Translating Camfranglais Literature: Exegesis, Jugglery, Cultural and SemanticSignification

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Abstract

Code-switching refers to the alternate use of more than one code in a single speech act, a phenomenon that Haugan refers to as the "the alternate use of two languages, including everything from the introduction of a single unassimilated word up to a complete sentence or more into the context of another language" (see Omole, p.58). In other words, these writers tend to transpose the imprint of their cultural backgrounds onto fictional works, thereby creating a third code-camfranglais. Camfranglais is a hybrid language spoken in the Republic of Cameroon where English, French and 248 indigenous languages co-exist. It is a medley of French, English, Pidgin and borrowings from local languages. This paper examines some aspects of the complexity of the language situation in Cameroon including the nuanced implication for translation in the field of literature.

Keywords: Cameroon; Canmfranglais; French; English; Pidgin;hybrid language.

Introduction

If up to a certain point, fiction writers have to re-invent language in a bid to appeal to a broader readership, the situation of Camfranglais writers is peculiar in that for them, French is not an acquisition; rather it is an occasion for constant mutation and modification. Engaged as they are, in the game of linguistic manipulation, these writers have to create their own language of fiction in a multilingual context affected by signs of polyglossia. To this end, Cameroonian Camfranglais creative writers constantly resort to code-switching as a mode of linguistic and cultural appropriation. Code-switching refers to the alternate use of more than one code in a single speech act, a phenomenon that Haugan refers to as the "the alternate use of two languages, including everything from the introduction of a single unassimilated word up to a complete sentence or more into the context of another language" (cited in Omole1998:58).

In other words, these writers tend to transpose the imprint of their cultural backgrounds onto fictional works, thereby creating a third code—camfranglais. Camfranglais is a hybrid language spoken in the Republic of Cameroon where English, French and 248 indigenous languages co-exist. It is a medley of French, English, Pidgin and borrowings from local languages. Kouega (2003:13) defines Camfranglais as a "composite language consciously developed by secondary school pupils who have in common a number of linguistic codes, namely French, English and a few widespread indigenous languages." Carole de Feral (1989:20) observes that Camfranglais saw the light of day in the 1970s when youths in Douala indulged in a language practice she refers to as "Français Makro".[1]Some examples of Camfranglais expressions that one is likely to hear in the streets in French-speaking Cameroonian cities such as Yaoundé, Douala, Bafoussam, Nkongsamba and more include:

Depuis le matin j'ai seulement chop une banane= I have only eaten a banana since

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morning.
Gars je go damba= I am going to play soccer, man.
Mon cochambrier a travel au day= my room-mate has traveled today.
C'est moi qui comot avec la nga-ci= I am going out with this girl.
La nkane-ci est trop coller chewing gum=This girl has a gumshoe attitude.
Je suis dans le débé, je n'ai plus da do= I am in dire straits, I have no money left.
Je dois go regarder le damba= I have to go watch a soccer game.
La damer de la mater est très mo= Mom's food is very delicious.
Il a décalé avec mes do= He took off with my money.
Tu as nang où yesterday? =Where did you pass the night yesterday?
Tu vas go au sukul au day?=Are you going to school today?

It is noteworthy that the insertion of Camerounismes[2]such as "chop", "débé", "damba", "au day", "damer", "do", "sukul", "nga", "mo", "nkane" and "commot" in a French language text may obfuscate meaning for a translator unfamiliar with the significations embedded in these words that originate from Cameroonian indigenous languages and pidgin English. It is obvious from these examples that the sentence structure of Camfranglais is calqued on the French syntactic structure, supported by loanwords from native tongues. Each utterance above contains an English, Pidgin or indigenous language word. This paper addresses some of the translation challenges posed by language mixing as seen in the examples above. Rather than dwell on theories of translation, our paper seeks to bring new insights to the pragmatics of literary translation-ways in which the translator grapples with meaning discernment and rendition when faced with the task of translating texts couched in more than one language. Jacques Derrida (1985:171) reminds us in "Des Tours de Babel" of "one of the limits of theories of translation: all too often they treat the passing from one language to another and do not sufficiently consider the possibility for languages to be implicated *more than two* in a text. How is a text written in several languages at a time to be translated?

