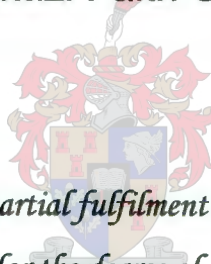


**A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS  
OF GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS  
TRANSLATED INTO ISIXHOSA**

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for the degree of*

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## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and that I have not submitted this work in part or in entirety at any university for a degree.

*Ncebakazi Faith Saliwa*

## ABSTRACT

South Africa declared all 11 South African languages official to bring back dignity to all citizens of this country and to ensure that communication reaches all people in the language of their choice. In an effort to meet this constitutional mandate, government institutions are obliged to translate documents into all official national or provincial languages.

Before 1998, only two languages were used in official documentation and those were English and Afrikaans. That meant that a lot of money was invested in and committed into developing these two languages, especially Afrikaans, so that they could be used readily in all official and general communication. African languages were not developed as much then and this became a problem when they were declared official as they were not ready to meet the challenges of official and technical use. Government has not been able to identify this as a problem and has therefore lightly and ignorantly regarded tasks such as translation as easy tasks that can be handled by any speaker of the language concerned. This has resulted in very poor translations.

This study begins with an introduction that entails the hypothesis. According to the hypothesis, most government documents translated into isiXhosa do not communicate with their target audiences because of their poor quality. This makes it difficult for target readers to follow the message. The poor quality results from the use of either untrained translators or people who claim that they can translate as well as the use of any language speaker to translate by the virtue of being able to speak the language concerned. In other instances, the issue is not the quality but rather transliteration because of the use of language professionals such as lecturers who are conversant with the language and grammar, but who have no expertise, training or experience in translation.

Chapter 2 explores the three main approaches of translation, namely the linguistic approach, the text-linguistic approach and the functional approach. In this chapter, the results of extensive research and development over the years in the translation field are presented. In Chapter 3, two government documents are analysed by the researcher and by a group of participants who were given relevant questionnaires and others interviewed. In Chapter 4, the reasons for poor quality are identified and,

in Chapters 5 and 6, solutions to problems and reasons for poor translation are suggested. It is hoped that the research will stimulate a new subject for discussion and a field of study concerning translation into African languages so that government can seriously regard translation as a specialist field.

## OPSOMMING

Suid-Afrika het al elf Suid-Afrikaanse tale amptelik verklaar om waardigheid terug te bring na al die landsburgers en om te verseker dat kommunikasie almal in die taal van sy of haar keuse bereik. Ten einde uitvoering te gee aan hierdie grondwetlike mandaat, is staatsinstellings verplig om dokumente in al die nasionale of provinsiale tale te vertaal.

Voor 1998 was daar net twee amptelike tale, naamlik Afrikaans en Engels. Dit het behels dat baie geld bestee en verbind is om hierdie twee tale en veral Afrikaans te ontwikkel sodat hulle maklik in alle amptelike en algemene kommunikasie gebruik kon word. Pogings is nie dienooreenkomstig aangewend om die Afrikatale te ontwikkel nie. Dit het onmiddellik aanleiding tot probleme gegee toe die Afrikatale as amptelik verklaar is aangesien hulle nie gereed was om die uitdagings van amptelike en tegniese gebruik die hoof te bied nie. Die regering het dit nie as 'n probleem beskou nie en het dus ligtelik en onkundig sulke take soos vertaling as maklike take beskou wat deur enige spreker van die taal gedoen kon word. Dit het gelei tot baie swak vertalings.

Die studie begin met 'n inleiding wat die hipotese stel, naamlik dat die meeste staatsdokumente wat in isiXhosa vertaal word, nie met hul teikengroepe kommunikeer nie omdat die swak gehalte daarvan dit moeilik maak vir die teikengroep om die boodskap te verstaan. Die swak gehalte spruit uit die gebruik van óf onopgeleide vertalers, óf enigeen wat daarop aanspraak maak dat hy of sy kan vertaal, of uit die situasie waar enige spreker van 'n taal versoek word om te vertaal omdat hy of sy die taal kan praat. In ander gevalle is die probleem nie die gehalte nie, maar eerder transliterasie en die gebruik van akademici wat vertrou is met die taal en die grammatika, maar geen vertaalkundigheid, -opleiding of -ervaring het nie.

Hoofstuk 2 ondersoek die drie vernaamste benaderings tot vertaling, naamlik die linguistiese benadering, die tekslinguistiese benadering en die funksionalistiese benadering. Die resultate van omvattende navorsing en ontwikkeling ten opsigte van hierdie benaderings wat oor die jare in die veld van vertaling gemaak is, word hier aangebied.

In hoofstuk 3 word twee staatsdokumente deur die navorser ontleed en ook deur 'n groep deelnemers wat tersaaklike vraelyste moes invul en met wie onderhoude gevoer is. Die oorsake van swak gehalte word bepaal en oplossings word in hoofstuk 4 aanbeveel. In hoofstukke 5 en 6 word oplossings tot en redes vir vertaalprobleme aangevoer.

Hierdie navorsing sal hopelik 'n nuwe onderwerp vir bespreking en 'n studieveld ten opsigte van vertaling in Afrikatale bevorder sodat die regering erns kan maak daarmee om vertaling as 'n spesialisveld te beskou.

## AMAGQABANTSHINTSHI

UMzantsi Afrika umisele zonke iilwimi ezilishumi elinanye zeli lizwe njengezisemthethweni ukubuyisela isidima sabemi beli lizwe. Oku kwenzelwa nokuqinisekisa ukuba wonke ubani ufumana ulwazi ngolwimi afuna ukulufumana ngalo. Kwimizamo yokuphumeza le njongo yoMgaqo-siseko, amaziko karhulumente kuye kwanyanzeleka ukuba aguqulele onke amaxwebhu kuzo zonke iilwimi ezisemthethweni zelizwe okanye zephondo.

Phambi ko-1998, zimbini kuphela iilwimi ebezisemthethweni, ibisisiNgesi nesiBhulu. Oku kwenza ukuba ezi lwimi zimbini ziphuhlise, ingakumbi isiBhulu, ukulungiselela ukuba zikwazi ukusetyenziswa kumaxwebhu asemthethweni nakunxibelelwano ngokubanzi. Iilwimi zesintu azizange ziphuhlise kangako, nto leyo ekhokelele ekubeni zijongane nemiceli-mngeni emva kokuba zamiselwa ngokusemthethweni. Urhulumente akakuboni ukuba oku kuseyingxaki kangangokuba imisebenzi efana noguqulo-lwimi uyithatha njengemisebenzi elula nenokwenziwa nguye nabani na okwazi ukuthetha ulwimi olo. Oku kubangela ukuba sibe namaxwebhu aguqulwe kakubi nangafundekiyo.

Le thisisi iqala ngokubeka ingxaki yokuba, amaxwebhu amaninzi karhulumente aguqulelwe esiXhoseni akafundeki ngenxa yokuba uguqulo olo lukumgangatho ophantsi. Oku kwenza ukuba abo bantetho isisiXhosa abafanele ukufunda la maxwebhu, bangayilandeli into ebhalwe kuwo. Olu luguqulo lungafundekiyo lwenziwa kukusetyenziswa kwabaguquli-lwimi abangawuqeqeshelwanga lo msebenzi kwakunye nabo bathi bayakwazi ukuguqula ukuya kuma ekusetyenzisweni kwaye nawuphi na umntu othetha olu lwimi. Ngamanye amaxesha, ingxaki kukuba abo baguqulayo bavele balandele ulwimi olo basukuba beguqula kulo nokusetyenziswa kweengcali zolwimi ezifana nabahlohli zibe zingenabungcali naluqeqesho lokutolika okanye loguqulo-lwimi.

Isahluko sesibini sichaza ngokubanzi ngezifundo zoguqulo nophando osele lwenziwe kwezi zifundo. Sichaphazela iindlela-ndlela zoguqulo eziphambili. Eyokuqala yileyo yokuguqula uqinisekisa ukuba onke amagama akuxwebhu aguquliwe kunye nazo zonke izigaba zentetho ezilapha. Eyesibini yileyo iqinisekisa ukuba ingxam yoxwebhu iguquliwe ze eyesithathu ibe yekuguqulwa kulandelwa injongo efanele

ukuphunyezwa luxwebhu olo nokuqinisekisa ukuba uyazanezisa iimfuno nolwazi lwabantu abaza kulusebenzisa.

KwiSahluko sesi-3, umbhali nomphandi wolu xwebhu uye waphonononga waza wehla amahlongwane amaxwebhu amabini karhulumente, wawanika nabanye abantu ukuba bakhe bawajonge yaye banike izimvo zabo ngawo. KwiSahluko sesi-4, Izizathu ezenza ukuba la maxwebhu angafundeki kamnandi zichaziwe ze kwiSahluko sesi-5 ne sesi-6 kwanikwa iingcebiso nezisombululo eziya kunceda ukuba kuguqulwe ngendlela engcono. Umphandi lo unomnqweno nethemba lokuba olu phando luya kubangela ukuba lo mba ukhe uqwalaselisiswe. Ukwathemba kananjalo ukuba ngenxa yolu phando kuya kuthi kuntshule ezinye izifundo ezijonga le ngxaki, ukuze urhulumente ayithathele ingqalelo into yokuba uguqulo-lwimi lufanele ukwenziwa ngabo bantu bawuqeqeshelweyo okanye bawufundeleyo lo msebenzi.



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## CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION

*Qualitative analysis of government documents translated into isiXhosa: Do these documents make sense to the target reader?*

### 1.1 Hypothesis

Currently, the quality of translations of documents translated from English into South African African languages is poor, especially those that are of a technical nature. This is an outcry from the target readers, namely the African language speakers who are the intended recipients and users of these documents that maintain that they only get to understand what is going on in some of these documents when they refer to the source text, which, most of the time, is in English. This means that those who do not understand English suffer even more in the sense that they cannot get the message from either the source text or the target text.

### 1.2 Reasons for poor translations

In citing reasons for poor translation into African languages, I would first like to give some very crucial background information that has given birth to this situation that is well sketched by Walker, Kruger and Andrews (1995:100):

*Language and therefore translation, have always been controversial issues in South Africa, reflecting the socio-political reality of the times. In the past, language policy played a pivotal role in promoting apartheid and racial discrimination. Historically, all official documents were published in Afrikaans and English, the then two official languages of South Africa. The translation profession in South Africa evolved around this linguistic policy. The state subsidies ensured that a well-developed infrastructure of professionalised language and terminology service as well as reference materials developed in order to ensure that Afrikaans had parity with English.*

*By contrast, the nine African languages spoken by the majority of the population did not enjoy the official status in South Africa. They were (and still are) without developed technical and scientific terminologies, adequate or extensive literatures (Mtintsilana & Morris, 1988) and moreover without trained translators.*

The background information quoted above has led to a situation where translation into African languages is not taken seriously in the public sector. Afrikaans and English still assume a higher status than the other nine African languages.

Reasons, therefore, for the poor translations range from use of anyone who can speak the language regardless of expertise in the language, such as use of general workers in companies to matriculants who have no extensive knowledge of language or grammar and such people tend to transliterate resulting in translations that make no sense to the target reader. Another reason is the use of language practitioners who have no training in translation due to the fact that employers or clients do not understand what is involved in translation, as well as the lack of terminology in African languages which result in people coining terms that do not make sense to the target readers.

Another reason for poor translations are deadlines, in that, clients want these documents within a certain period of time, which does not give translators enough time to work on the translations. Some of these documents are also by nature technical and as such cannot be simplified in the target language to the extent that an average person can make sense of what the text means. Government has its own specialised register that one has to familiarise himself or herself with before tackling translations from this sector. When this is not done, translators miss the point completely. One other reason that can also be cited is that, after government institutions have employed translators, they do not send them on translation courses to learn the art of translating. They think that a language qualification is enough for them to be able to translate. Whatever the reason, the fact remains that the message in the translated documents has to make sense to the target readers, otherwise there is no reason to translate the documents.

### **1.3 Aim of the study**

As an employee and a translator in the government sector, the outcry about poor translations, or translations that do not make sense at all and that people prefer using source texts, is cause for concern. Let me also state that I concur with the concern, because I have come across a number of documents that are badly translated and some documents that do not make sense at all. I have therefore set out to do research into this concern by making a qualitative analysis of these documents to

find out exactly where the failure is. I will tackle only one African language, namely isiXhosa, which is my mother tongue and which is also the language that I translate into and from. The research will try to establish the reasons for mistranslations, and, where possible, offer some solutions to the problems. The purpose, at the end of the day, is to see some improvement in areas where there is a problem of translating into isiXhosa.

The second purpose or aim of this thesis is to highlight to government authorities and any other clients or commissioners of translation work, that translating is a professional practice and that not just anybody who speaks the languages can translate.

One thing to be borne in mind is that governments serve people, and the purpose for translating documents is to reach out to people in all sectors of life. If these documents then are not of value to the target readers, this counts as a failure on the side of government to reach out to the audiences that they want to reach.

I therefore would like to come up with a thesis that will do four things. Firstly, I would like this thesis to evoke debate on this issue and secondly, to serve as an enlightening document to employers and users of translators. The employers in this case, are managers in government departments and parliaments that they may know that there is this outcry. I would like them to be aware of what the problem is and the role they play in exacerbating the problem such as employing unqualified practitioners, using freelancers who cannot translate properly and that government translators are not trained sufficiently.

Thirdly, I would like this thesis to be a reference document for new or prospective translators. Fourthly, I hope this thesis will encourage existing isiXhosa translators to polish up their skills or rather to take a look at what they are doing and to be introspective as to whether they are doing justice to their work. Lastly, it is hoped that this thesis will make language committees realise that multilingualism is not possible if this problem is not dealt with. It is hoped that they will intervene and ensure that government institutions empower translators by sending them for translation training.

I would like to start by drawing a picture of what is happening now with regards to isiXhosa translation so that readers of this thesis get background information on the status quo.



#### **1.4 The status quo of translation into isiXhosa in government institutions**

Information on translation of government documents into isiXhosa is not documented anywhere. I have had to use oral sources to get the information. Translation into isiXhosa in the government institutions started in the Eastern Cape in the late seventies while in the rest of the country it started in the 1990s. I consulted Professor Peter Mtuze of Rhodes University who headed translation services in the then Ciskei Government to get information with regards to the Eastern Cape government institutions and Dr Sydney Zotwana who was the Head of the Translation Unit at national Parliament from 1994 until 2002. He also freelanced for most Western Cape government institutions prior to 1994 and after 1994.

According to Professor Mtuze, translation into isiXhosa in government institutions started when Ciskei and Transkei were declared homelands. In Transkei it started in 1976 and Ciskei followed soon after. All Bills and policies had to be translated before they became Acts, as did Hansard, the verbatim record of parliamentary sittings, and all other government documents. Because of this need, the then Transkei and Ciskei homelands had to establish translation services sections or units. In addition to translating, they also developed terminology. In order to get a job in translation services, one was required to have had majored in isiXhosa in a tertiary institution and to have the ability to converse in English. There were a few people who had a BA in Translation that they had acquired from Rhodes University, but unfortunately the translation department at Rhodes University closed down. When translation services units were established in government institutions then, there was no university that offered a translation qualification, especially one that would help those translating into isiXhosa.

I also asked Professor Mtuze why we had not made much progress in translation if translation started that far back. He said that there had been no co-ordination and continuation among practitioners that dealt with isiXhosa translation and that there had been no guiding principles on how to translate. Each time there are workshops and conferences, we start new discussions and debates on translation. As translators, we do not build on what already exists and we do not follow up on what has already been developed. From my own perspective, therefore, this in essence also means that we have never revisited isiXhosa-translated works to look at

techniques used by translators. Thirdly, as already cited, we do not have documents to refer to on how to specifically tackle translation into isiXhosa.

According to Dr Zotwana, translation into African languages in the national parliament started in 1994 when South Africa declared the eleven official languages of the country. Pre-1994, translation was done between two languages only, namely Afrikaans and English. Chapter 1, Section 6(1) of the Constitution affirms the equality of all South African languages as follows: "Official languages of the Republic of South Africa are sePedi, seSotho, seTswana, siSwati, tshiVenda, xiTsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu" (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, Act 108 of 1996, Section 6, 4). After the passing of the Constitution, national parliament started working from and into all eleven languages.

The Western Cape government's history of translation into isiXhosa is as follows: In the provincial administration of the Western Cape, translation into isiXhosa started in 1993 and was outsourced. A full time isiXhosa translator was only employed in March 1998. The Cape Town Metropolitan Council only employed an isiXhosa translator in 2003. Before 2003 work was outsourced. The Western Cape municipalities employed isiXhosa translators from 1996. The Western Cape provincial parliament or legislature employed two isiXhosa translators from September 2000, one of them being this researcher. Most of these translators are employed on the basis of having a tertiary language qualification with a major in isiXhosa. None of these employees has a translation degree or diploma. They rely on their first language expertise, namely isiXhosa.

Within provinces, there is no regular networking between translators. As translators, we only phone one another when we are really stuck with a word or sentence. We all work in our own little corners, that is, in our institutions. We do not have regular provincial meetings or workshops or gatherings to share tips and information and to thrash out terms and orthography so that we are consistent in our work.

### ***1.5 Problems and challenges faced by isiXhosa translators in their daily work***

Problems and challenges facing isiXhosa translators are both intralinguistic and extralinguistic. IsiXhosa is still a developing language. The first and the worst nightmare of all isiXhosa translators is the lack of documented and standardized

technical terms, for example, medical, financial, computer or IT and legal terms. This results in translators coining different terms for the same concept. As Mfazwe (2003:3) puts it, while a word or a concept may be understood by most people, the target text may have no word to express it. Another word may be so complex that in translating it, a translator may have to write out a sentence. Mfazwe (2003:3) makes an example of the concept *affirmative action* which in isiXhosa is a long phrase, *ukubonelelwa kwabo babehlelekile ngaphambili* because it has no equivalent form in isiXhosa.

Secondly, isiXhosa orthography needs to be updated. There are a number of problems that can still not be solved in isiXhosa and for those problems there are no written reference points for language practitioners. For example, there is a problem of disagreement or differences of capitalisation and hyphenation. For example, when a particular word or phrase is a heading such as, *ISebe/Isebe lezeMfundo/Lezemfundo* (*The Department of Education*); *Usomlomo* or *USomlomo* (*Speaker of Parliament* or *a municipality*), do we put a capital letter on the first letter and on the first consonant or vowel of the stem or is it in only in the first letter of the stem or just the first letter of the word?

Thirdly, most translators have done English as a second language and their command of English is not very good either, whereas one would find that English-Afrikaans translators and vice versa are, in most cases, fully bilingual. There are terms that those translators still translate wrongly even when they have looked them up in a dictionary, especially when a concept has more than one meaning and they are not sure which one to choose. Some do not even look up the terms in the dictionary because at face value these terms to them look simple and translatable. For example, someone who was given a document on health translated *pap smear* as smearing a porridge on something because this was an unfamiliar term to the translator and it is a technical term. There was also a translation from one of local government institutions, of which I am a freelance editor, where one of the isiXhosa translators translated *servitude* in a document referring to subjection of property, as "being a servant". This was a very long document and throughout the document *servitude* was translated with that meaning so the whole document was confusing.

Fourthly, culture, as in traditional culture also poses a problem. Translators struggle to translate what is considered taboo in the African culture. Anything to do with sex and sexual objects is considered taboo. In these days when we have to talk about

HIV and how one contracts it, is not easy to express such an issue in isiXhosa and as such translators tend to go for long expressions to evade the direct and right equivalents of these words. This is sometimes costly to commissioners in cases where translators use word counts to calculate their fee or charge.

Fifthly, there are no translators that specialize in certain fields and translators do not state that they cannot translate documents from certain fields that they are unfamiliar with. For example, a document from the department of Finance will have finance jargon. What happens in most cases is that people translate these terms without finding out what the contextual meanings are. This results in terrible and unreadable translations and those who understand English opt for English documents because they do not know what on earth is being said in the isiXhosa documents.

Sixthly, most translators, as already mentioned, are not trained as translators but are isiXhosa language experts. As a result, in most isiXhosa technical translations one finds direct translations with excellent grammar but are meaningless and confusing. This is due to a lack of on-the-job training. In the Western Cape province particularly there is so far two tertiary institutions that offer short translation courses. These would be less costly for employers and would not take employees away from work for a long time. Corsellis (2003:184) states that Britain experiences the same problem of untrained translators in the public service. She states that people can be told what to do but will not do well in a task if they are not trained and supervised. "Often little or no training is given to those working in the public service on the practicalities of working across languages and cultures. As a consequence, the public services are largely staffed by good-hearted, hard working people who rarely have either the necessary skills or structures to deliver a competent service across languages and cultures" she says.

Seventhly, the dominance of English has negatively affected the African languages. Most educated isiXhosa speakers can no longer converse fluently in isiXhosa and can no longer read documents written in isiXhosa. They say they are too complicated. In translation they therefore expect simplification. I recently experienced a problem where I subcontracted work I received from local government which was in a Powerpoint format to another isiXhosa translator. The translation commissioner from the local government is isiXhosa-speaking, highly educated and is in the high echelons of local government, that is, he holds a management position. I later got a complaint that the document was not comprehensible. It was referred to the new fully

employed isiXhosa translator in the local government. He found the document completely comprehensible. After long deliberations with the complainant, we came to understand that he wanted the document simplified and terms explained more fully. English terms were not explained but the isiXhosa terms had to be explained.

There is also a problem of attitude from those who control finances both in the public and in the private sectors who feel that there is really no need to translate documents into isiXhosa and, therefore, do not budget for the training of translators. Corsellis (2003: 181) concurs with this statement. She states that those in authority sometimes do not see the need to translate documents into other languages other than English. She states that government departments are unaware that non-English clients cannot gain access to information that is not available in their languages. She goes on to say that, sometimes they deny that there is a need for translation service because of its financial implications which they are not willing to accommodate.

Eighthly, up until recently, traditionally-black universities have been trapped into teaching theoretical grammar, rather than shifting into a sociolinguistic mode, which would address issues like the relationship between culture and language, the issue of the sociology of communication and the issue of dialects. This aspect of language training seems to be treated as one that belongs to postgraduate studies.

Ninthly, in my experience of working as an isiXhosa translator for the last eight years I have found that, isiXhosa translators confine themselves to their offices and their close colleagues. They do not network with colleagues in other institutions and other provinces. We only meet in workshops and conferences and it ends there. We look at translation as a business enterprise and, in most cases we see one another as competitors, thereby inhibiting co-operation and development of isiXhosa as a language that can be used for translation.

Tenthly, isiXhosa and English or Afrikaans languages differ a lot in syntax and in the manner of phrasing sentences. Some isiXhosa translators are tempted to stick to English syntax and thereby end up transliterating or missing the sense altogether. Transliteration also tends to result in documents where one can actually figure out that they are definitely translations. An example that I come across a lot when editing publishers' translated children's literature documents is when an English text refers to "looking after the animals" and some translators translate this directly. Back-

translated to English it means, "looking at the backs of the animals or behind the animals".

As isiXhosa translators, we are faced with the mammoth task of having to deliver well-translated documents that make sense to the target audience while dealing with all the problems and challenges cited above.

In this thesis I will analyse two isiXhosa translated documents, one titled, *What is Local Government?* The second one is an extract from the *Revised National Curriculum Statement*. To prove that it is possible to give a sound good isiXhosa translation, I have also chosen to analyse a well-translated isiXhosa document in which I have looked at the techniques employed by the translator.

## 1.6 Theoretical models of translation and research methodology

This thesis will implement the theoretical approaches, firstly, as a basis for evaluating the quality of the translation and as a way of eliciting whether the hypothesis is true or not. It will look mainly into the three main approaches, namely the linguistic approach, the text-linguistic approach and the functionalist approach. It will describe, discuss and analyse these three approaches. The thesis will emphasise the functionalist approach or the skopos theory since the purpose of the translation is supposed to be the guide for a translator.

On the research methodology, I have conducted interviews into how people feel about isiXhosa translations. I have interviewed the speakers of the language as well as clients or employers of these translators. Also where possible, I established the responses that they have had so far from target readers about the isiXhosa translations. The second method that was used is questionnaires accompanied by the translated documents that required that respondents give their opinion on the two documents.

## 1.7 The structure of this thesis

The **first chapter** is the introduction. The **second chapter** contains the literature review on translation approaches and also looks into the role culture plays in translation.

The **third chapter** discusses the texts chosen, the reasons for choosing them, identifies their purpose, looks at the quality of their translation, compare them with the source texts and check whether they fulfil their purpose. This is where the problems are identified in the chosen texts. Alternative translations of certain words, phrases or sentences are suggested to illustrate the problem at hand and the possibilities that might have been explored which are not explored in this translation, the actual flaws in the translations and the possible reasons for the problems.

The **fourth chapter** contains the empirical research. I interviewed some people and I also handed out questionnaires to other people. This chapter explains how the respondents have been chosen and it gives the results of the findings.

**The fifth chapter** analyses a document that has been well-translated from English into isiXhosa as proof that it is possible to render a good translation into isiXhosa and that this is attainable if the translation is done by a competent translator.

The last chapter, **the sixth chapter**, is the conclusion with recommendations. It refers back to the introduction and answers the research questions. It brings together all the chapters, the literature reviewed, the root of the problem, the findings and possible solutions. It also verifies the hypothesis. It is hoped that, because of this thesis, a new debate on this topic will open up as well as new study fields that language practitioners have not explored which will hopefully contribute in the development of the African languages.



## **CHAPTER 2 : LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

To understand the importance of translation and the importance of the readability of translated documents, one may first need to tackle the question of why we need to do translation in the first place. Translation plays an important role in language and in communication. We translate because “thoughts, ideas and information that a certain number of people possess are not available to another group of people and in order to get access to these thoughts, ideas and information, whether mystical, magical, practical or technical, the second group of people needs translation” (Raffel, 1973:1). Through translation, we reach out to other people who do not understand the source language and through translation we reach out to other cultures.

Translation has developed over the years and theories and approaches have been developed to describe the processes involved in translation. This chapter will look into what translation is and what is involved in translation. It will also look into theoretical approaches; culture and translation and at the status quo of translation into isiXhosa, with specific reference to government institutions and how far isiXhosa is in the understanding and application of translation approaches.

