

An Ideological Study of Igbo Features in the French Translation of Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*

Mebitaghan Rita Ochuko
Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria

Traditionally, translation research is centered on language transfer and problems of transposing author's intention from Source Language (SL) to Target Language (TL). The cultural turn in translation studies which gave birth to such trends as postcolonial translation studies, saw research in translation expand to include cultural, social, and political considerations. Translation is then conceived as intercultural communication. Postcolonial translation scholars identify with other disciplines (cultural studies, anthropology, ethnography, etc.) and posit that culture can be mediated by language. Literatures of colonized societies existed first in oral forms and later in written form expressed in European languages as direct translations from indigenous languages; hence they are considered as retranslated texts manifesting traits of hybridity. In a postcolonial context, hybridity gives an identity to the writer and his text and places literature in its historical perspective. Against this background, this paper conceives translation as an intercultural activity with the translator acting as a mediator who communicates between cultures. It discusses Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* (PH) and cultural mediation in the French translation *L'hibiscus pourpre* (HP). Set in south-eastern Nigeria, the novel depicts amongst others, social norms of the Igbo people all expressed in English and the Igbo language. Drawing on postcolonial translation studies and Toury's Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS), the study conceives the translator as a bicultural individual who mediates between cultures; it raises such questions as what cultural elements in the text are translated and how? To what extent are these translated elements in touch with the original? What is the role of the translator as a cultural mediator? A comparative analysis of parallel pairs of Igbo features and norms in Source Text (ST) and Target Text (TT) are examined.

Keywords: postcolonialism, cultural mediation, cultural identity, postcolonial translation studies, the Igbo people

En général, la recherche en traduction est axée sur le transfert du langage et les problèmes de transmettre l'idée de l'auteur de la langue de départ (LD) à la langue d'arrivée (LA). Le tournant culturel dans les études traductologiques qui a mené aux approches telles que les études traductologiques postcoloniales, prend en considération des lors, les éléments culturels, sociaux, et politiques. La traduction, est alors, conçue comme une communication entre cultures. Des traductologues postcoloniaux étudient d'autres domaines (la culture, l'anthropologie, l'ethnographie etc.) et suggèrent que le langage peut servir de facteur médiateur en ce qui concerne la culture. La littérature des pays anciennement colonisés existait d'abord en forme orale et ensuite, en forme écrite exprimée en langues européennes comme une sorte de traduction directe des langues autochtones. Ainsi, cette littérature est considérée une retraduction ayant des traits d'hybridité. En contexte postcolonial, l'hybridité porte la

marque d'identité de l'auteur et de son texte. Elle place la littérature dans sa perspective historique. Alors, notre étude conçoit la traduction comme une activité interculturelle et le traducteur agissant comme un médiateur culturel. Elle aborde la médiation culturelle dans la traduction française de *Purple Hibiscus (L'hibiscus pourpre)* de Chimamanda Adichie. Ce roman qui a comme cadre géographique, la région sud-est du Nigeria, décrit entre autres les moeurs sociales igbo en langue anglais et Igbo. S'appuyant sur les études postcoloniales et les études descriptives de traduction de Toury (DTS), l'étude considère le traducteur comme un individu biculturel qui agit comme médiateur entre cultures. Elle cherche à mettre aux points certaines questions: quels sont les éléments culturels traduits dans le texte et par quels moyens le traducteur a-t-il réalisé sa traduction? Y-a-t-il un écart entre le texte de départ (TD) et le texte cible (TC)? Quel est le rôle du traducteur en tant que médiateur culturel? Enfin l'étude fait une analyse comparative des éléments culturels igbo dans le TS et le TC.

