

Original Research Article

The Problem of Translating Style in African Prose Writing

Tanyitiku Enaka Agbor Bayee

Abstract

Lecturer of Translation Studies and
Applied Linguistics, University of Buea –
Cameroon
Advanced School of Translators and
Interpreters

Email: etanyitiku@gmail.com

This research investigated style as an elusive and difficult element to render in an African prose text. Using illustrations from Charles Tsimi's *Clandestinement votre*, it identified elements of style in 15 randomly selected excerpts, highlighted possible constraints to the translation of style into English and proposed strategies that a translator could use in the event of its translation. The study applied Toury's (1995) *Descriptive Translation Studies* (DTS) for qualitative data collection as it identified, described and explained pathways for the translatability of style in the corpus. The quantitative data collected for the study were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistical tools used were frequencies and percentages. The quantitative data were analysed using SPSS 25.0, and the findings were presented using figures and tables. The research was underpinned by both translation and literary theories. Concerning translation theory, it made use of the Sociolinguistic and Skopos Theories. The literary theories that supported the work were formalism, post-colonial criticism, sociological criticism and new historicism. The findings revealed that difficult-to-translate elements of style were found in the author's diction (73.3%), voice (20.0%) and tone (6.7%). Regarding constraints, it was revealed that translators can face text-driven, translator-related, norm-imposed and extra-linguistic constraints in rendering African prose texts into English. Concerning macro translation strategies, the study proposed foreignisation (20%) and domestication (80%) for rendering style, while the micro strategies it identified were modulation (33.3%), literal translation (26.7), adaptation and equivalence, both of equal weights (13.3%) and deletion and transference also of equal proportions (6.7%). The study concluded that a successful translation of style would depend largely on the potential translator's mastery of the source text culture, which will condition how they convey both its message (content) and the style (form).

Keywords: African Prose Translation, Style, Translatability, Translation Strategies

INTRODUCTION

Stylistics began to take shape as a distinct discipline in the 1960s, with the birth of several different fields of stylistics that englobe those with pragmatic, socio-linguistic or literary orientations. A variety of disciplines and theoretical approaches including stylistics, literary criticism, and narratology all investigate how style is expressed in texts (Boase-Baier 2006). In other words, stylistics refers to textual strategies that critique literary texts, explain why certain forms are preferred by writers over others, clarify how figures of speech work and describe both literary and non-literary texts. Nowadays,

style has become a trope of literary translation theory and practice, given that literary translation incorporates the tenets of stylistics by seeking to explain not just how the text makes meaning, but also why whatever there is in an aesthetic text constitutes its meaning. In fact, since style is a key player in the translation of aesthetic texts, translating style is a creative and rigorous endeavour that should engender texts that are at the same time linguistically and aesthetically coherent, have the same content and serve the same purpose for their respective sets of receptors. This study connects style and literary

translation as a branch of translation theory that deals basically with aesthetic texts, whose key component is the author's style.

The Problem

Style is a fundamental characteristic of the African prose text, which constitutes an integral part of meaning. Hence, during translation, the style of a literary work should not be compromised, given that no text should be separated from its meaning by translation. This study investigates the problem of successfully rendering style in African prose. It uses excerpts from Charles Tsimi's *Clandestinement votre* to demonstrate the constraints and strategies for the replication of the author's personal style into English.

This study, therefore, sets out to provide answers to the following questions:

- a) What are the elements of literary style found in *Clandestinement votre*?
- b) What are the possible constraints to the translation of style in the novel?
- c) What are the proposed translation strategies for translating these elements of style into English for a new set of receptors?

Key Concepts

The main concepts that support this research are translation, translatability, style, constraints and translation strategies.

Translation

Translation is an activity that is as old as the world, since humans have always had the need to communicate with each other and breach the gap language differences created. It is in this light that many scholars have defined translation based on their views on the subject matter. Generally, translation is a process of rendering meaning, ideas, or messages of a text from one language to another. The accuracy, clarity and naturalness of the meaning, ideas, or messages are some considerations within the translation process (Nbaten, 2023).

Vinay and Darbelnet (1973:20) define translation as the act of moving from language A to language B to express the same reality. In this definition, the translation activity is situated at the linguistic level as the reality of one language should be transferred faithfully to another, ignoring the communicative aspect of translation. Also, this definition shows that translation process operates at the interlingual level whereas in translation we have the interlingual translation, the intralingual translation and

inter-semiotic translation, thus considering verbal and non-verbal translation.

According to Catford (1965: 20) translation may be defined as the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language. Catford sees the process of translation as a "replacement" which suggests a freer way of translation. However, his definition is text oriented.

More so, Larson (1984:3) defines the translation process as consisting of translating the meaning of the source language into the receptor language. Larson in his definition prioritises the meaning of the text over everything else. This is done by going from the form of the first language to the form of a second language by way of semantic structure. It is meaning which is being transferred and must be held constant. Only the form changes.

Lastly, Nida and Taber (1982: 12) say that translating consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message, firstly in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style. In this definition, Nida and Taber split the process of translation into meaning and style (Nbaten 2023). Thus, they consider that not only the meaning is to be translated or transferred but the style of the author must be equally replicated based on the target audience's culture. It is worth noting that, aside the meaning and style that can be translated; emotions, effects, spirit or the letter could also be transferred. This definition does not discard the target audience's language as the message is to be reproduced in the "closest natural equivalent of the source language." Nida and Taber's (1982) definition of translation is of interest to this research as it englobes not only the translation of meaning but equally that of style. Style is a vital part of the translation process as it plays a significant role in understanding the message of an author.

Translatability

Until recently, scholars had focused their attention mainly on translation methodology and the principles of translation. Translatability is reputed to be haunted by the apparition of untranslatability, which stipulates and defines the limits of translatability. In practical terms, the main task for translators is to identify translatability and be aware of its limits and then develop appropriate strategies of what works best to expand such limits. Translatability is the possibility of representing in the target text what is meant to be conveyed in the source text. In essence, this aligns translatability with transferability. Pym and Turk (cited by De Pedro 1999) define translatability as the capacity for meaning to be transferred from one language to another without undergoing radical change. The above definition holds true for translatability in this work because it claims that

translatability is the ability to translate from the source to the target text.

