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# FROM DECOLONISING THE MIND TO KUTAPANURA PFUNGWA DZAKATAPWA: A TRANSLATOR'S EXPERIENCE

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## ABSTRACT

*There has been an overwhelming interface between theories in translation, however, practical reflections on translated texts are scanty. This empirical paper evaluates the translation process. It unveils the challenges and the associated strategies from a translator's experience while doing the first translation of Decolonising the Mind into an African language in Africa: the ChiShona text, Kutapanura Pfungwa Dzakatapwa. It was dubbed "homecoming" by the author, Professor wa Thiong'o. From perspectives relating to intellectualisation and decolonisation, the translator was the key participant in this qualitative inquiry. The translated text was the primary source of data deployed in conjunction with the source text. This research advances that an interdisciplinary approach provides the foundation for eclectic theory in translation studies. Grounded theory informed the theoretical analysis of the translated text from the target audience's perspective. The study affirms that while translation cannot be guided by straight-jacketed approaches, copyright laws stifle the spontaneous growth of translations into African languages. Translation strategies mutate according to the text type and the languages involved. To this end, the translation of seminal literary works demands unique methods. This translator's experience enhances narratives and discourses on the notions of translation and decoloniality, as well as the intellectualisation of African languages.*

**Keywords:** *Decoloniality; Intellectualisation of African languages; Translation; Translation challenges; Translation strategies*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This experience-based paper unveils the empirical insights gained by the translator as he translated *Decolonising the Mind* (the source language (SL) text) into the ChiShona text, *Kutapanura Pfungwa Dzakatapwa* (Decolonising the Mind) (the target language (TL) text). Translation challenges and their associated solutions are widely acknowledged in extant literature (Weeks, Swerissen & Belfrage 2007; Zainudin & Awal 2012; Karjagdiu & Krasniqi 2020). Remarkably, literature exploring these challenges and solutions from the experience of the translator translating into African languages, is scarce. This paper offers a lucid



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gaze into the empirical translation process from English to ChiShona, its challenges and the strategies deployed as the translator translated this seminal work. The translated text enriches and (re)members ChiShona, (re)positioning it for its intellectualisation. Doing so deepens the theoretical appreciation of the translation processes and the challenges faced in the process. It affirms that translators working into African languages must not be subjected to a generic approach to solving translation problems.

African languages have been abandoned to enrich 'others' for far too long, and their time is now (Bamgbose 1999; Kaschula & Maseko 2014). This abandonment follows 'dismembering practices' that were unleashed to plant European memory in Africa, with missionaries at the centre (Thiong'o 2009, p. 1). They deployed translation to further entrench religious and colonial ideologies in Africa. The use of African languages to colonise Africans further typified the obliteration of the colonial subjects' memories from their individual and collective bodies (Thiong'o 2009). The elevation of English above these languages would symbolically 'decapitate' African memory for storage in Europe, as the new European memory would replace their own. The expansion of Europe through colonialism, "submitted the world to its memory", since there was naming and ownership involved (Mudimbe 1994, p. xii). Arguing in favour of translation in Meiji, Japan, Coulmas posits that "It was imperative that the 'new knowledge and enlightenment' was spread as widely as possible throughout society" (Coulmas 1990, p. 71). This translation of *Decolonising the Mind* is part of intellectualisation strides to avail new knowledge and seminal works in African languages, and ChiShona is a launch pad for this endeavour.

The implantation of European memory into colonised minds would also practically set the tone for the relationship that would be established and maintained between Africa and Europe, that of persistently snaffling intellectual power from Africa and Africans. It is worth noting that "much of the intellectual production by the native keepers of memory in Africa has been in languages other than those of the cultures of the writer's birth and upbringing" (Thiong'o 2009, p. 138; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018). This approach to intellectual production, therefore, calls for an intervention to restore African memory and to unshackle African minds through translating back into languages of African birth and upbringing. Such efforts are critical because most African states still perpetuate language policies that they inherited from their colonial masters (Prah 2009). This justifies persistent calls to decolonise the curriculum (Cross & Govender 2021; Stroud & Kerfoot 2021).

The deployment of English as a medium of instruction in the pedagogy of African languages at universities further entrenches an unquestionable hegemony and status of English over these languages. Chiblow and Meighan (2022) are of the opinion that these are the ramifications of colonialism – such a status remains broadly unchallenged at African universities. Therefore, one cannot promulgate the "Africanisation of English" (Cornwell 2015), as it dislodges African languages further off prospects of use in education. We cannot equally champion the "Anglicising of African languages", instead we should strive for the deepening of the use of African languages in Africa, hence, advocating for more translations like the one in question in this paper. In light of this, cultivating a praxis for the decolonisation of African languages through translation strides is critical.

It is argued that "Language is, without doubt, the most important factor in the learning process for the transfer of knowledge or skills ... mediated through the spoken or written word" (Bamgbose 1992, p. 18). Therefore, the translation of this *au courant* text into

ChiShona directly contributes to the learning and transfer of knowledge in the target language, as it replaces its English coequal as a recommended text for African language studies at Zimbabwean universities. In practical terms, English enjoys its status because of the functions that are ascribed to it, including its dominant use in the teaching and learning of African languages. This translation, therefore, avails literature that can be recommended for the study of African languages at colleges and universities in Zimbabwe.

