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Explicitness and implicitness of (linguistic) hybridity in translation

Abstract

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Today, hybridity has become a topic of interest in translation, especially when it comes to translating literature from postcolonial contexts. This is, for instance, the case with French-speaking African literature, where several authors embed a hybrid language in their writing, thus producing multilingual literary works. From a translation perspective, literary productions adopting this writing style expose the translator to a major challenge: translating not only from a single language into another, but also from two or more languages into another. The difficulty is compounded by the explicitness and implicitness of hybridity features. This article seeks to explore the explicitness and implicitness of (linguistic) hybridity in literature and its implication for translation. It uses French-speaking African literature to illustrate both concepts.

Keywords: hybridity, explicit, implicit, translation, function, purpose

1. Introduction

Hybridity as a topic and an issue has become a key subject of interest in postcolonial literature and a focus of research in French-speaking African literature, as will later be presented. However, "hybrid writing" did not emerge from postcolonial contexts (e.g., postcolonial French-speaking Africa), even though the postcolonial context has earned special attention regarding hybridity-related studies. Following the Russian Revolution in 1917, for instance, several Russian authors migrated to Western Europe and started writing in the language of their new country. Literary productions by Russian "émigré writers" of this period were

marked with what can be correctly termed as "cultural hybridity", thereby reflecting both Russia (country of origin) and the new homeland. Forced or voluntary migration, political and other conflicts, along with personal interests, etc., have driven many authors across the globe to leave their homeland and settle abroad, where they continued publishing, most often in the language of the new homeland, thus producing literary works with hybridity markers, whether cultural or linguistic.

With respect to French-speaking African literature, on which the examples in this paper are based, hybrid writing has been adopted by authors in the diaspora and those living on the African continent. Hybridity in French-speaking African literature is the reflection of the status of French on the continent. Many African countries have been using French alongside several other local or national languages following French colonisation. In this context, the French language is highly influenced by local languages in its daily use, as the users constantly borrow from their native tongue(s) when speaking French or adapt the use of French to their native tongue(s). This is what French-speaking authors who have adopted a hybrid writing style try to reflect in their literary productions. The resulting literary works are often written in French but are highly influenced by local languages and specific usages of French.

From a translation perspective, hybrid texts by French-speaking African authors can be considered multilingual, i.e., a single text can harbour multiple languages. In fact, when translating a French-speaking African literary work, translators are not only confronted with the main language of writing (i.e., French); they also must deal with one or more languages that evolve alongside French in the text, which makes the translation process even more challenging. Often, the (multilingual) hybrid language in French-speaking African literature results from two main writing strategies: hybridity markers are embedded either explicitly or implicitly in the main language of writing (i.e., French). This paper seeks to explore the explicitness and implicitness of hybridity in literature (with a focus on French-speaking African literature) and its implication for translation.

2. Attitude of French-speaking African writers towards French

Before exploring the characteristics of hybridity in French-speaking literature, it is perhaps important to point out that the issue of hybridity is, in general, extensively explored in African literature. Though a hybrid-writing style may be perceived as a major characteristic of African literature, it is not, however, a writing style that is generally accepted by all authors. In discussing the attitude of French-speaking African writers towards French, Chevrier (1984; 1999)

identifies three categories in which he classifies French-speaking African writers: *les inconditionnels*, *les réticents,* and *les réalistes*.[1] The first category, *les inconditionnels* (unconditional acceptance), includes writers who embrace and advocate for the French language. *Les inconditionnels* are unconditional supporters of French who, like Leopold Sedar Senghor, consider the colonial language as a medium of cultural expression in a context where most local languages remain uncodified, and their great number and variety standing as a threat to newly-formed African nations (Bandia 2006: 352). The second category, *les réticents* (the reluctant), includes writers who stand for and encourage the use of African languages in literature. Bandia (2006: 352) points out that "[t]hey strongly encourage vernacular language writing, but generally acknowledge its limitations in reaching a wider readership" and consider French as "nothing more than a translation language, a mere channel or vehicular language". French-speaking African writers like Ousmane Sembene, Birago Diop, or Zaghoul Morsy can be included in this second category. The third category, *les réalistes* (the realists), includes authors who have a realistic and pragmatic view of French. Bandia explains that "[f]or the 'realists', French becomes a kind of Trojan Horse, so to speak, through which they can encounter, resist and demystify the imperialist subtexts of neocolonialism" (2006: 352). For Ndeffo Tene (2004: 10–11), this category further includes authors who have deliberately chosen to write in French because the French language helps them reach a wider audience. However, in choosing to do so, they adopt a realistic use of the French language, which includes reflecting local or national use of the French language. One of the most prominent authors in this category is Ahmadou Kourouma, for whom writing in French and continuing to think in his mother tongue (Malinké) was a means of 'intellectual liberation' (*libération intellectuelle*), given that it is impossible to be completely free without owning the language that fosters the ability to express oneself freely and fully (Kourouma 1997: 117–118).

