

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

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A Postcolonial Study of the Effects of Linguistic Imperialism in Tsitsi

Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions (1988)

A dissertation submitted to the department of English in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in English: Literature, Civilization, and Language Teaching.

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Academic year: 2016-2017

Dedication

This work is affectionately dedicated to my family members and friends

Acknowledgments

Above all, I thank Allah the Almighty for having given me the strength and patience to complete this work. Glory and praise for Him.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Mrs. Soumia Bentahar whom I respect deeply, and who has seriously directed me in this work with her competence, generosity, and patience. I thank her for the understanding, encouragement, guidance, valuable comments, and the unreserved attention and time she spent observing my effort.

I wish to address my sincere thanks to all our teachers without whom bringing this dissertation to its end would have never been possible.

Abstract

This research demonstrates the effects of linguistic imperialism on Africans through a postcolonial reading to Tsitsi Dangarembga's novel *Nervous Conditions* (1988). The main focus of this study is on the cultural and psychological effects that linguistic imperialism has on the African persona. Therefore, a description of the postcolonial African writers' choice of language is discussed. Moreover, the colonial linguistic practices that are done to elevate the status of European languages are also examined in this research. Strategies of escaping the linguistic complex condition that Africans undergo during and post-apartheid are also given great importance in this study.

Key Words: aftermaths, linguistic imperialism, Africans, postcolonial, *Nervous Conditions*, language, escaping.

Résumé

Cette recherche démontre les effets de l'impérialisme linguistique sur les Africains à travers une lecture postcoloniale aux *Conditions Nerveuses* (1988) de Tsitsi Dangarembga. L'étude principale porte sur les effets culturels et psychologiques que l'impérialisme linguistique fait sur la personne africaine. Par conséquent, une description du choix du langage postcolonial des écrivains africains est discutée. De plus, les pratiques linguistiques coloniales qui sont faites pour élever le statut des langues européennes sont également examinées dans cette recherche. Les stratégies pour échapper à la condition complexe linguistique que subissent les Africains pendant et après l'apartheid ont également une grande importance dans cette étude.

Mots-clés: effets, impérialisme linguistique, Africains, postcolonial, *Conditions Nerveuses*, langue, échappé.

ملخص

يظهر هذا البحث آثار الإمبريالية اللغوية على الأفارقة و ذلك من خلال تحليل رواية 'ظروف عصبية' (1988) للكاتبة تسييتسي دانغاريمبغا عبر منهج ما بعد كولونيالي. وينصب التركيز الرئيسي لهذه الدراسة على الآثار الثقافية والنفسية للإمبريالية اللغوية على الأفارقة بعد الاستعمار. ولذلك تتم مناقشة اختيار الكتاب الإفريقيين للغة التأليف في فترة ما بعد الكولونيالية. ويناقش هذا البحث أيضا الممارسات اللغوية الاستعمارية التي تتم من أجل رفع مستوى اللغات الأوروبية. كما ان لوسائل التهرب من الحالة اللغوية المعقدة التي يتعرض لها الأفارقة خلال فترة ما بعد الكولونيالية أهمية كبيرة في هذا البحث.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الآثار، الإمبريالية اللغوية، الأفارقة، ما بعد الكولونيالية، 'ظروف عصبية'، اللغة، التهرب.

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General Introduction

In Western countries, people rarely question the effect that colonization has made on their languages. Africans, however, consciously or unconsciously; spend most of their time struggling with linguistic alienation burdening their absolute independence. Now, most African people are suffering from what is termed 'linguistic imperialism' which refers to the gradual replacement of a native language by a dominant one usually through careful colonial plans. Along the newly dominant language, aspects of the supreme culture are also transferred to the native people. The former colonizers did a number of educational and terminological tactics to impose their language on Africans. When Africans assume the colonizer's language at the expense of their native mother-tongue they appear to agonize cultural, social, and psychological hardships.

