



Revue D.L.T.

Didactique, Linguistique et Traduction

Vol. 02 – N° 01 – 30 juin 2024

Translation of Culture-Specific Items in the English Translation of Mariama Bâ's Une si longue lettre

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Pour citer l'article:

Faniran, Keji Felix (2024). Translation of Culture-Specific Items in the English Translation of Mariama Bâ's Une si longue lettre. *Revue D.L.T. Didactique, Linguistique et Traduction*, 02(01), 185-198.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.12635394>

Reçu: 17/02/2024; **Accepté:** 11/05/2024, **Publié:** 30/06/2024

Distribution électronique par ASJP-CERIST :

<https://www.asjp.cerist.dz/en/article/248356>



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| Titre français | en | Traduction des éléments culturels spécifiques dans la traduction <i>d'Une si longue lettre</i> de Mariama Bâ |
| Mots clés | | Cognitif : élément culturel spécifique ; littérature ; prose ; traduction |
| Résumé | | |
| <p>La traduction d'éléments spécifiques à la culture, comme en témoigne à la littérature africaine, vers une langue étrangère devient un problème, surtout lorsque les traducteurs ne font pas partie de la même communauté linguistique que les romanciers. Cette étude tente donc d'analyser les éléments culturels spécifiques dans la traduction anglaise d'<i>Une si longue lettre</i> (1981) de Mariama Bâ, traduite par Modupe Bode-Thomas sous le titre <i>So Long a Letter</i> (1989). L'étude emploie donc des méthodes de recherche descriptives et comparatives pour analyser les données d'un point de vue textuel. Nous adoptons la théorie interprétative de la traduction de Seleskovitch et Lederer (1970). Cette théorie est basée sur la compréhension, la déverbalisation et la reformulation des significations du message de textes. L'étude conclut qu'une connaissance suffisante des cultures des langues impliquées dans la traduction devrait être acquise par le traducteur d'un texte littéraire. De même, il existe des méthodes de compensation permettant au public cible de simplifier les mots et expressions prétendument difficiles et culturellement fondés dans la traduction.</p> | | |

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| Keywords | Cognitive ; culture-specific item ; literature ; prose ; translation. |
| Abstract | |
| <p>Many studies have depicted different ideas on the translation of prose by different translation scholars. But their cultural perspectives have not been treated immensely most especially, the issues relating to the translations of African prose texts and their narrative elements. The translation of culture-specific items as evident in African literature into foreign language becomes an issue most especially when the translators are not in the same linguistic community with the novelists. This study, therefore, attempts to analyse the culture-specific items in the English translation of Mariama Bâ's <i>Une si longue lettre</i> (1981) which was translated by Modupe Bode-Thomas as <i>So Long a Letter</i> (1989). Random sampling is used to elicit data from the source and the target texts. The study therefore employs descriptive and comparative research methods in analysing the data from the textual perspective. We adopt Seleskovitch and Lederer's Interpretative Theory of Translation (1970s). The theory postulates that the translation of a text should produce the same aesthetic effects on target readers as the original text does and this can be achieved through the theory's components - comprehension of meaning, deverbalisation and reformulation of meanings. The study concludes that sufficient knowledge of the cultures of the languages involved in translation should be acquired by the translator of a literary text. Equally, there are methods of compensation to allow the target audience to simplify the purported difficult words and expressions that are culturally based in translation. Such compensation devices can be in forms of adaptation and the use of illustrative devices in order to avoid under/over translation</p> | |

1. Introduction

Translation has gone beyond the orthodox consideration of a language and its structure or a mere replacement of one language with another; rather, the transfer of one culture into another has turned out to be the order of the day in translation in recent years. Prose as one of the genres of literature is embedded with some attributes which are distinctly different from other genres of literature. Prose can be naturally

narrative, expository, descriptive, explanatory, epistolary, fictitious, non-fictitious biographic and autobiographic. The major characteristic attribute of prose is that it is written in a straight-forward language. Despite the fact that prose has a simple approach in analysis, its translation is entrenched with some inherent challenges as a result of variations in the stylistic approaches of the novelists, cultural and linguistic divergences, above all, linguistic variances make prose texts uneasy to translate as applicable to other genres of literature. Researches have shown that translating literary texts is not an easy task and it poses many problems for translators most especially the translation of prose text like this nature which is culturally bound. According to Ziaul (2012:97).

