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THE TRANSLATION OF CULTURE-SPECIFIC ITEMS IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE FROM ENGLISH INTO SEPEDI

BY

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1986160

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SUPERVISOR: Dr C HLONGWANA

12 JUNE 2025

DECLARATION

I, Lekhipi Promises Themane, hereby declare that this Masters Research Report entitled: **THE TRANSLATION OF CULTURE-SPECIFIC ITEMS IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE FROM ENGLISH INTO SEPEDI,** is submitted by me for the degree of Master in Translation. It is my original work and all the sources used have been duly acknowledged. I further declare that this work has not been submitted by me to any university before for any academic qualification.



12 June 2025

Signature Date

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Firstly, I am sincerely thankful to the Almighty God for the opportunity and strength He gave me to pursue my studies. Secondly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dr C Hlongwana for his continuous support of my study and research, for his patience and motivation. Thirdly, I extend my gratitude to Wits University PG Masters Merit Award for supporting me financially in this study. Lastly, I would like to thank my family and friends, for their unwavering support during the period of this study.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this Masters Research Report to my late mother,

Dr Kgalushi Maria Themane.

May your beautiful soul rest in peace.

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore the translation strategies that are applied by Sepedi translators when translating culture-specific items found in children's literature from English into Sepedi. The study followed a qualitative research approach, where a case study research design was adopted. Purposive sampling was found relevant to this study and was used to recruit five participants who were relevant to answer the research questions. The researcher selected 10 cultural items from the story book, Charlie, and the chocolate factory at random. Data was collected through two methods (semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. Data from interviews and documents was processed through the following process: Firstly, data was transcribed into a transcript. Secondly, the transcripts were read repeatedly and then coded. Thirdly, the data was grouped into categories. Fourthly, from the categories four themes emerged. The translators were faced with the difficulty of finding a translation equivalent or using the correct strategy, in order to preserve the meaning of the text. The results showed that Baker's (2018) translation by cultural substitution and translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation are used by the translators. The study found that translation challenges encountered with culture-specific items inclined that there is a great need for a wider knowledge of the source language culture. The results indicated the importance of translating culture-specific items correctly to fulfil the purpose of the intended message. The study concludes by advising translators to apply effective translation strategies when translating culture-specific items.

Keywords: *children's literature, culture-specific items, translation strategies, translators, Sepedi*

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CHAPTER 1: CONTEXT AND INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Translators sometimes experience problems of mistranslation when they fail to account for the cultural nuances that can alter the meaning of a text, especially children's literature. Oittinen (2003) mentions that children's literature provides not only valuable information but fun as well. This makes children's literature fascinating to read. But interestingly, it appears as if little attention has been paid to their translation from one language to the other, such as from English to Sepedi. Van Coillie (2020:141) views translating for children as a "messenger that goes beyond mountains and rivers, beyond the seas, to the very ends of the world in search of new friends." The author also mentions that translated literature improves and introduces the target readers to their culture in so many ways; for example, it offers alternative views of norms and values carried by different people around the world.

There seems to be little scholarly research on the importance of culture in translation and on how to translate culture-specific items in children's literature from English to Sepedi. The focus of this study is to explore how culture-specific items impact the translation of texts. Notably, the aim of the study is to explore the translation of culture-specific items in Sepedi translations of the story *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.* The study focuses on the culture-specific items found in the story *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl and seeks to translate them into Sepedi. The researcher chose this storybook because of its typical nature in providing a rich cultural context of how cultural nuances can influence meaning-making. This focus can enrich both languages, that is, Sepedi and English if perused carefully.

The chapter is designed as follows: Firstly, the chapter presents pertinent information that provides a background for the study. This information is critical because it situates the study in its broader context of literature in translation. Such information is necessary to understand the rest of the study. Secondly, the chapter discusses the problem statement, which gives a summation of the problem that the study seeks to investigate and the issues under review. Thirdly, the chapter introduces the purpose of the study, which illustrates what the study intends to do. Other sections of the study will be research questions and research objectives, which pinpoint exactly what the study aims to investigate; these will also serve as a guide to the rest of the study. In this chapter, I will also explain the rationale of the study, which serves to give the motivation for conducting the study.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

To situate the problem of the study in its proper context, there is a need to establish a background to the study. In this context, it is important to understand where translation studies, particularly those translating literary works, come from. Translation studies have since been struggling to find the correct equivalent for a target text (Bassnett, 2013:21). There has always been a threat of a loss of meaning when using literal translation. One such threat is culturally hidden meanings; for example, in Sepedi (*Monna ke selepe o lala a adimilwe*), literary: A man is an axe that can be borrowed overnight), figuratively, it means that a man is allowed to sleep around with other women.

Translation scholars have recently recognised a cultural turn in translation studies (Bassnett, 2007:10). This cultural turn occurred in the 2000s. It is intended to shift the field from not only focusing on the target and source languages but also the cultural differences that occur between the societies in which the languages operate (Pym, 2006:2). Given the increasing global integration and an increase in a cross-cultural world, translators and interpreters are recognised as agents that mediate between cultures. More researchers have become interested in the translation of culture-specific items (Pym, 2006:2). So far, it has been found that cultural nuances interfere with translation, especially in children's literature. So far, studies that have focused on this area are sparse and scarce. The existing studies in South Africa are in English and other languages but not in Sepedi. For example, Kruger (2013) who studied the translation of cultural aspects in South Africa children's literature however, the study focused on Afrikaans and English. Another study by Kekana (2015) that studied *Dikanegelo tša bafsa tša Sepedi* which focuses on encouraging the production of Sepedi children's reading materials and motivating reading interest amongst the youth but doesn't specifically examine the culture-specific items within the texts. This justifies that cultural nuances are understudied.

Güzey (2018:12) states that language can be observed as a reflection of culture, which includes the values, customs, habits, and beliefs of a community. Thus, translations only involve the process of two cultures coming across each other alongside two languages. This is the reason why translation is considered a means of interaction, meaning that it does not just bridge languages; it also mediates the different cultures involved. Cultures are different from others; as a result, some expressions found in Language 1 might not exist in Language 2 (Terestyényi, 2011:58).

For good cultural communication to take place, Sentov (2020:36) suggests that participants should have a strong knowledge of the cultural diversity phenomena at play. However, culture-specific items may bring up difficulties in the translation process and cause translation equivalence barriers (Güzey,

2018:18). A translator faces difficulties when faced with finding the equivalents for items or events that do not occur in the target culture (Larson, 1997:163). Surprisingly, despite the importance of this information about the role of cultural inclinations in translation, little is known about how culture-specific items in Sepedi translations of the story Charlie and the Chocolate Factory interplay. Important information, such as how factories operate, may be valuable for both teachers who teach Sepedi literature and translators who specialise in children's literature.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

There is little children's literature that is translated from English to Sepedi. This is a disadvantage for Sepedi speakers, as the translation of this literature can benefit them in growing their imagination to travel the world and experience other cultures without leaving their homes, as alluded to by Mhlanga (2021:7). Children benefit from translated literature as they are open to understanding their friends from different backgrounds and cultures, for example, understanding the difficulties and challenges other children face in their daily lives.

It is the translator's responsibility to translate a message into the target language from the source language. When creating these translations, they must also consider the culture of the original language (source text). Finding accurate translations for cultural items that are exclusive to the original language can pose a challenge for most translators. Researchers and translation experts, including Baker (2018), have worked to find a solution to the issue of non-equivalence of cultural items. There hasn't been much research done on translating culturally specific content, particularly in the Sepedi language. Thus, this study has chosen to embark on this specific study so it can contribute to the field and to the body of knowledge regarding translation of children's literature. The contribution of the study will be seen in the improvement of teaching children about multilingualism and imparting knowledge of a multicultural, diverse South Africa.

1.4 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.4.1 Aim of the study

The purpose of this study was to explore the translation strategies that are applied by Sepedi translators when translating culture-specific items found in children's literature from English into Sepedi. Thus, the following three research objectives emerged.

1.4.2 Research Objectives

- To describe the culture-specific items that can be found in English children's literature and the challenges that can be encountered when translating them into Sepedi.
- To explain how culture-specific items found in children's literature can be translated from English to Sepedi.
- To understand why it is important to know how to adequately translate culture-specific items in children's literature from English to Sepedi.

1.4.3 Research Questions

- What are the challenges that a translator must take into consideration when translating culture-specific items from English to Sepedi?

  This research question aims to study some of the culture-specific items found in children's literature that may cause translation problems. It also aims to indicate the problems that Sepedi translators could encounter when translating culture-specific terms between English and Sepedi in children's literature.
- How should culture-specific items found in children literature be translated from English to Sepedi?

  This research question aims to explore the theoretical and practical translation suggestions or strategies of some of the problematic phrases or words that are found in children's literature. The suggested equivalents or translation solutions will be expressed in the paper.
- Why is the knowledge of the translation of culture-specific items in children's literature important when translating from English to Sepedi?

  This research question aims to find the reason why it is important for a translator to be aware of the challenges or complexities of different cultures when translating and why it is key to solving translation equivalence and untranslatability issues for the target audience.

1.5 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The study will assist Sepedi translators entering the field of translation to take note of and know how to translate these terms. Children's literature not only entertains children but also educates them about the societal issues occurring around them that are likely to affect them. Some of these issues might not be available in Sepedi literature; therefore, translating from English to Sepedi benefits the children greatly. South Africa has twelve official languages and their respective cultures, and as a result, more books should be able to cater to children from all cultures who speak different languages. The study aims to contribute to the area of translation of children's literature. Undertaking this study is mainly because fantasy stories are not so popular amongst children in South Africa, especially among Sepedi speakers. The reason for studying Sepedi translations of English culture-specific items is that it will benefit translators, as there is a shortage of guides for Sepedi translators on how to translate culture-specific items. It also seeks to spark the interest of translators working with African languages to channel them to specialise in translating popular children's books.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

16.1 Research approach and design

The qualitative approach was used to locate the study in an empirical world and to achieve the research objectives (Tracy, 2024:27). In this study, the researcher opted for the case study design. A case study design is a detailed study of a specific subject, such as a person, group, place, event, organisation, or phenomenon. Case studies are commonly used in social, educational, clinical, and business research. This design enabled the researcher to get an in-depth understanding of how translators handle culture-specific texts when translating children's literature from English to Sepedi.

1.6.2 Sampling

Purposive sampling was found relevant to this study and was used to recruit participants who were relevant to answer the research questions. The researcher chose this type of sampling because it is a technique that is used in qualitative research to choose cases with the richest information to make the most use of the limited resources available (Palinkas et al., 2015).

1.6.3 Data collection

Data was collected using two methods, namely: semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

1.6.4 Data analysis

Data was examined using thematic analysis. Data was presented through illustrative quotes, interpreted in terms of how developing themes answered the study questions, and conclusions were drawn after that (Belotto, 2018:5).

1.6.5 Trustworthiness of the study

Qualitative research explores the intricate details of human behaviour, attitudes, and experiences, emphasising the exploration of nuances and context. It is thus subjective in nature. To counter this threat, researchers need to ensure the trustworthiness of their studies is clearly explained. Ensuring trustworthiness is crucial in establishing the credibility and reliability of qualitative findings. This includes elements such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

1.7 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

The layout of the study is as follows:

- Chapter 1: Context and Introduction of the Study
- Chapter 2: Literature Review
- Chapter 3: Research Methodology
- Chapter 4: Data presentation and analysis
- Chapter 5: Findings, conclusion, and recommendations

1.8 SUMMARY

To conclude, translation scholars have recently recognised a cultural turn in translation studies. Language is observed as a mirror of culture, which includes the values, customs, habits, and beliefs of a community. A translator faces challenges of finding equivalents for objects or events that do not exist in the target culture. The study aims to explore the translation of culture-specific items found in children's literature from English into Sepedi. Also, to answer the research questions and achieve the objectives of this study. The researcher adopted a qualitative research approach and a case study research design. A purposeful sampling strategy will be employed to select participants, and data collection will be collected through interviews and document analysis. The research data will be analysed using Skopos theory. The study may benefit translators, as there is a shortage of guides for Sepedi translators on how to translate culture-specific items in children's literature.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the literature review of the study. It includes the literature review on translation, the problem of zero equivalence, cultural turn, culture-specific items, children's literature, the role of the translator in children's literature, challenges faced in children's literature translation, translation strategies and translation strategies for culture-specific items in children's literature.

