

Corpora and Bilingual Translation in Achebe and Soyinka's Creative Usages

Mabel Osakwe

Delta State University

Abstract: This paper explores the translation of the African experience (linguistic and socio-cultural) by two foremost African creative writers: Wole Soyinka and Chinua Achebe. The corpus data analyzed are texts from the creative make-believe, yet real worlds. Being coordinate bilinguals in English and a major Nigerian language, each of these users of English, is a locus of contact; a contact which automatically generates translation into the target language medium of expression of the corpus data. Whereas a study of the translation of a novel such as *Things Fall Apart* (TFA) (translated into many world languages) may wish to examine formal inter language translation processes, the focus here is on the informal 'idiolectal' usages which throw up idiolectal, diatopic, and diatypic linguistic categories. Linguistic categories cutting across syntax, lexis, phoric references and rhetorics are set up for textual analysis. The findings show Achebe's texts exemplifying 'real world' texts, especially in the varieties of language used. Soyinka's samples are restrictive, being largely idiolectal translations of an upper zone cline of bilingualism. The neologisms, broad vocabulary spectrum and their manner of freedom of occurrence and co-occurrence also provide further corpus data for research into literary translation study.

Introduction

The outcome of a linguistic inquiry can only lay claims to validity and sustain such a claim if it adopts a pro-scientific/methodical procedure involving observation, hypothesis, experimentation and formulation of law(s). The object/phenomenon of such a study, is language, but the 'guinea-pig' (strictly speaking) is man; the only species equipped and endowed with the language apparatus and the ability to use the same since language is intra-organism (man talks) and inter-organism (man talks to man).

The status and sanctify of man among other creatures, imposes a limit on the possibilities for investigation within the intra-organism perspective. Hence Lenneberg's (1967) possibilities advanced knowledge in this regard while Chomsky's LAD¹ 'is' indicative of the limits, so imposed. This is why a collection of linguistic data (corpora) either as recorded speech; transcribed or written text, are often used as starting points in linguistic description. Such a collection or corpus is also a means of verifying hypothesis about a language.

Although corpus-restricted linguistic description have been criticized, especially by linguistics of the generative school; as being samples that are performance restricted, such a restriction may be inevitable, especially at the initial stage of investigation in field work on a new language. An extended corpus, when made available through encounters with native-speakers, removes such restrictions. Whether 'restricted' or 'extended' then a linguistic study is invariably corpus-based, even if not corpus-restricted.

An inquiry into the translation of linguistic and socio-cultural experience from a source language (SL) to a target language (TL) is expected to be frame-worked on a linguistic theory on the one hand, and a translation theory on the other. When as in the case at hand, the corpus are from non-cognate languages with non-cognate cultures, then further difficulties are posed

needing further investigations and description for valid acceptable outcomes. Such difficulties are further complicated by the context of usage of the corpus – being creative. The corpora under reference here are excerpts from make-believe worlds. Complex as these are however, they can all be grouped under context as Hallidayan systemic grammar is employed to accommodate idiosyncratic, diatypic and diatopic categories. This linguistic model is adopted here along with Catford's translation model as relevant and adequate for written text corpora from co-ordinate bilingual users of English as-a-second language (EL₂) in Nigeria.

Corpora and Linguistic Description

Competing linguistic theories available for the description of corpora include Transformational Generative Grammar (TGG) with its various revisions and modifications (Chomsky 1957, 1965, 1971, 1981 Katz 1972, Lakoff 1970, and Neo-firthian Hallidayan Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) Halliday 1961, 1967, 1970, Halliday and Hasan 1976, and Halliday 1978, Halliday 1985/1994 Halliday and Mathiessen 2004. Both theories (TGG and SFG) have the common goal of accounting for how language works. There are significant differences however, in their approaches: TGG is generative; exposing recursive rules of productivity in language while SFG is functional – relating language structure to its functions and in turn to meaning, mode, and message. The former is a competence grammar, modeled after the native speaker's linguistic competence while the latter is a performance grammar.

TGG enables the analyst to relate superficially unrelated sentences and distinguish superficially identical one, since meaning lies in the deep structure and transformations do not affect meaning. The distinction made between surface structure and deep structure is indeed a striking revolutionary aspect of TGG. By placing syntactic relations at the centre of language, it

lay the groundwork for the most distinctive aspect of human language; its creativity and by implication, the speaker's capacity for linguistic novelty. This focus makes TGG interdisciplinary (Newmeyer 1986), as psychology in particular and philosophy have each borrowed a leaf. The model also throws some light on the nature of literary departure from normal and regular usages. It helps to differentiate between departures which are acceptable, and deviance which are indeed errors. It is also important in explaining the cases of idiomaticity since departure from norms are viewed in terms of surface and deep structures. TGG holds yet another promise for corpus of L₂ origin because some level of bilingual competence underlying the text, needs contrastive linguistics to account for some aspects of deviation.

