

A TRANSLATION STUDIES AND COGNITIVE LINGUISTIC-BASED CRITIQUE OF THE GERMAN TRANSLATION OF CHINUA ACHEBE'S THINGS FALL APART

Chinenye Loyce Okoye
Linguistic Department / Department of Chinese Studies,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
&
Methodius Okwuchi Mba
Department of Linguistics,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

Abstract

This work combines two fields of linguistics and successfully demonstrates how both could complement each other. The field of translation studies is combined with cognitive linguistics to evaluate a translated work. The translation of Chinua Achebe's "Things Fall Apart" into the German language was assessed from the point of view of translation studies and cognitive linguistics. The aim is to assess the German translation and analyse those translation units that are deemed not to replicate the intentions of the author of the source text. It was demonstrated in this work that cognitive linguistics is vital for the comprehension of texts and indispensable in rendering an adequate or equivalent translation. This work compiled a list of questionable choices made by translators and evaluated their choices based on the theories of translation studies and cognitive linguistics. It started with the choice of the translation equivalent of the original title of the novel. The work demonstrated clearly that if the cognitive linguistic notion of image schema had been applied by the translators they would have noticed the semantic differences in their choice of lexical equivalents. It also looked at other translated units which were questionable due to the lack of understanding of the idealized cognitive models of conceptualization peculiar to the source language. It concluded that the translation of the book into German could be viewed as adequate but not accurate when it comes to the translation of specific lexical items that belong to specialized domains.

Keywords: *equivalence, source text, target text, idealized cognitive model, metonymy, metaphor*

Introduction

Translating information from a source to a target language has been a well-established human practice since the advent of literacy and intercultural relations. Humans depend on translations in order to access both necessary and trivial information from languages other than theirs. Information is thus translated globally daily, either by individuals or mechanically to satisfy the human need for information. The need for translation extends throughout every aspect of human life from health and medicine to lifestyle, technical, and recreational activities, to mention but a few. Translators are trained to be aware of these different fields and their inherent characteristics and registers. This knowledge helps them in their classification of source texts (henceforth ST³⁴) and in their choice of the appropriate lexical items for the reformulation of the content into their lexical equivalents in the target languages (henceforth TL).

This paper critically examines the translation of the post-colonial literature *Things Fall Apart* by

³⁴The abbreviations used here are; SL-source language, ST-source text, TL-target language, TT-target text, ICM-idealized cognitive model.

Chinua Achebe, translated into the German language by Dagmar Heusler and Evelin Petzold, adhering to the theoretical backgrounds of translation studies and cognitive linguistics. The ST portrays the story of the evangelization of the Igbo at the turn of the nineteenth century around 1884-85. The author being an Igbo gives an extensive insight into the political, religious, and socio-cultural practices of the Igbo at the time of the story. The novel encompasses diverse semantic fields that demand an encyclopaedic knowledge of the idealized cognitive models (henceforth ICMs) of the source language (henceforth SL) and special registers to enable the translator to correctly represent the exact intended phenomena in the TL. These registers on the other hand demand above-average knowledge of the discourse nuances and intricacies peculiar to the SL. For a successful translation of this novel, the translator has to possess the necessary pragmatic competence of both the SL and the TL.

Unique to this particular novel, and probably obtainable in other post-colonial literature is that the ST has already undergone some degree if not a total translation from a primary SL (Igbo) to a secondary SL (English) which then serves as the ST for the second translation into a TL (German). These peculiarities put more demand and pressure on the translator, who has to take the overall background and context of the primary SL into consideration. If this competence is not given, then the translator will have difficulties in rendering certain aspects of the primary SL correctly in the TL.

These aspects of language that could become difficult for a translator lacking the necessary pragmatic competence of the primary SL include, for instance, suitable titles for the works in the TL, and misrepresentation of concepts in semantic fields that operate with different ICMs in other cultures. The translation of language concepts in figurative use, for instance, proverbs, idioms, aphorisms, and especially metaphors and metonyms usually demands the use of ICMs and certain degrees of established experiential language conventions.

Other areas that pose challenges or difficulties are lexical gaps in the TL, which makes it impossible for the translator to find a matching lexical equivalent of the SL in the TL. The issue of cultural filters in the TL limits also the possibilities of the translators, especially in typographically related languages like English and German as House (2006a) postulated. Notwithstanding, translation studies and cognitive linguistics have provided essential tools to enable translators to deal with these obstacles and provide target text (henceforth TT) recipients with successful translations.

This Paper is structured to continue as follows; after this introductory section, the next section (2) outlines the theoretical underpinnings relevant to this topic. Section (3) constitutes the Methodology, while section (4) presents the analysis. The final section (5) summarizes the findings and concludes the research paper.

Literature Review

This section is divided into two due to the two different fields of linguistics being combined in this research work. The first section presents a review of issues related to cognitive linguistic, while the second section goes into the theoretically related issues in translation studies.

Cognitive Linguistics

Translation is the quest to convey meanings of lexical items from an SL to a TL. First and foremost,

comprehension of these lexical items is a prerequisite for knowing the meaning of the lexical item and consequently its lexical equivalent in a TL. The question becomes then; how does the translator comprehend? There are series of postulated comprehension theories but this work focuses on the cognitive linguistic approach to comprehension and the processes behind discerning meanings. A more fundamental question still arises and that is the question of knowledge because we can only know the meaning of what we have the knowledge of or in other words what we can conceive in our language (cf. Sapir & Whorf: hypothesis of Linguistic relativity³⁵).