How is the effect of plurality to be "rendered"? And what of translating with several languages at a time, will that be called translating?" The dilemma is no easier to solve for practicing translators. There are clear and obvious benefits of linguistic hybridity (that is, a larger audience, self-representation, etc.) but how do these benefits transform when these languages are contextualized in literature? And what are the ramifications of such complicity or variance for the literary translator? What forms of discursive agencies are made available through translation? Critics of postcolonial literatures often contend that because of the quintessential hybridity of the postcolonial text, it is not possible for writers to return to an absolute pre-colonial cultural purity, nor is it possible for these writers to write fiction that is entirely independent of implication in the colonial discourse (Ashcroft *et al*., 1989; Bandia 1993; Gyasi 2006; Jameson 1986; Khatibi1983; Quayson 2000; Vakunta 2014). This remark is pertinent to the premise of our discussion in this paper given the emphasis we place on linguistic pluralism. Camfranglais writers tend to be perpetually adrift between several languages, vacillating from one to the other. Positioned on the threshold of "adversarial" languages, Camfranglais literature opens up an in-between (third) space of linguistic ambivalence. In this vein, the writer becomes the bearer of a split consciousness and double vision.

The question that begs the asking is how the translator comes to terms with all these ramifications. This paper attempts to provide answers to the foregoing intriguing interrogations. To this end, a corpus of four Cameroonian texts written in Camfranglais has been selected for critical

[2] Cameroonian turns of phrase.

analysis—*Camfranglais* (2013) by Jean-Paul Kouega, *Temps de Chien* (2001) by Patrice Nganang; *Moi Taximan* (2001) by Gabriel Fonkou and *Je Parle Cameroonais* (2001) by Mercédès Fouda.The finality of the literary analysis we have embarked upon would be to propose a canon that is deemed germane for the translation of fictional works written in Camfranglais.

Toward a Model for Translating Camfranglais

Camfranglais writers make a deliberate attempt to indigenize the messages they intend to convey through a process described by Zabus (1991:3) as "the writer's attempt at textualizing linguistic differentiation and at conveying African concepts, thought-patterns, and linguistic features through the ex-colonizer's language" as seen in the following excerpt: *"Il y a la galère au Camer au day*[There is poverty in Cameroon nowadays[3]]" (Kouega 2013:155). It should be noted that the word "Camer" is a truncation of the proper noun "Cameroon". In a similar vein, the expression "au day" is a hybrid word derived from a combination of the first syllable of the French word "aujourd'hui" and the second syllable of the English word "today". Thus, "au day" is a neologism obtained by replacing the "jourd'hui" segment of the word "aujourd'hui" with the English word "day". "Galère" is a French word that generically signifies "hassle" or "trouble". However, in the speech of Camfranglones, this word has undergone a semantic shift and has taken on a new signification— "abject poverty". Semantic shifts such as this one could make the job of the translator an uphill task, especially for translators who are not familiar with the linguistic appropriation process that takes place in the art of creative writing in Cameroon as seen in the following statement: *"Ma friend se call Suzy, elle me helep bad*[My friend's name is Suzie; she helps me a lot]*"* (Kouega 2013:154).

It is interesting to note that the English adjective "bad" carries a positive undertone in the speech pattern of speakers of Camfranglais: "helep bad" could be rendered as "helps me a lot". This oxymoronic construction could be mistranslated literally as "helps me badly" by an inattentive literary translator. Doing so would clearly derail the communicative intent of the fiction writer, an aspect of discourse analysis that André Lefevere (1992:87) describes as the author's "universe of discourse". He further notes that on the universe-of-discourse level, translators may be faced with things, customs, and concepts that were immediately intelligible to the readers of the original but are no longer intelligible to prospective readers of the translation. It should be noted that the Pidgin English word "helep" in the example above is derived from the Standard English word "help".

Camfranglais lexicon has been abundantly enriched by borrowings from Cameroon Pidgin English, also called Cameroonian Creole.Borrowings from Pidgin are evident in the following excerpt: *"Elle do the buyam-sellam depuis quand?* [How long has she been doing buyam-sellam?]"(Kouega 2013:152). The compound word "buyam-sellam" is derived from two Standard English words "buy" and "sell". This neologism, the brainchild of Camfranglais speakers, is often used to describe a man or woman who retails foodstuff in the farmers' market. It goes without saying that retail trade has contributed significantly to the broadening of the lexicon of Camfranglais as seen in this example: *"J'ai des aff* à *placer*[I have some items to sell]*"* (Kouega 2013:122). More often than not, the task of the Camfranglais translator becomes onerous not only on account of loanwords from other languages such as "aff" and "do" as seen in the examples above but also due to the fact that new semantic values are constantly being appended to existing words. Notice that the word "aff" is derived through the process of clipping. "Aff" is a truncation of the French word "affaires" which could literally be rendered as "affairs" or "business". However, translating the word "aff"

[3] All translations are mine except otherwise indicated.

literally would be tantamount to an under translation because "aff" refers to "stolen goods" in the Camfranglais universe of discourse.

