



Reflection of Cultural Identity in English Translations of Sinhala Literary Writings: with Special Reference to the Trilogy of Martin Wickramasinghe and its English Translation

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ABSTRACT

Preserving cultural identity is the utmost challenge in translating literary texts embedded with cultural capital. Cultural capital is untranslatable, yet it can be depicted by replacing equivalents of the target language. However, the effectiveness and applicability of equivalents that belong to a different culture are problematic. The main purpose of this research was to study how effectively cultural identity is reflected in the English translations of Sinhala Literary texts with reference to the great trilogy written by Martin Wickramasinghe. Thus, the study investigated what strategies were used by the translators to preserve and depict the cultural capital of the source texts and how effectively they are used to reflect the cultural identity. The methodological structure of the research is qualitative, and the relevant primary data was collected through the methods of desk review and interviews. Accordingly, the Sinhala and English versions of the trilogy were referred, and a comparative analysis was conducted in order to manifest the results aptly. As per the scrutinised data, borrowings, calques, hybrid compounds, equivalents, substitution, neologism, interpretation, combined methods, and deletion are the strategies used in the translation to depict culture-specific words. However, there are several limitations in the way they are used: loss of connotations, unfamiliarity, lost meaning, and meaning change, that harm the cultural identity of the source culture presented in the sourcebook. Finally, the study suggests some recommendations to overcome such limitations and cultural untranslatability.

KEYWORDS: *Cultural capital, Cultural identity, Literary translations, Translation strategies*

1 INTRODUCTION

Translating literary texts encapsulated with a large cluster of cultural capital is the utmost challenge in the field of translation because literary translation demands language competency, a gift of words, a feel for the language, and especially cultural understanding (Hansani & Manthirathna 2019). Newmark (1988) has defined translation as “an art, a skill, a science and a matter of taste”. Therefore, it is apparent that the translator should possess a good cultural understanding and creative writing skills irrespective of the language knowledge and experience.

Culture consists of all the culture-specific aspects, such as language, history, religion, human behaviour, flora and fauna, food items, clothing, arts, and literature, etc. Larson (1984) defines culture as a complex set of “beliefs, attitudes, values and rules which a group of people share” (cited in Zahrawi 2018). These nuances of culture, as per Zahrawi (2018), are known as **culturemes**, and these features pose translation problems due to the nonexistence or to the different value of the given item in the target language culture (Aixela 1999).

Thus, the researchers made a sincere effort to discuss the reflection of cultural identity in English translations of Sinhala literary

texts, with reference to the trilogy written by Martin Wickramasinghe and its English translation. Accordingly, this study addresses the research problem: how effectively do the target texts reflect the cultural identity depicted in the source texts through the translation strategies used? The research questions are:

- What are the categories of Cultural Specific Words (CSWs)?
- What are the strategies used to depict the cultural capital?
- What are the limitations of the strategies used to translate?

1.1 Academic and Practical Importance of the Study

Bobby Botheju, who is a professional translator, mentions that Sri Lanka lacks creative professional translators (cited in Ilangathilake 2020). Many Sri Lankan translators have entered the field just because they are equally competent in Sinhala/Tamil and English. As aforementioned, a perfect literary translator additionally requires good cultural understanding and creativity. A literary creation communicates the cultural aspects that belong to different cultures in the world. However, many English translations of highly recognized Sinhala literary writings lack literary taste and exhibit several limitations in reflecting the cultural identity conveyed in the original text.

Foreign research has been conducted in relation to cultural identity and translation methods. However, only a very few local studies have been done in relation to cultural identity and literary translations, and these studies were not conducted in line with the discipline of literature. On the contrary, Martin Wickramasinghe's writings are special literary creations highly embedded with cultural identity. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance to study and discuss this subject. Thus, this study sheds light on future research as it attempts to fill such research and theoretical gaps.

