

A Contextual Meaning Mislays in Translation: A Case of Hedges in Presidential Political Speeches in Kenya

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Abstract

This study seeks to highlight the phenomenon of pragmatic mislay in translation of hedges in presidential political speeches from English to Kiswahili and Vice versa. Hedges are considered an additional ingredient in communication, making the interlocutor to pass his or her message either elaborately or implicitly Lakoff, (1973). Information can pragmatically be expressed in an explicit or implicit manner to amplify or to conceal a specific message through usage of hedging devices which are not forthrightly detectable in a statement. Thus, this pragmatic function in a statement is bound to be missed out in translation leading to pragmatic mislay on the speeches owing to the fact that, hedging is a political strategy of communication for myriads of reasons. This is detectable in culture specific terms found in the proverbs often used by the politicians in their public addresses to convince and alter the thinking process of a community and sway them to vote in a certain direction. The study focused on cultural-specific terms in certain proverbs used by politicians and their translatability as hedging devices. Kiswahili and English are the official languages and as such used interchangeably by politicians in political rallies. Due to their polygrammatic nature, the hedging devices in the political language are a problem in translation. This would establish the connecting factor between pragmatics and translation.

Key Words: *Mislays, Accommodation, Domestication, Hedges, Linguistic Prevalence, Target Language*

Introduction

Mislays of pragmatic meaning in translation have widely been discussed by previous scholars notably, Newmark, 1988, Gutt, 2000, Nord, 2006, Pym, 2005 and Salager-Meyer, 2000 among others. The debate arising from their discussion had indication that in any translation process of any text there is mislay of meaning at different levels. The relationship between translation and pragmatics, has elicited debate on translatability of pragmatic effects from one language to another with focus on the mislay of these effects. This mislay of pragmatic meaning in the translation of the hedging devices has not received much attention more so the hedging strategy employed in the presidential political speeches in Kenya. The mislay occurs due to lack of comprehensibility of hedging devices used as pragmatic features in this genre of communication. Like in any journey, there is inevitable slowness and loss of energy on the way. The scenario is equally encountered by translators in their task as they try their best to alleviate the problem of pragmatic meaning mislay as expounded by Armstrong (2005). The ingredients in food preparation makes it tasty but the absence of the same ingredients results into tastelessness of the prepared food. Likewise, pragmatic effects make the source text attractive and pleasurable to read or hear but condemning these effects in translation makes the target text unpleasurable to read. Mislays of pragmatic functional meaning clutters audience's understanding of the intended meaning and as a result, there is an occurrence of disharmony between source and target languages due to absence of pragmatic correlation in the source and target texts when the translator does not pay attention to contextual cues which might not seem significant. Since there is no perfect translation, not a single translator can produce identical translation of the source text and therefore the product of translation is determined by comprehensibility of the source text and the contextual aspects in it thus, determining what to transfer into target text and what not to transfer as explained by Al-Azab (2012). From this realization, to try to reach the maximum optimal translation which by all means is not identical to the ST, a number of strategies and approaches are employable and by all means there can never miss pragmatic meaning mislay which the translators have to work

out in order to retain the candid meaning without trading it with insignificant ones which can easily be done away with. Pragmatic effect in the presidential political speeches presented inform of hedges which predominantly carry more than one meaning activates the need for the full understanding of the source text for appropriate rendition of the intended meaning.

When one listens to the political speeches in Kenya, it is easy to rate them as ordinal assertions between the candidates and their political supporters. The crafting of this messaging strategy is carefully planned to elicit a certain reaction from the audience that would favour and elevate the popularity of the politicians. As such, the use of hedging devices with pragmatic functions to enrich communication is an ever-present phenomenon in the Kenya's political arena. This is often in English especially during interviews on Televisions and radio or public address during campaign periods and in social functions. The Kenya Constriction of 2010 recognizes English and Kiswahili as official languages with Kiswahili doubling as a national language and thus the citizens have the right to information of national interest expressed in both languages. Where the information is in English, translation becomes the bridge to connect the larger majority of Kenyan's who have a higher command of Kiswahili and as such would not understand a higher register of English which is a characteristic of official information. There have been very few studies that have delved into investigation of the instances of meaning mislay in translation of the hedges in presidential political speeches in Kenya especially the ones that are embedded on proverbs slogans and sayings.

