

CULTURE-SPECIFIC WORDS IN KURUKAN FUGA CHARTER AND THEIR TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH

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Abstract: Languages spoken in the world are numerous and different. Thanks to translation, communication between people from different linguistic backgrounds becomes possible. However, translation is an activity that can be influenced by cultural factors because of the interplay between language and culture. Translators come across with cultural-bound elements during translation process which are partially translatable. That is why it is commonly known that some of the most problematic and challenging aspects of text rendition are cultural contexts. Thus, the translator must have not only a good knowledge of the foreign language in which a particular text is written but most importantly s/he should be familiar with its cultural coloring. In this paper, we conducted a descriptive qualitative method by applying the translation strategy proposed by Andrew Chesterman (2016). The aim of this study was to identify the culture-specific words in Kurukan Fuga Charter and their translation strategies into English. Data were collected from Kurukan Fuga charter and ten (10) cultural specific words were recorded. The results revealed that loan and calque with explanation is the most used with 50%; followed by literal and explicitness with 20% each; and unavailable 10%. We concluded that in translating cultural specific words in a legal document, the syntactic and pragmatic strategies are the most appropriate.

Keywords: Translation, culture, Kurunkan Fuga, the source language, the target language

LES MOTS SPECIFIQUES A LA CULTURE DANS LA CHARTE DE KOUROUKAN FOUGA ET LEUR TRADUCTION EN ANGLAIS

Résumé : Les langues parlées au monde sont nombreuses et différentes. Grace à la traduction, la communication entre des personnes de différentes origines linguistiques devient possible. Cependant, la traduction est une activité qui peut être influencée par des facteurs culturels à cause de l'interaction entre la langue et la culture. Les traducteurs rencontrent des éléments liés à la culture qui sont partiellement traductibles. C'est pourquoi il est bien connu que certains des aspects les plus problématiques et les plus difficiles dans la traduction des textes sont les contextes culturels. Ainsi, le traducteur doit avoir non seulement une bonne connaissance de la langue étrangère dans laquelle un texte particulier est écrit mais surtout il doit être familier avec sa coloration culturelle. Dans cet article, nous avons adopté une méthode qualitative descriptive en appliquant la stratégie de traduction proposée par Andrew Chesterman (2016). Le but de cette étude était d'identifier les mots spécifiques à la culture dans la Charte de Kouroukan Fouga et leurs stratégies de traduction en Anglais. Les données ont été recueillies à partir de la Charte de Kouroukan Fouga et dix (10) mots spécifiques à la culture ont été enregistrés. Les résultats ont révélé que la stratégie d'emprunt et calque avec explication est la plus utilisée avec 50 % ; littérale et explicite 20% chacune et non disponible 10%. Nous avons conclu que dans la traduction des mots culturels dans un document légal, les stratégies grammaticales et pragmatiques sont les plus appropriées.

Mots-clés : Traduction, culture, Kouroukan Fouga, la langue source, la langue cible

