

# The Idiomatic Translation of Lugwere Proverbs into English

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## ABSTRACT

This study sought to explore the idiomatic translation of Lugwere proverbs into English. Twenty-six Lugwere proverbs were identified from Lugwere written literature. The objective of this study, was to examine the idiomaticity of translating these *proverbs into English*. The study was guided by the *Skopos* theory of translation, cultural theory and the interpretive theory. The latter mainly informed the study explaining the representation of the source text (ST) messages in a target text (TT) with a real sense and meaning. Although this study is a qualitative one, some quantitative analysis of the information was essential to make sense of incidences of happenings of certain kinds of data. Within theme, certain references occurred oddly often, so that a “quantity” of such features in the data could be used to supplement the qualitative descriptions. Thus a more concrete understanding of the information than otherwise could be created, portraying trends and delivering a more reliable interpretation of the data. Questionnaires highlighting specific Lugwere proverbs were administered to three community translators/interpreters with good knowledge of Lugwere and English. Accordingly, the study, indicate that the translation of Lugwere proverbs into English took different dimensions. Whereas there are points to observe in the translations, the purpose of this specific paper was to examine the idiomaticity of the translated Lugwere proverbs into English. The study recommends that researchers ought to start publishing Lugwere proverbs and their translated versions in order to enhance communication between the Lugwere and non - Lugwere speakers

**Keywords:** Idiomaticity, translation, proverb

## INTRODUCTION

The process of translating Lugwere, a Bantu language primarily spoken by more than 700,000 people, who live in the districts of Kibuku, Budaka, Butebo and Pallisa in Eastern Uganda, into English presents a complex linguistic challenge due to the unique idiomatic expressions embedded within Lugwere. Idioms, colloquialisms, and cultural nuances play a significant role in shaping the language, making literal translations insufficient for capturing the intended meaning. This intricate interplay between language and culture necessitates a nuanced approach to idiomatic translation, wherein the translator must possess not only a deep understanding of both languages but also cultural sensitivity and contextual awareness. In this exploration, we delve into the art of idiomatic translation, examining the key principles, strategies, and challenges involved in rendering Lugwere expressions into English while preserving their essence and cultural significance. By analyzing specific examples and employing various translation techniques, we aim to shed light on the intricacies of this linguistic endeavor and highlight the importance of cultural context in achieving accurate and meaningful translations.

Through this investigation, we seek to enhance our understanding of cross-cultural communication and appreciation for the richness of language diversity. By unraveling the mysteries of idiomatic translation, we embark on a journey of linguistic discovery that transcends borders and bridges the gap between diverse linguistic communities.

Idiomatic translation of Lugwere proverbs into English involves more than just converting words from one language to another; it requires an understanding of the cultural nuances and linguistic expressions unique to both languages. Lugwere proverbs, like those in many African languages, are rich in imagery, symbolism, and wisdom, often reflecting the values, beliefs, and experiences of the Lugwere people. Translating these proverbs

into English while maintaining their essence and intended meaning can be challenging, as direct word-for-word translations may fail to capture the depth and cultural significance of the original expressions. Instead, skilled translators must strive to find equivalent English expressions or idioms that convey the same message and evoke similar imagery. This process involves not only linguistic expertise but also cultural sensitivity and creativity to ensure that the translated proverbs resonate with English-speaking audiences while preserving their authenticity and richness.

According to Rabin (1958) as quoted by Hale (2007:4), translation is “a process by which a spoken or written utterance takes place in one language which is intended and presumed to convey the same meaning as a previously existing utterance in another language”. Since proverbs are conduits of oral learning that enhance communal learning, translation is a notable linguistic activity for effective communication across cultures. With Uganda’s multilingual nature of over fifty languages spoken (Altinyelken, Moorcroft & Van, 2014), Lugwere is one of the languages endowed with proverbs.

Mollanazar (2001: 53) asserts that a proverb is “a unit of meaning in specific context through which the speaker and hearer arrive at the same meaning”. These proverbs are used in both formal and informal situations such as everyday conversation, journalistic writing, and advertising, speeches of all types, in sermons, literature, debates, slogans, songs, legal argumentation, humorous jokes, and other forms of human communication. They illustrate a specific point effectively due to their various purposes that is to say, to carry more weight in speech or writing, making a conversation lively and interesting, among others (Mieder, 1986).

The ability to convey the meaning or expression from one language to another while maintaining its naturalness and fluency within the target language. It involves capturing the essence of original expression rather than translating it literally, often by using equivalent idiomatic expressions or cultural references in the target language. (Gulay, 2018).

Idiomaticity may refer to native-like choice of expression, and that which one has to be familiar with over and above regulations and words inspired (Fillmore, Kay & O’connor 1988). The latter meaning breaks with the traditional view that knowing a language involves two types of knowledge: rules and lexical items, period, frequency and economy as a complete fact (Warren, 2005). Idiomaticity is explained by a speech community when someone who knows only the syntax and vocabulary of a language cannot, by that knowledge alone, understand how to say it, what it means, or whether it is commonly used. An idiomatic look or structure is somewhat a language user can fall short to distinguish while knowing all else in the language (Fillmore *et al.*, 1988). The translator’s duty at this point starts from evasion to attack in his or her attempts to translate the idiomaticity of the source language (SL) into the target language (TL) to realize corresponding sense, implications, connotations, literary aspects and effects (Ghazala, 2003). This paper, presents intercultural translation from Lugwere into English: the case of proverbs. The underlying intention is to examine the idiomaticity of the translation.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Available literature indicates that there are a number of proverbs from various African countries that have been translated into English. The researcher used examples of proverbs to point out gaps that this study sought to fill. Mbele (2016) published a piece of work with the translation of proverbs from Kiswahili into English. The purpose was to make Kiswahili proverbs widely known to the world and be used as a point of reference during speeches and documentations. An example of these proverbs is provided here:

*Afungaye kibwebwe sibure ana mchezo (Mbele, 2016:32):* which means that *She who ties a [broad strip of calico as a] waist belt does not do so for nothing, she is [intent] on playing.* By implication, an individual decides to do something that he or she thinks is worthwhile. This proverb is intended to inform the society that it is better to get involved in social engagements that are acceptable to the society and out of which a person involved has a tangible benefit. Mbele (2016)’s example is worthy copying especially taking into consideration that a number of Lugwere proverbs can be used to benefit societies but they lack translation; thus, if Lugwere proverbs are translated into English, a universal language, they may be applied in day-to-day communication across cultures.

