

**IDEOLOGICAL UNDERTONE IN
LANGUAGE HYBRIDIZATION IN NOLLYWOOD:
A STUDY OF SELECTED FILMS**

Isaiah Uche Ilo

&

Somtoo Obiefuna Arinze-Umobi

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Abstract

This study has investigated the ideological undertone of language hybridization in Nollywood films by analyzing English Language films with scenes containing Igbo expressions for purposes of understanding the possible ideological tendencies implicit or explicit in such lingual mixtures. Situated within the framework of the postcolonial theory, the study employed textual analysis (a form of qualitative content analysis) for a critical reading of the two selected films, Money Making Machine and African Tradition, in order to observe language-based hybridisation patterns in line with the study objectives. Findings revealed that lingual hybridisation was employed in the films for the purpose of achieving thematic emphasis, that is, reinforcing the message of the drama. Also, lingual hybridisation is deployed to enhance harmony between the local setting of the films and the words spoken (dialogue). Thus, while the scenes of such films are exclusively or dominantly English, native language soundtracks and dialogues provide the native flavour that tends to preserve the native solemnity of the setting against the “intrusion” of the alien English language. It was also discovered that such hybridization is employed as an instrument of cultural (lingual) protectionism; in other words, for the purpose of placing indigenous languages in an equal pedestal as English language; thus protectionism becomes the ideological undertone of lingual hybridisation. The study concluded that language-based hybridization in Nollywood films is informed by both creative and ideological concerns, the nature of which may potentially favour the

quest to shield indigenous languages from the perceived assault of foreign languages, especially English. Thus, in the context of postcolonial conceptualization, the films represent a protest against perceived language colonization and neocolonisation. It is therefore recommended that filmmakers in the country should do more towards producing exclusively native language films especially films in the Igbo language which appear to be few and in-between.

Key words: hybridisation, language, ideology, Nollywood, films

INTRODUCTION

Language is central to human communication (Dunu 179; Chukwujekwu 2); and film being a form of human communication, has language as its central element (Dunu 178). Language is the major vehicle for realizing dialogue in drama; other non-lingual elements such as gesture and facial expression are only playing a supportive role to language in the realization of dialogue. Thus, language plays an essential role in the realization of the plot and theme of a drama (Ojoma 10). Against the foregoing, it becomes obvious that language is an important consideration in the creation of a film; the filmmaker has to consider the most appropriate language to use as well as how to use it taking into considerations factors like the target audience, the storyline, the setting and the theme among others (Ajah, 24; Ojoma, 14). Therefore, deployment of language in film is beyond mere arbitrary decision but importantly a strategic input essential for the success of the overall film communication.

In Nigeria, the mainstream language for film is English while there are also films in local languages such as Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba, and other Nigerian languages. The film that heralded the Nollywood era, *Living in Bondage*, was made in the Igbo language with sub-titling in English. However, since English language is the lingua franca of Nigeria, it could also be said to be the lingua franca of Nollywood given that films intended for the generality of the nation's audience irrespective of lingual differences are ideally

made in the English language. Nevertheless, this primacy of the English language in Nollywood introduces some sort of contradiction vis-à-vis the relationship between the films' local status and the alien (foreign) nature of their language medium; that is, between their indigenous origin and lingual foreignness. The question this time becomes: Is Nollywood an instrument of language protectionism or an instrument of imperialism? This question reflects the sentiments of scholars and other stakeholders who believe that Nollywood, rather than becoming the instrument of cultural protection has proven to be that of imperialism (Danbello and Dakogol 14, Nbeta and Ikiroma-Owiye 123).

However, when Nollywood films are made in the English language, there is sometimes some sort of compromise whereby local language expressions are intermittently introduced to give some flavour of locality to scenes and actions. This is especially so with films set in rural areas or whose storylines reflect African societies of pre-Westernisation era. This production practice effectively results in language-based hybridisation wherein a film, though principally narrated in English, accommodates indigenous lingual elements. Such lingual hybridisation becomes an artistic strategy deployed by the filmmaker to advance meaning in line with the thematic conceptualisation of the film. Admittedly, any artistic decision by a creator of a work of art usually embodies some ideological bias – implicit or explicit (Taiwo 220). Hence, the manner in which hybridisation – including language-based hybridisation – is employed by the creator of a Nollywood film potentially embodies some ideological meaning. It is against this backdrop that this study attempts to investigate the ideological undertone in language-based hybridisation in Nollywood films.

