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A pragmatic appraisal of the translation of Yoruba discourse markers into English

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This paper examines the translation of discourse markers in Yoruba with the aim of identifying their pragmatic functions and constraints faced in their translation into English. The methodology of contrastive analysis is adopted in our analysis to identify similarities and differences in the use and function of specific discourse markers ('yes' and 'thank you') in both languages. The analysis is carried out within the pragmatic perspective based on the theory of speech acts and illocutionary force of utterances (Searle, 1969). The study also employs a contrastive linguistic pragmatic methodology which seeks to identify similarities and differences in the functions of discourse markers in Yoruba (source language). The findings from the data analysis show that translators' choices are constrained by cultural and pragmatic differences between SL and TL. They also demonstrate that a good knowledge of pragmatics can enrich the study and practice of translation.

Key words: translation, discourse markers, pragmatic constraints, illocutionary force, speech acts.

INTRODUCTION

The need to signal one's communicative intention in social interaction and direct the addressee's attention on the goal and the need of the hearer to 'acknowledge' the speaker and his/her communication is inherent in human interactions. Thus, every human language provides ways in which such communicative needs can be satisfactorily met. There are linguistic or paralinguistic means of performing this social or interpersonal function of language (Halliday, 1973). Discourse markers constitute one of the several ways of performing the illocutionary act of acknowledging in conversational discourse including admitting something, accepting that something exists, is true, or is real; showing appreciation of something; expressing thanks, confirming, agreeing, greeting, etc. Jefferson (1984:199) refers to items such as 'uh', 'huh' as acknowledgement tokens. To him, items such as 'yeah' and 'yes' are associated with topical shift while 'mm', 'hon' exhibit what he calls passive reciprocity. Schegloff (1982:81) sees items such as 'uh', 'huh' as continuers, which are indicative of an understanding of the state of talk. Schegloff (1982) refers to such items as backchannel communication.

Discourse markers may be used to signal changes in the conversation topic and indicate participants' interest in a conversation (Schiffrin, 1982). Such forms as 'mow', 'yes', 'ok', 'so' function as discourse markers (Taylor, 2006: 42). They may be used by a speaker to comment upon the discourse intention or goals. This function is served by such markers as, *oh, ah, uh*, certain uses of *well, say, y'know, like*, and non-conjunctive uses of *so* and *but*, among others. Certain lexical words act as discourse markers beyond their lexical meaning. According to Schiffrin (1982), there are lexical units which support spoken language (e.g. conversation) not in terms of their lexical meaning but in some other ways. For instance, 'certainly', 'well', and others also serve as discourse markers and can be found in both speech and writings.

Stenstrom (1994) says that "well" serves various functions in discourse depending on the context and its position in the utterance. He states that "well" at the beginning of a turn serves as a response marker to what has gone before. Also, "now" at the beginning of a turn is used as a transition marker, introducing a new topic and changing the direction of the discourse. In the case of automated dialogues, where the application may be very specific, "now" can be used to move from one part of the dialogue to another. Smith and Jucker (2000) claim that "actually" gives processing instructions to a listener about

Abbreviations: SL, Source language; TL, target language; ST, source text; TT, target text.

how the particular utterance should be understood. For the hearer, the use of "actually" highlights the fact that something is now being said that might not have been expected in this context but that is relevant nevertheless (Lenk, 1998:167). "Actually" can therefore be used to signal to the hearer that although what follows is relevant to the ongoing discourse, it will contain (in the opinion of the speaker) information that the hearer is not expecting. According to Stenstrom, "OK" is used informally in spoken English, but can have other uses depending on the level of formality required for the service. Stenstrom assigns various functions to "OK", depending on its location within an utterance.

A discourse marker may signal a speaker's relationship with the message or with the listeners. Schiffrin (1987) and Redeker (1990) have both argued that discourse markers signal the relationship between utterances. Listeners have to be sensitive to relationships being negotiated by speakers. Though discourse markers are not syntactic in the sense of constituting obligatory element of sentence structure and semantic in the sense that they do not change the truth condition of the sentence, they assist to structure an utterance in terms of its pragmatic and illocutionary function of utterances. It is generally acknowledged that discourse markers are not the same in all cultures and languages. Differences may be found in terms of their range, functions and usage. Being culturally rooted, it is thus assumed that discourse markers in one language (SL) are likely to pose challenges in a target language (TL).

