Grammaticality and Acceptability in Translation: A Case Study of the Song, "*French Kiss*" By Alpha Diallo

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Abstract

Noam Chomsky makes a distinction between grammaticality and acceptability in translation. A sentence may be grammatically correct (competence) but it may not be acceptable (performance) if it runs counter to common sense or extra- linguistic reality. This paper, however, treats the level of alignment of the song, "French kiss" by Alpha Dialloto competence and performance. To carry out this task, linguistic theory of translation was used. The conclusion shows that thesong, "French kiss", based on paraphrasing, imitation and adaptation is grammatically incompetent but goes in line with common sense and extra – linguistic reality, thereby gains acceptability.

Keywords: grammar, language, linguistic reality,translation

1.1 Introduction

Associated with the legend of the Tower of Babel is interlingual communication, the act of conveying ideas and information from one linguistic medium into another in speech (interpretation) and writing (translation), which is as old as human experience of multilingualism. From time immemorial, there have always been individuals who have access to more than one language as a means of communication, and who, therefore, could serve as channels linking together the people on the other side of the language divide.Basic knowledge of the nature of language is indispensable for every translator and interpreter because the use of language is central to his activity. (Joseph Ukoyen, 2021:219). The

language system consists essentially of highly structured lexis and grammar (or syntax). The mastery of grammar too; is necessary for good translation.

Alpha Diallo popularly known as Black M, is a French-Guinean rapper. He grew up in Paris in a modest family. He is famous for his membership in the French rap and hip hop collective Sexiond'Assaut in addition to his solo work and collaborations with various artists. In 2006, he had a joint released *Bakry& Black Mesrimespresente Le Pact*. In 2013, he released "Ailleurs" as an early release from his solo album titled *Les yeux plus grosque le monde.* that followed in 2014, becoming his first official studio album. Follow-up big hits from the album included "Mme Pavoshko'', "Sur ma route'' and "La legend. Among the songs produced by him is French kiss.

According to Vinay and Darbelnet, 1958 quoted in Ukoyen, 2001 translation is the search for the closest natural equivalent, first in meaning and secondly in style.J.C.Catford (1965) defines translation as the operation performed on languages. According to Eugene A. Nida (1974), translation process is as follows: analysis, transfer, and restructuring; all quoted in Ukoyen, 2001: 224 – 225. According to Vinay and Darbelnet, there are seven methods of translation, among which are – word for word, le calque, adaptation, transposition, etc.

Ferdinand de Saussure and Noam Chomsky propounded concepts of transformational generative grammar. Saussure posts a basic dichotomy in his analysis of language, that is language as a system and parole that is the living, dynamics and evolving speech used by individual human beings. Saussure proposes a referential theory of meaning, whereby acoustic symbols and graphic signs are associated in the human mind with extra –linguistics realities and mental concepts.

1.2   The Place of Grammar in Translation

French grammar is the set of rules by which the French language creates statements, questions and commands. In many respects, it is quite similar to that of the other Romance languages. French is a moderately inflected language. Nouns and most pronouns are inflected for number (singular or plural, though in most nouns the plural is pronounced the same as the singular even if spelt differently); adjectives, for number and gender (masculine or feminine) of their nouns; personal pronouns and a few other pronouns, for person, number, gender, and

case; and verbs, for tense, aspect, mood, and the person and number of their subjects. Case is primarily marked using word order and prepositions, while certain verb features are marked using auxiliary verbs.

Verbs in French are conjugated to reflect the following information: a mood (indicative, imperative, subjunctive, conditional, infinitive, or gerundive a tense (past, present, or future, though not all tenses can be combined with all moods)an aspect (perfective or imperfective)a voice (active, passive, or reflexive. Some of these features are combined into seven tense–aspect–mood combinations. The simple (one-word) forms are commonly referred to as the present, the simple past or past tense, perfective aspect), the imperfect (past tense, imperfective aspect), the future, the conditional, the present subjunctive, and the imperfect subjunctive.

However, the simple past is rarely used in informal French, and the imperfect subjunctive is rarely used in modern French. Verbs in the finite moods (indicative, imperative, subjunctive, and conditional) are also conjugated to agree with their subjects in person (first, second, or third) and number (singular or plural). As in English, the subject must be included (except in the imperative mood); in other words, unlike other Romance languages, French is neither a null-subject nor a pro-drop language.