Hybrid texts by French-speaking African authors fall within the third category in Chevrier's classification, i.e., *les réalistes* (or the *evolutionist/experimenters* using Okara's (1990) terminology). Describing this last category of French-speaking

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1| A similar categorization of the attitude of English-speaking writers has been put forward by Okara (1990). He also classifies African writers and their relationship to European languages – with a focus on English – in three categories, namely: the *neo-metropolitans* who advocate for the use of impeccable European languages in African literary works and assimilating to western canons (comparable to Chevrier's *les inconditionnels*); the *rejectionist* who advocate the development of the literature of the colonial centre at the expense of the development of the continent's literature using local languages (comparable to Chevrier's *les réticents*); and the *evolutionist/experimenters* who advocate for the potential to subvert European languages in literary works and adapt them to the local African usage (similar to Chevrier's *les réalistes*).

African writers, Bandia (2012: 430) explains that their "artistic use of puns, neologisms, orality, and linguistic codification serves to appropriate language and resist cultural domination".

3. Exploring the characteristic of (linguistic) hybridity in French-speaking African literature

Building on Grutman's concept of *hétérolinguisme* defined as "the presence in a text of foreign idioms, in any form, including varieties (social, regional or chronological) of the main language" (1997: 37; my translation[2]), and the concept of *extrastructuralism* (Flydal 1951) adapted to translation (Kembou Tsafack, 2019), hybridity in the French-African novel can be considered as the use of concepts, idioms, expressions, terms, etc. from other languages in the main language of writing, e.g., French, including its local use (Kembou 2020). From this definition, I will discuss two major aspects that characterise linguistic hybridity in the French-speaking African novel: orality and code-switching.

Orality: African literature has a long tradition of orality. Given that most African languages were not written before colonisation, literature (poetry, songs, tales, etc.) was orally passed on to the next generation. With colonisation and the adoption of European languages like French, written African literature in European languages emerged and, in part, drew inspiration from the African oral tradition. Orality is present in French-speaking African literature through translation, particularly the translation of songs, poetry, tales, and proverbs from African languages into French. Orality is undoubtedly the reason why African literature in European languages is often contrasted with translation since African literary productions in European languages like French are usually translations of the oral traditions and roots of their authors. Bandia (2008: 31) suggests that by virtue of their lifeworld, African writers are bicultural or bilingual (I will add plurilingual) subjects with the ability to negotiate the boundaries between a minor language and a major language. This, for instance, was the case of Ahmadou Kourouma, an advocate of hybrid writing, who could negotiate the boundaries of Malinke – his mother tongue – and French.

Code-switching: a major characteristic of French-speaking African literature is code-switching. For Gumperz (1982: 59), code-switching is "the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems". Shana Poplack (2015: 2062) adds that it is "the mixing, by bilinguals or (multilinguals) of two or more languages in

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2| "la présence dans un texte d'idiomes étrangers, sous quelque forme que ce soit, aussi bien que de variétés (sociales, régionales ou chronologiques) de la langue principale" (Grutman 1997: 37).

discourse, often with no change of interlocutor or topic". For instance, in the novel *Temps de chien* of Patrice Nganang (2003), there are several instances of code-switching between French and Pidgin-English or another local Cameroonian language, as illustrated in the examples below:

1) En voilà une qui aura remis Massa Yo à sa place, me disais-je en jubilant. Et mon maître, lui, se retranchait dans son pidgin de crise, tout en déchirant sur son visage un sourire bleu : "*Dan sapack i day for kan-kan-o*" (Nganang 2003b: 64; my emphasis).

