Foregrounding Direct and Oblique Translation Methods in Mariama Bâ's *So Long a Letter*: A Comparative Stylistic Perspective

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Abstract

This paper is a comparative stylistic study of the French source version and translated English version of Mariama Bâ's award winning epistolary novel *Une si Longue Lettre / So Long a Letter,* published in 1979 and 1981 respectively. It is an investigation on the linguistic ways and means to effectively arrive at the translation of a literary work from a source language to a target one, while remaining on track with the situation, the ideas and the message shared by the author in the source text. The proofread, cross study and scrutiny of both versions unveiled the significant achievements of the translator in the transcoding of a deeply cultural, religious, stylistic, tonal, and both traditional and modernity geared literary work. The results of the research work show that the translation methods used are those of direct translation - borrowing and literal translation – on the one hand, and oblique translation – transposition, modulation, and equivalence on the other hand, based on the theoretical framework developed by Vinay and Darbelnet. The application of those methods reveal the translator's dedicated efforts to remain on track with the source text, while feeding in some shifts in speech parts, some thoughtful stylistic and linguistic tonal balance to remain in tune with various peculiar aspects of the Anglophone readership.

Keywords: *Une si Longue Lettre / So Long a Letter,* Mariama Bâ, comparative stylistics, direct translation, oblique translation

1 – Introduction

The importance of language as a means of human interaction and the wide variety of distinctive languages, cultures, contexts and stylistic patterns and nuances have made interlingual communication -translation and interpreting –a field of high rush concern for a critical number of scholars (Bell, 1987; Dryden, 1680; Chomsky, 1972; Malone, 1988; Vinay and Darbelnet, 1958; Jakobson, 1960; Labov, 1972; Traugott and Pratt, 1980). In the same perspective, the use of structured language as a human means of communication proved particularly valuable in literature for the production of many different literary works in which language is used in context with highly leveled techniques. While such linguistic productions may be prose or poetry in creative writing, they display a sharp distinction from ordinary talk or colloquy through the bunch of stylistic patterns that are instrumental in the recounting of situations, ideas, messages as conveyed to readers through one specific discrete language. Indeed, literature is, as Bassnett (2002) postulates, both the condition and the place of artistic communication between senders and addressees, or the public. This allows saying that the content of a literary work ranks far beyond a mere stretch of structured lexical devices. It is rather a brew of culture in a unique context with a language style and tone used to phrase out a situation, a specific view of the world. Within such a complex contextual and linguistic backdrop, when the need arises to translate a literary work, the transcoding by a translator raises a wide variety of queries as for the ways and means whereby to effectively and faithfully arrive at it. It raises concerns of stylistics, author's intent, diversity of languages, differences of corresponding cultures, problems of interpersonal communication, changes in literary fashion, distinct kinds of contents (Nida, 1991), which makes Hutton (2009) to argue that no two speakers can exactly convey the same message in the same way. The rendition of a linguistic production from a source language (SL) to a target language (TL) builds on the most important goal of language: meaning making.

On this perspective of the place where meaning actually lies, Galichet (1958) infers from a thorough analysis of the semantic load of the word that, in actual fact, the word does not have any meaning by itself; any meaning it could ever have is that constructed by and inferred from the context in terms of metalinguistic information, which adds to the complexity of the transcoding task. In this regard, Vinay and Darbelnet's (1972)

