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Socio -cultural background as a prerequisite for the translation of culture-bound texts : the case of the translation of burundian lullabies into english

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THE UNIVERSITY OF BURUNDI
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

SOCIO - CULTURAL BACKGROUND AS A PREREQUISITE FOR THE TRANSLATION OF CULTURE - BOUND TEXTS :
The Case of the Translation of Burundian Lullabies into English

BY

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DEDICATION

To the Almighty God,
To my late Mother,
who did not get the opportunity to enjoy the fruits
of what she had cared for,
To my Father,
who registered me at school,
To my brothers, sisters and cousins,
with whom I share the family warmth,

I dedicate this work.

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The completion of this work would not have been possible without the assistance and advice of several people. I would like to express my gratitude to them for their help.

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I also wish to express my gratitude to the staff of the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Burundi for the training I have got from them.

My sincere and profound thanks are due to the HOBAYOs who have always been in my parents' place whenever the latter could not reach me, and the NTIBUBERWAs and the NDABIRINDEs for what they have done for me.

I am also grateful to my brother Arthémon HAKIZIMANA for his generosity in typing this paper.

Last but not least, I convey my feelings to relatives, friends and comrades. May all of them find in these pages the fruit of our mutual understanding and combined efforts.

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CHAPTER ONE. THE PROBLEM AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction

Language is a communicative tool restricted to human beings. It allows people gathered together to interact. However, languages spoken around the world differ from one community to another. What is striking is that communities living far from one another and hence speaking different languages still need to communicate through language. This becomes more true in this modern world undergoing many changes, where new ideas, new beliefs and discoveries concerning peoples' lives are spreading. In such a situation where people are concerned with materials available in languages they are not competent in, translation or interpretation becomes all the more important.

In fact, translation makes possible foreign news coverage in the press, on the radio and television, and in weekly news magazines as well as highly specialized trade publications. It enables people of all cultures to enjoy foreign films (whether through subtitles or voice dubbing), plays and television productions. As Congrat-Batler (1979: 2) points out, "*We are the heirs of diverse cultures of the past because translators have made them available to us.*"

Nevertheless, not all aspects of language are easy to understand for everybody. Some items are culture-bound or a figurative language may be used. Hence, they are not easily understood by people who do not have enough cultural background. Therefore, the understanding of such specific culture-bound language needs a deep investigation in the speaker's culture, including their tradition based on their everyday activities, the way they view the world, their beliefs and customs, their history, their attitude towards natural events like death, birth, to name but a few.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Any extract or passage of a text bound to a given culture makes it difficult to render the same message from the source language into another language. In fact, this consists of depriving the original text of its own vehicle, that is, its own source language. The new tool does not always fit in all situations as the original does. According to Lado (1974 : 110), society, culture and language are intimately related. He adds that : "*Culture is synonymous with the ways of people. Those ways of people are reflected in words which make the lexis.*"

Similarly, Burundian mothers have their own way of life which makes them distinct from women from elsewhere. They have their particular everyday life. This is expressed through lullabies they perform. These lullabies are classified among literary genres and especially under lyrical oral poetry. Ndabazerutse (1999 : 40) had this to say about Burundian lullabies : *"In this Lyrical poetry, the poet vaunts his own sentiments, it is an effusion, a confident."*

For this literary genre classification, we may also refer to the one suggested by Ntabona (1979) : *"Les berceuses, un genre littéraire, classé parmi les récitatifs lyriques et musicaux"*. (*Lullabies, a literary genre classified among musical and lyrical recitatives).* Hence, a mother soothing her baby expresses her deep feelings. But what we are mostly concerned with is not the analysis of such feelings. Rather, some of the words and expressions she uses are particularly important for our study. In fact, like many other literary genres found in Kirundi, including speeches delivered at social events and parties, figures of speech are often used in Kirundi. The metaphor, for example, is often used in Burundian lullabies.

Metaphorical expressions are used to describe a situation, a feeling, etc., or to express a certain thought, using images and symbols. For instance, in the line "Aragatuma Rukona", (May s/he send Rukona to...), Rukona is a type of bird which has a particular connotation in Burundian culture, namely a messenger who

is not serious, that one cannot trust. Therefore, it would be difficult or even impossible to translate it with its cultural peculiarity if the translator himself is not equipped with the required cultural background.

The most striking problem is that there is no hint, no theory to interpret the symbols or images found in these texts. This makes it very difficult for some people, especially those without deep cultural knowledge, to understand what those symbols and images denote. As Harerimana (1998 : 3) puts it, *''Symbols do not give meanings of the things they stand for. They rather give a reference, a connotation, they refer to the culture and philosophy of the society which uses them by means of a series of analogies.''*

Such a problem of understanding inevitably impedes a good translation to take place.

In addition to the problem of understanding created by the use of a figurative language, this particular language may entail other problems like ambiguity or the problem of linguistic or cultural correspondence between the source and target languages. In fact, for the symbol used, we may have various interpretations since the language used in lullabies is taken from the woman's day-to-day life, her activities, her emotions or feelings. Hence, people may interpret them literally ignoring that they refer to her culture, to her individual or collective life. This misinterpretation or misunderstanding ipso facto leads to mistranslation.

Therefore, it goes without saying that translation can only succeed when the translator has throroughly conceived what is communicated through the original language. This leads us to affirm that translation in general, and particularly translation of culture-specific terms is not an easy task at all, since the terms are not recurrent nor widespread. They are restricted to a certain community from the same culture. Thus, the translator might face a case where there is neither a similar situation nor an equivalent lexis in the target language. He might also come across an ambiguous word which causes problems of specifying its true equivalent in the

target language. For example, in the line : *Hora cagura nâma (Please calm down, you who widens the yard).* Not everyone who speaks Kirundi can understand the expression 'Kwagura inâma' (to widen the yard). One's linguistic knowledge and competence is not enough to decipher the true meaning of this line. The word 'Inâma' is ambiguous and so is its English correspondent – the yard. But here we are mostly interested in the polysemy in the source language. In fact, 'Inâma' can mean 'a meeting' as in the sentence 'Twagiye mu nama' (We went to the meeting). It can also mean 'a consent' as in 'twagiye inama' (We made an agreement). It can also refer to 'the yard' as said above.

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, this yard referring to a place is defined as *"an enclosed or partly enclosed space near or round a building or group of buildings, often paved."* Here, the translator faces a serious problem as he tries to choose the exact equivalent in the target language among the list of source language meanings provided. If he chooses the first, that is 'meeting', or the second which is a 'consent', the line 'Kwagura inâma' loses its meaning. But if he chooses the third meaning, that is 'yard', he is right and the line is still meaningful, though it does not exactly correspond to its meaning in the source language. For instance, the yard referred to in the source language is not paved. In traditional Burundi, it referred to a place out of the enclosure but near the main entrance, where the elders sat while discussing their problems. It was not paved at all. Therefore, a true conception of such a word is essential for getting the right translation. This requires the empirical knowledge of culture and society. For this situation and the like, the understanding of culture-bound expressions requires sociolinguistic competence besides the linguistic one. In this particular example, one has to know how a child was valued in Burundian culture. He is the one who strengthens family ties, the one who ascribes the motherhood value to its mother, the one who increases the number of kins and makes them perennial. Therefore, to widen the yard predicts that the child will grow up and make his own household, he will get children and hence enlarge the family. Thus, the line 'kwagura inâma' implicitly refers to family widening, which

was an important feature of the Burundian traditional society. A good translation is impossible without a thorough understanding of the message in the source language.

1.3. Aims of the Study and Motivation

Burundian lullabies portray the mother's everyday life. Through them, she expresses her household activities, her feelings, her joy, her emotions, her anxiety for the child, her situation in general. But she uses an encoded language which requires familiarity with the Burundian culture in order to understand what she is saying.

Through her lyric, a number of words and expressions reveal her deep feelings and her surrounding area composed of people, animals and other things. It is from these that she chooses images and symbols to express her views. However, the understanding of this connotative language is not easy for everybody. It is a privilege of people who thoroughly master the Burundian culture. Therefore, the present study aims at showing that the socio-cultural background is indispensable for the translation of Burundian lullabies which comprise a figurative language. Hence, its understanding requires a previous knowledge of the society and the most recurrent themes and characters. As Harimenshi (1974 : 101) points out, *« Les berceuses sont un genre littéraire typiquement féminin. Leurs thèmes sont très riches et leur style est très poétique. »* (Lullabies are a literary genre typically female. Their themes are very rich and their style is very poetic). She singles out themes related to the child, its mother, God, the stepmother and that of close relatives.

In this literary genre, the themes are developed in an encoded language which hampers the understanding of the text for those who are not familiar with the language and the culture. This may decrease people's interest in the genre. Such an attitude causes cultural value decay. As far as I am concerned, I find it would be an enormous loss for the community. Indeed, culture loss implies part of identity loss. Lado (1974 : 110) asserts that "*It is the culture that makes a people distinct from other peoples*".

From this, we understand that a lost cultural feature corresponds to a loss of some people's characteristics. In fact, if we consider the extent to which Burundian lullabies are performed today, we realize that they are no longer conferred great importance. Rather they run the risk of disappearing. As Mvuyekure and Ntahorubura (1962) quoted in Harimenshi (1974: 96) point out,

> *Actuellement, on rencontre très peu de mères Burundaises initiées aux berceuses. Ce genre de chanson populaire tend à disparaître. Dans les milieux campagnards, on entend encore quelques vers. Dans les milieux citadins, les berceaux à l'européenne se répandent. (Today, we find few Burundian mothers initiated into lullabies. This kind of popular chant tends to disappear. We still hear some verses upcountry. In the cities, european cradles are spreading).*

That is the reason why we chose to work on Burundian lullabies. They mirror to a large extent the performer's situation, her identity. Therefore, this study is a contribution, however little it may be, to preserving part of our culture.

Although we are not mainly concerned with the translation of Burundian lullabies, we intend to suggest a way a translator of such texts should follow to achieve his task as successfully as possible. Thus, the text being available in other languages, it allows our culture to spread out. Foreigners may grasp it as we grasp theirs. We agree with Newmark (1988 : 7) when he says that *"Translation has been instrumental in transmitting culture, the truth, a force for progress (...) by following the course of resistance to the Bible translation and the preservation of Latin as a superior language of the elect, with a consequent disincentive to translating between other languages (...)."*

Indeed, no language or culture should be neglected or disregarded. Rather, they should spread over different areas so that speakers of other languages would learn from the culture and grasp its value. According again to Newmark (1988:9),

"Translation is now used as much to transmit knowledge and to create understanding between groups and nations, as to transmit culture."

Clearly put, as my university studies involved the English language and literature, we learned much that was expressed through that language. Therefore, I feel I can give a hand to those who worked on that literary genre - Burundian lullabies and hence, promote our culture providing some hints to spread it to a larger extent, so as to share it with other linguistic communities.

However, as I have already pointed out, there are prerequisites a translator of culture-bound texts should be equipped with in order to achieve his goal. Our study intends to display the one which, in our opinion, stands out the most, that is the socio-cultural background.

1.4. Research Questions

The questions this study aims at answering concern the prerequisites a translator of Burundian lullabies must rely on as preliminaries to achieving his goal. Such questions are the following :

- Is linguistic competence in both Kirundi and English sufficient to achieve the task ?
- Does knowledge of the society and its culture contribute to achieving the goal ?
- Does the context help in any way to find a corresponding lexical item ?
- Is the translation of a culture-bound language possible ?

1.5. Scope and Delimitation of the Study

We do not intend to work on all versions of Burundian lullabies. We will select from our data, words and expressions requiring knowledge of the society and its culture in order to be translated. Therefore, relying on different themes and characters found in Burundian lullabies, we will focus on words and expressions whose mental representation is difficult for a number of people, and then causing problems of transfer into the target language. Among these we will include images, symbols, metaphors, idioms and other lexis peculiar to the Burundian society.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

As already mentioned, Burundian lullabies belong to the major literary genre called poetry. This genre uses more than any other figurative language. As Sefu (1985) puts it.