The emergence of Nollywood has been viewed as providing a golden opportunity for Nigeria (and indeed Africa) to tell her own story and protect and preserve her culture via locally made video films (Mba 16; Nwosu 28; Okoye 16; Akpabio and Mustapha-Lambe13). This is against the alleged cultural imperialism imposed

by the earlier dominance of the local cinema Western films (Nwosu 28). Nevertheless, while Nollywood films have been “local” in terms of production hands and actors, they are many a time “foreign” in the language of expression – a situation that calls to question the integrity of its cultural protectionist character. The attempt to retain some lingual indigenusness in Nollywood films has resulted in the practice of embedment of indigenous languages in English language productions. This is a form of cultural hybridisation or blending which raises certain critical issues such as- which of the blended cultures suffers and which profits from the blending (Kraidy 317). This is primarily significant, given the fact that hybridisation does not necessarily imply or result in cultural equality (Kraidy 317).

With these stated, it therefore becomes necessary to investigate the ideological undertone of language hybridisation in Nollywood films with special emphasis on scenes that contain Igbo expressions with the aim of understanding the possible ideological tendencies implicit or explicit in such lingual mixtures. More precisely, the study is geared towards the following objectives:

- i. To discover the recurring pattern in the use of Igbo expressions in English language films;
- ii. To discover the implicit or explicit ideological biases in the way Igbo expressions are embedded in English language films;
- iii. To find out whether the pattern of embedment of Igbo expressions in English language films tends to advance or undermine the dignity of the Igbo language.

AN OVERVIEW OF NOLLYWOOD

The motion picture industry in Nigeria has its genesis in the colonial era. Onuzulike, in tracing the evolution of film industry in the country between 1903 and 1992, argues that its metamorphosis is closely tied to crucial stages in the history of Nigeria (103). These periods are (i) the colonial period (1903 – 1960), (ii) the independence period (1960 – 1972), (iii) the indigenization decree

period (1972 –1992) and (iv) the Nollywood Period (1992 – date). Each of these epochs marked some significant developments in the evolution of film as a sub-sector in the country (Onuzulike 103, Nbeta *et al*/132, Idogho 2). During the colonial period, a landmark was recorded with the first film screening in Nigeria in August 1903 at the Glover Memorial Hall in Lagos as masterminded by the acclaimed father of Nigerian nationalism, Sir Herbert Macaulay (Fafiolu 22, Onuzulike 129). However, the British colonialists, like they did with other aspects of culture, imported foreign films into the country, which were screened in cinema houses sprouting up in major cities of the new country. Nbeta *et al.* note that the reason the colonialists brought cinema to Nigeria was “basically to distribute political and colonial propaganda, and, to some extent, to serve as social events” (131). The contents of these early motion pictures were predominantly documentary focusing on themes like education, health, agriculture, and industry amongst others. The Nigerian natives were shown films by means of travelling cinema vans because films were few and theatres did not exist in remote areas (Omijie 6).

The foregoing shows that, to a large extent, the development of film in Nigeria has a close link with the development of her political structures. Hence, the ideological underpinnings of her early political structures were exerted some influence on the ideological basis of her early film industry. In other words, from the onset, the stage was already set for a politics of culture; some sort of foreign-indigenous culture dialectic in the country’s fledgling cinema industry (Ekwenchi 231). Expectedly therefore, with the end of the colonial era, came attempts to indigenize film in Nigeria. This inevitably coincided – nay was intrinsically linked – with the efforts by the native leaders of the newly independent country to impose indigenous values and aspirations on the nation’s governing process. Onuzulike recalls that at this period, the Nigerian government continued the practice of the colonial government by concentrating on the production of

mostly documentaries and newsreel. This period was quite significant being that it marked the time when film production genuinely became an act by Nigerians for Nigerians. The Federal Film Unit did what its predecessor, the Colonial Film Unit, did not do by way of being concerned with training Nigerians in the art of filmmaking (113).

At this time came the famous Yoruba travelling theatre as pioneered by the likes of Hubert Ogunde and Ola Balogun in the 1960s. Their productions became a landmark in the development of private filmmaking in Nigeria, such that whatever later development in building film as an economic sub-sector owed so much to this era (Fafiolu 22). However, the post-independence era witnessed continued influence of Lebanese and Indian film distributors who dominated the film distribution and exhibition sector in Nigeria. This is irrespective of the Indigenisation Decree of 1972 which gave exclusive rights of film distribution to Nigerians. According to Onuzulike, the three main feature film distribution outlets were the American Motion Pictures Exporters and Cinema Association (AMPECA), NDO Films, and ACINE Films. "NDO Films and ACINE Films are Lebanese companies which control the importation and distribution of Indian films and the films from other Asian countries" (p.103). The foregoing indicates that at this period, the film industry in the country was yet to be fully possessed by Nigerians; there was still an appreciable degree of direct foreign influence both in the cultural and economic sense.

