



Where AI Fails: Literary Creativity in the English Translation of the Cameroon National Anthem

Thomas Njie Losenje

Advanced School of Translators and Interpreters (ASTI), University of Buea.

ABSTRACT

This study was motivated by the observation that despite the effectiveness of AI in the translation of large volumes of texts from one language to another, its effectiveness in translating poetry is questionable owing to its insistence on linguistic accuracy, which may strip poetry of its cultural resonance and aesthetic appeal. The study therefore, set out to explore the effectiveness of AI in replicating the cultural essence, emotional resonance and aesthetic beauty of the Cameroon national anthem from French into English and explain why literary creativity rather than reliance on AI is necessary for an appropriate translation of a poetic text like the Cameroon national anthem. The work is underpinned by the sociolinguistic as well as the reception theories of translation, given their insistence on the communicative functions of the text rather than the linguistic structure. The study employed a qualitative, analytical and comparative research design that employed synchronization and comparative analysis. Findings reveal that the AI-generated English translation of the Cameroon national anthem failed to replicate the cultural essence, emotional resonance and aesthetic beauty owing to its strict adherence to the original (French) version. Findings also revealed that the AI-generated version is based on linguistic accuracy and grammatical correctness hence, leading to a bland and unpoetic translation that has failed to consider the target language recipients. The study therefore recommends the need for creativity in the translation of the Cameroon national anthem from French into English as this will ensure that the sociocultural and historical context of the text are taken into consideration. It also recommends the need for AI-human collaboration in translation as the future lies not in the binary of replacement but in the need for harmony between human and AI-generated translation.

French: volumes de textes d'une langue à l'autre, son efficacité dans la traduction de la poésie est discutable en raison de son insistance sur l'exacitute linguistique, qui peut priver la poésie de sa résonance culturelle et de son attrait esthétique. L'étude a donc pour but d'explorer l'efficacité de l'IA dans la reproduction de l'essence culturelle, de la résonance émotionnelle et de la beauté esthétique de l'hymne national camerounais du français vers l'anglais et d'expliquer pourquoi la créativité plutôt que la confiance en l'IA est nécessaire pour une traduction appropriée d'un texte poétique tel que l'hymne national camerounais. Ce travail s'appuie sur les théories sociolinguistiques ainsi que de réception de la traduction, qui insistent sur les fonctions communicatives du texte plutôt que sur sa structure linguistique. L'étude a utilisé un modèle de recherche qualitatif, analytique et comparatif qui a fait appel à la synchronisation et à l'analyse comparative. Les résultats révèlent que la traduction anglaise de l'hymne national camerounais générée par l'IA n'a pas réussi à reproduire l'essence culturelle, la résonance émotionnelle et la beauté esthétique en raison de son adhésion stricte à la version originale (française). Les résultats ont également révélé que la version générée par l'IA est basée sur la précision linguistique et l'exacitute grammaticale, ce qui conduit à une traduction fade et non poétique qui n'a pas pris en compte les destinataires de la langue cible. L'étude recommande donc de faire preuve de créativité dans la traduction de l'hymne national camerounais du français vers l'anglais, afin de s'assurer que le contexte socioculturel et historique du texte est pris en compte. Elle recommande également la nécessité d'une collaboration entre l'IA et l'homme dans le domaine de la traduction, car l'avenir ne réside pas dans le binaire du remplacement, mais dans la nécessité d'une harmonie entre la traduction humaine et la traduction générée par l'IA.

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***Corresponding Author**

Thomas Njie Losenje

E-mail: thonjilo@gmail.com

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1. INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence refers to the simulation of human intelligence in machines designed to perform tasks that typically require human cognition such as problem solving, language understanding and decision-making. AI systems are built using algorithms of data, which allow them to process and interpret large volumes of information, recognize patterns and adapt to new input (Russell and Norvig, cited in Dewan, 2025). AI has shown potential in translating huge volumes of work in relatively shorter periods than human translators, hence revalorizing the translation profession.

As far as poetry is concerned, translation using AI involves employing artificial intelligence tools to render poems from one language to another while attempting to preserve their artistic essence, emotional depth and cultural resonance. Thus, unlike machine translation, which primarily emphasizes linguistic accuracy, poetry translation requires maintaining aesthetic qualities such as rhythm, metaphor, symbolism and tone, elements that are often subjective and culturally nuanced. Hence Tymoczko (2007) corroborates this claim by submitting that cultural references and wordplay often require adaptation rather than direct translation, as a literal approach may strip poetry of its cultural resonance. Malmkjaer (2020) for his part, notes the shortcomings of AI on poetic translation by noting that linguistic accuracy alone is insufficient in poetry translation, as poetic language usually carries multiple connotations, syntactic variations and ambiguous meanings that AI struggles to interpret effectively.

