Some French expressions as used in Urhobo: a case study of the terms ‘AVOIR …’ and ‘EVWO …’

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Expressions are expositions of the mind. They reveal thoughts which otherwise would have remained undisclosed. How these thoughts are expressed differ from language to language and from individual to individual. Even individual expressions can also be different one from the other even though they are expressed in the same language. In some instances, certain similarities and dissimilarities have been found in the phrasal constructions and usage of certain French and Urhobo expressions, even though they do not indicate any semantic divergences. In this study, the difference between some French ‘avoir’ expressions and their Urhobo equivalents will be examine. What happens to the verb ‘avoir’ when the expressions are translated into the Urhobo language? How is the structure of the expression affected by the transfer from one language to the other? This study is prompted by the hope of selling the Urhobo language to others as a means of saving it from extinction. The study will be based on some extracts of the French ‘Avoir …’ expressions as compared to their Urhobo equivalents. For obvious reasons, the approach in this study will be somewhat eclectic. It will involve individual interviews, and since there will be some elements of translation the study will have recourse to Eugene Nida’s theory of dynamic equivalence.

Key words: Study, French Urhobo Expressions ‘Avoir’, ‘Evwo’.

INTRODUCTION

A comparative study of expressions in two languages calls for a brief description of the two languages involved in the study. This will throw light upon the background of these languages especially as they belong to different linguistic families.

Urhobo Language

(Otite and Igben, 2011, p. 11) state that “The Urhobo people are found mainly in the Delta State of Nigeria where they constitute the largest ethnic group. More specifically, (Aziza, 1997, p. 1) states that “The people are today to be found in the southern part of Delta State.” As touching the population of the Urhobo people, (Aweto and Igben), cited by (Akpofure, 2015, p.152) say that:

There are no current statistics in the population of the Urhobo people. This situation has been compounded by the migratory propensity of the people. Today thousands of Urhobo people are permanent or semi-permanent settlers outside their homeland … In 1963 the Urhobo people constituted one of the ten largest ethnic groups in the country. … The present (2002) overall population of the Urhobo is more than two million taking into consideration Urhobo migrants living in other parts of the country and abroad.
According to (Aziza, 2007, p. 273), “Urhobo is a South-western Edoid language … Urhobo has fifteen dialects, the most of which are highly mutually intelligible. The Agbarho dialect is the standard variety spoken generally across the Urhobo community”. During a chat with Aziza (2009) also cited in (Akpofure, 2015, p.151), it was gathered that Agbarho was selected as the standard Urhobo language because it was easily understood and spoken by everyone.

Concerning the status of the Urhobo language (Mowarin, 2005, p. 525) quotes (Egbokhare 2004, p. 13) as predicting that “In the next 50-100 years, 90% of the languages of Africa will be extinct”. Urhobo is one of these African languages. Also, according to Mowarin,

Right now, the speakers of the three languages that constitute the Urhobo culture are not aware that their languages are contracting. This is a major problem for the speakers of an endangered language. The fact that these young Urhobos have already experienced language loss and there is also a large army of semi-speakers shows that the languages are tottering inanely to their linguistic graves. (p. 531).

In addition to Aweto and Igben’s claim that “Today thousands of Urhobo people are permanent or semi-permanent settlers outside their homeland is Mowarin’s assertion that “Urhobo languages have open social networks; they have contact with other indigenous languages that envelope them”. This implies that the Urhobo people as well as their languages are surrounded by lots of the factors which endanger a language and egg it on to its extinction. Clearly, the geographic scenario of the Urhobo as well as her experience in diaspora signify that this is a language in “trouble”, as (Aziza, 2015, p.8) describes such languages. Thus, even though endangered language is not the main thrust of this article, its status is clearly indicated in this study because there is need to know the language one is discussing.