The Similarity between Mbele's work and the current study is that both provide insights into the values, behaviors, and cultural practices of their respective communities. The Swahili proverb underscores the intentionality behind actions, a concept likely echoed in many Lugwere proverbs. The Kiswahili and Lugwere proverbs use metaphors or figurative language to convey deeper meanings. In the Swahili proverb, the act of tying a waist belt metaphorically represents preparing or intending to engage in an activity and both proverbs serve as guidance for behavior and decision-making, emphasizing the importance of purposeful actions.

However, the differences between Mbele's work and this study exists in the structure and syntax of Swahili and Lugwere proverbs which differ significantly due to the unique grammatical rules of each language. This affects the way the proverbs are phrased and the imagery used. The specific cultural references and symbols used in the proverbs also varies. For instance, the waist belt in the Swahili proverb is a culturally specific item that may not have a direct equivalent in Lugwere culture. By comparing these aspects, we gain a deeper understanding of how proverbs from different cultures, even when translated idiomatically, can reflect unique world views and values while sharing some universal elements.

Chidoka (2021) published a number of proverbs in the *Igbo* language of Nigeria, to respond to the realization that few people throughout the world understand the *Igbo* language, because it has several dialects, so equivalent English meanings doubtless will help to improve understanding of *Igbo* proverbs and will help to solve present difficulties. An example is the *Igbo* proverb – '*Gidigidi bu ugwueze* (Chidoka, 2021:28) which means, *unity is strength*. However, when it is interpreted to mean "*unity is strength*", it can also apply to circumstances where a society is divided and a mediator can use it to advocate for unity in the community so as to avoid some wrangles. In other words, the *Igbo* proverb above is used to settle conflicts and it is normally used where relatives, friends or closely related people develop misunderstandings and call for mediation. If not translated, it may not help the non- *Igbo* speakers and learners of *Igbo* to communicate effectively. The similarity of Chidoka's work and this study is that both *Igbo* and Lugwere proverbs often draw on natural elements and everyday life to convey their meanings as well as teach moral values and social norms.

In contrast, the structure and syntax of *Igbo* proverbs are influenced by the *Igbo* language's grammar and phonology whereas Lugwere proverbs have a different linguistic structure, reflective of Bantu language patterns.

Both the *Igbo* and Lugwere proverbs convey universal themes of unity and collective strength, though they do so through different cultural lenses and linguistic frameworks. The idiomatic translations into English help to bridge these cultural expressions, though some tones may be lost in translation.

Vadim & Shutterstock (2010) translated many proverbs from Tanzanian Kiswahili into English. Some of the examples include: *Kila ndege huruka nambawa zake*, which means "*Every bird flies with its own wings*", and *Haraka haraka haina Baraka* meaning "*Hurry hurry has no blessings*" (Vadim & Shutterstock, 2010:40). The first proverb "*every bird flies with its own wings*" is used in communication which teaches people to work hard and get everything from their own sweat. It discourages individuals who want to obtain things through begging, or depending on other people for survival. The second proverb *Haraka haraka haina baraka*: "*Hurry hurry has no blessings*" teaches people to go slow in order not to miss out on anything. This proverb advises someone who is about to cross the road to wait in order to cross safely and avoid accidents. It can also mean that people should first prepare before doing anything to avoid future problems. Accordingly, learners and non-speakers of Kiswahili may benefit from the translation of Kiswahili into English.

The connection between Vadim and Shutterstock and this study is that there is emphasis on the importance of patience and taking things at a reasonable pace. "*Haraka haraka haina baraka*" teaches that rushing can lead to mistakes and missed opportunities, while the idiomatic translations of Lugwere proverbs often impart wisdom and life lessons. The difference between this proverb and the study is that "*Haraka haraka haina baraka*" is a Swahili proverb, commonly used in East Africa, while Lugwere proverbs come from the Bagwere people of Uganda. This means the linguistic and cultural context of each proverb is different. The idiomatic nature of the translation of Lugwere proverbs may result in phrases that are less direct and more interpretative than the Swahili proverb, which has a clear, direct meaning.

In Uganda, Lena (2011) translated some Luganda proverbs into English. Out of the very many proverbs was "*Abali awamu, tebalema kuyomba*" (Lena 2011:30). "*People who live together cannot avoid conflicts*". This is a proverb that can be used in day-to-day communication in situations where speakers seek to advise society on social harmony. The proverb indicates that little disagreements should be tolerated in order to strengthen relationships among people. Another proverb by Lena (2011) is "*Abangi babi kulya, balungi mirimu*", meaning "*A crowd is bad for eating, but good for work*". In this proverb, the author seeks to warn employers who seek to make employees work hard but when it comes to payments, they do not want to meet their obligations. By implication, each worker deserves their payment. Lena's proverbs and the idiomatic translations of Lugwere proverbs offer cultural insights and wisdom. They reflect societal values and norms, teaching lessons about communal behavior and ethics. However, Lena's work has a very specific message about labour and compensation, whereas Lugwere proverbs in this study, cover a wider range of topics, from personal conduct to community values. The target audience for Lena's proverb is likely to be employers and employees, focusing on workplace ethics. Lugwere proverbs, when translated idiomatically, may be intended for a broader audience, including children, elders, and the general community, offering life lessons applicable to various aspects of life.

