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# Analyzing Facebook's Use of Natural Equivalents to Preserve Cultural Integrity and Reduce Meaning Shifts in Expressions

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## Abstract

This study sought to examine the extent to which Facebook has used natural equivalents to avoid meaning shifts of culture-specific expressions. The main challenge in development and implementation natural language processing technologies by Facebook has been the preservation of cultural integrity and reduction of meaning shifts when translating or interpreting expressions across different languages and cultures. The target population comprised Facebook pages with a significant following and a focus on CSIs posted within the context of conversations on those pages. This study used purposive sampling to select a sample of 11 Facebook cites whose contents were analyzed. This study collected primary data using content analysis method. This study conducted content analysis that involved preparing, organizing and reporting data. The study found that most of the Facebook sources revealed food items like "ugali" and "Nyama Choma" were often reduced to overly simplified translations like "cornmeal" and "grilled meat," failing to capture their rich cultural significance. With regards of fashion, the study found that majority of the Facebook pages mistranslated the garments such as "kanga" led to a loss of their deeper meanings, contributing to cultural appropriation. Similarly, architectural terms also suffered from meaning shifts; more than a half of the sources depicted that terms describing unique Kenyan architectural styles were reduced to words like "huts," ignoring the cultural and historical narratives they encapsulate. The study concludes that the meaning shifts of culture-specific expressions related to food, fashion, and architecture in Kenya on Facebook have various negative implications as it leads to misunderstandings that go beyond mere words. The study thus recommends that stickers that contain only the most basic information should be made more useful by scaling them down or making them smaller while figurative language, such as idioms, should be used to describe complex ideas.

**Keywords:** *Natural Equivalents, Cultural Integrity, Meaning Shifts, Digital Communication, Facebook NLP Strategies*

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## **1.0 Introduction**

Facebook, now part of Meta Platforms, Inc., has been at the forefront of developing and implementing natural language processing (NLP) technologies to improve user experience across its global platforms. One significant challenge in this development has been the preservation of cultural integrity and reduction of meaning shifts when translating or interpreting expressions across different languages and cultures (Songaila, 2024). To address this, Facebook has invested heavily in developing algorithms that analyze and utilize natural equivalents - phrases or expressions that convey the same meaning in different languages but may not be direct translations (Vazquez, 2020). This approach aims to maintain the integrity of cultural context of communication, ensuring that the intended message is accurately conveyed regardless of linguistic differences (Meta AI, 2023).

The use of natural equivalents is important in Facebook's effort to combat misinformation and maintain content integrity across its platforms (Tan, 2022). Through the development of advanced machine learning models trained on vast multilingual datasets, Facebook's systems is able to identify and suggest culturally appropriate alternatives to potentially challenging expressions. This not only helps in preserving the original intent of user-generated content but also aids in reducing unintended offense or misunderstandings that may arise from literal translations. Recent studies have shown that this approach has significantly improved the accuracy of cross-cultural communication on the platform, with a reported 15% reduction in user-reported translation errors (Johnson et al., 2024). However, challenges remain, mostly in languages with limited digital presence and for expressions deeply rooted in specific cultural contexts.

Meaning shifts refers to when words and phrases in one language (the source) are used incorrectly when they are intended to be used in another language (the target). This stage has a strong connection to one's cultural awareness. Others believe that the process of turning a spoken or written dialogue into text is multidimensional, emphasizing that it is a "theory-laden process" that is informed by the research and interpretation of findings, which in turn informs decisions or choices made throughout that process (Snell-Hornby, 2012).

Specific culture and general culture apply to two forms of knowledge and skills that enable people to understand and work effectively in other cultures. Cultural approaches promote a broad comprehension of one cultural meaning through a comprehensive knowledge of society (S. Hu et al., 2017). This induces asymmetry of how the same information is transmitted to the receiver. It can shift the way societies interpret and perceive a certain topic (Littau, 2016).

According to Lefevre, beliefs and cultural structures affect the portrayal of others in target texts, as "translations almost always try to naturalize different cultures in order to make them more in line with the use of the translation reader" (2000, 237). Translators are no longer treated as impartially actors, even though they do whatever they can to escape discrimination, "There is no escaping cultural loads representing some ethnic, linguistic and political groups that cross into other ethnic language and political groups violently or otherwise" (Faiq, 2004). This raises the question of which culture in the process of translation (source culture or target culture) is studied.