Style

The concept of style is, of course, a tricky one to define. It has been associated with an individual writer, with a genre or even with a specific historical period. To Leech and Short (1981:10) style refers to “the way in which language is used in a given context, by a given person, for a given purpose, and so on”, which is an extremely broad definition. Also, according to Munday (2008:6), “in translation studies, issues of style are related to the voice of the narrative and of the author/translator”. Munday sees the style of an author as his voice that should be heard and perceived through the text. This is the reason why translating an author’s style is important. Despite the difficulty in defining style as it depends on a larger part on the author (subjective), translators are however expected to reproduce the style of the original work while taking care not to shade the author’s style (voice).

Strunk’s (1918) Elements of Style

Authors have unique styles based on their personality, their writing style, their storytelling techniques, etc (Strunk 1918). Nevertheless, a writer’s style is made up of four key elements, namely voice, tone, diction, and punctuation.

a) Voice

Voice is determined by the author’s personality, which is shaped by the author’s background worldview, and experiences. The writer’s opinions and culture shape the way they tell a story and hence the style of the literary text.

b) Tone

Tone is the writer's attitude towards the subject or the choice of vocabulary in which can affect the style in which the information is presented. It could be informal or formal.

c) Diction

An author’s choice of words is the main factor that conditions the way readers interpret a literary text. Hence, diction is central to a writer’s style. The choice of words is what makes a difference and contributes to that author’s style, which could be words with a negative connotation, metaphors, abstract/literal language, etc.

d). Punctuation

Although the use of punctuation in writing is clearly spelled out by linguistic rules, writers have the leeway to tweak the way utterances are understood by changing the rules of punctuation. This often happens in poetry, where word breaks, dashes, periods, and commas are used to help to make meaning in poetry.

Constraints

Constraints, on the other hand, condition the translation process by controlling the translator’s choices and limiting his/her alternatives. They cause conflict between what the translator desires and what he/she can achieve. For translators who see translation as a quest for the ultimate truth, norms are always constrictive and are viewed with suspicion (ideology, structure and translational idiolect), but for those who seek to approximate within established norms and conventions, norms come as an aid or relief (Darwish 1999: 10-32). Translation can be conditioned by four main categories of constraints, namely extra linguistic, norm-imposed, translator-related and text-driven constraints.

Extra-linguistic constraints refer to the answers to questions translators answer before adopting a macro/global translation strategy. The aim of these questions is to enable them identify the text type, the genre, the intended readership of the translated text, the purpose (*skopos*) of the translation and the function of the target text (Almanna 2013: 27-36). These questions also push the translator to negotiate the communicative and cultural differences between the source and target cultures. It is only after the above have been answered that a translator can choose a global translation strategy and embark on the translation itself. Some of the choices of strategies here are conditioned by the brief for the job to be performed, which states the translation’s purpose, status, likely readership, the publisher’s attitude and the agency’s policy.

Norm-imposed constraints refer to factors at the micro and macro level which condition translation. These norms determine all micro, macro and meta- strategies that the translator adopts out of the number of strategies available at his/her disposal. In adopting the strategy, the translator can either opt for adequacy, which is observance of source-system norms or acceptability, which is faithfulness to target-system norms (Toury 1978: 53-54).

Translator-related constraints are conditioned by intrinsic factors that motivate or hinder the translator such as habitus (embodied dispositions or tendencies which condition the translator’s world view), ideology (culture, religion or gender), idiolect, competence and fears (Chesterman 1997:87-89).

Lastly, text-driven constraints include language-related, textual, cultural (micro-level), communicative, pragmatic, semiotic and stylistic factors that condition translation (Almanna, 2013: 27-36).

Literary Translation

Literary translation is the translation of poetry, plays, literary books, literary texts, as well as songs, rhymes, literary articles, fiction novels, novels, short stories, poems, and many others. The more literary works grew

and gained grounds, the more the world was influenced by these writers amongst which were African writers.

It should be noted, however, that the status of “literary” texts or indeed as “translations” is defined by conventions, norms and communicative functions as well as by the text’s intrinsic and aesthetic characteristics. This study, therefore, sets out to identify the problems and difficulties translators might face in rendering an author’s style, and propose strategies for rendering the message from the source text language to the target text language, in a way that the target text language readers will have the same aesthetic experience and effect as the readers of the source language.

Literary translation unlike other forms of translation is very difficult and complex; in its code-switching and aesthetic reproduction process. It is not just the conversion at the level of the language but more importantly, it is the experience and reproduction of the beauty and the communication of culture information. However, many authors and writers have set out to give a well-shaped definition to literary translation. According to Zilahy (1963:285), translation from one language to another can be divided into two main branches, namely literary and technical translation. On one hand, technical translation is schematical, uses specialised language and treats a particular subject matter. Meanwhile, on the other hand, literary translation allows the translator to exercise freedom in his/her choices or solutions, although it is more demanding from the point of view of knowledge and inspiration. In fact, Zilahy’s (1963) definition is no longer a valid definition of translation, since the practice has evolved to encompass more elements which go beyond the technical or literary aspects that this definition mentions.

Furthermore, Gaddis Rose (1997:123) defines literary translation as the “transfer of distinctive features and aesthetics of a literary work into a language other than that of the work’s first composition”. Gaddis Rose acknowledges that in literary translation, the aesthetics matters and must be considered by the translator when translating to the other language. Newmark (1981:7) simply says literary translation deals with the translation of literary texts such as poetry, prose and drama. He does not emphasise on the aesthetic aspect of the activity.

Based on all these definitions above, they all have a common point of convergence: style. They emphasize that priority should be given to the author’s style while translating a literary text because style constitutes the very soul of every work of art. It differentiates the latter from any other work within its ranks. Therefore, literary translation should handle themes and stylistic devices as well as strategies for replicating them in the target language.

