

## Linguistic Features in the French Translation of Osofisan's *Once Upon Four Robbers*

*From the onset, a linguistic feature is often one of the essential tools in analysing a literary work and obviously, it is sine qua non in translation studies. Many studies have been done on Soyinka's The lion and the jewel but the issue of translation made by non Yoruba native speaker where the substances contain Yoruba cultural items becomes contentious. Once upon four robbers (1980) was translated by Nicole Medjigbodo (2003). The study employs descriptive and comparative research methods in analysing the random elicited data from the source and target texts. We adopt Seleskovitch and Lederer's Interpretive Theory of Translation (1970s). The Theory postulates that the translation of a text should produce the same cognitive, affective and esthetic effects on target readers as the original text does. The study, therefore, explicates that to avoid translation loss or mistranslation, indigenous thoughts in African drama texts can be retained or translated with the use of illustrative devices. The study therefore concludes that the translated literary works do not often have the same popularity as the original ones; the above assertion is not an exception in this present study.*

**Keywords:** Interpretative, linguistics, features, Once upon four robbers, translation

### Preamble

In as much there are literary works; linguistic features will always be pertinent in communication which is also applicable to translation studies. A language is like an umbilical cord that is inseparable in communication either in an oral or a written form. The use of language in this paper is very unique, both the source and the target texts depict the linguistic background of the playwright. As applicable to other writers, Femi Osofisan, a Yoruba man in Nigeria exhibits his cultural background in the text *Once upon four robbers*. The playwright makes use of Yoruba songs, incantations, Ifa panegyrics, Yoruba dirges and other Yoruba cultural bound items in developing the intrigue of his play. This is also reflected in the playwright's choice of words and the presentation of his messages to the audience. It is crystal clear that two languages can have identical linguistic features but they cannot have the same linguistic elements all through. Both English and French languages are not often of the same structural features at the linguistic level and this is reflected in our study. The profound review of our text in this study convinces us that there are a lot of obstacles associated with the translation of play; most especially when such plays contain some elements of indigenous languages, folk songs, humours, incantations, Ifa chants, mimes and other indigenous thoughts. Translation of indigenous thoughts from indigenous languages into European languages is often full of tasks that need cross-cultural knowledge as a result of cultural variations.

## Translating Drama Texts

The mission of a translator of the dramatic work is slightly different from other literary genres because it involves performance. A drama text is put in place in order to be performed on stage. Drama translation is impossible without relating it within the socio-cultural context which conceived it. Drama texts cannot be translated like other genres of literature- prose and poetry. It is distinctly known that the three major genres of literature cannot be read in the same manner.. Some parts of artistic works of play create an unending suspense which if a translator is not conversant with, he or she may not be able to translate or justify the message of the source text in the target text. Drama texts are full of dialogues, rhythm, intonations, patterns, pitch, loudness and other dramatic elements. Linguistic expressions in most drama texts are symbols or signs constituted not only as discourse signs, but also as other signs. According to Komissarov (1991: 5)

In translating a play, the translator must bear in mind the requirements of theatrical presentation of such play; at all times, the translator must hear the voice that speaks and take into consideration the 'gesture' of the language, all rhythms and pauses that occur when the written text is spoken.

This shows that drama as a genre of literature is distinctly different from other genres because it involves *actions*. The translator of a drama text must put actions in his mind in order not to miss out the aesthetics and embellishments of the source text in the target text. The experience of Samuel Beckett, playwright and self-translator, shows the tremendous influence of self-translation on the message of the translator's original text. Beckett's *En attendant Godot* is translated by the playwright as *Waiting for Godot* which makes clearer pictures of his mindset in the translated version. In Holmes' view (1970:79), the points of difference between the author of the original and the translator are perhaps, another way of viewing equivalence as an objective criterion of translation quality:

The differences between the author and the translator are governed by the differing social and literary situations. The conventional designation of which is the taste of the day. In practice, these differences between the original and the translation can be reduced to shifts in the structural process. Each individual method of translation is determined by the presence or absence of shifts in the various layers of the translation. All that appears as new with respect to the original, or fails to appear where it might have been expected, may be interpreted as a shift. The fact that the process of translation involves shifts in the semantic properties of the text does not mean that the translator wishes to underemphasise the semantic appeal of the original. The very opposite is true.