2 MATERIALS, METHODS & TECHNIQUES

The complete methodological approach of the study consisted of qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. The primary data of the research were based on the method of desk review. The main source texts of the research were Sinhala and English versions of the trilogy: *Gamperaliya* (1944)-*Uprooted* (2009), *Kaliyugaya* (1957)-*Age of Kali* (2017), and *Yuganthaya* (1949)-*Destiny* (2014). Dictionaries and encyclopedias were also further referred. Professionals in the Sinhala language and Cultural Studies were also interviewed to collect more important information.

The relevant secondary data were collected from previous research articles, scholarly articles, books, and the internet. A comparative analysis of language was carried out with examples taken from texts in order to address the research problem.

3 RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The primary aim of this research was to investigate the effectiveness of the reflection of cultural identity in the translation of the trilogy. Martin Wickramasinghe is the doyen of Sinhala literature and is well known for his proclivity to Sinhala culture. Many of his writings reflect the cultural aspects of Sri Lanka. Therefore, translators definitely face many difficulties in translating such writings highly embedded with cultural capital.

Language and culture are inseparable aspects, and this relationship is also culture-specific. As aforementioned, some target cultures (TC) render a different value to the culture of the source culture (SC). These complexities occur due to the gap between the two cultures. Translators act as mediators who attempt to bridge this gap. According to Smith (1987), "Culture consists of all the shared products of human society." These shared products include ideas, family, beliefs, and customs. On the other hand, language is considered the

social behaviour that reflects culture. According to sociolinguists, language is the keystone of culture, and without language, culture does not exist for long. Culture also plays a significant role in language history, existence, and development. Every language is influenced, shaped, and developed by culture. In other words, language is the symbolic representation of people as it comprises the historical and cultural background of the particular speech society. Language always keeps cultural significance in the loop. Language can be generally classified as the complex system of communication that humans adapt from various cultural backgrounds.

Newmark (1988) classifies cultural terms into 5 categories:

1. Ecology - flora, fauna, plains, hills
2. Material culture - food, clothes, houses and towns, transport
3. Social culture - work and leisure
4. Organizations, customs, activities, concepts, procedures - political and administrative, religious, artistic
5. Gestures and habits

The culture-specific words (CSWs) were classified into 7 categories in this study. Newmark's classification does not have a space for a language-related category. Idioms, expressions, kinship terms, etc., are also integral parts of a culture. Newmark's

classification can be rearranged by inserting a new category for towns/places separately, and, as per the terminology given by him, categories 3 and 5 can be merged. Asian culture possesses a heavy cultural diversity. The classification of CSWs in this study is based on Asian culture:

1. Folklore - religion, traditions, festivals, beliefs, and folk games
2. Language usage - idioms and expressions
3. Material - clothes, food, domestic items, transport
4. People - kinship terms and titles
5. Location - places
6. Nature - topography, flora and fauna
7. Literature - chronicles
8. Behaviour - kinesics and habits

The Sinhala CSWs depicted in the trilogy are reflected by using various language strategies. This study reveals how effectively the CSWs that belong to the above categories are presented and how effectively the strategies used in the translation reflect the cultural identity. Various processes are used in the process of translation. For example, Ariyaratne and Gunathilaka (2019) discuss 7 types of translation methods. Figure 1 presents the classification aptly.

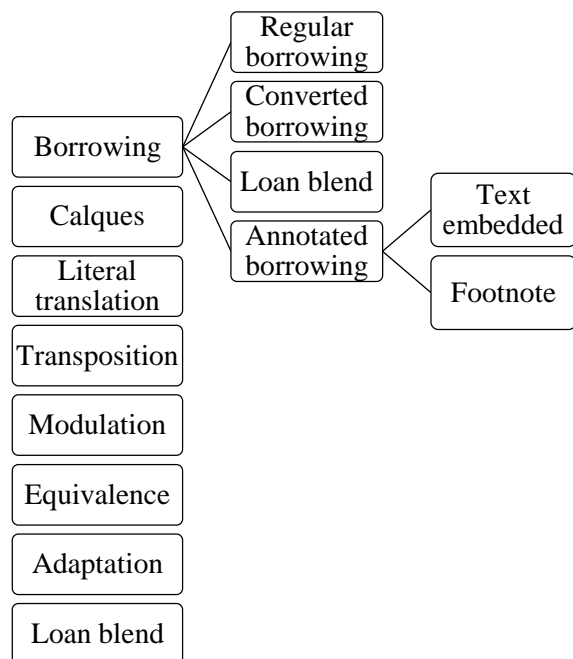


Figure 1. Strategies in Translating CSWs

Zahrawi (2018) mentions 4 specific strategies for translating CSWs:

