A Postcolonial Insight into African Onomastics in Europhone Translation: A study of D. O. Fagunwa's Selected Yoruba Narrative Names

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Abstract

Most African names have sociocultural identities, which convey thoughts, traditions, fortunes, conditions, histories, and other features. Translating African indigenous names from Yoruba into French and English transcends Saussure's postulation of signified–signifier arbitrariness (Saussure,1975). Previous studies in African onomastic translation have concentrated mostly on Europhone translation, with insufficient scholarly attention paid to the Yoruba-French onomastic translation. Therefore, this work explores Yoruba names in a literary onomastic translation with a view to bringing to fore the connotative embodiments of African names. Establishing techniques to employ in translating African names into European languages like French and English, the study adapts Newmark (1988) and Moya (2000) approaches to name translation. The content analysis was employed in the investigation and interpretation of the data that were purposively selected from two D. O. Fagunwa's Yoruba novels – *Ògbóju̓ Ọdẹ nínu̓ **Igbó** Irúnmalẹ̀* (2005) and *Ìrèké̓-Oníbùdó̓* (2005) –and their French translations – *Le preux chasseur dans la forêt infestée de démons (1989)* and *La fortune sourit aux audacieux*(1992) – by Olaoye Abioye respectively; as well as Louis Camara's, an Ivorian francophone, translation of Soyinka's translation *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons* (1982); originally from Fagunwa's *Ogboju* into French-- *La Forêt aux Mille Demons* (2010). The essay concludes that African names are embedded in ethnolinguistic and sociocultural connotations and specific translational

techniques are imperative to their translations into European languages such as French and English.

Background to the Study

"I am indeed Akara-ogun, Compound-of-Spells; even as my name is, so am I"

(D.O. Fagunwa, Wole Soyinka, 1982:71)

The science of naming, a recognized discipline that has received the attention of scholars, is adopted from French in the mid-9th century firstly known as *onomatology* (Encyclopeadia Britannica, 2020). The study is later referred to as onomastics (Ayeleru, 2001; Coates, 2008). Onomastics is, "the science or study of the origin and forms of use of the proper name of persons and places; it is the system underlying the formation and use of words, especially for proper names…" (www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/onomastics). Onomastics, therefore, is the underlying system and use of words in reference to a place, person, or thing. It is a scientific study that examines the arrangements and functions of appellatives and proper names.

Names, whether fictional or non-fictional, are essential elements of a language, which cut across human cultures. Proper names are a cultural heritage among the Yoruba. Names reveal the situations and circumstances that surround one's birth, parental hopes, and aspiration. Hence, an African name divulges one's origin, identity, religion, belief, and history. Therefore, Coates (2008:312) sees a name as "a conveyor of an identity of a person in communication." Proper names could be real or fictional. Real names are performed at the sacramental and initiatory ceremonies, while fictional names are mostly taken from the real-life occurrence. Fictional names are literary names that are directly taken from names in use and they are indicators of character types in literary works. This is observable in the works of D. O. Fagunwa which are translated into French and English. The translator's ability to solve ethnolinguistic challenges in literary onomastics has remained a challenging task because of ethnocultural distinctions and culture-linguistic attributes. This study, therefore, seeks to ascertain the meaningfulness of African fictional names and explore translation techniques of African names in Europhone translations.

Literature review

Several scholarly researchers have engaged themselves in the discipline of onomastics; that is, the study of names. This includes (Clark 1962, Soyinka

1967, Oyeleye 1985, Ajileye 2002, Abel 2004, Abel 2007, Evans 2007, Ode-
bode 2010, Bariki 2009, Odebode 2013, Wamitila 1999, Batoma 2009, Casnet
2013, Butler 2013, Toth 2014, Vrbinc and Vrbinc 2014., Vrbinc and Vrbinc
(2014). These studies examine literary onomastics from stylistic, sociolin-
guistic, philosophical, religious, and historical perspectives, and have ac-
knowledged the universality of names across cultures. For instance, Wamitila
(1999), who investigated literary onomastics in Kiswahili literature, opines
that names are the synthesis of aesthetics and teleological values in Kiswahili
literary texts, while Toth (2014) focuses on literary onomastics in Szilagyi's
novels. The work is concerned with the theory and methodology in the lan-
guage. The current study gains relevant insights from this terminology but the
point of departure is the literary texts under study. While Toth investigates Szi-
lagyi novels, the current study examines the translation of names in Yoruba
and French medium texts.

From these reviews, it can be observed that previous studies have con-
centrated on the literary onomastics of novels in a particular language with
their cultural implicature. They opine that culture and names are intertwined.
The current study is however a departure from the previous studies because
our focus is on the translation of Yoruba names into French. Meanwhile, it is
expedient to interpret some proper names in the source text in view of their
ethnolinguistic, sociocultural, and multifunctional implications in African lit-
erary narratives.

