

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Word-Level Equivalence in English-Amharic Translation

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Abstract

This study investigates culture and linguistic-related challenges that translators faced and strategies used by translators to reduce these challenges in translating words equivalently from English, the Source Language into Amharic, the Target Language. The study used the Bible “New World Translation of the Holy Scripture” and its Amharic translated version “mäs’ihafk’iddus addis aläm tirgum”. Using these documents, words were qualitatively described in light of Mona Baker’s (2011) model. The analysis contains five lines; the Source Text, the Target Text both orthographically and phonemically, the glossing and the literal translation of the TT into the ST. The study identified challenges including lexical relation, semantic complexity and culture. These challenges are caused by usage differences in religious and social practices between SL and TL users, semantic structure differences between words of the SL and the TL, and lexicalization and the number of vocabulary differences between the SL and the TL. The strategies used to minimize these challenges include cultural substitution, functionally equivalent words, translation by a more general word (superordinate), a more specific word (hyponym) when the TL lacks a general word, a general word plus explanation, and paraphrase. Based on the findings, the study recommended expansion of translation courses at high school level and specialized translating and interpreting programs that contain linguistic elements and socio-cultural practices.

Keywords: Equivalence, Cultural specificity, semantic complexity, Source language, Target language

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1. Introduction

The practice and evolution of translation have a long history. For instance, Firdaus (2012) states that the process of translation was commenced with the birth of the first human being when they started to communicate with their partners to express their thoughts in words. As a discipline, however, it began to develop and became more prominent in the second half of the twentieth century because of the following four reasons such as (1) roared demand for translation following the expansion of specialized translating and interpreting programs, (2) proliferation of conferences, books and journals, (3) the demand for general and analytical instruments such as anthologies, databases, encyclopedias, hand books and introductory texts, and (4) prosperity of international organizations (Munday, 2016; Panou, 2013). Since then, people translate texts from one language to another for different purposes.

The concept translation is defined by different scholars in different ways. Some definitions like Catford (1965) and Munday (2016) focus on Linguistic-textual aspects. For example, Catford (1965:20) defined translation as “the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL). In this definition nothing is said about the naturalness of the translated text. others definitions like definitions by Nida and Taber include not only the linguistic aspect but includes naturalness of the translated text to the receptor language as “translating consists in producing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and second in terms of style”(Nida & Taber, 1982). This definition shows that translation is not only a matter of linguistic equivalence, that is, lexical and structural equivalence between the two languages but include socio-cultural equivalence between the languages involved. In translation the normal or natural social usage must be rendered by its normal, equally frequent equivalent in any text (Newmark 1991:4). The structure and the socio-cultural experiences of the SL should be preserved without seriously distorting the structure and naturalness of the TL (Bassnet, 2005 & Bharathi, 2014).

In the above definitions it is clear that producing equivalent translation is one of the most important aim of translation According to Robinson (2012), one of the basic aim that translators strive for is equivalence. Moreover, definitions of translation given by many scholars emphasis that equivalence is the most important concept in translation (Jakobson, 1959, Catford, 1965, Newmark, 1988, Bell, 1989, & House, 2015) . Equivalence is also the most problematic issue that costs a lot in the field of translation (Palumbo, 2009; Catford, 1965; Pym, 2010 & Fawcett, 1997). This is because translation is a cross-linguistic and cross-cultural activity that needs translators’ linguistic and cultural knowledge of both languages (House, 2016). Equivalence does not mean sameness; loss, gain or change of meaning to a certain degree is expected during translation as translation involves at least two languages which have different vocabulary, grammar and ways of expressing experiences and culture (Bassnett, 2005).

Many scholars, for instance, Catford (1965), House (2015), Nida &Taber (1982) and Pym (2010) emphasize the importance of linguistic equivalence in translation. All these tell us, for a translation to be successful, there should be linguistic equivalence between the source text and the target text. Others also state that the major tool for translation is language because translation is an activity performed on language by language (Robinson, 2003, Panou, 2013, Jakobson, 1959, Baharathi, 2014). As translation is a means of transferring meaning of a text or textual material from one language to another, linguistics has much to offer in the study of translation (Newmark, 1988; Catford, 1965; Nida &Taber,

1982 & Manfredi, 2008). Strengthening this idea House (2015) defines as “translation is the result of a linguistic textual operation in which a text in one language is re-contextualized in another language”. Regarding knowledge of both languages, translators should study the lexical items and the semantic structure of both languages including differences very well. Lexical items of languages may differ in terms of use, system, lexicalization, semantic structure, function etc. Hence, for effective and equivalent translation, all these linguistic elements and differences between the languages involved need to be considered. Understanding terms like lexical items, lexical sets, concept, types of meanings, form and meaning and the semantic relationship between lexical items of both the SL and the TL help a translator to understand the meanings of words. Doing this before the actual translation is crucial to develop strategies for dealing with non-equivalence (Baker, 2011; Larson, 1984). Scholars divided lexical meanings differently, for example, Baker, (2011) reviewed four different meaning types: propositional or conceptual meaning, expressive meaning, presupposed meaning and evoked meaning. Nida (1964) divided meaning into two as linguistic or dictionary meaning and emotive meaning. On the other hand, Leech (1981) divided lexical meanings into four types. These are conceptual, reflective, indeterminate, and evoked meaning. Another scholar, Larson (1984), divided lexical meanings as referential meaning, organizational meaning and situational meaning. In all the divisions of lexical meanings, there are three important points that meaning can be deduced from and translators should focus. These are the individual lexical item and its meaning in relation to its referent, linguistic context and situational context. The study took all these points into consideration.

A single lexical item may contain more than one concept and sense, hence translators and researchers should understand the different semantic structures of lexical terms between the languages involved and within each language itself (Baker 2011 & Larson 1984). The semantic structure of the words of the source language may not be always equivalent to the words of the receptor language. The word in the TL which looks equivalent may lack something when if critically observed. Translators and researchers in this area should be aware of how words of both languages are structured. Being aware of the concepts and senses included in a single lexical term helps translators to find out equivalent translations.