- i. Literal translation
- ii. Literary translation
- iii. Substitution
- iv. Deletion or omission

Hue and Nguyen (2019) depict 5 methods of translating CSWs:

- a. Preservation (borrowings)
- b. Addition (footnotes, etc.)
- c. Omission
- d. Globalisation (equivalents)
- e. Localisation (adaptation)

Various other scholarly writings also indicate these methods in different ways. The strategies/morphological processes used in the research source texts are categorized in this study as follows:

1. Borrowing
2. Calques
3. Hybrid compounds
4. Equivalents
5. Substitution
6. Neologism
7. Interpretation
8. Combined methods
9. Deletion

These are the strategies used to depict the cultural capital in the English translation of the trilogy. This section intends to analyse the effectiveness of utilizing these strategies in terms of cultural identity.

1. Borrowings

Borrowings/loanwords can be defined as the lexical items directly borrowed from the source language (SL). Sri Lankan English (SLE) writings treasure a large number of borrowings in the context. Borrowing is the most powerful linguistic feature that highlights cultural identity. The massive cluster of borrowings from every category present in the translations faithfully captures the sense of cultural identity depicted in the source text (ST).

Table 1. Borrowings used in the research source texts

CSW Category	Examples
religion, traditions, festivals, beliefs, and folk games	lee kelli, dahaata paliya, pidenithattu, magul poruwa
idioms, expressions, and exclamations	mahadanamutta, aney, aiyo, ooi, patharanga jathaka, pinguththaraya
clothes, food, domestic items, transport	kauma, aappa, mellung, dodol
kinship terms and titles	matara hamine, amma, loku nona, kaisaruwatte muhandiram, upasakamma, vedamahattaya
places	mahagedara, rendagedara, devalagala, sinhale
topography, flora and fauna	hendirikka, burulla, gandapana, val beli, andanakeeriya, koral, rajapohottu, leello,
chronicles	jathaka tales
kinesics and habits	-

The translators of the trilogy have included some direct borrowings sans any related explanation of the word. It is obvious that such lexical items are unfamiliar to foreign readerships. Another group of borrowings is included with some explanations, either as footnotes or text-embedded explanations. This strategy is known as Annotated Borrowings (de Silva 2017),

which succinctly explains the meaning of the borrowing. The following examples depict the use of annotated borrowings in the research source texts.

Example 1: Annotated Borrowings

- *kaisa:ruvatte: muhandirəm yantrə mantra gurukam a:diyə no adəhannek novi:yə* (Wickramasinghe 1944).

Muhandiram Kaisaruwatte was not a disbeliever in ‘Yantra mantra-gurukam’, the collective village idiom for amulets, incantation, spells and the like (Wickramasinghe & de Silva 2014).

- *dostərətə evəni leḍak vat haḍuna:gannətə bæri viyə. dæn ohu mahadənamutteku men avəva:də kərai* (Wickramasinghe 1944).

The doctor had not been able to diagnose even an illness like this. Now he was giving advice like a foolish know-all, like Mahadanamutta (Wickramasinghe & Dissanayake 2017).

In the former example, the meaning of *yantra mantra-gurukam* is well-indicated through the annotation. Similarly, the implied meaning of *mahadənamutta* is also effectively presented. The term *mahadənamutta* is widely used in the Sinhala culture as an idiom to indicate

foolish and false know-alls. The stories of Mahadanamutta draw a realistic picture of the person and his foolish crew. However, as the foreign readership is unfamiliar with the folklore, the real essence of the idiom cannot be conveyed subtly. Nevertheless, the translators have made a special effort to reflect the cultural identity through the annotations. The importance of this strategy is that it specifies the relevant CSW by accompanying borrowings to the text. The translation consists of many instances of annotated borrowings.