Introduction

Language has an important role in communication. However, the languages spoken in the world are numerous. It will be difficult if there is no translation to understand the different languages. Translation has been defined by many experts. House defines translation as: “a procedure where an original text, often called *the source text*, is replaced by another text in a different language, often called *the target text*” (2018: 9). That means translation is the reproduction of a text from one language to another. Bell, another scholar in the field of translation said: “translation is the replacement of a text in one language by a representation of an equivalent text in a second language” (1991:6). In this definition, translating a text is finding out the equivalence of this text in another language. Another early and classic definition proposed by Nida & Taber (1982: 12) stipulates: “translation consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style” (1982:12). In other words, translation is concerned with producing a target language that in its meaning has a close and natural result of translation with the source language. In addition, Nida & Taber explained that there are two main things that the translator must pay attention to in translating that are meaning and style. Meaning means the information in the source language that must be transferred well to the target language and avoid misunderstanding or ambiguities between the two languages. Meanwhile, style means the culture in the two languages that must be transferred well with adjusting their culture and language style of the countries. Nowadays, translation study has shifted its focus from the incessant discussions on “equivalence” to debates on the factors influencing text production other than linguistic aspects (Yablonsky, 2017). Therefore, many researchers: (Yablonsky, 2017; Zhang, 2018; Akbari, 2013; Ginter, 2002; Sulaimaan, 2012 etc.) think that translation should be recognized as an efficient tool for raising the cross-linguistic competence and cross-cultural awareness of translators and translation students. Zhang (2018) stated that the translator’s dual cultural identity will have a significant impact on the translation of the text and the choice of translation strategies. Hanada (2009), in his article « Translation and cultural equivalence », thinks that a translator must be aware of the role of cultural aspects for both texts in order to provide a culturally more faithful translation. Based on these aforementioned viewpoints, it becomes obvious that “language and culture are inseparable” said Zhang (2018: 399). Language is an organic part of culture. It records the development history of human culture, reflects the progress of social civilization and progress, and is a tool for communication, dissemination, continuation and development of culture. Its status is extremely heavy. At the same time, language cannot exist out of culture, and it always grows in a certain cultural background. Jiang Q. said: “culture is the great environment of language activities, and all kinds of cultural factors must be embodied in language” (2015:174). In the process of language activity, there is a mark of culture everywhere, and the trace of culture is seen. Luo Changpei, a famous linguist, said: “language is the crystallization of a national culture. The past culture of this nation is spread by it, and the future culture is also advancing by it”. Since the late 1980s, cultural criticism and cultural studies have been rising in western academic circles (Zhang Y., 2017 cited in Zhang M., 2018). Hanada (2009) explained that cultural understanding during the process of translation is extremely essential especially in translation of literary texts, which require an effort on the part of the translator to retain the cultural information (reflected mostly

in the figurative language) of the source text in the target text. Such cultural translation is known to be one of the most challenging aspect of translation. Therefore, a large number of scholars began to study translation problems from different cultural perspectives, and a new school of cultural translation emerged. People no longer consider translation as a static, pure language behavior, but they take it as a process of communication in a specific social and cultural background. In the translation field, this is also known as “the cultural turn” of translation. The anthropologist Malinowski also considered culture as:

The fullest context of all human activities. It is the vast instrumentality through which man achieves his ends both as an animal that must eat, rest, and produce; and the spiritual being who desire to extend his mental horizons, produce works of art and develop systems of faith.

Malinowski (1962:169)

For Haviland, culture is "a set of rules and standards which when acted upon by the members of a society produce behaviour that falls within a range of variance that readers consider proper or acceptable" (1975:12). In other words, culture set up the rules and norms that determine good or bad behavior of people in a particular community. According to Newmark (1988:94) culture is defined as “the way of life and its manifestations, which are unique to a society that uses a particular language as a means of expression”. Moreover, Aziz and Muftah think that culture may be defined as “a set of beliefs, which governs the behavior patterns of a society” (2000:85). Regarding the point of views of Haviland (1975), Newmark (1988) or Aziz and Muftah, we can say that culture is the way of life of people in a given society. Thus, language is an integral part of culture, and translation involves two cultures, the culture of the source language (source culture) and the culture of the target language (target culture). Being obvious that there is an interplay between language and culture, scholars have used different concepts to determine words that have cultural specificity. Among them we can note: cultural words (Nitisari, 2016; Robingah, 2021), culture-bound elements (Yablonsky, 2017), culture-specific items (Akbari, 2013, Shekoufeh, 2016), culture-loaded words (Yihan, 2021), culture-specific words (Thandao, 2021) etc. Therefore, in this paper, all those concepts will be used interchangeably to refer to the same phenomenon. Hejwowski stated that culture-bound element is:

A wide-ranging term encompassing a variety of linguistic expressions which are intrinsically and uniquely bound to the culture concerned, and which have cultural specificity, i.e. they are characteristic for a particular culture and they are frequently the source of translation problems. They include items such as proper names, names and phrases related to the organizational aspects of life in the source language country (e.g. political system, education system, health service, law, etc.), elements connected with the source language habits, traditions and holidays, all kinds of intertextual elements: quotations from and allusions to the source language literature, proverbs, songs, history, music, film, etc.