A similar scrutiny of SFG shows that it consists of a scheme of inter-related categories set up to account for observable language events (both spoken and written) with scales of abstractions relating the categories to the text and to each other. The functions are designated as 'experiential' 'interpersonal' and 'textual', the three being closely related to meaning, mood and message. This context and situation is related to the linguistic system. Although SFG paid no attention to deep grammar initially, later Hallidayan development shows a shift in emphasis towards deep grammar. As relationship between elements of clause structure and various realizations of relationships between 'participants' and 'process', are revealed. Paradigms are then built to give systemic descriptions which are not shown at the surface level. There certainly is an apparent convergence of preoccupation between TGG and SFG. Deep grammar for SFG is the boundary between grammar/lexis and semantics while surface grammar is the boundary between grammar and phonology in spoken language, graphology/graphetics in written language. Halliday's own definition of SFG throws further light on what 'functional' means:

It is functional in the sense that it is designed to account for how the language is used. Every text ...unfolds in some context of use...A functional grammar is essentially a 'natural grammar, in the sense that everything in it can be explained, ultimately, by reference to how language is used. (Halliday 1985/1994)

It means that SFG describes language in actual use; centering around texts and their contexts. These contexts cater for varieties such as diatypic, diatopic and idiolect/idiosyncratic which this paper explores.

The foregoing scrutiny of the TGG and SFG reveals that TGG with its many advantages stops short of the situation theory whereas SFG fully synthesizes it. This means that SFG explains variations in linguistic structure and also accounts for the function and the situation which could give rise to it. Certainly, the latter model which has a functional and 'sociological' (indeed semiotic) tie is more adoptable in the description of African Literature of English expression, since the literary genre is a diatypic variety and the L₂ is a diatopic variety. TGG will need further corroboration with a theory of pragmatics before application to our corpora. SFG being ready-made is therefore preferable for our corpus.

The Linguistic Bond Between Translation Studies (TS) and SFG

The word 'translation' presupposes an action or an activity involving more than one language. In a bilingual speech community, translation occurs among group and even within the bilingual individual who is a locus of contact of his two or more languages. Catford (1965) conceived of translation as "an operation performed on language: a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another. According to him:

Translation is the replacement of textual material in one language (source language SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (target Language TL) (P. 20)

This definition which apparently categorizes translation into a process and a product perspective, has generated scholarly interests (Bell 1991, Shuttleworth 1997). The issue of 'equivalence' has also generated much debate (Fawcett 1997, House 2001, Hatim 2001). More interesting however, is the debate on the view that translation has a tie with linguistics and a general linguistic theory. While Catford's contribution was seen as a good systematic description by Fawcett, it received fierce criticism from culturally oriented translation scholars who believed that multiculturalism is needed for translation since what is being translated is cultures and not languages (Ivir 1987, Hornby 1988). These debates broadened the scope of (TS). The debates having abated, inquiries into TS has become more systematic, as the foundation is laid by linguistics.

Whether as a process or a product, translation is indeed a very broad concept since its corpora includes literary translation, technical translation, machine translation, and interpreting it covers language in actual use; including situation and context. The preoccupation and goals of translation are very similar to those of SFG, making it a good working tool and partner in translating culture, text, and context. Its application demonstrates the mutual interpretation of language and culture since the theory views language as a social phenomenon, indisputably embedded in culture.

Achebe and Soyinka's texts here are Arrow of God (AoG), IDANRE and Ogun Abibiman (OA). The language of these texts are steeped in multicultural and diatypic contexts, so our choice of SFG is appropriate.

Bilingualism and Creative Corpora in Achebe and Soyinka

At the coordinate bilingual level, the bilingual is able to harness the advantages of the two languages by using them fluently while separating their grammars. Achebe and Soyinka are writers of African literature of English expression at this level of bilingualism, but they are equally confronted with the problem of sourcing for translation equivalents of texts in SL for texts in TL. This problem is further complicated by the fact that their two grammars are those of non cognate language and cultures.

Our concern in this paper is not the type of inter-language translation which produced different translation of Achebe's first novel TFA into other languages (French, German, Hebrew, Ezech, Hugarian Russian, Spanish, Slovene, and Italian among others). It is more of how Achebe translates his first languages (L_1) and culture (C_1) into English in AoG. Soyinka's is a poetic text and the poet's experiment at reconciling his linguistic worlds, adopts a different translation method. Their corpora show how the English Language is altered to reflect the African surrounding, while maintaining its intelligibility within English homeland and hostlands. Achebe commenting on his use of English² says:

I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surrounding.

(P. 62 underling mine)

This 'new/altered' English is not expected to be homogenous because even with a competent bilingual, it is not easy to discover textual equivalent since bilingual competence is just one of the factors, constraining the writer's choice of language; others being message and audience/addressee. The writer himself is also part of the context and so is the literary medium. That is why Soyinka and Achebe cannot and do not adopt the same experimental styles or strategies in solving the problem of cultural and linguistic translatability.

Linguistic and Cultural Translation in Achebe's Arrow of God (AOG)

AOG (1964) is the third novel of a trilogy, the others being (TFA) (1958), and No Longer at Ease (NLAE 1960). In terms of the chronology of events, it precedes NLAE since in terms of proximity it is more contiguously located as the experiences immediately following TFA. The text is the longest and carries very delicate details of the ethnography, the socio-cultural and religious life of the Igbos and their conflict with colonialism and the new religion. Our corpus are excerpts from the first 2 chapters where the novelists lays the background of the cultural and linguistic setting. How does Achebe translate this? What has he altered and how is meaning retained in his English?