Language is a central concern in postcolonial studies. During colonization, colonizers encouraged the use of their language often by preventing natives from using their mother tongues. Many postcolonial African writers who were educated under colonization recount how schoolchildren have been devalued, humiliated, or even beaten when they use their native language. As a reaction to the linguistic imperialism, a number of postcolonial writers support the return to the use of native languages in their writings as a natural duty to their people. Others believe that the language imposed by the colonizers is a better alternative for enhancing awareness about the colonial experience at an international level.

The concept of 'linguistic imperialism' emerges as part of postcolonial studies in the 1990s to better describe the status of language in apartheid and post-apartheid sceneries. Since the early 1990s, analysis related to linguistic imperialism has fascinated scholars of applied linguistics as well as postcolonial researchers. In particular, Robert

Phillipson's book, *Linguistic Imperialism* (1992), debates the conditions that have led to the currently dominant status of English in the world and the shortcomings of such dominance.

The debate concerning the effects of linguistic imperialism has attracted much of critics' attention. Imperialism in its colonial and neo-colonial¹ gowns continue to control the economy, the politics, and even the culture of post-colonial Africa. This act of dominance made the English language, and in some cases French and Portuguese, a universal language for diplomacy. Scholars of linguistics name this 'linguistic imperialism' referring to an imperious language causing the 'linguicide' of other indigenous languages often through applying an effective language-education policy. It is by no means an accident that the former colonizers are profoundly committed to propagating myths about the importance of learning their language.

The term linguistic imperialism first appeared in the 1930s as part of a review on Basic English and was reinstated by Robert Phillipson in his book *Linguistic Imperialism*. The book offers English language teachers with the shocking proposition that teaching English is itself an act of promoting linguistic imperialism. Through historical, theoretical and ideological discourse analysis; Phillipson examines the instances by which English has become dominant and the conditions that make it possible. The leading argument in his *Linguistic Imperialism* is that the spread of English tends to weaken the rights of other languages.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o further explores this argument and puts it into the African postcolonial scenery. He believes that African writers should be the ones to find paths out

¹Neo-colonialism is the act of using capitalism, globalization, and cultural forces to dominate a less powerful country. The dominance over this country may be economic, cultural, or linguistic.

of the “linguistic encirclement” (5) of their continent and that it is unfortunate to find that they “came to be defined and to define themselves in terms of the languages of imperialist imposition” (5). He argues that only African languages can bear the weight of the African experience. Thus, the suppression of African languages and the act of replacing them by the language and the literature of the colonizer are taking the Africans “further and further from [themselves] to other selves, from [their] world to other worlds” (12).

Chinua Achebe seems to claim a different view. He maintains that English can bear the burden and texture of the multi-experience found in Africa. Achebe thinks that by using a ‘new’ English which is “altered to suit new African surroundings” (62) we can still define our own culture. Achebe is therefore among the researchers who debate the function of linguistic imperialism. These scholars support linguistic imperialism and claim that English as a ‘lingua franca’ facilitates cooperation at the international level. They acclaim spreading English and place it as a tool that fetches globalization.

Furthermore, supporters of linguistic imperialism point out that a language, in itself, is unable to be imperialistic. H.G Widdowson argues that “there is a fundamental contradiction in the idea that the language of itself exerts hegemonic control: namely that if this were the case, you would never be able to challenge such control” (398). Other critics believe that Phillipson’s theory is depreciating developing countries since it shows that they are incapable of making decisions about language-choice. Such critics might generate the feeling of unnecessarily guilty for English language teachers. To certain extent, the position reached by English in the world is the result of a number of interwoven processes “brought about by those who actively promote the language and those who consciously choose to learn it” (Sandra Lee McKay 24). Hence it might be inferred that, while those who agree with Phillipson regard language-choice as outwardly imposed, the other group views it as a decision made by the individuals.