Words of languages have different kinds of relationships. These relationships may be generic-specific relationship, synonyms, antonyms, reciprocal, etc. Understanding these meaning-based relationships between words of languages and words within languages help to produce equivalent translation. Getting the same words which carry same meaning within one language is difficult and gets more difficult when it is between two different languages. Hence, studying semantic relationships between words is crucial to render equivalence in translation. This should be done before starting the actual translation (Baker 2011 & Larson 1984).

The process of translation also involves an extra-linguistic criteria. According to Newmark (1991), “Language is a substantial but partial reflection of a culture, culture being defined as the total range of activities and ideas and their material expression in objects and processes peculiar to a group of people, as well as their particular environment”. In relation to ecology and social environment, language is used to understand human experiences and act out social relationships (Halliday, 2014). These is to say human experiences and social relationships depends on ecology and social environment and varies from language to language. Moreover, Language is a means of communication, and a means of expressing, conserving and passing culture from one generation to the next (Balraj, Singh, & Abdi Manan, 2020 & Janfaza, Assemi, and Dehghan, 2012). This goal of language can

be achieved when proper lexical items and structures acceptable by the language users are used. The choice of such linguistic codes, that is, the word and the grammar are determined and motivated by factors such as field of discourse, situation and participant (Baker, 2011; Naeem et al., 2014, Nida, 1979).

Religion as one domain of human behavior and topic of discourse use languages which are different from languages of other registers. As religious practices derive from prior experiences or beliefs, there might be use of theological loaded use of languages and these languages may be different from everyday speeches as religious observances demand highly marked and self-conscious use of linguistic resources (Keane, 1997). Therefore, in religious texts, there may be vocabularies and structures which are not typical and equally accepted by the whole users but motivated by the topic, the place and participants in that particular register. The parameters that are used to assess the languages of everyday language may be different from the parameters of the religious language. According to Al-sohaibani (2017), religious meaning is a social phenomenon presented in the social world. Therefore religion as a factor that influences cultural and social practices determines the meaning of a linguistic code and its usage.

Scholars discussed linguistic and extra-linguistic challenges that translators face in rendering equivalence and strategies used to overcome these challenges. Baker (2011) discussed the following non-equivalence problems in translation at word level including (1) when there is culture specific concepts in the source text, (2) when the source language concept is not lexicalized in the target language, (3) when there is semantically complex words in the source language, (4) when there is different distinction in the meanings between the source and the target language, (5) when there is lack of general term (superordinate) in the target language, (6) when the target language lacks specific term (hyponym), (7). When there is differences in physical or interpersonal perspective, (8) when there is differences in frequency and purpose of using specific form, (9) when there is differences in expressive meaning, (10) when there is differences in form, and (11) the use of loan words in the source language. Larson (1984) also explains some problems in translation by calling them “mismatches between languages”. These are mismatches of referents, mismatches of lexical sets and mismatches of culture.

Different scholars proposed different ways that translators need to consider in producing equivalent translation. Baker (2011) discusses five different strategies used by professional translators for dealing with various types of non-equivalent problems including translation by a more general word (superordinate), translation by a more neutral/less expressive word, translation by cultural substitution, translation using a loan word or a loan word plus explanation, translation by paraphrase using a related word, translation by paraphrase using unrelated word, translation by omission and translation by illustration. Moreover, Newmark (1991) proposed the following translation procedures that are varying from perfect equivalence through correspondence to adequacy that is, ranging from the closest-transference to the loosest-paraphrase. These are: transference, word-for-word, componential analysis, modulation, descriptive equivalence, functional equivalence, cultural equivalence, synonyms, and paraphrasing.

Vinay & Darbelenet, (1995) study that focus merely on French-English also proposed methodologies that can be used in different levels of expression such as lexis, structure and message by classifying under two main categories. The first category is direct translation that includes borrowing, *claque* and literal translation. These methods do not involve any special stylistic procedures. The second category which is called oblique translation that includes transposition (replacing one word class with another without changing the meaning of the message), modulation (variation of the form of the message, obtained by

a change in the point of view), equivalence (same situation can be rendered by two texts using completely different stylistic and structural methods), and adaptation (the type of situation being referred to by the SL message is unknown in the TL culture). These methodologies, for example, literal translations and transposition, need the knowledge of linguistic structure of both languages whereas methodologies like modulation, adaptation, and equivalence need translators' additional experiences of both language communities to see the text in its social environment (Vinay & Darbelnet 1995). These strategies may be used in other languages as long as languages involved have incompatibilities and these cause problems in getting equivalent terms.

According to Larson (1984), in cases where there is mismatch between referents of a lexical item between languages, translators need to study the lexical item carefully based on the context or situation and choose appropriate equivalent word. Once the word is carefully studied, a descriptive phrase can be added to include the meaning component found in the SL but missed in the TL. Specifically, according to Larson (1984), lexical equivalence can be obtained by; (1) unpacking meaning components and using phrases or clauses (i.e. descriptive phrases) especially when the term is semantically complex, (2) using related terms (e.g. synonyms, negated antonyms, reciprocal items), using generic-specific terms (using generic or generic with some modification when the receptor language has no equivalent specific term, or using specific when a receptor language lacks generic term). As to practice of Amharic translation, religious texts from different sources were translated into Amharic beginning from the 16th century (Houghton, 1949). He explained translating religious propaganda, rituals, and prayers into Amharic to attack the catholic propaganda was started around 16th and 17th century by the Jesuits coming as a missionary. In the 17th century for the purpose of introducing Lutheran, anti-Catholic propaganda, the Gospel of St. John were rendered in Amharic tongue by Lutheran missionary Peter Heying. And in the early 19th century, the major portion of the Holy Bible was translated into Amharic and published by the Bible society in London. Since then different religious books from different languages into Amharic was translated, for example, from English into Amharic like "New World Translation of the Holy Scripture" revised in 2013 by The New World Bible Translation Committee and its Amharic translation "*mäs 'ihaf k'iddus addis aläm tirgum*" translated by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York INCD and printed in 2018. However, as far as my reading is concerned no empirical study was made on translation equivalence on translation of religious texts.