Auxiliary verbs are combined with past participles of main verbs to produce compound tenses, including the compound past (passé composé). For most main verbs the auxiliary is (the appropriate form of) avoir ("to have"), but for reflexive verbs and certain intransitive verbs, the auxiliary is a form of être ("to be"). The participle agrees with the subject when the auxiliary is être, and with a preceding direct object (if any) when the auxiliary is avoir. Forms of être are also used with the past participles of transitive verbs to form the passive voice. Usually, the imperative mood, which only has first-person plural and second-person singular and plural forms, has forms that are similar or identical to the corresponding ones in the present indicative.

Every French noun has grammatical gender, either masculine or feminine. The grammatical gender of a noun referring to a human usually corresponds to the noun's natural gender (i.e., its referent's sex or gender). For such nouns, there will very often be one noun of each gender, with the choice of the noun being determined by the natural gender of the person described;

for example, a male singer is un chanteur, while a female singer is either une chanteuse (a pop singer) or une cantatrice (an opera singer). A plural noun that refers to both males and females is masculine. In some cases, the two nouns are identical in form, with the difference only being marked in neighbouring words (due to gender agreement; see below); a Catholic man is uncatholique, while a Catholic woman is unecatholique. Nonetheless, some such nouns retain their grammatical gender regardless of natural gender; personne 'person' is always feminine, while (at least in "standard" French) professeur 'teacher' is always masculine. In Canadian French, uneprofesseure is the standard feminine form, which is becoming more and more common in European French.

A noun's gender is not perfectly predictable from its form, but there are some trends. As a very broad trend, nouns ending in -e tend to be feminine (e.g., uneétoile 'star', unevoiture 'car'), while the rest tend to be masculine (e.g., un ballon 'balloon', un stylo 'pen'), but it sometimes can be the opposite. More consistently, some endings, such as -sion, -tion, -aison and -ité occur almost exclusively with feminine nouns, while others, such as -aire and -ismeoccur almost exclusively with masculine ones. Many nouns ending in -e preceded by double consonants are also masculine (e.g. un cadre, un arbre, un signe, un meuble). Nonetheless, a noun that seems masculine judging by its ending might actually be feminine (e.g., la peau 'skin') or vice versa (e.g., un squelette 'skeleton'). Noun clauses are masculine.[4]

A very small number of nouns can be used either in masculine or feminine gender with the same meaning (e.g., après-midi 'afternoon'). Often one gender is preferred over the other. Some (very rare) nouns change gender according to the way they are used: the words amour 'love' and délice 'pleasure' are masculine in singular and feminine in the plural; the word orgue 'organ' is masculine, but when used emphatically in the plural to refer to a church organ it becomes feminine (les grandesorgues); the plural noun gens 'people' changes gender in a very unusual way, being usually masculine but triggering feminine agreement when certain adjectives precede the word.

Other nouns change meaning depending on which grammatical gender they are used. For example, le critique (masculine) refers to a critic, while la critique (feminine) means criticism. Similarly, le voile means "veil", whereas la voile means "sail".The vocabulary of

French includes many homophones, i.e., pairs of words with different spellings but the same pronunciation. Grammatical gender, however, may serve to distinguish some of these. For example, le pot 'pot' and la peau 'skin' are both pronounced [po] but disagree in gender. Similarly, le pet (fart) and la paix (peace), are both [pɛ].

As in English, nouns inflect for numbers. In terms of spelling, the plural is usually formed from the singular by adding the letter -s (cf. maison>maisons 'houses'). Nouns ending in -au, -eu, and -ou often take the ending -x instead (cf. jeu>jeux 'games'). However, the endings -s and -x are not pronounced when the word is said (unless the word following it begins with a vowel, in which case it is pronounced). So, the plural form of a noun generally has the same pronunciation as the singular. Nouns that end in -s, -x or -z in the singular are left unchanged in the plural in both pronunciation and spelling (cf. croix>croix 'crosses', both pronounced [kʁwa]).