Hejwowski (2004:128-142)

Based on the viewpoints of aforementioned authors, we can say that translators must pay attention to some linguistics aspects as well as to some cultural elements between the source

language (SL) and the target language (TL). In other words, translating a text from one language into another by applying transposition is not always appropriate because what is relevant in one language may be irrelevant in another language. Facing with all these challenges, translation theorists and practitioners have developed techniques, methods, procedures, and strategies in translating. In this paper, the concept of translation strategy will be used to refer to the techniques, ways and procedures of translations. In fact, Jääskeläinen defines translation strategies as: “a set of (loosely formulated) rules or principles which a translator uses to reach the goals determined by the translating situation in the most effective way” (1993: 116). In addition, Albir (1996, cited in Molina & Albir, 2002, p. 508) also thinks that translation strategies are: “the procedures (conscious or unconscious, verbal or nonverbal) used by the translator to solve problems that emerge when carrying out the translation process with a particular objective in mind”.

1. Synopsis of translation strategy

Culture-specific words or cultural-bound elements have been the focus of many researchers in the field of translation. However, translation theorists and practitioners have developed many translation strategies that can be helpful in translating culture specific words. The work of Andrew Chesterman (2016:90) in his book entitled “*Memes of Translation*” has been applied in our study. Chesterman has identified three general categories of translation strategies including: syntactic, semantic and pragmatic strategies.

1.1 *syntactic strategy*

This strategy focuses on the syntactic aspects in translation such as units of a text. Syntactic strategies include ten sub-categories of translation strategies. They are : (1) Literal translation: the translator provides the source text form as closely as possible in translating the target text. (2) Loan and calque: loan is borrowing words that are similar to the source text. The translator translates the source language by keeping the form of source language and the translator does not modify anything. Whereas, calque is an absorption word from the source language which is translated into the target language with slight modification. The words that are calque usually have the same pronunciation to the source language. (3) Transposition: translators translate source text by applying changes in word class. Word classes include noun, verb, adjective, adverb etc. (4) Unit shift: it is a strategy used by involving unit alteration. Units refer to morphemes, words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and paragraphs. (5) Phrase structure change: it consists of bringing some changes in the phrase level. The changes are such as a change in the number, noun phrase, tenses and mood in the verb phrase. (6) Clause structure change: it is defined as a modification related to the clause structure. The modification includes constituent order, active vs. passive voice, finite vs. non-finite structure, and transitive vs. intransitive. (7) Sentence structure change: it is an alteration in sentence units, such as changes from compound sentences to complex sentences, simple sentences to complex sentences, and others. (8) Cohesion change: it is a strategy that emphasizes intra-textual reference such as the use of connectors of various kinds, substitution, ellipsis, repetition, or pronominalization. (9) Level shift: it is a modification from one level to another. The levels mean the main components of language as phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexis. (10) Scheme change: it refers to the

kinds of alteration that translators apply in the translation of rhetorical schemes such as parallelism, repetition, alliteration, metrical rhythm, etc.

1.2 semantic strategy

This strategy refers to the meaning of a text. It focuses on the semantic aspects of a text. Thus, semantic strategy emphasizes meaning. According to Chesterman, semantic strategies are also composed of ten sub-categories that are: (1) synonymy: This strategy provides not the “obvious” equivalent but a synonym or near-synonym for a unit. (2) antonymy: the translator gives an antonym or combines with a negation element, (3) hyponymy: This term is used to refer to a particular element of a broader class, (4) converses: this strategy manipulates the units of speech. That means the verb of SL can become a noun in TL, (5) abstraction change: a different selection of abstraction level may either move from abstract to more concrete or from concrete to more abstract, (6) distribution change: it is a change in the distribution of the same semantic components over more items (expansion) or fewer items (compression), (7) emphasis change: this strategy is used to add or reduce the emphasis or thematic focus, for one reason or another, (8) paraphrase: it consists of providing a loose or free translation in a TT version, in some contexts even undertranslated, (9) trope change: it refers to the translation of rhetorical tropes. [that mean: (a) SL trope X= TL trope X. For instant, SL metaphor is retained at a metaphor in the TL; (b) SL trope X= TL trope Y; (c) SL trope X= TL trope 0] and (10) other semantic changes: these would include other modulations of various kinds, such as change of physical sense.