> *« Les Berceuses peignent un tableau très riche en images. La mère recourt en effet à divers procédés pour rendre sa pensée plus frappante et plus belle, à savoir les figures.»* (Lullabies paint out a picture which is very rich in images. In fact, the mother resorts to different proceedings in order to make her thought more striking and more beautiful, that is, figures).

Among other figures of speech used, the metaphor is the most important for our study since it involves poetry. Our aim here being that of showing that to decode such a figurative language on the basis of the socio-cultural background constitutes a hint to better translation. However, it is worth defining first some key terms for our study.

2.2. Definition of Key Terms

We judge it necessary to supply the way we understand the most important terms used in our work. Cuddon (1977) defines the following terms as follows :

- Figurative language : a language which uses figures of speech ; for example, metaphor, simile,alliteration, etc. (page 271)
- Lyric : The Greek defined a lyric as a "*song to be sung to the accompaniment of a lyre.*" Cuddon adds that "*A lyric usually expresses the feelings and thoughts of a single speaker (...) in a personal and subjective fashion.*" (page 372)

Similarly, the mother lulling her baby expresses her own feelings and does it in a personal way.

- Metaphor : a figure of speech in which one thing is described in terms of another. It is the basic figure in poetry. A comparison is usually implicit, whereas in simile,it is explicit (page 391). Newmark (1988:105) defines metaphor as : *"the figurative word used, which may be one word, or extended over any stretch of language from a collocation to the whole text."*

  For both authors, a thing is not expressed directly, another one is used instead.

- Imagery : the making of likeness... Imagery as a general term covers the use of language to represent objects, actions, feelings, thoughts, ideas, states of mind and any sensory or extra-sensory experience (...). Many images are conveyed by a figurative language (page 322).

  For Newmark (1988: 106), an image is "*the picture conjured up by the metaphor, which may be universal, cultural or individual.*"

  As for Rodegem (1973 : 230) c'est *« un procédé par lequel on rend une idée plus sensible au moyen de formes empruntées à des objets similaires.» (*A process by which we make an idea more striking using borrowed forms from similar objects*)*

- Symbol : a symbol is an object, animate or inanimate, which represents or stands for something else (page 671).

  Newmark (1988: 106) adds that "*It is a type of cultural metonym where a material object represents a concept*". Rodegem (1973:231) views it as : *« C'e qui représente une réalité abstraite .»* (What represents an abstract reality).

2.3. Understanding Lullabies

Not everybody can understand the language used in lullabies. In addition, given the style, one might consider them as sentences without any link between them. But a

number of researchers have proved lullabies to be meaningful items. Gahama (1998) considers lullabies as belonging to *"...a rule-governed form of speech behavior."*

When we analyse them carefully, we find that Burundian lullabies are linked to culture and society. They are brief, condensed but may seem to carry superflous words for those who do not know the Burundian culture.

According to Barutwanayo (1983), Burundians convey their thoughts in a particular way as seen in the following lines :

> *Le Murundi recourt au langage symbolique (...) pour transmettre sa pensée. C'est pourquoi il faut entrer en profondeur pour comprendre les coutumes, saisir l'idée essentielle qui pousse l'imagination à adopter tel ou tel comportement.* (The Burundian resorts to a symbolic language (...) when conveying his thoughts. That is why one must think deeply to understand customs in order to grasp the main idea which leads to the thought of adopting a particular behavior).

The fact that Burundian lullabies are constructed on the basis of symbols makes them elusive. In fact, these symbols are taken from the Burundian culture and their understanding is difficult or even impossible without prior knowledge of the culture.

The mother soothing her baby expresses her feelings or describes her physical surrounding, expressing the way she views it. Therefore, symbols and images, basic constituents of lullabies, are a representation of moral things. To understand lullabies becomes then decoding symbols and images and this can only be done by integrating them into a symbolic system of the Burundian culture. In order to translate such a connotative language, one must be able to decode such a language, give it its true interpretation and then proceed with translation.

The task of translation is also challenging, especially when a culture-bound text like lullabies is involved. Bassnet (1987 : 16) has argued that different languages belong to different worlds. She says that "*No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same worlds with different labels attached.*"

In fact, the source language and the target language belong to two different worlds which consequently view things differently. For instance, if the mother soothing her baby chooses symbols from her physical surrounding, the interpretation or the meaning they carry lies in the culture of the society she belongs to. This leads us to take a look at the relationship between the concepts of language, culture and society.

2.3.1. Language, Culture and Society

There is a close relationship between these three concepts and it is worth mentioning it for a study involving a literary genre which is peculiar to a given society. Indeed, the performers - members of the society - express their views through a language. However, what is expressed is not always easy to understand especially when it describes people's culture. The latter is the concept whose understanding provides a clue to the understanding of the other two concepts, that is language and society.

According to Newmark (1988 : 94), culture is defined as : "*The way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression.*" This researcher distinguishes what is 'cultural' from what is 'universal' and 'personal'.

Harerimana (1998) has also looked at the relationship between culture and language. According to him, "*Culture is the cornerstone of every language in all its aspects, for language and culture are so closely linked that the understanding of one supposes the*

understanding of the other. Language exists because culture exists for language expresses what its users have gone through, what they have experienced, what they think and how they behave."

Such a claim is of great importance to us since it shows that language is a mirror of a particular culture. Shapiro (1960) agrees with Harerimana when he states that *"The bulk of culture is phrased in through sub-vocal speech and transmitted by word of mouth."*

Therefore, as shown above, we assert that language cannot be separated from culture. Also, as pointed out earlier, Burundian lullabies are culture-bound texts. Indeed, they are performed through language which reflects culture. Hence, their understanding is not possible without a prior understanding of Burundian culture in general and of women's situation in particular. One should also mention that not only the translator must have a clear - cut knowledge of the source language culture but the target language reader also needs the cultural source language background. Otherwise, he will not always understand the meaning as intended by the translator.

This is due to the fact already mentioned that language and culture are intimately linked. Sapir (1975) quoted in Bassnett (1987 :17) talks about such a relashionship :

> *No language can exist unless it is steeped in the context of culture, and no culture can exist which does not have at its center, the structures of natural language. Language then is the heart within the body of culture, and it is the interaction between the two that results in the continuation of life energy.*

As for the relationship between culture and society, it is also obvious inasmuch as a particular community has its own way of living, that is culture. And texts like lullabies spring from people's traditions, beliefs, and activities making up their culture.

In this connection, Mair (1965 :75) points out that *"Culture is a commom possession of a body of people who share the same traditions in social terms and such a body is what we call 'society'."*

Hence, society often views its culture, its beliefs, its concerns most of the time via language. This leads us to assert that language and society are linked as well.

In a nutshell, despite their differences in nature, the three concepts have striking relationships which make them very close. Harerimana (1988 : 27) expresses that quite clearly :

> *Culture is not a material phenomenon but ideas, customs, arts, ... of a human group at a given time. We cannot say the same for a society because a society is composed of persons rather than ideas. This is the main difference between these terms and both culture and society influence the language and vice versa.*

In one word, the three concepts, that is, language culture and society are intimately linked.

2.3.2. The Context of Lullabies

Broadly speaking, lullabies are not specific to Burundians only. They also exist in countries other than Burundi. By merely referring to The Dictionary of Literary Terms, we realize that lullabies exist elsewhere and are defined as : *"a soothing bed-time song or chant to send a child to sleep."*

However, in Burundian lullabies context, the style, characters, themes pertaining to them and the objective of the performer make it different and the genre carries with it its peculiarities. Gahama (1988 :1) points out that *"Burundian lullabies are circumstancial and are only produced by females."*

This does not fit the definition given earlier according to which anyone knowing the song can send the baby to sleep. In addition, this genre gives its performers an opportunity to fulfil another aim. Referring to Burundian lullabies, one of Sefu's (1985 : 56) respondents reveals that *"Ni bwo buryo bw'umuvyeyi bwo guserura akamubakiye ku mutima."* (It is an opportunity for the mother to express her deep concern).

From this, we may say that the translator ought to know the social context of lullabies and the themes developed through them. To decipher the message concealed by these themes requires the knowledge of the culture and society. Also, such a background constitutes a bridge to both understanding and translation.

2.3.3. Understanding Culture and Society as a Bridge to a Better Translation.

Lullabies picture the traditional woman's concern and experience. They also inform about relationships in the Burundian society. However, this picture is not grasped by everybody because comprehension of the language used involves more than linguistic knowledge. It also requires the knowledge of the real society that speaks that language and so does translation. In this connection, Brislin (1976 : 95) states that,

> *when the translator is not as familiar with the original language, nor as fully cognizant of the subject matter as the native reader, there is an immediate risk that he will resort to linguistic equivalents and that his renderings will no longer stem from the ideas contained in the original text but from the meanings individual words have as such.*

Dolet (1540) quoted in Bassnett (1987 : 6) argues that *"The translator must fully understand the sense and meaning of the original author, although he is at liberty to clarify obscurities."*

Brislin stresses an in-depth analysis of the society and its language. He adds that *"The translator has to enter into the mind and heart of his author, relive his circumstances, refeel what he felt, reperceive what he perceived."*

For the translator of Burundian lullabies, the above claim is quite relevant. The translator must be mindful of the themes and characters focused on in Burundian lullabies. This will be developed in the section on the analysis of the data.

2.3.4. Understanding Burundian Lullabies

To understand such culture - bound messages involves a number of stages. Firstly, one should search in tradition and analyse culture ; hence symbols and images used in the lullabies should be singled out in order to be analysed.

Secondly, one should find out the reasons or beliefs which motivated the perfomers to choose such symbols and images. Indeed, before we understand them, we have to understand the concrete objects which stand for abstract ideas. In fact, it is on the basis of what is perceptible like symbols that we can understand images of language in general and culture-bound texts like lullabies in particular.

The understanding of culture helps to interpret symbols whose meaning or value depends largely on the performers' beliefs, ideas and impressions that they share with the society. Nida (1974 : 283) clings to this view when he says that: *"Nothing can replace the cultural stock. Each language is an integral part of the cultural context."*

After a clear reference of a given symbol or image to the culture, we try to look for the relationship between the social communication and culture in general, and then establish a link between things which we observe in a given situation and those raised by images in lullabies. We consider this as the last stage in the understanding of the language used in Burundian lullabies.

Once the words and expressions have been given their true meaning, and the whole text thoroughly understood, then translation may be tackled.

However, other difficulties may arise at this stage. Cultural correspondence is the core of the problems. As already pointed out, when people live different and distant worlds, they view their surroundings differently. The words and expressions used are different and have different connotations. As Nida (1974) points out, *"Language is best described as part of culture because words are fundamentally symbols for features of culture."*

When one is asked to translate such features of culture into another language culture, it is not an easy task at all. But let us take a look at translation.

2.4. What is Translation?

We are mainly concerned with the prerequisites for the translation of Burundian lullabies into English. But a look at the translation field in general is necessary. We judge it worth defining what translation is. There are many definitions proposed by various scholars. Catford (1965 : 20) defines it as *"The replacement of textual material in one language(Source Language) by equivalent textual material in another language (Target Language)."*

Brislin (1976 : 1) says that translation is *"The transfer of thoughts and ideas from one language(source) to another (target) whether the languages are in written or oral form, whether the languages have established orthographies or do not have standardisation ; or whether one or both languages are based on signs, as with sign languages of the deaf."*

Newmark (1988 :7) views translation as "A *craft consisting in the attempt to replace a written message and or statement in one language by the same message and or statement in another language."*

We notice that these definitions converge in affirming that translation is a task consisting of the attempt to replace oral or textual material in one language called "source language" by oral or textual material in other language (target language). However, although closely related, the nuance between interpretation and translation should be mentioned. Brislin (1976 : 1) distinguishes them in the following way :

> *Interpretation is one type of translation, and it refers to oral communication situations in which one person speaks in the source language, an interpretor processes this input and produces an output in a second language, and a third person listens to the source language version.*

In our case, translation is very interesting because we proceed with the corpus written in the source language, that is Kirundi. But we have to recall problems related to such a task. It involves two languages belonging to two different cultures. They are very distant languages in that Kirundi belongs to the Bantu language family while English belongs to the Indo-European language family. That is why it is hard and even sometimes impossible to always find exact equivalences for all the Kirundi lexis and expressions. Many words and expressions are specific, that is culture-bound and this raises the problem of translatability. However, one should wonder if such a challenging task is worth undertaking. This leads us to raise the following question :

2.4.1. Is the Translation of Culture-Bound Texts Necessary?

In discussing the aim of this study and motivation, we singled out the importance of translation of culture-bound texts as being twofold : it is a way of preserving some items of culture and of spreading it to wider areas. In talking about the importance of preserving culture, Levis-strauss (1960) indicates that

> *"C'est une responsabilité de chaque peuple, non seulement vis-à-vis de lui-même, mais envers l'humanité toute entière ; aucun ne doit périr avant d'avoir pris pleinement conscience de son originalité et de sa valeur."* (It is everyone's responsibility, not

> only vis-à-vis himself, but towards the whole mankind. No one should perish before he has thoroughly had conscience of his originality and his value).