African Prose Text

Kuiper (2011: 244) defines prose as “a form or technique of language that exhibits a natural flow of speech and grammatical structure.” In other words, prose refers to any utterance that has no formal metrical structure. Prose denotes natural flow of speech in ordinary grammatical structure that is not rhythmic. An example of prose is normal everyday speech and even thoughts. Some of the elements of prose are characters, setting, plot, theme, point of view, etc. Some common types of prose include non-fictional prose, fictional prose, heroic prose and prose poetry. African prose fiction centres on prose works written by Africans about Africa. That is, it has Africa as its setting and treats issues that relate to Africa. Works written by Africans in the diaspora that centre on the living conditions and life of Africans abroad can also be called African prose fiction. Though African literature has for long been influenced by the Western languages and literature, during literary translation, the translator is expected to preserve or to recreate the aesthetic markers, effects or intent of the source text author.

Translation Strategies

Translation strategies refer to operational norms used to describe the different approaches used by the translators to carry elements which mirror feminist discourse from the source to the target text in literary translation. The term translation strategy is often used interchangeably with corresponding terms such as procedure, technique, method, tactic and approach (Hervey, Loughridge and Higgins 2006). There are two main translation strategies, foreignisation and domestication.

Macro Translation Strategies

There are two major macro translation strategies, namely foreignisation and domestication. Foreignisation is an ethical choice which entails breaching target language conventions. It is used to retain information from the source text and transfer it into the target language. Venuti (1995) supports the foreignisation strategy because to him, by sending target language readers to read referents from other cultures, it exerts what he refers to as “ethno-deviant pressure” on the target language culture and thus compels target text readers to internalise the linguistic and cultural differences of the alien source culture.

Domestication is a macro translation strategy used to recreate an equivalent and culturally matched target text when the context referred to in the source text does not exist in the target language. Through domestication, the translator can make the text closely fit into the SL culture, although it may nonetheless involve the loss of some vital

ST information and/or situational features. Venuti (1995) contends that the domesticating strategy effaces the SL cultural values and thus recreates a new text which reads as if had been written in the target language because it adheres to the target reader's cultural norms.

Micro Translation Strategies

Talking about micro translation strategies, on one hand, there are foreignisation micro strategies, which are literal translation, borrowing and calque.

Literal translation is the rendering of a text from one language to another "word-for-word" while conveying the sense of the original text to the target language. In translation studies, "literal translation" denotes technical translation of scientific, technical, technological or legal texts. Another term for "literal translation" in translation theory is "metaphrase".

Borrowing could be defined as the transfer of source language lexeme combinations into the target language without any semantic adaptation. 'Borrowing' is used here as a global term for the various levels of preserving the culture-specific item one may need in the transfer of contents from the source text to the target culture.

In linguistics, a calque or loan translation is a word or phrase borrowed from another language by literal, word-for-word or root-for-root translation. Used as a verb, to calque means to borrow a word or phrase from another language while translating its components to create a new lexeme in the target language. Calquing includes semantic translation and does not consist of phonetic matching.

Regarding domestication, on the other hand, its micro strategies are modulation, equivalence, adaptation, reformulation, expansion and economy.

Modulation consists of using a phrase that is different in the source and target languages to convey the same idea. Through modulation, the translator generates a change in the point of view of the message without altering meaning and without generating a sense of awkwardness in the reader of the target.

Nida & Taber (1969:23) maintain that there are two types of equivalence: formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence. They make a distinction between the two types: formal equivalence refers to the reproduction of the syntactic form of the original text and dynamic equivalence refers to creating a target text effect that is like the source text effect.

Newmark (2004: 46) defines adaptation as 'the freest form of translation'. This form of translation is common in the translation or rewriting of plays wherein the SL culture is swapped with the TL culture and the text is rewritten. Adaptation further gives room for the original work to be colonized by the target language system for fear of confining the reader to a world of foreignness. As such,

this translation procedure is based on the translator's judgment of his readership's knowledge.

Reformulation deals with restructuring source text phrases, clauses, sentences and paragraphs so that they are different in the target text. When translating advertising slogans, interjections, proverbs, names of institutions, and idioms, often the expression must be translated in an entirely different manner. In this case, equivalence or reformulation is used. This process is sometimes difficult as creativity is essential.

Through expansion, the author uses more words in the target text to convey the message in the source text (Ngoran 2017). This usually happens due to the systematic and cultural differences between languages. Generally, the wider the gaps between the languages in use, the higher the need for expansion. Expansion comes in with the desire to explain some reality or concept that is not clearly expressed in the source language to resolve ambiguity. Expansion procedure also occurs when the translator tries to shift from the implicit to the explicit.

Economy is used in translation when the target text uses less words to express the contents of the source text. Economy may be dictated by the author's choice of words or by the internal borrowing of the target text which sets it apart from the source text structure.

Theoretical Framework

Both translation and literary theories back this research. The translation theories that underpin the study are the Sociolinguistic and Skopos Theories, while the applicable literary theories are Formalism, Sociological Criticism and New Historicism.

Sociolinguistic Theory of Translation

Sociolinguistic approaches to translation emerged out of the dissatisfaction with linguistic theories and the growing interest in communication. Such interest resulted from the work of anthropologists who recognised the role of text recipients in the process of translating. Sociolinguistic theories of translating relate linguistic structures to a higher level where they can be viewed in terms of their function in communication. When discussing a text, the sociolinguist is concerned particularly with its author, its historical background, the circumstances involved in its production, and the history of its interpretation. Nida and Taber (1969:31) claim that the old focus on the form of the message in translation has shifted to the receptors or the readers. Therefore, it is the reader's response to the translated message that determines the correctness of that message. They set the average reader as the only criterion for measuring correctness in translating. Correctness, in their view, is not only the possibility of

understanding the message by readers but rather the impossibility of misunderstanding it. This theory helps the translator understand the era in which the novel is produced and how to decipher its subliminal messages in the text.

