"We're On Our Ears": A Linguistic Analysis of Translation in an African Novel

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Abstract

What are the quintessential linguistic features of translations in African writing? This is the question we attempt to answer in this paper. We undertake this task because there are evidences that African writing contains lots of translations and these bilingual/hybrid texts are very often discussed from a more political/ideological/birds-eye perspective. Since translation is a linguistic phenomenon, it is necessary that they are analyzed using linguistic approaches. We analyzed the translation of proverbs from the source language (Ewe) into the target language (English) in Mawuli Adzei's novel *Taboo*. We used the Vinay and Darbelnet's Model in translation theory for the study. Our findings show some linguistic features and the stylistic processes of translations evident in this novel.

Key Words: proverb, prosodic effect, stylistic process, taboo, translation.

1. Introduction

Language is the main tool for constructing every work of literature. It is necessary then, to demonstrate how writers use this instrument to negotiate meaning(s). In Africa, the debate about the language to use in literature has remained unresolved. It is widely acceptable that oral literature has influenced creative writing in European languages in Africa (Obiechina, 1975; Chinweizu et al, 1980; Gérard, 1986; Bandia, 1993 qtd. in Yeibo, 2011). These oral literatures are in non-European languages and since some writers chose to use the colonialists' languages, the probability that they might translate part of the oral literature of their various cultures into their creative work is high.

We classify Mawuli Adzei's *Taboo* as a bilingual and bicultural text. The author manipulates and adapts certain linguistic and cultural nuances of his native Ewe language into the novel. Prominent among these is the use of proverbs. In order to make these proverbs fit into the English language, which is the main language for his work, he adopts translation; as many other African writers do. This might be Adzei's own response to the language problem, which Anyidoho (1992:47) put into four "broadly defined tendencies":

(1) an acceptance of the languages of enslavement and colonization as the only practical, albeit inadequate, tool of self-expression; (2) an Africanization of the colonizer's language and the attempt to transform it into a weapon of cultural liberation; (3) a repudiation of the imposed language of enslavement/colonization and a return to mother tongue; (4) a reinvention of the "*mother tongue*" as *nation language* in the African diaspora.

Chinua Achebe and Leopold Sedar Senghor favored opinion (1) insisting that the colonial languages were not impositions. Achebe (1990:168) explains:

It is simply not true that the English forced us to learn their language... We chose English not because the British desired it but because, having tacitly accepted the new nationalities into which colonialism had grouped us; we needed its language to transact our business, including the business of overthrowing colonialism itself in the fullness of time.

This may give rise to a disadvantageous situation which Chinweizu calls the Nobel Prize Syndicate. He warns against the role of the Nobel Prize "as a bewitching instrument for Euro-imperialist intellectual hegemony" (Chinweizu, 1987:175). A group of African writers support opinion (2) advocating for the nativisation of the European languages. This calls for translation; both pure and applied, since the African and European languages and cultures must co-exist in their works simultaneously. Prominent proponents of this opinion are Ali Mazrui, Kofi Awoonor and Gabriel Okara. A third group openly supports opinion (3) and also seems to advocate for opinion (4); the use of African indigenous languages. Obi Wali, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Immeh Ikiddeh are the prominent advocates (Ushie, 2001.) A notably significant support for this stand is made by the Caribbean poet

Marlene Nourbese Philip in her poem "Discourse on the Logic of Language" in *She Tries Her Tongue: Her Silence Softly Breaks*, which won the Casa de las Americas prize in 1988:

WHEN IT WAS BORN, THE MOTHER HELD HER NEWBORN
CHILD CLOSE: SHE BEGAN THEN TO LICK IT ALL OVER...
UNTIL SHE HAD TONGUED IT CLEAN... /THE MOTHER
THEN PUT HER FINGERS INTO HER CHILD'S MOUTH GENTLY
FORCING IT OPEN; SHE TOUCHES HER TONGUE TO THE
CHILD'S TONGUE, AND HOLDING THE TINY MOUTH OPEN,
SHE BLOWS INTO IT- HARD. SHE WAS BLOWING WORDS,
HER MOTHER'S WORDS, THOSE OF HER MOTHER'S MOTHER,
AND ALL THE MOTHERS BEFORE-INTO HER DAUGHTER'S MOUTH. (56-58)