Oftentimes, speakers of Camfranglais resort to code-mixing out of the desire to create humor as is notice*able* in the following statement: *"Il est tellement press*é *qu'il a put son cal*é*koum* à *l'envers*[He is in such a hurry that he has worn his underwear inside out]"(Kouega 2013:154) The word "calékoum" is a *camerounisme* for the French word "*caleçon"* [pant or underwear]. The code switching in this statement is evident. We have the standard English word "put", and the Pidgin word "calékoum" jostling for space with standard French words. Omole (1998) maintains that this linguistic mixing presupposes a degree of proficiency at two or more languages from which a speaker or writer can switch back and forth seamlessly. These examples bear testimony to the fact that Camfranglais speakers tend to rely on code alternation as a word formative process as this other example seems to suggest*: "Ma rese a tcha le bele et elle talk que c'est avec un attaquant*[My sister is pregnant and she says that the man responsible is a taxi driver assistant]" (Kouega 2003:129). Notice that the French word "attaquant" is a standard French language word that could be translated literally as "assailant" or "attacker". However, doing so would misrepresent the speaker's communicative intention because in this context the word has been endowed with an entirely new signification, "taxi driver assistant". Kouega (2003:138) defines the word "bele" as "unwanted pregnancy".

The word "tcha" is a Pidgin English word that could be rendered as "catch"; in this context catch a pregnancy as Cameroonians would have it. In other words, become pregnant. These examples lend credibility to the assertion according to which the task of the Camfranglais translator is not a sinecure, the more so because word-play has become the hallmark of Camfranglais speech pattern as the following statement suggests: *"Le djo-l*à *est fini: sa nga a tcha le bele et elle veut qu'ils move* ç*a et il n'a pas le do*[The boy over there is in trouble: his girlfriend is pregnant and she wants them to remove the foetus but he does not have any money]*"* (Kouega 2003:138-9). Many borrowed lexical items are identifiable in this statement: "djo" is culled from one of the vernacular languages spoken in Cameroon. It refers to "man", "friend" or "partner". "Tcha" has other semantic equivalents: "catch someone red-handed", "arrest someone", "hold", and "take someone along with force" (Kouega, 2013, p.158). The word "do" refers to "money" as used in the following excerpt: *"Il m'a give les do que je lui ai ask hier* [He gave me the money I asked for yesterday]"*(*Kouega 2013:181). Notice that some words are spelled variably in Camfranglais. The word "give", for instance, is sometimes written as "gif", "gib", "gip", or "gi" (Kouega 2013:197).

This orthographical variance harbors bottlenecks for the unwary translator. Worse still, these heteronyms carry the germ of ambiguity for translators who have not mastered the rudiments of Camfranglais speech patterns. These examples lend credibility to the postulation according to which polysemy is part and parcel of Camfranglais semantics as the following example suggests: "*Je suffer ici trop; better je go*[I suffer a lot here; I would rather leave]" (Kouega 2013:140*)*. It is interesting to note that the word 'better' in this statement has a negative undertone as opposed to the signification of the same word in the following statement: *"J'*é*tais un peu sick, mais* ç*a va better*[I was a little sick but I am feeling better]" (Kouega 2013:140).

It is important to underscore the fact that this mode of writing is not an indication of the fiction writer's inability to write proper French. On the contrary, it is a deliberate quest for self-identity as ex-colonized writers endeavors to decolonize postcolonial literatures. As Ashcroft *et al*. (1989:2) would have it "What each of these literatures has in common beyond their special and distinctive regional characteristics is that they emerge in their present form out of the experience of

colonization and the tension with the imperial power, and by emphasizing their differences from the assumptions of the imperial centre. It is this that makes them distinctively postcolonial".

