning, the play on idiom cannot be successfully reproduced in the target text” (Baker, 1992:69). If this cannot be done the translator is forced to paraphrase the idiom. Chesterman (1997:104) corroborates this idea when he says that a ‘paraphrase’ is “a typical strategy for the translation of idioms, for which no corresponding idiomatic expression can be found in the TL” (Chesterman, 1997: 104). According to Chesterman, this strategy results in a TT version that can be described as loose, free and in
some contexts, even undertranslated. Interestingly, however, this strategy (of paraphrase) is the one used in the French translations of the idioms illustrated below:

ST: One cannot undo one’s destiny  
TT1: L’on ne peut pas changer son destin  
TT2: On n’échappe pas à son destin

And

ST: Do you think I drill money?  
(TT1) : Tu penses que je fabrique de l’argent?’  
(TT2) : Penses-tu qu’il me suffit de creuser pour trouver de l’argent’.

This strategy of paraphrasing accounts for different possible translations. This idiomatic expression can also be paraphrased as ‘penses-tu que l’on ramasse l’argent?’ (i.e. ‘Do you think that I pick up money?’ or ‘money does not grow on trees’).

Apart from idioms, we have certain **fixed collocations**, which also behave as idioms and may also pose problems to translators across cultures. For example:

ST: 1. ‘rumour still had it that…’  
2. ‘…urged the people not to heed these threats…’  
3. ‘he would dash to’  
4. ‘…sentenced to death, ’ etc.

TT (1): 1. ‘les rumeurs courraient…’  
2. ‘ne pas prendre les menaces au sérieux’  
3. ‘il allait courir chez…’ (Paraphrase)  
4. ‘condamné à mort’

TT (2): 1. ‘la rumeur courrait…”  
2. ‘vivement conseillé … de ne pas tenir compte de ces menaces’ (paraphrase)  
3. ‘il se précipiterait chez…” (Paraphrase)  
4. ‘condamné à mort’

Like idioms, some of these fixed expressions have their equivalents in French while others are paraphrased (e.g. no 3) as shown above in TT (1) and TT (2). This shows how both English and French share meanings of some fixed expressions, metaphors and clichês between them.
4.3.1.2. (B) Grammatical categories

Our analysis in this section deals with grammatical categories. The first question here is (5) what experiential values do grammatical features have? What types of process and participants predominate? Is agency unclear? Are processes what they seem? Are nominalisations used? Are sentences active or passive? Are sentences positive or negative?

To start with, ‘Is agency unclear?’ Njamba Nene is heavily topicalised in both texts. Most sentences start with Njamba Nene as the subject. It does not surprise us, then, to hear that Nene is the hero in these stories. But looking at the aspect of power relations, Nene shows less power. He is sometimes described as the mocked one, thin, from a peasant family, jobless, homeless, and a hungry boy, although in the end he reveals himself as a real hero. Unlike Nene, Mwendanda, in one text, and teacher Kigorogoru, in the other, are by contrast, endowed with much power. But there is no direct mention of them (Nene’s antagonists) being the cause of misery in the life of the boy. The agency is deleted or not clear.

The French translators succeeded in rendering this unclear agency just as in the original. In other words, the translated texts read the same as their source in terms of agency.

Nominalisations suggest and help to locate where agency lies. The issue of agency arises in different forms. We find it through nominisation as well as through passive voice as, we will see in the few next lines. Let us consider the following examples from Njamba Nene’s Pistol:

ST: 1. During this time, Kenya was under a state of emergency.
2. Many people had suffered under colonial rule.

We see that the use of under a state of emergency and under colonial rule links the suffering of the indigenous Kenyans to the process of time. It is the time of rule that takes all the blame or responsibility for the suffering of Kenyan indigenous people. “nominalisation is said to be particularly well suited to the expression of power through the mystification of time and participants” (Atkins, 2002:8). Time here takes responsibility as much as people do.
The following nominalisations are found in *Njamba Nene and the Flying Bus*:

**ST:**
1. Njamba Nene would be given *a prize for his leadership, intelligence and courage.*
2. *When the news that the pupils had safely returned to their school*.

**TT1:**
1. Njamba Néné allait recevoir *un prix pour ses qualités de leader, pour son intelligence et pour son courage.*
2. *Lorsque la nouvelle répandit que les étudiants étaient rentrés à leur école*.

**TT2:**
1. Njamba Néné recevrait *une récompense pour son initiative, son intelligence et son courage.*
2. *Quand la nouvelle se répandit que les élèves étaient revenues à l’école*.

In the source text, the nominalisations obscure agency, responsibility and causality. It follows that they allow the deletion of participants from the sentences. In example 1 above, the nominalisation seems to carry ideological implications in words like leadership, intelligence and courage. The actions of the boy are not stated clearly. The use of the verb in the passive form ‘*would be given*’ removes the idea of action on the part of Nene. This passive form along with its long nominalisation structure deletes the boy’s actions, thus, making the verb to *lead* turning into a state and fact. Similarly, the construction ‘*When the news that*’ seems to be a lexical unit, a natural, fixed entity, a premodifier of the word ‘pupils’. This nominalisation also turns a process of hearing news into a mere modifier.
The debate of this question takes us to the aspect of tenses in translation. In fact, the indicative (declarative statement form) and the past tense prevail in the text. The past is reported with certainty just as the events happened in the past. In addition, in English we have indicative and informative verbs. It follows that the present tense is often used for indicative while the past tense is for informative statements. The use of tense in English also characterises *Njamba Nene’s Pistol*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informative</th>
<th>Indicative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Njamba Nene pushed the wheelbarrow</td>
<td>How can I die of hunger in my …?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the wheelbarrow lay two sacks</td>
<td>How can I really die of hunger in our….?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He was taking these to the shop</td>
<td>How can I work so hard yet be…pay?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The shop was owned by Gacerũ Mwendanda</td>
<td>What god has willed, He has willed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Njamba Nene was starving</td>
<td>One cannot undo one’s destiny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He had not had anything to eat…for two days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the translation point of view, past tenses in English often creates serious problems for the French translator. For example:

