

Umbundu unique items in the translation of narrative texts

In this paper, I analyze certain target-language-specific items in the translation of New Testament narrative texts from Portuguese into Umbundu (R.11). I use the ongoing Umbundu translation and published translations (the Bible of 1963 and the Gospel of Matthew of 2002) in order to compare what unique items appear and how they are used. In these translations, Umbundu unique items include the applicative verbal derivation, locative enclitics, pronominal connexives, and ideophones.

In her empirical research based on corpora of both translated and original texts in Finnish, Sari Eskola (2004) shows that linguistic features unique to the target language tend to be under-represented in translations, whereas the linguistic features that have straightforward translation equivalents in the source language are over-represented in translations. Sonja Tirkkonen-Condit (2004:183) suggests that the reason for this is that there are no stimuli in the source text that would trigger unique items as the translator picks out lexical items, syntactic patterns and idiomatic expressions from her or his bilingual mental dictionary.

One example from my study is the applicative derivative extension which is very common in Umbundu but can be missed in translation because it does not have a straightforward equivalent in Portuguese. Although Umbundu speakers would naturally use the applicative extension when saying somebody was born in some place, the expression in the old Umbundu translation (1) lacked the applicative extension. A more natural expression was achieved in the ongoing translation by using the applicative extension in the verb (2).

| | | | | |
|-----|--|--|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| (1) | <i>Yesu</i> Jesus 'Jesus was born in Bethlehem.' | <i>w-a-cit-iw-a</i> 1-PST-be.born-PASS-FV | <i>vo-</i> 18- | <i>Mbeteleme</i> Bethlehem |
| (2) | <i>Yesu</i> Jesus 'Jesus was born in Bethlehem.' | <i>w-a-cit-iw-il-a</i> 1-PST-be.born-PASS-APPL-FV | <i>vo-</i> 18- | <i>Mbeteleme</i> Bethlehem |

In the second example, no new information is given. What has increased, however, is the naturalness of the language, which is one of the concerns of translation studies. This interdisciplinary study will explore how linguistic analysis of a language can be applied to translation studies and to what extent translation studies can contribute to linguistic research.

1. Introduction: purpose of the study, data, methods

This paper is located in two fields of science: Bantu linguistics and Translation studies. I have identified some of the so-called “unique items” in Umbundu (R.11) and Kwanyama (R.21) and we are going to look at how they are used (or not used) in texts in these languages.

I work as a translation consultant with about twenty translators from seven different Bantu languages in Angola who translate the Bible into their respective local language. They use as their source texts various Portuguese translations of the Bible. My inspiration for this paper comes from the Umbundu translators who are quite artistic and use a wide range of expressions typical to their language in order to make the text flow and sound good. Often, when reading the text aloud, a locative enclitic is being added by a reader, or a reduplicative or applicative derivation, or an ideophone is introduced in the clause. The meaning per se does not necessarily change in this kind of fine-tuning, but the text flows better. In Translation Studies, these features that make Umbundu text sound like good Umbundu are labelled “unique items”. They are unique to Umbundu in the sense that they are not found in the source language, in our case, Portuguese, and so there is no direct stimulus in the source text for the translator to consider it in translation. It is up to the creativity, professional skills and freedom of the translator to make the translation follow the patterns of the target language instead of copying the patterns of the source language.

Translation Studies reminds us that when a text is translated from one language to another, many of the structures of the source language also move into the target language. A common experience for a reader of a poorly translated text is that one can trace the original language behind the text. And, again, in order to

praise translations, readers may say they even forget the text is a translation, it sounds so natural, as if it were originally composed in this language! According to a test conducted by a Finnish translation studies scholar Sonja Tirkkonen-Condit, the native speakers of a language seem to rely heavily on the frequency of unique elements in determining whether the text is a translation or not. In her test, Finnish speakers were asked to sort out texts to two piles: translations and original texts. The only common feature of the texts believed to be original was the relative frequency of unique items. What are unique items?

Sonja Tirkkonen-Condit says: “Every language has linguistic elements that are unique in the sense that they lack straightforward linguistic counterparts in other languages. These elements may be lexical, phrasal, syntactic or textual, and they need not be in any sense untranslatable; they are simply not similarly manifested (e.g. lexicalized) in other languages. Since they are not similarly manifested in the source language, it is to be expected that they do not readily suggest themselves as translation.” (Tirkkonen-Condit 2004:177)

In this paper, I focus on two unique items in Umbundu and Kwanyama – unique in relation to Portuguese and English – namely locative enclitics and ideophones. The question is how these unique items manifest themselves in translated texts and does that differ from how they are used in original texts. After a brief discussion of some theoretical preliminaries from Translations Studies, I introduce my data and present and discuss some examples and finally draw some conclusions or better, ask more questions.

2. Some preliminaries on the theoretical basis for this study:

The concept “unique items” originated in the discussion of “translation universals”, that is, in the search for what may be common to translations world-wide, what tendencies can be detected in translated texts. With the large text corpora of both translations and non-translations, it has become possible to conduct some empirical studies about the frequencies of certain linguistic features (forms and functions) in translations and compare them to the frequencies of the same features in non-translations.

