



FRENCH AND HAUSA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF QUALITATIVE ADJECTIVE

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This study presents a comparative analysis of qualitative adjectives in French and Hausa, exploring their syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic dimensions. French, a Romance language characterized by grammatical gender and inflectional morphology, employs a system of qualitative adjectives that agree in gender and number with the nouns they modify. Conversely, Hausa, a Chadic language, exhibits a distinct approach where adjectives typically follow nouns and show limited inflection, thereby reflecting a different morphological structure. The research investigates how qualitative adjectives function within the sentence framework of both languages, analyzing their placement, agreement rules, and modification patterns. Special attention is given to the semantic roles these adjectives play, including denotative and connotative meanings, and how cultural contexts influence their usage. For instance, the qualitative adjectives in French often convey aesthetic, emotional, or evaluative nuances, while Hausa adjectives may reflect socio-cultural values unique to the Hausa-speaking community. By employing qualitative methods such as textual analysis and native speaker interviews, this research provides a nuanced understanding of how language structure reflects cognitive and cultural frameworks. Our analysis is streamlined towards the part of speech; particularly – Adjectives (Qualitative adjectives and adjective of colour). This will be useful in examining why some features of French are not in Hausa and vice versa. The theory of Robert Lado will facilitate the contrastive analysis of the both languages. This comparative analysis of qualitative adjectives in French and Hausa not only underscores the linguistic diversity between the two languages but also enhances our understanding of the interplay between language and culture. The findings aim to contribute to fields such as linguistics, translation studies, and intercultural communication, offering valuable insights for educators, translators, and language learners.

Keywords: French language, Hausa Language, Adjective, contrastive analysis

INTRODUCTION:

Languages serve not only as a means of communication but also as reflections of cultural values, social norms and cognitive possibility Ashiru-abdulrahman K (2024:16). This study focuses on the qualitative adjectives in two distinct languages: French, a Romance language with roots in Latin, and Hausa, a Chadic language widely spoken in West Africa. Despite their different

linguistic families and cultural backgrounds, both languages employ qualitative adjectives to convey descriptions, characteristics, and evaluations of nouns.

Qualitative adjectives play a crucial role in enriching language by providing depth and specificity. They help in forming a clearer picture of the subject being discussed, facilitating a deeper understanding between speakers. In French, adjectives are often gendered and inflected for number, reflecting the language's grammatical structure. In contrast, Hausa uses a different morphological approach, where adjectives may exhibit less inflection and are often placed after the nouns they modify.

This comparative analysis will delve into the syntax, semantics, and pragmatics of qualitative adjectives in both languages. It will explore how these adjectives function within sentences, their agreement rules, and how cultural nuances shape their usage. By examining the similarities and differences in the two languages, this study aims to provide insights into the cognitive processes underlying language use and the broader implications for translation, language learning, and intercultural communication.

Ultimately, understanding how qualitative adjectives operate in French and Hausa not only highlights the uniqueness of each language but also fosters a greater appreciation for the complexities of human expression across different cultures.

According to Charles Kaspavec in Ashiru-abdulrahman's (2023) work *Theories and Procedures of Literary Translation: The Concept of Borrowing*, a translator always risks inadvertently introducing source-language words, Grammar, or Syntax into the target-language rendering. On the other hand, such "spill-overs" have sometimes imported useful source-language Calques and Borrowing that have enriched target languages. Translators, including early translators of sacred texts, have helped shape the very languages into which they have translated (84-87). The idea of the author is that translation has enriched target languages through the technique of Calques and borrowing on lexical from one language to another.

Iwala in *Traduction au Milieu de la Mondialisation* of Ashiru-abdulrahman (2023:171) postulates that "Le terme traduction est un terme fourre-tout, qui peut prendre des significations différentes selon le contexte dans lequel il est employé. Pour le commun des mortels, la traduction est le passage d'une langue à une autre, une affaire de bilinguisme". The author suggests that translation is a bilingual process involving knowledge of two languages, i.e. encoding in one language and decoding in another.

Our interest on this paper is to critically analyse and evaluate the differences and similarities in Adjective (qualitative and adjective of colour) between French and Hausa language; while adopting the theory proposed by Robert Lado (1950). This will be useful in examining why some adjective features of French are not in Hausa and vice versa.