ST: 1. Njamba Nene pushed the wheelbarrow
    2. He was taking these to the shop.
    3. He had not had anything to eat…for two days

TT (1): 1. Njamba Nene poussa le pousse-pousse
        2. Il les amenait à la boutique
        3. Il n’avait rien mangé ni bu pendant deux jours

        2. Il les apportait au magasin
        3. Il n’avait rien eu à manger ni à boire depuis deux jours

In English and in French, tenses and aspects are highly developed with several distinctions in temporal location. In English you will find the simple present, past and future tenses. Related to them are present, past perfect, and other continuous tenses. The same applies to French with its temps présent, passé, future, passé simple, passé composé, imparfait, and so on. So, the sentence “Njamba Nene pushed the wheelbarrow”, for example, suggests that the boy at a certain point in time pushed the wheelbarrow for a purpose. Translator A used
the *simple past* tense known as *passé simple* in French “poussa”. This indicates that he did the action once and never repeated it, which is correct in this context. Translator B, however, used “poussait”. This tense is the *imparfait tense* in French. This tense suggests that the boy was pushing the wheelbarrow for a while. She gives to this tense a continuous aspect it does not have in the ST.

The second sentence “He was taking these to the shop” is used to show the process that also took place at some point in the past in a continuous manner. It did not just happen within seconds but took a while. But as the reader will notice, here again the tense is rendered in French without the additional meaning of process. This is so, because in French the continuous tense is often conveyed by ‘*entrain de*’. For exemple, ‘*il était entrain d’amener les sacs au magasin*’. But in most cases, the ‘*entrain de*’ construction is ignored and the *imparfait* embodies the idea of process as translated above.

Lastly, the sentence “He had not had anything to eat...for two days” was rendered by TA as ‘*Il n’avait rien mangé...*’. (i.e. he had not eaten anything to eat) and rendered by B as ‘*n’avait rien eu à...*’ (i.e. he had no had anything to eat). This ‘*had...had*’ is *pluperfect* (tense) referred to as *plus-que-parfait* in French. The French translator A is correct.

In short, we may also add that though French and English tenses are not too dissimilar, but French translators generally prefer to use the simple past tense throughout their works in order to achieve consistency.

Voice is also an important aspect in translation. “In active clauses, the subject is the *agent responsible* for performing the action. In passive clauses, the subject is the affected entity and the agent *may or may not be specified*” (Baker, 1992:102 emphasis ours). The issue of ‘agency’ is inevitable. It comes back in the discussion of passive and active voice. Let us look at the examples below from *Njamba Nene’s Pistol*:
In the first set of sentences, the agents perform actions (Nene thought, Nene also recalled, and people crowded the room). In the second set, however, the subjects become affected entities rather than agents. For example, sentence (c) does not clearly state ‘who sentenced the boy to death. It is left to the reader to infer the meaning and deduce that the court of the colonial government sentenced the boy. Unlike sentence (c), sentences (a) and (b) have overt agents. The journalist (or news reporter) puts the matter more bluntly (with full subjects – transitive verbs – object sequences). The Mau Mau, for example, are openly accused of having killed Chief Kigorogorus. Sentence (b) also shows that Kigorogorus was responsible for the exclusion of Njamba Nene from the school. But in (c), however, there is no overt agent. “The rendering of the verb in passive form involves the deletion of actors and focuses the attention of the hearer or reader on certain themes at the expense of others” (Thompson, 1984:120), which is according to Fairclough “a form of hidden power” (Fairclough, 1989:52). It is left to the reader to understand why the media eliminated agency. It is perhaps due to the fact that the colonial government is avoiding responsibility for the boy’s death sentence. This ‘agency can be hidden or distanced by the choice of a grammatical structure used’ (Atkins, 2002:7).

To illustrate the above discussion, let us give the following translations of sentence (c):

ST: It was Kigorogorus who had Njamba Nene sent away from the school
TT (1):C’est Kigorogorus qui avait fait chasser Njamba Nene de l’école
TT (2):C’était Kigorogorus qui avait renvoyé Njamba Néné de l’école

When we compare the translations of sentence (c) to the original sentence, it looks like something is missing in the two translations. What we have in the translations does not
perfectly convey the overall meaning of agency hidden in this passive sentence. According to Hatim et al., (1997:10), agency “is done through material processes subdivided in turn into action processes (in which the actor is animate) and event processes (in which the actor is inanimate). Action processes may be further subdivided into intention processes (in which the actor performs the act voluntarily) and supervention processes (in which the process happens independently of violation).” Kígorogoru in this sentence, for example, is taken as an object (a tool) that caused the event (of sending Nene away from school) to happen. In fact, it was not him who sent the boy away from school, but the school authorities (cf. Mr Pious Brainwash in Njamba Nene and the flying Bus, 1986b: 41). Reading the translation of this fragment, our observation is that:

(a) In TT (1), the sentence (C’est Kígorogoru qui avait fait chasser Njamba Nene de l’école) the demonstrative ‘ce’ is accompanied by the auxiliary ‘to be’ in the present tense instead of the past tense. The agency is clear; it shows that it is Kígorogoru who sent the boy away from school.