The study of frequencies is possible in languages that have large corpora in both original and translated texts. Finnish is especially interesting because there are corpora of Finnish texts that have been translated from languages that belong to different linguistic families and thus share fewer linguistic features with Finnish. I am not aware of such studies in Bantu languages, although there are large corpora of original texts and possibly also translations in some larger Bantu languages.

For example, Sonja Tirkkonen-Condit has shown with the comparison of the clitic particle *-kin* (that could be translated ‘also’ and many other things) that this frequent feature in Finnish language is systematically less frequent in Translated Finnish than in Original Finnish. There are other perfectly acceptable ways to translate expressions that could be translated with the particle *-kin*. Tirkkonen-Condit argues that, since other languages (the source languages) do not have a similar clitic particle, and there seems to be a (maybe universal) tendency of “the translating process to proceed literally to a certain extent”, nothing in the source text triggers the use of this particular clitic as “immediate equivalent”. This clitic would be an example of a “unique item”.

Andrew Chesterman (2007) criticizes the use of the term “unique” – it is a rather strong statement for something that actually may be more or less unique, he argued. Another critique to the concept of “unique items” in Translation Studies is that a translation from one language to another inevitably uses linguistic features that are not found in the source language, beginning with different sounds and lexemes. In

Translation Studies, the structural differences between translations and their sources have been described as “translation shifts”. One could well argue that translation is all about shifts, from one system to another. A translation is always a new text. It has also been attested that translation shapes the target language and its cultural context. Itamar Even-Zohar points out that translations can become a key element in the development of literature and play an innovative role in the target culture especially when a literature is young, peripheral or weak or when there are crises or turning points in a literature. (Pym 2010:72)

Let us now go to the data and look at some of the linguistic elements “unique” to Southern Angolan Bantu languages in comparison to some European languages. Since my data are very limited in quantity, and in the lack of truly comparable corpora, I focus on examining select examples from my data. I do believe I have enough data to show that certain features that I call here “unique items” actually do occur in the original non-translated texts, others more frequently than others.

3. Data - handout

It was difficult to find texts originally written in Umbundu. Kwanyama, a close relative of Umbundu, has much more original literature, thanks to its location: it is spoken not only in Angola but also in Namibia. In Angola, very little is being written in local languages. I will come back to this at the end of my presentation. My Umbundu data consist of: a collection of texts originally composed in Umbundu¹ (four narrative texts, a collection of proverbs and a poem), and two Umbundu translations of the Gospel of Mark: one from the Umbundu Bible published in 1963, and the new translation which is to be published soon². For Kwanyama, I used two books originally written in Kwanyama³, total about 100 thousand words (for Kwanyama, I used the ratio 7,8 characters per word), and the 1974 Kwanyama translation of the four Gospels with about 58.400 words.

In my Kwanyama data, the locative enclitics that are well represented in the Kwanyama literature that I investigated, are equally well represented in the Kwanyama 1974 translation of the Gospels⁴. In the Umbundu translation of the Gospels, the statistics show that the amount of locative enclitics is larger in the recent translation than in the 1963 Umbundu Bible.

¹ These texts come from three unpublished compositions, written by Dinis Ezequiel, Benevides Abraão and Vicente Numbi, from a collection *Provérbios populares Umbundo-Português* published by Tipografia do Dôndi, from a short book *Efetikilo liupange wekongelo ko Nova Lisboa: Huambo* written by Jeremias Solombe Chivinda and a story documented by Thilo Schadeberg (1990).

² The 1963 version consists of about 9,5 thousand words, whereas the new version consists of about 11,5 thousand words. The difference in these numbers is due to the fact that the new translation also has a few introductory paragraphs for the Gospel, and there are additional section headings and footnotes. The orthography used in these texts varies, the biggest difference being the old disjunctive and new conjunctive writing of the verbs. Counting words would not be comparable, and so I used an average word length: 6,1 characters per word, and divided the number of characters by 6,1 to get the estimated numbers of words.

³ L. M. Shemuvalula (1998) and Noa Ndeutapo (2005).

⁴ The book on the history of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Angola consists of approximately 93.600 words, and 1733 of them use a locative enclitic. I noticed that the frequency of the locative enclitics differed in the different parts of the book. In the sections with more narrative style, there were more locative enclitics, whereas in the sections that mainly reported facts – or were translations from European languages -, fewer locative enclitics were employed. It would be interesting to take a closer look at the different functions of the locative enclitics in the Kwanyama texts that make up my data. The smaller Kwanyama book consists of various short stories, and it has 310 occurrences of locative enclitics.