A critical reading of Kouega's textlends itself to the contention according to which the African palimpsest is at work in the creative writing a process, a phenomenon described by Zabus (1991:101) as the African writer's "attempts to simulate the character of African speech in a Europhone text". Thus, the translator of Kouega's text is invited to uncover the cultural layers and contesting indigenous languages in ferment behind the apparently homogeneous French language. To refer to Ashcroft *et al*.(1989:2) again, language appropriation is deliberate and emerges in its present form "out of the experience of colonization and the tension with the imperial power…" In other words, the ex-colonized writer tends to turn the reality of colonial history on its head by writing back to the imperial center from the empire. This transpires when indigenous peoples begin to write their own histories using the ex-colonizer's language. Linguistic appropriation permeates all facets of Camfranglais fictional writing including the sex industry.

This industry has endowed Camfranglais speakers with a gamut of words which may have implications for faithful literary translation as seen in the following excerpt*: "J'ai tchouk*é *la nga-l*à *mais je n'ai pas bien hia moh*[I have screwed that girl but I did not enjoy it]" (Kouega 2013:297). "Tchouké" comes from the verbal infinitive "tchouker" which could be translated literally as "to fix in position using a wedge". Rendering the sentence above as "I have fixed that girl in position using a wedge" would be a blooper! The lexeme "hia", derives from the Standard English word "hear". In this context, it conveys the idea of "have a feeling". The contextual usage of these words may not be obvious to a translator unaccustomed to the semantic jugglery that is the hallmark of Camfranglais, thus amplifying the likelihood of under translation or outright mistranslation. "Hia moh" is used in Kouega's text to convey the notion of "having a good feeling". Hence, "moh" is synonymous with the Standard English word "satisfaction" or "enjoyment". Another synonym for "tchouker" used in Kouega's text is "comb" as in: "*Toi aussi. How tu comb une ngo trois time en un seul day. Tu es became un coq?* [You too. How come you make love with a girl three times in a single day? Have you become a cock?]"(Kouega 2013:166). By resorting to different domesticating strategies of code switching, semantic shift, compounding, truncation, clipping and reduplication among others, Kouega creates a hybrid text that demands of readers to be not just bilingual but also bicultural. A problematizing of translation theory and practice is central to our reading of the works of Fouda, Fonkou, and Nganang.

In his text titled *Temps de chien*: *chronique animale* (2001), translated into English as *Dog Days* (2006:105).Nganang (2001:80) resorts to the device of language mixing for a myriad of reasons but the rationale he, himself, provides reads as follows:

> *La rue a une avance singulière tant sur les journalistes que sur les écrivains. Ce roman essaie de se mettre à l'école de la rue.… L'imagination et l'oralité des rues a fabriqué ces personages qui existent et que j'ai mis dans mon roman*. [The street exerts a unique pull both on journalists and writers. This novel attempts to depict the street school.…The imagination and orality of the street have produced the characters that exist and have been inserted them into my novel].

In his attempt to translate the speech patterns of indigenous populations in Cameroon, Nganang switches codes constantly. Code switching enables him to transpose the imagination, worldview and mannerisms of Cameroonians into standard French as seen in the following excerpt:

"*Ma woman no fit chasser me for ma long dis-donc! Après tout, ma long na ma long*![My woman no fit chasser me for ma long, dis donc! Après tout, ma long na ma long!]"(Nganang 2001:80). The translator resorted to a *calque* as a translation canon in the passage above. Jones (1997:53) defines the term "calque" as "a copy of an original. It is the borrowing of a foreign word or group of words by the literal translation of its components". The translator of Nganang's excerpt did a laudable job of providing an explicatory note in the glossary to shed light on the signification of the statement as follows: "My woman can't throw me out of my house, I tell you! After all, my house is my house!"(Nganang 2006:208). It is unclear why the translator resorted to a paratext as a translation device. Nonetheless, there is no question that the reader of the target text would be deprived of the communicative intent of the novelist had there been no glossary at all. Notice that the word "long" changes grammatical category from adjective to noun in Camfranglais discourse. The style of writing is labeled "transposition", a term that Jones (2014) defines as "a translation device which involves a change between grammatical categories, notably nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and prepositions, from the S.L. to the T.L" (p.77). In Nganang's text, the word "*long"* functions as a noun that refers to the speaker's "home" or "residence". The word "ma" is a possessive pronoun that the translator renders as "my".