Escaping linguistic imperialism and the process of decolonizing African languages should turn to be the central concern of postcolonial African writers. The way Africans tend to retrieve their linguistic rights is both an issue demanding our attention and a problem calling for firm resolution. Bill Ashcroft et al. state that one reaction against the supremacy of the imperial language is through “rejection and subversion” (283 *Reader*). The manners of decolonization proposed by Ngugi wa Thiong’o best demonstrate this. The choice of language is central to people’s definition of themselves. Thus, Ngugi calls for reestablishing the national identity that is rooted in the mother tongue through a terminal rejection of the colonizer’s language. Other critics believe that de-anglicisation is the right response to English linguistic imperialism.

Much ink has been spent on analyzing Tsitsi Dangarembga’s *Nervous Conditions* (1988) from a feminist viewpoint. Although the novel focuses mainly on the suffering of African women, Dangarembga manages to deliver the grief of both men and women during missionary education. Thus, the novel can be read with focus on English linguistic imperialism. In her novel, Dangarembga explores how “power relations are [...] exercised implicitly in language” (Norman Fairclough 6). Throughout the novel, Dangarembga keeps mentioning instances where English is considered dominant over the inferior Shona language. Moreover, colonial cultural and linguistic dominance is apparent in the ruinous magnetism of the ‘Englishness.’ Dangarembga portrays the catastrophic results of this problem through the characters’ agony.

Language undoubtedly holds power, and in multilingual contexts this leads to inevitable complications. These complications are revealed to be more cultural and psychological in some postcolonial texts. Since many postcolonial writings are set in patriarchal communities, the portrayal of linguistic conditions is coupled with discussion of gender politics. The power of language to displace, chain, or even set free is exhibited

greatly in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*, the award-winning first English novel written by a Zimbabwean woman. Seminal in the novel is Dangarembga's treatment of how language loss may result in dreadful psychological, cultural, and physical effects.

Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* is a fascinating bildungsroman, depicting the development of the protagonist Tambu as she strives to obtain an identity in Rhodesia. Characters in *Nervous Conditions* not only face trouble for being colonized by a race other than theirs, but also by a race that is relegating their culture and language. Possibly, the most important subject has been dealt with in *Nervous Conditions* is that of language dominance, particularly in the surrounding circumstances of colonial and postcolonial periods.

Nervous Conditions is a modern classic in the African literary tradition and is situated amongst the best African accounts in the 20th Century. The novel discusses the politics of decolonization that different characters embrace so as to escape the linguistic nervous condition that they experience. Through a skillful discussion of linguistic hegemony and cultural issues, Tsitsi Dangarembga dramatizes the 'nervousness' of the postcolonial linguistic condition that still haunts some Africans. Tsitsi Dangarembga envisions the situation of Africans in Rhodesia during both colonial and postcolonial locations. Native language in Dangarembga's novel is manifested, to a great extent, in a way that shows how both the colonizers and Africans themselves regard it as 'inferior.' Dangarembga portrays the injustice and marginality coming mainly from imperialist education tactics to bury African indigenous languages.

The pivotal purpose of our research is to mainly provide an analysis of the conditions of Africans who encounter an internal linguistic exile in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*. This research further seeks to demonstrate the effects of

marginalizing indigenous languages in Africa. In such colonial settings, the native language is of no value; hence linguistic liberty is strongly inhibited. Many of colonial traditions, especially linguistic ones, still find their way to get into Africans' minds and eventually worsen their lives. Hence, another ultimate objective of this study is to shed light on the danger of the cultural and linguistic inheritance from colonialism.

In postcolonial settings, one rarely wonders about the aftermaths of using the colonial language. The spread of English has accompanied the political and economic intentions of English-speaking nations to conquer other countries. This endangers their cultural ideals, their ways of life, and their indigenous languages. Thus, as learners and teachers of English, we should be aware of such linguistic imperiling. We, therefore, need to always arouse our critical thinking in order not to be promoters of linguistic imperialism. A great concern in the topic of 'linguistic imperialism' goes back to a personal enquiry about the dangers of expressing one's own thoughts using the colonizer's language.