Research reveals that there is an interdependence between student performance and the medium of instruction (Zondi 2014). This finding justifies calls for the intellectualisation and deployment of African languages as a medium of instruction to position students whose mother tongues are African languages better (Prah 2017). An intellectualised language is a “language which can be used for educating a person in any field of knowledge from kindergarten to the university and beyond” (Sibayan 1999, p. 229). It is conceded further that one of “the main mechanisms for bringing about and driving this process is the translation of major works of literacy and scientific creation that exist in the more ‘developed’ languages” (Alexander 2007, p. 37). In support of this view, Prah (2017, p. 217) postulates that “the first condition for the intellectualisation of a language is that it must have a literate social base; it must be written”. Considering these views, and as more texts are being translated into African languages, a noble consideration to start using such texts for teaching and learning is tabled, since institutions of higher education must spearhead and promulgate this process. Therefore, it is imperative to deploy translation to produce more texts in African languages, and that ideal spurred this translation stride.

This ChiShona translation of the SL text seeks to reinstitute the ‘prodigal’ African language. Translation into African languages is dubbed a “Restoration Project” (Thiong’o 2009, p. 138). Thiong’o advances, furthermore, that “Restoration would mean translating Europhone literature and Europhone intellectual productions back into the languages and cultures from which the writers have been drawn” (2009, p. 138). Therefore, translations into African languages enable intellectual production in African languages.

This ChiShona translation was the first translation of *Decolonising the Mind* into an African language, as hinted by Julia Masnik at Watkins Loomis Literary Agency, who highlights that at the time of this ChiShona rendition, the book had only been translated into German, Catalan, Spanish, Japanese, French, Italian, Korean and Turkish. As stated succinctly by Prof. Ngugi wa Thiong’o, this ChiShona translation marks the “Homecoming” of texts that were initially written in English by Africans (Herald Correspondent, 2021). The translation of this *au courant* text pragmatically reaffirms the position of ChiShona as an African language, beyond mere rhetoric to elevate it for broader use as a medium of instruction, instead, an effective blueprint for the intellectualisation of African languages. Furthermore, it broadens access to literature in one’s mother tongue, which promotes reading culture in Africa.

It is axiomatic that translations exist in all communities, and have come of age (Baker 2010). However, African languages still lag in a practical sense (Nida 1964; Chimhundu 1992; Kruger 2008; Kadenge & Nkomo 2012) and, worse still, reflections on translations into these languages from a translator’s lens are exiguous. Nkomo (2019) reflects on his translation of *Alice in Wonderland* into isiNdebele, while Mtuze (2003) alludes to his translation of Mandela’s *Long Walk to Freedom* into isiXhosa as a tall order. This paper broadens the scope and discourse of translation studies in African languages by articulating the translator’s experience while translating *Decolonising the Mind* into ChiShona. The paper presents a methodology

and background, after which a sneak peek into the theoretical framework is enunciated, leading to the presentation and analysis of the challenges, as well as solutions, proffered by the translator.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The texts identified for inclusion in this study are *Decolonising the mind* (the source text) and *Kutapanura Pfungwa Dzakatapwa* (target text). The collection of data was empirical, as the translator accounted for the challenges, as well as strategies deployed to resolve translation hurdles that confronted him during the translation process. Several entries were identified from the target text to explicate the challenges and strategies deployed. Excluded entries were saturated ones, or were those that were regarded as having occurred repeatedly under the identified themes. The selected TL texts were analytically juxtaposed with the source text from intellectualisation, pragmatic, and decolonisation perspectives. Indeed, an interdisciplinary approach provides the foundation for eclectic theory in translation studies. Grounded theory informed the theoretical analysis of the translated text from the target audience's perspective.

## 3. SEEKING TRANSLATION PERMISSION AND NEGOTIATION OF RIGHTS

No text that is protected by copyright can be translated without approval and permission from the rights holder, as stipulated by copyright law (Basalamah 2007). Translation permission must be obtained from the bureaucratic rights holders. While this process protects intellectual property rights, it also guarantees control over by whom and where the text can be translated. Translation rights tend to cement the individualistic and egoistic tendencies of capitalists in the Global North, unlike in African communities, where knowledge that is embedded in proverbs, folktales, myths and legends is communally owned and not subject to copyright. Translation rights could also be regarded as a gatekeeping strategy to linguistically dismember African languages further, thereby depriving them of easy access to seminal works that were initially written and published in English. *Decolonising the Mind* is subject to copyright protection. As the source text clearly states,

All rights [are] reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior permission of the publishers (Thing'o 1986, p. iv).

Even though translation is not lucidly expressed, it is implied by a declaration that it is illegal to transmit the text "in any form or by any means". Therefore, translating the SL text without seeking proper permission would have been a clear violation and infringement of copyright and intellectual property rights.

