

## CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF SEMANTIC AND SYNTACTIC SHIFTS

### 4.1. *INFORMATION STRUCTURE*

This research has found that although the Sotho news bulletins were translated from the English news, there are still some considerable differences that can be detected between the English and the Sotho news bulletins. The first major difference is that the layout of the Sotho news is never similar to that of the English news. By “layout”, one refers to the way the bulletins are arranged, or rather, the sequence of events in the news bulletins. Even the headings are often not the same.

Furthermore, the arrangement of sentences sometimes differed and this means that the themes and rhemes also differed. In Peter Newmark’s words, “theme states the subject of discourse, which is normally referred to in, or logically consequential upon, the previous utterance (sentence or paragraph)”, whereas “rheme is the fresh element, the lexical predicate which offers information about theme” (Newmark, 1981: 75).

More simply, theme is often referred to as the topic of a sentence, and rheme as a comment. Mona Baker describes the theme may be described as the first segment of the first clause of a sentence, while rheme may be described as “what the speaker says about the theme” (Baker, 1992: 122). In her view, the rheme is the goal of a discourse and as such, it is the most important element in the structure of a clause as a message because it represents the very information that the speaker wants to convey to the hearer. From the SABC Sotho news translations, the following sentences have been found to have different themes and rhemes compared with their English counterparts:

- (a) ST: “*Because of his age*, the Child Care Act will not protect him anymore”.

TT: “*Happy* ga a tlile go nna ka fa tlase ga tlhokomelo ya molao o o sireletsang bana ka ntlha ya dingwaga tsa gagwe” (Setswana).

**BACK-TRANSLATION:** “Happy will not be under care of the act that protects children because of his age”.

- (b) ST: “*Accolades* continued to pour in for world renowned South African writer J. M Coetzee”.

TT: “*Mokwadi wa Afrika Borwa J. M Coetzee* o tsweletse go amogela tlotlo e nngwe gape” (Setswana).

**BACK-TRANSLATION:** “The South African writer J. M Coetzee, went on to receive another honour”.

- (c) ST: “*Five traffic officers from the Eastern Cape* were arrested this morning. The operation was a joint effort by the police and the transport department”.

TT: “*Lefapha la sephethephethe* tshebedisanong le maponesa le tshwere balaodi ba sephethephethe ba tsheletseng ba porofensing ya Kapa Botshabela” (Sesotho).

**BACK-TRANSLATION:** “The Department of Traffic in cooperation with the police has arrested six traffic officers from Eastern Cape”.

- (d) ST: “*Acting on a tip off*, members of the Umtata based organised crime unit stopped a minibus between Ntabankulu and Mount Frere”.

TT: “Maphodisa a ka Umtata a twantšho ya bosenyi ao a bego a lomilwe tsebe, a emišitše di-minibus tseleng ya Mbetšhini magareng a Ntabankulu le Mount Frere” (Sepedi).

**BACK-TRANSLATION:** “The Umtata police for the fight against crime, who had had their ear bitten, stopped minibuses on the Mbetšhini road between Ntabankulu and Mount Frere”.

- (e) ST: “*A few days ago*, Statistics South Africa announced that over eight million South Africans were jobless in March this year”.

TT: “*Mokgahlo wa Dipalopalo wa Afrika Borwa* o begile mo malatsing a mmalwa a fetileng fa ma-Afrika Borwa a feta dimilione di le robedi a ne a se na ditiro monongwaga mo kgwedding ya Mopitlwe” (Setswana).

**BACK-TRANSLATION:** “Statistics South Africa announced a few days ago that more than eight million South Africans were jobless this year in March”.

For comprehension’s sake, the themes in the above sentences have been highlighted. In the first sentence, the English sentence theme is “*Because of his age*” and the rheme is all the remaining part of the sentence. But in the Setswana news, this is not the case. The thematized element for the Setswana translation of this sentence is

*“Happy”*, and the phrase *“Because of his age”* has been used as a complement or the reason why Happy does not qualify to be protected by the Child Care Act anymore. In other words, this means that what the English sentence has put as a starting point has been put as a completing point by the Setswana sentence.

The same thing applies to sentence (b) where the English sentence has put “Accolades” as a theme but only to find that this is not the case in the Setswana sentence. Here, the Setswana sentence has “The South African writer J.M Coetzee” as a theme and *“went on to receive another honour”* as a rheme. In sentence (c) also, the original text has put “Five traffic officers” as a theme, but the Sesotho translation has put “The Department of Traffic, in cooperation with the police”, as a theme. In this case, however, it should be noted that the original text used two sentences which were translated as a single sentence in Sesotho. This resulted in a complete rephrasing of the original text where the complement of the second original sentence formed part of the theme of the translated text.

In sentence (d), English news has *“Acting on a tip-off”* as a theme while Sepedi has thematized *“The Umtata police for the fight against crime”*. Here, unlike in all the other examples above, it was impossible for the Sepedi translator to follow the thematic structure of the English sentence as it would make the Sepedi sentence senseless. In the other sentences, the difference in the thematic structures between the source texts and the target texts resulted purely from the translators’ own choices. No clear-cut reasons can be attached to the reorganisation of these sentences. These include the thematic structures in the last example where the original text has *“A few days ago”* as a theme, while the target text has thematized *“Statistics South Africa”*.