Besides Lena, Ssemaluulu (2017) translated Luganda proverbs. However, the researcher noticed that Ssemaluulu's proverbs are written and interpreted in Luganda as indicated in this example "*Bakuyita embuga, sibuganzi*" (Ssemaluulu, 2017:28). *Amakulu: Buli gwebayita embuga tebamuyita kumuwa birungi. Oluusi baba bamuyita kumukuba oba kumusiba. Abamu kyebava batya okuyitibwa embuga.* The manner in which Ssemaluulu portrays the proverbs has certain disadvantages. First, this proverb leaves space for only the Baganda to digest the message. It excludes the non-Baganda. It is rather useful in strengthening Luganda at the local level. Likewise, many Lugwere proverbs may be translated in the same way, leaving Lugwere for Bagwere and not disseminating the knowledge to a wider audience. Ssemaluulu's example and some Lugwere proverbs exists in the provision of advise or caution about hidden motives behind invitations. However, Ssemaluulu's examples, when translated, remains relatively literal and retains its cautionary message directly, the Lugwere proverbs' idiomatic translation in this study, changes the metaphor to a more universally understood expressions across cultures. However, three theories informed this study for example; the Skopos, Cultural theory, and Interpretive theory, each offering a unique framework to ensure that the idiomatic meanings are preserved and conveyed effectively.

According to Reiss, K., Nord, C., and Vermeer, H. J. (2014). Skopos theory postulates that the primary determinant of any translation should be its purpose (or "skopos") in the target culture. The theory advocates for flexibility in translation strategies depending on the intended function of the translated text (As-Safi, 2011). Application to this study is that the purpose of translating Lugwere proverbs varies from educational purposes, cultural preservation, or literature. Skopos theory allows translators to adapt their strategies accordingly. For instance, if the translation aims to teach English speakers about Lugwere culture, the translator might opt for more literal translations supplemented with explanatory notes. If the purpose is to create an equivalent proverb in English literature, the translator might prioritize capturing the proverbial essence in a form that resonates with English-speaking audiences.

Cultural theory emphasizes the importance of cultural context in translation culture Venuti (2012), a key figure in this theory, argues for the "visibility" of the translator, advocating for translations that highlight the source culture rather than assimilating it completely into the target culture. Relatedly, Bassnett, S. (2014), stresses the need to consider cultural nuances to preserve the original text's meaning and impact. Lugwere proverbs are deeply embedded in the cultural and social practices of the Lugwere-speaking people. Applying cultural theory ensures that the proverbs' cultural significance, historical context, and social functions are retained. Translators might include explanations or footnotes to convey cultural elements that may not have direct equivalents in English.

Interpretive Theory, particularly developed within the field of translation studies by Gile, (2013) and Lederer, (2015), focuses on the cognitive processes involved in understanding and conveying meaning. This theory highlights the importance of capturing the sense rather than the exact words of the source text. When translating idiomatic expressions, the interpretive theory ensures that the underlying meaning and intent of the proverbs are maintained. Lugwere proverbs often carry metaphorical meanings and wisdom that require the



translator to understand the context and convey the intended message accurately in English. For example, a Lugwere proverb about perseverance might be translated to an English equivalent that captures the same lesson, even if the imagery differs.

Each theory provides a framework that addresses different aspects of idiomatic translation: Skopos Theory allows for flexibility based on the translation's purpose and function, Cultural Theory ensures the preservation of cultural nuances and context and Interpretive Theory focuses on conveying the meaning and sense behind the words. Using these theories in tandem can help achieve a translation that is faithful to the original Lugwere proverbs while being accessible and meaningful to English-speaking audiences.

This study considers a wide range of other studies conducted on the idiomaticity of translating proverbs in general. Mbele's example of *Afungaye kibwebwe si bure ana mchezo translated as "she who ties a [broad strip of calico as a] waist belt does not do so for nothing"* is idiomatically translated since its meaning cannot easily be understood in lay man's language if not interpreted to him/her whereas Vadim & Shutterstock's proverb *Haraka haraka haina Baraka Hurry hurry has no blessings* is not idiomatic since it can be easily understood without interpretation. This confirms that these findings are concrete and to some extent comprehensive. Therefore, these previous studies serve as guidance to the current study aiming at examining the idiomaticity of the 26 translated Lugwere proverbs into English. In this study, the researcher looked at such obstacles to meaningful translation of Lugwere proverbs into English.

## METHODOLOGY

This study is qualitative which can be described as discovery; oriented, exploratory, descriptive and inductive. It is within an interpretive research paradigm which is characterized by a non-experimental design, qualitative data and interpretive analysis characteristics (Patton, 1990; 1999; 2002; 2005). The research explored profound knowledge on the intercultural translation of Lugwere proverbs into English, as guided by Yin (2009) and Creswell (2013).

Qualitative method is found to be relevant in this study as Leedy and Ormrod (2001:155) mention the fact that qualitative approach provides "a detailed and systematic examination of the contents of a particular body of material for the purpose of identifying patterns, themes, or biases". The study analyses the contents of Lugwere proverbs under discussion, and focuses on non-numerical data. Its data is in a textual format, as it deals with words, phrases and sentences whose meanings form the core business of this study. Duffy (2007:130) explains that a qualitative method is a right tool for studying "[...] the values, meanings, beliefs, thoughts, feelings and general characteristics of the specific phenomena under investigation without manipulating the subjects under study".

The data collection technique used was library search where the researcher visited library archive at the Bagwere cultural centre in Budaka district, selected the proverbs from '*Engero Gy'Abagwere*' book through purposive sampling and acquired the source text data (Lugwere proverbs) which were then given to the translators to translate and the translations became the target text data.

In purposive sampling technique, data dealt with intentionally has to be selected by the researcher, based on the decision that the collected data can best help achieve the objective of the study (Kothari, 2004). The researcher purposively selected twenty six (26) Lugwere proverbs. The choice of such proverbs was based on the idea that, the specified number of Lugwere proverbs deal with various social themes of the Bagwere such as cooperation, love, hard work, politics, social behaviors as well as advice on social communication which is a representative of the different aspects of the Bagwere life as well as linguistic structure of Lugwere. Much as a small sample is a limitation, a bigger sample would unnecessarily result in prolonged and repetitive data presentation, interpretation and discussion.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to Kaerk (2021), translation is the action of interpretation of the meaning of a text and subsequent production of an equivalent text, also called a translation, which communicates the same message in another

language. The text to be translated is called the source text, and the language it is to be translated into is called the target language. In the context of this study, translation refers to converting proverbs from Lugwere into English without changing their meaning in any way. The 26 Lugwere proverbs were translated by three community translators individually. The first translator provided his translations a week earlier than the second and third translators. Table.1 below was made depending on the first translator’s work. The second and third translators also provided their versions which were used in the interpretation and discussion of results below in Table 1 following the study objective. However, the other respondents (fourteen teachers of English and thirteen clan leaders) gave their views on the translations using the scale ‘true’, ‘not sure’ and ‘false’; where, ‘true’ means the translation was correct, ‘not sure’ means the respondents were not sure whether the translation was correct or not and ‘false’ meaning that the translation was not correct.