Significance of the study

Although Fagunwa novels are enmeshed with moral and socio-cultural val-
ues copiously borrowed from Yoruba worldviews, the current study intends to
examine these values via onomastic translations. The study surveys and ad-
vances Fagunwa's fictional oeuvres in translation and how this has fostered
African intercultural heritage. Furthermore, against signified-signifier arbi-
trariness (Saussure, 1975), it investigates the connotative tendency of African
names and how the French and English language expresses the connotation
implications. As a result of the challenges confronting translators while trans-
lating African fictional names, this study seeks to suggest techniques for trans-
lating African names into French and English. Since not much has been done
in the onomastic translation of African texts into French, this work serves as a
source of reference for other critics and researchers who are interested in Af-
rican onomastic translation.

Methodology and Justification of the Texts

This research is grounded on the exploratory research method. This is be-
cause scant attention has been given to the exploration of names in scholarly

research, most especially Yoruba-French onomastic translation. This explains why the two novels of D.O Fagunwa -*Ogboju Ode Ninu Igbo Irunmale* and *Ireke Onibudo* that are translated into French by Olaoye Abioye as *Le preux chasseur dans la forêt infestée de démons* and *La fortune sourit aux audacieux...* as well as Louis Camara's retranslation of Wole Soyinka's The *Forest of a Thousand Deamons* (being a translation of Fagunwa's *Ogboju*) into French as *La Forêt aux Mille Demons* (2010) serve as the primary source of data. The selection of the two novels is based on the availability of their French versions and their classical position as a forerunner of Yoruba literary names in African literature.

There are several names of mysterious beings, people, animals, and things; however, this work is limited to names of places and specific hunters. Our choice for the names of the seven hunters is in the fact that they are extremely popular among the Yoruba and maintain the crux of *Ogboju*. Besides, they have explicit connotations that interest translation research. From a translatorial point of view, both Fagunwa, Soyinka, and Abioye are from the same ethnolinguistic background, which is the justification for the selection of the texts. Likewise, the fact that Louis Camara is an Ivorian Francophone and he is from a completely different ethnolinguistic background as well as the fact that his translation is from a translated text (Yoruba-English translation) justifies the choice of the texts. Purposively selected proper names and place names are subjected to qualitative analysis.

Fagunwa's Oeuvre in Translation

Some Nigerian works have been translated into the European language. Among those translated works are D.O Fagunwa's novels *Ògbójú Ọdẹ nínú* Igbó *Irúnmalè* (*Ògbójú*) translated into English as *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons* (1982) by Wole Soyinka and into French as *Le Preux Chasseur dans la foret infestee de demons* by Olaoye Abioye. Recently, Louis Camara, an Ivorian francophone, retranslated Soyinka's translation (of Fagunwa's *Ògbójú Ọdẹ nínú* Igbó *Irúnmalè*) into French as *La Forêt aux Mille Demons* (2010). This has brought *Ogboju* into the third stage of translational transformation (that is Yoruba-English-French). Other novels of Fagunwa translated into English are *Irinkerindo ninu Igbo Elegbeje*, *Aditu Eledumare*, and *Igbo Olodumare as Expedition to the Mount of thought*, (1994), *The Forest of God* (1995), and *The Mysteries of God* (2012) by Dapo Adeniyi, G.A. Ajadi, and Olu Obafemi, respectively.

In the same vein, Femi Osofisan in *The Fagunwa Series* has dramatically adapted the first three novels of Fagunwa into written plays. He has translated *Ògbójú Ọdẹ nínú* Igbó *Irúnmalè* as *Adventures in the Forest of a*

Thousand Daemons (2018), *Ìrèké-Oníbùdó* as *Ìrèké*: *Saga of the Sugarcane Man* (2018), and *Igbo Olodumare* as *The Forest of Promised Harm* (2018). Meanwhile, Wale Ogunyemi had earlier adapted *Ogboju* theatrically as *Langbodo* and presented at Lagos National Theatre on 18 January 1977 and published by Nelson, Ikeja in 1979 (S-J Timothy Asobele 2016:339). Likewise, Timothy Asobele also translated Wale Ogunyemi Yoruba theatrical adaptation into French as *Langbodo* (French Version Manuscript 1984) (See S-J Asobele 2016). In the same vein, Abioye has translated the other four of D.O Fagunwa's novels into French (though unpublished at the time of drafting this paper) namely: *Igbo Olodumare as La forêt de Omnipotent;* Ireke Onibudo as *La fortune sourit aux audacieux; Irinkerindo Ninu Igbo Elegbeje as Parcours interminables dans la forêt d'Elegbeje* and *Adiitu Olodumare as Mysteres_ Divins,* respectively. All these translations pose different forms of challenges to the translators, as every other African culturally infused literary narrative in translation.

In translating an African text, a translator may be confronted with a lot of culturally-infused difficulties because every text is a product of a culture. Bamgbose(2007) opines that the translation of African literary works involves several perspectives of semantic complexity; this is true of Fagunwa's novels.

Bamgbose (2007:89) asserts that:

Fagunwa's novels are to be interpreted more than one level. On the supernatural level, they are stories of adventure…at the deeper level; the journey is an allegory of life's journey with its attendant problems and difficulties. It is only through an understanding of this deeper level that we can attain the full meaning of the novels.