2) Massa Yo quant à lui frappa une fois de plus le comptoir de son bar du plat de sa main et répéta, suffisamment fort pour que même la rue puisse l'entendre : "*Ma woman no fit chasser me for ma long, dis-donc ! Après tout, ma long na ma long*" (Nganang, *Temps de chie*n, 2003b: 97; my emphasis).

On discussing code-switching in African literature, Bandia (1996: 141) points out that:

The most common form of [code-switching] […] used by African writers is that between vernacular language and the European language. When African writers cannot adequately express African sociocultural reality in a European language, they resort to the use of indigenous words and expressions. African novels in European languages are often replete with words and expressions from the native languages of the characters in the novel.

French-speaking African writers do not only use code-switching because they evolve in a multilingual environment. It is also a move towards appropriating French or even decolonising the language and rejecting the French influence over French-speaking African countries. Nganang (2004) states to this effect that "sooner or later, the French-speaking African writer comes to understand that he also must once again wage the battle with France, a battle that led to the independence of his country fifty years ago" (my translation).[3]

By adopting a hybrid writing style, French-speaking African writers not only put their readers who are not familiar with the author's sociocultural milieu in a challenging position (difficulty for understanding), but they also make the work of the translator even more difficult, as translating their literary works – beyond linguistic hybridity – also raises the issue of available resources in the target language. In the next section, I will elaborate on this as I explore two major strategies of hybrid writing in French-speaking literary works, i.e., explicitness and implicitness.

3| "[t]ôt ou tard l'écrivain Africain d'expression française se rend compte qu'il doit lui aussi mener une fois de plus avec la France ce combat qui il y a cinquante ans aboutit à l'indépendance de son pays" (Nganang 2004).

4. Translating the implicitness and explicitness of hybridity in French-speaking African literature

4.1. Defining the explicitness and implicitness of hybridity in French-speaking African

French-speaking African writers adopting hybridity as a writing style do this either implicitly or explicitly in their literary works. Both strategies contribute to the complexity of hybrid texts.

4.1.1. Explicit Hybridity

I use the term "explicit hybridity" to refer to hybridity markers that even a casual reader can easily identify as foreign elements embedded in the French language. A casual reader should be understood as a reader who has no knowledge about the linguistic and cultural peculiarities of the writer's socio-cultural background and therefore 'naively' reads – i.e., without this knowledge (cf. Sunwoo 2012) – but still can identify hybridity markers as being such in a text (Kembou Tsafack 2019). Most often, explicit hybridity is present in French-speaking African hybrid texts as textual manifestations of multilingualism, making the interaction between the French language and other languages spoken in the writer's socio-cultural and linguistic setting explicit (including the setting of the novel's plot). In a written text, explicit hybridity is often present through lexical borrowing and code-switching, marking an explicit switch from the main language of writing.

Regarding (lexical) borrowing, let us consider a few examples of explicit hybridity in the French-speaking African novel:

3) Hayatou, fais le *daà*, prononce la prière. Qu'Allah leur accorde le bonheur, gratifie leur nouveau foyer d'une progéniture nombreuse et leur donne la *baraka*. […] *Amine* répond mon père. […] S'il te plait, *Baaba*, écoute-moi : je ne veux pas me marier avec lui ! (Amal 2020: 20; my emphasis).

4) On ne saurait être heureux tout seul alors que tout autour de soi, les gens croupissent dans la misère. Ma'awèlè a raison, la richesse de La'afal n'a d'autre origine que le *Kôn* (Salé 2014: 14; my emphasis).

5) […] C'est même le contraire qui devait surprendre tout homme sensé. C'est à croire qu'il a signé un pacte avec la *Mami wata*. La'afal est trop riche (Salé 2014: 14; my emphasis).

6) Le récit purificatoire est appelé en malinké un *donsomana*. C'est une geste. Il est dit par un *sora* accompagné par un répondeur *cordoua*. Un *cordoua* est un initié en phase purificatoire, en phase cathartique (Kourouma 1998: 10; my emphasis).