This is very significant because of the importance the mother attaches to transmitting her language to her daughter; where the mother symbolizes African ancestors or the continent itself and her daughter symbolizes Africa's citizens. The poet placed premium on this by capitalizing every word; action, emotion, metaphor among others. Anyidoho (1990:52) comments, on the language in Pan-African literature that African writers had,

…for a while… settled in favor of European languages. But writing in African languages never ceased... Major writers such as D. O. Fagunwa and Shabaan Robert wrote almost entirely in Yoruba and Kiswahili respectively. Others, such as Okot p'Bitek and Mazisi Kunene, insisted on writing first in their own languages and then translating their works into English. Nevertheless, the majority of Africa's best-known writers continued to express themselves primarily in European languages until Ngugi wa Thiong'o's dramatic decision to write in his mother tongue.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, a contemporary Nigerian writer of international repute, also joined the debate; supporting the Achebe stand saying that "English is mine" (Azodo, 2008:2.) Very recently, on July 22, 2013, Ngugi wa Thiong'o was interviewed on the British Broadcasting Corporation's television programme, *Hard Talk*. He also gave a keynote address on the third day of the International Conference on African Studies as part of the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana on October 26, 2013. He still stands for his opinion saying "English is not an African language. … Those advocating for English and any other non-African language are living in a metaphysical empire. … Can you or anybody else imagine French literature in Zulu? … Can you think of English literature in Chinese?" The irony here is that such strong emotion is rendered in English to reach a wider audience.

In the present study, we attempt to find the linguistic features of translations in African writing. The current study is relevant in order to reveal some linguistic details that will in turn inform our understanding of the sociolinguistic context of African writing. We propound that Mawuli Adzei belongs to the group of writers who implicitly advocate for the Africanization of European languages by African creative writers, through the incorporation of African sociolinguistic and sociocultural nuances into their works, mainly through translations. In other words, he advocates for opinion (2).

Mawuli Adjei, PhD (who writes under the pen-name Mawuli Adzei) is a British Chevening Fellow who has taught English in Nigeria, Libya and Ghana. Currently, he is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of English, University of Ghana, where he teaches African Literature, Postcolonial Literature, Popular Literature, Practice in Criticism, Creative Writing, and other courses. His collection of poetry, *Testament of the Seasons* (2013), received the VALCO Fund Literary Award for Meritorious Writing (Unpublished Poetry Category) in 1996. His novels are *Taboo* (2012) and *The Jewel of Kabibi* (2011) (Agbozo, 2014).

The paper is organized thus; first, we give a background to the language of African writing and a brief introduction of the writer of the novel we analyze in this study then we sketch a vignette of the scanty scholarship available to establish a context for ours. This is followed by the theoretical framework and the methodology adopted by this study. Findings and discussions followed and we conclude with a summary which calls for further studies into the phenomenon we investigate in this paper.

2. Review of Previous Scholarship

Given the multilingualism and the power struggle between European and African languages on the continent, some scholars including the 1986 Nobel Literature Laureate Wole Soyinka advocated for the adoption of a singular African language as a continental language. Wesley (1992) observed that the push for the continental adoption of Swahili is a "romantic fancy" as even the three members of the East African Literature Bureau could

not hold themselves together for more than a few years to publish Swahili literature. It is therefore not feasible that other Africans could learn and have a mastery of Swahili within the shortest possible time.

In this kind of linguistic dilemma, translation becomes an available asset in African writing as it helps transfer social and cultural nuances onto the foreign languages used for creative writing. However, Maria Tymoczko (1998) put forward an argument that "unlike translators post-colonial writers are not transposing a text", but rather "as background to their literary works, they are transposing a culture" (p. 20). Using Okara's novel *The Voice* as a point of departure, Paul Bandia (2006) counter-argued that while this is generally true of many African writers, it is also true that many others are translating not only cultures but also languages.