This paper examines the English translations of specific discourse markers in Yoruba, which occur in three Yoruba-English bilingual plays (opera). The paper considers the kinds of problems involved in translating discourse markers occurring in conversational exchanges and dialogues in Yoruba into English, taking into account interlingual differences in the pragmatic functions of discourse markers in both languages. We shall also consider the pragmatic constraints in the translation of discourse markers and how the translators tried to achieve intended goals. Our pragmatic interpretation of translation considers how the original writer's intention or implied meaning has been rendered in the TL by the translator. This implies paying attention to the immediate cultural context of situation of the SL and matching it with that in the TL text. This level also embraces such variables as the intention of the speaker/writer, illocutionary force, the truth value of the proposition and the communicative use of sentences to perform some actions.

The analysis addresses the following three major questions:

- (a) Are there inter-lingual similarities and differences in the use of discourse markers between Yoruba and English?
- (b) What are the problems posed by the differences for the translators?

- (c) How functionally adequate are the English translations of specific discourse markers in Yoruba?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sources of data

Data are derived from four literary texts namely: three bilingual Yoruba-English plays (*Oba Ko So/the King did not hang* (1972) by Duro Ladipo, *Omuti/The Palmwine Drinkard* (1972) by Kola Ogunmola and *Obaluaye* by Wale Ogunyemi), and the fourth text containing extracts of bilingual Yoruba-English translations) is Yemi Elebuibon's *Ifa: the Custodian of Destiny* (2004). These are texts in which indigenous socio-cultural meaning and discourse in Yoruba are projected in English. The bilingual plays evidently mirror natural speech rhythm in Yoruba conversational discourse and dialogue. They are translated texts in which indigenous socio-cultural meanings and Yoruba speech are projected in English.

Duro Ladipo (1931 - 1978) was one of the best known and critically acclaimed Yoruba dramatists that emerged from postcolonial Africa. Ladipo was an actor and playwright whose theatre company combined folk traditions, drama, and Yoruba opera to form a distinctively Nigerian theatre. Writing solely in the Yoruba language, he tried to capture the symbolic spirit of Yoruba mythologies in his plays which were later adapted to other medium such as photography, television, and cinema. His most famous play, *Oba kò so* (The king did not hang), a dramatization of the traditional Yoruba story on how Shango became the God of Thunder.

Wale Ogunyemi, a prolific playwright and a scholar of the Yoruba world, who brought its history, myths and lore into his writing. His works include *Wale Ogunyemi*, worked as a Senior Art Fellow at the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ibadan from where he retired in 1999. He would be remembered as an actor and playwright whose career spanned over three decades. 'Without break' he often stressed.

Kola Ogunmola, Nigerian actor, mime director, and playwright took Yoruba folk opera (drama that combines Christian themes with traditional Yoruban folklore, music and dancing, and popular music and urban culture) and developed it into a serious theatre form through his work with his Ogunmola Traveling Theatre (founded c. 1947). Ifayemi Elebuibon is a renowned Ifa priest, poet, artist and author.

The methodology of contrastive linguistic pragmatics

The methodology of contrastive analysis is adopted to identify differences in the functions of discourse markers in both languages. Contrastive linguistics is the systematic comparison of two or more languages, with the aim of describing their similarities and differences.

The objective of the comparison may vary;

Language comparison is of great interest in a theoretical as well as an applied perspective. It reveals what is general and what is language specific and is therefore important both for the understanding of language in general and for the study of the individual languages compared (Johansson and Hofland, 1994: 25).

The problem of inter-lingual differences is well known and can be illustrated in the way the vocabulary of each language is organized. Although Lado (1957) included a comparison of cultures, early contrastive studies focused on what has been described as micro-linguistic contrastive analysis (James, 1980: 61ff). With the broadening of linguistic studies in general in the 1970s and 1980s,

contrastive studies became increasingly concerned with macro-linguistic contrastive analysis (James, 1980: 98ff): text linguistics, discourse analysis and pragmatics. Some of the researches looked at how cohesion is expressed in the two languages and how conversations are opened and closed in two or more languages.

Previous studies have characterized the problems of interlingual differences in terms of linguistic relativity and universals (Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, Sapir, 1921). The Whorfian view recognises that each language embodies and imposes upon the culture a particular world view. For Sapir, the emphasis on linguistic relativity which recognises that cultures vary from place to place and the vocabulary and grammatical structures reflect these. Culture bound entities like discourse markers can be found to differ from place to place.