“Evidently prose-translation is the translation of novels, essays, fiction, short stories, comedy, folktale, biography, works of criticism and science fiction. It is a type of literary creativeness where the written-work of one language is re-created in another. It is an inherent idea that the translation of poetry is very problematic, yet we have to agree that the translators also have to face lots of difficulties when it comes to translating prose”.

In Ziaul’s remark, it is observed that prose can be in many forms and he believes that prose translation is a creative work which is bound to face some translation problems like other genres of literature. Fernandez (2012:1) is also of the opinion that literary texts display many peculiarities as well as social and cultural aspects of our lives, thus, it can be said that literary translation is one of the major ways of communicating across cultures since literature is a mirror of the society. Larson (1984:956) stated that when cultures are very different, it is often very difficult to find equivalent lexical items. However, when cultures are similar, there is relatively less difficulty in translating. This is because both languages will probably have terms that are similar or more or less equivalent for various aspects of the culture. The peculiarity of translating prose text like other genres of literature is based on the linguistic and cultural features that are inclusive on the source and the target texts. Looking through our text in this study, *Une si longue lettre* written by Mariama Bâ in 1982 as translated into English by Modupe Bode-Thomas in 1989. first, it is observed that, there are lots of culture-specific items embedded in the work. Furthermore, it is also observed that there are areas of convergence and divergence in the way the cultural elements are translated into English.

There are thousands of culture-bound items which translators have to deal with. In (1958), Vinay and Darbelnet give some examples of such areas of culture such as time divisions, job positions and professions, food, drinks, baking, particular aspects of social life. Aziz and Muftah (2000:12) discuss some of the problems involved in cross-cultural translation. Ana Fernandez Guerra (2012) analyses the strategies employed by learners to translate from Spanish to English and some cultural terms from four extracts from different literary texts. Moruwawon (2010:211) in his work *Translating African Proper names* in three African texts states that translating

African names poses problems to translators as a result of differences in cultures. Newmark (1998) contributes a lot to theories and practices of translation. Vinay and Derbelnet proposed seven translation procedures in 1958. Jean Delisle et al in (1999) work on translation terminology. All these researches work together to know more about the translation of cultural elements in literary works.

The English translation of cultural aspect of *Une si longue lettre* is full of some challenges most especially on the translation of cultural-bound items such as proverbs, cultural proper names and songs. Furthermore, the diversity in the styles of the novelist and that of the translator poses a standing problem in the course of the analysis of the novel. Therefore, this research is building on the foundation laid by the researchers mentioned above among others, to consider the culture-items in a literary text *So Long a Letter* so as to ascertain the possibility or impossibility of translating culture-bound expressions from French into English. Thorough comparison of the two texts, there are some areas of disparity and resemblance in the two cultures will be highlighted and explained so as to identify some of the translation problems confronting translators in the process of translating culture-specific and specialised linguistic terms in literary work.

2. The Background Information about the Novelist

The novel, *So Long a Letter* is the first of the two novels written by Senegalese author Mariama Bâ in 1982. She uses the epistolary form to reflect on the female condition in postcolonial Senegal. The novel's appeal to most Western educators is attributed to its thematic focus on the negative effect that Islam and polygamy have on women. The novel validates Western feminist's assumption or myth of a subordinated African woman who is eternally victimised by her religion and culture.

3. The Background Information about the Translator (Modupe Bode-Thomas)

Modupe Bode-Thomas, a Lecturer at Ibadan Polytechnic, translated *Une si longue lettre* into French as *So Long a Letter* in 1989. In the translated text, she has produced an elegant work of art. She succeeded in using English language to depict Senegalese culture and presented accurately the information in the original text in a precise and clear manner. The translation of the text is a good and detailed representation of the original text.