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Work on comparative stylistics comes in as an insightful tool in the way a literary work could be bridged into another language, while remaining consistent with the source version. They agree that translators are concerned with words (forms) only at the two extremes, the beginning and the end of their task. The core material on which the translator then applies many different methods is a unit of thought which best embeds the ideas, the feeling, the style and the mood of the source language writer. The task of the translator is thus more than finding out the translated version of words as expressed in a SL; it is all about monitoring an interlingual dialogue aimed at rendering some intended meanings, a peculiar stylistic pattern and language tone in a TL. His required qualification to be on top of the job thus reaches beyond that of a mere bilingual. Nida's (1991) words corroborates with this high expectation from the task of the translator by pointing out that a translational adequacy would mean that the readers of the translation would respond to the text both emotively and cognitively in a manner essentially similar to the ways in which the original readers responded. To remain faithful to the source text and prove satisfactory in the rendition task, Nida (idem) takes from the works of various scholars (Felstiner, 1980; Chomsky, 1965& 1972, Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958; Labov, 1972; Gumperz, 1982; Krampen, 1979; Nida, 1986) and propose that four important aspects are to be covered : [1]the philological aspect with a special focus on the faithfulness to the source content, [2]the linguistic perspective with more attention to the distinctive features of the source and receptor languages, [3]the communicative aspect that sets the focus on the sociolinguistic strings of translation and [4]the sociosemiotic pattern which grants much attention to the multiplicity of codes involved in any act of verbal communication with the input of paralinguistic features. While recognizing the value and gaining much from the series of scholars' works available on the topic, this paper is more grounded on the thorough and forceful work published by Vinay and Darbelnet (1972) which represents a substantial reference theoretical framework. In this perspective and following its rationale, this article aims to address the question: how does the translator succeeds in rendering a literary work from a SL to a TL while remaining on track with the source text? In order to efficiently answer this overall question, it has been split into two research sub questions that are, first, the way the translator gets insight from the linguistic context provided by the literary work and secondly, the way she/he matches it with extra linguistic information to end up with a well translated version. This research work is framed along the hypothesis that, while the translator has to remain faithful to the source message by using some methods of direct translation, s/he may need, in many different cases, to use methods of oblique translation through various means of adaptation for an efficient rendering of the source text's author. The following section of this work informs on the theoretical ground of this paper and provides definitions on various keys terms.

2. Theoretical background and definitions

2.1 Theoretical background

This work is grounded on the theoretical foundation of comparative stylistic analysis as developed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1972). This framework sets the focus on the three planes of external stylistics – the lexicon, the syntactic structures and the message - , then the methods of translation that include direct and oblique translation. Transcoding a literary work from a language to another thus reaches beyond an exclusively linguistic rendition to include various contextual patterns such as metalinguistic information and the goal of the writer. Following the works of Saussure who defines the linguistic sign as the union of a concept and its written or spoken linguistic form, Vinay and Darbelnet (idem) pinpoint the sign as originating from the vocabulary and see it modified by grammar and intonation for its contribution to message/meaning construction. The organization of lexical items in a syntactic way that results into a message thus gives an accurate image of the pathway of the translator's work. Despite its context based value, the lexical item - the word – is the starting point in the translation process in so far it provides the basic hints for meaning conveyance in the SL. On the basis of such hints, does the translator undertake the transfer to the TL after checking on aspects such as "faux amis", borrowing possibilities, multi-meaning, etc? On the following plane, is the cluster level where words from various speech parts are gathered in a syntactically patterned way depending on the author's style, which aspect is foregrounded, backgrounded or to be inferred from the context?

The ultimate level of the message reaches beyond the first two and brings in a critical component, the metalinguistic contribution that makes up the overall text. Based on these foundational points, Vinay and Darbelnet (idem) have developed, among other translation tools, a set of seven methods for direct and oblique translation, as defined in the following subsection.

2.2 Definitions: The Seven Methods of Translation

There are two main categories of translation methods: first, direct translation which comprises borrowing, calques and literal translation on the one hand and secondly, oblique translation which covers transposition, modulation, equivalence and adaptation on the other.

2.2.1 - Borrowing
Borrowing is a direct translation method which is used to bridge a metalinguistic lacuna in the target language. In such a case, the source language word, expression, or concept that does not exist in the TL is borrowed into the latter. Borrowing may also occur from a deliberate choice of the translator for prestige or stylistic purpose.