### **2.2 What is translation?**

Translation is an interlingual, intercultural and interdisciplinary communicative act (Feinauer, class notes: 2002). It involves a text-processing activity in which a source language text is transposed into a target language text in a specific context for a specific target audience (Feinauer, class notes, 2002). Newmark (1990:7) describes translation as a craft consisted in an attempt to replace a written message by the same message in another language. That target text has to fulfil its intended function in the target culture, meaning that it has to communicate the message in a manner that is comprehensible to the target audience. Hatim and Mason (1996:1) describe translation as an act of communication that attempts to relay, across cultural and linguistic boundaries, another act of communication. It is characterised by the double linkage, to the source text and, secondly, by its link to the communicative conditions on the receiver's side.



Ideally, translation involves four major phases (Sager, 1994:70). The first phase is the commissioning and specification of the task by the client or commissioner. The second phase is the preparation phase where a translator interprets the text and formulates a translation strategy. The third phase is the execution of the translation task in which the translator reads the whole text, gets background information and does the actual translation. The fourth phase is the revision of the translated work after finishing it to check for style, rhythm, mistakes, readability and whether it has adhered to the client's brief and whether it is accessible to the target audience (Nida, 1969:241-251).

### **2.3 Background of the translation theory**

Translation dates as far back as 3000 BC during the old Egyptian kingdom (Newmark, 1988, 3). It has a history that is as honourable and complex as any other branch of literature (Savory, 1957:37). For example, Etienne Dolet published an outline of translation principles as early as 1540 with five translation principles (Bassnet-Mcguire, 1980:54). A number of other scholars also wrote on translation from the period between the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Although translation dates that far back, the development of its theoretical principles and the study of translation as an academic subject began only in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries (Newmark, 1990:3).

The term "translation studies" was first introduced by James Holmes in a paper he delivered at a conference of applied linguistics in 1972 in Copenhagen (Ulrych and Bosinelli, 1999:220). Holmes's main aim of referring to it as translation studies was to find a common ground for the academic study of translation and translating that would encompass theoretical aspects and applied aspects. However, as years went by, these two fields, the theoretical branch and the applied one, developed as separate disciplines, each with its own theoretical underpinning, methodology and applied components (Ulrych and Bosinelli, *ibid*: 221).

The most systematic translation theory development took place in the twentieth century termed, the "Age of translation" (Newmark, 1990:3). The need for the development of translation theory arose due to the high increase in the volume of translations world-wide and because of the proliferation of terms in art and technology, and in the scientific and electronic fields (Hermans, 1994: 10). Another reason cited by Newmark (1990:3) for the need for the development of translation

theory was the large number of badly translated documents, which was due to different linguistic structures of languages and to an attempt to be faithful to the original work.

The feeling was that there are lots of factors that have a bearing on translation that had to be brought to the attention of translators. They varied from sociolinguistics, sociosemantics, semiotics, syntactic and lexical factors, literary and non-literary texts, logic and philosophy. The development therefore of translation theory would help determine appropriate translation methods for the widest possible range of texts or text categories. It would help to provide a framework of principles for translating texts and for criticising translations, as well as possible translation procedures. The theory would give insight into the relationship between thought, meaning and language; into universal, cultural and individual aspects of language and understanding of cultures; and into the interpretation of texts (Munday, 2001: 19).

Before the nineteenth century, writings on translation focused on whether the translation was literal or free and faithful. Literal referred to a word-for-word translation and free referred to a sense-for-sense translation. The proponents of this debate were people like Cicero, St Jerome, Dolet, Luther, Dryden, Tytler and Schleiermacher and those debates formed the basis of key writings on translations in the later centuries (Munday, 2001: 19).

A more systematic and mostly linguistic-oriented approach to the study of translation began to emerge in the 1960s. Translation was then highly influenced by applied linguistics since it was understood as a linguistic phenomenon and a process of linguistic transcoding (Schäffner, 1997:1). The translation theory then focused on the status of the source text (ST) and the form of the target text (TT). Three main approaches dominated the development of translation theory in that period and those approaches were the linguistic approach, the text-linguistic approach and the functionalist approach. Let us now explore these approaches.

## **2.4 The three main translation approaches**

### **2.4.1 The linguistic approach**

The linguistic approach was the first attempt made in shaping translation theory (Feinauer, class notes: 2002). In this approach the debate was around key linguistic

issues. The main issue was meaning and equivalence. Linguistic-oriented theorists judged a translation to be good or bad in terms of a fixed theory of what constituted absolute equivalence between a source text and a target text (Naudé, 2000: 2). Using a source text as a yardstick to judge the target text, equivalence was seen as a means of bringing about accuracy that could result in a good and faithful translation. These linguists used a bottom-up approach to judge a text. They judged it from the words, meaning that, if the words worked effectively and there was a 100% equivalence of the source text and the target text, then the text had succeeded (Feinauer, class notes: 2002).

The proponents of this approach were linguists like Eugene Nida, John Catford and Wolfram Wills (Naudé, 2000:2). To them equivalence defined translation. Complete equivalence to them ensured the accuracy of a translation.

Absolute equivalence meant, among other things, the following:

- a) A translation must reproduce the words of the original;
- b) A translation must reproduce the ideas of the original;
- c) A translation should read like an original;
- d) A translation should retain the style of the original;
- e) A translator must not add or leave out anything;
- f) The translation should have the same effect on the translators' readers as it did on the readers of the source text (Wills, 1982:134).

#### **2.4.1.1 The process of translation according to the linguistic approach**

According to the linguists, the process of translation is as follows: firstly, the translator analyses the message of the source language into its simplest and structurally clearest forms (Nida, 1969:484). The analysis of the source language text involves three stages, namely grammatical analysis, referential-semantic and connotative analysis. In these stages, the translator analyses the minimal structures of the surface and deep structure, then the syntactic structure and then the style used in the source text. The second phase is then the transfer of the message which involves the transfer of all segments of the source text such as lexemes, idiomatic expressions that correspond to a combination of lexemes in the target language. The third phase is that of synthesis in which the translator checks the stylistic level and the text type that have to be realised in the target text.

### **2.4.1.2 Chomsky's influence**

These linguists, especially Nida, were highly influenced by Noam Chomsky's theory of generative-transformational grammar. Chomsky's model analysed sentences into levels governed by rules. According to him, the deep structure of phrases is governed by transformational rules and the surface structure is subject to phonological and morphemic rules. Nida incorporated key features of Chomsky's model into his science of translation because for him the model provided the translator with a technique for decoding the source text and a procedure for encoding the target text (Nida 1964: 60). In his translation process, the surface structure of the source text is therefore analysed into basic elements of the deep structure that is then transferred and then restructured or synthesised semantically and stylistically into the surface structure of the target text.

### **2.4.1.3 Equivalence**

Central in this translation process of linguistic approach is equivalence. Wills (1982:136) states that the relation of equivalence holds between the source text and the target text if the translation is an optimal translation of the source text in a given context. Catford (1965:49) states that the source text and the target text are translation equivalents when they are interchangeable in a given situation. Vinay and Darbelnet (1995: 342) describe equivalence as a procedure that replicates the same situation as in the original whilst using completely different wording and if this procedure is applied during the translation process, it can maintain the stylistic impact of the source text in the target text.

According to Nida, translation is equivalent if it reproduces the message as it was in the source text and that message has the same impact on the target reader as it did on the source text audience. He states that a translator must strive for that kind of equivalence rather than sameness or identity of the texts (1969:12). Nida refers to two types of equivalence, namely formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence. Formal equivalence focuses attention on the message and is designed to reveal as much as possible the form and the content of the original message. This means a sentence in the source language is matched with a sentence in the target language, a phrase with a phrase and an idiom with an idiom. In formal equivalence, "the translation attempts to reproduce several formal elements including grammatical units, consistency in word usage and meaning in terms of the source text" (Nida,

1964: 165). The message has to match as closely as possible the different elements of the source language.

Dynamic equivalence, on the other hand, is based on the principle of equivalent effect in which the message should substantially be the same in both the source receptor and the target receptor. It aims at complete naturalness of expression in that it tries to relate the target audience to cultural patterns with which it can associate. Nida (1964) describes it as the closest natural equivalent to the source language message. This means, it allows modifications, such as grammar and lexicon modifications to allow those that are acceptable in the target language. The lexical structure of the source message gets adjusted to the semantic requirements of the target language.

Although there is a slight conflict between formal and dynamic equivalence, for Nida the success of the translation depends on achieving equivalent reception of the message. The message has to make sense, it has to convey the spirit and the manner of the original, it must have a natural and easy form of expression and should produce a similar response.

#### **2.4.1.4 Criticism levelled against the linguistic approach**

A number of linguists found the equivalence issue very problematic, contradictory and very difficult to attain. It was refined and redefined but the description and attainment of equivalence still remained a problem. Newmark (1981: 39) for example modified the terms formal and dynamic equivalence to semantic and communicative equivalence. Semantic translation means that the translation attempts to render as closely as possible the semantic and syntactic structures allowed by the target language. Communicative translation attempts to produce in its readers an effect as close as possible to that produced in the readers of the original. Though Newmark's approaches were close to those of Nida, Newmark pointed out that a translator cannot produce the same effect in the target text reader, meaning that the principle of complete equivalence was impossible.

The linguists' approach to equivalence was heavily criticised for being overly concerned with the word level. Nida's work was particularly found to be subjective in that the question of equivalence entails subjective judgement on the part of the translator. There was also heavy criticism on the notion of absolute equivalence that

is just not attainable. These debates and discussions on equivalence resulted in the birth of other approaches. One of those approaches or models was the text-linguistic approach.

#### 2.4.2 The text-linguistic approach

This model did not move away from equivalence but viewed it in a different manner. The shift to the text-linguistic approach came as a result of the realisation that translation is not just a case of matching words with words but that it was much broader than that. Its starting point was a discourse analysis, that the text is the focal point, not the words. The text linguists state that translation is a semantic and pragmatic reconstruction of the source text using a top down approach from the text, down to paragraphs, then to sentences and words. The unit of translation is the whole text, not just words. Text linguists Neubert and Shreve (1992: 23) define the process of translation as a top-down recreation of the text. They state that the reconstruction of the text is not a sentence-by-sentence rendering of the original. Text linguists found no reason for correspondence of small linguistic units of the source text and of the target text because a translator translates texts and not words.

Text linguists therefore started looking at the largest dimension, namely the context and socioculture within which a text is created. They believe that a text is never created in a vacuum, that there is always a situation and culture around it. They also believe that, the source language and target language do not only differ in their sentence structures but there are many other differences beyond sentence structures that cannot be ignored. Thirdly, there is an interrelationship between syntactic, semantic and pragmatic factors, which all have a bearing on the way in which a text is translated (Hermans, 1994:13). Hermans (*ibid*) also states that, "in this model, translation does not transfer meanings, but communicative values".

Text linguists also introduced notions of translation analysis according to text-linguistics such as textuality, macrostructure and superstructure and more attention was paid to the fact that translators always deal with a text in a situation and in a culture (Schäffner & Wiesemann, 2001:10).

### **2.4.2.1 Equivalence according to text linguists**

Text linguists still considered equivalence to be important, but the difference was that text linguists referred to text equivalence, not word equivalence. The text was considered to be the yardstick for effecting or evaluating equivalence. Their belief was that words are only elements of a text (Feinauer, class notes: 2002). Their golden rule was that a translator should look at the whole text before translating it, look at things like context, socio-culture, text, paragraphs, sentences, phrases, collocations, then words and morphemes. Equivalence to them meant that the source text function was equivalent to the text target function and equivalence had to be considered on a textual and communicative level.

The proponents of this model were, amongst others, Albrecht Neubert, Juliane House, Basil Hatim and Ian Mason.

#### **2.4.2.2 Hatim and Mason**

Hatim and Mason (1990:xi) moved from the premise that first and foremost, translation is an act of communication which does not only have something to do with linguistics but also with sociolinguistics, discourse studies, pragmatics and semiotics. They also emphasised the fact that translators are also affected by their social conditioning in their work and that in translation we seek insights which take us beyond translation towards the relationship between the language activity and the social context in which it takes place. Texts therefore should be seen as communicative transactions taking place within a social framework (Hatim and Mason, 1990:1).

They also highlighted that translation is not just a product but a process which involves taking into consideration issues such as context and culture; the decision on the approach to be used by the translator; negotiation of meaning between producers and receivers of texts and the amount of objectivity and subjectivity that one is going to impose. The process also involves a decision on whether to follow the style of the source text or not, and if not, why; how much textual equivalence will be implemented and the preservation of meaning. The process also looks at matters like the need and purpose of the translation and the socio-economic circumstances of its production, its translation and the reception by the target language readers as well as contrasts between the language systems in the source and target texts.



Because translation relays meaning across cultural and linguistic boundaries, the translator also has to check things such as intended meaning, implied meaning and presupposed meaning from the text. To be able to detect these meanings, the translator would have to have linguistic and communicative competence both in the source text and the target text. In unbundling these meanings, the translator has to analyse the register, interpretation and inference, effectiveness and efficiency of the translation. From the above information, Hatim and Mason clearly displayed that translation goes far beyond looking at linguistic characteristics of the source text and at absolute equivalence as main issues in translations as was the case with linguists.

#### **2.4.2.3 Juliane House**

Juliane House who is also a text linguist, also rejected the judgement of appropriate translation in terms of whether it is syntactically and semantically equivalent to its source text. She believes that equivalence has to be sought at the language or text level, genre level and register level. She also refers to functional equivalence between source text and target text (Munday, 2001: 94).

She introduced the terms “overt translation” and “covert translation”. Overt translation refers to a target text that does not purport to be an original; in which the target text audience is not directly addressed. A covert translation is a translation that enjoys the status of an original source text in the target culture in which both the source text and the target text address their audiences directly. House gives an example of a tourist booklet and a company letter to explain the covert translation, explaining that the target text reader is not taken into the discourse world of the source text. The translator though still needs to apply a “cultural filter” to modify cultural elements so that the target text reader retains the status of the source text reader. The equivalence here is genre equivalence (Munday, 2001: 94).

In her model, House uses register analysis of both the source text and the target text in their realisation of lexical, syntactic and textual effect as a means of looking into the quality of translation. House adopts what is called “Halliday’s model of discourse analysis” based on functional grammar which studies language as a communication tool and analyses meaning from the writer’s linguistic choices and also looks at the socio-cultural framework. Central in this model is register that refers to what is being written about, who is communicating and to whom and the form of communication.



Register analysis involves and means the following: looking at the profile of the source text's register, its genre, its function and the information it carries. This same process is carried out for the target text. Thereafter the target text profile is compared to the source text profile and a statement of quality is then made of the translation. The final part of the process, the translation, can then be categorised as either overt or covert translation (Munday, 2001: 93).

#### **2.4.2.4 Mona Baker**

Another text linguist who had an influence on this approach is Mona Baker. She was one of the scholars of functional grammar and discourse analysis. She devoted most attention to textual function. She located equivalence at different levels - at word level, above word level, grammar level, thematic structure, cohesion and pragmatics level looking at how these are used in communicative situations (Munday, 2001: 95).

She distinguishes between equivalence that can appear at word level, at grammar level, at textual level and pragmatic equivalence. She states that in a bottom-up approach, a translator first looks at word equivalence so as to find a direct equivalent term in the target language and that when a translator considers a single word, he or she should pay attention to issues such as number, gender and tense. Grammatical equivalence refers to grammatical categories across languages that may differ from language to language. These differences in grammars may force a translator to use a different grammar category suitable in the target language, or may force the translator to add or omit information so as to suit the grammatical structure of the target language (Munday, 2001).

Textual equivalence, according to her, refers to the equivalence of information and cohesion between the source text and the target text in terms of the purpose of the translation, the text type and the target audience. Pragmatic equivalence refers to implications and strategies of the process in which the translator has to work out implied meanings in translation in order to get the source text message across by making sure that there is coherence between the source text and target text and that the translator has tackled presupposed meaning and implications. In the end, the target text reader has to understand the communication clearly and it has to be the communication that the source text author intended to relay.

#### 2.4.2.5 Criticism levelled against the text-linguistic approach

The Halliday model, which most of these linguists employed, was found to be too complicated for its grammar analysis as well as the inflexible one-to-one matching of structure and meaning (Munday, 2001:101). Language structures differ from one language to another and using methods like register analysis will not always work as a measure of judging a good translation.

Another criticism was that the analytical framework applied in this model was based on the English language and could not be easily applied to other languages especially non-European languages (Munday, 2001:101). The model did not really take into consideration that linguistic differences are indicative of cultural differences and it restricted the translation role in cultural innovation and change. Although Hatim and Mason tried to analyse this notion by analysing a range of text-types, their focus still tended to be linguistic-centred (Munday, 2001:102).

Nord's criticism of the text-linguistic approach was its notion of equivalence (Nord, 1997b: 44). She stated that redefinitions of equivalence in all linguistic approaches did not solve the problem of the inherent fuzziness of this concept. She stated the following problems with equivalence:

- Though it refers to pragmatic aspects, the equivalence model focuses on structural qualities of the source text losing an interrelationship between extra-textual and intra-textual factors of communication.
- Cultural aspects do not feature enough.
- The model is not consistent and therefore confusing.
- It excludes target language texts.
- The source text is the one and only standard that a translator has to be subordinate to. He feels that this model perpetuates low social prestige of the translator (Nord 1997b: 44-45).

An adequate model, to him, would be a model that would be pragmatic, culture-oriented, consistent, comprehensive and anti-universalist which allows for culture-specific differences in translational concepts. The model should be practical and an expert model that gives translators the prestige of being competent and experts in their field (Nord, 1997b, 45-46).

She therefore supported an alternative approach, that moved away from analysing word and sentence levels and rather viewed the whole text as a level at which communication is achieved, and that was the functionalist approach.

### **2.4.3 Functionalist approach**

The new approach that emerged with functionalists was that texts are produced, disseminated and received for a particular purpose or function (Feinauer, class notes: 2002). The starting point in translation, therefore, is not the analysis of linguistic structures and the seeking of equivalence of linguistic structures but rather the purpose of the text. This approach was introduced by Katharina Reiss in the 1970s and later expanded on by Hans Vermeer in 1984 and later endorsed by Christiane Nord (Munday, 2001: 73).

#### **2.4.3.1 Katharina Reiss**

Reiss stressed that the function of the text is the key concept (Munday, 2001: 73). She identified three functions that correspond to text-types and communicative situations in which they are used, namely the informative, expressive and operative functions. Informative function refers to the plain communication of facts, the information, knowledge and opinions. The expressive function looks at the aesthetic dimension of language used in a particular text to express the message. The form and the text type is expressive. The operative function looks at the aim of the text and the response it is supposed to spark, which may be to appeal to or persuade the receiver to act in a certain way. The focus of the operative function, according to Reiss, is appellative. According to Reiss, the transmission of the predominant function of the source text is the determining factor by which a target text is judged (Munday, 2001: 75).

Although Reiss moved beyond linguistic levels towards the communicative purpose of the translation, there was criticism of the differentiation of text types, in that an informative text type can also be an expressive text type or that one text can have several functions. Another criticism was that the translation method used depends on more than the text type.

### 2.4.3.2 Justa Holtz-Mänttäri

In 1984, Holz-Mänttäri, introduced translators to the view that, translation is purpose-driven and outcome-oriented; that it involves human interaction and is a message transmission that involves intercultural transfer (Munday, 2001: 77). It is an interlingual translation action from a source text and, as a communicative process, it involves a series of role-players, namely the initiator, the commissioner, the source text producer, the target producer, the target text receiver and the target text user (Munday, 2001: 77). The initiator is the individual or the company that needs the translation. The source text producer is the person or the company that writes or develops the source text. The commissioner is the individual who contacts the translator. The target text producer is the translator. The target text receiver is the person for whom the target text is produced. The target text user is the person who uses the target text for a particular purpose, for example to train or to teach (Munday, 2001: 77).

The translation action therefore focuses on producing a target text that is functionally communicative for the receiver and must be guided by what is functionally suitable in the target text culture. It is the translator that determines what is functionally suitable, not the source text profile (Munday, 2001: 77). The translator has to make sure that the intercultural transfer takes place satisfactorily. Holz-Mänttäri therefore places translation within its socio-cultural context.

Nord felt that, though Holz-Mänttäri came up with a good approach, the source text cannot be completely disregarded in translation. There needs to be a relationship between the source text and the target text, but the nature of that relationship must be determined by the purpose or *skopos* of that translation (Munday, 2001: 78).

### 2.4.3.3 Hans Vermeer and the *Skopos* theory

Another prominent functionalist who actually came up with the term “*skopos*” is Hans Vermeer. The term “*skopos*” is a Greek word that means purpose or aim (Feinauer, class notes: 2002). He used the term to refer to the purpose of a translation that in turn determines the translation methods and strategies to be used so as to produce a functionally adequate and meaningful translation. A translator therefore needs to know why the source text was produced and what function it is going to serve in the target text. The *skopos* of the translation then determines the translating strategy,

and it does not restrict translation strategies to just one or a few and does not introduce any restrictions (Vermeer, 1998:45).

According to Reiss and Vermeer, a target text is determined by its skopos and is an offer of information in a target culture. It must be coherent with the source text and with the target text's situation. The translator therefore plays a role in intercultural communication. Vermeer stresses that translation has to be culture sensitive. Vermeer dethrones equivalence and the use of a source text as a yardstick to measure the effectiveness or the good quality of a translation. Vermeer regards a translation as a translation when it functions as a text in the target culture, that is, when it relays the message it is supposed to relay and in an appropriate manner. The function of the translation in the target culture determines which aspects of the source text should be transferred to the translation (Vermeer, 1998:46).

According to Vermeer, for a translation to be appropriate, the skopos needs to be stated clearly in the commission. The nature of the target text is determined by its skopos and its adequacy. Adequacy is a relation between a source text and a target text that comes as a consequence of observing a skopos outlined during commissioning. The target text has to be functionally and communicatively adequate (Munday, 2001: 81).

#### **2.4.3.4 Christiane Nord**

Nord (1997a:47) added another insight into the functionalist theory. She felt that the skopos theory does not pay enough attention to the linguistic nature of the source text. A translator may fulfil the purpose laid out in the commissioning stage and only to find that at a semantic and stylistic level, the translation is inadequate. She therefore came up with a more detailed and flexible functionalist model that incorporates text analysis. She outlined the translation process as follows: that the initiator, who may be a client or a source text author, approaches a translator to do a translation. In the brief the initiator gives the purpose or the function or the skopos of that text to the target audience. The other information that should be obtained by the translator from the initiator is who that target audience is, who developed the text, the medium of the text, the motives for writing the text and for translating it. This information helps the translator to prioritise what information to include in the target text.

The translator begins by analysing the translation skopos as instructed by the initiator. Then he or she analyses the context of the source text to check whether it is possible to fulfil the function outlined in the commission and to decide on functionalist priorities of the translation strategy. In analysing the source text, the translator scrutinises the following: who transmits the information; to whom; what for; using which medium; why the information is being communicated; what the function of the text is; the subject matter it tackles; what the content is including connotation and cohesion; what non-verbal elements it contains; the words used in what kind of sentences and the tone used.

With isiXhosa in mind, which is my language, I would also like to add the following - is the language used in the source text acceptable and accessible in the target culture? Is the content something that isiXhosa speakers are familiar with and will it, as such, be able to transmit the message? If not, what strategy does a translator use then to transmit the same message? In answering these questions, the translator uses the skopos as a guide in determining which elements of the source text will be preserved and which ones will be adapted. This process ensures that the translator has taken into consideration all factors pertaining to the translation and because of this the translation will be able to fulfil the intended function in the target culture.

Nord's approach moves from a premise that translation does not occur in a vacuum. There is always a reason for a translation to take place. Nord's approach is flexible but it insists on text analysis. The intended function of the translation has to be identified and functional elements that need to be adapted to the target culture also have to be determined. In a way, this approach brings together the text-linguistic approach and the functionalist approach of the predecessors of Nord, namely Reiss, Vermeer and Holz-Mänttari. Source text analysis and skopos are both taken care of. The source text and specific conventions prevalent in a particular culture community are also taken into consideration and these were not given enough consideration in the skopos theory.

As much as Nord supported the skopos theory, she also added the concept of loyalty.

### 2.4.3.5 Loyalty

Nord feels that a translation is meant to fulfil a particular purpose that is specified in advance. The target recipient has to rely on the functionality of the target text to get the intended message. The initiators and readers of the target text expect a particular relationship between a source text and a target text that varies according to the text type. Because the target recipient relies solely on the functionality of the target text, the translator is bound to maintain a certain loyalty towards the target text recipient. He or she has the moral responsibility not to deceive them (Nord, 1997b: 48). Translation also depends on the compatibility of the target text skopos with the given source text and the translator has to be loyal towards the source text author. Nord calls this responsibility and relationship "loyalty". Loyalty commits the translator both to the source text, to the target text situation, to the purpose and to the target text recipient (Nord, 1991: 94).

This is also a point on which Nord differs from the other functionalists. Other functionalists allow the translators freedom to move away from the source text as much as they want to. Nord stresses that whilst functionality is the most important criterion for a translation, it does not allow translators an absolute licence to deviate as much as they want from the source text. There has to be some kind of relationship between the source text and the target text and the nature of this relationship is determined by the purpose or the skopos of the translation.

Nord also states that the responsibility of rendering an honest, functionalist translation rests with the translator who is the only person who can determine whether the transfer process has taken place satisfactorily and ensure that culture-specific conventions have been taken into consideration. Nord feels, therefore, that a combination of loyalty and functionalism means that a translator can produce a functionalist target text that conforms to the brief and the skopos as well as a translation that is acceptable in the target culture.

### 2.4.3.6 The process of translation according to Nord

For the process of translation, Nord recommends what she calls a looping model. The reason she prefers a looping model is that translation is not a linear, progressive process that start from a particular point to a particular point but is a circular recursive



process consisting of an indefinite number of feedback loops which one can keep on getting back to (Nord, 1991:30).

The first step, according to Nord, is the analysis of the target text skopos given in the translation brief or deduced by the translator from the translation task. From the translation brief the translator should be able to know the sender's intention, the addressee, the time and place of text reception, the medium to be used in text transmission and the motive for text production and reception.

The second step is the analysis of the source text. The translator has to first get the general idea of the material provided and check whether it is compatible with the initiator's brief. Then he or she has to do a detailed analysis of all levels of the text, namely pragmatic elements, the text-specific elements, interlingual elements and intercultural elements and focus on the elements that are of particular importance for the production of the target text. This will help him or her to identify relevant source text elements for the translation and decide how he or she will match those with corresponding target text elements, as well as help him or her to decide which ones will be suitable for the intended target text function. He or she also checks which translation problems will arise in the process of translation and what kind of transfer procedures will have to be used to solve them.

