

When the “Remnants” Sing in Kirundi: Herethics in the Translation of American Culture

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ABSTRACT

The article studies the translation of American culture in Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) hymnody in Burundi. It aims at (1) identifying the culture-specific references, language-specific forms, and translation techniques and (2) examining translation shifts with regard to American culture. It used a descriptive qualitative method. Kristeva's theory of split identity and notion of herethics were combined with Nida's cultural translation typology. The primary data were obtained from English and Kirundi SDA hymns. 12 hymns purposively selected from *The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal* and *Christ in Song*. The secondary data were collected from books pertinent to American culture, cultural translation, and Seventh-day Adventism. It was discovered that many source culture-bound references are rejected (52.5%) in the Kirundi construction of the domestic Adventist representation of American culture. Similarly, expressions reflecting source-language-specific norms are adapted (90%) to target pragmatics. Apart from a minimal domestication of source culture elements, references to American religious, social, material, ecological, and linguistic culture are manipulated through generalization, specification, deletion, cultural substitution, and adaptation to receptor language norms. The resulting herethics is a construction of an Adventist domestic internal subject that is dominated by a subversion of capitalism, individualism, free will, hegemony, inequality, and romanticism.

Keywords: American culture, cultural translation, herethics, SDA hymnody

INTRODUCTION

The translation phenomenon operates in a polysystem where the author, text, and audience belong to the first system, whereas the translator, target text, and receptor readers are set in the second system (Lambert & Van Gorp, 1985). However, for religious texts, the mother-daughter church relationship complicates the polysystem. The identity negotiations between the mother self and the interior daughter other impose translation norms. The SDA church is an American-born religion that has grown global and expanded to Burundi. The hymns used by the church were mainly written in the 19th century, as evangelical poets reflected the locale and Christian experience of the new republic (Watson, 1999). The hymns are part of the American literary system. In contrast, the translations of those hymns are integrated in a second literary system, that is, the receiving literary system. The center-periphery centrifugal and centripetal forces influence the denominational selections of evangelical poets and hymnic translation strategies. The selections aim to produce singable poems in the receptor language.



In the context of the SDA church in Burundi, the spirit of the American SDA congregant or “remnant” singing in English is likely to produce the same effect among Burundi SDA converts. In other words, translation approaches and techniques might produce a target text (TT) susceptible to functioning the way its corresponding source text (ST) does among American congregants, albeit Burundi Adventist local tastes and needs. It is on this note that this article proposes to investigate the construction of American culture in the Kirundi translation of Seventh-day Adventist hymns written by American authors.

Cultural translation

In this article, the expression cultural translation is used to denote any form of translation that is “sensitive to cultural as well as linguistic factors” (Wang, 2015, p. 71). It refers to the practice of translating culture-bound items or expressions in a text produced in a languaculture that is foreign to the receptor one. The translation is apprehended from a cross-cultural perspective where references denoting specific words, phrases, or concepts associated with a given culture or society are stressed (Ntamwana et al., 2025; Zheng, 2021). In the analysis of cultural references in descriptive translation studies, the ST and TT are compared by identifying the matching or shift with regard to personal and place names, terms of address, idiomatic expressions, figurative language, and reference to contemporary life (Naudé, 1999). Moreover, the description of the translation shifts is achieved by identifying the techniques used in the change of the cultural references from the ST to the TT. Naudé distinguishes eight techniques, including transference, domestication or indigenization, cultural substitution, generalization, specification, mutation (deletion or addition), transposition, and translation couplet (p. 79).

In the classification of culture-specific items, with regard to translation problems, Nida (1945) distinguishes five categories, including ecology, religious culture, social culture, material culture, and linguistic culture. Firstly, ecological cultural references encompass elements of season, fauna, flora, cosmogony, and topography, which may vary from source to target language cultures. Examples for American culture include names of deserts such as the Great Basin, Mojave, Sonoran, and Chihuahuan. Deserts are not represented in Burundi ecology (Laity, 2008). Secondly, material items are tools or technologies specific to a particular territory or society (Nida, 1945). In American tradition, material culture can be exemplified by mainstream Anglo-American products such as the Statue of Liberty and the White House, and by African-American folk items such as quilts, gumbo, and banjos (Mauk & Oakland, 2009; Wallach & Wise, 2016; Ntamwana, 2018). Thirdly, elements of social culture in translation encompass kinship terms, terms denoting age-relationship and social distinction, gender roles and division vocabulary, class and caste names, social and economic stratification references, and in-group and out-group references (Nida, 1945). Kirundi translators of American social culture might be challenged by interpreting idealistic and pragmatic principles underlying beliefs in individualism and capitalism (Mauk & Oakland, 2009). Actually, those concepts do not match with African humanitarian socialism underpinning many Bantu social practices (Kasanda, 2015, p. 42). Fourthly, translation problems concerning the religious culture are essentially linked with differences in the interpretation of names denoting spirits and deity, divine titles and attributes such as holiness and sanctity, names of prophets, beliefs, and divination (Nida, 1945). In American religious culture, ethnic religious terms and mainstream moral or religious references draw from Judeo-Christian values (Reidy, 2015). Last, the linguistic culture deals with special characteristics of a particular language that impact the translation. It includes differences at the phonological, morphological, syntactic, and lexical levels (Nida, 1945). For example, phonologically, what makes the translation difficult is the fact that the transliteration of proper names requires the production of the closest equivalents in sounds between the two languages in order to avoid objectionable or confusing homophonous forms.