2.2.2 - Calque
Loan translation or calque is a term used in comparative and historical linguistics to refer to a type of borrowing, where the morphemic constituents of the borrowed word or phrase are translated item by item from the SL into equivalent morphemes in the TL. There are two main types of calques. The first one is the lexical calque which keeps the syntactic order of the TL while importing a new mode of expression which is not akin to the TL such as "*Cela va sans dire*" translated from French as *"That goes without saying"*. The second one is the structural calque whereby a new syntactic wording is introduced into the TL such as "*Point de vue*" translated from French as *"Point of view"*.

2.2.3 - Literal translation
Literal translation is a word for word translation which the translator achieves through a direct rendering of a SL text into the TL. Literal translation is more often applied when the two languages share some common patterns in terms of syntactic order, cultural paradigms, and parallel thought processes. As one may guess, idiomatic expressions do not match with literal translation as the message therein reads beyond a mere string of the SL words. Literal translation is also unacceptable when the text in the TL is nonsense, is structurally impossible in the TL or does not correspond to any metalinguistic concept in the TL.

2.2.4 - Transposition
Transposition involves moving from one grammatical category to another without changing the meaning of the message as conveyed in the SL. The grammatical shift applied through transposition may at times introduce a stylistic aspect which is not contained in the base text, while keeping the message unaltered.

2.2.5 - Modulation
Modulation, occurs in the translation process when the translator deems it necessary to use a phrase that is different in terms of angle of view from that of the SL to convey the same idea. Modulation is applied through the initiative of the translator to apply a change in the perspective (conceptual or grammatical), the viewpoint from which the idea was originally expressed by the speaker / writer in order to avoid a sense of idiomatic awkwardness or an idiomatic mismatch in the TL. The use of modulation is thus a result of a translator's keen acquaintance with both SL and TL, lexically, grammatically and culturally.

2.2.6 - Equivalence or Reformulation
This is a translation method whereby the message in the SL is expressed in the TL in a completely different stylistic and structural way. Reformulations or equivalences display the intrinsic differences between languages for motivations that ought not to be explicated along any learning process but rather through acquisition. The cultural transmission feature of language does apply full in this regard.

2.2.7 - Adaptation or localization
The need to adapt an SL message into the TL highlights once again the culturally interwoven property of language. Adaptation becomes necessary when a direct translation of a message from SL to TL could raise metalinguistic clashes. Adaptation is thus used in the cases where the type of situation being referred to in the SL is uncommon or unknown in the TL culture. In such cases, the translator has to check for an equivalent situation that is as near as possible to the one expressed in the SL. In other words, adaptation results into a rendering of the SL situation in a way that is intelligible and acceptable by the TL audience rather than the SL.

3 - Material and method

The motivation to write this paper springs from the contact with the French and English versions of Vinay and Darbelnet's (1972) seminal work on a comparative stylistic approach of the French and English languages. Although this high valued publication seems at first sight directed to professional translators, it does matter much to the linguist too in general in so far as it sheds light on the riches, the intricacies and nuances of language as a means of communication between cultures and communities. In addition to the importance of context in meaning making as invariably mentioned by scholars in semantics, pragmatics and systemic functional linguistics, Vinay and Darbelnet (idem) brought in some more insight by indicating that in the study of a text :

...... we encounter certain factors which can be explained neither by considerations of a lexical nor a syntactic nature because they originate from a higher level of reality, which is less accessible, yet essential, and which some linguisticians refer to as "context".

The bridging of a literary work from one language to another thus requires a thorough cognition not only of the lexical and syntactic aspects of both languages, but as well of the metalinguistic component. In addition to this much triggering starting theoretical lever, the proofread of the Senegalese woman novelist Mariama Bâ's *Une si longue lettre* and its English translated version *So Long a Letter* definitely prompted me into embarking on a comparative stylistic analysis of these two versions. The message of the novel, the noticeable success it recorded as a literary work in terms of award winning and translation into sixteen languages did much in confirming the choice. To remain within the stretch of an article, this work covers the first ten letters of the novel, with a study that singles out the work achieved by Modupé Bodé-Thomas, the translator, in rendering the novel into English. The words and phrases that display the use of both direct and oblique methods of translation appear in bold and underlined in the French and English versions.

