



**Culture in Translation: A Comparative study of the role played by  
Culture in Literary Translation**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Human Language is one of the most prominent achievements of man in the course of evolution. These languages are intrinsic, multifaceted as well as extremely capricious. Yet, it is also crucial to identify that comprehension of the language of a certain community is the right way, if not the only way towards understanding the culture of the respective community. Culture encompasses a gamut of attributes varying from the assortment of dishes catering to our rich palate to styles of communication and translation which is the process of reproducing the receptor language the nearest natural equivalent of the source language, aids in transcending the language barriers existing amidst communities and universalising cultures. This study examines the role played by culture in the process of translation with special reference to Martin Wickramasinghe's Madol Doova and its' English Translation by Ashley Halpe. By means of secondary sources and a highly qualitative approach, which predominantly comprised content analysis of the afore mentioned literature, the study explores the cultural concepts inherent to Sri Lanka and the methods employed by the translator to transfer the notions behind them without any distortion to the source text as well as their purpose, efficacy and success. The findings suggest that there is an undeniable, rather an influential role portrayed by culture in creative fiction, and that it could be successfully transcended upon the depth of understanding the translator has on both source and target cultures, the techniques he or she employs as well as the creative use of language.*

## **1. Introduction**

The fire, wheel and hunting tools devised to sate the primary human necessities to smart paraphernalia, robotics and artificial intelligence invented to achieve far higher goals beyond the capacity of mere mortals, man has done it all. Regardless, the emergence of Human Language could undoubtedly be reckoned as the greatest endowment of man, as it lays the foundation for all other human faculties to develop, diversify, interact and achieve. Before the origin of the spoken word, man had to depend upon symbols, signs and sounds which were sparse compared to the evolving requisites of humans. The process of evolution encouraged man to design a mode of communication, signifying the birth of human languages. Human languages are fundamentally different from and of much higher complexity than of those other species. Brislin (1976) states that "human language is highly complex in that it is based on a set of rules relating symbols to their meanings, thereby forming an infinite number of possible innovative utterances from a finite number of elements" (p.51).

Apart from languages, culture is another variable inherited and acquired by an individual from the physical and human environment around him. Culture is the web which includes ways of living, manners, beliefs, values, customs, aesthetic standards, social institutions and styles of communication which a group of people has developed to maintain its survival in his or her surroundings. From 'Hath Maluwa'; a must at Aurudu festive meal table comprising an assortment of vegetables to 'Doladuka'; pregnancy cravings of expectant mothers to the communication style employed by laymen to address Buddhist monks, Sri Lankan culture demonstrate a wide array of significant attributes which may appear rather distant to a non-native speaker. Each of these cultural units portray a mosaic of inherent features, reflective of their respective cultures. These native features

which an individual has grown into and accustomed to are voiced via a language. Newmark (1988) defined culture as "the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression" (p.29). Thus, it is imperative to understand the language of a particular community to comprehend the culture innate to a specific group of people whose cultural bond acts as a tightly woven web which interconnects each and every member and augments the feeling of kinship.

In contrast, translation, which is primarily a process of re-narration acts as a mediator between two cultures which lack a mutual language space to interact with, both implicitly and explicitly. Eugene Nida (1964) defines translation as;

"a process that involves reproducing the receptor language the nearest natural equivalent of the source language, in respect of both meaning and form. Nevertheless, the reproduction of the closest natural equivalent in the target language is adhered to the cultural differences which influence the translation or the interpretation of any text. These differences may cover histories, local customs and beliefs...etc. It isn't uncommon that there are a large number of obstacles that impede people from understanding each other appropriately" (p.147).