Of course, there were studies on strategies used in translating literary texts from Amharic to English. For instance, Bezaye (2010) in a senior essay entitled "Dynamic Equivalence and Formal Correspondence in Sisay Ayenew's Love unto Crypt" concluded strategies used in translating cultural bounded terms, proverbs and metaphors. The finding showed that in translating culture bounded terms the translator chose to use partial translation, explanation and footnotes, and omissions when words like religious words which do not have equivalence in the TT culture. Proverbs were translated by finding their natural equivalent in the TT and metaphors and similes translated with same images in the TT. Another senior essay was on Yismake Worku's "Dertogada" translated from Amharic into English by Zelalem Nigussie in 2012. In this study, Sewnet (2019) find out that, the translator used explanatory translation strategy to translate some cultural specific terms. The translator tried to transmit meaning as literally and meaningfully as possible to the form and content of the original texts using descriptive and explanatory translation strategies predominantly. He also used untranslatability translation strategy when he faced texts which are so culture-bound for the original language. There are senior essays that focus on errors that translators committed during translation including Zewdu Wondimu's (1993) "Fidelity in Translation of 'Red Tears'" and Tesfaye Zewge (1997) "A critical analysis

of translation Errors in “Mannew” (Sewnet, 2019).

Another recent study that can be mentioned in Ethiopian context is Gessesse Nigusse’s work on audiovisual translation. In his PhD dissertation, Gessesse (2020) entitled “Linguistic approaches to translation; the case of Amharic-English Audiovisual translation: subtitling” described the different approaches that translators used in translating subtitles from Amharic to English. The study focused on strategies used and adjustments made during translation without identifying the problems. In the study, Gessese stated that his focus was only on linguistic elements without considering socio-cultural elements and recommended further studies on these elements.

The present study was different from the above works in genre, direction of translation, and coverage. In genre, the study focused on religious translations, not on literary translation or audiovisual translation. This study focused on translation of texts written in English and translated into Amharic, not from Amharic into English. Linguistic and non-linguistic challenges that translators faced and strategies used to produce equivalent translation were described and identified. Linguistic challenges which were not researched well in the previous studies were explained in detail. Moreover, conducting additional researches on translation helps people communicate cross linguistically and cross culturally. This in turn minimizes communication problems that may happen on education, media, tourism, education, business, religion and politics to easily disseminate information. Therefore, this study described linguistic and cultural elements at word level, addressed challenges that translators faced, and strategies used on the bases of social and cultural context in light of Baker (2011) model.

2. Methodology

This study employed qualitative (research) method because the data are in the form of text that need a complete and detailed expression and a complete subjective emersion of the researcher in the subject matter to contextualize, interpret and understand the perspective of the translators. The data was gathered purposefully from a Bible entitled “New World Translation of the Holy Scripture” revised by The New World Bible Translation Committee in 2013. Its Amharic translation is called “*məs’ihafk’iddus addis aləm tirgum*” translated by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York and printed in 2018.

As data is gathered from documents, the researcher is used as a data gathering instrument. Data were gathered from the book written by the three gospels: Matthew, Mark and Luke. In this study, only books of Matthew, Luke and Mark from the New Testament were taken, for manageability and consistency reasons.

The study uses exploratory thematic analysis methods. In the document analysis process, firstly, each sentence which is quoted in the body of the text in the source language (English) and the target language (Amharic) is marked by chapter number and verse number and written in two columns. Secondly, the data gathered were identified and marked for analysis based on their appropriateness for the description. The description has different sections based on problems caused by differences between the SL and the TL like culture, lexicalization and semantic complexity. Thirdly, the extract for description was taken either in phrase or sentence form depending on its importance. In presenting the data, in each subsection of the levels, there were five lines; the first line the ST, the second line the TT written in Amharic aortography, the third IPA transcription of the TT to make it more accessible to non-Amharic speakers, the fourth line the gloss; each word of the TT is glossed and the fifth line was a free translation of the TT into English. Finally, problems and strategies taken for each problem were discussed by comparing the ST and TT. The

discussion was made in line with Baker's (2011) typology of problems of none equivalence, i.e., challenges that translators face to render equivalence between the words of the ST and TT followed by the strategies used by translators because the way she labeled the type of problem was helpful to address concept and lexicalization, meaning and culture related challenges.

3. Result and discussion

3.1. Culture specificity

Culture is one of the elements that translators should take into account because culture affects language use and this in turn, affects translation too. In religious text translation, a culturally specific object can be translated into different equivalent object of the receptor language because object in Bible is not crucial to the message; what is important is the sense that it carries, for example in the expression, "white as snow", "snow" is an object and can be translated as "frost" and possible to say "white as frost" as both conveys the same sense (Nida & Tabor 1982). Since English and Amharic belong to a different language and their speakers have different cultures, there may be a possibility for a concept to be found in the source language but unknown in the target language. Sometimes, the concept may be culture specific as in (1).

1. Leave your gift there in front of the altar, and go away (Matthew 5:24).

መጠን በመስዊድ ፊት ትተህ ሂድ።

<i>māba-h-in</i>	<i>bā-məsəwja-w</i>	<i>fit</i>	<i>titə-h</i>	<i>hid</i>
gift for God-POSS.2SGM-ACC	LOC-altar-DEF	front	leave.CVB-2SGM	go away.IMP

'Leave your gift for God in front of the altar and go away'

The lexical item "gift" in (1) is translated into the Amharic equivalent *māba* 'gift for God'. In the everyday usage of the SL, the word "gift" is used to refer to something given to somebody on different special occasions such as birthday, wedding ceremony or to say thank you for good deeds. In Amharic, there is a word *sit'ota* 'gift' which is equivalent to and can substitute the word "gift". This Amharic equivalent word, *sit'ota* 'gift,' is not equivalent to the word "gift" in all contexts. For example, it is equivalent when we refer to something given to somebody during graduation, wedding anniversary, birthday, etc. The text in this example is discussing religion and this situation affects the linguistic choice (Baker 2011). Therefore, the Amharic word *sit'ota* is relatively general and cannot substitute the English word "gift". This is because choice of linguistic code is determined by field of discourse, situation and participants (Baker, 2011, Naeem et al, 2014 & Nida, 1979). Amharic has a religion-specific word that can best substitute the word "gift". Even in a religious context, to refer gift for God as in (1) and to refer gift for mercy as in Matthew 6:2 cannot be substituted by the same Amharic word. The word "gift" in (1) refers to something given for God for different purposes. It may be used to refer to something given to God to say thank you, as in (1), or maybe used to refer to something given for mercy and to ask or beg God, who has the power to harm and the right to punish, his forgiveness by putting one of his commandments into practice, as in Matthew 6:2. As a result, specific terms that can agree with the purpose of giving are used in the Amharic translation that is cultural substitution as suggested by (Baker, 2011; Larson 1984 & Newmark 1991) or called modulation by Vinay & Darbelnet (1995). That is why the word "gift" in example (1) is translated into the Amharic equivalence *māba* 'gift for God', and into Amharic equivalence *mis'wat* 'gift of mercy' in Matthew 6:2. However, when it is used out of churches for the same or different purposes, the English word "gift" can be translated to the Amharic equivalence *sit'ota* 'gift'. In the translation, the equivalent word *māba* 'gift for God' and *mis'wat* 'gift of mercy' are words that are derived from Geez. These Geez words became part of religious Amharic texts. For example, the Amharic word *māba* 'gift for God' is influenced by the Geez word *mābʔa* 'gift for God'. This is because Geez is the older among the four Semitic languages that influences the other three (Amharic, Tigre and Tigré) (Houghton 1949).