According to Mona Baker (1992), the unusual but acceptable thematic structure is referred to as a “marked theme”, while the usual one is called an “unmarked theme”. Here is an example of Baker’s sentence in which marked theme is used: *“Beautiful were her eyes”* (Baker, 1992: 130). In this sentence, the theme *“Beautiful”* is marked as it is unusual or uncommon for people to use this structure. But in the sentence *“Her eyes were beautiful”*, the theme *“Her eyes”* is unmarked as this is the common structure for this sentence.

Writers or speakers sometimes use a marked theme in order to draw the attention of the readers or listeners or to emphasise a certain point. According to Finch (1998) “putting an item first in a sentence, for example, is a good way of drawing attention to it and letting someone know what it is that we wish them to focus on” (Finch, 1998: 162). With regard to television news, themes might be associated with or likened to news headlines because just as Graeme Burton (1990) argues, news “headlines signal to us what we should understand is priority news” (Burton, 1990: 26). This means that the initial position is always reserved for important issues.

However, in the Sotho news translations, there were only a few cases where the target language’s thematic structure was not similar to the English thematic structure. In most cases, the translated versions of the English news have the same thematic structures as the originals. This proves Baker right when she states that “if the elements placed in theme position in the source text can easily and naturally be placed in theme position in the target text, the method of development of the two texts will be the same or very similar” (Baker, 1992: 128). As I mentioned, this is what proved to be prevalent in most cases in the Sotho news translations as far as the notion of theme and rheme is concerned.

The difference concerning the placement of theme and rheme in a sentence may result from the use of different voices in the source text and the target text. In all the Sotho news translations studied here, there were only two sentences that differed in voice. Below are those sentences and their translations:

- (a) ST: “**Judge Joas Hefer** has been appointed by the president to investigate allegations that Bulelani Ngcuka was an apartheid spy”.  
 TT: “**Moporesidente Thabo Mbeki** o kgethile moahlodi Joas Hefer ho fuputsa ditlaleho tsa hore Bulelani Ngcuka e bile sehlwela sa apartheid” (Sesotho).

**BACK-TRANSLATION:** “President Thabo Mbeki has chosen judge Joas Hefer to investigate reports that Bulelani Ngcuka was an apartheid spy”.

- (b) ST: “**Labour** believes the alarming unemployment stats can be reduced”.  
 TT: “**Le fa go le jwale**, go dumelwa fa dipalo tseo di ka fokotswa” (Setswana).

**BACK-TRANSLATION:** “Despite this, it is believed that those stats can be reduced”.

From the above two sentences, it may be noticed that the theme of the English sentence in the first example is “**Judge Joas Hefer**”, while for the Sesotho sentence, it is “**President Thabo Mbeki**”. The reason for this is that in English, the voice that has been applied in this sentence is passive, while Sesotho used the active voice. The use of the passive voice always shifts the position of the subject in a sentence, and it also makes it possible for the writers or speakers to leave out the subject or the doer of an action in a sentence. The second sentence above (b) provides evidence of this. In this sentence, the subject of the English sentence, which is “**Labour**”, has been left out in the Setswana translation. In its place the pronoun “**it**” is used. This made the translation less explicit as the “**it**” does not state clearly who believes that the statistics can be reduced. Unlike the English text, this Setswana translation has also obviously not thematized “**Labour**”, but “**Despite this**”, which is not present in the original sentence. Another difference is that there are some events which are not included in the Sotho news translations. This gives the impression that perhaps the Sotho news translators do not translate all the news that is found in the English versions of the news bulletins.

In addition, there are also some incidents which are found in the Sotho news bulletins but which are not present in the English news. Among those are the horse-racing reports. No single English news bulletin contains horse-racing reports but in the Sotho news, such reports were provided whenever a horse race took place. The reporting of the sports news in general is different. For instance, in the English news it is unusual for one to find the soccer news having been given an “in depth” coverage. Only when it is news about Bafana Bafana or when there is a cup game involving PSL teams does one find an in depth coverage of soccer events in the English news. Much of the English sports coverage is dominated by rugby, cricket, golf, and sometimes tennis.

But in the Sotho news bulletins, the opposite happens. Much of the sports news coverage is dominated by soccer while rugby, cricket, golf and tennis are only given a minimal time. However, when aMabokoboko are playing, they are also given a considerable amount of coverage time. This, I believe, has something to do with the

audiences' tastes or preferences in sports. From my own experience, it is an obvious fact that the majority of black people here in South Africa like soccer much more than rugby, cricket, golf and tennis, whereas the majority of white people like rugby, cricket, golf and many other sports activities more than they like soccer. This could be the reason why there is this disparity between the English sports news and the Sotho sports news.