The ideophones in both the non-translated and the translated Umbundu texts available to me were almost nonexistent: I detected a handful (6) of occurrences in the 6600 words of non-translated texts and even fewer (2-4) occurrences in the ±10000 words of translated texts. The Kwanyama non-translated texts with around 100.000 words contain around 100 occurrences of ideophones, whereas I could find only one ideophone in the Kwanyama translation of Mark (9000 words) and only three ideophones in the whole body of Kwanyama translation of the four Gospels. Interestingly enough, the book of Revelation has a higher number of ideophones. What happened, I wonder. Maybe a different translator? More freedom to make an idiomatic translation? An issue related to a different genre?

| TEXTS FEATURES | UMBUNDU NON- TRANSLATIONS 6.600 words | UMBUNDU 1963 TRANSLATION OF MARK 9.500 words | NEW UMBUNDU TRANSLATION OF MARK 11.500 words |
|-----------------------|--|---|---|
| locative enclitics | 102 1,5% | 77 0,8% | 148 1,3% |
| reduplicatives | 59 0,9% | 19 0,2% | 26 0,2% |
| ideophones | 6 | 4 | 2 |
| applicatives | 232 3,5% | 342 3,6% | 417 3,6% |

| TEXTS FEATURES | KWANYAMA NON- TRANSLATIONS 103.000 words | KWANYAMA 1974 TRANSLATION OF MARK 9.000 words | KWANYAMA 1974 TRANSLATION OF GOSPELS 58.400 words |
|-----------------------|---|--|--|
| locative enclitics | 2043 2,0% | 261 2,9% | 1144 2,0% |
| ideophones | 80 0,08% | 1 0,01% | 3 0,01% |

4. Umbundu unique item: locative enclitics

Both Umbundu and Kwanyama locative enclitics are found in three locative classes, 16 *po*, 17 *ko* and 18 *mo*. According to Thilo Schadeberg (1990), these are clearly enclitics in Umbundu, because they differ tonally from suffixes. The High tone spreading rule regards the boundary between the stem and the enclitic as a word boundary. I have attested the same for Kwanyama in my own work on Kwanyama tone.

The locative enclitics can function as locative adjuncts or locative objects, but they also have other functions, not so well documented for these languages. It is exactly the nuances that the locative enclitics add to the verbs – or adjectives – that make them so useful in crafting texts. There are verbs that obligatorily call for a locative enclitic and many others where it is optional.

Locative reference is naturally the most common use for locative enclitics. They typically refer to a locative noun or pronoun found in the same sentence or in the same paragraph, as we can see in the examples 1-3. The locative enclitic is in bold, and I have underlined the noun or pronoun that is referred to.

- (1) *w-á-fetik-a óku-téhãteh-à cãlwa, oku-téhãteh-à, oku-téhãteh-à, óco^l á-tund-è=mó y-u-liví.*
 SBJ₁-PST-begin-FV NP₁₅-jump~INT-FV a.lot NP₁₅-jump~INT-FV NP₁₅-jump~FV so.that SBJ₁-leave-FV=LOC₁₈ NP₁₈-NP₃-trap
 'S/he started to jump a lot, s/he would jump and jump so that s/he could get out of the trap.' KKH 4-6
- (2) *tálam-á hándi ndí-lond-è=kó=vó k-onheng'é yóvè.*
 stop-IMP still SBJ_{1SG}-climb-OPT=LOC₁₈=too NP₁₈-NP₉-Swing PP₉-POSS_{2SG}
 'Stop so that I can also climb on your swing.' KKH 18-19
- (3) *oco nd-a-fetik-a oku-vanj-a oci-tumalo apa p-a-sesamel-a oku-ling-il-a=po u-pange.*
 so SBJ_{1SG}-PST-start-FV NP₁₅-look-FV NP₇-place DEM₁₆ SBJ₁₆-PST-be.appropriate-FV NP₁₅-work-APPL-FV=LOC₁₆ NP₃-work
 'so I started to look for a place that would be good for working.' ELW

The locative enclitic can refer to something that is not explicit but implied by the verb and/or the context. In four, the leg is being inserted in the trap that was mentioned earlier in the story.

- (4) *Hósi^l yé w-ám-él-ã óci-pépi, w-á-kutulul-à é-púmbu, w-áng'is-a=mó oku-lu,*
 lion in.its.turn SBJ₁-PST.approach-APPL-FV NP₇-close SBJ₁-PST-untie-FV NP₅-knot SBJ₁-PST.insert-FV=LOC₁₈ NP₁₅-leg
 'Then the lion came closer, untied the knot and put its leg in.' KKH 27-29

The example 5 comes from a story about a boy who encounters monsters. The verb *okusika* 'to play an instrument' refers to a horn that the monster has.

- (5) *Sik-a=mo!*
 play-FV=LOC₁₈
 'Play (in) it!' NDN

There are verbs that regularly take a locative enclitic (especially when there is no other locative complement): *okuama=ko* 'to procede'; *okutunda=po/ko/mo* 'to leave (a location)'; *okuimbapo/mo* 'throw away/in', as we can see in examples 6-8, respectively.