We share the same view with Levis-strauss in that we chose to work on lullabies, in order to preserve our cultural value.

In a conference held in Bujumbura French Cultural Center, Ntabona and Nathan (2004) think that not only African cultures should be preserved, but also, the cultural richness contained in the source language should be rendered in the target language. They say :

> *« Il va de soi que la traduction des langues africaines favorise la mise en valeur de la multiplicité des cultures (...). Nous pensons que la traduction doit rendre dans la langue d'arrivée les richesses culturelles contenues dans la langue de départ : tant la charge sémantique, que le style et la tension affective, tant l'histoire sous-jacente que le texte qui s'y reflète - en un mot : l'humus du texte .»*

This may be translated as :

> It goes without saying that the translation of African languages favours the cultural multiplicity valorization (...). We think that translation must transfer into the target language, the cultural richness contained in the source language : the semantic load as well as the style and the affective tension, the underlying history and the reflected text - in one word : the humus of the text.

We conclude this subsection recognizing that translation does not only render meaning from the source language to the target, but also transfers the source language culture, and its richness spreads as well.

However, a number of persons, even among philologists, contend that translation is impossible. This inevitably arises our attention and we deal with it in the following subsection.

2.4.2. Is Translation Possible?

Although translation is a means to a number of ends, some people question its success. There are some who even consider it as ideal, hence lacking practicality. However, what is surprising is that some of those who claim that translation is impossible would like their views, their writings to spread via languages other than the source languages. Brislin (1976 : 63) reveals that *"Even some of the same philologists who insist on untranslatability want their own works translated."* This is interesting.

For us, the question of untranslatability would be more relevant if it were discussed in terms of absolute or relative equivalence. We take for granted that people must communicate and through any means of communication that is more convenient for them. And one should not only be interested in the degree of message transmission and comprehension, but also in the effect the message has on the hearer or the reader.

In the previous sections, we have stressed the understanding of the source language as a prerequisite to a good translation. Yet, we should precise that a thorough understanding of what is communicated is not always possible. According to Brislin (1976 : 64) , *"Even among experts discussing a subject within their own field of specialization, it is unlikely that comprehension rises above the 80 percent level."*

Broadly speaking, we cannot view translation merely as a total equivalence between source and target languages but as essentially an aspect of a larger domain, namely that of communication. In fact, a translator or an interpretor communicates what he has in his mind and this is what he grasped from the source language.

Therefore, if one is to insist that translation must involve no loss of information whatsoever, then obviously not only translation but all communication is impossible. Hence, one would be right to wonder if people never communicate. In other words, can one assert that people never succeed in conveying their meanings as they wished? Brislin's (1976 : 63) opinion provides an answer to our question:

> *No communication, whether intralingual, interlingual, or intersemiotic, can occur without some loss of information. Loss of information is part of any communication process, and hence the fact that some loss occurs in translation* should not be *surprising, nor should it constitute a basis for questioning the legitimacy of translating.*

We deduce from the above that translation has a lot in common with communication. However, problems pertaining to it are not to be neglected.

2.5. Translatability vs. Untranslatability

This binary opposition shows us that translation varies between two extremes: translatability and untranslatability. One should mention that on the one hand, total translatability is not always easy to achieve especially when words denoting non universal objects are involved. On the other hand, total untranslatability is not possible, unless communication is impossible. As Duff (1981) quoted by Ndihokubwayo (1997 : 17) puts it :

> *A text is neither completely translatable nor untranslatable. Each exercise of translation is a continued tension, a dialectic in which, the basic loss is a continuum between over-translation and undertranslation. It is an operation in which the limits of translatability are determined and remedied so that the sum of gains and losses on each linguistic item brings about the same effect as was made on the audience of the source tongue.*

When translating, the modification of source tongue lexical items meaning into the target tongue lexical items is sometimes inevitable. But this, as pointed out earlier, cannot support those who question the validity of translation. It can always be attempted provided that it retains the maximum possible sense from the source language.

All the same, though we claim that there is always a way for translation, we may single out some of the most striking problems the translator faces. They fall into three categories: the difficulty may be related to linguistic translatability, cultural translatability or the two may happen simultaneously, and the third case is the problem of ambiguity.

2.5.1. The Problem of Linguistic Translatability

This situation occurs when an item in the source language does not have a suitable equivalent in the target language, or if it does, it is not adequately replaced (in structural linear or semantic terms). According to Robins (1987 : 24), "*the finding of lexical equivalents is easiest with the words of languages whose cultures are more or less similar or words that are used universally.*"

Concerning the words that are specific to Burundian culture of lulling a baby, they seem not to have English equivalents because of the lexical gap which exists between the two languages. The reason may result from the fact that the culture of baby lulling is valued differently in the two worlds and hence in the two languages, that is Kirundi and English. While baby lulling actually intends to send it to sleep, a number of themes occur in Rundi lullabies. The importance the mother associates with her child in the Burundian society reflects the wide use of a peculiar lexis. In fact, a baby is the only one who ascribes its mother the quality of motherhood because the lack of it makes the mother's life meaningless, neglected and contemptously considered by everybody. That is why she expresses her pride resulting from the possession of the baby, her anguish in case it dies, her hatred towards those who are dangerous to the baby especially the stepmother. However, one has to know the

Burundian society in order to grasp the characteristcs associated with the stepmother: inhuman, cruel, brutal, and so on.

This implies that the target language reader will not be able to read all these characteristics from the sole term "stepmother" if he does not refer to her cultural background. This results in the problem of linguistic translatability.

An additional problem related to translatability concerns the suprasegmental elements. They are particularly hard to render in the target language. For instance, the intonation, the rhythm, the performer's attitude, his/her gestures, the quality of the voice which may have a particular effect on the receptor. Coupez (1970) quoted in Rodegem (1973 : 68) expresses such problems as follows :

> *Les harmoniques évoquées dans l'esprit d'un Rundi à l'audition d'un nom, d'un vers, d'un proverbe sont nombreuses mais totalement absentes dans une traduction aussi fidèle soit-elle. Il faudrait être sensibilisé pour percevoir les connotations, les sentiments qu'un mot suscite par sa seule présence.*

This may be translated as :

> *Harmonics evoked in a Burundian's spirit when he she hears a noun, a line, a proverb are numerous but totally absent in translation however faithful it may be. One should be sensitized in order to perceive connotations, feelings that a word arouses by its sheer presence.*

The above claim stresses the importance of the cultural background to understand the message communicated through a translated text. It goes without saying that the translator must be familiar with the source language and fully understand the message to be rendered in the target language before translation can be attempted.

2.5.2. The Problem of Cultural Translatability

Apart from problems related to linguistic translatability, cultural translatability may be a hindrance as well. A distinction between the two has been made by Bassnett (1980:37) who states that :

> *Linguistic untranslatability occurs where there is no lexical or syntactic substitute in the target language for a source language, whereas cultural untranslatability is due to the absence in target language culture of a relevant situational feature for the source language text.*

There are situations which exist in one linguistic community and not in another. Therefore, when it comes to translating a language which is bound to a given culture into another language where the situation described by the source language does not exist, the translator runs into problems unless he/she manages to find the nearest equivalent. As Kabugubugu (1997 : 28) puts it,

> *Language is itself a part of culture and its role is not simply one of expression but a more complex natural network in which language actively symbolises the social system. Therefore, if those words to translate are peculiar to the culture of language area, then there is the inevitable failure of culture correspondence and translation faces the risk of becoming too hard.*

We consider the above point of view as genuine. Language easily describes things which take place in the society in which it is used. To describe situations or things belonging to a socio-cultural area it is not used in, the target language does not always suit. For instance, the mother (in Rundi lullabies) says: '*Ntagira igisokozo ku mweko' (She does not have a comb on the belt).*

The statement in English does not convey the meaning carried by the source language. The latter is metaphorically used and means: She does not have a child. In fact, the idiom "kugira igisokozo ku mweko" refers to a situation in Burundian culture where mothers carry a comb on their 'belt' which serves to comb the babies' hair. It would be of no use to a woman without a baby. Such a situation might be absent in English culture and the literal translation "she does not have a comb on the 'belt' " would be meaningless, and this is the problem resulting from the translation of culture-bound items. In fact, the source language describes a situation which does not exist in the target language culture.

In addition, even the word 'umweko' translated as a 'belt' provides information on the way mothers dress: they use a kind of string to tighten the dress around their waist. We are not sure if such a way of dressing exists in the English culture. If it does not, it is very difficult for the target language reader who is not a Burundian to understand thoroughly- without any loss of meaning. In case he does not understand the message as the speaker intended it, that is the culture untranslatability, but there is always a way if one must transfer his thoughts.

One might wonder why a mother resorts to words that are peculiar to her culture. According to Lyons (1968:42)

> *The word is defined as a socially acquired knowledge, that is, the knowledge that someone has by virtue of his being a member of a particular society ...people tend to notice (and remember) the things that are codable in their language ; that is things that fall within the scope of readily available words and expressions.*

From the above view, we understand that such an encoded language makes them feel at ease when expressing their views, helps them to keep the tradition since they can easily remember things thanks to such a language.

2.5.3. Ambiguity

The term ambiguity usually refers to a word or sentence which expresses more than one meaning. Several types of ambiguity are recognized but according to Crystal (1991), the most widely discussed in recent years are the structural or grammatical ambiguity and lexical ambiguity.

♦ Structural (or grammatical) ambiguity is, according to Crystal (1991: 17), *"A phrase-structure ambiguity where alternative constituent structures can be assigned to a construction."*

From this definition, one realizes that structural ambiguity is related to the stucture or the syntax of a text.

For instance, we find grammatical (structural) ambiguity in the following :

- The lamb is too hot to eat ;

  Which can mean either :

  a) The lamb is too hot and therefore cannot eat anything

     Or

  b) The cooked lamb is too hot for someone to eat (it).

- He gave them black clothes and shoes to wear on the wedding day.

  a) Black (clothes and shoes), that is, black is related at the same time to clothes and shoes.

  b) Black (clothes) and shoes, that is, black is related only to clothes.

♦ Lexical ambiguity is due to the alternative meaning of an individual lexical item. We can use an example from Burundian lullabies.

e.g. Hora mwana w'intama,

Nayo iw`intambwe araryana

Literally translated as : *Be quiet, sheep's child, while the lion's one is ferocious.*

The sheep's child being a "lamb", the translator may also say: 'Be quiet, lamb`.

The word 'lamb' is ambiguous. The target language reader will face problems of understanding if he does not rely on context or if he does not know the association made with the child in his culture.

In fact, according to Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics, a lamb may refer to:

- a young sheep of less than one year old, or young of various other animals
- a gentle or weak person
- a dear
- a person easily cheated or deceived
- the flesh of a lamb used as food.

Referring to the context and cultural background, we assert that 'lamb' in the example 'Hora mwana w'intama nayo uw'intabwe araryana' means a 'dear', or 'a gentle', or a 'weak' person.