2.2. LANGUAGE BACKGROUND

Sepedi is one of the official languages of South Africa. Sepedi is a standardised language with numerous dialects, with Khelobedu, Sehananwa, Setlokwa, and Sepulana, amongst others. Sepedi is closely related to Setswana and Sesotho, as well as some of the official languages of South Africa. Sepedi is mainly spoken in the northern parts of the country; it is spoken in Gauteng Province, Limpopo Province, and Mpumalanga. Lathey (2006:11) mentions that the transfer of literature from one language into another or from one culture into another introduces the various images of childhood in distinct parts of the world. Sehlola (2011:14) adds by stating that when children read translated literature, they learn about the cultural practices of the children they read about from the source text.

2.3. WHAT IS TRANSLATION?

We live in a society that speaks multiple languages; as a result, people will speak in their respective languages to communicate. The translation process comes into play as a bridge to close the gap between two languages. Polezzi (2016) points out that translation becomes even more paramount when people travel the world more. Travelling is driven by several factors, including economic and political factors. This multinational interaction calls for research in this field to emphasise cultural aspects of translation in the context within which translation is done to make another culture accessible and comprehensible.

Therefore, translation is considered primarily a process of intercultural communication whose end product is a text that can function appropriately in specific situations and contexts of use (Schaffner, 1998). The author views translation as the act of transferring the content of a text from the source language into the target language. In the same vein, Williams (2013:79) explains the process of translating as reproducing the closest natural equivalent message of the source language in the receptor language, in terms of meaning and style. In view of this, translation implies having the meaning and the style of the source language in the target language. One may not have the precise

equivalent in some instances; that is the reason why Williams (2013) uses the term ‘closest natural equivalent’.

Furthermore, Lebese (2013) gives a more expansive definition, implying that translation is a common term that is used to refer to the transference of thoughts and ideas from the source language to the target language in a written and/or spoken form, irrespective of whether the language is a standardised variety or not or whether one or both languages are based on signs, as with sign languages for the deaf. Similarly, Samardali et al. (2013) maintain that translation is a linguistic process of finding an exact equivalent or nearest equivalent for a source language message in the target language. Given the above, an equivalent is a word denoting the same meaning as a word of the source language in the target language.

Translation is a process that entails creativity whereby the information from a source language is transformed into a target language (Solodub, 2005). To translate means to precisely and completely express by means of one language the things that had been expressed earlier by the means of another language. Clearly, in terms of the definitions provided above, translation can be seen as a process of communication that is aimed at transferring meaning from one language, the source language (SL), to the other, the target language (TL).

2.4. THE PROBLEM OF ZERO EQUIVALENCE

Zero equivalence is when there is a lack of two words that are similar in terms of meanings in two languages. This poses a challenge because it is hard to find two words that carry the same meaning between two languages, languages that do not share the same cultural background. The term equivalent refers to words that correspond or are virtually identical, especially in effect or function (Bassnett, 2013). Simply, it refers to a word, phrase, or sentence in a target language carrying the same meaning as a word, phrase, or sentence in a source language yet reflecting the very same meaning or function. Baker (2018) concurs that one of the main difficulties for the translator may be to find a word in the target language that has the same meaning as the word in the source language (equivalent). As Baker (2018) writes, “Different languages express meanings using different linguistic means such as fixed expressions, idioms, words, etc. It is extremely hard to find an equivalent of the same meaning and form in the target language.” Mustonen (2010:18) claims that “some confusion and vagueness exists in the very definition of the concept of 'equivalence,' which is one of the most central concepts in translation theory.”

> Several contradictory statements have been made about translation equivalence and its applicability, and translation theorists have attempted to

> define equivalence from various points of view. Various kinds of categories of equivalence have also been suggested within the field of translation theory. The complexity and elusiveness of the concept have resulted in the fact that a universally valid, comprehensive definition of equivalence does not exist (Mustonen, 2010:18).

This theoretical view accentuates that the equivalent is a centre of translation that connects two languages and their cultures. Equivalence is no longer regarded as an art used to match the words between two languages. This is strengthened by Bassnett (2007:2), who alludes that translators now have the freedom to choose the words or expressions they desire. For the text to be translated, it is given to the target audience with the best meaning. However, the main aspect that causes challenges to the translator is the cultural bond idioms or fixed expressions. Thinking about this from a cultural perspective, one will come to the realisation that the nature of our cultural circumstances, whether emotional, social, or psychological, cannot be simply carried through to another language. Therefore, it is necessary for the translator to use translation strategies that cater for both the meanings and emotions that are expressed in the source language.

2.5. THE CULTURAL TURN

Bassnett (2003:4) focuses on the interaction between translation and culture. The cultural turn is introduced by Snell-Hornby (1990). Translation has traditionally been perceived as an inter-lingual communication, where words are converted from one language to the other. However, Bassnett (2013:4) is strongly against the perception of taking translation as simply a matter of language. The author views "translation primarily as a cross-cultural transfer or intercultural communication." In this view, culture plays a vital role in the translation process. What influences this type of intercultural communication is that the major problem is caused by the disagreement over the ambiguous and fascinating concept of culture. Nida (1998) maintains that "culture is the form of things that people have in mind, their models for perceiving, relating, and otherwise interpreting them."

Translation becomes an arduous task to do because one has to translate meaning and culture from one language into the other. Thus, the difference between languages and cultures poses a great challenge as far as translation is concerned. This is because things are done differently in diverse cultures. The manner in which words are used in diverse cultures also reflects the differences in the respective languages. What compounds the problem of translation between diverse cultures is that every language comprises features that are derived from its culture. Idioms and fixed expressions are culture-based units of language. In other words, the translation process becomes more complex when

it involves the translation of culture-bound or culture-specific terms and expressions. Nida (1998) writes:

> Language and culture are two symbolic systems. Everything we say in language has meanings, designative or sociative, denotative or connotative. Every language form we use has meanings and carries meanings that are not in the same sense because it is associated with culture, and culture is more extensive than language.

People who come from diverse cultural backgrounds and different geographical settings may use the same language forms to refer to different things.

2.6. CULTURE-SPECIFIC ITEMS

Culture-bound terms, as defined by Guzëy (2018) are “concepts, institutions, and personnel that are specific to the source language culture." Translation is a form of intercultural communication because it not only involves two languages but also the aspects of the two diverse cultures. Guzëy (2018) argues that translation unequivocally presents us with an important service in that it mediates between different languages. It overcomes the difficulties involved in translating linguistic and cultural items. Therefore, it is an indication that the translator will, one way or another, come across linguistic and cultural barriers; these cultural barriers include culture-specific items, which the study will focus on.

According to Nida (1998), the term culture addresses three significant categories of human activity: personal, collective, and expressive. Bassnett (2003) mentions that culture is an abstract term used to account for the beliefs, values, and behaviours of groups of people. On this notion, Mustonen (2010) asserts that cultural meanings are embedded into the text of a particular language. It is right to conclude that culture plays a significant role in a language. Baker (2018) adds that culture is maintained and portrayed through language. The translation process occurs between two different languages that are also in possession of their own unique cultures.

On the other hand, we have cultural identity. Cultural identity is defined as characteristics that are shared by a group of people; it also defines a person’s particular values, beliefs, and origins. These characteristics include language, social behaviours, even cuisines, literature, and music. We understand that culture is the element of values and beliefs shared amongst people, and these reflect both culture and cultural identity. Therefore, culture should be taken into consideration by translators.

Guzëy (2018) suggests that translation requires considering the cultural implications. This makes us aware as translators that we should be aware of the cultural obstacles that we will face during the

process of translation. When one comes prepared for cultural obstacles, one will be able to come up with possible translation strategies to overcome such challenges. This means that now the translator keeps in mind the cultures of the source and target languages when translating a text. Furthermore, it is impossible to separate the two during a translation process. Culture-specific items (also known as cultural vocabulary or cultural lexis) are words and word combinations (phrases) that name a phenomenon closely characteristic of a certain community, have a specific national and historical colouring, and do not have equivalents in other languages (Vlakhov & Florin, 1990). Similarly, Borysenko et al. (2024:2) say that culture-specific vocabulary is used to picture the background of the events, describe the lives of the characters, and create a true-to-life atmosphere by writers.

One would observe that the process of translation is a critical one, as it is sensitive and has to be strategic to include two diverse cultures. It is important for translators to not only be good with two languages but also understand the cultures involved in the languages. One can say that translation is observed as a field that a translator works in and needs to pay attention to between two diverse cultures when translating a text.

2.7. CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Oittinen (2003:65) defines children's literature as "a genre specifically written for children or read by children. In other words, "a style of literature whose audience is mainly children or young adults." O'Sullivan (2005:45) defines it further as "literature written or adapted specifically for children by adults." Children's literature is a branch of mainstream literature (Chunhua, 2014) that is aimed at children, though it may be read and enjoyed by adults as well. Any literary text written for children should be in line with their personal lives and suit their ages, needs, and interests (Hunt, 2009:5).

Children's literature is an important part of Western culture (Hunt, 2009). In Africa, we do have literature, although not published as much as it is done in the Western culture, as alluded by Zell (2018) on *Publishing in African languages: A review of the literature*, the study states that children's literature remains a small fraction in educational publishing and that is the reason why the researcher is conducting this research to contribute to that. Children profit a lot when reading literature. Parents and carers should encourage children to read children's literature. Oittinen (2003) mentions that children learn greatly from literature; he states that children's literature can also be utilised to expose the world to children by using their imagination as they go through the literature and after reading it. In the last years, there has been a change in the way children's literature views commercialisation and globalisation (O'Sullivan, 2005:149-152). According to O'Sullivan (2005), the term children's literature can mean anything that a child finds interesting and entertaining. In line with this broad

definition of children's literature, Reynolds (2011:20) explains that children's literature encompasses everything that includes folklore, legends, myths, fairy tales, lullabies, and representations of how we transliterate age, such as computer games, eBooks, and fan fiction. Hunt (2009:16) defines children's literature as "writings which are good for children," and this shows that the two terms "children" and "literature" within the framework of "children's literature" are inseparable. With this regard, in his article 'Defining Children's Literature and Childhood', Lesnik-Oberstein (1996: 17) asks the following questions:

> "But is a children's book a book written by children, or for children? And crucially, what does it mean to write a book 'for' children? If it is a book written 'for' children, is it then still a children's book if it is (only) read by adults? What of 'adult' books read also by children—are they 'children's literature'?"

According to Hunt (2009: 135-180), children's books are didactic, regardless of the intention of the author. He says:

> "Books that are defined as didactic lead children to acceptable adult behaviours, whereas pleasant ones encourage their pleasure in what we regard as normal behaviour. Nevertheless, both kinds are didactic. Children's books have always been partially or totally didactic in nature."

Children's literature is literature written for or read by children. Translators of this genre need to deliver translations that are acceptable because children will find it challenging to understand unknown facts, so they must couple it up with teaching children about foreign cultures and enriching their vocabulary.

2.8. THE ROLE OF THE TRANSLATOR IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Oittinen (2002:26) believes that "to communicate with a child, a reader is to enter into an imaginary dialogue that is sharper and fresher than that with adults." It is therefore necessary for translators to re-experience the stage of childhood. The author argues that translators of children's literature should take into consideration that there is a dual audience, the child and the adult. In children's literature, the author is the bridge that connects the adult and the child.