There are levels of interpretations and meanings in Fagunwa's texts. The interpretations and meanings make Fagunwa's texts to be distinct. There are levels related to structure, sounds, and repetitions of words, meanings, and appellations. In this study, our attention focuses on names and naming in D.O. Fagunwa's text with their translated versions into French by Olaoye Abioye and Louis Camara. The specific use of names in Fagunwa's novels and the possibility of their translation into the French language needs adequate consideration in scholarly research because translating African names into French transcends Saussurean postulation of signified–signifier relation, which is mostly embraced in English-French translation. The quest for peculiar patterns through which cultural names are translated is the driving force that spurs this study.

African Name and Semantic Predisposition

The Saussurean postulation of signified–signifier relation has long been generating debate in the world of research. According to De Saussure, the relationship between signified and signifier are purely arbitrary. In other words, there is no semantic link between a name as a signified and the person bearing that name as a signifier (Saussure, 1975). In line with this position, John Stuart Mill (1843/1973) had earlier argued that proper names are denotative thereby signifying ä singular entity whose individuality is delimited by them" (Estebinez 2002:92; Gutierrez 2003-04; 125; John Stuart Mill 1843/1973 as cited by William G. Lycan 2008:32; Zeno Vendler, 1975 as cited in Vermes Albert Peter 2000; Nurken Aubakir & Velinur Makhpirov 2015). That is, proper names have no link in meaning with people, things or places that they refer to. The opposing views on the meaning predisposition of proper names posit that proper names are connotative, "they can be used as synonyms of their defined descriptions" (Estebanez 2002; 93; Gutierrez 2003-04: 125). In other words, beyond the idea of denoting or signifying a singular phenomenon or entity, proper names also describe something or someone that they label, identify or describe. Proper names socialize and reveal the historical background of the bearer (Ogunsiji, 1994). In most African society, names have a semantic-syntactic sense, which manifests specific meanings and functions (Oyeleye 1991:16). It is assumed that African names are meaning-associative and this semantic logicality (of African names) is crucial to onomastic translation. The reality of this signified-signifier arbitrariness is questioned among African names. Fagunwa through his protagonists sums up the signified-signifier associative predictability in *Ogboju* when he writes *"I am indeed Akara-ogun, Compound-of-Spells; even as my name is, so am I"* (Wole Soyinka, *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons* 1982:71).

Leaning on this bias, this segment will therefore explore the probability of semantic correlation between the seven hunters in the adventure to Mount Langbodo in Fagunwa's *Ogboju* vis-a-vis their names. That is, how D.O. Fagunwa has selected his seven hunters to craft a distinctive meaningful representation of each of his characters. The names of the seven hunters are Akara-Ogun, Kako, Imodoye, Olohun-Iyo, Elegbede-Ode, Efo-Iye, and Aramada-Okunrin. A lexico-semantic approach shall be employed to bring out the semantic imports implanted in each of the names of the characters, respectively.

Akara-ogun: The name Akara-ogun comprises two lexicons i.e., *akara* and *oogun* which connotes *cakebean* and *charm* respectively. This suggests *cake of charms* or *charmic cakebean*. The name "Akara-ogun" connotes "charmic cakebean" or cake of charms. This name describes his unusual possession of

armlets, charms, and talisman. It is a kind of compound of incantation and invocation. The one who accompanies the cook to the grave shows the supernatural features and attributes of this person. He is endowed with charms and spiritual strength. He is described to have about a thousand power gourds, eight hundred amulets, two hundred "incubi" and many others. His father is a seasoned formidable hunter, while his mother is a chronic witch. Akara-ogun, like his father, is a seasoned hunter, highly respected because of his boldness to dare any forbidden forest. He is called an intrepid hunter who dears the forbidden forests because he is courageous and audacious. These attributes are embedded in his name and reveal the identifiable meanings and purposes of the character. Thus, Akara-Ogun does not only denote a person but also reveals the attributes of the person bearing the name. This shows how significant a name is in the African context.

Kako-- The name "Kako" itself depicts strength, ability, valor, power, and might. "Kako" is a mighty man who wields a leopard club. He is the tallest hunter among his colleagues. He is known for his great ruggedness right from his childhood stage. Although he loses his guardian when he was young, he remained a great warrior in the Great Forest: A forest deadlier than The Forest of a Thousand Deamons. Kako is immensely powerful and his power is demonstrated when he volunteered in two instances to confront Ghommids on behalf of the Great Hunters. The name "Kako" itself is terrifying and it is a man of valour. This name brings to the fore the embodiments of the character and his situational context rather than signifying a singular denotation that is delimited by unilateral reference.

Imodoye - This implies knowledge-transformed-into-understanding. It simply means that knowledge is a person infused with understanding. This answers why the character has demonstrated the supernatural understanding of all forms of languages. He equally proved to understand almost all things. Unlike his colleagues, he lived on a single alligator pepper every day. He is very verse in charms and highly knowledgeable in all incantations. All these attributes explicitly avow the semantic links between the character and his worldview. Obviously, he cannot be diffused from his name.