In his study of the writing styles on the continent of Africa, Gyasi (1999) sees creative writing as translation. He opines that the African writer no longer considers the European language as the only means of creative output. This results from the realization that writing in European languages is "a further canonization of European-language literature". Contemporary African writers therefore invent new means of sustaining a discourse that can be called African. The new ways of writing reveals the stakes, conflicts, tensions, and the power negotiation between the European and African languages. Africanization is done through translating African languages and models into the European language. Through this the African writers question the historical hegemony of the European language and establish their languages as equally viable means of narration and expression.

Though it has come to be accepted that African writers translate, to a large extent, there is a dearth of research, situated in translation theory, to find a basis for the assessment of such translations in order to reveal their linguistic features that will in turn advance our understanding of the sociolinguistics of African writing. This study of the micro-level linguistic/stylistic processes in the partial translations of proverbs in *Taboo* is therefore a major contribution to the sociolinguistics of African writing.

2.1 *Taboo* as a Bilingual/Hybrid Text

Taboo is a novel set between 1999 and 2000, at the peak of Ghana's election and the various mystical maneuverings that draped the period (Agbozo, 2014). It "…is an artful tale, woven around the events of the ritual murders and removal of some body parts of 35 women…" (Boateng, 2013). Nana Fredua Agyeman, an award-winning Ghanaian literary blogger and poet characterizes the novel as "belong(ing) to (the) loose group", elegantly and bravely standing between "literary fiction (and) pulp fiction" (Agyeman, 2013). It "…takes liberty in fully exploring the hypocrisy of the modern-day charismatic Christian in particular, and Christians in general; the anathema of a Catholic priest, who discovers the pleasures of sex, and indulges in it despite his vow to be celibate" (Boateng, 2013). The setting and issues in this novel are very familiar to Ghanaians, not only because the issues are real in their space, but also because of the language used. The language is carved to directly communicate the very essence of cultural nuances and aesthetics that the Ghanaian is familiar with. Any Ghanaian who lived in a village and those who lived in the cities during the late 1980s and early 1990s will not fail to recognize the description of a typical bedroom:

A large hurricane lamp placed on top of a dwarf table lit the room generously. In one corner was a sideboard on top of which was an assortment of items arranged to impress. There was a large thermos-flask, a white plastic tray with six large beer jugs covered with a transparent white linen and a glass bowl full of cutlery; there was also a medium-sized radio cassette player and a stack of cassettes. Inside the sideboard were neat rows of Lux, Imperial Leather, Sunlight and Fa toilet soap, four tins of Exeter corned beef, about six tins of canned Geisha mackerel and a box of cube sugar among other items. They were for showmanship only; not for use. [102]

We have classified *Taboo* as a bilingual text. It is essential, therefore, to give some explanation to "bilingualism" in African literature. The Collins Cobuild Advanced Dictionary (2009) defines bilingualism as "the ability to speak two languages equally well." However, researches show that bilinguals rarely develop equal competence in both languages (Shin, 2004) and a bilingual person does not represent two monolinguals in one (Bialystok, 2001; Shin, 2004). "Bilinguals therefore acquire different levels of language competence in their two languages" (Asbjørnsen, 2013). The main point of note is that, there has to be two different languages with distinct features, in use.

Alo (1998) identifies the following devices used by African writers as a reflection of indigenous nuances in their works:

- Coinages, borrowing, etc.

- The use of native similes and metaphors

- The transfer of rhetorical devices from native languages

- The translation of native proverbs, idioms, etc.

- The use of culturally dependent speech styles

- The use of syntactic devices and deviation

- Code-switching and code-mixing

- Transliteration

In *Taboo*, Adzei employs most of the above devices in varied degrees and levels of intensity. The following are some of the devices found in *Taboo:*

i. Borrowing:

Language	Examples	English meaning
Ewe	Logo	'a tall tree of the silk-cotton family'
	Avia	'tall slender medicinal plant found in most Ewe communities and homes'
	Bokor	'diviner'
	Tsilefeba	'bathwater puddle'
	Yewe	'traditional religious cult'
Ga	Kenkey	'staple cornmeal wrapped in corn husk'
Hausa	Waakye	'rice and beans cooked together'
Gen	Asevi	'cat'