With children's limited level of understanding and psychological development, translators are encouraged to pay meticulous attention when translating. When translating children's books, it is necessary to make some adjustments to adhere to the characteristics of what is good and appropriate for children. Karimnia (2015:135) mentions that a translator must express what he or she understood from reading so that it is accessible to child readers. When translating children's literature, the translator must keep in mind the fact that they translate for a specific purpose and audience.

Furthermore, Karimnia (2015:135) mentions that children's literature needs experienced translators as the expectations of children are different from adults. The translator needs to consider the author's writing style, how to translate it into the target text, and bear in mind the cultural specificity of contexts and references. Translators ought to adapt to the source texts and produce translations that can form part of children's literature, meaning that the translation has to fulfil both the need of the child reader and the given purpose for producing the translation. Puurtinen (1995:22) alludes that translating for children may be more challenging than translating for adults. These challenges can come from the interplay of pictures, words in picture books, cultural references, playful use of language, dialect, register, names, etc. (Tabbert, 2002:203).

According Oittinen (2002:76), every act of translating for children has a purpose. The translations must be domesticated according to this skopos. In agreement with Oittinen (2000:76), Lathey (2015:124) believes that a translator of children's literature should have a proper understanding of his or her audience. Lathey (2015:124) further mentions that for the translation to be received successfully and enjoyed by the child reader, the translator should enter into an imaginary dialogue with the child. According to Lathey (2015:124) the main concern for the translator is that children's literature should be appropriate and useful to the child reader, and this is based on what the society regards as educational.

Davies (2003:69) states that translators should find alternative solutions for the culture-specific items which cause problems. These solutions are; either preserving the source text as far as possible or adapting the text to target culture norms and producing an acceptable translation. The translator's main role is to transfer a message from one culture to another. The translator needs to understand the nuances of both the source and target languages so as to transfer and present a correct message in understandable forms of expression in the target language (Zhang, 2015). Hence translation theorists suggest different ways of dealing with the non-equivalence that is usually found between two languages. This happens both in general and literary translation, without the exception of children's literature.

Translation of children's literature applies general literary translation strategies. However, in the case of children's literature, the translator needs not only to rely on his/her translation skills but also has to 'tone the translation down' to the level of the children. This is mainly because children do not possess enough life experience that can be used to fill the gaps that writers usually leave for readers to fill (Chunhua, 2014). It is for this reason that the language being used in translating children's literature needs to be appropriate for the age of the target reader.

2.9. CHALLENGES FACED IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE TRANSLATION

According to Hunt (2009:218), "The psychological and cognitive characteristics of children make the language of children's literature different from that of other types of literature." The nature of children's literature is that its style of language does not present many difficulties. It often uses a high percentage of direct speech that has a less complicated vocabulary. Chunhua (2014:178) alludes to the fact that "children's literature demands a normative and pure language style that helps children grow up psychologically, and this results in helping children a lot with their expressive abilities." The unambiguous language found in children's literature offers child readers the opportunity to connect their own experiences to the information they are reading.

Halliday (2001) believes that through language a child learns about customs, hierarchies, and attitudes; in other words, the language in literature can promote and reinforce the adoption of these customs. The language helps these child readers to become socialised beings. According to Halliday (2001:9), in the process of development of a child as a social being, language plays a vital role. Chunhua (2014:178) mentions that when reading is appropriate and exciting to the child, it may be educational. Halliday (2001) states that children's literature can also be used to open the world to children who rarely use their imagination beyond the confines of their neighbourhood. Van Coillie (2020:141) adds to the statement by stating that when literature is translated, this improves the readers in the target culture in so many ways; for instance, it can introduce them to new genres and writing styles. It can offer an alternative view of the world that will challenge their prevailing ideas, norms, or stereotypes.

Children's picture books are not only intended to entertain or delight the reader, but they may also represent an important first step, an apprenticeship, and socialisation into literature, literacy, and social values. To encourage children to develop their language and reading skills, educators, researchers, and book publishers should recommend several types of children's literature. Language is an important aspect of children's literature, along with knowledge about how images in books work and, more importantly, how both language and pictures in children's literature work.

The purpose of children's literature is important at various levels. Scholars have agreed that children's literature serves the purpose of teaching and entertaining its readers. Children's literature comes in the form of short stories, novels, and poems. Oittinen (2002:78). states that "the history of texts for children, whether 'didactic' or 'literary' or both, is a history of tension between the desire to teach children and the desire to please them." The translation of children's literature differs from other types of literary translation because children have their own reading levels and receptivity. The translation of children's literature is important because it should be translated in a way that relates to the content and the state of children's knowledge. When translating children's literature, a translator should bear in mind that the target readers are children, and the target texts should be appropriate for their level of knowledge. Hunt (2009:86) states that translating with purpose and focus on the readership of the text is of pivotal importance when translating for children.

Klingberg (1986:13) argues that a method that can be applied when translating children's literature is adaptation. For the author, adaptation means "the rendering of an expression in the source language by way of an expression in the target language that has a similar function in that language." Klingberg (1986:14) adds that adapting for children consists of considering their supposed interests, needs, reactions, knowledge, and reading ability and tailoring the literature intended for them accordingly."

Translators of illustrated children's books have to consider not only the text but also the 'language of illustration'. Language of illustration can be culturally specific and stylistically distinctive as written language (Oittinen, 2002:114). Children's literature can be thought of as a genre specifically written for children. It can also be referred to as a style of literature whose audience is mainly children. Hunt (2009:11) disputes this notion and argues that boundaries of children's literature cannot be clear-cut, i.e., children's literature cannot be defined by textual characteristics either of style or content, while its primary audience is equally indefinable.

Puurtinen (1998:2) mentions that children's literature is generally observed as a peripheral and uninteresting object of study despite the significant role it plays as an educational tool for social and ideological instruments. It is not only a source of entertainment or a tool for reading skills development, but it also conveys world knowledge, ideas, values, and what is considered acceptable behaviour. Oittinen (2002:4) states that "children's literature is mainly characterised by the fact that children's books are often illustrated and often meant to be read aloud". We can agree that children's literature is characterised by its appropriate adaptability to fulfil the audience's needs, in this case, the child's development. Klingberg (1986:10) mentions that children's literature has a particular purpose and that it should be continued in its translation.

In his study titled “An Analysis of the Cultural Phenomenon in English and its Translation”. Geng (2009) outlines the cultural phenomena in English with special attention on words, idioms, and allusion. In his study, the author aimed to study the cultural phenomena when translating from English to Chinese. He uses free and literal translation as a strategy for these cultural phenomena. The study by Geng (2009) brings a broader view of how culture affects the translation process and how to address it along the process. The challenge of bridging this cultural gap can make the translation process difficult. The solution for these concepts is outlined by Maasoum (2011:2), the domestication and foreignization strategy. These can be applied when a translator is confronted with cultural concepts that bring non-equivalence in the translation process.

Maasoum (2011:2), in his research “An analysis of culture-specific items in the Persian Translation of Dubliners based on Newmark,” mentions that diverse cultures influence the way members of society perceive the world. Applying an appropriate and suitable method when dealing with culture-specific items is one of the main, important duties every translator should fulfil. Rimari (2010:1), in his paper titled “A translation analysis of Indonesian material cultural terms in ‘Tenun ikat’” and the English translation ‘Indonesian Ikats’ discusses the translation analysis of material culture translation in a bilingual book entitled ‘Tenun Ikat’ and its English version ‘Indonesian Ikats.’ The study outlines the possible strategies that can be applied when a translator is faced with the material. containing culture terms to produce a functional translation for the target readers. Once literature is translated, it benefits children by imparting to them what is happening all over the world; it makes them mindful of other cultures. As mentioned in the introduction, literary translation has been viewed as a cross-cultural form of communication.

According to Sasaninejad and Delpazir (2015), literary translation is a method of communicating views and concepts. Furthermore, Vermeer (1992) states that culture is a notion that is inevitable in the translation process. He also mentions that translation involves linguistic and cultural phenomena. This means that translation should be comprehended as a “cultural” occurrence that deals with various cultures. This tells us that to have a successful translation, one needs to have a good knowledge of language cultures, as some words can only bring meaning to the language in which they function. Vermeer (1992:40) states that *Translation is a culture-transcending process.*

Alwazna (2014) classifies cultural words into five diverse groups, namely, ecology, organisations, social culture, material culture, customs and ideas, and signals and traditions. Alwazna (2014) mentions that, in general, culture reflects the attitudes, values, and beliefs shared by a specific social group. Culture-specific items are references suggesting various aspects of everyday life for a certain group of people, such as foods or drinks (Antonini, 2011:154). Culture-specific items include

expressions, proper nouns, customs, or even objects (Aixela, 1996) Furthermore, culture-specific items are linguistic elements that have caused difficulties for translators due to the dissimilarities in cultural understanding. These items can also be defined as a specific group of references that are problematic to translators. Both observances of linguistic and cultural competence are important so that there is no loss of meaning transferred into the target text.

Elkateb (2016) looks into Arabic and English cultures; he states that these cultures may give rise to instances of untranslatability or loss of meaning. He argues that the wider the gap there is between the source language and the target language, the more it will be difficult to translate the message between the languages. The difference between language use and cultural variation makes the procedure of translation a challenge. To be capable of producing a good target text, translators have the pressure to know the culture, cultural differences and similarities of both languages.

Furthermore, Elkateb (2016) mentions that translation studies research indicates that more focus is put on the interaction between translation and culture. He also argues that the challenge is to change from translation as a linguistic material to translation as culture and politics. Munday (2012) states that "the analysis of translation in its cultural, political, and ideological context" refers to the Cultural Turn. They came up with comparative studies to examine the way culture affects translation between source texts and target texts. According to Elkateb (2016), translating culture-specific concepts appeared to be the most challenging job to be executed by a translator. However, Braçaj (2015) mentions that the more a translator is knowledgeable about the intricacies of the dissimilarities between cultures, it will make him or her a better translator.

Kruger (2013) investigated the topic of the translation of cultural aspects in Afrikaans and English. The author, in her analysis, found that translation strategies indicated commonality; the strategies were towards the use of domestication strategy. This is a strategy that will make the text closely conform to the culture of the language being translated. Although we have seen that the cultural aspect plays a pivotal role and poses a challenge in translation, this strategy may cause some loss of information from the source text. However, scholars have made efforts to develop strategies to translate culture-specific concepts. Narváez and Zambrana (2014) explore how to translate culture-specific items. The authors have shed light on the procedures for translating culture-specific items in Spanish advertisements. The procedures are exoticisation, explanation, and assimilation (Narváez & Zambrana, 2014:83).

Translation of children's literature requires more than basic translation skills. A translator needs to be an artist and a writer to be a successful translator of children's literature. Functionalist theories like

Nida's Functional Equivalence Theory and Skopos Theory advocate that translation needs to focus more on the target language readership. At the same time, it is through the brief emphasis by the Skopos theory that the target audience is understood—their age, level of education, etc.

2.10. THE CHALLENGES OF TRANSLATING CULTURE-SPECIFIC ITEMS

Qassem et al. (2021) introduce an analysis of translation strategies and procedures from a cultural perspective. He mentions that a translation strategy refers to the mental process of comprehension, revision, and production. Qassem (2021) studies the translation strategies used by pupils when translating cultural references. Culture-specific items posed challenges to translators due to the differences in the functions of the cultures compared. Qassem and Vijayasarathi (2015) researched the problems experienced when translating cultural idiomatic expressions from English into Arabic. They discovered that the translations were inadequate as a result of the incapability to use relevant translation techniques for these culture-bound terms.

Apart from the general translation challenges faced by language practitioners, translating children's literature presents some of its own challenges. Translations for children play a significant role in society regardless of the difficulties they give to both researchers and translators. Children's literature is characterised as having a lower status as compared with adult literature. Oittinen (2002:16) argues that the translator of children's literature needs to take into consideration the cultural knowledge of the target reader. Cultural elements such as food and proper names need to be well thought out before producing a target text. In addition, idioms in the source text would also require that translators examine them so they can use an appropriate and justifiable strategy.