In this study, the researcher interprets translation shifts for the first four categories in the light of Venuti's (1993) foreignization approach. For the linguistic culture, House's (2015) contrastive discourse analysis or cultural filtering framework is applied. She elaborated a five-parameter analytical framework to explore the way a text functions in different linguacultures. The categories of her model include directness-indirectness, explicitness-implicitness, orientation to self-orientation to addressee, orientation to content-orientation to addressee (House, 2000). Kranich (2019) further divided translation procedures pertaining to cultural filtering into adaptation (following target language conventions) and adoption (following source language norms). These considerations will be exploited in the analysis of the data.

Seventh-day Adventist movement and hymnody

SDA movement is an American-born religion that has grown into a global evangelical Church (Bratosin, 2024). It is a reflector of American culture through its main doctrinal tenets, including Adventism and millennial mission, Sabbatarianism, and health message (Ntamwana & Adzhani, 2025). Firstly, the SDA movement started as a response to the millennial vision proclaimed by the American Second Great Awakening (Knight, 2000). The nascent church viewed itself as a community of "remnants" or saints offering themselves to transform the world by setting a Christian community that meets the precondition for the millennium (Bratosin, 2020). It embraced the Puritan vision of laying a foundation for "a community of saints prefiguring a perfect Christian society and offering themselves to the world as a model". Secondly, Sabbatarianism is one of the pillars of the SDA movement that is related to American culture. It is a response to the American restorationist ideologies that occurred in the 19th century (Knight, 2000). The founders of the Church, including James White, Joseph Bates, and Ellen White, were influenced by the restorationist movement. Thirdly, the Adventist Health Message (AHM) resonates with American culture. The AHM is a holistic view of life based on the conviction that the preparation for Adventism and the millennium requires a whole, healthy lifestyle, including a spiritual, physical, and mental restoration of humankind (Galvez, 2016). It reflects the movement's incarnation of the national world redeemer vision as it proposes to alleviate the suffering of the world while restoring the church for the Messianic return (p. 118).

The SDA hymnody refers to the writing, selection, and use of hymns among Adventist churches (Ntamwana et al., 2025). It reflects American identity through its connection with the 19th-century American religious experience (Ntamwana & Adzhani, 2025, p. 135). All the hymnic collections that constituted the first official Church hymnals, upon which subsequent songbooks are based, encompassed songs written by the members of the nascent church or purposively selected from prevailing hymnaries to respond to the movement's abolitionist liturgical spirituality and interest in national enthusiastic and ecstatic singing spirituality linked with American evangelical free-church tradition and revivalism (Höschele, 2022).

Within the United States, the main official hymnbook is *The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal* (1985) (Williams, 2024). Outside the United States, the American songbooks that supplied local hymnodies in the global Adventist community include *Hymns and Tunes* (1886), *Christ in Song* (1900/1908), *The Church Hymnal* (1941), and *The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal* (1985) (Williams, 2024). The Kirundi SDA hymnal is a hymnodical selection made from those American core songbooks and changed it into the local language, Kirundi. The current songbook is entitled *Indirimbo zo Guhimbaza Imana* (Songs for worshipping God). It was published in 2006. It includes 200 hymns. The translation for the Kirundi hymnal was done by Uzziel Habingabwa and Silas Senkomo (P. Nzomwita, personal communication, April 15, 2024).

Poststructuralism, identity, and translation

Poststructuralism is a movement of thought that originates from philosophy in the 1960s (Williams, 2005). The poststructuralist theory grew to influence the interpretation of social, cultural, and political phenomena in literature, politics, art, cultural studies, history, and sociology. It is based on a “dissenting position” concerning pre-existing sciences and moral values and a rejection of the stability of the signifier-signified relation (Allen, 2022). Thus, texts are considered as sites of resistance against the stabilization of the relationship between the signifier and signified (p. 33).

Kristeva’s (1980) conception of identity inscribes itself in the poststructuralist outlook. She refers to her theory of identity as split identity. She conceives the subject as shifting “from one identity to another”. Her main concern is the relationship between the signifying subject and the sign rather than the signifier and the signified. Thus, a text or writing, in her view, is a heterogeneous and signifying process because the identity of the speaking subject is apprehended through its manifestation in the “articulation between symbolic and semiotic dispositions” (p. 7). The identity of the subject is a split nature that results from the fact that the speaking subject belongs to both the semiotic chora and the symbolic component. It is both establishing and countervailing. It is established within the social framework underlying the identification of the signifying subject. Moreover, it is countervailed because the subject questions his identity by indirectly challenging the social framework in which it is grounded.

Kristeva draws from the French words *hérétique* (heretical) and *éthique* (ethics) to devise the term “herethics” (McAfee, 2004, p. 81). It is a heretical ethics based on the premise that there is always a “state” within the “State” (Kristeva, 1974, p. 441), that is, an inferior internal other within the subject. The “state” is an “other who is never wholly other but at the same time not entirely oneself” (McAfee, 2004, p. 76). This conceptualization is relevant to the mother-daughter church relationship. In the context of American global evangelical movements, the concept is pertinent to interpret the relationship between the central mother church and the peripheral daughter churches and the texts connected with these centrifugal and centripetal dynamics. In the translation of texts exported by the mother Church, a subversive potential is realized to subdue the American self to the domestic denominational identity.