In spoken French, therefore, the plurality of a noun generally cannot be determined from the pronunciation of the noun, but it is commonly marked by the form of a preceding article or determiner (cf. la maison [la mɛzɔ̃] 'the house' > les maisons [le mɛzɔ̃] 'the houses'; mon frère [mɔ̃ fʁɛːʁ] 'my brother' >mes frères [me fʁɛːʁ] 'my brothers').Liaison between a plural noun and a following adjective is only common in careful speech, for example, by newsreaders. In this case the plural ending -s or -x may be pronounced: des fenêtresouvertes [dɛfənɛtʁəz‿uvɛʁt] ("open windows"). In common speech, this is rarely done, so singular and plural forms of most nouns are homophonous in all contexts.Source: Wikipedia

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1.3   Linguistic Theory of Translation

Linguistic theory of translation draws attention to the phenomenon of linguistic relativity according to which different languages segment and analyse extra-linguistic reality differently and therefore can pose serious problems for interlingual communication envisaged primarily at the surface structure. Fortunately, the language system also possesses a deep structure which greatly clarifies the problems encountered at the surface structure level.

Eugine A. Nida lays great stress on intelligibility and acceptability in translation.InNidaand Taber (1974: 33) cited by Ukoyen (2001:225) the translation process is presented as follows:

i.   <u>Analysis</u>, in which the surface structure of the L1 is analysed in terms of its grammatical relationships to bring out its meaning or sense.

ii.   <u>Transfer</u>, in which the extracted meaning or sense is transferred en route to L2

iii.   <u>Restructuring,</u> in which the transferred meaning or sense is re-expressed or restructured in L2, with emphasis on generating the closest natural equivalent in content and style.

1.4   Analysis of the song "French kiss"

The analysis is going to be done through the linguistic theory of translation propounded by Noam Chomsky which encompasses paraphrasing imitation and adaptation

What is paraphrasing?

In paraphrasing, the translator could abandon the original altogether as he saw fit.

(i)   Remaining faithful to the original text

(ii)   Translating freely in the interest of the receptor language and culture

(iii)   The <u>analysis</u>is going to be done through:

-paraphrasing

-Imitation

-adaptation

The song comprises 62 lines, and 3 stanzas with a chorus. The central theme of the song is love.

Feelings -This emotion is portrayed as being deceitful in love (lines 2*3)

Stanza 2: opines that a man need not lose his happiness as a result of a lady disappointing him; there are other ladies in the world.

"French Kiss"

Trop de fierté pour avouer

Les sentiments, il faut pas jouer

Les sentiments, ils te font douter

Arrête de dire qu'ils te dégouttent

Oh, ma copine, ma copine résonne-toi, arrête tes sottises (Imitation)

T'es sous 'tise, t'es sous 'tise   (Imitation)

Pour parler d'amour: pas besoin de sous-titres (Imitation)

J'te vois, tu soupires, tu soupires (Paraphrasing)

Laisse-le partir, je suis là au pire (Imitation)

Ba ouais, ton cœur est brisé (Adaptation)

Toutes les femmes te disent: c'est l'homme le fautif (Imitation)

chorus

Je l'aime à la folie, un peu beaucoup, passionnément

Pas du tout, pas du tout

Je l'aime à la folie, un peu beaucoup, passionnément

Pas du tout, pas du tout

French Kiss

Je l'aime à la folie; French Kiss

Je l'aime un peu, beaucoup; French Kiss

Je l'aime passionnément; French Kiss

Pas du tout

Tu t'es fait complètement envouté (Imitation)

Regarde maintenant ce que ça t'as coûté   (Imitation)

Y'a certaines choses qu'il ne faut pas goûter   (Imitation)

Arrête de dire qu'elle te dégoûte (Imitation)

Mon gava, mon gava, tes frérots sont là, t'inquiètes pas, ça va (Ad)

Comment ça? Comment ça? (Imitation)

Oublie-la, tu peux tout recommencer} (Paraphrasing)

Une de perdue, dix de retrouvées   (Paraphrasing)

Toi tu veux retrouver celle que t'as perdue   (Imitation)

Ba ouais, ton coeur est brisé (Adaptation)

Tous les hommes ne font que dramatiser (Imitation)

chorus

Je l'aime à la folie, un peu beaucoup, passionnément

Pas du tout, pas du tout

Je l'aime à la folie, un peu beaucoup, passionnément

Pas du tout, pas du tout

French Kiss

Je l'aime à la folie; French Kiss

Je l'aime un peu, beaucoup; French Kiss

Je l'aime passionnément; French Kiss

Pas du tout.