4 - An identification of Translation Methods in *So Long a Letter*

4.1 - Direct translation methods:

They include borrowing, calque and literal translation. Four types of borrowings have been used in the translated version. They have been distinguished as presented in the Table 1

Table 1: Different types of borrowings

N°	Types of borrowings	Examples from the text
1	Words from traditional and religious lexicon	*"Zemzem", "siguilndigale", "laobés", "Djinns"*
2	Words that belong to the traditional and religious lexicon which have been overtranslated into English	*"Miraas"* and *"caacri"* rendered as *"mirasse"* and *"thiakry"* respectively
3	French language words which have been borrowed into English for a long time so that they became part of English lexicon	*"Eau-de-cologne", "boubou",* and *"polyclinique".*
4	French language words from various speech parts such as verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs that have been translated into English in such a way that maintains a kind of phonological resemblance with the French source version	*"ferme / firm", "destinées / destined", "impécablement / impeccably", "chantées / chanted", "sac / sack", "pénurie / penury"*

Literal translations have been used, both in their lexical and structural forms as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: cases of literal translation

French version	English version
Literal translation	
En atteste le défilé ininterrompu d'hommes et de femmes qui "**ont appris**" les cris et les pleurs qui m'entourent.	The uninterrupted procession of men and women who « **learned** » of it, the wails and tears around me, confirm his death.
Eternelles, les interrogations de nos éternels débats	**Eternal** questions of our **eternal debates**
Ses joues se gonflaient de la vie de ses poumons	His cheeks would swell with the life from his lungs.
Mêmes **allées et venues** d'amis	Same **comings and goings**
Le soir vient la phase la plus déconcertante de cette cérémonie du troisième jour	In the evening comes the most disconcerting part of the third day's ceremony.
« Dame la mort est aussi belle que le fut la vie. »	Lady death is just as beautiful as life has been
« ont su » tardivement	"learned belatedly"
…..passer son baccalauréat	To sit for her baccalauréat
Dame Belle mère brandissait ce papier	Lady-Mother-in-Law brandished the paper
…….et comme nous dépensions pour l'honorer	And how we spent ourselves to do it honors.

4.2 - Oblique translation methods

All the methods of oblique translation identified by Vinay and Darbelnet such as transposition, modulation, equivalence, adaptation have been used in the ten first letters covered by this paper. The following table displays the English version where those methods have been applied with the corresponding French source version.