#### 4.2. *SEMANTIC SHIFTS*

Furthermore, there are some events from the English news which are misinterpreted in the Sotho news. To simplify matters, the following table contains some words that have been misinterpreted: For full sentences, consult **Appendix 4**:

<u><i>ST WORD/PHRASE.</i></u>	<u><i>TT WORD/PHRASE.</i></u>	<u><i>BACK-TRANSLATION.</i></u>
(a) forty seconds.	Metsotso e masome a mane.	Forty minutes.
(b) a day.	Matsatsi a mabedi.	Two days.
(c) over the next three days.	Matsatsing a mmalwa.	Few days.
(d) special recognition.	Go hlomphiwa.	To be respected.
(e) Promote.	Hlohleletša.	Encourage.
(f) Five traffic officers.	Balaodi ba sephethephethe ba tsheletseng.	Six traffic officers.
(g) Three suspects.	Babelaelwa ba le babedi.	Two suspects.
(h) Medical tests.	Dipego tša kalafo.	Medical reports.

In the above table, “forty seconds” was misinterpreted as “forty minutes” in example (a). Instead of “metsotso e masome a mane”, the translation should have been “metsotswana e masome a mane”, which is “forty seconds”. But here, it was not only the phrase “forty seconds”, which was misinterpreted, but the whole sentence was. This is so because the English sentence says “it took just forty seconds for this car to be stolen”, and the Sotho translation of this sentence says, “within only forty minutes, this car will have been stolen”.

This clearly shows that the meaning in this translation is very different from the meaning embedded in the English sentence.

In example (b), the English news reports that there is only a day left before the All Africa Games in Nigeria commence, while the Sesotho news says there are two days. The same confusion is also noticed in example (c) where English news reports that Tokyo will host African leaders at an international conference over the next three days, while the Sesotho news says this will happen over the next few days. But unlike in the other examples above, the meaning in this example (c) is not that different from the original English meaning especially because “three days” may well be regarded as “a few days” because they are not many. As there is no exact limit or number of days that could be regarded as “a few days”, any number of days that cannot be regarded as “many”, may be regarded as “a few days”. However, what makes one think that this is also a misinterpretation is the fact that the phrase “over the next three days” has an equivalent in Sesotho and that is “matsatsing a mararo a a tlang”.

As for example (d), the phrase “a special recognition” has been misinterpreted as “to be respected”. From the table, this misinterpretation may seem less serious, but from the context in which this phrase was extracted, the intensity of the seriousness of the misinterpretation involved in this phrase is greater. The reason is that in that context, it was reported from the English news that the SACTU and SACAWU unions decided that Mr. Price deserved a special recognition for being South Africa’s worst employer following unsatisfactory circumstances in the Mr. Price clothing shops throughout the country. As a result, it was reported that two COSATU affiliated unions went to Mr. Price’s head office in Durban and protested against the said conditions in the shops.

From this scenario, it might be easy for one to realize that “a special recognition” in this context, does not and cannot refer to “to be respected” as the Sepedi translator says above. Rather, this means that people must aware of Mr. Price because he is a bad employer. No one can urge people to respect a bad employer, and for this reason, it becomes more sensible to argue that the Sepedi translation of the above sentence should have read like this: *“Unione ya SACTU le SACAWU ba tšere sephetho sa gore mabenkele ka moka a Mr. Price naga ka bophara a swanelwa ke go fiwa šedi ye e ikgethileng malebana le se”,* in order to achieve equivalence. The back-

translation of this version reads like this: ***“SACTU and SACAWU unions have taken a decision that all the Mr. Price shops throughout the country have to be given a special recognition about this”.***

In example (e), “promote” is misinterpreted as “hlohleletša” (encourage) which is not quite what “promote” means. As in the first example, the whole sentence in this example was also misinterpreted. The source text sentence says “there is a promise to promote Japanese investment in Africa”, but the Sepedi translation says “Japan will encourage investments in Africa”. In example (f), it was reported in the source text that five traffic officers from Eastern Cape were arrested in connection with bribes, and that the sixth one, who was said to be on leave, had still to be arrested soon. In the Sesotho translation however, it is said that it is six of them who were arrested. This also leaves a question about whether or not the sixth officer, who was on leave, was arrested shortly before the translation of the English news into Sesotho. If this is the case, then the translator would have done a splendid job of not providing a false statement, and if it is not, it is the other way round.

Another clashing number of suspects is manifested in example (g) where the source text reports that three suspects have been arrested by the police in connection with a botched cash in heist in Heathfield near Cape Town, whereas Setswana translation says the arrested suspects were two. Moreover, the Setswana translation states that **Heathsfield** is *in* Cape Town, whereas according to the English news report, Heathsfield is *near* Cape Town. In the last example, “medical tests” has been translated as “medical reports”, which is a misinterpretation too. The correct interpretation is “diteko tša kalafo”. But despite this, the meaning in the original text has not been hampered and therefore, the translator cannot be criticised.