Olohun-Iyo - The name connotes one with a salted voice. "Olohun-Iyo" means someone who has a sonorous voice that causes the audience to sing or dance. A good command of language is one of his characteristics. As the name implies, he is a good singer with a fascinating, intriguing, sonorous, and enthralling voice. He is the most handsome of all the hunters. He possessed a great ability in which smoke emerges in the air when he drums and flames come out of his mouth when he sings. Music of incantation is his favorite. He sings and drums everywhere to douse tension. He is respected for his voice and inherent qualities to sing. The name Olohun-Iyo is a direct representation

of this character's behavioral treasure; it manifests specific meanings and functions beyond mere personal identification. The reality of this relational signified-signifier arbitrariness is strongly questioned in his name.

Elegbede-Ode: The name refers to a person that has the strongest deadliest body among the great hunters. When hit with an iron rod, he does not feel it because he is stronger than a lion. He understands the language of birds and beasts. He has the quality of greatness and strength, and when he is young, the king provided him with a gun. This implies that he is a hunter since childhood.

Efoiye: The name "Efoiye" simply means a person that has the potential and ability to fly in the air. It means any person that has the exceptional skills to fly in case of trouble. He belongs to the family of birds. He used his wings in a dangerous situation and he is an archer. He rarely uses his wings and cut the wings to avoid the jeers of children of men. He has feathers growing from his body.

Aramada-Okunrin: The Yoruba expression *aramada-okunrin* is from *aramada*. While *Okunrin* simply means *man*. A morphological analysis of "Aramada" reveals something that is strange or miraculous. The word "*ara*" means "wonder" which means something that is completely unexplainable. Nobody can fathom how it happened. The other "*da*" is a verb that suggests *becoming*. It is beyond human reasoning and comprehension. "Aramada" simply means mystifying transformation. Bringing the two together, the name connotes a strange and mysterious man with inexplicable appearances. The attributes show the character traits of Aramada-Okunrin. The character is full of phenomenal tendencies because when all his friends are almost frozen such a place will be too hot for him. While others were almost suffocated, he would be frozen. He has mysterious interventions that immensely highlight the meanings and connotations of his name. His contributions to the success of the hunters' Journey to Mount Langbodo are unparalleled.

It can be observed that D.O. Fagunwa has succinctly employed proper names to create an understanding of his narrative characters through naming. The link between the signified and the signifier is directly relational in the attributes and personalities of each of the seven characters. He has contextually selected names to reveal the peculiarity of the characters. These names reveal the identity of Fagunwa's characters. Fagunwa employs socio-cultural beliefs to portray the identity of his character through naming. Names such as Akara-Ogun, Kako, Imodoye, and others are names used to create a vivid picture of character's distinctions that fit into the narrative milieu.

Each name Fagunwa uses performs pragmatic functions and it is expected of the translator to translate both the semantic and cultural functions of the name to the target audience. For instance, Filth, as the name implies, is a place of disgusting and excessive immorality. This town is meant for evil doers.

Fagunwa debunks this town for evil which has become the order of the day. When a child and an elderly person eat together in a place, the elder packs the dirt and tidies the place. In addition, a child sends an elderly person on an errand. There are confusion and pandemonium in this town. The villagers in this city revolted against God and they are punished with reprobate minds. The only sound person in this city is Iwapele who is created after the likeness of God. She is the epitome of perfection and beauty.

Igbo Olodumare and Igbo Irunmale are dangerous forests. These mountains are metaphorical. They are very close to heaven. Igbo Irunmale and Igbo Olodumare are daily difficulties that one must overcome in order to be celebrated. Hunters (heroes) in these texts are celebrated after they overcome their share difficulties. All these mountains represent a goal that must be achieved in life. For instance, Oke Hilahilo is a mountain that is slippery and is very difficult to climb. Hunters going to Oke Langbodo have to climb this mountain before they could get to their destination. Langbodo, Oke Hila-Hilo, Oke-Isoro, Ironu, and Igbega, and others all symbolize mental, physical, political, financial, and religious challenges that a man must overcome before he could be celebrated. Every individual must be prepared to overcome these challenges before they could be celebrated. It can be reinstated that most names of Fagunwa's characters and places are "symbolic of the qualities they possess or the characteristics they display" (Adeyemi 1982: 45).

Unlike the Sausurean postulation of the arbitrariness of names and naming, names, in Africa, are given according to surrounding situations for purposeful representation of both overt and covert realities. The above lexico-semantic analysis has revealed that fictional names have socio-cultural meanings in Yoruba mythology. Names are very important and carefully chosen to convey information to the bearer. It can be argued therefore that names do not exist in a vacuum in African society. Most African names are markers of sociocultural identities which embody and convey thought, tradition, fortune, condition, and history among other things. This suggests that, in Africa, the name is a conveyor of identities, ideologies, historical affiliation, and religious beliefs. Name identifies one's beliefs and ideologies that have social underpinnings. Ideologies are socially-dependent; name is one of the ways of explicating such ideologies. This suggests that the relationship between a name (signifier) and what is named (signified) is meaningful and logically related. The semantic logicality of the name is crucial to onomastic translation. A translator, therefore, needs to know whether a name is semantically associated with an entity or a being that it identifies or otherwise, in translation. This semantic relationship should guide African onomastics in translation because African names have "evocative and connotative qualities as well as phono stylistic effects which are very important cultural factors" (Olorode1994:193).