**French Language**

The French language is different from the Urhobo language in many ways. It certainly is, not only by geographical location or linguistic affiliation, but also by the fact that it is an international language amongst many other reasons. It is very widely spoken and it possesses a history of descent, which, for want of documentation, seems to be non-existent in Urhobo. According to (Dale and Dale, 1956, p.3) French is the native language of the people of France. It is spoken by more than 80 million people all over the world. It is the daily speech of the inhabitants of Continental France, and parts of Switzerland and Belgium. (Dewritech, 2015, p. ) specifically states that it belongs to the Indo-European language family. It is known to be one of the romance languages as is most of the languages that have their descent from Latin. (Hurd, 2013, p. 2) affirms that “The Langues d’Oil or Oil languages … is a dialect continuum that includes standard French and its closest autochtonous relatives spoken today in the northern half of France, southern Belgium, and the Channel Islands. They belong to the larger Gallo-Romance languages, which also cover most of east-central (Arpitania) and southern France, southern France (Occitania), northern Italy, and southern Spain”. Like Urhobo, French has many dialects. Unlike the Urhobo situation though, the French dialects are divided into three groups. These comprise of ‘Languages d’ Oc’, Langues d’ Oc and ‘Provençale’. According to Hurd, “Linguists divide the Romance languages of France, and especially of medieval France into three geographical subgroups: the first two are langues d’Oc and Occitan, … the third is Franco-Provençal, which is considered transitional”. Unlike the Urhobo situation where the Agbarho dialect was mutually chosen to be the standard Urhobo language which is taught in schools and used for writing, a dialect of the Langues d’Oîl, Île-de-France, was imposed on the other dialects.

For political reasons it was in Paris and Île-de-France that this koiné developed from a written language into a spoken language. Already in the 12th century Conon de Béthune reported about the French court who blamed him for using words of Artois. … By the late 13th century the written koiné had begun to turn into a spoken and written standard language, and was named French. Since then French started to be imposed on the other Oîl dialects as well as on the territories of langue d’oc. (7).

Evolving from different geographic and linguistic stalks as these two languages do, their expressions offer possible linguistic divergences to be examined. The French verb “avoir” (to have) and the Urhobo verb “Evwo” (to have).

**METHODOLOGY**

To fully elicit the linguistic and cultural similarities and dissimilarities in the expressions on hand, structural exercises were carried out in the department’s language laboratory to determine the extent to which the phonetic expression in French and Urhobo transmit the meaning of the words articulated. Also, oral exercises of the Urhobo versions of the French ‘avoir’ expressions (i.e. evwo) were also undertaken to clearly determine the various processes of the articulation of words in Urhobo since it is a tone language. This was necessary because a wrong intonation during the articulation of a given expression can change the entire meaning of an expression. It was needful also to travel out of the University town of
Abraka to Agbarho, the geographic location of the Urhobo dialect chosen as standard Urhobo, where spoken Urhobo language is not so intensely influenced by English language which is generally spoken in the University community along with pidgin. Sequences of the Urhobo "evwo" expressions were recorded and listened to repeatedly for semantic expressions.

Objective

Various studies have classed Urhobo language among languages in danger of extinction. Aweto and Igben's claim as well as Mowarin's assertion give credence to the fact of Urhobo being an endangered language. Also, as Aziza says: "... once a language ceases to be used for intergenerational transmission, when its young people cease to attach any importance to it and instead use another language for their communication needs, it is on the fast lane to extinction. This is certainly not a study on endangered languages; but Urhobo is my language. I do not only love to speak it, I love to hear people speak it. That is why, my main objective for this study stems from my growing love and pride for the Urhobo language. Just like the French sell their language, it is hoped that this article, amongst others would help to sell the Urhobo language and thereby create a niche for it in the minds of other people as the language is being revived in Urhobo land. If Urhobo does not speak her language, but others who hear of it love it and speak it, it is possible for the language to live and not die.

Theoretical Framework

Considering expressions from two languages which are not necessarily related necessitates an understanding of the nature of both languages; their cultural leanings, their phonology, their grammatical structures etc. Invariably, translation comes into play. (Essay 2017 p. 2) states that "Translation is a form of communication". Also according to Essay, (Nida, 1982, p.12) defines translation as "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." The various definitions of translation clearly imply that for two people who belong to two different linguistic communities to be able to communicate textually, translation must take place. Not only should there be communication, but the medium of communication should also be pleasant both to hearing and sense. That is why I suppose that Nida talks about "closest natural equivalence. For (Essay 2017 p. 1)

Translation is a complex process which can be regarded from several perspectives. Some specialists view translation as a merely linguistic process where notions from one language are translation into another one. This group of specialists regard equivalence as literal translating each word and notion. At the same time other specialists state that cultural context is very important for the translation because only the use of context can help to pass real meaning of the text. In their opinion equivalence in translation should deal with passing the meaning of the text. These scholars present semantic and functional approach to translation. The third group of specialists take middle position and state that equivalence is used for the convenience of translators ... because most translators are used to it.