- (6) *U-kwenje w-am-a=ko l-on-jila yaye,*
 NP₁-boy SBJ₁-PST.approach-FV=LOC₁₇ and-NP₉-way PP₉.Of.SUBST₁
 'The boy continued his way' NDN
- (7) *Eci a-limbuk-a okuti mw-e-yuk-ile a-kepa voma-nu, ka-kwenje w-a-tund-a=po*
 when SBJ₁-PST-realize-FV that SBJ₁₈-PST-be.full-REM NP₆-bone PP₆.of.NP₂-person NP₁₂-boy SBJ₁-PST-leave-FV=LOC₁₆
 'When he realized that it was full of human bones, the boy left (the spot).' NDN
- (8) *Cimb-a=po co-p-e-ka; co-k-u-tima ku-cimb-i=po.*
 OBJ₇.throw-IMP=LOC₁₆ PP₇.Of-NP₁₆-NP₅-hand PP₇.Of-NP₁₇-NP₃-heart NEG-OBJ₇.throw-OPT=LOC₁₆
 'Throw away what you have in your hand; don't throw away what is in your heart.' ALU49

Other verbs that imply a locative referent, are *okukwama=po/ko/mo* 'to follow'; *okuvokiya=ko* 'to add', as exemplified in 9-10, respectively.

- (9) *O-semana y-a-kuam-a=po ñala Cikolo w-a-tund-ile ko-Chiaca w-a-sandilyi-a...*
 NP₉-week SBJ₉-PST-follow-FV=LOC₁₆ lord Cikolo SBJ₁-PST-leave-REM.REL NP₁₈-Chiaca SBJ₁-PST-look.for-FV
 'The following week, lord Cikolo who had come from Chiaca looked for...' ELW
- (10) *tiuk-i vali ko-kuange nd-u-vokiy-i=ko vali on-giya yaco.*
 return-IMP.PL again NP₁₇-PP₁₇.POSS_{1SG} SBJ_{1SG}-OBJ_{2PL}-add-OPT=LOC₁₇again NP₉-permit PP₉.of.SUSBT₇
 'come back to me again and I will add for you the permit, too/and I will add time on your permit' ELW

It is interesting, that some of these verbs appear in an Umbundu-Portuguese dictionary compiled by an Angolan pastor Etaungo Daniel (2002) with separate entries for some verbs with a locative enclitic: *-ama* and *-amako*; *-tunda* and *-tundamo*; *-kuama* and *-kuamako*. I believe this may indicate what an integral part the locative enclitics play in the lexicon in the speakers' minds.

Comparison is indicated by the class 16 locative enclitic. Schadeberg (1990) also mentions this.

(11) *C-a-vel-a=po oku-kuat-a a-kamba oku-selek-a olo-mbongo v-o-mala ci-sule.*
 SBJ₇-PST-be.more-FV=LOC₁₆ NP₁₅-catch-FV NP₆-friend NP₁₅-hide-FV NP₁₀-money NP₁₈-NP₉-suitcase SBJ₇-be.less
 'It is better to make friends than hide money in a suitcase.' ALU 645

(12) *Eci pokati kavyo vyosi, oco c-a-tem-a=po vali;*
 DEMI₇ between PP₁₂.Of.SUSBT₄ PP₄-all DEMII₇ SBJ₇-PST-be.fierce-FV=LOC₁₆ more
 'This was the most fierce of them all;' NDN

The locative enclitic is used to indicate part of the whole, this is the partitive use of locative enclitics also attested in other Bantu languages:

(13) *Olo-sekulu vietu vi-a-kulakul-a u-tietie, etu tu-ma-la oku-li-a=ko w-a-ñañ-a.*
 NP₁₁-ancestor PP₄.Of.SUSBT_{1Pl} SBJ₄-PST-plant~INT-FV NP₃.plant we PP_{15G}-NP₂.children NP₁₅-eat-FV=LOC₁₇ SBJ₃-PST-be.bitter-FV
 'Our ancestors kept planting *utietie*, when we children eat of it, we find it bitter.' ALU 322

Completed action is also indicated by the class 16 locative enclitic in the two examples 14-15:

(14) *O-popi-a on-ganji; o-mal-a=po o-soma.*
 SBJ_{15G}-speak-FV NP₉-judge SBJ_{15G}-finish-FV=LOC₁₆ NP₉-king
 'What the judge says, finishes it up for the king.' ALU 242

(15) *V-a-lu-pale ovi-na vi-a-ñual-a=po.*
 NP₁₈-NP₆-NP₁₁-town NP₄-thing SBJ₄-PST-turn.around-FV=LOC₁₆
 'In the cities, things are up-side-down.' CKK

An Umbundu speaker and translator, Jeremias Benevides, gave an example of the use of the verb *okuñwala=po* with a locative enclitic: "If I were on my way home but then turned back, I would say *nañwala=po*". Daniel's Umbundu-Portuguese dictionary has an entry for the verb with the enclitic and gives the meaning *Voltar, Dar vira volta, Voltar-se para o sentido oposto*, 'to turn around, to go to the opposite direction'; whereas the one without the locative enclitic has the meanings *Dar volta, Volver, Rodopiar, Voltar, Voltar, Virar, Rodar* 'to turn around, go around'.

Substitutive applicatives use the class 17 locative enclitic in Umbundu. In the example 16, the action of cutting has been done for the addressee, on behalf of the addressee.