When it comes to strategy, Lathey (2015:112) sees adaptation as a negative norm due to the fact that the meaning of the texts is within the source text. This means that when the source text is manipulated to produce a target text that suits the intended audience, it is distorted. However, Lathey (2015:112) stipulates that translators may afford themselves the privilege to manipulate the text since children's literature occupies a peripheral position within the literary polysystem. Nevertheless, as studies show adaptation seems to be the preferred strategy for translating children's literature. Jettmarova et al. (1995:189) mention that "adjusting the source text to the target culture background involves foreign culture words that need to be adapted." On the other hand, Klingberg (1986:63) disagrees with this idea by stating that the translator should retain the degree of adaptation of the source text. This is due

to the fact that the source text has already been adapted for the child reader; therefore, there is no need for the translator to readapt. According to this view, the translator should therefore keep the source texts cultural elements; as a result, cultural-specific items become problematic for the translator. The researcher is for the idea that source culture and values should be embraced in the target texts.

Klingberg (1986:10) argues that the one goal for translating children's literature is to increase the quantity of children's literature available in the language. Kruger (2013:82) points out that the translation of children's literature enhances the status of literature and supports its glorification. Also, encourages the sharing of ideas, most especially stimulating the production of literature in South African languages. One of the objectives of this study is to encourage an interest in translating children's literature into the Sepedi. Sehlola (2011:29) states that with the translation of children's books such as Harry Potter, the status of children's literature would improve as more languages would want translations. Additionally, Sehlola (2011:29) also mentions that this will, to some degree, expose Sepedi children to what takes place in traditional English public schools.

Klingberg (1986:19) recommended two strategy categories: extratextual and explanatory strategies for translating children's literature. This study adopts this approach, the decision for foreignization, as a method to retain the source text's cultural elements. He strives for an increase in young readers so that they get an international outlook on other cultures. When translating children's literature, such as in this case where translators are translating for children from different countries, the translator is required to have a good cultural knowledge of the source text. It is his/her responsibility to ensure that the target text he/she produces meets this requirement. In this case, Bassnett (2007:6) states that the translator will have to develop strategies to work around these constraints.

Childhood is an important stage in one's life. Children get to learn about themselves and the different aspects of life, such as social and cultural values, which in turn shape their identity. As seen in this chapter, we learn that children's literature is one means of instructing and educating children. Educators, parents, and guardians strongly support that children should be more exposed to literature, especially those from other countries, to expose them to cultures other than their own. When translating children's literature, there are specific translation problems that set it apart from other types of literature. Alvstad (2010:24) argues that there are five aspects in this regard that are most common: cultural context adaptation, ideological manipulation, dual readership, features of orality, and the relationship between text and image. These aspects create translation problems that are unique to children's literature. Culture-specific elements (also known as CSEs) are what connect these five aspects to unique translation problems. Alvstad (2010:24) further states that one of the most notable

features that characterise the genre of children's literature is the duality of the readers, and the translator is required to adjust the terminology to the child reader without neglecting the presence of the adult readers.

Oosterling (2021) asserts that culture-specific elements are one of the aspects of translating children's literature that require special attention. In addition, Oosterling (2021) maintains that the type of text, the goal of the text, and the target audience are the three factors that influence the strategy of choice when translating CSEs.

2.11. TRANSLATION STRATEGIES

Translation theorists have proposed various translation strategies. Venuti (1998) proposed the distinction between the terms domestication and foreignization. O'Sullivan refers to these two strategies as "domesticating translations," in which cultural-specific foreign elements are adapted to make them those of the target culture, and "foreignizing translations," which preserve the foreignness of the source text.

Domestication refers to translation strategies that lower the foreignness of the target text and use domestic and cultural equivalents in the source text (Klingberg, 2008:240). The domestication approach aims to make the text more conversant to the target reader and to reflect the actual meaning of the original text in a way that both the subject and language are accepted by and understandable to the reader. Domestication, in other words, refers to the form of translation in which the translator minimises the strangeness of the foreign material for the target population by using a fluent and transparent style. However, domestication sometimes defeats the purpose of promoting understanding among cultures (Al-Fouzan, 2008). If the goal of translation is to promote such understanding, such cultural elements, although alien to the reader of the target language, ought not to be changed or tampered with during the act of translation. One needs to know the culture to understand it.

Foreignization, on the other hand, "comprises the selection of a foreign text and development of a translation technique along lines that are precluded by dominating values in the target language" (Venuti, 1998:242). Only when a target language's literary canon, professional standards, and ethical conventions are challenged can a foreign language approach represent the otherness of the foreign text. Foreignization refers to the sort of translation in which a target text "purposely deviates from target cultural norms by retaining some of the original's foreignness. Foreignization is defined as "an ethnodeviant stress on cultural values to reflect the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, so in other words, sending the reader abroad" (Venuti, 1998: 244).

2.12. TRANSLATION STRATEGIES FOR CULTURE-SPECIFIC ITEMS IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Cultural context adaptation was introduced by Klingberg in 1986. This translation strategy is required because the target text reader has a diverse cultural background from that of the source text reader. Madolo (2021) reveals that children's literature translation, like literary translation, requires a translator who thinks like an artist so as not to lose the essence of the story. The translator is required to be conscious of the fact that children have less experience of life. Therefore, they need a language that is simpler and full of imagery that illustrates the story.

Adaptation ensures that the translated story is narrated in a way that is familiar to the target audience. However, the essence of the message needs to remain the same. This is in line with what Madolo (2021) posits: 'When stories are retold and passed on, bits may get changed. But the heart of a good story lives on.' Although these authors' words are not specifically based on translation, they fit in well in the discussion. In terms of translation, this means that when a story is translated from one language into another, some changes have to be made to the story for it to fit well in the target language and culture, but these changes should not affect the essence of the story. Children's literature translators ought to use strategies appropriate for keeping the language at the level of the children so that they can relate to the message that is being transferred (Alla, 2015). It is the responsibility of the translator to cater to children's emerging understanding of language, and this can be achieved through the adaptation of the ST. Adaptation is one of the strategies that are suggested in Skopos theory. Adaptation may be defined as a slight change in the ST to satisfy the linguistic and cultural needs of the TL audience (Madolo, 2021).

In addition, when adapting, the translator only keeps the theme and characters and changes culture-specific linguistic aspects so as to make them conform to the TL culture (Madolo, 2021). This means that the translator can rewrite the SL text in a way that is acceptable to the TL audience. Adaptation is acceptable in translation (Klingberg, 2008), but it has to be executed in a way that will not tone down the style of the story. For instance, if the ST presents sorrow in the story, so should the TT; should the TT audience be in a celebratory mood after the translation, the translator would have failed.

Adaptation may be both explicit and implicit. Translation by explicitation occurs when the TL text explains what is implied in the ST (Vesterager, 2017). Madolo (2021) avers that the explanation does not add anything to the message, but it attempts to make the text more understandable to the TL audience. It is 'a shift in translation from what is implicit in the source text to what is explicit in the target text' (Murtisari, 2016: 64). Sometimes, the SL presents a concept that is alien to the target

audience. It is then when the intervention of the translator is required, for instance, an explanation of the concept. Explication should be considered as additions that cannot be expressed by structural and stylistic differences between the SL and T.' (Séguinot, 1988, in Moghaddam et al. 2017: 75). This means that the explanation could be culturally appropriate to the SL. Therefore, the translator could translate by providing an equivalence and explanation. In this case, if the translator is faced with an English term that is based on English culture, the translator may provide a Sepedi translation of that term, accompanied by a further explanation that will help the Sepedi reader to understand it better.

The translator may at times assert implicitly that which was expressed explicitly in the source language (SL). Omission is an example of such implication. A translator may leave out some of the text if s/he feels that its exclusion would not affect the whole text. Omission is used to limit a long-winded text that contains information that is not necessary. However, too much or unnecessary use of addition or omission can cause damage to the message being transferred (Madolo, 2021).

Chunhua (2014) maintains that a translator of children's literature has to carefully choose words to make sure that the readers find the story interesting. According to Puurtinen (1998), it is acceptable for the translator to make long sentences short when adapting an SL text. Adaptation, which is encouraged in the translation of children's literature, is evident in the translation. Adaptation is realised in the form of explicitation and implicitation, and these are used to clarify the message for the TL audience (Madolo, 2021). Furthermore, Madolo (2021) states that ideophones are an essential literary device used to paint images that are vivid in children's literature for the young reader and thus add excitement to the target language's (isiXhosa) narration. Klingberg's (2008) prescriptive study argued that a translated children's book must have the same 'degree of adaptation' as the source text. By 'adaptations', the author meant the changes made on account of the child reader that followed as a necessary result of the knowledge and experience gap between the adult author and the young reader.

Baker (2018) also suggests different strategies that can be applied when dealing with non-equivalence. Baker (2018) introduces non-equivalence at the word level; it entails that the target language has no straight equivalent for a source word found in the source language text. According to Baker (2018), among the problems of non-equivalence, a translator can encounter non-equivalence due to culture-specific concepts. She proposes strategies that a professional translator can use. These are (1) translation by a more general word, (2) translation by a more neutral/less expressive word, (3) translation by cultural substitution, (4) translation by a loan word or loan word plus explanation, (5) translation by paraphrase, and (6) translation by omission. Baker's (2018) non-equivalence at the word level will be used as a theoretical framework in the study.

2.13. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The researcher used the Skopos Theory (ST) as adopted by Hans J Vermeer (1970) to frame the study. Skopos is a Greek word that means purpose. Historically, the theory reflects a general shift from the traditional and structural linguistics which dominated translation work in the early 20th century, mainly in Europe and Russia, which was headed by the work of Ferdinand de Saussure, and the subsequent works done in Prague, Moscow, and Copenhagen schools of linguistics. From these works, a more functional and socio-cultural approach gained more strength; and fuelled theories in translation in the 1980s, such as communication theory, action theory, text theory, and reception theories. In short, this new approach elevated and stressed contextual factors surrounding translation as key to unlocking the true meaning of a text (Nord, 2016). These factors, include the culture of the intended readers. Thus, within this approach, each translation must serve a function for the target audience. Thus, the Skopos theory introduces us to the notion that every text needs to achieve functionality or purpose. On this basis, the theory forms the basis for this study as it provides the researcher with conceptual tools on how English culture-specific terms can be translated to serve the Sepedi readers (functionality). In accordance with the Skopos theory, one text can produce distinct translations depending on the purpose for which the text is intended for (Pym, 2014). This means that if the translation of a book is meant for adults and children, respectively, two distinct translations in the target language can be produced from the same source language text.

The Skopos theory is related to the Functional Equivalence theory in that they are both functional theories. They advocate for a translation that reads like an original in the source language; hence, they are both regarded as being target reader orientated. It further highlights the translator's significance as the author of the TL text (Jabir, 2006). This places more responsibility on the shoulders of the translator, as target language audiences often do not know the source language. Even in the translation of children's literature, the target language readers rely on the translator's interpretation of the source language.

Additionally, in terms of the Skopos theory, the function of the product determines the process of translation. In other words, the aim is to make a translation user-friendly to the target users, unlike linguistic theories that strive to have a mirror image of a source language without considering differences in languages (Jabir, 2006). Another related term to Skopos is intention, which is regarded as an aim-orientated plan of action on the part of both the sender and the receiver" (Zhang, 2015:18). This points towards a way of generating or understanding the text appropriately. The translator's better understanding of the source text is significant to produce the desired target text. This theory prioritises the interest of the target reader. The Skopos theory aims to dethrone the source text (ST)

and achieves this by emphasising the translator's role as a creator of the target text (TT) by making the purpose of producing TT a priority.

Although the theory has been overused in translation studies, the researcher thinks that it can still provide valuable insights into how to tackle issues that haunt translators and policy makers, especially when translating texts from different contexts. However, the researcher is aware of its flip side, that involves its limitation to the translator's freedom to choose from different translation strategies based on its focus on the element of purpose. Such a narrow focus on the purpose may constrain the translator to follow a step-by-step procedure instead of looking for other ways of dealing with a text.