I would not agree with the group of specialists who argue that "equivalence" is literal because the structure of speech in any two given languages would certainly not be uniform. I would not agree either that equivalence is used for the convenience of translators because the types of text in which equivalence is used are peculiar; texts that include idioms, proverbs, etc could not possibly be literally translated, so the nearest equivalence in meaning would have to be used. Consideration of "cultural context" is really relevant in translation. A certain notion may exist in two languages which have different cultures. These notions would be differently expressed in both languages. The translator’s knowledge of the linguistic and cultural bearings of these languages would help him choose the appropriate equivalent expression to use in the target language. Fixed expression such as this article is concerned with could not possibly be translated literally. This is why equivalent fixed expressions should be sought for in target language. (Essay, 2017, p. 2) quoting (Jakobson, 1959, p. 233), states that "translation involves two equivalent messages in two different codes". This means that linguistic differences notwithstanding, there would always be a mid-point where it would be possible to reproduce semantically, expressions from one language into another language. In other words, an equivalent expression for source language text is found in the target language text. (Catford, 1965, p. 21), cited by (Essay, p.1) further highlights the importance of equivalence when he states that:

Translation equivalence is an important concept of translation theory. It is one of the main principles of Western theory of translation. Finding translation equivalents is one of the core problems of the translation process. As Catford states, the central problem of translation practice is that of finding TL equivalents. A central task of translation theory is that of defining the nature and conditions of translation equivalence. Essay states furthermore, that "Starting from the middle of the twentieth century a lot of prominent theorists who work in the field of translation theory include the concept of equivalence in their theorizing and research".(1). (Leonardi 2000, p.
French ‘Avoir …’ expressions

Understandably, the grammatical constructions of the French expressions which we have to work with are different from those of their equivalents in Urhobo; considering the different placement of words, such as nouns and verbs, as the case may be. The following French ‘avoir’ expressions which are to be examined in this study, are taken from Ade (Ojo, 2002, p.395).

Avoir chaud, Avoir froid, Avoir foi en, Avoir tort, Avoir sommeil, Avoir lieu, Avoir ... ans, Avoir besoin de, Avoir envie de, Avoir horreur de, Avoir honte de, Avoir l’air, Avoir tendance, Avoir mal, Avoir confiance, Avoir l’habitude, Avoir la chance, Avoir la parole, Avoir l’intention

In what way are the structures of these expressions found to be different from the constructions of their Urhobo equivalents? In the segment that follows the analysis will show how.

(Lawless, 2016, p.1) affirms that “The French verb avoir literally means “to have” and is also used in many idiomatic expression”. Likewise, the Urhobo verb ‘évwó’ means ‘to have’. It should be noted that the Urhobo verb ‘évwó’ was not found in any of the existing Urhobo dictionaries. Apparently, it has not yet been documented. From usage it is known as the verb “to have”. For example, “évwó re ôrávwó” / to have something; “évwó re òdè” / to have a name. The French ‘avoir ….’ expressions to be examined in relation with their Urhobo equivalents are extracted from (Ade Ojo, 2005, p. 395).

i. Avoir chaud: “to talk about how you are feeling, whether you feel cold or warm, we use the construction AVOIR chaud /avoir froid” (Chevalier-Karlis, 2012, p.1) In Urhobo, we have the words “Óhēríévéré” - to be hot, warmth and “èkpyānèmuó” – to be cold. These are the words which are the exact equivalents of the construction “avoir chaud / avoir froid”. While the verb “avoir” features in the French construction, it is not relevant in Urhobo. For example, one would not say in urhobo “évwó re ôhērí” or “ôhēríévéró” (having of heat); which would normally translate the term “avoir chaud”. “Mī vwo ôhērí” / “I have heat” would not be said in Urhobo either. The proper construction would be “ôhērí here úvwé”. The literal translation in French is: “La chaleur m’échauffe” / “The heat is heating me”. This would not be accepted in French because apparently, this translation exhibits an incorrect grammatical French and of course bad English. The acceptable sentence would therefore be: J’ai chaud / I am hot, I feel hot. “Avoir chaud” is also used figuratively to express “… a near miss. Ouf, t’as eu chaud! Damn, that was a close call!” (MackenzieBot, 2007). An equivalent expression in urhobo is “… chékó émērḥá!”. This is accompanied by a click of the finger, a single clap, or jam of hands.

ii. Avoir froid: In line with the discussion on “avoir chaud” above the proper construction to express a feeling of cold in French is “J’ai froid”. “Èkpyānènvwó”, which translates “avoir froid” is not said in Urhobo. But Urhobo has “èkpyānènuó” – (l’attrapement du froid), (the catching of cold); however is not an acceptable French expression. The notion therefore is to adopt the equivalent term in Urhobo, since calquing on it would resolve nothing. Take for example, “èkpyān mú úvwé”. Literally, this would be “La froideur m’attrape” / “The cold catches me”. These are not acceptable grammatically.