(16) *kuend-e l-oka-nele va-ku-tet-el-a=ko.*
 GO-IMP with-NP₁₂-part SBJ₂-OBJ_{25G}-Cut-APPL-FV=LOC₁₇
 'Go with the part they cut for you.' ALU 107

? "For juiciness"

In my data, I also have examples of the use of the locative enclitics for which I have not been able to pinpoint what exactly it is that the locative enclitic adds to the meaning of the verb. Look at the example 17:

(17) *Eci nd-a-sapu-il-a=ko manjange, l-eye w-a-tav-a*
 when SBJ_{15G}-PST-tell-APPL-FV=LOC₁₇ my.brother and-he SBJ_{15G}-PST-agree-FV
 'When I then told my brother, he also agreed' ELW

When I asked Jeremias Benevides, Umbundu-speaker and translator, could one say *Eci ndasapwila manjange*, without the locative enclitic, he said it is correct, but “perdeu o suco”, it lost the juiciness.

5. Locative enclitics in Umbundu and Kwanyama translated texts

Locative

Again, the locative use is the most common one. Let us look at the example 18.

- (18) *v-e-kalasoko w-a-kal-a=mo a-kwĩ a-kwāla k-olo-neke,*
 NP₁₈-NP₅-desert SBJ_{15G}-PST-stay-FV=LOC₁₈ NUMP₆-ten NUMP₆-four NP₁₇-NP₁₀-day
 ‘In the desert he stayed forty days,’ UMBUNDU MARK 2016

Here in example 18, the locative inversion has taken place, and, in that case, the locative enclitic is used in the verb in Umbundu translations. Examples like 19 show that the locative enclitic in a verb seems to be avoided by Umbundu translators when the verb is followed by a locative noun or pronoun.

- (19) *w-a-kal-a v-e-kalasoko a-kui a-kuāla kolo-neke*
 SBJ_{15G}-PST-stay-FV NP₁₈-NP₅-desert NUMP₆-ten NUMP₆-four PP₁₇.of.NP₁₀-day
 ‘he stayed in the desert forty days’ UMBUNDU MARK 1963

I have a few pairs like this in my data. In the pair of phrases 20-21, the one with the locative enclitic is in the older translation, while the new translation has the locative noun follow the verb and does not employ the locative enclitic in the verb.

- (20) *Ndaño vimbo ku-ka-iĩil-e=mo.* (21) *Ku-kañgil-e v-imbo.*
 even NP₁₈-NP₅,village NEG.SBJ_{25G}-FUT-enter-OPT=LOC₁₈ NEG.SBJ_{25G}-FUT.enter-OPT NP₁₈-NP₅,village
 ‘Even in the village do not enter.’ UMBUNDU MARK 1963 ‘Do not enter in the village.’ UMBUNDU MARK 2016

I am wondering whether this is an instance of over-correcting, as I recall having heard in some editing processes of texts in Angola: a locative enclitic is not allowed when immediately followed by a locative noun or locative pronoun. However, in at least some Umbundu non-translations that I have used, locative enclitic in a verb seems to be perfectly acceptable also when the verb is followed by a locative noun or pronoun. This kind of variation could be due to regional variation, as well, or an issue related to style. This calls for more research.

In example 22, the class 18 locative enclitic *mo* refers to the noun *olongulu* ‘pigs’ in the sense of going into them, although the word here is prefixed with a class 17 locative prefix.

- (22) *Tu-tum-e k-olon-gulu ovyo oco tw-iĩngil-e=mo.*
 OBJ_{1PL}-send-IMP NP₁₈-NP₁₀-pig DEMIII₄ so.that SBJ_{1PL}-enter-OPT=LOC₁₈
 ‘Send us to those pigs so that we would enter them.’ UMBUNDU MARK 2016

In 23-24 we have two translations of the same sentence, one from this year and the other one from 1963. According to my informant, in 24 the verb *okutunda* does not have a complement and that is a problem.

- (23) *Pwāyi u-lume, tuli a-tund-a=ko, haco a-fetik-a oku-ci-sandek-a,*
 but NP₁-man as.soon.as SBJ₁.PST-leave-FV=LOC₁₇ then SBJ₁.PST-start-FV NP₁₅-OBJ₇-spread-FV
 ‘But as soon as the man left, he started to spread it (the news)’ UMBUNDU MARK 2016

- (24) *Puāi eye w-a-tund-a kuenje w-a-fetik-a oku-ci-sapul-a calua,*
 but he SBJ₁-PST-leave-FV and SBJ₁-PST-start-FV NP₁₅-OBJ₇-tell-FV a.lot
 ‘But as soon as the man left, he started to spread it (the news)’ UMBUNDU MARK 1963

In the following pair of examples, the old translation is the one that uses a locative enclitic, whereas the new translation does not, and, according to Jeremias Benevides, both versions are correct. When the verb

okupita ‘to pass’ is followed by a locative enclitic, this implies the meaning that is given explicitly (although maybe in a little clumsier way) in the new translation that uses the noun *ocipepi* ‘close-by’.

- (25) *eci va-pit-a=ko va-mol-a u-kuyu w-a-kukut-a.* (26) *oku-pit-a oci-pepi, va-mol-a...*
 when SBJ₂.PST-pass-FV=LOC₁₇ SBJ₂.PST-see-FV NP₃-fig.tree SBJ₃-PST-dry-FV NP₁₅-pass-FV NP₇-close SBJ₂.PST-see-FV
 ‘when they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up’ UMBUNDU MARK 1963 ‘passing close by, they saw...’ 2016

In 27-28, the verb *okusya* ‘to leave (behind)’ takes the locative enclitic in the new translation but not in the old one. According to my informant, both are acceptable.