From Holmes's analogy about translation, it can be deduced that translation involves shift- cultural or linguistic in the structural process. He also reiterates the relevance of method and style of translation in order to achieve the semantic appeal of the original.

### Problems Relating to the Translation of Drama Texts

Many translation scholars have made different relevant assertions as regard the problems facing the translations of drama texts. It is noted that every genre of literature poses some specific problems of translating into a particular language and drama translation is not an exception. The fundamental fact about the problems of translating drama texts or plays is that the tasks are related to cultural, linguistic and performative issues. Many literary translations fail to achieve the fame and quality of the original texts as a result of some factors relating to the reality above. Some of the impediments are based on the cognitive, stylistic, ethical or cultural and performance strictures. Most translators do translate word-for-word without considering the integral unit and translate in section. Some drama texts are not translated intention by intention, in this regard, elements of pragmatics and discourse prosody in translation are not taken into consideration. Another problem is related to the author's style, in which such style may not be comprehended by the translator. An individual writer has his or her style of writing, a translator should not insist on the style of the source text but the focus should be how the source message could be passed to the target audience. Furthermore, the style that is incorporated can inculcate the absolute comprehension of the audience.

As well, there is a problem of false friends (*faux-amis*) as it is rampant in general translation. Also, in plays, proper names are normally reformed to suit the graphic and phonic instances of the source text but most often it brings about contradictions. There is also a problem of mistranslation of information, sub-interpretation of the original text and as well superficial interpretation of connections between intentional correlatives. Drama text cannot be translated in the same way as the prose text. The reason behind this is that, it involves action and performance. According to Steiner (1975:396):

A bad translation is one which is inadequate to its source-text for reasons which can be legion and obvious. The translator has misconstrued the original through ignorance, haste, or personal limitation. He lacks the mastery of his own language required for adequate representation. He has made a stylistic or psychological blunder in choosing his text; his own sensibility and that of the author whom he is translating are discordant. Where there is difficulty, the bad translator elides or paraphrases. Where there is elevation he inflates and where author offends he smoothes.

The perception of Steiner from the above excerpt concerning the problem relating to translation is that a bad translation moves far from the concept of the source text as a result of misconception or ignorance, haste and some other reasons that can come up against the translator. Perhaps, the translator lacks the knowledge of the languages involved. Kolawole and Moruwawon (2007: 375-379) are of the opinion that "the translator had the responsibility of finding a solution to the most daunting problems, and he declared that the functional view must be adopted with regard not only to meaning but also to style and

form”. The above quotation reiterates the relevance of style and form in translation; Kolawole and Moruwawon explicate the solution to the most daunting problems of translation which is to adopt not only meaning but also the stylistic preoccupation. The word ‘meaning’ has different types and they can be polysemous or ambiguous in nature. Therefore, a translator is expected to put into consideration the cognitive premises, psychology and socio-linguistics in translation. In translation, the appropriate choice of words is necessary.

Another problem associated with the translation of drama texts is an indirect use of language (figurative expressions). The aesthetic use of figurative expressions in literature and most especially in plays can result to over-translation or under-translation of the source message into the target language. Furthermore, it is as well noted that the methodology used in translating prose is used to translate drama texts too by some translators. Furthermore, Nord (1991) categorises the problems of translating drama into different phases- as pragmatic problems which is referred to the fact that there may be difference between the situations in the source and target cultures. The difference include time, place, etc. in order to identify potential pragmatic problems; we need to check the extra textual factors for each text. He further states that, there are linguistic problems as most scholars emphasise. These arise as a result of difference in structure, vocabulary and syntax of SL and TL. Coupled with other problems of translating drama is the cultural issue. According to Nord, cultural problems are the results of the differences in norms and conventions that guide verbal and non-verbal behaviours in two cultures involved, as every culture has its own habits and conventions. To crown it all, he reiterates that among the problems is text-specific problem. This depends on the type and nature of the texts involved in translation. This means that problems may arise as a result of the complexity of the substance in a particular text. This can be in form of the choice of words, choice of vocabularies, the use of figures of speech, choice of proverbs, etc. However, most of the problems mentioned in this section reflect in our study, there are quite issues on untranslatability, cultural based problems, style and semantics, by extension discourse prosody.