In creating or recreating the colonial experience of the early twentieth century in Igboland, Achebe used world language English to tell the story. Since this story is about a people who did not speak English at that time, Achebe's attempt at creating their living speeches had to be done in a manner that the narrator's English is differentiated from the English translation of the Igbo-speaking characters on the one hand, and the English spoken by the colonial characters on the other. The translation strategies adopted may be ample, but we should categorize them into overt and covert translation (see House 1977, 2006). This binary typology should jointly cater for both the strong cultural background and the creative context of AoG.

Overt translation is literal (verbatim) translation employed in the syntactic and lexico-semantic equivalents used in the text. It includes translation of cultural items and concepts, events, festivals religious rites and beliefs. This also include transference either in part or fully, of SL items to TL. Covert translation is a type of creative translation which combines the lexis of TL in a free an unusual manner with a communicative rather than sheer semantic intent (Osakwe 1999). Covert translation convey the creative context of the text.

In our selected corpus below, covert and overt translations are not separated. Utterances are quoted as they are used. This reflects what happens in real life situations of living speech. We draw attention to the binary typology employed in the translation. Most of the utterances used here are direct and conversational speeches with a few reported ones. (the underlining and integrated structural analysis (SA) are mine).

Ezeulu's conversation with his son Edogo is directly translated from SL to TL thus:

1. Is Edogo not there?
 I am here.
 I said what did I tell you about carving the image of gods? Perhaps you did not hear my first question; perhaps I spoke with water in my mouth [SL_{CL}].
 You told me to avoid it.
 I told you that, did I? what is this story I here then – that you are carving an *alusi* for a man of Umuagu?
 Who told you?
 Who told me? Is it true or not is what I want to know, not who told me.
 [SA → C(s(PSC) CONJ PS (S(WH)SPC(INF P)))) Neg SPC] [SL_G]
 I want to know who told you because I don't think he can tell the difference between the face of a deity and the face of a mask.
 I see. You may go, my son. And if you like you may carve all the gods in Umuaro. If you hear me asking you about it again take my name and give it to a dog.
 What I am carving for the man of Umuagu is not...
It is not me you are talking to, I have finished with you. [SL_G]
 (p. 4&5)

Below is the English translation of the priestly prayer:

2. Ezeulu took the *ofo* staff and hit the ground to punctuate his prayer:
 Ulu, I thank you for making me see another new moon. May I see it again and again. This household may it be healthy and [SA → SPSPC] [SL_G]
prosperous. As this is the planting may the six villages plant with profit. May we escape danger in the farm – the bite of a snake or the sting of the scorpion, the mighty one of the scrubland. May we not cut our shinbone with the machet or the hoe. And let our wives bear male children. May we increase in numbers at the next counting of the villages so that we shall sacrifice to you a cow, not a chicken as we did after the last New yam Feast. May children put their fathers into the earth and not fathers their children. May good [SL_{CL}]

[SLCL]

meet the face of every man and every woman. Let it come to the land of the riverain folk and to the land of the forest peoples. He put back the *ofo* among the *ikenga* and the *okposi*.

(p. 6)

The discussion between Ibe's aggrieved relatives and their in-law is captured in the TL:

3. We cannot say that your son did wrong to fight for his sister. What we do not understand, however, is why a man with penis between his legs should be carried away from his house and village. It is as if to say: you are nothing and your kinsmen can do nothing. This is the part we do not understand. We have not come with wisdom but with foolishness because a man does not go to his in-law with wisdom but with foolishness. We want you to say to us: are wrong; this is how it is or that is how it is. And we should be satisfied and go home. if someone says to us afterward: Your kinsman was beaten up and carried away; we shall know what to reply. Our great in-law, I salute you.

[SLG]

[SLCL]

[SLCL]

(p. 12)

Ezeulu's addresses his kinsmen and Akukalia's comments on Okpen.

4. Umaro Kwenu! He cried.
Hem!
'I salute you all.' it was like the salute of an enraged Master when an adult is in the house the she-goat is not left to suffer the pains of parturition on its tether. That is what our ancestors have said. But what have we seen here today? We have seen people speak because they are afraid to be called cowards. Other have spoken the way they spoke because they are hungry for war. Let use leave all that aside. If in truth the farmland is our Ulu will fight on our side. But if it is not we shall know some enough. I would not have spoken again today if I had not seen adults in the house neglecting their duty. Ogbuefi Egonwanne as one of the three oldest men in Umuaro should have remind us that our fathers did not fight a war of blame. But instead of that he wants to teach our emissary how to carry fire and walter in the same mouth. Have we not heard that a boy sent by his father to steal does not go stealthily but breaks the door with his feet? Why does Egonwanne trouble himself about small thing when big ones are overlooked? We want war. How Akukalia speaks to his mother's people is a small thing. He can spit in their face if he likes. When we hear a house has fallen do we ask if the ceiling fell with it? I salute you all.

