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## **EDITORIAL**

Every academic environment is sustained by learning through rigorous methods. Research is one and the focal point for assessment. A serious member of the academic community is measured by the quality and number of academic articles.

In spite of the desire to acquire many research reports, this edition has insisted on standards and quality. It is important to note that many articles have been rejected for not meeting our requirements.

The first and most obvious task of our journal is to provide a level playing field for researchers all over the globe in language-related disciplines, which is the vehicle for conveying knowledge. In this edition, thirty-one (31) articles have undergone academic scrutiny from our blind reviewers.

To our esteemed contributors and readers, thought-provoking articles are expected and we are ready to publish them in the next volume.

**PROFESSOR ALI AMADI ALKALI,**

Editor-in-Chief,

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Department of Languages and Linguistics,

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This volume of JAJOLLS (Jalingo Journal of Linguistics and Literary Studies, Volume 8, Issue 1) adheres to the guidelines of the current edition of the American Psychological Association and Modern Language Association (APA & MLA) Publication Manual for editing and formatting the featured papers. Renowned for its clear and user-friendly citation system, the APA/MLA manual also provides valuable guidance on selecting appropriate headings, tables, figures, language, tone, and reference styles, resulting in compelling, concise, and refined scholarly presentations. Furthermore, it serves as a comprehensive resource for the Editorial Board, navigating the entire scholarly writing process, from authorship ethics to research reporting and publication best practices.

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The “Jalingo Journal of Linguistics and Literary Studies” (JAJOLLS) is a publication of the Department of Language and Linguistics, Taraba State University, Jalingo, Nigeria. This journal publishes reports in relation to all aspects of linguistics, literary and cultural studies.

### **Manuscripts Submission**

Three hard copies of the article with text, charts, tables, figures, plates or any other original illustration should be sent to the editor-in-chief JAJOLLS, Taraba State University, Jalingo, Taraba State Nigeria. Submission should either be in English, French, Hausa, or Arabic languages. Articles should be typed in double line spacing with a wide margin on each side only on A4 sized paper not exceeding 15 pages including abstract with not more than 6-7 keywords. Articles are to be submitted with Five Thousand Naira (N5,000) assessment and handling charges. By submitting an article to JAJOLLS, the author(s) agree that the exclusive rights to produce and distribute the articles to the publisher.

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## **Language and cultural revival in Nigerian postcolonial literature**

### **Abstract**

Postcolonial discourse is concerned with protesting eurocentric stereotypes forced on former colonies by their colonial masters and clamoring for the establishment of an identity for the former colonies after independence. Identity is an important issue, and it raises the question of whether it is possible to maintain an identity in postcolonial Nigeria. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's characters in the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* represent many different cultures and races. In order to analyse the language and cultural revival in a colonized society as they are deduced in Adichie's book *Half of a Yellow Sun*, this paper employs postcolonial theory, a term that is used to analyse the legacy of colonialism. Colonialism was not confined to the colonial era alone; it persisted even after Nigeria gained independence. Adichie's main concern seems to be what has become of the nation since independence.

**Keywords:** Postcolonialism; Language; Culture; Identity; Mimicry.

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### **1.1 Introduction**

Postcolonialism is a movement that involves hostility and has to do with protest and imitation. It embodies a combination of resistance and reconciliation. It questions and refutes eurocentric stereotypes of former colonies. The postcolonial literary movement began after the Second World War. Countries after colonization gained independence and writers from sub-regions emerged; examples of such countries are the Caribbean, India, South Africa, Nigeria, among others. This paper delves into various aspects of postcolonial discourse, investigating the enduring impacts of imperialism on cultural identity, language usage, and hybridity. It sheds light on how postcolonial literature navigates the intricate challenges of opposing, adjusting to, and undermining colonial structures.

The 'post' in postcolonialism has been a major source of debate. The prefix implies a time constraint, which poses the problem of when exactly postcolonialism begins. Gilbert and Tompkins attempt to resolve this by:

Postcolonialism is often too narrowly defined. The term-according to an overly rigid etymology is frequently misunderstood as a temporal The concept refers to the time after colonialism. ceased Postcolonialism is, rather, an engaging engagement with and

criticism of colonialism discourse, power structure, and social hierarchies (296).