## Interpretative Theory of Translation

The popular theory is interdisciplinary in nature; this is because it is adopted in translation studies, sociology, applied linguistics, psychology and many other fields of studies. The theory was founded by two translation scholars, Seleskovich, D. and Lederer, M. in 1970s. Seleskovich and Lederer (2001) challenge the view prevailing at that time that:

Translation was no more than a linguistic activity, one language being merely transcended into another. She believes translation is a triangular process- from language to sense and from sense to the other language. The Interpretative Theory of Translation was coined before translation studies became a field of study.

The thought of Seleskovich and Lederer as regards translation is that translation is a triangular process- from language to sense and from sense to the other language. In connection with the theory, the process of translation is divided into three phases, comprehension, deverbalisation and reformulation or re-expression. According to Selescovitch and Lederer (1983):

The component *comprehension* means adding extra linguistic knowledge to linguistic signs, new information constantly enriching extra-linguistic knowledge.

There is another important element in the Interpretative Theory according to Selescovitch (1983):

The process of translation is the “deverbalisation” to comprehension and reformulation. Everybody deverbalises in one way or the other. For instance, we do keep in mind facts, notions, concepts and events conveyed by words, but we do not retain the words in our memory. Languages and thoughts are located in different areas of the brain. The concept of deverbalisation in Interpretation Translation Theory is common in oral speech and interpretation; it is more difficult to observe in written translation. Deverbalisation needs an extra effort by translators to implement. In the stage of diverbalisation, sense is freed from all linguistic structures of the source language.

The next stage is the reformation of meaning according to the two theorists. In this stage, a translator re-expresses the message of the source text into the target message. In this case, meanings are expected to prevail than words. In Interpretative Theory of Translation, the translation of a text should produce the same cognitive, affective and aesthetic effects on readers as the original text does through comprehension, deverbalisation and reformulation. Selescovitch and Lederer (1983) buttresses the idea by remarking that:

Croire qu’interpréter consiste à passer directement d’une langue à l’autre postule des savoirs, dire qu’interpréter consiste à passer par le sens postule en outre de l’intelligence.

To believe that to interpret is to pass directly from one language to another and this postulates knowledge, to say that interpreting is to go through the meaning to postulate in addition to intelligence. (Our translation)

This depicts that meaning takes prominence in the act of translating and interpreting. The knowledge of the source and the target languages takes a high-flying position.

### **Analysis Of Linguistic Features In The French Translation Of Osofisan's *Once Upon Four Robbers***

*Translating Once upon four robbers as Il était une fois quatre voleurs*

The first linguistic feature in Osofisan's play is the presentation of the play's title and how it is translated into French. This means that translation can be done in numerous ways to suit the original message in the target text as suggested by the Interpretative Theory that the issue sense for sense is pertinent in translation. A title of this nature can be translated into different forms without losing the original message of the source text; this depends on the discretion of a translator. Considering Osofisan's title from the literal point of view, one would have thought that the translator should have presented the title as *Quatre voleurs* or *Une fois quatre voleurs* or *Il y avait quatre voleurs*. The title in the source text is idiomatic and the Nicole Medjigbodo approaches its translation in an idiomatic manner. She was able to find the cultural and linguistic equivalence of the title in the French milieu. The translator would have thought of other alternatives if she could not find the cultural and linguistic equivalent of the title in French, the alternative can be: *Quand jadis, quatre voleurs* or *Autrefois, quatre voleurs*. In essence, the translator approaches the French translation of the title to be able to find the direct equivalence to the expression. The expression *Once upon a time* is common among Africans most especially at the point that the elders narrate a story or tell a tale under the moonlight. Invariably, Nicole Medjigbodo presents her French title to be able to depict the semantic content of the source text in the target text.