Table1: Percentage of respondents’ views on intercultural translation of Lugwere proverbs into English

No.	Proverb	Translation	True	Not Sure	False
1.	<i>Amafudu gamanyanga owegaanamira.</i>	<i>Tortoise they always know where they meet.</i>	24%	44%	32%
2.	<i>Akubba owuwe akubbanga awumbaku.</i>	<i>One who beats his, he beats sparingly.</i>	31%	23%	46%
3.	<i>Abulawo tibamukwera omukali.</i>	<i>One who is not there, they don’t marry for him a wife.</i>	17%	71%	12%
4.	<i>Abyala Oisiru taita.</i>	<i>One who produces the stupid, he does not kill.</i>	44%	13%	43%
5.	<i>Amaani amatono gakwawukisya nomugugu okumutwe.</i>	<i>Little strength, it separates with luggage on the head.</i>	18%	10%	72%
6.	<i>Amaliga tigairya.</i>	<i>Tears don’t bring back.</i>	65%	25%	10%
7.	<i>Akootalirirya niiko akasika omaawo.</i>	<i>The one you despise, inherits your mother.</i>	7%	71%	22%
8.	<i>Amaisuka owegatalemalya gaita</i>	<i>If youthhood does not lame you, it kills.</i>	19%	73%	8%
9.	<i>Abagezi n’abagezi tibagulyangana amadiba.</i>	<i>The wise and the wise, don’t sell each other hide.</i>	10%	24%	66%
10.	<i>Awatali wuwo obinanga matyama.</i>	<i>There where it is not your home, you dance while seated.</i>	9%	23%	68%
11.	<i>Awegiriisirya tigigonawo.</i>	<i>Where they graze from, they don’t sleep there.</i>	16%	70%	14%
12.	<i>Atambula nomukulu akira alima.</i>	<i>The one who walks with the leader is better than the one who digs.</i>	72%	08%	20%
13.	<i>Adambira okungulu akira adambira ansi.</i>	<i>The one suffering from the surface is better than the one suffering from underground.</i>	21%	78%	1%

14.	<i>Akutendera takubbeera.</i>	<i>The one who incites you, does not help you</i>	12%	15%	73%
15.	<i>Awali obwita tibageryawo ibbaale.</i>	<i>Where there is millet bread, they don't try there the stone.</i>	11%	12%	77%
16.	<i>Agasiru agabiri gakira omugezi omoiza.</i>	<i>The two who are stupid, they are better than the only one who is wise.</i>	11%	59%	30%
17.	<i>Aminamina ekitani abyalisya eirongo.</i>	<i>The one who fondles the placenta, causes it to produce twins.</i>	4%	89%	7%
18.	<i>Aginga omuleme agingira kimo</i>	<i>The one who lifts the lame, lifts completely.</i>	13%	74%	13%
19.	<i>Awazwa ekitono niiwo awazwa ekinene.</i>	<i>Where the little comes, it is where even the great comes.</i>	54%	12%	34%
20.	<i>Akuuma omwala amwima mbiro.</i>	<i>The one who keeps the girl deny her black soot</i>	14%	71%	15%
21.	<i>Abuulya ekyamaite abuulya kuseka</i>	<i>He who asks what he knows, asks to laugh</i>	53%	23%	24%
22.	<i>Abali aamo bisusi ebinaagangana nayenga tibyatika.</i>	<i>Those who are together, are like grass that collide with each other but when they do not break</i>	44%	33%	23%
23.	<i>Abatakangana batiikangana omusiisi.</i>	<i>Those who love each other they load each other the chaff</i>	29%	62%	09%
24.	<i>Agaya embwa Atoolawo igumba.</i>	<i>The one who separates dogs removes the bone</i>	72%	11%	17%
25.	<i>Ataitangaku owaita alyane byoya.</i>	<i>The one who has never killed when he kills, he eats with feathers.</i>	22%	70%	08%
26.	<i>Amaite e mbuga gubatuma.</i>	<i>He who knows government headquarters is the one they send.</i>	14%	14%	72%

Source: Primary data from translators, Clan leaders and teachers of English

Overall, Table.1 indicates that the translation of Lugwere proverbs into English took different dimensions. Whereas there are points to observe in the translations, the purpose of this specific paper was to examine the idiomaticity of 26 translated Lugwere proverbs into English. The findings in Table 1 were compared with translations from qualitative findings where translations kept on differing by proverb. The first proverb, according to Table 1 was *A-mafudu ga-manyanya -nga o-wegaa-namira*, (AUG-6-tortise SM-know AUG-16-meet) translated as *Tortoise they know always where they meet* (unidiomatic translation). However, based on the percentage scores, only six (6) of the respondents (24%) acknowledged that this was the right translation of the proverb, while twelve (12) of the respondents (44%) were not sure and nine (9) of the respondents (32%) did not consider the translation as appropriate for the proverb. Accordingly, the second translator translated the proverb *A-mafudu ga-manyanya -nga o-we-gaa-namira*, (AUG-6-tortise SM-know AUG-16-meet) as *Tortoises*

*know their meeting place* (unidiomatic translation) because it is a literal translation that does not represent the connotative meaning in English. The third translator also differed revealing that this proverb is translated as *Tortoises always know where they meet* (unidiomatic translation). Most importantly, the three translations contain the aspect of meeting and knowing. It is right to state that each of the translators is right because percentage rating indicates that nine (9) of the respondents (32%) did not agree with the translation for the first translator indicating that translators based their translations on how they interpreted the proverb in question. The findings show that the proverb was not translated idiomatically by the three translators.