The flip side of the Skopos Theory involves not having the freedom to choose from different translation strategies based on the element of purpose, is that the theory may be seen as a vague framework that does not provide precise arrangement. The researcher navigated her way by looking at step by step examples in translating children's literature. Additionally, the researcher was also aware of the fact that the Skopos Theory tends to adopt a top-down approach, which it difficult for the target audience to follow the true meaning of the text translated. In this study, this weakness was navigated by giving the target audience preference during the translation process.

2.14. SUMMARY

This chapter focused at what translation entails, the problem of zero equivalence, cultural turn, culture-specific items being the words or phrases used in particular communities, children's literature, the role of the translator in children's literature, challenges faced in children's literature, translator's strategies, translation strategies for culture-specific items in children's literature, and lastly, the Skopos theory the theoretical framework for the study, which advocates that a translation must fulfil the same purpose in both languages. The next chapter will look at the research methodology of the study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter, Research Methodology, explains how the research was conducted. The following topics are covered in the chapter: research approach, research design, sampling, data collection, data analysis, quality criteria, and ethical considerations.

3.2. RESEARCH APPROACH

There are basically three main approaches to doing research studies: the quantitative approach, the qualitative approach, and the mixed method approach (Hwang et al., 2020:467). The quantitative research approach emphasises the objectivity of measurements and the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data collected through polls, questionnaires, and surveys or by manipulating pre-existing statistical data using computational techniques. It mainly uses statistical approaches to identify, interpret, and clarify relationships between variables that are key (Flick, 2018). The mixed-methods approach was not quite appropriate for this study because it was not relevant to understand how translators considered cultural nuances when translating English storybooks for children to Sepedi. The question required the capturing of the translators' experiences. It required descriptions of the translator's work, the challenges they experienced, and how the translators dealt with culture-specific items. Thus, the current study resides w ith the qualitative research approach.

3.2.1. The qualitative research approach

The qualitative approach was used to locate the study in an empirical world and to achieve the research objectives (Tracy, 2024:27). This approach focuses on the gathering of data that describes participants' experiences, perceptions, and behaviours. The qualitative approach seeks to answer the question of why instead of how many or how much (Hignett and McDermott, 2015). It is an interactive process that seeks a better and deeper understanding of a phenomenon under study; thus, the researcher adopted this approach. It pursues the search for meaning from the insider perspective; that is how issues are understood by those who are participants themselves. Denzin and Lincoln (2011:2) advise that the qualitative approach involves interpreting phenomena in their natural setting, where it tries to make sense of or understand phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. It is thus suited for capturing data from personal experiences, interviews, observational, interactional, historical, and visual texts. The qualitative research approach describes routines and challenging moments and meanings in people's lives (Denzin & Lincoln 2008:2).

A qualitative research approach is better matched to study human experiences such as language than its counterpart, the quantitative approach─ which is not immersed in human experiences (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). It is for this reason that the study opted for it to gain an insider perspective of the translators' experiences when handling English cultural concepts translated into Sepedi texts. This approach helps a researcher to comprehend the research problem by thoroughly examining people's experiences and knowledge using scientific methods such as interviews, observations, focus groups, and content analysis (Mohajan, 2018).

3.3. RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a methodical procedure or strategy followed by a researcher when conducting a scientific study regarding a specified phenomenon (Bhasin et al., 2019). Research designs are typically employed to break down a large problem into smaller, more manageable challenges that can be researched easily (Kumar et al., 2018). That is, it is a technique for condensing a very wide field of study into a single, manageable subject. A design is important because it makes it possible for the researcher to move forward correctly without losing focus. The types of research designs in qualitative research include historical, phenomenological, grounded theory, ethnographic, and case study design. In this study, the researcher opted for the case study design. A case study design is a detailed study of a specific subject, such as a person, group, place, event, organisation, or phenomenon. Case studies are commonly used in social, educational, clinical, and business research. This design enabled the researcher to get an in-depth understanding of how translators handle culture-specific texts when translating children's literature from English to Sepedi.

A case study design was found to be the appropriate design for this study since it supports investigations conducted in a realistic setting. Research using cases is "richly descriptive." Thus, the research deemed it fit to adopt the case study design. Moreover, the case study design enabled the researcher to collect comprehensive and rich data.

3.4. SAMPLING

Sampling is the selection of a subset of the population of interest in a research study. Since in the majority of research efforts, it is not always possible for the participation of an entire population of interest, so a smaller group is relied upon for data collection. Mweshi and Sakyi (2020) define sampling as a procedure or technique that researchers use to consciously pick a smaller number of representative objects or individuals from a predefined population to employ as data sources for observation or experimentation in line with their research goals. Flick (2018:167) defines sampling as the process of choosing a group from which the data of the study would actually be collected. The

researcher aligns with the definition by Turner (2020) because it includes the aspects of time and affordability. There are basically two types of sampling: probability and non-probability sampling.

Stratton (2023) states that, in non-probability sampling, the sample is selected based on non-random criteria, and not every member of the population has a chance of being included in the sample. On the other hand, probability sampling methods include simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling, and cluster sampling. The research adopted non-probability sampling, one of which is purposive sampling.

Purposive sampling was found relevant to this study and was used to recruit participants who were relevant to answer the research questions. The researcher chose this type of sampling because it is a technique that is used in qualitative research to choose cases with the richest information to make the most use of the limited resources available (Palinkas et al., 2015). Thus, the sample of the study consisted of five experienced translators. The five participants were chosen based on the researcher's judgement that they would be able to provide thorough and extensive information on the culture embedded in texts. Participants were selected on the basis of their knowledge and experiences as translators. It was their knowledge and experience as translators that provided the researcher with in-depth and detailed information about the phenomenon under study (Myers, 2019:58). The sample consisted of a senior lecturer in Translation, a director of the Sepedi National Lexicography Unit, an official of the Department of Sports Arts and Culture (DSAC), a Literacy Development NGO director, and a PanSALB official.

The inclusion or exclusion criteria refers to a process whereby the researcher selects the study participants who will be eligible to form part of the study (Connelly, 2020). This may include factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, and race. The inclusion criteria for population of this study targets language practitioners in the Limpopo Province, Capricorn District. Specifically, the population of the study targeted language practitioners who are professional translators. These professional translators were to specialise in the Sepedi language. These Sepedi translators had to have ten or more years of experience working in the field of translation.

From this target group, the researcher selected five participants whom the researcher recruited to participate in the study. The researcher reckoned that five translators would be ideal as a starting point. However, the researcher also reckoned that if there were still more to explore, the data collection process would carry on until the saturation point was reached.

3.5. DATA COLLECTION

In any research, there are instruments or methods for data collection related to that design. In this study, the researcher used two methods of data collection, namely *semi-structured interviews and document analysis*. The use of two methods was meant to triangulate the data to increase its trustworthiness, thus gaining a deeper understanding of how translators treat culture-specific texts (Clark & Bryman, 2019:16). A semi-structured interview is a data collection method that relies on asking questions within a predetermined thematic framework (Kallio et al., 2016). In research, semi-structured interviews are often qualitative in nature. Semi-structured interviews were used because they provided the researcher with an opportunity to probe more deeply into the rich descriptions of experiences shared by participants (Belotto, 2018). Participants were audio-taped, and brief notes were taken.

The second method of data collection was document analysis. Bowen (2009) describes document analysis as the process of reviewing or evaluating documents, both printed and electronic, in a methodical manner. The document analysis method, like many other qualitative research methods, involves examining and interpreting data to uncover meaning, gain understanding, and come to answer a research question.

3.5.1 Semi-structured interviews

The first method of data collection that the researcher used was the semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are data collection instruments that are prepared around specific topics of interest while retaining substantial flexibility in scope and depth for both the researchers and the participants to manoeuvre. This flexibility allows the researcher to modify the arrangement of the questions as and when it is necessary and to tailor subsequent questions around the topic under study. Thus, the researcher, being the interviewer, could make immediate probing follow-ups on issues that arise during the interview (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). In this way, the participants could give a fuller picture in response to the questions. In the case of this study, the researcher was able to unearth more valuable data about the translation strategies of culture-specific items found in children's literature.

3.5.2 Document analysis

The second method of data collection that the researcher used was document analysis. Bowen (2009) describes document analysis as an affordable way to attain empirical data as part of a process that is discreet and non-reactive. It consists of analysing various types of documents, including books,

newspaper articles, academic journal articles, and institutional reports. Any document containing text is a potential source for qualitative analysis (Patton, 2014). Document is a term used to refer to a wide variety of material, including visual sources, such as photographs, video, and film (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Like documents consisting of texts, those that consist of visual material can also be a source for qualitative analysis (Flick, 2018). For this study, the document analysis method was preferred. The translation of children's literature from English to Sepedi requires content analysis of a large number of texts to get the gist of meaning. On the other hand, document analysis will involve the text analysis of the selected story, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. For example, the method helped the researcher identify the following 10 words from the identified storybook:

Sixpenny, Dawdle, By golly, Nincompoop, Dilly dally, Gobstoppers, Barmy, Dotty Batty, and Good heavens.

3.6. DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis grants researchers the opportunity to make sense of the data (Neuman, 2014). There are different ways of analysing data, depending on what research approach one follows. For this study, data was examined using thematic analysis. Castleberry and Nolen (2018) define thematic analysis as a method of identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data to make sense of the data, the study followed Baker's (2018) non-equivalence at a word level, focusing on the culture-specific concepts and the seven translation strategies. Data was presented through illustrative quotes, interpreted in terms of how developing themes answered the study questions, and conclusions were drawn after that (Belotto, 2018:5).

Thematic analysis is usually applied to a set of texts, such as an interview document (e.g., storybooks). Here the researcher examines data very closely to identify common themes, ideas, and patterns of meaning that emerge when data is looked at repeatedly. To arrive at the themes, the researcher followed the following process: Firstly, the researcher transcribed interview recordings to transcripts. This entailed listening to interview recordings repeatedly. In some cases, the process provided direct quotes (verbatim) from participants (Nowell et al., 2017). Secondly, the researcher through the reading the transcripts, was enabled to created codes. During this phase, the researcher generated codes from the data collected and used a coding system to reduce the data into pieces that are manageable and readily accessible for analysis (Linneberg & Korsgaard, 2019).

Thirdly, the researcher revised the codes and looked for any repetitions. Also, reflective notes were written to help the researcher recall, think about, and understand the findings.

Fourthly, the researcher started searching for themes. It is in this phase that the researcher sorted and organised pertinent coded extracts into themes. Main themes and sub-themes were developed. The fifth phase, called 'reviewing themes,' followed immediately after the themes and subthemes were developed. At this phase, the researcher examined the coded data extracts for each theme to determine whether they form a unified pattern. The researcher adjusted where shortcomings were detected in the initial coding and themes.

Afterwards, the data was reduced into a comprehensible set of important themes. The researcher also ensured that the names of the themes were catchy and conveyed to the reader what the theme was about right away. Additionally, the researcher concisely and clearly described the vastness and content of each theme. The sixth phase, which entailed producing the report', started after the researcher established all the themes and was prepared to start the final analysis and report writing. When writing the final report, the researcher used participants' direct quotes with unique identifiers indicating that all categories of participants were represented across the findings, for example, Translator 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

Besides this inductive procedure to generating themes, the researcher added the *deductive* approach to the process. The Skopos Theory was used to enhance the analysis of data. As broadly elaborated upon in the previous chapter (item 2.13, p.29), its core concept is that translation strategies and methods driven by the translation. Thus, in the process of the translation, the translator should follow three principles or rules, the skopos rule, coherence rule, and fidelity rule. The three rules guided the researcher to explore challenges translators encounter when translating culture-specific items from English into Sepedi. The skopos rule was particularly in answering questions one and three of the study.