While the intention may seem sound, the prevalence of false news continues (Taylor, 2013). The belief that there continues to be a thin line between a reality and its alternatives is readily accepted today. In recent years, regulators and commissions have started to carefully determine how they can treat publishers who intentionally distribute inaccurate information (Snell-Hornby, 2012). Machines can produce accurate translations, but not fully accurate translations like humans.

Statistical machine translation systems use minimal grammar information and therefore translate low quality texts.

The most popular concepts for the development of equivalent problems are all cultural concepts that exist in the source language but are completely unknown in the target language. The source culture and source language can also vary from the target culture and target language in their context. A literal translation, word for text, would be entirely undecodable. The most difficult problem in translating literary texts is the question of culture (Desjardins & Desjardins, 2017b). Culture is the view from which the people look at things. There's a challenge in translating literary works when there are cultural gaps.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

As social media continues to connect people worldwide, the risk of misinterpretation, cultural insensitivity, and loss of nuanced meaning in cross-cultural communication has become increasingly significant (Zhang et al., 2023). Traditional machine translation methods often fall short in capturing the subtle cultural contexts, idiomatic expressions, and regional variations that are crucial for authentic communication (Li & Pardo, 2024). This limitation leads to misunderstandings, unintended offense, or the spread of misinformation, potentially compounding social divisions and hindering genuine cross-cultural dialogue (Nguyen & Smith, 2023). Moreover, the problem is compounded by the dynamic nature of language use on social media, where new expressions and cultural references emerge rapidly, making it challenging for translation algorithms to stay current (García, 2024). The stakes are high, as inaccurate translations cannot only affect individual user experiences but also have broader implications for content moderation, community guidelines enforcement, and the overall trustworthiness of the platform in different cultural contexts (Meta AI, 2023). Additionally, the challenge is particularly acute for languages with limited digital presence, where the scarcity of training data makes it difficult to develop robust translation models that can adequately capture cultural nuances (Lee & Brown, 2024).

Many people on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram use social media for communicating. In some parts of Africa, Facebook has the highest user penetration rate while YouTube is very popular in other places due to easy to use and more popular platforms. Societal and cultural factors remain as an intrinsic part of culture. Many of the contents of communications on the social media such as Facebook, Instagram etc. have elements of the foundations of claim, comparison, and pride and appreciation contexts. The aim of social media is to create exchange and connect with cultures. The great value of culture-specific products and social media in recent times has seen many mistranslated messages. The meaning shifts of Facebook posts can lead to confusion.

Analysis reveals that Facebook is a major company that involves different users in the world. With more than 3 billion users from different socio-cultural background, it presents a good platform for effective translation need. Within the East African region, Kiswahili and English are common used by Facebook users. Despite this, translation is not common in this platform and this means there are misinterpretation of facts. Facebook debated how to make their website more international while avoiding the time- consuming and costly process of hiring professional translators and instead chose to reach out to their sizable and varied user base. It introduced crowdsourcing translation service that allowed users to provide translations from their original tongues for words on the platform, and other users could rate how accurate these translations were. This improved user engagement and made it possible for the website to be translated into other languages quickly

and affordably. Meta (Facebook Inc.) admits that Typical Machine Translation systems require building separate AI models for each language and each task, but this approach does not scale effectively on Facebook, where people post content in more than 160 languages across billion of posts.

Advanced multilingual systems can process multiple languages at once, but compromise on accuracy by relying on English data to bridge the gap between the source and target languages. Facebook's crowdsourcing translation approach does not guarantee quality and effectiveness hence causing loss and harm to users on Facebook. Therefore, this study intends to explore linguistic, cultural and grammatical mismatches between English and Swahili, as well as significant distinctions between those respective languages. According to my research there is a current uninformed void concerning meaning shifts and cultural expressions in the age of social media like Facebook. It is against this background that this study focuses to find out the effects of meaning shifts of culture-specific content on Facebook. The analysis involved review of data from 11 Facebook pages that have mass followers, and the meaning shifts of the cultural specific items in Kiswahili and English is provided.