According again to Crystal (1991:22), "*ambiguity becomes a serious problem to translation which is a paraphrastic activity relying on an interpretative operation in order to establish semantic equivalence relation between source language lexical items and target language lexical items.*"

Ambiguity may also be a problem to communication. It impedes the translation process at all levels. First of all, it can be a block to the task of interpretation which is a sine qua non for understanding the target language. Secondly, it can be a problem in the act of paraphrasing from a source language to a target language. Thirdly, it can hamper understanding of the text in the target language if the translator has not been able to disambiguate it. Source language understanding is then the cornerstone of a good translation, and other elements such as the translator's skills and the context come into play to improve the quality of the translation suggested.

2.6. Principles of Translation

While translating, we should bear in mind that some principles must be respected. Among these, the principles of accuracy and economy stand out. These respectively refer to the dynamic equivalence principle according to which a translation should produce the same effect as was made on the audience of the original, and it has to be as short as possible and as long as necessary so that the equilibrium in the number of words between the two texts can be maintained. This is worth mentioning especially for the already mentioned cases of linguistic and cultural problems of translatability. Indeed, in such situations, there is a temptation to translate one word or expression by a phrase, a sentence or even a paragraph, which might cause much more difficulty in understanding.

If we refer to the already given example 'umweko' in the sentence 'ntagira igisokozo ku mweko', we realise that the word 'umweko' itself does not refer to a situation which exists in the target language. Thus, its accurate translation is very hard and in this case, the above principles are broken. In fact, 'umweko' is only one word which requires more than one equivalent in the target language, at least if one attempts to convey the nearest meaning to the original. 'Umweko' may be translated as a 'belt' or a 'string'which was used by Burundian women to tighten their clothes around their waist.

Although these principles are hard to observe, some translation methods attempt to respect them, especially the semantic and communicative translation methods.

2.7. Some Translation Methods

The task of translation is age-old. But according to Newmark (1988: 45), the central problem of translating has always been whether to translate literally or freely. The argument has been going on since at least the first century B.C. Up to the 19th Century, many writers favoured some kind of 'free' translation as Newmark puts it,

"The spirit, not the letter; the sense not the words ; the message rather than the form ; the matter not the manner."

This was the often revolutionary slogan of writers who wanted the truth to be read and understood. This view is in opposition to that of the 'literalists'. The latter advocate literal translation. According to this method, the source language grammatical constructions are converted to their nearest target language equivalents but the lexical words are again translated singly, out of context.

Semantic and communicative translation methods must be seen as wholes. Semantic translation is personal and individual, follows the thought processes of the author, tends to over-translate, pursues nuances of meaning, yet aims at concision in order to produce pragmatic impact. Communicative translation, on the other hand, is social, concentrates on the message and the main force of the text, tends to undertranslate, to be simple, clear and is always written in a natural and resourceful style.

A communicative translation is often better than its original. According to Newmark (1988: 49), *"A semantic translation has to interpret, a communicative translation to explain."* Communicative translation is more accurate, while semantic translation is more economical. These two methods attempt to fulfil the two main principles of translation (economy and accuracy) but only differ in terms of the extent to which they observe them.

Still other translation methods can be singled out. Adaptation and free translation have much in common. Both stress the content of the original. To quote Newmark (1988:50) again *"Adaptation is the 'freest' form of translation. It is used mainly for plays (comedies) and poetry ; the themes, characters, plots are usually preserved, the source language culture converted to the target language culture and the text rewritten."*

As for free translation, he says that "*It reproduces the matter without the manner, or the content without the form of the original. Usually it is a paraphrase much longer than the original.*"

2.8. Translation of a Figurative Language

2.8.1. The Translation of Metaphors

We have already pointed out that translation is not an easy task at all. Apart from the problem encountered in their translation method for a text, the tanslation of metaphors is more challenging. According to Newmark (1988: 104) a metaphor may be defined as *"Any figurative expression."* A metaphor may be single, that is, one-word or extended (a collocation, an idiom, a sentence, a proverb).

Newmark (1988: 104) argues that this figurative language is not used for its own sake. It has purpose. He says that

> *the use of metaphor is basically twofold: a referential purpose is to describe a mental state or, a concept, a person, an object, a quality or an action more comprehensively and concisely than is possible in literal or physical language; its pragmatic purpose, which is simultaneous, is to appeal to the senses, to interest, to clarify 'graphically', to please, to delight, to surprise. The first purpose is cognitive, the second aesthetic.*

For both purposes, the metaphor always involves illusion. According to Newmark again (1998:105), "*Like a lie where you are pretending to be someone you are not, a metaphor is a kind of deception, often used to conceal an intention.*"

We note that a metaphor demonstrates a resemblance, a common semantic area between two or more or less similar things - the image and the object. The two

converge on the literal meaning of the metaphor; that is, the sense which is the resemblance or the semantic area overlapping object and image. Usually this consists of more than one sense component, or else literal meaning would do.

When translating such a language which is not ordinarily used (which cannot be understood at its mere linguistic level), the translator must make sense of everything. The connotative language has to be grasped by the target language reader. In this connection, Newmark (1988 : 106) points out that,

> *Whenever you meet a sentence that is grammatical but does not appear to make sense, you have to test its apparently nonsensical element for a possible metaphorical meaning, even if the writing is faulty, since it is unlikely that anyone, in an otherwise sensible text, is suddenly going to write deliberate nonsense.*

He illustrates such a metaphorical meaning through the translation of a French sentence which becomes nonsense when translated into English (at least for the one who does not grasp the metaphorical meaning) :

"L'après-midi, la pluie tue les vitres" ("In the afternoon, the rain always kills the window-panes").

This might seem nonsense for the one who does not understand the sense conveyed by the source language metaphorical meaning. Such a translation, according to Newmark, leaves interpretation for a footnote, especially if an authoritative text is involved, but if it is an anonymous one, the translator must make an attempt, for example as follows:

"In the afternoon, the rain darkens blocks the light from the window-panes."

This is the way the translator of a figurative language must proceed to make his work worthwhile and meaningful. The meaning in the source language and target language must be as approximate as possible.

Since any word can be a metaphor, its sense has to be teased out by matching its primary meaning against its linguistic, situational and cultural contexts.

2.8.2. Metaphor vs. Idioms

We have already pointed out that metaphors and idioms have much in common since idioms are included in metaphors. In other words, idioms and metaphors are similar in that both involve the figurative use of language. And, in most instances, metaphors like idioms have meanings that cannot be directly equated with the cumulative meaning of words in the expression. There are, for instance, combinations of words in English that do not have separate meanings. For example, 'put up with' cannot be divided into three meaning units of put, up and with but seem to have the single meaning of 'tolerate'. Combinations of this kind in English are many. Because they cannot be divided into separate units of meaning, Palmer (1971) calls them idioms.

However, although metaphors and idioms are closely linked, they can still be distinguished. According to Duff (1981 : 89), *"The difference between them lies in the strength of the imagery : in idiomatic expressions the words convey rather than illustrate the meaning , in metaphorical expressions, the words colour the meaning."*

From the above point of view, we deduce that metaphors differ from idioms mainly because they still cling to their power of imagery. In my opinion, this makes the translation of metaphors more problematic than that of idioms. The colour and imagery used to embellish the source language may be hard to find in the target language.

The difficulty caused by the translation of idiomatic or metaphorical expressions can be looked at from different angles. In fact, some of the expressions are found in the usual language, but there are others which are culture specific. In this connection, Duff (1981 :93) states that

> *When reading in our mother tongue, most of us are unaware of just how much of the language is idiomatic or metaphorical (...) and it is only when we are asked to translate these seemingly straightforward messages that we become conscious of the figurative strength of the language. This strength may , of course, be well concealed.*

Duff uses a simple phrase illustrating the importance of deciphering a message as idiomatic or metaphorical before translation: "*Et si on se téléphonait...*" , This would have little impact in English when literally translated as follows "and if people phoned each other..." , but would be readily understood in form such as "*why not keep in touch ?"*

In a culture-bound text, metaphorical expressions become much harder to determine or understand, and hence to translate. Sindayihebura (1998:8) argues as follows :

> *Most of the time, metaphorical expressions, whether oral or written, are neglected and or looked at superficially by scholars, due to the lack of resources or perhaps because they are too difficult to be understood by readers. Besides that, these forms are culture specific in such a way that carrying out a research for instance on Kirundi metaphors without being a native and resident would not be an easy task. One would not be able to handle it since s he neither understands nor appreciates the linguistic qualities of these forms which are linked with Burundian culture.*

The above claim is very relevant to our study which is concerned with displaying the importance of socio-cultural background for the translation of such culture-bound texts like Burundian lullabies.

Although many idioms and metaphors are in fact common to several languages especially those genetically related such as French and English for example, to play a role, open fresh perspectives, key position, fruitful co-operation, etc., an idiomatic expression in one language will not necessarily be translated as an idiomatic expression in another. For instance, the English *"He went to great lengths (to)..."* may be rendered in French as *"Il a fait tout son possible (pour)...* or "*Il a essayé tous les moyens(pour)...*". Likewise, an idiom in one language may be translated by a different idiom in another; as in 'politique d'autruche' (a head - in - the - sand policy).

In short, one needs to distinguish between idiomatic expressions that are common to both the source language and the target language (example, to cast fresh light on, to fall in love, which are not very different from those in French: 'jeter la lumière sur', 'tomber amoureux') and those which are peculiar to one of the languages. In translating expressions of the second kind, the translator should not feel constrained to render idiom for idiom. It is primarily the context of the passage and the intended meaning in the target language that should determine his choice. Duff (1981 : 82) puts it in the following terms :

> *The translator is not an editor. He cannot cut the text. But he does have the right to, I think, avoid using figurative language which in the target language would sound incorrect : better no metaphor at all than one which strikes us only as being unfortunate.*

2.8.3. Componential Analysis in Translation

Newmark (1988: 114) distinguishes componential analysis used in translation from the other used in linguistics. According to him,

> *Componential Analysis in translation is not the same as componential analysis in linguistics; in linguistics it means analysing or splitting up the various senses of a word into sense-*

> *components which may or may not be universal ; in translation, the basic process is to compare a source language word with a target language word which has a similar meaning, but is not an obvious one-to-one equivalent, by demonstrating first their common and then their differring sense components.*

He states that normally the source language word has a more specific meaning than the target language word, and the translator has to add one or two target language sense components to the corresponding target language word in order to produce a closer approximation of meaning.

Therefore, if we think of translation as an ordered rearrangement of meaning components that are common to two language communities, then the value of componential analysis in identifying these components becomes clear. To cite Newmark (1981:115) again

> *Components analysis attempts to go far beyond bilingual dictionaries, all componential analyses are based on source language monolingual dictionaries, the evidence of source language informants, and the translator's understanding of his own language.*

As we said earlier, a translator must primarily understand the message to translate. This depends not only on his source language linguistic skills but also on the source language cultural background he has.

Componential analysis as advocated by Miller and Johson - Laird (1976 : 362) is in a sense different from the one used in translation and supported by Newmark. Indeed, Miller and Johnson – Laird's method helps to break down a word into a set of semantic components. They use kinship terms in the componential analysis. In Newmark's words, *"The only purpose of componential analysis in translation is to achieve the greatest possible accuracy, inevitably at the expense of economy."*

However, these two fields where componential analysis works recognize that it helps in solving the problem of ambiguity. Indeed, the translator is given a number of meanings from which he chooses the one which is appropriate. Likewise, in such situations of ambiguity, the context plays an important role.

2.9. The Role of the Context

The context is very important for any communication in general and for our study in particular. Indeed, it helps to understand a message, and that is a key to every translation. Cotext and context (that is, linguistic and situational environments) are fundamental to the understanding of the text.

Brislin (1976) states two cases in which a linguistic formulation cannot arouse any meaningful knowledge, so that the listener remains as nearly ignorant as he was before the words were said or written. According to him, the first arises when no context is provided with the utterance.