Nevertheless, the revolution came with what Onuzulike describes as the "Nollywood Period", the fourth stage in the evolution of the cinema industry in Nigeria (133). Kenneth Nnabue's movie, *Living in Bondage*, produced in 1992, is seen as having set the pace for the emergence of indigenous professional cinema industry in the country (Fafiolu 3, Onuzulike 177, Akpabio, 207, Nbeta *et al*/132, Idogho 2). Onuzulike argues that this phase in the development of indigenous film industry in Nigeria was inspired by the prevailing socio-economic circumstances:

Nollywood emerged as a result of several factors, one being economics. The low cost of video technology, coupled with greater awareness and demand for home entertainment, led to the rise of videofilm producers. In addition, the military government and the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAP) further affected the Nigerian economy, resulting in reduced funding for celluloid productions (177-178).

The unprecedented success of *Living in Bondage* – with over seven hundred and fifty thousand copies reportedly sold – stimulated indigenous filmmaking activities with series of other releases following in quick succession, and till today, the momentum seems never to have been lost. Today, Nollywood is ranked the third largest film industry in the world, after Hollywood and Bollywood, and its films have gained international recognition (Akpabio, 209). Its distribution channels include physical and online sales as well as cinema exhibition (Idogho 5).

In view of the foregoing, there is no doubt that indigenous films have emerged as a prominent aspect of popular culture in Nigeria. As a conspicuous element in the nation's cultural arena there is no gainsaying the fact that it has become integrated in the dynamics of the people's way of life where it reproduces and is reproduced by the people's worldview, norms, values, morals, language, music, diet, religion, etc. (Adesanya 321). Inevitably, as it were, its evolution has been tied to the political cum ideological dialectic of colonisation versus decolonisation.

CULTURAL HYBRIDISATION: AN OVERVIEW

The word "hybridisation" expresses the same phenomenon as hybridity. Hybridity refers in its most basic sense to mixture; its origin is biology and was subsequently employed in linguistics and in racial theory in the nineteenth century. However, today, its contemporary uses are scattered across numerous academic

disciplines and is salient in popular culture (Furlong 237). According to Nederveen-Pieterse, the term hybridity itself is not a modern coinage. It was common among the Greeks and Romans. In Latin “hybrida” or “ibrida” refers to “the offspring of a tame sow and a wild boar, child of a free man and a slave,” (Acheraiou 190) and by extension to the progeny of a Roman man and a non-Roman woman. The word hybridity was in use in English since the early 17th century and gained popular currency in the 19th century. Charles Darwin used this term in 1837 in reference to his experiments in cross-fertilization in plants. However, the concept of hybridity was fraught with negative connotations from its incipience (Furlong 237).

In cultural terms, hybridity refers to mixture or cross-breeding of culture as observed by Acheraiou:

Hybridity is a cross between two separate races, plants or cultures. A hybrid is something that is mixed, and hybridity is simply mixture. Hybridity is not a new cultural or historical phenomenon. It has been a feature of all civilizations since time immemorial, from the Sumerians through the Egyptians, Greeks and Romans to the present. Both ancient and modern civilizations have, through trade and conquests, borrowed foreign ideas, philosophies, and sciences, thus producing hybrid cultures and societies (190).

Cultural hybridity explains the process whereby elements of one culture mix with those of others whether in practice or in representation in art forms such as literature, film etc to generate a supposedly new cultural experience (Kraidy 316, Idogho 13). In Nollywood films, hybridity has become an important perspective as scholars engage with how culture is expressed in Nigerian films, particularly within the context of the western-local culture dialectic. More precisely, attention has been paid to how these films blend elements of local and foreign cultures; how the films come out as a

hybrid of indigenous and western cultural contents (Idogho 13, Onuzulike 176).