In the poststructuralist approach to translation, the view of the translation act as a communication of a source meaning through the target language culture cannot hold (Venuti, 2007). Translation is instead viewed as an interpretation phenomenon whereby the source text's meaning is registered in the translating language culture. In connection with this hermeneutic conception of translation, the analysis of a translated text is concerned with uncovering acts of meaning repression (Gentzler, 2002, p. 196). Actually, translation strategies and procedures operate to make changes in the translation in accordance with existing literary and cultural, religious, and political norms. By implication, analyzing translation is to examine to what extent the deconstructing process is enacted by the translator because the translated text is a deconstruction per se.

For Venuti (2009), translation is a cultural politics which requires a foreignization method. Similarly, translation forms cultural identities and causes social reproduction and change (Venuti, 1998). It constructs a domestic representation of foreign texts and cultures. The formation of identity in translation starts with the selection process of foreign texts to be translated and goes on through the choice of translation strategies, publication, and distribution. The foreignizing method is an ethics of translation aiming at making a “foreign text intelligible in domestic terms”. It is a strategy that consists of avoiding ethnocentrism or systematic negation of the strangeness of the foreign text and rejecting exoticism or strict fidelity to the foreign text. It emphasizes a dialogic and decentered interpretation whereby the domestic language and culture are forced “to register the foreignness of the foreign text.”

Existing related literature

Notwithstanding the translation of American literary and non-literary works outside the United States (Lockard & Dan, 2016; Cummins, 2011; Inphen, 2020; Xinyue, 2023; Mata & Tangkiengsirisin, 2018; Lu, 2025; Ntamwana et al., 2024), there has been little interest in the study of the translation of American hymns, in general, and SDA hymns, in particular. Firstly, Lockard & Dan analyze paratextual information in the Chinese translation of American literature. They find that prior to the 1950s, Chinese translations were characterized by the rejection of Western and capitalist values. But later translators have maintained American social culture in the TTs to accord with the Chinese cultural revolution. From a different point of view, Xinyue, in his analysis of the translation of American literature in China, finds that Chinese translation agents are challenged by the differences in mythological and religious vocabulary, living customs and environment, and thought systems between the sending and receiving cultures. It is argued that annotation and illustration techniques must be used to achieve effective translation. These procedures would promote cultural exchange and communication between the foreign and translating countries and respect towards the authors (2023). Furthermore, Lu supports that translation strategies are used to control the Chinese construction of British and American identities. The translations of British and American literary works into Chinese attempt to achieve effective cultural transmission. So, they manipulate the identities of characters, narrators, and authors through a combination of foreignizing and domesticating techniques (2025).

Secondly, from a Thai perspective, Mata and Tangkiengsirisin (2018) explore the Thai rendition of the American novel, *Percy Jackson*. The study focuses on metaphors. The authors discover that American metaphors are mostly conserved in the TT. Moreover, for some metaphors, the deletion of the source images is avoided by maintaining them through the explanatory technique. Similarly, Inphen (2020) treats the translation of Anglo-American novels into Thai as a phenomenon of American globalization. The results show that exoticism procedures, that is, the conservation of source culture, dominate the book selection, translation techniques, and publication. The low rate of domestication techniques demonstrates the success of American literature in the Thai book market.

Last, from a French perspective, Cummins (2012) finds that in the translation of American children fiction to French, the domestication approach is stressed. The French socio-cultural norms and milieu are promoted in order to satisfy the needs of the target audience. It is an ideological resistance that aims to reinforce the French national identity. The translators minimize denotative accuracy and textual fidelity by controlling adequacy and conformity techniques (p. 10).

From the perspective of American studies, Ntamwana and Adi (2023), Ntamwana et al. (2025), Ntamwana and Adzhani (2025), and Ntamwana et al. (2024) analyze center-periphery shifts among American New Religious Movements by focusing on translation. In the first three works, the authors examine the translation of SDA hymns into Indonesian and Kirundi. The studies highlight translational center-periphery shifts with regard to American values, beliefs, and ideals. The authors specifically examine the shift of conceptual metaphors, cultural references, and discourse. The material objects are treated from a poststructuralist and systematic functional linguistic approach. The findings show that expressions that suggest American popular products, capitalist identity, liberal values, and romantic tradition are either omitted or replaced with target-neutral or domestic denominational identity-based references. The last article investigates the Jehovah's Witnesses' Bible translation from American to Kirundi with a focus on the narrative of Malta Island. It explores center-periphery differences between Jehovah's Witnesses' American New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures (NWT) and its Kirundi counterpart by focusing on the metaphorical construction of the island. The authors reveal that there is a target cultural filtering of metaphorical expressions related to individualism, capitalism, and nautical culture. In these studies, various translation and cultural theories such as Schmidt's model for conceptual metaphor translation, Nida's adjustment

techniques, and Tymoczko's holistic framework for cultural translation and Halliday's notion of metafunctions are applied.