On translation, Catford (1965) identifies and classifies translation types, based on the criteria of (a) the extent of translation, (b) grammatical rank and (c) the level of language involved in, whether total or restricted. At the level of grammatical rank, equivalence between SL and TL may be sought at the level of morpheme, word or phrase that is, rank-bound translation, whereas in boundless translation, equivalence is not tied to a particular rank. Also, from the communicative dimension, Baker (1992) identifies five different levels of equivalence;

(a) Lexical word, (b) grammatical differences in language grammatical (c) differences in language structure concerned with information structure (d) textual cohesion (e) pragmatic issues original writer's intention or implied meaning. In trying to understand translational meaning, therefore, one has to pay attention to the immediate cultural context of situation of the SL text and matching it with that in the TL text.

Pragmatic translation, therefore, involves translation of pragmatic functions of expressions and forms in the SL (e.g., speech acts, social greetings, politeness phenomena, swearing, moral and pragmatic beliefs and ideology) in the cultural environment (Hervey, 1998). In translating these, the translator employs pragmatic translation techniques based on contextual interpretation of SL meaning with a view to producing an appropriate perlocutionary effect on the reader. The Yoruba greetings *Kara o le o*, *Iba o*, *Odu a yabo* are translated into English to express pragmatic functions or meaning in respectively as: "Hail, Your Majesty," "I salute you." And I wish you a prosperous year.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The analysis is carried out within the pragmatic perspective based on the theory of speech acts and illocutionary force of utterances (Searle, 1969). Pragmatics emerged from Speech Act Theory and has generally been interested in spoken communication, particularly conversational exchanges. Austin's theory of speech acts is that in saying things we are also doing things viz; speech acts. He draws a distinction between saying something and doing something in terms of constative and performatives. Utterances are seen to perform three kinds of acts simultaneously: *locutionary act*; the uttering of a sentence with given sense and reference; *illocutionary acts*; such acts as answering a question, giving information or assurance or a warning, announcing a verdict, or intention, making an appointment or appeal or a criticism, making an identification or giving a description, etc and *perlocutionary act*; the bringing about of an effect on the audience by uttering the sentence, such

effects being special to the circumstances of the utterance.

Bach and Harnish (1979) consider speech act and suggest an intention and inference approach to speech act. They argue that illocutionary acts are performed with the intention that the hearer identifies the act being performed. To them, linguistic communication is basically an inferential process. They propose that in general, the inference made by the hearer and the one he takes himself to be intended to make is based on just what the speaker says but also on Mutual Contextual Beliefs (MCB). To them, differences in MCBs bring differences in illocutionary force, so, the hearer relies on, and is intended to rely on, MCBs to determine from the meaning of the sentences uttered what the speaker is saying, and from that the force can content of the speaker's illocutionary act.

The problem of culture-specificity and cross-cultural non-transferability of illocutionary function has been observed by scholars. Every human language provides ways in which such communicative needs as acknowledging, agreeing or disagreeing, are met. There are linguistic and paralinguistic means of performing the social or interpersonal function of language (Halliday, 1973). Members of a given culture are thus familiar with the illocutionary function of utterances in their language and easily understand these in various context but as Hervey (1998:12) rightly points out;

... when it comes to designating the illocutionary functions of a given language/ culture by labels drawn from another language, the situation is rather different, often such labels can at best be highly approximate glosses for illocutionary functions which have indigenous designations but are difficult to translate and require explanation by paraphrase.

In translating such speech events as greetings, swearing, compliments and phenomena like politeness and discourse markers, the translator faces the task of interpreting contextual information from SL with a view to producing an appropriate illocutionary force in the TL (Hervey, 1998). A translator often faces the temptation to alter the illocutionary force of an utterance in the ST.

ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF YORUBA DISCOURSE MARKERS

The pragmatic appraisal below will consider the illocutionary force of discourse markers in Yoruba-English translated texts within the general pragmatic perspective whereby the focus on the speaker's actual intention or illocutionary force becomes central. First the analysis is presented in Tables 1 and 2 to highlight similarities and differences in the meaning and illocutionary force of 'yes' and 'thank you' and their equivalents in Yoruba. Then,

Table 1. Translation of illocutionary act of confirming from Yoruba (e.g Beeni) into English (e.g Yes).