However, cultural hybridity presents its difficulties and contestations. While some scholars see it as a natural consequence of interaction between local and foreign cultures; an inevitable and indeed desirable result of the dynamism which is a necessary characteristic of culture (Omoniyi 109, Okeoma 12) others see it as a dysfunctional phenomenon which consequent is nothing but domination and erosion of indigenous culture by foreign cultures (Asogwa *et al.* 97, Fafiolu 22). The reasoning behind the argument that sees hybridization in film as normal if not desirable is summarized by Idogho:

Looking at the world history in the rear mirror, we know that sharp transformations have occurred every few hundred years in the Western culture. Sometimes, we call these occurrences, “paradigm shifts.” In popular language, it means that we cross a “divide.” Following the crossing of the divide, culture and society work hard to rearrange themselves, including basic values, the worldview, social structures, arts, and institutions. After some decades, there is a “new world.” The people born in the new world cannot imagine the world of their grandparents and ancestors. Thus, we are currently living through such a transformation in this 21st Century, specifically (1).

On the other hand, the opposing argument, which views hybridization as cultural domination is aptly formulated by Osondu: Africans have been brought up in at least two cultures, which are African and Western; as a result, they have lost the richness of their culture, and casually pass on what remains to next generation. In other words, African parents and

their traditions may not be as strong as in previous generations (181).

NOLLYWOOD AND CULTURAL HYBRIDISATION

Generally, the reality of hybridisation in Nollywood films has been widely admitted in discourse (Agba 265, Idogho 2, Omijie 13, Onuzulike 176, Osondu 181, Uche 54). This phenomenon reflects in virtually all elements that make up a film work including language, costume, music and props among others. Thus, in Nollywood films, one, many a time, finds blending of elements of indigenous and foreign culture. Cultural hybridisation in Nollywood films have been explained in a number of ways. Stated differently, scholars have attempted to offer various explanations as to why Nigerian films embody cultural hybridisation. One school of thought is of the view that hybridisation is a function of western cultural imperialism. Thus, Danbello and Dakogol argue that “Nigerian culture has been invaded by the foreign cultures through the use of communications systems like films. History has shown that the intrusion of Western culture into the third world nations [like Nigeria] through the use of communications facilities has always been rampant” (14).

The cultural erosion perspective, like the cultural rediscovery perspective, is founded on some form of confrontational (or competitive) conception of the relationship between cultures. Every culture is seen as engaged in a battle for self-preservation against intruding cultures. This view of cultural relationship generates a kind of protectionism in the realm of communications as communication media (including film) are viewed as an instrument of cultural aggression which every people endeavour to perfect for the purpose of cultural expansion and defence. This sentiment is evident in the following words of Nbeté and Ikiroma-Owiye regarding the influence of foreign films in Nigeria:

Since its initial inception, film has been used as a medium for influencing the psychology of individuals and societies in diverse realms of

cultural life. This raises concerns about the growing dominance of Hollywood packaged films in Nigeria, as these films do not have sufficient cultural recipe, if any at all, for the socialization of Nigerian children? There is no gainsaying that the content and packaging of Western films are powerful instruments of Western imperialism, essentially designed as an insidious mechanism for fostering massive exportation of Western culture and products into other countries, especially the Third World Countries (TWCs). The influence of Western culture on Nigerian culture and collective social psyche manifests in their modes of dressing, choice of food, holiday culture, sexual habit, development strategies, and even foreign policies, etc. (123).

The argument of the proponents of the cultural erosion perspective is largely based on the allegation that Nollywood filmmakers, rather than successfully appropriating indigenous films as a vehicle for projecting the indigenous culture, are furthering the cultural expansionist ambitions of the West through their inability to checkmate the infiltration of Western culture into the text of their productions. This tendency is attributed to a number of facts such as the continued technological and economic reliance of Africa on the West and hangover from colonialism which has translated to unending cultural slavery (Uche 54).

However, another school of thought views cultural hybridisation in Nollywood as stemming from the very dynamic of culture. Cultural dynamism is a sociological concept that attempts to capture culture as a process; as an evolving as against a concluded, static phenomenon (Oranye 56, Nonyelu 18). In other words, culture is seen as a discourse, in a process of constant transformation. The cultural dynamism perspective understands that our culture is not inscribed in our DNA; it is not ontologically

attached to our being; rather it is acquired through the social process of interaction at the various levels of social organisation – familial, communal, national and transnational. This interaction continually realigns our cultural landscape and rewrites our cultural history as aptly depicted by Idogho:

Looking at the world history in the rear mirror, we know that sharp transformations have occurred every few hundred years in the Western culture. Sometimes, we call these occurrences, “paradigm shifts.” In popular language, it means that we cross a “divide.” Following the crossing of the divide, culture and society work hard to rearrange themselves, including basic values, the worldview, social structures, arts, and institutions. After some decades, there is a “new world.” The people born in the new world cannot imagine the world of their grandparents and ancestors. Thus, we are currently living through such a transformation in this 21st Century, specifically (1).

