



EUREKA

A Journal of Humanistic Studies
(Special Russian Edition)

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

John FALOJU & Victor ARIOLE

Department of European Languages, University of Lagos. jfaloju@gmail.com
& vicariole@gmail.com

Anike Ruth OMIDIRE

Department of Foreign Languages, Obafemi Awolowo University. Ile-Ife.
anikomi2002@yahoo.com

Elena Borisovna ERSHOVA (к.ф.н, Дц.)

Department of Practical Russian Language, Ivanova State University. Ivanova
Russia. ersh-60@mail.ru

Kayode OMOTADE

Department of European Studies, University of Ibadan.
korgifahd@gmail.com

Félix Ayoh'OMIDIRE.

Department of Foreign Languages, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-
ife. fomidire@yahoo.fr

Abiodun ADETOKUNBO

Department of European Studies, University of Ibadan.
tokunbo83@hotmail.com

Ramonu SANUSI & Semiyu ADEGBITE

Department of European Studies, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.

Akin ADEMUYIWA

*Department of European Studies, University of Ibadan,
Ibadan. akin.ademuyiwa@gmail.com*

Adewuni SALAWU

Department of French, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti.

Ramonu SANUSI

Department of European Studies, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

Joseph N. EKE

Department of European Studies University of Ibadan. Joniek.j@gmail.com

Salawu, ADEWUNI

Department of French, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti.

Sanoussi ASSALEYE

French Department, Alayande College of Education, Oyo.

Sanni Rafiu OLAYINKA

French Language Village, Ajara, Badagry.

Gill Oluwatosin ADEKANNBI

Department of Classics, University of Ibadan. tsn_ade@yahoo.com

Adebisi ADEMAKINWA

Department of Creative Arts, Faculty of Arts, University of Lagos.
bisikonga@yahoo.com

Chuka CHUKWUBE

Department of European Languages, Faculty of Arts, University of Lagos.

Adeboye O. IFATUROT

Department of European Languages, University of Lagos.

IBADAN UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Adewuni SALAWU

Department of French, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti.

&

Ramonu SANUSI

Department of European Studies, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.

**INTERPRETATION WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF
FRANCOPHONE AFRICAN LITERATURE: AN INVESTIGATION**

Аннотация

Африканская литература занимает важное место в теории перевода. Ведь все, кто пишет не на родном языке занимается переводом. Таким образом, франкоязычные африканские авторы являются переводчиками. Исследовательский перевод как область знания имеет две основные ветви: письменный и устный перевод. В некоторых романах африканского происхождения, переводчик играет важную роль, необходимую для восприятия сообщения автора.

Ключевые слова: Толкование, письменный перевод, устный переводчик, комендант, франкоязычный, переводчик, Гриоты, Император.

Abstract

African literature is a part of translation studies. Whoever writes in a language different from his/her mother tongue is translating. Therefore, writers of francophone African origin are translators. The discipline of Translation studies has two major branches, which are translation and interpretation. In some novels of African origin, the interpreter plays an important role, useful in understanding the message of the author. The objective of this article is to evaluate and understand the relevance of interpretation within African fiction of francophone origin namely, *Les soleils des indépendances* of Ahmadou Kourouma, *Les bouts de bois de Dieu* of Sembène Ousmane and *L'étrange destin de Wangrin: les roueries*

d'un interprète africain (1992) of Ahmadou Hampathé Bâ. The study adopts not only historical, but comparative and narrative analysis of data from the texts of Ahmadou Kourouma, Sembène Ousmane, and Ahmadou Hampathé Bâ, while the theoretical framework is descriptive translation studies (DTS). Works of linguists, translators, language experts, and literary scholars serve as reference documents. The profession of translator is a mere transposition of the function of the *griot* as known in francophone Africa, and the *commandant* in the novel stands as the emperor of the oral literature where the *griot* is a professional linguist that facilitates the communication between the emperor and his subjects. The study concludes on the notes that the *griot* and the interpreter are lucky individuals who hold a privilege position and who at the same time must be checked because they go beyond the limit of their duty.

Key Words: Interpretation, Translation, Francophone, *Griot*, Interpreter, Commandant, Emperor.