Theorizing African Onomastics in Translation

The onomastic analysis could be surprisingly elusive and contentious in research; hence, an eclectic approach is almost inevitable. Newmark (1988: 36) warns that, in translating the first name, a 'plain one-to-one translations' should be employed rather than distorted changing of lexical items that are irrelevant in both target and source languages. Newmark (1988:214) further asserts that "people's first names are transferred, thus preserving their nationality." By transferred, he means to transplant or transpose the source text orthography as against translating the sense, which implies a quest for semantic imports in the Target Language. In a situation where names have connotative implications and figurative significations, the translator needs to be careful of extra-linguistic factors that characterized the choice and formation of such names. Newmark (1988:35) stresses: "In translating proper names (place-names) one needs to look up for the whole proper names you do not know. Consider giving classifiers to any town, mountain, or river likely to be unknown to the (target) readership. Check the existence of any place name used in a work of fiction…. Bear in mind and encourage the tendency of place names to revert to their non-naturalized names…. Do not take sides on any potential dispute about place names".

The connotative implications are to be considered over-graphical transference and be translated through appropriate strategies. This is because some proper names are crafted to portray sound effects, cultural identities, stylistic individuality, ethnic distinctions, and other socio-linguistic values. Therefore, it is necessary that connotative names be cautiously translated along with their extra linguistic nuances. In translating proper names, such as place names, it, is, therefore, expedient to search for the source, distinctions, and meanings of the names in translation. A translator may categorize the names that are alien to the target readership and confirm whether the name still functions or it has assumed another name. A translator may also need to discourage unnecessary manipulations and encourage stylistic strategies that will fit the name in the TT.

It is crucial here to bring to the fore Newmark's (1999) assertion that every translator should note four crucial factors that should guide the process of translation, which is: "the intention of the text, the intention of the translator, the reader and the setting of the text, and the quality of the writing and the authority of the text" (Newmark 1999; Bariki 2009:59). Newmark proposes two ways of translating names. One is to translate a name with the recognized equivalence in the target language and the other is "information translation" (Newmark, 1993:3). In other words, the translator provides additional

information as a result of its importance to make the reader understands the cultural imports of a name.

Asserting the same, Moya (2000) posits that names can be translated through the technique of naturalization or transfer (Cited in Marta Ma Guteriez Rodriquez 2003-04: 126). Naturalization is a target reader-oriented technique that enables a translation to adapt a source language name to partly reflect features of pronunciation and morphology of the TL. The transfer is a technique that "passes the SL word onto the TL text" without any modification whatsoever (Moya 2000:13; Rodriquez 2003-04: 126).

Therefore, naturalization is conceived as a form of literal translation technique that seeks to sustain the source name in the TL but also makes provisions for any necessary modifications. The modifications aim to facilitate cultural conveyance and preserve referential connotation and semantic implications in the TL. In naturalization techniques, literal, additive, condensation, suppression, and omission strategies, as well as an outright explication of alphabetical indexes, are indispensable. The indexical manipulation may be in form of alteration of the lexical composition such as compression of alphabetical letters of the source name as well as employment of TL letterings in form of transliteration into the TL. These internal operations account for the natural communication of SL names in the TT. In neutralization technique, "The best method is first to translate the word that underlies the SL proper name into the TL, and then naturalize the translated word back into a new SL proper name… but normally only when the character's name is not yet current amongst an educated TL readership" (Newmark, 1988: 215).

This implies that one can transfer the name of a renowned character into the target language if the name is famous and the connotative significance is known to the target readership. However, in a situation where the name has a different meaning in the target milieu, it is expedient to translate the name into the target language by engaging an appropriate approach. Dapo Adeniyi (1994) naturalizes some of these names. For example, Omugodimeji and Aiyedimeji are translated literally as Double-Foolishness and Life-in-duplicate respectively. To do this, the translator needs to first translate the name with a close literal lexicon in the target language and then adjust it in consonance with the source language connotative imposition of the TL.

In Soyinka's Yoruba-English translation of *Igbo Irunmale,* we see *Imale* becoming *deamon* instead of gods, deities, or demons, which may not equate to the contextual and idiosyncratic spirit-human characters of Fagunwa (Translator's Note, *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons* 1982). This accounts for the undergoing transformation of *demons* which becomes *deamons* in the TL. The point here is that the concern of the translator is the reproduction of characters' peculiarities and these distinctions should justify a translator's position

in translating African culturally infused texts. Connotative significance and implications may necessitate a translator's intervention in form of linguistic transformation in onomastic translation. A translator of African text of ethnolinguistic onomastic extrapolations should therefore be conscious of the ST inferences while translating into the TL to complement a reflection of the entire message in the TT. Thus, a translator can subject the SL name to linguistic transformation to replicate a parallel figure in the target text.