Table 3: Methods of oblique translation

Transposition	
Toilette **mortuaire**	The washing **of the dead one** (Shift from an adjective to a noun)
De nous les restituer plus belles	To restore them to us, more splendid than before
L'or était sa chose qu'il fondait, coulait, tordait, aplatissait, affinait, ciselait	Gold is his medium which he melts, pours, twists, flattens, refines, chases.
La cohorte des sans-métier grossit les rangs **des délinquants**	The hord of the jobless swells the flood **of delinquency**
Cet univers particulier qui **fournissait le mil nourricier de la concession**	The whole compound's **source of nourishment**.
Il parlait de ton père, "**créateur**"	'**creative artist**'.
Nos mère se disputaient **la garde** de nos oncles et tantes	Our mothers argued over **who would look after** our uncles and aunts
Dans le sens de vos désirs	**When it moves** in the direction of desires
Ma gorge **sèche** (p2)	My throat **is dry** (p4)
Le groupe des hommes mange, **silencieux**	The men's group eats **in silence**
……..si avant d'organiser leurs **funérailles en festin**,	……. if, before organizing these **festive funeral** ceremonies,
Et ce sont eux que je crains car **ils ont le gôut de l'amertume.**	And these are what I am afraid of, for **they smack of bitterness**
….au fur et à mesure **de leur approche**	As they **drew nearer**
Modulation	
Un drap blanc **qui l'enveloppe entièrement**	A white sheet **in which he is completely enveloped**
…….la tristesse **ploie cette enfant**	…..**this child is dogged** by sadness
…..nattes de tous genres **s'étalent**	….mats of all sorts **are spread**….
On peut manquer un baptême, jamais un deuil.	**Child naming ceremonies may be missed**, but never a funeral.
La marée enlisante des dépenses **où il se débattait**	The mire of expenses **by which he was engulfed**.
De toi elle ne retenait que les **visites trop longues**.	All she remembered of you were your **visits considered too long.**
La confidence **tue la douleur** (p1)	Confiding in others **allays pains** (p3)
…..et c'est le tour de Dame Belle-Mère **d'être courroucée**	And it is Lady-Mother-in-Law's turn **to be annoyed**
Daouda Dieng **savait forcer les cœurs**	Daouda Dieng **knew how to win hearts**
L'air nous incitait à la bonne humeur	**The air would put us** in good humour
Une atmosphère nouvelle où j'évolue, étrangère et **crucifiée**	A new atmosphere where I move, a stranger, **tormented**
…surtout si sa main **emprisonnait** le billet de banque que j'y plaçais adroitement.	….particularly if her hand **closed over** the banknote I had carefully placed there.
Equivalence	
Adosse –toi	Hold on
Fallait-il nous en réjouir **sans ombrage** ?	Should we have rejoiced so **wholeheartedly?**
Mais **le plus souven**t	But **more often than not**
Le bel âge a ses exigences d'honneur	**Middle *age*** demands dignity
Je l'égrène avec ardeur	**I tell the beads** ardently
Jambes **molles**	Legs **of jelly**
………pour conjurer le **mauvais sort**	…..to ward the **evil spirits**
A la chute de chaque verset	**At the end** of each verse
Les unes parlent du dernier **tissu** paru sur le marché	Some discuss the latest **material** on the market.
De temps en temps, **une voix virile** met en garde	From time to time **a manly voice** rings out a warning
Elle, étrangère au **milieu qui l'environne**	She remains stranger **in these circles.**

il en sera de même, hélas, pour les huitième et quarantième jours	Alas, **it's the same** story on the eighth and fortieth days.
Ouf ! (p.12)	**Phew**!
Nourrie dès l'enfance à leur source rigide…..	**Reared** since childhood on their strict precepts
Le clou	The star attraction
Que sont les infirmités morales **dont vous n'êtes pas à l'abri**	What are moral infirmities **from which in any case you are not immune?**
Le souffle du vent rafraîchira encore **mon front**	The breath of the wind will again refresh **my face**
Tu concluais **en te disant arc-bouté sur tes études**.	You would finish **by saying that your studies were your staff,** your buttress.
Tu es ma **négresse protectrice**	You are my **protecting black angel**.
Je savais sourire **aux uns et aux autres**	I knew how to smile **at them all**.
Vous avez **des enfants à débarbouiller**.	There are **children to be washed**.
…… qui voyait son fils fréquenter de plus en plus **la forge de ton père**	….who saw her son going more and more frequently to **your father's workshop**.
La mangue verte **pimentée**	The **sharp** green mango
Et j'en passe	**And I haven't recounted all**
……trop mur pour **mes dix-huit hivernages**.	Too mature for **my eighteen years**
…….. apte à **l'analyse** ……	Capable of **discernment** now
La Fon du Dahomey	**The Fon girl** from Dahomey
J'ouvre ce **cahier**	**I am beginning** this **diary**
Et nous nous racontions des **"histoires salées"**	And we told **juicy stories**

5 - Discussion of the findings

This discussion of the results from the cross-read of both versions of the novel follows along the methods used by the translator in her rendition task, on the basis of the theoretical framework from Vinay and Darbelnet's work. In this perspective, the effort of the translator is particularly noticeable in her attempt to stick to the situation, the idea, and the message shared by the author in the source version of the novel. This shows up particularly well through various types of borrowings as shown in Table 1, and literal translations in Table 2. The first type of borrowings is composed of words that have first been borrowed into the French language in the source version of the novel and then borrowed into English in the translated one. Among these are examples such as *"beguine", "rumbas", "tangos", and "Zemzem", "djinns", "laobés"*. This first category is followed by a second one composed of words that belong to the traditional and religious lexicon which have been overtranslated into English such as *"Miraas"* and *"caacri"* rendered as *"mirasse"* and *"thiakry"* respectively, which shows a commitment from the translator to follow in the path of the source text.