4. Translation of Prose

Literature has three major genres- prose, drama and poetry. Each of the genres of literature has its own generic characteristics. Invariably, there are diverse approaches to each of the genres. Prose as one of the genres of literature has a simple approach in its translation but this depends on the level of complexities of the cultural and linguistic features in the prose text. The aim of translating prose text is closely related to the socio-cultural context which conceives it. According to Savory (1957:54) "A translation may include any of the idiomatic expressions which is peculiar to its language and which the translator sees fit to adopt: but it needs not, because of this, possess the style which the readers may expect" from the above

quotation, it can be deduced that style is an essential characteristic of every piece of writing in which prose writing is not an exception. The style that a novelist employs is of paramount importance to a translator of a prose text. The focus of translating is expected to be based on the interest of the audience. According to Ziaul (2012:98):

“The translation of literary prose is different from literary creativity because its existence depends on the existence of an object of translation, a work to be translated. However, it is not always possible to sketch a separate border line in the real literary procedure between prose-translation and all creative literature. In some examples, a work may not be a translation in the common sense, but it may not be possible to express it absolutely as a work of literary creativeness. Several labels that are used to designate these works include- “open translation”, “faux”, “a work on the themes of”, and “founded on”. The particular meanings of these designations rely on the language”.

According to Ziaul’s assertion, the translation of literary prose is distinctly different from literary creativity all depend on the language and the use of it. In outlook, literary prose translation may appear simple but in most cases it depends on the intrigue and the choice of words of the prose text. As well, the style of the source text novelist needs to be considered to make up the acceptable style of the target language. According to Seleskovitch and Lederer (1986:54)

“For translation to be in line with its proper plan, that is, that of discourse, it is not at the conceptual surface value of words that comparison of language is done with another. the use of words does not depend on equivalent meaning in language, what should be established is what each language expresses individually, for example English and French to make us understand the discourse, and not what does French words mean in English or English words mean in French”¹.

The two scholars believe that translation is not made based on conceptual surface value of words but a function of how the target audience can have the message according to their language in a proper way.

5. Translation of African Cultural Elements

The word “African cultural elements” are concerned with African folktales, myths, legends, folk ballad, folk speech, folk songs, folk musical instrument, folk dances, proverbs and other traditionally valued features. According to Peter, Low (2005:187) “Song-translating is considerably different from, for instance poetry

¹ « Pour qui l'étude de la traduction reste attaché a son plan propre, c'est-à-dire, au discours, ce n'est pas la surface conceptuelle des mots qu'il convient de comparer d'une langue a l'autre, l'emploi des mots dépend pas de leur équivalence significative en langue, ce qu'il convient d'établir, c'est ce que dissent séparément chacune de ces langues, l'anglais et le français par exemple, pour faire comprendre le discours, et non ce que les mots français signifient en anglais ou les mots anglais en français » (Our translation).

translation, because the verbal and non-verbal messages out to be transmitted simultaneously”. In essence, as it is applicable to folk songs, it is applicable to other folkloric elements. According to Ilo Isaiah (2006:5):

“The oral tradition of proverbs, riddles and stories from which modern African literature draws is often spoken of as though such tradition is an exclusive patent of African. It seems easily forgotten that other societies had similar tradition in their pre-literate era, which came to feature in their written literature”.

This is to remark that proverbs, riddles and all the likes are inclusive in folkloric elements. In essence, incantation among other African folkloric elements is mythical in application. Therefore, the translation of Yoruba incantations is not easy because it interacts with the metaphysical forces. Most parts of folkloric items are colloquial in nature and translating them into standard foreign languages such as English, French, Spanish, Arabic, etc, dispels their beauties. A translator of folkloric items must intimate himself or herself to cultural operations that are involved in the translation because the translations of folkloric elements are challenging tasks for linguistic, cultural, musical, ecological, emotional and psychological reasons. Each of the folkloric elements has its proposed function to perform; this assertion is supported by Kaindl, K. (2005 : 4):

“Songs and lyrics have an umbilical relationship with culture, which can have an immediate and considerable impact on skopos of the translating mode. Thus, from a translational point of view, the skopos of rendering a song may not necessarily be communicating by content; rather, it could be singability, rhythm and rhyme”.