Mots Clés: postcolonialisme, communication culturelle, identité culturelle, études traductologiques postcoloniales, le peuple igbo

Introduction

The increasing growth of globalization necessitates much translation across the globe—literary and non literary. Literary translation is an activity that entails transfer of a people's culture and civilization from one language to another. To translate an author is to have contact with a given people and a given culture and civilization, situated in a given geographical space and time and as Bokiba (p. 112) puts it:

Le texte nous rapporte toujours les lectures de son auteur, mais aussi l'histoire et la culture de son pays, de son peuple, de la société ou il vivait quand le texte a été écrit et qu'il essaie de recréer à travers son œuvre.¹

These projections are presented to the translator who finds a means to capture them to a foreign target audience. Translation in this regard involves message transfer between two languages belonging to two different cultures shaped by their historical experiences. It could be from SL (dominant language) to another TL (dominant language) or from SL (dominated language) to TL (dominant language) and vice versa. Translation from a dominant language to a dominated language could aid in developing and enriching the latter and aid it to attain some features of a modern language. When the translation is from a dominated language to a dominant language, it leads to an understanding of the culture and civilization of the language of its expression. Language use in this direction is a kind of recognition of the language of another and gives an indication of a people's identity to the target audience.

Literature (African Literature) is essentially an expression of the oral traditions of the people, which later existed in written forms expressed in European languages. The translations of such literature often resulted in literary diglossia as observed by Bokiba (p. 113) "Traduire dans une langue européenne une réalité africaine ordinaire d'une culture—source orale conduit au phénomène de diglossie littéraire".² Discourses on literary translation, its nature or function in recent decades, especially from the cultural turn consider translation from the view point of cultural transfer from source cultures to receptor cultures. The interactions between cultures have opened discussions in translation research which gave rise to trends such as postcolonial translation

¹ The text conveys always the author's vision, the history and culture of his people and of the milieu from where he writes and which he attempts to recreate in his work "Translation Mine".

² Translating African oral cultural features in a European language results in literary diglossia.

studies, an approach which “specifically critiques the lingering Eurocentric or western bias in the study of translation” (Delabastita, 2011, p. 73).

Postcolonialism, Cultural Mediation, and Postcolonial Translation Studies

Postcolonialism is generally used to cover studies of the history of former colonies, studies of powerful European empires, resistance to the colonialist powers and, more broadly, studies of the effect of the imbalance of power relations between colonized and colonizer. (Munday, 2008, p. 131)

Postcolonial translation studies (a perspective in which linguistic and other cultural issues do not take place on an equal basis (Dirk, 2011, p. 71)) flows from the cultural turn in translation studies. Evidently, the cultural turn of the 1990s brought great changes in translation research and “a shift to seeing translation as embedded in a dual cultural context” (Bassnett, 2014, p. 179). The implications of these paradigm shifts are enormous as parameters for translation analyses such as translation equivalence, registers, and word for word meanings no longer constituted focal points for translation discourse. Literature of postcolonial societies provide a fertile ground for cultural studies and “by the very nature of this literature, written in colonial languages by colonial subjects, a host of issues often overlooked in the past, namely gender, ethnicity, sociology, linguistic alterity, identity, politics, and ideology became prominent in translation research” (Bandia, 2010, p. 264). Suffice it to say that these issues border on the identity of previously colonized societies. Central to postcolonial translation studies are literatures of pre and postcolonialism, immigration, culture and language contact, and Diaspora experience. These extended translation research to “cultures of former colonies from Africa, India, Latin America, and the Caribbean as well as non-hegemonic cultures such as the Irish and those from settler colonies like Australia, Canada, and South Africa” (Bandia, 2010, p. 264). Some anthropological historical studies could be considered major influences on postcolonial translation studies; they include Asad’s (1986, 2010) Anthropological study of cultural translation, studies on language inequality and colonial power (Fabian, 1986), Siegal’s (1986) studies on Translation and language Hierachy (Robinson, 1997, pp. 3-4). Robinson opines that “translation in the present remains steeped in the political and cultural complexities of postcoloniality” (p. 8).