2. Calques

Calques are often named as direct translations, literal translations, or word-to-word translations. Calques fill linguistic gaps that occur in languages, yet only the people of the native culture, who are the second language speakers of the target language (TL), are familiar with them. All the examples of calques included in the source texts belong to SLE. However, the etymology and the socio-cultural background of these words can be unfamiliar to the target audience, although calques imbue colours to the text.

- *gamsab^{ha} pa:rə* > village council road
- *godə perəkəde:rua:* > village notary

3. Hybrid compounds

Hybrid compounds combine two separate words that belong to the SL and the TL. The majority of cultural festivals and flora and

fauna are indicated through this strategy in the translation. This is an innovative strategy that, on the one hand, depicts the cultural identity and, on the other hand, links the lexical item to the TL. The translators have attempted to indicate the relevant meaning of the source lexical item effectively. The following examples show the effective use of this strategy in the source texts.

- *thovil* ceremony/ *thovil* exorcism
- *thovil* dancing
- *baludan* berries
- *bovitiya* fruit
- *gahala* yams
- *dikki* cart

However, there are some instances which pose lost meanings despite how interesting and creative this strategy is. For example, hybrid compounds such as ‘*upasaka* cat’ fail to imply the hidden meaning of the idiom. The lexical item does not even accompany any annotation in the text; therefore, such instances can be unfamiliar to the target audience.

4. Equivalents

This process accompanies the words of the TL, which have a similar contextual meaning. For example:

- *maləsun geyə* > shrine room
- *pancə keliyə* > game of panchi
- *mahagedərə* > ancestral home

- *korəvakka* > water hen
- *kabəragoya* > water monitor

This is the most successful strategy that can be used in a translation. However, if the word carries two different values separately in the two cultures, the applicability and the effectiveness of using the word in the translation is problematic. This strategy is predominantly used in the translation to represent the kinship terms of the SL. However, some of the equivalents that belong to the SLE (e.g. elder-sister) can be unfamiliar to the foreign readership. For example:

- *amma:* > mother
- *nəenda:* > mother-in-law/aunty
- *a:ya:* > nanny
- *malli* > brother
- *akka* > elder-sister

Kinship terms are presented in the source texts in two ways. The borrowings are widely used in the utterances, and the equivalents are used in the parts of narration.

Example 2: Kinship terms used in utterances

- *Nanda assisted her mother-in-law to get dressed in her new clothes and accompanied her to the door.*

“Amma, I hope you aren’t displeased with me for not coming with you” (Wickramasinghe & de Silva 2014)

The Sinhalese address in-laws the same way they address their own family members. Therefore, the fact that “mother-in-law” is also addressed as *amma* must be confusing to the target audience. However, this is also another instance that portrays Sinhala cultural identity, and as the translators use the kinship terms in two ways, it helps to highlight this feature.

In some instances, the translators have not used the accurate equivalent.

- *vilakku* > firebrand

Charles Carter Sinhala-English Dictionary (2022) refers to *vilakku* as the “torch”. The Godage Sinhala-English Dictionary (2021) defines *vilakku* as “a flaming torch, a long piece of wood that has material at one end that’s set on fire and that people use especially at devil dancing ceremonies”. Firebrand is defined as “a piece of burning wood” (Merriam-Webster 2021 & Cambridge Online English Dictionary 2021). It is apparent that the equivalent used to represent *vilakku* is inaccurate (or insufficient). Therefore, the relevant culture-specific meaning cannot be extracted effectively. Even the slightest difference in the meaning can make a big impact on the overall meaning of the context.