The second case is that of insufficient referential knowledge: the interpretor or translator who is not given any insight into the problems to be discussed does not possess the minimum level of knowledge enabling him to interpret, that is to understand. His extralinguistic inadequacy will render obscure, and probably meaningless, most of what he hears, even with sentences composed of perfectly ordinary words.

Such a situation makes the task of translation unsuccessful. To quote Brislin (1976) again, *"The interpretator translator inevitably falls back on linguistic meaning, he understands the words not in their relevant meaning but their primary sense, the meaning they most frequently have for him or on which he has heard them used most recently."*

In such cases, if any ambiguity or a figurative language is used in the source language, the translation runs the great risk of failing. In fact, out of context, without any situational background, a word, a phrase or even a whole sentence may have several possible meanings, which, when translated, may be very different from the original.

Werner and Campbell (1969) quoted in Brislin (1976: 8) point out the importance of the context in translation. They state that, *"A word is translated least adequately when it is translated as a single item. Translation improves when a word is part of a sentence, and is even better when the sentence is part of paragraph."*
Longacre (1958) also quoted in Brislin (1976: 9) argues in the same sense when he says that, *"In translating bible passages, the long passages are easier to translate than short ones because long passages provide more context for any concept."*

Clearly put, context has a vital role in understanding the message conveyed in the source language and as pointed out earlier, translation depends to a large extent, on the understanding in source language.

After reviewing some studies related to Rundi lullabies, and having shown the relationship between a language and a socio-cultural context it is used in and discussed translation and some problems related to it, we can now carry on to reach our aim. For this, we adopt the methodology which is described in the following chapter.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this work comprises two main parts: the data collection procedures and the data analysis procedures. In the section on the collection of the data, we show how we collected the words and expressions requiring socio-cultural prerequisites for their translation into English. The second part on data analysis procedures seeks to clarify the steps the researcher has gone through while analysing the data.

3.1. Data Collection Procedures

The collection of data can be done through many ways such as collecting material from books, auto - administration questionnaires (where the person who is answering is alone), interviews by researchers, tape recording, and so on.

For the present study, the data to be analysed here has been collected from a dissertation submitted by Sefu (1985) entitled: "Essais d'Exploitation Sémantique de Quelques Métaphores Contenues dans les Berceuses Rundi.» She herself collected those lullabies from Benga area, Isare - Mugaruro commune, and they were interpreted.

It is important to note that the lullabies from that area are similar in form to those performed all over the country. She says:

> *"Les berceuses constituent un genre assez constant où les mêmes données textuelles se trouvent presque littéralement à travers tout le pays.* (Lullabies constitute a constant literary genre which is found all over the country in almost identical texts).

For the sake of objectivity, and since those texts were locally interpreted, she conducted research in other areas of the country to check out the varieties in content interpretation (the form of the texts being identical) :

> *Il a fallu donc soumettre le corpus à des informateurs-interprètes des régions différentes pour observer les constantes dans la compréhension de leurs contenus. Ces régions sont le Mugamba, le Buyenzi, le Buyogoma, leBuragane, l'Imbo, et les Mirwa* (It was then necessary to submit the corpus to the respondents-interpretors from different regions in order to observe the constancy in terms of content comprehension. These regions are Mugamba, Buyenzi, Buyogoma, Buragane, Imbo and Mirwa).

In addition, we relied on lullabies collected by Rodegem (1973). He is among the famous anthropologists who dealt with the Kirundi language as well as the Burundian culture. However, we have to say that versions collected by Rodegem and those collected by Sefu are basically similar inasmuch as the genre in question is unique. The form and content do not vary throughout the country. There might be a slight omission of some lines in some versions and the reason is simple: lullabies belong to oral genre and the performer may easily omit one or two lines (but this does not have any impact on the form of the genre).

The choice of these sources is justifiable by the fact that they are reliable. In fact, they contain valuable data which has great importance for us, that is, the data concerning the language used in Burudian lullabies since that language is coded. This means that a figurative language relying on symbols is mainly used and the interpretation requires the mastery of the society's culture.

Sometimes, the context is indispensable. Indeed, within their connotative aspect, the translation needs first to decode the message, that is, to decipher the deep meaning of those words and expressions communicated through lullabies. Otherwise, he would translate what has not been said as in the case of ambiguity, or would miss any near equivalence especially in case of lexical gap or cultural untranslatability. For

example, the mother lulling her baby addresses the enemy (especially a stepmother or a sterile woman) saying :

Aragacana injishi
Yenyegeze igisabo

Here the translator faces the problem of translation of such culture-bound words without exact equivalence in the target language (here injishi and igisabo), but also the correct interpretation or understanding of the idiom: 'gucana injishi' and 'kwenyegeza igisabo' requires the mastery of Burundian culture.

3.2. The Corpus

As already mentioned, the corpus to be used is selected from lullabies collected by Sefu (1985) and Rodegem (1973). It is available in the appendix. We subclassified the corpus into three categories.

3.2.1. Single Words without Accurate English Correspondents

These are words for which there is a lexical gap in the target language. Most of them are cultural (have a special function in Burundian culture) and leave room for footnotes when translated into English. We can single out words such as :

1. injishi
2. igisabo
3. indava
4. umuhivu
5. inkindi
6. ikindi
7. inkongoro
8. uruhimbi
9. umwino
10. umubindi
11. intaho
12. Irembo

3.2.2. Ambiguous Words or Expressions

These are words or expressions which have more than one meaning. Here we include also those figuratively used. We have words like:

1. inama
2. kirezi
3. infyisi
4. intambwe
5. umwana w'intama
6. impuzu
7. gucira
8. gutera
9. inkindi
10. ikindi
11. yagize (kugira)
12. wangeze (kugera)
13. igateza ibibondo (guteza)
14. igikoko (Mukaso)
15. kuvuna
16. kubaga
17. kurinda
18. umurima

3.2.3. Idiomatic Expressions

These are figurative expressions having a specific meaning in Burundian culture:

1. gucana injishi
2. kwenyegeza igisabo
3. kwuma ukisenya
4. guca mu canzo
5. guca mw'irembo
6. kuba gati ka waga
7. kubura dirigidirigi kw'irembo
8. kugira igicuro mu nda
9. Gucuranya imicuko
10. Gutera intimba
11. Gutera ibibunda
12. Kuba mubi wa barundi
13. Kwagura irembo
14. Kwagura inama
15. Kuza imana icanye
16. Gukura ubwatsi
17. kuvyimvya umutima

Let us mention that the corpus was selected on the basis of our linguistic competence but we also included some items suggested by Sefu as being metaphors.

3.3. Data Analysis Procedures

In the first chapter, we stated that our study aims at showing that there is a socio-cultural knowledge which is required for the translation of culture-bound texts and that the lack of this knowledge causes misinterpretation or misunderstanding and hence leads to mistranslation.

In the analysis of the corpus then, words and expressions which can have more or less correspondents will be provided with literal and communicative translations. The former translates word-for-word without considering the mother's intended meaning whereas the latter intends to help the reader of the target language to acquire the best understanding of the meaning conveyed by the mother soothing her baby. For example, if the mother addresses the enemy of her child saying:

aragacana injishi
yenyegeze igisabo

The literal translation may be :

May s/he use the rope for cows as firewood
And add the churn

This is far different from the communicative meaning which is :

May all her/his cows perish to such an extent that the breeding material would be useless and then burnt. Such an analysis highlights the importance of cultural background in the translation of culture-bound texts.

To display it clearly, we will use a table with 3 columns. The first column comprises the Kirundi word or expression to be translated, the second being composed of the literal translation; and the third consists of the communicative translation. The latter attempts to fill the gaps left by the former. It tries to achieve a dynamic equivalence. This will prove that culture-specific words and expressions always leave room for additional details which can be added if necessary, and only the translator who is familiar with that language can do it.

If the word or expression is ambiguous, we will rely on the method of "componential analysis" which we owe to Miller and Johnson - Laird (1976). It is a method which will help us to solve the problem of ambiguity of some lexical items used in Rundi lullabies. The method consists of breaking down a word into a set of semantic components. But more importantly, we will rely on Newmark's componential analysis. Hence, componential analysis is a means to an end, that is, it helps us to avoid confusion which may be brought about by the phenomenon of ambiguity. It compares the source language and target language's similar meaning and then contrasts them especially when the source language has a more specific meaning than the target language. This is the case of words like 'mwana w'intama' (lamb) implying 'innocence' or 'dear' not a lamb as a kind of food. Componential analysis in translation may also reveal the qualities ascribed to a sheep in the source language culture. It is a sacred animal whose role in religious ceremonies is indispensable. It couldn't be eaten at all. Thus, the child is not only innocent but also a sacred creature as well. Therefore we can only know the second denotation or cultural meaning of a given word or expression after we have solved the problem of ambiguity, that is, the multiplicity of references of lexemes contained in lullabies, and after a deep investigation has been conducted in the source language culture.

In one word, we must know the true meaning of lexemes contained in lullabies before we understand them as images. Componential analysis will help us to get the second denotation or cultural meaning. Let us mention that our native intuition will play a great role in choosing and analysing the data.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF THE DATA AND FINDINGS

The aim of this chapter is to carry out a deep analysis which allows to display the importance of the socio-cultural background for the translation of a culture-bound text. This is to be done on the basis of the data collected and we attempt to find answers to the questions raised in the first chapter.

To achieve our goal, we provided literal and communicative translations. This strategy is reliable for all the three categories of our data, that is single words with a lexical gap in the target language, ambiguous or polysemous words and idiomatic expressions. The process of translation we adopted shows how communicative translation succeeds where literal translation fails because it does not take into consideration the society's culture. Therefore, it is worth presenting first the main themes and characters focused on in Burundian lullabies because it helps discover the society's culture.

4.1. The Main Themes and Characters in Burundian Lullabies

4.1.1. Characters

The most outstanding characters in Burundian lullabies are the child, the mother, the stepmother, and God.

4.1.2. Themes

A specific theme is bound to each character. However, a figurative language is used and this makes the message conveyed through Burundian lullabies difficult to understand. Therefore, it is not haphasard to present the themes developed in Burundian lullabies especially the theme of motherhood, the performer of lullabies being a mother. In fact, the language used in this genre cannot be understood if one does not understand the mother's situation. Moreover, she often uses a figurative

language comprising symbols in addition to a culture-bound lexis, whose interpretation lies in the cultural framework. This theme of motherhood reflects the inmost feeling of love a mother expresses towards her baby.

Around the character of the child, the theme of preciousness of the baby in the family and particularly for the mother is developed. For instance, to stress such a great importance, moher says: "*uri impuzu isaga abavyeyi*" (You are the cloth which fits mothers).

The interpretation of such a line lies in the mother's culture and society. In this figurative meaning, the baby is compared to a cloth fitting its mother. Let's look at its meaning in socio-cultural context.

According to one of Sefu's (1985: 58) respondents (Kanjori),

> '*impuzu isaga abavyeyi ni impuzu abagore bambara igashika bu birenge, ikabakwira, ikabasusurutsa*'.(The cloth which fits mothers is the one that thoroughly suits them and falls to their feet. It also makes them warm).

The same respondent in the same study adds:

'*...iyo atikwije abandi baramutwenga, bagatako bakamuhunga*'.(When she wears a cloth which does not suit her, the others laugh at her and even run away from her).

In literal translation, the mental representation associated with 'impuzu isaga abavyeyi' (cloth that suits mothers) is totally absent at the linguistic level. All the details above provided by the respondents do not occur in the translation.

Two other respondents Kiyangayanga and Ntagipfuye, [in Sefu (1985:57)] who are from two different areas, view the fitting cloth which is associated with the child as follows :

> "*umuvyeyi wese afise umwana bamubona ko ari umuntu yikwije kandi naho yoba yambaye nabi, aguma aberewe. Niwe*

amushira mu murongo w'abavyeyi." (Every mother who has a child is considered as dressed in fitting clothes ; even when she is in shabby clothes, she is still considered as well dressed. This child ascribes its mother the valuable quality of motherhood).