Specifically, the concept of postcoloniality is approached from the perspective of power relations in colonial empires. Empire here refers to “a political system based on military and economic domination by which one group expands and consolidates its power over many others” (Robinson, 1997, p. 8). The primary essence of empire suggests exploitation of colonized communities economically, socially, and culturally by imperial powers and this has adverse effects on peoples and cultures. We recall here the Portuguese empire and the Spanish occupation of America both in the 16th century, the Dutch, French, and British expansion of the 17th century and the great European partition of Africa (1880–1914) amongst others. Then, the anti colonial movements brought independence to most colonies from the late 1940s to 1965. These historical antecedents have great implications for translation studies. For example, translation/interpreting were indispensable tools of communication in colonial era which gave rise to the training of interpreters to mediate between imperial masters and their subjects.

By and large, colonial experience paved way for studies in translation, to be expanded in the 1980s beyond language transfer. Such theories as the Hermeneutics (Steiner, 1975), and the Polysystem or Descriptive translation studies (Even-Zohar, 1990; Toury, 2012), helped and influenced further expansion which includes postcolonial translation studies—an approach that deals with anthropology, ethnography, sociology, historical

experiences amongst others to examine cultural issues in translation. It started developing after the disintegration of colonial empires and the cultural turn of the 1980s in translation research. One definition of postcolonial studies puts it as:

The study of all cultures/societies/countries/nations in terms of their power relations with other cultures etc; how conqueror cultures have bent conquered cultures to their will; how conquered cultures have responded to, accommodated, resisted or overcome that coercion. “postcolonial” here refers to our late-twentieth-century perspective on political and cultural power-relations. The historical period covered is all human history. (Robinson, 1997, p. 14)

Suffice it to say that Robinson’s definition could explain the need to investigate intercultural relations and the effect of translation on cultures of colonized persons. These issues which underpin language as an element of culture such that language and cultural studies are interwoven have become focal point in postcolonial translation research. The literature calls for translation strategies that can account for cultural elements in the text. One strategy that has helped the translation of postcolonial literature is the conceptualization of translation as mediation between cultures. The session that follows discusses Igbo features and cultural mediation in the French translation of Chimamanda Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus* (*l’hibiscus pourpre*) by Mona de Pracontal.

Cultural Mediation in *l’hibiscus pourpre*

Hitherto, translation activities operated on the plain of technical procedures (with evaluative undertones) as a result of which Vinay and Darbelnet’s (1958) *sept procédés techniques* (seven translation techniques) remain points of reference. Hence notions such as critical evaluation, translation “error”, equivalence, and faulty translation were common place and to a large extent, translators have been studied negatively, in terms of the distortive or disruptive effect of their “opinions”; “biases” or “misunderstanding” in the translation process (Robinson, 1997, p. 8) especially of cultural issues but some scholars (Snell-Hornby, 1999; Hatim & Mason, 1990; Toury, 2012; Bassnett & Lefevere, 1990, etc.) conceive translation as intercultural communication. Such domains as diglossia, heteroglossia, neologisms, vernacularisation, and other features in the postcolonial text attracted new spot lights for the translator who tries to negotiate or even mediates between cultures; although target language may not always express target culture equivalent. A point in case is Mona de Pracontal’s French Translation of *Purple Hibiscus* as *L’hibiscus pourpre*. Set in South-eastern Nigeria, the novel depicts social norms and values, cultural rites and beliefs all wrapped up in the Igbo language and varieties of the English language in Nigeria.

Permeation of indigenous language and diglossia into postcolonial literature heralds the existence of a language which could signal the identity of its speakers. Referring to Quebecois—French translation, Brisset (2010, p. 285) argues that the existence of the Quebecois language is a tangible proof of the existence of a Quebecois people and that this explains why translation is of great importance because it underlines that the Quebecois language exists. Use of indigenous language is a stylistic device, characteristic of first generation African writers of the 1950s as a mark of cultural identity and resistance to colonial ideology. This device which continued with later writers contributes to debates on language issues in postcolonial translation studies. For example, literary works of Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Amos Tutuola, etc., rich in cultural elements and heterogeneous language of the projected milieu are translated into homogeneous languages. The examples presented in Tables 1 and 2 taken from Chimamanda Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) and its French translation *l’hibiscus pourpre* (2004) are indications of the Igbo cultural identity of the author and of the milieu depicted in the novel:

Table 1

Igbo Norms and Expressions in PH and HP

Source text (PH)	Target text (HP)	Explanatory notes
Biko (p. 16)	Biko (p. 17)	Expression of a plea (please)
Atilogu (p. 17)	L'atilogu (p. 19)	A type of Igbo cultural dance
Gini (p. 159)	Gini (p. 209)	Expression of enquiry (what)
Onugbu leaves (p. 20)	Feuilles d'onugbo (p. 22)	The Onugbu leaf is a type of bitter vegetable used to prepare various Igbo and other Nigerian soups.
Umunna (p. 81)	Umunna (p. 106)	The total number of male in the extended family (kindred)
Mba(p. 21)	Mba (p. 25)	An expression of negation (no)
The wives of our <i>Umunna</i> (p. 81)	Les épouses de notre Umunna (p. 106)	An administrative unit of womenfolk married into the extended family (<i>the umunna</i>)
Ogwu (p. 28)	Ogwu (p. 33)	Charms used in a fetish sense. In general terms ogwu also refers to a medicine or a drug.
Ozugo (p. 22)	Ozugo (p. 26)	It is enough.
Nne (p. 28)	Nne (p. 32)	Expression used for a love loved one—my dear. In general terms it refers to mother.
O di egwu (p. 57)	O di egwu	An exclamation expressing surprise or what is formidable
Azu (p. 40)	Azu (p. 47)	Fish
Nne ngwa (p. 16)	Nne ngwa (p. 17)	My dear go ahead.
Ke Kwanu (p. 19)	Ke Kwanu (p. 22)	What is the matter?
Kedu nu (p. 63)	Kedu nu (p. 82)	How are you all?
Nno nu nno nu (p. 63)	Nno nu nno nu (p. 81)	You are all welcome.
Imakwa (p. 85)	Imakwa (p. 112)	You are aware that...
Nna anyi (p. 91)	Nna anyi (p. 119)	Sir, also means father not necessarily in biological but as a mark of respect for elderly man.
Tufia (p. 92)	Tufia (p. 121)	An expression of outright disapproval

Notice that from the parallel pairs in Table 1, the translator adopts Hervey and Higgins strategy of cultural borrowing (2002, p. 269) in the TT such that she carries over source language expressions verbatim from the ST into the TT with a few words listed in a glossary. The translation maintains the original aesthetics and the local colour of the ST, a device that seems to project a people's existence and identity. The use of indigenous language in African fiction suggests the quest for cultural and self assertion and a rejection of the idea of racial cultural tabula rasa of the colonial era. But then, borrowing makes the translator's voice almost invisible and one would wonder what would be the target audience's understanding of the language. A great volume of Igbo expressions and norms are present in *Purple Hibiscus* but no seeming translation except for a small glossary presented in *L'hibiscus pourpre*. Oftentimes, translation aids the literary text to exist beyond its original geographical and cultural milieu, reaching out to an entirely new audience for whom new meanings are created. Literary translations are therefore "expected to preserve or to recreate somehow the aesthetic intentions or effects that may be perceived in all source text" (Delabastita, 2011, p. 69). This in essence is one of the ideas developed by the "manipulation school" as advanced by polysystem theory and descriptive translation studies with scholars like Even-Tohar (1990), Toury (1995, 2012), who study translation from the point of view of the target cultures. Even-Zohar in polysystem theory of translation explains the influence of translation on receptor cultures, while to Toury (1995, p. 56) "translation inevitably involves at least two languages and cultural traditions, i.e., at least two sets of norms-systems on each level". In this regard, DTS allows a descriptive explanatory approach to the translation process which in turn aids the translator as a mediator between the "cultural traditions".