Introduction

The fact that African literature is not largely written in African languages suggests different problems especially the one of adaptation. Thus writers of African origin adapt ideas imagined in their mother tongue into European languages. In so doing, all characters of the African oral literature are transposed into the written form. Although one could have new characters due to the contacts of cultures such as the character of *marabout* or Islamic cleric often spread in African literature of Francophone origin. African writer as a translator is more pronounced in some African writers' works who adopt the character of interpreter in their literary production.

Translation and interpretation suggest the mastering of at least two languages and two cultures. It is sometimes observed that despite the distortion of the structure of European languages to accommodate the principles of the mother tongue of the writer, it is still noticed that some African writers often employ the help of an interpreter to pass their message across to their targeted audience. In African oral literature, the interpreters are often demanded in public gatherings where an important

personality is expected to talk to a larger society. In some cases, in the absence of loudspeakers, such middlemen are not interpreters, but people relaying the message to other listeners. With the marriage of cultures, interpreters play a great role in transferring the message of the cleric to those who do not speak the language of the preacher during congregational meetings. Some African writers have adopted the style not because they are talking to a larger society but because they want easy communication among groups of people with different linguistic and cultural challenges. These African writers turned translators engage in a creative intellectual activity enriched with facts collected from the society or picked from history. Thus, African writers such as Ahmadou Kourouma do not only translate in the process of writing but also include the character of interpreter in their literary productions. One looks at the interpreter within the context of African literature as the extension of the *griot* as known in African oral literature or of old African empires, no matter how trusted he is presented. This article attempts to evaluate the character of the interpreter to ascertain to what extent he satisfies the roles expected of him:

Debates on Interpretation

Interpretation is a sub-division of translation studies and it is most concerned with the oral aspect of communication. It dates back to the beginning of contacts of people of different cultural background. An interpreter must have an adequate knowledge of the subject matter and at least two languages. An interpreter is trained to facilitate communication between two or more people engaged in communication with difficulties in understanding each other due to differences in linguistic and cultural settings. Therefore, language stands as the most important factor in interpreting, especially in its oral form. In the context of African literature, it appears difficult to point at the languages of interpretation, as the language of African literature reserves an unending debate as its status is concerned. Most writers of African origin publish in European languages, and their literary productions are referred to as African literature. Several critics of African literature such as Paul Bandia among others agree that for the mere fact that African authors conceive their ideas in their mother tongue and express them in European languages, qualify as translators. African writers have most of the time transposed the African oral literature to the African written literature. Bandia (2009: 11) more than any critic

deserves to be read:

Besides ... direct fictionalized translations of oral narratives into European languages, there have been other, more creative uses of African oral aesthetics in European-language fiction by writers such as Achebe, Senghor, Soyinka and Ahmadou Kourouma. Regarding the novel, *Les soleils des indépendances* (Suns of independence, 1968), Kourouma had no qualms about stating his indebtedness to the art of translation in expressing the Malinké worldview in French. Critics have referred to the language of the novel as a kind of Malinkization of French, thus recognizing the need to bend the French language in order to capture Malinké traditional discourse and culture.

Katrien Lievois (2005: 62) has earlier made a similar remark thus: «... to render account of the experiences and thoughts of his Malinké characters, Ahmadou Kourouma is not only inspired by the African oral tradition, but also transposes the Malinke in French syntax.» (Katrien Lievois, 2005: 62). African literature in European languages being within the context of translation studies is no longer debatable. Prominent African scholars such as Senghor (1964) et al are also of the opinion that:

All the "negro novels" in Francophonie proceed from René Maran, whether the author is called Ferdinand Oyono.... After Batouala, we can no longer live, work... have Negroes talking as Whites. They wouldn't be allowed to talk "littlenegro", but Wolof, Malinké, Ewondo in French. Because it is René Maran who was the first, to express "the black soul" with the negro style, in French (Our translation) (Léopold Sédar Senghor, 1964:410).