The notion of knowledge is seen in cognitive linguistics from four different perspectives that sum up to the same goal. As proposed by Lakoff 1987, we organize and access our knowledge using structures known as 'idealized cognitive models' (ICMs). He asserts that the categorization and prototype effects are all by-products of that organizational structure. Furthermore, he states that this cognitive model has developed in cognitive linguistics from four sources namely; a) the propositional structure as presented by Fillmore (1982b) in his frames, b) Lakoff and Johnson (1980) in their theory of metaphor and metonymy, c) Langacker (1986) in his cognitive grammar and d) Fauconnier (1985) in his theory of mental space. Other researchers whose theories are involved in the development of this knowledge structure are Rumelhart (1975) with his schema theory, Schank and Abelson (1977) with the theory of scripts, and Minsky (1975) with his theory of frames with defaults. Lakoff 1987: 68, describes an ICM as a complex structure whole, a gestalt that operates with four structuring principles namely:

- a) Propositional structure, as related to Fillmore's 'frames'
- b) Image-schematic structure, as related to Langacker's cognitive grammar
- c) Metaphoric mappings, as presented by Lakoff and Johnson
- d) Metonymic mappings, as described by Lakoff and Johnson

In an attempt to describe what ICMs are and how they are vital in acquiring knowledge through categorization, one could look at an example based on Fillmore's notion of a 'frame'. In this case, taking a look at the Igbo word '? kwó' for instance, '? kwó' can be understood or defined only in relation to an idealized model that includes the natural cycles defined by the movement of the sun, the standard means of marking the end of a day and the beginning of another and the lunar phases. One also needs to know the larger four-day calendric cycle known as the *ízù* (Igbo-week). In the idealized model, the Igbo-week is a whole with four parts (Èké, Òriè, Àf?r, and ọ kwó) organized in a linear sequence where each part is named after a market day, the first is 'Èké' and the fourth is '? kwó'. The four days make up a seven-times cycle of twenty-eight days that make up a lunar month in the Igbo calendar system. In order to discern the meaning of the word '? kwó' one needs to know this background information or this cognitive model.

The above-mentioned theoretical frameworks give us an insight into how knowledge according to cognitive linguistics is construed. Revisiting the first question asked; how do we then attach meanings to the things we know? According to Cognitive linguistic claims, meanings are descriptions that take account of our experience of the world. An experiential view of symbols and other linguistic structures seems to furnish us with a rich and fairly natural description of their meanings (cf. Ungerer & Schmid 2006: 2). The following sub-section looks at the notion of meaning in Cognitive Linguistics.

³⁵Linguistic relativity is a hypothesis attributed to Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf which is an assumption suggesting that the structure of a language influences its speakers' worldview or cognition, and thus individuals' languages determine or shape their perceptions of the world.

Meaning

The notion of meaning in Cognitive linguistics is better described by starting with the symbolic thesis of Cognitive grammar. In the views of Cognitive Linguistics, our language is made up of symbolic structures. These structures could be simple or complex. A symbolic structure is inherently bipolar consisting of a semantic pole and a phonological pole.

An established characterization of human language is the building of complex structures out of simpler ones. In some cases, the complex structures also exist as a unit that is understood as a whole. Figure 1 below depicts an imagistic representation of symbolic structures (a) is a simple structure comprising of a lexeme that has its semantic and phonological poles. The symbol (b) represents a combination of two lexical units and (c) shows the growth of the complexity of symbolic structures (cf. Langacker 2008: 15).

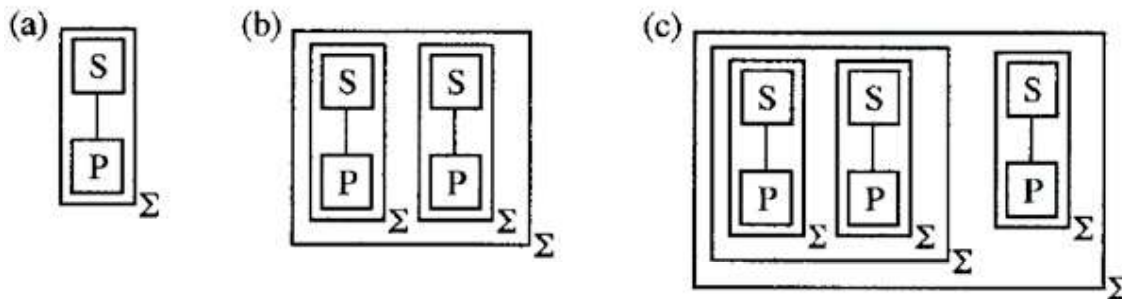


Fig. Semantic structures; simple and complex, Langacker 2008

Meanings are ascribed to linguistic symbols as a whole whether they are simple or complex, as the Figure above shows these structures exist as a unit and have their individual semantic and phonological poles attached to every structure as a whole not to the individual components.

Components of Meaning

In order to describe meaning, one would first identify the components of meaning. It is established in cognitive linguistics that meaning on the one hand resides in conceptualization and conceptualization on the other hand resides in cognitive processing. For one to have a certain mental experience means invariably the occurrence of a certain kind of neurological activity. This gives two options for approaching conceptualization, the first being a phenomenological and the second a processing approach. Therefore we can attempt to characterize either our mental experience or the actual processing activity that constitutes it. Cognitive semantics tends to dwell on the former approach which is more practicable as it is more accessible and amenable to investigation through linguistic evidence. Processing can be studied and verified at different levels both at functional and neurological levels through the means of psycholinguistic experiments, and clinical research as obtainable in aphasia research. Worthy of note is that these approaches still rely on phenomenological characterization for guidance and as the basis for interpreting results (cf. Langacker 2008: 31). Conceptualization is deemed a dynamic process because it unfolds through processing time and the specific course of development remains a significant aspect of our mental experience.