### *French translation pidgin and other Expressions*

Indigenous languages or dialects can be in form of vernacular. Vernaculars can be in various forms, ranging from dialects, slangs, street languages, argots, pidgin, lingos, jargons, idioms, patois, idiolects, etc. A vernacular can be any language spoken or written outside the official language of the linguistic community. In Osofisan's literary opus, there are numerous local languages. Despite the deliberate use of poor English by the playwright to create humour and satire and to depict the class level of the speakers, Nicole Medjigbodo was able to translate the words, phrases and sentences according to the intention of the playwright. For instance:

Yess aaah..... ou .....!

- 1 Darring mi! ..... ma chéééerie!  
 2 Yes, di yah! ..... I' am here!  
 3 How many picking we get? ... On a combien de gosses?  
 4 Pardon? ..... Quoi?  
 5  
 6 Shirrup! ..... La ferme  
 7  
 8 Pitakwa ..... Local name for Port-Harcourt (p.57)  
 9

10 In the above examples, we can observe that there are certain vernacular  
 11 expressions/slangs employed by the playwright. According to the Interpretative  
 12 Theory of Translation, the translator re-expresses or reformulates the jargons  
 13 and the pidgin of the source message. Seleskovitch and Lederer emphasise that  
 14 the rendering of the message of the source text may not necessarily take the  
 15 same linguistic pattern as the original message. The source message must be  
 16 reformulated to the target message in a language that the target audience can  
 17 absolutely understand. In this study, Medjigbodo attempts to find the  
 18 equivalents of the local pidgins so as to produce the messages of the source text  
 19 in the target text. She translates the vernacular expressions by replacing those  
 20 vernaculars in English into French which is the target language. It is certain  
 21 that she must have gone far to be able to find the equivalents of the above  
 22 expressions since they are not standard French like other elements represented  
 23 in this study. From the above expressions, we can deduce that Osofisan  
 24 employs the vernacular expressions to create some dramatic effects such as  
 25 satire and humour; likewise, Medjigbodo's French translation of the  
 26 expressions is done with the use of pidgin French. For example, the expression  
 27 "Darring mi!" is translated as ma chééerie! From the expression, we can  
 28 observe that the translator does the French translation according to the message  
 29 from the source text.

30

### 31 *Translation of Quranic Verses*

32

33 In the source text of our study, the use of Quranic chants is rampant from  
 34 the prologue of the work to the epilogue. This is because the literary work  
 35 involves the activities of a Muslim cleric-Aafa. Equally, in the intrigue of the  
 36 novel, there is the use of mixed religion, Islamic and traditional religions. In  
 37 the play to reinforce this idea of syncretism, in the play, *Once upon four*  
 38 *robbers*, Aafa, a Muslim cleric, brings out the paraphernalia of Ifa and that of  
 39 Islamic chants.

40 In the view of Hatim and Munday (2004:15) "The notion of  
 41 untranslatability is described as a relative notion, and it has to do with extent to  
 42 which, despite obvious differences in linguistic structure (grammar,  
 43 vocabulary, etc), meaning can still be adequately expressed across languages.  
 44 But, for this to be possible, meaning has to be understood not only in terms of  
 45 what the source text (ST) contains, but also equally significantly, in terms of  
 46 such factors as communicative purpose of translation" In our study, our  
 47 selected text have diverse kinds of aesthetic functions thereby the issue of

untranslatability is common in the translated version. For instance, in *Once upon four robbers*, Osofisan makes use of some well-known Islamic chants, likewise, Medjigbodo uses the same chants and expressions directly without being translated.

i. Aafa: il étend la natte tout en chantant:

Ataiyatu : lilahi  
 Azakiyatu: lilahi  
 Ike oluwa: lilahi  
 Ige oluwa: lilahi,  
 Ko lo ba Mohamadu – Lilahi  
 Ataiyatu Salamatu ! Etc. (p.16)

ii. Aafa : Wahalu hairu hafizan, wauma arihamu rohimim. (p.17).