Meanwhile, *Irunmale*, which is a fusion of *Irun* and *Imale* connotes *four hundred deities*. Thus, the word-for-word French translation of *Irunmale* suggests *four hundred deities*. The challenge is that "*four hundred deities"* do not support a proper name as the code of Yoruba counterpart implies. Besides, the significance of the name is not in the orthography but the cultural depictions of its geographical location. Hence, there is a need for an invention of a corresponding name and internal manipulation of the target orthographical construct to reflect the same implied effect and connotation in the target language. Thus, Soyinka opts for *Thousand* as against *Four hundred* to have *The Forest of a Thousand Daemons* as against its literal translation: *The Forest of Four hundred demons.* It can be argued that, in a situation of extreme necessity and to ease the cultural barrier of acceptability among the TT readership, a translator can negotiate a source text name with direct equivalence in the target text.

Transfer technique, on the other hand, is a kind of literal translation that preserves the lexical composition of the SL name in the TL with its nuances. In transfer, supplementary information is deployed along with the source element to justify communicability. The information is presented in form of a translator's note, glossary, preface, and other forms of paratextual indexes. The information primarily accounts for the explication of source names that are wholly transposed into the TL. The explication of connotations eases semantic issues, thereby enhancing comprehensibility among the TT readership.

Dapo Adeniyi (1994) in his translation of *Irinkerindo ninu Igbo Elegbeje* rendered as *Expedition in the Mount of Thought (The Third Saga)* leaves some names untranslated; hence, he employed the transfer technique. Names like *Akara ogun, Irinkerindo, Gongosutakiti, Inakigori-I'te, Kumodiran, Ibembe-Olokunrin,* and *Olohun iyo* are retained in the target text with glossaries. G.A. Ajadi (2005), in his rendition of *The Forest of God: Annotated Translation of D.O. Fagunwa's Igbo Olodumare,* transposes almost all names from Yoruba to English and gives some explanations in the footnotes. Scholars have argued that a fictional text always demands an unbroken flow of reading and that footnote and glossaries reduce the flow of narrative reading. Contrary to the position of Dominic Aury in the preface to Georges Mounin's (1963:1X) work, cited by Bariki (2009:51), which harshly renounced the use of footnotes "*La note en bas de page est la honte du tranducteur*" (that is, a footnote

is a shame on the translator), contemporary translators employ additional in-text information to explicate symbols and connotations. A good parenthesis is represented in the transfer of names like "Aganoribi (the barren woman bears no child), Yawopa (the one who kills too hastily), and Seyida (the one who misinterprets a figure), Onilaja (peace-maker), and so on. These are symbolic names which portray the characteristics of those who bear them" (Ogunpolu 1995: 247-248). Parentheses are, therefore, translational strategies that allow translators to preserve peculiar features of source culture nuances as well as to explicate the symbolic imports in the TL.

Anthroponymic translation of Yoruba names into English and French

This segment mainly interrogates the translation of the names in *Ogboju* from Yoruba into English and French respectively. The translations of Wole Soyinka, Femi Osofisan, (into English) as well as Olaoye Abioye, and Louis Camara (into French) are considered for this study based on their availabilities.

Soyinka interacts with the naturalization and transfer approach. For instance, in Soyinka's translation of *Ogboju*, he employs both natural and transfer techniques in translating SL names into the TL. The names- Iwin, Ebora, Egbere and other mysterious spirit beings are naturalized in the TL. They have group nominals as their generic names such as Ghomid, Bog-troll, and Gnom respectively in the translation of *Ogboju,* while some ST names are transferred without any modification in the TT. Names like Sango, Oya, Iragbeje, Janduku, Ojuri, and Ajantala among others are transferred into the TT without any additional information.

In Femi Osofisan's dramatic adaptation of *Ogboju Ode ninu Igbo Irunmale* as *Adventures in the Forest of a Thousand Daemons* (2018. Henceforth, AFTD), almost every name of the characters is transferred into the TL. Osofisan carefully transferred most of the source names to agree with the contemporary Yoruba writing system. Hence, the orthography of names like Akara-Ogun, Kako, Efo-iye, Elegbede Ode, Olohun Iyo and Imodoye are corrected to reflect the current written system with adequate tonal marks (AFTD, 44-45). Each of the names is directly followed by supplementary information that explicates its signification in the TL such as *Akaraogun, compound of spells* (AFTD, 12). In form of explication, this in-text information follows the mentioning of Olohun Iyo as well as Imodoye:

Olohun Iyo is one of the most handsome men on earth. A superb drummer and singer with a mellifluous voice, he is capable of emitting fire and smokes through his mouth in the heat of performance. **Imodoye** is second

in command, and is related to **Akaraogun** on the mother's side. At age of ten, he was abducted by **Aja** for seven years and was fed throughout that period solely on one alligator pepper. So, he has acquired a great deal of knowledge about herbs and medicines" (AFTD, 45).