In addition, misinterpretations may also emerge as result of wrong choices of tenses. The following table contains some misinterpretations that occurred due to the application of wrong tenses in the Sotho news translations. Full sentences are provided in **Appendix 5:**

<i><b>ST WORD / PHRASE.</b></i>	<i><b>TT WORD / PHRASE.</b></i>	<i><b>BACK-TRANSLATION.</b></i>
(a) Nigeria will withdraw.	Nigeria e ikgutse.	Nigeria has withdrawn.
(b) Will be named after.	E reeletswe.	Has been named after.
(c) Will soon find himself new surroundings.	E fumane bodulo bo botjha.	Has found new surroundings.
(d) They say.	Ba boletše le gore.	They also said that ...
(e) Zuma says.	Monghadi Zuma o boletse.	Mr. Zuma said.
(f) He will appear.	O ikemiseditse ho hlaha.	He is intended to appear.
(g) DELTA hope.	DELTA e ne e tshepa.	DELTA hoped.

As mentioned earlier, the above phrases have clashing or different tenses. But unlike most of the previous misinterpretations, the above examples do not distort the original or source text because their meanings are more or less the same as those in the source text. For example, the sentence ***“DELTA hope the workers will be back on their jobs this week”***, is not that different from its Sesotho translation which reads like this, ***“DELTA hoped that the workers will have returned to their jobs this week”***.

The slight difference between these two sentences comes because of the present tense “hope” in the source text, and the past tense “hoped” in the Sesotho translation. It could be assumed that this difference in tenses results from the different time frame locations between these sentences. In the English sentence it could be assumed that the time frame is located on the phrase “this week”, which shows that the matter is something that is on-going and, as a result, the speaker had to use the present form of the word “hope”. In the Sesotho translation however, an inference may also be made by suggesting that the translator here has used the past tense of the word “hope” referring to the time when the DELTA officials were interviewed. In this case, the time frame is then located on “the time of the interview”, and not on “this week”.

However, it is always better for translators to stick to the original tense so that they may not be labelled as ‘liars’ if events do not turn out to be what they said would be

in their translations. For example, in the sentence “*Nigeria will withdraw its bid to back South Africa’s*”, the translator would have been regarded as having lied, had Nigeria not withdrawn its bid. In other words, the Sesotho television news viewers were told that Nigeria had withdrawn its bid before it actually did so. This is rather dangerous because had Nigeria not kept its promise, the Basotho people would have been misled.

Furthermore, this research has found that the SABC’s Sotho translators have not been consistent in some of their translations. This means that they did not translate certain terms in the same way throughout their translations. The following table shows some of the inconsistencies found in the Sotho news translations. Full sentences are provided in **Appendix 6**:

<u><i>ST WORD / PHRASE.</i></u>	<u><i>TT WORD / PHRASE.</i></u>	<u><i>TT’S LATER VERSION.</i></u>
(a) conference.	Seboka.	Khonferense.
(b) To convince.	Go kgotsofatša.	Go huetša.
(c) Priority /ties.	Sa bohlokwa.	Mabaka.
(d) Economy.	Mmušo.	Ikonomi.
(e) A setback.	E hlokile lesego.	Go thefutse sehlopha ga bohloko.
(f) sick-leave.	“sick-leave”.	Llifi ya ho kula.

In example (a) above, “*conference*” was first translated as “*seboka*” and for some inexplicable reasons it was later translated as “*khonferense*”, which is a coinage from the English form “conference”. “*To convince*”, in example (b) was first translated as “*go kgotsofatša*” and later on, it was translated as “*go huetša*”. In Sepedi, “*go kgotsofatša*” is “*to satisfy*” while “*go huetša*” means “*to influence*”. Neither of these two words is an equivalent of “*to convince*”. The equivalent word or phrase is “*go kgodiša*”. However, all these words “*go kgotsofatša*”, “*go huetša*” and “*go kgodiša*”, may be used to refer to “*to convince*”, depending on different situations or contexts. But in the above example, “*go kgotsofatša*” was inappropriately used. The translator could have used “*go huetša*” as well, because the sentence in question is about

convincing taxpayers to pay their bills. It is not about “satisfying” them to pay their bills.

In example (c), “*priority*” was first translated as “*sa bohlokwa*”, meaning “*important thing*”, and it was later translated in its plural form “*priorities*”, as “*mabaka*” which means “*reasons*”. The word “*priority*”, is unavailable in Sotho languages and by using “*sa bohlokwa*”, the translator has resorted to its near-equivalent which has a closer meaning to that of the source text. This is what the translator should also have done for the word “*priorities*” as well. Instead of “*mabaka*”, he or she should have used the word “*tsa bohlokwa*” to maintain his or her consistency in the translation. “*Economy*” in example (d) was first mistranslated as “*mmušo*” and it was later translated into its usual form as “*ikonomi*”. The word “*mmušo*” means “*government*” and not “*economy*”. In example (e), the word “*setback*” has also proved to be a problematic one to deal with as it also has no equivalent in the Sotho languages. Here, it was first paraphrased as “*having no luck*”, and later, it was paraphrased as “*a painful demoralising factor*” for the South African athletic team. But for consistency’s sake, one may argue that it was up to the translator to keep to one of these two paraphrases.