[SLG]

SLOL

SLOL

[SLG]

SLOL

(p. 18)

- 5 It is the result of an ancient medicine, Akukalia explained. My mother's people are great medicine-men.' There was pride in his voice. 'At first Eke was a very small market. Other markets in the neighbourhood were drawing it dry. Then one day the men of Okperi made a powerful deity and placed their market in its care.

[SLG]

From that day Eke grew and grew until it became the biggest market in these parts. This deity which is called Nwanyieke is an old woman. Every Eke day before cock-grow she appears in the market place with a broom in her right hand and dances round the vast open space beckoning with her broom in all directions of the earth and drawing folk from every land. That is why people will not come near the market before cock-crow; if they did they would see the ancient lady in her task.' (p. 19)

Akukalia speaks again and Uduezue replies

6. 'And I think I should remind you again to hold your tongues in your hand when we get there and leave the talking to me. They are very difficult people; my mother was no exception. But I know what they know. If a man of Okperi says to you come, it means run away with all your strength. If you are not used to their ways you may sit with them from cock-crow until roosting-time and join in their talk and their food, but all the while you will be floating on the surface of the water. So leave them to me because when a man of cunning dies a man of cunning buries him.' (p. 20). SLQL
SLCL
SLCL
[SLG]
7. True? Asked Uduezue, 'I was saying to myself; what could bring my son and his people all this way so early? If my sister, your mother, were still alive, I would have thought that some thing had happened to her.' He paused for a very little while. 'An important mission; yes. We have a saying that a toad does not run in the day unless something is after it. I do not want to delay your mission, but I must offer you a piece of kolanut.' (p. 21) [SLG]
SL-OL

The general reaction to sacrilege committed by Akukali and the subsequent revenge taken by Ebo is our eight sample:

8. Let us put ourselves in the place of the man he made a corpse before his own eyes,' they said. Who would bear such a thing? What propitiation or sacrifice would atone for such sacrilege? How would the victim set about putting himself right again with his fathers unless he could say to them: Rest, for the man that did it has paid with his head? Nothing short of that would have been adequate.' SL-OL
SL-OL
- Umuaro might have left the matter there, and perhaps the whole land dispute with it as Ekwensu seemed to have taken a hand in it. But one small thing worried them. It was small but at the same time it was very great. Why had Okperi not designed to send a message to Umuaro to say this was what happened and that was what happened? Everyone agreed that the man who killed Akukalia had been sorely provoked. It [SLG]
[SLG]

was also true that Akukalia was not only a son of Umuaro; he was also the son of a daughter of Okperi, and what had happened might be likened to he-goat's head dropping into he-goat's bag. (p. 25).

Ezeulu's fierce condemnation of the negligence of Umuaro elders and his further insistence that Ulu should not be expected to support their unjust cause and warfare is translated thus:

9. 'Umuaro Kwenu!'

'Hem!'

'Umuaro obodonesi kwenu!'

'Hem!'

'Kwezuenu!'

'Hem!'

"The reed we were blowing is now crushed. When I spoke two markets ago in this very place I used the proverb of the she-goat. I was then talking to Ogbuefi Egonwanne who was the adult in the house. I told him that he should have spoken up against what we were planning, instead of which he put a piece of live coal into the child's palm and ask him to carry it with care. We all have seen with what care he carried it. I was not then talking to Egonwanne alone but to all the elders here who left what they should have done and did another..... no matter how strong or great a man was he should never challenge his *chi*. This is what our kinsman did – he challenged his *chi*. We were his flute player, but we did not plead with him to come away from death. Where is he today? The fly that has no one to advise it follows the corpse into the grave. But let us leave Akukalia aside; he has gone the way his chi-ordained.

Umuaro is today challenging its *chi*. Is there any man or woman in Umuaro who does not know Ulu, the deity that destroys a man when his life is sweetest to him? Some people are still talking of carrying war to Okperi. Do they think that Ulu will fight in blame? Today the world is spoilt with it. If you go to war to avenge a man who passed shit on the head of his mother's father, Ulu will not follow you to be soiled in the corruption. Umuaro, I salute you.' (p.

26 & 27)

Nwaka Berates Ezeulu:

10 The man who carries a deity is not a king. He is there to perform his god's ritual and to carry sacrifice to him. But I have been watching this Ezeulu for many years. He is a man of ambition; he wants to be king, priest, diviner, all. His father, they said, was like that too. But Umuaro showed him that the Igbo people knew no kings. The time has come to tell his son as well.... If a man says yes his *chi* also says yes. And we have all heard how the people

SL_{OL}

[SLG]

SL_{OL}

of Aninta dealt with their deity when he fail them. Did they not carry him to the boundary between them and their neighbours and set fire on him? I salute you. (p 27 & 28).