In the case of traditional and religious lexical borrowings, the reader is referred to the provided footnotes not only for lexicological insight but also for a discovery of and immersion into the source milieu in the writer's context of culture. The third category of borrowings is that of French language words which have long been borrowed into English which became part of English lexicon such as *"Eau-de-cologne", "polyclinique", "bourgeoisie, "boubou", "brouhaha"*. Borrowings have been widely used to transpose into English, the author's traditional and religious lexis, but also to imitate her phonological patterns. Translation examples with a fourth type of borrowings such as *"ferme / firm", "destinées / destined", "impécablement / impeccably", "chantées / chanted", "sac / sack", "brandissait / brandished" "pénurie / penury"* are particularly illustrative at this regard. The rendition keeps the same tide of sticking to the author's style by means of lexical and structural literal translation whereby the Anglophone reader is provided with a text that conveys the writer's ideas, message, style, tone and familiar language as can be noticed in the following examples:

- « Dame la mort est aussi belle que le fut la vie. » / Lady death is just as beautiful as life has been
- Dame Belle mère **brandissait** ce papier / Lady-Mother-in-Law **brandished** the paper
- Mêmes **allées et venues** d'amis / Same **comings and goings** of friends
- …….et comme nous nous dépensions pour l'honorer / ……..and how we spent ourselves to do it honors.
- Ses joues se gonflaient de la vie de ses poumons / His cheeks would swell with the life from his lungs.

However, this keenness of the translator in sticking to the author's words, syntactic structures and style did not prove conclusive at all levels in the source language phrasing of the message, which made oblique translation necessary. This could be noticed in the English version of the novel through the use of transposition with some shifts in parts of speech as presented in table 4 below.

Table 4 : Cases of transposition through shifts in parts of speech

Types of shifts in parts of speech	Base expression	Transposed expression
From adjective to noun	Toilette **mortuaire /**	The washing **of the dead one**
From a noun to an adjective	……..si avant d'organiser leurs **funérailles en festin**,	……. if, before organizing these **festive funeral** ceremonies,
From a verb to a noun	Cet univers particulier qui **fournissait le mil** nourricier de la concession	The whole compound's **source of nourishment**
From noun to verb	Et ce sont eux que je crains car **ils ont le gôut de l'amertume.**/	And these are what I am afraid of, for **they smack of bitterness**
From a verb to an adjective	Ma gorge **sèche** (p2)	/ My throat **is dry** (p4)

These examples reveal the translator's purposeful choices. In the case of *"Toilette **mortuaire**"* for example which was translated as *"the washing of the dead one"* the shift from the modifier / adjective *"mortuaire"* to the noun *"the dead one"* brings in a stylistic pattern of a shift from an abstract level of expression to a concrete one, thereby making more visible the very situation that prompted the writer to embark on her literary recounting. This corroborates Vinay and Darbelnet's viewpoint as they indicate that transposition may be purposely used in order to allow a particular nuance or style to show off. The foregrounded stylistic effect remains the same with the cases of shifts from verb to adjective (Ma gorge **sèche** (p2) / My throat **is dry** (p.4)), and the noun-verb shift (….car **ils ont le gôut de l'amertume.** / …..for **they smack of bitterness)**. The feed in from the translator in the translating process continues through modulation whereby the source idea is rendered with a variation in the way it is viewed and phrased onto the Anglophone reader. The deliberate purposeful choice of the translator to operate this way is visible enough through the shift from active voice to passive as exemplified in the following Table.