Lastly, lack of consistency is also revealed through the usage of the word “*sick-leave*” which was firstly left untranslated, that is, it was borrowed, and later paraphrased as “*llifi ya ho kula*”. The word “*llifi*” is also a coinage of the word “leave”, while “ho kula” means “to be sick”. In this case, the translator could have done away with this borrowing and used “*llifi ya ho kula*” only, especially because this is a regular way of referring to “*sick-leave*” in Sesotho.

Furthermore, when taking into consideration the fact that the Sotho news bulletins are watched by both the urban and the rural population, literate and illiterate people, it becomes more advisable for the translator to use or select terms that can incorporate all the above-mentioned groups of people so that no one is left disadvantaged, as far as the comprehension of the meaning in the news bulletins is concerned. This argument originates from the fact that by using “*sick-leave*” as a borrowed term here, the translator has disadvantaged the majority of the illiterate people who do not know the meaning of this term.

Another finding from the Sotho news translations is that there are some incorrect substitutions of certain English words. Such words are displayed in the following table: **Appendix 7** contains full sentences.

<u><i>ST WORD / PHRASE.</i></u>	<u><i>TT WORD / PHRASE.</i></u>	<u><i>BACK-TRANSLATION.</i></u>
(a) dinner.	<i>Dijo tša go fihlula.</i>	Breakfast.
(b) The Boer War.	<i>Ntweng ya lefase.</i>	At the World war.
(c) Perception.	<i>Dikgonono.</i>	Suspicious.
(d) Yesterday.	<i>Maloba.</i>	A day before yesterday.
(e) Life.	<i>Tsohle.</i>	Everything.
(f) Controversial.	<i>Go tuma kudu.</i>	To be very famous.

As can be seen, the above English words and phrases were translated incorrectly in the Sotho news translations. It is not easy to establish why these words were translated in this way because they all have equivalents that could have been used. For instance, “dinner” is “*dijo tša mosegare*” in Sepedi, while the “Boer War” is “*Ntwa ya Maburu*”. “Perception” is “*kgopolo*”, and “yesterday” is “*maabane*”. In Sesotho, “life” is not “tsohle”, but “*bophelo*”. As shown in the table, “tsohle” means “everything”. Lastly, the word “controversial”, should have been translated as “*go belaelša*”, given the context in which it appears.

In addition, incorrect substitutions may also be shown by the wrong choice of a singular or a plural form. The following table contains three examples of a wrong choice of a singular or a plural form: Full sentences are in **Appendix 8**:

<u><i>ST WORD / PHRASE.</i></u>	<u><i>TT WORD / PHRASE.</i></u>	<u><i>BACK-TRANSLATION.</i></u>
(a) work.	Mešomo.	Works.
(b) Owners.	Mong.	Owner.
(c) The Bid Book.	Dibuka tse.	These books.

From this table, it could be noted that a choice of a singular or plural form may have a greater or lesser impact on the meaning of a sentence. For instance, in the first example, the choice of a plural form “mešomo” (works) has had less of an impact on the sentence from which this word was extracted. The reason is that in that sentence, the speaker talks about people getting to know about J.M Coetzee’s *work* as a writer, and in the translation the translator is also talking about J.M Coetzee’s *works* as a writer. This differs from the usage of a singular form “*owner*” for the plural form “*owners*” in example (b), because here, the meaning is negatively affected. This is so because unlike “*work vs works*”, the usage of a singular “*owner*” implies that this elephant bull which is being talked about here, has one owner, whereas in the source text, it was reported to have had more than one owner. This changes the meaning of the sentence in the English news bulletins. The same thing applies to “the Bid Book” and “these books” in the last example. This shows that by using clashing quantity forms, translators may also mislead the target language audience.

In addition to these incorrect substitutions, there are also some words in the SABC’s Sotho news translations whose usage resulted in certain shifts in meanings when compared to the English news words. Such words are displayed in the following table and their full sentences are found in **Appendix 9**:

<u><i>ST WORD / PHRASE.</i></u>	<u><i>TT WORD / PHRASE.</i></u>	<u><i>BACK-TRANSLATION.</i></u>
(a) commitments.	<i>Maikemišetšo.</i>	Intentions.
(b) communication.	<i>Kgokahano.</i>	Link.
(c) confirmed.	<i>Ukama.</i>	Allege.
(d) testimony.	<i>Bohlahli.</i>	Guidance.
(e) seizure.	<i>'phuruphutšo.</i>	Searches.
(f) economy.	<i>Mmuso.</i>	Government.
(g) conversations.	<i>Tshedimošo.</i>	Information.
(h) offered.	<i>Tshepiswa.</i>	Promised.
(i) last season.	<i>Mo ngwageng o fetileng.</i>	Last year.
(j) borrowers.	<i>Badiriši.</i>	Users.

In the above table, wrong choices have been made for the source text words in the first column. The wrong choices are the target text words which are displayed in column two. In the first example, that is, sentence (a) in the appendix, *“commitments”* has been translated as *“maikemišetšo”* which means “intentions”. In this case, the translator should have used the word *“boikgafu”* (commitment) which has the same meaning as *“commitments”*. It should be noted that unlike English, Sepedi does not have a plural form for this word *“boikgafu”*, and as a result, it is unacceptable to say *“maboikgafu”* (commitments).