Our underlined translations are specific examples in one form or the other, of overt and covert translations. The overtness at the lexico-semantic and syntactic levels of these context and situationally constrained expressions indicate the authenticity of the SL in the TL translation. *Alusi* in (I) is overtly cushioned not only within the immediate collocational context of carving a/an – but by the covert anaphoric reference to ‘carving the image of gods’, and also by the cataphoric reference to ‘face of a deity... of a mask’ and “carve all the gods” Similarly *ofo ikenga*, *Okposi* (2) *Eke day* (5) *Ekwensu* (8) *Obi* and *Ogene* (12) *Ani-mmo* (13). It is within the context of discourse that Achebe handles the problem of zero translation equivalence which enables the non-Igbo reader to tease out the meaning of *alusi* not just as an image, ‘a mask’ or ‘god’ in the general sense of ‘god’ but an igbo-specific concept which meaning combines the sense of the deixis. The same is applicable to *obi* (hut?) *ogene* (iron gong?) *ani-mmo* (grave/abode of the dead?). Other overt lexico-semantic translations tagged (SL_{OL}) are underlined in 4-10. They include Igbo maxims, proverbs, contradictions and absurdities; understand only within the socio-cultural and religious context.

Covert translation goes beyond the covert transposition of information about new cultural items. It involves transposition of the grammar of SL into the surface structure of TL: ‘Is Edogo not there? (1) is grammatically acceptable English but it is unEnglish if the addressee who is Edogo is present. In this SL cultural context, it is both grammatically and pragmatically acceptable as an expression of strong resentment from an elder who feels insulted by the continued silence of a child. Achebe’s translation then is aimed at communicating and creating a socio-cultural background as part of the story. ‘Is it time or not is what I want to know....(2) is

structurally unEnglish (see our SA). The apparent inverted SPC structure of intensive complementation similar to usages such as ‘John is a doctor/Mary is kind’ is not acceptable (thus Doctor is John/kind is Mary) the co-referential relationship holding between the subject and complement notwithstanding. The TL acceptable translation should be: ‘What I want to hear is ‘Is it true or not’. By using the SL structure (see also other underline labeled SLG in 1-8) Achebe differentiates Igbo speeches from English as he strives to keep the rhythm of the SL. ‘Other markets are drawing it dry (5) is structurally unEnglish and presents a peculiar p-element of the Igbo action-result verb, functioning as complement. These overt literal translation of Igbo grammatical structures are foregrounded enough to produce the rhythm of the SL even underneath the TL orthographic shape.

Some other striking covert lexico-semantic translations are underlined....and tagged SL_{CL} (see 2,3, and 6,) ‘Children put their fathers into the earth.... Children’ is a deliberate avoidance of using ‘bury’ as TL equivalent since the belief system is that ancestors actively participate in their religious and daily events. Even so should absurd translations such as ‘the man he made a corpse before his own eyes’ (8) derive their meaning from Akukalia’s sacrilegious action within that cultural context.

We should examine some translations of reported speeches in 11-14. Captain Winterbottom’s account of the Umuaro-Okperi conflict (11) is the only text outside our chapters of focus. The speech is selected as British English (EL₁) speech in contrast to the narrator’s Nigerian variety.

11. As I was saying, this war started because a man from Umuaro went to visit a friend in Okperi one fine morning and after he’d had one or two gallons of palm wine – it’s quite incredible how much of that dreadful stuff they can tuck away – anyhow, this man from Umuaro having drunk his friend’s palm wine reached for his *Ikenga* and split it in two. I may explain that *Ikenga* is the most important fetish in the Ibo man’s arsenal, so to speak. It

represents his ancestors to who he must make daily sacrifice. When he dies it is split in two; one half is buried with him and the other half is thrown away. So you can see the implication of what our friend from Umuaro did in splitting his host's fetish. This was, of course, the greatest sacrilege. The outraged host reached for his gun and blew the other fellow's head off. And so a regular war developed between the two villages, until I stepped in. I went into the question of the ownership of the piece of land which was the remote cause of all the unrest and found without any shade of doubt that it belonged to Okperi. I should mention that every witness who testified before me – from both sides without exception – perjured themselves.

(p. 37 & 38)

As a native speaker of English, Winterbottom's report provides further intelligibility (for TL readers) which may have been lost in a bid to keep translation close enough to SL meaning. But intelligibility for TL readers is achieved only in part since some SL content and meaning is also lost when compared with earlier texts (p. 1-28). The texts below, (12-14) shows the coordinate bilingual's attempt at separating the two grammars (and the lexis too) of SL and TL in translation. The underlined usages include deliberate choices of deviation from TL aimed at creating realism.

The use of free indirect speech in 12; using third person reportage along with first person direct speech, is a free translation in which Achebe strives to communicate the direct feeling and experience of the Ulu priest, and in so doing, retain the meaning import:

12. There was the usual, long threshold in front but also a shorter one on the right as you entered..... The moon he saw that day was as thin as an orphan feel grudgingly by a cruel foster – mother. He peered more closely to make sure he was not deceived by a feather of cloud. At the same time he reached nervously for his Ogene. It was the same at every new moon. He was now as an old man but the fear of the new moon which he felt as a little boy still hovered round him. It was true that when he became Chief priest of Ulu the fear was often overpowered by the joy of his high office; but it was not killed. It lay on the ground in the grip of the joy. He beat his ogene GOME, GOME, GOME, GOME... and immediately children's voices took up the news on all sides. *Onwa*

atuo!... He put the stick back into the iron gong and leaned it on the wall...