Furthermore, poetry carries an aesthetic and emotional quality that AI may find difficult to replicate. This is echoed by Hassan (2020) in his affirmation that “while AI tools are improving, they still struggle to maintain poetic fluidity and resonance, often producing translations that are mechanically accurate but

emotionally flat.” Bergsma (2021) finds no reason to disagree with Hassan’s affirmation when he equally submits that the interplay of sound, imagery and emotion is fundamental to poetic essence, yet AI lacks the nuanced appreciation of poetic expression necessary for preserving these elements.

The above affirmations point to the fact that success in poetry translation can only be guaranteed through a conscious and delicate balance of linguistic accuracy (which the AI is limited to), cultural sensitivity and poetic ingenuity. The latter two (cultural sensitivity and poetic ingenuity) can only be ensured through the creativity of the human translator. That is why this study sets out to assess the effectiveness of AI in replicating the cultural essence, emotional resonance and aesthetic beauty of the Cameroon national anthem from French into English as well as investigate why human creativity rather than reliance on AI is a necessity for an effective translation of a poetic text in the ilk of the Cameroon national anthem.

1.1 The Problem

Despite the effectiveness of AI in the translation of huge volumes of texts from one language into another, especially with regard to linguistic accuracy and grammatical correctness, the cultural context, emotional resonance and aesthetic beauty is often lost when it comes to poetry translation. Thus, a line by line analysis of the AI-generated English translation of the Cameroon national anthem reveals a bland, unpoetic translation devoid of musicality, unlike the human version of translation that has given a creative touch while taking the socio-cultural and historical contexts as well as the musicality into consideration.

1.2 Research Questions

The above problem has been operationalized in the following research questions:

1. What is the effectiveness of AI in replicating the cultural essence, emotional resonance and aesthetic beauty of the Cameroon national anthem from French into English?
2. Why is literary creativity rather than over-reliance on AI necessary for an effective rendering of a poetic text like the Cameroon national anthem from French into English?

1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Explore the effectiveness of AI in replicating the cultural essence, emotional resonance and aesthetic beauty of the Cameroon national anthem from French into English.
2. Explain why resorting to literary creativity rather than over-reliance on AI is necessary for an effective translation of a poetic text like the Cameroon national anthem from French into English.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Key concepts related to this study have been probed into. They include various scholarly debates on AI and poetry translation since the Cameroon national item is considered to be a poetic creation, the potential limits of AI on literary translation and the need for creativity in translation. They are discussed in the ensuing paragraphs.

2.1. AI and Poetry Translation

The Cameroon national anthem is written in verse form and therefore, can be said to be poetry. It is therefore, worthwhile to add voice to the debate on whether AI can effectively translate poetic texts or not. The question as to whether AI can effectively be used to translate poetry has generated so much debate and wisecrack. This is in part, due to the intricate rhythm, metaphorical pattern, poetic melody, cultural specificity, and the rest, which pose challenges that go far beyond straight forward linguistic translation.

Commenting on the constraints encountered in translating poetry, Jakobson (1959) introduced the concept of 'intersemiotic translation' to refer to the interpretation of verbal signs by means of non-verbal sign systems. He highlighted the fact that poetry requires 'creative transposition' into a different system of signs, hence acknowledging the uphill task in translating poetic texts. In the same vein, Lefevere (1992) observed that translation extends beyond words and encompasses cultural transference and artistic intent hence, suggesting that translations are influenced by ideological constraints within the target culture. Both scholars attest

to the need for creativity in the translation of poetic texts, hence making thinly-veiled suggestions about the necessity to question AI-generated translations of poetry.