In sentence (b) *“communication”* has been translated as *“kgokahano”* which is “a link”. Although “communication” implies that there is a certain link between or among the people who are communicating, it is improper for the translator to use *“kgokahano”* here instead of the appropriate word *“puisano”* (communication). By using *“kgokahano”* in this context, the translator has shifted the original meaning of the word “communication” and by so doing, he does not allow the listener to grasp the full meaning of this sentence. Without the source text, it is impossible for the listener to understand the kind of link which is involved in this sentence.

In sentence (c) *“confirmed”* has been translated as *“ukama”* (allege). In Sepedi, the word *“ukama”* is used in situations where the speaker is not entirely sure about what he or she is saying. These include situations where there are allegations or rumours. Given this fact, it could be realized that the usage of this word *“ukama”* in the Sepedi news version gives a totally different meaning compared to the one in the English news. The word *“confirmed”* in the English news, makes it clear that there is a certainty that the economy is struggling, whereas the word *“ukama”* in the Sepedi news implies that there is an uncertainty about this issue.

As for sentence (d), *“bohlahli”* which is *“guidance”*, has been applied to refer to *“testimony”*. Like all the other words in the above examples, this word is also wrongly used in this context. However, one may assume that by choosing the word *“bohlahli”*, the translator may have realized that by giving a testimony, Zuma was inevitably going to give the investigators some form of guidance about the positive steps that they could take in order to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion. In sentence (e), the word *“seizure”* has been replaced by *“diphuruphutso”* which means

*“searches”*. In this case, although the word *“diphuruphutšo”* does not mean *“seizure”*, some reasons may be given to justify the possible reasons for the SABC translators to use this word. For example, firstly, the translator may have used *“diphuruphutšo”* because the word *“seizure”* lacks a clear equivalent in Sepedi. In order to arrive at an equivalent meaning of this word, the translator had to paraphrase it, which could have made the sentence longer than it is now. Secondly, the translator may have opted to translate this sentence like this because the word *“hapile”* (seized) had already been introduced in one of the previous sentences in his or her translation, and therefore, he or she felt that the audience would not lose any elements of meaning in this sentence. From the way this sentence has been translated, it is conceivable that the police did some searching and thereafter seized the assets. In this case, although the translator has used an inappropriate word for the word *“seizure”*, the meaning still remains intact.

As for the words *“mmuso”* in sentence (f), *“tshedimošo”* in sentence (g), *“tshepiswa”* in sentence (h), *“ngwaga”* in sentence (i), and *“badiriši”* in sentence (j), it is difficult to suggest the reasons that led to their usage. The word *“mmuso”* does not mean *“economy”* but *“government”*. Here, the translator should have used an acceptable and popular coined word *“ikonomi”* instead of *“mmuso”*. As the word *“economy”* is alien to Sesotho culture, it was coined as *“ikonomi”* from its English form *“economy”*. The word *“tshedimošo”* is also inappropriate as it does not mean *“conversations”* but *“information”*. *“Conversations”* is *“dipoledišano”* in Sepedi. In sentence (h), the application of the word *“tshepiswa”* has given the translation a different meaning from the one contained in the English news bulletins. This is the case because in the English news it is said “..., we were *offered* several kilograms of heroine” whereas in the Sesotho version it is said “..., the SABC crew were *promised* many kilograms of heroine”. Even the quantity of the heroine that they were promised or offered differs. The English news says *several* kilograms while the Sesotho news says *many* kilograms.

In sentence (i) *“ngwageng o fetileng”* is also incorrect because it does not mean *“last season”*, but *“last year”*. *“Last season”* is *“sehla se se fetileng”*. The same thing applies to *“badiriši”* in sentence (j). This word means *“users”* and not *“borrowers”*. Here, the correct word would have been *“baadimi”* which is *“borrowers”*.

#### 4.3. *WORD TRANSLATION VERSUS CONCEPT TRANSLATION*

Lastly, this research has found that there are incidents where the already-mentioned Stephen Maphike's hypothesis was proved to be correct, and there are also those incidents where it was proved to be incorrect. From all the Sotho news translations that were studied for this research report, there were only three sentences that were translated in a way that justifies Maphike's (1992) hypothesis to be true. Below are those sentences and in brackets are the languages into which they were translated:

- (1) ST: "Mourners, including opposition Movement For a Democratic Change officials, were in for a surprise. *Mugabe extended a hand of friendship*".  
 TT: "Batlapolokong ba tšhositšwe ke ge *Mugabe a otlolla seatla sa segwera*" (Sepedi).

**BACK-TRANSLATION** = "Funeral-comers were frightened when *Mugabe extended a hand of friendship*".

- (2). ST: "*Air combat* has been taken to a new level".  
 TT: "*Twantšho ya moya* e tlo fetoga ..." (Sepedi).

**BACK-TRANSLATION** = "*A combat against air* will change ...".

- (3). ST: "The alleged serial rapist *targets* blonde girls aged between eleven and sixteen".  
 TT: "Monna yo go begwago gore ke mohlasedi wa basetsana ka bontši *o lebanya* basetsana ba mengwaga ya magareng a lesometee le lesometshela" (Sepedi).