Postcolonial translation studies present the translator as an intercultural mediator who mediates between cultures for ease of communication. Culture exists within the tenets of a given language and people so much so that, to translate is to make a cross-cultural comparison through a linguistic filter and as such “compare languages, cultures and societies” (Castro-Paniagua, 2000, p. 1). One would then wonder De Pracontal’s intention in adopting loan words in his translation of cultural issues in *Purple Hibiscus* without any form of explicitation. Martinez-Sierra (2008) assigns a double role to the translator as a decoder/encoder and as a receptor/sender with bilingual ability and bicultural vision. She concludes that “when the references to be translated do not exist in the target culture, the translator must provide them with some symbolic value” (cf. Robinson, 1997). Going by this, Pracontal’s strategy of borrowing does not enhance mediation between source culture and target culture. Expressions such as: “Omelora” (HP, p. 47), “ngwo ngwo” (HP, p. 40), “bunie ya enu” (HP, p. 36), and other Igbo expressions in the TT may be unclear. For example, the word “atilogu” (PH, p. 17) is a type of traditional Igbo dance projected by the author but borrowed by the translator as “*l’atilogu*” (HP, p. 19); an explanatory translation would probably suffice. Some examples express social norms of the Igbo people; the expression “wives of the *umunna*” (PH, p. 81), denotes a sum total of women married into the extended family (the *umunna*); the womenfolk is usually an administrative unit within the family.

Considering that postcolonial translation studies view the translation of cultural and language issues as an activity of power play and power differentials, what comes to the fore are cultural issues in *Purple Hibiscus* and the possibility of translation into registers of the French language; in such a case, would the TT be deemed not “to have met the criteria of acceptability set by the literary institution” (Brisset, 2010, p. 302). Brisset observes for example that “to satisfy the needs of the nationalist cause, French was held up as an ideological fiction—a socially and geographically homogenous language, homogeneous to the point of being totalitarian...”. To translate a sociolect into French, the translator has to contend, not with an intrinsic deficiency in the linguistic system of France, but with a *linguistic void* in the normative system of literature. Ideology can be detected behind the void (pp. 286, 302). Regarding the defence of the French language, Brisset conclusively posed a question: “was it not continuously subjected to normalization by a small group of academicians, and to censorship by a handful of intellectuals in Paris” (pp. 286-287). Robinson (1997) highlights three stages in postcolonial translation studies in which he identifies the middle stage “as a lightning rod for cultural inequalities continuing after the collapse of colonization” (p. 31). If one is to go by this, cultural translation could somehow breed “translational inequality” to which Jacquemond (1992, p. 154) proposes four hypotheses:

(1) A dominated culture will invariably translate far more of a hegemonic culture than the latter will of the former;

(2) When a hegemonic culture does translate works produced by the dominated culture, those works will be perceived and presented as difficult, mysterious, inscrutable, esoteric, and in need of a small cadre of intellectuals to interpret them, while a dominated culture will translate a hegemonic culture’s works accessibly for the masses;

(3) A hegemonic culture will only translate those works by authors in a dominated culture that fit the former’s preconceived notions of the latter;

(4) Authors in a dominated culture who dream of reaching a large audience will tend to write for translation into a hegemonic language, and this will require some degree of compliance with stereotype.

Such cultural divide has serious implications for translation and as Venuti (1992, p. 6) puts it, “it provides a neat illustration of the imbalances of cultural power in today’s world”. Literatures from colonized cultures

(dominated cultures) could sometimes be conceived as difficult, strange, and problematic particularly when translating into dominant (hegemonic culture). Some of the experiences depicted in *Purple Hibiscus* could be identified as difficult especially when it comes to expressing them in hegemonic languages (French and English). Today, English is conceived as the world's most dominant language and lingua franca after a century and a half of first British and then American political, economic, military and cultural world dominance (Robinson, 1997, p. 35). This position puts English as one vast medium for global dissemination of knowledge of a people's culture. Against this backdrop, Chimamanda Adichie may have been prompted to transport the cultural vision of her people (the Igbo people) to the English milieu while writing in English. There is therefore the cultural projection of a people which could yet attain wider readership via translation. This position is underscored by Castro-Paniagua (2000, p. 24) who is of the view that "a work's potentiality to achieve universal dimensions will rest upon the literary genius of a writer and the translator's job will be to transmit".

