

**IGBO RHETORIC AND THE NEW NIGERIAN NOVEL:  
CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE'S *PURPLE HIBISCUS***

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**Abstract**

*The post-colonial work of imaginative art otherwise known as the cross-cultural text is generally regarded as a veritable virtual battle-front on which literary artists and writers fight the good fight of linguistic faith. In this connection, it is English, the dominant idiom of the metropole, that is pitted against Igbo, one of the major languages of Nigeria (Africa). Typically, Adichie, the Igbo-born Nigerian novelist, follows the pragmatic example of Achebe, her elder compatriot, in constructing what we have dubbed 'Igbo English' even as she liberally draws upon the inexhaustible oral resources of the Igbo as the figural 'bolts' and 'nuts' of her narrative. The resulting product, therefore, is a literary hybrid shot through with socio-political and epistemic issues. Our contention is that the Adichian aesthetics points the way to the future of literature in Africa.*

**Key Words:** Igbo, English, aesthetics, oral tradition, Language.

**Introduction**

Part of the fallout of the incidence of Western incursion into Africa and the developing world is the issue of culture conflict, or, put less bellicosely, culture-contact between the imperial West and the indigenous cultures of traditional Africa. Indeed, it seems perhaps discursively inevitable that *all* talk of modern African literature cannot meaningfully be had without foregrounding the so-called "Language Question". Although the urge to tell stories is native and common to man everywhere, the term 'Modern African Literature' dramatizes the problematic relationship between [written] African narratives and the colonial legacy. Literacy as a major element of modernity came with colonialism in Africa, and, as such, those equipped with the ability to read and write in the language of the colonial masters, became the avatars of African *belles-lettres*. And, since language is the vector of culture, the indigenous tongue took a hammering in the momentous, if, cataclysmic encounter between the occupying western power (or language) and the native tongue. Consequently, in Anglophone Africa, English became not only the official language but *the* medium of instruction in schools.

This imperialism of the English Language, therefore, led to the vernacularisation of indigenous African languages, a situation which encumbered the African with a deeply-ingrained sense of inferiority complex even to date. Be that as it may, following the cobbling together of peoples from culturally divergent backgrounds by colonial fiat, it became rather fatalistic for these people to adopt a common tongue in which to communicate with one another and conduct their daily businesses. And due to the inevitable interaction between English and the several indigenous languages spoken in Nigeria, Nigerian (African) speakers of English evolved their own varieties of English, varieties which reflect the speech patterns and habits of thought of the speakers. Thus, apart from the English spoken in polite or formal environment, we discover that there are also several other ethnic-based varieties used both by educated and non-educated Nigerians. According to Herbert Igboanus: 'There is the national variety of English also known as Nigerian English (NE) and the ethnic variety of English

exemplified here by Igbo English (IE)' (2). To be certain, Igbo English is said to be found in creative writing (in the novel) 'as a deliberate but significant stylistic device, which arises from the influence of the Igbo language and culture on English' (2). The phenomenon of, say, Igbo English, has spawned what has been categorized as 'ethnic literary tradition', and, as such, African literature today is characterized by 'linguistic diffusion and cultural diversity' (2). Igboanusi goes on to assert that:

There is today, the distinctiveness of Igbo English writers, which manifests itself in experimentation in language, in recreating distinct Igbo discourse in English, and in stylistic innovations. The various manifestations of this distinctiveness can be seen in the works of Chinua Achebe, Cyprian Ekwensi, Buchi Emecheta, Nkem Nwankwo, Chukwuemeka Ike, Flora Nwapa, Elechi Amadi, John Munonye, Ifeoma Okoye, Clement Agunwa and Onuorah Nzekwe. Their works demonstrate a good instance of the 'Igboization of English'. (2).

