

## Translation of French Proverbs into English and Yoruba: An Investigation of Strategies and Challenges

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### Abstract

*Proverbs represent an important aspect of language and culture, serving as concise expressions of collective wisdom, beliefs and social values. However, their translation often presents serious linguistic and cultural difficulties because their meanings are frequently metaphorical, symbolic, and deeply rooted in the world view of a particular community. Proverbs add beauty to any personal communication that employs them, and for this reason, they are not handled with levity. Their translation in foreign language teaching and learning causes difficulty for learners because they are not all transparent. This non-transparent nature makes it difficult for learners to easily translate during translation exercise in translation class. This paper investigates the strategies and challenges involved in translating French proverbs into English and Yoruba. It examines how translators manage cultural gaps, semantic ambiguities, and structural differences among the three languages. The paper is grounded in Conceptual Metaphor Theory since proverbs are metaphorically motivated and Dynamic Equivalence Theory to evaluate appropriate translation strategies that preserve meaning and communicative impact. Using ten (10) selected non contextualized French proverbs as data collected from fifty (50) degree 3 students, consisting of fifteen (15) males and thirty-five (35) females with average age of 23. The research analyses various translation techniques such as literal translation, equivalence, paraphrasing, adaptation and domestication. The study reveals that literal translation alone is often inadequate as it may distort meaning or produce unnatural expressions. Instead, functional and cultural prove more effective in preserving both sense and communicative impact. The findings also highlight problems related to loss of imagery, shifts in meaning, and the absence of direct equivalents in the target languages. The study concludes that successful proverb translation requires not only linguistic competence but also deep cultural knowledge and creativity. It therefore recommends a context-sensitive approach that prioritize meaning and cultural relevance over word-for-word rendering.*

*Key Words: Proverbs, Translation, Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Dynamic Equivalence Theory*

### 1.0.Introduction

Proverbs constitute an essential component of every language because they reflect the experiences, beliefs, and value systems of a people. They transmit traditional wisdom, regulate social behavior, and enrich everyday communication. In many societies, including French, English and Yoruba – speaking communities, proverbs are frequently used in speech, story telling and literary expressions to persuade, advise, or caution. Their figurative nature and cultural depth make them powerful tools of communication, but these same qualities also make them difficult to translate.

Translating proverbs from one language into another is not a straightforward task unlike ordinary sentences. Proverbs often depend on metaphor, symbolism, culture-bound images whose meanings cannot be understood from the individual words alone. Consequently, literal translation may produce awkward or misleading results, especially when the source and target languages belong to different linguistic and cultural traditions. The translator must therefore interpret the intended message and search for expressions that convey equivalent meaning and effect rather than simply reproducing the original form.

The study examines the strategies and challenges involved in translating French proverbs into English and Yoruba. It explores the linguistic and cultural problems that arise in the process and evaluates the techniques that can be used to achieve clarity, naturalness, and communicative effectiveness. The paper hinges on conceptual metaphor theory and Dynamic Equivalence Theory. By analyzing selected proverbs, the study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of proverb translation and to propose practical approaches for handling culturally rich expressions across language. It is quite important to consider briefly the concept of proverb.

## 2.0. Proverb

The word proverb, according to Arthur (1998:234) in Ogunbola et al (2017:1) is derived from the Latin word “proverbium” which could be interpreted as a saying that supports a point, and verbium also means word in English language. Proverbs “are special, fixed, unchanged phrases which have special, fixed, unchanged meanings” (Ghazala 1995:142). Proverbs are an integral part of the people that are perpetually on the lips of the elders and are such a striking example of argument by analogy; in such society, to cap the proverb speaker as indeed the supreme accomplishment of sophisticated learning (Greene 1986). They are used by people to summarize a whole issue or events in one sentence. This fact was confirmed by Delano (1966:77) thus:

*proverbs are self-evident truths which give the gist of what one wants to say in a brief and unmistakable form. A proverb can drive home a point or describe a situation in a few striking words; hence the Yorùbá proverbs “òwe leşin ọrọ, ọrọ leşin òwe, bí ọrọ ba sọnu, òwe ni a fi n wa which means a proverb is a horse which easily help with the idea sought.*