7) […] Mais la réalité d'un procès l'en avais 6laisir6 : il faudrait rester au pays pour le mener et malgré le 6laisir qu'il avait découvert de se réveiller dans un lit

d'hôtel, sans être chassé par la petite Marie, il n'était pas prêt à cet effort pour Ngountchou, *bei aller Liebe* (Nganang 2018: 76).

8) *A fit do fô Cameroun wôsi ben Bella wé di do fô Algeria*. Parce que je peux faire ce que Ben Bella a fait en Algérie pour le Cameroun (Nganang 2018: 293; my emphasis).

In example 3, there are four cases of explicit hybridity: 'da'a', 'baraka', 'Amine', and 'Baaba' are borrowed by Amadou Amal from Fulani and respectively mean 'prayer to Allah', 'blessings', 'amen' and 'dad'. In examples 4 and 5, Charles Salé uses two explicit hybridity markers, 'Kôn' and 'Mami wata', which he borrows respectively from Ewondo[4] and Cameroonian Pidgin-English. 'Kôn' is used in Ewondo to refer to witchcraft or any practice intended to harm mystically, while 'Mami wata' (literally "mother of water") refers to a mermaid. In example 6, Kourouma uses words from Malinke[5] for which he provides explanations in the text: 'donsomana', a purificatory tale, 'sora', a tale-teller, and 'cordoua', a person who has been initiated and undergoing purification. The last example is from Nganang, who uses the German expression 'bei aller Liebe' (in spite of all love). A major characteristic of explicit hybridity and its use in French-speaking African literature is that, in most cases, writers explain them in French using intralingual translations (see example 4) or footnotes and endnotes (this is the case for examples 3 and 7).[6]

4.1.2. Implicit Hybridity
Implicit hybridity is the opposite of explicit hybridity. I use the concept to describe hybridity markers in a text that require the reader (or the translator) to be knowledgeable about the social, cultural, and linguistic background of the writer. Implicit hybridity in the French-speaking African novel is built on French but borrows from the grammar and syntax of other languages through linguistic calques. Implicit hybridity may include proverbs, tales, songs, etc. translated into French, phrasal or compressed metaphors, euphemisms, semantic claques, and/ or shifts in denotation and connotation (see also Biloa 2006). To identify, understand and interpret an implicit hybridity marker appropriately, the reader (or translator) must have linguistic and cultural knowledge of both French and other languages embedded into French (Kembou Tsafack 2019). Implicit hybridity is often present in the text in the form of literal translation.

Let us consider the following examples of implicit hybridity in the French-speaking African novel:

4| Ewondo is the language spoken in the Centre region of Cameroon.

5| Malinke is a West African language spoken in southern Mali, eastern Guinea, and northern Ivory Coast.

6| Section 2 briefly discusses some of the ideological underpinnings behind the choices of these authors as well as their attitude towards French.

9) Les français *nous sortent par les yeux* avec leur francophonie et leur CFA […], il est temps qu'ils foutent définitivement la paix (Beti 1999: 47; my emphasis).

10) […] moi, Mboudjack, je n'allais pas me laisser humilier par leurs insinuations sans montrer mes crocs. En fait, *je tapai mon corps pour rien* (Nganang 2003b: 26; my emphasis).

11) Oui, Panthère parlait *comme si on l'avait attaché* (Nganang 2003b: 113; my emphasis).

12) Tu viens là, tu trouves que *les gens parlent leur affaire et tu mets ta bouche.* Qui a *demandé ta bouche même* ? (Beti 1999: 149; my emphasis).

13) Le soleil en face. Je *laisse pleuvoir mes yeux*, car le bonheur, il faut y être habitué (Beya*la* 1987: 169; my emphasis).

14) « Il était une fois … », commença Grand-mère, et je posai la bassine sur ma tête. Elle avançait devant, en s'aidant de sa *troisième jambe* (Beyala 1998: 90; my emphasis).