(b) In TT (2) the sentence (C’était Kígorogoru qui avait renvoyé Njamba Néné de l’école) is the same as the first one; it puts the responsibility on the teacher. It is the action event process that is represented here, yet that is not what is meant in the original text. If we compare these translations with our own suggested renderings: (e.g. C’était Kígorogoru qui avait fait renvoyé Njamba Néné de l’école or C’était à cause de Kígorogorou que Njamba Néné avait été (fut) renvoyé de l’école), we see that these renderings give less agency to the teacher (Kígorogoru), but instead, they focus more on the event just as the original does. In fact, the two sentences show that the teacher did something. He probably gave a false report concerning the boy resulting in the founder of the school deciding to send the boy away from his school. The teacher was indirectly involved but not directly so.

Concepts such as modes, modality and pronouns can also be used to define translation problems. Fairclough’s sixth and seventh questions can lead us into the discussion of such grammatical devices. The questions read as follows:
(6) What relational values do grammatical features have? What modes are used? Are there important features of relational modality? Are the pronouns we and you used and if so, how; (7) What expressive values do grammatical features have? Are there important features of expressive modality?

**Introduction**

To start with, **mode** covers the three basic sentence forms: the *declarative*, the *interrogative* and the *imperative*. In *Njamba Nene and the flying Bus* the *mode of command*, for example, demonstrates power in reality. Mr Pious is portrayed as giving these commands:

1. Stand up!
2. Go! Your sins have driven you out of this school.

Commands “are requests of action, and actions must have an underlying transactional, in which the hearer is the actor of the requested action” (Kress & Hodge, 1979:98). Clearly, in such commands, we see that the commander (Pious in this context) has a considerable social power - he is the founder of the school and Nene is aware of that. That is why the boy executed his commands without question.

The translators have shown creativeness by choosing the imperative form « Lève-toi! », but there is also an option to render this command by « Mets-toi debout! ». No special difficulty is encountered in translation here. The translators are faithful to the source text and conveyed the idea of the command embedded in the original.

The category of **Modality** appears to be well represented in *Njamba Nene’s Pistol*. It is identified on the basis of *relational* and *expressive values*. Broadly speaking, Fairclough’s *modality* is to do with the speaker or writer’s authority. He argues that

There are two dimensions to modality, depending on what direction authority is oriented in. Firstly, if it is a matter of authority of one participant in relation to others, we have *relational modality*. Secondly, if it is a matter of the speaker or writer’s authority with respect to the truth or probability of a representation of reality, we have *expressive modality* i.e. the modality of speaker/writer’s evaluation of truth (Fairclough, 1989:126-127).
These two orientations are reflected in this text. We find here some paragraphs or sentences reflecting *relational modality*. For example:

“You can’t even spare me twenty cents for a cup of tea?”

“Are you deaf?” Gacerê Mwendanda shouted at the boy. “If that does not suit you, you can take back the sacks where you got them from.

There is a relationship going on here between the characters. In other words, Nene speaks to ‘you’ and that ‘you’ is Mwendanda. But in the following sentence, the *can* used by Mwendanda signalling *obligation* is different from the first one. Mwendanda is powerful and he does not care whether the boy is hungry or not, therefore he is in a position to say the last word. That is why he orders the poor boy to return the sack if he is not pleased with his decision of paying him the following day. The same modals (can, can’t) are both relational and expressive.

The *can* in the sentence (*You can’t even spare me twenty cents for a cup of tea?*), gives the meaning of request. While the can in the sentence (*can take back the sacks where you got them from*) gives the meaning of *possibility* in that Njamba Nene is free to do so if he wishes. As for *cannot* used in the following paragraph, it conveys the idea of impossibility.

“One cannot undo one’s destiny. What God has willed, He has willed”.

The speaker is well aware of the fact that nobody is able to change God’s plans. Nene speaks out of certainty, conviction of the spiritual truth he possesses. The ideological interest here lies in the claim to knowledge of God that the speaker has which he probably got either from his culture or from the Christian school he formerly attended. This knowledge of *God’s Word* is reflected in the truth of these statements: (*One cannot undo one’s destiny. What God has willed, He has willed*).

Kress & Hodge (1979) claim that the speech model also organises another aspect of modality occurring in three forms: *question, statement* and *command*. The neutral form of a statement is a *declarative*; the neutral form of a command is an *imperative*; and the neutral form of a question is an *interrogative*. As far as the participants’ roles are concerned, the
authors summarise them in this manner: the speaker is a giver of information in the statement, the hearer a recipient of this information. In the question, the speaker becomes a seeker of information, the hearer the possible provider of information. In the command, the speaker is the commander and the hearer is the commanded, as already said in the previous lines about Pious Brainwash’s commands.

Let us first concentrate on the interrogative aspect of modality. In fact, it is interesting to note that in this text there are three questions that are observable although they mean the same thing. Njamba Nene asks:

- How can I die of hunger in my own country?
- How can I really die of hunger in our country?
- How can I work so hard yet be refused my pay?