SIGNIFICANCE

This work will benefit translators, especially the french/hausa translation as a work to consult when working on both languages. It is a linguistic analysis of two languages; as such, it will benefit students of applied linguistics. The contrastive analysis of hausa and french in this aspect has provided the unique features of both languages, differences and how they are related to one another

LITERATURE REVIEW

Problem of mistranslation has been a hot topic in the fields of linguistics and translation studies. A number of high profile cases of mistranslation have made headlines in recent years, including a famous mistranslation of the Bible that led to the incorrect translation of the word “virgin” into “young woman”. Mistranslation can have serious consequences, from the miscommunication of important information to the perpetuation of stereotypes and prejudices. Douglas Hofstadter (1997) in his book “Le Ton Beau de Marot: In Praise of the Music of Language” explores the art of translation through the lens of a 16th century French poem “Le Songe du vieil Pelerin” by Clément Marot. He argues that a true translation should not only be literal, but also capture the essence and rhythm of the original text. He pointed out that mistranslation can often be a result of a failure to understand the nuance of language and culture. A literal translation of a text can miss the underlying meaning and intent of the original author. Instead a more holistic approach to translation that takes into account the context and culture of the source text. Lawrence Venuti (1988) developed a theory of “foreignization” and “domestication” in translation. He challenged the prevailing view of translation as a transparent process, arguing that translator’s role should be visible and acknowledged, rather than hidden or invisible. Also in (1995) in his book “The Translator’s invisibility: A History of Translation”, he stated that mistranslation is often the result of a desire to domesticate the foreign text, rather than preserve its original meaning and context. According to Gregory Rabassa (2005) mistranslation can often result from the translator’s lack of knowledge of or understanding of the source text and culture. Rabassa also highlights the challenges of translating works from other cultures and languages and emphasizes the importance of understanding the cultural and historical context of the source text. In order to solve the mistranslation problem Robert Lado (1957) in his book proposed the contrastive analysis hypothesis, which suggests that learners’ errors in a second language can be predicted by comparing and contrasting the two languages. By comparing French and Hausa, we are likely to know the similarities and differences (from the orthography to the word order). This analysis is needed to help understand the structure of both languages in order to minimize mistranslation.

THEORITICAL FRAME WORK

The theories of contrastive linguistics also know as differential linguistics that seeks to describe the differences and similarities between a pair of languages is our approach. The approach proposed by Robert Lado (1950) to assist interlingua transfer in the process of translating text from one language into another. By applying the contrastive description, it can occur at every

level of linguistic structure: speech sounds (phonology), written symbols (orthography), word formation (Morphology), word meaning (lexicology), collocation (phraseology), and sentence structure (syntax and complete discourse (textology) while using the parallel-text analysis. Various techniques used in corpus linguistics have been shown to be relevant in interlingual and intralingual contrastive studies.

HISTORY OF TRANSLATION

The history of translation goes all the way back to ancient civilizations like the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans. It has a very long History; in fact it is as old as man -Goerge steiner, Ashiru-abdulrahman Khadijah (2024:116). People would translate texts from one language to another for various reasons, such as sharing ideas, preserving knowledge, and facilitating trade. During the middle ages, monks and Scholars played a big role in translating religious texts from Latin into local languages. The history of translation, especially, when it is viewed from its three-fold typologies as defined by Roman Jakobson cited in (Ashiru-abdulrahman 2017:2) Translation can be grouped into the following:

- Intralingual translation or rewording which means that the verbal signs of a language are interpreted by other verbal signs of the same language.
- Interlingual translation or translation proper involving the interpretation of verbal signs from a particular language to another.
- Intersemiotic translation where verbal signs are interpreted through nonverbal signs.

The history of interlingual translation dates back to the 300B.C Rosetta stone which represents the oldest work of translation belongs to this period. Judicial and religious texts were translated in Mesopotamia and Egypt, but the translation of literary work into foreign languages started during the Roman Empire. Livius Andronicus is the best know translator of this time. He translated Greek texts for the roman audience and attempted to preserve the artistic quality of the original.

As pointed out by Data Sawant(2015 in <http://www.researchgate/publication/2716thourity06>), Livius Andronicus must have had enormous challenges in his task, since he had no authorities to fall back on. He tried to be faithful but altered untranslatable ideas. For instance, the phrase “equal to Gods”, which would have been unacceptable to Romans was changed to “Summus adropus” I: e “greatest and first work” (Ashiru-abdulrahman2017:3)

FRENCH LANGUAGE

French is a romance language spoken by over 200 million people in over 30 countries Stephen Murray (2006). It is the official language of France, Switzerland, and Monaco, and it’s also of the official languages of Canada, Belguim, and Luxembourg. It is considered one of the most beautiful and melodic languages in the world, and it is known for its complex grammar

and rich vocabulary. According to lexicographer and linguist Herald Hammarström (2013), who analysed the size of dictionaries in different languages, French has the largest dictionary with over 150,000 words.