Having established that writers of African origin who publish in European languages are translators and considering interpretation as part of such literature, is not mistaken. It is observed that some writers engage their characters in discussions knowing well that there is a

communication gap between them, or that there are different levels of mastering languages whether it is intralingua or interlingua. Most of the time the focus of writers of African origin is the Africa of a multitude of dialects, local and regional languages such as Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo in the case of Nigeria. Although, there could be some linguistic interferences overtime due to contacts, yet in times of great needs, the services of interpreters are demanded to be sure of communicating effectively, a situation described by Bandia (2009: 5) as « horizontal translation and intercultural activity among African themselves. » The situation becomes more demanding and complicated when it involves African languages and European languages which is the focus of this paper. The role of the interpreter becomes inevitable in view of facilitating communication between the colonial master and the illiterate 'indigènes' which according to Bandia (2009: 5) is:

a vertical translation practice, based on unequal power relations, between European and African language cultures. In this vertical relationship, translation became much more than a mere exchange of cultures or texts, and assumed an ideological basis which determined and influenced the orientation of translation in the recording and transcription of African oral culture in European languages, as well as in the conveyance of Western civilization in Africa society.

In fact, the appellation of interpreter is not appropriate enough for the simple reason that the so-called interpreter was not trained to assume such responsibility. He was simply a multilingual and a child of circumstances. He mastered his mother tongue and some other local languages around him and the language of the colonial administrator. The interpreter was recruited among the first Africans who had contact with either Churchmen or European administrators. Sometimes such interpreter is recruited among retired soldiers that served in the colonial army or among some people who were purposefully trained in order to interact with the colonial master and his collaborator. The French spoken by such soldiers was a broken one often called "français petit nègre" which Gyasi (2012: 224) defines as follows:

The expression "le français petit nègre" is a metonymic term referring to the variety of "ungrammatical" French spoken during the colonial period by the indigenous colonized people of French Africa. By extension, it is used in a mocking and offhand way to refer to non-standard and/or faulty French, often with a racist undertone. The term has long been considered as an endogenous production in the colonies through learning on the job and contact between the indigenous populations and the colonizers.

Evidence of poor handling of French language is commonly observed in the literary production of writers of Francophone African origin. Dalamina is often seen proudly speaking his 'forofifonnaspa' (Hampaté Bâ, 1992) or 'le français petit nègre' (Gyasi, 2012) or 'le français tirailleur' (Hampaté Bâ, 1992) where « verbshad neither tense nor modal and names, surnames and adjectives, neither number nor gender. »(Hampaté Bâ, 1992). Yet Dalamina is an interpreter. For example, Dalamina says: « Ah! Moussé Lekkol, you talk a lot with commander. But you not speak French brand new, colored wine of Bordeaux. »(Hampaté Bâ, 1992). It is obvious that the colonial administrators or the Churchmen have played an important role in the upbringing of the interpreter who will work in the direction of the master or the boss. Ferdinand Oyono in *Une vie de boy* (1956) also refers to the bastardization of French language by the 'indigènes' when he engages 'Le Commandant du cercle', the school teacher, and the pupils in a huge communication confusion, yet they all were speaking the same French at different level of mastering.

'Forward marsss!' ordered the man. ... The schoolboys advanced in front of the Commandant. ... The children sang, without any pauses, in a language which was not their own or French but the strange gibberish which village people assume is French and Frenchmen assume is the vernacular. (Reed, 1980: 40; Oyono, 1956 :63).