Yoruba: Source text (ST) Òmùtí	Illocutionary force of discourse markers	English: Target text (TT) The palmwine drinker	Illocutionary force
Sango: Hùn-hún!	Listening	Sango: Yes, (I am listening)	Listening
Timi: Dákun, má pe mo bá o lóyè mo pè o lórúko.	Seeking permission with respect	Timi: Please, don't say when I met you with the title I called you by name. (P. 12 – 13)	Requesting politely
LANKE: E ku ikale eyin ara. E ku ikale eyin ore mi. E feti bale ke gbo ro kan. Emu, emu! Emu, emu! E je ka memu amu kara! Bi a ba laso, aso a gbo! [Awon ore laso aso a gbo!] GBOGBO: Húuùuun! Àkííkà!	Supporting the perspective expressed in the proverb	LANKE: I hope you are pleasantly seated ladies and Gentlemen. I hope you are pleasantly seated, my friends. Listen close and hear something. Palmwine, palmwine! Palmwine, palmwine! Lets drink palmwine with all our might! If we have clothes, the clothes will wear out! [His friends, interested and cup in hand] ALL: HmMMM! That's right! (P.2 – 3)	Supporting
GBOGBO: A.....!o! LANKE: Kí lo bo somi ti ko ro talu? GBOGBO: [Pelú igboju so ke fun irori] Uuuuunn ... un ... un! Jide: Ha E duro! Abere ni! LANKE: (Pèlú èrín) Abéré ni looto 'o! Abéré ni. Okare 'o! Abéré ni!	Meditating on the riddle Confirming Commending/ Praising	ALL: Riddle it is! LANKE: What is it that fell into water and didn't go 'plop' ALL: [gazing up, lost in thought] HmMMM! Hmmm! Hmm! JIDE: Hey! Stop! It is a needle! LANKE: (laughing) It is a needle, indeed! It is a needle. That's right! It is a needle (P. 6 – 7)	Meditating Confirming Confirming
GBOGBO: Un-hun!		ALL: Yes....! (Go on!)	
LANKE: Iyawoo-kobo-kan-aabo. Ti n le onigba oke sigbo! Aku-wa-npa, Abito-funfun lenu! ROPO: Àkííkà!	Doubting	LANKE: The penny-ha'penny wife. Who drives the fifty-pound wife into the bush! The epileptic. Who foams at the mouth! ROPO: How true! (Yes) (P. 14 –15)	Doubting (Ironic)
LANKE: Oo! To ba je temu tee mu ni, E waa jo ko. [Lanke pe ademuu re] Alaba! Alaba oo! Alaba' ooo!!! Alabaa mi eeyan atata! [Ademu wole pelu gbogbo ohun elo to fi n demu.] ALABA: (pelu ibínú) O oo! Kí ló se tí gbogbo è fi le tó bá yi ke? À 'a!	Exclaiming Emphasizing Raging Raging	LANKE: Oh, I see! If the trouble is the palmwine you will drink. Come and sit down [and don't worry]. [Lanke calls his palmwine tapper] Alaba! Alaba...!Alaba...! My Alaba, a man of high calibre! [The palmwine tapper enters with all the instruments for tapping palmwine] ALABA: (angrily) Yes ...! What's the matter? Strange! (P. 16 – 17)	Exclaiming (Interjection) Exclaiming Worrying Worrying

Table 1.Contd.

GBADE: E wo o! E wado pe yi! O ti de di ope!	Agreeing/ supporting	GBADE: Look at him! Look at this tapper! He is already at the foot of the palm tree!	
LANKE: Se mo so bee!? Eeyan bee ni! Ode tan nsin-in! OHUN ENIKAN: Un-hun! An-han!		LANKE: Didn't I say so? He is that sort of person! He will soon return! VOICE: Yes...! Yes....! (P. 18 – 19)	Agreeing
OBA ÌKÀ: Uun!		CRUEL KING: Yes, (that's all right). (P. 102 – 103)	
Oba kò so: Sango: Hun-hun! Timi: Dakun, ma pe mo ba o loye mo pe o loruko. Sango: O seun	Following the argument acknowledging	The King did not hang Sango: Yes, (I am listening.) Timi: Please, don't say when I met you with the title I called you by name Sango: Thank you (P. 12 – 13)	Following the argument Acknowledging
Agba Ede'kan: Kade o pe lori, Ki bata o pe lese. Ohun'kan: Amin! Agba: Tie laa maa se titi aye. Ohun'kan: En-en.	Acknowledging presence and status agreeing	An Ede Elder: May the crown stay long on the head, And may the shoes stay long on the feet! Voice: Amen Elder: We will obey you till the end of the world. Voice: Yes. (P. 50 – 51)	Acknowledging status Agreeing
Enikan: Bèè ni.	Confirming	Somebody: Yes	Confirming
Sango: Gboonkaa Ebiri, Omo aji-boogun-soro ni o Gboonkaa: Bèè ni.	Confirming	Sango: Gboonkaa Ebiri, One who, on awaking, speaks with charms! Gboonkaa: Yes. (P. 62 – 63)	Confirming

the appraisal of the translation of these markers is presented.