According to Brookes et al (2003:216), a proverb is “a short familiar saying expressing a supposed truth or moral lesson: a saying that requires explanation”. Wehmier et al (2006: 1169) define it as “a well-known phrase or sentence that gives advice or says something that is generally true, for example, “waste not, and want not”. It is a collective wisdom of a society and thus contains much that must be known and constantly remembered. By implication, proverbs are charged with ideologies and common sense of the socio-cultures that own them. Proverbs differ from idioms in that they display shared cultural wisdom. Proverbs are easily understandable and, sometimes, the first part of the proverb might be enough to express the whole meaning. For instance, ‘do not count your chickens’ is used instead of ‘do not count your chickens before they have hatched’. One major way to facilitate learning and internalization of events is through creation of imageries in spoken words. Stevick (1986:1) argues that memory and availability depend on mental imagery. He then offers a great deal of exercises in language learning situation to students, intensifying the iconicity, thereby creating images in their mind’s eye. Even if proverbs may be considered as culture-specific because they are very bound to culture, many proverbs have equivalents in different languages. proverbs are not always transparent, and their meanings are sometimes ambiguous. Yet learners are fascinated by them since they are always intrigued with expressive colorful language.

Dan MacDougal (2004:4) gives the dictionary meaning of proverbs as:

*“a saying popularly known and repeated, usually expressing simply and concretely, though often metaphorically, a truth based on common sense or practical experience, e.g. a stitch in time saves nine”.*  
*He adds that, it is a major rhetorical strategy the Yoruba use to pun, trope, attack through indirection, and perform other functions the black in the Diaspora associate with signifying,*

Proverbs are words of wisdom and Adedimeji (2003: 54) corroborates by saying that *proverbs like an idiomatic expression, is not just a means of communicating ideas, but it communicates ideas with a view to advise or enlighten and that is why it is regarded as an expression of wisdom. He also describes the proverb as a sign of native intelligence, linguistic competence and cultural erudition.*

Ojoade (1985: 328) gives his own opinion on proverbs that “there is no part of the globe in which proverbs are as important as in the continent of Africa. Indeed, the proverbs represent the quintessence of African life and thought. Proverbs are not just platitudes but sayings that carry authority. Proverbs constitute a manual of authority or an anthology of gnomes.

Ida Ward (1978) in Fawehinmi and Fabiyi (2009) adds that

*proverbs in family life, regulate the attitude of one member of the family to another; it helps in the education of children, and in social intercourse , it smoothes out difficulties and adds pith to the well-known accomplishment of the African conversation . It is very important to know that morals and lessons are crystallized in the form of proverbs. And proverbs either in foreign or indigenous languages make you think twice or thrice.*

It has been discovered that proverbs can aid the learning of any language indigenous or foreign. Dan MacDougall (2004) opines that “ the learning of proverbs can be a key element in the language acquisition process...”

Proverbs are words of elders especially among the Yorubas. This was confirmed by Ogunmola et al (2017: vi). “

*“The Yoruba believe that the elders are the custodians and main users of proverbs because of their age and long time experience in various aspects of life. In Yoruba land, proverbs, like folktales, are tools with which to educate the young ones and to buttress a point during a discussion. So, generally, either in English, French, Yoruba and other languages, the role and importance of proverbs cannot be over-emphasized. They shed light and serve as catalysts to understanding situations. Proverbs can serve as warning, advice, factual knowledge and guidance”*

## 2.1. Types of Proverbs

Proverbs according to Adedimeji (2003:71) in Ogunbola et al (2017:1) classify proverbs into four viz:

1. Rhetorical proverbs
2. Philosophical proverbs
3. Didactic proverbs
4. Epistemological proverbs

Adedimeji further clarified that, there is yet to be a proper classification of proverbs and that the relationship between one classification and the other is not mutually distinct as instances of overlapping of the characteristics of language do occur. There is interconnectivity between them.

**2.1.1. Rhetorical proverbs:** these are proverbs that are geared towards persuading people to do certain things. They are in forms of encouragement, motivation and advice with the aim of making people see reasons why they should act swiftly and decisively in a specific way.