Figure 1: Borrowing in *Taboo*

ii. Code-switching and code-mixing:
- ""*Tsaklikpe! Kumasa, tsaklikpe!*" Dzotor Manyo incanted and moved forward." (23)
- "*Ekpo*! What is the hitch, *afa*? Is it a deity or a man?" (26)
- "If a person sneezed, they immediately shouted, *Tugla nexom de agbe* - Tugla should sustain my life."(39)

In these examples, Ewe words, phrases and sentences are mixed with English ones. The Ewe contents are not translated, except in the third example. In the second example, we see code-switching with the pattern Ewe-English-Ewe-English.

iii. The transfer of rhetorical devices from native languages:

"Finally, Dzotor Manyo…addressed the bees:
Zokadza Yewe, edo ho menyatamtam o
Kpavia medoa yo kple vi o
Miavie nye Hunua Somadza

Swarm of bees, harbinger of the Yewe thunder god
That cannot be tapped
The one who traps a child at the back
Does not kill the child
Chief Priest Somadza was your ardent devotee…" [25-26]

This rhetorical device is called appellation. What distinguishes appellation from ordinary praise is its dual role as praise and supplication. Its diction is also metaphoric as it uses imagery to refer to linguistic units of comprehension. Appellation is not meant for the ordinary person to understand. It is for the elderly and those initiated into religious cults like the Yewe and Afa/Ifa. The first part of this appellation which translates as "Swarm of bees, harbinger of the Yewe thunder god/That cannot be tapped" is praise to the bees, which are regarded as messengers of the Yewe thunder god, in Ewe/African traditional religion. The rest of the utterance is a supplication. In the novel, the scene being described was one where there was a struggle over the dead body of a traditional priest and the bees came to punish those opposed to traditional burial rites by stinging them, to register the anger of the gods towards their resolve. ''The bees were appeased'' [26] and they left immediately after this utterance by the incumbent priest.

The use of these devices makes the novel a bilingual/hybrid text.

3. Theoretical Framework

The present study draws on the Vinay and Darbelnet's Model (1958/1995) in translation theory. They proposed two strategies and seven procedures used in translation. The two broad translation strategies they proposed are direct and oblique translations. This study found evidence of both translation strategies. We found evidence of four of the seven proposed stylistic procedures. They are transposition, modulation, equivalence and calque. Transposition is "chang(ing) of one part of speech for another without changing the sense" (Munday, 2012: 87). Modulation "changes the semantics and point of view of the source language" (Munday, 2012: 88). Equivalence refers to instances in which "languages describe the same situation by different stylistic or structural means" (Munday 2012; 89.) Calque is the only Direct Translation procedure identified in the sample text. Calque is a "special kind of borrowing" (Vinay and Darbelnet, 1995: 32-3; 2004: 129-30) "where the SL (Source Language) expression or structure is transferred in a literal translation" (Munday, 2012: 87). We also found evidence of the following prosodic effects: amplification, explicitation and generalization. Amplification occurs where the translated text "uses more words than the source text to express the same idea" (Pym, 2010: 14). It is used "often because of syntactic expansion" (Munday, 2012: 89). Explicitation is the "procedure whereby the translation gives specifications that are only implicit in the source text" (Pym, 2010: 14). We employed it to clarify the varied layers of metaphors and aesthetics of proverbs; the source items we are focusing on for this study. Generalization is the translation of a specific term as a general term (Pym, 2010: 14). The theory helped in identifying and labeling shifts, which could be results of the author/translator's stylistic choices but also merely of differences between languages, in cases of obligatory shifts.

4. Data Collection and Analysis Methods

Data was collected through a critical reading of the novel and sampling of identified proverbs in the text. We provided the Ewe language correspondences of the proverbs and their English glosses. The data was then subjected to Ewe native speakers' judgment to judge the likeness of meaning and imagery between the English version and the Ewe correspondence. We must emphasize that two of the researchers are native speakers. However, twenty other native speakers were consulted to judge the data. They were drawn from ten Ewe towns and villages: Mafi-Kumikpo, Mafi-Kumase, Sogakofe, Ho, Have, Hohoe, Kpando, Anlo-Afiadenyigba, Agbozume-Klikor and Keta. The participants were selected at random from northern, central and southern Ewe land. This was done to get a fair judgment as these geographical locations depict diverse dialectal variations of the Ewe language.