The dynamic equivalence which decodes such a figurative language reveals that the suitable cloth is compared to the child who makes the mother important and comfortable in her society, while the one without a child is despised and considered dangerous especially to babies. That is the reason why other people avoid her. This was not obvious in the literal translation (you are the cloth which fits mothers).

The above analysis shows that literal translation omits much about the original message especially when a figurative language is used. Communicative translation attempting dynamic equivalence is the most reliable method in such conditions.

As for the stepmother, a theme of hostility towards babies is developed. She as as dangerous as the childless woman. She is cruel and should be avoided. For example, the mother soothing her baby might say: "Mukaso ni igikoko" (your stepmother is an animal). Such a comparison reveals the way a mother views a stepmother. One who knows Burundian culture is aware of what is associated with 'igikoko' (animal). But the one referred to here is not just any animal; it is the one which is savage, cruel and dangerous to people.

Rodegem (1973) quoted in Barutwanayo (1983: 26) provides the same argument about the same characteristics and behaviour of a stepmother : *"yigenza nk'igikoko"* (She behaves like an animal). Sefu's (1985: 74) respondents also provided more information concerning the relationship between the child and its stepmother : *"umwana ni nyina, nayo uwundi ntiyamubabaje, yababaje nyina, ni naco gituma mukase n'ukumwica atobitinya"* (The child belongs to its mother, as for the stepmother, it did not make her suffer, only its mother suffered. That is the reason why the stepmother would not even hesitate to kill it).

As it appears above, the analysis of the words 'Mukaso' literally translated as 'stepmother' yields a lot of information. The reader in English (target language) can only grasp this information if the source language translator has himself been able to detect them and then adopt free translation. In addition, the analysis of such a metaphor used by the mother allows us to discover some of her preoccupations. For instance, here she expresses her anxiety about the child who runs the risk of being killed by the stepmother. This leads us to assert that only a translator who is linguistically and culturally competent can attempt the translation of culture-bound texts, trying to keep as much as possible the meaning conveyed through the source language.

The performer also praises God, expresses her deep gratitude to him. At the same time, she expresses her fear and anxiety in case the baby dies; in this case, God would be responsible because he may take the baby away any time he wants to. We can illustrate this on basis of the following lines from the data collected by Sefu (1985)

Imana yakumpaye	God who gave you to me
Icompa tugahura	If I could meet Him
Nopfukama nkayisenga	I would kneel and pray Him
Hora murima w'isangi	Calm down, you the common field
Nsangiye n'Imana	that I share with God
Hora se gatera ntimba	Calm down, you source of sorrow

The word 'intimba' (sorrow) in the last line is particularly interesting. In fact, it is not easy to understand how a child, whom the mother had been longing for and constitutes the best thing any household could hope for, can be the source of sorrow. The interpretation of the line lies in Burundian culture. In fact, when a child dies, great sorrow follows and its mother is especially affected. She even runs the risk of being kicked out of the household.

This illustration clearly displays the importance of the cultural background and the knowledge of societal attitudes. They are of great help to understanding the

encoded language, including lullabies in our case. Hence, any analyst of the language must try to understand both society and culture. In fact, the true interpretation of words and expressions sometimes does not appear at the surface level but is to be found in culture.

In short, we may affirm that the translator is not merely concerned with formal equivalence, that is literal translation, but he needs to be equipped with enough cultural background on the society, which allows him to make everything clear. Similarly, such knowledge allows him to relate the concept to the context for the sake of the target language (English) reader.

The data to be used is presented in tables for detailed analysis. As stated earlier, two languages are involved, namely Kirundi and English. The words or expressions are translated following two ways: literal and communicative translations. The latter translation comes closest to allowing the target language (English) reader to grasp the source language meaning.

4.2. Single Words

The following table shows that translation of cultural terms does need to take into consideration the culture of the source language. Here literal translation is not accurate as it appears through the columns of translations. More details are added in order to attempt equivalence in target language. This required additional information is provided by communicative translation which attempts dynamic equivalence because it takes into consideration the culture of the society using a particular language.

Kirundi Items	English Translation	
	Types of Translation	
	Literal translation (or formal equivalence)	Communicative translation (or dynamic equivalence attempt)
1. injishi	a kind of rope	This rope is used to tighten the cow's back legs with, in order to milk it safely, that is to prevent it from hitting the milker. This concerns a cow that makes many movements when being milked.
2. igisabo	a churn	It is a round container they fill with milk. This milk will stay in it until butter is ready to be made from it.
3. indava	particularly nice grass	This was reserved for very important people to sit on or take rest on; they applied butter on it to make it smooth.
4. umuhivu	a string	It is a special kind of string which, when broken, is impossible to repair and that is where it differs from other types of strings. The mother chooses this term to compare it to its baby.
5. inkongoro	a small milk cup	It is a small milk cup used to feed children with milk. It is made of special wood and it is polished.
6. uruhimbi	a traditional kind of shelf	It is a kind of large shelf on which they put utensils, especially breeding ones. It is made of little branches tightened together with strings and supported by strong pieces of wood.

7. umwino	Small straw	A tool used to have the child's bowels emptied especially when it is constipated. Such a tool looks like a short straw.
8. umubindi	pot	A small pot used to fetch water, or to carry beer from one place to another. It is made of clay.
9. intaho	Way	It is the shortest way heading straight home. Mothers use such a term because it is at home that they, together with their children, will feel more comfortable.
10 inkindi	Leopard skin	It is a skin obtained from a killed leopard. It is used to carry the baby on the back when cradling it or when moving from one place to another.
11. irembo	Entrance	This entrance is very different from the one we meet in modern urban societies. The fence in question here is the open passage left while the houses are surrounded by an enclosure. In the evening, they close it with many pieces of wood.
12. ikindi	Meat	It was a delicious meat obtained after a long time. It was an important food for important persons.

The above chart shows that there is no exact correspondent of a Kirundi item when translated into English. The Kirundi lexemes like the ones used above are culture bound and call for further explanation when translated into a language like English becauce the cultures they are used in are quite different. Moreover, words like 'intaho',

and 'ikindi' implicitly carry other deep meanings, respectively 'shortest way leading home', and very delicious meat but difficult to obtain and thus making it very expensive. We may add that these words are even hard to interpret for some people whose Kirundi is their mother tongue. This is because they are not commonly used, and it becomes even harder when they are asked to translate them into another language.

Still other words express a function which is peculiar to the Burundian customs. It becomes more difficult to translate them into the English language where a similar situation of use does not exist, or, if it does, it is only approximate. For instance, 'umubindi' corresponds to the English word 'pot' but the material it is made of together with its function make them different. The same for 'uruhimbi' or 'inkindi'. Therefore, when these words (umubindi, uruhimbi, inkindi, irembo, ...) have to be translated into English, such an attempt requires the mastery of Burundian culture, which, as I pointed out, refers to people's way of life.

4.3. Ambiguous Words

Kirundi Items	English Translation	
	Types of Translation	
	Literal translation (formal equivalence)	Communicative translation (Dynamic equivalence attempt)
1. Inama	- yard - meeting - agreement	'inama' corresponds to the 'yard' and its enlargement refers to the increasing number of houses built on the yard.
2. mwana w'intama	- lamb - dear - innocence	In addition to its innocence, this animal has a divine function through which Burundians passed to implore the Almighty.

3. inkindi	- child on its mother's back - leopard skin used to carry the baby on the back - leopard skin worn when dancing (Intore dancers) - clothes worn by very important persons, especially princes.	Everyone owning it, or wearing it be they dancers or princes, was very happy and proud. A mother who had a child had the same feeling. [Sefu's (1985:59): Nka kurya kw'inkindi, umwana arahimbara (just like the leopard skin pleases, so does the child).
4. kirezi	- the child - a jewel - a name of cow that has white colour around the neck	Mothers refer to such a concept because it was very rare and precious. This child is, for her, very precious as well, and it is not very easy to have.
5. gucira	- to hit - to set limit - to spit	The suitable verb is 'to hit'. This refers to the woman who was jealous and killed the mother who was experiencing the joy of motherhood.
6. ikindi	- an important thing or person - a kind of meat	Burundians had a specific way of preparing such meat. It took some time (it was a long process) and was hard to get. It was very delicious and was eaten by important persons. So, it was rare and precious.

7. kuvuna	- to hurt - to break into pieces - to help	Here, to hurt is the one which is meant. In fact, Burundians' fence around the house had a main entrance and a small one. The latter was in the back yard and people had to bend over in order to pass through it. Actually, they passed through it when the main entrance was already closed (at night).
8. kubaga	- to hurt either morally or physically - to operate on (surgical operation) - to slaughter and get meat from animal - to sell a domestic animal in order to get money.	Referring to the context of Burundian lullabies, the sun of the dry season is very harmful especially for babies who are still vulnerable. Therefore the mother has to protect her baby from such a harmful sun.
9. kurinda	- to protect - to resist/endure - to avoid fear - to be hot (for animals)	The mother would fight tooth and nail to protect her child against any danger.
10. umurima	- the child - a field of crops	The mother uses this term to show that she shares the child with God. The latter is the source of any life and may put an end to it at any time. She refers to 'umurima' rather than another term because in traditional Burundian culture, a field of crops was shared just like harvest and food. No one dared eat alone without sharing with others.

11. infyisi	- childless woman - a hyena	A childless woman is considered as cruel, savage and was hunted like a hyena.
12. intambwe	- childless woman - A lion	A childless woman is brutal, cruel and merciless towards babies as a lion is towards other animals or people.
13. impuzu	- child - cloth	The child is considered as a fitting cloth which makes mothers feel at ease and comfortable in their society.
14. gutera (ibibunda)	- throw puppies - attack puppies - sow puppies	As the child is crying, the mother would create a favourable weather for it to sleep. (Gutera ibibunda = to create a quiet situation like that of night favourable for sleeping; Sefu (1985 : 84)
15. yagize	- did - told - invited	- She invited the mother to accompany her to fetch some fire wood.
16. igateza	- helping to throw or sow - increasing thirst	According to the performer, the person other than a child's father does not care about the quantity of milk that could satisfy the child as would do child's own parents.
17. wangeze	- tempt to throw - measure - integrate	The child made the mother fit into the category of lucky parents.

Apart from translation skills, the first category of words in our corpus (single words) requires merely the mastery of the Burundian culture in order to be interpreted correctly. Hence, translation may be tackled. As for the ambiguous words, they need to be disambiguated first. The translator may rely on the method of "componential analysis" proposed by Miller and Johnson - laird (1976). As we pointed out earlier, the method consists of breaking down a word into a set of semantic components. For example, for the word 'Inama', this method helps us to find various meanings it carries. It breaks down the word into a set of others like 'a meeting', 'an agreement', 'the place before the main entrance', that is the 'yard'.

In this situation of ambiguity, the context plays a vital role in assigning a suitable meaning to a word or an expression. Wardhaugh (1985: 102) points out that *"It is the context which creates possibilities for interpretation and helps to remove the multiple ambiguities that utterances would have if they occurred in isolation."*

Similarly, when the translator comes across an encoded language or when a figurative language is used, the context is also important for message interpretation.

For instance, when the mother says: '*Hora kirezi co mu nda*',(calm down, pearl of my womb), the translator must refer to his/her cultural competence to allow the reader discover the characteristics of pleasure and preciousness the child carries with it in the eyes of its mother.

The use of componential analysis in translation as proposed by Newmark (1988) fills probable gaps left by componential analysis applied in Linguistics. The former becomes very helpful especially when the translation of culture-bound texts is concerned. In fact, when a similar target language word has already been identified thanks to componential analysis applied in linguistics, with the help of the context, the componential analysis in translation demonstrates that the word suggested as correspondent is not always a thorough one - to - one equivalent. This method provides both their common and differing components. Hence, the culture-bound words and expressions as well as metaphors are translated on basis of this method.

First we provide the supposed similar equivalent and secondly, we display dissimilarities giving the additional and differing meanings carried by a source language item.

For example, the source language item 'Inama' has as its English correspondent the word 'yard'. However, though both refer to an almost similar locality, the Kirundi item 'inama' is not paved (as the yard is often thought of in English).