The second proverb was *A-kubba o-wuwe a-kubba -nga a-wumbaku*. (3SG-beat AUG-1-beat SM-Pos 3SG-beat 3SG sparingly). This is also a Lugwere proverb that can be translated in different ways. The first translator viewed it as *One who beats his, he beats sparingly* (unidiomatic translation). This response was subjected to teachers of English, clan leaders for assessment and according to Table 1 twelve (12) of the respondents (46%) did not acknowledge this as the right translation, while six (6) of the respondents (23%) were not sure and nine (9) of the respondents (31%) were comfortable with the translation by the first translator. To the second translator, the translation for this proverb was *You do not hurt your own* (idiomatic translation) and this is different from the third translator's rendition, which was *He who beats his own does it sparingly* (idiomatic translation). The general observation in these translations is that the second proverb also had different ways of translating it depending on the translator in question. These results suggest that it is rather difficult to have one standard translation. Nonetheless, the differences in translating Lugwere proverbs are acceptable since translation is based on the context and approach used by the translator. Following the translation of this proverb, it was idiomatically translated by the second and third translators as in the proverb *Kila ndege huruka nambawa zaake* (Vadim & Shutterstock 2010:40) meaning *Every bird flies with its own wings*.

In the third proverb, *A-bulawo ti-bamukwera o-mukali*, (3SG- be absent NEG – SM- marry AUG- 1- woman) the first translation was made as *One who is not there, they don't marry for him a wife* (unidiomatic translation). This was subjected to assessment through the interview guide and the results in Table 1 show that nineteen (19) of the respondents (71%) were not sure about the translation as opposed to only five (5) of the respondents (17%) who acknowledged this, as a right way of translating the proverb. The structure of results indicates a large-scale lack of knowledge for translating Lugwere proverbs into English especially bearing in mind that the highest percentage of respondents remained neutral concerning this particular proverb. On the other hand, the second translator's view on the same proverb was *It is impossible to make a marriage proposal on behalf of someone who is not around* (unidiomatic translation). At the same time, the third translator viewed the proverb as *only the one who is present can propose to a woman* (unidiomatic translation). All these translations can be right based on the translator's interpretation as long as they do not change the meaning and serve the purpose (*Skopos*). Most importantly, it is not easy to have a uniform way of translating this proverb into English because the capacity of organizing messages in the mind and portraying the same information in different languages without changing the meaning differs considerably depending on interpretation of the translator.

The fourth proverb was *A-byala O-isiru ta-ita* (3SGS give birth AUG-1-stupid NEG-kill). According to results in Table 1, the translation for this proverb by the first translator was *One who produces the stupid, he does not kill* (unidiomatic translation), which was subjected to assessment by teachers of English and clan leaders, with findings indicating that twelve (12) of the respondents (44%) acknowledged that this was the right translation, while twelve (12) of the respondents (44%) refused to acknowledge it. These results simply suggest that like other proverbs, this proverb can also be translated in different ways. This is true because the second translator viewed it as *Giving birth to a foolish child does not mean killing them* (unidiomatic translation). Yet, on the same note, the third translator viewed it as *Giving birth to a foolish child is not punishable by death* (idiomatic translation). Observing these interpretations, this proverb was not idiomatically translated by the first and second translators.

Among the Lugwere proverbs in Table 1 is *A-maani a-matono gawkawukisya no- mugugu o-kumutwe* (AUG-strength AUG-6-little SM separates OM-1-luggage AUG-16-head), which the first translator translated as *Little strength; it separates with luggage on the head* (unidiomatic translation). When subjected to assessment by respondents on a rating scale, the results in Table 1 are mixed with nineteen (19) of the respondents (72%)



expressing contradictory views towards the first translation of this proverb, leaving only five (5) of the respondents (18%) who acknowledged it as the right translation. The highest percentage of respondents who did not accept this, as a right translation, attributed it to the varying views among the translators as the second translator viewed the translation as *Less strength makes luggage fall from the head* (unidiomatic translation) and the third translator viewed it as *Less strength separates you with the luggage* (unidiomatic translation). The differences in translation are normal as seen even in the earlier developments in the analysis.

The proverb *A-maliga ti-gairya* (AUG-6-tears NEG- bring back) was translated by the first translator as *Tears do not bring back* (unidiomatic translation). It was subjected to assessment by teachers of English and clan leaders to obtain results in Table 1, whereby the highest percentage eighteen (18) of respondents (65%) accepted this as the right way of translating the proverb. While seven (7) of the respondents (25%) were not sure and three (3) of the respondents (10%) did not acknowledge the proverb as rightly translated. The same proverb was subjected to translation by two other translators, who also differed in their views such that the second translator viewed it as *Tears cause loss* (unidiomatic translation), and the third translator viewed it as *Tears do not bring back* (unidiomatic translation), just like the first translator. In their translation, the second translator differed significantly in that we cannot see the implication of the word “loss” anywhere in the Lugwere proverb. These are some of the divergences which exist during intercultural translation of Lugwere proverbs into English that this study has explored.

According to Table 1, the first translator translated the Lugwere proverb number seven *A-kootalirirya niiko a-kasika o-maawo* (AUG-despise 3SG-inherit AUG-mother) as *One you despise, inherits your mother* (unidiomatic translation). When subjected to assessment, it had the rating of nineteen (19) of the respondents (71%) who were not sure whether this was the right translation except two (2) a representation of (7%) respondents. Not being sure may mean that the given proverb was not commonly known to some of the respondents. The view of the second translator was that *The despised later becomes one’s mother’s heir* (idiomatic translation), while the third translator’s view on the same proverb was *One who looks despicable later becomes your mother’s heir* (unidiomatic translation). The main observation here is that the first translator uses the word *inherit*, yet the second and third translators use the word *heir*. Looking at the Lugwere proverb, and considering that the researcher is a Mugwere, the right translation of the word *a-ka-sika* in the proverb could have been *heir*, not *inherit*. Nonetheless, we still keep experiencing challenges in the intercultural translation of Lugwere proverbs into English, which is the reason this study also highlighted.