Against the foregoing, the dichotomy of *ours* and *theirs* becomes blurred as far as culture is concerned. Humans continuously learn and unlearn their cultures. There is no form of cultural expression that can be strictly, exclusively and eternally attributed to a particular people. Hence Okeoma observes that “certain factors are altering the profile of what could be regarded as the country’s (Nigeria) culture, while the home-video industry itself is undergoing a crucial transition” (12). In other words, the continued evolution of the Nigeria’s social space with the attendant transformations in cultural patterns makes it increasingly problematic to pigeonhole the people into a particular static cultural identity; a situation that naturally reflects in the cultural colouration of Nollywood films. Hence, Onuzulike argues that Nigerian video films that emulate other cultures particularly

western culture “depict a hybridization of African and western culture” (180).

LANGUAGE-BASED CULTURAL HYBRIDISATION

Language is a mutually upheld system of codes for sharing of meaning, whether spoken or written, among a people. Language is central to human communication. Dunu describes it as “a basic form of communication which is continuous and eternal” (178). Language, as every other element of culture, could be subjected to hybridization. Experience of African countries and races is replete with instances of language-based cultural hybridisation. This occurs when a foreign language finds its way into an indigenous lingual space and shares this space with it (Taiwo 226). In Nigeria, for instance, English language has come to be spoken side by side indigenous languages. There is also blending of indigenous languages with English language as people introduce English words, phrases and sentences while speaking their indigenous languages and vice versa (Ojoma 34).

However, language-based hybridization has been a controversial phenomenon as many scholars and stakeholders view this as a form of cultural imperialism. They see this as undermining if not completely eroding the indigenous languages (Chukwujekwu 4; Dunu 189). Chukwujekwu, expressing this sentiment, argues:

By failing to speak and write our language or by blending it with European languages, we are allowing our language to be subdued; we are submitting ourselves to lingual slavery. Because language is critical to consciousness and social memory, lingual colonization is the highest point of colonization; lingual slavery is the ultimate slavery (4).

However, those who view hybridisation from the point of view of cultural dynamism might argue that lingual hybridisation does not necessarily imply lingual imperialism. No language is an

island unto itself and none can validly lay claim to complete self-purity as languages develop and borrow from other languages in their process of evolution. A lot of peoples and races have seen their languages change over time; some have had their languages modified while others have had to adopt and speak a completely new language (Chukwujekwu 9).

Once language-based hybridisation becomes real in a society, it naturally reflects in other aspects of its culture including its literature, music, film etc just because language is a key vehicle for expressing these cultural elements. This has become the experience of a country like Nigerian where as far as language of expression is concerned, contemporary art expressions is far from being monolithic but rather a hybrid of indigenous and foreign languages (Dunu 181; Ojoma 56).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To place this study in a proper theoretical framework, the researcher settled for the postcolonial theory. As a theory, postcolonialism is an approach that critically focuses on the colonial experience and its impact on the worldview of the colonised people. It is related to postmodernism in that just as postmodernism stands in opposition to modernism, postcolonialism stands in opposition to colonialism (Dershowitz 342). Writing on postcolonialism, Ilo observes:

As a literary theory or critical approach, post-colonialism examines the literature by or about colonized people. On the one hand, it studies how the colonizer's literature justifies colonialism through images of the colonized as inferior people, society, and culture. On the other hand, it examines how colonized people articulate and celebrate their cultural identity by writing back in the colonizer's language to redress negative labels (6).

Nollywood, in some sense, has been viewed as a postcolonial experience; a sort of statement of intent on the part of a previously colonized people; a bold attempt to retell their story and recapture their cultural destiny (Onuzulike 176, Osondu 181, Uche 54, Taiwo 220, Zaidi 87). This attempt at cultural rediscovery, of course, also includes the lingual aspect of culture. Chukwujekwu (3) aptly expresses the sentiments of the postcolonialists when he argues that “language colonization is the most dangerous form of colonization; it is the worst form of slavery as it robs the colonized people of a critical instrument of identity and memory preservation.”

Of course, as earlier noted, the postcolonial theory is also interested in how the colonized people contribute in strengthening the colonial ideology (Ilo 6). Thus, this theory becomes relevant in interrogating Nollywood films in terms of the ideological undertone of lingual hybridity embodied by them – is such ideology pro or counter-colonialism? Do the films represent a protest against or acquiescence in lingual colonialism?