Skopos Theory (Communicative-Functional Approach)

The *Skopos* Theory (Reiß and Vermeer 2013) or the Communicative-Functional Approach to translation Nord (1997) is applied firstly to examine translation in the given communicative context of its production and secondly, as a means of communication between identified actors. As such, in a bid to analyse a translation and what influenced its production, this approach is applied to consider the linguistic aspects of translation, the attributes of the pair of languages and the texts themselves. Also, it is applied to systematically examine the human aspects of translation, such that the translation can acquire what can be termed a “human face.” This means laying particular emphasis on the needs and expectations authors who produce texts in source languages and target text readers who consume texts translated into target languages by translators. In fact, the Skopos Theory is applied to investigate the quality of translation, because it fundamentally considers translation as a communicative situation within an imaginary/supposed, though realistic environment within which the activity takes place. This clearly implies an interaction of human beings, and communication can be both direct and indirect and even between stakeholders who are divided by a language barrier, and therefore need mediation by a translator.

Therefore, advocates of translation through the Skopos Theory posit that the translator as a mediator between stakeholders in a communicative event should bear in mind the aims of the communicators, their needs, the function of the translation and how target readers will use the target text produced. It is based on this that Gentzler (2001) claims that translation is a form of action or a communicative interaction. Hence, a client who hires a translator has goals which should be considered, while the target audience has expectations that need to be addressed. It is thus after identifying the needs and expectations of the target audience that the translation can understand and formulate the translation goal. The translation goal does not entail simply producing a text that would be acknowledged as equivalent to the original, it means producing a text that would be a contribution to the activities of its end users.

Thus, this approach views translation as both the instrument of communication and one that is called to serve a purpose to the stakeholders involved. Thus, professional translation should be preceded by an investigation of the aim or intention of the translation. This

assertion, however, causes one to ponder on whose intention the translation is supposed to mirror, between that of the source text author and the translator. Nevertheless, the personality of the translator is very important, while it is important to note that the translation is not usually initiated by the target reader. The initiator might be a physical person or corporate body whose goals or aims may differ from the source-text author’s, the target-text receiver’s and the translator’s (Gentzler 2001).

Sociological Criticism

Sociological criticism is literary criticism directed towards understanding literature in its larger social context. According to this approach, a literary work must relate very closely to its author, the society or social milieu in which it is produced. It therefore analyses both the social functions of a literary piece and how literature works in society. It was introduced by Kenneth Burke, a 20th century literary and critical theorist, according to whom, works of art are strategic in naming of situations that allow readers to better understand and gain control over societal happenings through the work of arts. Sociological criticism enables the translator to decipher social facts and contexts, thereby helping him/her render the intended message appropriately.

Formalist Criticism (New Criticism)

Formalist Criticism is also known as New Criticism. Formalist critics see the aesthetic experience as unique, powerful, and significant. As such, literary discourse has formal aspects that distinguish it clearly from other types of texts and make it possible for literature to be successfully divided into genres (Schogt 1998). Moreover, to the New Critics, literary analysis has its own specific interests, focuses, and, of course, terminology, which is why it is fundamentally different from other fields such as history, psychology, and sociology. Also, in literature there are meaning(s) beyond the “intent” and biography of the author. Thus, Formalist Criticism is necessary to carefully scrutinise the text, while paying greater attention to form, language, and detail, all primary factors to a discussion of the text’s aesthetic quality, themes and functions (Schogt 1998).

METHODOLOGY

The research design of this corpus based descriptive study is a mixed method, which analyses both qualitative and quantitative data. A total of 15 randomly selected excerpts are collected and analysed according to the

following procedures, to answer the research questions posed at the beginning.

Descriptive Research Procedure

The descriptive research framework applied to the study is Toury's (1985) Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) framework. Although Descriptive Translation Studies was introduced by John Holme in 1972, it's widely attributed to Toury (1985). In reaction against speculative prescriptive studies, DTS is proposed by Toury (1985:35) to produce systematic and exhaustive descriptions of what translation is supposed to be. By considering the interdependency of translation as a product, process and function, and by relating regularities uncovered by such a description with features of the sociocultural context constraining them, DTS also aspires to both understand and explain the described regularities. The identification of relations of sequence, correlation or cause between profile and context variables is also carried out with purpose of producing more refined formulations of probabilistic theoretical laws, capable of predicting what translation may be under a given set of circumstances.

It is in this light that Toury (1985) suggests that any descriptive study of translation should begin in the target-system, because, in nature, a translation is determined or conditioned by the goal it serves. Therefore, if we want to understand the process of translation and its product, we must clearly define the purpose of the translation. This can only be done through the perspective of the target pole which, in the function of a receptor pole, works as the `initiator of a transfer at the interlingual, intertextual, and intercultural levels.

Toury (1985) proposes three basic steps in an analysis of translations through the descriptive model. The analyst first selects target phenomena regarded as translational phenomena from the viewpoint of the target-system. These translational phenomena are prior to, or independent of the source text. In the second step, the analyst verifies these translational phenomena against the source text, through a comparative analysis in the form of a problem/solution pattern. The purpose of this analysis is to establish translational relationships between source-text and target-text. Lastly, the third step consists of the reconstruction of the process of decision-making of the solutions for the respective problems. A descriptive study is not merely a comparative analysis of source-text and target-text. As Toury (1985:84) claims, comparative studies may contribute to a broader dimension of the functional description of translational phenomena. He argues that comparisons can be made among several translations by different translators into the same language, different phases in the elaboration of a translation, and different translations of the same text into different languages.

Below is a sample of data analysis grid, which applies the principles of DTS to identify, describe and explain the elements of style in the novel, *Clandestinemtvoire*.

Explanation of Data Analysis Framework

Source Text: Excerpts from the source text that have to do with devices of style will be analysed here.

Context of Utterance: Refers to who says what, when it is said, how it is said and why the utterance is made.

Possible Constraints: Challenges that can be faced in the eventual translation of the element of style.