More often, appropriate meaning of the hedging device in human conversation has been sacrificed at the altar of translation. The pragmatic meaning mostly expressed in implicit messaging is part of human communication and as such, the transfer of meaning from the source text into the target text is often unnoticeable and easily ignored due to lack of comprehension of the actual meaning which exhibits several layers of meanings presented by these devices. This presentation of several meaning options calls for careful comprehension of the implied meaning carried by hedging device to ensure the correct meaning is not scarified in the pretext of faithful rendition. The implied meaning in most cases offer information that is very crucial in determining what kind of response the target audience would give. Therefore, the needs of the target audience ought to be put into consideration during meaning transfer so that the same pragmatic effects on the source texts are felt in the target text. This study therefore aim at delving into careful examination of the factors leading to mislay of pragmatic meaning in translation process where factual and exact meaning in presidential political speeches in Kenya is not transferred into the target text due to the nature of presentation of these speeches that is coupled with lack of appropriate terminologies that suit the appropriate meaning against the preferred meaning of the culture bound words.

The transfer of optimal and appropriate meaning from the Source language text to the Target language text has been the biggest task that the translators grapple with, often unable to discern which features they ought to 'legitimately sacrifice' and which ones to retain or add while transferring meaning in order to minimize the meaning mislays in any conversation while ensuring the message remains relevant and comprehensible (Dickson, Hervy and Higgins 2002:2b). In an attempt to alleviate this problem, the translators largely employ compensation as translation strategy where they allow the loss of some ST elements of meaning before their transfer into TT. Through compensation, meaning is made complete by 'additional of some elements' in the target text to aid in completion of meaning. The additional of some elements in translation process is viewed as compensation act where the added elements stand in for the sacrificed ones in the source text and as such offer more information that would have been lost (Amstrong, 2005: 4b).

Ensuring nonoccurrence of pragmatic loss in translation of hedges in presidential political speeches in Kenya is uphill task for translators daring to achieve an optimal effect. This is due to polygramatic nature of these hedging device and the inability to discern the exact meaning from these devices by the translators. Faced with the translation problems emanating from this perspective, translators need to exercise scrutiny, precision and meticulousness in translation process in order to minimize mislay of pragmatic meaning in these speeches. In this study, the level of pragmatic

meaning in the speeches occur in multiplicity and extensions of phrases or word meanings as exhibited in the lexical and invisible hedging devices. This is also discernable in culturally specific words presented in proverbs and slogans and riddles. This study delves into the mislay of meaning in translation that encompasses culturally specific terms that leads to multiplicity and extension of word meaning (Pellant, 2010).

Translators may find it very difficult to imitate the political genre and present similar meaning components found in the ST without a noticeable mislay of pragmatic cues due resulting from hedging nature of the political speeches in Kenya. Translators as such can only attempt to transfer the meaning of these speeches by use of near approximations without achieving optimal meaning equivalence in Kiswahili or English specifically when the hedged pragmatic meaning cannot be accounted for in the target text. The problem of translation of this kind of text genre is acute in translation process due to the fact that these texts are distanced from the TL readers and the translators have no privilege of interrogating the speaker to ascertain the exactness of the implicit meaning. The target readers thus fail to connect with the original text that carried the source meaning which had no alterations as opposed to the altered translations (Bassnet, 2006). The political genre in Kenya is captivating to the readers and listener since it is characteristically rhetorical, has elements of music, slogans and a unique texture used as hedged device whose meaning would not be fully recoverable in translation. The most intriguing aspect is its context sensitivity which majorly inhibits full comprehension of the implicit meanings that is enriched through 'colour and flowery' language through usage of 'imageries, metaphors, figures of speech, powerfully evocative language,' proverbs and persuasiveness (Nash 1980; 4b). To achieve an optimal translation of these hedging devices, cohesion and coherence must be in interplay and interact harmonically prior to and within the translation in order to get the overall effect of the meaning of the hedging devices used in these political speeches in Kenya. None the less, due to their multiplicity of meaning, pragmatic meaning is bound to be lost in the process of translation of these linguistic features (Malmkjaer 2005).

The hedging devices in proverbs as used in the political speeches are culturally bound. The culture specific terms or words are special to the source language with their meaning only being discernible in their original status and therefore becoming a foreign entity once transferred into the target language. This complicates their translatability leading to mislay of their meaning in the target culture. They carry a specific meaning and would not be exactly transferable to the target language since they could be 'abstract or concrete concepts' unfound in the target culture emanating from their relationship with belief, custom or religion (Baker, 1992: 21). This is another hurdle that a translator has to deal with in translation of presidential political speeches.