The third step is the structuring of the target text and translation thereof. The functionalist approach's process of translation therefore is a top-down approach. It starts on a pragmatic level by first identifying the function of the translation. The next stage looks at which functional elements of the source text will be reproduced and which ones will be adapted so as to suit the target reader's culture genre or medium restrictions and communication needs. The last stage looks at the differences in language systems, contextual aspects and at the translator's personal preferences while sticking to the function of the translation.

#### **2.4.3.7 Summary of the functionalist approach**

Functionalists view translation as intercultural communication. They view translation as adequate if the translated text is appropriate for the communicative purpose defined in the translation brief. The proponents of this approach did away completely with basing judgement of a good translation on the source text. They also dethroned



equivalence. Their focus became the function and purpose or the *skopos* of the text, which would be spelt out in the brief.

This approach differs from the other two approaches in that it is a top-down approach that takes into consideration the target recipient. It also gives translators some freedom and recognises their expertise in the field of translation. Though the translator is given some freedom, he or she is still expected to remain loyal to all translation role-players namely the initiator, the message and the content of the source text and the conventions of a particular culture. It is therefore a communication-oriented concept of textuality and a target-oriented concept of translation, accompanied by a principle of loyalty to all translation role-players and conventions.

## **2.5 Translation and culture**

Language and culture co-exist. Culture is considered to play a big role in translation studies. Culture refers to beliefs and expectations shared by a particular community or group that determine the way people act. It relates to values, ideas and feelings and it manifests in behaviour and products, behaviour referring to how we conduct and present ourselves and products referring to things such as clothes, cars, houses and so on. There are different types of cultures, for example, we have youth culture, education culture, age culture, traditional culture and so on, in which a particular community is oriented to behave and see things in a particular way. Interlingual translation opens up a foreign culture. It transfers aspects of the culture of one group to another group.

Susan Bassnet-Mcguire and Andre Lefevere did research into the interaction between translation and culture and the way in which culture impacts and constrains translation. Lefevere states that the ideology of the translator, or the ideology imposed upon the translator, plays a role in the translator's strategy and his solutions to specific problems. Culture in translation involves issues such as politics, gender, power relations, colonisation and ideology (Munday, 2001: 127). In the African culture, for example, it is considered taboo to name sexual organs and translators in this culture have to use respecting unfamiliar terms when confronted with sexual terms. The same goes for insults; translation into African languages may omit or tone down because of ideology pressures.

The culture of power relations plays a role in translation. Translation studies are largely Western-oriented and most translations follow Western norms and the theory of language of the Western culture and its philosophy. Most languages are forced to bow to some languages' conventions, mostly European languages.

The political context also plays a role in translation. In South Africa, for example, translation into English from any language is seen as sufficient and there is no pressure to translate texts into other languages, except into Afrikaans, because English is seen to be the language of power and of the economy. English has political and economic incentives. The national Constitution states that there are eleven official languages but in practice there are still two official languages, namely English and Afrikaans. Minor efforts are made to promote the other nine languages but the people who are in power are happy with receiving documents in English.

The socio-cultural framework also plays a role in translation. For example, in African languages, because of understanding his or her target audience, a translator may decide to simplify or naturalise technical translations so as to minimise foreignness of the target text. On the economic side, literary translation, for example, is an economic activity and as such will be dictated upon by publishing companies or the commissioning agents and the market forces. Companies or agents that commission the work may dictate the kind of translation they want and as such decide on the translation strategies. Translation into African languages of the revised education curriculum is highly dictated by educational requirements and market forces and has to conform to them.

## **2.6 Summary**

Although the field of translation studies is still not on par with other academic fields, it is slowly developing. Although it is still housed in language departments, it has grown from being seen as just part of language learning or of grammar exercises used to compare two languages, or as a means of acquiring a new language, to an academic discipline with its own theories and applications. The 1960s saw the development of a more systematic approach to translation from a linguistic approach to other approaches.

The linguistic approach focused on equivalence of words and sentences and sentence structures and insisted that these had to be completely equivalent for a translation to be considered good. The text linguists started looking at a holistic picture in which the whole text was taken as a unit of translation. They also introduced the socio-cultural situation within which a text is produced. This approach did not do away with equivalence but it looked at textual equivalence rather than word equivalence. Both the linguistic and text-linguistic approaches received heavy criticism for focusing on linguistic structures of a text and for their notion of equivalence.

Another approach that emerged and that moved away from linguistic orientation and focus was the functionalist approach. The emphasis in this approach was put on the function and purpose, the *skopos*, of the translation. Equivalence was dethroned as a measure of judging the adequacy and quality of translation. To cater for the source text, other concepts such as text analysis and loyalty were introduced. This approach differed a lot from the other two approaches in that it was a communication-oriented concept of textuality and a target-oriented concept of translation accompanied by a principle of loyalty to all translation role-players and conventions.

Other translation theories were developed that introduced other dimensions involved in the translation process other than those highlighted in the three theories mentioned above. Amongst these dimensions, they looked at what goes on in the translator's mind as he or she translates and what other systems are related to translation that have an effect on how one goes about translating.

As far as I am concerned, all these theories build on each other and can all be taken into consideration when one is translating. Linguistic factors can be taken into consideration; cultural factors and situational factors can be taken into consideration; the function and purpose of the translation has to be taken into consideration and systems dominant in a particular period can also be considered since they may have an effect on how translations are carried out in a particular period.

IsiXhosa translators have not even begun to focus consciously on using these translation theories and models in their daily work. They currently use their language expertise. They are still dealing with other factors such as developing the orthography and dealing with attitudes that people have towards African languages. Unconsciously and without being taught, they do use these theories if one looks at

the existing isiXhosa translations. Some use both linguistic approaches that result in a lot of direct translations; others use the functionalist approach which result in good translations and others use a combination of all three main translation approaches.

## CHAPTER 3: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF ISIXHOSA AS TARGET TEXT : TEXT FOCUSED

**Document :** MODULE 1: WHAT IS LOCAL GOVERNMENT:

*Developed, compiled and translated by the Foundation for Contemporary Research (FCR) in 2003 for the municipalities of the Western Cape*

### 3.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2, the translation activity has been explained as a communicative act between the source text author and the target text reader via the translator. It is about successfully conveying the message in the source text into the target text (Jang Hoe Tang, 2000:1). Wills (1996: 35) states that translation has three foci of emphasis, the source text, the translator and the target text all of which feed upon each other. As stated in Chapter 2, at first translation used to be regarded as quality translation if it had all the linguistic elements contained in the source text and that was referred to as a linguistic model. As years went by, translation was regarded as good if it carried and succeeded in achieving the purpose or the aim of the text, the functional equivalence, and that was termed the functionalist approach (Nord, 1997).

The functionalists' approach focused on the function of the text and the reader as the evaluator of translation quality because the purpose of the message was the criteria used to judge whether a translation was adequate or good (Jang Hoe Tang, 2000:1). Before the functionalist approach, an assessment of translation quality was at first concerned with the degree of equivalence between the source text and the target text as products and did not consider the reader dependency in understanding the text (Jang Hoe Tang, 2000:1). It concentrated on the meaning of sentences. It was then later realised that this approach to translation quality ignored the fact that translation is a communicative activity which aims to convey the message to the recipient. It was also realised that the reader's understanding of the target text has to be taken into consideration for a translation to be adequate (Jang Hoe Tang, 2000:2).

In this chapter I will analyse an unedited document titled, *What is local government*, developed, compiled and translated by the Foundation for Contemporary Research (FCR) in 2003 for the municipalities of the Western Cape. I will assess whether it has

conveyed the message in the source text successfully, in an understandable manner to the reader; and whether the translator has done the job adequately. Analysed sections of this document are attached as Appendix A:A1-A7 and the source text as Appendix B:B1-B7.

### **3.2 Description of the chosen document**

The above-mentioned document is available in the three official languages of the Western Cape province namely Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa. It was developed for the local government by the Foundation for Contemporary Research (FCR). The purpose of the document is to help all municipalities to know what local government is in terms of its constitutional status, objectives, powers and functions. It is also intended to help municipal council and executive committee members understand their role and responsibilities in the municipal structures and in the local community. It is therefore an informative text. Upon enquiry about the document, the author of the source text, Mr Ismail Davids from the Foundation for Contemporary Research (FCR) informed the researcher that the document was originally compiled in English and was outsourced for translation into isiXhosa and Afrikaans. It was translated into isiXhosa as the language policy of this province and of the Unicity or municipalities demands that all provincial and government official documents be produced in all the three languages of this province.

### **3.3 The target text and reasons for choosing this text**

I chose this text because it was translated very badly. The target isiXhosa text is a frustrating document in that one can hardly make out any meaning throughout the translation. Almost not a single sentence makes sense from the first page to the last page. The heading is wrong and the document is full of spelling mistakes. It is totally unreadable.

When I read this document, it made me think of the signage on buildings around Cape Town whose isiXhosa translations are either wrong or have spelling errors, most of which are government buildings or parastatal offices. It also made me think of lots of government documents that have been produced in our languages with appalling translations. The efforts by local, provincial and national governments to translate these documents are highly appreciated but they culminate into nothing when the documents are badly translated.

I therefore chose this document because it represents a number of documents that are translated into isiXhosa that are often not readable, especially those that are outsourced to freelancers or organisations or companies that deal with translation work. This is not always the case but I believe that someone needs to blow a whistle. This document, therefore, is a translation that supports my hypothesis and a feeling of many African language practitioners that documents translated into African languages are badly translated. It therefore lays the foundation for me to express my feelings and the feelings of many isiXhosa target readers who get frustrated when they read translated documents.

All that was needed to render a proper translation of the source text was to read it and understand it so that when one comes across terms that do not exist in isiXhosa, one would still find a way of communicating the same message using alternative terms or phrases or find out what those terms mean so as to be able to translate them.

### **3.4 Qualitative analysis of the target text**

Botha (2003: 6) has come up with an instrument that can be used to assess the quality of the source text and the target text. She emphasises the importance of studying the source text before making a judgement of the target text. She also emphasises the importance of the translation brief and the function of the text for the target audience. This instrument looks at the following seven textual principles as useful tools to judge whether the text has fulfilled its purpose:

Coherence – the way in which a reader forms a meaningful interpretation of the text which includes the significance of the text to the reader; contextuality; intertextuality; intentionality; acceptability; informativeness; and cohesion, which refers to the unity of the text, the way sentences run together to form a cohesive text.

The instrument works as follows, and I quote from Botha (2003: 7) :

"... the instrument assesses the text in its entirety by looking at its significance in the given context. This refers to the principle of coherence, which is the first principle of textuality ... Next, the conformity of the text function with the requirements of the translation brief and correspondence of the text type with

the text function have to be established. These three issues form the textual aspects of the instrument.

The second category of the instrument concerns the aspects of content. The accuracy of the information given in the target text has to be verified in terms of the translation brief. This is of paramount importance because for the first time accuracy is determined by means of the translation brief and not the source text and culture. Secondly, the instrument determines the adequacy of the information given.

The third category deals with the construction of the text, and in particular, its logic. This aspect refers to the way in which arguments are presented and the evolution of the text. The cohesion and unity of the text, i.e. the way sentences and paragraphs are put together, is germane to its construction and has to be determined accordingly.

The fourth category assesses the formulation of the text. In the first instance the compatibility of the language used with the specific context, is assessed. This concerns the pragmatic level of language. Secondly, a decision should be reached in the degree of formality which should be in keeping with the contents of the text. This refers to the stylistic level of language. The syntactic level of language is assessed by investigating the formulation and syntax and deciding their measure of compliance with the requirements of the target language. Finally the lexicological level assesses the eligibility of the word usage.

The last category concerns the presentation of the text or translation. Firstly the instrument assesses the suitability of the format and the layout of the text. Secondly it has to be determined if spelling and punctuation requirements are being met. “

Botha presents the instrument to assess the quality of the target text as follows:



Assessment Instrument

**CATEGORY 1: Textual Aspects**

1.1 Is the text meaningful given the context?

<b>Not meaningful</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Meaningful</b>
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1.2 Does the text function conform to the requirements of the translation brief?

<b>Inadequately</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Adequately</b>
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1.3 Does the text type correspond with the text function?

<b>Not corresponding</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Corresponding</b>
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**CATEGORY 2: Content Aspects**

2.1 Is the information accurate in terms of the translation brief?

<b>Inaccurate</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Accurate</b>
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2.2 Is the information given adequate?

<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Adequate</b>
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**CATEGORY 3: Build-Up**

3.1 Does the text have a logical build-up?

<b>Illogical</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Logical</b>
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3.2 Is the text presented cohesively?

Incohesively	1	2	3	4	5	Cohesively
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**CATEGORY 4: Formulation**

4.1 Is the language use suitable given the context?

Not suitable	1	2	3	4	5	Suitable
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4.2 Does the degree of formality suit the contents of the text?

Not suitable	1	2	3	4	5	Suitable
--------------	---	---	---	---	---	----------

4.3 Are the formulation and syntax in accordance with grammatical requirements of the target language?

Inadequate	1	2	3	4	5	Adequate
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4.4 Is the use of words appropriate?

Inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	Appropriate
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**CATEGORY 5: Presentation**

5.1 Is the format suitable?

Not suitable	1	2	3	4	5	Suitable
--------------	---	---	---	---	---	----------

5.2 Are spelling and punctuation requirements being met?

Inadequately	1	2	3	4	5	Adequately
--------------	---	---	---	---	---	------------

Somewhere here I would add originality, because in a number of cases, one finds that when one reads an isiXhosa document, one can tell that it is a translation because it reads like English. One sometimes notes that the translation is good but the language is foreign. I would also add something that emphasises transference of culture. It does not come out strongly in the above categories.

This is a good assessment instrument that would work well to assess translated government documents. It would help to identify what the problems are in the existing documents. For the target local government document analysed in this chapter, we would probably answer “inadequate” to almost all the questions asked because most of the translators here “unconsciously” used a linguistic approach. In this particular translation, I would mostly mark the target text with qualities listed on the left-hand side such as, inadequate, illogical and so on.

In analysing the target text being dealt with in this chapter, the researcher will look at the microstructural and macrostructural aspects of it. In microstructural aspects, the researcher will look at the finer aspects of the translation such as spelling errors, orthography and syntax or sentence construction. Under macrostructural aspects, the researcher will look at broader issues such as terminology, language competence, translation competence and the structure of the text at large.

### **3.4.1 Microstructural aspects of the target text**

#### *3.4.1.1 Spelling errors*

The isiXhosa version of this document is full of spelling errors. These are the kinds of spelling errors that sometimes change the sense of a document. This occurs from the title page to the last page. The title on the covering page is, *What is Local Government?* IsiXhosa reads, *Yinto Urhulumente Wengingqi* and it should actually read as, *Yintoni uRhulumente weNgingqi?* The translator has left out *-ni* in *Yintoni* (*what is*) and has ‘*yinto*’ which means ‘*it is a thing*’ and with no question mark at the end of this question. The title in isiXhosa therefore has been translated as ‘*Local Government is a Thing*’. Since the word ‘*yinto*’ is an isiXhosa legitimate correct word, any isiXhosa reader, the target reader, will definitely understand that title to mean that local government is a thing, implying, it exists. The meaning has changed

altogether. Had this translator revised or read his or her work, he or she definitely would have picked up this error.

On the very first page, following the title page, there are 12 spelling mistakes: **umgaqo-siseko** (constitution) has been spelt **ungaqqa siseko** and the second time spelt as **umqawo siseko**

lkomiti (committee)	ikomii	
Lwenzu (makes)	llwemza	
ngoyena	goyena	
kunye	kunyw	
aceba	ooceba	
namagosa	namagesa	and so on.

This is the case throughout this document. Every sentence on page 32 has a spelling mistake.

#### 3.4.1.2 *The orthography*

The translator does not know isiXhosa orthography. Word division in the isiXhosa text is very bad. For example, in isiXhosa, verbs in future tense are written as two words - **will look at**, would be translated as **oza kujongana** – two words, yet the translator has **ozakujongana** on the first page as one word. Then he or she divides words when he is not supposed to. I will quote a few examples:

**luka masipala** on page 30 should be one word, not two words, **nje ngo ceba** on page 30, which the translator has divided into three words should be one word; **kwimi butho** on page 27 should be one word; **ye wadi** on page 34 should be one word; **ngoko mqaqo** on page 36 should be one word.

Secondly, a demonstrative in isiXhosa is separated from a noun and therefore a noun preceded by a demonstrative becomes two words. This translator's isiXhosa demonstratives in many instances are joined to the noun, for example:

**lonto** on pages 28 and 33 should be written as **loo nto**, two words;

**yalemisebenzi** on page 34 should be two words, **yale misebenzi** not one word.

The capitalisation is wrong. The translator has chosen to follow the English style of capitalisation by capitalising the first letter of the words in titles whereas, in isiXhosa, we mainly capitalise the first letter of the stem.

### 3.4.1.3 Grammar and syntax

The grammar and syntax are worse. In a number of instances, concords do not match the nouns. For example, on the objectives or aims of this document stated on page 4 in the source text and on page 27 in isiXhosa, isiXhosa concords are all wrong. IsiXhosa reads as follows: **Lw**enza abathathi nxaxheba **yazi** ukuba urhulumente ... The sentence, first of all, is completely meaningless. The concord **Lw** of **Lw**enza does not agree with the noun **iinjongo** (objectives). The proper word would be **kukwenza**. **Ya-** of **yazi** does not agree with any of the two words, **iinjongo** and **lw**enza. **Ba-** should have been used instead of **ya-** and the word should be **bazi**.

On page 36, the last sentence, the concord used for **umasipala** is **ba** instead of **u** – *umasipala banoxanduva ...* which should be *umasipala unoxanduva ...*

The plurals of certain words are isiZulu words, eg **amawadi** (wards) which in isiXhosa is **iiwadi** or **iiwodi**. There are a number of other isiZulu words used, for example, **umbiko** (report) and sometimes calls it **iripoti**, on page 32 which should be **ingxelo** in isiXhosa which is a well-known isiXhosa term for report; **ezisemqoka** is another isiZulu word used to refer to **main** and in isiXhosa the word should be **ezingundoqo**. It is as if the document was translated by an isiXhosa third language speaker.

### 3.4.1.4 Word order in phrases

The translator has also followed English word order when translating concepts or phrases, whereas in isiXhosa we actually translate backwards when translating phrases. For example, municipal airport has been translated on page 28 as **Umasipala wesikhululo senqwelomoya** which back-translates as **airport municipality**. It should have been **isikhululo seenqwelomoya sikamasipala**. **Building regulations** has been translated as **ulwakhiwo lomiselo**, which first of all is meaningless; and back-translated it means **building of establishment** or **of a regulation**. The translator just does not know how to translate to isiXhosa.

### 3.4.2 Macrostructural aspects of the target text

#### 3.4.2.1 Assessment of terminology and field jargon employed by the translator

The translator of this document either does not understand the English terms used in this document or does not know how to put or phrase them in isiXhosa. He or she just does not understand government or legal document jargon at all, does not understand English very well or cannot speak isiXhosa properly. The first sentence on page 4 in English under the title **Introduction** reads as follows:

“The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act of 1996 makes provision for three spheres of government, which are distinctive, interdependent, and interrelated:

- a central government sphere, also referred to as the national sphere
- a provincial government sphere consisting of nine provincial administrations, and
- a local government sphere consisting of metropolitan, district and local municipalities.”

isiXhosa reads as follows:

“Umqawo siseko womthetho ka 1996kwi phondo lomzantsi Afrika llwemza umphako wemo ezintanthu zikarhulumente ezi cacileyo, ngokuzimela kunye nangokohlobo.

- Urhulumente ophakathi wemo, ozakujongana nemo ngokubanzi
- Urhulumente ophakathi onamaphondo e-ofisi alithoba kunye
- Norhulumente wengingqi ahambisana ne metropoliteni, isixeko kunye nomasipala be ngingqi.”

Besides the fact that this sentence has lots of spelling mistakes, it does not make sense at all. Back-translated it reads as follows:

The Constitution of the of the Act of 1996 in the province of South Africa, makes provision (translator has used the provision (the one that refers to food) of three clear environments or conditions by being independent and by nature

- A middle government of a nature, which will look after all conditions
- A middle government which has nine provinces and
- A local government that works with the metropolitan, the city and local municipalities.

How is a target reader expected to make sense of this? It just does not make sense. To add to the confusion, the translator in this instance has capitalised bulleted sentences or first words in the bulleted sentences that are not capitalised in the source text.

A proper or more sensible translation should have been something like this:

*Umgqaqo-siseko weRiphabliki yoMzantsi Afrika ophunyezwe ngowe-1996 ubonelela ngoorhulumente abathathu, abohlukileyo, abaxhomekeke omnye komnye nabathungelanayo abangaba:*

- *urhulumente omkhulu okanye ongundoqo okwangurhulumente welizwe*
- *urhulumente wephondo obandakanya amacandelo olawulo alithoba, kunye*
- *norhulumente wenginqi okanye wommandla obandakanya iinqila, izithili noomasipala beengingqi okanye bemimandla.*

On page 6, the source text has "Structures within a Municipality" but the isiXhosa on page 29 is translated as, "Izakhiwo phakathi kumasipala" which back-translates as "*Buildings or building structures inside the Municipality*"

#### *3.4.2.2 Language and translation competency*

There are extreme cultural differences between English and isiXhosa. For example, those of us who were born in the Eastern Cape do not refer to the flats and houses that we bought in Cape Town as homes, we refer to them as our houses (endlwini). When I say ekhaya (home) I am then referring to my birth home in the Eastern Cape. I may say in English, I am going home, but in isiXhosa I say, 'I am going to my house' so the translation would change to reflect that. In this regard, and I know of a person who was fined heavily by the Wynberg court because of that lack of cultural understanding of a difference between 'house' and 'home' by the isiXhosa interpreter. The accused was heavily fined for not appearing on the court date and he said he was at home which was why he did not turn up. He actually meant that he had gone to the Eastern Cape. From the interpreter who was interpreting from isiXhosa into English, the magistrate deduced that this man was sitting at home here in the Western Cape and he fined him R500.00 for contempt of court.

the fact that, he or she has not even bothered to contact his or her commissioner to try and understand the document.

The translator therefore seems not to be competent in the two languages and is definitely not a competent isiXhosa translator because he or she failed to decode the source text and to encode it into the target text.

#### *3.4.2.3 The style and structure of the text*

The translator has followed the source structure style closely and that does not affect the translation at all, except for a few deviations in the headings style where the translator has used upper case while the source text has used title and lower cases. The English version of this document, which is the source text, uses a fairly straightforward, easy-to-understand formal but very simple language.

- It is not technical or complicated at all.
- The structure is the kind that one would find in most official or formal information documents.
- It has clear paragraphs and, where necessary, it has used tables.
- It has no pictures.
- It is in double-line spacing and is therefore reader-friendly.

Properly translated, with this structure, the document would work well in isiXhosa and the isiXhosa target reader would understand it well in its form and structure.

### **3.5 Does the text function as a text in the target culture?**

The target text in this case does not function as a text in the target culture at all. This translation hardly makes any sense, it is just a combination of words. If this translator was paid for this translation, the commissioner should demand his or her money back. The translator seems to have tried to make his or her translation as closely equivalent as possible to the source text and in the process lost the meaning. The translator is also not fluent in either English or isiXhosa and he or she definitely is not aware that the grammatical structures of these two languages are different.



### 3.6 Translation brief, translation process and loyalty

From the quality of this translation, it seems as if the translator was not briefed sufficiently about the text type and the intended audience. If the translator was briefed, then he or she never bothered to browse through the document to determine whether he or she would be able to do the job. It is very clear from the first page that the translator was unable to fulfil the skopos of the translation but disregarded his or her inability to translate this particular document and he or she continued with the translation job. He/she chose not to be loyal to the person that commissioned him/her. In fact, as mentioned before, this person cannot translate into isiXhosa at all or at least could not at the time of translating this document. He/she should have been honest about that as soon as he or she was offered the job. He or she was therefore not loyal both to the source text and the target text. In fact, he or she committed a crime on both texts. This is language "murder" especially of the target text, isiXhosa and an insult to the target language and the language profession at large.

### 3.7 Recommendations

#### (i) *Macrostructural matters*

There are good translations that have been rendered in isiXhosa such as the isiXhosa translated version of the *Long Walk to Freedom* of Mr Mandela which was translated by Professor Mtuze from Rhodes University. Professor Mtuze is a qualified translator, a linguist and a very good and experienced translator and that is the calibre of translators that we need to seek, identify and develop. There are government documents that also have been properly translated. In such cases, when one does research on who did those translations, one will find that, they were done by people with a vast amount of experience in translation, coupled with language qualifications. Government should employ or use proper translators and should evaluate or analyse their translating capabilities.

Organisations, companies and institutions, especially government institutions as well as translators used by these institutions need to be made aware that translation is a skill that one develops over time and that needs to be backed with language expertise. They need to know that there are theoretical issues involved, such as translation procedures that one needs to take into consideration when translating.

This then immediately means that translating is not a task that can be performed by any language speaker. This knowledge would make translators aware that if they have not taken care of certain issues, such as checking whether the translation relays the proper message, then their translation is inadequate.

This knowledge would make commissioners of translation understand that:

- ◇ Translation is a professional exercise. As Prof Mtuze (1994:10) puts it, it is not “an unimportant exercise that can be undertaken by any Tom, Dick and Harry without proper training or sensitivity for the use of language”. They therefore need to find properly trained or experienced translators;
- ◇ They have a duty to ensure that their translation brief to translators is clear;
- ◇ They need to establish whether that translator will be able to do the job;
- ◇ After the translation is completed, they need to have it checked by a qualified editor, not only for orthographical errors but to check whether it fulfils its function;
- ◇ Institutions need to encourage translators to enrol for translation courses because in translation courses they would learn that translation involves theory, and that there are translation procedures and processes to take note of when translating;
- ◇ Translators also need to attend regular language and translation workshops and network with other translators and establish how they manage to come up with good quality translations despite the lack of technical terminology in isiXhosa.

(ii) *Proposed solutions to microstructural issues*

*Spelling errors*

Translators need to read their work after they have finished their translations so that they pick up spelling errors.