From a linguistic perspective, Omolo-Ongati (2005), Onserio (2009), Ntamwana and Munandar (2024), and Ntamwana and Adi (2025) assess the translation quality of SDA hymns in Kenya, Indonesia, and Burundi. The authors reveal that SDA hymns are not adequately translated. Translation errors are characterized by stanza mismatches, omissions, deletions, autonomous creation, and poetic and semantic distortions. The textual profiles and functional equivalences between the STs and TTs are consequently disrupted. The mismatches reduce the TTs into covert versions. The mistranslation is because Western tunes do not stylistically and culturally easily accord with African semantic codes and performance aesthetics. It is also caused by a lack of contrastive discourse analysis basis for the involved language pairs prior to the translation projects.

The present article differs from the existing literature by its purpose to scrutinize alterity in the representation of American culture and its focus on cultural references and linguistic-cultural relativity by applying Nida's cultural categories and Kristeva's concept of herethics. Despite the wide range of existing literature on the translation of SDA hymns, Nida's cultural categories have not been applied to scrutinize the issue of self-other identity through the lenses of Kristeva's split identity and concept of herethics. The concept of herethics has been used by Ntamwana and Adzhani (2025) to explore the issue of mission from a social constructionist and systemic linguistic approaches, yet it was not connected with Nida's categories. Likewise, cultural references have been treated by Ntamwana et al. (2025). But the framework for the identification of culture-bound items was Tymoczko's holistic approach. This research aims to probe into the representation of American culture in the translation of SDA hymns by answering two questions: (1) what are the American culture-specific references and language-specific forms and the techniques used to translate them in the Kirundi hymns, and (2) how do the translation shifts construct American culture?

RESEARCH METHOD

The article used a qualitative descriptive method because the data are not numerical. In the collection of data, the translation comparative analysis method was used (Toury, 1985, p. 27). The primary data were collected from American English hymns and their Kirundi translations. STs were purposively selected from *The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal* (1985) and *Christ in Song* (1900), whereas TTs were obtained from the hymnal, *Indirimbo zo Guhimbaza Imana* (2006). In total, 12 hymns were purposively selected from the church hymnody in both the center and periphery. The procedures are schematized as follows:

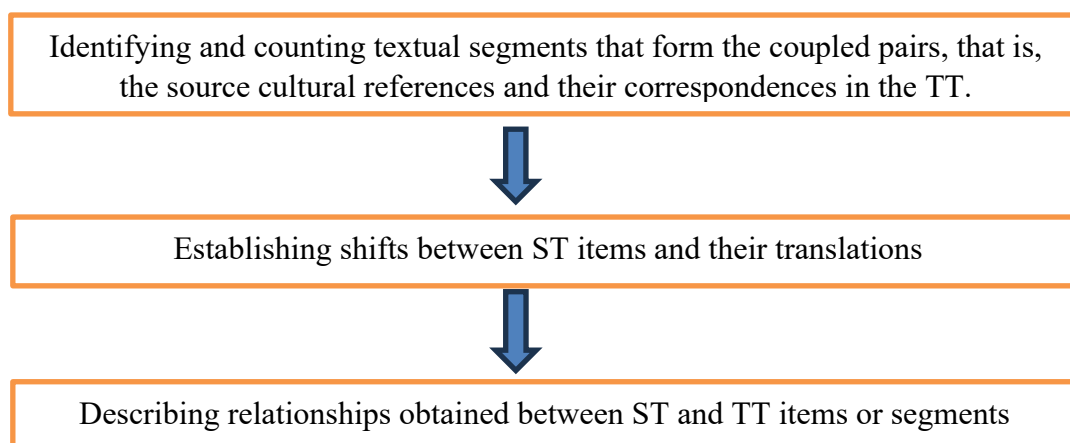


Figure 1. Analysis procedures

The lyrics were sampled based on the author's background information and pertinence to American national identity (Risku et al., 2022). The focus was on hymns included in Adventist hymnals in the center and periphery, and written in the 19th century by authors whose nationality was American. The selected lyrics are classified under three themes that are central to Seventh-day Adventism: nature and Sabbath, mission, and homeland. The first category comprises “Don’t forget Sabbath” by Crosby (1820-1915), “My Sabbath Home” by Blackall (1830-1924), “He Loves me too” by Straub (1838-1898), and “The Great Physician is now Near” by Hunter (1811-1877). In the analysis, these hymns are symbolized by H1, H2, H3, and H4. TTs include “*Wibuke isabato*”, “*Nkunda ishure ry’isabato*”, “*Imana ikunda utunyoni*”, and “*Muganga mwiza*”. The second category includes “Here Am I, Send me” by March (1816-1909), “Watchman, Blow the Trumpet” by Gilmour (1836-1920), “I will go where you want me to go” by Brown (1856-1918), and “Hark! It is the shepherd’s voice” by Thomas (1857-1910). Kirundi TTs include “*Nimwumv’ijwi rya Yesu*”, “*Murinzi we, vuza inzamba*”, “*Nzoj’ah’unshakira hose Mwami*”, and “*Umve rya jwi ry’umwungere*”. They are symbolized by H5, H6, H7, and H8. The last category includes “How far from Home” by Smith (1828-1855), “Anywhere with Jesus” by Pounds (1861-1921), “In the land of Fadeless Day” by Clements (1868-1946), and “Shall we Gather at the River” by Lowry (1826-1899). Their corresponding Kirundi songs are “*Murinzi we Menyesha Igihe*”, “*Aho Njanye na Yesu*”, “*Mu Gihugu c’Ivyiza*”, and “*Mbega Tuzokoranira*”. They are symbolized by H9, H10, H11, and H12. English hymnary data were collected from the websites (<https://hymnary.org/hymnal/SDAH1985> and <https://hymnary.org/hymnal/CS1900>). The Kirundi data were collected from the songbook hardcopy since it is not available online. The research used the written lyrics without taking into account the musical composition. Other books and articles pertinent to the topic were exploited for secondary data.