To a very large extent, Allwell Abalogu Onukaogu and Ezechi Onyerionwu appear to agree with Igboanusi's convictions, particularly with regard to the Nigerian writer's burden. According to Onukoagu and Onyerionwu:

[t]he Nigerian writer's major burden has been how to arrive at a linguistic compromise in his bid to express his artistic thoughts. He knows that because of his dual cultural heritage and orientation [English and Igbo, for instance], and that of his audience, and of course the national, continental and international demands on his art, he has to find a formula which enables him to be relevant. He knows he has to be at once 'local' and 'international' and that language manipulation is one very effective way of achieving this. (265)

In the *new* Nigerian novel, therefore, what has come to be referred to as 'the Achebe model' has become standard practice, namely, the deployment of supra-linguistic, para-verbal nuances such as folklore, proverbs, wise sayings, folksongs and other allied forms of language games, stylistic strategies which emboss and semiotize the Africanity or the sense of place in the novel. Much as Nigerian (African) writers have preoccupied themselves with the 'fleshpot' of the African past, the question of *content* did not bother literary critics as such. But the issue of *form* was another matter. The problem of *form* – or, in part, language – has continued to agitate the minds of many African and Africanist scholars in the field. The polarized positions of those critics and scholars on the language question are well-known and well-documented.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps what brought – and still brings – the issue of form into sharp focus was the famous debate between Chinweizu *et. al* and Wole Soyinka over this problem of form. Chinweizu *et. al* have argued that African writers should adopt the 'language of African particulars' which must convey 'an African poetic landscape with its flora and fauna – a landscape of elephants, beggars, calabashes, serpents, pumpkins, baskets, town criers, iron-bells, slit-drums, iron masks, hares, snakes, squirrels' (147). They further aver that African works of art must be imbued with proverbial lore, refrains, folklore, among others, in order to make the works truly and authentically *African*. They also accuse Wole Soyinka and the other members of his generational cohorts of euro-modernist pretensions instantiated by what they term 'Poundian allusiveness', 'Elitescue obscurantism' and the 'Hopkins' Disease' (174). According to Chinweizu *et al* the works of the so-called Ibadan-Nsukka school are shot through with private esoterism, and willful obscurity.

Onukaogu and Onyerionwu, for their part, assert:

While many agitators for the subscription to the African indigenous tongue as language of creative writing are of the opinion that the unchallenged dominance of the foreign tongue is another avenue of perpetuating colonialism, many others see it as an easy way of destroying the African indigenous culture and thought system. Some others view creating literature in the native languages as a sure means of getting to the target audience faster and closer. Ngugi, in another context, talks about ‘speaking to the peasants and workers... in the languages they speak’ (qtd. in Nwachukwu – Agbada “The Language Question” 25). Ngugi’s position above tallies with what Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin recognize as one of the identifying variables for the ‘effective post-colonial voice’ in which ‘the language, with its power, and the writing, with its signification of authority, has been wrested from the dominant European culture. (*The Empire* 8) Onukaogu and Onyerionwu 263)

The excerpted passage above felicitously summarizes and highlights the major critical standpoints adopted by various critics and theoreticians, including the likes of Chinweizu *et al.* Thus, Chinweizu *et al.*, in their estimation, argue that people who intend to write good African (and decolonized) works must be prepared to follow the path kneaded smooth by the likes of Chinua Achebe and his epigones. In this connection, therefore, the English used in the Nigerian (African) novel should reflect the linguistic behaviour, the nuances of the indigenous communicative code such that the resultant product becomes a hybrid which teems with polysemic overcoding. It is this syncretic nature of the post-colony that made Achebe to famously declare that:

The African writer should aim to use English in a way that brings out his message best without altering the language to the extent that its value as a medium of international exchange will be lost. He should aim at fashioning out an English which is at once universal and able to carry his peculiar experience. (61)