It is assumed that retaining the SL names in the TT with supplementary information is enough to link the character's identity with their external connotations and distinctions, as well as projecting African ethnolinguistic naming into the world language. In transfer, the SL name, without any linguistic alteration, is transposed along with its nuances. External information may be added to familiarize the target reader with the peculiarity of the name.

In the French translation of names in *Ogboju*, the transfer of names is done within the text. An example of this is explicated in names such as Ijamba as Danger, Egbin as La Puanteur, Iwapele as Gentillesse, Agbako as Le Malheur, Chokoti as Le Forgeron Celeste, Egbere as Troll Pleurant and Ireke-Aiye Canne as à sucre de terre respectively. The translation of Sokoti and Chokoti is done so as to familiarize the target audience with the phonological peculiarities in the target language. This agrees with the target reader-oriented technique that enables a translation to adapt a source language name to partly reflect features of pronunciation and morphology of the TL.

However, Abioye retains the name in the ST in the TT context. This is mostly carried out through foregrounding. Examples are "Lamorin" as LAMORIN, Aroni as ARONI, Ajantala as AJANTA, Imondoye as IMODOYE in the target language. The tactical deployment of capital letters shows that the names are proper names, it must be noted that there is a loss of connotative meanings because the target audiences are not inclined to the cultural import of the names. Similarly, names like Tembelekun, Bilisi, and Idarudapo among others (*Le Preux*, 70) are retained without the provision of additional information. The translation transfer deprives the target audience of their semantic and connotative fairness. Translation transfer gives supplementary information which is noted in a footnote that expresses the symbolic interpretation. In other instances, Abioye retains some names in the target texts such as Alade Igbo (That is the Chief of this forest). Furthermore, Abioye, in the translation of "Egbin", preserves the source language orthography with a parenthesis that explicates it in French "le puanteur". There are different strategies, transfers, and methods used in the translation of Yoruba-French text because of different cultural and linguistic disparity. The cultural and linguistic disparity compels translators to deploy several translation strategies.

In Louis Camara indirect translation of *Ogboju,* for instance, all the names of the seven hunters are transferred with supplementary information. Akara-Ogun is transferred with parenthesis as *Akara-Ogun,*

fortresse-des-charmes(La foret, 8). Camara seems not to be consistent in his translation of common nouns used as a proper noun in his French translation. The translation of Akara-Ogun is translated as *Mon nom est Akara-Ogun, fortresse-des-charmes* (*La foret,* 8), despite the fact that Soyinka rendered it as: My name is *Akara-Ogun, Compound-of-Spells* (*The Forest,* 9). The capitalized name *Compound-of-Spells* is banalized as *fortresse-des-charmes* (*La foret,* 8) thereby highlighting the triviality of capitalization in Camara's translation of names. Though *fortresse-des-charmes* is a good translation of *Compound-of-Spells*, the capitalization strategy, which distinct the name from common nouns and authenticates its naturalization technique of anthroponymic tendency is removed in the TL.

With the exception of some expressions like *Peril, Loss, Starvation* (TFTD 61), where capitalization is respected and translated as *Ijamba, Peril,* and *Famine* (*La Foret*, 59), some proper names are not capitalized. Though Soyinka maintains the rule of capitalization of common nouns that are assuming the class of proper nouns in his translation, Camara strictly does not; conversely, he attached himself to miniscule which is very common in French writings. By extension, in the expression "the name of this city is Filth" (TFTD 30), Camara decapitalized *Filth* as *Immonde* in his translation as *cette ville a pour le nom: L'immonde* (*La Foret,* 28) and *Sokoti the Smith of Heaven* (TFTD 99), as *Shokoti le forgeron du ciel* (*La foret,* 50). In the same vein, Camara transferred Olori-Igbo as *Olori-Igbo le roi de la foret* in the first instance with explication. In subsequent translation, Camara naturalizes the name as Roi de la foret ! Roi de la foret! (*La Foret*, 14). Though this agrees with Soyinka's translation in *Olori-Igbo, Lord of the Forests* which later becomes *Lord of Forest! Lord of Forests!* It is significant to note that the rule of capitalization is also penalized in Camara's retranslation. However, Abioye retains the name Alade Igbo and immediately adds explicative information to acquaint the target reader with the meaning of Alade Igbo 19 as Chef du cette foret (That is the Chief of this forest).