Essentially, translation is a twofold operation involving two unlikely languages and their respective cultures. The translator, with his extensive insight of both languages and cultures embarks on a bifocal journey of recreating the message depicted in the source text into the comprehension of target audience. L. Venuti states that "translation is not just a literal recasting of a work from one language to another, but is also an adaptation of one culture's values and biases into another" (Braj,2014, para.3). As the

translator conveys the exact referential, pragmatic and interlinked notion behind a text, culture inevitably becomes universal. In this endeavor, culture, with its inbred characteristics poses a dominant figure, hence the study focuses on the role played by culture in the process of translation; the magnitude of impact as well as the course of action practiced by the translator to overcome the interference in achieving a successful literary translation.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

Given the various dimensions presented above, the analysis of the role played by culture in the translation of the selected literature, 'Madol Doova' written by the eminent writer Martin Wickramasinghe and the translation by Ashley Halpe is highly admissible, as the beautifully woven tale revolves around the adventures of Upali Giniwelle and his follower Jinna in the serene villages of rural south, full of cultural references. "Madol Doova is rich in blithe escapades of rural boyhood. The spirit of youthful mischief comes vividly to life in such episodes as the cadju raid, the veddah game or the dish of live five frogs" (Halpe, 2001, p.1).

'Madol Doova' is a bildungsroman which recounts the coming of age tale of two young lads, set in the Southern coast of Sri Lanka, during the latter half of the 1980s. Upali Giniwelle, the protagonist child fostered by his father and step mother is of recalcitrant nature and often finds himself in tumult. Jinna, the boy who labored in his household was always a staunch ally in his misdemeanors. One incident of such nature propelled them to leave their home town behind, carving the path for their life and stay in Madol Doova. The anecdote flows with their adaptation to the life in Madol Doova, their income generation through cultivation to bravery of early teenage years. The story narrated in Upali's point of view, is intriguing, compelling and at times is full of emotions. Hence is considered as one of the most

popular readings of Martin Wickramasinghe up to date. His use of simple yet artistic language along with a plethora of cultural references takes the reader alongside the unfolding tale to an authentic journey of growing up Sri Lankan at the time of narration. The novel has been translated into English, Tamil, Japanese, Chinese, Russian, Dutch, Romanian and Bulgarian since its debut in 1947. The adaptation of 'Madol Doova' into both silver screen and small screen is testament to its wide popularity and credibility.

'Madol Doova' was translated into English by Prof. Ashley Halpe, a renowned scholar, poet, translator and dramaturge. The English translation of the 'Madol Doova' received accolade from both the home bound and international readership selling over thousands of copies here and abroad. The literary translation is more inclined towards foreignization hence preserving the colour of rural down south of Sri Lanka at the time of narration. The translator has adopted a gamut of techniques to persevere the notion of the source text, the cultural concepts embedded in the story subsequently providing a rather rich text to analyze along with the source text.

Therefore, the study is conducted through a qualitative approach which predominantly consists of comparative content analysis of the afore mentioned literature with special reference to cultural concepts in both the source text and translation. Apart from the primary resource analysis, secondary sources such as reviews, periodicals, journal and magazine articles as well as internet findings with relevance to the study are employed to augment the outcome of the qualitative analysis.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

The main results of the study would succinctly expound the role portrayed by culture in creative fiction; finding the relationship between language, culture and

translation suggesting that the three elements are inextricably linked and that the translator has a prime undertaking in unifying the said elements without any hindrance to the original text. Another purpose of the research findings is to force the analysis out of the context of the 'Madol Doova' and its English translation, considering it a foundation for comprehending and articulating the skills, techniques and magnitude of knowledge a translator should possess, for a successful literary translation.

The origin of Cultural Anthropology which instigated the relationship between man and culture during the 19th century, maintained that language was a product of culture and every language differed from one another. The implication was that translation was impossible and hence literal translation in which lexical words are again translated singly, out of context ought to be adopted. However, the argument forsakes some significant elements, the likes of readership and genre. In the opinions of translation scholars such as Peter Newmark and Mona Baker, in between the source text and target text, i.e. the translation, several other factors should be taken into consideration by the translator.

- Writer: The translator should recognize the purpose of the writer (the message he is trying to convey) through the micro and macro structures of the text.
- Language: The translator should study how the writer manages the languages in all linguistic levels.
- Culture: The translator should comprehend the culture where the text is born; because language and culture are mutually inclusive.
- Structure: The translator should study how the content is organized within text to convey the message.
- Reader: The translator should recreate the text depending upon his or her audience.

- Target Language: The translator should have an in depth understanding about the target language.
- Culture of the target language: A translation is essentially a transformation of a text from one culture to another. Hence to maintain the equivalence between the source and target languages, the translator should own a broad knowledge of the respective culture.
- Structure of the target text: Translator should not conform to that structure adhered by the writer, but he or she should maintain consistency within the structure (Beacon, 2017, p. 12)

It is evident that all the above aspects contribute to the ultimate translation, thus a brief encore of the above mentioned would provide a prorogue to the analysis of the study.