- (27) *pwāyi va-kal-a l-u-sumba l-ow-iñgi oku-u-sy-a=po vanda.*
 but SBJ₂.PST-stay-FV with-NP₃-fear with-NP₃-crowd NP₁₅-OBJ₃-leave.behind-FV=LOC₁₆ SBJ₂.PST.go-FV
 ‘but they were afraid of the crowd, left it and went away.’ UMBUNDU MARK 2016
- (28) *puāi va-kal-a l-u-sumba wow-iñi, kuenje vo-si-a, va-end-a.*
 but SBJ₂.PST-stay-FV with-NP₃-fear PP₃.Of.NP₃-crowd and SBJ₂.PST.OBJ₃-leave.behind-FV SBJ₂.PST-go-FV
 ‘but they were afraid of the crowd, left it and went away.’ UMBUNDU MARK 1963

The comparative use of locative enclitics is common in the examined translations, usually with the verb *okuvela=po* ‘surpass’, but also with adjectives.

- (29) *K-onyima yange kw-iy-a u w-a-mbel-a=po,*
 NP₁₇-behind PP₉.POSS₁₃₆ SBJ₁₇-come-FV REL₁ SBJ₁-PST-OBJ_{15G}.surpass-FV=LOC₁₆
 ‘Behind me comes the one who surpasses me,’ UMBUNDU MARK 2016
- (30) *oyo yi-tito=po vali p-okati kolom-buto vy-osi*
 DEMI₉ AP₉-small=LOC₁₆ more NP₁₆-between PP₁₂.Of.NP₁₀-seed PP₄-all
 ‘it is the smallest of all seeds’ UMBUNDU MARK 2016

The phrase 31 from the new translation gives an example of the partitive use of locative enclitics, in connection here with the verb *okutuma* ‘to send’. Jesus sends here two of his disciples, and the locative enclitic *po* carries that information, together with the locative noun *polondonge* ‘among the disciples’.

- (31) *Yesu p-olon-donge vyaye w-a-tum-a=po vi-vali,*
 Jesus NP₁₆-NP₁₀-disciple PP₄.Of.SUSBT₁ SBJ₁-PST-send-FV=LOC₁₆ NP₄-TWO
 ‘Jesus sent two of his disciples,’ UMBUNDU MARK 2016

Another example of the partitive use of locative enclitics comes with the verb *okuhā* ‘to give’. Here some of the food was given to others, not all of it. And in 33, something is being done.

- (32) *w-a-ly-a olom-bolo vy-a-tumbik-iw-a kwenje w-a-h-ā=ko=vo ava v-a-kal-a la-ye.*
 SBJ₁-PST-eat-FV NP₁₀-bread SBJ₄-PST-sacrifice-PASS-FV and SBJ₁-PST-give-FV=LOC₁₇=also DEMI₂ SBJ₂-PST-be-FV with-SUBST₁
 ‘he ate the sacrificed bread and he gave some of it also to the ones who were with him’ UMBUNDU MARK 2016
- (33) *Pwāyi nda o-tēl-a oku-ling-a=ko ci-mwe, tu-kwatis-e*
 but if SBJ_{2SG}-be.able-FV SBJ₁-PST-do-FV=LOC₁₇ PP₇-some OBJ_{1PL}-help-IMP
 ‘But if you are able to do something, help us’ UMBUNDU MARK 2016

In example 34, the class 17 locative enclitic indicates completed action:

- (34) *oku-sul-a=ko w-a-popy-a hati:*
 NP₁₅-end-FV=LOC₁₇ SBJ₁-PST-speak-FV saying
 ‘At the end, he said:’ UMBUNDU MARK 2016

Substitutive applicative calls for the class 17 locative enclitic *ko*. My data of Umbundu translations have an example of this with the verb *okutiñgulula* ‘to roll away’. The class 17 locative enclitic is being used in the women’s question in the first line of 35. So this is a case of substitutive applicative. Compare this to the second line in 35 which is the continuation of the story in the same translation, and now the same verb comes with a passive derivation and the locative enclitic 16 to agree with the class 16 locative noun *puvelo* ‘at the opening’ – or to indicate a completed action!

(35) *Helye o-ka-tu-tiñgulw-il-a=ko e-we li-kasi p-u-velo we-yambo?*
 who SBJ₁-FUT-OBJ_{1PL}-ROLL-APPL-FV=LOC₁₇ NP₅-rock SBJ₅-be NP₁₆-NP₃-opening PP₃.Of.NP₅-tomb
 ‘Who will roll for us the rock that is at the opening of the tomb?’

Pwāyi eci va-petul-a ova-so, va-mol-a okuti ly-a-tiñgulw-iw-a=po ale.
 But when SBJ₅-lift.up-FV NP₆-eye SBJ₂.PST-see-FV that SBJ₅-PST-ROLL-PASS-FV=LOC₁₆ already
 ‘But when they lifted up their eyes, they saw that it had already been rolled from there.’ UMBUNDU MARK 2016

Polite Imperative? Completed action?