The food culture of the SL and the TL affects translation and should also be considered as in (2).

2. Give us today our **bread** for this day (Matthew 6:11).

የዕለቱን ምግባችንን ዛሬ ስጠን።

jə-ilət-u-n	migib-afjfin-in	zare	sit't-ən
GEN-day-DEF-ACC	food-POSS.IPL-ACC	today	give.IMPV-IPL
'Give us today our daily food'			

In (2) the word “bread” is translated into the Amharic equivalent *migib* ‘food’. Here, the translators interpreted the word ‘bread’ in its primary sense. In Amharic, there is a lexically equivalent word *dabbo* ‘bread’. The physical form of the thing is the same in both English and Amharic. However, as there may be a possibility of correspondence of form and function, sometimes the ‘thing’ or the ‘event’ may have the same physical form but a different function. That is what happens in example (2). The word ‘bread’ *dabbo* is found in both languages with the same form. However, in the culture of the English language users, it is the main food and eaten at every meal whereas, in the culture of Amharic language users, it is eaten on some occasions maybe as a food for special programs or rarely for breakfast so there is a functional difference. In the example, the English word “bread” is translated into the Amharic equivalent word *migib* ‘food’. This change happens not because Amharic has no direct equivalence to the English word “bread”, but to fill the culture gap caused by function in the target language. One thing that should be taken into consideration is words such as ‘bread’ *dabbo*, ‘injera’ *indžera* and ‘porridge’ *gənfo*, etc. refer to almost the same concept, thing, and grouped in the same category, food. In all the cases, the generic term would be *migib* ‘food’ and the generic contrastive component would be “that which people eat”.

However, what makes it different is the pictured conjured up in the mind of the language users because of the difference in the cultural objects referred to. The referent is different not only between users of different languages, but it may also happen between users of the same language. Here, in the SL the word “bread” is a specific type of food common to the language users. This may not be true for the users of the TL. When such problems happen, using culture-neutral or generic terms can be a solution. In the food culture of the people of the source language, they usually ask God in their prayer to give them daily bread because bread is a food commonly used by the language users. However, in the target language culture, *indžera* ‘is a large, flat, round piece of food in Ethiopia made by mixing teff flour and water; after fermentation, this mixture is baked by putting onto a circular griddle, called *mit’ad* is commonly eaten in many parts of the country and the prayer may ask *indžera* instead of “bread”. The question is, why the word “bread” is not translated into the Amharic equivalent word *indžera* ‘injera’ but translated into the generic or the culture-neutral term *migib* ‘food’? Using a generic term in the TL for a specific term of the SL is not advisable and mandatory as far as the equivalent specific term exists in the TL (Larson 1984: 75). This is because as much as possible translators need to be accurate and find the words most accurately equates with the lexical item used in the SL.

In translating the word “bread”, the sense that the word is used should be considered. Translators should know the type of the sense of the lexical word by asking questions like; is it used in a primary sense, a secondary sense, or a figurative sense? This should be answered before translation (Baker 2011: Larson 1984). For example, in what sense the word ‘bread’ in (2) is used? The word “bread” is not used in its primary sense to refer to a specific type of food. If that was the case, “bread” is not the only type of food eaten by

the language users and their prayers may vary depending on their interests. One can understand that in the culture of the English language users “bread” is used in a figurative sense based on associative relations with the primary sense to represent the whole type of food. Here, the prayer is talking about food, not about bread that is one type of food. There is a concept of an association called synecdoche that means to refer to substitution of a specific or one part of a term by a whole part; in this case, using the word “bread” to represent the whole kind of food.

Translating secondary and figurative senses by using different words in the target language is possible, but it should be used as a last option because the aim of translation is not to eliminate the secondary and the figurative senses (Larson, 1984). It had been good if the translators would have been considered the sense the word is used and translated into the target language equivalently without forgetting sense equivalences. As the English word “bread” in a figurative sense represents the whole part of food and other necessities, the Amharic word *indzəra*, which is a specific type of food, in a figurative sense represents the whole part of food *migib* ‘food’ and other necessities of survival. Therefore, translating the English word “bread” into the Amharic word *indzəra* retains the figurative sense of the source language. This sense relates the primary sense with the culture of the TL users. Cultural substitution like this is also one of the strategies used for equivalent translation (Larson, 1984; Baker, 2011).

The other culture-related factor that should be considered in translation is material culture, for example, clothing culture as in (3).

3. He gave them orders to carry, no money in their **belts**. (Mark 6:8).

በመቀነታቸው ገንዘብ እንዳይዙ አዘዛቸው።

<i>bə-mək'ənnət-afjəw</i>	<i>gənzəb</i>	<i>ində-al-j-jiz-u</i>	<i>azəz-ə-afjəw</i>
in-girdle-POSS.3PL	money	COMP-NEG-3PL-carry.IPFV-3PL	order.IPFV-3SGM-3PL

‘He orders them not to carry money in their belts’

In (3) the word “belt” is translated into the Amharic equivalent *mək'ənnət* ‘girdle’. In the gospel of Mark (6: 8), God ordered the prophets not to carry money in their belts. In English, the word “belt” although primarily refers to a piece of leather or clothing that one wears around the waist to secure or hold up clothing like trousers, can also be used in a different sense, that is, a material that moves around and is used to carry things along and one of its use is carrying money. Here, one can understand that the word “belt” is used to refer to a material used for both securing and holding up clothing. With respect to the physical form, in Amharic, there is a lexicalized word *k'əbato* which is equivalent to the English word “belt”.