The foregoing examples indicate that Nganang's writing style is particularly challenging for translators. More often than not, the translator has to resort to the technique of exegesis in a bid to surmount seemingly insuperable obstacles as seen in the following excerpt: "*La voix d'un lycéen lui disait: comme d'habitude, Mama Mado. Et ma maîtresse connaissait son goût. La voix d'un autre exigeait, put oya soté, for jazz must do sous-marin*[A student's voice would say: the usual, Mama Mado, and my mistress knew just what he wanted. Another's voice would order, put oya soté, for jazz must do sous-marin]" (Nganang 2001:57 and 84). Clearly, this passage would constitute a stumbling block for many a translator. The term "oya" is a Pidgin English word for "oil," in this case oil used in cooking. "Jazz" is a slang word for "beans" Kouega (2013:210) defines *jazz* as "cooked beans usually eaten with 'beignets' at the 'beigetariat'." Cameroonians use the term "jazz" to describe the trumpet-like sound that one's stomach would make if one ate a lot of beans, or beans that has been poorly prepared. The expression "jazz sous-marin" could be translated as "beans submerged in oil". The sentence above could better be translated into English as: "A student's voice would say: as usual, Mama Mado, and my mistress knew just what he wanted. Another's voice would order: put enough oil so that the jazz look like submarines."[4] The lexeme "submarines" refers to beans floating on oil.

As if to make the job of the translator even harder*, Nganang'sTemps de chien* is replete with expressions culled from pidgin English as the following example illustrates: "*Et mon maître lui, se retranchant dans son pidgin de crise, tout en déchirant sur son visage un bleu: Dan sapak i day kan-kan*-o[As for my master, he'd fall back into pidgin, his dialect of disaster, cursing the whores as he tore his face into a sick smile: *Dan sapak i day for kan-kan-o*]" (Nganang 2001:52 andNganang 2006:35). The code mixing evident in this excerpt is an indication of Nganang's acknowledgement of the fact that as a writer nurtured in a multilingual context, he is straddling multiple linguistic spheres.

Consequently, he spices his text with expressions culled from all the communicative crucibles that constitute his creative fount in a bid to make his diction respond realistically to the plurality of codes in which he writes. It should be noted that the word "sapak" is an indigenous language term for "whore". The expression "kan-kan", culled from Pidgin English could be translated as "a variety of". The word "day" also derived from Pidgin English translates the Standard English adverb of location, "there". The word "dan" is the pidginized form of the demonstrative adjective "that". In *Temps de*

[4] My translation.

chien, recourse to Pidgin English is not to be perceived as an indication of the character's illiteracy or inability to communicate effectively in standard French. Oftentimes, Nganang's characters choose to communicate in pidgin French also called Camfranglais simply as a sign of group solidarity or phatic communion. Echu (2006:1) observes that the "pidginization processes operational in the two varieties clearly illustrate the relationship between language contact and cultural dynamism, the two speech forms being an expression of the culture of the highly multicultural Cameroonian setting". Given that Nganang's text is deeply embedded in the cultural matrices in which it was conceived the mono-cultural translator would struggle with semantic decipherment.

Some pidginized expressions in *Temps de chien* harbor sexual innuendos, as the following excerpt seems to suggest: *"Quand elle avait disparu au loin, mon maître disait rêveur: Dan tendaison for dan woman na bigbig hein?*[When she has disappeared in the distance, my master would say, still dreaming of her ample behind: Dan tendaison for dan woman na big big huh?]"(Nganang 2001:69 and Nganang 2006:47). Notice that once again the translator has opted for a calque as a translation strategy for the second sentence in this excerpt. That is probably because there are several codes enmeshed in this single utterance: standard French, Standard English, and Pidgin. The reduplication of the word "big" translates the notion of "extremity" in the discourse of Camanglophones. Echu (2006:8) posits: "Camfranglais utterances are strongly marked by reduplication, which is the repetition of morphological and lexical elements within an utterance". He further notes that such repetitions emphasize the intensity or duration of an action; express augmentative and diminutive values, or simply constitute an inherent feature of one of the indigenous contact languages. To drive the point home, Echu provides the following examples: *doucement doucement* (very slowly or very gently), *nayor nayor* (very slowly or very gently), *penya penya* (brand new or in very good state), *beaucoup beaucoup* (in great quantity), *un peu un peu* (very little or in very small quantity), *depuis depuis* (a very long time ago)*, nyama nyama* (very small; of little significance or value).