Translation Strategy: Techniques that can be used to translate style are identified here.

Proposed Translation: Translations of the source text excerpts are proposed here to demonstrate the rendering.

Method of Quantitative Data Processing and Analyses

The quantitative data collected for the study are analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistical tools used are frequency and percentage. The quantitative data are analysed using SPSS 25.0 and the findings are presented using figures and tables. The inferential statistics are presented at 95% confidence interval (95% cl).

The Target Audience of the Potential Translation

The target audience of the translator is hypothetically the English readers who are not necessarily from the author's cultural background.

Criteria for Corpus Selection

Clandestinement votre was chosen because of the various themes the author treats and the unique style he uses to pass across his message through a plethora of stylistic devices. Also, this novel, which was recently published, has never been translated. This work constructs pathways for translators desiring to translate the text into English.

Validity of Data

The 15 purposively selected excerpts are identified, described and explained using the DTS analysis method in tabular form, to eliminate data errors and ensure accuracy. Data are collected by identifying source

language stylistic devices that carry style.

Data Analysis

This section is based on a synopsis of the novel as well as the micro textual analysis of the source text excerpts which embody the author's style.

Synopsis of the Novel

Clandestinement votre is a satirical autobiography that recounts the adventures of the protagonist, Charles, who leaves Cameroon to study political science in France on a scholarship. However, instead of a student visa, he is granted a tourist visa that will expire after two months. At the end of the scholarship, Charles is expected to leave France, but he does not want to return home to face the bleak prospects that await him in Cameroon. However, staying in France proves a difficult feat. The French immigration authorities expect Charles to write a language test that proves that he is proficient in the French language before he is given a residence permit. Charles's response to the summons to prove that he speaks French is original, for he pens a novel (letter) in which he justifies why he ought to be given a residence permit. Despite his arguments, his request is rejected. Charles finally gets his residence permit and eventually becomes a French citizen only through his son, whom he has with a Jewish woman.

Micro-Textual Analysis of the Translatability of Style into English

The micro-textual analysis, which is based on 15 randomly selected excerpts, is outlined in the following sections:

Excerpt 1

Source Text : *Je vous envoie mon roman. Lisez-le ! Dans le métro, dans la rue, dans l'avion, dans le train, dans vos water-closets, dans vos salles de réunion, dans vos salles d'attente... et prenez garde ! Le délit de solidarité sera bientôt crime contre l'humanité*(5).

Context of Utterance: Charles justifies why he wrote to the French authorities why he felt humiliated when he is summoned to take a test to prove that he speaks French, a language that he has spoken from birth.

Element of Style: The element of style is diction. The author's choice words and his generous use of punctuation are both factors that condition the way readers interpret the utterance.

Possible Constraints: Extralinguistic constraints

Macro Translation Strategy: Domestication

Micro Translation Strategy: Literal translation

Proposed Translation: I hereby forward my novel. Read it! In the subway, in the street, on a plane, on the train, in your water closets, in your meeting rooms, in your waiting rooms... And, beware! The crime that is solidarity will soon be considered a crime against humanity.

Excerpt 2

Source Text: *Vraiment, cette Académie de diplomatie n'est qu'une arnaque, une vitrine en plastique ! Gars, ton pays me dépasse !* (8)

Context of utterance: After enrolling at the *Académie de Diplomatie du Cameroun* for a master's in international relations Charles and his friends are sent on break for seven months without warning.

Element of Style: The voice used is determined by the author's personality, which is in turn shaped by the author's background, worldview, and experiences.

Possible Constraint: Cultural constraint

Macro Translation Strategy: Domestication

Micro translation Strategy: Modulation

Proposed Translation: This diplomacy school is a scam. It's just a smokescreen! Boy, I don't understand your country!

Excerpt 3

Source Text : *Ah, Charles, ça fait plaisir ! T'es déjà grand jusqu'à tu laisses déjà la barbe. Tu es toujours voyou ?* (Rires.) (9)

Context of Utterance: Charles's uncle, Pierre, jokes about the former's physical appearance. Pierre teases Charles for growing a beard and refers to Charles's earlier life, when he was considered "rascally."

Element of Style: Diction since the same peculiar choice of words is used to convey the source text meaning from French into English.

Constraint: Linguistic Constraint

Macro Translation Strategy: Domestication

Micro Translation Strategy: Calque

Proposed Translation: Charles! I'm happy to see you! You're now a man! You've grown a beard! Are you still a rascal? (Laughing).

Excerpt 4

Source Text: *Amen ooooo... Amen oooo... Je suis dans la joiiiiie, une joiiiiie immense, je suis dans l'émotion car Yahwé m'a libérée... , entonna ma mère* (14)

Context of Utterance: Charles's mother chants in joy when she is informed that her son ended his contract with his Uncle Pierre and is moving to France, where he believes

he will have better prospects than back home in Cameroon.

Element of Style: Diction Protagonist's choice of words is the key factor that conditions the way the translator can interpret the utterance. Hence, diction is central to a writer's style.

Possible Constraint: Cultural Constraint

Macro Translation Strategy: Domestication

Micro Translation Strategy: Modulation

Proposed Translation: Amen! Amen! I'm filled with joy, great joy, I'm filled with emotions because Yahwé has set me free... My Mother sang.

Excerpt 5

Source Text

Alors, depuis tout à l'heure on perd notre temps ? Monsieur Tsimi, si vous n'avez pas de titre de séjour, ça ne sert à rien. Désolé, mais on n'est pas ici pour faire du social. On va mettre un terme à cet entretien (44).

Context of Utterance: An interviewer for the Yvelines City Council, a potential employer, ends a job interview when he discovers that Charles does not have a residence permit.

Element of Style: The tone betrays the writer's attitude towards the subject-matter. Also, the choice of vocabulary, which affects the style in which the information is presented, makes the utterance stand out.

Possible Constraint: Textual constraint

Macro Translation Strategy: Domestication

Micro Translation Strategy: Deletion

Proposed Translation: So, we've been wasting our time? Mr Tsimi, if you don't have a residence permit, then it's of no use. Sorry, but we're not here for charity. We'll end this interview.