It is good recollecting or revisiting the inevitable or unwanted circumstances that gave birth to the influx of characters such as interpreters. The victory of the colonial master over the natives or 'indigènes' with the gun and consequently the subjugation of Africa, explains the rationale of the vertical translation expatiated by Bandia (2009). First with the gun and then with the school, the whole Africa was compelled to take a new orientation in the way of the European, but this time in the manner of master versus slave or conquered 'indigènes'. Badian (1972: 60) attests to the assault of the colonial master when he submits: « Look at the Whites, they speak of humanity, but they settle all their disputes with gun. » (Badian, 1972: 60), while Cheikh Amidou Kane (1961:59) confirms this thus: « Strange dawn! The morning of the West in Black Africa was studded with smiles, guns and shiny beads. » (Cheikh Amidou Kane, 1961: 59). Seydou Badian (1972: 250; 253) through Chaka in *Sous l'orage* predicted the ugly occupation of Africa. « Our land will be upset soon. There will be storm; we will know a life without light, a life of torture, humiliation. ... You are killing me to take my place. It's too late! Oum Loungoum, the White man is on the way! You will be his slaves.» (Seydou Badian. 1972: 250; 253). Nazi Boni (1962: 215) announced the arrival of the colonial master or Nansarawa « As soon as the city was getting settled that the noise of an alien of red color with long hair went round the country, had just arrived at Bonikuy. » (Nazi Boni, 1962: 215). Cheikh Amidou Kane (1962), Seydou Badian (1962) and Ahmadou Kourouma (1968; 2000; 2004) and many other African writers established the changing order in Africa with the colonial master at the top of the hierarchy. Kane (1961: 60) argues that: « The result was the same, however, everywhere. Those who fought and those who surrendered, those who had composed and those who were obstipated, found themselves when the day came, recorded, distributed, sorted, labelled, conscripted, administered. » (Kane, 1961 : 60). Crowder confirms it thus:

By the end of the nineteenth century, however, the Christian governments of Western Europe were to use force to bring Africa under their rule (Michael Crowder, 1977:75). By 1900 the partition of West Africa was virtually over. All of West Africa, except Liberia, had been divided between the European colonial powers Britain, France, Germany and

Portugal (Michael Crowder, 1977:143).

Whatever was the orientation of the colonial administration, all Europeans present had the same aims: the economic exploitation of Africa's potentials and the orientation of the African in the European style. They were to lose their right of choice. They were lured into the culture of the master so as to facilitate the management of the colony. Ade Ajayi (2000:160) supports the above view when he said that: « Whether or not European rule was effective or hardly felt, there was little room for doubt as to the loss of sovereignty. And once a people lose their sovereignty, and they are exposed to another culture, they lose at least a little of their self-confidence and self-respect; ... » The second and the most powerful tool used by the colonial master was the school. The instruction was in French at all level and schools modelled in the style of France to harmonise the teachings. With the school, the colonial master gave another direction to Africa. Africans were to be taught the Western way of thinking. According to Kodjo (1987: 113), the colonial school was « ... more often the expression of a necessary alienating culture, buttressed by an ideology in the form of a set of values in which the colonised is seen as an inferior being, devoid of the intellectual faculties and moral qualities necessary for the fulfilment of great human ambitions. » Lievois (2005: 65) summarizes this admirably in his well-known quotation: « The civilization that the French intend to impose on Blacks will be achieved through the school and the hospital...» (Lievois, 2005: 65). In *L'aventure ambiguë* of Cheikh Amidou Kane (1961: 57), La Grande Royale expresses it better when she describes the colonial school as:

The school where I push our children to will kill in them what today we love and keep with care, and rightly of course. Perhaps our memory itself will die in them. When they return from school, there are some who will not recognize us. What I propose is that we accept to die in our children and that foreigners who have defeated us take in the mall the space we have left free. (Cheikh Amidou Kane, 1961: 57).

With his gun and his school, the colonial master has the entire Africa under his command. The new order in Africa is set and the view of the colonized is not sought. He only wanted to obey the wishes of the master. Therefore the services of a qualified interpreter is not needed here, rather those needed are people like Toundi, the houseboy as presented in *Une vie de boy*. What is needed is someone who speaks well the local languages but with a little knowledge of French poor enough at least to communicate with the colonial master or 'Le commandant du cercle' who was an important person during the colonial era. It is expected of the Commandant in *L'étrange destin de Wangrin* (1992) to look at Dalamina, his interpreter, with suspicion, disliking him, and even calling him an idiot. « My oldsillyinterpreterwasimposed on me. He wasthe worker of I do not even knowwhat officerof the conquest.» (Hampaté Bâ, 1992: 34). Appointing someone like Toundi as an interpreter is to elevate him to a parallel position of 'Le commandant du cercle'. The houseboy or a 'tirailleur' turned interpreter cannot but dance to the tune of his boss who he knows is at the service of France. 'Le commandant' was to spread the fame of France and to protect her honor. « ... what irritatedmost the commander was the lack ofsubmission to discipline andalsothe spread ofnegative news aboutthe authority andprestige of French.» (Hampaté Bâ, 1992: 31-32).