AI-driven translations, particularly through neural machine translation (NMT) tools like Google Transformer, DeepL, Chat GPT, etc. have experienced advancement, thereby enhancing text fluency and translation accuracy. Thus, according to Wu et al (2016), these AI models perform better than traditional translation methods in making sentences sound smooth and meaningful. The case may not be the same with poetry translation. Thus, Dewan succinctly states the difficulty of AI in replicating poetic texts from one language to another in the following words:

However, when it comes to poetry, AI still struggles. Unlike regular texts, poetry has unique structures like rhythm, rhyme, and deeper meanings hidden in metaphors. These artistic elements are difficult for AI to fully understand and recreate, making poetry translation a challenging task. AI models primarily focus on semantic accuracy, often overlooking formal poetic structures like meter and rhyme schemes, which are crucial to a poem's aesthetic and emotional impact. Additionally metaphors and idiomatic expressions, deeply rooted in cultural contexts, present significant challenges to AI, leading to potential misinterpretations or loss of meaning (Dewan, 2025).

The above affirmation by Dewan, which is a very objective assessment of the limitations of AI in translating certain contexts, point to the fact that translators should not depend on AI when translating poetic texts, hence lending credence to the need for creativity in the translation of poetry, rather than depending on AI.

Poetry translation is highly interpretative. More often than not, human translators make subjective choices based on their understanding of the text and its audience. Jones (2011) notes that this requires a deep knowledge of both the original and target languages on the part of the translator. Toral and Way (2018) submit that while NMT systems can produce grammatically correct translations, they often fail at these interpretative tasks. And as a result, "their translations might be accurate in terms of language but miss the poetic beauty or emotional depth of the original text."

Poetic meaning is usually conveyed through a complex interplay of cultural references, metaphor, rhythm, and poetic melody, elements that are very complex and context-dependent. Toral and Way (2018) further point out that these elements are challenging for AI, as they require not only linguistic accuracy but also a grasp of cultural and emotional undertones that are frequently lost in translation.

Malmkjaer (2020) indicates that AI's approach to translation is inherently algorithmic, meaning it lacks the creative intuition and emotional intelligence that human translators bring to literary texts hence, making AI-

generated poetry to appear mechanical and devoid of artistic beauty, while Bergsma (2021) observes that AI struggles with polysemy, where a single word has multiple meanings, leading to translations that may be technically correct but lack the depth and nuance of the original poem. Thus, in the words of Bergsma, "AI-generated poetry translation often miss the delicate beauty and deep emotions of the original, making them feel robotic and less expressive."

Aydin and Kara (2023) equally underscore the shortcomings of AI on poetry translation. They, however observe that AI should not be discarded entirely by the translator of poetry because "they can serve as an assistive tool rather than a replacement for human translators, optimizing efficiency while preserving the poetic essence."

2.2 Other Potential Limits of AI in Literary Translation

Artificial intelligence is making remarkable strides, especially in its effectiveness in processing large amounts of textual data, thereby providing rapid solutions in translation. This modern technology mimics human linguistic patterns to generate fluent and grammatically correct translations, thereby challenging human translators. Despite the ubiquitous presence of AI in today's translation world, the human touch has been deemed crucial in literary translation not only for transferring linguistic content but also for capturing the source culture's essence, emotional resonance and aesthetic beauty.

Nord (1997) notes that the human translator possesses unique and irreplaceable advantages in handling the complexity and subtlety of literary works, "particularly in capturing the emotional nuances and cultural connotations of the original text," while Toral and Way (2018) hail literary translation "as the last bastion of human translation" distinguished by its linguistic refinement, artistic creativity, cultural embeddedness and societal relevance. The question to ask here is whether AI can be applied to this 'last bastion' of literary translation, particularly the translation of the Cameroon national anthem into English, and accurately render the emotional profundity and the cultural subtleties it entails? Li (2024) notes that AI has a serious impact on the literary translator's voice. He presents a study by Kenny and Winter conducted in 2020, which explored how neural machine translation (NMT) affects the presence of the translator's voice in literal translation. Findings from their study reveal that the translator's voice, which reflects the translator's discursive presence and creative contribution is diminished in texts that have been post edited after machine translation, hence raising ethical concerns about "the homogenization of styles and the loss of individual nuances that human translators bring to literary works.

In a similar line of reasoning, Song and Ning (2024) affirm that literary translation requires creativity and is a form of recreation that transcends cultures and

languages, necessitating the translator's personal flair and sensitivity to cultural nuances. Wang equally corroborates this affirmation by the latter scholars, hence stating that "while AI excels in translating scientific and technical texts, it still faces limitations in creativity and cultural sensitivity while dealing with literary works.

The above assertions underscore the necessity of human intervention in the translation of literary works in a bid to maintain the integrity and richness of the original or source language literary texts, something the AI may be lacking in, as exemplified by the comparative analysis of the human translation of the Cameroon national anthem and the AI-generated translation, which is the object of this study.