'Moon,' said the senior wife, Matefi, 'may your face meeting mine bring good fortune.' (p. 1 & 2)

13. Ezeulu often said that the dead fathers of Umuaro looking at the world from *Ani-Mmo* must be utterly bewildered by the ways of the new age. At no other time but now could Umuaro have taken war to Okperi in the circumstances in which they did. Who would have imagined that Umuaro would go to war so sore divided? Who would have thought that they would disregard the warning of the priest of Ulu who originally brought the same villages together and made them what they were? But Umuaro had grown wise and strong in its own conceit and had become like the little bird, nza, who ate and drank and challenged his personal god to single combat. Umuaro challenged the deity which laid the foundation of their villages. (p. 14)
14. Speaker after speaker rose and spoke to the assembly until it was clear that all the six villages stood behind Nwaka. Ezeulu was not the only man of Umuaro whose mother had come from Okperi. But none of the others dared go to his support. In fact one of them, Akukalia, whose language never wandered far from 'kill and despoil', was so fiery that he was chosen to carry the white clay and the new palm frond to his motherland, Okperi. (p. 17)

The native speaker's control and proficiency of Winterbottom contrasts with the narrator's variety of English. If this narrator is not the novelist, he still stands in for the novelist as an EL_z speaker – a bilingual in English and Igbo.

Translated Corpus in Soyinka's Poetry

The creative translation of his L₁ poetry into his L₂ medium is handled essentially in a covert manner and less of overt. Among the many poetry rhetorics is Ese Ifa; Yoruba oracle or divination poetry. It is the only form that is not interpolated within the content of the others, being occasioned by the quest for destiny by a suppliant. The Ifa priest presents the suppliant

with an archetypal situation in a poetic form in the ese ifa rows of verse. It is these verses which are recited to the suppliant.

Ese Ife has a distinct structure consisting of 256 odu (branches). Each odu is made up in terms of unspecified number of poems known as Ese. Rhythm and metre is strikingly different from English poetry since emphasis is placed rather on tonal configuration. It is the most rigid form. As the suppliant identifies with the protagonist of his ese, he carries out whatever the priest advises (Olatunji 1970). The structural units of Ese Ifa, its characteristic symbolism of the number 2 involving dualism and its symbolic wordplay, are hardly translatable. But Soyinka's covert translation is visible and deducible from the themes and style of his poetry. He therefore adopts an essentially stylistic translation.

The man is part of the socio-cultural and other situational factors which constrain his choice of language. Soyinka's culture has been described³ as one with 'a wealth of artistically inspiring traditions' Yoruba traditional religion and cosmology is a major aspect of this culture. Ogun (among the uncountable divinities of their pantheon) is Soyinka's fascination; being the creative and destructive essence – an enigmatic symbol, the central link between Soyinka the man, his art, and his language. The duality of man's personality manifesting in his simultaneous capacity for creation and destruction is then his central focus, regardless of the medium or vehicle of conveying the thought.

Soyinka covertly translates the theme and style of this divination poetry into IDANRE (Osakwe 1992). The existential quest theme, segmentation into units and copious use of quines point to a translated corpus. Examples 15-17 are located at page 67:

15	Opalescent Pythons oozed tar coils (SPC) Hung from rafters thrashing loops of gelatin The world was choked in wet embrace Of serpent spawn, waiting Ajantala's rebel birth	[A(Sd (PAC ((HQ (PC (PC (cre)))))) (SPA) (A' FWG (P(cre(NWG(HQSL, QSL(PC)))))))]
----	---	--

Monster child, wrestling pachyderms of myth
(p. 67)

[Q(NWG (MH, Q(PWG(ecve))))]

16 *And at the haven of a distant square
Of light, hope's sliver from vile entombment
She waited, caryatid at the door of sanctuary
Her hands were groves of peace, Oya's forehead
Dipped to pools and still hypnotic springs. (p. 67)*

17 *and now she is a dark sheath freed
From Ogun's sword, her head of tapered plaits
A casque of iron filigree, a strength
Among sweet reeds and lemon bushes, palm
And fragrances of rain. (p. 67)*

The mythical events which make Idanre hills, the hub of activities are covertly translated and described in 15 with universal appeal. The syntactic structure as shown (see our structural analysis) and most lexico-semantic choices are standard British English with very little overt indication of a diatopic variety. The complexity of 'our analysed structure is a reflection of the complexity and depth of mythic thought which generates very absurd collocations. The italicization of 16, 17 (see also 19 and 20 below), is an overt graphic and graphological representation of corpus aimed at foregrounding the use of SL by supra-humans in the supernatural at Idanre. Soyinka's cline of bilingualism makes it possible for him to tread delicately, yet confidently within the universal buffer zone of both SL and TL to translate freely as he manipulates the two grammars and lexis in 16, 20.

The description of the mythic existential quest then and the central role of Ogun's sword' vis-à-vis other deities are handled with intellectual sophistication as he uses Ifa symbols. (see the covert reference to Oya being the god of wine "... pools... hypnotic springs" (underlined 16).

18 *Set flanges to a god, control had slipped
Immortal grasp. On the hills of idanre memories
Grieved him, my Hunter god, Vital
Flint of matter, total essence split again
On recurrent boulders.*

19 *This road have I trodden in a time beyond
Memory of fallen leaves, beyond
Thread of fossil on the slate, yet I must
This way again, let all wait the circulation*

Of time's acrobat, who pray.