The Writer of the selected creative fiction 'Madol Doova'; Martin Wickramasinghe is a native of the island as of the translator. Hence both parties were well versed in the aspects of source culture. The grasp of understanding born through this intimacy shared, is distinctly visible throughout the English translation of the text. The mastery comprehension of the source text writer's intention, language and structure by the translator is a testimonial skill, of their inbred characteristic traits. The translator has molded and manipulated the target language and structure accordingly signifying the afore mentioned. However, at times, contrary to the majority populace's opinion, to a monolingual reader of English, perplexities may occur. "There are some instances where these translations are sometimes confusing to a monolingual English reader. We believe that this could be because, Halpe was addressing a strong Sinhala- English bilingual readership where code mixing practices are quite common" (Medawaththa, Ranaweera & De. Silva, 2018, para. 1). Thus, it is evident that the translator intends the target group to be more inclined towards a bilingual audience,

whom are proficient in both Sinhalese and English rather than a pure English readership. The nuances are reflected most in, if not all in, the translation of culture bound concepts.

“කුරුමා” /kurumbā/ - The most prominent variety of cultural concepts discerned throughout the text are the terms inherent to the source culture. Coconut tree is a tropical plant, well known for its versatility, in which the very root to the tip of leaves are used in a plethora of ways. The venerated plant is inextricably entwined with the day today lives of the islanders; from the delicious curry dishes prepared with scraped coconut to thatched roofs of wattle and daub houses. Subsequently, “කුරුමා” refers to the young stage of the fruit of coconut trees. Thus there is a clear distinction to the culture – specific concept. Mona Baker (1992) defines the situation as where the “source language word may express a concept which is totally unknown in the target language. The concept in question may be abstract or concrete; it may relate to a religious belief, a social custom or even a type of food. Such concepts are often referred to as culture-specific” (p.32). In translating the culture specific term, the absence of a direct equivalent in the target language creates a hurdle for the translator.

One of the most frequent ways the translators prefer to translate this word is as a loan word followed by an explanation. In brief, a loan word can be defined as an adaptation from a foreign language with little or no modification or in other words a word adopted from the donor language and incorporated into another language without a translation. Thus Halpe has adopted the method, “We gave them a drink of *kurumba*” in translating the culture specific concept (Halpe, 2001, p.93).

“ඇඹුල් තියල්” /ambul thijal/ – Sri Lanka being an island surrounded by the Indian ocean, fish is abundant in our land. A gamut of feasibility with fish as the hero is produced and enjoyed by the islanders. Fish along with

the rich spices combined, is a must have in Lankan cuisine. “ඇඹුල් තියල්”, a sour fish curry perfected by our village folks is such a unique dish packed full of familiar flavours blended together for an ultimate taste bud explosion. The assortment of ingredients used to prepare “ඇඹුල් තියල්” differs from one cook to another. Although the recipe varies according to locality and practice, certain ingredients are considered essential, such as brindle berry, cardamom and pepper. “ඇඹුල් තියල්” is an indigenous food type which is entwined with the culture of Sri Lanka. In the Sri Lankan context, it is not just a dish, but also a mode of showcasing their identity, customs and traditions as well as their rich taste palate to the world. Thus in translating this word, the translator has adopted the technique of using a loan word i.e. the exact same words, followed by a glossary reference in which the culture specific term is described as “a preparation of fish in a black sauce” (Halpe, 2001, p.139).

“A proper noun is the name of some particular person or a place” (Wren & Martin, 1991, p.4). One such proper noun which stars in majority of folk tales retold during our childhood is the character of “මහදෙනමුත්තා” /mahadenamuttā/. His signature grey hair with the semi-circular comb, pair of spectacles perched in the tip of his misshapen nose along with the white cloth and black coat is an ensemble embellished in the minds of Sri Lankans in all walks of their lives. Such is the bond of the character of “මහදෙනමුත්තා” in growing up here, tales of his somewhat twisted logics and hidden human traits were narrated to children by their elders. Hence the character reference could still be heard; beyond the context of folk tales, stereotyping the man making him an icon in the Sri Lankan culture. In translating this proper noun, Halpe has provided the verbatim in italics; followed by an explanation in lexicon as “a folk-story character epitomizing foolish pontification” (Halpe, 2001, p.139).