Tu n'es jamais sûr de toi   (Imitation)

Tu sais pas ce que tu veux, toi   (Imitation)

Tu le veux sous le même toit   (Adaptation)

Tu la veux sous le même toit   (Adaptation)

En amour, 'suffit pas d'y croire (Paraphrasing)

Tu vis dans le doute et l'espoir   (Adaptation)

Quand t'es seul face à ton mirroir (Adaptation)

Tu te refais l'histoire   (Adaptation)

Mais tu l'aimes (tu l'aimes, tu l'aimes)   (Imitation)

Hein, tu l'aimes (tu l'aimes, tu l'aimes)   (Imitation)

Je l'aime à la folie, un peu beaucoup, passionnément, pas du tout, pas du tout

Je l'aime à la folie, un peu beaucoup, passionnément, pas du tout, pas du tout

French Kiss

Je l'aime à la folie; French Kiss

Je l'aime un peu, beaucoup; French Kiss

Je l'aime passionnément; French Kiss

Pas du tout

French Kiss

French Kiss

French Kiss

French Kiss

French Kiss

Source: Lyric fiindParoliers :Alpha Diallo / Renaud Rebillau

Translation of "*French Kiss" into English*

Too proud to admit

Feelings, must not play with

Feelings, they make us doubt

Stop saying they disgust you

Oh, my friend, my friend, reason with you, stop your nonsense

You are drunk, you are drunk

To talk about love, no need for subtitles

I see you, sighing, sighing

Let him leave, I am here at worst

Yeah, your heart is broken

Every woman tells you: men are to blame

[Chorus]

I love her madly, a bit, a lot, passionately,

Not at all, not at all

I love her madly, a bit, a lot, passionately,

Not at all, not at all

French kiss

I love her madly, French kiss

I love her a bit, a lot, French kiss

I love her passionately, French kiss

Not at all

[Stanza 2]

You have been completely captivated

Now look at the price you paid

There are things you must not taste

Stop saying she's disgusting you

My friend, my friend1all your bros are here, it's okay

How come? How come?

Forget her, you can try again

There are plenty more fish in the sea

You want to find again the one you lost

Yeah, your heart is broken

Every man is just dramatizing

[Chorus]

I love her madly, a bit, a lot, passionately,

Not at all, not at all

I love her madly, a bit, a lot, passionately,

Not at all, not at all

French kiss

I love her madly, French kiss

I love her a bit, a lot, French kiss

I love her passionately, French kiss

Not at all

[Verse 3]

You're never sure of yourself

You don't know what you want, you

You want to live with him

You want to live with her

In love, to believe isn't enough

You're living with doubt and hope

When you're alone in front of your mirror

You repeat the story

But you love her (you love her, you love her)

Doesn't it, you love her (you love her, you love her)

[Chorus]

I love her madly, a bit, a lot, passionately,

Not at all, not at all

I love her madly, a bit, a lot, passionately,

Not at all, not at all

French kiss

I love her madly, French kiss

I love her a bit, a lot, French kiss

I love her passionately, French kiss

Not at all

French Kiss

French Kiss

French Kiss

French Kiss

French Kiss

The title of the song'French kiss', could have been 'African kiss', to portray African identity. It connotes the singer's regard for white people. A lot of Imitations were discovered in the version translation of the song, For example :

Line 5 : Oh, ma copine, ma copine résonne-toi, arrête tes sottises (Imitation)   Thème
Oh, my friend, my friend, reason with you, stop your nonsense   Version

Line 6: T'es sous 'tise, t'es sous 'tise
You are drunk, you are drunk

Line 7 : Pour parler d'amour: pas besoin de sous-titres

To talk about love, no need subtitles
Line 11: Laisse-le partir, je suis là au pire

Let him leave, I am here at worst
Feelings -This emotion is portrayed as being deceitful in love (lines 2*3)

Stanza 2: opines that a man need not lose his happiness as a result of a lady disappointing him; there are other ladies in the world.

Summary and Conclusion

Translation is a very interesting task. The more one practices it, the more experienced one becomes in the area of translation. Translation is to be done systematically according to the laid down rules. There are rules governing translation. All must be strictly adhered to have a good job done. Translation is not limited to the area of songs alone; virtually all things can be translated to all languages of the world. Variations will be discovered from one language to the other. Not all linguistic elements present in the French language is present in all other languages. That is why paraphrasing, adaptation, and imitation are allowed in translation. Moreso, no two world languages are the same in structure and lexis. French kiss was originally composed, bearing in mind the ideology of the singer; there is no way, this can be translated expressly but can still be managed. A good job must be grammatically acceptable