Cognitive linguistics tends more towards imagistic representations and accounts. The most accepted proposal postulates a set of 'image schemas' this is described as schematized patterns of

activity abstracted from everyday bodily experience, especially related to vision, space, motion, and force. Image schemas are generally considered basic 'pre-conceptual' cognitive structures that generate more elaborate and more abstract conceptions or at least produce their organizational scaffold through combination and metaphorical projection. In order to visualize this concept, below is an imagistic depiction of the conceptual symbol 'Enter'.

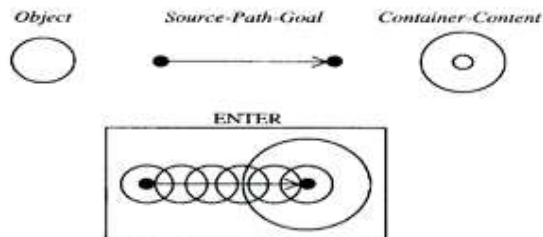


Fig. Image schema of the concept 'Enter' (Langacker 2008: 33)

As depicted in the Figure above, for example, the concept 'Enter' can be analyzed as a combination of the image schemas objects, source-path-goal, and container-content (cf. Langacker 2008: 32). The image schema depicts three aspects or stages of the conceptualization of the symbol 'Enter'. It shows (a) the object that is going to physically move from its resting point through (b) a source path and finally arrives at (c) a container or the destination. This is roughly the conceptual image schema that is activated when we construe the meaning of the symbol 'Enter'.

Metonymic Mapping

Metonymy has been postulated as one of the basic characteristics of cognition. In the sense that it is quite natural for language users to take one well-established or salient aspect of an entity and use that salient part to represent the entire entity, some aspect of it, or even a part of the entity. An everyday illustration of such a situation would be in a restaurant setting if a waitress tells her colleague that the 'Caesar salad' is waiting to pay. In this case, the 'Caesar salad' is representing the customer that ate it. By so doing the waitress is using a component of a frame to represent the protagonist.

The application of metonymic models can also be seen in language production when speakers answer questions for instance regarding how they got to a destination. In the English language for instance one could answer the question of how she got to a destination by just saying 'I hopped on the Bus'. This is done by using the ICM of the transportation system available and representing the whole model by just mentioning the embarkation process (cf. Lakoff 1987: 77ff).

This model has been analyzed in detail and has also been established to always take the following structural form. Given that an ICM has some established background condition, for instance, embarkation is a part of arriving at a given location. This automatically gives rise to a 'stands for' relation that may exist between two elements *A* and *B*, in such a way that one element of the ICM *A* may stand for the whole ICM *B*. In this situation, *B* represents the ICM of getting to a destination, and *A* 'embarkation' is a part of the process of getting to the destination. *A* could be used to represent or stand for ICM *B*. Such ICMs containing these types of stands-for-relations are known as metonymic models and work in language use as demonstrated above with the arrival at a destination ICM (cf. Ibid: 78).

Similar to the ICM of Metonymic mapping is the metaphoric mapping, this is also a vital

aspect of human cognition. While the metonymic model works based on 'stands for', the metaphoric model works with similarity. In this model, certain qualities or characteristics of an entity are taken, and based on those qualities an entity is substituted with another. For instance, if one is known to be cunning, that person could be called a fox. This model is also based on language and cultural conventions as one culture might see a fox as docile instead of cunning.

Translation Studies

What is a good translation? Or primarily, what is a translation? Before one can successfully evaluate or criticize a piece of translation, the latter question has to be answered. Translation as House (2015) puts it, is the end product of a linguistic-textual operation in which a text in one language is re-contextualized in another language (cf. House 2015: 2). She goes further to acknowledge that this process of re-contextualization is not always as straight forward as mentioned. She points out that Translation being a linguistic-textual operation is subjected to, and influenced by numerous extra-linguistic factors and conditions. This inevitable interaction between the 'inner' linguistic-textual and 'outer' extra-linguistic, contextual factors translates into such a complex phenomenon (cf. Ibid).

Krein-Kühle (2014) in her work *Translation and Equivalence* sees translation as “an interlingual text transformation based on invariance demands and always involving an interpretation of the source text” (quoted from Schreiber: 1993: 43) She goes on to point out that this definition offered by Schreiber (1993) includes two important aspects of translation. On one hand the 'text translation' ('Textübersetzung') and on the other hand 'context translation' ('Umfeldübersetzung'). The former is governed by text-internal factors for instance form or contents while the latter is governed by other external factors inherent to the text. Krein-Kühle likens this binary distinction to the binary model of 'overt and covert' developed by House (1997).

Taking into consideration that there are various ideological and theoretical approaches to translation, one would quickly realize that the quality of translation in the sense of good or bad is not crucial to all translators. In her overview of different approaches to translation House (2015) pointed out that the adherents of the Functionalistic, and action-and reception-theory-based approaches see the purpose or the 'skopos' of translation as the primary goal (cf. Ibid: 22). The linguistic-stylistic-aesthetic features of the source texts play rather an insignificant role. The ST is seen as a mere information offer that could be adhered to or rejected (cf. Ibid). Another approach with similar characteristics according to House is the descriptive translation studies, which is predominantly comparative literature-oriented, but also a target text-oriented approach (cf. Ibid). This approach postulates that 'translation are facts of one system only' (Toury. 1985: 19 quoted from House 2015) and should be the only valid guideline on how translation should be examined. According to the adherents of this approach, translated texts are examined with no comparison to the original text. In this approach, the importance of the ST is considerably played down (cf. Ibid). These differences in ideological approaches to translation make it difficult for one to universally ascertain what a good translation is.