3.7. QUALITY CRITERIA

Qualitative research explores the intricate details of human behaviour, attitudes, and experiences, emphasising the exploration of nuances and context. It is thus subjective in nature. To counter this threat, researchers need to ensure the trustworthiness of their studies is clearly explained. Ensuring trustworthiness is crucial in establishing the credibility and reliability of qualitative findings. It is essential for qualitative studies to ensure the trustworthiness of their studies. Rose and Johnson (2020:3) explain trustworthiness in qualitative studies as "the systematic rigour of the research design, the credibility of the researcher, the believability of the findings, and the applicability of the research methods." In this study, rigour was assessed using a variety of criteria, namely, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and credibility (Laumann, 2020; Rose & Johnson, 2020).

In addition, confirmability was ensured by deriving findings from the data collected from participants and not the researcher's own imagination. Credibility was ensured by reading, rereading, and analysing data to match participants' words, e.g., quotations.

3.7.1 Transferability

Transferability concerns the issue of whether the findings and conclusions of a particular study can be applicable or transferable to other situations (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Nassaji, 2020; Rose & Johnson, 2020). The translation of children's literature is topical in literature globally (Kyngäs, Kääriäinen & Elo, 2020). Thus, the findings of the current study could arouse keen interest in children's literature. It is therefore imperative that studies should suit various contexts.

Nowell et al. (2017) advise that researchers may not always be aware of the locations where findings may need to be transferred. Therefore, to ensure transferability, the researcher provided a detailed account of the participants and the research procedure followed in conducting the study so that the reader might decide whether the findings are transferable to their own settings. This would provide readers with a justification for the investigation and application of the findings to different contexts and circumstances (Rose & Johnson, 2020). For example, in this study, transferability means that translators from other languages in South Africa (e.g., Xitsonga) may benefit from this study.

3.7.2 Dependability

Dependability is the term used to describe the consistency of the research findings if the study were to be repeated with the same subjects in the same setting. To ensure dependability, the researcher provided a detailed explanation of the sites and the study procedure, allowing the reader to determine as to whether the findings were applicable to their own circumstances (Walsh, Flanagan & Mathew, 2020). The researcher ensured that the analysis was consistent and could be repeated. Also, the researcher ensured that the analysis procedure adhered to the approved standards of the chosen design (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). For example, in this study, the researcher opted for thematic analysis, which is relevant to qualitative studies such as this one. The researcher gave a thorough explanation of the steps used in the research process to create a thorough audit trail that explained the stages of data gathering and analysis (Walsh, Flanagan & Mathew, 2020). The researcher took steps to retain all relevant data so that it can be verified by other researchers in the future. The researcher also presented the findings of the study in a way that allowed for identical conclusions to be drawn by others after they examined the data (Nassaji, 2020).

3.7.3 Confirmability

Confirmability is the degree to which the researcher's interpretations and findings of the study are corroborated by other researchers (Nassaji, 2020; Rose & Johnson, 2020). To ensure confirmability in a qualitative study, Abdalla, Oliveira, Azevedom, and Gonzalez (2018) advise that conclusions derived from the study should be from the experiences and ideas of participants and not from the researcher's own viewpoints and personal experiences and that data collected should support analysis thereof (Rose & Johnson, 2020). Confirmability was ensured by deriving findings from the data collected from participants and not the researcher's own imagination. In this study, the interpretations made by the researcher were solely grounded in the data collected from the translators (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Thus, the researcher tried to make sure that the findings were based on participants' responses rather than their own prejudices.

The researcher tried to maintain objectivity throughout the entire research project. That is, the researcher remained neutral. Confirmability was also assured through the audit trail. To achieve this, the researcher ensured that she kept the full set of notes taken during the research process, including the sampling procedure, emergent findings, and data management, and made them accessible for the auditor (external party) to see the transparency of the research process (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). In this context, the auditor is anyone who was not one of the study participants but a knowledgeable person with effective discipline management skills. To avoid subjectivity, the auditor also reviewed the findings to check if the coded categories and themes were generated from the raw data collected during interviews with translators and document review.

3.7.4 Credibility

Credibility is concerned with the issue of truth value (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The concept of credibility in qualitative research refers to how credible the results and conclusions are (Nassaji, 2020). This involves the truthfulness of the results and the degree to which they accurately reflect the phenomenon under investigation. To maintain the credibility of the study, the researcher ensured that the data collected through a voice recorder, field notes, and document review portrayed the original data collected from translators. Again, it was ensured by reading, rereading, and analysing data to match participants' words, e.g., quotations. Additionally, the researcher ensured that she understood the environment in which the study was conducted, the procedures involved, and the participants.

Korstjens and Moser (2018) and Nassaji (2020) identified various strategies that are used to ensure credibility, namely, persistent observations, prolonged engagement, member checks, and triangulation. To ensure credibility and to increase participants' trust in the study, the researcher spent sufficient time explaining to the translators partaking in the study and ensuring mutual understanding

(Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Translators were asked several questions on how they ensure that the original meaning of the text is secured.

3.8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Bussu, Lalani, Pattison, and Marshall (2021) explain ethical considerations as a set of guidelines that must be followed when doing research and are used to direct research designs and data collection procedures. This study involved a variety of ethical concerns because it was primarily concerned with the selection of participants and their sites and the acquisition of access to those participants and research sites (Farrugia, 2019). The researcher has a responsibility to uphold ethical principles, such as permission, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, trust, honesty, protection of participants from harm, the right to privacy, and aftercare of participants. If they do not, researchers should be aware of potential risks associated with their study, such as participant intimidation through the use of lawsuits and other means, to silence researchers (Strunk & Locke, 2019). In this study, the ethical guidelines gave the researcher flexible tools to consider moral choices that emerged during the study.

3.8.1 Permission

The researcher needs to ensure that he/she abides by ethical procedures and acquires consent from the translators. Prior to requesting access to the translators, permission to carry out the study was sought from the Wits University Ethics Committee. Details about the study and the intended use of the data collected were included in the letter for approval. The researcher received a clearance certificate that allowed for the collection of data.

3.8.2 Informed consent

Bussu et al. (2021:7), informed consent primarily ensures that people are treated with respect. In other words, people should not be forced to engage in anything; they should be allowed to make their own decisions. In this study, participants were told that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they might withdraw their participation from the study without any penalty or stop responding to questions at any time during the interview whenever they desired (Gibbs, 2018). Furthermore, participants received oral briefings on the topic, potential hazards and benefits, and they were made aware of the purpose of the study, goals, and research methods (Segalo & Rambuda, 2018). They were given consent letters from the research, and the researcher made sure that participants understood its contents and the consequences of their involvement. This was required to show that the sampled translators were participating voluntarily.

3.8.3 Confidentiality and anonymity

Confidentiality is a prerequisite that helps protect participants' identity (King, 2018). The authors further claim that assuring anonymity is crucial because it stops members of marginalised groups from becoming even more marginalised and because it prohibits researchers from sharing participant details, such as their work. In this study, the researcher was aware of the participants' identities but chose to keep their identities anonymous in the report. As a result, neither the participant's personal information was disclosed. The researcher made sure that no private information about the participants was revealed to the reader. She further promised to maintain their anonymity and assured them that she would use the details they revealed with her verbatim in the research findings (King, 2018).

Additionally, data was safeguarded both during the study and afterward, and it was securely kept and anonymised, for example, using passwords (Gibbs & Earley, 1994). To further maintain anonymity, translators were given a chance to edit the transcripts, that is, add, remove, and replace the content, as well as identify the problems that, in their opinion, required additional anonymisation. They were also allowed to make note of any concerns they felt warranted additional anonymisation. The researcher also requested that they indicate any sensitive information and any portions that she was not permitted to quote.

3.8.4 Trust and privacy

According to Surmiak (2018:3), privacy refers to people's actions and interests in controlling who has access to them without being compelled to give the researcher their personal information if they do not want to. The researcher would keep the transcripts and audiotapes for five years in a safe location. The researcher also let them know that the information would only be used for the study. This suggests that the researcher should only share information in ways that participants have consented to provide it. To protect participant privacy, the researcher refrained from sharing information with other participants.

The researcher first established mutual trust with participants (Tiidenberg, 2020). To strengthen the trust, the researcher informed them that findings might be obtained in hard copies or via email. Additionally, the researcher was just and fair when outlining the goals of the study and the steps that were taken to carry it out.

3.8.5 Protection of participants from harm

Farrugia (2019:48) argues that the researcher must ensure that participants' safety is prioritised and protected. In this study, the researcher reassured the participants that all necessary measures to protect them and their families from being harmed physically, psychologically (risk of psychological distress), financially, socially, or legally would be taken (Farrugia, 2019). For example, the researcher refrained from providing information about the participant's health, such as the HIV/AIDS status of participants. This was primarily done to avoid the stigmatisation of participants (Surmiak, 2018). The sole risk considered in this study was the possibility that their typical daily routines might be disrupted (Magabe, 2020).

3.9. SUMMARY

In this chapter, the researcher sought to explain how the study was conducted. Firstly, the researcher described the research approach that was followed, namely the qualitative research approach. This was followed by an explanation of the research design, namely, the case study design. After the research design, the research showed how sampling was done, the data collection, and how the trustworthiness of the study was ensured. Finally, the researcher described what measures were put in place to ensure that the study was conducted ethically.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter addressed the research methodology that was followed for this study. This chapter presents data that addressed the research questions. The chapter comprises data presentation and interpretation. The analysis and interpretation of the data are divided into two categories, namely: a) results from semi-structured interviews and b) results from document analysis. But, before presenting these findings, the researcher will present a brief profile of the five participants, which is intended to provide a context for their answers.

4.2. PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Five participants were selected for participation in the study through a purposive sampling strategy. An inclusion and exclusion criteria were used. This brief profile in Tables 1 and 2 below provides participants' selection criteria and their level of education.

Table 1. Summary of eligibility criteria

Criteria	**Inclusion criteria**	**Exclusion criteria**
Participants	1. Translation practitioners 2. Sepedi speakers 3. Academics in translation 4. More than five years of experience	1. Translation policy makers 2. Non-Sepedi speakers 3. Less than five years of experience in translation
Target book	1. Children storybook: Charlie and the Chocolate Factory by Roald Dahl	1. Any other book

Table 2. Participants' profile

Participant Code	**Brief Bio**	**Qualification**

A	An official for the Department of Arts and Culture	Masters in Translation
B	Director of PanSALB	Masters in Translation
C	Director at Sepedi National Lexicography Unit	Masters in Translation
D	Director of an NGO for Literacy Development	Masters in Education
E	Senior Lecturer in the Department of Translation	PhD in African Languages (Sepedi)

4.3. PRESENTATION OF SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

The first method of data collection was semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured interview is a qualitative research method that combines a predetermined set of open questions (questions that prompt discussion) with the opportunity for the interviewer to explore particular themes or responses further. Three professional translators were interviewed over the phone and the call was recorded. The questions that were asked can be found on Annexure 3.

The researcher used the Skopos Theory to frame the analysis and interpretation of the data. Specifically, in this instance, she used the three rules of the theory, the **purpose of the translation**, the **coherence rule**, and the **fidelity rule**, as the primary determinant of methods and strategies used. From this process, four themes emerged, namely (a) translation by cultural substitution, (b) translation by loan words or loan words with explanation, c) difficulty finding a translation equivalent or using the correct strategy and d) preservation of meaning These results become clearer when discussed individually.

4.3.1 Finding from theme 1: Translation by cultural substitution

The finding from the first theme emerged from data from the interviews revealed that in instances where there were no equivalents, the translators resorted to cultural substitution. This theme answered research question 2 which is, 'How should culture-specific items found in children literature be translated from English to Sepedi?'. To make meaning of this translation strategy, the researcher applied the purpose rule of translation as adopted by Skopos. Since the intention of the translators in

children's literature is to make them understand the nuances of the text, they used the cultural substitution to mediate their understanding. For example, when they were confronted with a culture-specific word that could not be understood easily by the children, they used the purpose rule to make sure that the children understand the story. Here the researcher used the purpose rule to make sense of the data. The researcher found that the translators were mostly driven by the purpose of what they wanted to put across to choose what strategy and method they adopted. This can be observed in the following examples.