In what seems like a freewheeling back-peddling into a nativist African Eden, Abiola Irele contends that *only* indigenous-language literatures qualify to be called ‘African Literature’ (44). Needless to say Wole Soyinka, for his part, roots for the syncretist school<sup>2</sup> as a stop-gap *entente* in the raging controversy. The cross-cultural text becomes an intriguing site for the unequal cultural, and, hence, epistemic, exchange between the ethnocentric assumptions of the English language and the vital primacy of the indigenous tongue. This (un)holy wedlock of sorts has far-reaching implications at once political and epistemological. In the main, part of the *modus operandi* of ‘re-placing language’ in the post-colonial text are some textual strategies identified and adumbrated by Bill Ashcroft *et al* in *The Empire Writes Back*. These formal/rhetorical features include Appropriation, ‘a process by which the language is taken and made to “bear the burden” of one’s own cultural experience, or... ‘to convey, in a language that is not one’s own the spirit that is one’s own (39). In a diglossic society such as Nigeria in which bilingualism has become an enduring societal arrangement, *appropriation* is inevitably implicated in the structural and figural protocols of the cross-cultural text. In the words of Ashcroft *et al.*: ‘Worlds exist by means of languages, their horizons extending as far as the processes of neologism, innovation, tropes, and imaginative usage generally will allow the horizons of the language itself to be extended’ (44). The

strategies of appropriation in the post-colonial novel include glossing, untranslated words, interlanguage, syntactic fusion, code-switching and vernacular transcription. Similarly, Igboanusi remarks that: '[t]hrough the linguistic processes of transfer and translation, the following seven linguistic categories – borrowing, coinages, loan-blends, translation, equivalents, semantic extension, collocational extension and colloquialisms – have been identified as sources of IE [Igbo English] in the Nigerian novel' (2). By the same token, ethnographic detail serves not only as local colour 'but as the central feature of a structuring' that gives the work some specific reference point. Nigeria being a multilingual and multi-ethnic country with English as the official language, the phenomenon of inter-language and syntactic fusion is very prevalent. Additionally, various forms of interference occur in the spoken and written English of the average educated L<sub>2</sub> English user.

The *métier* of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel *Purple Hibiscus* is the largely adroit interweave of thoroughly domesticated English complete with Nigerianisms, slang, buzzwords, among others. Besides, we find in the novel an admirably successful overlarding of Igbo words, phrases and expressions, which foreground the unique sense of place and contextual realism. Indeed, Adichie's exceptionalism, it would appear, inheres in her deft and surefooted admixture of both the exoglossic and the endoglossic codes, i.e.; English and Igbo respectively in her work. Niyi Osundare, who, like other African writers, grapples with the linguistic claims of foreign and indigenous languages [English and Yoruba in his own case], notes:

How does one conceive, think out, a poem in Yoruba, then give it expression in English? If language is truly the dress of thought, how would deeply Yoruba ideas look and feel in English coat and tie? What adjustments must be made in size and style to prevent the tie from turning into a noose? (14)

Osundare goes on to remark that: 'English is English. Yoruba is Yoruba. What does the writer then do to make sure that the twain shall meet? What bridges does he/she device; what strategies of appeasement?' (14). Knowing fully, then, that when two languages meet, they kiss and quarrel and later on call a truce, Osundare has created in his poetry what we may call 'interface language' which is necessarily a product of linguistic appropriation. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie does more than this in her work. Apart from adopting mostly the variant or variety known as Nigerian English<sup>3</sup>, she intersperses and dignifies her novel with Igbo expressions worked inimitably into the complex tapestry of her narrative. A few instances taken from her novel *Purple Hibiscus* will suffice. Let us examine Adichie's deployment of her native Igbo at the *word* level:

1. *Nwunye m* (72) [my wife]
2. *Okwia* (72) [Isn't it?]
3. *Mmuo* (74) [Ancestral spirit, masquerade]
4. *Chukwu* (83) [God]
5. *Tufia!* (84) [God forbid!]
6. *Icheku* (84) [Tasty fruit]

7. *Ogbunambala* (68) [one who kills in the square-denoting courage, bravery].
8. *Igwe* (102) [traditional ruler, monarch]
9. *agbogho* (91) [damsel]
10. *biko* (8) [Please]