Besides the above limitation, Li (2024) discusses other limitations in a study conducted on the translation of *A Pair of Peacock's Southeast Fly from Chinese into English*. The weaknesses have to do with expressing cultural connotations, narrative perspective shifts and translator subjectivity, which are equally noticeable in the AI-generated rendition of the Cameroon national anthem in English. With regard to the expression of cultural connotations, Li (2024) notes that while AI can handle basic grammatical and lexical transitions, it demonstrates deficiencies in capturing cultural subtleties in the ancient Chinese society and the nuances of language use within the context. As far as shifts in narrative perspective is concerned, Li notes that while the human translator typically adjusts the viewpoint flexibly according to the context and the development of the plot, AI is usually constrained by "its training data and algorithms, often appearing mechanical and rigid in perspective shifts." This may be due to its inability to adjust the viewpoint flexibly in keeping with contextual changes and changes in the surrounding text.

With regard to the translator's subjectivity, this can be crucially lacking in AI-generated translation, especially the translation of a poetic piece like the Cameroon national anthem. This is due to the fact that poetry uses highly condensed language that is rich in rhythm with deep expression of emotion, involving translation that goes beyond mere linguistic transfer to encapsulate the conveyance of cultural, emotional and aesthetic appeal. Replicating the emotive and aesthetic values of the source text into the target language might not be possible with AI. Thus, in the words of LI (2024), "AI cannot truly comprehend and translate the deep emotions of poetry, lacks profound insight into cultural differences and is unable to engage in subjective, aesthetic and strategic translation choices, unlike the human translator, whose sense of creativity naturally leads him/her to take meaning making subjective decisions.

2.3 A Call for Creativity in Translation

The question to ask here and now is why creativity, since poetry is a creative art and the translator has to be creative in order to bring out the creativity of the source text in the target language? This study posits that there

is lack of creativity in the AI-generated translation of the Cameroon national anthem into English. The focus on linguistic accuracy has tended to undermine the creative essence of the target text, making one to wonder aloud whether AI and creativity run counter-current in poetry translation.

Scholars in the domain of literary translation have tended to regard creativity with a pinch of salt, given that it may minimize the replication of the target language content as well as the form. Others see it as encouraging subjectivity. However, the notion of creativity has been deemed paramount in translation in general and literary translation in particular, given that a straight forward literal translation will render the text bland and undermine the literariness of source language aspects of style, hence leaving the target language readers bereft of equivalent effect.

According to Rade Gundis (2011:140), creativity is very necessary and a solution to literary translation. Hence, he perceives of creativity in the following words:

Creativity is not a creation *ex nihilo* but rather a combinational, exploratory playing with given ideas and rules, the combination of words and sentences given in the source text, whereby creativity is the translator's way out of a dead end.

The above submission by Rade Gundis thus, views creativity as a conscious decision by the translator to explore solutions that are geared towards solving problems inherent in translation, especially the translation of literary texts. This view is very crucial, given that all translations are geared towards solving problems as one navigates through languages.

Sternberg and Lubart (cited by Mohamed (2016) consider creativity as "the ability to produce a work that is both novel...and appropriate" and involving "...the handling and crafting of the raw material of language." They continue with the affirmation that "a commitment to the mere equivalence of this raw material...has the ability of erasing the most outstanding features of the source text and reducing the translation to an inferior copy, making it therefore unable to live up to the original." It should be admitted that an analysis of AI-generated contents of the translated version of the Cameroon national anthem does not satisfy this definition of creativity, as the translation focuses in producing linguistic equivalents, thereby "erasing outstanding features of the source text," unlike the human translation that produces a target text that is both 'novel' and 'appropriate.'

For his part, Awawdeh (2021) disagrees with those who claim that translation is a betrayal of the original text. Thus, according to him, literary translators should instead be seen to encourage 'betrayal' because adherence to the original text can cause translation to lose its creative function. He therefore considers creativity a necessity, stating that it "lies in the translator's ability to determine the goal behind his translation" as well as "his full knowledge of the

recipient's quality of the translated text and the expectations of this recipient." An analysis of the AI-generated translation of the Cameroon national anthem reveals that neither the goal nor the expectations of the recipients has been taken into consideration, hence justifying the subpar translation in many instances. This cannot be said to be the case with the human translation, which took both aspects (the goal of translation and the recipients' expectations into consideration.