20 *For dissolution: the chronicle abides in clay texts
And fossil textures. I followed fearful, archives
Of deities heaved from primal burdens; Ogun
Sought the season's absolution, on the rocks of genesis
Night weighed huge about me.*

18, 19 and 20 are still translations of the exploits of his poetic muse. Oriki (Yoruba praise poetry) is interpolated into the Ese Ifa in 18. But apart from 'Idanre' and 'hunter god' there are no overt SL usages. 'Rock of genesis' anaphorically refers to Idanre Hills, and cataphorically refers to the segment of IDANRE numbered 'IV' and titled, 'the beginning'.

In the fourth segment subtitled 'the beginning' this poet graphically in stanzaic form (quinates and couplets) highlights the significance of 5 and 2 in Ese Ifa:

- 21a *Low beneath rockshields, home of the Iron One
The sun had built a fire within
Earth's heartstone. Flames in fever fits
Ran in rock fissures, and hill surfaces
Were all aglow with earth's transparency*
- 21b *Orisa-nla, orunmila, Esu, Ifa were all assembled
Defeated in the quest to fraternize with man*
- 22a *Wordlessly he rose, sought knowledge in the hills
Ogun the lone one saw it all, the secret
Veins of matter, and the circling lodes
Sango's spent thunderbolt served him a
hammer-head
His fingers touched earth-core, and it yielded*
- 22b *To think, a mere plague of finite chaos
Stood between the gods and man (p. 70)*

The poet's Ifa oracular creation myth translated in 21a – 22b depicts a very compact overt and covert method of creating and recreating the Yoruba (Orisa-nla, Orunmila, Sango Esu, Ifa) cosmology and mythology with universal import.

It is therefore understandable that these texts are obscure and esoteric, being traceable to SL cultic language and mythic meaning. His fiercest critics (Chinweizu 1980) refer to his idiolect as ‘idiosyncratic linguistic misdemeanor’, and even in his adulation⁴, Gyllesten accepted that the imagery of the poems are compact and rather hard to penetrate.

Soyinka can choose to be penetrable depending on the field and tenor of discourse, even when the mode of discourse hardly permits. This was the case with his attempt at substituting SL text with TL text in OA. His attempt is of special interest as the poet sought to speak to Africans in an African language, but being constrained by the linguistically heterogenous societies, he adopts a borrowed tongue. In this short volume, the poet extols the Black World. His adopted L₂ medium exhibits obvious signals of an expressive compromise in a number of ways: The title is a blend combining Ogun, the Yoruba god of war and creativity with Abibiman the Akan reference to ‘land of the black peoples’, to mean Ogun of the black peoples. There is ample use of untranslated Yoruba lexical items, but more striking is the manner the poet copes with translation problems via stylistic translation of Yoruba stylistic categories: ofo, owe, oriki, and Alo Apamo. They are translated to give this poem of English expression, a striking rhythm of the African SL. The details of this was handled elsewhere (Osakwe 1999). Having discussed the diatypic constraints of Ese Ifa rhetoric’s in 15 – 22 above, we should briefly examine an example of ofo; Yoruba in incantatory poetry.

- Sigidi!
Sigidi Baba! Bayete!

23 *Our histories meet, the forests merge
With the savannah. Let rockhill drink with lion
At my waterholes. Oh brother spirit,
Did my dying words raise echoes in your hills
When kinsmen matched broad blades
With Shaka’s shoulders?.... (p. 11)*

Bayete Baba! Bayete!

24 *Reclaim my seeds. Restore my manhood.
 Their cries are trumpeted in the dead abode,
 Image swarms of that first incompleteness,
 Lives usurped, Shaka's pride of nation
 Robbed of being. O Silent one, my tap-roots
 Wait your filling draught to swell
 To buttresses. Restore my seeds. Reclaim
 The manhood of a founder-king (p. 13)*

25. *Rógbódiyàn! Rógbódiyàn!
 Ogún ré lé e Shaka
 Rógbódiyàn
 Ogún gbo wô ọ Shàkà
 O di rógbódiyàn*

The ancestral essence (Sigidi Baba...) called forth in the SL is the typifying ofo structure. The basis of ofo (or oro) meaning 'word' is in its homopathic and contagious magic which works by sympathies through an impersonal dynamic force present in all things: objects, plants, human, or supra-human. The belief is that an object, (including flora and fauna) such as 'forests' 'savannah' rockhills 'lion' 'waterhole' 'brother spirit' 'dying words' hills' 'broad blades' 'Shaka's shoulders' (23) can transmit some aspects of its nature to other bodies, in this case, the magic of these names evoked by the enchanter is a summon to their vital force for power control for Africans against racism.

The truth assertion in lines 2-5 of 24 is in conformity with ofo structure; being mythologically defined. The parallel imperative structures of their preceding first line ("reclaim my seed") and the succeeding lines are incantatory repetitions which produce SL incantatory rhetorics. Indeed the assertion in 25 rendered in Yoruba with the tone marks is an instance of the poet's outburst in the language and lyrical form of his SL native culture – a deliberate choice not to translate; just like Achebe did in the initial Igbo protocol greetings in 4, and 9 above. For how does he translate the tonal configuration? He chose to provide a glossary⁵ in order to retain the original songs with their rhythm and to echo the African drums. All of these combine to compensate for the poet's non-use of the African SL which is the most appropriate medium for this special discourse on the black peoples. This is a rather heuristic device, not based on translation equivalence but on synonymy; meaning relationship that is highly context sensitive (including cultural context).