From a different approach, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in his treatise on translation, translated by Sharon Sloan (2012), presented three important classifications of translation. The first is a translation that acquaints the target audience on their terms. The second is a translation whereby the translator endeavours to transport herself into the foreign situation, this he also calls *parodistic*. The final classification is one where the goal is to achieve perfect identity with the original text. These classifications are purpose-oriented; therefore, a translation can only be examined or assessed based on what the initial purpose was.

If one should heed this taxonomy as presented by Goethe, then it becomes apparent that it is the function of translators to produce identical TTs from any given ST. Identical in the sense that the translation should be in tune with one of the key factors suggested above by House 2015 about the ST and its characteristics.³⁶ This particular factor is insofar relevant to this work because it advocates the consideration of the linguistic-stylistic-aesthetic features of the ST.

The evaluation and assessment of translations based on their quality has been and remains a controversial issue in translation studies. Susanne, Lauscher (2000) in her essay *"Translation Quality Assessment: Where can theory and practice meet?"* sees the increase in the world's demand for translations as directly responsible for the demand for practical efforts to understand and regulate translation quality and makes it operational for practical purposes. (cf. Lauscher 2000: 150) She proceeds by envisaging the establishment of a conclusive list applicable to all translations as the ultimate goal of translation quality research. Nevertheless, she points out the uncertainty of the production of such a list. The list in her opinion will make it possible to make prescriptive judgments About individual translations being 'good or bad'. Whereby 'good or bad' is and will remain subjective to translators depending on their purpose. She recalls the definition of translation quality as offered by (Bontrone 1998: 13) that translation quality is “delivering the right translation, at the right time, at the right place, and the right price”. This definition embodies enough argument for one to accept that creating a list of rules that will suffice for the needs of all translations is utopic. Notwithstanding, she postulates the equivalence-based approaches, which she sees to have been a central concept in translation studies as a practical approach to translation quality assessment. (cf. Lauscher 2000: 151). She argues that equivalence-based translation theories view translation as 'the attempt to reproduce the ST as closely as possible' (cf. Ibid). She also calls to attention, the numerous views of researchers about the notion of equivalence for instance, formal and dynamic or functional equivalence as proposed by Nida (1964) and de Ward and Nida (1986), furthermore the denotative, connotative, pragmatic, textual and formal-aesthetic equivalence as suggested by Koller (1997). She goes further to air the view of the acclaimed German translation scholar Katharina Reiß, who according to her introduced one of the first systematic approaches to translation quality assessment. Reiß understands translation as a bipolar procedure that aims at producing a target text while constantly referring back to the source text (Reiß 1971: 11 quoted in Lauscher 2000: 151).

In other words, translation means looking for equivalents for ST items in the TL at the level of text and individual text units. One therefore considers a translation as good if it achieves optimum equivalence, that is if “considering the linguistic and situational context, the linguistic and stylistic level and the intention of the author. The ST and TT units must have the same 'value' as the text unit in the SL” (cf. Ibid. quoted in Lauscher 2000: 151). Reiß proceeds by outlining the parameters relevant to the assessment of optimum equivalence between source and target text. Critics should analyze both texts using the parameters:

- a) Text type, which captures the main function of language in a text.
- b) Linguistic instructions, which include the semantic, grammatical, and stylistic properties of the source text.
- c) Extra linguistic determinant, which refers to the impact of contextual factors on verbalization strategies, including different levels of knowledge of subject matter among source and target readers, their different perceptions, and evaluation of particular phenomena.

³⁶House advocates the importance of the source text with its linguistic-stylistic-aesthetic features that belong to the norms of usage held in the source lingua-cultural community should be rendered completely in the target language. She defines prescriptive judgment as a judgment that claims validity in a specific evaluation situation (cf. Lauscher. 2000: 150).

Reiß maintains that in order to successfully evaluate a translation, one has to reverse the translation process and reconstruct the translation parameters employed during the translation. She states clearly that the analytical concepts of text type, linguistic instructions, and extralinguistic determinants are integrated into a set of hierarchical rules that govern both the evaluation and translation processes. (cf. Ibid. quoted in Lauscher 2000: 151).

Furthermore, another important aspect worthy of consideration in translation is the issue of names and titles. Kalverkämper (1996) in his essay '*Namen im Sprachaustausch: Namenübersetzung*' dwelt on the problems translators could encounter while translating names and titles in both fiction and non-fiction. He outlines among others, two important features that one should consider if names and titles are to be translated. The first is the translatability of the names and titles in question and the second is if the name or title has a semantic meaning. Finally, specifically in the translation of film and book titles, he states that:

This has to do with the thing, the bearer of the name, which is seen as his market product and is therefore primarily subject to the laws of euphony, rhythm, culture-related habits and expectations, taste, i.e. commercial effectiveness.
(Kalverkämper. 1996: 1019ff.) (highlight: Mba)

In the above citation, the author explicitly presents important aspects to be considered in the translation of names. One should first consider if the name or title is translatable or not. If the name or title is translatable, then the translator should consider if the name has a meaning, which could be relevant to the translation. Peculiar to the translation of titles he adds that the translator has to be aware of several factors in the TL, ranging from the linguistic euphony, the rhyme scheme, the culturally oriented habits, what is expected and therefore acceptable in the TL community, and the general preference of the speakers. Finally, the commercial consequences of the translation choices made have to be put into consideration too.