### **1.3 Research Objective**

To examine the extent to which Facebook has used natural equivalents to avoid meaning shifts of culture-specific expressions.

### **1.4 Research Question**

To what extent has Facebook used natural equivalents to avoid meaning shifts of culture-specific expressions?

## **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

This research was based on the Principle of Cultural Translation. The Principle of Cultural Translation was developed by Homi Bhabha (1990) The Principle of Cultural Translation states that when cultures come into contact or interaction, there is a dynamic process of negotiation and adaptation that takes place. This process involves the exchange of ideas, values, symbols, and practices between different cultures. The theory emphasizes that translation is not merely a linguistic act but a complex interplay of cultural meanings and contexts (Qing, 2019). The theory challenges the idea of a straightforward, unidirectional transfer of meaning from one culture to another, especially in the context of colonial encounters (Buden, 2006). The Principle of Cultural Translation posits that when different cultures come into contact, there is a constant negotiation and transformation of meanings, identities, and power dynamics. It suggests that cultural translation is not a mere act of linguistic conversion but a multifaceted process that involves adaptation, reinterpretation, and hybridization of cultural elements (D'hulst, 2008). This theory recognizes the inherent instability and ambiguity in the process of cultural translation, where meanings are always in flux and subject to contestation.

This research indicates that the vocabulary used in culture-specific items (CSIs) is not universal but derived from the cultural environment, with Kenyan culture containing unique rhetorical elements. The study explores how cultural contexts can render language characteristics inappropriate when applied to a different language, particularly on platforms like Facebook, where English is the primary language used in social media machine translations. When content is presented in another language, readers unfamiliar with that language attempt to translate it, often resulting in meaning shifts. The growing efforts of non-professional translators, such as

fansubbers, have been studied for their specific subtitling procedures and interventionist agendas. Christian Fuchs' theory (2007) was relevant to this study, providing a framework to analyze the relationship between language, culture, and meaning in the digital realm. This theory helped examine how cultural aspects embedded in CSIs are subject to distortion or misrepresentation during translation, offering insights into cultural appropriation, miscommunication, and the preservation of cultural heritage in Kenya.

## **2.2 Literature Review**

Younas, Pervaiz and Riaz (2022) conducted a study to examine the relationship between Lexical Meanings and Meaning shifts adopting an Analysis of English Translation of Munshi Premchand's Short Stories. The study was qualitative in nature and aimed at highlighting a genuine difficulty with the translation that many foreign translators have. The study found that idiomatic expressions and cultural terms cannot be translated easily. They need to be translated very carefully, keeping in view the intercultural subtleties. In this study, Munshi Premchand's three short stories originally written in Urdu and translated into English have been selected for qualitative analysis. These short stories are Eidgah, Qazaqi, and Kafanres pectively translated into English by Khuswant Singh, Fatima Rizvi and Frances W. Pritchett. The study concluded that the translators, especially those whose own mother language is different the source language, have a hard time translating idiomatic expressions and cultural terms embedded in the very culture of the source language because they are not fully aware of the intercultural translational intricacies and the intercultural pragmatics. This is what creates meaning shifts and misleading meanings.

A study by Sajarwa, Khumairo, Ma'shumah, Arrasyid and Ediani (2023) on Identity struggle through the negotiation of cultural identity in the translation of French cultural references into Javanese indicated that, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to achieve an effective transition if there are cultural differences among the two languages involved in translation. In the same line as the literary, religious, social, cultural and idiomatic expressions which are a chief field of translation, particularly when the translator belongs to a culture that is entirely different from that of the writer. According to the study, the only constant in digital culture is the transition that can sound cliché, but the underlying MT systems also change so that cultural patterns are difficult to grasp (Sabra, 2017a).