Participant A: picked up the following example of a cultural substitution.

1: Source Text (ST): The great big greedy ***nincompoop!***

Target Text (TT): ***Lešilo*** *le legolo la megabaru!*

Back Translation (BT): This big greedy **idiot**!

Participant B: had the following example.

2: Source Text (ST): 'He's *Barmy*!' they shouted.

Target Text (TT): *Ba goeleditše ba re 'o a* ***gafa****'*

Back Translation (BT): They shouted and said '**he is mad**'

Participant D presented the following except

3: Source Text (ST): The man's *dotty*!' muttered Grandma Josephine.

Target Text (TT): *'Monna yo o* ***hlakane hlogo****!' gwa sebaseseba makgolo Josephine.*

Back Translation (BT): 'This man has **gone mad**'! murmured Grandma Josephine

Of the five participants, below are the culture-specific items that were identified to fall under the translation by cultural substitution category. The culture-specific items in English are then followed by the Sepedi translation and a back translation.

Participant A picked up the following example of a cultural substitution.

1: Source Text (ST): The great big greedy ***nincompoop!***

Target Text (TT): ***Lešilo*** *le legolo la megabaru!*

Back Translation (BT): This big greedy **idiot**!

Participant B had the following example

2: Source Text (ST): 'He's *Barmy*!' they shouted.

Target Text (TT): *Ba goeleditše ba re 'o a **gafa**'*

Back Translation (BT): They shouted and said '**he is mad**'

Participant D presented the following except

3: Source Text (ST): The man's *dotty*!' muttered Grandma Josephine.

Target Text (TT): *'Monna yo o **hlakane hlogo**!' gwa sebaseseba makgolo Josephine.*

Back Translation (BT): 'This man has **gone mad**'! murmured Grandma Josephine.

4.3.2 Finding from theme 2: Translation by loan word or loan word plus explanation

The second theme that emerged from the data analysis is that of translation by loan word. This refers to the use of a loan word or loan word plus an explanation. This theme answered research question 2: 'How should culture-specific items found in children literature be translated from English to Sepedi?'. To understand this better, the researcher used the strategies and methods guided by Skopos rule of coherence. As explained in chapter three, the coherence rule determines that there is an intratexual coherence, that is, ensure that the translated text is understandable to the target audience.

Below are some of the culture-specific items that were identified to fall under the translation by using a loan word or loan word plus explanation category:

Participant C wrote the following loan word plus explanation that she used

4: Source Text (ST): Gobstoppers

Target Text (TT): *gobstoppers (malekere a go thatafala gomme a tšea nako go fela)*

Participant C again wrote the following loan word plus explanation that she used

5: Source Text (ST): Ooompa-Loompas

Target Text (TT)*: Ooompa-loompas (batho ba bakoroto ka seemo ba go šomela difeme)*

Participant E wrote the following loan word that she used

6: Source Text (ST): And if you tried chewing one of these *Gobstoppers* here, you'd break your teeth!

Target Text (TT): *Gape ge o ka leka go sohla ye nngwe ya **di-gobstopper** mo, o tla kgeroga meno!*

Back Translation (BT): And if you try to chew any of these gobstoppers here, you will break your teeth

Participant A wrote the following loan words that he used

7: Source Text (ST): I found the **Oompa-Loompas** living in tree houses. (tip: Oompa- Loompas are fictional characters)

Target Text (TT): *Ke ile ka hwetša **di-Oompa-Loompa** di dula ka dintlong tša mehlare*

Back translation (BT): I found Oompa-Loompas living in tree houses

Participant D wrote the following loan words that he used

8: Source Text (ST): And if you tried chewing one of these *Gobstoppers* here, you'd break your teeth!

Target Text (TT): *Bjale ge o ka leka go sohla ye nngwe ya **Dikoposetopa** tše, o tla pšhatla meno a gago!*

Back translation (BT): Now if you try to chew one of these **Gobstoppers**, you will crush your teeth!

4.3.3. Finding from theme 3: Difficulty finding a translation equivalent or using the correct strategy

The third theme that emerged showed that Sepedi translators identified the difficulty of finding a translation equivalent or using the correct strategy as a problem they encounter when dealing with English culture-specific items. This theme answers the research question 1, which is: 'What are the challenges that a translator must take into consideration when translating culture-specific items from English to Sepedi?'. To make meaning of this translation strategy, the researcher applied the fidelity rule of translation as adopted by Skopos. Since the intention of the translators in children's literature is to make them understand the nuances of the text, the challenge will be to be faithful to the source text by aiming for a more similar translation equivalent.

4.3.4 Finding from theme 4: Preservation of meaning

The fourth theme that emerged from the interviews is the theme that sought to answer research question 3, which is 'Why is the knowledge of the translation of culture-specific items in children's literature important when translating from English to Sepedi?'. The translators regarded proper or accurate translation as important preserving the meaning of the text. To make meaning of this translation strategy, the researcher applied the fidelity rule of translation as adopted by Skopos.

4.3.5 Summary from semi-structured interviews

Data collected from interviews revealed the following themes: The challenge when translating culture-specific items begins when a translator has no equal understanding of both cultures. Most of these culture-specific items are unknown to the target readers; this brings about translation challenges in finding the most relevant equivalence.

Another challenge faced by translators is the struggle of choosing a translation strategy when faced with terms that cause untranslatability challenges. However, as seen in the results from the semi-structure interview, most Sepedi translators will opt for cultural substitution and the use of loan words to find a translation equivalent. Additionally, translators encounter the challenge of deciding how the loan word should be spelt or transliterated in the Sepedi language, considering the rules of the language. Participants A highlighted that transliterating and then writing the English word in brackets can help the reader.

Words that pose difficulties for Sepedi translators, among others, are technical terms, scientific terms, academic terms, and idioms. These can cause translation problems when dealing with culture-specific items in children's literature. Knowing how to translate culture-specific items is important in that it allows you to apply the best translation strategy. You will be able to apply the best strategy and reach the target readers' needs for understanding the target text and fulfilling the purpose of the translation. Using the best translation strategies helps to avoid mistranslation and misleading the readers.

The results that were recorded from the translation task indicate that Sepedi professional translators mostly opted for translation by cultural substitution when dealing with culture-specific items in children's literature from English to Sepedi. Baker (2018:30) mentions that this strategy involves replacing a culture-specific item or expression with a target language item. The item has different proportional meanings but carries the same impact for the target reader in their culture. Baker (2018:30) states that the advantage of using this strategy is that it gives the target readers a concept in which they can identify something similar. She also mentions that this translation strategy's main advantage is that it gives the reader the concept with which he or she can identify something familiar. The second strategy that most translators opted for was translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation. According to Baker (2018:34), this strategy is commonly used when dealing with culture-specific items, modern concepts, and buzzwords.

The summary of answers on why the participants used the translation strategies they chose is that through those strategies, they could produce accurate and sensitive translations of the source culture.

These strategies ensure the development of high-quality texts and translations and ensure the meaning is preserved.

Although the Skopos theory was useful in guiding the study, was nevertheless not without shortcomings. The purpose rule for example, it tended to confine translators to be fixated into one strategy. This confinement did not allow the translators to think outside the box. Thus, their creative crafts were limited. This is not surprising though, given its historical roots in structuralism. To navigate this weakness, researchers elevated the rules of fidelity and coherence to the same level as the purpose rule.

4.4. PRESENTATION ON DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

As stated in the previous chapter, the second method of data collection was document analysis. Document analysis is one of the qualitative research methods. It involves the process of reviewing or evaluating documents both printed and electronic in a methodical manner. It also involves examining and interpreting data to uncover meaning, gain understanding, and come to a conclusion (Bowen, 2009). There are five types of document analysis: semiotics, discourse, interpretative, conversations, and grounded analysis (Bowen, 2009). Of these five, the researcher used interpretive and semiotic document analysis. This helped to answer research question 2: How should culture-specific items found in children's literature be translated from English to Sepedi?

Interpretative document analysis refers to a case where documents are interpreted by the researcher to give meaning or a voice to a text (Bowen, 2009). On the other hand, semiotics refers to a science that studies the life of signs in society (Bowen, 2009). After reading the documents, the researcher finally selected the document that she deemed would be relevant to answering the research question.

The document analysis involved the text analysis of the selected story, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. In this book, the researcher further identified ten words through a thorough screening. The ten words included *Sixpenny, Dawdle, by Golly, Nincompoop, Dilly Dally, Gobstoppers, Barmy, Dotty, and Batty.* These words were deemed relevant to answer the research question because they were imbued with cultural connotations.

Rimari (2010) supports the view that certain words can only be understood in their cultural contexts. Thus, the translation of the ten words illuminated the importance of a context-cultural consciousness. The ten words, which are mainly English exclamations or figures of speech, idioms, and similes, cannot be easily translated into Sepedi because they are deeply immersed in the traditional English

of the Shakespearean period. These words do not have direct Sepedi equivalents. To counteract this deficiency, document analysis shows that most translators resort to cultural substitution or borrowing.

In answering research question 2, the researcher used semiotics. For example, where there was no direct translation of words, the research looked at pictures of symbols in the story. This was a useful strategy to bridge the gap between a culturally bound English word and Sepedi. For example, an analysis of the following picture (Figure 1) could reduce the gap created by culturally imbued text and the Sepedi language. Symbols or pictures can play a vital role as a translation strategy. Figure 1 serves to express an expression.



Figure 1. Expressing an exclamation (Good heavens!) from *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* storybook.

Summary of document analysis

As with the first method of data collection, this section provides a summary of the results from document analysis. In summary, the researcher used two types of document analysis: interpretative document and semiotics. The researcher used a content analysis approach strategy, which is a type of document analysis, to make sense of the data gathered. Content analysis is a tool used to determine the presence or frequency of certain words, phrases, or themes appearing or being observed in a text. This process enabled the researcher to answer the research question (How should culture-specific items found in children's literature be translated from English to Sepedi?). The researcher found that the translation used by the writers of texts needed to be understood in their cultural contexts. That is

the reason the translators opted towards the use of cultural substitution during the interview and the result falls under theme 1 and answers research question 2. Also, the use of pictures and symbols was an effective method to mediate meaning between the translator and the receiver.

4.5. SUMMARY

In this chapter, the researcher presented the findings of the study. The findings were framed by Baker's translation strategies, which are translation by a more general word (superordinate), translation by a more neutral/less expressive word, translation by cultural substitution, translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation, translation by paraphrase using a related word, translation by paraphrase using unrelated words, translation by omission, and translation by illustration. The first method of data collection, semi-structured interviews revealed that Sepedi translators experience challenges because of culture-specific items; they also revealed that they used the Baker's translation strategies to translate these terms. Sepedi professional translators mostly opted for translation by cultural substitution when dealing with culture-specific items in children's literature from English to Sepedi. The second strategy that most translators opted for was translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation. Sepedi translators identified the difficulty of finding a translation equivalent or using the correct strategy as a problem they encounter when dealing with English culture-specific items. The translators regarded proper or accurate translation as important preserving the meaning of the text thus confirming the fidelity rule of translation as adopted by Skopos. The second method of data collection, which is document analysis, revealed that the use of pictures and symbols (semiotics) was an effective method to mediate meaning between the translator and the receiver. Through document analysis the researcher found that the translation used by translators needed to be understood in their cultural context and thus fulfilling the purpose of the translation.

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CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the results of the study. The chapter is designed as follows: Firstly, the chapter opens with an introduction. Secondly, the main findings are presented. Thirdly, the chapter presents individual findings. Fourthly, the chapter concludes with the implications of the findings, limitations of the study, and recommendations.