5. Substitution

Substitutions are rare in translations as this process replaces the original word with a different word that is more familiar to the target audience. Such domesticated translations are generally known as adaptations. Refer to the following examples:

- *vædi sanniyā* > aboriginal dance
- *aṭua:* > commentaries
- *merendā kannā yanāva:* / *merendā kanāva:* > going on a picnic/picnic meal

Taking the first example, *vædi sanniyā* is one of the opening ceremonial dances (*vædi sanniyā*, *gini sanniyā*, *maru sanniyā*) of *daha:ṭā sanniyā*, the traditional method of healing 18 types of illnesses. The main purpose of this ceremony is to give a mental treatment/therapy to the patient (Education Department- Drama and Theatre Teachers' Guide 2017). Eighteen demons who act in the ceremony symbolize each illness (Kottegoda 2013). *Vædi sanniyā* does not indicate any dance/act related to Sri Lankan indigenous people. Aboriginal dance refers to a traditional ceremonial dance that has been part of the Australian Aboriginal culture for thousands of years. These dances play an important role in the spirituality of indigenous Australian tribes, and each group has different customs when it comes to performing and orchestrating

these dances (Watarrka Foundation 2021). It is obvious that Sinhala *vædi sanniyā* and Aboriginal Dance are two different occasions belonging to two different cultures.

Thirdly, *merendā kannā yanāva:* / *merendā kanāva* has been substituted with *going on a picnic/picnic meal*, which does not rigidly imply the ideal cultural meaning. *Merendā kanāva* means roaming in the village roads and jungle while having wild fruits (this word does not have any dictionary references) (Mr. Dalupotha, 2021 pers.comm., June 24). A **picnic** is referred to as an occasion where people pack a meal and take it to eat outdoors, especially in the countryside. **The picnic** meal refers to the meals, that usually consist of sandwiches, salad, and fruit, etc., that are taken to go on a picnic (Oxford English Dictionary 2003). Apparently, there is a gap between the implied cultural meanings of the original word and the substitution. Thus, the cultural identity is not aptly depicted by the substituted word in this respect.

Substitutions are acceptable in cultural adaptations, yet there is a big possibility in changing the original cultural meaning of the word. Although the translators of the trilogy have made an effort to bring lexical solutions to overcome untranslatability

through substitution, it harms the identity of the SC.

6. Neologism

This strategy introduces new coinages to the context. New coinages may introduce lexical items with either one word or two or more words. The following are the significant examples of new coinages contained in the translation:

- *de:va:le:galə* > shrine rock
- *aṅṅanam elika:rəya:* > light-gazer/light reader
- *si:ni sambal* > sweet onion sambol
- *amu sohonə* > open graveyard
- *aḍunə* > love potion/charmed potion
- *rankiri kaṭə gæ:mə* > first breastfeed
- *kasa:yə* > bitter medicine

Newly coined lexical items also fill linguistic gaps in languages. Although this is an ideal strategy to overcoming untranslatability and linguistic gaps, the original essence of the cultural term with its implied meaning cannot be effectively reflected by new coinages. For instance, the third example given above, *open graveyard*, is used to indicate *amu sohonə*, a place where wrapped dead bodies are thrown. This term is defined in the Charles Carter Sinhala-English Dictionary (2021) as below:

Amu sohonə, n. place where bodies are burnt or cast unburied.

Aməkə susanəyə, n. corpse-ground, where corpses are cast unburied, (*Amu Sohonə*)

There is no evidence of these graveyards in Sri Lanka, yet according to chronicles, ancient India had many places where the dead bodies were thrown. These places are horrible, bitter, and arouse disgust, as there are fresh and rotten dead bodies scattered everywhere. This term is widely used in the Sinhala culture in relevant contexts with this same meaning (Mr. M Dalupotha, 2021, pers.comm., 24 June). *Amu sohonə* does not have any English equivalent. The term *open graveyard* renders the meaning of a ‘grave which is excavated’ or an ‘unlocked cemetery,’ which does not accurately reflect the cultural meaning. The translators would have included the new coinage with annotations or used an effective lexical solution such as *corpse-ground*, while including the direct borrowing would be even better.