In the analysis, the interdisciplinary method of American studies and the methodology of descriptive translation studies were combined (Deloria & Olson, 2017; House, 2018). The combination generated the following five-step analytical model: (1) analyzing the ST to identify American culture-specific references following Naudé’s cultural dimensions; (2) classifying the identified culture-specific references under Nida’s five categories; (3) comparing the source text to the target text with respect to the identified cultural categories to determine shifts and techniques by applying the translation techniques adapted by Naudé; (4) interpreting the translation techniques and shifts in the light of House’s cultural filtering categories and Venuti’s foreignizing approach to determine heretical constructions; and (5) drawing conclusions on the forms of herethics with reference to other discourses on American society and culture.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Herethics in the construction of religious culture

Five techniques are used in the translational resistance to American culture. They include deletion, cultural substitution, specification, domestication, and generalization. The most dominant is cultural substitution (40%). ST items reflecting American religious identity, such as ‘sweetest carol’, ‘sabbath home’, ‘house of praise’, and ‘day of sacred pleasure’, are substituted for TT elements with different propositional meanings. ‘Carol’ and ‘day of sacred pleasures’, for instance, are used by the authors to signify religious aspects conveyed in American popular culture, while ‘Sabbath home’ and ‘house of praise’ connote American religious infrastructures and habits.

Table 1. Distribution of shifts in the translation of religious culture

No	ST CSI	TT	BT	Technique	Tot.	%
1	Heathen land (H5)	–	–	Deletion	3	30
2	Home, sweet home (H8)	–	–	Deletion		
3	Wandering heart (H4)	–	–	Deletion		
4	Sweetest carol (H4)	<i>Ntawutazirwa nkawe</i>	None is praised like him	c. substitution	4	40
5	Sabbath home (H2)	<i>Ihwaniro ry'abigishwa</i>	A gathering of disciples	c. substitution		
6	House of praise (H8)	<i>Ndanezerwa</i>	I feel happy	c. substitution		
7	Day of sacred pleasure (H1)	<i>Tunezerwe twese</i>	Let's all be glad	c. substitution		
8	City-Four-square (H11)	<i>Umugwa mwiza</i>	A beautiful city	Specification	1	10
9	Sabbath school (H2)	<i>Ishure ry'Isabato</i>	School of Sabbath	Domestication	1	10
10	Pilgrimage (H12)	<i>Urugendo</i>	Journey	Generalization	1	10
		Total			10	100

Table legend:

ST CSI: source text culture-specific item; TT: target text; BT: back translation; c. substitution: cultural substitution

Nonetheless, the TT forms, '*ntawutazirwa nkawe*' (None is praised like him), '*ihwaniro ry'abigishwa*' (a gathering of disciples), '*ndanezerwa*' (I feel happy), '*tunezerwe twese*' (Let's all be glad) are neutral expressions intended to likely produce a similar impact on the target congregants. For the deletion, as the table shows, expressions connoting hegemonic, romantic, and liberal tints permeating American religious culture are deleted.

Concerning the technique of specification, the expression 'city-four-square' is defined in the TT by using a more specific cultural reference '*umugwa*' etymologically meaning a mountain and denoting a city. While the ST form suggests belief in egalitarianism and perfection connected with the Christian homeland or city of God, the TT form lacks these attributes. Actually, 'beauty' in the receptor linguaculture does not have the semantic components of 'rectitude' and 'equality'.

For the domestication, the ST form 'Sabbath school' is indigenized as '*ishure ry'isabato*'. To maintain the ST expression, practice among American Sabbatarian denominations to instruct people about some matters at the beginning of the church, before the liturgy proper, the TT form combines orthographic adaptation of the Arabic expression '*shwl*', '*ishure*', already in use in the receptor education culture (school) and that of the English 'Sabbath', '*Isabato*' to generate a form which is less foreign to the target congregants.

As far as generalization is concerned, a culturally neutral term '*urugendo*' (journey) is used to define the ST culture-specific term 'pilgrimage'. Therefore, the Adventist premillennialist conception of the elect in American society as saints marching to the homeland is subverted.

Herethics in the construction of ecological culture

The herethics in the translation of ecology is dominated by generalization (40%). The ST items 'sparrow', 'lily', 'highway', and 'streets' are used in the ST to connote the American urban culture, fauna, and flora. They are defined in the TTs by using neutral terms '*utunyoni*' (birds), '*amashurwe*' (flowers), and '*inzira*' (path). Deletion and translation couplets are represented at 20%.