Lim (2023) while studying italicization of translated Korean literature and Korean diasporic literature indicated that in social, religious, geographic, political, and literary and media texts, cultural expressions represent an important problematic field in translation, especially if the translator belongs to a culture that is entirely different from the author's. Cultural terms involve a proper understanding of a cultural context and thus pose translation problems (Holt & Haller, 2017). The problems of translation and the variety of translation techniques used to clarify their significance by analysing the lexis of the cultural field of cuisine have been discussed. These issues are due to various linguistic phenomena, including the difference between semanticized words in the source and target languages, the absence of a cultural term in the target language, the lack of meaning, and the metaphorical significance transmitted by numerous cultural words.

Facebook, has a multiple of functions in the food industry as many people post links to their favorite recipes, cooking advice, and food-related articles. Food preparation-related groups and sites have grown in popularity, where fans share their recipes and interact with one another. It is in Facebook that users frequently discuss their dining experiences. Consumer reviews of online restaurants are significant. Around a third of customers use online feedback when selecting a

restaurant and over half of the 18-34-year-olds review food choices. These reviews are relatively brief but expressive, however helpful they are, are an important aspect. Food bloggers and influencers also use Facebook as a forum to discuss their experiences, rate restaurants, and advertise food-related goods. For sponsored content, these influencers work with brands frequently. Depending on the language, some ingredients may go by a different name. An ingredient's name being mistranslated might cause confusion or result in the use of the wrong ingredients in a recipe.

Facebook is the world's second most popular social media platform (Alexa, 2018). More than two billion monthly active users (Facebook, 2018) have made 60 million Facebook pages for company transformation (Vladlena et al., 2015) and an extra marketing contact platform. More than two billion people have been active monthly (Burton and Soboleva, 2011). The novelty of this channel is that companies can use it to communicate and work with their customers to promote sharing and to spread positive feelings, thus improving visibility of the company (Smith et al., 2012). Research shows four key reasons for Facebook pages: socializing, entertainment, searching for self-status and looking for facts (Park et al., 2009). Since consumers can now create and share their own content, they can now monitor the discussion (Abedin and Jafarzadeh, 2013). As companies build their Facebook contents, they are mainly involved in five kinds of businesses: direct selling of goods or services, promotion of supported activities, polls, information and fun posting (Dekay, 2012). Whenever you log into Facebook, consumers who liked the site are informed about business messages on the site (that is, news feeds). It is understood that consumers pay more attention to posts containing a textual status messa.

Benson (2023) while examining conflict in curation and architecture: the politics of memory and rhetorical sovereignty of the Jewish Museum Berlin indicated that at the conception of Libeskind's design submission, there are multiple cultural and political factors that must be taken into account in the contemporary debate surrounding architecture and cultural criticism in museology, primarily with the changing representational values of monuments and, in turn, architecture in the West during the Cold War. As opposed to carrying associations of being totalitarian tools and visual symbols of societal values and tributes to deceased individuals, the concept of collective memory became key in the discourse. In a post-Shoah society, the drawbacks of Modernist monuments of only demonstrating one perspective within the experience of one person or one nation's imposed cultural values halted cultural continuity with a lack of collective function (Akcan, 2005) and was not deemed suitable for the imperative and unavoidable reconciliation for the perpetrators of the Holocaust with the entirety of the European-Jewish population.

### **3.0 Methodology**

In order to arrive at a logical conclusion and to improve research credibility and validity, the research involved observation, note taking, analysis and interpretation of the results. This study relied on primary data. Primary data was collected by collecting the number of meaning shifts occasioned by every CSI posted on a Facebook conversations. English-Kiswahili translations were examined so as to bring out the errors. The researcher is an avid Facebook user, and this study sought to limit itself on CSIs posted on Facebook conversations on pages and not on individual accounts. Purposive sampling was used in this qualitative research. This study targeted at least 11 Facebook pages with a high number of followers and based in Kenya with a core focus on the CSIs posted on the pages. The study involved social media consultants in the assessment of the research instruments mainly to ascertain the reliability of the data collected. The results were presented on tables. This study adopted descriptive research design by adopting an exploratory approach (Blaug

and Psacharopoulos 1989). This is mainly because the study sought to examine specific units and subjects and conducted at a central location. The study covered CSIs posted on Facebook. This study was conducted content analysis that involves preparing, organizing and reporting data. This was because it would enable the study critically examining pertinent issues and concerns raised in the research questions in order to make conclusive recommendations for consideration. The study made generalized conclusions and discussions on the CSI.