From the above example, it can be deduced that the translation of Islamic chants cannot be easy except the Islamic chants are subjected to transliteration; from such transliteration, translators can translate the chants into other indigenous and foreign languages. The idea is applicable to our text *Once upon four robbers* where the playwright translate his songs in Yoruba language into English so as to make the translation easy for the non-Yoruba translators and to have wider audience.

#### *Translation of Proper Nouns*

A noun that is designated to a particular being or thing, and it does not take a limiting modifier, and is usually capitalised is called a proper noun. It is obvious from our study that Osofisan makes use of different proper nouns such as names of deities, kings, places and other proper names. For instance :

#### *Medjigbodo's Translation*

Fils d'Enire, fils d'Enire  
 De ceux qui frappent vite et fort  
 Ifa, nous t'invitons sous notre toit!  
 Ewi d'Ado  
 Onsa de Deta  
 Erinmi d'Owo  
 Ifa, nous t'appelons ici!  
 Gbolagoko, qui assoit la richesse, etc. (p.28)

From the above Ifa panegyrics, we observe that, it is very hard to find the cultural and linguistic equivalents of proper nouns of African setting in European languages. From the extract, it can be observed that some special proper nouns remain as used in the source text so as to avoid translation loss in the target language. Such words are as follows: Enire, Ewì, Adó, Onsa, Dètà,



Erinmi, Òwò, Ifá and Gbólágoko. Another example of proper nouns in the translation is below:

#### *Medjigbodo's Translation*

L'homme s'approchera de moi et nous allons partager ensemble, une fois de plus, la pomme d'*Obatala*. Il va me séduire des mêmes mensonges, me pénétrer dans un moment d'abandon et, au cours du neuvième mois, mes batards vont se déverser de nouveau comme de la merde. *Oduduwa* sera là tout prêt à prendre soin d'eux, à leur donner une forme. La merde va respirer l'air s'abreuver à la fraîcheur de la pluie et *Edumare* va leur apprendre comment se servir de leurs pieds. *Ogun* dans une gourde attend être découvert. Et ils vont boire, mes enfants, le soleil sera dans leurs yeux, le soleil et *Eshu Laaroye*, dans toutes les cellules de leur cerveau, et l'un va poignarder l'autre et laver sa chevelure dans son sang. Je vais crier, je vais appeler mon époux, mais *Orunmila*. Etc. (p.7)

In the example cited above, Nicole Medjigbodo makes use of Yoruba proper noun such as: Obátálá, Odùduwà, Èdùmàrè, Ògún, Èshùn Láaróyè and Òrúnmilà. These are the names of deities in Yoruba land, since the text is translated into another language, the cultural divergence is reflected on the target language and thereby the issue of untranslatability sets in. It is better the way Nicole Medjigbodo attempts her French translation. Most often, for the names of the deities to its original representation and meaning, she makes use of footnotes, glossary and other illustrative devices for comprehension.

#### *Code-mixed Sentences and their Translations*

One of the linguistic features in the play is code-mixed sentences. In African literature for instance, it is observed that some African writers cannot do without the use of code-mixed sentences because they believe so much in their dialects and colloquial languages to depict their linguistic backgrounds. It is observed that the translator mingles (which is his native language, and most often he makes use of his dialects to exhibit his socio-linguistic background) with English. For instance, songs, incantations, panegyrics, dirges, Ifa chants are written in Yoruba and self-translation was done by the playwright into English and Nicole Medjigbodo translates the Yoruba folkloric elements into French which is the target language. In essence, the major languages in our study are Yoruba, English and French. Code-mixed sentences are employed from the prologue to the epilogue in the play. In the translated version, most often, the translator makes use of the dialect, and vernacular and Yoruba where she could not get lexical equivalence of the linguistic items. As lexical words, phrases, clauses and sentences are code-mixed in the source text; code-mixed sentences are also rampant in the translated version. For instance, there is a combination of Yoruba and French in the translated text. Furthermore, we observe the use of Quranic chants and the chants (written in Arabic language) are mingled with other languages. For instance:

- i. Robi najini wahaali mimo yahamalum!