*A-maisuka o-wegataremalya ga-ita* (AUG-2-youthhood AUG-1- NEG- lame NEG-kill), is a Lugwere proverb number eight in the table 1. Firstly, translated as *If youthhood does not lame you, it kills* (unidiomatic translation). This was subjected to assessment by teachers of English and clan leaders, whereby twenty (20) of the respondents (73%) were not sure about the right translation except five (5) of the respondents (19%). This directly means that this Lugwere proverb is not commonly used in day-to-day communication by some of the respondents. However, there are some differences in translation according to translator 2 and 3, in that the second translator viewed it as *If youthhood does not make one lame, it kills* (idiomatic translation). On the same note, the third translator viewed it as *Youthhood either causes disability or kills* (idiomatic translation). It is not new to have different translations as long as the meaning and purpose is maintained for the target audience and readership.

The Lugwere proverb *A-bagezi na-bagezi ti-bagulyangana a-madiba* (AUG-2-wise DEM-1-wise NEG- sell AUG-6-hides) was translated by the first translator as *The wise and the wise, does not sell each other hides* (unidiomatic translation). It was then subjected to assessment by the teachers of English and clan leaders, in which eighteen (18) of the respondents (66%) did not recognize this as the right translation except three (3) of the respondents (10%) who accepted that the translation was right. This interpretation is justified by the different translations given by the second and third translator as *Two wise people cannot sell hides to each other* and *the wise do not sell hides to each other* (unidiomatic translations). These differences in translation suggest that this proverb was idiomatically interpreted as in the meaning of the word *a-ma-diba* which may not necessarily mean hides but also other items depending on context of usage in day-to-day communication. This was supported by Mbele’s (2016:32) example of the proverb *afungaye kibwebwe si bure ana mchezo* which informs “society that it is better to get involved in social engagements that are acceptable to the society and out of which a person involved has a tangible benefit”.

Further, the Lugwere proverb *A-watali wuwo o-binanga ma-tyama* (AUG-1-NEG-home DEM-I-dance NPX-sit) was translated by the first translator as *There where there is not your home, you dance while seated* (unidiomatic translation). This translation was subjected to assessment, with results in Table 1 revealing that eighteen (18) of the respondents (68%) did not accept that this was a right translation and six (6) of the respondents (23%) were not sure. These results suggest that this is a commonly used proverb, whose translation has not been brought out as well as it is commonly used in communication. Considering the second translator, the same proverb was translated as *Out of your residence, you do not dance while standing* (unidiomatic translation) while the third translator viewed it as *when you are not at your place, dance while sitting down* (unidiomatic translation). The differences in translation alone necessitated documenting the translations of these proverbs hence the idiomatic translation of this proverb in question would have been *“When you are not at your home, dance while seated”*.

*A-wegiriisiryia ti-gigonawo* (AUG-16-SM-graze NEG-5-sleep) is a Lugwere proverb, which according to the first translator, was translated as *Where they graze from, they don't sleep there* (unidiomatic translation). This proverb and its translation were subjected to assessment by teachers of English and clan leaders such that nineteen (19) of the respondents (70%) were not sure while three (3) of the respondents (14%) did not accept this as the right translation and four (4) of the respondents (16%) acknowledged it as the right way of translating it. Accordingly, the second translator viewed this proverb as *They do not sleep in grazing grounds* (unidiomatic translation) and, about the same proverb, the third translator was of the view that it is translated as *Where they feed from, they do not again sleep there* (unidiomatic translation). With these differences, it is clear that translation of proverbs differs with the translator's perception and sense.

Another Lugwere proverb is *A-tambula no- mukulu a-kira a-lima* (3SGS-walk SM-1-leader 3SG-better- 3SG-dig) which, according to the first translator, was *The one who walks with the leader is better than the one who digs* (unidiomatic translation). This was subjected to assessment by teachers of English and clan leaders to test whether they viewed this as the right translation. According to the findings in Table 1, nineteen (19) of the respondents (72%) indicate that they were sure that this was the correct translation except five (5) respondents (20%) who could not agree. By implication, the perception and purpose of the proverb was easily understood by the respondents in line with the first translation. This is justified by the views of the second and third translators who never had different views. However, two (2) of the respondents (08%) who never acknowledged that it was the right translation are not worth ignoring since this indicates that there are other strategies in which the same proverb can be translated appropriately, thus paving the way to exploring intercultural challenges faced in translating Lugwere proverbs into English and the strategies on how the challenges can be addressed.

The first translator translated the Lugwere proverb *A-dambira o-kungulu a-kira a-dambira a-nsi* (AUG-1-suffering DEM-1-surface 3SG-better AUG-1-suffering 3SG-underground) as *The one suffering from the surface is better than the one suffering from underground* (unidiomatic translation) and when subjected to assessment, the findings indicated that twenty one (21) of the respondents (78%) were not sure whether the first translation was the right one for the proverb while six (6) of the respondents (22%) concurred with the translation. These results suggested that this particular proverb translation was not easily grasped by the respondents due to their limited knowledge on translation. If this was not the case, then most of the respondents would have either marked *“true”* to be sure or *“false”* to indicate that the translation was not right. Therefore, there is a popular indicator that translators, clan leaders and teachers of English were non-professional translators; thus, its translation is not obvious. The second translation was also similar to the first one. However, the third translation was *One rather suffers while on the ground rather than while in the ground* (unidiomatic translation).

The Lugwere proverb *A-kutendera ta-kubbeera* (3SGS-incites NEG- 3SM- help) in the first translation was *The one who initiates you, does not help you* (unidiomatic translation). This translation was subjected to assessment, whereby twenty (20) of the respondents (73%) indicated that this proverb was commonly used by Bagwere in day-to-day communication but not with this first translation. These results suggest that there are other ways this very proverb can be translated into English. The second translation was that *The one who is good at influencing does not get affected in any way* (unidiomatic translation), while the third translation was that *Someone can let you fall into a trap but does not follow you to the trap* (unidiomatic translation). Based on

these results, there are few respondents who did not acknowledge the right translation of this proverb as indicated by seven (7) of the respondents (27%) who were not sure about whether the first translation was appropriate for this proverb.