1.3 pragmatic strategy

This strategy puts a strong emphasis on the information of a text. So this type of strategy puts stress on pragmatic aspects. Pragmatic translation problems result from the contrast between ST situation and the TT communicative situation. Culture-bound terms, references to place and time, proper names, addresses specifications are examples of this type. Pragmatic strategies tend to involve bigger changes from the ST, and typically incorporate syntactic and/or semantic changes as well. If syntactic strategies concern form, and semantic strategies refer to meaning, pragmatic strategies focus on the message itself. Chesterman proposed the following sub-categories of pragmatic strategies: (1) cultural filtering: it concerns the way in which SL items, particularly culture-specific words, are translated as TL cultural or functional equivalents, so that they conform to TL norms (2) explicitness change: it consist of adding elements explicitly in the TT which are only implicit in the ST, (3) information change: the addition of new information which appears to be relevant to the TT readership but which is not present in the ST, or the omission of ST information deemed to be irrelevant to the TT, (4) interpersonal change: this strategy manipulates the overall style. It changes the formality level, the degree of emotiveness and involvement, the level of technical lexis and the like. In a nutshell, anything that involves an alteration in the relationship between text/author and reader, (5) illocutionary change: brings changes to the speech act. These changes often include obligatory changes at other levels, such as the mood of the verb or the shift from direct to indirect speech, (6) coherence change: it concerns the logical order of information or ideas in the text. That means rearranging, combining or splitting paragraphs or larger sections of a text, (7) partial translation: any kind of

non-integral translation, summary translation, transcription, translation of the sounds only, (8) visibility change: it refers to translator's footnotes, bracketed comments or added glossaries, (9) transediting: radical modification that translators must bring to a badly written original texts, and (10) other pragmatic changes: changes in the layout, choice of dialect. For instance, naturalize or exoticize, alter the level of explicitness, add or omit information.

2. Overview of Kurukan Fuga Charter

According to the oral tradition, Kurukan Fuga Charter is considered as the constitution of the Mali Empire that was edited in 1235 after the Battle of Krina. The Kurukan Fuga Charter aimed at unifying Mandinka clans under one government, outlined how it would operate and provided the laws by which people would be bound in the society. Correct Connect Africa stipulates that "this document was as important for that region of Africa as the Magna Carta for Western Europe". Today, the Kurukan Fuga Charter gains attention in political and research area because of the Malian current situation. Some Western countries think that Malian militaries are violating human rights in their different military operation. Malian officials are also showing to the world that Mali has always been a country where the respect of human right existed since the thirteenth century far beyond the Universal Declaration of Human that dated to 1948. Politicians and researchers focus on Kurukan Fuga Charter to illustrate that the social organization of Mali puts emphasis on the freedom of human being, the protection of environment, the abolition of slavery and the respect of diplomats. These values dated back to Mali empire. Thus, this document is important for Malians as Magna Carta is for Western. That is why it constitutes our research object. CCAF-Africa said:

"Most people would have recognized the Magna Carta as having a great impact on the eventual idea that Man is a free being with formal representation in governing counsel, that idea would take centuries to realize off- course and many found it as a precursor to the US constitution and the parliamentary system in Britain. In the Malian empire a similar document was being put into place".