Thus, the problematic of the current research rests on whether the global spread of English language threatens native languages and whether it threatens African cultures and identities. Other similar debatable research questions can be raised: Why do African writers add to the already existing stock of works and literatures written in English? Why does Tsitsi Dangarembga opt to write *Nervous Conditions* in English? What effect does linguistic imperialism make on characters in the novel? And what kind of resolution can be made to decolonize the local African language?

We hypothesize that the supremacy of the English language in the world imperils African native languages and cultures to some extent. The Africans' choice of the colonizer's language as a medium of authorship is assumed to indicate their entrapment

unless they successfully appropriate it to their experience. Tsitsi Dangarembga is among the writers who choose English in their texts yet manages to portray the cultural and psychological effects that linguistic imperialism makes on the African persona. We assume that postcolonial scholars, writers, and educators should be the ones committed to finding solutions to the linguistic dilemmas found in Africa. However, we argue that the act of liberating the African language must start from the individual's choice of his own language.

'Linguistic imperialism' in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* is discussed through a postcolonial perspective in order to demonstrate the impacts that 'linguistic imperialism' has on African populations. The postcolonial theory is an academic field of study that explores, describes, and responds to the cultural legacy of imperialism and colonialism. Since the theory mainly investigates the effects of colonial and neo-colonial rule on the cultural and linguistic aspects of the colony, we adopt this theory in our research to better exhibit the effects of linguistic imperialism on Africans.

The present research is mainly divided into three main chapters. The first two chapters represent the theoretical basis of the research. The last chapter delivers an engagement of the concept 'linguistic imperialism' into Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*.

Regarding the necessity of defining the concept 'linguistic imperialism,' the first chapter is totally dedicated to defining this concept as well as to delivering a brief explanation of postcolonialism. After presenting the definitions, the language of African literature is debated.

The second chapter is devoted to discussing the effects of linguistic imperialism on the African persona. Colonial linguistic practices are first debated. Then the psychological

and cultural effects of linguistic imperialism in Africa are presented. Manners of escaping linguistic imperialism are also given great attention in this chapter.

The third chapter is dedicated to analyzing *Nervous Conditions*. After presenting a background of the novel, the question of Dangarembga's 'English' choice for the novel is raised. Furthermore, Dangarembga's presentation of instances of the English linguistic domination is profoundly explained. After that, the manner Zimbabwean characters tend to escape their linguistic nervous condition is delivered with some illustrations extracted from the novel.

Chapter I: Linguistic Imperialism in Postcolonial African Fiction

Introduction:

Postcolonialism contains a number of theories that are linked to the social and cultural aftermaths of colonialism. It is also related to the literature written in the colonizer's language or any other language in countries that were or are still colonized. Postcolonial theorists' task is to change the common sense belief of observing colonized people as inferior. Postcolonial African writers, on the other hand, should be committed to the task of revealing the multi-oppression that Africans witness after independence as well as reclaiming their linguistic rights.

Linguistic imperialism has become one of the foremost concerns of postcolonial theorists. It refers to the process of transferring cultural, social, political, and even economic ideologies through imposing a standard language on other languages and peoples. The extension of one language over other languages may result in deteriorating the rights of other languages and therefore result in their inferiority. Hence, recent studies focus on the fact that language, like material and political imperialistic forces, can exercise power at the international level.

The politics of literary language is a perpetual concern of African thinkers. In pre-colonial Africa, the oral or written forms of literature, which are unquestionably written in African local languages, display a special way of exhibiting the African experience. However, in postcolonial settings, African writers come across a linguistic tangle. After independence, The African continent has become a multi-lingual space with hundreds of indigenous languages and a number of colonial languages. African writers are, thus,

gravitated by their duties as writers and their pledge to Africa to opt the right literary authorship that communicates profoundly to their readers.