LANGUAGE STRUCTURE IN FRENCH

French like most Romance languages, has a relatively simple grammar structure. It has nouns, adjectives, verbs etc and uses prepositions to indicate relationships between words. French Nouns have gender and number, and adjectives agree with nouns in gender and number. It also has a complex system of verb conjugation, with different endings for different tenses and moods. French grammar prioritizes the set of rules that govern how to create statements, questions and commands. In many respects, French has similar features with other Romance languages. Such as the use of tonal marks, articles, gender consciousness and creation of new tenses from auxiliaries such as the Verb ‘Être’, ‘Avoir’ Aller etc.

And like other languages belonging to same family group, modern French language word order is ‘SVO’ although it allows fewer word orders like the old French which has six potential word orders such as ‘VOS, SVO, OSV, SOV, OVS, VSO’.

The part of speech

French language has nine parts of speech, also known as lexical categories or word classes.

- i. Adjectives
- ii. Adverbs
- iii. Articles
- iv. Conjunctions
- v. Interjections
- vi. Nouns
- vii. Prepositions
- viii. Pronouns
- ix. Verbs

This only intend to look at the adjective; analyse and evaluate the differences and similarity between the French adjective as well as Hausa Adjectives putting into consideration the position, gender and plural implications in each adjective.

ADJECTIVE IN FRENCH

In French grammar, an adjective is called an “adjectif” and it usually comes after the noun it is modifying. There are Different types of Adjectives- there is the Possessive, Demonstrative, Qualitative Adjective which in our concern in this work. In French, it is called “adjectif qualificatif” For example, the French word for beautiful is “beau” and the French word for

“cat” is “chat”. So, a beautiful cat in French would be “Un chat beau”. There are many different types of qualitative adjectives in French, including those that describe:

1. Physical characteristics, such as “grand” (tall), “Beau” (Beautiful), “Mince” (Slim) etc.
2. Emotional Characteristics, such as “heureux” (happy) or “fâché” (angry). Etc
3. Subjective Characteristics, such as “intelligent” (Smart) or “Stupide”.
4. Objective Characteristics, such as “joli” ((pretty) or “hideux” (ugly) etc

French adjectives usually have different types of endings depending on whether the noun they are modifying is masculine or feminine.

There are four different types of endings for French adjectives: Masculine singular, feminine singular, masculine plural and feminine plural. To illustrate the different types of French adjective endings, we would use the adjective “intelligent” (Meaning “Smart” or intelligent). Here is how the endings would change depending on the gender and number of noun being modified:

Masculine Singular: “Un homme intelligent” (a smart man).

Feminine Singular: “une femme intelligente” (a smart woman)

Masculine plural : “des hommes intelligents“ (Smart men).

Feminine plural : “ des femmes intelligentes“ (Smart women).

In French, it is important to make sure that your adjective endings match the noun they are modifying. If not, it can render the sentence awkward or incorrect.

ADJECTIVE IN HAUSA

In Hausa language, Adjectives are generally placed before the Noun they modify. For example, the word for “big” is “babba” and the word for house is “Gida”. So, the phrase “big house” would be “Babban gida” in Hausa. There are some exceptions to this rule, however, such as when the adjective describes the sizes or quantity of something. In these cases, the adjective may come before the noun. For example, the phrase “a lot of water” would be “Ruwa mai yawa” in Hausa.

In addition to their placement in a sentence, Hausa adjectives can also be modified to indicate intensity. For example, the adjective ‘big’ can be modified to become “very big” by adding the word ‘sosai’ after the noun. So, the phrase “very big House” would be “babban gida sosai” in Hausa. Other modifiers that can be used to indicate intensity include “

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Cases	French	Hausa	Analysis		
Case 1	Une <u>Jolie</u> fille	Kyakyawar yarinya/ Yarinya mai Kyau	Similarities	Differences	Both phrases demonstrate the use of qualitative adjective to
			1. Function: In both phrases, the adjectives (“jolie” in French and	1. Gender and Agreement: - French: The adjective “Jolie” agrees in gender and	