It can be further remarked that folkloric elements are translated according to their functions. In the translation of songs, the translator needs to consider the function of the song in a play.

6. Interpretative Theory of Translation

Seleskovitch and Lederer (1986:10) state that “translator and interpreter have the same objective: to communicate the mind of another” Above all the translator should play the role of interpreter. Speech exits before and the translator’s task is to communicate the mind of the author. He is not going to analyse the words or alienate proposition out of context to convey the meaning of the original text. We adopt Seleskovitch and Lederer’s Interpretative Theory of Translation (1970s).The theory postulates that the translation of a text should produce the same cognitive, affective and esthetic effects on target readers as the original text does and this can be achieved through the theory’s components - comprehension of meaning, deverbalisation and reformulation of meanings.

7. Translation of Culture-Specific Items in the English Translation of Mariama Bâ’s Une si longue lettre

Senegal Cultural Delicacies and their English Translations (Senegal food)

In Senegal, there are some indigenous delicacies that may not be available in some other French and Francophone countries. Most often, there are names of Senegalese food which cannot be translated into English. We may not have the same cultural equivalents of such items as a result of its cultural implication. Several occasions, Modupe Bode-Thomas makes those lexical words untranslatable because she may want to avoid wrong use of cultural transplantation. Such names retain their cultural names and are explained in the text. Some examples are as follows:

1. L'achat des denrées alimentaires de base me mobilisait toutes les fins de mois; je me débrouillais pour n'être pas à court de tomates ou d'huile, de pommes de terre ou d'oignons aux périodes où ils se raréfiaient sur les marchés; j'emmagasinai des sacs de riz « siam » dont les Sénégalaises raffolent. (p.99).

Bode-Thomas's translation:

The purchase of basic foodstuffs kept me occupied at the end of every month; I made sure that I was never short of tomatoes or of oil, potatoes or onions during those periods when they became rare in the markets; I stored bags of 'Siam' rice, much loved by the Senegalese. (p.51).

Modupe Bode-Thomas does not translate *Siam* instead she makes use of loan-word by repeating the same food stuff as written in the source text in the target text. Word like (Siam) is a type of Senegalese food (rice) which is not available in English delicacy but the translator makes use of it so as to avoid mistranslation. Maraima Bâ's presentation of her novel depicts her background in order to reveal her creative presentation of her culture and deployment of language to achieve her purpose and to convey her message to the entire audience. The constant use of loan-words and direct translation techniques by the translator brings about the naturalness of the messages on the source text in the target text.

2. Satisfaite, Tante Nabou refit sa valise, mit dans ses paniers tout ce que l'on trouve en brousse et qui est cher en ville: couscous sèche, pâte d'arachides grillées, mil, oeuf, lait, poulets. (p.60)

Bode Thomas's translation:

Satisfied, Anty Nabou packed her suitcase again, filled her basket with all that could be found in the village and is dear in town: dried couscous, roasted groundnut paste, millet, eggs, milk, chicken.

Likewise, in the above extract, *couscous sèche*, is translated into English as *dried couscous*. The translator uses the same word for the type of food because there is no cultural equivalent of such food in English. As we research to search for the word in the English dictionary, we are unable to get the direct meaning of the word

couscous. Therefore, this shows that there may be a similar foodstuff like *couscous* but it may not be the same.

