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## Dialogism amid Heteroglossia of the Translinguistic Process of Relexification: The Subversion of Colonial Cultural and Linguistic Imperialism

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### Abstract

Most postcolonial African writers choose English as the language of their literary works for the reason of wider audience reception but come to indigenize it to decolonize the colonial tool, i.e. colonial language. The translinguistic process of relexification means subverting colonial cultural imperialism and colonial linguistic imposition through the dialogic interaction opened in the wake of using colonial language to represent the voices of the dispossessed amid a heteroglotic milieu. Relexification is the linguistic reflection of polyglotic multilingual postcolonial milieu. Studying relexification in Chinua Achebe's rural novel, *Things Fall Apart*, the present paper intends to delineate that while colonial literary discourse is mostly monologic as it voices mainly the colonizer, postcolonial literary discourse is the dialogic bringing together of voices and forces from both sides. The synchronic study of relexification can reveal that the hybridization strategy triumphs on three axes of linguistic transposition, rhythmic transposition, and folkloric transposition. The paper is limited to linguistic transposition. First through the theoretical saturation method, samples of lexical borrowing, cushioning, and code-mixing were spotted in the corpus. Next the samples were thematically analyzed to derive implications of relexification in textual context. Discourse analysis revealed broader dialogic and subversive implications of relexification in postcolonial polyglot discourse. Implementing literary relexification in his novels, Achebe extends the frontiers of English by creating a new English literary form.

**Keywords:** Code-mixing; Cushioning; Lexical borrowing; Linguistic transposition; Relexified language

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### INTRODUCTION

Post-colonial studies are particularly sensitive to language, since language played an obvious leading role in colonization, so it must have had a key role in decolonization. Colonial language was mainly imposed by colonial literature as the result of which postcolonial literary discourse emerged as a response to colonial literary

discourse. Colonial literary discourse is monological as it is marred by intentional omissions, gaps and silence about Africa. Criticizing Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899), Achebe in "An Image of Africa" writes:

It is clearly not part of Conrad's purpose to confer language on the "rudimentary souls" of Africa. In place of speech they made "a violent babble of uncouth

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sounds." They "exchanged short grunting phrases" even among themselves. But most of the time they were too busy with their frenzy. (p. 4)

African writers felt unhappy about the way their stories were told by the colonizers, about the way their identities were constructed in colonial monologic discourse and hence they embarked on presenting their own story in their own particular language. Chinua Achebe (1975) writes that while he was at the university he read "some appalling novels about Africa (including Joyce Cary's much praised *Mister Johnson*), and decided that the story we had to tell could not be told for us by anyone else, no matter how gifted or well intentioned" (p. 123). Henceforth, he tried to innovate a new literary language, a new Africanized literary style appropriate to impart African experience in response to colonial tendencies which meant to efface Africanness from literary discourse.

Once Achebe decided to describe his African experience in English, he realized that he has to delineate "situations or modes of thought, which have no direct equivalent in English way of life" (C. Achebe, 1973, p. 7). Rather than containing what he wanted to say within the limits of conventional English, he tried "to push back those limits to accommodate his ideas" (C. Achebe, 1973, p. 12) through his experimentation and implementation of relexified language. Relexification extends linguistic borders for the purpose of accommodating new concepts. As such the technique is more recurrent in novels with native ethnic aura which mean to simulate a local setting. For his new literary experiments, Achebe is truly called the "producer of a new African literature and the inventor of new forms through which African culture can adequately be represented" (Gikandi & Gikandi, 1991, p. 7).

Achebe's "new English" (C. Achebe, 1975, p. 62) produces a dialogic discourse which gives voice to the so far excluded or silenced Africans, but at the same time does not withhold giving voice to European colonizers. In his new literary

language, utterances are entangled in dialogic interaction with their colonial complements as they triumph on what Bakhtin calls "addressivity" (M. M. Bakhtin, Holquist, & Emerson, 1986, p. 170). Achebe's linguistic register is a response to colonial language and in turn demands response; that is it has the capacity to elicit a never-ending dialogue. According to Bakhtin, our individual speech utterances are tied indissolubly to all previous and future acts of language in the never-ending act of dialogue with others: "There is neither a first nor a last word and there are no limits to the dialogic context (it extends into the boundless past and the boundless future)" (M. M. Bakhtin et al., 1986, p. 170).