The roots of colonialism are far-reaching and are still sprouting fruit in modern-day independent nations. Economic dominance was the aim of imperialism, but this could not be achieved without political and cultural dominance. An attack on the people's identity and culture ensued, and the hierarchical structures set in place by their cultural disposition were disrupted. The political, cultural, and economic subjugations of former colonies are still in place to a large extent, even though these nations are now independent. Postcolonialism seeks to expose the legacies of colonialism as well as proffer plausible solutions such as cultural integration.

Postcolonialism is characterized by an awareness of portraits of non-Europeans as exotic or as the immoral 'other'. Edward Said addresses this in his book "Orientalism," published in 1978. According to him, the word "Orientalism" is a western conception of the eastern part of the world; as he wrote, "Orientalism" was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the strange difference ("The Drier and East Them" 38). An Oriental is a person who is described as exhibiting qualities of femininity and weakness, contrasting with the perception of whites as masculine and strong.

Edward Said in his book "Orientalism" that postcolonialism is aware of the Europeans to guide and set them on the right path. This right path is, of course, the prerogative of only the Europeans, as the 'other' will remain his primitive self if not guided, the colonizers argued. Stephen Duncombe opines (in his "Cultural Resistance Reader") that "Cultural Resistance is used to describe culture that is used, consciously, effectively, or not, to resist and/or change the dominant political, economic, and/or social structure" (5) Therefore, cultural resistance provides a kind of 'liberated zone' for cultivating ideas and practices. Freedom from the confines of the dominant Western culture allows for experimentation with new methods, contributing to the development of tools and resources for resistance. The act of transforming and decolonizing the imperial culture becomes a form of cultural resistance, serving as an effort to subvert colonial strategies aimed at erasing native cultures.

In the realm of postcolonial theory, cultural resistance is influenced by the phenomenon of hybridization. The colonized strategically modify to dismantle the colonizer's authority or influence. Here, theater is such a powerful cultural tool of the colonizer. It brings together a lot of facets of cultural creativity: socio-political, religious, ritualistic, mimicry, role-playing, and communal festive celebration.

Similarly, cultural resistance to western tradition can be observed in the choice of language. This choice is often a political one. As Gilbert and Tompkins observe in their work "Postcolonial Drama: Theory, Practice, and Politics," when a playwright chooses an indigenous language over English, she or he refuses to submit to the dominance of the imposed standard language and to subscribe to the 'reality' it sustains (169).

Postcolonialism can also be characterized as a consciousness of how flawed the colonizer's language truly is. It is presupposed that language is one of the major issues of imitation and hybridization in postcolonial literature. Frantz Fanon opines that "the use of language as a tool of assimilation and subsequent rebellion against linguistic integration and alienation have become

familiar aspects of colonial life (Gendzier 47). Abrams and Harpham raise this same topic in *A Glossary of Literary Terms*.

how, and to what extent, a subaltern subject, Writing in a European language, can manage serve as an agent of compliance with, the very discourse that has created its subordinate identity (309).

Some scholars like Frantz Fanon, Kwame Nkruma, Albert Memmi, Chinua Achebe among others, are of the opinion that using the colonizer's language would be an act of submission to the superiority of their language. Ngugi, for instance, argues that "the bullet was the means of physical subjugation. Language was the means of spiritual subjugation" (Ngugi 282). and "Language carries culture, and culture carries, particularly through orature and literature, the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world" (Ngugi 290). This means that the idea aligns with the contentious belief misery of a certain language, which indicates that the speaker accepts the ideological and cultural outlook of the community where this language originates and is used. Fanon and Ngugi's arguments suggest that foreign languages in Africa should not be enforced on people and must be rejected. Ngugi notes in 'Towards a National Culture', that "by acquiring the thought processes and values embedded in one's mother tongue, or the broader language of the masses, individuals strengthen their cultural identity and connection to their community" (Ngugi 16), It is, however, important to note that any language has the capability to carry any culture, just as any culture can carry any language. It is evident that languages and cultures now evolve into "foreign" cultures by introducing new words as well as borrowing from other languages, like the French language, to form new words. The assimilation of foreign words like 'garage' (a French word) into the English language enhances and develops better understanding and comprehension. Ngugi further puts this as:

The impact of cultural bombs is to Annihilate people's belief in their environment. In their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities, and ultimately in themselves, causes them to identify with something that furthest removed from themselves, for instance, with other people's language rather than their own (cited in Alan and Ngel, 1990).