3. Hier, elle nous offert de l'excellent *caacri* pour étancher notre soif. (p.16)

Yesterday, they offered us some excellent *Thiakry* to quench our thirst (p.7)

In the last two cases, the names of the food are not translated but reformulated or re expressed as stated by the Interpretative Theory of Translation to fit into the method of word formation in the target language- transliteration. Also, both the translator and the novelist gave additional note to explain the nature of the food items – that is what each of the food items represents in the Senegalese culture while *thiakry* is described as a drink prepared by mixing sugared curds with well-kneaded millet flour; it is cooked in steam. The theory, Interpretative Theory is virtually heightened and sensitive in this study; Seleskovitch and Lederer propose that the three translation elements need to be followed comprehension, deverbilisation and reexpression. The theory has its place to solve translation problem and most especially in the translation of cultural bound-items which are full of indigenous thoughts and folkloric items. The same principle is applicable in this study. Modupe Bode-Thomas employs diverse strategies to keep her audience aware of the Senegalese cultural items and how they are translated into English. The use of *couscous*, *thiakry* and *Siam*. The translator expresses her language dexterity by translating *caacri* as *thiakry*. This shows a level of dynamism as concluded by Nida.

4. L'odeur du *lakh* qui tiédit dans des calabasses, flotte, excitante. (p.13)

The smell of the *lakh* cooling in the calabashes pervades the air, exciting. (p.16).

Therefore, *lakh* is a kind of Senegalese food, though, it cannot be found in English but it has an equivalent in English. For instance, *lakh* is described as Senegalese food prepared from roughly kneaded millet flour, which is cooked in water and eaten with curds. In a real sense, *lakh* is described as a kind of food that is full of aroma. This can be described as *efiri* in Yoruba language and it is called “a scent leave” because its sweet-smell scent. Furthermore, it is not impossible to have some cultural items untranslatable, for instance, the so-called *lakh* is culturally untranslatable. We believe that the only way out is to make a lexical borrowing of the word.

8. Translation of Funeral Terminologies

In this study, funeral events play a major role. Senegal is a Muslim country, and the issue of negotiating the passage to modernity without renouncing a Muslim identity has been at the heart of much Senegalese literature from the onset. The funeral rite in Senegal is relating to Islamic rite as depicted in the novel. For Bâ, it was important to establish Ramatoulaye's adherence to an identity as a practicing Muslim woman at the outset. The novel begins with an account of the death of Ramatoulaye's estranged husband, Modou, but it is thirty-five pages before we learn of their estrangement. Instead, we are immersed in the procatice of *mirasse*, the period of mourning and seclusion for widows, during which all the faults of the

deceased are to be brought to light. The process of disclosing the faults of the person who died was closely explicated in the novel. The novelist uses funeral-related language to convey her message to the entire audience. At this juncture, we want to examine the level of fidelity in the translation of some funeral terminologies in the text. The success of translation is determined by the extent of cultural traits shared between the source language and the target language. Through the description of Modou Fall's funeral event, for instance, both the writer and the translator give the following picture:

Le troisième jour, même allées et venues d'amis, de parents, des pauvres, d'inconnus. Le nom du défunt, populaire, a mobilisé une foule bourdonnante, accueillie dans ma maison dépouillée de tout ce qui peut être volé, de tout ce qui peut être détérioré... mes larmes coulent et ma voix s'ajoute faiblement aux *Amen* fervents qui mobilisent l'ardeur de la foule, à la chute de chaque verset. L'odeur du *laax* qui tiédit dans des calebasses, flotte excitante. (p.13).

Bode-Thomas's translation:

On the third day, the same comings and goings of friends, relatives, the poor, the unknown, the name of the deceased, who was popular, has mobilised a buzzing crowd, welcomed in my house that has been stripped of all that could be stolen, all that could be spoilt... My tears flow and my voice joins weakly in the fervent 'Amen' which inspires the crowd's ardour at the end of each verse. The smell of lakh cooling in the calabashes pervades the air, exciting. (p.5).