Another scholar, Yazbeck (2023) concurs with Awawdeh (2021) about the paramouncy of creativity in literary translation. She defines creativity succinctly as "an intellectual and affective aptitude wherein ingenuity and intuition converge to birth unprecedented masterpieces." One can say that the English rendition of the Cameroon national anthem has become a masterpiece in the country and beyond. Yazbeck further states that the concept of creativity in literary translation can best be understood through the lenses of three human sciences – sociology, psychology and philosophy, at the confluence of which lies translation:

In the realm of translation, sociology plays a crucial role in understanding the cultural and social dimensions that impact language and communication....Psychology also bears significance as the translator's mental processes including cognitive abilities and emotional intelligence influence their approach to the task...Furthermore, philosophy adds depth to the concept of creativity in translation, offering insights into the nature of language, meaning and interpretation... (Yazbeck, 2023).

The above submission by Yazbeck lends credence to the importance of creativity in literal translation, whether perceived from the sociological, psychological or philosophical perspective. All these result from human rather than AI-generated translation, wherein the translator's creative intuition comes into play when confronting the gaps between languages and cultures, hence, striving to transcend these barriers and give life to a cohesive and captivating translated piece, like the English version of the Cameroon national anthem translated by Bernard Fonlon.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

This study is underpinned by two theories, which have a crucial bearing on its understanding. They are the sociolinguistic theory and the reception theory. They are discussed in the ensuing paragraphs.

2.4.1 The Sociolinguistic Theory

The proponents of the sociolinguistic theories of translation argued against the linguistic theory that focused mainly on language. Thus, their motivation was as a result of their dissatisfaction with what they considered the shortcomings of the linguistic theory. Scholars like the Anthropologist, Eugene Nida recognized the role of text recipients in the process of

translation. The sociolinguistic theory therefore, focused on the communication context of the text to be translated and talked about a context of communication. This theory shifts from Catford's (1965) surface structure equivalence to focus on the communication context.

Sociolinguistic theories of translation relate linguistic structures to a higher level where they can be viewed in terms of their function in communication. Thus, when faced with a text, the translator is particularly concerned with the author, its historical background, the circumstances involved in its production and the history of its interpretation, elements which are rooted in the social setting of communication.

Scholars like Nida and Taber (1969) opine that there is a paradigm shift from the form of the message to the receptors or readers. The sociolinguistic theories thus, hold that it is the reader's response to the translated message rather than the translation itself that determines its correctness. According to them, correctness is not only the possibility of understanding the message but equally the impossibility of not understanding it.

The sociolinguistic theory bodes well with this study, in view of its insistence on the communicative functions of texts rather than the linguistic structure. Thus, just as this study propounds, texts that have been translated by human translators stand a greater chance of taking cognizance of the sociocultural context, the receptor perspective, than machine or AI-generated texts that focus on linguistic correctness.

2.4.2 The Reception Theory

The early conceptualization of the reception theory was based on two main intellectual traditions and historical periods – the first composed of German scholars belonging to the Constance School and its theory of *Rezeptionsaesthetik* (aesthetic of reception) from the late 1960s and early 1970s onwards, and the second one comprising their Anglophone counterparts during the 1970s and 1980s, which was known as reader response criticism (Willis 2018:4). The common denominator between both schools is the conviction that texts do not produce meaning by themselves.

One of the early proponents of this theory was the German, Hans-Robert Jauss, who developed the concept *Rezeptionaesthetik*. This theory brought a paradigm shift in literary studies by placing the focus on the reader. Thus, according to Jauss, the relationship between the reader and the text was a communicative action that was concluded by reading and interpreting the text. This implies that the text would only truly begin to exist when it is read and interpreted by an individual reader or a collective readership. Jauss argued that the meaning of a text "is extracted only during the progressive process of reception" (1982:59).

In line with the principles of Information Theory, the idea of reception is suggestive of a sender (an author), a message (a text) and a receiver (a reader). Equally implicit is the fact that there must be a communication system which facilitates the sending and receiving of the message (Willis 2018:5). According to Jauss (1973:169), this communication system is part of a specific historical and cultural context, and therefore, the interpretation of a literary work can change depending on the time and place in which it is read. Venuti (2004:36) corroborates Jauss's assertion about situating a text within a particular cultural and historical context, claiming that different readerships in the receiving culture may have different interpretations and may want to apply their own values to the text."