The data is analyzed using qualitative method of data analysis. It is used to analyse the styles used and the linguistic features that are evident as results.

5. Findings and Discussions

This section discusses the translation of proverbs found in *Taboo* using the Vinay and Darbelnet's Model of translation. As stated earlier, the study aims at revealing some linguistic details in this translation that will in turn inform the understanding of the sociolinguistic context of African writing. Our choice of the Vinay and Darbelnet's Model is informed by the fact that this model has succinctly stipulated the characteristics of translations based on the linguistic features they display. This is therefore in tandem with the aim of the present study as it helps to attempt a detailed taxonomy of the linguistic features evident in partial translations in the African novel.

We identified about twenty-two translated proverbs. Six of those are selected as samples for this discussion. The selected translations embody evidences of translation making them relevant to this study. The following are the six selected translations with the English glosses of their correspondences in the Ewe language:

a. **English:** A traveller who asks for direction to his destination does not lose his way. [13]

Ewe Correspondent: Mɔta-bia-la   me-bu-na   o.

English Gloss: [path-search-NOM   NEG-lost-ASP NEG]

                              (A path-searcher does not get lost.)

b. **English:** A dog does not chase after a fowl that picks its bone; it knows the fowl does not eat bone and will eventually drop it. [17]

Ewe Correspondent: Koklo me- tsɔ- a   ƒu   avu   do- a   dziku o.

English Gloss: [fowl NEG-pick-ASP bone   dog   plant-ASP anger NEG]

                              (A fowl does not pick a bone and the dog gets angry.)

c. **English:** [W]hen a club strikes the forehead, the victim does not enquire of blood.[26]

Ewe Correspondent: Kpo me- dze- a   ŋgo- nu   wo- bia-na ʋu   ta o.

English Gloss: [club NEG-strike-ASP forehead-mouth they-ask-ASP blood of NEG]

                              (Club does not strike the forehead and they ask of blood.)

d. **English:** Two pots, our elders say, do not spoil liquor. If one does, the other will not. [34]

Ewe Correspondent: Ze   eve me- gblẽ- a   aha   o.

English Gloss: [pot two NEG-spoil-ASP liquor NEG]

                              (Two pots do not spoil liquor.)

e. **English:** No one drinks medicine on behalf of a sick person. [141]

Ewe Correspondent: Wo- me- nu- a   atike   ɖe   dɔnɔ nu o.

English Gloss: [they-NEG-drink-ASP medicine behalf patient of NEG]

                              (They do not drink medicine on behalf of a patient.)

f. **English:** We're on our ears; as our elders say, good news is nourishment for the ear. [42]

Ewe Correspondent: Mie-le to dzi; nya nyui- a   to ƒe   dzenkple   ye.

English Gloss: [we-are ear on; news good-DET ear POSS   "palm oil mush"   FOC]

                              (We are on our ears; the good news is ear's "palm oil mush".)

5.1 Stylistic Procedures

Here we discuss the stylistic procedures identified in the selected examples.

5.1.2   Transposition

Transposition is the "chang(ing) of one part of speech for another without changing the sense" (Munday, 2012: 87). We identified evidences of transposition in the selected examples. The postpositions in the source language become prepositions in the target language. Some examples include "ear on" becomes "on…ear", "patient of" becomes "of "sick person"" and "blood of" becomes "of blood". This is because the source language does not have prepositions and the target language does not have postpositions. Again, we identified transposition of adjectives. For example "pot two" becomes "two pots" and "news good" becomes "good news". Another observation in the "pot two" versus "two pots" example is pluralisation. In the source text, the plural is marked by the numeral "two" but in the target text the plural is marked by both the numeral "two" and the suffix "-s". This is a grammatical shift. It is an example of obligatory transposition which comes about precisely because of linguistic differences between the languages involved. Other transpositions are non-obligatory. These are cases where one could have translated the item in question without the transposition, but has for one reason or another chosen a different grammatical equivalent in the target language. In (f), "the good news" becomes "good news" and "ear's" becomes "of the ear" in the translated text. The other parts seem to be maintained in the translated text as they appear in the source text. This may be possible because both the source and target languages have the same sentence structure in the order of Subject-Verb-Object.