Translation process in an active process controlled by translators whose main function is to ensure the correlation between the source text and the target text. In this process, that is always a form of mislay. If not on literal level but on conciseness of the expression. In instances where the expressions are precise, the translations may not be so. The translators need to be privy to the fact that their work is not to eliminate the pragmatic meaning mislay, but to try to reduce it by making concise decision on which features of source text to respect and maintain and which to sacrifice and lose. This is well catered for by compromise and compensation. In compromise and compensation, the translator may opt to make an implicit message explicit in the target text and may also opt to narrow or broaden the meaning of the term for this.

The Skopos of the Translation

In every translation, the Skopos guiding the process ought to be outlined in advance in order to determine the translation approach that would be suitable (Vermeer, 1978). The skopos, which is the purpose of a given translation is complimented by other tenetes which ensure the cohesion and coherence of the translation is adhered to in rendering of the target language as given in the source language. In any translation process, the translator's major concern is the purpose of the translation. The purpose of the translation may emanate from the author of the text or other commissioners who would initiate the translation process guided by certain needs. Often, the translators define the purpose

of translation of a given text for various reasons, majorly being driven by the need of expansion of the readership of the translated work. Once the purpose is well established, the concerns of the target audience are put into consideration focusing on the internal and external coherence of both the source and target text. Ultimately, the translation has to evoke the same effects as the source text with the audience enabled to comprehend and act accordingly on the basis of the text's information.

The Hedging Strategy in the Presidential Speeches

In Kenya, the presidential candidates and their running mates often use hedges in their speeches. The purpose of using these hedges in their political speeches usually vary although majorly, the devices function as the tactful means of making the audience to believe in some information and thus sway them to take a specific direction in voting. Due to the heavy usage of hedging devices in the political speeches, the information therein is often misunderstood because of their implicitness in message conveyance. The speeches under the study were drawn from the Kenya's presidential political speeches in 2013 and 2017. Since the speeches were in spoken form, they were transcribed and translated. The mislays of the pragmatic meaning in the translated texts were identifiable in proverbs and riddles used by the speakers. The choice of riddle and proverbs for this study arose from the fact that, no single word or phrase is inherently a hedge and as such any word, phrase or a sentence potentially can become a hedging device in contextual perspectives. Hedges as pragmatic devices in presidential political speeches add flavour in communication and becomes a means to attract the audience to listen to the speaker even though the meaning may not forthrightly be comprehended by the listeners. The incomprehensibility nature of hedges in these speeches forms the basis of mislay of pragmatic meaning in translation

Mislay of Pragmatic Meaning in Translation of Presidential Speeches

The discussion on the presidential political speeches and mislay of pragmatic meaning during translation process delves in examining the original text which is presented in Kiswahili and its translation into English and from English into Kiswahili. The presented hedging devices are riddles and proverbs extracted from the political speeches of presidential candidates and their running mates in 2013 and 2017.

Mislay of pragmatic meaning in translation of presidential political speeches can occur at different levels. The level at which this mislay can occur includes, the choice of words, extension of meaning, omission, generalization, bowing, domestication, choice of popular meaning as opposed to the exact meaning. Culturally bound terms present a high level of difficulty in translation because the conceptual meanings they carry in the source text are not easily transferable into the target text. This is observable in translation of a Kiswahili riddles or proverbs into English where the cultural bound meaning is lost in during the transfer of meaning of culturally bound terms in these proverbs. In a majority of languages, riddles and proverbs will ordinarily have more than one meaning, the implicit and explicit meaning. If a translator is unable to decipher the implicit meaning, mislay of meaning is bound to occur in translation. This is expounded in the following speech excerpts extracted from the political speeches in the period under review.