The novelty about the reception theory is its insistence on the fact that the value of a literary text depends on its reception by the reader and not necessarily on the text itself. Fish (1980) equally agreed with Jauss by positing that what conditions the interpretation of a text are individual lives experienced in a specific socio-cultural context.

The relevance of the reception theory to this study cannot be questioned. Not only does it suggest that the translator should be creative enough and consider the socio-cultural background of the receivers he is translating for, as it is the case with human translators. It equally makes a veiled reference to the fact that this is not the case with machine translation AI where the reader's socio-cultural background is not considered.

3. METHODOLOGY

This corpus-based study adopts an analytical and a descriptive research design and is therefore, essentially qualitative. The texts, which are the focus of scientific enquiry, are the French version of the Cameroon national anthem, the English translation by Bernard Fonlon and the AI rendition which was done through DeepL. Excerpts have been selected from the source text, the target text 1, which is the human translation rendition and target text 2, which is the AI-generated text. Thereafter, a comparative analysis was done to determine the correctness in terms of respecting the purpose of the translation with regard to musicality or poetic melody, the message, the socio-cultural and historical context and other elements. Thus, the principal modus of operandi was synchronization wherein the source text was put side by side the two target texts to determine correctness in translation. The selected excerpts have been presented in a table having five columns under the following headings:

S/N	SOURCE TEXT	TARGET TEXT1 (Human Translation)	TARGET TEXT 2 (DeepL Translation)	VALUE JUDGEMENT
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4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data for this study consists of the source text, which is the French version of the Cameroon national anthem, and the target texts involving the translated version by Bernard Fonlon and the AI-generated Deepl version. As mentioned above, the synchronization technique has permitted the three texts to be put side by side for purposes of the micro analysis

4.1 Macro Analysis

Prior to the micro analysis, the macro analysis has been done focusing on a brief presentation of the Cameroon national anthem, themes of the Cameroon national anthem and the translator of the text.

4.1.1 Presentation of the Corpus (The Cameroon National Anthem)

The Cameroon national anthem has been christened as *Chant de Ralliement* or Rallying Song. As far back as 1928, some third year students of Ecole Normale Protestant de Foulassi, new Ebolowa in the South Region of Cameroon decided to immortalize their stay in that school a few weeks before their graduation. They nominated four of their classmates with musical skills to carry out this project. They included Rene Jam Afane, Samuel Minko Bamba, Moise Nyate Nko'o and Michael Nkono Banga.

After days of endless self-rehearsals, they came up with a theme, which they called *le chant de ralliement* (the rallying song). Samuel Minko Bamba's song was selected and finally adopted as the Cameroon national anthem on 5 November 1957 (Elime, 2024).

4.1.2 Themes of the Cameroon National Anthem

The Cameroon national anthem, equally known as Chant de ralliement or rallying song, has several themes. These themes reflect the country's rich historical and cultural heritage as well as its aspirations. Some of the themes are presented as follows:

a) **Unity and Patriotism:** The anthem urges Cameroonians to unite in service to their country, promoting patriotism and pride for the fatherland.

- b) **Ancestral Heritage:** It references the country's ancestors or forefathers and the sacrifices they made, and highlights the importance of honouring their legacy.
- c) **National Identity:** It celebrates the richness of Cameroon's history, cultural diversity, natural heritage and its unique identity.
- d) **Progress and Development:** The anthem encourages progress, peace, and loyalty to the nation, reflecting the country's aspiration for a brighter future.
- e) **Loyalty and Devotion:** It underscores the importance of loyalty and devotion to the nation, encouraging citizens to work in synergy for the good of the country.

4.1.3 Brief Presentation of the Translator of the Cameroon National Anthem

The Cameroon national anthem was translated by Professor Bernard Nsokika Fonlon. He was born on 19 November 1924 in Nso, Bui Division of the North West Region of Cameroon. Fonlon studied both in Cameroon and abroad, mainly in Nigeria, Ireland, and the prestigious Sorbonne in France, where he met great intellectuals like Aime Cesaire, Dubois and Richard Wright. He defended his PhD IN 1960 and returned to Cameroon in February 1961 to champion the cause of nation building. Hence, apart from being a university don, Professor Fonlon equally held several positions of responsibility. Bernard Nsokika Fonlon passed away on 26 August 1986 in Canada. At the time of his demise, he was 61 years old.