#### **The Phrasal Level**

11. *Nnu nu* (55) [bird]
12. *Bunie ya enu* (28) [Lift Him up higher]
13. *I fukwa gi!* (70) [just look at you, stupid!]
14. *Nna anyi* (82) [our master]
15. *Igba krismas* (77) [Celebration of Christmas]
16. *ke kwanu* (11) [How are you doing?]
17. *Nne ngwa* (8) [Come on, dear]
18. *ezi okwu* (250) [Indeed]

#### **The Clausal/Sentential Level**

19. *Ome mma, chineke, o me mma* (49) [God is gracious to us]
20. *'Hei, chi m o! nwunye m! Hei!...* (290) [Alas! my God! My wife, what a disaster!]
21. *Ekene nke ndo-Ezigbo*  
*nwanne m nye m aka gi* (246) [The greeting of peace – my dear sister, my dear brother, give me your hand...]
22. *I na asi m esona ya!* [Are you telling me not to follow him!]

Igbo words and expressions are used to convey states of mind, moods, feelings and opinions in the novel. Consider, for instance, the following excerpts as expressions of affection and endearments:

23. Instead, she said, "Lunch is ready, *nne*". (10)
24. "Ke kwanu?" I asked, although I did not need to ask how he was doing. (11)
25. Papa thumped my back while mama rubbed my shoulders and said, "*O Zugo*. Stop coughing" (14).

Adichie also utilizes Igbo/pidgin lexical items in *Purple Hibiscus*. Let us consider the following examples:

26. “Sisi and I are cooking *moi-moi* for the sisters; they will be here soon” mama said, before going back downstairs. (21)
27. “Sister Beatrice, what is it? Why have you done this? Are we not content with the *anara* we are offering in other sisters’ homes? You shouldn’t have, really”. (21)
28. “What did you eat?”  
“*Garri*”. (22)

We can also identify the use of Igbo cognomen, and other forms of greeting in the novel. Consider these expressions:

29. “*Nno nu! Nno nu!* Have you come back? We will come in soon to say welcome” (55).
30. “*Omelora!* Good afun, sah!” they chorused. (55)
31. “*Kedu nu*” papa gave them each ten naira from a wad of notes he pulled out of his hold-all. (55)

The novelist also uses Igbo lexical items to convey interjection:

32. “*Neke! Neke! Neke!* Kambili and Jaja have come to greet their old father! “he said (64).
33. Papa-Nnukwu scratched at the stubborn white tufts that clung to his bald head. “*Ehye*, I expect them tomorrow”. (65)
34. “*Ezi Okwu?* I know your father will not let you eat here because I offer my food to our ancestors, but soft drinks also? Do I not buy that from the store as everyone else does?” (66).

Adichie avails herself also of the stylistic device of onomatopoeia and ideophones. Let us look at these two instances:

35. Aunty Ifeoma was scraping a burnt pot in the kitchen, and the *kroo-kroo-kroo* of the metal spoon on the pot seemed intrusive. (172)
36. ‘Shut up if you do not want to lose your job because you can be fired *fiam*, just like that’. (229)

Throwing some light on the above-cited instances of the use of sound symbols, Onukaogu and Onyerionwu disclose that: ‘The above examples of onomatopoeic expressions, apart from being mainly improvised and articulated by the Igbo, firmly located their nuances and rhythms of use in the Igbo culturo-linguistic environment’ (290). Thus, while, *kroo-kroo* “denote[s] actual sounds made by either things or persons, others like *kpam-kpam* and *fiam* are used to refer to attitudes and developments” (290). *Fiam* would mean “in a jiffy” or before you know it’ (291). According to Onukaogu and Onyerionwu:

Adichie has also perfected a strategy of infusing Igbo grammatical elements below the sentential level in her narrative. Here, linguistic elements of the lexical and phrasal levels are deployed as information

motivators, introducers, emphasizeers, and affirmers. (273)

A few instances will suffice:

37. 'I *fukwa*, people are leaving the country. Phillipa left two months ago...' (84)
38. 'I *mana*, you know sucking fuel is a skill you need these days', Father Amadi said'. (160).
39. 'Have you forgotten, I *marozi*, that the doctors went on strike just before Christmas?' (160).