Following Kress and Hodge’s model, it is clear that when a question is asked, the speaker is classified as (- knowledge) i.e. he wants information from the hearer who, this time, is regarded as (+ knowledge) or has records of some kind. Kress and Hodge critically remark that an interrogative can also be used to give commands as an imperative structure can be used to ask questions (Kress & Hodge, 1979:95). It could be added that an interrogative can also be just a declarative sentence. In such an interrogative discourse the speaker is not (- knowledge) but (+ knowledge).

The question: ‘How can I die of hunger in my own country?’ though syntactically interrogative in nature, has a strong intonation pattern of a declarative sentence. The speaker wonders why things are the way they are. Why such injustice? This utterance, in our view, reveals how the speaker is permanently -power and temporarily +knowledge. The utterance has an imbalance of power. The utterance can be also rewritten as ‘I am dying of hunger in my own country’. The boy is not ignorant; he knows that the situation is not good in his country. He is a victim of exploitation by other people. This shows that the boy is well aware of what is going on in his country. The boy had come to Limuru because he had heard that there were a lot of jobs at the Limuru Bata Shoe Company and now he wonders
why things are so bad in his country. With this knowledge of the situation going on in the country, it becomes clearer that his questions are not questions at all, they are facts that he states. They fit very well with Kress and Hodge’s ‘reflective speech model’:

How can I die of hunger in my own country?
How can I really die of hunger in our country?
How can I work so hard yet be refused my pay?

We may assume that in asking ‘How can I die of hunger...?’ the boy is trying to speak to himself, saying among other things that: ‘I am dying of hunger, or I shouldn’t be dying of hunger in my country, or It is not a normal thing to die of hunger at home like this or even I expected my money as a fruit of my labour, how come that now I am dying of hunger? etc.’

We can easily guess from these derivations that the boy speaker is (+knowledge) and to some extent (+power). He seems to be increasing his power through his reflection on the matter through his experience of hardships and hunger. He is an authority not only of how he feels but also of what he feels. This knowledge gives him power (‘knowledge is power’) to speak and indirectly challenge the political system in place though it does not have any effect for the moment. One can even go further to assume that most probably the boy finally decided to join the ranks of freedom fighters as a result of this hard experience. He might have decided to fight for the freedom of his country in order to bring back the bread he was deprived of. Most importantly, the child hero’s statement demonstrates that the search for nationhood can be undertaken concurrently with the quest for self as a higher kind of struggle. The Mau Mau political imageries and political action can be seen as emerging from such questions as reflected by the child in these above questions. It is interesting to see how the use of modality enabled people to exercise control over others or resist domination. Such an analysis reinforces the comment of literature as a social force.

The French translations rendered perfectly the meanings behind these modal verbs except that Translator A does not reverse the verb and its subject, as often expected in French although this is also accepted in speech. He wrote ‘Comment je peux mourir de fain dans mon propre pays?’ but English, like French, allows the order verb + subject when it comes
to questions. So, he would have said: ‘Comment puis-je mourir de faim dans mon propre pays?’ (The *puis* is a verb and *je* its subject). Similarly, the original text repeats the question two times, of which the first time the boy says ‘in my country’ and the second time ‘in our country’. The translators, however, did not pay attention to this detail and translated the same sentence using *my* (lit. *mon*), yet this detail is very important in ideological discourse.

Van Dijk’s (1998) findings on ideology seem to confirm that people only acquire ideologies when they have learned what it is to be a group member. That is, from thinking in terms of “*I*”, they have to learn to think in terms of “*WE*” and “*THEM*”, distinguish a number of group differences, identify with the group, participate in its activities, share some of its goals, be subject to its norms, values and rules. In other words, the child first needs to be able to identify himself as a member of a given group with such opinions and beliefs before he can defend his ideologies or beliefs against others. So when the child hero in this story says, for instance, “How *can* I really die of hunger in our country?” This shows that he has already acquired the notion of ideology in his discourse. He is able to distinguish *us* from *them*, *our* from *their*. That is to say, the notion of others is already established. The above utterances demonstrate that *truths* and *facts* are easily conveyed by modal verbs such as *must*, *should*, *can*, and *cannot*.

It is one of the foremost tasks of translation criticism to contribute to a greater awareness of *pronouns*, especially when it comes to French and English languages where they exhibit power relation differences between participants.

In *Njamba Nene and the Flying Bus* we are provided with a grammatical category of *person* as related to the notion of the pronoun participant role. English, unlike French, has no formal, politeness dimension in its person system. The French ‘*vous*’ is opposed to ‘*tu*’. The former is known in French as second person plural while the latter is second person singular.

For example:
From now on, you are no longer a student in this school. Go! Your sins have driven you out of this school.

“What did you say?”

The first translator shows logical inconsistency in the use of vous and tu. He writes:

A partir de cet instant, je ne vous considère plus comme étudiant de cette école. Va-t-en ! Tes péchés t’ont chassé de cette école.

Remarkably enough, one can find this confusion not necessary because in French one decides to use either the formal vous or the informal tu consistently. This is ill considered; this confusion cannot therefore help us to elaborate on Translator A’s decision. Translator B, however, opted for the use of vous. She translated this into:

A partir de maintenant, vous ne pourrez plus étudier dans cette école. Allez-vous en ! Vos péchés vous ont conduit hors de cette école.

If we consider the fact that Pious Brainwash is speaking to a little boy, a student and known terrorist, it is acceptable to use tu. This is so because the relative power of the speaker is stronger than that of the learner. It is up to the translator to look at the social distance between speakers and addressee and decide whether s/he should use tu or vous.