Professor Fonlon was a Cameroonian statesman, diplomat and writer who played a key role in Cameroon's political history. His translation of the Cameroon national anthem into English is considered a significant milestone in Cameroon's sociocultural and political landscape. His work on the national anthem reflects his commitment to promoting unity and cultural expression in Cameroon.

4.2 Micro Analysis

This involves a line by line presentation and analysis of the source text and the two target texts, in the ensuing table.

TABLE 1:

S/N	SOURCE TEXT	TARGET TEXT 1 Human Translation	TARGET TEXT 2 Deep Translation	VALUE JUDGMENT
1	Ô Cameroun, berceau de nos ancêtres,	O Cameroon, Thou Cradle of our Fathers,	O Cameroon, cradle of our ancestors,	The human translation version of the text has succeeded in replicating the rhythm and musicality in the target language through addition (thou) and substitution (fathers) unlike the AI where musicality has been sacrificed at the altar of linguistic accuracy.
2	Va debout et jaloux de ta liberté.	Holy Shrine where in our midst they now repose,	Go upright and jealous of your freedom.	The TT1 is a completely different version of the ST because the translator has completely re-written another text to maintain fluency of thought with the earlier rendition. This is not the case with the AI version that has focused on the meaning rather than the musicality.
3	Comme un soleil ton drapeau fier doit être,	Their tears and blood and sweat thy soil did water,	Like a sun your proud flag must be,	In TT1 here, the translator continues with textual coherence through re-writing . The focus is on the cultural and historical context rather than just replicating the message lineally, as in the AI-version. Thus, musicality is gained in TT1 and lost in TT2
4.	Que tous tes enfants du Nord au Sud, (Line 5)	Dear Fatherland, thy worth no tongue can tell!	May all your children from North to South,	Despite the complete difference in rendition, the idea of ancestral heritage has been captured in the ST and the two TTs. Thus, the translator can still be credited for creativity
5	Chère patrie, terre chérie, (Line 1, chorus)	Land of promise, land of glory	Dear homeland, beloved land	The idea of national pride and belonging is embedded in the French and English renditions. However, one can credit the human translator for his use of transposition , which focuses on the “land” hence, replicating the musicality unlike the AI-rendition, where focus is on the <i>langue</i> rather than the <i>parole</i>
6	Tu es notre seul et grand honneur.	Thou, of life and joy, our only store!	You are our one great honor.	There is creativity embedded in TT1 with the use of “thou” to refer to Cameroon, unlike in the TT2, which uses “you,” hence watering down the value. Musicality is also maintained in this substitution
7	Notre joie et notre vie,	Thine be honour, thine devotion,	Our joy and our life,	The translator (TT1) has resorted to re-expression while maintaining the poetic melody in his rendition. The musicality is totally lost in the AI rendering due to the focus on grammatical correctness.
8	A toi l'amour et le grand honneur.	And deep endearment, for evermore.	To thee love and great honour.	Here again, the translator (TT1) has manifested creativity by rendering the ST “amour” as “deep endearment,” hence, maintaining the poetic melody, unlike in the AI rendition where musicality has been sacrificed
9	Tu es la tombe où dorment nos pères,	From Shari, from where the Mungo meanders	You are the tomb where our fathers sleep,	This ST is an echo of the English version of the second line of the anthem: “holy shrine where in our midst they now repose...” Thus, while some might criticize Fonlon for mutilating the ST, We commend him for thematic and rhythmic fidelity, which is not the case with the AI-generated text
10	Le jardin que nos aïeux ont cultivé.	From along the banks of lowly Boumba Stream	The garden our forefathers cultivated.	Here, while the translator deviates from the ST, he shows creativity by maintaining the ecological perspective. He refers to rivers whereas the ST and the AI-version refer to gardens, but still maintains the musicality
11	Nous travaillons pour te rendre prospère,	Muster thy sons in union close around thee,	We work to make you prosperous,	The TT1 is a completely different rendition of the ST but the idea of national unity and patriotism are embedded in both renderings. While musicality is maintained in TT2 despite the re-expression , it is completely lost in the TT2 due to too much focus on meaning. This meaning has been re-expressed in line 7 of the English version: “How can we ever pay thy due?” hence, the importance of cross-reference in translation
12	Un beau jour enfin nous serons arrivés	Mighty as the Buea Mountain be their team;	One fine day at last we will have arrived	Here again, the rendition is different but the theme of resilience is captured in the renderings. One cannot lose sight of the translator's creativity when he re-expresses the idea of resilience by referring to the Buea mountain, where only the resilient can venture to. The SL musicality is equally captured in TT1 unlike in TT2 where it is lost.