The second name of the hunters, Kako, is transferred as *Kako* without giving explicit distinction. Soyinka explicates his translation of *Kako* with parenthesis, capitalization and hyphenation. In a bid to bring out the connotative indexes in the TL, Kako is foregrounded as *Kako (a foundling by the ako)* and *Kako-who-Wields-a-Leopard-Club* (*The Forest*,73). This is not significantly represented in the French translation: *Kako (celui qui fut decouvert au pied de l'ako*) (*La Foret,* 73). Camara retained the parenthesis and discards capitalization and hyphenation. Besides, the Yoruba term *ako,* (that has to do with the leopard-bone, from which the name *Kako* is derived) deserves additional information both in English translation and French retranslation. More importantly, it is appalling to note that the fundamental notion that informs the

signification of Kako (along with two other profound sentences) is left un-translated in the immediate French retranslation: "Kako returned to the spot and removed its thigh-bone, turning it into a club and from then he earned the name of Kako-**who-Wields-a-Leopard-Club** …" (*The Forest*,73). However, the translation can be rendered as "*Kako, l'homme a la massue en os de leop-ard*" (La Foret, 79) from Kako of the Leopard Club" (*The Forest*, 78).

Imodoye is transferred from Imodoye with additional information that ex-plicates the connotative notion almost immediately after the ST name that is transferred into the TL. The retranslation of Imodoye as in *la sagesse qui est l'accompagne de l'intelligence* (*La Foret*, 79) equates to the ST transfer *Imo-doye, that is, knowledge fuses with understanding* (*The Forest*, 79). The ad-ditional explication directly introduces the target readership to the implied meaning of the name and its implicative association with the character bear-ing the name. A similar approach is employed in the translation of Ijamba as *Ijamba, Peril,* (La Foret 59), Ogodogo as in Ogodogo "Gloire de la gloire" (*La Foret*, 99) among others.

In the same vein, Olohun-Iyo, the fourth of the great hunters whose name suggests One-with-salted-voice, is also transferred into the French context with explication. That is, *Olohun-Iyo, l'homme a la voix d'or* (This suggests *a man with the voice of gold*) (*La Foret*, 79) is inferred from Soyinka's transla-tion *Olohun-Iyo, the Voice of Flavors* (*The Forest*, 79). Though the capitaliza-tion of *the Voice of Flavors* is neglected in the French naming, it is significant to allow the transliteral intervention of Camara in the choice of the French term *or* (that is, gold) as against *flavors*. These stylistic interventions are un-avoidable when it is crucial to bring out character-peculiarities through seman-tic transformations and extensions. This answers the reason *Iyo* (salt) used in the Yoruba text becomes flavors in English and metamorphosed into *or* (gold) in French. This agrees with Smith (2001) that, if the literary tradition of Fa-gunwa would not be "confined to a limited local audience and medium…, the artistic manipulation of language…the creative use of numerous paralinguis-tic devices by one preoccupied with the dual authorial intent of edifying and entertaining" become inevitable (Smith 2001:749).

The fifth hunter Elegbede-Ode is also transferred into the TL by Camara as Elegbede-Ode (*La Foret*, 79,85,92). Unlike the other hunters whose names are accompanied with additional information that literarily explains the linguis-tic orthography, the connotative association is inferred from the surrounding narrative in the text. This means that the literal translation of Elegbede would suggest *One-who-speaks-many-languages* and *Ode* is a hunter. This obviously suggests a hunter-who-speaks-many-languages. Following the transfer ap-proach, the addition of the literal translation will familiarize the target readers

with the connotative association between the identity and the character. This is obvious when we later see him speaking the language of birds and animals.

A similar occurrence is seen in Efo-Iye, the sixth of the great hunters. The name is transferred as Efoiye (*La Foret*, 80). The connotative association is embedded in the fact that he looks like a bird and his body is covered with feathers. The Yoruba word "*Iye"* means feather, which implies a link between his identity and his connotation. Immediate literal translation of the lexical components that form the name would have brought to the fore the associative features earlier on mentioned. The seventh name Aramada-Okunrin is transferred as *Aramada-Okunrin un homme des plus extraordinaire.* (That is, the most extraordinary man) (*The Foret*, 80) as against Soyinka's rendition as Aramada-okunrin a most singular man (*La Forest*, 80). This is followed by the extraordinary peculiarity of his personality, which link the reader with the qualities that characterized him. This underscores the quest for semantic certainties of the names.

Conclusion

This study has focused on the task of translating culturally infused names from Yoruba to English and French; African names in translation are driven by a quest for peculiar patterns through which cultural eccentricity is interpreted. The use of names in Fagunwa's novels has shown connotative associations that transcend Saussurean postulation of signified–signifier relation. The cultural and pragmatic imports of African names are significant in translation and the translator should not toil with those imports at the expense of aesthetics and fluency in the target language. The semantic and syntactic functions of names afford translation researchers the privilege and interest in African onomatology. Since African names are embedded with symbolic values, transference of these sociocultural tenets is necessary and crucial to the entire African narrative work. We infer that translating African onomastic calls for three major procedures: transferring source text name into the target language without any semantic or linguistic alteration; subjecting source text name to linguistic transformation to replicate a parallel figure in the target text; and, translating source text name with direct equivalence in the target text. It presupposes therefore that it is the task of the translator to employ an appropriate strategy that will make the readers understand the meaning and symbol of the African name in order not to lose the treasure and value of the entire message in African literary translation into European languages such as French and English.

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