Subsequently, the translator has employed the same technique of using a loan word or in

other words a borrowing from the source language into the target language with relevance to common nouns also. Wren and Martin (1991) defines common noun as “a name given in common to every person or thing of the same class or kind” (p.4). Hence in translating common nouns like “මහත්තයා”, Halpe has adopted the exact strategy of employing a loan word along with the glossary explanation. “mahattaya” as “Sinhala equivalent of ‘Mister’ (Halpe, 2001, p.139). The same was utilized with “gamarala” and “Colomba-rala”.

Another feature inextricably entwined with the culture of Sri Lanka is the games played by the children. Each and every one of us adults have fond memories of childhood games played with our kith and kin. They represent a time period in our lives where things were much simpler, before the reality of life intrudes in. Hence childhood games are part and parcel of the culture as well as interlinked with effervescent memories of our youth. The source text writer had enclosed a number of such games in the text as “කට්ටි පනිනවා” /katti paninəvā/, “කැලි පන්දු” /keli pandu/ and “ගඩොල් මැනුම” /gadol menumə/. In the process of translating, the translator has employed the culture specific terms in verbatim; i.e. as loan words followed by glossary explanations.

- “කට්ටි පනිනවා” - “A game played between two teams” (Halpe, 2001, p.138).
- “කැලි පන්දු” - “Games played by children” (Halpe, 2001, p.138).
- “ගඩොල් මැනුම” - “A game. A one cent coin is tossed on the tiled floor. The player whose coin is closest to the center of a square tile takes all the other coins” (Halpe, 2001, p.139).

“සර්ප වෙදා” /sarpə vedā/ - Sri Lanka is an island nation known for its centuries old Ayurvedic tradition of medicine. The indigenous system of medicine was hailed from ancient Ceylon and has been practiced by physicians all over the land. Every village had their own ayurvedic physician, well

versed in a plethora of treatments for every ailment suffered at the time. A concoction of herbal plants and other elements extracted from the verdant earth is used in preparing medicinal portions. Proliferation of the home grown tradition happened under royal patronage and still continues to exist and excel with the aid of state. The occult tradition is branched into sub fields as of the western medicine, a physician per a specific group of ailments. Thus in translating the afore mentioned, the translator has to overcome the dilemma of providing justice to the source text word as ayurvedic tradition is in the heart of the culture of this land. In doing so, Halpe has resorted to the translation technique of literal translation. “Also called as direct translation which is found in everyday usage, literal translation means to render the text from one form of the first language to another. In Latin it means word- for- word translation rather than sentence translation” (Penn, 2019, para.1). However, direct translation differs from word for word translation as this is more effective for brief, simple, neutral word combinations and sentences. It also differs from one to one translation in which each SL word has corresponding SL word, but primary (isolated) meaning of words may differ. So in out of context they are not semantic equivalents. Literal translation on the other hand, preserves both the referential and pragmatic aspects of the original. Literal translation has different ranges: from one word to one word, from group to group, from collocation to collocation from sentence to sentence. It is the basic translation procedure, but it becomes increasingly difficult above the word level. Thus Halpe, in the target text, has translated the cultural term, “සර්ප වෙදා”, using the direct translation as “snake- bite veda”. In the word level, he has provided the direct target language word to that of the source text.

“In many speech communities two or more varieties of the same language are used by some speakers under different conditions” (Ferguson, 2015, para. 1). The significant

scenario, which creates a multitude of alterations to a language, is known, primarily as diglossia. “The Sinhala language, which is spoken in Sri Lanka, is in a diglossic situation where the written variety differs from the spoken variety phonologically, morphologically, syntactically and lexically” (Rajapakse, 2016, p. 112). The two varieties, in their written and spoken forms display an entire range of characteristics shared by them, individually and collectively. The H(igh) Variety or the written form is mostly seen in more formal contexts such as in serious literature, whereas the L(ow) variety i.e. the spoken Sinhalese is the widely employed. The daily conversations with one’s kith and kin, the eye catching captions of media outlets as well as the most interesting parliament debates open to the public nowadays are characterize of the L variety of Sinhalese. Hence the spoken form, closer to the hearts of laymen is a significant addendum in the culture, viz. the L variety is inextricably bound with the culture of respective communities. Thus the term “ගොන් කතාව” /gon katāvə/ is commonplace in every day utterances, which signifies a foolhardy talk – an inane remark. In translating the culture related, L variety concept, the translator had employed the technique of word to word translation as “buffalo talk”.