Apart from the pronoun you, a close look at this text leads us to speak of the personal pronoun ‘we’:

We are pleased to welcome the pupils who were lost in the forest. But at the same time we are sad because of the three who were killed there. Who killed them? They were murdered by those savages dressed in skins, with plaited hair, and who call themselves land and freedom army. But are they freedom fighters? No, they are terrorists! They want to drive us out of the country, we who have brought light and development to you. They want to take the country back into darkness. However, I am most shocked to know that here in TAPS we have terrorists. All the children you see here were misled by one little terrorist (Ngugi, 1986a:41).

Some of these we pronouns in the above quote are inclusive while others are exclusive. The first two we are inclusive because Mr Pious seems to speak on behalf of the school, including all the white settlers, teachers and even the indigenous people who all were excited to see those children back home. The following ‘we’ are exclusive simply because local people to whom the light and development were brought to by missionaries are not included. He refers to them (the indigenous) by ‘you’ (e.g. we who have brought light and
development to you.). Moreover, the pronoun we in the above paragraph is supplemented by the process of passivisation. The sentence below explains the operation:

ST: We are pleased to welcome the pupils, who were lost in the forest

TT (1): Nous sommes contents du retour des enfants qui étaient perdus dans la forêt.

TT (2): Nous sommes heureux d’accueillir les enfants qui étaient perdus dans la forêt.

We notice from the above that the speaker (Mr. Pious Brainwash) shifts the focus away from himself as a speaker to a collective ‘we’. He speaks on behalf of the school of which he is a founder (according to the story). In other words, the teachers, the principal and other staff are pleased to see the lost students back at school. This we is referred to as nous de majesté in French. It is often used in political speech as well as a way of avoiding direct responsibility or when speaking on behalf of a corporate body (company) as in the case at hand. The French translators are familiar with this form as reflected in their translations.

Further examples of pronouns are taken from the dialogue and its translated French versions. (We will come back to this dialogue later on as when we will discuss the question of structures). Njamba Nene’s Pistol presents this dialogue:

But when he got to the shop, Gaceru Mwendanda told him that he could only get his money on the following day.

“Two shillings? You mean you don’t have two shillings?” Njamba Nene asked.

“Do you think that I drill for money?” Gaceru Mwendanda asked him.

“Not even fifty cents?” Njamba Nene asked pitifully.

“Come for it all tomorrow!” Gaceru Mwendanda growled.

“You can’t even spare me twenty cents for a cup of tea?”

“Are you death?” Gaceru Mwendanda shouted at the boy. “If that does not suit you, you can take back the sacks where you got them from.” His head began to swim, and he felt faint…

Translated as:

TT (1): Mais lorsqu’il arriva à la boutique, Graceru Mwendanda lui dit qu’il ne sera payé que le lendemain.


« Tu penses que je fabrique de l’argent? » Graceru Mwendanda lui demanda.
« Même pas cinquante centimes? » Njamba Nene demanda piteusement.
« Reviens demain! » hurla Graceru Mwandenda.
« S’il vous plait... vingt centimes pour une tasse de thé ?! »
« Tu es sourd? Si ça ne te convient pas, t’as qu’à ramener les sacs où tu les as trouvés »

Njamba Nene avait faim. Il se sentit faible partout. Sa tête se mit à tourner, et il se sentit las…

TT (2) : Mais quand il arriva au magasin, Gacerou Mwandenda lui demanda s’il pouvait repasser le lendemain pour prendre son argent.
« Penses-tu qu’il me suffit de creuser pour trouver de l’argent ? » lui répondit Gacerou
« Viens tout chercher demain ! » grommela Gacerou.
« Vous ne pouvez même pas me donner vingt centimes pour une tasse de thé ? »
« Est-ce que tu es sourd? » cria Gacerou au garçon. « Si ça ne te convient pas, tu peux rapporter les sacs où tu les as pris ». Njamba Néné avait faim. Il se sentait très faible. Sa tête commençait à tourner, et il se sentait mal…

As already said, the choice of tu or vous is part of the discourse of power in French. The distinction between them creates social distance between people. Mesthrie, et al. (2000), note that French superiors use tu and receive vous from inferiors. The terms ‘superior’ and ‘inferior’ are defined with reference to societal bases of power (the state, church, army, wealth, the family), but also other factors like age, gender and physical strength. By contrast, English does not have this distinction, but instead uses honorific titles like lady or sir.

Unlike the previous text, in the present text the two translators knew exactly which ‘you’ should be for tu and which one should be for ‘vous’. They looked at (a) the social distance between the speaker and the addressee. Speculations are that they might have considered this time the factor of age to determine that Gaceru Mwandenda is older than Njamba Nene or has a title higher than that of his casual worker. Given this context, they made the older person use ‘tu’ while the boy uses ‘vous’. The translators might have also looked at (b) the degree of imposition emerging from the conversation and concluded that the one who
commands is powerful (though not always the case) and deserves the ‘vous’ whereas the receiver of the command can only be expected to receive ‘tu’ from the commander.

It could be argued that the reading of the text brings an example of the child treating Mwendanda as a liar to the fore. If the child sounds so disrespectful, this presupposes that he considers Mwendanda his equal and he might have used ‘tu’ while speaking to him. But this claim of the use of ‘tu’ by the child is not evident if we consider the fact that the child continuously pleaded to get his money from the rich man, (“even twenty cents to buy a cup of tea, he cried”), which indicates that the child acknowledges the power that his interlocutor possesses. The point here is not whether the boy used tu or vous as such, but rather the strategies the translators used in such a context and the child image they had in mind.