As can be seen from the examples above, it is almost impossible to distinguish implicit hybridity from standard French as it is built on French grammar and syntax. In general, implicit hybridity requires the reader and/or translator to be extremely careful lest they misidentify or misinterpret their occurrences. To avoid any misunderstanding or misinterpretation, the reader and/or translator must have the appropriate linguistic and cultural knowledge to identify and properly interpret the implicit hybridity markers embedded in the French language. In example 9, the expression 'sortir par les yeux' – literally 'get out through the eyes' – is an example of semantic calque resulting from the translation and transposition of lexical semantic expressions from African languages into the French language (see Biloa 2003: 112). Therefore, 'sortir par les yeux' should be interpreted from its implicit meaning, i.e., 'to irritate' or 'to annoy'. A well-known French expression with a similar meaning is 'sortir par les oreilles' (i.e., have had enough). The same procedure is used in examples 10–13 with the expressions (10) 'taper son corps pour rien' (literally 'beat one's body for no reason'), (11) 'parler comme si on avait été attaché' ('speak as if one had been tied up'), (12) 'mettre sa bouche dans les affaires des gens' ('to put one's mouth in people's businesses') and (13) 'laisser pleuvoir ses yeux' ('to let it rain on the eyes'). With the necessary linguistic and cultural knowledge, these expressions will be interpreted respectively (by a reader or translator) as follows: 'to bother' (10) – 'there was no reason to bother me', 'to be talkative' (11) – 'Panther was a real talkative', 'to snoop' (12) – 'You meet people discussing, and you start snooping around', 'to cry' (13) – 'I start crying …'. Example 13 shows a different procedure in creating/using implicit hybridity, i.e,. syntactic calques. When Beyala uses 'troisième jambe' ('third leg'), she is metaphorically referring to a 'walking stick'. Beyond semantic or syntactic

calques, forms of implicit hybridity markers in a text may also include semantic, grammatical, register and structural shifts, and neologisms.

4.2. Translating explicit and implicit hybridity

4.2.1. Main issues and translation approaches

Approaching the translation of explicit and implicit hybridity, I will start by pointing out that I see translation as a three-step process, building on the observations of Nida and Taber that the translation process phases comprise:

> (1) analysis, in which the surface structure (i.e., the message as given in language A) is analysed in terms of (a) the grammatical relationships and (b) the meanings of the words and combinations of words, (2) transfer, in which the analysed material is transferred in the mind of the translator from language A to language B, and (3) restructuring, in which the transferred material is restructured in order to make the final message fully acceptable in the receptor language (Nida/Taber 1969: 33).

Therefore, the three translation phases include analysis, transfer, and restructuring. Further development of the three phases by Nida and Taber is proposed by (Gerzymisch-Arbogast 2008), who adapted the process into partially interrelated reception, transfer, and (re)production phases, as shown in Figure 1. This distribution of the translation process into three phases helps to consider translation problems which may arise at three levels, each requiring a different intervention. The reception phase is concerned with identifying salient features in the text, e.g., implicit or explicit hybridity markers in the text. The transfer phase deals with the contrastive analysis of the source and target cultural systems. The (re)production phase consists of (re)producing the target text against the language and cultural resources identified in the transfer phase.

Language and Culture Systems (LCS)
Compatibility of features LCS1/LCS2

Transfer

Identification of
- **atomistic (salient) features**
  (e.g., explicitness of reference)
- **bot-atomistic patterns**
  (e.g. information structure, isotopy)
- **holistic patterns**
  (domain knowledge, cultural knowledge)

Decision making process:
- ranking individual features, patterns and knowledge systems according to purpose, norm/conventions , recipient type of target text
- selecting features and patterns for target text formulation
- contextualizing features into target text

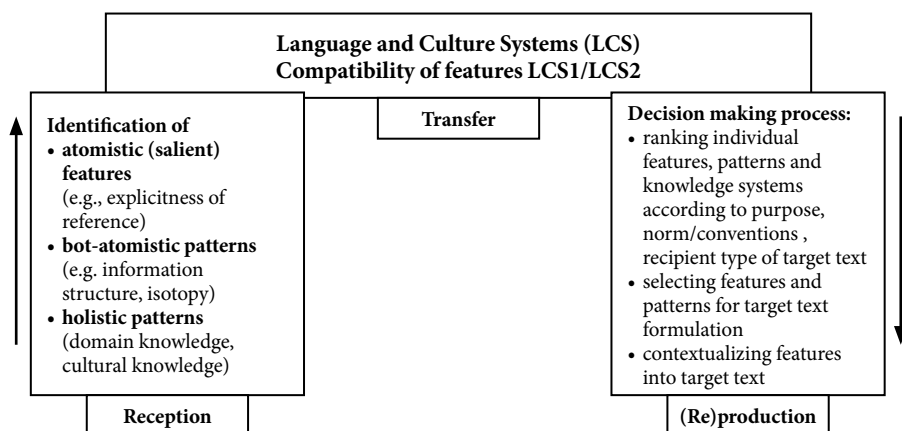**Reception**

(Re)production

Figure 1. Three-phase translation process (Gerzymisch-Arbogast 2008)