An important phenomenon also worthy of note in this research is “explicitation”, this term was first defined by Vinay and Darbelent (1958/1995: 342 quoted in Fang 2018) as a “stylistic translation technique which consists of making explicit in the TL what remains implicit in the SL because it is apparent from either the context or situation” (Fang 2018: 5). This tool enables translators to use more lexical items in the TL when deemed necessary for clarifications. This also enables translators to find means of rendering phenomena that do not have a one-to-one equivalence in the TL. Sometimes, this technique uses more lexical items in the TT as in the ST but highly advantageous due to the clarity it provides the recipients of the TT.

The last aspect that will be considered in this section, one can say, is not yet an acknowledged function of translators but could be considered one. As Kranich (2014) rightly pointed out the translator as an individual is the 'locus' of language contact. This unique form of language contact occurs when the translator, being a bilingual individual, activates her language competence during a translation process. She points out that the product of this cognitive process “can exhibit an impact of features of the SL to the TL”. She goes further to call two important terms to mind, first the notion of “interference” as introduced by Toury (1995), and the notion of 'shining through' introduced by Teich (2003).

In tune with the above theoretical background, this paper therefore puts forward the hypothesis that a successful translation should be semantically and pragmatically identical to the ST when translated back. This work will not dwell on translating the TT back to the SL for the

operationalization of the hypothesis, rather will through the analysis of the selected units show if a back translation will be felicitous or not.

Method

The method of analysis employed in this work is an examination of selected excerpts. A collection of questionable translation choices of different translation units from the German translation of the novel *Things Fall Apart* was compiled. The translation was searched for questionable translation choices that are salient to a competent speaker of the ST language. These salient translation units were then compiled into a list. Subsequently, the corresponding translation units from the ST were also identified and extracted. The entire data could be obtained from the author on demand. The collected data features translation units that represent different domains of language and translation theories. The peculiarities involved with each unit will be briefly commented on and attempts will be made to pin down the reasons that influenced the translation choices made by the translators.

Data Presentation and Analysis

This section will present to the reader an analysis of selected excerpts from both the German translation (TT) and the original text (ST) of “Things Fall Apart”. The questionable choices made by the translators will be pointed out and analyzed based on the theories of Cognitive Linguistics and Translation Studies. Comments will also be provided in a separate column to buttress the arguments being put forward why a translation or a lexical choice is questionable at that point.

The Title

Title ST	Title TT	Comments
<i>Things Fall Apart</i> by Chinua Achebe	<i>Okonkwo oder Das Alte stürzt</i> by Chinua Achebe. Translated by Dagmar Heusler und Evelin Petzold.	A comparable equivalence of the notion of underlying message in the title of a novel could be: <i>Gone with the Wind</i> by Margaret Mitchell

In the analysis of the translation choice made by the translators in choosing the title of the novel *Things Fall Apart* in the TL German, *Okonkwo oder das Alte stürzt* (literally meaning “*Okonkwo or the old things collapse*”), one has to look at the English title *Things Fall Apart* from the cognitive linguistic perspective. The title can be viewed as a complex symbolic representation of meaning. The complex symbol comprises of a 'thing' (noun) *Things*, a 'process' or a 'temporal relational predication' (verb) *fall*, and finally a 'state' or an 'atemporal relational predication' of manner (adverb) *apart*. These components of the complex symbolic representation of “Things Fall Apart” form a single semantic unit depicting a scenario of destruction. When we conceptualize this symbol, we have a construal of things falling apart, not holding together anymore, which entails the destruction of an existing entity due to the application of an external force. As the title rightfully states, the book also tells the story of a culture falling apart due to an external intrusion. Furthermore, the title is a part of an epigram presented in the second page of the novel.³⁸

³⁸ The position of the epigram in the novel could differ based on publications and editions.

*Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things Fall Apart; the center cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world*

Looking at the title isolated from the epigram and also the whole poem one can say that the title was used based on a metonymic model for the whole poem and it represents perfectly the story told in the book. According to cognitive linguistic terminologies, an image schematic representation of the title could be depicted in Fig. 4 below.

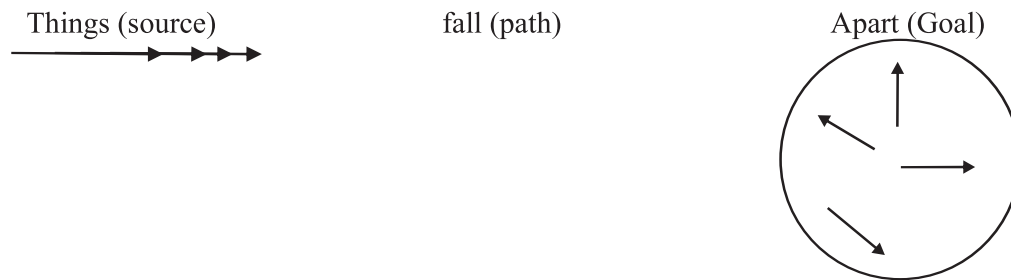


Fig. 4 Image schematic representation of the title 'Things Fall Apart'

The overarching theme or message of the novel is the story of a culture being subdued or wiped out by an external force. The same dominating theme in *Things Fall Apart* can also be seen in another popular novel, *Gone with the Wind* by Margaret Mitchel. In the case of *Gone with the Wind*, it was the war that subdued and eventually eradicated the culture of the southern region of America, as a result of the American civil war. Whereas, it was the colonization that subdued the culture of the Igbos in *Things Fall Apart*. The author of *Gone with the Wind* also had a protagonist; Scarlet O'Hara, who could have been used as the title of the novel in the German translation of the novel but that was not the case. Regardless of this possibility, the translator chose a literal translation of the English title *Gone with the Wind* 'Vom Winde verweht' as the title of the German translation of the novel. This is the most suitable approach as the title retains the implicit approach of the author. Accepting 'Okonkwo' as the title would not only correlate with the observation made by House (1997) about the habit of German translators in 'letting the cat out of the bag' when translating work titles but will also show how inappropriate this style of 'letting the cat out of the bag' could be sometimes. Using the name of the protagonist of the novel as the title of this particular novel is wrong because, it shifts the focus of the underlying message of the novel to the actions of the hero, which are irrelevant to the main theme.