Furthermore, the L variety of Sinhalese is characterized with utterances specific to the style of communication of the language. “අපි හිතේ ගින්නරෙන්න උන්නේ; අපේ ඇමේ ලේ වතුර වෙලා ගියා”, /api hitê gindaren unnê; apê ægê lē vaturə velā gijā/ was uttered by Mrs. Dharmasinghe, the wife of the headmaster under whom Upali tutored and resided. The recalcitrant lad leaves on a fishing expedition after he disappeared from the house in the face of punishment for his misbehaving. The utterance could be heard in spoken Sinhalese where an individual exclaims the fright he or she experienced in a calamity or might be after a traumatic incident. The maxim is interconnected with the styles of

communication of Sinhalese culture and is revealed with the day to day happenings of the islanders. The translator has adopted the translation technique of direct translation in which the translation in target language is provided in verbatim. “our minds were on fire all the time. You turned our blood to water” (Halpe, 2001, p. 37).

Not spoken out loud, yet one of the mostly uttered, mumbled or spat out category of words specific to any culture is the profanities. Be it in embarrassment, exasperation, pain or provoked, expletives come in handy. Every once in a while, justifiable reasons arise; even for a gentleman to swear under his breathe. “Curse words are words we are not supposed to say; hence, curse words themselves are powerful. The words contain and are produced by social practices. The articulation of a curse word thus as incorporated into its social rules about gender identity, race, power, formality, prohibition, etc.” (Jay, 2005, p. 18). Thus, profanes are a linguistic category with a vocabulary bound with the culture specific to the respective community. The writer had utilized mild, inoffensive yet at times darkly humorous; obscenities suitable for the target audience. “මුන්ට දෙවියන්ගේ භාල් කැවිලා වෙන්නැති” /muntə deviyange hāl kevilā venneti/ the irritated frail lady of the robbed house bellows. Deities, the venerated invincible holier than most are worshipped by Sinhalese along the Lord Buddha the enlightened. The offerings at their altar, of flowers to other delicacies were regarded sacred. Consumption of these, to a mortal being was fatal; from insanity to death. Hence, the birth of the afore mentioned profanity. The translator while preserving the native colour of the source concept adopts direct translation as “they must have eaten the holy offerings”. Although the source language culture specific concept is not lexicalized in the target language, the translator’s choice of words provides a distinctive and comprehensible image to the audience.

“තෝ මග්ගොනට යවනවා” යයි කියමින් තාත්තා මට තර්ජනය කෙළේ ඉස්කෝලේ මහත්මයා ගිය පසු ය” (Wickramasinghe, 2002, p. 28). In the spoken variety of Sinhalese, ‘මග්ගොනට යවනවා’ /maggonəta javanəvā/ is an utterance one could hear parents or elder siblings speaking to their recalcitrant younger. It was considered a punishment, an extreme one at that. At the time, the small town of ‘මග්ගොන’ was pretty much devoted to one thing; which is fisheries based livelihood. It was believed that wayward, disobedient youngsters were used for hard labour as a form of inflicting punishment. Hence ‘මග්ගොන’ symbolizes a place of chastisement for unruly children. Though the symbolical usage is familiar to the source culture, it appears rather nonsensical to the target audience. Hence the translator has resorted to the strategy of translating using a loan word and providing an explanation in the immediate text. Mona Baker states that “this strategy is particularly common in dealing with culture-specific items, modern concepts, and buzz words. Following the loan word with an explanation is very useful when the word in question is repeated several times in the text” (Baker, 1992, p. 38). Thus Halpe (2001) has performed the translation as follows: “I’ll pack you off to Maggona!” Father threatened me after the school master had gone. I didn’t know then that Maggona was a reformatory” (p. 23).