Yoruba	French
Igba ara ni a n bu ara	Battre le fer quand il est chaud
Diedie ni adiye n diye	Peti à petit l'oiseau fait son nid.

**2.1.2. Philosophical Proverbs:** According to Sodipo (1972) in Amodu (2009: 420) Philosophy is defined as reflective and critical thinking about the concepts and principles we use to organize our experience in morals, religion, social and political life, psychology, history and the natural sciences. He adds that, it is justifiable to call a people's culture their philosophy of life. The people's culture reflects their philosophy. It reflects the way they have traditionally thought about the questions of reality and existence. Culture is relative to the environment from which it evolves. Therefore, philosophical proverbs make allusion and reference to events and happening in our environment.

Yoruba	French
Aṣọ nla kọ ni eniyan nla	L'habit ne fait pas le moine
Ẹni ti o ta ojà erupç yoo gba owo okuta	Qui sème le vent récolte la tempête

**2.1.3. Didactic proverbs:** these are proverbs which instruct and teach moral lessons. They are used to instill moral lesson and discipline.

Yoruba	French
La réputation vaut mieux que des grandes richesse	Oruko rere o san ju wura ati fadaka.
La charité bien ordonné commence par soi même.	Ile ni a ti n ko eso lo si ode.

**2.1.4. Epistemological proverbs:** they are proverbs which originated from history, folklore, myth, story legend and other traditional sources. Their understanding depends on the foreknowledge of the oral literature. At times, animal are used as subjects of such proverbs.

Yoruba	French
Oúnjç ibikan èèwọ ibòmíràn /idálùú ni isèlú	Autre pays autres mœurs.

2.1.2. Damiana (2018) also classifies proverbs into six :

a). **General attitude:** Proverbs expressing a general attitude towards life and the laws that govern life

French	Yoruba
Chaque chose en son temps	ohun gbogbo ni akoko wa fun
La santé est plus précieux que des biens	Ara lile ni oogun oro.

b). **Ethical proverbs:** these are proverbs that proverbs recommending certain virtues and condemning certain vices.

French	Yoruba
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La réputation vaut mieux que  
des grandes richesses  
La charité bien ordonnée commence  
par soi même.

Oruko rere o san ju wura ati fadaka/ iwà  
rere ni èsò èniyàn.  
Ile ni a ti n ko eso lo si ode.

c). **Proverbs expressing a system of value**

French

Yoruba

Le monde ne s'est pas fait en un jour  
A bon entendeur, salut.

Ojo ti a gun ko ni a n kan orun(patience)  
Aabo oro ni a n so fun omoluabi to ba  
de inu re a di odidi. (obedience).

d). **General truths:** proverbs expressing general truths and observations about life and human nature.

French

Yoruba

Un service rendu en vaut un autre  
Au besoin on connaît l'ami.

Ohun ti o ba se/gbin lo maa gba  
Igba iponju ni a n mo ore ododo.

e). **Miscellaneous proverbs:** they are proverbs that do not fall strictly into any specific category

French

Yoruba

Il faut casser le noyau pour avoir l'almande  
(no pain no gain).

Tita riro ni a n ko ila

Ventre affamé n'a point d'oreille

Eni ebi n pa esu n see.

f). **Humorous proverbs:** they are proverbs that deliver wisdom with a healthy dose of humor. They are meant to be funny and wise, making the listener laugh, learn and think.

French

Yoruba

Qui ressemble assemble

Egbe eye ni eye n wo to

As we have explained above these classes of proverbs are interwoven.

### 3.0. TRANSLATION

Translation is as old as language, for the different language communities render translation mandatory for their interaction. It is a cross socio-cultural and linguistic activity that came into being as a result of the existence of different sets of linguistic items with dissimilar socio-cultural distributions, whereby the different socio-cultural groups desired to mutually cooperate and understand the meaning and senses encoded in their dissimilar sets of linguistic items. Translation is therefore, an indispensable activity because it makes inter-linguistic communication between peoples possible.