*Orthography mistakes*

Organisations, companies and institutions need to check the language qualifications, expertise and experience of the translators they employ. Qualifications do not necessarily mean that people can translate, but at least they offer some kind of guarantee that orthographical errors will be minimised. Translators need to equip themselves with language skills.

### *Jargon and terminology*

Translators should be competent and knowledgeable speakers of the source text language, the target language and their cultures. When translators come across terms or concepts that they do not know, they need to phone their clients or commissioners or find reference works in the relevant fields.

### **3.8 Summary**

Translators need to realise that when they translate, they communicate a number of things. They communicate the meaning, information, propositions, thoughts, ideas, beliefs, attitudes and emotions (Jang Hoe Tang, 2000:2). As Nida points out in his theory of dynamic equivalence, it is important that readers of the target text should respond to the message in the same manner as those of the source text. "There should be a high degree of equivalence of response or the translation will have failed to achieve its purpose" (Nida and Taber, 1969:24). The translation text being considered in this chapter does not spark that kind of response, instead it leaves the reader totally confused. This is a common occurrence in texts translated into isiXhosa, especially the technical ones. This does not only affect texts translated into isiXhosa documents but those translated into African languages in South Africa in general and something needs to be done about this. Translators need to equip themselves with language and translation skills and knowledge and should familiarise themselves with cultural aspects of the languages.

Clients, in this case governments and organisations or consultants acting on behalf of government, should use competent translators because government documents, whether local, provincial or national are for public consumption. Those that have employed full-time in-house translators need to send them on regular translation training courses and to workshops so that they can polish up their skills. The National Language Service needs to regularly send all workshops reports and conference reports pertaining to language and translation as well as terminology booklets, orthography booklets to all language units, not just those that fall under departments of Arts and Culture as well as to freelancing language practitioners. The National Lexicography Units (NLUs) that fall under PanSALB should speed up the process of producing technical dictionaries that are highly needed as tools for translators to refer

to. Without these tools and without language and translation training, new translators will continue to produce unreadable documents.

The language profession also needs to be regulated by a statutory body so that not just anybody is given a translation job.

## CHAPTER 4 : THE QUALITY OF TRANSLATED ISIXHOSA GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS : READER-FOCUSED

### 4.1 Introduction and purpose of this empirical study

The main purpose of this chapter is to assess the feeling of target readers of the translated isiXhosa government documents on the quality of these documents. The second purpose was to establish from the heads of government language units in the province and the isiXhosa translators in those units about the quality of the isiXhosa translations as far as they are aware. It was also to establish whether there have been any complaints with regard to isiXhosa translations in their institutions.

In my hypothesis I stated : *Currently, the quality of translations of documents translated from English into South African African languages is poor, especially those that are of a technical nature. This is an outcry from the target readers, namely the African language speakers who are the intended recipients and users of these documents that maintain that they only get to understand what is going on in some of these documents when they refer to the source text, which, most of the time, is in English. This means that those who do not understand English suffer even more in the sense that they cannot get the message from either the source text or the target text.* The empirical research in this chapter therefore is about proving or disproving my hypothesis.

This chapter explains the methods used in the research, how the respondents were chosen, tabulates the questions asked to the respondents, tables the results of the empirical study and ends with a conclusion.

### 4.2 Research methodology used

I have used two types of research, namely questionnaires and interviews. In the questionnaires, respondents were provided with two documents, each with one page extracted from translated documents. The first document was extracted from the translated Revised National Curriculum Statement of the Department of Education, Grades 10-12 Green Paper and its source text version was also provided. This document is attached as Appendix D. The second document was extracted from a local government unedited document titled, *What is Local Government?* submitted by

a commissioned translator to the commissioning institution. Its source text version was also provided. This is the document analysed in Chapter 3, and is found as Appendix D3 and D4.

Thirty-three respondents were asked to read through these documents and assess the quality of translation in the two documents, or state whether they make sense to them, and then to answer the questions that followed. The questions were the same in each of the two documents. They were also asked to fill in their name, institution and the work that they are doing and if they are not working, not part of any institution, a freelancer, student or an ordinary resident they were asked to state that as well.

The questions were both closed and open-ended. Regarding the closed questions, the respondents were expected to tick a box or to answer "yes" or "no". There was also the option of "other" so that if the answer did not fall within the given options, they had the liberty of stating the answer in the "other" slot. The open-ended questions sought further clarity on the answer supplied by the respondent. On these questions respondents were to give as much detail as possible. The questions on the two texts are attached as Appendix E.

The second type of research method, the interview, was directed at the heads of language units in provincial governments and at the isiXhosa translators in those government institutions. It was also directed at those heading language centres that translate documents into isiXhosa to find out about the translation practice followed as far as isiXhosa is concerned, the service rendered, the quality of isiXhosa translation and whether they have received any complaints on their isiXhosa translations. The interview questions are attached as Appendix F.

In each category of respondents, I explained the purpose of the research and I think that made some respondents to fill out in the questionnaires enthusiastically. That explanation is attached as Appendix C.

### **4.3 Choice of documents**

There were two reasons behind the choice of the two documents. The education document was chosen because there is currently an outcry in the whole country about the quality of the existing translated policy documents that are supposed to

clearly and simply explain the revised national curriculum, the new outcomes-based education, as it is popularly known. What the educators and subject advisers get instead are translations that are so complex that they make the subject matter even more difficult. Teachers opt for the English source text as they cannot make out what is stated in the African languages target texts, and not because the translation is poor but because the translation is too technical.

The second document on local government was specifically chosen to demonstrate that what sometimes makes a translation worse is the fact that some freelance translators used by government institutions do not even have a good command of the target language. They do not have a clue about grammatical requirements of the target language, not to mention being totally uninformed about the translation field.

There are lots of these isiXhosa translations so much so that translation into isiXhosa in government is seen as a futile exercise. The purpose therefore of choosing these documents is, firstly, to address the problem so that it is not perpetuated, secondly, to demonstrate that there are reasons for poor translation but that there are also solutions.

#### **4.4 How the respondents were chosen**

The respondents chosen were mainly language practitioners, namely translators and interpreters working either full time or as freelancers and educators, that is, teachers and lecturers or academics and education department subject advisers. The reason for the choice of these two categories was the choice of documents to be analysed. One was a document from the education department from which I wanted views of educators as they are the target audience of that particular document. The second document was from local government, flawed with language and grammar mistakes. I wanted the views of language practitioners in terms of their understanding of the cause of such careless mistakes. From the same language practitioners, I also wanted their opinions on the education department document, whether they understood it clearly as most of them have no knowledge of the education field, especially the revised curriculum. For this thesis, they then represented the general public.

#### *4.4.1 The language practitioners*

The language practitioners ranged from very experienced to less experienced translators and interpreters. The kind of questions asked required that they dug deep into their grammatical knowledge as well as general translation knowledge. They were chosen at random, no deliberate choice of gender or age but they were only chosen because they are language practitioners. A few of them are translation students.

#### *4.4.2 The educators*

The educators ranged from teachers and lecturers to subject advisers, meaning that they ranged from educators who know the curriculum subject matter very well to ordinary teachers who still need to be work-shopped on the new curriculum. They also ranged from very well experienced teachers to new teachers. The group comprised males and females, some highly qualified and others with only one teaching diploma.

#### *4.4.3 The overall response from respondents*

For some respondents the subject of poor translation was very sensitive and irritating. Most language practitioners and advisers seem to share this frustration. However, most were more willing to be vocal about it than to fill in the questionnaires because they were busy and did not have time to fill in questionnaires and others just did not like filling in questionnaires. I sent out 50 questionnaires and got 33 back. Some respondents still promise to fill in the questionnaires and give them back to me. There is a number of respondents who really took time to work on the questionnaire. They marked mistakes in the extracts and provided alternative translation in areas where they were unhappy about the translation. On the questionnaires they gave detailed explanations for their responses.

From the questionnaires that were returned, a number of issues were raised that have covered a lot of ground. The unreturned responses are highly unlikely to supply new inputs, views or opinions.



## **4.5 Questions asked**

The questions asked prompted respondents to assess the quality of the two translations and their overall feeling of the quality of isiXhosa translations. As already mentioned, respondents were given two texts with the same ten questions, meaning that the ten questions asked on the second text were the same ten questions asked on the first text. The questionnaire is attached as Appendix E.

There were eight questions compiled for the interview with the heads of the provincial language units which were different from those posed in the questionnaire. The purpose was to find out what the status quo is in the language units with regards to employment criteria, number of isiXhosa translators, whether they were qualified language practitioners or translators, whether they outsourced translation assignments and the effect of all the above. The interview questions are attached as Appendix F.

## **4.6 RESULTS OF THE EMPIRICAL STUDY**

### **4.6.1 The education document**

#### **4.6.1.1 The general feeling**

The first text extracted from an education government document raised very interesting responses in that, employees of the education department such as the translator in the department and some subject advisers and a few academics, stated that they understood the document well. This raised an interesting point that, a certain language/lingua or terminology that may not be easily understood by the general public makes perfect sense to people who understand the subject matter well or who are in that particular field. They can easily figure out what is being referred to, as opposed to those who are unfamiliar with the subject matter and who may need simplified language to be able to follow the subject matter.

The majority of the ordinary teachers and language practitioners who do not work for government and those who are not very familiar with the revised national curriculum statement policy document stated that they found the language in the document technical and the syntax very difficult to follow. As a result, they could not

make sense of certain parts of this document. They understood some parts of the document but other parts did not make sense at all.

#### **4.6.1.2 Responses to the questions asked**

##### *a) Sense and meaning*

Most respondents felt that the education document made sense to some extent but some aspects of it were literal and some sections were difficult to follow while others felt that it was too technical for them. A few respondents stated that it only made full sense after they referred to the English text. Speculation of the reasons by those who felt that it did not make much sense, ranged from assuming that the translator relied a lot on dictionaries and in certain instances picked the wrong meaning. Another reason cited for the lack of full sense was the word-for-word equivalents and the inability to change the source text structure so as to attain accuracy in the isiXhosa idiom. The third reason cited for the lack of full sense or meaning is the lack of terminology in the target language, meaning that the translator struggled to phrase the document properly in isiXhosa. The lack of appropriate terminology and proper concepts in isiXhosa left the translator with no choice but to come up with his or her own devices to try to transfer the meaning.

##### *b) Suitability of language*

Most respondents felt that the language used was suitable, the only problem was the choice of terms and sentence construction. Translation of words and phrases like "articulation" translated as "ukuhambisana" and "free the potential" translated as "ukukhulula amandla aleleyo" have been cited as examples of problematic translation. These are not technical words or phrases that need specialised terminology.

A few respondents cited that the language used by this particular translator was only accessible to education specialists. Ordinary teachers and ordinary people would not be able to work out the meaning in some of the paragraphs. The translator did not aim for simplicity.

c) *Grammatical requirements, punctuation and spelling errors*

Almost all the respondents stated that the translator's grammatical knowledge was of a high standard. A few academics raised the concern of the translator sticking to English grammatical formulations in certain paragraphs that were not compatible with isiXhosa. However, most respondents felt that the translator had a good command of isiXhosa. There were no spelling errors and the punctuation was very good.

d) *Format of the source text versus that of the target text*

The question raised here was whether the format of the source text affected the translation or the message of the target text. The responses indicated that both the source text and the target text are highly technical. Some respondents felt that the format and the formality of the source text did not affect the message while others felt that it did. A few respondents indicated that the translator did not have to follow the rigidity and the technicality of the English source text and in that way the message could have been further simplified. Other respondents did not answer this question.

e) *Suitability of lexical items used by the translator*

This is an area in which most respondents felt that the translation failed them. Others felt that, owing to the lack of isiXhosa terminology, the translator had no choice but to coin his or her own words, terms and phrases and, as such, the terms and words used were fine. The respondents who had a problem with the choice of words and terms felt that, if some of the terms were to be back-translated the meaning would be completely different. Therefore, on the whole, the lexical items used by the translator were appropriate in this context, except for a couple of mistranslations. This is where the respondents had to go back to the English source to get the meaning of these mistranslated terms. The most quoted mistranslated terms and phrases were:

<b>English</b>	<b>Terms/phrases used by translator</b>	<b>Appropriate term/phrases from respondents</b>
<i>Establish</i>	<i>Ukuzinzisa</i>	<i>Ukuseka</i>
<i>Free the potential</i>	<i>Ukukhulula amandla aleleyo</i>	<i>ukususa izibophelelo kwizakhono ukukhulula/ukukhupha izakhono ezisilelayo</i>

		- <i>ukuvumela ukubonakaliswa kwezakhono ngokukhululekileyo</i>
<i>Development</i>	<i>Ukwakhiwa</i>	<i>Ukuphuhliswa</i>
<i>Preamble</i>	<i>Isingeniso</i>	<i>Imbulambethe</i>
<i>Framework</i>	<i>Isakhelo</i>	<i>Isikhokelo</i>
<i>Articulation</i>	<i>Ukuhambisana</i>	<i>Ukuhambelana/ukungqinelana</i>
<i>“open” society</i>	<i>“esivulekileyo”</i>	<i>Esikhululekileyo</i>
<i>Learning pathways</i>	<i>Imimandla yokufunda</i>	<i>Iminyilo yokufunda</i>
<i>Reasonable measures</i>	<i>Imilinganiselo ecingisiswe kakuhle</i>	<i>Amanyathelo afanelekileyo</i>

One of the solutions or suggestions that have been brought up is that this translator should have consulted language specialists or subject advisers in the education department on these phrases to get an explanation of what these terms meant in this context so as to translate them properly. The translator could have also consulted other translators who have been working on education department documents so that there was consistency in the terms used.

*f) Overall comments on the education document*

The overall feeling was that this translation was not bad but that it is complicated. It has a few mistranslations, a few incidents of literal translation and the translator has followed the formal language of the source text. The translator was not familiar with either this field or the subject of the text. A language practitioner may be able to figure out what the document is about but an ordinary teacher may not figure out what is being explained here and may get bored, irritated and give up reading this.

The translation can be improved on. It is obvious that the translator has a good command of the target language and knows the grammar of the target language very well.

## 4.6.2 The local government document

### 4.6.2.1 The general feeling

This is the same document that was analysed in Chapter 3. The extract is from a local government document, a very important document that explains what local government is, the role of councils, councillors and of municipalities and so on. The document is supposed to be read and be well understood by all citizens. I have added it as a second document for empirical research so as to check the feelings of other people about this translation and other similar translations that are rampant in government documentation and signage.

The respondents have mainly echoed the same views that the researcher expressed in Chapter 3. The overall feeling about this document is that it is badly translated so much so that one of the respondents only answered the first question and stated that he did not see the need to answer other questions because this translator does not know the first thing about translation and had no idea of isiXhosa orthography. Another respondent stated that, if this translator was paid, he or she needed to refund the client or the commissioner.

### 4.6.2.2 Responses to the questions asked

#### a) *Sense and meaning*

Except for three respondents out of the 33, all respondents categorically stated that the translation did not make sense. It is described as both syntactically and semantically poor. It is very misleading and it conveys a confused message, if any. The facts presented in the source text are misrepresented and the translator has no insight of the local government field. There is also a clear display of total dependency on the dictionary without checking context. One would never be able to make out the meaning of the target text without referring to the source text.

#### b) *Suitability of language, grammar and punctuation*

According to the respondents, the language used was not suitable. The reasons given for this response were:

- ◇ The expressions used have no immediate relevance, for example, **provisions** have been translated as the “food” provision – **umphako** instead of the appropriate word or term **izibonelelo**.
- ◇ The language is fraught with grammatical errors, especially bad use of concordial forms; formatives are broken from words in a manner that is not natural to isiXhosa.
- ◇ It is full of typing and spelling errors.
- ◇ Some terms are literally translated and they distorted the meaning.
- ◇ Some terms have not even been translated.

c) *Format of the source text versus that of the target text*

The majority of the respondents said that the format of the source structure did not affect the target text. A few said yes it affected the target structure, most said no, and others did not answer to this question. The structure of the target text, however, was seen as problematic. One problem cited by one of the respondents was that, the main headings in the source text were written in small capitals whereas bulleted subheadings were in a large font and in capitals. This was found to be confusing and the target text had followed suit instead of improving on the source text. This was stated as one of the problems in isiXhosa translations in which translators are said to sometimes mimic even the inaccuracies of the source text. They strictly apply the linguistic approach to translation.

d) *Suitability of lexical items used by the translator*

Most respondents said “no”, lots of terms are not suitable and a few said “yes” they are suitable, but the whole translation was so bad that even good terms were shadowed by the bad terms. The respondents’ view was that most of the words and terms used were not suitable because they were word-for-word translations that had not been adapted to accurate isiXhosa form. There are lots of existing isiXhosa terms that could have been used in this translation that were not used, eg *ibhunga* for *council*, instead of *ikhansile* used by the translator, *icandelo* for *section* instead of *u-section*, *isigqeba* for *executive* instead of the Zulu term *iqoqo* used by the translator, *ukuba nakho* for *ikhaphasithi* used to translate *capacity*. One respondent even said that he thought that the translator probably spoke a lot of *fanakalo*, a South African pidgin, and may therefore be used to a lot of codeswitching.

Some of the worst lexical items quoted by the respondents, which are isiXhosa-correct versions, but very improper for this context are:

<b>English</b>	<b>Terms/phrases used by translator</b>	<b>Appropriate term/phrases from respondents</b>
Exercise power	Ukuqhelisa (train/acustom) igunya	Ukusebenzisa igunya
Provision	Umphako (as in food)	Isibonelelo
Status	Uxanduva (responsibility)	Iwonga/isikhundla
Promotion	Ukunyuselwa (higher position)	Ukukhuthaza
Organ	Ilungu (body part)	Isebe/iziko/icandelo/iqumrhu
Powers	Ulawulo (management/administration)	Amagunya

e) *Overall comments on the local government document*

As already mentioned, the respondents consider this document to be a poorly translated document. Words used by respondents to describe it range from terrible to pathetic, very bad to appalling, irritating, upsetting and insulting. It is bad because:

- ◇ the translation is literal;
- ◇ sentences have no meaning;
- ◇ the syntactical structure is disastrous;
- ◇ of numerous spelling mistakes;
- ◇ there is no consistency in terms and phrases;
- ◇ of inappropriate terms;
- ◇ of the terrible layout;
- ◇ the message is completely distorted.

Speculations for the bad translation are that:

- ◇ The translator may not be a first language speaker of isiXhosa;
- ◇ The translator may have been under pressure to meet a deadline;
- ◇ The translator is completely incapacitated as far as translation is concerned;
- ◇ The translator had no translation tools such as local government terminology lists, dictionaries, and so on;



- ◇ The translator has no knowledge of isiXhosa orthography; and
- ◇ The translator has no translation experience, qualification and even language qualification.

f) *The general quality of government documents*

Towards the end of each questionnaire on both documents, respondents were asked to give their general feeling about government isiXhosa-translated documents and any other comments that they have. Not all respondents regularly come across government documents. Those that do gave the following responses:

- ◇ In some documents, terminology is a bit foreign and the message tends to be obscure.
- ◇ Most of them are badly translated and part of the problem is inappropriate terminology and tendency to imitate the structure of the source text.
- ◇ The language used is not good and does not capture the meaning of the source text.
- ◇ The texts are translated for the sake of translating with the perception that isiXhosa speakers will not read them anyway, therefore no attention is paid to detail and quality.
- ◇ Some of the documents are poorly translated and this compromises the value of our indigenous languages.
- ◇ The message and meaning are not always clear; one sometimes has to consult the source text.
- ◇ They are not perfectly done; there are always language and spelling errors.
- ◇ Some of them are well translated.
- ◇ Some of them are highly technical and therefore difficult to translate.
- ◇ No proper quality assurance is done and there is no consistency, co-ordination and standardisation of terms.
- ◇ Some use too many acronyms that render them unreadable.
- ◇ Many of them are badly translated with literal translations that do not make sense, meaningless word-for-word translations in which the proper isiXhosa constructions are not followed, eg. the superfluous and senseless use of the word *kwaye* to mimic the English *and*. This suggests that the government solicits the translation service of people with little understanding of the English language and of isiXhosa itself, and, in some cases, in spite of the translation training they may have undergone.

- ◇ Some are not readable and the National Constitution was quoted as an example of a government document that is not readable and that has mistakes.
- ◇ They are not up to standard.
- ◇ Appalling.
- ◇ They use abstract terminology instead of simple language understood by the people.
- ◇ Commendable attempts but there is still room for improvement.
- ◇ The translators used lack the capability and skill to translate.
- ◇ Sometimes they are so bad that they have to be retranslated.
- ◇ The quality of the translation depends on whether the translator used is a professional one and whether he or she is afforded enough time to do the translation. Good translators that are given ample time to do translations produce good translations. Mistakes in government documents are indicative of time constraints, that is, not having enough time to read and understand the concepts used in the source text and not having time to proofread the document after translating it.

Regarding other comments, most respondents offered what they thought to be solutions to the problem of translation into isiXhosa problem as well as concerns. Their solutions and concerns are as follows:

- ◇ Government departments must use proper translators and translations must be edited.
- ◇ Translating does not only require someone who can speak the language; it is a specialist field and needs to be treated as such. Giving translation work to anybody is an insult to our languages, to the speakers of the target languages and to the translation profession.
- ◇ The native speakers of isiXhosa should take pride in their language.
- ◇ Translation into isiXhosa of government documents is still in the infancy stage and a lot of effort should be put into improving it.
- ◇ Translation is one of the first steps in the development of African languages and in the reintegration of black people into the mainstream of economic programmes. Government should therefore take this profession seriously.
- ◇ Sociolinguistics can play a big role as there are many dialects in Nguni languages and new terminology is surfacing occasionally.

- ◇ A translator should make it a regular practice to consult other sources and other language practitioners.
- ◇ There is a need for more and more terminology development that will result in domain-specific dictionaries that will help in translation.
- ◇ Translators' training should include basic linguistics and language training.
- ◇ Translators that have been commissioned to do translations for government should consult with specialists in the departments concerned to ensure that they interpret and translate concepts correctly.
- ◇ There should be thorough editing of isiXhosa translations.
- ◇ People that want to get involved in translating should attain proper training so as not to compromise the dignity of speakers and of the language itself.
- ◇ Translators need to be given enough time for translation.
- ◇ Government outsources translation work to academics who have no skills in translation. Government should be educated on the fact that language academics are not necessarily translators but are language teachers. It should therefore only use those who have demonstrated extensive experience in translation or are practising translators.
- ◇ Translators must use natural isiXhosa when they are translating, for example, we want to see proverbs and idioms in the translations that we use naturally on a daily basis.
- ◇ Government should scrutinise the translators that they use and should solicit services of good translators.
- ◇ Government should consider employing dedicated full-time translators in order to ensure quality control and professional service.

#### **4.7 Responses from the interviews**

The purpose of the interview was to establish what is happening currently in the language units in the Western Cape government. The responses indicated that in all the existing language units, namely in the local government, provincial government and in provincial departments only one isiXhosa language practitioner is employed, except for the education department and the provincial parliament that each have two translators. Therefore, most of the government work is outsourced as one translator could never cope with having to translate for about 10 departments and more in each institution.

The translators used are all qualified linguists. There are no isiXhosa editors employed, except in the provincial legislature and in the department of education where the second translator acts as an editor. The one employed translator in all other government institutions also has to edit and does not always have time to do a quality check of all outsourced work. The unit heads think that their government translations are fairly good. However, owing to the absence of editors, uniformity and correctness of translations cannot be verified and there is inconsistency in the terminology used.

These unit heads and translators have indicated that the workload is far too much and needs at least three full-time translators. They also recommend that government should employ more qualified and trained translators and that in-service training and terminology workshops should be the order of the day. Another solution offered is that translation companies should be registered with statutory bodies as they exacerbate the problem by using cheap labour to the detriment of the target language. The translators of these companies should be registered and accredited.

#### **4.8 Conclusion**

My hypothesis seems to be proven right by the respondents, that in the main, a lot of work needs to be done to improve the quality of translation of government isiXhosa documents, both from the side of government and that of the translators. The two documents were specifically and deliberately chosen because there is currently an outcry about the quality of translation of the curriculum documents, the quality of other national and provincial government documents, such as medical documents that could lead to detrimental results as well as the quality of local government documents which are meant for ordinary citizens. The two chosen documents demonstrated two main problems, the first being the use of translators that are not familiar with a particular field but are language practitioners. The second problem demonstrated is the use of just any language speaker who claims that he or she can translate resulting in bad translation. This proves that translation is a professional exercise that cannot be done by just anybody but that trained translators or trained language practitioners with good command of both the source language and the target language should be used. Samples of responses from questionnaire respondents have been attached as Appendix H.

The next chapter will present a short, well-translated isiXhosa document in which techniques and translation strategies that have been used or employed to achieve quality translation will be analysed. I will also provide my concluding remarks and recommendations.

## CHAPTER 5 : QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF A WELL-TRANSLATED ISIXHOSA TEXT

### 5.1 Introduction

Translation decodes and expresses, in a target language, a message carried and conveyed by the source text. The effect of the message on the target text reader is expected to be the same as that of the source text reader. As Bassnett-Mcguire (1980:27) points out, translation equivalence must be considered a semiotic category comprising syntactic, semantic and pragmatic components but the semantic equivalence should take priority.

In our multilingual country in which all 11 languages have been declared official, translation has become a crucial tool for communication and a bridging tool to different cultures as linguistic access to one another's cultures, enhancing understanding of the cultures from which the various texts originate. As Schäffner and Wiesemann (2001: 1) puts it, the political, economic, educational and cultural communicative practices are accompanied by increasing demands for translation, in particular from English. Translators are therefore expected to produce target texts that are appropriate for their purposes in an efficient and effective way. It is also crucial, as espoused by Schäffner and Wiesemann, that these translations are of a high quality and that they convey the correct information.

Campbell (1998: 5) states that a good translation can only be rendered by a competent translator. According to him, competence involves an acquired interlinguistic competence, competence in at least two linguistic systems and a certain knowledge of the language and cultures associated with them. It also needs competence in text reception and analysis as well as transfer competence and text production.

The previous chapter analysed texts that provided inadequate communication in the target language, in this case, in isiXhosa. This chapter gives a short analysis of a well-translated isiXhosa text. The reason for this is that it does not always help to just pinpoint problems in a situation and not provide or recommend solutions. As much as the researcher cannot claim to be an isiXhosa translation expert, but an 11 years translation experience and a tertiary qualification with a major in isiXhosa, as well as

translation theory information gathered in this course will help the researcher shed some light on this problem.