Seeking and obtaining translation permission becomes an obstacle if a translator endeavours to pursue it as an individual. It is a norm that translation rights holders directly negotiate with publishers, not with individual translators (Levin 2009). Therefore, obtaining permission becomes more taxing for independent, pioneering and enterprising African translators who are passionate about the restoration of African languages. With a clear exhibition of the apparent oblivion of translation rights procedures and processes, publishing houses expect individual translators to 'translate' the text and create a manuscript that is evaluated to determine if the work is publishable. However, this is not possible, because a translator cannot translate any work without a publisher negotiating translation rights on their behalf – it is a knotty,

inverted, flipped, and impracticable process. On the other hand, and rightfully so, translation rights holders expect a translator to obtain a publisher (to negotiate translation rights on their behalf) before the commencement of translation work. This creates a paradoxical hurdle that entangles and chokes the translation process. While translation is one way of intellectualising African languages (Prah 2017), copyright and translation rights are a key stumbling block to the translation and ultimate decolonisation of these languages.

The ChiShona translator had to secure translation permission for the SL text prior to the commencement of his work. He approached Prof. Ngugi wa Thiong'o on 19 November 2015 with a request to translate *Decolonising the Mind*. However, Thiong'o referred him to the publisher of the book, James Currey, in the United Kingdom. The translator contacted the publisher through their managing editor, Lynn Taylor, who revealed that the rights to translate the source text were held by Watkins Loomis in New York. In the same mail, Taylor copied Julia Masnik, to whom the translator would then write on this matter. Having received the translator's request, Masnik at Watkins Loomis reverted with the feedback 15 days later, revealing that she wanted to clear the request with Thiong'o first. In line with copyright law, she hinted that Watkins Loomis generally does not make arrangements with translators, but rather with a publisher, who then contracts a translator to do the translation work (Levin 2009).

With his lucid appreciation of how the bureaucracy of publishing houses hampers the progress of African languages through translation, Thiong'o reassured the translator that he would persuade the copyright holder to grant permission. In *Something Torn and New*, Thiong'o asserts that the restoration project can only be a success if there is, "a conscious Africa-wide movement, ... a grand alliance of publishers, translators, financiers, and governments" (2009, p 126). To enforce this view, as an author, Thiong'o brokered with Watkins Loomis to permit the translator to proceed with his work before other conventional and bureaucratic processes were resolved. Thiong'o motivated the noble request to repatriate knowledge back to Africa through African languages, and emphasised the need to expedite that process. This description of the process that was followed is a prototype of what authors need to do to accelerate the translation process and deliberately cut the red tape.

On 30 November 2015, having heeded the author's plea and conceded to the translator's determination, Watkins Loomis authorised the translator to synchronously proceed with the translation of the book and search for a publisher for his project. Once the translator found a publisher, he would then link the publisher with Watkins Loomis for the finalisation of arrangements around the translation rights and the right to publish the translated work. Watkins Loomis however, signalled that the translator would need to negotiate with and authorise the publisher to use his translation as a matter of principle. This authorisation is merely ceremonial because, with adherence to copyright laws, the translator's work can never see the light of day without publication, which is a prerogative of the publisher.

The translator immediately started with the translation process, while also undertaking his Master's studies, which he completed in December 2016. The translator registered for his PhD studies in January 2017, while he continued with the translation and the search for a publisher. He approached the Centre for the Advanced Studies of African Societies (CASAS) in January 2019, and they were eager to publish the project since they had published the translator's first translated book in 2014. Ultimately, the translator linked CASAS with Watkins Loomis, who referred the publisher to the Marsh Agency in the United Kingdom, which represented Watkins Loomis' interests in negotiations around translation rights, and the two parties successfully

negotiated the issuing of translation rights to CASAS. The COVID-19 hard lockdown was instrumental in expediting the finalisation of the translation process, and CASAS published the work in June 2021. The publication of *Kutapanura Pfungwa Dzakatapwa (Decolonising the Mind)* coincided with the graduation of the translator with his PhD. The book was launched by the University of the Western Cape's linguistics department in conjunction with CASAS at the first-in-Africa Biennial Conference of the International Association of Colonial and Postcolonial Linguistics (IACPL) on 30 June 2021.

Even though CASAS was permitted to publish the translated text under the issued rights, it was limited to printing only 200 books – an example of the gatekeeping strategies used to control and indirectly choke and stifle wide access to literature in African languages by the rights holders. One could justifiably argue that the rights holders permit the translation processes, but they still control how widely the translated texts are circulated. Given such depth of control, it is a noble submission to call for the establishment of new and vibrant publishing houses that can be instrumental in not only the negotiation of translation rights on behalf of African translators, but in the publication of high quality, new literature in African languages that can be widely circulated without restriction.

Grounded theory is concerned with the generation of a theory that is steeped in data that has been systematically collected and analysed. The translation in question is graphically expressed in Figure 1.



Figure 1: From *Decolonising the Mind* to *Kutapanura Pfungwa Dzakatapwa*

Munday (2016) elaborates on the translator's journey as unveiling the meaning of the SL text, to transfer it into the TL text. Unveiling the translation experience of this au courant text is critical, as it can be the basis upon which further and similar translation projects are developed; it also enriches the discourse and narrative on translation, as a tool to decolonise African languages.