Interlingual similarities and differences

Similarities

There is equivalence of meaning in the English translation 'yes' for the Yoruba discourse 'Bee ni'. Words like Aa! O seee mo ma dupe' means 'thank you' with exclamation. The analysis shows that discourse markers in Yoruba like 'Hun-hun!', 'Huuuuun!', 'Uuuuunn...un', 'un-hun!', 'An-han!', 'O oo!', 'Uun!', carry similar illocutionary to the English 'Yes'. 'hun-hun' (yes) indicates that the hearer is listening to the speaker. However, whereas 'Un-hun' translated as 'yes' in English has its message here as 'agreeing'. 'En-en' also indicates that the hearer is 'agreeing' with the speaker.

Differences

Differences and inequivalences are observed in the translation of discourse markers from Yoruba into English. For instance, words like 'Hun-hun!' 'Huuuun!' 'Uuuuunn...un' 'Un-hum!' 'An-han!', 'Ooo!' 'Unn!' carry similar message – 'yes'. They function differently in their various texts. Also 'Hun-hun' means 'yes' indicating that the hearer is listening. On the other hand, 'Un-hun!' indicates 'yes' but 'yes' in this context means that the speaker should speak on. Words like 'Aa! O seee' 'mo ma dupe' means 'thank you!'. The English translation has no respect marker. 'Mo' in 'mo ma dupe' is a respect marker. Again, 'Oooooooooooooo! is interpreted as 'thank you'. This further proves that Yoruba is a tonal language because this 'Oooooooooooooo! could mean some other things with different intonation. The 'Oo' in Yoruba has degrees. The longer one 'Oooooooooooooo!' has a deeper meaning.

Table 2. Translation of the illocutionary act of 'Acknowledging' from Yoruba (E seun) into English (Thank You).

Yoruba	Illocutionary force	English	Illocutionary force
LANKE: E fee mo idi re ti mo se gbadun emu mu bi eleyi, abi? OHUN OMOBINRIN: O jare! O jare!	Seeking to know	LANKE: You want to know why I like drinking palmwine so much, don't you? GIRL'S VOICE: Thank you!	Appreciating
OKUNRIN: Aa! O see, o see!	Supporting	MAN: Ah! Thank you, thank you, thank you.	Supporting
BABA: Oo		FATHER: Thank you	
BABA: Oo, Ejowoo!	Praising	FATHER; Thank you. Please!	Acknowledging
BISI; Baba, mo ma dupe pupo	Acknowledging	BISI: Father, I thank you very much	Acknowledging
AWON IWIN: Ooooooooooooo!	Appreciating	SPIRITS: Thank you! ...	Appreciating
Oba koso		The king did not hang	
Kabiyesi! Atoobajaye!	Greeting	Your Majesty!	Greeting
Olowoo mi, okoo mi o! Eni a ni ni I gbani! Oosa gba temi ye wo!	Praising	With whom one can associate and enjoy life! My master, my husband! The one whom a person has is the one who saves him!	Praising
Sango; E seun!	Acknowledging	Sango: Thank you!	Acknowledging
IYAWO: Okoo mi, e gbo na, mo fee beere oro kan. Ki lo n sawon eniyan? Ki ni won n le kiri nile aye? Bo ba ri won ni'gbaku'gba. Pelu isoro sa n! Ko ye mi to' o! Boya e lee ladi e ye mi! OKUNRIN: Aa! O sééé, o sééé!	Responding/ accepting to explain	WIFE: My husband, listen now! I want to ask a question. What is the matter with human beings? What are they running after in the world? If you see them any time, They are always in difficulty! I don't understand it! Maybe you can explain it! MAN: Ah! Thank you, thank you, thank you. (P. 48-49)	Accepting to explain the matter
[Babaa Bisi wole la'ti ba a soro ninu agoo re] BABA: Bisi! Bisi: E kaabo, baa mi BABA: 'Oo	Responding	[Bisi's father enters, in order to speak to her in her stall] FATHER: Bisi! You are welcome, my father FATHER: Thank you (P. 64-65)	Appreciating the greeting
BABA: Oo, E jòwóò!		FATHER: Thank you. Please! (P. 72-73)	
BISI: Bàbá, mo mà dúpé púpò	Acknowledging	BISI: Father, I thank you very much (P. 86-87)	Acknowledging

Table 2. Contd.