Table 5: Modulation through a shift from active to passive voice

French version	English version
Un drap blanc **qui l'enveloppe entièrement**	A white sheet **in which he is completely enveloped**
…….la tristesse **ploie cette enfant**	…..**this child is dogged** by sadness
…..nattes de tous genres **s'étalent**	….mats of all sorts **are spread**….
On peut manquer un baptême, jamais un deuil.	**Child naming ceremonies may be missed**, but never a funeral.
La marée enlisante des dépenses **où il se débattait**	The mire of expenses **by which he was engulfed**.

The use of the passive in "*A white sheet **in which he is completely enveloped**"* for the translation of "*Un drap blanc **qui l'enveloppe entièrement**"* removes the animism applied on "*un drap blanc"* in the source version which portrays it as the doer of the action of covering Modu's corpse. The removal of this animism implied the use of the passive voice, which displays an aspect of cultural difference in the way of viewing things and which impacts on the linguistic rendering. The motivation remains unchanged for the other cases of modulation obtained through the active-passive shift. Still on the method of modulation, the translated version shows a stylistic feature through a moderation, a lessening in the linguistic tone of the writer as illustrated through the examples in the Table 6 below.

Table 6 : Modulation through moderation

La confidence **tue la douleur** (p1)	Confiding in others **allays pains** (p3)
…..et c'est le tour de Dame Belle-Mère **d'être courroucée**	And it is Lady-Mother-in-Law's turn **to be annoyed**
Daouda Dieng **savait forcer les cœurs**	Daouda Dieng **knew how to win hearts**
L'air nous incitait à la bonne humeur	**The air would put us** in good humour
Une atmosphère nouvelle où j'évolue, étrangère et **crucifiée**	A new atmosphere where I move, a stranger, **tormented**
…surtout sis sa main **emprisonnait** le billet de banque que j'y plaçais adroitement.	….particularly if her hand **closed over** the banknote I had carefully placed there.

The stylistic choices of the translator as achieved in other examples display a softening in the lexical choice in the rendering of the author's ideas. The following examples of source and translated versions are illustrative. The specific source and translated words that display the softened style are written in bold and underlined: *"**tue** la douleur / **allays** pains", "d'être **courroucée** / to be **annoyed**", "savait **forcer** les cœurs / knew how to **win** hearts", "étrangère et **crucifiée** / a stranger, **tormented**", "surtout sis sa main **emprisonnait** / particularly if her hand **closed over**".* The same perspective from the translator to remain both on track with the author and make the translated version culturally, socially and linguistically at home with the Anglophone readership proceeds with the use of equivalence through various examples as shown in Table 2. The direct and oblique translation methods that have been used so far bring an answer to the main and sub research questions of this article and prove the hypothesis true.

Conclusion

This paper is prompted from the challenge it represents to translate into a target language a literary work originally produced in a distinct language, context, style and tone. It explored the permanent and deep concern of renowned scholars and embarked on a closer investigation of some methods and methodologies as developed by Vinay and Darbelnet (1972). The examination and exploration of their long established and enduring framework served as roadmap in the cross thorough read and study of the Senegalese woman novelist Mariama Bâ's *Une si Longue Lettre* and its English translated version *So Long a Letter* by Modupé Bodé-Thomas and published by Heinemann in 1981. The comparative stylistic study of this seminal work uncovered the significant effort of the translator to stick to the situation, ideas, message and feelings of the author through direct translation with borrowings and literal translation on the one hand and oblique translation with transposition, modulation and equivalence on the other. This allows inferring, that the translated version of this epistolary novel offers large possibilities to make the Anglophone reader react both emotively and cognitively in an almost similar way with the francophone readership, while remaining consistent with the source text.

In these modern times of going global, this paper comes in as a call for more attention to the complex task of translation in so far as it requires from its professionals, a bulky bunch of multi linguistic, cultural, contextual and stylist grasp.

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