“Èkpyān mú úvwé” “J’ai froid” and in English it would be “I am cold. I feel cold”.

iii. Avoir foi en: Larousse Dictionnaire de français en ligne (2016) presents “avoir foi” as being related to “avoir confiance” since they both imply trust in somebody, something or situation. In Urhobo, the expression “Vwo èsègbūyótà phiyó” is the same as “avoir foi en” / to have faith in, to have confidence in. The construction of the French expression is in line with that of the Urhobo expression. This is so because the verbs in both languages coincide in position with one another. For example “Mī vwo èsègbūyótà phiyó” / “J’ai foi en lui” “J’ai confiance en lui / je lui fais confiance”. "I have faith in him", "I have confidence in him"

“Mī vwo èsègbūyótà phiyó omo óbó mé
"J’ai confiance en moi-même"
“i have confidence in myself"

Closely related to “avoir foi en …” is the expression “Avoir confiance”.

2) cites Vinay and Darbelnet as viewing “… equivalence-oriented translation as a procedure which replicates the same situation as in the original, whilst using completely different wording … equivalence is therefore the ideal method when the translator has to deal with proverbs, idioms, clichés, nominal or adjectival phrases and the onomatopoeia of animal sounds. For (Nida and Taber, 1982:200), cited by (Leonardi Op cit.5) Dynamic equivalence is a "...translation principle according to which a translator seeks to translate the meaning of the original in such a way that the TL wording will trigger the same impact on the TC audience as the original wording did upon the ST audience. They argue that ‘Frequently, the form of the original text is changed; but as long as the change follows the rules of back transformation in the source language, of contextual consistency in the transfer, and of transformation in the receptor language, the message is preserved and the translation is faithful’. Given the topic on hand, as well as the type of "avoir expressions” (which are fixed), the most appropriate theory for this study would be Nida and Tarber’s theory of dynamic equivalence.
iv. Avoir confiance: ‘Énwénkpánhé’ and ‘ímuēró’ are used to express confidence, trust, either in something, a situation or someone. But ‘énwénkpánhé’ does not use the verb ‘évwó’ (avoir). It uses the verb ‘émuó’ (to carry) Example: ‘Mí mu énwén kpánhén Oghene’ / ‘I put my trust in God’. This is quite different from ‘J’ai confiance en Dieu’ / ‘I have confidence in God’. On the other hand ‘ímuēró’ would be more applicable in this context. ‘Mí vwo ímuéró’ / ‘J’ai confiance’ / ‘I have confidence’. This is one sequence in which the French verb (avoir) and the Urhobo verb (évwó) play the same role in both languages. As touching the French “confiance” and the Urhobo “énwénkpánhé”, « avoir » and « émuó », though they are different, play the same role. Other related sentences are:

Mí phi énwén phiyo Oghéné.
Je fait confiance en Dieu
I place my trust in God

What Urhobo does in this situation is to replace the verb ‘avoir’ (to have) with the verb “éphíyó phiyo” “to put upon”, or “émuó” “to carry”, émuó phiyo “to lay upon”. Example: “Mí mu énwén kpánhén Oghéné” I lay my confidence on God. Thus the verb “émuó” to carry comes into play. Literally, ‘Émuókpánhén’ means “to carry upon”, “to lay upon”.

v. Avoir tort: Larousse Dictionnaire de français en ligne (2016) translates “avoir tort” as “to be wrong”. In Urhobo this is expressed by “Rú chóng”; (érú chóng) / (to do wrong) The French verb « avoir » (to have) modulates into the Urhobo verb " rú " (érú) - (to do). Also, “rè ābé” which means to be in the wrong, serves as the equivalent of “avoir tort”; although “ré” is the verb “to eat”, while “rú” is the verb “to do”. It should be noted that this serves as the equivalent since there are no results of literal translation.

Example:

La mère a tort
Ônì nà rú chó / Ônì nà re ābé
The mother did wrong / the mother is wrong.