Excerpt 6

Source Text: *On ne quitte pas un homme au bord du précipice de cette façon ! On négocie lentement la séparation, ou bien on reporte l'usage de son pouvoir discrétionnaire (83)*

Context of Utterance: Charles Admonishes his lover for leaving him at the lowest moment of his life.

Element of Style: Diction the author's choice of words conditions the way the utterance is interpreted. Hence, his diction is central to his style.

Possible Constraint: Extralinguistic constraint

Translation Macro Strategy: Foreignisation

Micro Strategy: Literal translation

Proposed Translation: You cannot leave a man when he is at his worst! You gently negotiate the separation, or you use your discretion.

Excerpt 7

Source Text: Ekié, qu'est-ce qui t'arrive ? Tsui ! fit-elle avec un sourire digne d'une mater dolorosa... (14)

Context of Utterance: Charles's mother comments about his happy mood when greets her after he comes home from France to visit.

Element of Style: Mater dolorosa words spoken by the mother of Jesus when he was taken down from the cross. Diction is determined by the author's personality that is shaped by the author's background worldview, and experiences. The translation technique used is calque as there is a linguistic constraint that requires the translator to know the language used by French-speaking native Africans. This phrase and way of speaking is a typical Cameroonian slang and the translator can either calque it to make it sound natural to local English-speaking Africans or use a standard phrase.

Possible Constraint: Extralinguistic constraint

Macro Translation Strategy: Foreignisation

Micro Strategy: Transference

Proposed Translation: What's happening to you? She sighed with a smile worthy of a mater dolorosa ...

Excerpt 8

Source Text: *Paris pue le cul. Paris respire le sexe. L'ambiance parisienne est digne du cul. Elle incite au cul, davantage qu'al'égalité, au socialisme (47).*

Context of Utterance: When Charles relocates to Paris his first impression is that the town is characterised by immorality.

Element of style: Diction. The author's choice of words is the main factor that conditions the way readers interpret a literary text. Hence, diction is central to a writer's style.

Possible Constraint: Translator-related factors

Macro Translation Strategy: Domestication

Micro Translation Strategy: Adaptation

Proposed Translation: Paris reeks of sex. Paris exudes sex. The atmosphere in Paris is worthy of sex. It encourages sex more than equality or socialism.

Excerpt 9

Source Text: *Sans argent, le touriste n'est pas touriste, il est sans-papiers, ou pire, il est ce qu'on appelle aujourd'hui un migrant. Et quand on s'appelle migrant ici-bas, on est fin prêt pour l'au-delà sans concert mémoriel (53).*

Context of Utterance: Charles analyses the situation of tourists. He claims tourists are treated better than migrants, whereas tourists are more of a threat to nature than migrants.

Element of Style: Voice. This element of style is determined by the author's personality, which is in turn shaped by the author's background which conditions his dislike for tourists.

Possible Constraint: No constraint

Macro Translation Strategy: Domestication

Micro translation Strategy: Equivalence

Proposed Translation: Without money, the tourist is not a tourist, he is a clandestine, or what we now call an illegal immigrant. And when we are called a migrant on earth, we are always ready to go to heaven without any memorial concert.

Excerpt 10

Source Text: Aujourd'hui, ces saints fouetteurs ne sont pas encore au paradis. Ils sont sur Facebook. Ils font des selfies. Ils s'ennuient. Ils s'ennuient de leur célibat, de leur sacerdoce, de leur foi, de la Pâques, de la Pentecôte, s'ennuient des vêpres. Le clergés'ennuie à mourir (57)

Context of Utterance: Charles flashes back to his days at boarding school, when he used to be whipped by the priests for breaking rules.

Element of Style: Diction. The author's choice of words is the main factor that conditions the way readers interpret his criticism of sadistic priests who took delight in flogging school children.

Possible Constraints: Extralinguistic constraints

Macro Translation Strategy: Domestication

Micro Translation Strategy: Literal Translation

Proposed Translation: Today, these holy floggers are not in heaven. They are on Facebook. They are taking selfies. They are bored. They are bored with their celibacy, their priesthood, their faith, Easter, Pentecost, they are bored with Vespers. The clergy are bored to death.

Excerpt 11

Source Text: Parce qu'en France, il n'y a plus que les représentants de la Mort et de la Bêtise qui gouvernent. Ce pays a perdu son «f» comme formidable. Formidable 1793 ! Il n'y a plus que laRance officielle... (114)

Context of Utterance: Charles discusses with his Congolese friend, Stanislas De Stanis, why the political party he created to advocate for the homeless in France failed.

Element of Style: Diction brings out the play of words. "Rance" means rancid, old, almost decomposing. Hence, the author plays with words by deleting "F" from France so that what is left means "decay." The author's choice words is central to his style. The intent will be lost if the utterance is domesticated.

Possible Constraint: Text-driven constraint

Macro Translation Strategy: Domestication

Micro Translation Strategy: Literal translation

Proposed Translation: Because in France, we only have the representatives of death and stupidity who govern. This government has lost its "f" for formidable. What a formidable year, 1793! We now have just the official Rance...

Excerpt 12

Source Text: *Je la laissais cloîtrée dans cette zone abandonnée qu'était le Cameroun, un champ de ruines, un mouiroir à ciel ouvert, un bocal géant à virus et bactéries divers.* (117)

Context of Utterance: The protagonist describes his mother's living conditions in Cameroon.

Element of Style: Diction. The author's choice of words shows his complete disdain for Cameroon. Hence, diction is central to the way this excerpt is understood.

Possible Constraints: Text-driven constraints

Macro Translation Strategy: Foreignisation

Micro Translation Strategy: Literal translation

Proposed Translation: I left her cloistered in that God-forsaken country called Cameroon, a field of ruins, an open field for the dying, a giant jar of uncountable viruses and bacteria.