Griots or Interpreters

It is no longer a doubt that whoever writes in a language other than his/her mother tongue is translating. Most writers of African origin have only adapted in European languages their own oral literature. The influx of African oral literature in African creative writing in European languages is a reality. Katrien Lievois (2005: 62) has argued the same in his article "de Gaulle, ce grand guerrier toubab" ou résistance et domestication dans *Monnès, outrages et défis* d'Ahmadou Kourouma, that « AhmadouKouroumawas notonlyinspired by theoraltradition, butalso transposedtheMalinkeintoFrenchsyntax.» (Katrien Lievois, 2005: 62) African writer such as Kourouma is committed to the cultural and political struggle for the emancipation of Africa. This is supported by the following lines of René Richard (1969: 34) where he presented the African writer as: «... the depository of a tradition..., the witness of the passage between traditional and modern Africa, the witness of a

mutation which is being manifested now. »(Réné Richard, 1969 : 34). But in the process of transposing from African oral literature to modern African literature, some elements of such literature may no longer appear exactly as they were in the source text due to the creative ability of the artist. However, the mixture of cultures has brought some other similar characters playing some functions which are not totally traditional or totally modern. While *Webster dictionary* says that tradition is the transmission of knowledge and institutions through successive generations without written instructions, *Grand Larousse encyclopédique* defines modern as something of recent times. Traditions do not start in a day. They are the results of interactions and contacts over time with people of different backgrounds. Culture is linked to people's behaviour and perceptions of life. It is learned and transmitted from generation to generation. It changes and it is universal. For example, the present cultural set up in West Africa is a mixture of the West African, Islamic and Euro-Christian conceptions of life.

'Traditional' is linked to societies with slow progress and to societies that legitimize action by referring it to the past (Louis Munoz, 2003: xvii-xxviii). These societies stopped where the process of modernization starts. But in fact there is no opposition between modern and traditional because a society cannot be totally modern or totally traditional.

Several factors have contributed and influenced the changing of the cultural set up of West Africa. They may be distinguished as exogenous and endogenous. Louis Munoz (2003) calls them heterogenetic and orthogenetic. The distinction is based on whether they are the logical evolution of a cultural trait or affected by external influences. As a matter of fact both factors go often together (Edward Shills, 1981). Such phenomenon of *griot* in African literature is nothing than the importation of the aid of the emperor of the old empires known to West Africa. He is part and parcel of the African oral literature and he has enjoyed the publicity of scholars for the important position he occupied in the management of those empires. He was too close to the king and « often enjoyed a privilege position in society and wielded a great deal of political power and influence given their proximity to the king. » (Bandia, 2009: 3-4). Similarly, the interpreter was the closest person of the « “commandant”, he had a higher influence in the administration ...

As the native collaborator who is closest to the commandant, he assumes, in the eyes of the indigenous populations, responsibilities which are well beyond his modest official functions » (Gyasi, 2012: 228). In the words of Lievois (2005: 65) « Sometimes, he [interpreter] tries to substitute himself to the authority of the White in the management of Soba. »(Lievois, 2005: 65) There is no-one who is able to apprehend so perfectly the interpreter in his position almost as equal as the one of the 'commandant' as done by Hampaté-Bâ. Describing the interpreter, Hampaté-Bâ (1992: 39) comments as follows: « ...the interpreter Raoutié, this old *tirailleur* of Rufisque fingers laden with silver rings and carnelian, illiterate in French and ignorant in Arabic, was the second most powerful person of the area and came immediately after the commander. Sometimes the commander relies on him. »(Hampaté-Bâ, 1992 : 39). The prestigious position accorded to Racoutié is also seen in the interpreter Soumaré in *Monnè, outrages et défis* of Kourouma who tends to accord himself the power of the 'commandant du cercle'. According to Lievois (2005: 65): « the interpreter too confident, departs gradually from its original task. Sometimes he fails to translate and responds directly to the African king, without consulting the French commander. Sometimes, he substitutes himself to the authority of the White in the management of Soba.» (Lievois, 2005: 65). In *Les bouts de bois de Dieu*, the same scenario is observed where the interpreter engages in a continuous conversation with the entourage of Ramatoulaye, giving less consideration to the commandant.