Table 2. Distribution of shifts in the translation of ecological expressions

No	ST CSI	TT	BT	Technique	Tot.	%
1	Sparrow (H3)	<i>Utunyoni</i>	Birds	Generalization	4	40
2	Lily (H3)	<i>Amashurwe</i>	Flowers	Generalization		
3	Highway (H6)	<i>Inzira</i>	Path	Generalization		
4	Streets (H11)	<i>Inzira</i>	Path	Generalization		

5	Earth's dark spots (H6)	–	–	Deletion	2	20
6	Lilly bell (H3)	–	–	Deletion		
7	Crystal river (H11)	<i>Uruzi</i>	River	translation couplet	2	20
8	Sunny plain (H6)	<i>Kiyaya</i>	low land	Translation couplet		
9	Fields are white (H5)	<i>Ishwabura rirageze</i>	The harvest has arrived	Specification	1	10
10	Hedge(H6)	<i>Umwiherero</i>	secret place	Cultural substitution	1	10
Total					10	100

For deletion, STs' expressions 'Earth's dark spots' and 'Lilly bell' representing earth science and flower morphology are omitted in the TTs. As far as the translation couplet is concerned, the forms 'crystal river' and 'sunny plain' are based on American topography. In the TTs, a subtraction is operated by deleting parts of the forms connoting to foreign ecology. In addition, the remaining parts are substituted for general neutral items 'uruzi' (river), 'ikiyaya' (low land area). The other techniques are specification and cultural substitution. The form 'Fields are white' reflects cereal farming in the sending society. However, in the TT, a more cultural and expressive form, 'Ishwabura rirageze' (the harvest has arrived) is used to define the source items. It represents the receptor society's farming practice without necessarily focusing on cereal crops. Last, the item 'hedge' reflects American architecture. In the TT, it is substituted for 'umwiherero' (secret place), which has a different propositional meaning.

Herethics in the construction of material culture

Herethics in the material culture is represented by deletion (50%), specification (20%), cultural substitution (20%), and generalization (10%). Deleted expressions are items representing American popular culture. They include 'silver spray', 'healing balm', 'palace dome', 'warning tones', and 'perfume'. The cultural references 'robe' and 'times' wasting sands' connote Western material culture. The TT forms '*iyi s'igiye kuranduka*' (this earth is going to be destroyed) and '*impuzu z'ubukwe*' (wedding clothes) are more expressive expressions that define the ST expressions in accordance with SDA domestic identity.

Table 3. Distribution of shifts with regard to the material culture

No	ST CSI	TT	BT	Technique	Tot	%
1	Time's wasting sands (H9)	<i>Iyi s'igiye kuranduka</i>	This world is going to fall into ruin	Specification	2	20
2	robe (H12)	<i>Impuzu z'ubukwe</i>	Wedding dress	Specification		
3	Silver spray (H12)	–	–	Deletion	5	50
4	healing balm (H9)	–	–	Deletion		
5	Palace dome (H4)	–	–	Deletion		
6	Warning tones (H9)	–	–	Deletion		
7	Perfume (H3)	–	–	Deletion		
8	Trumpet (H1)	<i>Inzamba</i>	Animal horn trumpet	C. substitution	2	20
9	Gates (H11)	<i>Amarembo</i>		C. substitution		
10	speed thy flight (H9)	<i>Guma ugenda</i>	Go on	Generalization	1	10
Total					10	100

The cultural substitution is used to recontextualize the source elements in the receptor culture. The items '*inzamba*' and '*amarembo*', reflecting respectively the translating culture's animal horns used for alert and wide range communication and entrance in the traditional architecture,

are used to replace items of American culture, ‘gate’ and ‘trumpet’. Finally, the item ‘speed thy flight’ derives from the source aerial terminology. But in the TT, it is defined by means of a neutral expression, ‘*guma ugenda*’ (go on). In the ST, the Adventist eschatology is inscribed in the urban environment. But in the TT, the concepts of Adventism, apocalyptic havoc, and eternal homeland are interpreted in the light of traditional communication and infrastructure systems. Contrary to other findings (Onserio 2009; Omolo-Ongati, 2005; Ntamwana & Adzhani 2025; Ntamwana et al. 2025) that highlight the use of omission, deletion, and alteration to eliminate foreign elements, the study shows that techniques used in the rewriting of the SDA hymns into the Kirundi language operate an incarnational interpretation, where even elements of the traditional non-Christian or African culture are exploited. By implication, an incarnational approach underlies the construction of the internal otherness.

Herethics in the construction of social culture

There is subversion in the receptor construction of the social culture. The heretical signification is dominated by deletion (40%). Elements reflecting American identity are omitted in the TTs. They include ‘weary-foot’, ‘happy golden day’, ‘golden hours’, and ‘exiles.’ The expressions reflect freedom beliefs and capitalistic individualist ways. Generalization (20%) and domestication (20%) are also used to counteract American beliefs underlying the Evangelical denominational views.