This paper studies the ways containment of Ibo elements in English by Achebe responds to colonial discourse, opens a dialogue with it and subverts colonial cultural and linguistic hierarchy practiced in colonial literary discourse. It is noteworthy that while Zabus (1990) theorizes relexification *others* the colonial language, this paper suggests relexification, as a linguistic reflection of polyglot multilingual postcolonial milieu, causes the dialogic interaction of colonial and colonized languages.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### Relexification: Causes of Emergence, Definition and Characteristics

The dominance of English in the wake of British colonization changed the linguistic ecology of the ethnic local scene in a way that English became an integral part of the colonized socio-cultural-linguistic milieu. The domination of English caused hierarchical linguistic diversity. English became "a tool of power, domination and elitist identity and of communication across continents" (Kachru, 1986, p. 291) which inevitably marked native language with locality, illiteracy, and backwardness. The double functions of English as the administrative language of the colonized bureaus as well as the language of wider communication, which binds together different tribal communities with different languages, posed serious threats to local languages:

The enthusiasm for English is not unanimous, or even widespread. The disadvantages of using it are obvious: cultural and social implications accompany the use of an external language. But the native languages are losing in this competition. (Kachru, 1986, p. 8)

One major cultural disadvantage of using an “external language” is the importation and domination of its literature. The dominance of English in colonized territories brought with it English literature and consequently English writers, English stereotypical models and above all English modes of thought which molded the colonized subconscious after colonial frameworks. Brathwaite (1984) writes:

And in terms of what we write, our perceptual models, we are more conscious (in terms of sensibility) of the falling snow, for instance-the models are all there for the falling of snow- than of the force of the hurricanes which take place every year. In other words, we haven't got the syllables, the syllabic intelligence, to describe the hurricane, which is our own experience, whereas we can describe the alien imported experience of the snowfall. It is that kind of situation that we are in. (p. 263)

In other words, language is a dynamic tool capable of constructing one's mental images and more importantly modes of thought.

From the linguistic viewpoint, *relexification*, also referred to as *relabeling*, is one of the three major processes in language genesis and language change (Lefebvre, 2004). The other two processes are *reanalysis* and *dialect levelling*. Relexification is an important tool in the creation of mixed languages (Bakker, 1997; Lefebvre, 2006) and in the formation of Pidgin and Creole languages. One of the earliest theorists of relexification asserts that “we do accept the possibility of relexification as a mechanism in forming a

new language in a bilingual situation” (Muysken, 1981, p. 77). Lefebvre (2004) explicates that “Relexification essentially alludes to the assigning of new labels to the lexical entries of a given lexicon. The lexical entries so formed have the semantic and syntactic properties of the original entries with labels drawn from another language” (p. 2). It appears that, as a linguistic strategy, relexification refers to the importation of words in one language from another language.

Though grounded in linguistic relexification, this paper argues literary relexification, born in polyglot postcolonial milieu, involves more than the entrance of lexical entries in another language rather it means to Africanize the Europhone text. Unlike the linguistically oriented definitions (Appel & Muysken, 1987; Bakker, 1997; Lefebvre, 2006) definitions of relexification provided by Todd (1982) and Zabus (1991) are related to the domain of literature.

Chantal Zabus (1991) defines relexification as the linguistic process at work when a West African writer tries to simulate the aura of Africanness in a Europhone text, “using a seemingly familiar language to convey an unfamiliar message” (p. 101). Furthermore, Zabus (1991) adds relexification is “the making of a new register of communication out of an alien lexicon” (p. 102) for the reason that the concept involves semantic and syntactic aspects. In such process, the Europhone text is intruded with indigenous African myths, legends, folktales, fables, proverbs, metaphors, ideological beliefs, religious assumptions, customs, traditional ceremonies, speech rhythms, speech patterns, linguistic structures and lexis. According to Zabus (1990) “Relexification is [...] an essentially literary, world-creating, diachronic practice which differs from inadvertent calquing in its ideological intention to simulate the linguistic peculiarities of the repressed palimpsestic original” (p. 106). The purpose is to generate African concepts, thought-patterns and linguistic features in the Europhone text. Todd (1982) formulates the concept as “the relexification of one's mother tongue, using English vocabulary, but indigenous structures and rhythms” (p. 303).

Stern (1980) theorizes that the new language is an 'interlanguage' which resembles neither the European target language nor the indigenous source language.

Literary relexification, born in post-colonial context, is the simulation, incorporation and assimilation of indigenous African language in a Europhone text for the dual purposes of cultural decolonization and linguistic decolonization. Zabus (2007) writes that "Relexification... corresponds to an artistic need to forge or create a new literary medium" (p. 16). The strategy defamiliarizes the colonial European language by constant incorporation of indigenous African elements. As such literary relexification "is grounded in a specific ethnic and linguistic identity" (Verthuy, 1991, p. 208). That is to convey literary relexification triumphs on valorizing indigenous ethnicity.