Each of the phases illustrated in Figure 1 represents a translation problem when it comes to translating hybrid texts and specifically French-speaking African novels:

Reception phase – while identifying explicit hybridity markers in a text could be simple even for a casual reader, implicit hybridity can be trickier. It may lead to mistranslations if its markers are not properly identified in the reception phase. Furthermore, after identifying explicit and implicit hybridity markers, the translator still needs to secure their meaning, interpret them properly, and, by extension, identify their contextual function to serve as the basis for translation.

Transfer phase – at this level, the translator proceeds with a contrastive analysis of the linguistic and cultural systems of the source language/text against the linguistic and cultural systems of the target language. When translating explicit and implicit hybridity markers from the French-speaking African novel, the translator may be confronted at the transfer phase with the unavailability of linguistic or cultural resources that are 'directly' equivalent to the resources identified in the source text. These are cases of non-equivalence at the word- or text-level (see Baker 2011: 18–23).

Reproduction phase: the main challenge at this level is identifying the right translation strategy for explicit or implicit hybridity markers. Close attention must also be paid to the translation purpose and its implementation through the (re)production stages.

The translation of implicit and explicit hybridity is viewed and approached differently in literature. For classical translation theorists like Catford, every language can be said to be endowed with some type of hybridism (he uses the term *varieties*) which normally should remain untranslated, i.e., it should be preserved in the translation. Where translation is attempted, an equivalent variety (e.g., a dialect) should be identified and used for translation (Catford 1965: 84–85). For Nida (1976: 54), the role of those who participate in discourse is marked by language variation, which should be kept invariant in the translation. To achieve this, he suggests resorting to *concordant translation*, *more-or-less literal translation*, and *nonliteral translation* (footnotes).

Considering the translation of implicit and explicit hybridity in French-speaking African literature, the views of Catford and Nida align with the perspective of Bandia (1994: 101–104), who points out that implicit and explicit hybridity is used to assign the appropriate language to the protagonists in a novel. He further points out that the use of a hybrid language, whether implicit or explicit, aims to enhance the *Africanness* of the novel. The translator should therefore retain aspects of the text that account for the *Africanness* of the text. Therefore, the general tendency is to adopt *foreignizing* strategies (Venuti 1995; 2008) when dealing with explicit and implicit hybridity. The idea is to bring the reader of the translation as close as possible to the linguistic and cultural setting of the source text. Further discussing the

translation of hybrid language in postcolonial contexts, Bandia (2012: 430) states that "the translator must not only deal with different language registers but must also represent what are, in fact, different languages spoken by groups with different linguistic habits and traditions". He, therefore, further advocates the idea of preserving the *Africanness* of the text because the writer adopts this form of writing to "salvage and translate the history of subaltern cultures in the postcolony" (ibid.).

4.2.2. Contextual function and purpose for translating hybridity

As discussed above, most studies tend to be in favour of the preservation of explicit and implicit hybridity in the translation. In the case of French-speaking African literature, this will be keeping hybridity in the translation in order to preserve the source text's *Africanness* (Bandia 1994), style and tone of the source text (d'Almeida 1981), world-view (Klinger 2015). Although these strategies significantly contribute to the translation of implicit or explicit hybridity, they do not explore the important role of the contextual function and the translation purpose in translating hybridity, whether implicit or explicit. In fact, a combination of both can help achieve better results during the translation of implicit and explicit hybridity, thereby helping to solve the issue of *untranslatability* and unavailability of (equivalent) linguistic resources in the target language. Let us consider the following example to illustrate the contextual function and the role of the translation purpose:

> 15) […] moi, Mboudjack, je n'allais pas me laisser humilier par leurs insinuations sans montrer mes crocs. En fait, *je tapai mon corps pour rien* (Nganang 2003b: 26; my emphasis).