Table 4. Distribution of shifts in the translation of social culture

No	ST CSI	TT	BT	Technique	Tot.	%
1	Weary-foot (H9)	–	–	Deletion	4	40
2	Happy golden day (H12)	–	–	Deletion		
3	Golden hours (H1)	–	–	Deletion		
4	Exiles (H6)	–	–	Deletion		
5	Wanderer (H8)	<i>Indushi</i>	Life-weary person	Generalization	2	20
6	Captives (H6)	<i>Imbohe</i>	Prisoners	Generalization		
7	Heathen (H5)	<i>Abapagani</i>	Pagans	Domestication	2	20
8	Master (H5)	<i>Yesu</i>	Jesus	Domestication		
9	Great physician (H4)	<i>Muganga mwiza</i>	Good medical doctor	Specification	1	10
10	In this world below (H10)	<i>Mur’iyi si</i>	In this world	Translation couplet	1	10
Total					10	100

The items ‘wanderer’ and ‘captives’ map American signification of social inequality and power imbalance into the Christian myths of redemption and salvation. Nonetheless, the TT forms, ‘*indushi*’ (life-weary person) and ‘*imbohe*’ (prisoners), undermine the spatial disconnection reflected in the STs by using less expressive terms suggesting lack of freedom and sustainability. The domestication is characterized by the subversion of the expressions ‘heathens’ and ‘Master’ inscribed in American representation of social relations and roles in the evangelical milieu by using less foreign terms ‘*abapagani*’ (pagans) and ‘*Yesu*’ (Jesus). The occurrence of the specification and translation couplet is 10% for each. On the one hand, the item ‘great physician’ reflecting hierarch in American medical culture is defined in the TT by using a more expressive term ‘*muganga*’ reflecting medical practices in the receptor culture. On the other hand, ‘*mur’iyi si*’ (in this world) undermines the power imbalance realized through the orientational metaphorical conceptualization of world, ‘in this world below’ (above-below) operated in the ST.

In the light of Kristeva's (1974) herethics and Venuti's (1998) foreignization approach, the findings on cultural categories and translation shifts can be classified under the variables of repetition, inclusion, and rejection. First, results related to transference and transposition are related to repetition to suggest nihilism or lack of change in the TTs. Second, domestication, generalization, specification, and translation couplet are related to inclusion or revolt because they register the American or foreign in the translating local. Last, deletion and cultural substitution are related to rejecting the translation operates a fundamentalism where the foreign is neglected in favor of the translating local.

The inexistence of repetition (0%) indicates that the American self is recontextualized in the TTs. The high rate of inclusion (47.5%) proves that the American self and the translator other are integrated in the peripheral Adventist construction of the universe represented in the hymnody. The inclusion is an indication that in Burundi, like in Zimbabwe, there is a development of a new culture advocated by the SDA (Makondo & Makondo, 2011, p. 80). But Makondo & Makondo's point is an internal-otherness based on hymn selection rather than translation strategies.

Table 5. Distribution of translational herethics by cultural categories

Herethics	Techniques	Religious	Ecology	Material	Social	Tot.	%	Tot. %
Repetition	Transference	0	0	0	0	00	00	00
	Transposition	0	0	0	0	00	00	
Inclusion	Domestication	1	0	0	2	3	7.5	47.5
	Generalization	1	4	1	2	8	20	
	Specification	1	1	2	1	5	12.5	
Rejection	T. couplet	0	2	0	1	3	7.5	
	Deletion	3	2	5	4	14	35	52.5
	c. substitution	4	1	2	0	7	17.5	

Inclusion is mostly manifested through the generalization of the ecological culture. The domination of rejection (52.5%) proves that the inferior internal other is strongly manifested in the hymnic translation. The most omitted elements are those of material and social culture, while the most substituted are the items of religious culture. The phenomenon of rejection corroborates the considerations made by Onserio (2009) and Ntamwana et al. (2025) that, in the translation of SDA hymns, a reaction against the dominance of Western culture is manifested by omitting some items in the TTs. Previous works do not, however, prove that the omission is a construction of an internal otherness, which still integrates the translation strategies in the millennial mission of the church and national mythic discourse to build a city upon a hill. Moreover, in other works on the translation of American literature, authors reveal that translators choose between foreignization and domestication strategies (Cummins, 2011; Lockard & Dan, 2016; Mata & Tangkiengsirisin, 2018; Inphen, 2020; Xinyue, 2023; and Lu, 2025). However, in this study, it is discovered that the attempt to decenter the translation, in view of representing the internal self, generates three tendencies, namely rejection, inclusion, and repetition.

Herethics in the construction of linguistic culture

Out of the 10 identified cases of linguistic culture, there is only one case of adoption of the SL pragmatics, which is 10%. The remainder (90%) is adaptation to the receptor pragmatics. Even though ST directness is conserved for the change of the form 'Don't forget the Sabbath' to '*wibuke isabato*' (remember the Sabbath), there is some degree of herethics because the TT form tends to be explicit (House, 2000). The herethics is characterized by the domination of the adaptation techniques. Despite the fact that both STs and TTs are mostly

person and addressee-oriented, American spatial deictic construction is subverted by a change to self-orientation. For example, the form ‘You can find the heathen nearer’ is addressee-oriented (you). But the TT form, ‘*N’ino hariho abapagani*’ (Even in this place there are pagans) is self-oriented (in our place). In other words, while the author uses English pragmatic first-second person interaction convention, the translator recontextualizes the hymn to the receptor culture by establishing a relationship between the ideational meaning and the self by adapting the deictic construction (here-there) to the local spatial deixis, *ino* referring to a place that is near the speaker and far from the listener. The passive form ‘when victory is won’ is content-oriented and used to preserve alliteration and English iambic rhythm and rhyme scheme. In the TT, its corresponding form ‘*tumaze gutsinda*’ (when we have won) is person-oriented and does not retain the aesthetic feature of the original.