Raila Odinga, a presidential Candidate in 2017 extensively used Kiswahili proverbs and riddles in his political speeches during the election period. Some of these riddles would be rendered into English by Kenyan print media where mislay of pragmatic cultural meaning was discernible. In one of his political rally's address to Kenyans in 2017, Raila used the following Kiswahili proverb; —

Raila: *Mbiu ya mgambo ikilia ina jambo.* Translated into English as —*When the buffalo – horn sounds, there is something of importance.* Advancing his assertion, he further said;—
Raila: *Na tumekuja kupiga mbiu ya mgambo.* ' *Na kuambia nyinyi ya kwamba kuna maneno.*
Mbiu ya mgambo ikilia? (Kuna jambo) Si kuna jambo? Translated into English as;— *And we have come to blow the buffalo horn. And to tell you that we have a problem. When a buffalo – horn sounds? (There is a problem). There is a problem, isn't it?*

Further commenting on the political issues of that moment, Raila Odinga continues to castigate the Jubilee government on its failure to fulfill the promises it made in 2013 general election campaign period. Raila: *Waliongea juu ya laptop... mumeona? Walisema watajenga stadium, mumeona? Basi ahadi za jubilee ni kama kujamba kwa kupanda.* Translated into Kiswahili as;—*They tacked about laptops, have you seen them? They said they would build stadiums, have you seen them? So, promises of Jubilee are like donkey's fart (which is so rare).* From these two excerpts, it is evident that Raila used Kiswahili proverbs to convey a powerful message. These proverbs by their very nature are hedges used in the conversation to convey a powerful message implicitly. The message would not have been delivered in such a force without the hedging devices that acted as a bait to attract the audience. Use of proverbs in conveyance of message in certain circumstance ensures that the meanings are of two prongs, where there is literal or forthright meaning and the implicit meaning. Depending on the encyclopedic knowledge, the audience would decipher both meanings or comprehend the forthright one only. In this status, if the translator does not get the implied meaning which in this sense is referred to as deeper meaning, the exact and appropriate meaning would be lost in the process of translation. Raila's use of the Kiswahili proverbs shows a clear way of message presentation that unveils deep meaning without saying it. In a contextual meaning, —*mbiu* is not a buffalo horn as translated above. It is a horn and when it sounds, there is a serious message that need to be passed and thus the audience is alerted to be ready for the message and at the same time be prepared for the outcome of the message. The term —*ikilia* in Kiswahili does not exactly mean to sound. When translated into Kiswahili the term —*kilio*— literally means a cry and when someone cries which is not an ordinary occurrence, then the cry signals a very serious and important message. Thus, the coded message in the term —*ikilia*— in Kiswahili when translated as —*when it sounds*— downgrades the force of the statement leading to pragmatic meaning mislay. The term —*mgambo*— translated as in English as *buffalo* means a *ranger* in Kiswahili. The deeper meaning from the Kiswahili context is that the sound is a call for a serious meeting for the wise men. Under the lenses of the hedging devices, Raila's assertion meant that he was blowing the horn and as such, he was calling for a serious consultation with the audience to resolve the political problem which seemed to be there and it was only him who could call for a meeting to resolve it and thus required approval from the audience. All these possible meanings derivable from the proverbs makes it difficult for the translator to discern the exact meaning the speaker was alluding to which led to mislay of the intended pragmatic meaning.

Yet in another conversation on 23rd October 2017 when Raila reiterated on insults hurled to him by members of Jubilee party, he used a Kiswahili riddle—Raila: *Kutukana Raila, ni kama kuchuna matako ya punda.* Translated in the Daily Nation as —*Insulting Raila is like pinching donkey's buttocks (which will elicit instant back kicks).* As a hedging device, the saying by Raila is implicit and one does not know why he likened Jubilee's insults with pinching of the donkey's buttocks which are not any correlated. To understand the message, the audience needed to have inferences on what are the attributes of a donkey that are comparable to Raila Odinga's behavior. The donkey ordinarily would kick anybody who would pinch it thereby hurting or killing him or her. Therefore, if anybody insults Raila, he or she would receive instant punishment which would be severe or fatal. How the punishment would be administered remained a mystery. The transfer of meaning from Kiswahili to English is literal and as such the pragmatic meaning is lost especially to those who don't know the characteristics of a donkey and cannot connect it with Raila's actions. To make the message relevant and comprehensible, the translator added information by way of explication. Since the with no explication message would have been incomprehensible. This is due to the cultural binding of the riddle which doesn't have English equivalence. The implied meaning which is hidden in the riddle is not accounted for in the translation and the audience would not tell what the speaker exactly meant. Although the speaker's intention is to keep the message implicit even in translation, the mislay of pragmatic meaning occurs in the paraphrasing of the riddle without and in the addition of information.