The first translation for *A-wali o-bwita ti-bageryawo i-bbale* (AUG-20-be AUG-millet bread NEG- try OM-stone) was *Where there is millet bread, they do not try there the stone* (unidiomatic translation). When subjected to assessment, the results in Table 1 reveal that twenty-one (21) of the respondents (77%) were not satisfied with the first translation while three (3) of the respondents (11%) were satisfied. The remaining three (3) of the respondents (12%) were not sure whether this was the right translation of the proverb. In the second translation, this proverb was constructed as *Where there is millet posho, they do not try a stone* (unidiomatic proverb). The third translation was not so different from this, as it stated *Where millet posho is, they do not try a stone* (unidiomatic translation). Observation of the analysis indicates that this particular proverb is not used in day-to-day Lugwere communication by some respondents since they were not even sure about the interpretation of this proverb.

Proverb 16 *A-gasiru a-gabiri gakira o-mugezi o-moiza*, (AU-stupid AUG-two DEM-1-better -one) the first translation was that *The two who are stupid, they are better than the only one who is wise* (unidiomatic translation), when subjected to assessment, sixteen (16) of the respondents (59%) were not sure whether this was the right translation, a clear indication that this proverb was not commonly used by some respondents in the day-to-day communication and only three (3) of the respondents (11%) were comfortable with the translation while eight (8) of the respondents (30%) were not comfortable with the translation. Proverb 16 is one of the Lugwere proverbs translators widely failed to translate or to know its translation and this is a clear indication that there are intercultural challenges of translating Lugwere into English, which this study addressed.

*A-minamina e-kitani a-byalisya e-irongo* (AUG-1- fondles OM-placenta AUG-1-produce AUG-1- twins) was another Lugwere proverb which the first translator translated it as *The one who fondles the placenta, causes it to produce twins* (idiomatic translation). The second translator did not have any translation different from this. While the third translator translated the proverb as *She who keeps turning over the placenta delivers twins* (unidiomatic translation). When subjected to assessment by teachers of English and clan leaders, twenty-four (24) of the respondents (89%) were not sure about whether this was the correct translation, which also justifies availability of proverbs whose translation is widely not known to some Bagwere and taking the reader to the implication that proverb 17 is also not commonly used in day-to-day communication. However, three (3) respondents (11%) accepted that the translation was right. This study was, thus, a step in the right direction to create awareness about the presence of not widely used proverbs and to make the target readership appreciate that Lugwere is rich with many proverbs that can be used to enrich day-to-day communication across cultures.

The Lugwere proverb *A-ginga o-muleme a-gingira ki-mo* (3SG-1- lift AUG-1- lame 3SG-lift-completely) according to the first translation was *The one who lifts the lame, lifts completely* (unidiomatic translation). When subjected to assessment by the clan leaders and teachers of English, twenty (20) of the respondents (74%) indicated that they were not sure whether the translation was right or not, while four (4) of the respondents (13%) were comfortable with the translation as a right one and three (3) of the respondents (12%) did not consider the translation to be right. On the other hand, the Lugwere proverb *A-wazwa e-kitono niiwo a-wazwa e-kinene* (3SG-1-comes AUG-small DEM-1-comes 3SG-1- big), in the view of the first translator, was *Where the little comes, it is where even the great comes* (unidiomatic translation). This was subjected to assessment and the results showed that fifteen (15) of the respondents (54%) were comfortable with the translation as a right one, while nine (9) of the respondents (34%) were not comfortable with the translation as a right one and three (3) of the respondents (12%) were not sure whether that was the right translation for the proverb in question. However, the second translator indicated that this particular proverb was translated as *A small beginning makes a big ending* (idiomatic translation) and the third translator stated *You can get a big one from where you get a small one* (unidiomatic translation). Thus, differences existed in the manner in which proverbs were translated from Lugwere into English depended on the translators' interpretation.



The Lugwere proverb *A-kuuma o-mwala a-mwima mbiro* (3SG-keeps AUG-1-girl 3SG-deny SM- black soot) as per the first translator was *The one who keeps the girl deny her black soot* (unidiomatic translation). When subjected to assessment, the highest number of nineteen (19) respondents (71%) were not sure whether this was the right translation or not. By and large, knowledge of translation of proverbs from Lugwere into English is still inadequate in the area of study. However, the translation of this proverb was partly made following the interpretive theory which re-expressed meaning of the source language into another language (Gutt, 1991), where *mbi-ro* was translated as *black soot* and not as running. The second and third translator did not give any translation that was different from the first translator.

According to table 1, proverb number twenty-one is *A-buulya e-kyamaite a-buulya ku-seka* (AUG-1-ask AUG-3- know AUG-1- ask DEM-1-laugh) translated as *He who asks what he knows asks to laugh* (unidiomatic translation) by the first translator. Basing on the scores from table .1, fourteen (14) of the respondents (53%) regarded the translation right and six (6) of the respondents (23%) did not consider the translation right due to the fact that the second translator made the translation as *He that inquires of what he knows inquires to laugh* (unidiomatic translation), while the third also translated the same proverb as *One who asks something he knows then he has an intention of mocking or kidding the one he or she is asking* (unidiomatic translation). These variations in the translation made seven (7) of the respondents (24%) not sure because of the variations in the word *ku-seka* to mean laugh, mocking or kidding.

*A-bali-aamo bisusi e-binaangangana naye nga-tibyatika* (AUG-1- together OM-grass AUG -8 – collide NEG- break) was translated as *Those who are together is grass that collide with each other but when they do not break* (unidiomatic translation). Based on the percentage scores, only twelve (12) of the respondents (44%) accepted that this was the right translation of the proverb, while nine (9) of the respondents (33%) were not sure and six (6) of the respondents (23%) did not consider the translation correct for the proverb. The second translator translated the proverb *a-bali-aamo bisusi e-binaangangana naye nga-tibyatika* (AUG-1- together OM-grass AUG -8 – collide NEG- break) as *People who stay together are like gourds; they knock each other without breaking* (unidiomatic translation). The third translation for this proverb was *People staying together do conflict but they do not separate completely* (unidiomatic translation).

All the three translations have the element of together and break. It is correct to say that each of the translators is right because the rating shows that twelve (12) of the respondents (43%) were in favor of the translation for the second and third translators.