This translation choice does not only let the cat out of the bag, it also lets the wrong cat out of the bag. Klavenkämper (1996) outlines several factors to be considered by translators while translating a title. He advocates above all "the linguistic euphony" and "the culturally oriented habits" of the target language. (Klavenkämper 1996: 1022) The title *Okonkwo* does not adhere either to the linguistic euphony or the culturally oriented habits of the TL. The title contains an unusual consonant cluster /nkw/ which is not obtainable in the TL and the meaning of the title is also not transparent in the TL. The ICM of four market day weeks is not known to the speakers of the TL. Therefore they cannot know that the title is a generic name for male children born on 'nkwó' market days. These semantically opaque entities could become problematic when it comes to the general acceptance of the work by the TL recipients.

At this point, one could rightfully ask what difference would it have made if the translators had retained the original title by translating it literally to 'Alles bricht zusammen', 'Dinge brechen zusammen' or 'Alles bricht auseinander'. The analysis will look at the version that translates with 'zusammen' due to its contrastive meaning compared to the original text. Despite the fact that the word 'auseinander' has more resemblance to the ST word 'apart' in terms of literal translation. Nevertheless, the word 'zusammen' has the same semantic value with the word 'auseinander' in this context in the TL. The word 'auseinander' implies an explosion, whereas the word 'zusammen' implies an implosion, both have the construal of destruction. These literally translated alternatives would have been more accessible to the TL recipients and would have retained the original intention of the ST author who did not want to let the cat out of the bag but rather let the recipient find out what 'fell apart' while reading. More importantly, the above suggestions would have also been adequate semantic equivalents of the ST title. The solution lies in the literal translation of the TL word for 'translation', which is 'Übersetzen', which means 'carrying over' a concept from a source to a target language. Furthermore one can also look at the image schema of the German equivalent for a semantic comparison.

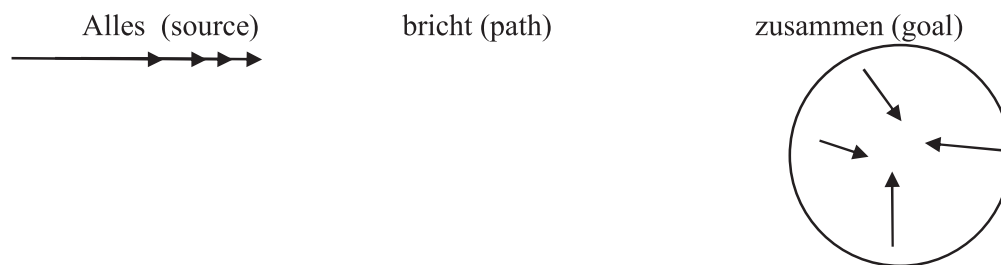


Fig. 5 Image schematic representation of the literal German translation of the title 'Things Fall Apart'

The image schematic representation of the English and the German equivalent of the title are identical. The only difference lies in the construal of destruction in both languages. In English there is a conceptualization of 'explosion' or bursting out, whereas in German there is the conceptualization of 'implosion' or collapsing. Despite the differences in construing the meanings in these languages 'falling apart' and 'zusammenbrechen' are semantically equivalent and therefore suitable for this particular translation.

The second part of the title *das Alte stürzt* which was presented as an alternative to the name of the Protagonist (*Okonkwo oder das Alte stürzt*) is also a wrong choice because it mentions explicitly 'the old things'. The Author had no intention of mentioning what fell apart, but this title clearly states that the old ways or old traditions and culture collapsed. Another aspect to consider is that a back translation of the German title will not be equivalent to the original title rather one would have 'Old Things Collapse' as the title of the novel.

Further questionable choices made are 2) using 'panther' as the lexical equivalent of 'cat', 3) A wrong rendition of a proverb, 4) Translating "noon" as "12 O'clock", 5) Using wrong lexical items from the TL for farm implements of the SL, 6) Translation of food items with lexical items from the TL that do not exist in the ST, 7) A wrong presentation of the state of palm wine in the TL.

2. Equivalence of "cat" as „Panther

ST	TT	Comments
As a young man of eighteen, he had brought honor to his village by throwing Amalinze the Cat . Amalinze was a great wrestler who for seven years was unbeaten, from Umuofia to Mbaino. He was called the Cat because his back would never touch the earth. It was this man that Okonkwo threw in a fight.	Als junger Mann von achtzehn Jahren hatte er Amalinze, gennant der Panther , im Ringkampf besiegt und damit zum Ruhme seines Dorfes beigetragen. Amalinze war der berühmte Ringkämpfer, der Sieben Jahre lang von Umuofia bis Mbaino niemals und nirgends besiegt worden war. Man nannte ihn den Panther , weil sein Rücken noch nie die Erde berührt hatte. Und diesen großen Kämpfer hatte Okonkwo nun bezwungen.	The universality of the notion of a cat and the back that will never touch the earth. If this quality of a cat is universal, why did the translators not use the equivalent lexical unit (die Katze) in the target language? Moreover, the ST author is applying in this case the metaphoric model of the source language. Die Katze also having a grammatical feminine gender in the TL does not help the matter also. It becomes difficult for such a manly endeavour to be represented by a feminine gendered entity.