However, functionally, in the culture of the target language, the material which people, especially women, wear around their waist and used to carry money is specifically called *mək'ənnət*, ‘girdle’. Culturally, this material, *mək'ənnət*, ‘girdle’ is commonly worn by a female. When it is used for both male and female, it is called *k'əbato*, ‘belt’. Here, *k'əbato* ‘belt’ is not used to carry money in the culture of the target language. When such problems happen translators should describe the form and the function of the concept. Although *k'əbato* and *mək'ənnət* are the same in form (the physical aspects), they are not the same in function (in significance or purpose). Using functionally equivalent words is one of the basic strategies in translation (Baker, 2011; Newmark, 1988; Newmark, 1991). Therefore, according to the culture of the target language, a material put around a waist and used to

carry money is better said and translated as *mək'ənnət* 'girdle' instead of *k'əbətə* 'belt' and is functionally equivalent to the English word "belt".

3.2. Concept and lexicalization

Finding equivalent words becomes challenging when the shared concept is not lexicalized in both the SL and TL. SL and TL are languages spoken by different people of different cultures. Hence, a concept that is shared may not be lexicalized in both languages. Sometimes, there may be a concept expressed by a single word in the SL; however, the same concept may be found in the TL without a single lexicalized word but expressed by several words. Moreover, the lack of equivalent general or specific lexicalized words in the TT is a challenge in translation.

3.2.1. Shared concepts not lexicalized in the target language

A shared concept that is lexicalized in the SL may not be lexicalized in the TL as shown in example (4).

4. Presented him with gifts- gold and frankincense and myrrh. (Matthew 2:11).

ወርቅ፣ ነጭ እጣንና ከርቤ በስጦታ መልክ አቀረቡለት።

<i>wərk'</i>	<i>nəf'ɣ'</i>	<i>it'an-inna</i>	<i>kərbe</i>	<i>bə-sit'ota</i>	<i>məlk</i>	<i>a-k'ərrəb-u-ll-ət</i>
gold	white	incense-and	myrrh	in-gift	form	CAUS-present.PFV-3PL-APPL-3SGM

'They presented him gold, **frankincense** and myrrh in the form of a gift'

In (4), "frankincense" is translated into the Amharic equivalent *nəf'ɣ' it'an* 'white incense'. The English word "frankincense" refers to a substance that is burnt to give a pleasant smell, especially during religious ceremonies. English directly transliterates the French word 'franc encens' which literally means 'high-quality incense' and buds them with some phonological and morphological adaptations into 'frankincense'. In Amharic, the concept is known and the substance is used in religious ceremonies. The substance which is burnt in religious ceremonies is called *it'an* 'incense'; however, any type of incense could not be used; it should be of high-quality incense. The word that carries this concept, incense which has high quality and is offered during religious ceremonies, is not lexicalized in Amharic. However, it is common that, Amharic uses the adjective "white" to describe the quality of something beyond its use of expressing one of the color types. As a result, the English word "frankincense" is translated into Amharic as *nəf'ɣ' it'an* 'white incense' by taking the generic term and adding the adjective to represent the attributive concept. Using the generic term in this case *it'an* 'incense' and adding a description *nəf'ɣ'* 'white' is a common strategy in translation when the TL lacks a lexicalized item (Baker, 2011; Larson 1984).

On the other hand, there are shared concepts in both languages which are not lexicalized in the source language but lexicalized in the target language. That means, it is good to know the fact that, as opposed to translating a single word of a source language by a number of words in the target language, several words in the source language can be translated by a single word as in (5).

5. He will clean up his threshing floor completely. (Matthew 3:12).

አውድጣውንም ፈፅሞ ያወዳል።

<i>awidimma- w-n-m</i>	<i>fəs s'im-o</i>	<i>j-a-s'əd-a-all</i>
threshing floor-3SGM-ACC-FOC	complete.CVB-3SGM	3SGM-CAUSclean.IPFV-3SGM-AUX

'he will clean up his threshing floor completely'

In (5), “threshing floor” is translated into Amharic by a single word *awiddimma* ‘threshing floor’. As can be seen, the phrase ‘threshing floor’ refers to a place used to separate the grains of barley, wheat, teff etc. from the rest parts of the plant. This shared concept is not lexicalized in the SL and hence it is expressed by the phrase ‘threshing floor’. Of course, this phrase can be literally translated into the Amharic equivalent *mawik'ja wolal* ‘threshing floor’. However, this concept is lexicalized in Amharic; as a result, it is substituted by the Amharic word *awiddima* ‘a threshing floor’. Synthesizing or grouping components into a single lexical item is one of the strategies when the concept transferred by a phrase in the SL is lexicalized in the TL (Nida & Taber, 1982; Baker, 2011). In the same way, the concept which is not expressed by a single lexical item in Luke (6:4), that is, “the loaves of presentation” that refers to a sacred food given to people usually in a church is translated into the Amharic equivalent by a single word *hibist* ‘sacred food’.

3.2.2. Generic-specific relationships of words

Languages have a generic-specific relationship. To talk about equivalence in translation and make a linguistic-based analysis, understanding the generic-specific relationship of words between languages is helpful. This is because the target language may lack a generic or a specific lexical term and this makes translation difficult. Superordinate is a word with a general meaning that includes the meanings of other particular words with specific meanings. Sometimes general words which are available in the source language may not be available in the vocabulary of the target language as in (6).

6. cling to the **tradition** of men (Mark7:8).