All the examples of the pronouns you and we given above are necessary in the understanding of power relations in translation. In fact, this category of pronoun shows how grammatical system of languages has or might have ideological influence linked to power relations. This confirms the idea that language is an instrument of control as well as of communication. The linguistic forms allow significance to be conveyed and to be distorted as well. How this register takes a different connotation from English to French is a good example of power relations in language. All these arguments once more hold together and help us to postulate translation as culture-bound and context-related. The fuzziness underpinning the norms in this text confirms our argument that breaking grammatical norms in such instances is more dangerous than breaking any other lexical norm. In short, this shows that pronouns differ from one language to another and are linked to power relations issues.
4.3.1.3. (C) Textual structures

Fairclough’s question leading to this discussion of ideology and structure is (9) **What interactional conventions are used? Are there ways in which one participant controls the turns of others?**

As Nord points out, “characters are implicitly described by the way they talk or address each other” (Nord, 1997:100). Their roles and relations to each other are often indicated by the forms of address, as in the following structure i.e. dialogue from *Njamba Nene’s Pistol*:

> But when he got to the shop, Gacerũ Mwendanda told him that he could only get his money on the following day.
> “Two shillings? You mean you don’t have two shillings?” Njamba Nene asked.
> “Do you think that I drill for money?” Gacerũ Mwendanda asked him.
> “Not even fifty cents?” Njamba Nene asked pitifully.
> “Come for it all tomorrow!” Gacerũ Mwendanda growled.
> “You can’t even spare me twenty cents for a cup of tea?”
> “Are you deaf?” Gacerũ Mwendanda shouted at the boy. “If that does not suit you, you can take back the sacks where you got them from.” His head began to swim, and he felt faint…

The discourse practice illustrated in this structure (dialogue) is a significant part of asymmetrical power relations between the boy and Mwendanda the businessman. When the boy says, for instance, that “**You mean you don’t have two shillings?**” he presupposes that Mwendanda is lying; because it is unbelievable for one to have a shop and yet say that he does not have “two shillings”.

In reading this dialogue, it seems that Mwendanda pays no attention to the boy’s problem of starvation and his demand for a few cents. In the conversational exchanges Mwendanda speaks really as a rich selfish and uncaring person. He says, for example: (**‘Do you think that I drill for money’**). The relation between the two is that of a worker and the boss. Presumably, his intonation (or tone) is high. There seems to be no sense of humour in his tone. Sentences are short in structure and straightforward to the point, just as businessmen speak – the busy man has no time to waste for a wild boy. Despite his multiple supplications and petitions for his empty stomach, the boy gets in return a negative response.
Although the story is simple, it is ideologically loaded. Each sentence contains an element of power relations. The ideological importance of implicit textual content receives attention in the French translation.

The first translator renders the sentence “You can’t even spare me twenty cents for a cup of tea?” as « S’il vous plait [même pas…] vingt centimes pour une tasse de thé?! » adding to it the device ‘please’ (lit. ‘S’il vous plait’), a device which is not found in the original text and by which the translator gives a tone of supplication to the dialogue, as he perceived it. What the translator has in mind here is the fact that a child is speaking to the adult person and that tone is that of politeness. From Mwendanda’s side, several instances of imperative sentences are heard (e.g. “… you can take back the sacks where you got them from.”). The authority or power of this man is also marked by the fact it is him who ends the dialogue.

We can reformulate this conflict in a different way, emphasising its connection with psychoanalytic space. Lesnik-Oberstein once argued that “the child has no voice within the hierarchies of our society, because adults… silence that voice” (Oberstein, 1994:187). If we consider how children are everyday victims of horrors such as: baby-trafficking, abuse of child labour, of child soldiers, and so on, we can see a direct reflection of that in the treatment of Nene by Mwendanda in this dialogue where the voice of the child remains unheard by the wealthy man. This suggests to us that “the possibility of creating a space within which to hear the voice of children as individuals” (Oberstein, 1994:189) is more than necessary in our communities in which the child is marginalised and voiceless. The dominant role the adult (Mwendanda) has in his relationship with this child (Nene) is still maintained and repeated throughout cultures and societies today. From this short dialogue and its translations, we have been able to determine who the oppressor is and who the oppressed is.

The second point on structure concerns Shift of style marked by a Mau Mau song. The writer shifts from prose to lyric (song). It is important that we understand the reasons behind this and how a song as a literary device is dealt with in the translation of children’s books.
Hatim and Mason (1997) remark that “within sociolinguistics, the phenomena of code-switching (the use of two separate languages or dialects in one speech event) and style shifting (the use of distinct speech styles in one speech event) are amply documented and hypothesis is advanced that such switching is never random” (Hatim & Mason, 1997:151). Hatim and Mason argue that style shifting enables speakers to exploit the variables of power and distance, playing on aspects of their relationship with the addresses. Looking closely at the text, the use of distinct speech styles in one speech event is evident; it indicates the variation of genres from prose to poetry (hymn). The omniscient narrator says that when Nene was sent away from school he met his Mother at the gate waiting, and when she saw him, she started singing:

*Bũrũrũ ũyũ witię andũ airũ,*
*Ngai ni atũrathimũre*
*Na akiuga tũtikoima kuo*

God gave us this land  
We black people  
And said that it was ours forever (Ngugi, 1986a: 43)  
*(Translated by Wangũrĩ Wa Goro)*

The above is a Mau Mau song still heard in Kenya even today. Songs, as we know, are used in Africa for various purposes among other things as vehicle for political communication, education and political propaganda. Kenyans’ local protest against colonial regime was often expressed by singing of Mau Mau hymns. Mother Wacũ does exactly that in this text.