In addition, 'inama' refers to a particular place where elders sat discussing different problems or to the place where an additional house could be built. Therefore, the English word 'yard' does not carry the further information lying behind the source item 'inama', and componential analysis applied in translation adds the missing message left out by the literal translation.

Likewise, the expression 'umwana w'intama' corresponds to the English word 'lamb'. But componential analysis applied in translation together with the context reveals that it not only carries with it the meaning of innocence, but also that of a divine and sacred animal, and hence forbidden to be eaten while a lamb can be understood as a type of food in English. In fact, a sheep was considered as godlike in Burundian tradition. In short, the mother uses that metaphorical expression to communicate the innocence, beauty or how dear the child is in her eyes. Furthermore, she wants to convey that the child is the sacrosanct gift that God can give her and she stresses the importance of such a gift, that is, the child that she takes as a godsend as well.

In one word, the translator goes through a number of steps. First of all, he has to understand what he intends to translate. Then, as the word is ambiguous, he has to break it down into different meanings, relying on componential analysis in linguistics. Then he relies on context to find the equivalent in the target language (English). Then the translation may be tackled. Here, he relies on componential analysis as proposed by Newmark which compares and contrasts the meanings in the source language and

target language of a suggested word as equivalent. He has to add any missing information to the suggested equivalent in order to be more accurate.

4.4. Idiomatic Expressions

Kirundi Idiomatic Items	English Translation	
	Types of Translation	
	Literal translation (formal equivalence)	Communicative translation (dynamic equivalence attempt)
1. gucana injishi	To burn|make fire with the rope	To use as firewood, the rope that was actually used to tie up a cow's legs when milking. This happens when the cattle perishes.
2. kwenyegeza igisabo	To add the churn to the other items used as firewood	To burn everything that was used in cattle breeding because they have become useless after the cattle had completely perished. They can no longer be used for anything else but making fire. This idiom and the one firstly mentioned-'gucana injishi' express the worst wish for someone: to become the poorest.
3. kugira igicuro mu nda	To experience muscle contraction in the belly	This is exclusively experienced by a woman who is pregnant. Others do not. It is a foresign that she is going to have a child in the near future. This makes the woman wait impatiently but with hope.

4. gucuranya imicuko	To create conflit between little children because you gave them very little food	This explains the characteristics of a woman without children. She is merciless, she does not take care of whatever misfortune may befall the children. Rather, she enjoys seeing them in hardship.
5. gutera ibibunda	To throw puppies	The deep meaning of this idiom is "to make the sky cloudy", hence creating darkness as if it were at night. The mother presumes the baby would stop crying and sleep deeply as it does at night (see Sibomana (1981: 26).
6. kubura dirigidirigi kw'irembo	To miss a running child before the main entrance	It refers to the situation when there is no child in the family. This family is very unfortunate. It runs the risk of disappearing since the child symbolises family's perpetuation. (See Gahama 1983).
7. gukura ubwatsi	To remove the grass	This means simply "to thank.» In fact, the mother is very thankful to God who gave her the most precious gift, that is the child.
8. kuvyimvya umutima	To cause someone's heart to swell	The mother loves her child so much that whatever makes it cry hurts her as well. Great bitterness follows if anything troubles the baby. Then, the idiom means to annoy, to make extremely unhappy.
9. guca mw'irembo	To pass through the main entrance	To feel happy and proud when passing where many people are gathered. They accord her great value and then respect her.

10. gutera intimba	To throw sorrow	Given the deep love the mother has towards her child, anything that disturbs it raises in her great sorrow. She would like to see the child always comfortable. Otherwise, she is very anxious about the child.
11. kuza Imana icanye	To come when God is making fire	In Burundian tradition, fire symbolises 'life'. Therefore, the idiom means that the child was born when the family was fortunate, prosperous.
12. kwagura irembo	To enlarge the entrance	When a child is born in a family, many people come to see the newborn. The enlargement of the entrance refers to the increasing number of guests coming to pay a visit to the family and especially to the child.
13. kwuma ukisenya	To dry (for a tree) and lose all the branches	To lack any assistance because you are in terrible loneliness. In fact, no one cares about a woman without a child. She is reduced to nothing.
14. guca mu canzo	To pass through the back small entrance	To avoid any critic and humiliation, a woman who had not got a chance to give birth to a child passed through the back entrance where people could not see her. This entrance was very small. To pass there was both morally and physically harmful. It is humiliating and it hurts the woman's back when passing through.

15. kuba gati ka Waga	To be like a tree of Waga	It refers to the condition of someone without help. A woman who does not give birth is in such a situation. People do not care about her because she is meaningless. She is compared to a tree growing alone in a river, (Waga is an example of river) a non suitable area for it to develop. It does not have branches nor roots.
16. kwagura inama	To widen the yard	The child is supposed to grow up and later on, when he becomes an adult, he is expected to build his own house and marry. Hence, the growing number of houses enlarges the yard, and increases the kins.
17. kuba mubi wa barundi	To be considered ugly by Burundians	Although the child is a source of happiness for its mother and her close relatives, there are people, namely the stepmother and childless woman, who are very dangerous to it. They are very jealous and may even kill it if the mother does not keep a jealous eye on it.

The analysis of the above table shows that those idiomatic expressions are characterized by their nonliteral and metaphorical sense. As a matter of fact, they have two levels of meaning. The external level which corresponds to the literal meaning and the second one which is implicit since it is a figurative meaning. Therefore, the correct meaning of an idiom cannot be predicted from the individual meanings of items that make it up. In order to interpret it correctly, one has to be aware of the cultural stock of the language in question. In fact, the understanding of the relationship between various referents used in Burundian lullabies and their figurative meaning requires the

knowledge of these referents in Burundian social system. In addition, one has to be aware of the importance the Burundian society and mothers in particular ascribe to the child in order to understand the meaning of these idioms.

As for the translation, the one concerned with the task must be able to select cultural features that are most significant and relevant, of which he is likely to give the right interpretation, and then transfer the meaning to the target language. As Davidson (1967 : 78) points out, *"We do not know what someone means unless we know what he believes in, and we do not know what he believes in unless we know what he means."*

We agree with Davidson that the translator has to know what the whole society, including the mother, believes in, how it views the child, the physical surroundings and the referents they use to code the language. For instance, the idiom 'kuba gati ka Waga' requires knowledge of how such a tree is: it is hollow, without strong roots and branchless. A childless woman is compared to that tree in the Burundian culture because she means very little in the society, and she is baseless.

Besides, in the case of Burundian lullabies, the translator ought to know the character of the stepmother in her society in order to understand the idiom 'gucuranya imicuko'. The stepmother is cynical towards the child. Therefore, the translator must take all of this into consideration and tackle a translation taking into account such relevant information.

Still other words or expressions seem confusing for people who are not very familiar with the Kirundi language. They are grasped by a category of people who have been in contact with their users and had them interpreted, or those who have conducted research in the language and culture of Burundians. Most of the time a figurative language is used. For example:

Nda yandara	belly that delays
Yuzuye ubwiko	full of poison

This refers again to the childless woman who is very dangerous to babies. It is too late for her to give birth and the place in her belly where a baby could lie is full of poison to kill babies. This figurative language is not easy to be grasped by everyone.

Other lines might reflect situations which are peculiar to Burundian culture as in 'wangaruye ngiye': You made me come back while leaving.

In the Burundian tradition, a woman who does not give birth to a baby is often kicked out of the household. In this line, therefore, the mother is praising the baby who saved her while she was about to be thrown out.

There are words which are not often used in normal communication and then hard to understand :

Kamirwa na so mwana	may your father milk for you
Se w'uwundi 'aratinda'	another's father loiters
Adatinze agasera	or pours out the milk.

The word 'so' (father) is very frequently used. However, it does not always mean one's own father. In this context, it refers to anyone who cares about the child's welfare. But the word 'aratinda' from the infinitive 'gutinda' is not current in everyday language use. Therefore, to translate a language which comprises both rarely used words and figurative language requires a lot on the part of the translator. He must first of all reach a clear-cut interpretation of the source language which is done referring to the culture the language is used in.

However, all words may be simple, current and easily understood but the meaning of a line, difficult to grasp. For example, the mother expresses the great tenderness saying: 'Hora mwana wa mama' (Calm down, my mother's child). It is quite confusing to understand how one's own child can be one's sister or brother at the same time. However, referring to such love between a child and its mother, it becomes clear to understand the meaning. In fact, the mother lulling her baby is free to use any

term or expression which expresses her inmost feelings. Here the opinion pointed out by Brislin (1976 : 10) is relevant. He says that *"The translator has to enter into the mind and heart of his author, relive his circumstances, refeel what he felt, reperceive what he perceived."*

This claim shows us that the translator must understand the source language as thoroughly as possible. In one word, he must take the place of the source language writer or speaker. Therefore, any unclear item must be clarified and then communicate the source message the best way possible to the target language reader.

A translator who considers only the words without taking into account the source language's setting, the circumstances in which they were uttered, or the feelings of the speaker is often misleading or the target language might be confusing. For instance, some of Rodegem's (1973: 171) translations of Burundian lullabies are confusing. We can single out some examples, though we are not concerned with translation assessment. The translation suggested by Rodegem is in French, but it is relevant as far as our study is concerned. In fact, we noticed that familiarity with Kirundi language, the society and the context of lullabies are indispensable for a good translation.

Example :

Source language	Target language (French)
Hora hora nkwingige	Tais-toi, tais-toi je t'en supplie
Hora se wanduhuye	Tais-toi tu m'as soulagée
Hora ihorere mama	Tais-toi, tout doux, mon chéri.

The verb 'guhora' in the context means 'to be silent.' At the literal level, or when it is taken out of context, the translator is quite right. But using an imperative form like "tais-toi" which expresses either anger, domination or impoliteness, etc... it becomes far different from the context of lullabies. Indeed, the mother's mood when soothing the baby expresses deep love, tenderness, pride, etc... She is only harsh when

adressing the enemies of the child. Therefore, she cannot use such a collocation like "tais-toi" more or less corresponding to "shut up" in English.

We may ascribe such a shortcoming in translation to the lack of enough socio - cultural background for the translator. He only considered the surface meaning. On the other hand, confusion or contradiction can be singled out in the above lines.

For instance, "Tais-toi, tais-toi, je t'en supplie" (shut up, shut up, I implore you) seems contradictory. In fact, we cannot order or recommend ("tais-toi") and implore at the same time; it becomes abnormal.

The same conclusion can be drawn in "tais-toi, tout doux, mon chéri" (shut up, tenderly, my dear) as one cannot use such a collocation uttered violently "shut-up" and pretend to address his/her dear tenderly.

We can conclude saying that the translator has to consider a number of things to achieve his task. Apart from translation theories, and the skills in source language and target language, he must consider the culture of the society the source language is spoken in, together with the context the utterance is produced in.

GENERAL CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main purpose of our study was to show that the socio - cultural background of a source language is of paramount importance for the translation of culture-bound texts. The contrast between a formal equivalence and a dynamic one was adopted to provide more evidence.

Our work was organised into four chapters. The first one is the introduction and it states the problem. It also raises main questions related to the topic. The answers stress the view according to which the translation of culture-bound words and expressions requires, apart from translation skills, both linguistic and socio-cultural competence. In fact, language and culture are intertwined. Likewise, the language used in Burundian lullabies is culture-bound to such an extent that the sole linguistic competence cannot help as far as understanding is concerned, and a good translation requires a good understanding.

The second chapter is the review of related literature. It looks back on certain previous works which deal with Burundian lullabies and some outstanding works on translation. The works on Burundian lullabies view them as a genre which must be studied in context, taking into account the setting since a figurative language comprising symbols and images is mostly used. The referents are peculiar to the Burundian society. We defined some key terms related to our topic and we think this made it easy to understand. As for works on translation, they define the concept and highlight the difficulties pertaining to the field. But some of them recognize that there is always a way for translation since it is as important as communication in people`s everyday life.