የሰውን ወግ አጥብቃችሁ ትክታተላላችሁ።

<i>jə-səw-u-n</i>	<i>wəg</i>	<i>at'ibik'-afffihu</i>	<i>ti-katatəl-all-afffihu</i>
POSS-man-DEF-ACC	custom	stick.IMP-2PL	2PL- follow.IPFV-AUX.PRT-2PL
‘You stick and follow the tradition of men’			

In (6), the lexical item “tradition” is translated into the Amharic word *wəg* ‘custom’. The word “tradition” is a superordinate. The meaning of the English word “tradition” includes meanings like culture, belief and custom; it is a general word. However, the TL has no lexicalized word which is equivalent to the SL word and includes all the compositions. Lack of superordinate is one of the non-equivalence problems in translation because the number of superordinate and hyponyms are not equal between two different languages (Baker 2011; Larson 1984 & Nida & Taber 1982). The TL lacks a superordinate word that equates with the English word “tradition”. As a result, the translators took the word ‘custom’, the hyponymy of the word “tradition”, and translated into the Amharic equivalent *wəg* ‘custom’. Here, as “custom”, “culture” and “belief” are hyponyms of the word ‘tradition’; tradition is a superordinate word and translating this word by taking one of the hyponyms lead towards lose of other components. It would have been good if the translators had used a paraphrasing strategy or descriptive equivalence as suggested by Baker (2011), Newmark (1991) and Larson (1984).

Opposite to the above problem, that is, lack of superordinate, the TL may lack a specific term, hyponym, a word with a particular meaning that is included in the general word. When such a problem happens, translators use different strategies as in (7).

7. Whose **sandals** I am not worthy to take off (Matthew 3:11).

እኔ ጫጣውን ለጣጣው ለቅ እንኳን ብቁ አይደለሁም።

<i>ine</i>	<i>f'amma-u-n</i>	<i>lə-mawilək'</i>	<i>inkuan</i>	<i>bik'u</i>	<i>al-j-dəllə-hu-m</i>
I	shoes-POSS.3SGM-ACC	to-take off	even	worthy	NEG-1SG-AUX.PRT-1SG-COMP

'I am not worthy to take of his shoes'

The English word “sandal” in (7) is specific terms and is translated into the Amharic equivalent word *tj'amma* ‘shoes’. The specific English word is not translated into a specific Amharic term. The problem is no specific term that can carry this specific meaning is lexicalized in Amharic. The word “sandal” is the hyponym of the word “shoes” because “shoes” is a superordinate word with a general meaning that includes different types of words with a particular meaning. This general word, “shoe” includes words like “sandal”, “sneaker”, “and boot”. This shows that “sandal” is the hyponym of “shoe”. Since in Amharic a specific word that carries the meaning of the English word “sandal” is not lexicalized, as a result the translators used the general word *tj'amma* ‘shoes’. The general term “shoes” is found in the specific term “sandal”, a type of light shoes that is worn in warm weather (Oxford learner’s Dictionary, 2000). This strategy is one of the strategies suggested by Baker (2011) and Larson (1984).

3.3. Semantic complexity of the source language

Translating semantically complex words is one of the challenges that translators face. A word in a language can be complex because of different reasons as discussed below. Therefore, if a translator translates such words from one language to another, in this case from English into Amharic, without considering the different semantic features that can cause complexity, there might be a loss in rendering meanings of the source text to the target text equivalently. To avoid this problem, it is good for a translator to understand the semantic fields in both the source and the target languages, and the hierarchies of semantic sets found in the field and others (Baker 2011, Nida & Taber 1982, Larson 1984).

3.3.1. Obsolete words or words which are not colloquial at the moment

Time affects the selection of words while writing about something and translating too. A word in a source language becomes complex or ambiguous to translate when that word is not used in its meaning where it is commonly known in recent times in different texts, that is, when it is not colloquial as in (8).

8. Do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the wicked one (Matthew 6:13).

ከከፋ አድኅን እንጅ ወደፈተና አታግባን።

<i>kə-kifu</i>	<i>adinə-n</i>	<i>indʒi</i>	<i>wədə</i>	<i>fətəna</i>	<i>al-t-agib-a-n</i>
from-wicked one	save.IMP-1PL	but	to	temptation	NEG-2SGM-bring.IPFV-2SGM-1PL

'Do no bring us into temptation, but save us from the wicked one'

In (8), translators translated the word “deliver” into the Amharic equivalent *adanən* ‘rescue us’. Translating the English word “deliver” is complex because translators cannot understand its meaning easily to translate it into the Amharic equivalent. Although the word “deliver” has different meanings, the meaning of the word in isolation and the meaning of the word in the mind of many of us primarily is the activity of ‘giving something to somebody’; this is not the right meaning as per the context. So, if translators do not understand its meaning from its context and rush into translating the word based on its

common meaning, an odd translation might have resulted. We need to go back and refer to the old usage of the word “deliver”. In older times, this word is used to mean to rescue somebody from something bad (Oxford Learner’s Dictionary, 2000). In recent times, this word is not colloquial and is not used in formal writings; instead words like “save” or “rescue” are used. In the language of the Bible writers did not invent lexical items for unknown events; they used words current at that time and these words become old and obsolete and in turn makes translating words ambiguous, and problems like this can be resolved by considering either the linguistic or cultural context (Nida & Taber, 1982; Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995). It is after understanding all this, that is the old usage of the word, that translators of this text translated the word “deliver” into the Amharic equivalent *adanən* ‘rescue us’.

3.3.2. Collocates

Meaning becomes complex when its sense is determined by collocates. In collocation two or three words may come together. During this combination, the meaning of one of the collocate affects the meaning of the other collocate. This makes the translation of a word from one language to another complex as in (9).

9. John wore a leather belt around his waist (Mark 1:6).

ወገቡም ላይ የቆዳ ቀበቶ ይታጠቅ ነበር፡፡

<i>johanis</i>	<i>wəgəb-u</i>	<i>laj</i>	<i>jə-koda</i>	<i>k’əbətto</i>	<i>j-tat’əḳ’</i>	<i>nəbbər</i>
John	waist-POSS.3SGM	on	GEN-leather	belt	3SGM-gird-JUS	AUX.PST

‘John girded a leather belt around his waist’

In (9), the verb “wore” collocate with the noun “belt” and is translated into the Amharic equivalent *tat’əḳ’*- ‘girded’, not into the direct equivalent *ləbəs*- ‘wore’ to the same collocate *kəbətto* ‘belt’. This shows that words which often combine in one language may not combine in the same way in another language. Translators should consider the impact of one collocate on the meaning of the other, otherwise unnatural translation will result. Meaning arises from the co-occurrence of restrictions (Baker, 2011). The word or expression expected to be seen before or after the word may differ from language to language. If the collocate, “leather belt”, of this word was not considered by the translators, the word “wore” would have been translated into the Amharic equivalent *ləbbəsə* ‘he wore’. However, in Amharic, the verb *ləbbəsə* ‘he wore’ does not strongly collocate with the noun *jə-koda* *kəbətto* ‘leather belt’. Instead, the Amharic word *tat’əḳ’ə* ‘he girded’ is used in place of *ləbbəsə* ‘he wore’. This is because the general term “wear” in English can collocate with the term “belt”; however, in Amharic this collocations are not typical. As a result, the translators used specific terms for general terms as suggested by Baker (2011).