The calendar of Sinhalese is packed full of festivals inherent to their culture. Sinhala and Tamil New Year celebrated in every April signifying the commencement of a novel year is at the fore front of this list. “Aurudu has become an important national holiday for both the cultures of the Sinhalese Buddhists and the Tamil Hindu Sri Lankans, and is unique as such, as it is not celebrated elsewhere in the world” (Pereira, 2006, para. 7). The song of the cuckoo bird, red hued blossoms dancing in the breeze, delicious smell of sweets wafting in the air coupled with men and women preparing to welcome the New Year, is a sight signaling the arrival

of this auspicious time of the year. Customs and rituals handed down from generations are practiced bereft of any mishap in every household regardless of their societal status, caste or income. The Author had vividly portrayed the New Year in the source text, all in its’ finest detail. The traditional “අලුත් අවුරුද්දට ගේ අලෙවි කිරීම” /alut avuruddəta gē alevi kirīmā/ is one such ritual, the author had accorded much significance to. The ritual of entering into the first business transaction of the year is heavily shrouded with superstitions, indeed credited by the masses. The ritual, often accompanied by an outsider who is lauded for his financial deftness is considered as a decisive factor in future gains of the household. The better the merrier. In the process of translation, the translator is forced to be creative and diplomatic as the culture specific concept is not lexicalized in the target culture. Hence the translator has translated the cultural concept as “receive the auspicious coins”. The translator has employed the translation technique Mona Baker identifies as ‘translation by a more neutral word’.

One of the most frequent issues a translator has to overcome is the lack of a specific term (hyponym) in the target language. “More commonly, languages tend to have general words (superordinate) but lacks specific ones (hyponyms), since each language makes only those distinctions in meaning which seem relevant to its particular environment” (Baker, 1992, p. 35). The distinctive feature becomes much more evident with relevance to concepts of culture; for an example in Sinhalese under the superordinate ‘කැවුම්’ /kevum/, a deep fried sweetmeat prepared from a mixture of rice flour and trickle which is a must at the New year table, variety of hyponyms such as ‘භෑණි කැවුම්, කොණ්ඩ කැවුම්, නාරං කැවුම්, අච්චු කැවුම් and හැදි කැවුම් exist. Though ‘කැවුම්’ has its’ counterpart in English as ‘oilcakes’, specific terms or hyponyms for different ‘කැවුම්’ varieties lack in the target language. Such cases of lacking specific terms could be seen within the literature studied



here. The storyline of ‘Madol Doova’ being developed in the south coast of Sri Lanka, numerous references to fishing and respective aspects were made throughout the anecdote. The story narrator Upali’s venture to the sea as well as his adventures with his partner in crime Jinna, take the reader a voyage through these lesser known territories of both sea and inland waters. In the context, allusions to the fruits of these waters is inevitable; “පසු දා ජීන්තා උදයෙන්ම නැගිට බනක් උයා පොල් සම්බලක් හදා කුම්බලා කරවල හොද්දක් ද ඉවුවේ ය” (Wickramasinghe, 2002, p. 95). The island nation surrounded by the blue ocean is world renowned for its succulent delicacies prepared from the fruits of sea. ‘කුම්බලා කරවල හොද්ද’ /kumbəla karəvələ hoddə/ is one such dish notoriously popular amongst the natives for its subtle flavors. In translating the culture related term, the translator has employed the method of translation by superordinate. The absence of hyponym has not hindered the translator’s course of action: instead he has achieved the necessary through generalizing the term as ‘dried fish’ which is the English counterpart or the general equivalent.

In every language, the way an individual speaks depends upon a number of factors: the situation, speakers involved as well as the surrounding environment, fundamentally the context. “For Firth, all of the circumstances in which a spoken utterance occurs that are relevant in making sense of it. He emphasized that meaning is context – dependent” (Bree,

2020, para. 2). Therefore, in every context, the differences in physical and interpersonal perspectives could be succinctly observed. The contradiction creates issues for the translator. “perspectives may also include the relationship between participants in the discourse (tenor). For example, Japanese has six equivalents for ‘give’, depending on who gives to whom: *youtu, ageru, morau, kureru, itadaku* and *kudasaru* (Baker, 1992, p. 20). The same could be identified in Sinhalese too; Sri Lanka the island of righteousness is generally regarded as the home of pure Theravada tradition.