#### 4. THE TRANSLATION PROCESS

Translation projects of this magnitude require financial resources, because they are time consuming, arduous, fatiguing, and strenuous. The SL text was translated without any form of financial backing, as it was born out of the translator's initiative and enterprising effort. It was financially costly for the translator, who used his personal resources from the initiation to the final completion of the translation process. The translation process, furthermore, isolated the translator, as he laboured on his own to complete the project. Additionally, it was unfeasible for the translator to acquire any income-generating translation projects while he was working on this project, owing to its magnitude and how close it was to his heart. This explains why such translation projects must be supported through financial incentives for translators, who are required to turn away and lose professionally paid translation projects in the process. Had it not been for the passion to see more seminal works published in African languages, the translator could have given up before project completion.

The publisher of the ChiShona translation, CASAS, prescribed that the *Unified Standard Orthography for Shona-Nyai Varieties* (Alfândega & CASAS 2008) had to serve as the translator's orthography guideline. It may be that CASAS was justified in doing so, to promote the use of the new orthography, since it was through CASAS that the orthography was developed. Therefore, adhering to what was regarded as the Shona orthography (Magwa 2008) would have led to the regressive compartmentalisation of languages, thereby vilifying the unification of the Shona-Nyai varieties. However, this being the case, the translator was schooled using the Standard Shona orthography, and undoing what had been acquired through years of learning proved to be challenging. An example is the use of repeated ideophones that used to be separated by hyphens, for example *mumwe-mumwe* (one by one) is now written as a single word, *mumwemumwe* (one by one). Critics are likely to describe the new *Unified Standard Orthography for Shona-Nyai Varieties* as troubled, problematic, and artificial, but that misplaced discussion is beyond the scope of this paper. Standard languages have always been regarded as political creations (Milani & Johnson 2010; Vogl 2018; McLelland 2020) and have been criticised and rejected by critics on that basis.

The translator was confronted by a plethora of challenges while he decided on the renditions that eventually yielded the translated TL text. While exploring the translation of *Alice in Wonderland*, Kaschula (2016) advances that "the challenge for translators of Lewis Carroll's work is the challenge of dealing with cross-cultural structures, differing cultures, language metaphor, puns, ... conveying the mythical message across cultures". One of the biggest hurdles that confronted the translator of *Decolonising the Mind* into ChiShona was the interpretation of meaning within the context of the SL text and transferring it into the TL text with a great deal of fidelity and preservation of the original meaning. Translation strategies that were employed will, therefore, be explored within the context of this translation.

Munday (2016) confesses that an analysis of the translation process like that of the SL text into the TL text, like this case, entails a great deal of complexity. As advanced by Angelone (2010), translation is a complex, cognitive, problem-solving and decision-making process. It is complicated by the inherent difficulties embedded in studies that aim at tapping into a cognitive process that is not amenable to direct observation. As the translator reads the SL text, they do so with a deliberate intent of deeply appreciating the meaning – more than just understanding the words used. Having comprehended the meaning, they are then forced to scan or process their TL, looking for any equivalence, in this case, ChiShona was scanned. The scanning process included checking for equivalence at the word level, the cultural context, as well as the general meaning that was portrayed by the SL text. Once an equivalence had been identified, the translator reproduced the SL text in the TL text, thereby completing the translation process. It is, therefore, acknowledged that the challenges inherent in the analysis of a translation process are amplified by these complex stages through which the translation process unfolds. The reading, comprehension, processing, and reproduction processes are managed concurrently.

The general aim of the translator was not to simply translate the English language or the SL text into the ChiShona TL text in the strictest sense of this phrase, but to transfer the sense and meaning embedded in the original text, what Reynolds (2006, p. 67) calls, "the translator's equivalent response". The priority of sense over the literal rendition, and of context over the verbatim expression of any SL text, cannot be overemphasised. The translator was inspired by the desire to produce a translation that would be both readable and faithful to the original text and which would evoke what Nida (1964) calls an equivalent response in the target



audience. It is argued that “the approach(es) and strategies adopted by translators ... have definite implications for the nature of the translated text” (Nkomo 2019, p. 130). This claim is summed up in an argument that “translation is the language of languages” which makes the remembering of Africa a possibility (Thiong’o 2009, p. 96). Considering these views, a multidimensional approach was employed; the translator negotiated a balance between the linguistic, sociolinguistic, hermeneutic, and literal approaches. The TL text endeavours to give a complete transcript of the ideas expressed in the SL text, *with* full regard for the semantic truth.

The translator approached the title of the SL text from Steiner’s hermeneutics of translation perspective. Hermeneutics is defined as “the act of elicitation and appropriative transfer of meaning” (Steiner 1998, p. 312). The translator was initially confronted by the notion of “decolonising” as he sought to elicit and engage in an appropriative transfer of the concept into ChiShona. Colonisation is regarded by Thiong’o (2009, p. 28) as a process of being “dismembered from the land, from labour, from power, and from memory, the result (*being the*) destruction of the base from which people launch themselves into the world” – this is what African states and others were subjected to by colonialists. It is argued, furthermore, that colonisation was responsible for the shackling of Africans in a condition of “indignity, contempt and humiliation” (Mbembe 2021, p. 23). The selection of existing terms is regarded as incorporation, because “the TL ... is already full of its own words and meanings” (Steiner 1998, p. 314).