3.3.3. Multiple concepts in a single lexical item

Translation becomes complex when a single lexical item represents several concepts. There may be a complete match of meaning components or there may be mismatches in some of the meaning components between the two languages. Therefore, identifying the meaning components that a lexical item carries is crucial for equivalent translation. The number of concepts included in a word determines its complexity level. If a word in a source language has more concepts, it becomes complex as in (10).

10. bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them (Luke 10:34).

በቁስሎቹ ላይ ዘይትና የወይን ጠጅ አናስሶ በጨርቅ አሰረለት፡፡

bə-k'usil-otff-u *laj* *zəjt-inna* *jə-wəjn* *t'adɣdɣ* *afsis-o* *bə-ɣ'ərk'* *assər-ə-ll-ət*
 on-wound-PL-POSS.3SGM on oil-and POSS-wine mead pour.CVB by-cloth tie.PFV-3SGM-APP-3SM

‘The man tied his wounds by cloth, pouring oil and mead of wine on them’

In (10), the lexical item “bandaged” is translated into the Amharic equivalent *bəɣ'ərk' assər-* ‘tied by cloth’. Here, The English word, “bandaged” is semantically complex. A lexical item becomes complex when it has combined concepts (Nida & Taber, 1969). The English word “bandaged” is used as a verb and consists of not only the action of wrapping the wounded part of a body, but also the material used to wrap the wounded part, a strip of cloth, to protect or support the body that has been hurt. It represents two concepts, i.e. ‘thing’ and ‘event’, but Amharic has no lexicalized item that can carry both concepts. Translating the English word “bandaged” into the Amharic verb *assərallət* ‘he tied’ seems equivalent but causes loss of meaning component because the Amharic word *assərallət* does not include the thing which is used to tie but shows only one of the concept, that is, the ‘event’. Unpacking the meaning components and using a descriptive equivalence, using a generative term with descriptive, that can carry both concepts is good in translating such terms when there is no equivalent word which can carry the components (Larson, 1984, Newmark 1991). This is strategy is also called Paraphrasing (Baker 2011). That is why the translators added the prepositional phrase *bəɣ'ərk* ‘by cloth’ and translated it as *bəɣ'ərk assərallət* ‘he tied by cloth’ to include one of the concepts, i.e. the ‘thing’ used to wrap.

3.3.4. Multiple senses in a single lexical item

Sometimes a word can have more than one meaning. Unless the different meanings in the target language are considered, translating without considering the different senses results wrong interpretation as in (11).

11. recline at the table with Abraham and Isaac in the Kingdom of the heavens (Matthew 8:11).

በመንግስተ ሰማያት ከአብርሃም፣ ከይስሃቅና ከይዕቆብ ጋር በማዕድ ይቀመጣሉ፡፡

bə-məngist-ə *səmajat* *kə-abriham-inna* *kə-jisak'* *gar* *bə-ma?id* *ji-k'əməttal-u*
 at-kingdom-CON heavens with-abraham-and with-isaac with with-together PRG-recline.IMPV-3PL

‘They recline together with Abraham and Isaac at the kingdom of the heavens’

The word “table” in (11) is translated into the Amharic equivalent word *ma?id* ‘state of being together’. When a word in a source language has more than one meaning as the word “table” in (11), translation becomes complex. A word becomes complex when it has more senses (Larson, 1984). The word “table” can be used to refer to a thing used to put materials on it for different reasons in its primary sense or to refer to the people sitting in a group in its secondary sense. If the word ‘table’ had been referring to the furniture, the primary sense, it would have been translated into the Amharic word *t'ərap'eza* ‘table’. The word “table” is not also used in the secondary sense to refer to the people sitting around. Figuratively the word table is used in a figurative sense to refer to the presence of people coming from the east and west with Abraham and Isaac. It is associated with the event of sitting together. In the religious context, a material which is used to bring together while eating is *ma?id* ‘a low round material used to serve food in the older times’. Therefore, translators translated the word “table” into the Amharic equivalent *ma?id* to figuratively represent the state of being together with Abraham and Isaac. As figurative use of words are highly influenced by culture, the translators translated the same meaning with different form to make it natural to the receptor language (Baker 2011).

3.3.5. Translating substituting words

A substitute word refers to something already introduced to the context. Translating words in this respect refers to pronouns that are highly dependent on context is complex. Therefore, the thing or the object they refer to can be complex as can be seen in the word ‘himself’ in (12).

12. and slashing **himself** with stones. (Mark. 5:5).

እንዲሁም ሰውነቱን በዲንጋይ ይተለታል ነበር።

<i>indihu-m</i>	<i>səwinnət-u-n</i>	<i>bə-dingaj</i>	<i>ji-tələtil</i>	<i>nəbbər</i>
and-FOC	body-POSS.3SGM-ACC	with-stone	3SGM-slash.IPFV	AUX.PST

‘And he was slashing his body with stones’

In (12), the word “himself” is translated into the Amharic equivalent *səwinnətun* ‘his body’. The word is taken from an extract which narrates about a man filled with unclean spirits and always slashes his body parts with a stone. The word “himself” is the reflexive form of “he” and is used when the person who performs an action is also affected by the performer himself. In Amharic, the word “himself” literary means *irasu* or *rasu*. It is possible and acceptable to translate in this way because *irasun* in Amharic refers to the man in general. However, the Amharic word *irasun* also refers to one part of the body, that is, “his head” and equivalent to the Amharic phrase *irasun* ‘his head’ in addition to the intended meaning and becomes “...slashing his head” which is acceptable in Amharic but does not refer to the intended meaning. Therefore, the Amharic word *səwinnətun* ‘his body’ substitutes the English word “himself” and avoids confusion. This is because the word “himself” is not used to refer one part of the body. This translation procedure used in translating this word is called transposition (Vinay & Dalbernet 1995). The reflexive pronoun himself is substituted by the *səwinnətun* ‘his body’ which is a noun.