Looking critically at the text, it appears that the first reason for this shift lies in the value that Ngugi confers to oral tradition (literature). He writes:

*Orature has its roots in the lives of peasantry. It is primarily their compositions, their songs, their art, which forms the basis of the national and resistance culture during the colonial and neo-colonial times*  
* (Ngugi, 1986:94).*

Simultaneously, this shift shows that the writer, although concerned with issues of freedom and education in his writing, is primarily concerned, like many Kenyan writers of the 19th century, are, with the problem of *land*. Ngugi presents through this song the  
Gĩkĩrũyũ creation myth:
“This land I give to you, o man and woman
It is yours to rule and till, you and yours posterity” (Ngugi, 1965: 2).

This myth is also known by Jomo Keyatta who writes that:

in the beginning of things, when mankind started to populate the earth, the man Gikuyu, the founder of the tribe, was called by the Mogai (the Divider of the Universe, and was given as his share the land with ravines, the rivers, the forest, the game and all the gifts that the Lord of nature Mongai bestowed on mankind. At the same time Monai made a big mountain which he called Kere-Nyaga (Mount Kenya, as his resting place when on inspection tour and as a sign his wonders. He then took the man Gikuyu to the top of the Mountain of mystery, and showed him the beauty of the country that Mongai had given him. While still on the top of the mountaun, this Mongai pointed out to the Gihuyu a spot full of fig tress (mikoyo), right in the centre of the country. After the Mongai had shown the Gikuyu the paranoma of the wonderful land he had been given, he commanded him ro descend and establish his homestead on the selected place which he named Mokorwe wa Garhanga…. (Kenyatta, 1939:3-4 emphasis ours).  .

In fact, the Mau Mau message is an appeal to the physical space “our land”-and the physical state of things “we the landless” (Odhiambo, 1991:305). This message, according to Ogude (1999) portrays the Mau Mau conception of nature of reality. The powerful evocation of land both as a signifier of a glorious past in which man and woman were in harmony with nature presupposes a stable identity of Gĩkũyũ people associated with land ownership. This ownership of land though contested and criticized by some Europeans remains the only thing Gĩkũyũ people were obsessed with. This land is their “memory-text”. They possess it in their spirits and dreams as pointed out by the scholar Mudimbe Vumbi Yoka who defines memory text as:

Both a legend and a dream for political power. In effect it links words and names to possessed things and spaces designating motions of ancestors...according to process of appropriations of power and governance over new lands (Vumbi Yoka in Palmberg, 2001: 122).

Through her song Mother Wacũ claims this God-given land, land of her ancestors.

Oittinen suggests that “songs in translation must be singable, too” (2000:110). She further holds the view that “as in drama and film translation, we must pay attention to the
readability, even ‘singability’ of the text” (2000:111). In fact, “they are part of the nonverbal or suprasegmental features” (Nord, 1991: 120-121). This supposes that, if possible the translator needs to find out if the song is still sung and give it tune with print such as so so la re do, as required in the translation of music. This singability of the text means that the text should read and flow when read as if it was sung. This shows how and why songs are important in children’s literature translation. The issue here is that the emotional attachment to the text needs to be respected. In other words, when translating a text for another culture, the “translation should also include emotions” (Oittinen, 2000: 98).

What we find most problematic in the French translations, however, is the idea of not translating this song. Translator A applied a technique called ‘abridgement’. This concept is explained by Klingberg (1986) as the shortening of texts written for children. The translator deleted this song from his target text and when asked the motive behind his decision, he said that he actually needed to find an equivalent song in French with which to substitute the English or Gikũyũ song. He finally decided to ignore the existing song since he did not find the French alternative he was looking for. Minor abridgements as well as minor enlargements are a normal part of translation work, but this type of abridgement has led to a loss of the central theme of the story: land. This is a serious translation problem given the consequences it entails. If the target reader is not given access to such an ideology, the very essence of the story is lost. That is why Klingberg strongly recommends that “nothing should be cut out unnecessary” (Klingberg, 1986:74). Deleting whole passages of a literary work (like this song) should be avoided and should not, in our view, be tolerated. This point indicates how translators do sometimes make careless decisions. And how, to repeat Klingberg’s words, “often delete in a capricious way, even when there can be no difficulty in finding the right words” (Klingberg, 1986:74).

By contrast, Translator B found no reason not to translate this song:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Bururi uyu witu andu airu,} \\
\text{Ngai ni aturathimure} \\
\text{Na akiuga tutikoima kuo}
\end{align*}
\]

Dieu nous donna cette terre
A nous, les noirs
Et dit qu’elle était à nous pour toujours
The work of the French translator here could hardly be faulted on the ground of language competence; she uses the simple past tense, which historically shows that the singer does not claim any authority. In other words, it is not her speaking but God himself, the land provider. The French version has fully upheld the dynamic fluctuation, which builds on the meaning intended by the writer.
Generalising description of differences between TTs / STs equivalences

The first version of Njamba Nene’s Pistol in French by Translator A is an essentially communicative translation that seeks to capture the source culture of the original text and the personal style of the original writer. As such, its emphasis is on meaning correspondence, while at the same time taking into account differences of grammar, syntax, and idiom between current literary French and the original English language. His translation seeks to be transparent to the original text, letting the Cameroonian French speaking child reader see, as directly as possible, the structure and meaning of the original.