According to Gutu (2007:3), the word translation was first used in French by Etienne Dolet in 1540. Dictionary of Translation Studies by Shuttleworth and Cowie (2007:181) submits:

*An incredibly broad notion which can be understood in many different ways. or example, one may talk of translation as a process or a product, and identify such sub-types as literary translation, technical translation, subtitling and machine translation; moreover, while more typically it just refers to the transfer of written texts, the term sometimes also includes interpreting.*

Crystal (2008:520) in dictionary of language and linguistics, says "in the study of writing system, translation is the conversion of one writing system into another"

Lewis (1958) writes that "translate" is formed from the Latin 'trans+latus', which means "carried across". Foster (1958:1) considers translation as "the act of transferring through which the

*content of a text is transferred from the SL into the TL.*” Not taking culture into consideration, Catford (1965:20) points out that, “*translation is the replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another language.*” In this definition, the most important thing is equivalent textual material; nonetheless, it is unclear in terms of the type of equivalence. According to Levy (1967:146), “*translation is a process of communication whose objective is to import the knowledge of the original to the foreign reader*”. Echoing the similar viewpoint, Savory (1968:37) believes that “*translation is made possible by an equivalent of the idea that lies behind its different verbal expressions.*”

Translation, whose beginning can be traced back to the tower of Babel (Finlay, 1971:161), is defined as “*a bilingual mediated process of communication which ordinarily aims at the production of a TL text that is functionally equivalent to a SL text*”. Furthermore, regarding the definition of translation, Ordudari (2008:15) quoting Brislin 1976 opines:

*The general term referring to the transfer of thoughts and ideas from one language (source) to another (target), whether the languages are in written or oral form; whether the languages have established orthographies or do not have such standardization or whether one or both languages is based on signs, as with sign languages of deaf.*

In a similar position, Pinhhuck (1977:38) defines translation as “*a process of finding a TL equivalent for a SL utterance*”. Moreover, Wilss (1982:3) points out:

*Translation is a transfer process, which aims at the transformation of a written SL text into an optimally equivalent TL text and which requires the syntactic, the semantic and the pragmatic understanding and analytical processing of the SL.*

Nida (1984:83) points out: “*translation consists of reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of Style.*” Likewise, translation, as Bell (1991:8) asserts, “*involves the transfer of meaning from a text in one language into a text in another language.*”

Spivak (1992:398-400), considering translation as “*the most intimate act of reading*” writes that, “*unless the translator has earned the right to become an intimate reader, she cannot surrender to the text, cannot respond to the special call of the text*”.

In general, what seems to be understood as translation, as Bassnett (1994:2) writes, includes “*rendering a SL text to a TL text so as to ensure that (1) the surface meaning of the two will be approximately similar, and (2) the structure of the SL will be preserved as closely as possible but not so closely that the TL structures will be seriously distorted.*”

Considering the translator as a learner, Robinson (1997:49-51) puts forward that “*translation is an intelligent activity involving complex processes of conscious and unconscious learning*”. He maintains that, “*translation is an intelligent activity, requiring creative problem-solving in novel, textual, social and cultural conditions*”.

Hatim and Mason (1997:1) consider translation as “*an act of communication which attempts to relay, across cultural and linguistic boundaries, another act of communication*”. In most cases, according to Houbert (1998:1), “*translation is to be understood as the process whereby a message expressed in a specific source language is linguistically transformed in order to be understood by readers of the target language*”. From a different view point, Nogueira (1998:1) asserts that,

*“translation is a service business”*. Moreover, Hatim and Mason (1997:1) affirm that, *“translation is a useful case for examining, the whole issue of the role of language in social life.”*

Translation can also be taken into consideration as *“the process of establishing equivalence between the source language texts and target language texts”* (Sa’edi, 2004:242), which aims at *“passing on an understanding to people in their own language and create the same impact as the original text”* (Galibert, 2004; 1).

In translation, what is of more importance is the meaning. This saves the students the risk of jogging on in a line-by-line process making sentences that are unlinguistic in the receiving language.

