A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE PROBLEMS OF TRANSLATING AFRICAN DRAMA INTO GERMAN USING SELECTED FEMI OSOFISAN’S PLAYS AS A CASE STUDY”

Modern European literature can be said to owe its development to translation. The translation of African literature could therefore encourage the development of the same and promote its spread worldwide. In my view, African drama has a lot to contribute to research in the area of African literary translation and Postcolonial discourse, as a result of its cultural richness and diversity.

Western theories of translation have dominated the field of translation studies over the years. But of recent, African scholars have started to develop new areas and theories within the field of translation studies that reflect their own sociocultural realities¹.

Research so far in the area of the translation of African literature has focused mainly on the novel, at the expense of the other literary genres, especially drama. The translation of African drama is a very complicated process not only because the relationship between the written text and its performance is a complex one but also because the literary works of African playwrights are deeply rooted in their sociocultural traditions and culture. A peculiar trait of the African dramatic text that makes its translation into other languages especially complicated is its heavy reliance on oral narratives and oral forms² as seen in the two plays selected for this study.

My study focuses not only on the general problems and possibilities of translating Anglophone African drama into German but specifically on the challenges and possibilities of translating drama from Western Nigeria into German, with a view to improving the same within a framework of intercultural communication.

The study aims to be a substantial contribution to the field of African literary translation. In order to achieve my research objectives, I will be basing my investigation on my translation of Femi Osofisan’s, *The Engagement* and *Esu and the Vagabond Minstrels*, as there exists yet no German translations of these works.

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¹ See Adeaga, Tomi 2008  
² See Mayanja, Shaban 1999