For the same text Translator B has, on the other hand, attempted a smooth and natural version of the original, strengthening certain emphases and boldly over-translating many lexical details and deleting others, which, as she saw it, appeared to be too abstract, weak and vague for the French child reader. She made some adaptations, but nevertheless kept her message close to the original. One of the reasons it reads as an original written in French is because it uses patterns that are typical of French discourse instead of relying on those of the English language. Like its original, the translation is descriptive and filled with enchanted details. It reads eloquently as illustrated in the following passage:

De ce fait, il avait passé son temps à faire des petites courses ici et là ; à balayer et à dépoussiérer des magasins ; à éplucher des pommes de terre et à faire la vaisselle dans des restaurants ; et à porter la viande de l’abattoir jusque la boucherie. Il faisait cela et d’autres menus travaux similaires pour gagner juste de quoi survivre. Parfois, il n’y avait même pas ces petits jobs alors qu’il y avait toujours plus de nouveaux chercheurs d’emploi.

As one can see, the rhetoric is good and the language is fluent. It sounds good indeed. However, the main difference between this translation and its original is marked by Translator B’s decision to delete some lines from the source text. B was not happy with the idea of good versus bad that appears in the original. In fact most of Ngugi’s stories display a struggle between good and bad as a way of conveying a moral lesson. The translator omitted some phrases because they were related to the issue of violence and would possibly cause clash between the two cultures (Western and Gĩkũyũ). Following her comments (cf. Appendix 3), she decided to delete the following phrases in brackets: “Chief Kigorogoru was shot by Mau Mau terrorists in his home... (he was shot through the mouth and) he died
instantly… (It is reported that the terrorists first cut off his ears…) where the cutting of limbs appears to be a shock both for herself and her future readers. Translator B is not alone to think that way. In most societies, children are “tenderly protected from violence” (O’Dell, 1978:20). Why violence is accepted in some cultures and not in others makes us think of how different people view the concept of childhood in their communities.

We share the translator’s worry about the status of the French child (not used to wars) to be spared from issues related to violence, but can only agree with her in part. We suggest, however, that the emphasis on words be altered or changed instead of deleting the whole stretch of lines. It would have been advisable to translate these lines by providing a footnote that might read as: ‘the Government said that Kigorogorou was killed this way…but it can be all a matter of speculation’. The shock that would have been created in the child reader will be neutralised, although other people do hold the view that footnotes are not useful for children as readers.

We need to remember that the child we are trying to protect lives with violence anyway. He sees violence through the media and other sources. The political implications of violence are therefore inevitable and we should not view violence only from its psychological effects on the development of the young readers as Translator B does. We should also be prepared to understand that children live in a world full of violence and need to be told how to face this challenge. Rose-Marie (2004) makes a very interesting point when she says that this literature [Jamba Nene’s Pistol] has no reason to make a French child miserable since it is based on truth and these children have a right to this truth.

We suggest, therefore, that whenever we come across any text loaded with issues of violence, as translators, we should not make ourselves pro-violence or anti-violence, but should rather try to find solutions to his/her translation in a more professional way. It is safe to do so because with such issues it is difficult to apprehend the writer’s position as whether or not he favours violence in his writing. There is complexity of meaning that text analysts refer to as “insinuations”. “Insinuations” have “double meanings and, if challenged, the writer can claim innocence, pretending to have only one of these two meanings in mind” (Huckin 2004:6). This is similar to what Kress & Hodge (19880 call an “ideological complex”. If this ideological complex is not dealt with carefully, the translator is likely to
depart far from the original text. Unlike Translator B, Translator A on this particular point did not omit anything from this original text. For him violence has become part of African children’s life and therefore they are entitled to know their past whether good or bad. We agree with Klingberg who says “in principle the source text must have the priority, and the cultural context adaptation ought to be the exception rather than the rule” (Klingberg, 1986:17).

Translator A’s way of processing *Njamba Nene and the flying Bus* is characterised by the breaking of some expectancy norms. He showed his resistance to some norms to convey the foreignness that the text embodies (e.g. John Bull, Bata Shoe Company, etc.). But the translator still has merit in that he makes his intentions visible. With respect to his decisions, while they cannot be ruled out completely, one can argue that he acted as a responsible translator even though he failed somehow to keep his balance between ‘freedom of action’, on the one hand, and ‘situational constraints,’ on the other.

Translator B, however, remained close to the original context for this particular text and that helped her to avoid hit-and-miss approaches to her task. Most importantly, she has been able to show her language competence as well as her ‘linguistic, cultural transfer, factual and research competence’ (Hatim et al, 1997:204). Her decisions were made according to the source text to preserve the social values in her culture. Still, she was able to make her text relevant in responding to her readers’ needs. This makes one believe that if culture and linguistic theories are applied to translation, the view of translation as a faithful transmission of the original message will no longer hold.

The above analyses have increased our knowledge as to why different interpretations and readings of texts produce different translations. It is not redundant to say that Ngugi’s works help us to bring together writing, translation, and ideology. His books provide areas of dealing with all these concepts at once.

An important aspect to be remembered in translation is that the rights of the future readers of the text often make translators move away from their source texts with the intention to fill in the gaps caused by differences between cultures and languages. As just said, the
child, as a future reader of a text, is an important person to remember when translating children’s literature. The child has needs that should not be ignored for if not addressed, the translation of children’s literature misses its point.