The auxiliary agent who acted as interpreter, moved forward and positioned himself like a respected man:

- We want to see Ramatoulaye and take back the sheep....
- *Macou!* (Silence!) says the assistant. We want to see Ramatoulaye....
- She lies, replies the assistant....
- Here is she, chief, says the interpreter...
- The interpreter reports to his superior that part of the talk of Ramatoulaye, is done in her own way
- Come with the sheep. They will not keep you;

you have only to sign a paper. I know the chief, he is just. He is not like other toubabs...

What did she say? Asked the white man, who approached? (Ousmane, 1960:122-123)

The interpreter assumes the function of an adviser and a councilor like the one of the *griot*. So, the *griot* was also an adviser and a councillor, who knew people of the environments and their cultures such as their languages so as to serve as an interpreter for the king when needed. The profession of *griot* is not only learnt, it was a responsibility of a cast, a family, a lineage. The words of Djeli Mamadou Kouyaté are a testimony to this. « I am the *griot*. This is me, Djeli Mamadou Kouyaté, son of Bintou Kouyaté and of Djeli Kedian Kouyate, a master in the art of speaking... I hold my science from my father Djeli Kedian who also holds it from his father.» (Niane, 1960 : 9). He further says: « My word is pure and stripped of all lies; this is the word of my father; this is the word of my father's father. I will tell you the word of my father as I received it; the *griot* ignores lies.» (Niane, 1960 : 10). He was also the historian, the professor of the word, a lawyer, a 'professional linguist' (Bandia, 2009) that masters at least the languages spoken by peoples around. For example Djeli Mamadou Kouyaté, a *griot* argues: « When a quarrel broke out between the tribes, we are the one to restore peace back because we are the custodians of the oaths of the ancestors.» (Niane, 1960 : 10). This appears clear in the light of the quotation from Danquah (1928: 42) which Bandia (2009: 4) takes his time to remind us:

The Ashanti linguist was expected to repeat the words of the king for the benefit of the king's subjects, thus enhancing the authority of the king, whose ornate and esoteric language was not accessible to his subjects and required the intercession of the linguist. In his role as translator, a competent linguist was expected to embellish the king's speech, enhancing its eloquence and adding a touch of humor or philosophical content without altering the message, and as a result earn praise and esteem for the king and himself. ... the 'professional linguist' is generally known

by the name *griot*. These linguists were renowned for their mastery of several languages, and as translators- interpreters, they helped to spread the poetry and culture of a people over vast territories in many languages and cultures.

Danquah (1928) and Bandia (2009) equate a *griot* to a 'professional linguist' and to a translator- interpreter as observes by Bandia (2009: 2) « Multilingualism has always been a fact of life for people here, and it is not unusual to see an ordinary individual who speaks a variety of languages, switching from one to the other regularly in his daily activities. » On the lineage of the professional linguist, Bandia (2009: 3) has this to say: « the professional linguist belonged to a lineage of gifted orators, some of whom had worked in the courts of great monarchs in kingdoms such as Mali, Zimbabwe and Ghana. » The *griot* is proud to be the teacher of the king because as Djeli Mamadou Kouyaté explains « I taught to kings the history of their ancestors so that life of their ancestors serves as example to them, because the world is old but the future is of the past. » (Niane, 1960 : 10). Camara Laye (1953: 25) supports this view as for him- the *griot* « settled, heralded on its cora.. and began to sing the praises of my father... I heard the remembrance of the good deeds of the ancestors of my father and his ancestors themselves in the order of time ... » (Camara Laye, 1953: 25).. However, besides famous *griots* known during the era of old empires such as Ghana, Mali, and Songhai, one could find errant ones who are not from the lineage and who might want to make the profession their daily activity. Often called and nicknamed as gamblers, they know little about the history of people they intend to glorify. For example, Fama, the hero in *Les Soleils des indépendances* (1970) was furious and attempted to attack the *griot* who was associating the Doumbouya and the Keita. Fama wanted the *griot* to make himself understood clearly:

Fama asked the *griot* to repeat himself. He hesitated. Who had associated Doumbouya and Keita? These are the kings of Ouassoulou with hippopotamous as totem and not the panther. In a firm voice, angry and

indignant, Fama again asked the griot to repeat what he just said. The griot embarked on endless justifications...Bastard of *griot*! There is no more a true griot; the good ones died with the great masters of war before the conquest of Toubabs. Fama rose up and thundered to vibrate the building. The sickly *griot*, out of his senses, did not know by what wind to swing... (Kourouma, 1970:12).