**BACK-TRANSLATION** = This man, who is reported to be the attacker of many girls *aims at* girls aged between eleven and sixteen".

The highlighted words and phrases above are the focal points in this regard. To use Maphike's words, the above examples show that the translator in this case has made a mistake of using a word translation instead of a concept translation. In the first sentence, the phrase, "*Mugabe extended a hand of friendship*", is difficult to be understood thoroughly as it is ambiguous. The ambiguity in this sentence firstly results from the fact that there is a certain Sepedi idiom which says "*Go ba le*

*letsogo*” (*To have a hand*), which means “to be generous or kind-hearted in a way that you always give something to people, especially the needy ones”. This could be money or any other valuable thing. Secondly, there is an act of shaking hands which is common in Sepedi culture and it is performed in two different contexts. In the first context people may shake hands when they greet each other, and in the second, they may do this to show a sign of reconciliation. This usually involves people who were previously at loggerheads and who are now prepared to bury the hatchet.

When taking this into consideration, one may realise that this phrase, “to extend a hand of friendship”, may confuse Bapedi as they may associate it with their common idiom “*to have a hand*”, mentioned above, and think that it means “becoming more and more generous or kind-hearted”, and they may also associate it with their reconciliatory act of shaking hands.

Following this ambiguity, one may argue that instead of using a word translation for this sentence, the translator should have used a conceptual translation which would have made the meaning clear. In this context, however, the phrase means Mugabe was extending his friendship towards the MDC. It is a well known fact that Mugabe’s political party and the MDC are the two main opposition parties in Zimbabwe, and when he is said to have extended his hand of friendship towards the MDC, this surprised many people.

As for sentence (2), the translator seems to have been unaware that English word construction differs from Sepedi word construction in most cases. Here, the translator has failed to realize that a word translation or a semantic translation, to use Peter Newmark’s (1991) words, would not be suitable for this sentence. This flaw resulted in the complete loss of the meaning of this sentence. Instead of translating this sentence as “A combat in the air ....”, he or she translated it as “A combat against the air ....”, which is not what the English sentence says. One cannot fight against the air, but one can fight in the air, which is in the sky. This also gives one an impression that the translator may have not understood this sentence and that is why he or she mistranslated it. In Sepedi, this translation does not make sense, and I believe this is also the case in several other languages.

The same thing applies to sentence (3) where the literal translation of the word “target” has made the sentence ungrammatical or unusual in Sepedi. Here, the translator should have opted for a conceptual or communicative translation of this word because its semantic translation is irrelevant here. The word “o lebanya” (he targets), is more suitable if one is talking about shooting something, and not about someone who chooses certain types of people. For this reason, the translator should have substituted the word “targets” with the word “o kgetha”, which means “he chooses”, to make the sentence acceptable in Sepedi.

Following all these three “mistakes”, one may realize that the act or process of translation needs considerable awareness and expertise in order for translations to be regarded as “good”. According to Peter Newmark (1991), a good translation can be described in the following terms:

A (good) translation has to be as accurate as possible, as economical as possible, in denotation and in connotation, referentially and pragmatically. The accuracy relates to the SL text, either to the author’s meaning, or to the objective truth that is encompassed by the text, or to this objective truth adapted to the intellectual and emotional comprehension of the readership which the translator and/or the client has in mind (Newmark, 1991: 111).

As for Cabré (1999), a good translation “not only has to express the same content as the source text, but it also has to do so in the forms that a native reader of the target language would use” (Cabré, 1999: 47).

However, there are many examples that can be used to disprove Maphike’s hypothesis. The following sentences are some of those examples:

(a) ST: “Ernie Els and Vijay Singh *were on the move* in the Dunhill Links championships today”.

TT: “Ernie Els and Vijay Sing *ba sebeditse hantle* kajeno tlhodisanong ya Dunhill Links, ....” (Sesotho).

**BACK-TRANSLATION** = “Ernie Els and Vijay Singh *worked well* today, in the Dunhill Links competition, ....”.

- (b) ST: The seven month old baby has died and two other children aged two and seven *are fighting for their lives* at the Polokwane provincial hospital”.

TT: “Lesea la dikgwedi tse supileng le hlokahetse mme bana ba bang ba babedi *ba kula hampe* sepetleleng sa Polokwane ...”.

**BACK-TRANSLATION** = “The seven month old baby has died and two other children *are very sick* at Polokwane hospital ...” (Sesotho).

- (c) ST: “Japan is *the world’s largest giver* to Africa”.

TT: “Japan *ke yona e fago Afrika go feta dinaga ka moka lefaseng*”.

**BACK-TRANSLATION** = “Japan is *the one that gives Africa most than all the countries in the world*” (Sepedi).

- (d) ST: The president warned that the United Nations could, in his words, be *consumed by flames* unless changes are made”.

TT: “O hlokomeditse mokgahlo hore *o tla phuhlama* ebang ho sa etswe dipheto” (Sesotho).