To summarize, it can be inferred that literary relexification triumphs on five characteristics and premises. First, it is an intentional hybridization of two languages; usually a superstrate and a substrate language in a way that a new "interlanguage" (Stern & Literature, 1980) is born. Second, it centers on reflecting the indigenous cultural characteristics of the substrate language to restore the lost valorized indigenous identity. Henceforth, it is used as a linguistic strategy for cultural decolonization. Third, it defamiliarizes the Europhone text by depicting African experience. Henceforth, it is used as a means for linguistic decolonization. Fourth, it is a narrative strategy in postcolonial novels with the purpose of simulating the aura of Africanness, and is not used in postcolonial poetry or drama (Zabus, 1991). Fifth, Relexification is the byproduct of linguistic and cultural contact henceforth it is born in bilingual, polylingual or polyphonic situations and evolves mainly in contact literature of postcolonial era.

Achebe, "the father of modern African literature" and the "literary icon of the 20<sup>th</sup> century" (Emenyonu & Uko, 2004, p. xvii), relexifies Ibo language into English. By incorporating the elements of Ibo language into English, Achebe cre-

ates a "new English" (C. Achebe, 1975, p. 62) and appropriated "the world language . . . forced down our throats" to be used as a "weapon of great strength" (1962, p. 63). Using Okara's terms, Achebe's relexified language is a new Nigerian English which adds life and vigor to English:

There are American, West Indian, Australian, Canadian and New Zealand versions of English. All of them add life and vigor to the language while reflecting their own respective cultures. Why shouldn't there be a Nigerian or West African English which we can use to express our own ideas, thinking and philosophy in our own way? (Okara, 1963, pp. 15-16)

Achebe's new literary language is a new Ibo English literary style of writing which bears resemblances to both Ibo language and English, but simultaneously different from both. To simulate the aura of Ibo culture within colonial superstrate language, Achebe makes use of transpositional strategies which create double-voiced utterance. Interpreting Bakhtin, Danow writes:

That word which is directed both toward the object and toward another's word is considered dialogical or 'double-voiced'. The dialogical word requires not only the presence of another but that the other's semantic position be assimilated into the speech of the subject, whose own utterance is at the same time attempting to take into account the other's intention. This is achieved when either another's language is incorporated into one's own speech, where it is accentuated according to the speaker's criteria and intentions, or when the language of the other-while not itself incorporated- is seen active-

ly to influence the speaker's accentuation or semantic orientation. (Danow, 1991, p. 61)

Transpositions incorporate the language of the colonized in the colonizer's speech. Any utterance made in relexified language assimilates the semantic position of the colonized and that is how double-voiced speech acts are constructed.

Linguistic utterances in relexified language become meaningful only in relation to other utterances rather than in isolation. According to Bakhtin an isolated utterance lacks "semantic fullness of value; and it has no capacity to determine directly the responsive position of the other speaker, that is, it cannot evoke a response" (1986, p. 74). Relexified language reflects the struggle of diverse voices belonging to the colonizer and the colonized. Holquist in "Introduction" of *Dialogic Imagination* writes:

At the heart of everything Bakhtin ever did...is a highly distinctive concept of language. The conception has as its enabling a priori an almost Manichean sense of opposition and struggle at the heart of existence.... The most complete and complex reflection of these forces is found in human language, and the best transcription of language so understood is the novel. (M. M. Bakhtin, Wright, & Holquist, 1981, p. xviii)

Depicting the dialogic interplay of voices, relexified language reflects the polyglot milieu of postcolonial era and "the literary heteroglossia practiced by postcolonial writers" (Bandit, 2014, p. 109). Moreover, amid the heteroglossic milieu of relexified language, the colonized is granted a voice to subvert the dominance of colonial language as the "center of the ideological world" (M. M. Bakhtin et al., 1981, p. 366).

## METHODS

In colonial discourse, Africans are mostly depicted as voiceless, passive and the other. Postcolonial African novelists set it their own mission to vocalize the silenced. The problem at stake was to write back to the canon on the one hand and to reach the voice of the voiceless to the interlocutors of colonial discourse. For long, there was an ongoing debate among African writers regarding whether to write in African languages, which have limited number of audience, or to write in English which has wider audience. Some writers, such as Chinua Achebe, chose the latter option. The problem just turned more complicated as writing in the language of the canon and using the language of the colonizer could perpetuate colonial imperialism. Patrick Scott (1990) writes: "The particular linguistic or stylistic problem thus enacts synecdochically the larger problem of African cultural and economic resistance to continuing Western hegemony" (1990, p. 75). Relexified language, the special language of Achebe's novels, subverts colonial cultural and linguistic hegemony.