Summary and Conclusion

We have just undertaken a methodical exploration of the use of corpora in translation studies. Corpus from translated texts of coordinate bilingual creative writers in English and two Nigerian languages: Igbo (Achebe) and Yoruba (Soyinka) were examined using SFG model and a binary translation typology.

The outcome reveals that these idiolectal, diatopic and diatypic linguistic categories exhibit syntactic and lexico-semantic features of living speeches or real-world texts. Our analyses raise further questions on the degree of authenticity in meaning retention or loss which may have occurred and still occurs in other interlanguage translations of these texts. There is therefore a need for further research into corpus data of such translations and into literary translation study as well.

Notes

1. Language Acquisition Device
2. The African Writer and the English Language' *Morning Yet on Creation Day*: Heinemann 1975: p. 62.
3. That was the description of the Chairman of the Nobel Committee for Literature; Professor Las Gyllensten at the Nobel prize award ceremony.
4. Adulation still at the same Nobel prize award ceremony.
5. Soyinka's glossary at the end of OA translates the song:

*Turmoil on turmoil!
Ogun treads the earth of Shaka
Turmoil on the loose!
Ogun shakes the hand of Shaka
All is in turmoil (p. 24)*

References

Primary Sources

Achebe C. (1974) *ARROW OF GOD* London/Ibadan/Nairobi:Heinemann

Soyinka W. (1967) *IDANRE AND OTHER POEMS* London: Eyre Methuen
_____ (1976) *OGUN ABIBIMAH* London: Colings.

Other Sources

- Bell, R.T. 1991 *Translation and Translating: Theory and Practice* London/New York: Longman
- Catford, J.C. (1964) *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics* Oxford, Oxford University Press
- Chinweizu O. and Madubuike I. (1980) *Towards the Decolonization of African Literature* Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers.
- Chomsky N. (1957) *Syntactic Structures* The Hague: Mouton
_____ (1965) *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* Mass: M.I.T. Press
_____ (1971) 'Deep Structure, Surface Structure and Semantic Interpretation' in Steinberg, D. and Jakobovits (eds) *Semantics* Cambridge University Press.
_____ (1981) *Lectures on Government and Binding*: Bordiecht, Forfons
- Halliday M.A.K. (1961) 'Categories of the Theory of Grammar' *WORD* Vol. 17, No. 3
_____ (1967) 'Notes in transitority and Theme in English' *Journal of Linguistics* Vol. 3, Nos 1 & 2.
_____ (1970) 'Language Structure and Language function' *New Horizons in Linguistics* Lyons J. (ed) Pelican Books
_____ (1979) *Language as Social Semiotics: The social Interpretation of Language and meaning*. London: Edward Arnold
- Fawcett (1997) *Translation and Language: Linguistic Theories Explained*, Manchester St. Jerome London: Edward Arnold.
- Halliday M.A.K. and Hasan R. (1976) *Cohesion in English* London: Longman
- Halliday M.A.K. and Matheïessen C. (2004) *An Introduction to functional Grammar* Third Edition, London: Arnold.
- Hatim, B. (2001) *Teaching and Researching Translation* Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd.

- Hornby, M. (1988) *Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach* Amsterdam/Philadelphia: Benjaming
- House J. (1977) *Translation Quality Assessment: A Model Revisited* Tübingen: Gunter Narr.
- _____ (2001) Translation Quality Assessment: Linguistic Description versus Social Evaluation” *MÉta* 46 (2)
- _____ (2006) “Text and Context in Translation” *Journal of Pragmatics* 38
- Ivir V. (1987) “Procedures and Strategies for the translation of Culture” *Indian Journal of Applied Linguistics* ‘G: Toury (ed) 13 (2).
- Katz J. (1972) *Semantic Theory* New York: Harper and Row
- Lakoff G. (1970) *Irregularities in Syntax* New York: Hill, Rinehart and Winston Lenniberg.
- Lenneberge E.H. (1967) *The Biological Foundations of Language*. New York: Wiley
- Manfredi, M. (2008) ‘Functional Grammar Studies for Non-Native Speakers of English’ Series (ed) Miller D.
- Newmeyer, F. (1986) ‘Has there been a “Chomskyan Revolution?” in Linguistics:” *language* Vol. 62, No. 1.
- Olatunji, O. (1970) *Characteristic Features of Yoruba Oral Poetry*. Ph.D Thesis, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.
- Osakwe M. (1992) *The Language of Wole Soyinka’s Poetry: Diatype of English*. Ph.D Thesis, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.
- _____ (1999) ‘OGUN ABIBIMAN: A creative Translation of Yoruba Verse *MÉta* Vol. 43 No. 3.
- Shuttleworth M. *Dictionary of Translation Studies* Cowie M. (1997) Manchester: St. Jerome.