Let me mention in passing that on 26 and 27 May 2005, the researcher attended a workshop on isiXhosa orthography, translation and editing guidelines held in East London, in the Eastern Cape. This was organised by the isiXhosa National Language Body, which is a statutory body that falls under the Pan South African Language Board. It was attended by all those considered to be experts in isiXhosa. Respondents were divided into three groups and each group was given translated isiXhosa guidelines to work from. The original texts were developed in English and translated into isiXhosa. The first group looked at the language rules governing isiXhosa, the second group looked at translation into isiXhosa and the third group looked at editing guidelines. I was in the third group, the group of editors. During the report-back session, a common complaint from all the groups was that the quality of the isiXhosa-translated guidelines the groups were supposed to work from was bad.

The second group that looked at translation guidelines that have been developed by the National Language Service, located in the national Department of Arts and Culture in Pretoria reported that, as it could not make sense of the translated text, it decided to use the English version because it made more sense to them than the isiXhosa-translated version. What is it then that other isiXhosa translators do right and what skills do they possess that result in them rendering good quality isiXhosa translations?

The researcher will analyse an attached extract, Appendix G, of a well-translated text, translated from English into isiXhosa. The isiXhosa-translated speech is so good that it does not read like a translation; it reads like an original. It reads as if this particular speaker delivered the speech in isiXhosa.

## **5.2 Text chosen**

The text chosen is extracted from an address by the City of Cape Town Speaker, addressing councillors, businesspeople, the media and members of the public. The researcher has chosen this text particularly because this is one example of a text that gets passed on to the general public as opposed to other government documents such as strategic plans, annual reports, Bills, Acts and so on, that are filed in offices. The target text came to the researcher as work that needed to be edited and the

researcher could not help but admire the skill and the expertise of this translator. The text is attached as Appendix G(1) and G(2).

### **5.3 The translator**

The translator that worked on this translation is a young lady, in her late-twenties. isiXhosa is her mother tongue. She has an Honours degree in isiXhosa. She has been translating for the past three years. She has no translation qualification. She is employed full-time as a translator in a translation agency and she does translation work on a daily basis. She has a strong grasp of both English and isiXhosa.

She comes from the Eastern Cape and she grew up there. She has an excellent command of isiXhosa. She works with a very experienced translator and with an editor who works as her editor and regularly gives her feedback on her work. Her expertise in both the source and the target texts and her research, education and linguistic knowledge as well as knowledge of the dynamics of isiXhosa language, have all played a big role in her product.

### **5.4 Analysis of the source text**

The text is both an informative and persuasive text, as the Speaker is informing the ward councillors and the community in general about the progress made the previous year and the strategy for the following year. It has lots of spelling and grammatical errors, some of which are marked in red, but the translator did not make these mistakes in isiXhosa translation.

The source text uses simple language and, in a few instances, unfamiliar and non-existent terms in isiXhosa, but the translator translates them perfectly well using isiXhosa idiomatic language.



## 5.5 Analysis of the target text

### 5.5.1 Coherence and cohesion of the target text and meaning or sense

The text is very well translated and it carries the full meaning of the information conveyed by the source text. The information is conveyed accurately and it flows logically and very well. The words used are appropriate. As a target reader, one does not have to consult the source text at all. The translation or the target text makes perfect sense. It is also as cohesive as the source text and even better than the source text. The text functions as an independent text in the target culture.

### 5.5.2 Language, syntax and grammar

The translator has used simple day-to-day language that has made the translation natural and easy to comprehend. That being the case, she has not compromised the richness of the language in that she has also used proper isiXhosa words. She has not followed the source text word by word but has chosen to phrase sentences in a way that an isiXhosa-speaker would phrase them in their daily way of speaking. The good command of isiXhosa by the translator is apparent throughout the translation. For example, this translator has used the existing proper isiXhosa words for concepts like *council – ibhunga* as opposed to *ikhansile*. It seems as if she unknowingly follows the functionalist approach.

The grammar and the syntactic structure are in the main, perfect in that they are entirely in accordance with the grammatical requirements of the target text and that makes the translation very readable and enjoyable to read. In isiXhosa, we encounter lots of syntactical problems when we have to translate from English to isiXhosa. For example, the pronoun, you affects the syntactical structure quite a lot because the translator has to work out exactly to whom it refers and work out what isiXhosa concord to use, and whether he or she has to use the singular or plural concord in a particular sentence as English uses you to denote singular and plural. In this translation, this was one of the very few mistakes that this translator made but it was picked up by the editor. The Speaker in the text states that the councillors will be rewarded but uses the pronoun "you" - *you will be rewarded* - using it in the plural form. This may seem to be a minor issue but it sometimes affects the translation significantly as it has the potential to confuse the reader as to which 'u-' (you in

isiXhosa) is being referred to. *u-* in isiXhosa is also used for the third person – *he and she* - and this is where the confusion comes in.

### 5.5.3 *Spelling and punctuation*

There are no spelling and punctuation mistakes in the target text. In certain instances, the translator has just followed the punctuation in the source text, such as the repetitive use of the exclamation mark. Where the translator has seen this to be unnecessary or wrong, she has not followed suit. Word division and hyphenation, which is a problem for some translators and writers are excellent. For example:

- between a letter and a figure, or when prefixing concords to figures, isiXhosa uses a hyphen as used by this translator in wama-25 Agasti, ezili-100;
- demonstratives are separated from words that follow them and this translator has done so, eg. ezo zinto, kula maxesha ( in these times);
- the long form of the future tense is written disjunctively, eziza kwenza (that will make) iSixeko, niza kuvuzwa (you will be rewarded) whereas the present tense is written conjunctively, as in kuluvuyo (it gives me great pleasure).

### 5.5.4 *Techniques and strategies used by the translator to render a good and quality translation*

#### 5.5.4.1 *Microstructural or intratextual aspects*

##### a) *Avoidance of a word-for-word translation*

isiXhosa differs from English and therefore its way of expressing thoughts and ideas is different from that of English. It also has its own syntactical system. Word-for-word translation, therefore, does not render good translation in isiXhosa. This translator seems to be very aware of this and throughout the translation, there is no literal or word-for-word translation. Here is one good example :

*(English) - It seems a low blow ... (Xhosa) - Kubonakala kunzima ...*

'Low blow' has been translated as "difficult" because that is what it means in this context.

## b) Use of isiXhosa idioms

In their daily conversation, isiXhosa speakers use a lot of idioms. A number of concepts are better expressed using idioms. This translator has used that tool. A good example to illustrate this is as follows:

*English : The City of Cape Town salutes you –*

*isiXhosa : ISixeko saseKapa sinothulel 'umnqwazi –*

*Salute* has been translated as *sinothulela umnqwazi*, which is an isiXhosa idiom meaning – *salute*. Literally translated, it is *taking off your hat*.

## c) Borrowing/Transference

There are English words that do not exist yet in isiXhosa. There are also words that are archaic and that people in urban areas do not know. In those cases, instead of coining and using words that target readers will not know, isiXhosa speakers borrow from English or Nguni sister languages. Examples of that in this text are as follows:

*Wards - iiwadi*

August – Agasti (archaic isiXhosa term – eyeThupha)

December – Disemba (archaic isiXhosa term – eyoMnga)

Volunteers – Amavolontiya (archaic isiXhosa term – unonibe)

## d) Adaptation

In the absence of some of the terms that isiXhosa translators have to use when translating, it is sometimes necessary to adapt certain terms, using existing terms that have similar meanings. An example of this from this text is:

*Metro – inqila*

*Inqila* is a term used mainly in the rural areas to refer to the chief's kraal or great place where the main decisions affecting a number of surrounding villages that fall under that particular chief are discussed and decided on. This term is widely used to refer to metropolises.

### **e) Language and sense**

As already mentioned, the translator seems to have made it one of her priorities to ensure that the text gives the full meaning in the target language and that the weight of the message in the source text is carried through to the target text. There is also not a single instance in which one wonders what the text, sentence or paragraph is about, what is being talked about, or what is meant. The text just flows very well and the *skopos* is maintained. The translator's linguistic abilities mentioned above have also enhanced the text quite a lot.

#### *5.5.4.2 Macrostructural or extratextual aspects*

##### **a) The translator's competence**

As already mentioned, the translator is very competent in translation. She is fully bilingual and has a good grasp of both languages and has linguistic insight into both of them. Her competence has enabled her to formulate a strategy that befits this particular text, meaning she has identified that the source text is of a particular nature and therefore her translation should be of a particular type and nature as well. She has identified the purpose of the source text and her target text has followed suit. She has used language that is accessible in the target culture.

##### **b) Use of references**

References here refer to dictionaries, manuals, word banks, other translators or other people with subject knowledge, and to institutions such as libraries, publishers and universities. These references are very handy when one is translating. Consulting manuals, dictionaries and word banks, asking people what concepts mean, and asking other translators how they translate certain concepts all help to ensure that a translator produces good quality translation. This is especially so in our African languages where there is a dire shortage of technical terms. One senses that this translator got into that exercise in the choice of terms used to translate words like 'Speaker' which one finds in legislative houses. Television isiXhosa newsreaders translate this term wrongly as "isithethi" which also means a "speaker" but in a different context. Other terms that are not so easy to translate into isiXhosa that this

translator has translated perfectly and which show that she has consulted references are words like “mandate”, “subcouncils”, “diversity”, “mother city” and so on.

**c) Knowledge of the subject field**

Though this is a general speech, one can tell that the translator is familiar with local government concepts. She is comfortable doing the translation because she is translating a text dealing with a subject she is familiar with. There is a huge difference between this translation and the one analysed in Chapter 3, which is also a local government text with the same terms and concepts.

**d) Text analysis**

The consistency in the terminology used shows that the translator read both the source text before translating the work and the target text after finishing the translation.

**5.6 Conclusion**

This analysis demonstrates that translation cannot be done by any first-language speaker. A number of factors influence the quality of translation, such as the competence of the translator, linguistic knowledge, text analysis, transfer competence and subject knowledge. Because the translator of the text analysed here possesses most of these qualities, she has been able to render a good translation of the target language. The next chapter will conclude the study.

## CHAPTER 6 : CONCLUSION

### 6.1 Revisiting and unpacking the hypothesis

Commissioning the work of translation is driven by a need to communicate a message. It is therefore crucial that a translated product should carry that purpose very effectively. What the hypothesis of this thesis and what the previous chapters have been trying to put across is that when a translation is not readable, it does not carry the message across. If it is complicated or is of poor quality, the target readers do not get the message that should be communicated to them because the translation fails to transmit it. The visibility of the translator becomes an issue instead of the message.

In his book, Venuti (1995:1) quotes Norman Shapiro:

I see translation as the attempt to produce a text so transparent that it does not seem to be translated. A good translation is like a pane of glass. You only notice that it is there when there are little imperfections – scratches, bubbles. Ideally, there should not be any. It should never call attention to itself (Venuti, 1995: 1).

What we experience with translation into isiXhosa in government documents is the problem of the translation calling attention to itself. Most government documents, especially the bulky ones such as departments' strategic plans, annual reports, etc, leave one questioning who translated that particular work because of the quality of translation and the lack of imparting the intended message. Venuti states clearly, and correctly so, that a translated work "is judged acceptable by most readers when it reads fluently, when the absence of any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities makes it seem transparent, giving the appearance that the translation is not in fact a translation but the 'original'." He continues to say, "the more fluent the translation is, the more invisible the translator is, and presumably the more visible the meaning of the foreign text" (Venuti, 1995: 1).

Venuti brings up another very important factor into this problem, the interpretation of the source text so that the translator is able to decode and encode the message. He describes translation as "a process by which the chain of signifiers that constitutes

the source language text is replaced by a chain of signifiers in the target language which the translator provides on the strength of an interpretation" (Venuti, 1995:17). He says that as much as the source text and target text consist of diverse linguistic and cultural materials, there are semantic possibilities and interpretive choices in specific social situations. When a target reader feels that the translation is poor, he or she is not comparing it with the source text, but is rather stating that the message is not carried across to him or her. Venuti (*ibid*: 18) states therefore that the viability of translation is established by its relationship to the cultural and social conditions under which it is produced and read. I want to add to this and say that, its sense is also affected by the choice of the translator and his or her expertise in translation, fluency in the source and target language and his or her knowledge of the subject field because the knowledge of the subject matter makes it easier for the translator to find suitable equivalent expressions in the target language.

Venuti (*ibid*: 18) states that translation replaces linguistic and cultural differences of the source text with a text that is intelligible to the target language reader. The text is reconstituted in accordance with values, beliefs and representations in the target language that always determine the production, circulation and reception of texts. The translation is domesticated according to target culture, and it becomes a communication that addresses a specific reading audience. This is such inherent information and knowledge that every translator should bear in mind that, in addition to being aware that one is translating into a different language, the translation should be done in such a manner that it is understandable in the culture of the target language. The syntax used has to be familiar in the target language, in this case, isiXhosa. The phrasing should be intelligible in isiXhosa. The language used by a translator should be familiar enough to the audience. This, therefore, also necessitates and forces translators to read or revise their translation work to ensure that it flows and makes perfect sense. It also means that translators should ensure that the time constraints they accept from commissioners take into consideration the fact that the work has to be revised. Thirdly it also means that government should use translators who know the target language and the target culture very well.

The researcher's hypothesis raises the concern therefore that the translated isiXhosa texts are poor because the translations are not fluent and do not flow and are rather too aligned to the source text and culture than to that of the target audience. Therefore, the translations do not appeal to the intended target audience. Chapters 3 and 4 back this up with empirical research and proof from two very crucial

government texts. For more proof of this outcry, I have attached a recent newspaper article, Appendix I, from the *Weekend Argus* of 12 March 2005, titled, “*Misleading notices, a bad sign for Xhosas*”. This article gives lots of examples of instances of bad isiXhosa translations in signage put up by municipalities and in health materials found in government hospitals or health centres. All these are government entities.

## 6.2 Translation theory and translation strategies

Translation has developed over the years and theories and approaches have been developed to describe the processes involved in translation. Chapter 2 has dealt extensively with the three major theoretical approaches, namely the linguistic approach, the text-linguistic approach and the functionalist approach.

The first theories of translation tended to judge translation according to how equivalent it was to the source text. As the translation theory developed over the years, it became apparent that textual equivalence was no longer an issue but what was more important was the purpose of the translation and the communicative function of the texts. This new approach that came up with functionalists was that texts are produced, disseminated and received for a particular purpose or function. The starting point in translation, therefore, is not the analysis of linguistic structures and the seeking of equivalence of linguistic structures, but rather the purpose of the text. For our government translations therefore to work as communication tools and utilities, they have to be able to function as communicative texts in the target language and in the target culture.

Translation strategies were also developed in the translation field and they are outlined in detail in Chapter 5. Sager (1994:226) refers to the implementation of these translation strategies as language engineering and translation. He lists strategies from Vinay & Darbelnet (1995). Those strategies appropriate for isiXhosa from those he listed would be:

- a) Borrowing or transference: taking over words from the source language, eg. computer – ikhompuyutha;
- b) Transposition: a syntactic paraphrase or alternative linguistic formulation, eg. “No entry”, *akungenwa apha (do not enter)*, while “for official use” is better translated and understood when it is translated as “set aside for officials”.



- c) Modulation : Semantic paraphrasing which helps to overcome differences in semantic structures between source language and target language. We use this strategy quite a lot in isiXhosa.
- d) Adaptation : pragmatic paraphrasing used to change cultural references.
- e) Matching : Though this is not listed as a translation strategy, I chose to list it as one because it is one of the exercises in translation. This refers to matching a source language unit with a target language unit and it involves lexical matching, syntactic matching and pragmatic matching (Sager, 1994 : 229 – 230).
- f) Mutation : Either deleting or adding a linguistic which was not there in the source text.

Mfazwe (2003:6) quoting Naudé adds indigenisation or domestication which she explains as being similar to transference or borrowing but with a slight modification to remove some of the foreignness. She also refers to cultural substitution which she describes replacing as a culture-specific item with a target language item that is likely to have the same impact on the target reader. A good example from a parliament or legislature context would be a term, *Whip*, which in isiXhosa is translated as **uMbhaxeshi** (conductor/controller).

These are strategies that our translators need to be aware of.

### 6.3 Translation as a field of specialisation

The concept of language engineering brings me to the third and very crucial point which is that translation, both into first and into second language, needs to be seriously viewed and taken as a field of specialisation in this country, South Africa. When translating, a person has to identify cognitive units in the source language and find equivalent target language expressions for them (Sager: 1994, 211]. Secondly, it has to be borne in mind that source language text structure is mostly not the same as that of the target language text structure, and therefore the translator has to find the correct and proper manner of encoding the message that goes with the correct target language text structure.

Thirdly, the translator has to decide on the techniques to use to translate the work commissioned, and to do this he or she has to analyse the source text or browse through it to determine the type of source text, that is:

- Is it, for example, a technical document?

- Is it a formal document?
- Is it fiction or non-fiction?
- Is it a children's document?
- Which level of language am I supposed to use?
- Is it for urban or rural use?
- Do I need references, such as dictionaries and terminology manuals to do the work effectively?
- Is the work urgent or not urgent?
- How long is it realistically going to take me to finish this work?

and a host of other questions. Ideally, the translator also analyses the source text comprehensively to ensure that he or she understands it fully so as to choose a suitable translation strategy suitable for the intended purpose of the particular translation he or she is working on (Nord, 1991: 1). Following that, a translator will prepare and pace himself or herself accordingly. People in professional fields such as law and medicine have to engage in this kind of exercise to reach their final decisions, verdicts and diagnoses. Why then is it so difficult to recognise translators as professionals? Is it a lack of understanding of what goes into translation?

Sager (1994: 214) goes on to explain that translation involves a lot of mental processing. It is a mental operation in which a translator has to mentally move forward in the text he or she is translating, while at the same time keeping in mind what he or she has processed and where and when necessary goes back to the source text (Sager, *ibid*: 214). The translator has to search and find equivalents in the target language and assess the adequacy of the link to the source text, and if the equivalent is not adequate, he or she has to modify it (Sager, *ibid*: 214). A translator has to ensure that the effect the text has on him or her as a recipient and on readers of the source text is the same effect as that which the text will have on the target reader, taking into consideration cultural interferences (Sager, *ibid*: 223). To do this, he or she has to interpret the text correctly and continually remember the purpose of the text. This is the mental processing that a translator has to go through.

Translation is therefore not a simple task that can be undertaken by anybody but is a task that must be undertaken by a specialist in translation work or by trained language practitioners or translators. Government therefore has to either employ or use well-trained or very experienced translators. If there are few available well-trained isiXhosa translators, then it must invest in training them.

#### 6.4 Empirical research on isiXhosa-translated government documents

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 deal with empirical research concerning government documents translated into isiXhosa. Chapter 3 is an analysis of a document by the researcher. Chapter 4 is the empirical research that the researcher conducted, using mainly questionnaires and the findings of that research. In Chapter 5 the researcher provides recommendations and solutions to problems raised in Chapters 3 and 4 by analysing a well-translated document as proof that it is possible to render a well-translated, flowing and fluent isiXhosa document.

#### 6.5 Recapping of problems cited that affect quality of isiXhosa translations

- ◇ IsiXhosa translations are often literal, word-for-word translations.
- ◇ Employers use anybody who happens to speak isiXhosa and who claims that he or she can translate.
- ◇ Most translators have no translation training.
- ◇ Some translators do not even have language and grammar training. They turn to translation as a source of income even though they do not have a strong command of their own mother tongue.
- ◇ There is also the misconception that those with language qualifications are automatically translators, and the government relies a lot on them, especially on academics. In a number of cases, documents produced by these language specialists are linguistically correct but lack meaning and the intended message. They therefore do not function as texts, in that the function is then not carried over and the texts do not communicate with the intended target reader.
- ◇ Most translators have studied English as a second language. As a result, their command of English is not very good and they are therefore not fully bilingual and fully competent in the source language, which is mostly English.
- ◇ In isiXhosa there are no translators who specialise in certain fields and translators do not state that they cannot translate documents from fields that they are unfamiliar with.
- ◇ There is no statute that forces commissioners to use trained or accredited translators. As a result, private companies use anybody to do isiXhosa translations.

- ◇ isiXhosa is a developing language and lacks terminology for technical translations; its orthography is also not fully developed.
- ◇ There is also an attitude problem on the part of those who control finances both in public and in the private sector as they feel that there is really no need to translate documents into isiXhosa and therefore do not provide finances for the training of translators.
- ◇ isiXhosa translators confine themselves to their offices and their close colleagues. They do not network with colleagues in other institutions and other provinces. They only meet in workshops and conferences and the networking and getting together ends there. Translation is seen as a business enterprise and isiXhosa translators see one another as competitors, thereby inhibiting co-operation and development of isiXhosa as a language that can be used for translation.
- ◇ Translators produce documents under enormous time constraints or deadlines.
- ◇ There is a lack of recognition of translation as a specialist field.
- ◇ Language units and services are understaffed, especially in provinces which mostly have one overworked translator and no editors. In these government departments there is also no translation norm that stipulates how much translation a translator should undertake in a day and there is also no time to consult or research. These overworked translators are also not paid very well compared to the amount of work they do.

## **6.6 Recommendations for the improvement of the quality of isiXhosa translations**

I will reiterate the solutions and recommendations offered in Chapter 4 that were taken from the questionnaires and I will also add a few more of my own. However, I would like to emphasise that isiXhosa translators need to undergo translation training, both theoretical and practical training. They also need to improve their academic and professional qualifications in languages.

Here are the recommendations that would help to improve the quality of translations in our African languages:

- Government departments must use proper translators and translations must be edited.
- Translating does not only require someone who can speak the language but it is a specialist field and needs to be treated as such. Giving translation work to just anybody is an insult to the language, to the speakers of the target languages and to the translation profession.
- The native speakers of isiXhosa should take pride in their language.
- Translation into isiXhosa of government documents is still in the infancy stage and a lot of effort should be made to improve it.
- Translation is one of the first steps in the development of African languages and in the reintegration of black people into mainstream economic programmes. Government should therefore take this profession seriously.
- A translator should make it a regular practice to consult other sources and other language practitioners. This will help with common approaches and solutions to problems.
- There is a need for more and more terminology development that will result in domain-specific dictionaries that will help in translation.
- Translator training should include basic linguistics and language training.
- Translators that have been commissioned to do translations for government should consult with specialists in the departments concerned to ensure that they interpret and translate concepts correctly.
- People that want to get involved in translation work should get proper training as the dignity of speakers and of the language itself gets compromised.
- Translators need to be given enough time for translation.
- Government outsources translation work to academics who have no training in translation. Government should be educated about the fact that language academics are not necessarily translators but are language teachers. It should therefore only use those who have demonstrated extensive experience in translation or are practising translators.
- Translators must use natural isiXhosa when they translate, e.g. we want to see proverbs and idioms in the translations that we use naturally on a daily basis.
- Translators need to analyse and read documents before translating and to revise translations afterwards to ensure that they make sense.
- Translators should not take translation work in subject fields of which they know nothing.

- Government should scrutinise the translators they use and should solicit the services of good translators.
- Government should consider employing dedicated full-time translators in order to ensure quality control and professional service.
- Government needs to speed up the process of establishing a statutory body, a council that registers and accredits translators and should legislate that government use only screened and accredited translators.

## 6.7 Summary and aim of this study

The poor quality of documents translated into African languages, isiXhosa in this case, has raised concerns nationally. These documents do not communicate with the target readers. Some do not make sense at all. The aim therefore was to try to find out what the reasons are for poor translations, and to offer some solutions to the problems. The purpose is to see some improvement in areas in which there are problems translating into isiXhosa.

The second purpose or aim of this thesis was to highlight to government authorities and any other clients or commissioners of translation assignments that translating is a professional practice and that not just anybody who speaks the language can translate. There is a number of factors that influence the quality of translation, such as the competence of the translator, linguistic knowledge, text analysis, transfer competence, subject knowledge, training and experience in translation work.

I would like to end off by quoting Button Raffel in a recorded and compiled interview conducted by Vincent Clearly, which was titled, "*Why Recreate*" (Raffel, 1973: 14-17). In describing translation he says:

In translation, one decomposes the original object that one is interpreting in order to create thereafter a new object that is recomposed. That sounds simple but it implies a number of other things. It implies that you are not just taking the original and carrying it into the host language... but you have to decompose it, meditate on it in a sense and then recompose it. ... If you are a good translator, you are going to be somebody who works well in your language. A person who has a native command of his language and an enormous fluency in another

language as a language teacher or simply has acquired an enormous fluency in another language is not per se thereby equipped to be a translator.

If you fail to write something that can be read, appreciated and understood with pleasure, you have failed entirely. There are lots of bad translations partly because people who do translations are often people with linguistic knowledge rather than literary capacity to make translations. And often there are bad translations because people who make translations do not have sufficient respect for the material that they are translating.

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## Appendix A (1)

## Injongo Zokufunda

## Icandelo 1 : Lwenzabathathi nxaxheba

- Yazikuba urhulumente wengingqi uyintoni ngokongaqasiseko, injongo, amandla.
- Uqonde indima noxanduvalwezakhiwo lwezopolitiki kamasipala (ikhansile kamasipala, ikomiti yoqoqo lolawulo, ikomiti yamawadi njalo-njalo) iofisi kamasipala kunye nabahlali bengingqi ngokorhulumente wengingqi

## 1. INTSHAYELELO

Umqawo siseko womthetho ka 1996kwi phondo lomzantsi Afrika llwemza umphako wemo ezintlanthuzikarhulumente ezi cacileyo, ngokuzimela kunye nangokohlobo.

- Urhulumente ophakathi wemo, ozakujongana nemo ngokubanzi
- Urhulumente ophakathi onamaphondo e-ofisi alithoba kunye
- Norhulumente wengingqi ahambisana ne metropoliteni, isixeko kunye nomasipala bengingqi.