METHODOLOGY

This study will employ textual analysis (a form of qualitative content analysis) for a critical reading of the selected films under study in order to observe language-based hybridization patterns in line with the study objectives. Two films are purposively selected: *Money Making Machine* and *African Tradition*. The selection is based on the settings of the two films. The first is set in the contemporary (post-westernization) African society while the second is set in the pre-westernization African society. These two settings are considered significant given that they represent two significant epochs in the evolution of the indigenous lingual culture in Nigeria and Africa in general; the pre-westernisation era when indigenous languages were protected from foreign language influence hence secured from hybridisation and the post-westernisation era when the languages were prone to such influence hence open to hybridisation.

SYNOPSIS OF THE FILMS UNDER STUDY

Money Making Machine

Money Making Machine is a 2015 film produced by Amobi Onyenze Richard and directed by Ifeanyi Azodo. It is a story of a village young man, Obinna, who, assisted by his friends in the village, is able to travel abroad and eventually returns a very wealthy man. The wealthy Obinna becomes an eccentric character through his immodest display of wealth. He lives a flamboyant lifestyle, moving with convoy and security escorts and freely boasting of his affluence. The chieftaincy title he takes is quite instructive here – *Egbe a na-agba anyanwu*, literary “gunshots directed at the sun”; such gunshots would neither reach nor harm the sun – an imagery Obinna deploys to project himself as invincible due to his wealth. Worse, Obinna fails to recognize the benevolent sacrifice of his friends who had contributed money and also took some risks in ensuring he travelled abroad where he made his wealth. He exhibits contempt towards these old comrades of his and practically ridiculing them by giving them paltry sums to go and start up something.

However, things take a dramatic turn when a white woman, Alice, succeeds in tracing Obinna’s village in Nigeria. Alice was Obinna’s girlfriend whom he met abroad and promised to marry. She is a wealthy lady and had entrusted most of her wealth to Obinna believing he was a genuine husband-to-be only to see his beloved fiancé elope with her wealth disappearing into an elusive African village. Alice storms Obinna’s village with a fury of a wounded lion wielding a pistol. The whole episode ends in disgrace for Obinna who eventually loses everything and gets exposed as a dishonest opportunist and a dupe.

African Tradition

African Tradition is a 2016 film produced by Christian Ndulue and directed by Okonkwo Chikelue. It focuses on the man Ichie Nnadozie who is bent on retaining the village kingship in his family as against the will of the gods who have decided to take it to

another family; the family of Ogbonna. Hence, a future son of Ogbonna has been destined to become the next Igwe. Therefore, immediately this son of Ogbonna, Emeka, is born, Ichie Nnadozie arranges for the baby's kidnap after which he is sent to a distant land where he is kept in the care of someone until he becomes a full adult. The grown-up Emeka then returns to his village of birth and dwells in Ichie Nnadozie's house (being that he believes this to be his home and Ichie Nnadozie his father). The young man is eventually crowned king according to the will of the gods. While Nnadozie has been denied kingship by the gods, he has succeeded in ensuring that he at least retains the stool in his family by kidnapping and coveting Ogbonna's son.

However, through a chain of co-incidences, Ogbonna begins to suspect that the new king Emeka is his son who was born years ago but mysteriously disappeared. He thus, begins to come around the palace with the hope of possibly unraveling the truth, but Ichie Nnadozie would have none of it, warning him to stay clear of the palace. Eventually, unfolding events forced Nnadozie's third wife, Ugochi, the purported mother of Emeka to confess that Emeka was not really her son; that he was merely kidnapped from his real mother upon birth. This confession opens the Pandora's Box, exposing the whole machination of Nnadozie and returning Emeka to his real parents thus finally restoring the kingship to their family.

Textual Analysis

Textual analysis of the above two films in terms of language-based hybridisation reveals the following three tendencies:

- Thematic Emphasis
- Setting Harmony
- Lingual Protectionism

Thematic Emphasis

The introduction of Igbo language in the two films under review serves the purpose of thematic emphasis. This is evident, first, in

the soundtracks of the two films which are rendered in Igbo language and which wordings reflect the theme of the dramas. In *Money Making Machine*, the soundtrack repeatedly mentions the title taken by Obinna – “*Egbe a na-agba anyanwu...*” (“gunshots directed to the sun...”); an expression that features ubiquitously in the dialogues themselves and conveys an imagery of a pompous, boastful and arrogant wealthy man, which constitutes an important element of the film’s thematic structure. Similarly, in *African Tradition*, the soundtrack clearly embodies the theme of the drama which is man’s fruitless machination against the inviolable will of the gods.