The word "tendaison" used in the excerpt above is the Pidgin word for "buttocks." In this passage, Mini Minor's buttocks are depicted as elephantine. The sentence could be translated as: "When she had disappeared in the distance, my master would say, still dreaming of her ample behind: That woman has extremely big buttocks, huh?" It should be noted that the translator drew a blank when it came to translating the last segment of this utterance: "Dan tendaison for dan woman na big big huh?" With the exception of the word "hein" which she rendered as "huh", the utterance was simply transposed into the target text, thus leaving the target language reader in a quandary. A similar translation anomaly is noticeable in the translator's abortive attempt to render the following excerpt:

> *Femme, avait-il dit, tu n'as pas entendu ce qu'on raconte? Les voleurs ont déjà la potion pour se rendre invisibles ici dehors. N'est-ce pas hier ils sont entrés dans le salon de Massa Kokari et ont emporté sa télévision sous son nez? A di tell you!* (Nganang 2001:50)[Woman, he said, haven't you heard what people are saying? Thieves already have a potion that makes them invisible out there. Don't you know that yesterday they went into Massa Kokari's living room and took his television right from under his nose? A di tell you!]" (Nganang 2006:34).

The emphatic Pidgin English expression, "A di tell you!" could be translated as: "Take it from me!" Instead, the translator opted for a calque. Generally speaking, Cameroonians employ an expression like this in a bid to dispel doubt, especially when they sense disbelief on the part of the interlocutor. The word "massa" is the pidginized equivalent of the Standard English word "Mister" or "Master". These expressions are germane in Nganang's text given they speak to the polyglossia

that characterizes fictional writing in Camfranglais. Each linguistic variety invokes a specific type of discourse that is in synchrony with the social status of the speaker. The style in which *Temps de chien* is written amounts to a wedding of a European language—in our case French, with indigenous languages. This mode of writing is not the preserve of Nganang.

Mercédès Fouda in her 2001 novel titled *Je parle camerounais: pour un revouveau francofaune* follows in the footsteps of her compatriot by jettisoning the yoke of linguistic imperialism through the process of indigenization of language as seen in the following excerpt:

> Le gombo, c'est ce petit job périodique et sporadique dont les revenus disparaissent aussi rapidement que son homonyme, plante mucilagineuse dont on fait les sauces, et qui, surtout cuisinée avec du couscous, descend à toute vitesse dans la gorge[Gombo is this menial job that one gets occasionally whose revenue disappears as rapidly as its floral homonym, plant used in making soup which descends with ease down the gullet, especially when eaten with fufu](Fouda2001:36).

It should be noted that the term "gombo" refers to "okra". However, in this context it is used as an equivalent of the English language word "windfall". The task of the translator in instances like these resides in distinguishing the literal from the figurative usage of terms and expressions. Fouda constantly shifts meaning for the purpose of transcribing the speech patterns of Cameroonians into French as this example illustrates: *"Ces temps derniers les jeunes talents se sont vus affubler des substantives "yo" et "yoyettes,"surtout s'ils se sont branchés comme des fils électriques, avec pantalons en tire-bouchon*"[Lately, these youngsters have gotten into the habit of referring to each other as "yo"and "yoyettes", especially when they are dressed to the nines and look like electric poles]" (Fouda 2001:62). **The standard French words "jeune" and "talent" have been endowed with entirely new significations, especially when coupled as is the case in this context.**

It is worth mentioning that words such as "yo" and "yoyettes" are culled from Cameroonian indigenous languages. Both words describe young boys and girls that are smartly dressed. Kouega (2013:319) provides the following definition for the term "yo": "a lad; a young boy that dresses well" (Kouega 2013:319). For "yoyette" he provides this definition "a young lady, a young girl that dresses well". Kouega provides the following example to shed more light: "*La yoyette-là a put une belle dress au day*[That young lady is wearing a very beautiful dress today]". Unfamiliarity with the etymology of these words may render the task of the translator painstaking.The linguistic indigenization process that transpires in *Je parle camerounais* has the potential of making the text hard to translate by a non-Cameroonian translator on account of the cultural specificity of the lexical items chosen by the writer. The language manipulation that takes place in Fouda's narrative speaks volumes about the author's conscious attempt to translate orality into the written word; to domesticate the French language for the purpose of expressing an indigenous worldview and self-identity. In this vein, literary scholar, Ojo-Ade (1986:295), pertinently remarks that "On the whole, one may safely say that the dual culture of the African writer (the native culture he is writing about and the European culture he has imbibed) makes him first and foremost a translator before being a creative artist".