Urhulumente wengingqi goyena ufikelelekayo kubahlali. Nje ngesona sixhobo sicacileyo senziwe ngenkqubo nomisomthetho ukuqhuba imisebenzi karhulumente etengqo nolwahlulo lwemihlaba lwengingqi oluthe ngqokudityenwe kunywnorhulumente wengingqi neziteki holidazi. → abachaphazelekayo

Igama elithi Masipala ligama elibhekiselwe kwimi butho ukuyaleza imisebenzi karhulumente wengingqi Umasipala unoceba abanyuliweyo kunye namagosa aqeshiweyo. Ucaciso olusemthethweni luka Masipala aluqakanisi aceba namagesa kuphela kodwa nabahlali. Unxulumano ngalunye lunamalungelo kunye noxanduvalubhekiselele kumgaqo siseko owenziwe ngokomthetho ka-2000 kamasipala.

## 2. IWONGA LOMGAQO SISEKO LIKARHULUMENTE WENGINQI

Iwonga lomgaqo siseko kwiphondo lomzantsi Afrika elithi liwuthwese kurhulumente wengingqi lolu lulandelayo:

- **URHULUMENTE WENGINQI UNOOMASIPALA (S 151)**  
Kufuneka wonke usklwe ummandla wephando.
- **URHULUMENTE WENGINQI UNELUNGELO LOKULAWULA IMCIMBI KARHULUMENTE WENGINQI YASEKUHLALENI (S 151)**  
Ilungelo lokulawula lithetha ukuqhelisa igunya ngqo ngokwasemandleni uku:
  - Rhafisa abantu
  - Ukwenza nokujongana nowisomthetho
  - Thata izigqibo ezizakuchaphazela amalungelo omntu ngamnye.
- **IQQOQO ELILAWULA KUNYE NOWISO MTHETHO OLU GUNYAZISIWEYO LUKAMASIPALA LUMIKELWE KWIKHANSILE KAMASIPALA. (S 151)**  
Ikhansile kamasipala inamalungu anyyuliweyo
- **UMASIPALA LILUNGA LESIZWE ( S 239)**  
Ilungu lesizwe libhekiselele kwisebe lesizwe lwephondo
- **UMASIPALA NGUMNTU OSEMTHETHWENI (UMTHETHO KAMASIPALA (S 2(D) )**  
Lonto ithetha ukuthi phanti kwegama lakhe umasipala:
  - Angamangala okanye amangalelwe
  - Athengise owakhe umhlaba
  - Aqhube nangaluphina uhlobo umntu osemthethwe ni avumelekileyo ukuba enze ngalo ngokuse mthethweni

(...” Akukhuphe ukumela kabahlali ngokwe nkqubo kamasipala...” Umthetho kamasipala ka S 2 (d) )

### 3. IINJONGO ZIKARHULUMENT WENGINQI

Usection 152 wongaqo siseko uboniso injongo zikarhulumente wengingqi:

- Umphako wedemkrasi kunye nkuba noxanduva lukarhulumente kubahlali bengingqi,
- Umphako wenkonzo zabahlali.
- Ukunyuselwa kobuntu kunye nophuiso lwezo mnotho
- Nokukhuthaza kokuzibandakanya kwabhlali nemibutho yabahlali kwimicimbi yorhulumente wengingqi.

Ezi zinjongo kuphela, ayilolawulo luka masipala. Umasipala kufuneka azame uku plumelelisa ezinjongo azithathele ingqalelo.

- (a) kwezemali kunye nolawulo lwekhapasiti
- (b) ukuthwesa kolawulo

### 4. IZAKHIWO PHAKATHI KUNASIPALA

Umthetho kamasipala ka (s2) ucacisa umasipala nje ngo ne:

- Nemibutho yepolitiki ( okanye ikhansile kamasipala, iqoqo lolawulo lwekomiti, ikomiti zewadi nezinye iikomiti kunyr nabadlali ndima ( isenokuba ngo ceba, solodolophu okanye isithethi)
- Ulawulo (isenokuba ngamagosa anyuliweyo oma sipala, okhekelwa zimanejala zikamasipala)
- Abahlali Cisenokuba ngabahlali abohlukieyo abanje ngomntu ngamnye, emizini kunye nosomashishini

#### 4.1. Izakhiwo zepolitiki kunye nabadlali ndima:

Indima kunye noxanduva

## Ikhansile kamasipala

Ooceba benginqi yekhansie kamasipala, ikhansile kametropolitani kunye nesithili sabaphathi bekhansile zengingqi, bonyulwa ngokwenkqubo yolwalamane. Aboavoti bonyula inani elithile koceba beithili, ikhansile yengingqi iqashe. Umlinganiselo wekhansile uxhomekeke kuhlebo luka masipala. Ukuba ngamasipala kametropolitan ingano ceba ukuya kuma 270, ukuba yikhansile yengingqi ingano ceba abayi 90.

IMEC yorhulumente wengingqi ingalinyusa okanye ilithebe inani loceba ukuqinisekisa ukuhamba ngendlela.

Iridima: Umasipala ngamnye kufuneka abene khansite kamasipala ekufuneka idibene kwikoa nganye. Ikhansile kufuneka ihlaziye:

- Imfuno zabahlali
- Ezomfuno zidibane nezo zisemqoka
- Inkqubo yokufaka abahlali bathathe inxa xheba kwizenzo zika masipala
- Uhlobo lokuhulula ngohlobo lokukawulelana nezomfuno

Ukawangeza ikhansile kamasipala, ifanele ijonge uhlobo ekusetyenzwa ngalo ukuphumelelisa injongo zayo. Kufuneka iphuhlise uhlobo olululo lonxulumano nabahlali kunye nemibitho yabahlali ngohlobo ekusetyenzwa ngalo.

Ikhansile ingenxa umthetho ophathelele kumalungiselelo angaphakahi, ishishini kunye noqhubekeko lolawulo kunye nemisebenzi ye komiti zazo.

## Ooceba

Abavoti babhalisa kwingingqi ethile ukwenzela oceba abazokonyulwa kwi khansile kamasipala. Bangonyulwa nje ngo ceba be wadi, bamele lowadi bamele lombutgo kwikhansile.

**Indima :** Indima yoceba imbaxa kakhula njengokuba ubonile xabesixoxa kwicandelo eligqithileo. Indima ziquka uncediso phakathi kwaba hlali kanye nekhangsile uqulunqe iimfuno zabahlali uzigqithisele kwikhangsile.

**Usodolophu: (akalolungu lweqoqo lolawulo)**

Umasipala kufuneka anyule ilungu lalo kwiqoqo lolawulo nje ngo sodolophu . Kufuneka ayeke ukuba lilungu loqoqo lolawulo lwekomiti.

**Indima :**

Usodolophu ongelolungu lweqoqo lolawulo uchophela intlanganiso Zo qoqo lawulo lwekomiti aqhbe iisebenzi yamatheko, aqhelise Ulawulo olu yalezwe kuye yikhangsile kamasipala okanye uqeqo Lolawulo lwekomiti. Losodolophu nngelo lungu loqo lolawulo, Akanalawulo lufanayo nalowo sodolophu ulilungu loqoqo lolawulo.

**Isithethi:**

Ikhangsile kamasipala ngmnye kufuneka inyule isithethi. Umthetho kamasipala ubalula ixesha lesthethi e-ofisini, ukushiya I-ofisi nokususwa kwi ofisi.

**Indima:**

Isithethi siqhuba njengomhlali ngaphambili wentlanganiso zekhansile achophele intlanganiso ezo. Nguye othatha isig qibo ikhansile izakudibana nini phi. Naxa ingumsebenzi wakke ukubiza inflanganiso. Uninzi loceba lungacela isithethi ukuba sibize inflanganiso. Uninzi loceba lungacela isithethi ukuba sibize intlanganiso. Isithethi kufuneka siqiniseksi ukuba ikhansile iyadibana rhoqo nge kota. Kufuneka sakhe ucwangco xa kukho intlanganiso zekhansile. Isithethi kufuneka siqinisekise ukuba intlanganiso iqhutywa ngokunzulumene nomthetho nesinyanzelo sekhangsile.



**Iqoqo lwekomiti yelawulo:**

Kwintsuku eziyi-14 zolonyulo lwekhansile usodolophu weqoqo lolawulo kufuneka enyule uqoqo lwekomiti yolawule. Le komiti yoqoqo lolawulo kufuneka ingabi narnalungu angaphezulu ko.10 okanye angabi ngaphantsi ko.3. Imibutho kwakunye nenimandla emelweyo kwikhansile ka masipala kufuneka zimelwe kwikomiti yoqoqo lolawulo ngokufanayo nenxalenye emelweyo kwikhansile. Ikomiti yoqoqo lolawulo lunika iforumu ebalulekileyo kuphikiswano/ wembi esitheleyo kuwonke wonke.

**Indima:**

Ikomiti yoqoqo lolawulo idlala indima efanayo naleyo kaodolophu weqoqo lolawulo kufuneka ijongene nolawulo luka masipala. Uqinisekisa inkonzo ziyoneliswa nemali iphethwe ngendlela eyiyo. Kufuneka ifumane umbiko (ripoti) kwezinye ikomiti zekhansile izithumele kwi khansile, xa ingenakwazi ukuphatha lomcimbi kulawulo lawo. Ikomiti yoqoqo lolawulo kufuneka zichaze imfuno zikamasipala, uhlaziyo/ wemfuno ekuhluzeni izinto ezisemqoko, ikhuthaza ubnhule bokumisela kunye nenkqubo yokubonisa imfuno isebenzisa I IDP iqikelele inkeitho.

Kufuneka iyaleze inkqubo eyiyo kwinkonzo zokuhanyiswa, iphuhlise nendlela yokuhlola okanye ikey performance indicator (KPJ's) zise tyenziswe ekuhluzeni uhanjiso.

Ikomiti yoqoqo lolawulo kufuneka ihlaziye inkqubo ukuphucula iziphumo zohanjiso (deliver) ukuphata ukoleko lwamatyala nongemiso lwabaphathi. Kufuneka iripoti yanyaka ifaka abahlali nemibutho yabahlali kwimicimbi kamasipala. Uqinisekiso lokuba iripoti yezimvo zika wonk wonke kunikwe iripoti kawonke wonke kuhlonelwe izigqibo zokhansile. Kufuneka yonamele iqinise uthwalo lwemiphako lwenkonzo kubahlali nguMasipala.

**Ezinye ikomiti (eg. Portfolio Committees)**

Ikhansile kamasipala inqaqulunqa ikomiti nikuba inye okanye zininzi ziyimfuneko kwiziphumo nokwazi ukwenza nokuba ngowuphina u msebenzi. Ikhansile ingaqasha

ikomiti kuma lunga ayo, ingayichitha lokomiti nangaliphi ixesha. Ikhansile ingaqesha umhlali ngaphambili ivumele ikomiti yonyule amalungu acebisayo engengawo amalungu ekhansie. Ikhansile ingagqiba ngenkqubo yekomiti.

**Indima:**

Umsebenzi wekhansile unganeziphumo ezihle rhoqo ukuba ikomiti ingaqesha isebenzise inisebenzi ethile yekhansile. Kunokwenzeka ikhansile ithumele ulawulo lwabathunywa kwezi komiti. Ulangazelelo labacebisi engengabo abekhansile bangafuneka bonyulwe.

**Metropolitani sub- khansile**

Ezinye imetro khansil zingaqulunqa umetro sub-khansile omele amawadi anama gama aqhumeleleyo ngalinye. Lonto yenza ingingqi nganye yesub-khansile ibe noceba abanenani elongezelekileyo ngokugqitywe ngumetro.

**Indima:**

Umetro subkhansile akanamandla olawulo angundoqo. Unolawulo aluthunywa ngumetro kuphela. Isub- khansile enjolo inako ukwenza uyalezo kumetro khansile kwimeko e chaphazela ingingqi yayo.

**Ikomiti yewadi:**

Umetropolitani kunye nomasipala bengingqi abathile bangaqulunq ukunika iikomiti.

Ukuba umetro okanye ikansile yengingqi ukuba ibe nekomiti ye adi nganye. Ikhansile yengingqi kuzakufuneka yenza umthetho.

- Inkqubo yokunyula amalunga ewadi ( ukuqinisekisa ukuba kukho abafazi aboneleyo nomdla wewadi uyamelwa)
- Intlanganiso zekomiti zewadi rhoqo. Ikhansile ingayichitha ikomiti yewadi ukuba aziphumeleli injongo zayo.

## Appendix B (1)

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Module 1 enables participants to:

- Know what local government is in terms of its constitutional status, objectives, powers and functions.
- Understand the roles and responsibilities of municipal political structures (the municipal council, executive committee, ward committee, etc.), the municipal administration, and the local community in terms of local governance.

### 1. Introduction

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act of 1996 makes provision for three spheres of government, which are distinctive, interdependent, and interrelated:

- a central government sphere, also referred to as the national sphere
- a provincial government sphere consisting of nine provincial administrations, and
- a local government sphere consisting of metropolitan, district and local municipalities.

Local government is the sphere of government closest to the community. As a distinctive sphere, it is compelled by policy and legislation to perform specific government functions within a specifically demarcated area in consultation with the local community and other stakeholders.

The term 'municipality' is a generic term referring to organisations entrusted with the local government function. Municipalities consist of elected Councillors (constituting the municipal council) and appointed officials (constituting the municipal administration). The legal definition of a municipality is that it comprises not just the Councillors and the officials, but also the local community. Each of these interrelated components has certain rights and responsibilities, based on the Constitution and set out mainly in the Municipal Systems Act of 2000.

## 2. Constitutional Status of Local Government

The status which the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa confers on local government is as follows:

- LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONSISTS OF MUNICIPALITIES [S151]  
Municipalities must be established for the whole of the territory of the Republic of South Africa

- LOCAL GOVERNMENT HAS THE *RIGHT TO GOVERN* LOCAL GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS OF ITS COMMUNITY [S151]

The right to govern means to exercise authority and more specifically the power to:

- Impose taxes on people
- Make and administer legislation
- Take decisions which may affect the rights of individuals

- EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY OF A MUNICIPALITY IS VESTED IN THE *MUNICIPAL COUNCIL* [S151]

The Municipal Council consists of elected members.

- A MUNICIPALITY IS AN ORGAN OF STATE [S239]

An Organ of State refers to any department of state or administration in the national, provincial or local sphere of government.

- A MUNICIPALITY IS A LEGAL PERSON [*MUNICIPAL SYSTEMS ACT, S2(d)*]

This means that the municipality may, under its own name:

- Sue or be sued
- Purchase, own and alienate land
- Enter into contracts
- Act in any way legal persons are allowed to in terms of the law.

[Liability of “the community” for the actions of the municipality is excluded”:

*Municipal Systems Act, S2d]*

### **3. Objectives of Local Government**

Section 152 of the Constitution identifies the objectives of local government as:

- the provision of democratic and accountable government for local communities
- the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner
- the promotion of social and economic development
- the promotion of a safe and healthy environment, and
- encouraging the involvement of communities and community organisations in matters of local government.

The above are only the objectives, and NOT the powers of a municipality. A municipality must strive to achieve the above objectives taking into account (a) its financial and administrative capacity, and (b) its conferred powers.

### **4. Structures Within a Municipality**

The Municipal Systems Act [S2] describes a municipality as consisting of:

- " The Political structures (i.e. the Municipal Council, Executive Committee, Metropolitan Sub-Councils<sup>1</sup>, Ward Committees, Other Committees) and role-players (i.e. the Councillors, Mayor, and Speaker).
- " The Administration (i.e. the appointed municipal officials headed by Municipal Manager)
- " The Community (i.e. the different residents such as individuals, households and businesses).

#### **4.1 Political Structures and Role-players: Roles and Responsibilities**

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<sup>1</sup> Only in metropolitan municipalities.

### **Municipal Council**

Councillors of local municipal council, metropolitan councils and district management area councils are elected on a system of proportional representation. The voters elect a certain number of district Councillors and the local councils appoint the rest. The size of the council depends on the type of municipality. If it is a metropolitan municipality it can have up to 270 Councillors and if it is a local council it can have up to 90 Councillors. The MEC for Local Government (provincial minister) can increase or decrease the number of Councillors to ensure optimal effectiveness.

**Roles:** Each municipality must have a municipal council, which should meet at least quarterly. The council should review:

- the needs of the community.
- its priorities to meet those needs.
- the processes for getting the community involved in municipal activities.
- the organizational and delivery mechanisms in place for meeting those needs.

In addition, the municipal council should examine its performance in achieving its objectives. It should develop mechanisms for effectively consulting the community and community organisations about its performance.

The council may make by-laws pertaining to its internal arrangements, business and proceedings, and the powers and functions of its committees.

### **Councillors**

The voters registered in a particular area elect Councillors onto a municipal council. They may be elected as ward Councillors to represent a particular ward, or if they are elected from party lists, they represent parties proportionally in the council.

**Roles:** The roles of Councillors are very broad and include maintaining a link between their community and council, establishing the community's needs and referring these to council. Councillors are accountable to their wards.

### **The Mayor (Non-Executive)**

The municipal council must elect a member of its executive committee as the Mayor and, if required, a deputy Mayor. He or she then ceases to be a member of the executive committee.

**Roles:** A non-Executive Mayor presides at meetings of the executive committee, performs ceremonial functions and exercises powers delegated to him or her by the municipal council or the executive committee. (This non-Executive Mayor does not have the same powers as the Executive Mayor. A non-Executive Mayor will not have more power than the executive committee).

### **The Speaker**

Each municipal council should elect a Speaker. The *Municipal Systems Act* stipulates the Speaker's term of office, vacation of office and removal from office.

**Roles:** The Speaker acts as the chairperson of council meetings and presides at council meetings. He or she decides on when and where the council meets. Although it is the Speaker's task to convene meetings, a majority of the Councillors can request the Speaker to convene a meeting. The Speaker must ensure that the council meets quarterly, must maintain order during council meetings and must ensure that council and council committees comply with the code of conduct. The Speaker must also ensure that the meetings are conducted in accordance with the rules and orders of council.

### **The Executive Committee**

Within 14 days of the council's election, the Mayor must elect an executive committee (Exco.). The executive committee should have no more than 10 or fewer than 3 members. Parties and interests represented on the municipal council must be represented on the executive committee in the same proportion as they are represented on the council. Exco. provides an important forum for debating controversial issues out of sight of the public.

**Roles:** The executive committee has the same roles as the Executive Mayor, namely that it should concern itself with the day-to-day running of the municipality, ensuring that services are satisfactorily provided and finances properly controlled.



It should receive reports from other committees of council, forwarding these to the council when it cannot handle the matter in terms of its powers.

The executive committee must identify the needs of the municipality, review and evaluate the needs in order of priority, recommend strategies and programmes to address the needs through the IDP, and estimate expenditure.

It should recommend the best methods for service delivery and develop criteria or Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to be used to evaluate delivery.

The executive committee should review processes in order to improve delivery efficiency, control of debt collection and management of revenue. It should report annually on the involvement of communities and community organisations in the affairs of the municipality, ensure that due regard is given to public views and report back to the public regarding council decisions.

It should oversee the sustainable provision of services to communities in the municipality.

#### **Other Committees (e.g. Portfolio Committees)**

A municipal council may establish one or more committees, which are necessary for the effective and efficient performance of any of its functions. The council must appoint the committee from among its members and can dissolve the committee at any time. The council must appoint the chairperson, and may authorize the committee to co-opt advisory members who are not members of council. The council may determine the committee's procedures.

**Roles:** Often the work of the council can be more effectively done if a committee is appointed and tasked with certain council functions. It is possible for a council to delegate certain powers to these committees. Where additional non-council advisors are needed, they can be co-opted.

#### **Metropolitan Sub-Councils**

Some metropolitan councils may establish a metropolitan sub-council, which consists of the Councillors representing the cluster of adjoining wards (each with its own distinctive



name) that make up the sub-council area and an additional number of Councillors determined by the metropolitan.

**Roles:** The metropolitan sub-council does not have any original powers or duties. It has only those duties and powers that are delegated to it by the metropolitan council. Such a sub-council can, however, make recommendations to the metropolitan council on any matter affecting its area.

### Ward Committees

Metropolitan and local municipalities may establish ward committees. If a metropolitan or local council decides to have ward committees, it should establish a committee for each ward. The metropolitan or local council will need to make rules and regulate:

- procedures for electing the members of the ward ( making sure that there are sufficient women and that the diversity of ward interests is represented).
- Frequency of ward committee meetings.
- The circumstances under which a member of a ward committee can be told to leave the committee.

Ward committees should consist of the councillor of the ward (who should chair all ward committee meetings) and not more than 10 members. These members are not paid for serving on the committee.

**Roles:** Ward committees are intended to increase the participation of citizens in local government. The municipal council may delegate duties and powers to the ward committee. Ward committees are expected to participate in the initiation, monitoring and evaluation of local government activities. The metropolitan or local council must make the necessary administrative arrangements to enable ward committees to perform their functions effectively. The ward committee is an advisory body and can make recommendations directly to its Councillor, or to the metropolitan or local council, the executive committee, the Executive Mayor or the relevant sub-council. The council can dissolve a ward committee if it fails to achieve its objectives. The objectives of a ward committee are to:

- Get better participation from the broader community to inform council decisions

**CHAPTER 4: MPHIL THESIS – NIF SALIWA****EMPIRICAL STUDY ON THE QUALITY OF TRANSLATED ISIXHOSA GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS****THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

Dear respondent

Attached find a questionnaire which I would like you to help me with by reading the attached documents and answering questions about them. The main purpose of this questionnaire and research is to gauge the feeling of target readers of translated isiXhosa government documents on the quality of these documents. I will appreciate it if respondents take time to fill in the questionnaire giving their best response on the questions. Your responses will help me formulate a statement on the quality of translation produced in government institutions.

**FORMAT AND TYPES OF QUESTIONS**

Participants have been provided with two documents, each with one page only. The first document is extracted from the translated National Revised National Curriculum Statement of the Department of Education, Grades 10-12 Green Paper and you will also be provided with its source text version. The second document is a local government document with its source text version. Kindly read through them and assess the quality of translation in these two documents or state whether they make sense to you. After reading each document, kindly answer the questions that follow suit and the questions are the same in each document. Please, also fill your name, your institution and the work that you are doing. If you are not in any institution, not working, or a freelancer, or student please state that as well.

The questions are both closed and open-ended. On the closed questions, the participant is expected to tick a box or to answer yes or no and there is also an option of "Other" so that if your answer does not fall within the given options, you have the liberty to state your answer in the "Other" slot. The open-ended questions seek further clarity on the answer supplied by the respondent. On these questions kindly give as much detail as possible. If you would like to add more comments on questions asked you are very welcome to do so. I thank all of you in advance for your time and effort. You are welcome to contact me if you need further explanation on what to do.

**Ncebakazi Faith Saliwa (Researcher)**

*Contact details: (021) 487 1715 (o/h)*

*Fax: (021) 487-1685 (mark it for my attention)*

*email: nsaliwa@wcpp.gov.za*

**ENGLISH VERSION: EXTRACT FROM CHAPTER 1****INTRODUCING THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT**

The adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) provided a basis for curriculum transformation and development in South Africa. The Preamble to the Constitution states that the aims of the Constitution are to:

- heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights
- improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person
- lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law and
- build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.

The Constitution further states that “everyone has the right ... to further education which the State, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible”.

The *National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (Schools)* lays a foundation for the achievement of these goals by stipulating outcomes and standards, and by spelling out the key principles and values that underpin the curriculum.

**Articulation and portability**

Articulation refers to the relationship between qualifications in different NQF levels or bands in ways that promote access from one qualification to another. This is especially important for qualifications falling within the same learning pathway. Given that the FET band is nested between the General Education and Training (GET) and the Higher Education bands, it is vital that the FETC for schools articulates with the General Education and Training Certificate (GETC) and qualifications in similar learning pathways of higher education. In order to achieve this articulation, the development of each Subject Statement included a close scrutiny of the exit level expectations in GET learning areas, and of the learning assumed to be in place at the entrance levels of cognate disciplines in higher education.

**EXTRACT FROM CHAPTER 1 OF THE REVISED NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT  
GRADES 10-12 – IsiXhosa Version**

**INTSHAYELELO YENKCAZELO YEKHARITYHULAM YESIZWE**

Ukwamkelwa koMgaqo-Siseko weRiphabliki yoMzantsi Afrika (uMthetho we-108 wo-1996) kusinike isiseko sokuguqulwa nokwakhiwa kwekharityhulam eMzantsi Afrika. IsiNgeniso soMgaqo-Siseko sichaza ukuba iinjongo zoMgaqo-Siseko zezi:

- ukuphelisa iiyantlukwano zangaphambili, kuzinziswe kananjalo uluntu olusekeke kokuxabisekileyo ekuvunyelwene ngako sisizwe esilawulwa yintando yesininzi, kubulungisa bentlalo namalungelo oluntu asisiseko.
- ukuphucula umgangatho wobomi wabemi bonke, nokukhulula amandla aleleyo omntu ngamnye.
- ukwenza isiseko sentando yesininzi nesivulekileyo soluntu, apho ulawulo okanye ukuphatha kusekeke kwintando yabantu, kwaye wonke ummi ekhuselwe ngokulinganayo ngumthetho.
- ukwakha uMzantsi-Afrika omanyeneyo olawulwa yintando yesininzi, okwaziyo ukudlala indima efanelekileyo njengombuso ozimeleyo kumnombo wezizwe.

UMgaqo-Siseko ucacisa into yokuba “wonke ubani unelungelo kwimfundo eqhubekela phambili, ekufuneka ke ngoko ukuba uMbuso ngokusebenzisa imilinganiselo ecingisiswe kakuhle, uyenze ukuba ifumaneke kuye wonke ubani, ize kananjalo ifikeleleke.”

INKcazelo yeKharityhulam yeSizwe yamaBanga 10-12, yakha isiseko sokuphumelelisa ezi njongo ngokumisa iziPhumo zokuFunda kunye nemiGangatho yokuHlola, kunye nangokudandalazisa imithetho- siseko nokuxabisekileyo okuxhasa ikharityhulam.