The present paper is a qualitative research based on close textual analysis. Theoretical saturation method was used to locate almost all samples of relexification in the corpus. Next, the samples were compared with examples of relexification theorists and the ones near to the theorists' examples were selected. At the final step, a venerable professor in the field of postcolonial studies confirmed the collected samples.

The samples were later thematically analyzed to signify the purpose of relexification of the selected text and its implication in the textual context. Next the samples were interpreted at the level of discourse to derive the implications of relexification in postcolonial dialogic milieu.

The following section rotates one axis of relexification, that is linguistic transposition. Though linguistic transposition in Achebe's novels may have become effective via diverse strategies, the following section is limited to just three strategies: lexical borrowing, cushioning and code-mixing. And though relexification can be

studied in Achebe's five novels, the following section brings *Things Fall Apart* under closer scrutiny.

## RESULTS

### Relexification and Linguistic Transposition

Zabus (1991) theorizes that relexification is a diachronic process by which she means that the historical evolution of single linguistic elements should come under close scrutiny. However, it can be argued though diachronic study of relexification is worthy, synchronic study should be given priority. Relexification causes a polyglossic milieu with diverse phones and voices at work. Accordingly "A synchronic study of language is a comparison of languages or dialects--various spoken differences of the same language--used within some defined spatial region and during the same period of time" (Donnelly, 1994, p. 12). Moreover, in polyglossic milieu of relexified language what essentially come under study are the composition of language and the composition of linguistic components. That is rather than tracing the historical changes of the language or diachronic study (Aitchison, 2005), the description of the language at its presented and present mode are important. That is relexified language demands synchronic study.

The synchronic study of relexified language should define not only the relation of every element to other elements but also how it is that some particular lexis, lexicons, rhythms . . . rather than the others are used. Studying Achebe's relexified language synchronically, it can be hypothesized that such translinguistic process happens at three levels:

1. Linguistic transposition
2. Rhythmic transposition
3. Folkloric transposition

This study merely focuses on *linguistic transposition* for matters of integrity and brevity. In *linguistic transposition*, the interposed elements are linguistic ones.

In Achebe's works, among a totality of English linguistic codes some African words pop up. In *Things Fall Apart*, there exist 179 instances of

Igbo lexicon (Larson, 1972, p. 12). These words are mostly local words with no equivalent in English language as far as they derive from deep recesses of Igbo culture.

There are a considerable number of references to Ibo traditional ceremonies such as *Uri* ceremony performed when the dowry is paid to the Bride's family, *Umuada* ceremony which is the gathering of daughters when the female turns back to their village of birth, *isa-ifi* ceremony which is a ceremony performed when a wife is to be united with his husband after a period of separation, or *ozo* ritual performed once a man is to receive a title. There are also citations of Ibo religion-bound terms such as *Chukwu* which is the highest god in the Igbo hierarchy of gods, *chi* or a man's personal god, *Ani* or the earth goddess who possesses all land, *Amadiora* or the god of thunder and lightning, *Idemili* or the river god, *Agbala* or the Oracle of the Hills and the Caves, and *nso-ani* a sin against the earth goddess. References to hierarchical Ibo titles just accompany religious and ritual-bound terms. In Ibo culture, *Ogbuefi* isa a person with a high title and *ozo* isa a class of men holding an *ozo* title.

The Europhone text is peppered with diverse Ibo foods and drinks such as *alligator pepper* or *offe* which is a small brown fruit with hot seeds. The ground seeds may be served with kola nut in ritual welcome ceremonies. Other food or drink names are *cassava* plants which are edible root sticks, *coco-yam* (a woman's crop) which is spherical and is eaten like potatoes or ground into flour, cooked to a paste, or fermented for beer, *egusi* melon seeds prepared for a soup, *kola nut* which are indeed the seeds of the cola, contain caffeine and are used as welcoming snack, often with alligator pepper. There are lots of references to *yam foo-foo* (which is pounded and mashed) and *yam pottage* which is a watery gruel made of yams.

The importation of Ibo musical instruments which are unfamiliar for Europeans defamiliarizes the English text in the Europhone world. Ibos have particular musical instruments such as *ekwe* which is a drum or *ogene* which is a kind of

gong or *udu* which is a drum made of pottery. Achebe also subtly refers to Ibo particular calendar. *Market* is Ibo week which unlike European week, has four days. The four days are *Eke*, *Oye*, *Afo*, and *Nkwo*. *Week of Peace* is a sacred week in which violence is prohibited. Ibo culture has a particular way of counting. As a case in point, there is no particular number for thirty. Thirty is twenty and ten.