Growing up, Ngugi and his classmates were reprimanded for speaking their native language in school and applauded for speaking the colonizer's language. This caused an alienation from that which brought them pain and closeness to the colonizer's language, which brought them recognition. Ngugi's early works were written in English, but today he has reverted to writing in his native language, Kikuyu (Gikuyu).

Achebe, on the other hand, is of the opinion that language is a weapon and should be used as such. Hence, he advocates the domestication of the English language. To be effective, it has to be aimed in the right direction. He says:

African writers should aim at fashioning out an English which is simultaneously universal. capable of carrying his unique experience. would have to be a new ancestral home. altered to fit its new African surroundings. (cited in Alan and Ngel 1990).

There is merit in both arguments; however, Achebe's stance is more realistic. The writer has a purpose in mind whenever he produces a literary piece. He is exposing, sensitizing, and expressing a phenomenon in his society. For his purpose to be achieved, his audience must be able to correctly interpret his work. By writing in his native language, he limits his audience. In a multiethnic country like Nigeria, his audience is almost nonexistent if the writer decides to use his native language. No reader will take a course in the language just to read a literary piece, especially if the work is aimed at denouncing his culture. Ngugi recognizes the need to reach a wider audience, which is why he painstakingly translates his works into the English Language.

The imposition of the English language on postcolonial subjects in a bid to control them was part of imperialism's method. Language was used to manipulate the people and attack their cultural identity. The English language was associated with positive emotions, while the language of the colonized was treated with contempt. Gilbert and Tompkins write that:

Forbidding people to speak their native tongues is the first step in the destruction of culture... The Loss of language can lead to loss of names, of oral history, and of a connection to the land... prevented from speaking their own languages and severely punished if they disobeyed, These children frequently refused to pass down their language to their own children in an attempt to prevent the repetition of such punishment (163)

Achebe is advocating for the use of the colonizer's language, not as the colonizer would use it, but in a more sophisticated way that suits his environment. The writer who uses the colonizer's language in that way is making a statement. He is refusing to bow to the colonizer and is showing his defiance by creatively tampering with something very important to him—his language.

In post-colonial countries, the paper observes Homi Bhabha's concept of mimicry, which defines mimicry as the colonizer's approach to introducing the colonies (Bhabha 122). This speaks of the imitation of a group by another. Postcolonial studies expose the tendency of the colonized to want to desert their roots in a bid to be more like the colonizers. They imitate colonial culture, education, language, and dressing. The colonized imitates the colonizer's culture but alters it significantly. Mimicry results in ambivalence. It is complex as it strives to pass on more than one message at a time. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* depicts how Richard, one of the characters in the novel, uses mimicry in an opposite way. He is deeply intrigued by everything the Igbo culture encompasses and actively seeks to learn more about their traditions and culture. So both the colonized and the colonizers employ it to achieve their goals.

The need for cultural identity is a pivotal point in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Although the Igbo assimilated the British, the Igbo were not favoured, and the British preferred to support the northerners (Hausa) during the civil war. The reason for this was the oil that was in the hands of the Hausa (Bhattacharjee and Tripathy 445). The Hausa's need to belong to a group that spoke the same language and had the same religion and culture led to a renewed alienation from the peoples to the south, both the western Yoruba and the eastern Igbo (Strehle 656). By embracing western ideas and utilizing them against Nigeria's oppressors, Odenigbo can craft a hybrid identity in which he employs the beneficial concepts of colonization as a means of resistance. Bhabha's theory

employs hybridity in the construction of identity, which refers to how identities emerge in colonial societies as a fusion of influences from the colonizers and the native culture (Bhabha 277). Odenigbo elucidates that in the African context, the only authentic identity is the tribe, but the white man created Nigeria and gave them that identity (Adichie 20). In *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha recommends that “for Fanon, the liberatory people who initiate the productive instability of revolutionary cultural change are themselves the bearers of a hybrid identity... the changed political and historical site of colonial inheritance into the liberatory signs of a free people of the future” (38). The hybrid identity bestowed upon Nigerians by Britain poses challenges in identifying themselves as Nigerians rather than Igbo, Hausa, or Yoruba. Postcolonial theory will be employed in the analysis of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