**Ukuhambisana nokwamkeleka okanye ukuthwaleka**

Ukuhambisana kubhekisa kuzalwano nobudlelwano obukhoyo phakathi kwezigaba okanye amanqanaba ahlukeneyo eSakhelo sesiQinisekiso seSizwe, ngeendlela eziphuhlisa ukufikeleleka kwisiqinisekiso esithile ukuya kwesinye. Oku kubaluleke kakhulu kwisiqinisekiso ezikwibakala lokufunda elinye. Nanjengoko sisazi ukuba isiGaba seMfundo noQeqesho oluqhubekela Phambili, sibekeke phakathi kwesigaba seMfundo noQeqesho Jikelele kunye nesigaba seMfundo ePhakamileyo, kubalulekile ukuba isiQinisekiso seMfundo noQeqesho oluqhubekela Phambili, sihambisane nesiQinisekiso seMfundo noQeqesho Jikelele, nakunye neziqinisekiso ezifunyanwa kumimandla yokufunda efanayo yeMfundo ePhezulu. Ukuze kuphuhliswe oku kuhambisana, ukwakhiwa kweNkcazelo yesiFundo ngasinye, kubandakanya ukuphicothwa kwamanqanaba okulindelweyo kumfundi ophumelele iNkalo zeziFundo zesiGaba seMfundo noQeqesho Jikelele, kwanolwazi lokufunda ekucingelwa ukuba uluzuzile, xa engenela izifundo ezizalanayo zeMfundo ePhezulu.



**SECOND DOCUMENT****Constitutional Status of Local Government****THE STATUS WHICH THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA CONFERS ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT IS AS FOLLOWS:**

- **LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONSISTS OF MUNICIPALITIES [S151]**  
Municipalities must be established for the whole of the territory of the Republic of South Africa
- **LOCAL GOVERNMENT HAS THE *RIGHT TO GOVERN* LOCAL GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS OF ITS COMMUNITY [S151]**  
The right to govern means to exercise authority and more specifically the power to:
  - Impose taxes on people
  - Make and administer legislation
  - Take decisions which may affect the rights of individuals
- **EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY OF A MUNICIPALITY IS VESTED IN THE *MUNICIPAL COUNCIL* [S151]**  
The Municipal Council consists of elected members.
- **A MUNICIPALITY IS AN ORGAN OF STATE [S239]**  
An Organ of State refers to any department of state or administration in the national, provincial or local sphere of government.
- **A MUNICIPALITY IS A LEGAL PERSON [*MUNICIPAL SYSTEMS ACT, S2(d)*]**  
This means that the municipality may, under its own name:
  - Sue or be sued
  - Purchase, own and alienate land
  - Enter into contracts
  - Act in any way legal persons are allowed to in terms of the law.
 [Liability of "the community" for the actions of the municipality is excluded": *Municipal Systems Act, S2d*]

**3. Objectives of Local Government**

Section 152 of the Constitution identifies the objectives of local government as:

- the provision of democratic and accountable government for local communities
- the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner
- the promotion of social and economic development
- the promotion of a safe and healthy environment, and
- encouraging the involvement of communities and community organisations in matters of local government.

The above are only the objectives, and NOT the powers of a municipality. A municipality must strive to achieve the above objectives taking into account (a) its financial and administrative capacity, and (b) its conferred powers.

**4. Structures Within a Municipality**

The Municipal Systems Act [S2] describes a municipality as consisting of:

- The Political structures (i.e. the Municipal Council, Executive Committee, Metropolitan Sub-Councils<sup>1</sup>, Ward Committees, Other Committees) and role-players (i.e. the Councillors, Mayor, and Speaker).

- The Administration (i.e. the appointed municipal officials headed by Municipal Manager)
- The Community (i.e. the different residents such as individuals, households and businesses).

### (S) Xhosa translation

## 2. IWONGA LOMGAQO SISEKO LIKARHULUMENTE WENGINQI

Iwonga lomgaqo siseko kwiphondo lomzantsi Afrika elithi liwuthwese kurhulumente wengingqi lolu lulandelayo:

- URHULUMENTE WENGINQI UNOOMASIPALA (S 151)  
Kufuneka wonke usklwe ummandla wephando.
  - URHULUMENTE WENGINQI UNELUNGELO LOKULAWULA IMCIMBI KARHULUMENTE WENGINQI YASEKUHLALENI (S 151)  
Ilungelo lokulawula lithetha ukuqhelisa igunya ngqo ngokwasemandleni uku:
    - Rhafisa abantu
    - Ukwenza nokujongana nowisomthetho
    - Thata izigqibo ezizakuchaphazela amalungelo omntu ngamnye.
  - IQOQO ELILAWULA KUNYE NOWISO MTHETHO OLU GUNYAZISIWEYO LUKAMASIPALA LUMIKELWE KWIKHANSILE KAMASIPALA. (S 151)  
Ikansile kamasipala inamalungu anyyuliweyo
  - UMASIPALA LILUNGA LESIZWE (S 239)  
Ilungu lesizwe libhekiselele kwisebe lesizwe lwephondo
  - UMASIPALA NGUMNTU OSEMTHETHWENI (UMTHETHO KAMASIPALA (S 2(D))  
Lonto ithetha ukuthi phanti kwegama lakhe umasipala:
    - Angamangala okanye amangalelwe
    - Athengise owakhe umhlaba
    - Aqhube nangaluphina uhlobo umntu osemthethwe ni avumelekileyo ukuba enze ngalo ngokuse mthethweni
- (..." Akukhuphe ukumela kabahlali ngokwe nkqubo kamasipala..." Umthetho kamasipala ka S 2 (d) )

## 3. IINJONGO ZIKARHULUMENT WENGINQI

Usection 152 wongaqo siseko uboniso injongo zikarhulumente wengingqi:

- Umphako wedemokrasi kunye nkuba noxanduva lukarhulumente kubahlali bengingqi,
- Umphako wenkonzo zabahlali.
- Ukunyuselwa kobuntu kunye nophuiso lwezo mnotho
- Nokukhuthaza kokuzibandakanya kwabahlali nemibutho yabahlali kwimicimbi yorhulumente wengingqi.

Ezi zinjongo kuphela, ayilolawulo luka masipala. Umasipala kufuneka azame uku phumelelisa ezinjongo azithathele ingqalelo.

- (a) kwezemali kunye nolawulo lwekhapasiti
- (b) ukuthwesa kolawulo

# The Questionnaire

Name of the participant: .....

Institution: .....

Field : .....

Designation: .....

## QUESTIONS

1. Does the translated isiXhosa document make sense to you? If your answer is **No**, what is the problem with the document and if the answer is **Yes** does it convey the same meaning as that of the source text, that is, the English version? If your answer is **Other**, kindly give an explanation.

- YES
- NO
- OTHER

.....

.....

.....

2. Is the language used suitable for its context?

- YES
- NO
- OTHER

.....

.....

.....

3. Is the formulation and syntax in accordance with the grammatical requirements of the target language?

- YES
- NO
- OTHER

.....

.....  
.....

4. Does the format and structure of both the source text and the target text affect the message of the document?

- YES
- NO
- OTHER

.....  
.....  
.....

5. Does the target document have any spelling errors? If yes, do these errors affect and readability of the document in any way?

- YES
- NO
- OTHER

.....  
.....  
.....

6. Are there any cultural elements in the source text that have an impact in the translation of the target language?

- YES
- NO
- OTHER

.....  
.....  
.....

7. Are words and terms used by the translator appropriate in this context? If the answer is no why do you say so?

- YES
- NO
- OTHER

.....



## Appendix E (3)

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.....

8. Is this a good or bad translation? Why do you say so?

- YES
- NO
- OTHER

.....  
.....  
.....

9. Do you regularly come across government documents, eg, circulars, notices, gazettes, Bills, reports, strategic plans, etc? If yes, what is your overall feeling about them?

- YES
- NO
- OTHER

.....  
.....  
.....

10. Any other comments that you want to make regarding the above text?

.....  
.....  
.....

***Thank you for taking time and for your kindness to respond to these questions.***

TO : HEADS OF LANGUAGE UNITS IN THE WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE

DATE: 16 MARCH 2005

EMPIRICAL STUDY ON THE QUALITY OF TRANSLATED- ISIXHOSA  
GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

Interview Questions:

- 1) How many isiXhosa translators are employed in your institution and what workload do they have?
- 2) Does this have any impact on the quality of translation rendered by your unit?
- 3) Are the translators employed qualified language practitioners or qualified translators with isiXhosa as one of their major subjects? In other words, what is the requirement for a translator to be employed in your institution?
- 4) Do you use freelance translators? If yes, are they qualified language practitioners and does their work get edited before their translated documents are released for public consumption?
- 5) Have you received any complaints with regards to your isiXhosa translations? If yes, what was the nature of the complaints?
- 6) Generally what is the quality of isiXhosa translations?
- 7) If the quality is not always good, what could be the reasons for that and is there anything you would suggest needs to be done to improve isiXhosa translation?
- 8) Any other comments that you want to make regarding isiXhosa translation?

*Thank you for taking time and for your kindness to respond to these questions.*

## Text analysed in Chapter 5

## IsiXhosa target text

*Malungu eekomiti zewadi abekileyo, oogxa bam abangoceba, amagosa, amalungu amajelo eendaba, iinkokeli zethu zeenkolo ezikhoyo namhlanje, oogxa bethu bezoshishino, ngokukodwa abe-KPMG esibabulelayo ngenkxaso-mali abasinike yona, iindwendwe ezizodwa ezivela kwiinqila, ezifana nenqila ye-Nelson Mandela neSixeko saseRhawutini, manene namanenekazi. NjengoSomlomo weSixeko saseKapa, nanjengegosa lezopolitiko elijongene nokumiselwa kweekomiti zethu zewadi kwiSixeko, kuluvuyo olukhulu kum ukwenza intetho kuni ngale ntsasa.*

*Ngomhla wama-25 ku-Agasti 2004, iBhunga lamkela imigaqo yokumiselwa kweekomiti zewadi. NjengoSomlomo ndanikwa umyalelo wokumisela iiwadi ezili-100 kwisithuba seentsuku ezili-100. Ndinovuyo ukunazisa ukuba ngomhla wama-24 Disemba 2004, sibe sele sizimisele iikomiti zewadi ezili-100. Oku kuphunyezwe liqela eliphambili, endinethamsanqa elilodwa ukusebenza nalo, eliquka bonke oosihlalo bamabhungana nabalawuli bamabhungana. ISixeko saseKapa sinothulela umnqwazi!*

*Kubonakala kunzima kula maxesha ukucela abantu ukuba babe ngamavolontiya. Oku kubangelwa kukuba siphila kwixesha apho sifuna intlawulo ngayo yonke into esiyenzayo. Nangona kunjalo sithi abakwaziyo ukubona oko sikwenzayo, njengotyalo kubomi babantu bethu. Uthatyathwa njengesidenge xa usebenzisa ixesha lakho, usenza neenzame uncedisa umbutho othile ngaphandle kokulindela inzuzo. Niyaqinisekiswa ukuba niza kuvuzwa. Mhlawumbi anizi kuwufumana umvuzo wenu ngoku nisaphilayo nina, kodwa abantwana benu nesizukulwana esizayo siza kuvuna lukhulu kumsebenzi wenu kwesi Sixeko ngokunjalo nesizwe sethu esithandekayo.*

*Ubuhle beSixeko esinguNozala, abuzinzanga nje kuphela kwimbonakalo yesi Sixeko nakubuhle bendalo esisikelelwe ngabo. Obona buhle beSixeko sethu nesizwe sethu buzinze kubantu baso, kuwe nakum, ekwahlukeni kwethu namandla esinawo okusebenzisana sonke singazijonganga iiyantlukwano zethu nemiceli-mngeni esijongene nayo, izinto ezo eziza kwenza iSixeko sethu sibe siSixeko esikumgangatho wehlabathi.*

## (Chapter 5)

*The English source text*

**NB: The grammatical mistakes have intentionally not been corrected because the translator was given the translation with these mistakes. Instead some of them have been underlined or made bold or italicised to show that the translator even produced a better translation and did not make similar mistakes in the target text**

*Esteemed ward committee members, fellow councillors, officials, members of the media, our religious leaders present today, our business partners, in particular KPMG for your kind sponsorship, special guests from our visiting metro's, namely Nelson Mandela Metro and Joburg City, ladies and gentlemen.*

*As Speaker of the City of Cape Town, and the political office-bearer responsible for the establishment of our ward committees for the City, it gives me great pleasure to address you this morning.*

*On the 25<sup>th</sup> of August 2004, council adopted the rules for the establishment of our ward committees. As Speaker, I was given a mandate to establish 100 wards within 100 days. I'm proud to say that by the 24<sup>th</sup> of December 2004, we had established 100 ward committees. This was made possible by the excellent team I'm privileged to work with which includes all sub-council chairpersons and sub-council managers. The City of Cape Town salutes you!*

*It seems as a low blow in the times the find ourselves, to refer to volunteers. For we live in a society where everything we come down to payment for what we do. Yet it is our ability to see what we do, as an investment in the lives of our people. You are seen as foolish for investing your time and efforts in a structure without compensation you can be assured that you will be rewarded. Your reward may not come about in your lifetime, but your children and the generations to come will reap from your investment in this City and our beloved nation.*

*The beauty as the Mother City, lies not only on our scenic or natural beauty we've been blessed with. The true beauty of our City and nation lies in its people, in you and me, its our diversity and the ability. We have to work together despite our differences and challenges that will make our City a world class City.*

## Appendix H (1)

### QUESTIONS

1. Does the translated isiXhosa document make sense to you? If your answer is **No**, what is the problem with the document and if the answer is **Yes** does it convey the same meaning as that of the source text, that is, the English version? If your answer is **Other**, kindly give an explanation.

- YES
- NO
- OTHER

Literal translations;

Word-for-word equivalents which, though cast in isiXhosa, do not make sense;

Inability to change source structure of source text so as to effect accuracy of isiXhosa idiom;

Verbosity: some words are redundant and only the complex rendition even more difficult to read and to understand.

2. Is the language used suitable for its context?

- YES
- NO
- OTHER

Perhaps the language style is a suitable register if it is aimed only at government officials who are familiar with the technical terms used. Otherwise for accessibility of the information to all possible readers, the translation is very non-user friendly. **I believe a translator should, among other things, aim for simplicity (in addition to accuracy at all levels).**

3. Is the formulation and syntax in accordance with the grammatical requirements of the target language?

- YES
- NO
- OTHER

See 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet in answer to Question 1 above



Appendix H (2)

4. Does the format and structure of both the source text and the target text affect the message of the document?

- YES
- NO
- OTHER

I think that the source text is not very well written: (1) It is so highly technical, using such complex constructions, that that even a highly literate person who is however not familiar with the contents, struggles to come to grips with the meaning of what is described; (2) Also, the excessive use of acronyms, so typical of our government's documents and speeches, renders the text opaque.

.....

5. Does the target document have any spelling errors? If yes, do these errors affect and readability of the document in any way?

- YES
- NO
- OTHER

The translator's level of knowledge of the current orthography rules of isiXhosa is quite commendable.

.....

.....

6. Are there any cultural elements in the source text that have an impact in the translation of the target language?

- YES
- NO
- OTHER

This is a highly specialized and technical text, void of much, if any at all, cultural content in both versions.

7. Are words and terms used by the translator appropriate in this context? If the answer is no why do you say so?

- YES
- NO
- OTHER

Terms are not well-thought out. In several instances I read the English text to get a sense of the translated terms, and then recast the translation in what I perceived to be an accurate form. For example, the term "Qualification" in NQF does not, in my understanding, refer to a literal certificate, but to a successfully completed level of education/training. Thus ugqibo-sifundo (isifundo being a

course, diploma, etc) or ugqibo-zifundo (i.e. whatever Izifundo had to be completed for a particular course, diploma, etc) would be better suitable, in my opinion. The translator also uses terms which s/he must have got from either inaccurately translated government texts, e.g. "isakhelo" (which should simply be) for 'framework'. This term has a clearer meaning as simply, Isikhokelo, for IsiXhosa. S/he also uses word-for word equivalents even where they are not necessary and where they do not make sense.

8. Is this a good or bad translation? Why do you say so?

- X YES
- NO
- OTHER

Because the text is difficult to read, it is boring.

NB

9. Do you regularly come across government documents, eg, circulars, notices, gazettes, Bills, reports, strategic plans, etc? If yes, what is your overall feeling about them?

- X YES
- NO
- OTHER

Some are well written, in good English. Others are, like this page you sent us, rendered difficult to read by too much use of technical terms and boring acronyms.

10. Any other comments that you want to make regarding the above text?

I think my answers above contain enough comments.

*Thank you for taking time and for your kindness to respond to these questions.*

#### 4. IZAKHIWO PHAKATHI KUNASIPALA

Umthetho kamasipala ka (s2) ucacisa umasipala nje ngo ne:

- Nemibutho yepolitiki ( okanye ikhansile kamasipala, iqoqo lolawulo lwekomiti, ikomiti zewadi nezinye iikomiti kunyr nabadlali ndima ( isenokuba ngo ceba, solodolophu okanye isithethi)
- Ulawulo (isenokuba ngamagosa anyuliweyo oma sipala, okhekelwa zimanejala zikamasipala)
- Abahlali isenokuba ngabahlali abohlukieyo abanje ngomntu ngamnye, emizini kunye nosomashishini

### QUESTIONS

1. Does the translated isiXhosa document make sense to you? If your answer is **No**, what is the problem with the document and if the answer is **Yes** does it convey the same meaning as that of the source text, that is, the English version? If your answer is **Other**, kindly give an explanation.

- YES
- NO
- OTHER

S/he misrepresents the facts which are presented by the source text. For instance, the isiXhosa version of the first English text statement, namely, "THE STATUS WHICH THE CONSTITUTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA CONFERS ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT IS AS FOLLOWS:" has the following meaning, which is not only different from, but also an inaccurate expression of the facts reflected in, the said statement: "*The constitutional status in the province of South Africa which it (the Province) confers on one local government is the following one.*" This whole sentence does not make sense, either in isiXhosa or when translated back to English. It seems that the translator had no insight of the field whatsoever. For example there is no "iphondo lomzantsi Afrika." There are numerous such other examples.

Also, word-for-word translations and failure of the translator to change English syntactic structures to meaningful isiXhosa sentence structures add to the mystification of the isiXhosa version. In some cases the translator leaves out whole chunks of information which is there in the original text. In such places, the isiXhosa version does not make sense at all.

3. Is the language used suitable for its context?

- YES
- NO
- OTHER

The language is froth with grammatical, specifically, agreement errors; it is also full of typing, and spelling and other orthography errors. These grave errors turn it into a careless slang inappropriate for the context of the contents.

3. Is the formulation and syntax in accordance with the grammatical requirements of the target language?

- YES
- NO
- OTHER



## Appendix H (5)

See under Question 2. above. There are also terrible grammatical errors, especially the very bad use of concordial/agreement forms, eg "lwonga ... lolu lulandelayo", (should be "leli lilandelayo"). The translator also breaks some formatives from words of isiXhosa in a manner not natural to isiXhosa, eg, Ilungelo lokulawula lithetha ukuqhelisa igunya ngqo ngokwasemandleni uku:

- Rhafisa abantu
- Ukwenza nokujongana nowisomthetho
- Thata izigqibo ezizakuchaphazela amalungelo omntu ngamnye

Here s/he even displays lack of knowledge of writing morphemes and incomplete forms of words, namely, by making appropriate use of hyphens. There is also inconsistency in the 2<sup>nd</sup> bullet. One could go on and on, but for pressure of time.

4. Does the format and structure of both the source text and the target text affect the message of the document?

- X YES  
 NO  
 OTHER

*NB*  
In the source text main headings are written in small font, whereas bulleted subheadings are in large font and in capitals. This is confusing. The target text follows suit instead of improving on the source text. The version in another language should be an independent piece of work in which the translator has demonstrated her/his insight into both the language and the field or area of the text, by producing an accurately formatted document in the language to which s/he is translating. Translators to isiXhosa and, in deed, to all African Languages, should wake up from the stupor of making isiXhosa (in this case) so much of a carbon copy of a source language that they even mimic inaccuracies/weaknesses of format or document structure of the source language.

5. Does the target document have any spelling errors? If yes, do these errors affect and readability of the document in any way?

- X YES  
 NO  
 OTHER

They affect the readability of the isiXhosa version. There are so many of them that reading the document becomes very irritating. *NB*

6. Are there any cultural elements in the source text that have an impact in the translation of the target language?

- YES  
 X NO  
 OTHER

See answer to similar question under your first document.

7. Are words and terms used by the translator appropriate in this context? If the answer is no why do you say so?

## QUESTIONS

1. Does the translated isiXhosa document make sense to you? If your answer is **No**, what is the problem with the document and if the answer is **Yes** does it convey the same meaning as that of the source text, that is, the English version? If your answer is **Other**, kindly give an explanation.

- YES  
 NO  
 OTHER

*The translation is literal*

2. Is the language used suitable for its context?

- YES  
 NO  
 OTHER

*Yes - but it is a collection of words that do not convey any meaning*

3. Is the formulation and syntax in accordance with the grammatical requirements of the target language?

- YES  
 NO  
 OTHER

*Syntax is ok but there is problem with consistency in the use of orthography e.g. - use of capital letters & hyphenation (e.g. setatano noDeqesho - I/ele/e)*

4. Does the format and structure of both the source text and the target text affect the message of the document?

- YES  
 NO  
 OTHER

Yes, I.e. Thosa has been made a carbon copy of English - something that affects the contextuality of the text

5. Does the target document have any spelling errors? If yes, do these errors affect and readability of the document in any way?

- YES  
 NO  
 OTHER

No. It is a clear that the translator is a person who has studied language but not translation of course

6. Are there any cultural elements in the source text that have an impact in the translation of the target language?

- YES  
 NO  
 OTHER

Yes. words like values are not translated in cultural context and disputes the clarity of meaning

7. Are words and terms used by the translator appropriate in this context? If the answer is no why do you say so?

- YES  
 NO  
 OTHER

No. the <sup>translator</sup> translator are tried to translate words instead of the context. Terms do not convey any original meaning of the

8. Is this a good or bad translation? Why do you say so?

- YES  
 NO  
 OTHER

BAD TRANSLATION - there is no clarity of meaning of message. The isiXhosa version can never be understood in isolation

9. Do you regularly come across government documents, eg, circulars, notices, gazettes, Bills, reports, strategic plans, etc? If yes, what is your overall feeling about them?

- YES  
 NO  
 OTHER

Yes. Govt outsource translations to academics who have no skills in translation. Govt. should also have dedicated full time translators, qualified in language and translation or with experience in translation

10. Any other comments that you want to make regarding the above text?

Govt. should be educated on the fact that language academics are not necessary translators but lang. teachers. They should use people who have demonstrate extensive experience in translation or practising translation.

Thank you for taking time and for your kindness to respond to these questions.

↓  
How?

## Appendix H (9)

8. Is this a good or bad translation? Why do you say so?

- YES
- NO
- OTHER

Very bad translation. It is clear that it is done by somebody who has never studied layout no clue about word division etc. Not checked & edited

9. Do you regularly come across government documents, eg, circulars, notices, gazettes, Bills, reports, strategic plans, etc? If yes, what is your overall feeling about them?

- YES
- NO
- OTHER

Yes - that Govt. do not scrutinize their translators they just outsource work to a freelance with no consideration for quality control

10. Any other comments that you want to make regarding the above text?

Govt. to consider having dedicated full-time translators in order to ensure quality control and professional service.

Thank you for taking time and for your kindness to respond to these questions.



## Appendix H (10)

translator uses those derived directly from English, like "ikhansile" for "council", instead of using "ibhunga".

8. Is this a good or bad translation? Why do you say so?

- YES  
 NO  
 OTHER

I am saying it is bad because it is not building the language because children & other non-speakers of the language will think "ikhansile" is a siXhosa word when it is not.

9. Do you regularly come across government documents, eg, circulars, notices, gazettes, Bills, reports, strategic plans, etc? If yes, what is your overall feeling about them?

- YES  
 NO  
 OTHER

I feel that they are not up to standard and some thing has to be done if the government and language practitioners are serious about developing African languages and peoples of South Africa.

10. Any other comments that you want to make regarding the above text?

I think and believe it is one of the first steps in the development of the African languages and the reintegration of the black people into the mainstream economic programmes.

Thank you for taking time and for your kindness to respond to these questions.

## Appendix H (11)

8. Is this a good or bad translation? Why do you say so?

- YES  
 NO  
 OTHER

Not just bad, pathetic. Inconsistencies, mistranslations, poor spelling, incomplete translations. This is just a mess.

9. Do you regularly come across government documents, eg, circulars, notices, gazettes, Bills, reports, strategic plans, etc? If yes, what is your overall feeling about them?

- YES  
 NO  
 OTHER

People should not be made to do what they can not do. Translating does not only require someone who can speak the language. It is a specialist field. Needs to be treated as such.

10. Any other comments that you want to make regarding the above text?

This undermines the beauty of my language. It is an insult to the speakers of the language and to the profession, i.e. translation.

Thank you for taking time and for your kindness to respond to these questions.

'Respondent edited the text.'

## Appendix H (12)

### EXTRACT FROM CHAPTER 1 OF THE REVISED NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT: GRADES 10-12 – IsiXhosa Version

#### INTSHAYELELO YENKCAZELO YEKHARITYHULAM YESIZWE

*nokuphuhlisa*

Ukwamkelwa koMgaqo-Siseko weRiphabliki yoMzantsi Afrika (uMthetho we-108 wo-1996) kusinike isiseko sokuguqulwa nokwakhiwa kwekharityhulam eMzantsi Afrika. IsiNgeniso soMgaqo-Siseko sichaza ukuba iinjongo zoMgaqo-Siseko zezi:

- ukuphelisa iiyantlukwano zangaphambili, kuzinziswe kananjalo uluntu olusekeke kokuxabisekileyo ekuvunyelwene ngako sisizwe esilawulwa yintando yesininzi, kubulungisa bentlalo namalungelo oluntu asisiseko.
- ukuphucula umgangatho wobomi <sup>b</sup>yabemi bonke, nokukhulula amandla aleleyo omntu ngamnye.
- ukwenza isiseko sentando yesininzi nesivulekileyo soluntu, apho ulawulo okanye ukuphatha kusekeke kwintando yabantu, kwaye wonke ummi ekhuselwe ngokulinganayo ngumthetho.
- ukwakha uMzantsi-Afrika omanyeneyo olawulwa yintando yesininzi, okwaziyo ukudlala indima efanelekileyo njengombuso ozimeleyo kumnombi wezizwe.

*ugqiba uthi*  
UMgaqo-Siseko ucacisa into yokuba, wonke ubani unelungelo kwimfundo eqhubekela phambili, ekufuneka ke ngoko ukuba uMbuso ngokusebenzisa imilinganiselo ecingisise kakuhle, uyenze ukuba ifumaneke kuye wonke ubani, ize kananjalo ifikeleleke."