- 1        **ii.**      Walahu hairuhafizan, wauwa arihamu rohimim!  
 2        **iii.**      Ataiyatu : lilahi  
 3              Azakiyatu : lilahi  
 4              Ike oluwa; lilahi  
 5              Ige oluwa: lilahi  
 6              Ko lo ba Mohamadu – Lilahi  
 7              Ataiyatu Salamatu! Etc. (Pp.16-17)

9        In the above extracts, Arabic language is code-mixed with Yoruba. It  
 10       means that the background of the playwright reflect in the choice of his  
 11       language. The same idea reflects on his translated work. The translator makes  
 12       use of code-mixed sentences to drive home the message of the source text into  
 13       a target text. French is code-mixed with Yoruba and Arabic language as  
 14       applicable in the source text. Furthermore, there is also the mélange of musical  
 15       solfa with French which is the target language. In the French translation in this  
 16       study, the translator employs musical notations as used in the source language.  
 17       Musical notations are the solfas relating to music and its components. For  
 18       instance:

20       **Corporal:** “Do-re-mi”, is it? I will do-re-mi you with bullets today!  
 21       Robbers  
 22       **Soldier 1:** Bu-u-u-ut, soja.....  
 23       **Corporal:** Quite! You can’t even sing a healthy, masculine song! “Do-re-  
 24       mi”!  
 25       Disgusting! Are you one of those wall geckos from England?

#### 27       *Medjigbodo’s Translation*

29       **Le Caporal:** Je t’ai eu, espèce de canaille!  
 30       **Le Soldat:** (Begayant de peur). Ch.....ch.....chef!  
 31       **Le Caporal:** Ferme-la! Tu ne peux même pas chanter un morceau  
 32       énergétique!

34       Do-re-mi-fa-sol! C’est une honte! Est-ce qu’on ne dirait pas un de ces grillons  
 35       Européens!

36       “Do-re-mi-fa-sol” is a musical notation which is applied in the work of  
 37       Osofisan, in the translated version; the tonic solfa is used accordingly in the  
 38       source text. In the play *Once upon four robbers*, Osofisan makes of language  
 39       as he likes. As observed in the French version of the play, the translator uses  
 40       the playwright’s language most often to avoid under/over translation of the  
 41       source message.

#### 43       *Translation of Figures of Speech*

45       A figure of speech is a word or phrase that has a meaning other than the  
 46       literal meaning. It is also referred to literary device. It makes use of a  
 47       comparison using verbal images to illustrate the speaker’s intention, for effect,

and to clarify meaning “rhetoric”. The examples of speech are the following: simile, metaphor, oxymoron, pun, etc. In our study, the playwright makes use of diverse figures of speech. In this study, the commonest literary device employed by the playwright is the use of simile. Simile is as indirect comparison between two things or people which makes use of “as” and “like” to indicate the comparison. On the same note, the translator makes attempts to translate simile in different forms to be able to maintain the naturalness of the messages of the source text in the target text, among the translated simile are the following:

**Simile:**

- i. **Angola:** like a ram. They slaughtered our leader like a Ramadan lamb. (p.22)  
**Angola:** Comme un bélier! Ils ont égorgé notre chef comme le bélier Sacrificiel. (p.6)
- ii. **Angola:** And so you’ll run, isn’t it? Like a cheap half-kobo pick-pocket in the market pursed by women. (p.23)  
**Angola:** Et c’est pour ça que tu veux foutre le camp, hein? Comme un vulgaire voleur à la tire pourchassé par les femmes du marché. (p.9)
- iii. You fed on worms and leftovers, your body nude like a carcass in the government mortuary, elbowing your way among other corpses. (p.24)  
 Tu t’es nourri de vers et déchets, nu comme un macchabée à la morgue, jouant des coudes au milieu d’autres cadavres. (p.10)
- iv. Every time we went on a raid and had to kill, he broke down and sobbed like a silly school pickin. (p.24)  
 Chaque fois qu’on était sur un coup et il fallait descendre un type, il s’effondrait en pleurant comme un gosse stupide. (10)
- v. Sarumi, the leader of the coast, who knew the creeks like the back of his palm. (p.26)  
 Sarumi, l’empereur de la côte, qui connaissant les criques comme la paume de sa main. (p.13)
- vi. When he cunningly led officers on his trail to quick sand and watched them flounder like *agbéjijé*. (p.26)

In essence, we can simply remark that the translation of *simile* into any language is easily possible because the idea of simile is attached to two objects with which comparison is made. The first example above compares “leader” with “Ramadan lamb” and it is translated without changing the structure of the source text. It is translated as ‘Ils ont égorgé notre chef comme le bélier sacrificiel’. The second example is far from literal translation of simile.