One finds that in this case, where in French, the verb is “avoir” (to have), in Urhobo the verb becomes “rú” (to do).

vi. Avoir raison: For Larousse Dictionnaire de français en ligne (2016) ‘avoir raison’ translates as ‘to be right’. The Urhobo equivalent is “Riérú” “to do right/ to do well”. What happened to « avoir tort » also happens to “avoir raison”. “Riérú” means “bien fait” in French. This certainly does not mean “avoir raison”. When someone has done something well he is told ‘Wó rié rú’ – meaning “You have done well”.

Example:

Wó ghéné fórhó émwà nà? Wó riérú
Tu as bien fait la lessive? Tu as bien fait.
You really washed the clothes? You have done well.

The nearest equivalent to “avoir raison” would be “Úyọtά”, meaning “True. You are right” / “You are correct” which means “Tu as raison”.

The context which would be more applicable to “tu as raison” would more likely be: “Wó rié tá – Tu as bien parlé / Wó rié tá – Tu l’as bien dit.”. For this to be accomplished, the verb modulates from ‘avoir’ (to have) in French into “savior” / “Érién” (to know) in Urhobo. Ôbò wó táré na úyọtά, wó nábó rein tá / ce que tu as dit est la vérité, tu l’as bien dit / What you have said is the truth, it’s very well said. Or, simply put, “you are right”. This brings us back to the French “tu as raison” which tallies with the Urhobo “wó táró gbà”.

vii. Avoir sommeil: Collins French-English Dictionary translates “avoir sommeil” as “to be sleepy”. Literal Urhobo translation would be « vwo ováwɛ́rɛ́ “Ováwɛ́rɛ́éwɔ́” which means “to have sleep”. That is, if one must stick with the verb “avoir”. In Urhobo, the appropriate verb would be “ováwɛ́rɛ́ ésuɔ́” (to feel like sleeping). For example:

J’ai sommeil / “mí vwo ováwɛ́rɛ́” (wrong in urhobo) But
J’ai sommeil / “ováwɛ́rɛ́ sůwɛ́wɛ́” (correct in urhobo)

J’ai sommeil is therefore translated by “ováwɛ́rɛ́ sůwɛ́wɛ́” which means “I am feeling sleepy”.

In this situation both the construction of the sentence and the verb change, but the meaning is retained.

viii. Avoir Lieu: Collins French-English Dictionary (op cit) translates “avoir lieu” as “to take place”. In Urhobo the word “Phiah” which in this context means “to happen”. The verb “avoir” changes to “phiá” (to happen, to take place). Depending on the context, the verb “érú” (to do) can also be used here. For example: ‘L’examen a lieu ici’ / ‘Étínè è dé ru ódààwvinúnà’, ‘The examination is taking place here’. If the event is a social one the verb may change to a more exciting one like “Éphiali” (to happen).

“Àyè dà róvwó nù ómímié nà chà phiá óbì Jubilee Centre “/ “Après le mariage la reception aura lieu à Jubilie Centre” / « After the wedding the reception will happen at the Jubilee Centre”. “Happen” will not however be termed as formal English language. Although Urhobo is still evolving it can be said that the term “éphiali” could possibly be taken as an informal term for “érú” in the social context. This of course could have been drawn from the informal parlance “It’s happening live”, generally spoken by comperes during their stage presentations. The verb “éphiali” is more likely to be used in informal settings such as social get-togethers, youth rallies and others. The promoters could then say something like:

“Éhà re ighéhè nà chà phiá ghwò òghèrûvó nà vwe àfì éhàre òrhó re àvwànré nà
La danse des jeunes aura lieu en grand cet après-midi à la place publique de notre ville même”
The Youth dance will be happening live this afternoon at the public square of our very own town.

ix. **Avoir ... ans**: Literally, 「vwó ... ikpé」、「vwó ikpé」. In Urhobo, it is expressed by « égbúkpe » (to be ... years). *Collins French – English Dictionary on line* (2016). As noted above, the verb ‘avoir’ is used, among other things, to express possession. ‘Avoir ... ans’ would therefore be expressing the possession of age. This means that in French, one possesses one’s age. Ex. ‘J’ai 20 ans’. But in Urhobo, one’s age is not possessed; one is one’s age. Ex. : « J’ai vingt ans » / Méwe égbúkpe újé (20). The verb ‘avoir’ / ‘to have’ transposes into the verb ‘être’ / ‘to be’. The example below explains this further:

- **Égbuíkpé újé (20)**
- **Mévwe égbúkpe újé**

Instead of

- **Égbuíkpé újé**
- **Mévwe égbúkpe újé**

This child is ten years old.