questionable rendition of a proverb

ST	TT	Comments
Everybody laughed heartily except Okonkwo, who laughed uneasily because as the saying goes, an old woman is always uneasy when dry bones are mentioned in a proverb . Okonkwo remembered his father.	Alle lachten schallend, nur Okonkwo war nicht recht wohl beim Lachen, denn, wie es im Volksmund heißt: >> Stets sieht man nur den Splitter im Auge des anderen <<	Literal translation as opposed to the adapted translation offered by the translators. This is a case of a 'gestalt' which should always be treated as a whole. „Es ist eine alte Frau immer unbehaglich wenn alte Knochen in einem Sprichwort erwähnt werden“

4. Time of the day (noon translated as 12 O'clock)

ST	TT	Comments
It was not yet noon on the second day of the New Yam Festival. Ekwefi and her only daughter, Ezinma, sat near the fireplace waiting for the water in the pot to boil	Am zweiten Tag des Yamfestes kurz vor zwölf Uhr Mittag saßen Ekwefi und ihre einzige Tochter Ezinma am Herd und warteten darauf, dass das Wasser im Topf anfang zu kochen.	At the story time, 1884-85 the Igbos did not read the time with the clock. They did not have one. Therefore in their ICM of time telling there was no 12 O'clock.

5. Farm implements

ST	TT	Comments
Some days later, when the land had been moistened by two or three heavy rains, Okonkwo and his family went to the farm with baskets of seed yams, their hoes, and machetes , and planting began. They made single mounds of earth in straight lines all over the field and sowed the yams in them	Einige Tage darauf, als der Boden nach zwei oder drei schweren Regenfällen feucht genug war, zogen Okonkwo und seine Familie mit Körben voller Saatwurzeln, mit Hacken und Buschmesser hinaus auf ihre Felder, und das Pflanzen konnte beginnen. Die Erde wurde in geraden Linien aufgehäuft, und in jedes dieser Erdhäufchen steckte man eine Saatwurzel .	Hacken and Buschmesser when translated back into the SL are not semantically equivalent to hoes and machetes used by the author. The translation choice made for hoe is known as pick axe for the SL speakers. Picks belong to a different domain of tools. An Igbo conceptualizing the frame of farming will not include a pick axe .

6. Food

ST	TT	Comments
And so three goats were slaughtered and a number of fowls. It was like a wedding feast. There was foo-foo and yam pottage, egusi soup and bitter-leaf soup , and pots of palm wine.	Also wurden drei Ziegen und mehrere Hühner geschlachtet. Es war wie auf einem Hochzeitsfest. Es gab Fufu und Yamwurzeln, eine Lorbeerblattsoße und eine Soße aus Melonenkernen sowie Krüge voller Palmwein	Bitterleaf soup as Lorbeerblattsoße . Lorbeerblatt is known as bay leaf in the SL. It belongs to the domain of spices in SL and is also used in entirely different types of dishes.

7. Palm wine and pragmatic contextualization

ST	TT	Comments
Okonkwo brought the wine and they began to drink. It was a day old and very strong	Okonkwo kam mit dem Wein zurück, und sie begannen zu trinken. Der Wein war erst einen Tag alt und sehr stark.	Normally palm wine is not supposed to be stored. Therefore saying that it is 'just' a day old is a misconception based on the notion of European wine. In the frame of palm wine drinking in Africa, freshness is an important factor.

Findings and Discussions

The analysis section of this research paper was focused on translation units selected from the collected data. For the scope of this work only the analysis of the title was dwelt on in detail. The analyzed units were selected from different semantic domains and were distributed as follows: 1) The title of the novel, 2) Equivalence of 'Cat' in the ST versus 'Panther' in the TT, 3) Proverb, The old skinny woman and dry bones, 4) Time of the day "noon" versus "12 Uhr Mittag", 5) Semantic domain of farm implements, 6) Semantic domain of food, 7) Palm wine (pragmatic contextualization).

Looking at the chosen title of the novel it became obvious that the translators adhered to an already established norm of title translation in the target language community which tends to as House (2015) puts it let the cat out of the bag for the sake of explicitness. Another factor that might have facilitated this choice might be the regulations put in place by the contract givers. This is what House (2015) calls the 'translational brief' given to the translator. However, one could also observe that this choice goes contrary to the ideas postulated by Kalvekämper (1996) who, among other factors, stressed the importance of the linguistic euphony and the overall cultural taste of the target language community. The consonant cluster in the title 'Okonkwo' is not obtainable in the target language community and hence inappropriate. Kalvenkämper also addressed the issue of keeping the economic success of the translation in mind when choosing the title. This was also not the case here, as one would tend towards buying a book that one can pronounce and understand the title rather than one with a strange and opaque title. A cognitive linguistics approach using the image schema of the titles also shows a clear semantic difference between the ST title and the title of the TT.

The next translation unit analyzed is the choice of 'Panther' in TT as the translation equivalent of 'Cat' in the ST. The analysis showed that this translation being a covert one, applied in this case a necessary cultural filter, which does not allow the depiction of 'die Katze' as a symbol of manliness and wrestling. This cultural conflict prompted the choice of 'Panther' as an equivalent. The quality attributed to the cat in the source text, „back not touching the earth” is a universal quality that applies to all cats in general. This fact legitimizes also the choice made by the translators to use 'Panther' instead of 'die Katze'. Also knowing that a Panther belongs to the family of cats justifies the choice made by the translators. This situation clearly shows the hierarchical importance of the notion of cultural filters in translation. It could also be seen that the translators have no understanding or knowledge of the ICM of wrestling in the SL. The metaphoric mapping that made the language users represent an undefeated wrestler with the image of a cat is not accessible to the translators.