#### **4.0 Findings and Discussion**

The study sought to examine the extent to which Facebook has used natural equivalents to avoid meaning shifts of culture-specific expressions. The study found that Facebook's translation algorithms had a mixed success rate when it came to using natural equivalents for culture-specific expressions in Kenya, particularly in the domains of food, fashion, and cultural architecture. In the case of food, terms like "ugali," "nyama choma," and "sukuma wiki" were sometimes translated to their closest English equivalents, such as "cornmeal porridge," "grilled meat," and "collard greens," respectively. While these translations captured the basic nature of the foods, they fell short of conveying the cultural practices and social situations in which these foods are typically consumed. For instance, "nyama choma" was not just any "grilled meat;" it is a communal eating experience often associated with social gatherings. Regarding fashion, the study discovered that traditional Kenyan clothing terms like "kanga," "kitenge," and "Maasai shuka" were inconsistently translated. In some instances, "kanga" was accurately rendered as a "wrapper," but in others, it was simply translated as "cloth," missing its specific use and cultural significance. "Kitenge," a fabric rich in colors and patterns, was often reduced to "African fabric," a term too broad to encapsulate its unique identity within Kenyan culture. "Maasai shuka," a special type of blanket worn by the Maasai people, was sometimes mistranslated as "plaid blanket," losing its cultural resonance entirely.

When it comes to cultural architecture, terms like "Boma," "Swahili house," and "Maasai Manyatta" were examined. The study found that "Boma," traditionally a livestock enclosure or a community dwelling space, was often translated as "compound," a term too generic to depict its original meaning. "Swahili house," which refers to a specific architectural style prevalent in coastal Kenya, was inaccurately translated as "coastal house." "Maasai Manyatta," a term for Maasai homesteads, was sometimes translated as "village," missing the significance that it often refers to a cluster of huts surrounded by thorn bushes for protection. The study noted that while Facebook has made some strides in using natural equivalents for translation, the platform still has a long way to go to avoid meaning shifts that could lead to cultural misunderstandings or appropriations. The use of natural equivalents was inconsistent and seemed to lack a thorough understanding of the depth and context of Kenyan culture-specific expressions.

**Table 1: Natural Equivalence in Translation in the context of Food**

Word	Category	Natural English	Equivalent in Context
<i>Ugali</i>	Food	Cornmeal Porridge	A staple food commonly consumed in Kenya
<i>Nyama Choma</i>	Food	Grilled Meat	Often enjoyed during social gatherings
<i>Sukuma Wiki</i>	Food	Collard Greens/Kale	Commonly cooked as a side dish
<i>Githeri</i>	Food	Mixed Beans and Corn	A traditional Kenyan dish
<i>Mandazi</i>	Food	Sweet Doughnut	A popular snack often enjoyed with tea
<i>Chapati</i>	Food	Flatbread	Widely eaten across Kenya, often with stews
<i>Matoke</i>	Food	Cooked Plantain/Banana	A common dish, especially in western Kenya
<i>Samaki</i>	Food	Fish	Commonly fried or grilled, enjoyed with vegetables
<i>Kachumbari</i>	Food	Tomato and Onion Salad	A fresh side dish often served with grilled meats
<i>Pilau</i>	Food	Spiced Rice	Aromatic rice dish often cooked with meat or fish
<i>Mutura</i>	Food	Blood Sausage	A popular street food, especially in urban areas

Table 1 shows how Kenyan foods like "Ugali," "Nyama Choma," "Sukuma Wiki," and "Githeri" undergo meaning shifts when portrayed on Facebook, reflecting the intersection of cultural context and social media. While these dishes hold every day or festive significance in Kenya, their online representation, especially to international audiences, often transforms them into symbols of cultural pride, national identity, or even global trends like healthy eating and sustainability. Facebook enables diverse interpretations, turning traditional dishes into cultural showcases that embody modern Kenyan identity and contribute to the global culinary landscape, showcasing how digital platforms reshape cultural elements. Table 2 shows some of the some commonly used Kenyan words and their most naturally equivalent translations in English as found by the study with regards to meaning shifts in the context of fashion.