Rankiri kaṭə gæ:mə is a Sinhala tradition which is now declined from the society. *Rankiri* is defined as **gold-milk, the first milk given to an infant, which has been rubbed against gold** (Charles Carter Sinhala-English Dictionary 2021). As per the tradition, before feeding the newly born baby, a few drops of fresh milk are allowed to come out of mother’s breast and at that very moment, a gold jewel, most probably

the father's wedding ring, is rubbed against the mother's nipple. A drop of this ritualized milk is applied on the newly born baby's lip (Mr. M Dalupotha, 2021, pers.comm., 24 June). Thus, it is clear that, *rankiri kaṭa gæ:mə* is, per se, is applying a drop of first milk on the infant's lip rather than the **first breastfeeding**.

On the contrary, the fact that the nanny did the ritual when Alan was born has a negative impact on the ST, as the nanny is the servant in the house, yet the translation changes this implied meaning as it mentions that the nanny takes care of the baby after the first breastfeed. This does not portray the hidden cultural message given in the ST. Thus, the real cultural identity is hindered by such lexical solutions. Compare the extracts taken from the ST and the TT given below:

Example 3: Strategies that hinder cultural identity

- *ælən upannə davəsehi rankiri kaṭa gæ: ohu surətal kəle: sa:ttuka:riyəkə visini* (Wickramasinghe 1957).

The day Alan was born, from the time the new-born was given the first breastfeed, a nanny was in attendance to look after him (Wickramasinghe & Dissanayake 2017).

Some new coinages render meanings similar to the original word:

- *si:ni sambal* > sweet onion sambol

Newly coined lexical items are interesting to the audience, but they may leave the readers with a lost feeling as they are unable to understand the word. However, in some instances, the translators had attempted to avoid such limitations by adding annotations to the word:

Example 4: Addition of annotations to avoid vagueness in new coinages

- *anjənam elika:rəya:* > light-gazer/light reader

Another woman was dispatched by Matara Hamine to a 'light-gazer' who reads the future through the flame of a lamp placed before a circular patch of black lamp. (Wickramasinghe & De Silva 2014).

On the other hand, it is apparent that the term *kasa:yə* has been replaced with a newly coined word instead of using its equivalent *decoction*:

- *kattirinage behet kasa:jəwələṭə gewannə salli nətijə kija: puŋci appu dawəsak...* (Wickramasinghe 1944)

The excuse he gave was that he did not have money to pay for Kathirina's decoctions and medicine. (Wickramasinghe and Silva 2014)

Thus, it is apparent that neologism, as a strategy, has its own pros and cons in terms of the contextual cultural meaning.

7. Interpretation

This is the process that gives an explanatory introduction to the relevant word without giving any lexical solution to indicate the word. Refer to the following examples:

- *geyyi* > anklet with tinkling bells
- *lanu æḍḍ* > wooden bed with a woven network of thin coir rope

Lexical items such as *geyyi* do not have English equivalents. *Geyyi* refers to the **kind of tiny bells worn around ankle** (Godage Sinhala-English Dictionary 2021). The Charles Carter Sinhala-English Dictionary (2021) defines this term as “tinkling ornament used by dancers”. This is a traditional piece of jewellery owned by Asian culture. The translators have tried to give a solution to overcome these limitations through this strategy, but it seems unsuccessful in some instances.

There is an important feature that the translator has used to depict some lexical items that have equivalents in the TL.

Example 5: The use of borrowings with interpretations in the place of equivalents

- *kauma*, the traditional small cone-shaped bun made of rice flour cooked

in boiling hot coconut oil (Wickramasinghe & Silva 2014)

- *aappa*, a crisp baked pancake made with rice flour (Wickramasinghe & de Silva 2014)

The equivalents of the above two borrowings are *oil-cake* and *hoppers*. It is questionable that the equivalents are not used in the translation. On the contrary, the use of interpretations as a strategy also harms the literary value and the flow of the text.

8. Combined methods

There are a few instances of combining multiple methods in the translation. Given below are some examples.