The proverb *A-batakangana ba-tiikangana o-musiisi* (DEM-2- love DEM-2- load OM- chaff) was translated in many ways by the three translators. The first made the translation as *Those who love each other, they load each other the chaff* (unidiomatic translation). This was subjected to the clan leaders and teachers of English for assessment and in line with table 4.1, two (2) of the respondents (9%) did not accept this as the right translation for the proverb, while seventeen (17) of the respondents (62%) were not sure and eight (8) of the respondents (29%) regarded the translation right. The second translator translated the proverb as *Those who love each other can help another to carry the millet husks on the head* (unidiomatic translation), and this was different from the third translator, who gave the translation as *Beloved ones assist each other in the task given* (unidiomatic translation). The general observation in these translations is that the second and the third translator used interpretation of meaning to translate the proverb indicating that there are several approaches that translators employ in translation.

The Lugwere proverb *A-gaya e-mbwa a-toolawo i-gumba* (AUG-1-separate AUG-9- SM-dog DEM- 1- NEG- remove OM-bone) was translated as *One who separates dogs removes the bone* (unidiomatic translation). Based on the percentage scores from table 4.1, nineteen (19) of the respondents (72%) accepted the translation of the proverb as a right one, while three (3) of the respondents (11%) were not sure and five (5) of the respondents (17%) did not consider the translation right. The second translator of the Lugwere proverb *A-gaya e-mbwa a-toolawo i-gumba* (AUG-1-separate AUG-9- SM-dog DEM- 1- NEG- remove OM-bone) was translated as *He who separates the fighting dogs takes away the bone* (idiomatic translation). The third translator presented the translation as *To separate dogs you remove the bone, if two parties are fighting, to separate them you have to take away what they are fighting for* (idiomatic translation). In a nutshell, all the



translators used the word -for- word mechanism of translation. However, the third translator goes ahead to give an explanation and meaning of the proverb under study.

*A-taitanga-ku o-waita alya ne-byoya* (DEM 1-NEG-kill SM- NEG –kill eats OM-feathers) was proverb number twenty-five and the results, in table 4,1, shows that the proverb was translated as *One who has never killed when he kills, he eats even feathers* (idiomatic translation) was subjected to assessment by the teachers of English and clan leaders with discoveries showing that six (6) of the respondents (22%) accepted that this translation was a right one, while nineteen (19) of the respondents (70%) doubted the accuracy of the translation. These results indicated that, like other proverbs, this very proverb can be translated into English using a number of ways since the second translator translated it as *One who has never caught a prey, devours with the fur* (unidiomatic translation). Relatedly, the third translator made her translation as *The hunter who has never killed a bird, when he kills he eats even the feathers* (unidiomatic translation). Observing these translations, one can easily think that some translations are not correct while others may see correct translations made, as the first and third translator used the element of *kill* and *eat* then *feathers*.

The second used the words *prey* and *fur* to mean *feathers* and was not specific with what *prey* unlike the third who specifically talked about the *bird* in her translation. All these translations depended on meaning (sense) and to some extent purpose (*Skopos*).

The Lugwere proverb number twenty-six reflected in table1, *A-maite e-mbuga gu-batuma*, (AUG-1- know AUG1-palace DEM -1- send) was among the Lugwere proverbs subjected to translation by the first translator as *He who knows government headquarters is the one they send* (unidiomatic translation). When exposed to assessment by the respondents in the study, that is, teachers of English and clan leaders on a rating scale, the results revealed that four (4) of the respondents (14%) expressed contradictory feelings about the rightness of the translation of the proverb in question leaving only four (4) of the respondents (14%) who accepted the proverb translation and nineteen (19) of the respondents (72%) in the study did not know the rightful translation as the second translator translated the proverb as *The one who knows the palace headquarters is the one they can send* (unidiomatic translation) and the third translator also made her translation as *One who is acquainted to an office is the one they send there* (unidiomatic translation). The varying views presented by the translators made the highest percentage of respondents not to be aware of the translation as they presented *government*, *palace* and *office* in their translation to refer to *e-mbuga*. However, translation variations are acceptable since there are also many ways used in translation studies and also due to the fact that the respondents were non-professional translators.

## SUMMARY ON DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

By and large, the findings from results and discussion of data in this sub-section indicate that very few proverbs were idiomatically translated while most Lugwere proverbs were unidiomatic in the sense that their English versions were inaccurate; the translations were too, literal too long and lacking precision. This was as a result of the inadequate translation strategies employed by the translators which differed from interpretive, cultural and Skopos theories of translation that informed this study. This lack of idiomaticity in the translation can be attributed to the word for word translation from Lugwere into English while ignoring the lexical and stylistic features of the TL. It also points to the fact that the translators were unaware of the linguistic strategies of translating pragmatic meanings of proverbs across cultures.

## CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

The study's objective was: to examine the idiomaticity of 26 translated Lugwere proverbs into English, Using the Choi's (2003) interpretive theory, the objective has to a large extent, been achieved. With reference to a research gap identified in the literature review section, the present research contributes to the conceptual and theoretical body of knowledge in translation studies when it comes to the understanding of the idiomaticity of the 26 translated Lugwere proverbs into English. Due to limited literature about translated Lugwere proverbs into English, there was a need to sample twenty-six (26) proverbs for translation from a list of Lugwere proverbs collected and compiled in Gasyodo's *Engero Gy' Abagwere* book (2015) produced by Lugwere Bible Translation and Language Development Organisation. The study established that the translation of Lugwere

proverbs into English took different dimensions where translations kept on differing according to the proverb in question and the interpretation of the translator based on meaning (sense) of the translation. To a large extent, the translation into English were not idiomatic. The translators needed to go beyond the denotative meaning expressed by their literal translation and deal with the non-literal meaning of the proverbial concepts as pragmatic meaning based on the source language and the target language social cultural differences.

## RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

The issue of translating proverbs ought to be given priority to enrich communication in languages and to explore the richness in Lugwere, which is otherwise lagging behind. Translators are encouraged to apply relevant theories established by this study in order to start publishing Lugwere proverbs and their translated versions to allow day-to-day use in meetings, and training sessions with non-Lugwere speakers.

Translators also need to adopt acceptable intercultural translation strategies that this study established in order to eliminate the inconsistencies in the way Lugwere proverbs are interculturally translated into English.

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