In ChiShona, the term *kutapa* mean to ‘colonise’. Therefore, the translator used an existing word, *kutapa*, ‘to colonise’, to create the opposite term *kutapanura*, ‘to decolonise’, as it could be understood easily by ChiShona speakers. The English SL title *Decolonising the Mind* was subsequently translated as *Kutapanura Pfungwa Dzakatapwa* in the ChiShona TL text. The TL text rendition, however, elaborated the phrase, ‘decolonising the mind’, since the literal rendition of the SL could have been *Kutapanura Pfungwa*, which would have been semantically erroneous and contextually inappropriate, because the SL text emphasises how we as Africans can (re)member ourselves and unshackle our minds from the “dismembering practices of planting European memory in Africa” (Thiong’o 2008, p. 1) and from the grip of colonisation. Thiong’o (2008, p. 4), furthermore, alludes to colonisation as “any act in the context of conquest and domination ... a practice of power, intended to pacify a populace ... and produce docile minds”. Mbembe (2016, p. 34) concurs with this view by affirming that Ngugi uses the term ‘decolonizing’ to refer to “an ongoing process of seeing ourselves clearly; emerging out of a state of either blindness or dizziness”. It was the appreciation of meaning in this context that shaped the final rendition of the ChiShona TL text title.

The subtitle of the SL text is *The Politics of Language in African Literature*. The key focus was on the interpretation of the term ‘politics’. It emerged that politics, in the SL text context, pertains to the processes and issues that undermine the status and future of African languages. Disrespect of African languages deters people from using them broadly, and that demeans both the language and its speakers. The author alludes to these issues to cement his clarion call for the elevation of the status of African languages in African literature. For Ngugi, “to Africanize is part of a larger politics – not the politics of racketeering and looting, but the *politics of language*” (Mbembe 2016, p. 34). An applied discourse analytic approach became critical to bring to the fore “more explicit, precise, concrete determinations”, as noted by Lewis (1985/2012, p. 223). In line with the interpretation of *The Politics of Language in African Literature*, the book’s subtitle, rendered as *Chiremerera Chemitauro YeUvaranomwe HwemuAfurika*. *Chiremerera* – dignity, honour or respect – is what Thiong’o is advocating



for in *Decolonising the Mind*. This is what Nida (1964) calls dynamic or sense-for-sense translation. The choice is given further credence by Benjamin (1923/2012, p. 81), who argues that dynamic translation “does not obscure the original”.

The rendition of the SL text, ‘Literature Department’ (p. viii) was aligned with the phrase that is in conventional use in ChiShona. The TL text rendition, therefore, became, *Bazi reUvaranomwe* (p. vii), what Steiner (1998) calls incorporation. This approach makes the TL text more acceptable. This was also the rationale behind the translation of ‘University of Zimbabwe’ (p. viii) into the TL text as *Yunivhesiti yeZimbabwe* (p. vii). In this rendition, the term ‘University’ was rephonologised as conventionally used in ChiShona.

If one undertakes a structural comparison between the two text extracts below, the translation of the dedication section yielded a close-to-literal rendition, what Newmark (1988) calls a word-for-word translation. The debate around word-for-word versus sense-for-sense translation has been “emerging again and again with different degrees of emphasis” (Bassnett 2013, p. 53). The English SL text form was matched with the ChiShona TL text, with the latter having a few more words because of its sentence structure: The SL text reads

Dedication – This book is gratefully dedicated to all those who write in African languages, and to all those who over the years have maintained the dignity of the literature, culture, philosophy, and other treasures carried by African languages (p. iv).

This was rendered into the TL text as follows:

*Vandakanyorera – Chinyorwa chino ndakachinyora ndichitenda vese vanonyora vachishandisa ndimi dzemuAfurika, uyewo avo vose zvavo vakatsigisa nekupa chiremerera kuuvaranomwe, tsika, utsome nezivo, pamwewo nezvese zvazvo zvakakosha zvakagukuchirwa nemitauro yemuno muAfurika mumakore ese akapfuura* (p. iv).

Note that the ChiShona rendition preserved the form of the SL text without distorting and compromising the meaning. This was observed in the translation of the following phrase (SL text): “The Language of African Literature has a long history” (p. viii), to (TL text): *Mutauro unoshandiswa muUvaranomwe hwemuAfurika une nhorondo refu* (p. 7). From this observation, one could justifiably argue that literal translation is the default strategy – an inherent part of the translation process, as noted by Dimitrova (2005), and the law of translation (Toury 1995). It is generally rare to effect literal translation without distorting the meaning of the SL text. It is for this reason that translators avoid literal translation, as suggested by Nida (1964). On the other hand, Newmark (1981, p. 39) advances that, “provided equivalent effect is secured, the literal word-for-word translation is not only the best but also the only valid method of translation”. Newmark’s view exudes an extreme and unhealthy obsession with the literal translation strategy, and this paper approaches such a position with great caution and scepticism. Zhongying (1994) advocates for literal translation where possible. Clearly, this approach is only acceptable when the meaning and context of the SL text are not distorted in the process, as was the case in the extracts from the SL and TL texts above.