As Kourouma rightly pointed through Fama, the good and errant griots, Ruth Finnegan (1970) is of similar view in his observation of the different categories of poets praise-singers. Besides court poets, there are freelance and wandering poets. There are also part-time poets. In his words, «some poets, it is clear already, are associated with royal courts and receive reward as professionals. Others depend on private enterprise, perhaps wandering from patron to patron and living on their wits. Others... are marked out by their skills on special occasions. » (Finnegan, 1970: 82). Some interpreters like their counterpart *griots* or praise-singers could also be classified as freelance, part-time or wandering interpreters. A freelance interpreter is found in *Le mandat* of Sembène Ousmane (1966) to facilitate communication between the literate and non-literate indigene. Abdou in Paris cannot communicate with his uncle Dieng in Dakar who cannot read and write. Dieng needs the intervention of a professional linguist to resolve the linguistic challenges or difficulties which confronted him. « Placed on the side of the mail boxes, the scribe [Dieng] received him. He was to refuse the letter, but Dieng made him to understand that it was his wife who had opened it,... The docket, ..., looked at him through his glasses and concluded; he was older. The letter is from Paris, from your nephew, Abdou. He read. ...» (Ousmane, 1966 : 126). The same professional linguist was there to write the response of Dieng to Abdou. « The 'rapide' dropped him at the bus stop. The hall of the post office was half-empty. The old writer had before him just a client. He did not recognize him. Diengre minded him of fifty francs and paid his debt. The other adjusted his glasses and took his pen: »(Ousmane, 1966 : 181). The services of a part-time interpreter was also sought to remove the linguistic barrier between the judge and Fama, the accused coup plotter.

The impromptu interpreter was a Malinké retired soldier who was digressing and adding freely his own comments on the judgment passed. The Malinké guard interpreter started thus: « You are all animals. You do not understand French and you wanted to kill the president... In all cases, the sentenced were set free by the President... And if there is someone to challenge the spirit of justice of the President, he should raise his finger. "(Kourouma, 1970:174-175)" The guard-interpreter is seen politicizing the judgment and taking position which was not supposed to be for an interpreter. We do not know the identity of the judge, but the interpreter was presented as a Malinké retired guard. « You who are here, you are bad Malinke, bastards, a pure Malinke does not involve himself in a plot.(Kourouma, 1970:175) 'Un pur de chez nous' indicates that the Malinké interpreter was personalizing the judgment bringing in sentiment and supporting the judgment passed by the justice. The arrogance of interpreters is also felt in some griots, such as Balla Fasséké who will become later the praise-singer of an emperor, Soumaoro Kanté, king of Sosso, well known during the era of empires in Africa. Balla Fasséké attempted to put himself in the shoes of the emperor, sitting in the chair of the throne behaving like Soumaoro and touching whatever he found in the secret room of the emperor.

Un jour que le roi était absent, Balla Fasséké arriva à s'introduire jusque dans la chambre la plus secrète du palais, là où Soumaoro abritait ses fétiches. Quand il eut poussé la porte, Balla fut cloué de stupeur devant ce qu'il vit :... Balla Fasséké, qui était aussi versé dans la sorcellerie, récita des formules et tout dans la chambre se tint tranquille, et le fils de Doua continua son inspection. ... Se rouant dans la chambre, sabre au poing, Soumaoro rugit «Qui est là ... ? C'est toi Balla Fasséké !! »Le roi écumait de colère ; ses yeux rouges des braise ardentes renflaient puissamment ; (Niane, 1960 : 74 ; 76).