### **2.1 Language and cultural revival in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun* using postcolonial theory.**

In Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, the story opens with Ugwu’s aunty telling him how his master is; he has spent most of his time reading books abroad, according to her, and hardly returns greetings. This is entirely different in reference to the tradition and custom of the Igbo society; they respect greetings and always return greetings. It can be deduced that the characters experience the physical disposition of the cultural ebb of society. African countries are known for their rich traditions and cultures. Adichie in the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* shows how the characters struggle because of the dying of their culture. Ugwu’s interest in his cousin's sister deviates significantly from Igbo cultural norms; it can be depicted that going to the primary school in his village corrupted his mindset. The Ugwu master instructed him to address him by his first name, a practice considered unconventional and inappropriate in his village. This made him uneasy and uncomfortable, as he was not accustomed to addressing elders by their first names. Throughout the novel, Ugwu finds it difficult to call Odenigbo by his first name until the end of the novel.

Shoat identifies cultural mimicry as a form of hybridity. Homi Bhabha defines mimicry as “the sign of a complex strategy of reform, regulation, and discipline” (437). Mimicry, in postcolonial terms, is the imitation of the language, politics, or cultural behaviour of a colonized society by its colonizers. The colonized suppress their own cultural identity and sometimes lose it totally. The Igbo ethnic group is the most cultured tribe, and all the main characters speak the English Language and live a life similar to that of the West. Odenigbo wants Ugwu to receive an education because it is the only way he can understand the problems in English that plague newly liberated Nigeria: “How can we resist exploitation?” (Adichie11).

Postcolonial societies are heading towards a completely hybrid society as such legacies of colonialism as the language, education, and religion of the colonizer do not fade away but instead gain more ground every day. Hybridity results in ambivalence, as the colonized cannot totally condemn the colonizer’s culture as bad because he has obviously gained some things. The colonizers can also not write off the culture of the colonised, as there are obvious merits to it. Thus, ambivalence sets in. There are contradictions inherent in colonial discourse that hybridity addresses.

Those who mimic other cultures tend to dissociate themselves from theirs. Ugwu’s aunt describes some of these people thus: For breakfast, they had eggs that were not cooked well, so that the yolk danced around, and they wore bouncy clothes; they used hot combs to straighten their hair. (19).

She also illustrates the women in the university; she says they are always with wigs and mini-skirts; that's the reason she's telling him because he will definitely come across that kind of dressing. Miss Adebayo, a friend of Odenigbo, regularly attends their Saturday meetings along with her co-lecturers. However, her manners deviate from traditional African norms, especially in her way of speaking. Miss Adebayo raises her voice above all the men in the meeting, a behaviour that Ugwu deems inappropriate. Yet, being an educated individual, she perceives her actions as justified. Ugwu's indignation at being addressed in the Igbo language by Olanna and his proud response in the English Language are another instance of mimicry (47). Also, Harrison's inability to make the whites' food is another example of cultural mimicry. He says, "The food of white people makes you healthy; it is not like all of the nonsense that our people eat." His disdain for his help in acquiring traditional herbs to help him with his impotence. Harrison directs him to the medical doctors, telling him that herbs are not good. Ugwu also takes pride in being seen beside a white man.

The tear gas fascinated Ugwu. If it made people pass out, he wanted to get it. He wanted to use it on Nnemesinachi. when he went home with Mr. Richard for the ori-okpa festival. He would lead her to the grove by the stream and tell her the tear gas was a magic spray that would keep her healthy (210).

Richard's mimicry of the african way and culture is, however, the most striking. He is fascinated by Igbo-Ukwu art. He also learns the Igbo language and identifies himself as a part of Biafra, and he even falls in love with an Igbo girl, Kainene. He also looks to african herbs for his impotence. Olanna's thought about Richard gives an insight into his personality:

She had never liked any of Kainene's boyfriends and never liked that Kainene dated so many white men in England. Their thinly veiled condescension and false validations irritated her. Yet she had not reacted in the same way to Richard Churchill when Kainene brought him to dinner (36).