- *vedeku lava: vedakam kāravanā* > the supplement treatment by a practitioner of Ayurveda, the ancient system of traditional medicine (Wickramasinghe & de Silva 2014).
- *yakædureku lava: yakædurukam kāravi:mā* > the service of a village shaman the yakadura, literally ‘one who gets rid of bad spirits’ (Wickramasinghe & de Silva 2014).

In the above two examples, the translators have used the borrowings *veda:* and *yakadura*, and their English equivalents; *ayurveda practitioner* and shaman, with a succinct interpretation of the relevant lexical items. This strategy further specifies

and gives a clear idea about the cultural word and the context in which it is used.

9. Deletion

Deletion is another noteworthy strategy used in translation. According to Issa (2017), this process is used in the case of social or theological taboos (cited in Zahrawi 2017). However, it seems that the translator of the trilogy has not utilized this strategy for ethical reasons.

Example 6: The use of deletion as a strategy

- *dæqi puhunuvak ha: ihala pantiye: vædum gevälə se:vəyə kiri:men lat atdæki:m...* (Wickramasinghe 1957)
With her background of experience in looking after the children of those in high society, and the rigorous training she had received, the nanny performed her duties with efficiency (Wickramasinghe & Dissanayake 2017).

Vædum geyə is the delivery room in ancient houses. Ancient villagers had allocated a specific room for delivering babies. Giving birth to babies was referred to as *vadənəva* in ancient times. Therefore, this room was known as *vædum geyə* (Dalupotha 2012).

Vædum geyə and its practices are highly culture-specific. Having practical experience in the *vædum geyə* was a special recognition to village women in those days. Not every woman is capable of taking this

responsibility; there are specially practiced women in the village named *vinnəbū amma* (midwife). The fact that the nanny has *vædum geyə* experiences is salient in this respect. However, this special aspect is omitted in the translation. It is important to distinguish between having experiences in the *vædum geyə* and having experiences in looking after children. Therefore, the fact that the translation does not give any reference about the *vædum geyə* is a noteworthy limitation.

As elucidated above, it is apparent that the translators have used a variety of strategies to indicate the CSWs and reflect the cultural identity through the strategies effectively. Although some efforts are near-perfect reflections, some other attempts are unsuccessful. On the other hand, some strategies, such as interpretation and in-text annotations (accompanied by direct borrowings), harm the literary flow and the taste of the text despite how important they are as a strategy of translation.

3.1 Cultural Identity, Idioms, and Expressions

It is of prime importance to discuss how the cultural identity is reflected in the idiomatic expressions and exclamatory sentences. Idioms and expressions belong to the intangible culture (IC) and are a vital culture-specific feature. Taking a few

examples, it is intended to discuss how effectively idioms and expressions are translated in the target text (TT), and how the cultural identity is reflected in this respect.

Example 7: Translation of idioms and expressions

nan̄gige hæb̄iliye h̄uju pod̄dak æti bava akka: dani: (Wickramasinghe 1957)

The elder-sister knows that the younger sister is hiding chunam in her purse (Wickramasinghe & Dissanayake 2017)

According to the extract given above, Piyal's mother knows that Anula is aware of Nanda's secret affair with Samaraweera, but she keeps it a secret. This idiomatic expression, *hæb̄iliye h̄uju pod̄dak æti* implies the negative meaning that the person is hiding a secret (Mr. M Dalupotha, 2021, pers.comm., 24 June). It is problematic whether this implied meaning of the idiomatic expression is subtly conveyed to the target readership by the translation. It is effective if the translators translate only the meaning of the idiom without giving a direct translation. The same problem occurs in the below example.

Example 8: Translation of idioms and expressions

gæhæniyækə visin ninda: kərənu læbu: mædi viyehi vu: gæhæniyækə varak me: gal taləyehi miris dama: ab̄arəmin tama:tə ninda: kələ e: gæhæniyā æb̄ari: gomə gæ:vi: ya: yutuyi... (Wickramasinghe 1944).