And so you’ll run, isn’t it? Like a cheap half-kobo pick-pocket in the market pursed by women. (p.23)

Et c’est pour ça que tu veux foutre le camp, hein? Comme un vulgaire voleur à la tire pourchassé par les femmes du marché.

In the above sentences, the translator translates *simile* by following the structural pattern of presentation of simile in English. Notwithstanding, in the

translated samples of simile in our study, the translator makes use of the word “as” or “like” as the normal structure of simile in English. Without the use of comparison words, simile cannot effectively depict its beauty as one of the rhetorical devices. The same pattern of literal translation of simile is found in the third example, “You fed on worms and leftovers, your body nude like a carcass in the government mortuary, elbowing your way among other corpses” which is translated into French as “Tu t’es nourri de vers et déchets, nu comme un macchabée à la morgue, jouant des coudes au milieu d’autres cadavres”

The same pattern of simile structure is observed in the above proverbs in the fourth to the last one. It does not necessary that simile should be translated with the use of “like” as (comme) in French. At times, instead of using the French word (comme) in the translation of simile into French, one can use the French word (rassembler) depending on the nature and type of simile.

### *Metaphor*

**i. Hassan:** The world is a market, we come to slaughter one another and sell the parts.... (p.72)

**Hassan:** Le monde est un marché, on y vient pour s’entre-égorger et pour vendre les morceaux. (p.78)

**ii. Mama Alice:** The market is our sanctuary. (p.72)

**Mama Alice:** Le marché est notre sanctuaire. (p.79)

Metaphor is a direct comparison between two objects or persons. Metaphor is hardly used in the play. In the translation of metaphor in this study, the use of calque as translation technique is common. In some texts, the translation of metaphor can be in another form rather than the traditional approach to its translation. The above example *the market is our sanctuary*, can as well be translated as *le marché deviant notre sanctuaire*. Notwithstanding, the purpose of translation must be achieved by taking care of those using the target language.

### *Onomatopoeia*

Onomatopoeia is one of the figures of speech in literature; it is a situation where the sounds of something or objects dictate the meanings.

“As lights slowly increase now with the growing day, a cock crows” (p.21)

“ L’éclairage s’accroît avec la venue du jour, un coq chante”(p.5)

The use of onomatopoeia is not common in the translated version of the play as it is not presented in the source text. The example above shows that there is an equivalence of the expression “a cock crows” in the French which is the target language. The expression is translated as “un coq chante”, as the sound of the expression gives its exact meaning in the source language, it is

applicable in the target language. Therefore, in the translation of onomatopoeia, it is better to have the lexical equivalents of the expressions used in presenting the figure of speech. In this case, meanings are expected to prevail than words as expressed by the theory in the stage of reformation of meaning and according to the two theorists,

## Conclusion

Reference to the objective and the theory adopted in this study, it can be safely remarked that Nicole Medjigbodo tries to maintain the source message in her translation through comprehension, deverbilisation and reformation of content of the source text in the target text. Though, in several occasions, she makes use of direct translation techniques (calque, literal translation and loan-words) in conveying the message of the source text to the target text. This is as a result of the nature of the text which contains the Yoruba cultural bound items. We can also conclude that, despite the fact that she is not originally from the milieu of the playwright, she is able to translate the Yoruba cultural items into French. Though, the issue of untranslatability abounds severally in the translated text, but, the socio-cultural importance of the study is achieved by translating the minds of the entire audience. This means that the French audience is able to grasp the message of the play as it is, in the original text. The study therefore concludes that the translated literary works do not often have the same popularity as the original ones. This assertion is not an exception in the present play in this study.

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