In example 15 above, 'je tapai mon corps pour rien' is a case of implicit hybridity. Formally, it can be characterised as being a transposition of a local Cameroonian language into the French language. The sentence may be grammatically correct in French, but it requires a knowledge of Cameroon's linguistic landscape to be correctly interpreted. If the passage were translated literally, it would mean, 'I was beating myself for no reason'. However, if considered from the perspective of a Cameroonian language (like Yemba and Medùmba), it would mean 'my efforts were useless' and have as its contextual function to express the uselessness of one's efforts, or more simply, needless efforts. Failing to consider this contextual function in the translation process can potentially lead to misrepresentation and even a mistranslation in the target language. In the English translation of Nganang's novel, the following translation is available for Example 15:

> I, Mboudjack, wasn't about to let myself to be humiliated by their insinuations without baring my fangs. In the end, *I took a beating for no good reason* (Nganang 2006: 14; my emphasis).

Translating *je tapai mon corps pour rien* with *I took a beating for no good reason* gives the impression to English readers that Mboudjack got into a fight and was defeated, which, of course, does not match with the contextual function of the implicit hybridity in the French text. This can further be illustrated with another example from *Temps de chien*, but this time with a German translation:

16) "*Bo-o*, tu fais ça avec lui ?" me demanda le chien galeux quand il se fut mis en sécurité (Nganang 2003b: 52; my emphasis).

"*Oho*, machst du das mit ihm?", fragte mich der räudige Hund, nachdem er sich in Sicherheit gebracht hatte (Nganang 2003a: 12).

In example 16, *Bo-o* is a case of explicit hybridity, whereby *Bo-o* is used by one communication partner to refer to another, consciously avoiding using his name to establish proximity with the communication partner he is addressing. *Bo-o* can therefore be said to have a phatic function in this context. In the German translation, it can be noticed that *Bo-o* has been rendered with *Oho*, which is rather an interjection. Thus, the German translation mistranslates the explicit hybrid element.

As can be seen from examples 15 and 16, the contextual function – i.e., the role played by a specific explicit or implicit hybrid in its immediate context of use, whether in relation to the communication situation, the communication partners, the author or the subject matter (Kembou Tsafack 2019: 67) – is a key indicator when it comes to the translation of explicit and implicit hybridity. By relying on the contextual function, the translator can therefore be certain of achieving better translation results for explicit or implicit hybridity, thus avoiding any form of mistranslation.

Using the contextual function as the basis for translating explicit and implicit hybridity may be rightfully perceived as a *domesticating* strategy (Venuti 1995; 2008), which may, at first sight, mean that the contextual function steers against the *foreignizing* trend observed in the literature (e.g., Bandia 1994). However, deciding on foreignizing or domesticating hybridity should not be a decision *ex nihilo*. This is where the translation purpose comes into play. The primary guiding element in decision-making during the translation of hybridity should be the translation purpose. Applying the translation purpose means that translation results can vary depending on the purpose that guided the translation process or, specifically, the translation of hybridity. When it comes to hybridity, three possible translation purposes are available to choose from (as discussed by Kembou 2020).

Firstly, the translation purpose set for translating explicit or implicit hybridity could be to introduce the target language readers to the linguistic and cultural realities of the source text, for instance, by preserving the *Africanness* (Bandia

1994: 101) in the French-speaking African novel, to bring the target language reader closer to the author (Schleiermacher 1992: 42) or to adopt a *foreignization* strategy (Venuti 1995).[7] In this case, translation decisions will consist mostly in adopting strategies that help keep explicit and implicit hybridity in the target text to remind readers in the target language that they are reading a foreign text. Examples of translation strategies at this level may include borrowing, calque, glosses, footnotes, literal translation, etc.

> 17) *A bo dzé-a*, dit une chienne borgne qui s'était jointe à l'étonnement et à l'amusement du chien galeux. Tu vas devenir comme nous (Nganang2003b: 52; my emphasis).
>
> "*A bo dzé-a*", said a one-eyed female who'd joined in on the surprise and amusement of the mangy mutt. "You'll be just like us" (Nganang 2006: 12; my emphasis).