			<p>“Kyakyawar” or mai Kyau in Hausa) serve to describe the noun (“Fille” in French and “Yarinya” in Hausa), Conveying a positive quality.</p> <p>2. Position: The Adjectives precede the Noun in both phrases (“Jolie fille” and Kyakyawar Yarinya”). In the case of “Yarinya mai Kyau”, the adjective follows but is still effectively describing the Noun.</p>	<p>Number with the feminine noun “fille”. French adjectives often change form to match the noun they modify.</p> <p>-Hausa: “Kyakyawar” is a form of the adjective that agrees with the feminine noun “yarinya”. while “mai Kyau” does not change form based on gender but rather describes the quality of Beauty.</p> <p>2. Construction: - French: The phrase uses a single word adjective (“Jolie”) which is a simple, standalone description.</p> <p>-Hausa: “Mai Kyau” functions as a phrase meaning “good” or “beautiful”, Indicating that Hausa can express similar qualities through multi-word constructions.</p> <p>3. Cultural Context: The way beauty is expressed can vary culturally. French may emphasize a delicate quality with “Jolie”, while Hausa expressions like “Kyakyawar” can</p>	<p>describe a noun, highlighting similar grammatical functions. However, they differ in gender agreement rules, the structure of the adjective and cultural nuances in the expression of beauty.</p>
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				connote a more vibrant or striking beauty.	
Case 2	Une voiture Blanche	Farar Mota	<p>Similarities</p> <p>1. Attributive Function: Both phrases use adjectives to describe a noun. “Blanche” in French and “Farar” in Hausa specify the colour of the noun (“Voiture” and “Mota”).</p> <p>2. Structure: Each phrase consists of a noun and a descriptive adjective, creating a noun-adjective pairing.</p> <p>3. Connotation: In both languages, the colour white may carry similar connotations of purity or newness, depending on cultural context.</p>	<p>Differences</p> <p>1. Language Structure: -French: The adjective (“Blanche”) follows a specific gender agreement with the noun (“Voiture”), which is feminine. -Hausa: The adjective (“Farar”) does not change based on gender; Hausa has a different system of noun classification that does not use gender in the same way.</p> <p>2. Word order: - French: Typically places the adjective after the Noun, although some adjectives can come before it depending on meaning and emphasis. -Hausa: The adjective usually precedes the noun, forming a more direct descriptor.</p> <p>3. Cultural Context: The cultural meanings attached to</p>	<p>These elements illustrate how both languages convey similar meanings through their unique grammatical structures and cultural nuances.</p>

				<p>colour white symbolize different attributes or values in Hausa speaking culture. E.g. “Farin ciki”, Farin jini etc connotes a different meaning distinct from colour. For French the term (blanchir”) can relate to feelings of fear or shock, as someone might (“blanchir”) (turn pale) when surprised or scared.</p> <p>4. Morphological aspects: In French, adjectives can change form (e.g., Pluralization), while in Hausa, the adjective remains consistent regardless of number in this context.</p>	
Case 3	Une très grande maison	Babban gida sosai	<p>Similarities</p> <p>1. Function: Both phrases describe a noun (house) and include an adjective that conveys size.</p> <p>2. Structure: Each phrase contains a noun and qualitative adjectives that modify the noun,</p>	<p>Differences</p> <p>1. Language Structure: - French “une très grande maison includes an article (“une”) and an adverb (“très”) that intensifies the adjective (“grande”). - Hausa: “Babban gida sosai” does not</p>	Overall, while both phrases effectively communicate the same idea of a very large house, their structures and grammatical rules highlight the distinct characteristics

			<p>enhancing its description.</p> <p>3. Emphasis on Size: Both phrases emphasize the large size of the house, indicating a qualitative comparison</p>	<p>use an article , and “sosai” serves as an intensifier for “babban” (Big/Large).</p> <p>2. Word Order: - French: The adjective comes after the adverb and before the noun. - Hausa: The adjective precedes the noun, followed by the intensifier.</p> <p>3. Morphological Aspects: -French: The adjective “Grande” agrees in gender and number with the Noun “maison”, which is feminine singular. - Hausa: “Babban” does not change form based on gender or number, reflecting a different noun classification system.</p> <p>4. Cultural context: The implications of describing a house as large may vary between french and hausa-speaking cultures,influencing how such</p>	<p>of french and Hausa.</p>
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				descriptions are percieved.	
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CONCLUSION

This comparative analysis of qualitative adjectives in French and Hausa reveals significant insights into the interplay between language structure, cultural context, and cognitive processes. The examination of these adjectives has highlighted both the similarities and differences in their usage, reflecting the unique characteristics of each language while also emphasizing the universal functions of adjectives in communication.

In French, the grammatical agreement of adjectives with nouns in gender and number illustrates a complex system that enriches the language and adds layers of meaning. This feature allows for nuanced expressions and reflects a broader cultural emphasis on aesthetics and formality. In contrast, Hausa's relatively straightforward adjective structure—where adjectives typically follow nouns and exhibit less inflection—demonstrates a linguistic economy that aligns with the cultural values of directness and clarity in communication.

The analysis also revealed how qualitative adjectives serve not only descriptive functions but also convey social attitudes and cultural values within each linguistic community. In both languages, the choice of adjectives can reflect societal norms, emotional states, and evaluative judgments, thus underscoring the role of language as a vehicle for cultural expression.

In conclusion, the study of qualitative adjectives in French and Hausa provides a rich framework for understanding the broader implications of linguistic structures on communication and cultural identity. This comparative approach fosters greater appreciation for the diversity of human languages and the complexities of conveying meaning across different cultural contexts.

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