Apart from the soundtracks, Igbo language expressions employed in the dialogues in the two films are similarly situated to emphasis the themes of the plays. In *Money Making Machine*, expressions by the major character, Obinna, such as “*e nwego m ego*” (“I am now wealthy”), “*kedu ife icholu ka m meelu gi*” (“what do you want let me do it for you”), “*Akalilu m okwu nkotelu*” (I am greater than every challenge”) etc tend to portray arrogance and vulgar display of affluence which are central thematic elements in the film. Similarly, in scenes where supporting characters express outrage against Obinna’s excesses, Igbo language expressions are deployed; for instance, when a daughter of the king who Obinna was wooing exclaimed “*onye a na-eme ka onye ihe na-eme n’isi*” (“this man behaves like a mentally derailed”); when a friend of Obinna, Ikenna, said “*Obinna imazikwa ife I na-eme?*” (“Obinna are you still without your senses?”); or when another villager exclaimed “*Onye bukwa nkea?*” (“Who is this man?”). All these expressions put the central themes of arrogance and vulgar display of affluence in sharp relief by way of opposing and rejecting them. Such discursive juxtaposition and contradiction are an important strategy for achieving thematic emphasis in drama (Durojaiye 133).

The same tendency is found in *African Tradition* where expressions like “*Mmuo kalili mmadu*” (“Spirit is more powerful than humans”) made by the Ezemmuo (the chief priest), “*A na-amu eze amu adighi abu ya abu*” (“one is born and not made a king”)

made by a diviner, and “*Nkata ga-egkpudoriri onye aghugho*” (the treacherous man must meet his retribution”) made by Ogbonna all lay emphasis on the drama’s central themes of inviolability of the gods’ will and retributive justice. These Igbo expressions are introduced intermittently within the dominant English dialogues in a manner that clearly suggests emphasis.

In the two films, also, traditional Igbo proverbs and idioms are in many instances rendered in Igbo language. These wise sayings often have bearing on the themes of the films, suggesting that the lingual hybridisation is deliberately deployed to emphasise the themes. Deployment of Igbo expressions for the purpose of thematic emphasis in the two films might have been informed by the need to connect the theme to the setting. While the film is dominantly English, its setting is Igbo – a contradiction that necessitated a compromise, a lingual hybridisation to connect the message (theme) to the setting. This strategy appears to stem from the idea that an Igbo setting ought to be validated by the appropriate language – Igbo. This, in a way, may be viewed as a counter-narrative directed against the contemporary culture where English language is “intruding” even in the traditional settings. Hence, postcolonial sentiment may be identified as a motive here.

Setting Harmony or Concord

A critical look at many of the scenes in both *Money Making Machine* and *African Tradition* reveals that some of the settings or situations are profoundly native and so arguably demands copious introduction of native language. This is more visible in *African Tradition* where there are several scenes featuring traditional prayer, sacrifice and divination. These scenes feature lingual hybridisation but with much prominence accorded to Igbo language, the language that is in perfect harmony or concord with the setting or situation. Thus, we find the chief priest reciting almost all the lines of his prayers in Igbo language with English being merely secondary. For instance, we hear the following lines from the priest punctuated by beatings of the *ogene* (metal gong):

Umu mmuo nuru nu onu m (Spirits I greet you all)

Akpokuo m uno (I call on you)

Nekwa nu aja m na-achuru unu (behold the sacrifice I offer to you)

Aka m dikwa ocha (My hands are clean)

Aka m dikwa ocha (My hands are clean)

Eji m aka ocha welu bia (I come with clean hands)...

The above represents an exclusive use of Igbo language in a fairly long speech as the setting apparently demands. Thus, hybridisation becomes an element for harmonizing the setting with the speech to enhance content unity in the drama.

In *Money Making Machine*, a similar setting-enhancing role is given to Igbo language in the scene of the traditional marriage rites of Obinna and his would-be bride. Igbo language is copiously blended with English language to achieve the native flavour characteristic of a traditional marriage setting. A parallel to this is found in real life practice where English language may be used by Igbo people in moderating a white wedding while Igbo language is the accepted standard for a traditional marriage ceremony.