Imposing all above-mentioned culture bound items on the English text, Achebe makes English impart his African experience:

I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communication with its ancestral home but altered to suit new African surroundings. (Achebe, 1975, p. 62)

It can be claimed that the imposition of the colonized culture on the colonial language, has caused heterogeneity in the otherwise homogenous language of the colonizer and hence has opened room for the voices of the dispossessed.

By transposing Ibo words in otherwise English linguistic codes and italicizing these words, Achebe highlights the fact that Ibo words, and above all African culture, can never be assimilated in English context:

Many words stubbornly resist, others remain alien, sound foreign in the mouth of the one who appropriated them and who now speaks them; they cannot be assimilated into his context and fall out of it; it is as if they put themselves in quotation marks against the will of the speaker. (M. M. Bakhtin et al., 1981, p. 293)

This paper proposes that linguistic transposition, in Achebe's rural novels, comes to be effective via strategies such as lexical borrowing, overt cushioning, code mixing, covert cushioning, code-switching, transliteration and imposing

the syntactic, stylistic, linguistic and literary patterns of the author's native language on colonial language.

### Strategies of Linguistic Transposition

The first strategy of linguistic transposition is *lexical borrowing*. In *lexical borrowing*, just a term or lexicon from another language is imported in and a glossary or dictionary at the end of the literary work can help understanding the meaning of the lexical item. Sometimes textual clues should be derived across the pages. On page 91 of *Things Fall Apart* we read: "The crime was of two kinds male and female, Okonkwo had committed the female, because it had been inadvertent". Having such background in mind when in page 95 we read "The old man listened silently to the end and then said with some relief: "It is a female ochu" " we understand that ochu should come to mean crime.

In *No Longer at Ease*, Obi has hard time for marrying Clara who is an *osu* because of the reason that he is an *Odigbo*, and there is no textual clue regarding the cultural history of the terms.

"What's the matter, Clara? Tell me.' He was no longer unruffled. There was a hint of tears in his voice. 'I am an *osu* ,' she wept. Silence. She stopped weeping and quietly disengaged herself from him" (C. Achebe, 1960, p. 54). 'Tell me, darling,' he said, holding her hand in one of his while he drove with the other. In another sentence of the same novel we read "Leave me, *ojare* ,' she said, snatching her hand away" (C. Achebe, 1960, p. 16). There is absolutely no textual clue to infer the meaning of the Ibo term 'ojare'. *Lexical borrowing* contributes to metatextuality and *African inthemetextuality* by which one text refers the reader to other African texts for its being comprehended.

*Lexical borrowing* is closely related to another linguistic strategy in literary texts called *cushioning*. The "interpolation, or intercalation" (Bandia, 2014, p. 109) of the vernacular words and expressions into the colonial language is accompanied by foregrounding the imposed words with inside-text explanations. Various foregrounding

strategies are called cushioning by Peter Young (1971, 1973). According to Young (1971) cushioning is divided into two types; overt cushioning and covert cushioning. The textual strategy of overt cushioning happens where the explanation for the lexical item is given in the text (and not in a glossary at the end of the work) while covert cushioning is “the fashioning of the immediate co-text into a careful context or explanation” (Young, 1971, p. 40). According to Zabus “When African words or phrases describing culturally bound objects or occurrences cannot be transparently conveyed...in the Europhone text, the writers resort to the methods of “cushioning” and “contextualizing”” (1990, p. 351). Cushioning is for the purpose of providing African identity for the text (Bandia, 2014; Chishimba, 1985).

In Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, we read: “On her arms were red and yellow bangles and on her waist four or five rows of *jigiida*, or waist-beads” (C. Achebe, 1959, p. 51), or “That was how Okonkwo first came to know that *agbala* was not only another name for a woman, it could also mean a man who had taken no title” (C. Achebe, 1959, p. 11). In these two examples, the interpolated Ibo term is followed by its meaning to diminish cultural burden of English language imposition. Regarding Ibo ideology about *efulefu* or a worthless man we read: “The imagery of *efulefu* in the language of the clan was a man who sold his matchet and wore the sheath to battle” (C. Achebe, 1959, p. 103). Another example of overt cushioning is “Unoka was an ill-fated man. He had a bad *chi* or personal god” (C. Achebe, 1959, p. 18). The meaning of the Ibo term, “*chi*”, is immediately cushioned after the conjunction “or” to provide international overtones for Ibo cultural ideology.

In *No Longer at Ease* we read “On the other side of the road a little boy wrapped in a cloth was selling bean cakes or *akara* under a lamp-post. His bowl of *akara* was lying in the dust and he seemed half asleep” (C. Achebe, 1960, p. 14). Or as another example “Every few yards one met bands of dancers often wearing identical dress or ‘*aso ebi*’” (C. Achebe, 1960, p. 15). In both ex-

amples, the meanings of the Ibo terms are provided immediately before or after the conjunction ‘or’. It can be conceived that, in case of all above-mentioned overtly cushioned words, though Ibo people readily understand the term, Achebe provides the meaning of the word in the text because as Walder has observed the novel “was written primarily for an overseas audience” (Walder, 2010, p. 11).