5.2. MAIN FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study undertook to explore strategies that are employed by translators when they translate children's literature from English to Sepedi. The research questions that the study aimed to answer are the following: *(1) What are the challenges that a translator must take into consideration when translating culture-specific items from English to Sepedi? (2) How should culture-specific items found in children literature be translated from English to Sepedi? And (3) Why is the knowledge of the translation of culture-specific items in children's literature important when translating from English to Sepedi?*

The study found that the translation of culture-specific items in children's literature posed a challenge for Sepedi translators, such as difficulty finding a translation equivalent or using the correct strategy. Alternatively, it resulted in them resorting to finding translation strategies for these terms. The strategies that were used by these translators were translation by cultural substitution and translation by using a loan word or loan word plus explanation. It found that it is important to have good knowledge of the translation of culture-specific items because translators will be able to reach the target readers' needs for understanding the target text and fulfilling the purpose of the translation. These findings become clearer when looked at individual themes.

5.3. INDIVIDUAL FINDINGS

5.3.1. **Theme 1:** Translation by cultural substitution

The first finding is that of the use of cultural substitution. The finding answers research question 2. The participants indicated that they made use of cultural substitution where they did not have equivalent words. This finding was also consistent with other findings from Pedersen (2007), who indicated that translators used subtitling when culture reference is removed and, more often than not, replaced by one from the target culture. Pedersen (2007) calls this cultural substitution. This means that a source culture reference is removed and, more often than not, replaced by one from the target

culture. This situation is not surprising, as translation, by its very nature, is the mixing of different cultures, as was alluded to by Axiela (1996). However, Olk (2013) cautions against that; such selective analysis of this type may give undue weight to the selected examples or lexical sub-field while ignoring other items.

5.3.2. **Theme 2:** Translation by a loanword or loan word plus explanation

The second finding from this study was that the participants used translation by loanword or loanword plus explanation. The finding answers research question 2. As indicated in Chapter 4, loan translation is a translation whereby a word or a phrase is taken from one language into another language. A loanword is a foreign word or expression maintained in its original form in the target language. This finding was found to be consistent with other findings as well. Frankenberg-Garcia (2005) found that the use of loanwords has been a practice in many monolingual settings, although it has long been surrounded by controversy. This strategy is common in monolingual settings where speakers of one language often use words belonging to another language when they fail to retrieve an equivalent way of expressing the same concept in their own language. Sometimes, they may use loan words on purpose to evoke meanings that go beyond the mere propositional content of the words used.

Interestingly, in translation, the use of loan words is generally associated with strategies for dealing with culturally bound concepts that are difficult to translate and with deliberate ways of showing respect for the source-text language culture. The researcher found a similar observation. Participant B had this to say: "When we translate culture-specific items, we use an English loanword, but we ensure the words follow Sepedi grammatical rules." Participant A had this to say: “To keep the meaning, we opt to use it as a loan word and give an explanation in brackets to indicate to the reader what we mean." Participant E had this to say: “When we translate culture-specific items, we decide to use loan words and transliterate them in order to follow Sepedi grammatical rules.” This shows that this strategy is common among these participants.

However, whereas this practice is a common phenomenon, there is some controversy on the extent to which loans should be used. Frankenberg-Garcia (2005) advises trainee translators to borrow words from the source language (a procedure which he calls transference) judiciously, reasoning that "it is the translator's job to translate, to explain".

5.3.3. **Theme 3**: Difficulty finding a translation equivalent or using the correct strategy

The third finding answers research question 1: What are the challenges that a translator must take into consideration when translating culture-specific items from English into Sepedi? The researcher found that the translators who participated in this study experienced problems in finding an equivalent for the Sepedi words, or using the correct strategy, especially for those words that are culture-specific. This finding is consistent with other findings in the field of translation studies. More and more translation studies find that as the translation profession grows in popularity, freelance translating is growing. This has opened doors for young people abusing the loaning of words, which influences translation students. These students find it difficult to find solutions to problems in the process of translating from the source language to the target language. In another study by Aulia (2012), it was found that despite equivalence being important in translation, many translators find it difficult to handle equivalent words in modern times. In a Japanese study (Small, 2011), which compiled data from a total of 484 first, second, and third-year EFL university students, it found that, overall, the most common style of translation for all year levels was direct translation rather than the usual English conversation style wording.

This posed problems for cases where challenges faced when translating culture-specific items begin when a translator has no equal understanding of both cultures. Most of these culture-specific items are unknown to the target readers; this brings about translation challenges in finding the most relevant equivalence. Another challenge faced by translators is the struggle of choosing a translation strategy when faced with terms that cause untranslatability challenges. However, as seen in the results from the semi-structured interview, most Sepedi translators will opt for cultural substitution and the use of loan words. Additionally, translators encounter the challenge of deciding how the loan word should be spelt or transliterated in the Sepedi language, considering the rules of the language. Participant A highlighted that writing the English word in brackets can help the reader. The problem of lack of equivalence is echoed in the conversation with Participant C when she said:

> *Interviewer:* What problems do you encounter when translating culture-specific items?
>
> *Interviewee*: A lack of equivalence, more research is needed and consultation with other linguists when opting to use transliteration.

Words that pose difficulties for Sepedi translators, amongst others, are technical terms, scientific terms, academic terms, and idioms, which normally do not have direct meaning. These can cause translation problems when dealing with culture-specific items in children's literature. Knowing how to translate culture-specific items is important in that it allows you to apply the best translation strategy. You will be able to apply the best strategy to reach the target readers' needs for understanding the target text and fulfilling the purpose of the translation. Using the best translation strategies helps

to avoid mistranslation and misleading the readers. So, we may conclude that the challenges that a translator must take into consideration when translating culture-specific items in children's literature are not understanding the culture of both languages, choosing a translation strategy, dealing with untranslatability, and the lack of equivalence.

5.3.4. **Theme 4** : Preservation of meaning

The fourth finding from this study was that of the preservation of meaning. The finding answers research question 3. The translators regarded proper or accurate translation as important for preserving the meaning of the text. In order to preserve the meaning, the knowledge of the socio-cultural environment of the source text is very important to finding the appropriate word. This finding was also consistent with Rout (2020), who indicated that when translating culture-specific words, the local culture, customs and traditions play an important role in understanding the background of literary texts. This knowledge is helpful for faithful translation work in the preservation of the meaning of both the source language and culture.

5.4. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Like any qualitative study, the researcher encountered some limitations. One such limitation was that the process of collecting data and analysing it was time-consuming. Qualitative methods such as interviews and focus groups can provide rich, detailed data, but they require significant time for data collection and analysis. The researcher found the process of data collection was a time-consuming process. The researcher found a way around this problem by conducting interviews by telephone and analysing the data as the data collection progressed. Another limitation was that the results in qualitative studies are not easily verifiable. Self-reporting can be subjective, and the participants can falsify their answers. The researcher used two methods of data collection (semi-structured interviews, and document analysis) to counteract this threat.

5.5. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

By their very nature, qualitative studies are not meant to generalise results to the population. This was the case in this study as well. However, valuable lessons can be learnt from this case study. At least three implications can be drawn from this study. For the researcher, the findings reveal that the translation of culture-specific items still needs to be explored more, especially in Sepedi. So far, there is limited data in the field to assist translators and researchers. Two, for practitioners, the findings from this study have revealed that even experienced translators such as those in this study still face challenges when they are met with the translation of culture-specific items in children's literature. The findings, therefore, provide an indication of what trajectories need to be followed to improve

their practice, for example, how the loan word needs to be used with caution. Third, for language policymakers, the findings have revealed that there is a need to develop a policy framework to guide translators.

5.6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering these implications, the researcher proposes the following recommendations: Recommendation one is that knowledge of the translation of culture-specific items should be taken into consideration. Translators should be aware of these challenging concepts and be guided in applying the best translation strategies. Two, more funding should be made available to postgraduate students and researchers to study the translation of children's literature from English to Sepedi, as there is a dire need in this area. Researchers should ensure Sepedi translators are equipped with knowledge of both source and target cultures. Lastly, the Sepedi translation practice needs more effort to assist translators in navigating the challenges and the use of correct translation equivalents when translating challenging terminology, which is lacking which is lacking now. Other theories that are non-structuralist in nature need to be considered if translation of culture-specific are to be elevated.

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ANNEXURE 1: ETHICS CLEARANCE

SCHOOL OF Literature, Language and Media ETHICS COMMITTEE
CONSTITUTED UNDER THE UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE **PROTOCOL NUMBER: WSLLM-TRAN-3**

PROJECT TITLE TRANSLATING CULTURE-SPECIFIC ITEMS IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE FROM ENGLISH TO SEPEDI

INVESTIGATOR Lekhipi Themane

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT SLLM/Translation

DATE CONSIDERED 19 July 2024

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE Approved

RISK LEVEL No risk

EXPIRY DATE 19 July 2025

ISSUE DATE OF CERTIFICATE 25 July 2024 **CHAIRPERSON** Prof. Anette Horn

A. Horn

cc: Supervisor : COLFAR HLONGWANA

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Chairperson of the School/Department ethics committee.

I fully understand the conditions under which I am are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee.

_____ _____/_____/_____
Signature **Date**

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES

ANNEXURE 2: ETHICS CERTIFICATE



Zertifikat
Certificat
Certificado
Certificate

TRREE

Promouvoir les plus hauts standards éthiques dans la protection des participants à la recherche biomédicale
Promoting the highest ethical standards in the protection of biomedical research participants

Certificat de formation - Training Certificate

Ce document atteste que - this document certifies that

Clinical Trials Centre
The University of Hong Kong

Lekhipi Themane

a complété avec succès - has successfully completed

Module 1 (2023) - Introduction to Research Ethics

du programme de formation TRREE en évaluation éthique de la recherche
of the TRREE training programme in research ethics evaluation

Release Date: 2024/04/11
CID : XNACenwBdA

Professeur Dominique Sprumont
Coordinateur TRREE Coordinator

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[REV : 20220217]

ANNEXURE 3: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

Dear Participant,

I am **Lekhipi Themane,** a Masters student in Translation at Wits University for 2024. As part of the programme, I am to conduct a research project. My research topic is '**The translation of culture-specific items in children's literature from English into Sepedi'.** To this end, I have identified you to be one of my participants.

I will ensure that your information will be kept confidential and will be used only for research related purposes. If this is acceptable to you, I attach herewith to this letter a semi-structured interview that I will humbly request you to complete for me. This will be followed up by a brief interview that I will arrange with you telephonically.

Thank you in advance

LP Themane

076 130 7129

The interview schedule was made up as follows.

PART A:

Please translate the following culture-specific items:

1. .Charlie would make his **sixpenny** bar of birthday chocolate last him for more than a month.
2. **'**Get a move on, please! We'll never get round today if you **dawdle** like this!'
3. **By golly** he's right!' said Grandpa Joe.
4. The great big greedy **nincompoop**!
5. But we mustn't **dilly**! We mustn't **dally**!
6. And if you tried chewing one of these **Gobstoppers** here, you'd break your teeth!
7. 'He's **Barmy**!' they shouted.
8. 'The man's **dotty**!' muttered Grandma Josephine.
9. I found the **Oompa-Loompas** living in tree houses. (tip: Oompa-Loompas are fictional characters)
10. Of course, it's true! **Good heavens,** didn't you know that?

PART B:

Research Question 1	Interview question (IQ)

What are the challenges that a translator must take into consideration when translating culture-specific items from English to Sepedi?	IQ1: What kind of culture-specific items cause translation problems from English to Sepedi? *e.g., food*
	IQ2: What problems can you encounter when translating culture-specific items? *e.g., not having a direct equivalent, struggling with a translation strategy*
Research Question 2	Interview question (IQ)
How should culture-specific items found in children literature be translated for English to Sepedi?	IQ3: What strategies have you used to translate the culture specific items? IQ4: Why did you use this strategy?
Research Question 3	Interview question (IQ)
Why is the knowledge of the translation of culture-specific items in children's literature important when translating from English to Sepedi?	IQ5: Why is it important to be aware of the challenges of translating culture-specific items when given a translation task? IQ6: Why is it important to solve untranslatability issues for the target readers? e.g., *why does translating them very well really matter for the reader since it not their culture anyway*