The English version of the extracts cited above is the literal translation of the original French version. The translation is word-for-word and the structures of sentences in the two texts are almost identical. The translator makes use of calque by tracing the structure of the source language and presents it in the target language. The word 'welcomed' can be replaced with 'gathered', or the verbal phrase "received to mourn" which is closely related to funeral language. Modupe Bode-Thomas wants to portray vividly African customary way of greeting at funeral -so also is the expression "the same comings and goings of friends" that is contained in the translation. It gives the picture of the way people are trooping in and out of the house to greet the widows of the deceased. In her English translation from the above extract, the translator uses direct techniques of translation such as literal translation and calque to convey a message to the audience. In the above extract the term *laax* as written in the original work is different from the orthography of the translated version which is written as *lakh*. The translator makes use of calque to be able to trace the structure of the sentences in the extract.

Another examples of such terms are the following:

1. Siguil ndigale (p.5) is the form of condolence that also expresses the hope of moral recovery.

The above expression is used in the translated version of the work as reflected in the original text. This shows that there the cultural transposition has set in the translated work. According to Herve and CO. (1992:29) “cultural transposition is a cover-term for the various degree of departure from literal translation that one may resort to in the process of transferring the content of a source text in into the content of a target culture.”

2. Gongo- Sweet-smelling and stimulating powder

3. Mirasse – this is an injunction by Koran that a dead person be stripped of his most intimate secrets after death.

The above funeral terminologies are not translated into English but the translator only explains their meanings in the latter parts of the novel. Modupe Bode-Thomas employs such technique of translation to avoid under/over translation of technical words and expressions.

9. Translation of Religious Terminologies

Religious and funeral phenomena are interrelated for instance: original text, ‘*So Long a Letter*’ depicts the Islamic tradition as well as African culture – aspect of polygamous marriage. Majorly, Mariama Bâ centres the plot of the novel under the Islamic religion and some Islamic languages and chants are used to explain the type of religion being used. For instance:

Some words that have religious connotations are explained in the notes at the back of the text. Examples of such words are, are *laobés*, *mirasse*, and *gongo*. These are loan-words and their meanings are rooted in the Islamic religion thus the translator has to explain their meanings in the latter part of the target text so as to enable readers understand the message of the text. The meanings of these words as explained in the text are as follows:

Mirasse – this is an injunction by Koran that a dead person be stripped of his most intimate secrets after death. These exposures crudely explain the deceased’s life. The *muezzin*’s invitation to the *Timiss* prayer was persuasive. The word *Timiss* in this statement is a religious prayer term which can only be understood by the practitioner of the Muslim religion. Some religious terms that have the same meanings across cultures are not explained in the note Examples of such expressions are: ‘Bissimilai’ (p.69), the “Imam” (p.38) “Amen” p.5 (so be it). Also in page three (3) ‘the *Zem-Zem*, the miracle water from the holy place of Islam religious kept by each family, is not forgotten”.

The expression *Singuil ndigale* has religious connotation. This is a form of greeting can only be understood by those who are conversant with Islamic religion or those who understand Senegalese religious culture. Therefore, it is explained in the note at the back of the text.

There are some other common religious expressions that cut across cultures with the same pronunciations and meanings. Examples of such words that are used in the text include: Bissimilai, Amen, Alhaja, Alhaji, ‘Tidjanism’ (name for major Islamic brotherhood in Senegal) has different spelling in the French version ‘Tidianisme’. This is to ensure that the method of forming words in each of the two languages is maintained. In essence, all the above religious terms are not translated into the target language.

1. Bissimilai! Bissimilai! Toi, si fanée. (p.134).

Bode-Thomas’s translation

2. Bissimilai! Bissimilai! You so withered. (p.73).

In the consideration of the religious terminology, Bissimilai! is an Arabic word which means, in the name of God in English. The expression is not English one but the translator makes use of in the target text. It is used as word-for-word translation. But, the target audience can understand the expression. *Une si longue lettre* is full of Islamic terminologies. Some of the terminologies do not have their equivalent items in the target language.