In these examples, the actual delivery of the information – observations, developments, states and situations and declarations – is done in English. However, the Igbo lexical items really serve important functions of 'motivating, introducing, guiding, emphasizing and affirming the articulation and transfer' of these pieces of information (274). We are also told that: 'Adichie herself talks about a kind of English that is rooted in a Nigerian [Igbo] experience and not a British or American or Australian one' (Azodo 2 qtd. in Onukaogu and Onyerionwu 298).

It is instructive to stress at this juncture that Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie equally makes use of such features of lexical innovation in the Igbo English novel as borrowing, coinages and loan-blends. Lexical items as such, '*Igwe*' (102) [traditional ruler]; '*Nno nu*' (55). [Welcome, my people]; '*Igba krismas*' (77). [Celebration of Christmas]; '*biko*' (8): [Please]; '*mmuo*' (74): [ancestral spirit or masquerade], are all instances of *borrowing*. *Coinages* are also deployed in the narrative. Consider the following examples: *Garri* (22); '*Gudu morni*. Have you woken up?...' (58); *fufu* (cassava flour meal) (65); *walking stick* (67); '*watching satellite*' (79); '*his going-blind eye stayed open*' (87). Loan-blends feature liberally in *Purple Hibiscus*: examples abound such as: '*ngwo-ngwo*' (32) [pepper soup filled with assorted meat]; 'chunks of azu fried...' (32) ['azu' is Igbo for fish]; 'ezi-Butterfly' (50); 'stackes of *Okporoko* (54) [Stockfish, a variety of fish imported mostly from Norway]; 'our *Ikwu nue*, mother's maiden home' (67); 'The women *mmuo* are harmless' (85); 'a ripe *agbogho*' (91) [*agbogho* is Igbo for maiden or damsel]; '*onugbu* soup' (160), '*aku* flies' (221); 'catholic *fada*' (287) and 'do *something*' (300). The phrase '*do something*' means in English 'be useful'. Thus, this instance of semantic extension derives its effectiveness as a meaning-signaling device from an almost instinctive transliteration of Igbo speech patterns and thought system. The word, *nne*, to be sure, is used a lot in the novel. Although *nne* in Igbo means 'mother', but Adichie uses it to convey feelings of filial intimacy particularly in a mother-daughter, or aunt-niece relationship. Apart from the use of semantic extension, the writer also uses collocational extension in *Purple Hibiscus*. Let us consider a few instances: '*mba*, there are no words in my mouth', Jaja replied. (25); '... I don't have the strength for Ifediora's family right now. *They eat more and more shit* every year' (82); 'That soup smells like something Amaka *washed her hands well* to cook', she said, (162); "Hei". Amaka groaned. 'This is not a good time for NEPA to *take Light*'. (165). Adichie also uses colloquialisms and Igboisms in her debut novel so much so that the entire work becomes a quintessential instance of 'Igbonizing the English language or/and Englishizing the Igbo Language' (Onukaegu and Onyerionwu 301). These two critics helpfully furnish in their important study what they call 'Strategies of Meaning Linking in Adichie's Narrative' (291). They identify three main strategies, namely: (1) Linguistic Appositioning (2) Narrative Framing and (3) Discourse Implicature. While linguistic appositioning is basically more or less the same thing as *glossing*; narrative framing describes a situation in which meaning in a

piece of narrative is contextually explicated. For discourse implicature, the critical idea of the reader as co-creator is foregrounded. In other words, the reader is required to read between the lines in a bid to decipher meaning from the flow of the narrative. This reader-response strategy requires that the reader immerses him/herself in the cultural milieu which the narrative purportedly mirrors. In fact, Igbo-laced English sentences dominate *Purple Hibiscus* to the extent that one gets the impression that one is reading a skillfully transliterated Igbo novel. Virtually every page carries a transliterated Igbo expression or has an Igbo word, phrase or a clause deployed to help earth the novel in its culturo-metaphysical locus. Adichie, for instance, narrates:

Papa came in then, on his way to his bedroom.