3.3.6. Textual context dependent words

Words, whose meanings depend on linguistic contexts, are difficult to properly understand and translate. When the meanings of words depend on words or phrases that surround them, translators need to critically examine the context well as in (13).

13. took him along to an unusually high mountain and (Luke 4:8).

በጣም ረጅም ወደ ሆነ ተራራ ወሰደ

<i>bət'am</i>	<i>rəḏzɨm</i>	<i>wədə</i>	<i>hon-ə</i>	<i>tərara</i>	<i>wəsɨd-o</i>
very	tall	to	become.PFV-3SGM	mountain	take.CVB-3SGM

‘took him to a very tall mountain’

The word “high” in (13) is translated into the Amharic equivalent word *redzɨm* ‘tall’. The word can have more than one equivalent lexical items in Amharic, for example, *tillik* ‘big’, *kəfitəjjna* ‘high’ and *rəḏzɨm* ‘tall’. Unless translators consider the context and identify the meaning designated by the word, a wrong translation may have resulted. Before translating the word “high” into Amharic, interpretation of a word in relation to the other words is a necessity. Context affects linguistic choices and shifts in translation (Nida & Taber, 1982; Baker, 2011). Possible meanings of the word should be identified by asking questions like, is the word “high” about measuring of a mountain from the bottom to the top or

about how far the mountain is above the ground? The context in which the word is used answers this question. It is about the distance that they travelled up to the mountain, it is not about the measure, the height of the mountain. Therefore, among the three possible equivalent words, the Amharic word *radzdzim* ‘tall’ contextually fits with the other Amharic words with which it is combined.

3.3.7. Situational context dependent words

Broader than the textual context, situational context refers to specific factors and circumstances that may affect the meaning of a word. Language use is affected by the register that is by the field, tenor and mode. This in turn affects the choice of words in translation. Therefore, it is crucial to critically see the situation, that is, the how and the why of the message conveyed by the word, and the social impact the meaning of the word bears as in (14).

14. In answer he said: “you must love your **neighbor** as yourself.” (Luke 10:27).

እሱም መልሶ ባልንጅራህን እንደራሱህ ወደድ አለው።

<i>issu-m</i>	<i>mālis-o</i>	<i>balindzāra-h-n</i>	<i>ində-ras-ih</i>	<i>widəd</i>	<i>al-ə-w</i>
he-FOC	reply.CVB-3SGM	partner-POSS.2SGM-ACC	CMP-head-2SGM	love.IMP	say.PF-3SGM-3SGM

‘In a reply, he said, “love your partner as yourself”’.

In (14), the word “neighbor” is translated it into the Amharic equivalent *balindzāra* ‘partner’. To understand the meaning of the word “neighbor” clearly and translate into the Amharic equivalent, translators need to see the situation or the circumstance in which God said “love your neighbors” in his speech. Translators should consider the situation in which the word is used before translating a word (Nida & Taber 1982; Baker, 2011; Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995). The saying is taken from Jesus’s teaching for his disciples about what they should do to be righteous. His teaching was based on a question asked by a man versed with the law. This man asked Jesus, “what do I need to do to inherit everlasting life (Luke 10:25)?” in a reply to his question Jesus said love Jehovah and your neighbors. Following God’s answer, the man asked Jesus “who really is my neighbor?” To answer this question, Jesus made a narration about the priest and the Levite who passed on the opposite way and the Samaritan who helped the man who fell victim to robbers while they were travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho. Finally, Jesus asked the man a question “Who of these three seems to you to have made himself neighbor to the man who fell victim?” The man replied, “The one who acted mercifully toward the victim”. Then Jesus said, “Go and do the same yourself”. So translating the word “neighbor” needs understanding of all these circumstances.

In terms of the mode, that is, the role of the word in use is to give instruction about whom to love and the field is discussing love in a religious context. As can be understood loving a neighbor in this field is not a question of loving a certain group of people, but any human being. If this was the case, the Samaritan who helped the victim was not his neighbor, he is not his friend; totally they didn’t know each other. Therefore, translating the word “neighbor” into the Amharic equivalent word *gorābet* based on its literal meaning limits the scope of love because a righteous man in that field loves not only his neighbor but loves his enemies too (Matthew 5:44). Hence, because of this situational context, the English word “neighbor” is translated to the Amharic equivalent word *balindzāra* ‘partner’. This specific term figuratively represents the whole human being. This is because loving a partner

is not the only quality of a righteous person, but loving all human creatures created in the image of God and that is what the Samaritan did.

3.4. Conclusion

The present study investigated the linguistic (lexicalization and semantic complexity) and cultural- related challenges that translators faced in translation for rendering equivalence between the Source Language (SL) and the Target Language (TL). Strategies used by translators to reduce the challenges are also examined. Most importantly, Lexical and semantic related challenges and strategies to overcome the challenges which were not studied by other researchers in our context were included.

The study identified and described various challenges which essentially focus on elements: lexicalization, semantic complexity, and culture. These linguistic and linguistic-related challenges are resulted from cultural specificity between the SL and the TL, lexicalization and number of vocabulary differences between the SL and the TL, and semantic complexity because of semantic structure differences between the SL and the TL.

The findings also showed that translators used strategies like cultural substitution, functionally equivalent terms, paraphrasing, generic terms with description, superordinate lexical items when there is no hyponymy in the TL, the hyponyms when the TL lacks superordinate, contextually equivalent words to overcome the above problems caused by cultural and linguistic differences between languages.

The study indicated that linguistic and cultural knowledge of the SL and the TL depending on the genre or register is very important and helpful for translators. Practically, the findings help translators to know and use different strategies to solve problems they faced while translating a word from English into Amharic.

As a recommendation, the study was limited to equivalence at word level focusing only on culture, lexicalization and semantic complexities. Others areas like semantic feature difference, form difference, perspective and ideology difference as mentioned by Baker (2011) were not covered in this study. Therefore, further studies were recommended on these issues. Moreover, this study focused only on religious texts and recommend further studies on other genres like legal, medical, and literary texts.

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