This is further exhibited in the William Ruto's speeches as in the following excerpts;

Ruto: *Mmenaswa ama bado mko jubilee?*

Translated into English as, *Have you been cornered or you are still in Jubilee?* (Ruto 6/8/2017) In this excerpt, Ruto wanted to ascertain whether the audience was still members of Jubilee party or they had been lured by the NASA coalition and abandoned the Jubilee Party. He used the term —*nasa* derogatively to show how the NASA coalition was such an insignificant entity and even reducing itself to acts of ‘trapping’ members of other parties. He did not mention the acronym NASA but he used the verb —*mmanaswa* which is translatable into Kiswahili as *have you been trapped, caught* or even *brainwashed* in this context of usage. These layers of pragmatic meanings are bound to cause meaning loss in translation where the term used or the literal translation does not enforce the impact that was there in the source text. The loss in pragmatic meaning is well exhibited in the excerpt presented when the term *mmanaswa* has been translated into English as—*have you been cornered*. Although the term Nasa has an equivalent term in Kiswahili, the context of usage in this political messaging is different. Here, —*mmanaswa* is a derogative word to ask the audience if they had been trapped or tricked by the NASA Coalition. Any other meaning would not render the appropriate meaning as given by the source text. Due to lack of explication the message remains implicit and as such an occurrence of pragmatic meaning mislay. If the translator would have added the information through explication, the translation would have been; *have you been tricked by NASA or you are still in Jubilee?* This would have been a more elaborate and comprehensible meaning in the context of discussion.

In many of his public rallies, William Ruto speaks on a number of issues and in one of reactions for being castigated for hovering from one church to another giving money donations and whose source was not known, he reacted by saying;

Ruto: *I cannot be a hustler here and still be a hustler in heaven.*

Translated into Kiswahili as— *Siwezi kuwa mjasiriamali wa kuangaika huku na pia nikawa majasiriamali wa kuangaika binguni* (October 5, 2018). While this would be viewed as an explicit assertion, it carried a weighty matter whose comprehension and interpretation would require a dynamic approach in that the context of the assertion. From this utterance, Ruto was talking about his religious faith. However, it had political inclination and as such, its translation into Kiswahili was not forthright. In search of meaning of the term *hustler*, which is definable as, one who obtains money by fraud or deceit, alternatively referred to as a scammer. Further expounded to mean as a swindler, someone who lures less skillful players into competing at a gambling game. The term hustler further means an athlete who plays with alert energy and aggressiveness and also it means a prostitute (Merriam-Webster 2002). In the popular meaning and the extended meaning, it means a hard-working person who is focused on success, or someone who uses force for his success. In the Kenyan political context, it means *a poor person doing odd jobs to make it in life*. While all these meanings a possibility of what the speaker meant, used as a hedging device, its translation becomes an uphill task due to these many layers of meaning when a translator does not know the exact meaning implied by the speaker. The term *hustler* is used as flavour addition to the language of politics with a certain force that elicits a particular meaning that shapes the political narrative of the country. In Kiswahili the term is translated as —*pwaguzi*, —*laghai*, —*malaya* TUKI (2006). The Kiswahili equivalents thus do not give the other meanings that are in English. Further, the term in Kenyan political context carries two meaning; a person working hard in difficulty circumstances to earn a living, or when the politicians call themselves hustlers, this can be perceived to be *scammers* or *swindlers* who are not sincere about their status of their wealth in the country and do not explain how they acquired it in the first place; they cannot be *hustlers* yet they own businesses and very wealthy. In this scenario, the translator is torn between what to render into Kiswahili and what to leave out depending on the circumstances of the occurrence of the utterance. In many Kiswahili dictionaries, the term does not depict a person struggling in life, instead the equivalence is *pwaguzi* or *laghai*. It is alleged in Kenya that, a majority of politicians cannot be trusted because they use all means including corruption to get wealth. Thus, the terms *pwaguzi* and *laghai* would be used to describe them. It is tenable to argue

that, since politicians are not struggling to make it in life, their *hustle* is that of deceit which is the mislay of information as seen in translation of Ruto's statement above.

In yet another assertion in Raila's political speech in Kisii on 23rd October 2017, usage of Kiswahili proverbs was evident where the following proverb was used;

Raila: *Mjinga akierevuka, mwerevu yu mashakani.*

This was translated into English as; *When a fool becomes enlightened, the wise person is in trouble.* This translation literally rendered the information into the target text where the implicated meaning was explanatory. Since the proverb is hedging device by its very nature, the meaning remained implicit even in translation. The fact that the speaker would have wanted it to remain implicit, the translation would not have made it any clearer. The proverb carried the message which indicate that, Raila and his team knew that the Jubilee team was planning to apply tactical deceit in the election process and thus there was need for NASA team to be well prepared to deal with the issue. This information is lacking and misrepresent in translated text due to the nature of duality in meaning of hedged proverb, thus complicating discernability of the exact meaning targeted by the speaker.