The issue of identity is central to postcolonial translation discourse which upholds the view that postcolonial fiction enters the world through translation from one global language to another. In the view of Bandia (2010) for example, translation plays a central role in the struggle of marginalized cultures for acceptance and recognition in the global literary space. He posits that there are many literate minority cultures for which translation into languages with global literary capital provides the sole means of recognition (p. 267). Cultural assertion is a major theme in post colonial literatures which translation as a culture-specific communication tries to convey. Thriveni observes that "one of the main goals of literary translation is to initiate the target-language reader into sensibilities of the source language cultures". De Pracontal's adoption of loanwords in her translation certainly is an attempt to probably project the Igbo language to its French audience but leaves the task of decoding the meaning of such words to the reader. For example praise names and titles are presented in the novel: "As we drove past, people waved and called out papa's title "*Omelora*" (PH, p. 63).

Titles are part and parcel of traditional African society, carried into postcolonial fiction. Sometimes the semantic structure of the titles reveals that they are direct translations from an African language as is seen in the title *Omelora* (one who gives to everyone). Such translations are meant to enhance the "'Africaness' of the European language text, assert the text's identity and claim its space within the global literary culture" (Bandia, 2010, p. 267). The title is maintained as a loan word "*Omelora*" (HP, p. 81) in the TT, an expression that is alien to English and French. The same goes for the concept of kinship. Kinship affiliations are sometimes expressed in simple words or explanatory phrases. To indicate family relationship in India, Thriveni observes that there are different words in Indian languages to refer to each relation; there are words to address a wife's mother or father, a wife's sister or brother, a husband's sister or brother, a mother's sister or brother, and so on. Similar practices are found in *Purple Hibiscus*; the novel illustrates communal living and social relationships and extended family life in its geographical setting. Specific words refer to specific relations and relationships. Words like "*Nwun yem*", "*nne*", "*umunna*", "*nnam*", "*nna nyi*", depict such relationships; the expression "*Nwuny em*" (PH, p. 81) for example means "my wife" and is used by a female interlocutor in the novel to address the wife of a family member, an indication that a wife is considered the wife of the entire family members, a phenomenon that is not identifiable in the target culture. The expression is rendered in the TT as *Nwumy em* (HP, p. 106). In some cases, there is no target culture equivalent to enable translation. Some translators resort to Nida's (1964) dynamic equivalence while some others resort to explanatory notes as is the case with the French translation of Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987).

Translation scholars have argued that translators of literary texts should have knowledge of subjects discussed by authors. Lederer (2003, p. 127) demonstrates this in clear terms. She opines that: “It is up to translators to provide foreign readers with additional pieces of knowledge...to unlock the door which leads to the knowledge of the other”. To her, “Translators help [readers] by making explicit certain elements which are implicit in the original and by using adequate linguistics means to designate the referents which do not have direct correspondences in the language of the translation”. Lederer concludes that this knowledge makes the reader not to “remain completely in the dark” (p. 128). In the light of this positioning, the translator can mediate between cultures. Mona de pracontal transports the Igbo words and expression into her translation with little glosses or no explanations of many expressions.

A required knowledge would allow for example, the target reader access to the usage of the expression. Wives of our *Umunna* (*PH*, p. 81) translated as “les épouses de notre *Umunna*” (*HP*, p. 106). In Igbo cultural practice, the total number of women married into an extended family the (*umunna*) are referred to as wives of the family (of the *umunna*).; they constitute an administrative body within the women folk of the family.