The next area of analysis is the translation of proverbs from the source text. The translators gave an adapted translation of the proverbs rather than rendering the lexical units literally as they occur in the ST. The proverb which is an established communicative stylistic means in the SL was not treated by the translator as such. It is already established to the reader in the story that the father of the protagonist was a known failure. Therefore, it is logical that the protagonist will not heartily laugh when failure jokes are told. Also an old skinny woman would not also enjoy dry-bone jokes. The translators chose to interrupt this logical path initiated by the narrator and decided to use an adapted alternative translation. It is not clear here what would have prompted the choice of this approach, notwithstanding it would not have harmed the overall translation if the proverbs had been rendered with the same lexical equivalents in the target text. The translators failed to treat the proverb as a figurative gestalt or a complex symbol which cannot be disembodied but rather can

only be treated as a whole both in translation and understanding.

Time of the day and the different ways they are represented in the different cultures is the topic of the next analysis. The ST shows clearly that this is a story of a non-mechanized culture still void of technological influence. This notion was held upright consistently in the ST. It then seems strange to see the depiction of time made accurate and precise by the use of a clock in the TT. This choice has been found wanting because it was not obligatory to do so. The target language has lexical possibilities to equally represent a vague notion of time as depicted in the ST. The translators in this case did not heed the obtainable cognitive models of time telling in the ST language community. The translation would not have decreased in quality if the translators had also used 'gegen Mittag' for 'around noon'. The next translation unit dealt with includes the farm implements used by the Igbos in the story to cultivate the highly acclaimed king of the crops in the story called 'yam'. Owing to the importance of this crop to the entire story, it is important to depict the farm implements used for the cultivation for a clearer understanding of the overall topic. The depiction of 'hoes and machetes' as 'Hacke und Buschmesser' is very problematic because the target language vocabularies are in this case semantically ambiguous. Cassell's bilingual dictionary (1957) lists for the translation of 'die Hacke' a) pickaxe, b) pick, c) mattock, and finally d) hoe. This clearly shows that other tools share the same name with 'hoe' in the TL and 'hoe' is the last in this list. This suggests that the TL recipients will automatically activate the wrong mental image when confronted with the word 'die Hacke'. The case of the lexical unit 'Buschmesser' for 'machete' was seen as unnecessarily confusing as the TL also has the word 'die Machete' in its vocabulary. The lexical choices made by the translators do not reflect the same ICMs in the SL.

In the analysis of the next translation unit, the discrepancies in the vocabularies of the culinary domain and dishes obtainable in the two languages were analyzed. It was seen that the translators, being confronted with the problem of a lexical gap in the TL decided to substitute 'bitter leaf' with 'Lorbeerblätter'. These two leaves are both edible but consumed in totally different ways. The leaf chosen by the translators in the TL cannot serve the same purpose a 'bitter leaf' does in the SL. In this case, a literal interpretation or even adding a modifier for the sake of explicitness would have been more rewarding. It would not have reduced the quality of the translation if one had used 'Bitterblätter' or 'Bitterspeiseblätter' instead of 'Lorbeerblätter' for bitter leaf. The lexical choices made in this segment also do not reflect the ICMs of this semantic domain in the SL.

The last questionable translation unit examined in this work is the translation of the state of palm wine in the narration. The narrator pointed out that the palm wine served on the occasion being narrated was not fresh anymore. This subtle comment about the deviation from the usual norm in which palm wine is consumed was misunderstood by the translators and seen as a subtle proclamation of prestige. In this case, the issue of pragmatic competence with the use of expressions in the SL was found lacking among the translators. A summary of the observations made till this point tends to show that the translation offers a somewhat equivalent text to the original. Nevertheless, the translation tends to be found wanting in areas of intricate cultural aesthetics and language nuances of the ST.

Conclusion

The hypothesis binding this paper states that a successful translation should be identical, semantically and pragmatically to the ST when translated back. The analysis has shown that a back translation in this case will be futile. Therefore, one can view the German translation of *Things Fall Apart* as adequate but not entirely successful if one heeds the theoretical framework consulted in this paper.

This paper has brought up some ideas worth considering in detail, for instance, the vital role of cognitive linguistics in the overall comprehension of a text. It has also raised some underlying questions in translation studies, yearning for answers. An example of such a question is; “what is the *most* important purpose or function of a translation?” The above question is narrowed down to the *most* important purpose and function because, as seen in the theoretical section; what to be prioritized as the purpose of translation depends on whom one asks. Another question is should the question about the quality of a translation in terms of good and bad even be relevant in translation studies? Is it not more rewarding to channel the entire focus on the success of a translation? One thing that cannot be entirely forgotten is that according to Schreiber (1993) quoted in Krein-kühle (2014), translation is not only about the text-internal factors but also the external factors. In other words, every text type has its peculiarities inherent to it. These characteristics must be taken into consideration when translating. In this work, the translation of a post-colonial novel was analyzed and the analysis has shown that the majority of the questionable translation choices emanate from 'text external factors' as introduced by Schreiber (1993).

In conclusion, one can observe that the analysis of the quality of a translation is not always a straightforward venture. The overall purpose of the translation and the so-called 'translational brief' issued by the commissioner(s) of the work, play very important roles in the decisions and choices made by translators. This paper has shown in a nutshell, the problematic translation choices that could be obtainable in the translation of post-colonial literature from English to German. It has also made some presumptions regarding the factors that could have influenced the translation choices made by the translators. This work does not suffice to make a representative statement about the quality of post-colonial literatures translated into German. It has only given a brief insight into what could be obtainable if the field of cognitive linguistics is thoroughly applied in translation. One needs further research, in other to make representative statements about the quality and success of post-colonial literatures translated into German.

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