Beyond proverbs, mislay of pragmatic meaning in the presidential political speeches in Kenya is noticeable in the translation of slogans like *unga, mkate* as revealed in this excerpt;

Raila: *I am not interested in **nusu mkate**; we need full **boflo**.*

This is translated into English as; *I am not interested in half a loaf of bread; we want the full loaf of bread* (October 16, 2017). The *nusu mkate* and full *boflo* hedging words as used in this statement conveys implicative meaning where the literal translation does not cater for the implied meaning. However, due to constant usage of these terms in political speeches, the audience has inferences of what the words mean and therefore they can comprehend that the term *nusu mkate* means sharing power and *full boflo* means unshared power which the translators miss out in rendition. This is as a result of hedging nature of these terms which enables the speaker to be implicit but relevant. This complicates the comprehensibility of the meaning to audience that does not share this encyclopedic knowledge of the terms in political context. The pragmatic meaning is thus lost in the translation.

There is further usage of hedges in political slogans whose translations would lead to mislay of pragmatic meaning as seen in the following assertion by the presidential candidates and their running mates during the time under review.

Raila: *Kuna ubaya gani nikiita watu kwa bedroom yangu si marafiki ndio wanaitwa kwa bedroom* (November 2019). This is translated into English as; *What is the problem of calling people to my bedroom? Is it not friends who are invited in the bedroom?*

Raila: *Dalili ya mvua ni? Mawingu yametanda!* This is translated into English as; *Clouds are the sign of what? (rain) it is about to rain heavily.*

In these two assertions by Raila, there is loss of pragmatic meaning because the sayings are hedges in their entirety. Although some particular words carry extra pragmatic feature, the exact meaning is lost in the translation. The term *bedroom*, although not said in Kiswahili by the speaker, is beyond the connotative meaning. The *bedroom* in this assertion is the stronghold of the NASA coalition. This is a reaction from accusation by William Ruto that he and his team had entered the NASA's bedroom. Likewise, the verb —*yametanda* in Kiswahili does not mean the rain is going to fall. It simply means the clouds have gathered. Though the gathering of clouds is a sign of rain, this does not mean it will rain. Clouds gathers and sometimes disappear without any rainfall. Thus, these assertions are hedged and needed to be understood in that political context but the translator rendered the meaning in English literally avoiding to represent wrong meaning because he couldn't ascertain the exact and appropriate meaning the speaker intended to convey to the audience. The pragmatic meaning lost in translation is that the NASA coalition were the clouds and the clouds had gathered and that this was a sign of securing victory against the Jubilee Party. The time for this victory was due. The hidden meaning missed in translation is that, before something happens, there always signs to warn people to be ready in advance. In this case the NASA coalition was a sign that could not be ignored in the

political context. All this was lost in translation which did not explicate the meaning in the source text.

In the same political messaging style of hedging information through Kiswahili riddles and slogans, Uhuru Kenyatta employed the same hedging tactic but the translation missed out the exact and the intended meaning.

Uhuru: *We are telling Maraga and his Kitendawili (riddle) man Wakenya ni walewale na wembe ni uleule.*

This is translated into English as; *We are telling Maraga and his riddle man that Kenyans are still the same and the razor blade is the same one* (September 3, 2017). This riddle was literally translated without accounting for the implied meaning that in the first place was the reason of its usage. In Kiswahili context, the razor blade is used in context of shaving. The next person on the shaving queue would be alerted that the same blade that shaved the earlier person would be the one to shave him too. In another context the razor blade was used in circumcision and the next person to be circumcised was asked to get ready because the same razor blade would be used on him. Thus, the same victory as earlier on experienced would be the same because Kenyans who voted for Jubilee government would vote for it again in the repeat presidential election. This is the contextual information mislay in the target text to the detriment of the target audience.