5.1.3   Modulation

Modulation causes semantic changes of the source language (Munday, 2012: 88). We identified some evidences of modulation in the selected text. Proverb (d) "Ze eve megblẽa aha o" which literally corresponds to "Two pots … do not spoil liquor" is expanded in the translated form by the addition of a reason "If one does, the other will not." This gives an explanation to the main proverb. This explanation, in the source language, is embedded in the proverb but made clear in the target language. This causes a semantic expansion. Another instance of modulation is in proverb (a). The source text has two parts: the subject "Mɔtabiala" [path-searcher] and the predicate "mebuna o" [does not get lost]. The subject in the source text is rendered as, "A traveller who asks for direction to his destination", in the target language. This rendition gives an explanation to the subject. This is semantic expansion as it gives the meaning of the subject rather than just a translation.

5.1.4   Equivalence

Equivalence refers to instances in which "languages describe the same situation by different stylistic or structural means" (Munday 2012; 89.) Munday suggests that it is useful in translating fixed expressions such as idioms and proverbs. We observed that since all languages are different, they may express same concepts differently. We found evidence of such situations in our examples. In (a), the phrase "me-bu-na o" [does not get lost] becomes "does not lose his way" in the target language. In (b), "doa dziku" [gets angry] becomes "chase after" in the target language. These choices might be informed by the fact that "way" (a) has the undertone of the notion of journey and "anger" (b) on the part of a dog has undertones of running/chasing after its subject/enemy. The author/translator therefore chooses the underlying expressions for the target text. This choice seems to maintain the sense in both texts though with different words.

5.1.5   Calque

This is the only Direct Translation procedure identified in the sample text. We identified only one instance: the first part of (f.) Calque is a "special kind of borrowing" (Vinay and Darbelnet, 1995: 32-3; 2004: 129-30) "where the SL (Source Language) expression or structure is transferred in a literal translation" (Munday, 2012: 87). The first part of (f) "We're on our ears…" is a literal translation of the Ewe equivalent "Miele to dzi…" The target language has an equivalent of the expression, which is "we're all ears", for the author/translator to adapt. However he chose to render it in its present state. About this particular expression, the author/translator has the following to say in an electronic mail message to one of the researchers: "The copy editor who worked on the manuscript changed it… to the English idiom, "We're all ears." I refused to accept it because, for me, contextually it's inappropriate in terms of the people speaking (the characters) and their cultural and linguistic background." The characters in this discourse are elders of the clan in a meeting. They have Ewe linguistic background. This comment confirms that this translation style is specifically informed by the sociolinguistic context of the Source Language (SL).

5.2 Prosodic Effects

Prosodic effects are the results of using the stylistic procedures. The effects we discuss here are amplification, explicitation and generalization.

5.2.1 Amplification
We observed that the translated versions of the proverbs contained more words than their original versions in the target language. The following table illustrates this numerical difference:

	Number of Words					
Languages	**a**	**b**	**c**	**d**	**e**	**f**
Source Language (Ewe)	3	7	8	5	6	9
Target language (English)	14	25	13	16	10	15
Difference	**11**	**18**	**5**	**11**	**4**	**6**

Figure 2: Number of words in each proverb in both source and target languages

The vast numerical difference between the translated versions and their original equivalents confirms what Vinay and Darbelnet (1958/1972: 10ff.) called "étoffement" (perhaps "completion" or "lengthening"). Pym (2010: 14) proposes that this is done in cases "where a target-text word grammatically needs the support of