In the two films, the soundtracks are also deployed for achieving this purpose. While the scenes are exclusively or dominantly English, Igbo soundtracks furnish the native flavour that tends to preserve the native (or traditional) solemnity of the setting irrespective of the intrusion by the alien English language. This way, lingual hybridisation stands as a strategy for enhancing the locality of the setting by reducing the role of the alien language and allowing the appropriate local language to fill the space. This is obviously a sentiment that is associated with postmodernism and its tendency to reclaim the indigenous cultural space of the formerly colonized people.

Lingual Protectionism

By protectionism is meant the process of shielding an indigenous culture from the corrosive influence of a foreign culture. This is more properly known as cultural protectionism which is a response

to cultural imperialism whereby nations adopt measures aimed at preserving their culture against the perceived assault of alien cultures (Okunna 119). In *Money Making Machine*, language-based hybridisation is found to have been deployed as an instrument of protectionism; lingual protectionism. In other words, introduction of Igbo language in some instances appears to serve the purpose of preserving or promoting the language.

A conspicuous instance of this occurs when Alice, Obinna's girlfriend, comes into his village searching for him. A complete stranger in a completely strange land, Alice has a lot of barriers to surmount including language barrier. Along the line she encounters two young men and asks them how to locate a man known as Obinna. Immediately, a culture clash is evoked as the two young men cannot understand the language of Alice. But far from being apologetic or even embarrassed for not understanding English as might be expected of young people in our contemporary westernized society, the two young men rather speak to each other ridiculing the foreigner's inability to understand or speak Igbo language. This encounter seems a deliberate attempt by the scriptwriter to make a statement in favour of dignity of Igbo language and its equal status with any foreign language including English. The other film, *African Tradition*, does not have need for such lingual protectionism as the film's setting – pre-westernised Africa – does not admit of any foreign language interference. Such lingual protectionism continues to recur as Alice goes after Obinna who is now aware of her presence in the village.

Through discourses like this, hybridisation becomes a tool for placing Igbo language in an equal pedestal as English language. Cultural protectionism thus becomes the ideological motive of language-based hybridisation. Such protectionism, of course, underscores the postcolonial character of the lingual hybridisation.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The foregoing analysis reveals a number of tendencies in the way language-based hybridisation is deployed in Nigerian films. First, such hybridisation is employed for the purpose of achieving thematic emphasis i.e. reinforcing the message of the drama. In this instance, lingual hybridisation introduces indigenous language in an English language film by way of soundtracks and dialogues that project the central themes of the film.

Similarly, lingual hybridisation is deployed in the films to enhance harmony between the local setting of the films and the words spoken (dialogues). Thus, while the scenes of such films are exclusively or dominantly English, native language soundtracks and dialogues provide the native flavour that tends to preserve the native solemnity of the setting against the “intrusion” of the alien English language. In the same vein, language-based hybridisation is found to have been deployed as an instrument of cultural (lingual) protectionism. It is employed for the purpose of placing Igbo language in an equal pedestal as English language. Cultural protectionism thus becomes the ideological *raison d’être* of lingual hybridisation.

CONCLUSION

From the findings, it could be concluded that language-based hybridisation in Nollywood films is informed by both creative and ideological concerns. The creative concern is with regard to achieving thematic emphasis and setting harmony, while its ideological motive is to preserve and promote indigenous language. Hence, the pattern of lingual hybridisation in the films may potentially favour the quest to shield indigenous languages from the perceived assault of foreign languages, especially English. Thus, viewed from the perspective of the postcolonial theory, these films represent a protest against perceived lingual colonization and neocolonization. They represent an attempt to contradict an existing ideology that privileges a western language (English) over indigenous languages.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above findings and conclusion, the following recommendations were put forwards by the researcher:

1. Filmmakers in the country should do more towards promoting indigenous languages through films. Blending English and indigenous languages (hybridisation) may not be enough, as there is still need to produce exclusively native language films especially Igbo films which number has been observed to be low in recent time (Ekwenchi et al. 15).
2. There is need to encourage production of indigenous language films by way of instituting high profile awards to reward local language filmmakers. Such awards would potentially enhance growth in the quantity and quality of native language films produced in the country.
3. There should be an audience-focused study regarding language-based hybridisation in Nollywood films. This time, the objective would be to investigate how the audience view such hybridisation and how much it influences their reception and comprehension of the message of the films.

Prof. Isaiah Uche Ilo

Department of Theatre Arts

University of Abuja, Nigeria.

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Somtoo Obiefuna Arinze-Umobi

Department of Theatre and Film Studies,

Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria.

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