As the function of interpreter is similar to the job of *griot*, the commander of the colonial era is comparable to the emperor of the ancient period of Africa with empires such as Mali, Ghana, and Songhai.

Conclusion

The interpreter is a reality in modern African literature and the character appears to be very important if we have the true social scenario in Africa. It is a fact that not only Africans speak the official languages, but the African writer needs all to make his message a comprehensive one, hence it is all about our daily activities that are reflected in his creative fiction. Although the interpreter is a product of the forceful mixture of the culture and the new order in Africa, it could also be out of the transposition of the oral tradition into modern literature with the *griot* being replaced by a similar character in the management of the colonies and the commandant playing the function of the emperor.

The interpreter as presented in African literature is more political than academic because the interpreter is at the mercy of his boss. He is employed to do the wishes of the commandant, giving him ample opportunities to enrich himself and building power around him at the admiration of other Africans. The fame of the *griot* is comparable to the one acquired by the interpreter but the interpreter is most arrogant and needs to be checked as the *griot* is sometimes overzealous despite his ability to speak a couple of languages.

Bibliography

- Ade Ajayi, J. F. 2000. *Tradition and Change in Africa*, Edited by Toyin Falola, Trenton: Africa World Press.
- Badian, S. 1972. *Sous l'orage*, Paris: Présence Africaine.
- Bandia, P. 2009. "Translation Matters: Linguistic and Cultural Representation", *Continuum Studies in Translation, Translation Studies in Africa*, Edited by Judith Inggs and Libby Meintjes, 1-20pp.
- Boni, N. 1962. *Crépuscule des temps anciens*, Paris: Présence Africaine.
- Crowder, M. 1977. *West Africa. An Introduction to its History*, London: Longman.
- Danquah, J. B. 1928. *Gold Coast: Akan Laws and Customs*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Finnegan, R. 1870. *Oral literature in Africa*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Grand Larousse Encyclopédique*. 1968. Tome dixième, Paris : Librairie Larousse.
- Gyasi, Kwaku A. 2012. 'Le français petit nègre' and the Construction of Social Identity in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa", *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, vol. 2, no. 19, Special Issue. 224-231pp
- Hampaté Bâ, A. 1992. *L'étrange destin de Wangrin ou les rueries d'un interprète africain*, Paris: Editions 10/18.
- Kodjo, E. 1987. *Africa Tomorrow*, Translated by E.B. Khan, New York: Continuum Publishing Company.
- Kourouma, A. 1970. *Les Soleils des indépendances*, Paris: Editions du Seuil.
- Kourouma, A. 2000. *Allah n'est pas obligé*, Paris: Éditions du Seuil.
- Laye, C. 1953. *L'enfant noir*, Paris: Plon.
- Lievois, K. 2005. 'De Gaulle, ce grand guerrier toubab' ou résistance et domestication dans Monné, outrages et defies d'Ahmadou Kourouma, *Linguistica Antverpiensa*, NS, 4, 2005, 61-76pp.
- Munoz, L. 2001. *The Roots of the West, An Introduction to the European*

Cultural Tradition, Ibadan: Bookcraft Ltd.

Munoz, L. 2003. *A Living Tradition, Studies on Yoruba Civilization*, Ibadan: Bookcraft Ltd.

Niane, D. T. 1960. *Soundjita ou l'Épopée Mandingue*, Paris, Éditions Présence Africaine.

Ousmane, S. 1966. *Le Mandat*, précédé de *Véhi Ciosane*, Paris : Présence africaine.

Ousmane, S. 1998. *Volatigue*, Paris: Présence africaine.

Richard, R. 1969. 'Le choix de la langue' in *Actes du Colloque. Situation et perspectives de la littérature négro-africaine*, Série D, Tome II.

Sanusi, Ramonu & Semiyu Adegbite 2013. "Etude appreciative de l'intertextualité chez Amos Tutuola et Ahmadou Kourouma," *Mélanges Francophones*. Vol. 7: 8, 129-141

Sanusi, Ramonu. 2007. « La Langue d'Ahmadou Kourouma ou la décentralisation du français dit académique, » *Ibadan Journal of European Studies* No7, 279-289.

Shills, E. 1981. *Tradition*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.