Table 2

Igbo Transliteration (Linguistic Creation)

Source text (<i>PH</i>)	Explanatory notes in Standard English	Target text (<i>HP</i>)
Also hand Clapping was to be kept at a minimum (p. 12).	Clapping of hands.	De même, il fallait taper dans les mains le moins possible (p. 13).
There are no worlds in my month (p. 21).	I am short of Words.	Il n’y a pas de mots dans ma bouche (p. 25).
A drizzle is coming (p. 27).	It is going to rain.	Il va y avoir de la bruine (p. 31).
She had prepared a “Little something” for them (p. 29).	An expression which does not necessarily refer to “a small quantity”. The referent could be something big or large.	Elle leur avait préparé “un petit quelquechose” (p. 34).
They have taken him (p. 45).	He has been taken.	Ils l’ont emmené (p. 55).
Afun sah (p. 63).	Good afternoon sir.	Bonjour m’sieur (p. 83).
Home training (p. 66).	Upbringing.	Education à la maison (p. 85).
Gudu Morni (p. 66).	Good morning.	Bonjour, la.
Chineke, bless the children of my children (p. 175).	Bless my grand children.	Chineke, Benis les enfants de mes enfants (p. 231).
To give you a little something for the children. mah (p. 121).	A way of speaking amongst Igbos which does not necessarily signify a little quantity. madam.	Donner un petit quelque chose pour les enfants (p. 88). ma’am (p. 159).

Postcolonial literature is conceived as “a metaphoric translation whereby the language of colonization is bent, twisted, and manipulated to capture and convey the sociocultural reality or experiences of an alien dominated language culture by postcolonial subjects” (Bandia, 2010, p. 265). This act in itself led to transliteration, lexical innovations, varieties of the colonial language, vernacularization, code switching, and code mixing (resulting in pidgins and creoles) as a mark perhaps of identity. The examples in Table 2 are evidence of the author’s linguistic creations and transliteration in the text. Linguistic creativity which is characteristic of literature of postcolonial societies reflects a stylistic device which results in different sociolect and registers in the text. Hervey and Higgins (2002, p. 165) observe that “a sociolect is a language variety typical of one of the broad groupings that together constitute the class structure of a society”. A sociolect gives insight about the speaker. Adichie creates different sociolect characteristic of different interlocutors arising from language contacts. Such examples as “good afun sah” (*PH*, p. 63), “gudumorni” (*PH*, p. 66), “yes sah”,

“tank sah” (*PH*, p. 64), are a variety of English in Igbo ethnolinguistic milieu indicating mother tongue transfer in Igbo/English contact. The same expressions are rendered in another register in the novel: “Good morning (*PH*, p. 66), Good afternoon sir (*PH*, p. 102). This speech pattern is an indication of speaking the language of colonization with mother tongue accent. Adichie states in clear terms concerning one of the characters in the novel “that he spoke English with an Igbo accent so strong it decorated even the shortest words with extra vowels” (*PH*, p. 68). Such is the case with words like; good afun sah (Good afternoon sir), Gudu morni (good morning), please... mah (Madam). In *HP*, the expressions are rendered in some form of petit-nègre:

(1) *PH*: Good afun sah

HP: Bojour m’sieu (p. 82)

(2) *PH*: “Yes sah” “Thank sah” (p. 64)

HP: oui m’sieu! Marci, m’sieu (p. 82)

(3) *PH*: Gudu morni

HP: Bojour, là (p. 85)

These observations bring to mind the place of sociolect in translation. Hervey and Higgins observe that sociolectal features convey important speaker related information and if they are salient features of the ST, the translator cannot ignore them when deciding a strategy (2002, p. 165): They conclude that if the strategy is to incorporate some TL sociolectal features corresponding to those in the ST, the requirements are similar to those involved in choosing social register. Examples (1)–(3) above expressed in non Standard English are rendered in some form of petit-nègre. Studies in contemporary francophone sociolinguistics identify petit-nègre as a historical need between colonizers and colonized in colonial settings. Petit-nègre as a variety of French lacks standard lexical form and is described by Batchelor (2002) as a simplified form of French used by colonial rulers and colonial people to communicate with each other. Petit-nègre is devoid of coherent lexical patterns as observed in the Mona De Pracontal’s rendition of examples (1)–(3). There is no gainsaying, features such as indigenous expressions and linguistic creations in the postcolonial text require specific attention of the translator as a mediator.