In example (i) The Urhobo sentence is correct and the French sentence is wrong. In example (ii) the Urhobo construction is wrong while the French version is correct. In another sequence the verb changes from “avoir” in French to “être” so it fits in with the sense and structure of the sentence. Example:

J’ai 15 ans. / Méwe égbúkpe 15. / I am 15 years old.

x. **Avoir besoin**: "Have a need". *Collins French – English Dictionary on line* (2016) translates “avoir besoin de ...” by ‘to need something’. Urhobo translation for this is “vwó odávwé”(to have a need or to need) / Avoir besoin de – vwo odávwé ré (to have a need for):

- **ódávwé** (to want), vouloir (to want).
Example: Je veux de l’argent / Mé guōno igho / I want money.

This refers to just a want, not yet a need. The following example refers to a degree of want (need) that supersedes a mere want, implying obligation, a want that should be met if things are to be made right. Example:

"J’ai besoin de l’argent. / Mí vwo odávwé re igho / I have need for money"

In this situation the verb "avoir" features in the urhobo language as “évwó” (to have).

xi. **Avoir envie de**: Word Reference.com (2016) translates “avoir envie de” as "... want to do something" “feel like doing something". In Urhobo it is expressed by “Éwén, to feel like”. Orávwón dé wén óhwó / When one feels like... something" In Urhobo, “éwén” or “óhóré” is used to express a desire to do something. Example: “órhé érió wén vvwé” / “J’ai envie de manger” / I feel like eating food. « Il a envie de nager” / Órhéhérhé wén. O guónó rhérhé. / He feels like swimming.

Unlike the French construction « Avoir envie de ... » « éwén » (to feel like ...) does not need the verb "to have" to complete its expression. So, like most of the other verbs the verb “éwén” (to feel like) drops “avoir” and still makes sense. Example:

i. Oghwōishá wén vvwé érió / J’ai envie de manger la sauce à haricot / I feel like eating bean-soup
ii. Óne édjé wén vwoo / J’ai envie de courir  / I feel like running

xii. **Avoir horreur de**: Collins French – English Dictionary online (2016) translates “avoir horreur de” as “to hate, to loathe” Urhobo expresses this sentiment as “Ómāétuó”. A strong feeling of dislike for something or somebody. In the word “ómāétuó” or « útuōmá” the auxiliary verb “avoir” does not feature. Example : « Ómāégbé tū vwé ómá” / “J’ai horreur de la saleté”, “I hate dirt”.

xiii. **Avoir honte de**: Word Reference.com (2016) translates “avoir honte de” as «to be ashamed of ... ». In Urhobo, «Ómāévuó, ómāvwé” expresses “to be ashamed of ... shame”. It also means to be “shy”. In Urhobo, ómāévuó also drops the verb “avoir” because it can have complete expression without the help of another verb. Example:

- **Égbé re úwēvwí nā nérhe ómāvō vwé**
- **J’ai honte de la saleté de la maison**
I am ashamed of the dirtiness of the house.

However, one could say in Urhobo:

- **Ómōtā nā vwoo ómāvwóvwé**
- **La fille n’a aucune honte**
The girl has no shame


*Émù dā diá kírè / When something looks like ...Óhwó dā diá kírè / When someone looks like ...Il a l’air d’être riche ... Ó phā kírè ódåfè ... He looks like a rich man. He looks rich. At this junction, the verb « avoir » is dropped for the verb “être”. Example:

- **Ó phā kírè ómōtē**
- **Elle a l’air d’une jeune fille**
She looks like a young girl

Il a l’air malade

He seems to be sick.

xv. **Avoir tendance à:** For Collins French – English Dictionary online (2016) “avoir tendance à” translates as “to have a tendency to, to tend to”, “have the inclination to do something”. In the Urhobo language this is expressed by “Óhôre évwo”; the inclination, the tendency. Example:

- Ómô ná wọ óhôrè re ó vvó se ẹbè ná turè ke ẹkè ke ókè. L’enfant a tendance de tout lire jusqu’à la fin chaque fois
  The child has a tendency to read the book to the end every time

In this context the verb ‘évwó’ functions in Urhobo, just as does the verb ‘avoir’ in the French language.