Romantic structures are undone in the TTs through cultural filter techniques. For example, the implicit forms ‘Savior’s invitation sweetly saying’, ‘Anywhere with Jesus is a house of praise’, ‘Anywhere with Jesus will be home sweet home’ are made less emotional by making them explicit ‘*Yes’ arabatumir’ati*’ (I will always go on my journey), ‘*Aho njanye na Yesu ndanezerwa*’ (Anywhere I go with Jesus, I feel happy), ‘*Aho njanye na Yesu ndanezerwa*’ (Anywhere I go with Jesus, I feel happy). The ST forms are adapted to the receptor text norms. Consequently, the explicitation subverts the ST romantics. Similarly, the English common use of routine formulaic expressions is undermined in the TTs by using ad hoc expressions. The modification can be exemplified by the change of ‘Here Am I, O Lord, send me’ to ‘*Nditavye mwami, ntuma*’ (I have responded, Lord, send me) and ‘O blessed thought!’ to ‘*Tunezerwe mu mitima*’ (let’s be happy in our hearts).

Table 6. Display of cultural filtering procedures

No	ST CSI	TT	BT	CF Procedures	To.	%
1	You can find the heathen nearer (H5)	<i>N’ino hariho abapagani</i>	Even in this place there are pagans	From addressee to self-orientation (adaptation)	9	90
2	When victory is won (H9)	<i>Tumaze gutsinda</i>	When we have won	From content to person orientation (adaptation)		
3	Savior’s invitation sweetly saying (H6)	<i>Yes’ arabatumir’ati</i>	Jesus is inviting you saying	From implicitness to explicitness (adaptation)		
4	Not far from home! (H9)	<i>Tugiye gushika i muhira</i>	We are about to reach home	From content to person orientation (adaptation)		
5	O blessed thought! (H9)	<i>Tunezerwe mu mitima</i>	Let’s be happy in our hearts	From routine to ad-hoc formulas (adaptation)		
6	Anywhere with Jesus is a house of praise (H10)	<i>Aho njanye na Yesu danezerwa</i>	Anywhere I go with Jesus, I feel happy	From implicitness to explicitness (adaptation)		
7	Children’s dearest friend (H1)	<i>Incuti ziwe twese</i>	All of us his kins	From content to person orientation (adaptation)		
8	Here Am I, O Lord, send me (H5)	<i>Nditavye mwami, ntuma</i>	I have responded, Lord, send me	From routine to ad-hoc formula (adaptation)		
9	Anywhere with Jesus will be home sweet home (H10)	<i>Aho njanye na Yesu danezerwa</i>	Wherever I go with Jesus I feel happy	From implicitness to explicitness (adaptation)		
10	Don’t forget the Sabbath (H1)	<i>Wibuke isabato</i>	Remember Sabbath	Conservation of directness (adoption)	1	10
Total					10	100

Last, in the forms, ‘not far from home’ versus ‘*tugiye gushika imuhira*’ (we are about to reach home) and ‘children’s dearest friend’ versus ‘*incuti ziwe twese*’ (all of us his relatives), free will and emotional expressions are filtered by changing content orientation to self-orientation. It can be, thus, deduced that congregants in the periphery signify revolt when singing American evangelical lyrics in their own language.

Contrary to Ntamwana and Munandar (2024) and Ntamwana and Ida (2025) where results on cultural filter underline the omission or alteration of culture-specific items in the TTs, this article proves that American identity is constructed at the linguistic level as well. The domination of adaptation cases in the above table is an indication of the receptor resistance. The resistance is realized through the exploitation of the linguistic pragmatic asymmetry between American English and Kirundi. Moreover, even though the linguistic category has been neglected by many translation scholars, among others, Newmark and Díaz Cintas & Remael, the study reveals that it can yield plausible results (Ranzato, 2016, p. 59). However, its application must be supported by House's contrastive discourse analysis framework in order to effectively grasp cultural asymmetry at the linguistic level. Additionally, the inclusion of the linguistic category requires a redefinition of the term "cultural reference". The new definition must grasp both culture-bound and culture-conditioned expressions. Such a definition is susceptible to scrutinizing translation from the perspective of intercultural studies.

CONCLUSION

The SDA rendition of American evangelical poems into Kirundi reveals a heretical construction. In dealing with the religious, social, material, and ecological elements of American culture, there is an inclusion of the foreign and the receptor in the TTs. The inclusion (47.5%) is a revolutionary construction, in the Kristevan sense, that is realized through domestication, generalization, specification, and translation couplet. Furthermore, herethics is manifested through a rejection (52.5%) of the foreign or American self in favor of the receptor. This fundamentalist construction is realized through deletion and cultural substitution. The herethics is characterized by a manipulation or elimination of expressions suggesting American capitalism, individualism, social power imbalance, hegemony, and urban culture. Additionally, for the linguistic culture, American English ST forms are mostly adapted (90%) to the receptor pragmatics. While many ST forms are content-oriented to accord with the romantic poetic tradition, the translation uses Kirundi person-oriented pragmatics in a free verse poetry. In a similar vein, English implicit and routine formulaic expressions suggesting free will and emotional expressions are reduced in the TTs by substituting them for Kirundi explicit and ad-hoc forms. Self-orientation is also used in the TTs to subvert alterity associated with American hegemonic discourse. Future studies should be carried out on other hymns, such as lyrics used among Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses, to account for the representation of American culture in the periphery of other American-born religions.

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