**Table 2: Natural Equivalence in Translation in the context of Fashion**

Word	Category	Natural English	Equivalent inContext
<i>Kitenge</i>	Fashion	African Wax Print Fabric	Used for various clothing items and accessories
<i>Maasai Shuka</i>	Fashion	Maasai Blanket	A special type of blanket with cultural significance
<i>Dashiki</i>	Fashion	Loose-Fitting Garment	Often colorful and worn for various occasions
<i>Kanga</i>	Fashion	East African Garment	A colorful fabric used for clothing, decorations, and more A versatile garment often worn at the coast
<i>Kikoi</i>	Fashion	Swahili Sarong	An important part of traditional Kenyan dress
<i>Shanga</i>	Fashion	Handcrafted Beaded Jewelry	Often printed with Swahili proverbs, used as an accessory
<i>Leso</i>	Fashion	Decorative Cloth	Worn by various Kenyan communities, not just the Maasai
<i>Shuka</i>	Fashion	Traditional Blanket/Cloth	Made from sisal plant, used for its durability and style
<i>Kiondo</i>	Fashion	Handwoven Bag	Popular for their durability and unique designs
<i>Akala</i>	Fashion	Handcrafted Leather Footwear	

The translation of Kenyan fashion terms like "Kitenge," "Maasai Shuka," "Dashiki," "Kanga," "Beadwork," and "Kikoi" into English for platforms like Facebook often leads to meaning shifts and oversimplification, losing the deeper cultural nuances. For example, "Kitenge" is reduced to "African Wax Print Fabric," stripping it of its identity and heritage significance. Similarly, items like the Maasai Shuka and Shuka, though both translated as cloth, hold different cultural meanings that can be homogenized online. The Dashiki, Kanga, and Beadwork also lose their symbolic and social importance when presented merely as garments or jewelry. Facebook's focus on visual appeal often results in a superficial understanding, diluting the craftsmanship and rich history behind these items, emphasizing the need for cultural awareness in cross-cultural communication on global platforms. Table 3 shows some of the some commonly used Kenyan words and their most naturally equivalent translations in English as found by the study with regards to meaning shifts in the context of cultural architecture.

**Table 3: Natural Equivalence in Translation in the context of Cultural Architecture**

Word	Category	Natural	Equivalent in English	Context
<i>Boma</i>	Cultural Architecture	Compound or Homestead		Can refer to a livestock enclosure or community area
<i>Swahili House</i>	Cultural Architecture	Swahili Style House		Specific architectural style found on the coast
<i>Maasai Manyatta</i>	Cultural Architecture	Maasai Homestead		Traditional dwelling of the Maasai people
<i>Makuti</i>	Cultural Architecture	Thatched Roof		Common in coastal areas, made from palm leaves
<i>Jumba</i>	Cultural Architecture	Large House or Mansion		Grand houses in coastal towns, reflecting Swahili culture
<i>Kibanda</i>	Cultural Architecture	Shack or Small Hut		Small, simple structures used for various purposes
<i>Bandas</i>	Cultural Architecture	Rustic Lodge or Cabin		Often used in tourist lodges, built in a traditional style
<i>Nyumba ya Mabati</i>	Cultural Architecture	Corrugated Iron Sheet House		Simple houses made from corrugated iron sheets
<i>Choo</i>	Cultural Architecture	Toilet or Latrine		Basic sanitation facilities, vary in construction
<i>Tembe</i>	Cultural Architecture	Traditional Mud House		Made from mud and other natural materials, often rural

The translation of Kenyan architectural terms such as "Boma," "Swahili House," "Maasai Manyatta," and "Makuti" into English often leads to shifts in meaning, especially on platforms like social media, where cultural nuances may be lost (Mokhtar Hamadouche, 2018). For example, while "Boma" is translated as "Compound or Homestead," it holds specific connotations related to community living and traditional lifestyles in Kenya, which may be overlooked in broader contexts. Similarly, the "Swahili House," with its rich history of Arab, Persian, Indian, and African influences, might be reduced to a mere "Swahili Style House" in translation, ignoring its cultural significance. This can result in a homogenization of culturally distinct terms, leading to misunderstandings in multicultural or global discussions (Ge & Gretzel, 2018). Moreover, terms like "Maasai Manyatta" and "Makuti" may be technically accurate in translation but fail to communicate the cultural richness and ecological importance embedded in their original context.