A middle-aged woman who, humiliated by an accusation that she was barren, ground a few chili pods on a corner of the stone altar, and implored the gods to crush her detractor in similar fashion, and then smear her with cow dung (Wickramasinghe & de Silva, 2014).

The above idiomatic expression means a deadly curse; *æb̄ari: ya: yutuyi*- the enemy should be destroyed in the same manner that chili is grinded with the grinding stone. *Gomə gæ:vi: ya: yutuyi* conveys the meaning that the person should be humiliated and insulted (Mr. M Dalupotha, 2021, pers.comm., 24 June). These cultural connotations are not communicated in the above examples, as they are paraphrased instead of translating the conveyed meaning.

“It is the Upasaka cat that is adept at catching mice” is another instance that fails to convey the cultural connotation. *Upasəkəya* is the religious devotee who is deviated from committing sins. Although people observe *sil*, their genetically inherent behaviours exist. Relating to this

reality, it is said that ‘cat does not stop hunting although it observes *sil*’. Those who pretend themselves as religious devotees are the ones who actually commit sins (although they attempt to assure that they are clean). Such human beings are known as *upa:səkə balallu* in Sinhala. However, the implied meaning of this idiomatic expression is not conveyed in the translation. Hence, it is important to translate only the implied meaning of the idiomatic expressions, otherwise, the attempt to translate the text would be unsuccessful.

3.2 Limitations

As elucidated above, there are both pros and cons in the strategies used to translate CSWs in the ST. Table 2 depicts the major limitations found in the TT with examples.

Table 2. Limitations in strategies used to translate CSWs

Limitation	Relevant	
	Lexical Item	Example
Loss of connotations	Idiomatic expressions	upasaka balala
Unfamiliarity	SLE words	elder-sister
	Behavior	chewing betel, lime-washing, horoscope reading, ayurvedic practices

Lost meaning	Newly coined words	love-potion, light-gazer
Meaning change	substitution	Aboriginal dance

The recommended strategies to overcome these limitations will be described in section 4.1.

4 CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

The main purpose of this research was to study how effectively cultural identity is reflected in the English translation of the trilogy through the strategies used to translate the texts. In line with this, the study investigated what strategies were used by the translators to preserve and depict the cultural capital of the source texts and the limitations of those strategies. The research data were accumulated through the method of desk review and interviews. Apart from the main research texts, dictionaries and encyclopedias were referred as supportive primary data sources. Professionals in language and cultural studies were interviewed to collect further important information.

Cultural capital is of prime importance in translations as it depicts the cultural identity of a nation. Translators use various strategies to overcome cultural untranslatability, yet there can be several limitations in translation. As per the above discussion, the translators of the trilogy

have used 9 strategies: borrowing, calques, hybrid compounds, equivalents, substitution, neologism, interpretation, combined methods, and deletion to depict the cultural capital in the translation. Although the translators have attempted to use these strategies aptly, the translation consists of various limitations, such as the loss of connotation, unfamiliarity, lost meaning, and meaning change, that are resulted by the cultural gap.

4.1 Suggestions and Recommendations

In conclusion, the study suggests a few recommendations to overcome the above-mentioned limitations, as mentioned below.

- Use borrowings, hybrid compounds, and effective calques to depict CSWs to render the cultural identity aptly.
 - Use equivalents if only the same value is shared between the SC and TC; otherwise, the original meaning will be violated.
 - Translate the conveyed meanings of idiomatic expressions that do not communicate the connotated cultural meanings instead of paraphrasing them.
 - Include annotations to describe the cultural meaning of borrowings and idiomatic expressions either as footnotes or end notes.
- Avoid in-text annotations that may harm the literary value and the flow of the text.
 - Avoid substitution that may cause meaning change.

Cultural capital is untranslatable; therefore, rendering the original meaning of the CSWs and idiomatic expressions is a challenge. If the translators are competent in the TL and the SL, the cultural identity that belong to the SC and equipped with the best strategies to translate, translating literary texts highly embedded with cultural identity will create a near-to-perfect literary piece. It is the translator who is able to overcome all types of limitations through such characteristics.

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