4.3 DISCUSSIONS

An analysis of the source version of the Cameroon national anthem vis-à-vis the target language version may be suggestive of the fact that the English version of the Cameroon national anthem is completely different from the French version that it translates. This is true, when one proceeds with a line by line analysis of both versions. The translator can, therefore, be accused of mutilating the source text and presenting another version of the national anthem to the English population. However, this is not the case when one embarks on a thematic analysis.

Fonlon wished to achieve fluency of thought, textual coherence and thematic progression or consistency, rather than a line by line translation of the message. To do this, he employed translation techniques such as rewriting and re-expression mostly as well as substitution and addition. For instance, in the first and second lines of the SL version: *Ô Cameroun, berceau de nos ancêtres*, and *Va debout et jaloux de ta liberté*, there is a shift of focus from ancestral heritage to a sense of patriotism after having achieved independence. This is not the case with the English rendition where the ancestral heritage runs through the first four lines as seen below:

O Cameroon thou cradle of our Fathers,
Holy shrine where in our midst they now repose,
Their tears and blood and sweat thy soil did water,
On thy hills and valleys once their tillage rose...

The translator was able to maintain thematic progression throughout his translation of the national anthem into English. Thus, he moved from ancestral heritage to patriotism and finally resilience, while also succeeding in replicating the source language poetic melody. This may be due to his knowledge of sociocultural and historical factors that influenced the composition of the Cameroon national anthem. This is not the case with the AI-generated version of the national anthem into English, which is based on grammatical correctness and linguistic accuracy, as well as linear correspondence with the source language text, but which fails to replicate the source language poetic melody. This is because of the obliviousness of AI to the sociocultural and historical context of the national anthem and its composition. One will, therefore not be wrong to attest that the AI-generated translation of the Cameroon national anthem failed in capturing the poetic essence of the Cameroon national anthem into English owing to its insistence on linguistic accuracy and grammatical correctness.

Furthermore, there is need for creativity in translating a poetic, historically and ideologically loaded text like the Cameroon national anthem, given that a strict adherence to the source text will produce a text that is based on grammatical correctness and semantic accuracy but which fails to capture the sociocultural and

ideological nuance of the original, while also failing to consider the receivers of the target language culture.

5 CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine the limits of AI, particularly in the translation of literary texts, using the Cameroon national anthem as case study. The study was based on a comparative analysis between the French version of the Cameroon national anthem and two English versions, the human translation version and the AI-generated version through DeepL. The methodology used for the study is purely qualitative, relying on qualitative procedures such as synchronization and comparative analysis. Hence, the source text was put side by side two English versions of the Cameroon national anthem, which represent the target texts, to determine correctness in translation with respect to the message, consideration of sociocultural and historical context, as well as the replication of poetic melody or musicality

Findings reveal that the AI-generated translation of the Cameroon national anthem from French into English is good as far as grammatical correctness and linguistic accuracy. However, it fails to capture the source culture's essence, emotional resonance and aesthetic beauty in a way that the human translation does.

Findings also reveal that the AI-generated translation of the Cameroon national anthem is successful in term of language and replicating the source text meaning (semantics) into the target language. However, it cannot be said to be more successful than the human translation because translation extends beyond mere words and encompasses cultural transference and artistic intent as well as the consideration of ideological constraints within the target culture, aspects that have been considered by the human translator of the Cameroon national anthem.

This study urges the translator of literary texts, especially an ideologically loaded text like the Cameroon national anthem, to be creative instead of over-reliance on AI during the process of translation, as he is called upon to put the target language readers at the centerpiece as he navigates through the iconic dimensions of language. Creativity is a necessity, given that a straight forward literary translation will render the text bland and undermine the literariness of the SL aspects of style and many others.

Unlike the AI, the creativity of the human translation enables him/her to take cultural and ideological nuances into consideration, aspects considered very paramount in the translation of poetic texts like the Cameroon national anthem. Thus, Toral and Way's (2014) affirmation that literary translation is "the last bastion of human translation," because it is distinguished by its linguistic refinement, artistic

creativity, cultural embeddedness and societal relevance.

Recognition of the need for collaboration with AI equally typifies the literary translator's creativity given that literary translation finds itself at the crossroads of technological advancement. Thus, in the words of Li (2024), "the future lies not in the binary of replacement but in the harmony between human and AI-generated translation."

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