A prominent example of *covert cushioning* can be seen in the sentence “Where did you bury your *iyi-uwa*?...You buried it in the ground somewhere o that you can die and return again to torment your mother” (C. Achebe, 1959, p. 57). The term *iyi-uwa* which is related to Ibo cosmology and African mythology is not followed by “inter-linear translation or an in-text explanation” (Bandia, 2014, p. 111) as is the case for overt cushioning. Rather, there is just enough contextual information for the reader to infer the meaning of the term but never come to be quite sure. In another example, drawing attention to complex traditional Ibo ceremonies, it is written that “Sometimes another village would ask Unoka’s band and their dancing *egwugwu* to come and stay with them and teach them their tunes” (C. Achebe, 1959, p. 4). Although there is no direct explanation of the Ibo term “*egwugwu*”, the reader can infer the meaning of the term and its relation to traditional ceremonies and ancestral spirits of the village. One motivation for covert cushioning can be foregrounding the complexity of the submerged Ibo culture, ideology, religion, cosmology and mythology and the untranslatability of Ibo cultural bound terms simply in one or a few English words. According to Achebe “He [African writer] often finds himself describing situations or modes of thought, which have no direct equivalent in English way of life” (C. Achebe, 1975, p. 12).

The other literary linguistic strategy is *code-switching* which is “one of the most studied and maybe most important phenomenon in bilingualism research and language contact” (Schmidt, 2014, p. 13). Code-switching is a term used when two or more languages come into contact or are



used alternatively in the same utterance or the same conversation (Grosjean, 1982; Josiane et al., 1989; Milroy, Milroy, Muysken, Muysken, & Foundation, 1995; Poplack, 2004; Wei & Li, 2000). In recent studies, the focus has been on grammatical aspects of *code-switching*: “since 1975 the focus of code-switching research has been put more on grammar and on the syntactic aspects of code-switching” (Schmidt, 2014, p. 21). Carol Myers-Scotten (1993) speaks of asymmetrical hierarchical relations of Matrix Language (ML) and Embedded Language (EL) in code-switching whereby the ML provides the dominant grammatical framework and the EL is assimilated. Her proposed theory sustains colonial hierarchal linguistic policies.

In contrast to Myers-Scotten (1993), MacSwan (2009) proposes a model of mixed grammars in code-switching. MacSwan’s generativist minimalist approach is one of the most recent approaches to code-switching in which the two grammars co-exist: “the mixing of grammars is effectively the mixing (or “union”) of two lexicons, as the significant features of grammars, including the parameters of variation between grammars, are assumed to be located in lexicos” (Gardner-Chloros & Gardner-Chloros, 2009, p. 98). In *code-switching* unlike, lexical borrowing, the grammatical and syntactical aspects of the other language are also imported, hence deciphering demands more than glossary or dictionary. As pointed out by Braj Kachru (1995) code-switching “is not borrowing in the sense of filling a lexical gap”, it involves the incorporation of aspects of the grammar of the other language as well (p. 65).

There are three types of code-switching (Appel & Muysken, 1987; Poplack, 2004). The first type, *inter-sentential*, is used for switches between sentences whereby one sentence is either in one language or another (Woolford, 1983). In the second type, *intra-sentential* or code-mixing, the shift happens in the middle of a sentence at word level or clause level or phrase level. In the third type, *extra-sentential* or *tag-switching*, a tag from one language is inserted into an utterance

from another language (Romaine, 1995). In Achebe’s rural novels, *intra-sentential* examples are quite frequent, while *inter-sentential* examples are less frequent and *extra-sentential* examples are quite rare.

In *Things Fall Apart* (1959), there are lots of examples of *intra-sentential* items. Protesting Ibo religion, Mr Brown says: “Chukwu is the only God and all others are false. You carve a piece of wood--like that one” (he pointed at the rafters from which Akunna’s carved *Ikenga* hung), “and you call it a god. But it is still a piece of wood.” (C. Achebe, 1959, p. 179). *Ikenga* which is inserted in the middle of an English sentence is a translinguistic item at word level. In another example, the Ibo term, *obi*, is mixed with English terms “Ezinma had prepared some food for her father ... She took it to him in his *obi*. He ate absent-mindedly. He had no appetite, he only ate to please her. His male relations and friends had gathered in his *obi*” (C. Achebe, 1959, p. 199). The alteration of codes happens in the following sentence ““On what market-day was it born?” he asked. “*Oye*,” replied Okonkwo” (C. Achebe, 1959, p. 78). In another sentence we read “Ezinma did not call her mother *Nne* like all children. She called her by her name, Ekwefi” (C. Achebe, 1959, p. 76). The insertion of an Ibo term among English codes is seen in the following sentences too. “If the clan had disobeyed the Oracle they would surely have been beaten, because their dreaded *agadi-nwayi* would never fight what the Ibo call a *fight of blame*” (C. Achebe, 1959, p. 12). ““Do what you are told, woman,” Okonkwo thundered, and stammered.” “When did you become one of the *ndichie* of Umuofia?”” (C. Achebe, 1959, p. 14).