One may deduce from Ojo-Ade's remarks that the translation of indigenous imagination and cultural relativity into European languages remains a salient feature of Camfranglais literature. Thinking along similar lines, Gyasi (1999:151) posits that contemporary fictional writing in Francophone Africa is "a creative translation process that leads to the production of a …text in French and the development of an authentic African discourse." All too often, Fouda spices her text

with expressions that reflect the Cameroonian discourse, a trope that defies comprehensibility by translators who do not belong in the closed circle of Camfranglais speakers as seen in the following passage: *"Si depuis belle lurette vous vous démenez de-ci de-là sans trouver aucune occasion à saisir sur le plan matériel, vous pourrez toujours vous plaindre que le dehors est dur*[If you have been searching here and there in vain for a job to make ends meet, you could always complain that times are hard]" (Fouda, 2001:5). "Le dehors est dur" is a Cameroonianism[5] that translates the idea that times are hard. There is no denying the fact that an understanding of the contextual usage of Cameroonianisms employed in Fouda's *Je parle camerounais* would serve to enlarge the translators' comprehension of the text and make it more accessible than it would be if they were to know nothing of the circumstances surrounding the creation of the text.Fonkou's *Moi Taximan* (2001) harbors similar hurdles.*Moi taximan* seems to defy comprehension on account of code-mixing and the Africanization of French language as the following sentence shows:

> *J'avais remarqué dès les premiers jours que certains collègues clandos ne s'arrêtaient pas aux barrières de contrôle, ou que quand ils s'y arrêtaient, c'était pour échanger avec les* contrôleurs des plaisanteries puis repartir sans avoir servi ni le café ni la bière[I had noticed from the onset that some clando colleagues never stopped at the police checkpoint, or only stopped there to crack jokes with the controllers and leave without serving coffee or beer] (Foukou 2001:12).

Fonkou's recourse to the word "clando" could pose comprehension problems for the translator. Kouega (2013:164) defines "clando" as "a private car illegally used as a taxi". "Clando" also refers to a taxi driven by a driver who does not possess the legal documentation that grants him or her right to drive a taxi. Sometimes, Cameroonians use the word "clando" to describe a private car used to transport passengers illegally. "Clando" derives from the word "clandestine".

Like Fouda, Fonkou resorts to the technique of compounding in an attempt to acquaint his readers with the thought patterns of Camfranglais speakers: "*Les premiers contacts avec les mange-mille et les gendarmes coûtent cher, mais par la suite, tout le monde se connaît et il s'établit comme un contrat tacite*[The first encounters with the mange-mille and gendarmes often cost much, but with time, people get to know one another and a sort of tacit contract is established"] (Fonkou 2001:12). "Mange-mille" is a Camfranglais derogatory term used in Cameroon to describe corrupt police officers who take bribe from commuters. The French used by Fonkou in this novel has been described as "le français langue africaine" [African French] by Mendzo Zé (1999). Certain camfranglais lexical items are hard to decipher by a translator who is unaccustomed to the lexicon of this language. As Nstobé *et al*. (2008:90) would have it, *"Il faut absolument connaître la signification de ces mots dans leurs contextes spécificique*s [You really have to know the meanings and contextual usage of these words]" The difficulty stems from the fact that camfranglophones frequently borrow words and expressions from indigenous languages to embellish their parlance as this proverbial expression shows: "*L'Enfant qui vit près de la chefferie ne craint pas le 'mekwum'* [The child who lives near the palace does not fear the 'mekwum'] (Fonkou 2001:14). The word "mekwum" is an indigenous language word that refers to a masked dancer belonging in a village secret society.[6] The following excerpt is rich in borrowings from vernacular languages spoken in Cameroon:

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[5] Speech patterns and discursive mannerism typical of Cameroonians.

[6] Occultist group.

> *Dès que je me trouvais au milieu de cette foule ce furent d'interminables poignées de mains d'une vigueur à vous déséquilibrer, d'interminable "nge pin", "a pon", "a bha'a", toutes les expressions de l'approbation et de la satisfaction*[As soon as I found myself in this crowd, we shook hands incessantly and so vigorously that one could lose one's equilibrium, endless "nge pin", "a pon", "a bha'a", expressions of approbation and satisfaction] (Fouda 2001:93).