I was sure it was to get more stacks of naira notes that he would give to visitors for Igba Krismas, ... (79).

The Igbo expression *Igba Krismas* is not highlighted through a visual clue like italics or bold type. It is used in the passage as though it is an English expression. In many other instances, the writer deploys this style of commingling English and Igbo. Also, the Igbo term *Umunna* (61, 73, ff) literally dots the entire textual landscape of the novel. Appropriately, Adichie skillfully insinuates the term in the artistic tapestry of her tale in such a way that *Umunna* begins to read like a mint-new entry into the English lexicon. Really, the term, *Umunna* is strategically pivotal in the narrative, being as it is the cultural linchpin of the Igbo communal set-up. *Umunna* approximates the English concept of kith and kin or extended family membership. In ancient African society, in which polygamy was practised, you could find an *Umunna* comprising many wives of a man, numerous children, cousins, nephews, nieces, uncles and aunties. Hence, when Eugene Achike takes his family to his hometown at Christmas, Mama is advised to allow the wives of the *Umunna* to do the cooking. (73) This ancient Igbo (African) cultural norm survives to the present day.

In referring to culturally significant concepts and practices, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie piquantly uses Igbo conceptual terms in order to underscore the practices and give a proper sense of local rootedness to what might seem to the ignorant outsider ‘airy nothings’. For example, Adichie writes about the concept of “*mgbalu*” in the novel:

The compound gates were locked. Mama had told Adamu not to open the gates to all the people who wanted to throng in for *mgbalu*, to commiserate with us. Even members of our *Umunna* who had come from Abba were turned away. Adamu said it was unheard of, to turn sympathizers away (288).

The two terms, ‘*mgbalu*’ and ‘*Ummuna*’ are not highlighted in the novel. The novelist instead drops these culturally-significant lexical items as though she has already taken her readers into confidence.

Apart from that, she uses linguistic appositioning or glossing to elucidate the concept, *mgbalu*. This achieves a socio-aesthetic effect here: there is a certain confidence, an easiness displayed here in the manner of usage; and the cultural practice of the Igbo is conveyed in a foreign code rather effectively in spite of the fact that the English carries its own cultural assumptions which, if not carefully handled, might vitiate and stymie the cultural integrity of the native communicative idiom. As earlier noted, the pragmatic necessity of English and the vital primacy of Igbo condemn the writer to midwifing the (sometimes) rancorous co-



existence of these two languages. Niyi Osundare, in writing about his own practice as a Yoruba-born poet, remarks:

[t]here are Yoruba ways of thinking which have produced a certain science of being, a certain blend of wisdom and philosophy, certain moral ideals and a certain epistemology-certain Yoruba ways of segmenting experience and cognizing the world (4).

Osundare continues:

The two languages locked in this creative scuffle are Yoruba and English. Like all encounters between Africa and Europe, it is a “contest” between two unequal parties, a relationship between two unequal histories (no, historiographies!) and epistemologies. (5)

The plan is not to multiply instances of the use of Igbo rhetoric in the novel, but rather to make the point convincingly that Igbo rhetoric has enriched and dignified this novel in particular, and the *new* Nigerian novel in general. Like most African writers, Adichie has been greatly influenced by Achebe, particularly in matters of *form*. In fact, part of Adichie’s Igbo linguistic experimentation can be seen in her depiction of traditional Igbo cultural activities and events. For instance, in *Purple Hibiscus*, Adichie creates a situation in which Kambili, the first-person participant narrator, accompanies her relatives to her hometown to celebrate the *mmuo* festival.