*Inter-sentential* examples are also seen in *Things Fall Apart*, though they are not as frequent as *intra-sentential* items. “Onyeka had such a voice, and so he was asked to salute Umuofia before Okika began to speak. “*Umuofia kwenu!*” he bellowed, raising his left arm and pushing the air with his open hand. “*Yaa!*” roared Umuofia” (C. Achebe, 1959, p. 202). “*Umuofia kwenu!*” is an Ibo sentence among English sentences. In an-

other example we see the insertion of *Nna ayi*," among English sentences: "'Nna ayi," he said. "I have brought you this little kola." (C. Achebe, 1959, p. 19). Other switches between sentences happen in the following sentences "The house was now a pandemonium of quavering voices: *Am oyim de de de de!* filled the air as the spirits of the ancestors, just emerged from the earth" (Achebe, 1959, p.87). "'I will come with you, too," Ekwefi said firmly. "*Tufia-al!*" the priestess cursed" (C. Achebe, 1959, p. 101).

The frequency of *transposed* linguistic terms is in accordance with the pace of the domination and settlement of colonization. In pre-colonized era, transposed linguistic terms are frequent. However, such frequency declines in a way that in *Things Fall Apart*, in chapter twenty four, there are very few transposed items and in chapter twenty five, the last chapter when colonization is quite settled in Umoufia, there is no transposed item. In accordance with the advance of colonization, linguistic transposition is more frequent in Achebe's rural novels (*Things Fall Apart* (1959) and *Arrow of God* (1964)) than urban novels which reflect post-colonized era. Urban novels such as *Anthills of the Savannah*, *A Man of the People* and *No Longer at Ease* triumph more on pidgin language and as such show *attrition* or influence of English on Ibo language. In all these novels, directly imposing words from Ibo culture or overloading words with such cultural background, Achebe establishes dialogical interaction as the concept of dialogical word is established by the presence of *other* person's word where intention of the subject comes under the influence of the other yielding "an intersection of two consciousness" (M. J. T. Bakhtin & literature, 1984, p. 288).

Linguistic transposition can become effective through other strategies such as "transparency", "transliteration", "transference" and "transmutation". Studying these strategies may demand another extensive research. As Zabus concurs "Relexification is thus tied to the notions of 'approximation' and of 'transparency'. Yet it also encompasses 'transliteration', 'transference'

and 'transmutation'" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2006, p. 287).

## DISCUSSION

Colonial discourse is marred with intentional gaps, omissions and silence about Africa which automatically *others*, marginalizes and sub-centers Africans. Moreover, colonial discourse is written from the viewpoint of the white outsider, unfamiliar with African culture and civilization. And finally, colonizer's language was used as a dynamic weapon for colonization by constructing the mental images of the colonized. If language had a key role in colonization, it could have a role in decolonization. Ngugi wa Thiong'o believes language is a powerful tool for decolonization due to its function of image-making in the mind (Thiong'o, 1986). Achebe, through his special use of relexified language, could achieve creating "the perceptual models... the syllables, the syllabic intelligence" (Brathwaite, 1984, p. 263) with which African writers can describe their own experience. Writing African literature in English, Achebe uses the colonial language to represent his African experience and hence upturning colonial purposes of mental image imposition. Moreover, Achebe's relexification provides the black insider's viewpoint and inevitably *others* the white colonizer.

Achebe's relexification is in essence literary relexification, experimenting a new literary form, a new literary style or a new literary language. His new literary language serves the ends of the "post-colonial West African authors to "indigenize" the European tongue, to bend it to the African reality it must express" (Verthuy, 1991, p. 207). Achebe's special use of relexification indigenizes, Africanizes and Nigerianizes the very English imposed as the colonial cultural and linguistic weapon. His "indigenization" is used "as a form of decolonization" (Verthuy, 1991, p. 208), as a way of disturbing Western hegemony.