3. Bissimilai ! Bissimilai ! Qu’as-tu osé écrire et m’en faire la messagère. !
 Tu as tué un homme. Sa figure déconfite me le criât.
 Tu as éconduit l’envoyé de Dieu pour te payer de tes souffrances. C’est Dieu
 Qui te punira de n’avoir pas suivi le chemin de la paix. Tu as refusé la
 grandeur (p.134).

Bode-Thomas’s translation

Bissimilai ! Bissimilai ! What was it you dared to write and make me messenger of? You have killed a man. His crestfallen face cried it out to me. You have rejected the messenger sent to you by God to reward you for your sufferings. God will punish you for not having followed the path towards peace. You have refused greatness! (p.72).

Words like *Bissimilai!* Dieu take different forms in their translation, Dieu is the equivalent of God in French while *Bissimilai!* is conceived to be a loan-word in English. This is because it is a common expression that people are aware of around the world.

4. Bissimilai ! Bissimilai ! Toi, si fanée, qui veux choisir. Un mari comme une fille dix-huit ans. La vie te garde une de ces surprises. (p.135).

Bode-Thomas’s translation

Bissimilai ! Bissimilai ! You so withered, you want to choose a husband like an eighteen-year-old girl. Life will spring a surprise on you. (p.73).

5. Le zem-zem, eau miraculeuse venue des Lieux Saints de l’islam. (p.9).
 The zem-zem, the miracle water from the holy places of islam. (p.3).

6. Et monte, réconfortante la lecture du Coran; paroles divines. (p.13).
Comforting words from the Koran fill the air, divine instructions. (p.5).
7. L'on nous dit dans le Coran que le troisième jour la mort enfle et emplit sa tombe. (p.18).
And yet we are told in the Koran that in the known that on the third day the dead body swells and fills its tomb (p.9).
8. Le vieux Tamsir, frère de Modou et l'Imam de la mosquée de son quartier (p.21).
Old Tamsir, Modou's brother and the Imam from the mosque in his area. (p.10)
9. Tandis que la Nationalité II, traversant Thiès et Tivaouane, berceau du Tidianisme (p.57).
While the National 2 goes through Thies and Tivaouane, cradle of Tidjanism (p.20).
10. Voice Sindia, puis, à gauche, popenguine où les gourmettes festoient à la pentecôte (p.57).
Here, Sindia, and to the left, popenguine, where the Catholics celebrate white sun (p.27).

From the above, it can be remarked that, the religious related expression are translated by the use of literal translation and loan-word, for instance, expressions like *Le zem-zem*, *Koran*, *Tamsir*, *l'Iman*, *Thiès et Tivaouane*, *berceau du Tidianisme*, *Sindia*, *popenguine*, *gourmettes*, *pentecôte*. In the expression *le zem-zem*, only the article *le* is translated as *the*. The word *Koran* has a change in the orthography of the consonant *k* in the translated version while others are borrowed words and expression from the source text. Finally, the word *gourmettes* is equivalently translated as *Catholics* while *pentecôte* is translated as *white sun*. Bode-Thomas does not use the literal translation in translating the word *pentecôte* like other words and expressions are re-expressed according to Interpretative Theory of Translation.

10. Conclusion

Going by the insight from the Interpretative Theory of Translation employed in this study, It is observed that most culture-bound elements in the source text are translated with the use of literal translation technique. Equally, loan-word plays a very vital role in this study; this is as a result of the traditional elements that are embedded in the source texts.

In this study, Mariama Bâ tries to give clues to the employed cultural elements so that they can be easy for the translator who is not from the milieu of the novelist to go along in with the cultural representations in the translation exercise. Furthermore, to avoid lack of comprehension of certain cultural elements on the part of the target audience and to alleviate the problem of untranslatability in the translation of prose, certain illustrative measures are put in place. In addition to that there are methods of compensation to allow the target audience to simplify the purported difficult words and expressions that are culturally based in translation.

Such compensation devices can be in forms of adaptation where a translator can adapt to the target language culture. More so, the use of calque as one of the direct translation techniques can be of great value for absolute understanding of culturally based words and terminologies.

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