Excerpt 13

Source Text: C'était bel et bien moi qui étais en situation de clandestinité, d'insécurité totale, mais le simple fait que ma mère vive au Cameroun me rendait plus inquiet de son sort que du mien. (117)

Context of Utterance: Charles muses about his mother's situation in Cameroon, which he believes is more precarious than his.

Element of Style: The diction is central to a writer's style, and thus conditions the understanding of the utterance.

Possible Constraint: Text-driven constraints

Macro Translation Strategy: Domestication

Micro translation Strategy: Literal translation

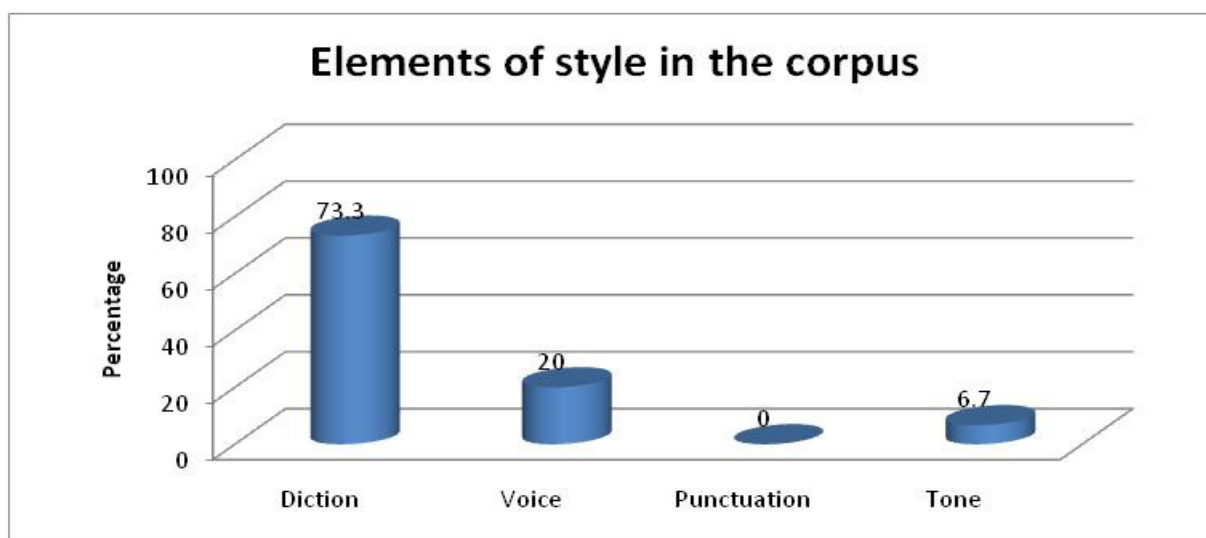
Proposed Translation: Indeed, I was the one living as a clandestine, in a situation of complete insecurity. However, the simple fact that my mom was living in Cameroon made me more worried about her fate than mine.

Excerpt 14

Source Text: *Il m'invita à la table qu'il occupait avec trois autres personnes, dont une demoiselle incroyablement fessue* (10)

Table 1. Elements of Style in the Novel

Element of style	Frequency	Percentage
Diction	11	73.3
Voice	3	20
Tone	1	6.7
Punctuation	0	0
Total	15	100

**Figure 1.** Elements of Style in the Novel
n=15

Context of Utterance: Charles describes his uncle Pierre's female companion whom he meets at Bafia.

Element of Style: Diction by his choice of describing the lady as "incroyablementfessue" which literally means "to have an incredibly big ass" the author uses humour to describe the lady. Hence, his choice of words influences the way readers react to the utterance (by laughter).

Possible Constraint: Cultural constraint

Macro Translation Strategy: Domestication

Macro Translation Strategy: Adaptation

Proposed Translation: He invited me to the table where he was seated with three other people including a lady incredibly buxom lady.

Excerpt 15

Source Text: Un sans-papier, c'est aussi un sans-histoire (

Context of Utterance: One of Charles's lovers, Marion, mocks him for having an illegal immigration status.

Element of Style: Voice determined by the author's experience, which is one of bitterness felt because of his status as an illegal immigrant in France.

Possible Constraint: Cultural constraint

Macro Translation Strategy: Domestication

Micro Strategy: Modulation

Proposed Translation: An illegal immigrant is also someone without a story.

Interpretation of Findings

The three research questions posed at the beginning of this study are thus answered as follows:

Research Question One

What are the elements of literary style found in the selected excerpts of *Clandestinement votre*?

With reference to the elements of style to the translation in the selected corpus, diction appears the highest, with 73.3% (13), while voice had 20% (3) and tone 6.7% (1). Punctuation had nothing. Table 1, Figure 1

Research Question Two: What are the possible constraints to the translation of style in the selected corpus?