Literary relexification, broader and wider than linguistic relexification involves more than the entrance of substrate language lexicon in the superstrate language. Literary relexification gives

the aura of ethnic substrate culture to the text written in canonical superstrate language. Achebe's relexified language is a new literary medium to linguistically and culturally decolonize a text written in superstrate canonical language. Achebe creates the aura of Africanness in his text by imposing old age African cultural traditions and beliefs.

Achebe creates a new English, Nigerian English, in which linguistic transpositional strategies create utterance which assimilate the semantic position of the colonized and hence double-voiced speech acts are constructed to open dialogic interaction with colonial discourse. The linguistic utterances made in relexified language become meaningful in relation to prior utterances of colonial discourse. The results of the previous section justify that the synchronic study of relexification should be given priority to diachronic study, above all for the reason that in the polyglossic milieu of relexified language, the linguistic utterances with cultural overtones and dialogic interaction come under study. Achebe's literary relexification extended the frontiers of English to locate African concepts, modes of thought and cultural patterns.

## CONCLUSION

Achebe's experimentation with relexified language extends the possibilities of literary language and proves that unlike Barht's claim (Barth, 1967) literary conventions are not "exhausted". Of the three axes of relexification, linguistic transposition causes *de-familiarization* within English text for the purpose of lending authority to Africanness:

There are certain Igbo words and Igbo thought patterns that cannot be easily rendered into English. Achebe creates a sense of mystery and aesthetic distance by retaining these Igbo words and phrases in his novels. (Njoku, 1984, p. 9)

Achebe's is to restore dignity to African identity: "The worst thing that can happen to any

people is the loss of their dignity and self-respect. The writer's duty is to help them regain it" (C. J. N. M. Achebe, 1964, p. 8). Moreover, his "inter-language" is the linguistic translation of the wholesale contact of colonial period. On a broader perspective, it can be claimed that Achebe's goals are generalizable to the translanguistic strategies practiced by postcolonial African writers.

First, translanguistic strategies, literary techniques and styles which transpose the features of the language of the colonized on the language of the colonizer are initially the linguistic translation of the wholesale contact that happened during colonial period. The aforementioned strategies are employed in the genre of postcolonial novel as according to Bakhtin novel is the best genre to reflect diversity of voices and forces:

The novel can be defined as a diversity of social speech types (sometimes even a diversity of languages) and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized... Authorial speech, the speeches of narrators, inserted genres, the speech of characters are merely those fundamental compositional unities with whose help heteroglossia can enter the novel; each of them permits a multiplicity of social voices and a wide variety of their links and interrelationships (always more or less dialogized). (M. J. L. t. A. a. Bakhtin, 1934, pp. 59-60)

Novel is a Western genre and hence inevitably has to deploy Western discourse conventions. However, novel is a genre with the high capacity of assimilating the linguistic features and discourse conventions of the author's native language. It is such assimilation that reflects the clash between the colonizers and the colonized. By reflecting the clash, the translanguistic techniques mean to subvert the hierarchical power positions of the colonizers which were textually imposed.

Second, translanguistic strategies which reflect

the features of native source language are representatives of *transcultural identities* that emerged in contact zones. Such strategies reflect the independent identity of the speakers of that language; that is independent from colonial interventions: “even where the original native language is lost the old discourse conventions tend to persist and to be taken over into the group’s use of the majority language. In fact, these conventions come to reflect the identity of the group itself” (Gumperz, Drew, Goodwin, & Schiffirin, 1982, p. 6). Language plays a key role in the realization, construction and exaltation of *national identity*. A distinct national identity can be constructed through a distinct language; a language different from that used by the colonizer.

Third, translinguistic techniques reorient the way of thought to the point that though the very language maybe translated, culture *cannot be translated*:

As readers of the Indian novel, non-Indians have their deficiencies. It is hard for a British reader, for instance, to take up the references -to the Indian scene, the agricultural tradition, the vast distances, the terrible poverty, the profoundly significant religion. (Walsh, 1973, p. 20)

What Walsh has observed about Indian literature can as well be true about other literatures in English.

And, fourth, the emergence of literary styles in postcolonial era disrupts the unidirectional flow from the colonizer to the colonized. Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin (2007) state that:

Imperial binarisms always assume a movement in one direction – a movement from the colonizer to the colonized, from the explorer to the explored, from the surveyor to the surveyed. But just as post-colonial identity emerges in the ambivalent spaces of the colonial encounter, so the dynamic of change is not all in

one direction; it is in fact trans-cultural, with a significant circulation of effects back and forth between the two. (p. 21)

Postcolonial linguistic styles and literary linguistic strategies dismantle the tendencies of colonial literary discourse regarding the stigmatization of the speakers of vernacular languages.

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**Biodata**

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