Here, Papa-Nnukwu or their grand-father plays the tour guide to the rest of them who have come visiting from the urban centres. He reveals a deep knowledge of the different categories of the masquerades and makes sure his charges observe the necessary rules governing masquerade – spectator relationship, especially where reverence and mysteries are concerned. This typical marker of local colour is further underpinned by the deployment of folklore in the narrative. Appropriately, Adichie makes Papa-Nnukwu entertain his grandchildren to folktales. Characteristically, the ubiquitous Tortoise occupies centrestage in this loric universe, and the captive audience of the old man draw moral lessons from the folk tales.

Be that as it may, Adichie does not quite succeed in her characterization of Papa-Nnukwu. If there is any one person in the novel who should have been made to bear the burden of cultural validation and cultural rehabilitation, it is the old man, the father of the cultural renegade, Eugene Achike. It is hard to believe that throughout the entire novel, Adichie hardly uses Igbo proverbs, apart from one or two instances: ‘our people say that after *aku* flies, it will fall to the toad’, Father Amadi said. (226). We do know that proverbs “are replete with allusions to the cosmic world-view, oral tradition and philosophical tenets of the Igbo language’ (Onukaogu and Onyerionwu 300). Yet, it is a marvel that the author does not allow Papa-Nnukwu to utter a single proverb as an Igbo elder. A patriarchal figure who ordinarily should be *the* custodian of culture, Papa-Nnukwu remains to all intents and purposes an *effect* while his son, Eugene, towers in comparison as the *cause*. *Purple Hibiscus* is a *bildungsroman* novel which dramatizes the tragic transformation of both the protagonist, Kambili (and Jaja, her elder brother) *and* the post-colonial nation-state of Nigeria under military dictatorship. The novel, by implication, is a historical tale of cultural anomie caused by years of unequal culturo-epistemological exchange between the Christian west and animist Africa. In this regard, Bill Aschroft *et-al* contend: ‘The post-colonial world is one in which destructive cultural encounter is changing to an acceptance of difference on equal terms’ (36).

They contend further that: ‘Both literary theorists and cultural historians are beginning to recognize cross-culturality as the potential termination point of an apparently endless human history of conquest and annihilation...’ (36). In the post-colonial text, therefore, English cannot remain pure neither can Igbo: an osmotic interpenetration must result in their interaction. Thus, the resulting product, is a most veritable pointer to the currents of globalization at work in contemporary culture and society. A good degree of verisimilitude is achieved in the novel as the writer tries with considerable success to capture the speech habits and linguistic patterns of most Igbo-English speakers. Ashcroft *et. al* note that: “The crucial function of language as a medium of power demands that post-colonial writing define itself by seizing the language of the centre and re-placing it in a discourse *fully* adopted to the colonized place’ (38) emphasis added). Significantly, Ashcroft *et. al* conclude:

[L]anguage localizes and attracts value away from a British ‘norm’ eventually displacing the hegemonic centrality of the idea of ‘norm’ itself. Finally, the ‘double vision’ imposed by the historical distinction between metropolis and colony ensures that in all post-colonial cultures, monolithic perceptions are less likely (37).

## NOTES

1. See Abiola Irele’s *The African Experience in Literature and Ideology*. London” Heinemann, 1981, 44.
2. Wole Soyinka takes issues with Chinweizu *et. al* in his famous essay: ‘Neo-Tarzanism: The Poetics of Pseudo-Tradition’ (1988).
3. The Phenomenon called ‘Nigerian English’ is said to be a fact and not fiction. See Adegbija’s ‘The Domestication of English in Nigeria’. (2004) 20-44; Adetugbo’s ‘Nigerian English: Fact or Fiction. (1976) 128-41; Akere’s ‘Nigerian English in Sociolinguistic Perspective: Users, Uses and Emerging Varieties’ (2004) 256-84; Dadzie’s ‘The Concept of Nigerian English’. (2004) 224-41; Okoro’s ‘The Identification of Standard Nigerian English Usage’. (2004).

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