Ideophones and imagery are the hallmarks of African languages, and their richness manifests in the TL text, as exhibited in the rendition of the following SL text:

Then suddenly it occurs to Wangeci that maybe the Kiois are coming to discuss the possibilities of a marriage between Gathoni, Kiguunda’s daughter, and John Muhuuni, Kioi’s son (p. 66).

The TL text rendered it as follows:

*Chiriporipocho Wangeci akanyangirwa nepfungwa yaiti pamwe mhuri yekwaKioi yainge yauya kuti izokurukura nekuonesana kana zvichiita kuti pave newanano pakati paGathoni, mwanasikana waKiguunda, naJohn Muhuuni, mwanakomana waKioi (p. 87).*

The ChiShona rendition above used an ideophone, *Chiriporipocho*, for 'Then suddenly'. It also used the imagery, *Wangeci akanyangirwa nepfungwa* for 'it occurs to Wangeci'. This translation vividly demonstrates that this was a sudden and an unexpected thought, a meaning that is embedded in the SL text, but not so explicitly expressed as is now the case in the TL text. This translation refines the meaning of the SL text. In that way, we use African languages as resources to demonstrate their own capability to express the SL meaning through African nuances. Almazan Garcia (2002) refers to a focus on what was said and on what was meant during the translation process. This places sense and meaning at the centre of the translation effort, as was illustrated by the examples above.

The translator also employed a communicative translation approach, by combining adaptation and word-for-word rendition techniques. Newmark (1981, p. 39) is of the view that "Communicative translation attempts to produce on its readers an effect as close as possible to that obtained on the readers of the original". This is what inspired the translator as he translated the play and songs that stretch from page 62 to 69 in the SL text, and from page 73 to 82 in the TL text, as illustrated in Figure 2.

SL text (p. 62)	TL text (p. 73)
KIGUUNDA: You women! You are always thinking of weddings!	KIGUUNDA: <i>Imi madzimai!</i> <i>Chamunongofunga chete michato!</i>
WANGECI: Why not? These are different times from ours. These days they sing that love knows no fear.	WANGECI: <i>Ko kutyei?</i> <i>Nguva dzino dzasiyana nedzedu dzakare.</i> <i>Mazuvano vave kuimba vachiti rudo haruzeze kana kuzengurira.</i>
In any case, can't you see Your daughter is very beautiful? She looks exactly the way I used to look - a perfect beauty!	<i>Kana newewo hauzvioniwo kuti</i> <i>Mwanasikana wako itsvarakadenga?</i> <i>Anonyatsotaridzika semataridzikiro andaiita inini kare kwangu - svsvurandadya!</i>
KIGUUNDA: [stopping dusting up the tyre sandals] You? A perfect beauty?	KIGUUNDA: <i>[achimira kupukuta manyatera ake akagadzirwa nemataira]</i> <i>Iwe manje? Tsvarakadenga?</i>

Figure 2: Extract of the rendition of play and songs that stretch from page 62 to 69 in the SL text

Clearly, in the translation of the play and song reproduced in Figure 2, the translator explicitly strived to preserve the original meaning, while maintaining the stylistic structure of the original text. The translator also carefully selected poetic language for his translation, to maintain the poetic effect of the SL text in the TL text. An example was the rendition of the SL text, 'Why not?' which was translated in the TL text as *Ko kutyei?*, which is equally poetic. To obtain proper poetic effect, the translator made use of enjambment where there was a continuation of a sentence or clause across a line break. The translator also carefully selected words such as *itsvarakadenga* (beautiful) and *svusvurandadya* (perfect beauty), which he deliberately alternated with *Tsvarakadenga?* (A perfect beauty?). Gorlée (1994) argues in favour of the principle of semiosis, where the translator is said to not transfer or reproduce meaning, but to be engaged in the process of actively creating the meaning as they render the SL text into the TL text. As the translator selected terms that express beauty in ChiShona, he created the Shona meaning while, at the same time, retaining the SL text meaning. The processes of creating and retaining meaning were, therefore, simultaneous during the translation process. The reading, comprehension, processing, and reproduction processes had to be managed concurrently.