*sokufezekisa*  
INkcazelo yeKharityhulam yeSizwe yamaBanga 10-12, yakha isiseko sokuphumelelisa, ezi njongo ngokumisa iziPhumo zokuFunda kunye nemiGangatho yokuHlola, kunye nangokudandalazisa imithetho- siseko nokuxabisekileyo okuxhasa ikharityhulam.

Ukuhambisana nokwamkeleka okanye ukuthwaleka

*ngokukodwa/ngakumbi*

Ukuhambisana kubhekisa kuzalwano nobudlelwano obukhoyo phakathi kwezigaba okanye amanqanaba ahlukeneyo eSakhelo sesiQinisekiso seSizwe, ngeendlela eziphuhlisa ukufikeleleka kwisiqinisekiso esithile ukuya kwesinye. Oku kubaluleke kakhulu, kwisiqinisekiso ezikwibakala lokufunda elinye. Nanjengoko sisazi ukuba isiGaba seMfundo noQeqesho oluqhubekela Phambili, sibekeke phakathi kwesigaba seMfundo noQeqesho Jikelele kunye nesigaba seMfundo ePhakamileyo, kubalulekile ukuba isiQinisekiso seMfundo noQeqesho oluqhubekela Phambili, sihambisane nesiQinisekiso seMfundo noQeqesho Jikelele, nakunye nezinqinisekiso ezifunyanwa <sup>???</sup> kumimandla yokufunda efanayo yeMfundo ePhezulu. Ukuze kuphuhlise oku kuhambisana, ukwakhiwa kweNkcazelo yesiFundo ngasinye, kubandakanya ukuphicothwa kwamanqanaba okulindelweyo kumfundi ophumelele iNkalo zeziFundo zesiGaba seMfundo noQeqesho Jikelele, kwanolwazi lokufunda ekucingelwa ukuba uluzuzile, xa engenela izifundo ezizalanyo zeMfundo ePhezulu.

Ukuthwaleka okanye ukwamkeleka kubhekisa kwindlela ezithi izahlulo zesiqinisekiso (izifundo okanye iiyunithi zemiGangatho) zamkeleke ngayo kummandla owahlukileyo wokufunda kwakwiSakhelo sesiQinisekiso seSizwe esikwisiGaba esinye. Ngenxa yeenjongo zokunyusa ukuthwaleka okanye ukwamkeleka kwezifundo eziphuyelelwa kumaBanga 10-12, kuphononongwe iindlela ezahlukileyo, umzekelo, ukuthelakelela isifundo esiyunithi zomGangatho oziikhredithi ezingama-20. Izifundo eziqulathwe kwiNkcazelo yeKharityhulam yeSizwe zamaBanga 10-12 (Jikelele) zithelekiseka ngokuncomekayo nemigangatho yeeyunithi ebhalisiweyo ekwiSakhelo sesiQinisekiso seSizwe.

→ Indiwafumani lo mhlathi  
cisiNgesi.

ezahlukileyo  
kwezinye?  
(asingathi ezahlukeneya?)



Appendix H (13)

- The Administration (i.e. the appointed municipal officials headed by Municipal Manager)
- The Community (i.e. the different residents such as individuals, households and businesses).

IsiXhosa translation

IWONGA ELITHWESWA UPHULUMENTE WENGINGQI

2. IWONGA LOMGAQO SISEKO LIKARHULUMENTE WENGINGQI

NGUMBAQO-SISEKO WERIPHABHLIKI YOMZANTSI AFRIKA LELI  
Iwonga lomgaqo siseko kwiphondo lomzantsi Afrika elithi liwuthwese kurhulumente wengingqi lolu lulandelayo:

- URHULUMENTE WENGINGQI UNOOMASIPALA (S 151)  
Kufuneka wonke usikwe ummandla wephando.  
*kumiselwe ooMasipala kummandla wonke weRiphabhliki yo..*
- URHULUMENTE WENGINGQI UNELUNGELO LOKULAWULA IMCIMBI KARHULUMENTE WENGINGQI YASEKUHLENI (S 151)  
Ilungelo lokulawula lithetha ukahelisa igunya ngqo ngokwasemandleni uku:  
• Rhafisa abantu; *ukuba namagunya, ngokukodwa awoku;*
- Ukwenza nokujongana nowisomthetho;
- Thata izigqibo ezizakuchaphazela amalungelo omntu ngamnye.  
*ISIGAIBA NEAQOQO LOWISO-MTHETHO LIKAMASIPAL*
- IQOQO ELILAWULA KUNYE NOWISO MTHETHO OLU GUNYAZISIWEYO LUKAMASIPALA LUMIKELWE KWIKHANSILE KAMASIPALA. (S 151)  
Ikhansile kamasipala inamalungu anyfuliweyo.  
*U LORHULUMENTE WESIZWE*
- UMASIPALA LILUNGA LESIZWE (S 239)  
Ilungu lesizwe libhekiselele kwisibe lesizwe lwephondo  
*U LORhulumente wesizwe kulo naliphi iSebe lokhulumente wesizwe*
- UMASIPALA NGUMNTU OSEMTHETHWENI (UMTHETHO KAMASIPALA OKANYE ULAWULO (S 2(D))  
Eonto ithetha ukuthi phanti kwegama lakhe umasipala;  
*kwinganaba lesizwe, iphondo okanye ingingqi.*
- Amangala okanye amangalelwe;
- Athengise owakhe umhlaba okanye awuchithelwanga;
- Aqhuba nangaluphi na uhlobo umntu osemthethweni avumelekileyo ukuba enze ngalo ngokusemthethweni  
*omthetho ngenxa kwizivumelwano*

(... " Akukhuphe ukumela kabahlali ngokwe nkqubo kamasipala..." Umthetho kamasipala, kaS 2 (d) )  
*Uxanduva "loluntu" ngezenzo zikamasipala libekelwe bucala.*

3. IINJONGO ZIKARHULUMENTE WENGINGQI - (Jonga indlela esibhalwe ngayo  
*I Candelo lomgaqo - li*

Usection 152 yomgaqo siseko ubonisa injongo zikarhulumente wengingqi injengo; *isinjongo*

- Umphako wedemokrasi kunye nkuba noxanduva lukarhulumente kubahlali bengingqi,
- Umphako wenkonzo zabahlali.
- Ukunyuselwa kobuntu kunye nophuiso lwezo mnotho
- Nokukhuthaza kokuzibandakanya kwabhlali nemibutho yabahlali kwimicimbi yorhulumente wengingqi.

Ezi zinjongo kuphela, ayitolawulo lukaMasipala. Umasipala kufuneka azame ukaphumelelisa ezinjongo  
*azithathele ingqalelo. ethathela ingqalelo camthamo wakhe ngokwa*

- (a) kwezemali kunye nolawulo lwekhapasiti *sezimalini nakulawulo*
- (b) ukuthwesa kolawulo *(b) amagunya awathwesweyo*

• nikezele lolawulo lwedemokrasi nenkathalo kuluntu lwengingqi

• nikezele lweenkonzo kuluntu ngenqalelo ezinzileyo;

• phuhlise lwentlelele negogebela;

• phuhlise lokhuseleko nempilo ekujaleni kunye

4. Does the format and structure of both the source text and the target text affect the message of the document?

- YES  
 NO  
 OTHER

*the translated version of*

The structure of the target language text must always follow the natural target language idiom otherwise if there is too much of the source language format & structure in the target language the meaning gets lost.

5. Does the target document have any spelling errors? If yes, do these errors affect and readability of the document in any way?

- YES  
 NO  
 OTHER

There are plenty of them (see my comments in the text) & Yes they do affect the readability of the document.

6. Are there any cultural elements in the source text that have an impact in the translation of the target language?

- YES  
 NO  
 OTHER

7. Are words and terms used by the translator appropriate in this context? If the answer is no why do you say so?

- YES  
 NO  
 OTHER

Some are isiZulu terms & others are English terms. There is no objection for use/borrowing from other languages if there are not terms in the target language. In this case, umotho should have been umqeqesho, Sectin since we have been iCa-delo

1. No.

No, it does not make sense at all. From the very first paragraph one can't follow the meaning of the translation. The style of writing and the grammar is very poor. Using the following excerpts to illustrate this, one can see that the Xhosa translation follows the wording of the English text, thereby making the isiXhosa senseless. You are left wondering what the original text was in English, and only after checking the English text does it hit you what the Translator is trying to say

- ukuphelisa iiyantlukwano zangaphambili, kuzinziswe kananjalo uluntu olusekeke kokuxabisekileyo ekuvunyelwene ngako sisizwe esilawulwa yintando yesininzi, kubulungisa bentlalo namalungelo oluntu asisiseko
- ukuphucula umgangatho wobomi wabemi bonke, nokukhulula amandla aleleyo omntu ngamnye.
- Ukwenza isiseko sentando yesininzi nesivulekileyo soluntu ...
- Ukwakha uMzantsi-Afrika omanyeneyo olawulwa yintando yesininzi, okwaziyo ukudlala indima efanelekileyo njengombuso ozimeleyo kumnombo wesizwe.

Ukuhambisana nokwamkeleka okanye ukuthwaleka

From the title mentioned above, one cannot understand what it is that is being referred to in "ukuhambisana, eyamkelekayo nethwalekayo" – meaning that there is no qualifier. Basic principles of sentence construction and Xhosa grammar dictate that this should be the case – the sentence above leaves you with a question. When one reads the paragraphs that follow on, nothing really ties up and one just gives up from sheer frustration.

2. No. One gets the feeling that the person who was doing the translation is not familiar with the language (a non-mother tongue speaker), because if he/she had to read what he/she has translated, I doubt that he/she would be able to understand it.
3. No. It would seem repetitive because when such mistakes as the ones mentioned above are encountered in the text and all the other principles for grammatical construction are not heeded, one can't make out the meaning of the translation and it ends up misleading the reader.
4. Yes, the message is really affected (compromised).
5. Yes, there are and they can interfere with one's reading and understanding of the document. Here's an except to illustrate this: "kufuneka wonke usklwe ummandla wephondo = Municipality must be established for the whole of the territory of RSA

Urhulumente wengingqi unelungelo lokulawula imcimbi karhulumente wengingqi yasekuhlaleni

Thata izigqibo ezizakuchaphazela amalungelo omntu ngamnye

Lonto ithetha ukuthi phanti kwegama lakhe umasipala

Iqoqo elilawula kunye nowiso mthetho olu gunyazisiweyo...



Usection 152 wongaqo siseko uboniso injongo...

- NUS
6. Yes. It can be construed as criticism sometimes whereas the reality is that our terminology is limited and also the fact that our cultures are different. The translator uses the concepts the way he/she has understood them - 'Ukuhambisana nokwamkeleka okanye ukuthwaleka' as a translation for - 'Articulation and portability'.
  7. I can't really say so because I don't know of any useful dictionary that has been published in recent years that he/she could have referred to for this document. I am not sure if he/she has been adequately trained/empowered by his/her past employers.
  8. One can say that the standard really degrades the translator's work. Maybe he/she was under a lot of pressure - the types of mistakes that are encountered in this document are usually indicative of time constraints, that is, not having time to read and understand the concepts used in the source language and then not being able to proofread the document after translating it. I am confident that if he/she had sufficient time for this job, the result would have been different.
  9. Yes, I often encounter them. It depends on ~~the~~ whether the translator used is a professional one (as opposed to just anyone who professes to be able to translate) and moreover, what is most important is he/she is afforded enough time for the translation.
  10. In my opinion it seems as if there wasn't enough time for the whole project - from the translator to the proofreader and the editor.
- NUS

## 4. IZAKHIWO PHAKATHI KUNASIPALA

Umthetho kamasipala ka (s2) ucacisa umasipala nje ngo ne:

- Nemibutho yepolitiki ( okanye ikhansile kamasipala, iqoqo lolawulo lwekomiti, ikomiti zewadi nezinye iikomiti kunyr nabadlali ndima ( isenokuba ngo ceba, solodolophu okanye isithethi)
- Ulawulo (isenokuba ngamagosa anyuliweyo oma sipala, okhekelwa zimanejala zikamasipala)
- Abahlali isenokuba ngabahlali abohlukieyo abanje ngomntu ngamnye, emizini kunye nosomashishini

## QUESTIONS

1. Does the translated isiXhosa document make sense to you? If your answer is No, what is the problem with the document and if the answer is Yes does it convey the same meaning as that of the source text, that is, the English version? If your answer is Other, kindly give an explanation.

- YES  
 NO  
 OTHER

The translated isiXhosa document has been poorly translated, again terminology is the problem. No effort was made to check existing terminology. Secondly, the document is full of spelling errors and orthographical mistakes, rendering it a very poorly translated document.

3. Is the language used suitable for its context?

- YES  
 NO  
 OTHER

isiphathe should have been translated icondelo, for e.g. umnotho (isiZulu) should have been erogogolho. These are well-established terms in isiXhosa, but the translator chose to ignore them & hurriedly translated poorly.

3. Is the formulation and syntax in accordance with the grammatical requirements of the target language?

- YES  
 NO  
 OTHER

As have been pointed out (see my comments in the target text) spelling & orthographical mistakes. All these point down to carelessness & lack of regard for the African languages.

## Appendix H (18)

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5. Does the target document have any spelling errors? If yes, do these errors affect and readability of the document in any way?

- YES
- NO
- OTHER

*A lot! This document is fraught with spelling errors. These grossly affect the readability of the document.*

6. Are there any cultural elements in the source text that have an impact in the translation of the target language?

- YES
- NO
- OTHER

.....

.....

.....

7. Are words and terms used by the translator appropriate in this context? If the answer is no why do you say so?

- YES
- NO
- OTHER

*status – iwonga and NOT uxanduva*  
*organ – isebe, iziko, icandelo and NOT ilungu (a)*  
*provision – ukubonelela and NOT umphako*  
*promotion – ukukhuthaza and NOT ukunyuselwa*

8. Is this a good or bad translation? Why do you say so?

- YES
- NO
- OTHER

*This is a very bad translation*  
*Omissions; mistranslation; transliterations*  
*Section 152 – usection 152 instead of icandelo 152*  
*Capacity – ikhaphasiti instead of ukuba nakho ukwenza okuthile*

9. Do you regularly come across government documents, eg, circulars, notices, gazettes, Bills, reports, strategic plans, etc? If yes, what is your overall feeling about them?

- YES
- NO
- OTHER

*Even though I do not regularly come across them the few that I have seen are not that good.*

10. Any other comments that you want to make regarding the above text?

*This work is of very poor quality. The person who did it lacks the skills and the capacity. This is a misleading translation. I suggest that if already paid, this person should refund the client.*

***Thank you for taking time and for your kindness to respond to these questions.***

Lonto ithetha ukuthi phanti kwegama lakhe umasipala:

Angamangala okanye amangalelwe

Athengise owakhe umhlaba

Aqhube nangaluphina uhlobo umntu osemthethwe ni avumelekileyo ukuba enze ngalo ngokuse mthethweni

(..." Akukhuphe ukumela kabahlali ngokwe nkqubo kamasipala..." Umthetho kamasipala ka S 2 (d) )

### 3. IINJONGO ZIKARHULUMENT WENGINQI

**Usection 152 wongaqa siseko uboniso injongo zikarhulumente wengingqi:**

Umphako wedemkrasi kunye nkuba noxanduva lukarhulumente kubahlali bengingqi,

Umphako wenkonzo zabahlali.

Ukunyuselwa kobuntu kunye nophuiso lwezo mnotho

Nokukhuthaza kokuzibandakanya kwabhlali nemibutho yabahlali kwimicimbi yorhulumente wengingqi.

Ezi zinjongo kuphela, ayilolawulo luka masipala. Umasipala kufuneka azame uku phumelelisa ezinjongo azithathele ingqalelo.

kwezemali kunye nolawulo lwekhapasiti

ukuthwesa kolawulo

### 4. IZAKHIWO PHAKATHI KUNASIPALA

**Umthetho kamasipala ka (s2) ucacisa umasipala nje ngo ne:**

Nemibutho yepolitiki ( okanye ikhansile kamasipala, iqoqo lolawulo lwekomiti, ikomiti zewadi nezinye iikomiti kunyr nabadlali ndima ( isenokuba ngo ceba, solodolophu okanye isithethi)

Ulawulo (isenokuba ngamagosa anyuliweyo oma sipala, okhekelwa zimanejala zikamasipala)

Abahlali isenokuba ngabahlali abohlukieyo abanje ngomntu ngamnye, emizini kunye nosomashishini

## QUESTIONS

1. Does the translated isiXhosa document make sense to you? If your answer is **No**, what is the problem with the document and if the answer is **Yes** does it convey the same meaning as that of the source text, that is, the English version? If your answer is **Other**, kindly give an explanation.

No

Lots of misinterpretations of the context, mistranslation of the words, word for word translation model, total dependence on the dictionary definitions and explanations without considering the context/s of the clause/phrase/word/concept:

2. Is the language used suitable for its context?



NO

Translation of "exercise" as "ukuqhelisa"; "political structures" as "nemibutho yezopolitiko"; "provisions" as "umphako" demonstrate the answer in 1

- 3. Is the formulation and syntax in accordance with the grammatical requirements of the target language?

NO

Translator follows the morphosyntactic structures of the source language; "Purchase, own and alienate land" as "athengise owakhe umhlaba"; word division is pathetic,

- 4. Does the format and structure of both the source text and the target text affect the message of the document?

YES

- 5. Does the target document have any spelling errors? If yes, do these errors affect and readability of the document in any way?

YES

They do affect the readability and comprehension of the document. "Lonto" "phanti"

- 6. Are there any cultural elements in the source text that have an impact in the translation of the target language?

YES

NO

OTHER

- 7. Are words and terms used by the translator appropriate in this context? If the answer is no why do you say so?

YES

- 8. Is this a good or bad translation? Why do you say so?

Bad translation

Appalling spelling errors, lots of misinterpretation of the contexts, 'dictionary dependence syndrome',

9. Do you regularly come across government documents, eg, circulars, notices, gazettes, Bills, reports, strategic plans, etc? If yes, what is your overall feeling about them?

YES

Pathetic and appalling. The native speakers should take pride which will make them take control of their language's document production which would boost the economic, social and political status of the language

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10. Any other comments that you want to make regarding the above text?

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*Thank you for taking time and for your kindness to respond to these questions.*

## HEADS OF LANGUAGE UNITS IN THE WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE

### EMPIRICAL STUDY ON THE QUALITY OF TRANSLATED- ISIXHOSA GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

#### Interview Questions:

My name is Ncebakazi Faith Saliwa. I am doing MPhil in Translation with the University of Stellenbosch. I am conducting research on the quality of translation in government documents that have been translated into isiXhosa. The main purpose of these questions and research is to find out whether the public out there or your audience or target readers is happy with the quality of translation of documents, adverts, banners, posters, signage and so on. Your responses will help me formulate a statement on the quality of translation produced in government institutions. If they are not happy, then my thesis will come up with proposed solutions on how to improve the quality of our translation into isiXhosa, as you all know that I am also a Senior Language Practitioner in a government institution. This is not an exercise of criticizing some institutions or competing as who is doing right or wrong but this is just to find out if our clients are happy with our translation into isiXhosa, and if not, how do we improve it. Will you therefore kindly answer the following eight questions, and where necessary, consult your isiXhosa translators for answers. If the space provided below the questions is not enough, you are very welcome to write answers in separate pages. Kindly email or fax answers to me as soon as you find time to answer these questions, preferably this week still, if you can. Your help will be greatly appreciated.

- 1) How many isiXhosa translators are employed in your institution and how much workload do they have?

One at present, who has resigned. Permission to unfreeze the position (all posts are frozen automatically upon becoming vacant) is still being awaited. The incumbent must do urgent translations and editing of work translated by freelance translators, as well as assist the head of the unit in the co-ordination of translation requests and the general management of the unit, should the head be unavailable.

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- 2) Does this have any impact on the quality of translation rendered by your unit?

Absolutely – we need at least 3 full-time translators. Work load is way too much.

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- 3) Are the translators employed qualified language practitioners or qualified translators with isiXhosa as one of their major subjects? In other words, what is the requirement for a translator to be employed in your institution?

## Appendix H (25)

- YES  
 NO  
 OTHER

Yes and no. Terms are word-for word translations which have not been adapted to accurate isiXhosa form of speaking, by changing their morphological structure and sometimes their ordering: e.g. **"IWONGA LOMGAQO SISEKO LIKARHULUMENTE WENGINQI"** should be **IWONGA LIKARHULUMENTE WEENGINQI ELINGOKOMGAQO-SISEKO**;

(ii) The phrase **"ukuqhelisa igunya"** for "exercise authority" is senseless and ludicrous; it is very inappropriate and inaccurate in the context in which it is used. The phrase should simply be, **ukusebenzisa igunya...**;

(iii) **"...ilunga (-u) lesizwe"** for "...is an organ of state" should be, **"...liqumrhu likarhulumente"**, for it is not a part of the body; njalo-njalo ke.

8. Is this a good or bad translation? Why do you say so?

- YES  
 NO  
 OTHER

It is a very bad translation. The reasons already stated in answers to the above questions should suffice. There are a myriad of others. For instance the translator does not write capitals where they are necessary; does not know where to write conjunctively or disjunctively in isiXhosa; fails to use double vowels where they should indicate plural forms, and this is one of very significant features of the orthography of isiXhosa

9. Do you regularly come across government documents, eg, circulars, notices, gazettes, Bills, reports, strategic plans, etc? If yes, what is your overall feeling about them?

- X YES  
 NO  
 OTHER

Many of them are badly translated to isiXhosa: with literal translations which do not make sense; meaningless word-for-word equivalents, where proper isiXhosa constructions should be resorted to, eg superfluous, senseless use of the word "kwaye" to mimic the English "and", mostly where a simple subjunctive construction is adequate and fits the idiom of isiXhosa; misrepresentations of concepts; etc, This situation suggests that the government and its structures solicit the translation services of people with little understanding of the English language, and of the concepts they must translate, and of the language isiXhosa itself, in spite of being born amaXhosa and, in some cases, in spite of the training in translation that they may have undergone.



**Excuses:** financial constraints blamed for spending more on English and Afrikaans translations

# Misleading notices a bad sign for Xhosas

MYOLISI GOPHE

MANY of the official signs in IsiXhosa that are proliferating around the Western Cape are a fiasco.

The signs are so badly translated that they have been described as "meaningless and offensive".

Like the one advising pregnant women to phone a clinic when they are in labour, translated as "phone the clinic when your tummy is running".

Or the sign that should tell people they can book for a picnic, but saying instead "you can bring book for picnics".

A Cape Town road sign proclaiming "no hawking" has been mistranslated into IsiXhosa as "no walking", completely baffling pedestrians.

And the one telling people that drinking is prohibited on a beach, informs them instead "there is no alcohol here", in effect an invitation to bring alcohol.

Instead of making IsiXhosa-speaking people feel welcome, the signage baffles, misleads and annoys them.

This revelation follows Cape Town mayor Noma Linda Mfeketo's statement that black people do not feel welcome in the city. Ironically, some of the absurd signs have been put up by her own municipality.

Language experts have blamed carelessness and negative attitudes for the poor IsiXhosa translations on official signs on roads, at beaches, hospitals and other public places. Translators appear to be unqualified or have relied solely on dictionaries, a recipe for chaos.

IsiXhosa is one of three recognised official languages in the province, together with English and Afrikaans, but the translation into IsiXhosa at government, provincial and municipal institutions, heritage and other sites has been found to be ridiculous.

Language experts say those who commission translations see this indigenous language as valueless and treat it as less important than



Lost in translation: Tessa Dowling with the 'no hawking' sign on the M5 in Cape Town, which has been translated into IsiXhosa as 'no walking'.

Afrikaans and English or any other Western language.

"When people want translations into Afrikaans they will get qualified translators, editors and proof-readers, but when it comes to IsiXhosa they just drag in anybody," said Tessa Dowling, director of the African Voices language institution in Muizenberg.

She and Wynberg Girls' High School IsiXhosa teacher Thandi

Mpambo-Sibukwana have recently done a study which revealed that signage translation is appalling.

One sign, which Mpambo-Sibukwana described as the worst, was at the Afrikaanse Taal Monument in Paarl.

The sign "you can book for picnics" has been translated into IsiXhosa as meaning "you can bring book for picnics".

"Because of that signage, I hate to

visit that monument," said Mpambo-Sibukwana.

But that is just one of many.

At St James beach, a sign warning people that alcohol is prohibited turns out to mean that "there is no alcohol here" in the IsiXhosa translation.

At the dispensary unit in the Khayelitsha Community Health Centre in Site B, the researchers found countless errors.

water" instead of "Yonga amanzi".

A sign relating to "seizure" has been translated into IsiXhosa as "Isikere", meaning "scissors".

Dowling said that, legally, IsiXhosa-speaking people could not be prosecuted for bringing alcohol onto St James beach because of the poor translation.

She said translators, editors or proof-readers at official institutions just dragged in any unqualified IsiXhosa-speaking person to translate.

Sydney Zolwana, former head of translation services in parliament, agreed and said: "If you speak a certain language, it doesn't mean you are qualified to translate it."

He said the problem was that institutions had negative attitudes towards African languages and would translate English and Afrikaans correctly while translating IsiXhosa sloppily.

"They use financial constraints as an excuse and want to save when it comes to IsiXhosa translation while they are prepared to spend for Afrikaans and English," he said.

Zolwana, an independent language consultant, said another problem was the lack of standardisation of the language. IsiXhosa, along with other African languages, was struggling to cope with the new parliamentary, scientific and technological concepts.

Attempts to get the city council to comment were not successful and the Afrikaanse Taal Monument and the Khayelitsha Health Centre said they had no knowledge of the errors.

Meanwhile, the government hopes to put its house in order after the launch of the Western Cape Language Policy – the result of a five-year consultation process – a few weeks ago.

About R4.2 million has been approved for the next financial year, starting next month, and the policy will require departments to have language units to render translation and interpreting services, "ensuring that people of the Western Cape feel at home, welcomed and respected".

The Department of Obstetrics has been translated as "Isebe labazali", which means the "department of parents". The title of a pamphlet about HIV/Aids has been misspelt and instead of "Isifo uGawulayo" it reads "Isipho uGawulayo", which means "The Cur HIV/Aids".

Mpambo-Sibukwana said a Cape Town municipal sign urging people to save water was written as "Bonga amanzi", which means "praise