Further mislay of pragmatic meaning in translation of political messaging that lacks clarity was exhibited in translation of the following excerpts from the speeches of the presidential candidates and their running mate in the period under review;

Uhuru: *Say what you may I must do what I must* (November 5, 2015). This was translated into Kiswahili as; *Sema uwezacho lazima nifanye kile ambacho ni lazima kwangu.*

Kalonzo: *There will come a time when we may call you to action (August 10, 2017).* This is translated into Kiswahili as; *Itafika wakati amabapo tutaweza kuwaita kuchukua hatua.*

In the above assertion, Uhuru Kenyatta did not give any lead to what would be the reference of understanding his statement. Being a hedged statement, the implied meaning was not forthright and it was difficult to be comprehended by the source text audience because of lack of exactness and clarity. The translators, being part of the source language audience, faced the same predicament and could not decipher the exact meaning and as such transferred the same vague message into the target language. From the speech, the sampled assertion is a throw in slogan that lacks correlation with the topic under discussion. It is not clear who was being referred to by Uhuru and what he was to. The whole statement is a hedged strategy of avoiding exactness and purposely choosing to be vague. The same vagueness is translated into Kiswahili without making any effort to make the information clear. The source audience and the target audience remain in the dark. Thus, lack of clarity in the source text leads to meaning mislay when the pragmatic cues are not understood. This is also evidenced in Kalonzo's assertion. It is not clear when the action would be called for and what kind of action and for what reason. These are the question that the source audience ask themselves and are not answered in the target language because this is a hedging device that remains so even in translation thus losing the pragmatic meaning that would be provided through explication instead of literal translation.

This is also discernible in Ruto's castigations on the slogans used by the NASA coalition. The slogans had a specific and exact meaning in their original form. Due to their cultural and contextual biding in the political messaging, they were transferred into the target language without any alteration which was a case of borrowing with no explication. In their original form, the meaning was not decipherable because the user did not tell the audience what the slogan meant. Likewise, the target audience remained in darkness since they could not comprehend what the borrowed words meant in the target language and culture. Although they responded to the call with the same slogans, they could not explain or tell what the term **Tibim** or **Tialala** meant as seen in the following statement.

Ruto: *So, has CJ taken sides? Listening to the tone, language and drift of Maraga's lecture the only phrase missing is NASA HAO, TIBIM and TIALALA.* This is translated into

Kiswahili as; *Kwa hivyo Hakimu Mkuu amekuwa wa kuegemea pande? Kusikiliza toni ya lugha, na kule kupotoka kwa mhadhara wa Maraga, kifungu kinachokosa ni NASA HAO, TIBIM, na TIALALA* (September 19, 2017).

In the translations presented above, the translators adopted the strategy of compensation and generalization of information. In this translation, there was no single corresponding term in Kiswahili or English that could stand for TIBIM or TIALALA. The reason behind it was that this source text cultural concepts had not corresponding match in the target text. In this strategy then, information given by the translator did not help the audience to understand the concepts resulting into mislay of the pragmatic meaning carried by these terms.

Observations

From the discussion, there are a number of observations and conclusion which arise from misunderstanding of the hedges in the political speeches in a translation process.

The Presidential political speeches are populated with the hedges and the presidential candidates and their running mates used hedging strategies in their political messaging which were evidenced in usage of proverbs and riddles in Kiswahili and translation of these hedged message was problematic due to many layers of meaning and as such translators could not discern what was the exact meaning that the speaker intended to convey.

The proverbs and the riddle were used as a hedging device in Kenya's presidential political speeches of the period under review in their entirety and no single word would be extracted from them to represent a particular hedging category without losing the entire proverb. Thus, the proverbs and riddles as used in presidential political speeches in Kenya could be viewed as invisible hedges. Due to lack of mechanism to decipher the exact and appropriate meaning of the proverbs and riddles in Kenya's presidential political speeches, because of their cultural boundness, translators tended to use literal translation strategy and as such leading to pragmatic meaning mislay.

Conclusion

In order to enrich their communication, the presidential candidates and their running mates employed the usage of hedging strategy to either put their assertion forthright or to hide their intents through implied meanings in form of hedging devices during the general elections in 2013 and 2017. These hedging devices range from lexical to invisible categories all performing a particular pragmatic function in the statements of usage. In the attempts to translate these statements into English or Kiswahili, the pragmatic meaning or its elements was lost in the meaning transfer process as it has been revealed in the excerpts discussed above. Since the commission of translation of these statements is usually not sanctioned by the speakers, translator can only infer the meaning of the assertion and as such use the literal translation in avoidance of presenting the wrong meaning that was not intended. It is also conceivable that English and Kiswahili share common hedged meaning in the political context where the audience in both the source and the target audience are able to discern the implied meaning through presuppositions and inferences.

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