(<https://ccaf.africa> consulted on April 10th 2023)

3. Research Method

3.1 Research Approach, Design, and Model Framework

The research approach is descriptive qualitative method that means observing the data as they are in order to answer the research question. The research design is case study, namely, Kurukan Fuga Charter translated into French by Kouyate et al. in 1999 and from French into English by an unknown author available on the site of Correct Connect Africa. The research model framework is application of some theories of translation whose objective is to investigate the translation phenomena in the translated document in accordance with the research question. This research is carried out based on two research questions as follow: what are the translation strategies used to translate culture-specific words in Kurukan Fuga Charter from Maninkakan to French and from French to English? and what translation strategy is the most widely applied and its possible reasons for it in Kurukan Fuga Charter from Maninkan to English? Those problems of the research are based on the objectives of the research. This research aims to find out the translation strategies used to translate culture-specific words in Kurukan Fuga Charter

from Maninkakan to French and from French to English, and to identify the translation strategy that is the most frequently applied and its possible reasons for it in Kurukan Fuga Charter. In addition, as a significance of the research, this research is intended to hone the ability of the researcher to think scientifically based on the existing theories. Moreover, this research can be a reference for other researchers in analyzing the strategies used by translator to translate culture-specific words in another types of text.

3.2 Data Source and Data

The source of data of this investigation is the Kurukan Fuga Charter by Kouyate et al. 1999 as the source text and the English version by unknown author available on the website of Correct Connect Africa as the target text. The data of the research are the translation units of some linguistic forms which are based on particular category, that is, the semantic representations of culture-specific words in their various- linguistic forms in the Kurukan Fuga Charter as the source text and their translations in French and English as the target texts. Translation units are defined as the smallest units from the source text which are translated individually separated from other segments as stated by Haas and quoted by Newmark (1988:54) “as short as is possible, as long as necessary”. The units of the translations vary from a word, a phrase, and a clause (Bell, 1991:29 and Newmark, 1988:54). Data are collected by contrasting the source text and the target (translated) text based on the translation strategies proposed by Andrew Chesterman (2016).

3.3 Data Analyzing Technique

Data analyzing technique of the research follows the model proposed by Sutopo (2006) in Mono et al. (2015), namely, data collection, reduction, presentation and drawing conclusion (verification) which is carried out simultaneously. Consequently, the data are forms of notes which consist of descriptions whose reflections are the data gained and recorded by separating and choosing the ones to be matched with the objective of research. The chosen data are then reduced as required. In the analyzing phase, the data are analyzed based on the translation theory proposed by Andrew Chesterman (2016, p.90). In the data presentation phase, the culture-specific words in Kurukan Fuga Charter are identified and the translation strategies applied to them are determined. Then the frequency of each translation strategy is calculated and classified.

4. Results

4.1 Result 1: Identification of culture-specific words in Kurukan Fuga Charter

Data analysis revealed that ten culture-specific words were identified in Kurukan Fuga Charter as shown in table 1 below.

Table1: Identification of culture words in Kurukan Fuga Charter

N°	Culture-specific words
1	Ton ta djon
2	Mansa si
3	Mori Kandalu
4	Nyamakala
5	Kangbé
6	Könögbèn Wölö
7	Mandenkaw
8	Sanankunya
9	Tanamanyöya
10	Nyara

4.2 Result 2: Translation strategies used to translate CSWs

Data analysis revealed that in ten (10) CSW, 100% (n=10) are translated into French by using loan and calque translation strategy with explanation. In English, 50% (n=5) CSWs are translated by using loan and calque translation strategy with explanation; 2 CSWs or 20% are literal; 2 CSWs or 20% are explicitness and 1 CSW or 10% is unavailable as shown in table 2 below.