The translator was also confronted with some nouns in the SL text. According to Alfândega and CASAS (2008, p. 40), "Names of places such as countries, villages and towns as well as names of languages will be written as pronounced". Considering this orthographic dictate, the translator rendered country names for 'China' (p. 21) and 'India' (p. 21), as *Chaina* (p. 32) and *Indiya* (p. 32), as they are pronounced in ChiShona. Alfândega and CASAS (2008, p. 40) dictate that, "Personal names should be written as they are spelt in the SL". Examples include names in the SL text such as 'Spencer, Milton and Shakespear' (p. 29), which were rendered in the TL as spelt in the SL: *Spencer, Milton naShakespear* (p. 44). Other names were 'Pushkin and Tolstoy (p. 29)', which were written as they are spelt in the SL: *Pushkin, Tolstoy* (p. 44). Organisation names such as the 'Kenya National Theatre' and 'Donovan Maule Theatre' on p. 38 in the SL text were also rendered as they were in the SL, on p. 61 in the TL text. It was imperative for such SL names to be preserved as articulated by the new Shona-Nyai varieties orthography.

The 'Kenya Land and Freedom Army' (p. 24) in the SL text was rendered as *Mawuto airwira nyaya Yevhu Nerusununguko muKenya* (p. 55) in the TL text. This was prompted by the fact that in Zimbabwe, guerrillas (the Zimbabwean liberation war fighters) were generally referred to as *Varwi Verusununguko* – freedom fighters – in ChiShona. Therefore, a ChiShona speaker would easily identify with the translated name of the Kenyan army.

The SL text is replete with language names, which were handled in accordance with the *Unified Standard Orthography for Shona-Nyai Language Varieties* as outlined by Alfândega and CASAS (2008, p. 39), who advise that they "must be written as they are pronounced in the local languages". Examples of such language names in the SL text are listed in Figure 3.

ST Language Name (p. 29)	TT Language Name (p. 44)
Kiswahili	<i>ChiSwahili</i>
Luo	<i>ChiLuo</i>
Gikuyu	<i>ChiGikuyu</i>
Maasai	<i>ChiMaasai</i>
Luhya	<i>ChiLuhya</i>
Kallenjin	<i>ChiKallenjin</i>
Kamba	<i>ChiKamba</i>
Mijikenda	<i>ChiMijikenda</i>
Somali	<i>ChiSomali</i>
Galla	<i>ChiGalla</i>
Turkana	<i>ChiTurkana</i>
Arabic	<i>ChiArabhu</i>
Hausa	<i>ChiHausa</i>
Wolof	<i>ChiWolof</i>
Yoruba	<i>ChiYoruba</i>
Ibo	<i>ChiIbo</i>
Zulu	<i>ChiZulu</i>
Nyanja	<i>ChiNyanja</i>
Lingala	<i>ChiLingala</i>
Kimbundu	<i>ChiKimbundu</i>
English	<i>Chirungu</i>
French	<i>ChiFurenji</i>
German	<i>ChiJerimani</i>
Russian	<i>ChiRashiya</i>
Chinese	<i>ChiChaina</i>
Japanese	<i>ChiJapanizi</i>
Portuguese	<i>ChiPutukezi</i>
Spanish	<i>ChiSipanishi</i>

Figure 3: Language names from the SL text to the TL text

It is evident from these renditions that the translator rephonologised language names such as Arabic, French, German, Russian and Portuguese, in conformity with the ChiShona sound system and orthography stipulations. Moreover, the language names Swahili, Luo, Gikuyu,

Maasai, Luhya, Kallenjin, Kamba, Mijikenda, Somali, Galla, Turkana, Hausa, Wolof, Yoruba, Ibo, Zulu, Nyanja were simply prefixed with *Chi-*, in line with the conventional naming of languages in ChiShona. Languages such as English (*Chirungu*) and Chinese (*ChiChina*) were simply aligned with their conventional usage and reference in ChiShona. In addition, other names were simply left as they appeared in the SL, for example, the SL names on p. 18, 'Shakespeare, Goethe, Balzac, Tolstoy, Gorky, Brecht, Sholokhov, Dickens' were simply transferred to the TL text on p. 27, as *Shakespeare, Goethe, Balzac, Tolstoy, Gorky, Brecht, Sholokhov, Dickens*. This attests to the fact that names are not translated through a one-size-fits-all or straight-jacketed approach. Much care needs to be taken when reproducing names from the SL to the TL text, to avoid loss of meaning. One also needs to acknowledge that besides carrying meaning, names are largely used as identity markers. Therefore, translating names had the potential to anonymise and deidentify the individuals concerned – which would have deluded the TL audience of the meaning embedded in the SL text.

English is a gendered language, as noted by Bigler and Leaper (2015). Thiong'o refers to 'man' and 'woman' in the SL text to refer to biological make-ups and gender. Considering this, the translator simply transferred the meaning as such into ChiShona, because it is equally a gendered language. When the SL text refers to 'Every rich man' (p. 82), the translated version makes a clear reference to a gender, *Murume wegawega akapfumisisa* (p. 132). The SL text, 'No man or woman can choose their biological nationality' (p. 1) is rendered into the TL text as *Hakuna murume kana mudzimai anogona kuzvisarudzira nyika yekuzvarirwa* (p. 2). This clearly demonstrates how the English gender references were simply transferred and translated into ChiShona.