xvi. **Avoir mal:** (to be in pain) Word Reference.com (2017) Émiāvwó – Àsá dà miàvwe óhwó, pain – when one is in pain. The Urhobo expression “ëmiávwó” does not make use of the auxiliary verb “avoir”. The main verb “ëmiávwó” does not connect with “avoir” in any way as does its French equivalent, although in another context, when the verb “ëmiávwó” modulates into a noun like “ëmiāvwé”, the verb “évwo” – “to have” comes into play, not as an auxiliary verb but as a main verb. Example:

- Mí wọ ógá óvó/ Mí wọ émiāvwé óvó
  J’ai une maladie
  I have an ailment

One can however say “Obó miāwé óvwé” which translates into “J’ai mal au bras” / “My hand hurts”. “Ówó miawé óvwé” translates into “J’ai mal au pied” / “I have a bad foot” or “my foot hurts”.

xvii. **Avoir l’habitude:** For Lawless (2016, p. 1), “avoir l’habitude” is a French expression which “…talks about what someone is used to doing”. In Urhobo, when someone has a habit of doing something repeatedly, it could be referred to as “Úruémú”. For example:

- Óyé ghwá úruémú rōyé … C’est son habitude … That is her habit.
- Ó vwe úruémù re óvwērhè ókrékì / Il a l’habitude de dormir tard / He has a habit of sleeping late. By extension, the word “Ekúruémù” is said of an ingrained attitude, behaviour that somebody has. An habitual way of doing things. A peculiar mannerism which speaks for itself. This habit creates the tendency to always do something in a particular way. This attitude may be negative. Example:

  - Óbó étórò, óyé ékúruémù re ómóshāré yénà.
    Derober, c’est une habitude de cet homme – là.
    Pilfering is a habit with that man.

  - “óvwērhè ókrēkì ye úruémù rōyé”,
    “De dormir tard est son habitude”,
    “Sleeping late is his habit”.

Note that this sentence structure does not retain the verb avoir in both languages. Note also that the verb “avoir” modulates into “être” in both languages when the sentence is inverted.

xviii. **Avoir de la chance:** Collins French-English Dictionary (online) translates this as meaning “to be lucky”. In Urhobo it translates as ”ériéyóvvó”. The verb “avoir” does not feature in the Urhobo equivalent of “avoir de la chance”. Instead, it modulates into the adjective “éyóvwó”. “Óyóvwé érhi”. Obviously, “óvwé érhiéyóvvó” / “avoir de la chance” is not said in Urhobo. For example one can say:

- La mère a de la chance
  The mother is lucky

The expression ‘Ó yóvwé úyóvwí’ is equally relevant in other favourable situations.

xix. **Avoir la parole:** Word Reference.com (2016) gives the English translation of ‘avoir la parole’ as ‘having the floor’. In other words, it implies having the permission, the right to speak. In Urhobo, the literal translation of “avoir la parole” would be “Évwó re ótá”. But this is not the usage in Urhobo. The Urhobo equivalence would be ‘óta érhe únù’ By extension therefore there is the expression:

- Óre ótá nhèrè únù / “celui qui a la parole”, “The one who has the floor” or “The one whose turn it is to speak”. Other examples are:
  “Ótā rhè vvè únù”, “J’ai la parole”, “I have the floor”.

The Urhobo equivalent of ‘avoir la parole’ does not use the verb ‘évwó’ (avoir) in its construction “óta érhe únù”
xx. **Avoir l'intention:** *Word Reference.com dictionnaire anglais-francais* online translates ‘avoir l’intention’ ‘… intend to do’, ‘have the intention to do …’. The Urhobo version of this expression is ‘Évwó phi énwén’. It expresses a situation where someone has something in mind to do, an intention to please, to build, to give something out. The verb “to have” (i.e.) “avoir and évwó” both feature in the sentence structure which follows:

- Ó vwo éwén re ó vwó dājī Ínókó.
  Il a l’intention de rester à Londres
  He has the mind to remain in London

**Findings**

In this study twenty items of French ‘avoir …’ expressions have been discussed. Among the twenty items sixteen indicate divergences between the structural presentations of the French and urhobo expressions. In the Urhobo equivalent of the French ‘avoir …’ expression, the structure does not include the verb ‘evwo’ as seen in numbers i – xvi below:

- ‘avoir la parole’ / “óta érhe únù”
- ‘avoir de la chance / érhí éyóvwó
- ‘avoir l’habitude / Úruémú, Ékúruémú
- Avoir mal / émiávwó
- Avoir honte de / Ómaévuó
- Avoir l’air de / óhóhóvwé
- Avoir horreur de / ómāétuó
- Avoir envie de / Êwén, óhórè.
- Avoir … ans / Égbuíkpé
- Avoir lieu / phià, éruó.
- Avoir sommeil / óvwérhé ésuó
- Avoir raison / Èríén ruè, Éruó gbá
- Avoir tort / éruó chò
- Avoir froid / ēkpáyѐn émuó
- Avoir chaud / Óhērí ēhérѐ
- Avoir confiance / Énwénkpánhè
- Avoir l’intention / Évwó phi enwen
- Avoir besoin de / vwo odávwé ré

Four of these terms employ the use of the verb ‘avoir’ in French as well as the verb ‘évwó’ in Urhobo as seen in numbers xvii-xx below:

- **Avoir** tendance à / óhórè évwó
- **Avoir** foi en / Vwo èsègbúyọtá phiyó
- **Avoir** l’ intention / Évwó phi enwen
- **Avoir** besoin de / vwo ódávwé ré

The following use the verb ‘évwó’ in another context to express ‘possession’ in another form. Here also, the position of the verbs is the same as in that of the French grammatical structure. Example:

i. **Avoir** mal / émiávwó: ‘vwo émiávwé’ – ósháréná **vwo** émiávwé re évú.
  L’homme a une maladie du ventre
  The man has stomach ache

ii. **Avoir** honte de / Ómaévuó: ‘vwo ómávwévwé ré’ – Ò re ó **vwo** ómávwévwé rué chóò
  Celui qui a honte ne s’égare pas
  He who feels ashamed does not do wrong*

iii. **Avoir** horreur de / ómāétuó: ‘vwo útuòmà’ - Ò re ó **vwo** útuòmà ke éfià, ó guo éfiàà
  Celui qui a horreur du mensonge ne ment pas
  He who hates lies does not tell lies

iv. **Avoir** envie de / Êwén, óhórè: ‘vwo óhóré’ -
  Mi **vwo** óhóré ré mé vvwó re ámbiéiéí re éri kpókpò
  J’ai envie de manger la sauce au palme préparée avec du poisson frais.
  I feel like eating fresh fish *banga* soup.
CONCLUSION

In this study, it has not been a question of literal translation. There has been no question of using any one word to translate another word, except when that word falls neatly into place and makes sense in TL as is the case with the French and Urhobo expressions “Avoir honte de … / ‘vwò ómávóvwé ré… ’”. The French expressions have simply been understood as a whole, and their Urhobo equivalents have been given in the target language as a whole. The Urhobo language has been highlighted in its socio-cultural and linguistic bearings, bringing forth its own structures which do not lack in semantics, when compared with the French expressions; and yet, retains the rich freshness of the Urhobo expression. Take for instance the expression:

« J’ai envie de manger la sauce au palme préparée avec du poisson frais ».  
“Mi vwò óhóré ré mè vwò re âmíèdí re érl kpókpó”  
“I feel like eating fresh fish bangà soup”.

Banga soup is an Urhobo traditional soup prepared from very ripe palm nuts with condiments such as pepper, onion, crayfish and various traditional spices. It can be cooked with beef, dried or smoked fish, or any other type of meat. Sometimes there is the rare longing or desire to eat “bangà” soup made with fresh fish. This longing or desire is expressed with the word “óhóré” which, in French means “envie”. So, the expression “avoir envie de …” has an exact equivalent in the Urhobo expression “vwò óhóré ré …” with the verb “vwò” translating the verb “ái” as in “avoir” and “évwó”.

It had been noted earlier on that lack of documentation on Urhobo language inhibits the work of research in this domain. Now that it has become a teaching subject it would be encouraging to know that linguists are researching it more vigorously. Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa are all Nigerian languages which have been well researched and are still being researched. They have written documentation and more of these will be done as these languages continue to evolve as it usually is with any living language. This means that projects and studies in these languages are facilitated as researchers have these documents as reference material. These trail blazers have done well. To conclude, it would not be out of place to say that the time has also come for Urhobo to wake up and strive. In her own way Urhobo is quite interesting to hear and to speak. It is left for her owners to continue to project it. It is commendable that it is now a teaching subject.

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