Translation studies, which emerged significantly in the 20th century, highlight the complexities of translating not just language but also cultural significance (Holmes, 1988). Scholars like James Holmes laid the groundwork for modern translation theory, which includes the challenges of cultural equivalence, particularly with idiomatic expressions and proverbs (Touy, 1995; Wongsee, 2021). This complexity is further demonstrated by the challenges translators face when navigating neologisms in social media and the evolving meanings of words like "tweet" or

"cookie" (Pathak & Muralidharan, 2020a). Translation not only involves linguistic accuracy but also adapting cultural contexts, as seen in the examples of functional equivalence in Kiswahili-English translations like "Hakuna Matata" and "It's raining cats and dogs," where meaning shifts are necessary to maintain cultural relevance (Snell-Hornby, 2012). The use of various translation strategies such as borrowing, calque, and modulation also plays a significant role in preserving the original text's stylistic and cultural integrity during translation (Dencik et al., 2018).

## **5.0 Conclusions**

The study of Facebook's use of natural equivalents to preserve cultural integrity reveals an effort to maintain the original essence of expressions across different languages and cultures. Through the use of natural language equivalences, Facebook aims to ensure that users are able to engage with content that resonates with their own cultural context, reducing the risk of misunderstandings and shifts in meaning. This approach to localized translation emphasizes the importance of cultural relevance and seeks to balance the precision of language with cultural norms, values, and expressions. Consequently, Facebook's natural equivalence strategy significantly contributes to maintaining the authenticity and integrity of culturally specific content, allowing for seamless cross-cultural communication without losing the nuances of the original expressions.

Moreover, the careful selection of natural equivalents helps to address any potential shifts in meaning that is likely to occur when expressions are translated literally or through automated means that lack cultural sensitivity. Using context-aware translations, Facebook has been able to reduce instances of miscommunication that may arise from direct translations, which often fail to capture idiomatic phrases, humor, and culturally bound references. As such, this practice not only create inclusivity by ensuring that users feel understood and respected, but it also maintains the platform's accessibility across diverse linguistic communities. The effectiveness of this strategy emphasizes the need for more culturally mindful approaches to language translation within global social media platforms.

Moreover, the emphasis on natural equivalence indicates Facebook's role as a mediator of cultural preservation and exchange. Through promotion of translations that retain cultural meanings, the platform contributes to a broader understanding of global cultural diversity and reduces the risk of cultural erosion in digital spaces. This strategy is consistent with the growing demand for culturally appropriate content, providing a model for other social media platforms aiming to connect users across linguistic and cultural barriers. Facebook's approach demonstrates how thoughtful language practices can enhance user experience, contribute to more meaningful interactions, and support the larger goal of fostering cross-cultural understanding in an increasingly interconnected digital world.

## **6.0 Recommendations**

In view of the findings, this study recommends that Facebook should further improve its use of natural equivalents by employing a more context-sensitive approach to language translation. To achieve this, the platform should invest in culturally diverse language experts who understand the details of the local idioms of target languages. These experts should be able to provide more accurate and culturally appropriate translations that go beyond literal word-for-word conversions, ensuring that the intended meaning and tone are preserved across different regions. Additionally, the use of artificial intelligence and machine learning tools should be further optimized to detect and analyze cultural contexts, which would support translators in refining translations to maintain the original expressions' integrity while being mindful of local cultural sensitivities.

Furthermore, Facebook should actively engage with its diverse user base to collect necessary feedback on the effectiveness of its translations, as this will allow for continuous improvement and cultural alignment. This can be achieved through periodic surveys, focus groups, and in-app feedback mechanisms where users are able to suggest corrections or improvements to translated content. Such a participatory approach will not only improve the accuracy of translations but also create a sense of inclusivity and representation among users. Through continuous refinement of the balance between technology and human expertise, Facebook can better preserve cultural integrity and reduce meaning shifts, ultimately improving cross-cultural communication and user experience on the platform.

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