The chapter on methodology shows how we collected the data, and then shows clearly the procedures adopted in analysing it. It gives the volume of the corpus and shows how it is subdivided into different categories to make the task easier. The selection was based on our native speaker's intuition and we used also some words and expressions proposed by Sefu (1985) as metaphors.

The findings from the analysis of the data are presented in the fourth chapter and provide answers to the questions raised in the first chapter. This shows that linguistic competence is not enough to interpret correctly the meaning of a culture-bound language for getting its translation. One must be equipped with the socio-cultural competence as well. A number of words are culture-specific to the Burundian society (e.g. inkongoro, umwino, uruhimbi, etc) and thus hard to translate for anyone who is not familiar with the Kirundi language and culture. Besides the socio-cultural prerequisites a translator of such a language must have to achieve his goal, the role of the context was also found to be indispensable especially in the case of ambiguity. Context gives a hand to componential analysis in linguistics since it helps in finding among a set of meanings, the one that matches in target language, that is the meaning intended by the source language speaker. As for componential analysis in translation, it compares the source language item and its suggested correspondent in the target language and it adds some relevant information to allow a closer approximation of meaning. Hence, it attempts to fill the gaps left by the translation.

In fact, the mother lulling her child uses great imagery which conceals the meaning she wants to convey. Most of the words or expressions she uses have two levels of meaning: the explicit meaning corresponding to literal sense and the implicit sense, corresponding to the figurative or implied meaning.

Thus, the translation of a figurative language was found more demanding especially in a case like the one we are concerned with where the cultural settings are divergent or relevant situational features are lacking. Therefore, the translator merely reproduces the general meaning. To make his work more accurate and relevant, he may use footnotes to connect the reader to the cultural background.

All the same, despite the problem caused by the translation of a culture-specific language, the translator shouldn't despair. He should bear in mind that there is always a way for translation to be done. Here we join Brislin (1973: 63) cited earlier when he

relates translation to communication and concludes that communication is still possible in spite of some loss of information, and so is translation.

All in all, with this work we wanted to show that the translation of culture-bound texts requires their true interpretation in the source language, and this is achieved when one is equipped with socio-cultural knowledge besides the linguistic competence.

However, we cannot deny that a reseacher must expect difficulties whenever he undertakes his enterprise. But he should face the limitations and tackle them the best way possible. As far as we are concerned, we encountered difficulties related to the translation of words and expressions which are peculiar to the Kirundi language and culture. We do not doubt that there are shortcomings about the translations we suggested and the unrelatedness of the two languages (Kirundi and English) is one of the reasons which can account for those shortcomings.

This work was only a suggestion about some of the prerequisites a translator of a specific language (words and expressions or a figurative language whose true interpretation does not appear on the surface level) should be equipped with, namely the source language cultural background. This would help to avoid mistranslations like the ones we pointed out earlier suggested by Rodegem. Hence, future researchers may be interested in the assessment of the translation of some culture-bound texts especially those done by foreigners while the source language is culture-bound.

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APPENDIX A

1. Set of Lullabies Collected by Rodegem (1973 : 170)

Hora hora nkwinginge	Calm down and let me beg you
Hora giti c'igitutu	Calm down my shady tree (shelter)
Kituriza abavyeyi	That favours parents
Ingumba zikinjirwa	And the childless get annoyed
Imana yakumpaye	God who gave you to me
Nisubire yuhire	May he add more
Hora muhivu wo munda	Calm down, you are the string of the waist
Wahivuwe n'imana	That was manufactured by God
Iyakumpaye ikunderere	That the God who gave you to me, may bring you up for me
Kirezi kiri i mugongo	Pearl which is on my back
Kirusha ibindi kwera	The most precious one
Ka kadegedege	The little child
Ka nyina w'umwana	Proper to its mother
Hora gatera ntimba	Calm down, you source of sorrow
Hora nkurinde izuba	Calm down and I will protect you from sun
Nawe undinde irungu	And you save me from loneliness in turn
Hora mwana w'intama	Calm down, you are the lamb
Uwintambwe araryana	That of a lion is ferocious
Hora murima w'isangi	Calm down, you are the field that I share
Dusangiye n'imana	That we share with God
Hora mwiza wanje	Calm down my dear
Hora mubi wa barundi	Calm down, you have enemies
Hora se wanduhuye	Calm down, you set me free
Hora se wangize ikindi	Calm down you made me important
Kera naca mu canzo	I used to be shameful
None ubu nca ku kirimba	But now I am proud

Gicamwo abatware n'abagabo	Like other important persons
Hmmm mama hmm	Hmm baby hmm
Hora se kibondo	Calm down my dear
Ca make duce ibiyago	Be quiet so we may chat
Twumvirize abatwanka	Let us listen to those who hate us
Ba nda yuzuye ubwiko	Whose wombs are full of poison
Ba seruburakigongwe	Those who are merciless
Hora kadashumbushwa	Calm down, you are irreplaceable
Nk'inkono y'umubindi	Like a small pot made of clay
Nk'imbuto yo mucibo	Like rare corn to sow
Imana yakumpaye	God who gave you to me
Icompa tugahura	If I could meet Him
Noyikurira ubwatsi	I would thank Him
Ngasubira ngapfukama	And I would kneel again
Ngapfukama nkayisenga	And I would kneel to pray Him
Nti urampa inka n'ibibondo	Asking for cows and children
Ibisigaye wuhire	And I would ask for the rest later
Hm mama hmm	Hmm baby hmm
Kamirwa na so mwana	May your father milk for you, baby
Se w'uwundi aratinda	Another's father loiters
Adatinze arasera	Or else he pours out the milk

APPENDIX B

Set of Lullabies Collected by Sefu (1985) from the first respondent (8-11)

Hora hora nkwinginge	Calm down, and let me beg you
Mama abana baringingwa	Children are begged, my dear
Hora shavu ry'umuvyei	Calm down, parent's anger
Mama ryirirwa ntirirare	Which does not last long
Hmmm	Hmmm
Igituma nkwinginga	The reason why I beg you
Mama ni uko mbona wangoye	Is because you made me suffer, dear
Hora kadegedege	Calm down, little child
Hora nyina w'umwana	Calm down, you are close to your mother
Hora yuntera intimba	Calm down, don't make me anxious
Niyo nfise irabaye	The sorrow I have is enough
Hmm mama	Hmm my baby
Hora kagozi ko mu nda	Calm down, you are the string of the waist
Mama gacika ntibunge	Once broken can no longer be repaired
Hora kirezi co mu nda	Calm down, you are the pearl in the womb
Mama gisumba ibindi kwera	That is the most precious
Hmmm	Hmmm
Hora murima w'isangi	Calm down, shared field
Mama nsangiye n'imana	That I share with God
Hora nkwime mukaso	Calm down and I protect you from your stepmother
mama mukaso gikoko	Your stepmother is very dangerous
Hmmm	Hmm
Yokuramiza amazi	She could compel you to drink water
Mama amata ari ku ruhimbi	While the milk is on the larder
Hmm	Hmm
Yogutuma kuvoma	She would send you to fetch water
Mama mu mvura y'igitondo	In morning rain

Mama ivyimvya umutima umwana	Which bores the child very much
Hmmm	Hmmm
Hora nkwime intavyara	Calm down I will protect you from the childless
Hora nkwime inangumba	Calm down I will protect you from the sterile woman
Mama umugore wa Kidida	Kidida's wife
We yagize umukazana	Who told her daughter -in-law
Mama ngo bajane gusenya	To accompany her to fetch firewood
Ngo bagere mu kabande	When they reach the valley
Mama amucira ko akabezi	She bit her with an axe
Mu ngata y'umugongo	In her back
Arakubita araryama	And she died
Hmmm	Hmmm
Ntazi igicuro mu nda	She has never had a pregnancy presumption
Mama ntagira igisokozo ku mweko	She has never got a child
Ntazi ikiriza umwana	She does not know what makes a child cry
Mama ni rucuranya micuko	She only enjoys seeing the little children in hardship
Hmmm	Hmmm
Hora ngohoze rirenge	Let me lull you the whole day
Niryanka kurenga	If the sun does not set
Mama ndaritere ibibunda	I will manage to create a favourable Atmosphere for you to sleep
Hora giti c'igitutu	Calm down, shady tree
Mama cuganika abavyeyi	Which is parents' shelter
Hora wangeze mu bavyeyi	Calm down, you ascribed me the quality of motherhood
Mama kera narabatinya	I used to be afraid of them
Nari igikoko nararyana	I was an animal, I would bite

Mama nari infyisi nari intambwe	I was like a hyena or a lion
Hmmm	Hmmm
Hora katabona bose	Calm down, you are quite precious
Iyo kaba kabona bose	If you were not
Mama ntawuba aruta uwundi	People would be equal
Hora wangaruye ngiye	Calm down, you brought me back while I was likely thrown out
Mama hora wangeze mu bavyeyi	Calm down, you ascribed me the privilege of motherhood
Hmmm	Hmmm
Ndazi ikikuriza	I know why you are crying
Ushaka umwino	You need a rectal injection

Set of Lullabies Collected by Sefu (1985) from the second respondent (12-16)

Hora mwana wa mama	Calm down my beloved baby
Hora mwana w'intama	Calm down my dear
Uw'intambwe araryana	Lion's child is ferocious
Shira ishavu nshire irungu	End your anger and I'll stop being alone
Numvirize abatwanka	I'll pay attention to the enemies
Muntu anyankira inkindi	The person who deslikes my precious child
Aragacana injishi	May he burn the rope for the cows
Yenyegeze igisabo	And the churn so that he becomes the poorest
Abure dirigidirigi kw'irembo	And miss any running child in his family
Hmmm	Hmmm
Hora se kataguranwa	Calm down you who cannot be lent
Tunga ibitunganye	Own fair properties
Birimwo inkoko n'intama	Composed of a great herd, and God blessing You
Hmm mama	Humm baby

Hora nkujane iwanyu	Calm down, let me take you home
Hora nkujane kwa so	Calm down, let me take you to your father
Yokubona agatamba	He would be very happy when seeing you
Agatambana inkongoro	He would dance holding a milk cup
Yuzuye infyufyu	Full of fresh milk
Hora nkwime mukaso	Calm down and I protect you from your setpmother
Yokuramiza amazi	She would compel you to drink water
Inka za so zitashe	When your father's cows come home
Yogukamira inteza	She would milk for you very little milk
Igateza ibibonda	Which causes children's great thirst
Hmmm mama	Hmmm baby
Hora mwiza wanje	Calm down my pleasant child
Hora mubi wa barundi	But your enemies find you ugly
Hora wangeze mu bavyeyi	Calm down you ascribed me motherhood
Hmm hmmm mama	Hmmm hmm baby
Hora wancishije mw'irembo	Calm down you made me proud
Kera naca mu canzo	While I used to be shameful
Icanzo kivuna umugongo	It hurt me very much
Hmm mama	Hmm baby
Nari gati ka Waga	I was Waga's hollow tree
Kwuma kakisenya	That no one cares about
Hmm mama	Hmm baby
Hora nkwinginge	Calm down, let me beg you
Abana baringingwa	Children are entreated
Hora ngucane intaho	Calm down, we take the shortest way
Icamwo abandi bana	Where other children pass
Hora kadegedege	Calm down little child
Ka nyina w'umwana	Close to its mother
Hora se cagura nama	Calm down you who enlarges the family
Hora se cagura rembo	Calm down, you who increases the guests

Imana yakumpaye	God who gave you to me
Icompa tugahura	If I could meet Him
Noyisasira indava	I would roll out a nice mat for Him to sleep on
Nkayorosa iyindi	And I would cover Him with another mat (nice grass)
Hora muhivu wo munda	Calm down, you are the string of the waist
Uri impuzu isaga abavyeyi	You make parents feel at ease
Hmm mama	Hmm baby
Hora nkurinde izuba	Calm down, and let me protect you from the harmful sun
Izuba rya Nyakanga	The striking sun of September
Rirabaga ibibondo	It hurts children
Hmm mama	Hmm baby.