**BACK-TRANSLATION** = “He warned the organisation that *it will fall down* if changes are not made”.

- (e) ST: “But we are still just getting it once a year, making it difficult for researchers and the public to identify *hot spots*”.

TT: “Bjalo dipalopalo tše di lokollwa gatee feela ka ngwaga, gomme seo se šitiša banyakišiši le setšhaba go lemoga *mafelo ao a nago le mathata*” (Sepedi).

**BACK-TRANSLATION** = “Now these statistics are released once only, a year, and this makes it impossible for researchers and the public to realize *places that have problems*”.

- (f) ST: Wits Technikon management has denied claims that it has given students *the green light* to have sex on campus”.

TT: “Ba tsamaiso ya Wits Technikon ba qheetse ka thoko ditlaleho tsa hore ba fane ka *tumelelo* ya hore baithuti ba tswela pele ka thobalano khemphaseng” (Sesotho).

**BACK-TRANSLATION** = “Wits Technikon management have pushed aside the reports that they have given *permission* that students may continue with sex at the campus”.

(g) ST: “But *behind closed doors*, student leaders and technikon management, (are) battling to manage the sex on campus scandal”.

TT: “Empa *ka sekgukung*, baetapele ba baithuti le batsamaisi ba technikhone ba ntse ba sokola ho laola ditlaleho tsa thobalano khemphaseng” (Sesotho).

**BACK-TRANSLATION** = “But *in private*, student leaders and technikon management are struggling to control the sex reports at the campus”.

(h) ST: “The guards *returned fire* and the suspects fled the scene”.

TT: “Bahlankela ba tshireletso *ba ne ba ikarabela ka go thuntsha* mme babelaelwa ba le botsa phukujwe” (Setswana).

**BACK-TRANSLATION** = “The security guards *replied by shooting* and the suspects ran away”.

The above sentences have not been semantically translated, but conceptually translated. The highlighted phrases are the ones that make a distinction between a semantic and a communicative approach of translation in these sentences. In the first sentence, the phrase “*were on the move*”, was conceptually translated as “*worked well*” because a literal translation would have been meaningless. In the second sentence, the phrase “*are fighting for their lives*”, has been translated as “*are very sick*”, which is exactly what the meaning of this English sentence entails. But it should be noted that in this case, even if the translator had applied a semantic approach of translation for this phrase, the sentence would still be perfect and acceptable in Sesotho. This is so because this phrase “*are fighting for their lives*” is not alien to Sesotho language, and it is not, to other African languages such as Sepedi and Setswana as well.

In sentence (3), “*largest giver to Africa*” was paraphrased as “*the one that gives Africa most*” because the literal translation “*mofi yo mogolo wa Afrika*” is ungrammatical. The word “*mofi*” (giver) is never used as a single word in Sepedi.

Instead, Sepedi uses the phrase *“motho yo a fago”* (the person who gives). As a result, it was impossible for the translator to translate *“giver”* as *“mofi”*. Only a paraphrase of this word is acceptable for its translation.

In sentence (4), the words *“will be consumed by flames”* have been substituted by *“will fall down”*, for the same reason of trying to make the whole sentence meaningful. In all these sentences, except sentence (2), had the translator not used a conceptual translation of the highlighted phrases, the sentences would not make sense at all. The reason is that all these phrases need to be translated from their connotative meanings, and not denotative meanings, in order for the sentences not to lose their meanings. For example, the word *“hot spots”*, literally means *“the spots that are hot”*, which in Sepedi means *“matwabatwaba ao a fišago”*, but its connotative meaning is *“dangerous places”*. For this reason, in order for the Sepedi translation to make sense, the translator had to focus on this connotative meaning and not the denotative meaning of *“matwabatwaba a ao a fišago”*. In sentence (6), an English idiom *“to give a green light to”*, has been used and this means *“to give permission to do something”*. Taking this meaning into consideration, it shows that the Sesotho translator did very well by using the word, *“tumelelo”* (permission) instead of the literal translation *“lebone le letala”* (the green light) because otherwise, the translation would be **incomprehensible**. The translator’s stunning job is also evident in sentence (7) where the phrase *“behind closed doors”* was perfectly translated as “in private”. This phrase is one of the English culture-specific phrases which are alien in other languages such as Sesotho, Sepedi and Setswana.

The last example is a Setswana translation of the phrase *“returned fire”*, which was also perfectly done. In this case, the translator used the phrase *“ba ne ba ikarabela ka go thuntsha”*, meaning *“they replied by shooting”* because of his or her understanding of the covert meaning behind the overt meaning of this phrase.

All these, together with many other sentences that have not been cited in this research report, show that there are indeed, some situations where the SABC translators have been aware of the danger of translating semantically and not conceptually in other contexts. Although it is sometimes possible to translate word for word, or

semantically, it should be noticed that in some situations, such an option is irrelevant as it distorts the Source Text meaning.

In the next chapter, a conclusion which contains some suggestions about the SABC's translations of the Sotho news, is provided. The suggestions are not in any way provided as a means of undermining the current SABC strategies applied in the Sotho news translations. Rather, they are provided as an endeavour to make this research have a positive impact as far as the development of the SABC's Sotho news translations is concerned.