#### **4.0. Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)**

The paper hinges on Cognitive Linguistics because proverbs are metaphorically motivated. Njoroge (2015: 58) opines that Cognitive linguistics is one of the most reliable areas of research within the interdisciplinary project of cognitive science. Its reliability stems from the fact that cognitive linguistics aims at an integrated model of language and thought that reflects the human construal of external reality, taking into account the way in which human beings experience reality, both from cultural and psychological perspectives (Ibid).

In CL, metaphor is regarded as one of the several kinds of idealized cognitive model (ICM). According to Lakoff (1987: 68), *Idealized Cognitive Model is the way in which human beings organize knowledge* and therefore, it may be postulated as cognitive structures whose purpose is to represent reality from a certain perspective. (Grant and Oswick, 1996) in Njoroge (2015: 59). As a process, metaphor involves combining language and thought to develop new non-literal meaning that enhances our reality. Cognitive linguistics emerged in the 1970s conceptual metaphor, or cognitive metaphor, refers to the understanding of one idea, or conceptual domain, in terms of another. Since many proverbs are motivated by metaphor, interpreting their actual meaning sometimes becomes difficult. The user should always bear in mind the relations between the conceptual system and the linguistic system (Csabi, 2002: 249 – 54).

Metaphorical expressions are the cream of a language. They reflect the relationship between language and culture. Metaphoricity is the main feature of all human languages. In fact, a language or any form of language, without metaphorical traits is non-existent (Goalty, 1997 in Abass & Ghafel 2011:211).

As proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980:10), Conceptual Metaphor Theory suggests that human thought processes are largely metaphorical, and human conceptual system is structured and defined in a metaphorical way. In other words, the Conceptual Metaphor Theory takes the basic assumptions of the Lakoffian School on “experiential realism”, which hypothesizes that metaphor is not just an aspect of language, but constitutes a primary part of human cognition (Gibbs, 1994; Lakoff, 1987; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Sweetser, 1990)

Conceptual metaphors shape not just our communication, but also shape the way we think and act.

Metaphorical language is an indispensable part of human life, involving language, thought and action. Writers and speakers use metaphor such as proverbs to express abstract, difficult-to-talk-about concepts in term of concrete entities which are easier to understand (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980:99).

In short, as it has been said earlier, Conceptual Metaphor Theory indicates that human thought processes are largely metaphorical, and human conceptual system is structured and defined in a metaphorical way. Therefore, metaphor is defined as cross-domain mapping between source and target domain. A mapping is the systematic correspondence between constituent elements of the source and target domains. The target domain is an abstract domain while the source domain is a

concrete concept of which one can have direct sensory experience. The relationship is in the form of 'TARGET DOMAIN IS SOURCE DOMAIN'. They are stored together in the mind (Lan& McGregor 2009: 11-24). However, under different cultures, cultural considerations play a crucial part while conceptual mapping is carried out.

#### 4.1. DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCE THEORY

The paper also draws on Dynamic Equivalence Theory, proposed by Eugene Nida, a prominent scholar in modern translation studies. The theory emphasizes that translation should aim at producing in the target audience the same effect that the original text has on its source audience. Rather than focusing on word-for-word correspondence or formal similarity. Dynamic equivalence prioritizes meaning, clarity and naturalness of expression.

According to this approach, a successful translation is the one that sound natural in the target language and communicates the intended message effectively. The translator is therefore encouraged to restructure sentences, substitute cultural references, and use equivalent expressions that are familiar to the new audience. In the sense, translation is seen as a process of reproducing the sense and impact of the original message rather than its exact linguistic form.

Dynamic Equivalence Theory is particularly relevant to the translation of proverbs because proverbs are metaphorical and culturally bound expressions. Literal translation often leads to confusion of meaning, especially when the images or symbols used in the source language are unknown in the target culture. By applying Dynamic equivalence, the translator may replace a French proverb with an English or Yoruba proverb that conveys a similar lesson or communicative function. This strategy helps preserve both the meaning and rhetorical effect of the original proverb.