Along with this austere, intellectually enlightened religion, a benign undertow of devotional Buddhism practiced by the general Buddhist populace can be found within the territorial boundaries. Nonetheless in practical life the gap between the ‘great tradition’ of Buddhism and the average person’s world of everyday experience is bridged by a complex set of ceremonies, rituals and devotional practices. Amongst them one of the most outstanding features is the language used, to communicate between the Buddhist monks and laymen as well as among themselves.

This style of language differs from the ordinary way of communication between the Sri Lankans. This difference is perfectly summed by K.N.O. Dharmadasa in his book ‘Language and Society’. (Dharmadasa, 1996, p. 42)

**Table 1.** Differences in styles of communication

| සාමාන්‍ය මිනිසා | අදිකාරම් කුමා         | රජකුමා        | කෙරුන් වහන්සේ | තරාභක්‍ෂයන් වහන්සේ |
|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|
| ඉඳ ගනී          | යහපත්වෙලා ඉදි         | පොරොත්තු වෙයි | වැඩ ඉදි       | වැඩඉඳ වදාරයි       |
| නිදා ගනී        | ඇහැ බුදි සප්පායම්වෙයි | සැනපී වදාරයි  | සැනපේ         | සැනපී වදාරන සේන    |
| බත් කයි         | අඩුක්කු සප්පායම්වෙයි  | මේ වඩයි       | දන් වළඳයි     | දානයවළඳවදාරනසේක    |

When it comes to this context, a Buddhist clergy is treated in a separate realm and hence in the translation an appropriate word

to convey the perspective should be used. However, when English language is concerned, there is only one verb to describe

this action which is 'sit'. The exact situation could be seen in multiple ways throughout the selected literature. One such application is that of addressing in second person narration which appears frequently in the text. In the course the translator has employed 'you' as that of the equivalent in the target language due to the lack of distinctions, for “උඹ, ඔයා, තෝ, ඔබතුමා, ඔබතුමී and ඔබවහන්සේ”. However, the translator has succinctly clarified the dynamic between the speakers in each context providing a distinct understanding of the context. “I’ll pack you off to Maggona!” father threatened me after the school master had gone” (Halpe, 2001, p. 23).

“Every language has its peculiar turns of expression. The peculiar uses of particular words and phrases which have become stereotyped by usage are known as the idioms of a language. It is generally agreed that idiomatic phrases cannot be translated literally from one language to another without altering the meaning, if not making the expression completely meaningless. Hence many of the translators tend to omit idiomatic expressions while translating” (Nanayakkara, Nagodawithana & Madhusanka, 2016, p. 45). Idioms play an important role in languages. Not only they add colour to languages but also depth of meaning which is part and parcel of human languages. The intricate nature of these expressions, in which metaphoric characteristics override that of literal meaning makes it disconcerting for the translator to make sense in the target readership. However, Halpe in the English translation of ‘Madol Doova’, employs a plethora of translation techniques to transfer the meaning decoded in idiomatic expressions to the target language. One such technique is using a cultural substitute: translating with a parallel idiom or the most telling equivalent. “අංචර දෙමළ වගේ” /andərə demələ vagê/ - An idiomatic expression used to express perplexity: when something does not make sense or creates confusion, this is uttered. The translator replaces the idiom

with a cultural replacement from the target language, “It was like Greek to me”, which suggests of something of foreign nature. Hence the cultural equivalent creates familiarity within the target language and provides a lucid telling to the audience.

#### 4. Conclusion and Recommendations

When it comes to this context, a Buddhist clergy is treated in a separate realm and hence in the translation an appropriate word to convey the perspective should be used. However, when English language is concerned, there is only one verb to describe this action which is 'sit'. The exact situation could be seen in multiple ways throughout the selected literature. One such application is that of addressing in second person narration which appears frequently in the text. In the course the translator has employed 'you' as that of the equivalent in the target language due to the lack of distinctions, for “උඹ, ඔයා, තෝ, ඔබතුමා, ඔබතුමී and ඔබවහන්සේ”. However, the translator has succinctly clarified the dynamic between the speakers in each context providing a distinct understanding of the context. “I’ll pack you off to Maggona!” father threatened me after the school master had gone” (Halpe, 2001, p. 23).

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