A few times there is an imperative that takes a locative enclitic in the new translation but not in the old one. Two examples of this follow.

(36) *Valwa vo-lemel-a vati “Ūh-a=ko”,*
 many SBJ₂.PST.OBJ₁-tell-FV saying be.quiet-IMP=LOC₁₇
 ‘Many told him: Be quiet!’ UMBUNDU MARK 2016

(37) *Uh-a,*
 be.quiet-IMP
 ‘Be quiet!’ UMBUNDU MARK 1963

(38) *w-a-lemel-a o-fela l-a-kimba hati: “Li-wek-a=ko! Tulumuh-a!”*
 SBJ₂-PST-tell-FV NP₉-wind and-NP₆-wave saying REFL-calm-IMP=LOC₁₇ be.quiet-IMP
 ‘He told the wind and the waves: “Be quiet! Calm down!” UMBUNDU MARK 2016

(39) *Li-wek-a, tulumuh-a.*
 REFL-calm-IMP be.quiet-IMP
 “Be quiet! Calm down! 1963

Is the usage of the locative enclitic related to these verbs or is the locative enclitic part of the imperative expression? In the case of the verb *okuliweka*, the new translation uses the class 17 locative enclitic *ko* in the command, but in the reporting of the becoming quiet, it uses the class 16 locative enclitic *po*.⁵

(40) *O-fela l-a-kimba vy-a-li-wek-a=po, kwenje vy-a-tulumuh-a.*
 NP₉-wind and-NP₆-wave SBJ₄-PST-REFL-calm-FV=LOC₁₆ and SBJ₄-PST-be.quiet-FV
 ‘The wind and the waves became quiet and calmed down.’ UMBUNDU MARK 2016

Softening? Lexicalized items? What is the function of the locative enclitic in the following examples?

The first two examples use the verb *okupuyuka(=po)* ‘to rest’. When I asked the Umbundu translator Jeremias Benevides whether it would be correct to say ...oco vupuyuke, omitting the enclitic, he said it would be correct, but that the particle *po* softens the expression. How did the –ko get to the verb in 43?

(41) *Tw-end-i k-oci-tumalo conjuka, oco vu-puyuk-e=po kamwe.”*
 SBJ_{1PL}-GO-IMP.PL NP₁₇-NP₇-place PP₇.Of.NP₉.quiet so.that SBJ_{2PL}-rest-OPT=LOC₁₆ a.little
 ‘Let us go to a quiet place so that you can rest a little.’ UMBUNDU MARK 2016

⁵ The verb *okusapwila(=ko)* ‘to tell somebody’ comes sometimes with the locative enclitic. Both old and new translations of Mark use the imperative *Tusapwileko*. ‘Tell us.’ The old translation also has *Tusapwile* in other gospels, whereas the new translation always uses the locative enclitic in this phrase – to soften the imperative? But again, this verb is used with the same locative enclitic in Umbundu texts also in indicative.

(42) *tu-end-i lika lietu v-e-kalasoko ho-puyuk-a naito.*
 SBJ_{1PL}-GO-IMP.PL alone PP₅-POSS_{1PL} NP₁₈-NP₅-desert SBJ_{2PL}-rest-FV a.little
 'Let us go alone to the desert and you rest a little.' UMBUNDU MARK 1963

(43) *Eci ñgo owiñgi w-a-mol-a Yesu, w-a-li-saluk-a=ko calwa.*
 when just NP₃-crowd SBJ₃-PST-see-FV Jesus SBJ₃-PST-REFL-startle-FV=LOC₁₇ a.lot
 'At the moment the crowd saw Jesus it got very scared.' UMBUNDU MARK 2016

There are a few verbs that take a locative enclitic in the new Umbundu translation of Mark and that appear in the old translation without the locative enclitic. There are also few instances where the old translation has a locative enclitic but the new does not. What is it that makes the translators decide one way or the other?⁶

Some verbs simply call for a complement, and a locative enclitic may be preferred over a noun phrase. This is probably the case in the following examples extracted from two different stages of the new translation, the first one has a noun phrase and the second one uses a more natural-sounding locative enclitic.

(44) *Yesu w-a-pitulul-a vali olon-daka viaco hati:* (45) *Yesu w-a-pitulul-a=mo vali hati:*
 Jesus SBJ₁-PST-repeat-FV again NP₁₀-word PP₄.of.SUSBT₇ saying Jesus SBJ₁-PST-repeat-FV=LOC₁₈ again saying
 'Jesus repeated again those words and said:' UMBUNDU MARK 2014 'Then Jesus repeated them again and said:' 2016

6. Umbundu and Kwanyama unique item: ideophones

In both Umbundu and Kwanyama, there is a set of ideophones that form pairs with certain words or concepts. In addition, there are onomatopoeic ideophones. These are typically repetitive.