The foregoing discourse analysis lends itself to two seminal conclusions. First, Camfranglais fictional works are not canonical texts; rather they belong in the category of peripheral ethnographic texts that require an interpretive approach to literary criticism. Second, in the light of the multilayered substratum from which Camfranglais literature derives its special qualities, translators need to have recourse to multidimensional frameworks in a bid to accomplish faithful translation-one such model, namely the Hermeneutic-*Exegetic model* is discussed below.

The Hermeneutic-exegetic Translation Model

According to Anthony Pym (1995), *Hermeneutics* or the theory of interpretation was propounded by Friedrich Schleiermacher in his lecture titled "On the Different Methods of Translation" (Störig 1963:38-70) delivered to the Royal Academy of Science on 24June 1813. To paraphrase Pym, energetic, systematic, and fecund, Schleiermacher' theory underscores the importance of interpreting, not just the latent (hidden) significations embedded in a literary text but also the situational dimensions that constitute the matrix in which the text was conceived. This theorist further puts emphasis on the importance of the hermeneutic circle as an indispensable foothold in the exegetic interpretation of meanings embedded in the deep structure of the literary text. The hermeneutic circle supports and facilitates the critical analysis of the literary text by enabling the translator to come to grips with the fact that one's understanding of a text is conditioned by a conscientious engagement with both the linguistic and extralinguistic elements that account for textual holism. Schleiermacher further observes that neither the whole text nor any individual components can be understood without reference to one another, and hence, the notion of a circle. The circularity inherent in hermeneutics lends its readily to usage in the translation of literature written in Camfranglais because these texts are sociological novels the complete meaning of which can only be unraveled by taking cognizance of their cultural, historical, temporal and spatial constituents.

The *hermeneutic* theory goes hand in hand with the theory of *exegesis* in translation studies because the science of interpretation is integral to the theory and practice of translation. According to Margot (1975:156) serious exegetical study of the source text is a prerequisite for producing a translation of high quality". He further notes that translations are like women: if they are beautiful they are not faithful, if they are faithful they are not beautiful. *Exegesis* is understood to mean a thorough analysis of the content of a text for translation purposes. Textual analysis is not limited to linguistic components; rather it englobes both verbal and non-verbal constituents of the source text.

Exegesis entails the translator's effort to unravel the significations embedded in the original text in its wider literary, historical, geographical and cultural contexts. In other words, the translator must constantly ask questions such as: What am I translating? For whom am I translating? Where and when am I translating? Why am I translating what am I translating? In doing so, translators must endeavor to rid themselves of shackles imposed by the quest for formal correspondence. The *Hermeneutic- Exegetic* translation model that we propose in this study is a sine qua non for success in translating literature written in less commonly taught languages such as Camfranglais because this

sort of literature is culture-specific. The *Hermeneutic- Exegetic* paradigm is analogous to cultural adaptation, a translation mode that enables the translator to comprehend the nuanced cultural significations of the source text. Steiner (1975:318) observes that the hermeneutic-exegetic approach to translation sees the relationship between translation and translator as an act of interpretation. As he puts it, "the translator-interpreter creates a condition of significant exchange". *Hermeneutics* deals with the ways in which the translator discovers meaning embedded in the situational dimensions of the source text. Viewed from this perspective, *Hermeneutics* is a kind of discernment process; ways of mining the holistic meaning, as it were. On the other hand, *exegesis* is a method of attempting to understand a text.

The exegete studies the lexical meanings and grammar of the source text in order to discern that which the author intended to convey. *Exegesis* entails applying various rules of interpretation to a given text in a bid to expound and reveal the essence of its message(s). In the Hermeneutic-Exegetic translation process, the translator strives to understand what led to the writing of the text, and what circumstances prevailed during the author's time of writing. In sum, the Hermeneutic-Exegetic process is inductive. Induction involves three processes, namely observation, interpretation and application.

Conclusion

This paper provides readers with information on the plethora of modes of writing Camfranglais literature. It is also a call to translators of Camfranglais literature to reflect on the nature of texts and translate for different readerships, and to propose paradigms suitable for translating such literature. It is critical for translators of Camfranglais literature to be conversant with evolutionary trends inherent in the theory and practice of translating such literature.

A mastery of French language alone does not suffice to do justice to the translation of the novels discussed in the examples discussed in this chapter. Translators of Camfranglais literature cannot but be like the texts they translate—at once multilingual and multicultural. Given the polytonality and multilingual composition of Camfranglais literary texts, translators must conceive appropriate models suitable for translating these texts. A multifaceted framework of translation rendition is useful and imperative.

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