#### 5.0. Statement of the Problem

Proverbs are also a part of figurative language that produces cultural information, and their use shows that, the person is a part of that social group that uses them (Hartch and Brown 1995: 202-203). One major area of difficulties in the study of French is in the area of translation especially the translation of proverbial expressions. They are not always transparent, and their meanings are sometimes ambiguous. This study therefore, seeks to examine how proverbial expressions are translated by Yorùbá speakers of French learning French in Nigeria. To what extent do they recognize or understand that these expressions cannot be handled the way plain or ordinary language of expressions are translated? Are there similar expressions in Yoruba or English that can be appropriated? If not, how have they been handling proverbial expressions in their translation or how should they be handled? Answers to these questions will enable us to see how translation studies have fared in Nigeria. What recommendations we can make with regard to how teaching of this aspect of French studies in Nigeria can be improved.

#### 5.1. Objectives of the Study:

The main objectives of the research are:

1. Verify the strategies the learners employ while translating proverbs (from French to Yorùbá and vice versa).
2. Identify the types of difficulty students of French face in translating proverbs
3. Verify if there are similar idiomatic expressions in the languages concerned.
4. Propose adequate strategies for a better translation of idiomatic expression

## 6.0. Methodology

The study is a descriptive study with 50 participants of degree three students of the degree programme of Adeyemi College OF Education, Ondo in Nigeria. The population consists of fifteen (15) males and thirty-five (35) females. Their ages range from 17 to 23. It was observed that, the females dominated the population. The research tool was a questionnaire divided into two parts. The first part consisted of personal information of the participants while the second parts consisted of ten non- contextual proverbs to be translated to Yoruba. The questionnaire was an open-ended type i.e. the students were free to translate the proverbs on their own. The translation given was marked and the results were analysed quantitatively.

**Table 1:** French proverbs translated to English and Yorùbá

FRENCH	ENGLISH	Yoruba
1.Un ventre affamé A stomach affamed n'a point d'oreille hasn't point of ear	A hungry man is an angry man	Èni ebi ñ pa èṣù ñ se é. person hunger is killing devil is doing him  Literary: A hungry man is an angry man (someone who doesn't get what he wants can be frustrated and even become violent)
2 .A bon entendeur, A good hearer  demi mot half word	A word is enough for the wise	Ààbò ọ̀rọ̀ ni à ñ sọ fún ọ̀mọ̀lúàbí, Half word is we are telling for responsible person  Tí ó bá dé inú rẹ́ á di odidi. When it gets to stomach his it becomes full Literary: A word is enough to the wise (a very brief explanation is enough for an intelligent person).
<b>3.Rome ne s'est pas Rome is not faite en un jour done in a day.</b>	Rome wasn't built in a day.	Díẹ díẹ ni adiyẹ ñ di iyẹ. Small small is hen aspect growing feather  Literary : Rome wasn't built in a day.(an injunction or plea for someone to be patient)
4. Qui se ressemble, Who resemble s'assemble assenble	Birds of a feather flock together.	Ẹgbé ẹyẹ ni ẹyẹ ñ wọ tọ. Group bird is bird aspect move follow  Literary: Birds of a feather flock together. (those of similar interest or value congregate in group)
5.Dis – moi qui tu Tell me who you	Show me your friends and I will tell you who you are.	Àgùntàn tó bá bá ajá rìn yóò jẹ igrẹ. sheep that (preverb) meet dog walk will eat shit

hantes, je te dirai haunt, I you will tell  qui tu es. who you are		Literary: Show me your friends and I will tell you who you are. (your current friends are a reflection of you)
6. L' union fait The union makes  la force the force	United we stand, divided will fall	Agbajo owo ni a fi n soya Gather hand is we make aspect tell chest. Literary: it is used to inspire unity and collaboration.
Au besoin on connaît At need one knows l'ami the friend	A friend in need is a friend indeed	igba iponju ni a n mo ore Period problem is we aspect know friend  ododo true Literary: a person who helps at a difficult time is a person you can rely on.
Appeler un chat un To call a chat a  Chat Chat	To call a spade a spade	So oju abe ni iko Beat eye blade have knock  Literary: speak plainly without avoiding unpleasant or embarrassing issues
La santé c'est la The health it's the  richesse riches	Health is wealth	Ilera ni oògùn Health is medecin  orò. wealth. Health is wealth (means that, the state of well being, free from disease ur diseases, both physical and mental is indeed a wealth.
L'habit ne fait pas The habit does not  make le moine. the monk	Do not judge a book by its cover.	Aso nla ko ni eniyan nla Cloth big not is man big  Literary: Appearance is deceitful .