Table 2: Translation strategies used to translate CSWs

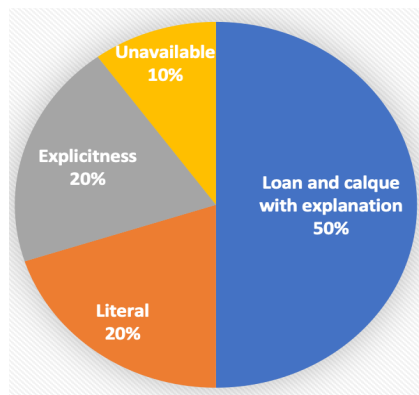
N°	Maninkakan	French	English	Translation strategy
1	Ton ta djon	« Ton ta djon » ou porteurs de carquois	clans of quiver carriers	Literal
2	Mansa si	« Mansa si » ou tribus princières	Unavailable	Unavailable
3	Mori Kanda	« Mori Kanda » ou classes de marabouts	Clans of marabouts	Literal
4	Nyamakala	Nyamakala » ou classes de métiers	The "nyamakalas"	Loan and calque
5	Kangbé	Les «Kangbé » (classe intermédiaire entre les jeunes et les vieux)	The members of the intermediary class between young and old people	Explicitness change
6	Könögbèn Wölö	La « Könögbèn Wölö »	The general system of supervision	Explicitness change
7	Mandenkaw	les « Mandenkas	the Mandinka	Loan and calque
8	Sanankunya	« Sanankunya » (cousinage à plaisanterie)	The sanankunya (joking relationship)	Loan and calque
9	Tanamanyöya	le Tanamanyöya » (forme de totémisme)	the tanamannyonya (blood pact)	Loan and calque
10	Nyara	les « Nyaras »	Nyaras (the talented)	Loan and calque

4.3 Results 3: Frequency of translation strategies

Concerning the second research question related to the most widely strategy used to translate CSWs, we found out that three translation strategies are used in English to only one

strategy in French. In French, the loan and calque strategy with explanation is used to translate all the culture-specific words or 100%. In English, three strategies are used: loan and calque with explanation, literal and explicitness. One datum is unavailable. Among them, the most frequently translation strategy used is loan and calque translation with a frequency of 50% (n=5); followed by literal 20% (n=2) and explicitness 20% (n= 2). One datum or 10% is unavailable in English as shown in the figure 1 below.

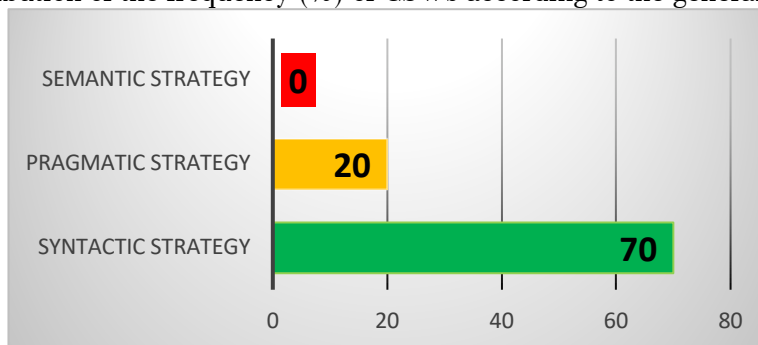
Figure 1: Frequency of translation strategies



4.4 Result 4: Distribution of data according to the general categories of strategy

After data analysis, we found out that the syntactic strategy was the most prevalent general category of translation strategy proposed by Chesterman (2016) with a frequency of 70%. We recorded 20% of pragmatic strategy. Yet, it is worth mentioning that no data of semantic strategy was recorded. Thus, it is obvious that in translating culture-bound elements, the translators should understand not only the form of the cultural words (syntactic) but also the message they carry on (pragmatic) as shown in figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Distribution of the frequency (%) of CSWs according to the general category



5. Discussion

The researcher found out 10 culture-specific words (CSWs) which are: Ton ta djon, Mansa si, Mori Kandalu, Nyamakala, Kangbé, Könögbèn Wölö, Mandenkaw, Sanankunya,