Conclusion

Purple Hibiscus can be considered an example of a hybrid text (a text that results from a translation process). Schaffner and Adab (1997, p. 325) explain what a hybrid text is in transcultural communication. According to them, “a hybrid text shows features that somehow seem ‘out of place’/‘strange’/‘unusual’ for the receiving culture”. In *L’hibiscus pourpre*, names of food, objects and Igbo expressions alike are used as loanwords in the translation. This may pose problems of clarity to the target audience who may not share the cultural background of the source text.

An approximation of 200 Igbo words and expressions exist in *Purple Hibiscus* retained as loanwords (i.e., in their original form) in the target text. While some postcolonial translation scholars argue that the translator is an expert who mediates between cultures, some others conceive him as a mediator who integrates foreign objects without questions (Jacquemond, p. 1992). It is equally argued that translation research on literature of postcolonial societies is a step towards decolonizing translation studies (Batchelor, 2009). Studies on colonial societies in a postcolonial context tend towards self assertion and identity and Batchelor argues that “little attention has been paid to the literatures of such societies when translated” (2009, n.p.). Translation research approaches should of a necessity take into consideration the relationship between unequal languages and adopt

approaches that would help factors like language issues and identity. To Niranjana (1992), the foundational drive for translation from the perspective of ethnography is the desire to know the other. From the hybrid nature of Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, it may appear that there is an attempt to not only project a people and their language but provoke some kind of learning from the target audience as was expected of colonial subjects to learn the language of colonization in colonial schools. Taking her stance on "decolonizing translation practice", Batchelor (2009, p. 203) agrees that the intricacies and challenges arising from the linguistically innovative features in postcolonial texts, linguistically and culturally hybrid texts are open to a range of creative solutions by the translator (p. 230). One of such solution is maintained by Niranjana (1992) who holds the view that translation research should be more concerned with the unequal power relation involved in the cultural communication at the expense of linguistically motivated strategies. This position necessitates a grasp of the cultural and historical experiences of depicted societies in the postcolonial text and calls for a reflection on the translation of Literature of colonized societies into Languages of colonization. It is perhaps against this backdrop that Bandia (2010) holds the view that "the postcolonial translator must be interventionist and through the practice of translation, deconstruct colonizing translation strategies and resist colonialist ideological impositions" (p. 267). We adopt therefore Spivak's (1993) strategy for translating the postcolonial text as expressed by Bandia (2010):

Spivak discusses the ideological ramifications of translating Third World literature into colonizing or hegemonic languages. She points out that the asymmetrical power relationships in a postcolonial context often lead to colonizing translation practices that seek to minimize the difference of minority cultures for the benefits of the target majority culture. In this regard, translation continues to play an active role in the colonialist and ideologically motivated construction of colonized peoples as mimetic and inferior clones of their ex-colonizers. To counter this perspective, Spivak proposes a translation strategy based on a kind of "positive or strategic essentialism" calling on the translator, much like the field anthropologist, to seek an intimate knowledge of the language, culture and history of the colonized. (p. 266)

The parallel pairs examined are a pointer to the fact that the transfer of culture consists in bringing to foreign readers knowledge about a world which is not theirs (Lederer, 2003, p. 133); this in Lederer's opinion "opens a window onto the original culture" (p. 133) and for this to happen she concludes that: "translators keep the foreign referent (p. 133) but transmit it in understandable form" (p. 133). Adichie like Chinua Achebe writes in Standard English with a mixture of Igbo lexical and linguistic creations revealing Igbo speech patterns. Achebe (1975) assumes the position of one seeking cultural assertion and projection vis-à-vis the cultural *vide* proclaimed by colonial Ideology. Following spivak's proposal, Mona De Pracontal's translation of Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* requires explanatory notes which would "open a window" onto the world revealed in the novel.

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