[Awon iwin ati Lanke dobale, won si n dahun lemo-lemo bi lya ti n ki won to si n beere nankan lowoo won] AWON IWIN: 'Oooooooooo!	Acknowledging/ appreciating	[The spirits and Lanke prostrate and answer repeatedly as the Mother greets them and asks them questions.] SPIRITS: Thank you! ... (P.118-119)	Appreciating
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There is the influence of the Yoruba culture. The response, 'Hun-hun!' shows that the hearer wants to hear more from the speaker even when he/she is not satisfied. The word 'Bee ni' could mean 'yes/no', depending on the mood of the speaker and the tone used. The variants *bee ni*, *Un-hun*, *Oo*, *Een-en*, *Ooto ni*, *ododo ni*, *looto ni*, are standard forms. They are used in both formal and informal situations. Their use cuts across all dialects, age, sexes and religions. The use of any of the variants in Yoruba land by an addressee signifies confirmation or affirmation of any statement made by the addresser. The use in this sense has no negative or offensive denotative meaning. However, at the level of pragmatic meaning, they may acquire negative connotations, e.g. doubt.

An-han, *Uun*, *Huuun*, *Ooo*, *O da* ("Yes" in English) can all mean acceptances to a proposition or re-affirmation of a statement. The terms are used extensively among both the adolescent and adult of Yoruba users in both formal and informal settings. *Oo*, *Ee-en*, or *Hun-un* variants are used by an addressee as a response to a call by an addressee. They are used in both formal and informal settings. Their use is not restricted to elites too. However, other expressions such as *mo nje*, *mo ndahun*, *mo nbo* can also be used as equivalents for "Yes" among Yoruba adolescent users of the language. The choice of any of the variants depends on the user's interactive setting. For instance, in some enlightened social settings, especially among the youth, the variants *En-en*, *Hun-un*, *Oo*, appear to be restricted to local and uneducated people. *He eba!* is a slang, which is used informally. Its use and meaning are restricted to certain groups of Yoruba speakers to affirm or confirm a proposition. It can also be used as an affirmative response to a question. Its use cuts across different ages, sexes or religions. *Ooo* or *Oooooooooo* is used in a special way. It is commonly used among the spiritually possessed people especially the masquerades, the Sango, Ogun, Obatala and other lesser god worshippers in Yoruba land. It has a spiritual connotation as a response to a negative call (e.g. from sleep). The variant is used as a response to spiritual chants, incantations, talking drums, praise-songs, etc that highly provoke emotional sensibility in the addresser. Its use cuts across sexes or genders but the setting is always religious and formal. It can only be used sarcastically in ordinary settings. The variant *Akiika* is only used among adult Yoruba users especially the elderly ones. Its other

equivalent is *Òótó ni*, *Òdodo ni*, *béè ni*, or *Oò púro*. The setting is always formal. It is normally used in a discourse among elderly discussants. Young Yoruba users only use the term to mimic elders or playfully cajole a young interlocutor that tries to mimic elders.

"Thank you" may be used ironically to mean the opposite of what the expression usually implies (that is appreciation or gratitude). This is the case here in *Baba Oo*: Father thank you. Again, context plays an important role here. The equivalents of "Thank you" in Yoruba are not restricted by such factors as age, sex, religion or social class, as such in terms of meaning. The variants are mainly used to express appreciation in Yoruba. Variants of "Thank you" in Yoruba include: *O séé*, or *e séé*, *mo dúpé*, or *a dúpé*, *o seun*, or *e seun*, *e káre* or *o káre*. The major difference among the age line is usually reflected in the preceding pronoun "e", and "o". The pronoun "e" as in *e see* (emphasis), or *e seun*, is used with the variant to address an elderly person while "o" (*o seun* or *o séé*) is used for a younger addressee. It is considered insulting, rude and uncultured for a younger addressee to use *o seun*, *o séé*, or *o kare* for an elderly addresser. The use of these variants is reserved for the elderly addressee and equal interlocutor in Yoruba. Even at times, equal interlocutors use *e see* or *e seun* for equals just to show mutual respect especially in an informal setting.