His attitude leads to Miss Adebayo's statement that "Richard was an african in his past life" (108). Though he claims to be an Igbo man, it is, however, obvious that he can only imitate but can never really be an Igbo man; he is unable to do away with his european identity. He does not understand the nitty-gritty of their culture. This is made clear when Richard goes to visit Nnaemeka's parents and tells them to hide their bravery in the face of death. This is what a white man wants to hear. In fact, that is all he needs to hear to be happy. However, in the Igbo culture, you do not go to people who are mourning without bearing gifts with you. In his last appearance, the racist outlook he has been suppressing is let out briefly toward Major Madu: "Come back, he wanted to say, come back and tell me if you ever laid your filthy black hand on her" (429-30).

Mimicry is not always about the shameful abandonment of one's culture, believing that another is superior; it can also be a weapon used by individuals who are well established in their culture and are therefore not swayed by the colonizer's culture. They understand the two cultures and come out not knowledgeable but better able to adapt and relate to others. These characters do not struggle with their identity and do not experience conflicting emotions about their culture. Olanna is an

example of this group. Ugwu, upon meeting Olanna, remarks that her “Igbo words were softer than her English, and he was disappointed at how easily they came out. He wished she would stumble in her Igbo; he had not expected English that perfect to sit beside equally perfect Igbo” (23). Richard is not well established in his culture and sees himself as an outsider, which is why he continues, unlike Olanna, to struggle with his identity.

## **2. 2 Language use in *Half of a Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**

Language is a fundamental tool for postcolonial struggle because colonialism itself begins with language. Adichie makes use of the English language, combined with Igbo phrases and words. This also points to her intermediary position, in between two worlds. Postcolonial writers often use English as a subversive strategy; they accept this tool the colonizer has given them and use it to reject the “political power of the standard “language” (284). Adichie’s English seems to be influenced by the circumstances and environment in which it is used, which makes it different from the English language brought to Africa by colonisers.

Adichie subscribes to the same postcolonial school of thought as her kinsman, Chinua Achebe, who advocates for the use of a type of the English language that accommodates the unique African experience. Though the work is written in the English language, it is suffered with Ibo words. These words are written side by side with the English words, and the reader can sometimes infer that the English words are translations as a result of the use of punctuation: “Kedu afa gi? What is your name?” (5). Ndi be anyi! My people! (38). In some other instances, however, the reader is left to guess the meaning of the words: ‘Yes, but these [natural flowers] are better, famakali,’ Olanna said (47), ‘Bairn, come,’ (149).

The Igbo experience also makes its presence known in her use of Igbo proverbs and culture: “He who brings kolanut brings life. You and yours will live, and I and mine will live. Let the eagle perch and let the dove perch, and if either decrees that the other not perch, it will not be well for him.” (164).

He finally started to speak Igbo to her on the day she rearranged the photos on the wall. A wall gecko had scuttled out from behind the wood-framed photo. Don't kill it!’ She turned to glance down at him from the chair she was standing on. ‘If you kill it you will get a stomach ache,’ he said. (47-8)

It is tradition for the kolanut to be prayed over and eaten when one visits an Igbo family, and by introducing this, the writer succeeds in showing that though the language is the colonizers, the experience is the African’s. This she does as a means of subverting the English language and asserting control over it.

Chimamnada Adichie also employs language in a way that accommodates the classes of people that exist in society. She uses formal speech when intellectuals are conversing, informal speech to accommodate the middle class, and vernacular for the lower class. “You come to my house. My wife cooks very sweet kuka soup,” he said to Olanna (40).

## **3.1 Conclusion**

Postcolonialism contests ideologies. It goes beyond the temporal to contest structures that are seen as exploitative. The postcolonial theory is two-fold. It explores works from former colonies that protest the legacies of imperialism and colonialism, and also discusses works from the colonizers and explores their portraits of former colonial subjects.

The language of postcolonial studies is an important issue. The language used by a writer is a statement of his stance. Using the colonizer's language would be seen as acquiescing to his superiority, while rejecting it totally or adapting it to one's taste would mean the opposite. Postcolonialism is characterized by an awareness of the portrayal of colonial subjects as exotic and inferior. It is also about the ambivalence of the colonizer and the colonizer's identity.



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