A cursory look at the examples given above both in Yoruba and French enables us to see that the literal translation of the proverbs makes them far away from the real meaning. Therefore, proverbial expressions cannot be translated literally and be semantically accurate. It has also been established that, there is cultural relativism. There are proverbs in both languages that express similar concepts. The only difference is in their linguistic structure. Similar concepts express in different wording pattern

## Table 2: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

S/NO	PROVERBS	TRANSLATION	CORRECT	WRONG	TOTAL
1.	Un ventre affamé n' a point d' Oreille.	Ẹni ebi ń pa ẹ̀sù ń se é./ ebi kii wo inu ki oro miran wọ	10 (20%)	40(80%) i).Stomach has no ear ii) stomach is empty.	50 (100)
2.	A bon entendeur, demi mot	Ààbò ọ̀rò ni à ń sọ fún ọ̀mọ̀lúàbí, tí ó bá dé inú rè á di odidi.	8 (16%)	42 (84%)	50 (100%)
3	Rome ne s'est pas faite en un jour	Dìẹ̀ dìẹ̀ ni adìyẹ ń dì iyẹ̀.	12 (24%)	38 (76%)	50 (100%)
4	Qui se ressemble, s'assemble	Ẹgbé ẹyẹ ni ẹyẹ ń wọ tọ.	20(40%)	30 (60%)	50 (100%)
5	Dis – moi qui tu hantes, je te dirai qui tu es.	Àgùntàn tó bá bá ajá rìn yòò jẹ igbé./ Fi ore re han mi, ki n so iru eniyan ti o je	23 (46%)	27 (54%)	50 (100%)
6	L' union fait la force	Agbajo ọ̀wọ̀ ni a fí n soyà	35 (70%)	15 (30%)	50 (100%)
7	Au besoin on connaît l'ami .	Igba iponju ni a n mo ore	15 (30%)	35 (70%)	50 (100%)
8	Appeler un chat un chat	So oju abe ni iko/ so otito oro	7 (14%)	43 (86%)	50 (100%)
9	La santé c'est la richesse	Ìlera ni oògù ọ̀rò. .	10 (20%)	40 (80%)	50 (100%)
10	L'habit ne fait pas le moine.	Aso nla ko ni eniyan nla.	3 (6%)	47 (94%)	50 (100%)

If we carefully observe the table above, it is discovered that, the students found it difficult to translate the proverbs examined in the study. The only one that was easy for them to translate is

'l'union fait la force', where 70% of the total population translated it correctly. Their performance was below average in the remaining exercises. 20% got the correct translation for the first proverb while 80% missed it. We can see their level of performance for other proverbs in the table. Their bad performance could be due to their non-familiarity with the proverbs, their poor background in the French language and poor knowledge in French proverbs.

### **The place of proverbs in language teaching**

Proverbs play an important role in language teaching and learning. It helps to gain cultural knowledge, metaphorical understanding and communicative competence. Again, in the process of learning a foreign language, proverbs help improve all types of speech activity, develop the imagination and creativity of students. Using proverbs in the classroom creates a favourable environment and the learning process becomes more enjoyable and interesting Pedagogy.

### **Conclusion**

The paper enables us to see that, the importance of proverbs in any given language cannot be overemphasized. Different points of views on proverbs have been presented together with their usage and their translation. They are used in a variety of situations to perform several functions as it has been given up. The literal translation of proverbs will lead to loss of meaning and inadequate communication. The possibility of cultural relativism among languages has also been established, although, the linguistic elements may be different. Since proverb has different roles to play in the learning of a foreign language, the paper suggests that, the curriculum developers should include a course on proverbs in the curriculum. This will expose learners the more to French or Yoruba cultures and such phrases will improve their vocabularies.

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