Again, the use of "a", "e", or "o", *mo* as in *e seun* and *o seun* respectively is distinct for number (singular/plural). *E seun* or *e see*, *e kare*, are used to indicate plurality while *o see*, *o kare* are used to indicate a singular addressee or younger person who is lower in status. But the singular pronoun can equally be used in some settings as honorific pronouns to show majesty, prowess strength, wealth, influence or very high sense of appreciation displayed by the speaker. The pragmatic or illocutionary force of "Thank You" as used by the King several times in this context is seen in terms of appreciation.

At times, the Yoruba uses of these equivalents may be sarcastic or ironic. In this sense, the term will not really mean or express the normal appreciative gesture but something else. Here, the use of the expression may connote perhaps failure of the addresser to discharge a duty, a responsibility, fulfill a promise, grant an obligation, etc. The setting for the usage may be formal or informal.

The use of the expression "Thank you" has other

functions: sarcasm, question, unserious remark. Variations in the use of “Thank you” occur in spoken English are made possible by means of intonation e.g. “Thank you” as a question has a rise intonation; whereas “Thank you” with a fall-rise intonation can mean sarcasm or may indicate unserious remarks. The ironic or sarcastic use of *o séé, o káre* or *e káre* (equivalents for English “Thank you”) depends on the mutual knowledge and contextual beliefs of interactants.

How pragmatically adequate are the English translations of specific discourse markers in Yoruba?

We have seen that certain inequivalences exist in the translation of discourse markers like ‘been’ ‘E seun’, ‘o seun’ in Yoruba as ‘Yes’ and ‘Thank you’ in English. The inequivalences are related to differences in conversational function and context of situation. A major challenge is that of translating a discourse marker in terms of the variety of meaning and function in SL different from the TL.

Yoruba is a tonal language and tone mark plays an important role in using these Yoruba equivalents to show different meanings in the language. For instance, the markers *Hun-un* with fall-rise tone marks indicate response to a call. The same term *Hun-un* with middle tone-mark indicates affirmation or confirmation of a statement or proposition. *Hun hun* can also be used to express a disagreement to an opinion or action. This usually goes with the shaking of the head (body language) to confirm the disagreement. However, it is a less forceful expression of disagreement or saying ‘No’ to an error of opinion of sometimes error of action.

As we have observed, the Yoruba equivalent to the English marker “Yes” realizes different functions and illocutionary force. The variants can indicate confirmation, affirmation, positive response and acknowledgement: *bee ni, Hun-hun, un-hun, O oo, An-han, Uun, Eneen, HUUUUUN, OOOOOOOOO! O da, Òótó ni, ododo ni, hoo, hee ba, looto, Akiika (Ooto)*. They can be used in both formal and informal settings depending on the social status of the user. Factors such as age, sex, religion and intimacy, also to some extent, do constrain the use of the Yoruba equivalent of “Yes”. Context therefore becomes a fundamental factor in the interpretation of the Yoruba expressions. Sometimes, *Akiika* can mean “Yes” to affirm a claim. Apart from its meaning as “yes”; *akiika* may indicate a surprise or ironic use. Some of these variants are of course dialectal and their use and meaning are restricted to certain contexts.

Conclusion

Discourse markers constitute a significant feature of

conversational discourse and language. As discourse markers and their functions are not the same in all languages, the translator that sets out to mirror natural speech (e.g. dialogues) of the ST in the TT faces the challenges of translating specific discourse markers. Translation of discourse markers inevitably involves translators’ knowledge of pragmatics (speech acts, intention and illocutionary force). Accurate pragmatic translation can only take place with a translator’s foreknowledge of the cultural features of the source language and those of the target language.

It is suggested that discourse markers (DMs) are carefully considered when doing a translation of conversational substance. Some of the discourse markers translated in English do not have the connotations inherent in the original text. If they are well considered, a translation with a strong and original style would be created. DMs have to be translated in a variety of ways, taking into consideration contexts, formality of a situation, intended impact and audience within the text as well as the style of the original text itself. The translation of discourse markers will involve identifying the functions that they are to serve in the discourse and selecting appropriate equivalents in the target language, given a specific function. It will also require an understanding of the pragmatic conventions in both SL and TL.

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