Among the possible constraints to the translation of style

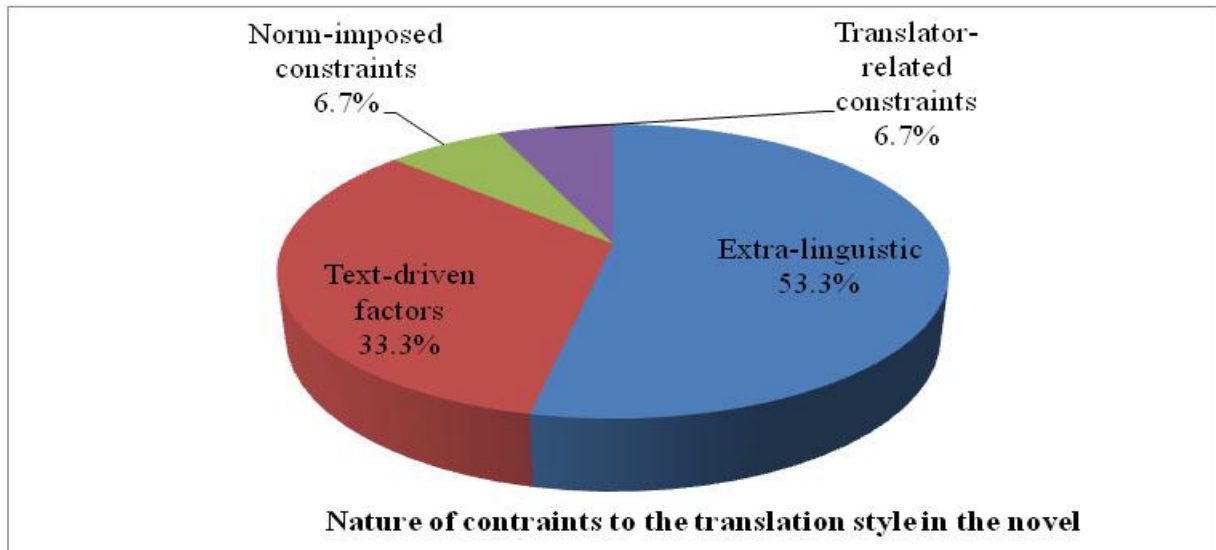


Figure 2. Prevalence of the Nature of Constraints to the Translation Style
n=15

Table 2. Translation Strategies Used

Categorisation of strategies		Frequency	Percentage
Macro Strategies	Domestication	12	80
	Foreignisation	3	20
	Total	15	100
Micro-strategies	Modulation	5	33.3
	Literal translation	4	26.7
	Adaptation	2	13.3
	Equivalence	2	13.3
	Deletion	1	6.7
	Transference	1	6.7
	Total	15	100

in the corpus, extra-linguistic constraints were the most dominant - 53.3% (8) - followed by text-driven factors - 33.3% (5). Norm-imposed constraints and translator-related constraints were the least noticed, with equal weight of 6.7% (1). Figure 2

Research Question Three: What translation strategies can be used to translate these aspects of style into English for a new set of receptors?

The research findings showed that both micro strategies were used in the translation alongside macro-strategies. With reference to the macro-strategies, two were used with domestication having the highest percentage - 80% (12) - against foreignisation - 20% (3). For micro-strategies, six were identified and modulation was used the more - 33.3% (5) - followed by literal translation - 26.7% (4) - adaptation and equivalence with equal weight

of 13.3% (2) and lastly deletion and transference with equal proportion of 6.7% (1). These findings reveal that the proposed translations of style are more foreignised than domesticated. However, it cannot be denied that domestication has a significant impact on the translation of style. Table 2

CONCLUSION

The objectives of this study were to identify the different elements of style in the Charles Tsimi's *Clandestine-mentvotre*, identify possible constraints to the rendering of style and propose translation strategies used for translating style. Findings demonstrated that culture is at the centre of the translation of literary texts, especially one that uses cultural referents that are not familiar to the target culture. Hence, to mitigate the problem of constraints and minimise the likelihood of poor

translations that impinge on the aesthetic effect of the target text, the translator's familiarity with the source culture must be a condition sine qua non to the translation of culturally loaded literary texts.

REFERENCES

- Attardo, S. (1994). *Linguistic Theories of Humour*. Berlin-New York: Mouton de Gruyter. Amsterdam-Atlanta, Rodopi
- Catford, J. C. (1965). *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Charles, T. (2020). *Clandestinement votre*. France: JC Lattès
- Darwish, A. (1999). *Towards a Theory of Constraints in Translation*. Geelong: Deakin University.
- Davies, E. E. (2003). *A Goblin or a dirty Nose? The Treatment of culture-specific references in translations of the Harry potter book*. Morocco : Ecole Supérieure Roi Fahd de Traduction.
- De Pedro, R. (1999). The Translatability of Texts: A Historical Overview. *Met:journal des traducteurs*, 44 (4), 546-559. Available at <https://www.erudit.org/fr/revues/meta/1999-v44-n4-meta165/003808ar.pdf> [Accessed on October 2022].
- Escarpit, R. (1994). *L'Humour*, Paris : Presse Universitaire de France.
- Jens, A. and al. (1992). *On the semantics of linguistic and pragmatic feedback*. Gothenburg: University of Gothenburg.
- Kruger, A. & Wallmach, K. (1997). *Research Methodology for the Description of a Source Text and its Translation(s) - a South African Perspective*. South Africa: Journal of African Languages
- Ladmiral, J.R., Meschoonic, H. (1981). *Poétique de... /Théorèmes pour...la traduction*. Paris : Université Paris 7
- Ljudskanov, A. (1969). *Traduction humaine et traduction*. Paris: Dunod
- Munday, J. (2001). *Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*. London: Routledge
- Newmark, P. (1981). *Approaches to Translation*, Oxford: Pergamon (1988). *A textbook of translation*. Hertfordshire: Prentice Hall
- Nida, E. A., (1975). *Language, structure, and translation*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Nida, E. (1997). *Translation as Communication*. In *BBT Book Production Series: Readings in General Translation Theory*, Vol.2, pp. 29-39.
- Riazi, A. (2002). *The Invisible in Translation: The Role of Text Structure*. Available at <http://translationjournal.net/journal/24structure.htm> [Accessed on 10 September 2023].
- Sattar, I. (2015). *Papers in translation*. UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. Available at <https://www.cambridgescholars.com/resources/pdfs/978-1-4438-7228-7-sample.pdf> [Accessed on 20 January 2023].
- Strunk Jr. W., (1918) *The Elements of Style* Revised by John Woldemar Cowan (2006) <http://vrci.lojban.org/~cowan/style-revised.html>
- Toury, G. (1980). *In Search of a Theory of Translation*. Tel Aviv: Porter Institute.
- Vinay, E and Darbelnet, J. (1973). *Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais*. Paris: Didier
- Venuti, L. (1995). *The Translator's Invisibility*. London: Routledge.
- Wright, J. (1963). *A Blessing*. In R. DiYanni (2007). *Literature, reading fiction, poetry, and drama*. New York: McGraw-Hill
- Zilahy, S., (1963). *Quality in Translation* in E. Cary and W. Jumpelt (eds.). Oxford: Pergamon Press.