Cultural sensitivity and consideration were critical during the translation process. In ChiShona, it is taboo to explicitly name the private parts of either men or women. In the SL text, explicit reference is made to the 'extra penises' (p. 82) and 'two cocks' (p. 82). Specific reference to the male private organ and 'female organs' (p. 82) is too culturally sensitive in the TL. Therefore, the ChiShona rendition does not explicitly name the male organ, as was the case with the SL text, as it made a culturally sensitive, lighter rendition, *nhengo* 'private parts' (p. 131-132) for both the male and female private parts, thereby not depriving the ChiShona audience of the original meaning carried by the SL text. One should, therefore, note that the translation process should not preserve only the meaning of the SL text, but should also take full cognisance of the cultural sensitivity of the SL text, to avoid offending the target audience.

Key terms, issues and foreign concepts were other hurdles. The translator was confronted by a plethora of these in the SL text, as illustrated in Figure 4.

SL text terms and concepts	TL text rendition
Capitalism (p. 20, p. 56, p. 62, p. 66, p. 102, p. 103)	<i>Huzvinabizimusi hweKapitarizimu</i> (p. 31, p. 86, p. 104, p. 105, p. 115, p. 162)
Socialism (p. 20, p. 30, p. 68)	<i>Jechetere</i> (p. 4, p. 31, p. 45)
Democracy (p.3, p. 30, p. 61, p. 103)	<i>Kuzvitonga/Gutsaruzhinji</i> (p. 4, p. 45, p. 95, p. 162)
Nationalistic (p.20, p.21, p.39, p.40)	<i>Vane nyika pamwoyo</i> (p. 31, p. 32, p. 63, p. 63, p. 65)

Figure 4: Foreign concepts from the SL text to the TL text

These terms and concepts were translated with much consideration of the meaning that they carry in the SL text. 'Capitalism' was rephonologised and concurrently explained for ease of semantic access by the target audience. It is also worth noting that the translator deliberately transferred 'Marxism' (p. 101) from the SL text to the TL text (p. 159). This was premised on the fact that Marxism was simply referred to once in the SL text, which could have made its translation into the TL text difficult to comprehend for the target audience, as the concept never appears in the text again to ease familiarization. This was a difficult decision that the translator had to grapple with.

## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Thus far, much scholarly attention has been ascribed to the Shona language in education policies (Magwa 2010; 2015, as well as Chivhanga and Chimhenga 2013). However, there is apparently a yawning gap and a dearth of literature that unveils translators' experiences of translating into African languages. Translation into these languages can propel the implementation of African language policies in higher education. Mpfu and Salawu (2018) posit that the general sensitivity in Zimbabwean indigenous language research has been premised on safeguarding the identity of the discipline by way of defending the use of local languages and vilifying the primary use of English. With, and through translation efforts, the use of African languages in education can easily become a reality, as it creates a firm ground to defend the use of indigenous languages. This paper deployed an empirical gaze at the first translation of a particular SL text into an African language. It unveiled the challenges and strategies that were employed by the translator while he translated the seminal work. The translator collected, analysed, and presented the empirical findings.

It emerges from this paper that translators are confronted with the hurdle of seeking translation rights, a difficult process that exhibits how knowledge is still controlled by a few publishers and rights holders, and which cements the egoistic and individual tendencies that can easily stifle and counter the decolonial project of the intellectualisation of African languages. This gatekeeping was identified as a neo-colonial strategy for preserving the hegemony of colonial languages, and a further subjugation of African languages. It is, therefore, recommended that authors collaborate with translators, rights holders, and publishers to expedite the translation rights application process. It was also reported that translation rights can easily thwart the spontaneous growth and expansion of African languages, and can become a stumbling block for the decolonisation project.

A number of translation challenges were identified in this research. These ranged from lack of funding, which generally demoralises translators who need resources to effectively execute their duty, as well as the hurdle of searching for equivalence from the SL text to the TL text. The enormity of the task of translating seminal works into African languages makes it imperative for translators to receive financial backing from NGOs, universities, and African governments. Such funding would expedite the translation process, as more human and other resources can be easily sought. Funding could also serve to hasten the quality assurance processes, the publication, marketing and wide distribution of translated texts. The translator's findings concur with existing literature that translation challenges exist, but it rebuts any calls for a straight-jacketed approach to the translation process. It was fascinating to note how, as a translation strategy, African languages exploit ideophones and imagery to depict sensory events.

The overarching submission in this paper is that further research is imperative, to establish fresh insights into the translation of seminal and literary works such as *Decolonising the Mind*, to empower African languages through their broad access and use. Furthermore, the translator calls for more translation projects into African languages, to unshackle these languages from the hegemony of colonial languages.

There is also a need for coordinated efforts to tackle translation projects. Departments at universities can take the lead in the coordination process. This empirical research contributed to the narratives and discourses on translation studies, decoloniality and the intellectualisation of African languages. Such research should snowball into a larger body of translation analysis studies that looks at a specific period of translation into African languages. Further research on how translation rights could hinder and slow down translation efforts is also recommended. The translation of *Decolonising the Mind* into *Kutapanura Pfungwa Dzakatapwa*, therefore, ratifies such an effort as a blueprint for the translation of seminal texts into African languages, with the deliberate aim of enriching, intellectualising, and decolonising these languages.

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