Secondly, if the purpose of translation is to give the target audience the feeling they are reading an original work in their language, i.e., to bring the author closer to the target language reader (Schleiermacher 1992: 42) or adopting *domestication*[8] strategies (Venuti 1995), translation decisions will mostly consist in adopting strategies that allow for an equivalent concept in the target language, such that explicit and implicit hybridity completely disappear in the target text, e.g., by using adaptation or equivalence strategies.

> 18) Un homme plus compatissant que Massa Yo s'approcha du malheureux et lui demanda: "*Tara*, ils t'ont *compressé* ?" (Nganang 2003b: 70; my emphasis).
>
> Einer, der mehr Mitgefühl aufbrachte als Massa Yo, näherte sich dem Unglücklichen und fragte: "Kumpel, haben sie dich *gefeuert*?" (Nganang 2003a: 103; my emphasis).
>
> German gloss: Another, more compassionate than Massa Yo, approached the unfortunate man and asked: "*Mate, did they fire you*?".

In Example 18, the German translators chose to bring the author closer to the target audience by finding an equivalent to 'Tara' in the German language and using it in the translation. The German equivalent chosen is 'Kumpel' (which could mean 'buddy', 'mate', 'friend', 'pal', etc.) and clearly conveys the idea of closeness and proximity embedded in the explicit hybridity marker 'Tara'.

7| Venuti's concepts of *foreignization* and *domestication* were inspired by Schleiermacher's. Therefore, in Venuti's sense, *foreignization* and *domestication,* mean bringing "the target language reader closer to the author" and bringing "the author closer to the target language reader" respectively in Schleiermacher's sense.

8| See footnote 4 above.

Finally, the purpose of the translation may be to preserve both the linguistic and cultural realities of the source and the target language, in which case translation decisions will mostly consist of a combination of the two previous hypotheses, e.g., through a borrowing strategy coupled with an equivalent or explanatory translation.

"*Menmà, you tcho fia*?" Massa Yo lui répondit indifférent : "Je mange la paix? Si tu veux passer, passe tranquillement-o" (Nganang 2003b: 52; my emphasis).

"*Menmà, you tscho fia? – Sohn deiner Mutter, hast du Frieden*?" Massa Yo antwortete ihm gleichgültig: "Lebe ich von Frieden? Wenn du in meine Kneipe willst, gut – dann aber ruhig und friedlich!" (Nganang 2003a: 40; my emphasis).

German gloss: "*Menmà, you tscho fia? – Son of your mother, do you have peace*?" Massa Yo replied indifferently: "Do I live on peace? If you want to come to my pub, fine – but then quietly and peacefully!"

The strategy adopted by the German translator seeks to preserve both source language and target language linguistic (and cultural) knowledge. To do this, they resorted to a combination of borrowing and explanatory translation to translate the explicit hybridity marker 'Menmà, you tcho fia'. It is worth pointing out that the explanation in this translation remains literal, as 'Sohn deiner Mutter, hast du Frieden' (literally 'Son of your mother, do you have peace?') remains an untypical construction in German, but still helps the reader to grasp the meaning of the explicit hybridity marker.

From the observations above, translation decisions and results in the target language depend on the purpose assigned to the translation in general, and specifically the translation of explicit and implicit hybridity.

5. Conclusion

This article discussed the concept of implicit and explicit hybridity and its relevance for translation studies. These two concepts were illustrated by French-speaking African literature. It was observed that hybridity is increasingly becoming a topic of interest in translation studies, although it has already been explored in literary studies for much longer. For translation, hybridity (explicit or implicit) poses several issues, the main challenge being the availability of resources in the target languages to translate hybridity markers compounded with possible untranslatability. Classical approaches to the translation of hybridity seem to all agree on keeping hybridity markers in the source text in the translation, thus foreignizing the translation (Venuti 1995) or bringing the target reader closer to the author (Schleiermacher 1992). Beyond these classical approaches, this article pointed to the fact that two key factors played a significant role when deciding on

the strategy to be used in translating explicit or implicit hybridity, i.e., the contextual function of hybridity markers and the translation purpose (three hypotheses for the translation purpose were made in this article). It is suggested here that the combination of both factors can help achieve not only better translation results but also evidence-based translation decisions.

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