Tanamanyöya and Nyara. To translate these CSWs into French, Kouyate et al. (1999) used loan and calque translation strategy with explanation 10 times or 100%. Concerning the English version, the translator used 3 translation strategies which include: loan and calque with explanation, literal and explicitness change. The most frequent translation strategy used to translate CSWs into English is loan and calque with explanation with a frequency of 50%. This strategy refers to borrowing particular vocabulary and following the structure of the source text, which is foreign to the target reader or even untranslated text and then add an explanation to make understanding easier for the target text readership. For instance, “nyara” (ST) translated into English (TT) as “the nyaras (the talented)”. The second most frequently used translation strategy to translate CSWs are literal and explicitness change with 20% each. The literal translation means the translator follows the source text form as closely as possible without following the source language structure. For example, «Ton ta djon» (ST) to «quiver carriers »(TT). Another strategy used is the explicitness change. In this strategy, the translators add components explicitly in the TT which are only implicit in the ST. For example: «Könögbèn Wölö » (ST) to « general system of supervision » (TT). One datum or 10%; i.e « mansa si » is not available in English version. Our findings are different from those of Nitisari (2016: pp 6-9) who pointed out 8 translation strategies and 87 cultural words from Ahmad Tohari’ s *Dancer* translated into English by Rene T.A Lysloff. Among these strategies, descriptive equivalence is the most frequent strategy with 27 cultural words or 31.03% followed by loan words with 18 cultural words or 20.69%. However, our study concerned a legal document of 44 edicts whereas that of Nitisari was a novel. In addition, we adopted the translation strategies proposed by Chesterman (2016) whereas Nitisari adopted the translations strategies proposed by Newmark (1988). Haya and Djohan (2022: pp 54-64) also conducted a similar study to analyze the translation strategies applied in English-Indonesian ASEAN charter document (a legal document). They found out 8 translation strategies are used among them literal translation is the most frequent strategy with 33% followed by loan and calque with 31%. These authors think that literal translation is an appropriate strategy to translate a legal document. However, in our study which was also pertaining to a legal document, we found out that the loan and calque strategy with explanation was the most used with 50%. The difference between our findings and those of Haya and Djohan may be accounted for in two levels. The first level is the fact that our document was first translated from Maninkakan (the source language) to French (the first target language) then from French to English (the second target language) whereas that of Haya and Djohan was from English to Indonesian. There was no intermediary language between the source text and the target text. The second level may be related to the translation strategies used. We adopted the translation strategies proposed by Chesterman (2016) whereas, Haya and Djohan have used Newmark’s translation strategies (1988). Moreover, Daghighi & Mahmood (2016: p.171) conducted a study to analyze the translation strategies applied in translating culture specific items in Jalal Al-Ahmad’s *by the Pen*. They found out that functional equivalent was the most frequently used strategy in translating the CSWs with a frequency of 23.36%, and modulation and paraphrase were the least frequently used strategies with a frequency of 0.16% each. In functional equivalent, a culture-free word is used, sometimes a new specific term is used; therefore, it generalizes the SL word. However, they also used the translation strategies

proposed by Newmark (1988) with 625 culture specific items. In our study, we used Chesterman's translation strategies with only 10 culture specific words.

To sum up, we can say that culture specific words or cultural-bound elements have recently drawn the attention of many translation scholars because of the interplay between culture and language. Since languages and cultures differ from one nation to another, therefore culture specific words pose one of major challenges to translators and translation students. Yet, the translation strategies used by translators to overcome this challenge are various and differ from one translator to another. For instance, in Kurukan Fuga Charter, Kouyate et al (1999) used loan and calque with explanation to translate all the cultural words into French. This could be accounted for by the fact that Kouyate is a native speaker of Maninkakan, the source language of the Charter. Then he is aware of the cultural difference between Maninkakan and French. In English version, the translator used three translation strategies that are loan and calque with explanation, literal and explicitness change. This difference could be accounted for by the cultural understanding of the source language and the target language of the two translators.

Conclusion

Languages spoken in the world are numerous and different. And the interplay between language and culture is also obvious. Regardless to that, the communication between people from different languages and cultures is possible thanks to translation. Translator theorists and practitioners have developed different strategies that take into account the linguistic aspects as well as the cultural rules during translation process. That is why we conducted a descriptive qualitative study to identify the cultural words that occur in Kurukan Fuga Charter, a legal document of Mali empire and the translation strategy used to translate those cultural words. After data analysis, we found out that syntactic strategy was the dominant strategy in French as well as in English, followed by pragmatic strategy. No semantic strategy was recorded. We concluded that in translating cultural specific words, the syntactic and pragmatic strategies are more essential.

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