An example of an onomatopoeic ideophone comes from a poem composed in Umbundu:

Koñolosi tuatumãla vonjango okukanga okalukango pociyo

'In the evening, we sit at the fire roasting a little corn on a piece of clay pot'

sekeseke sekeseke

'sound of the corn popping on the fire'

(46) *K-o-ñolosi tu-a-tumãl-a v-on-jango oku-kang-a oka-lu-kango p-oci-yo sekeseke sekeseke*
 NP₁₇-NP₉-evening SBJ_{1PL}-PST-sit-FV NP₁₈-NP₉-fireplace NP₁₅-roast-FV NP₁₂-NP₁₁-corn NP₁₆-NP₇-piece.of.pot IDEO
 'In the evening, we sit at the fire roasting a little corn on a piece of clay pot' UMBUNDU POEM KILO KIMBO KOKO – DINIS EZEQUIEL

Kwanyama examples of ideophones in Onakudiwa ya-IELA

In the Kwanyama non-translations that I analyzed, the ideophones are used frequently, not only in fiction but also in non-fiction literature, as 47-48 show.

(47) *Oku-dj-a opo Omu-putu a-tokol-a toko, oku-kondj-if-a oi-longo oyo i-tatu*
 NP₁₅-start-FV DEMIII₁₆ NP₁-portuguese SBJ₁-PST-decide-FV IDEO NP₁₅-fight-CAUS-FV NP₈-country DEMII₈ NUM₈-three
 'Since then the Portuguese was determined to fight against those three countries' KWANYAMA IELA HISTORY - NDEUTAPO 2005

⁶ As we saw in my data of Umbundu non-translations, there are a number of verbs that regularly take the locative enclitic: in my data of Umbundu translations, these verbs include *okusupa=po* 'to be left over'; *okwivala=ko* 'to forget'; *okwama=ko* 'to procede'.

- (48) *Eenhe de-vangeli da-yelel-a m-omi-laulu fokofoko,*
NP₁₀-beam PP₁₀-Of.NP₅-gospel SBJ₁₀-PST-shine-FV NP₁₈-NP₄-darkness IDEO
'The beams of the gospel shone in the pitch-dark darkness' KWANYAMA IELA HISTORY – NDEUTAPO 2005

7. Ideophones in Umbundu and Kwanyama translated texts

Both translations employ very few ideophones. In the Kwanyama translation of the Gospel of Mark, only one ideophone was attested. In all four gospels, another occurrence of *filu* and one occurrence of *ndo* was found. A few others are found in the rest of the NT, especially in the book of Revelation: *foko, sheke, to*.

- (49) *U-walo waye w-a-nin-a. W-a-yelel-a mwele twelele,*
NP₃-clothing PP₃.POSS₁ SBJ₁-PST-shine-FV SBJ₃-PST-be.clean-FV indeed IDEO
'His clothing was shining. It was dashingly white' UMBUNDU MARK 2016

- (50) *Omhepo oy-a-lot-a ndele okw-a-ty-a filu.*
NP₉.wind SBJ₉-PST-cease-FV and SBJ₁₇-PST-say-FV IDEO
'The wind ceased and it became all calm.' KWANYAMA MARK 1974

8. Conclusions/Further research needs

Clearly the ideophones are “unique” to these languages when compared to European languages - just as are the locative enclitics, especially in their non-locative functions. (Although there is a Portuguese counterpart of a softening locative adverb *lá* used with imperatives like *diz lá* ‘just go ahead, say’.) Why are ideophones rarely used in the translations? Are they as rarely used in original Umbundu texts as suggested by my limited data? Could this be an indication of the generally perceived acceptability of such linguistic category in narrative or poetic texts, and especially in the written form?

As I mentioned earlier, in Angola, published literature originally composed in local languages is almost nonexistent. Why would anybody write in their own language? Portuguese is the norm; Portuguese rules. Even when people write in Angolan languages, do they try or tend to make it fit the Portuguese norms?

Another question to ask is: why are there more unique items in the newer Umbundu translations than in the older ones? Speaking of the Bible translations, one should of course ask who were or are the translators. Both the Umbundu 1963 and the Kwanyama 1974 translations were done mainly by non-native speakers of these languages. The Kwanyama translators were mostly Finnish missionaries. The Umbundu Bible was translated by M.W. Ennis, W.H. Sanders, G.M. Childs, ja Florence Malcolm (ABCFM), J. Tucker, S.R. Collins, ja Millicent L. Howse (United Church of Canada), Edward Sanders, L.W. Adcock, ja E. Roberts (Brethern Mission), Florence Eoll (Philaffrican MS), and a committee composed of both missionaries and local people –I found this information in the database of the United Bible Societies. Now, in the current Umbundu Bible translation, the translators are native speakers of Umbundu. It is of huge importance to the translations not only who the translators are but also who has the power to decide how to translate. The social expectations play a role.

In the course of the development of Translation Studies and Translation Theory, there has been a shift from text-centered translation toward a User-Centered translation. We are crafting translations for very specific audiences with the user in mind. It means shifting away with the idea that the primary objective is 100% accuracy. What is more in focus are the translators and the end users. If the translators have enough freedom to craft the translations for the users, the translations can become smoother. Playfulness is important for a translator who is an artist.

Finally, I am not suggesting that frequencies of unique items in translations should be used as indicators of the quality of translations as such, but it is important to look at how unique items are used and whether they correspond with the ways they are used in non-translations.

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