another word" in the course of amplification. As part of amplification, dilution occurs. "When the amplification is obligatory, the effect is dilution" (Pym, 2010: 14.) Taking proverb (b) for an example, we observe that the main proverb is contained in the first part of the translation "A dog does not chase after a fowl that picks its bone…", however, the second part of the translation "… it knows the fowl does not eat bone and will eventually drop it" is also added to provide more information about the reason why the first part is considered a truth statement. Due to this, the reader may not need any analysis of the proverb to understand the statement. This may seem to dilute the proverb since the moral in proverbs are hidden in metaphors and should be analyzed before they become lucid. We also observe that the Ewe correspondents of the translations are simple sentences (b, d, e) and complex sentences (a, c). The translations however are complex sentences (c, d, e) and compound sentences (a, b). This, however, does not in any way crash the didactic motivations behind these proverbs. The author/translator tries to stay true, as much as possible, to the source language. In the source language and culture, the proverb in (e) for example is used to caution or rebuke someone who tries to carry out a difficult task on behalf of another person. Logically, punishments or difficult situations are supposed to correct or help reform the undertaker in a way. It improves the morality of the person who does these tasks. It is not advisable therefore for someone to suffer on behalf of the real or supposed person. The following is the context of its use in the novel where Atakuma (elder male twin) is cautioned against taking the task of apologizing to the elders on behalf of his twin brother, upon himself:

Atakuma had seen the difficulty his brother was going through and rose to his aid. He lowered his cloth to his waist, baring his chest and abdomen, curtsied before the elders and apologized profusely on behalf of his brother. The apology was grudgingly accepted. Or was it?

"No one drinks medicine on behalf of a sick person," cautioned one elder from the back (141.)

The context of the use of the translation is the same as the original proverb is used in the source language.

5.2.2   Explicitation
This is the specifications that are only implicit in the source language. For example, we know that a fowl does not have teeth so it cannot eat a bone. This knowledge is implicit in the source language. The author/translator however decided to add a clause which gives the reason why the dog should not be bothered: "it knows the fowl does not eat bone and will eventually drop it". Also in (d) the author/translator explains why "Two pots, our elders say, do not spoil liquor". The reason "If one does, the other will not" is embedded in the concept of alternating one pot with another should one pot cause liquor to go bad in the process of brewing. This concept might be easy to comprehend in Ewe communities. These communities use pots/tanks for brewing the commonest local gin, "akpeteshie", and are familiar with the repercussions of using the pots in the process.

5.2.3   Generalization

Generalization is "the use of a more general word in the TT (target text)" (Munday, 2012: 90) "for a specific… term" (Pym, 2010: 14). An instance of generalization identified in the sample text is the last part of (f): "…good news is nourishment for the ear". The particular expression of our interest is "nourishment" which is the author/translator's rendition of "dzenkple". *Dzenkple* is a special type of cornmeal among the Ewe. It is prepared by pouring corn flour into soup, stirred with a cooking paddle then steamed into a semi-solid food, usually garnished with cooked crab. Jakob Spieth calls it "palm oil mush" (Spieth, 2011: 852). A lot of fish and palm oil (red oil) is used in its preparation giving it the name "dzenkple" meaning "red akple: steamed corn flour"". The ingredients used make it rich in food nutrients. It is therefore very delicious and nourishing. It has no English equivalent therefore the author/translator uses the quality of "nourishment" as a translation. This is generalization because many other food items give nourishment apart from "dzenkple".

6. Conclusion

We have demonstrated in this study that some African writers make efforts to adapt the English language to speak to their sociolinguistic circumstances. We have established that Mawuli Adzei's *Taboo* is a bilingual text as it applies the sociolinguistic features of the writer's mother tongue to the English language. We have also shown that the author's linguistic experiment of translation is a validly significant response to the lingering problem of language in African literature. The study attempts a linguistic analysis of the translations in the African novel. This study is essential given the dearth of linguistic studies on the continent situated in translation studies in order to bring to the fore an understanding of the sociolinguistic atmosphere of African writing.

During the course of this research, we have discovered that lots of literary texts have the sociolinguistic phenomenon explored in this study. However, much research has not been done into it. We recommend further research into the phenomenon in order to establish the extent of its prevalence. We also recommend studies into other parts of this phenomenon such as lexical and syntactic analyses. This would help in creating "additional knowledge of the sociocultural variables present in the context of (this) situation" (Adekunle, 1987:1 as qtd in Yeibo, 2011).

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