I.1 Postcolonialism:

The terms postcolonialism and postcolonial first emerged in journals in the mid-1980s and in texts as subtitles in a number of works. Both terms became determinedly used in theoretical discourse by the early-mid 1990s. Postcolonialism is mainly related to the effects of colonialism on both societies and cultures. Originally and after the Second World War, the term ‘postcolonial’ had been used to infer a clear chronological denotation and to describe the ‘post-independence’ period. However, starting from the 1970s, the term has been used to refer to the different cultural aftermaths of colonization. (Bill Ashcroft et al. *Key* 168)

Postcolonialism embodies a heterogeneous ground of research, and whose spelling shows different standpoints. When the term ‘post-colonialism’ is spelled with a hyphen, it refers to the shift from a colonial to post-colonial condition— that is, it indicates the historical stage. The second orthographic type of the term ‘postcolonialism’ refers to the writings that tend to resist the colonial discourse both in the pre and post-colonial period. A number of critics think that the non-hyphenated orthographic covers a greater arena. The slashed orthographic spelling of the term ‘post/colonial,’ believe some critics, is more convenient than the two previously mentioned spellings since it stresses the interrelatedness between an unlimited amount of texts which share a parallel condition that exists in colonial and postcolonial discourses.

Formerly, the term ‘postcolonial’ per se was used to denote the cultural relations within colonial groups in literary arenas. Afterwards, the term has been conventionally used to designate the social, political, and linguistic practices in nations that were

previously colonized by Europeans. Postcolonialism is currently used in a variety of contexts as maintained by Ashcroft et al.:

postcolonialism is now used in wide and diverse ways to include the study and analysis of European territorial conquests, the various institutions of European colonialisms, the discursive operations of empire, the subtleties of subject construction in colonial discourse and the resistance of those subjects, and, most importantly perhaps, the differing responses to such incursions and their contemporary colonial legacies in both pre-and post-independence nations and communities. (*Key* 169)

The postcolonial African literature emerged during the last few decades when African writers have been reexamining their own culture and “their attitudes towards Europe and the west” (Gover et al. 1). Many postcolonial African writers had to be both artists and political activists. Earlier postcolonial works were marked by a sense of euphoria since most African countries were celebrating their independence. In the following years, as many African countries struggled to free their long-submissive culture, many postcolonial African writers began portraying the fears that their nations suffered from through depicting anger and despair in their writings.

The postcolonial theory came out when the once-colonized intellectuals have had time to re-think and write about their experiences of tyranny and to retrieve their lost cultural identity. Postcolonial theory focuses on unveiling the diminishing colonial discourses that constantly attempt at practicing the state of inferior on colonized people so as to exercise entire control. Therefore, the task of postcolonial theorists and writers is to voice up experiences of the often ‘silenced’ colonized subject. Therefore, postcolonial theory is generated from what the colonized people experience. Hence, most postcolonial

themes focus on colonized peoples' frustration, fears, hopes, dreams about the future, and linguistic clashes.

I.2 The Concept of Linguistic Imperialism:

We live in a world categorized by injustice— of race, nationality, class, gender, and most significantly of language. Though imperialism has been theorized mainly through economic, political, and military view points, later accounts of imperialism also embrace the social and cultural aspects of control. The theoretical readings grounding imperialism attempt to encompass the system which is promoting inequality. On almost all aspects of human conditions, including language, this monstrous inequality takes place among nations or within the same nation.

Hence, language can serve severe imperialistic purposes. English linguistic imperialism can be defined as the outcome of the continuous formation of “structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages.” Structural inequality refers to acclaiming material belongings like the financial portions whereas cultural inequality infers dominance over immaterial matters like pedagogic principles. English language speakers continue to benefit from these material and immaterial inequalities which also tend to ensure the continued profit of more substantial properties to English than to other languages. (Phillipson 47)

The Ghanaian sociolinguist, Gilbert Ansre, describes linguistic imperialism through a clear cited statement as follows:

The phenomenon in which the minds and lives of the speakers of a language are dominated by another language to the point where they believe that they can and should use only that foreign language when it comes to transactions

dealing with the more advanced aspects of life such as education, philosophy, literature, governments, the administration of justice. [...]Linguistic imperialism has a subtle way of warping the minds, attitudes, and aspirations of even the most noble in a society and of preventing him from appreciating and realizing the full potentialities of the indigenous languages. (12-13)

Two main educational planning mechanisms are used to legitimize English linguistic imperialism. One is labeled 'anglocentricity' and is related language and culture. The other is related to pedagogy and is named 'professionalism.' The term anglocentricity is analogically related to ethnocentricity and refers to the practice of judging others' cultures according to one's own standards. Anglocentricity devalues other languages either through explicit judgments or by implicit implications. Professionalism is linked to limiting the scope of analyzing language learning to technical matters such as the techniques, the methods, and the procedures followed in ELT. Both anglocentricity and professionalism rationalize the needed theoretical background which contributes to ensure the structural and cultural disparities between English and the other languages. (Phillipson 47- 48)

Linguicism refers to the kind of discrimination that is related to language. Like racism, linguicism can be overt or covert, conscious or unconscious; and it might reflect some dominant stances and beliefs about the value of languages, dialects, and manners of speaking. Linguistic discrimination is also closely tied to class and color. For instance, French and Castilian Spanish are regarded as preeminent languages whereas the French Creole spoken by Haitians or the Spanish spoken by Mexicans are degraded. Such practices strengthen a hierarchy that sustains the white language, values, and ideals. (Adams et al. 147)

Linguistic imperialism is, thus, a sub-type of linguistic imperialism which refers to the status where language is the medium that keeps inequality of power relations. This has some aftermaths for learning especially when the mother tongue of children is ignored at schools. Hence, linguistic imperialism involves representation of the desirable features of a given language, for the intention of inclusion, and attributing undesirable characteristics to other languages, for the intention of exclusion. (Phillipson 55)

I.3 The Language of African Literature:

Reexamining the issue of language controversy in African literature leads one to question the subject of African identity and culture. African literature is marked by the existence of linguistic diversity that involves the use of indigenous languages, on the one hand, and the adoption of European languages on the other. These linguistic choices might determine some features of the African identity. Upon examination, this identity might reveal either an aesthetic complexity or a bitter multi-sidedness.

I.3.1 In Pre-colonial Period:

In the pre-colonial time, African people have managed to hand a tradition of oral literature from one generation to another for centuries. It is through this oral literature, that today's African culture has survived. Though pre-colonial literature is characterized by its oral nature, it should not; however, be labeled as purely 'verbal' since it was sometimes transformed into the written form.

The African traditional literature is an art that is categorized by its entertaining features as well as educational ones. It conforms to the cultural truths and ambitions that are valued by the whole society. Pre-colonial stories carried out goodness, morality, and harmony as essential components for reaching communal unity. This tied relationship between language and culture is described by Ngugi wa Thiong'o's depiction of

personal examples wherein the stories told in his native language, Gikuyu, were magical and powerful. He maintains that they valued words for their echoed meanings and tones. Language for them was more than a mere linear series of ordered words. It has the power of providing them with a view of the whole world through a special beauty of its own.

The special social atmosphere of Africa can be appropriately depicted through the adoption of ceremonial, magical, and divined features. That is, the distinct nature of the African world needs proper reflection through appropriate literature. This literature is marked by “its mixture of halfman-half-beast and of human beings all intermingling and interaction in a coexistence of mutual suspicion, hostility, and a cunning but also occasional moments of co-operation.” The social struggles, however, were depicted through epic poetic works honoring the valiant endeavors of their rulers and of the super natural men who served the society in the time of tragedy. (Ngugi 65)

Language, thus, is centrally related to “human experience, human culture, and the human perception of reality” (Ngugi 13). Hence, Orature besides the written forms of African literature in the pre-colonial period are undeniably better means for maintaining culture as well as exhibiting the African experience. This is clearly shown in the pieces written in African languages where authors feel free to describe African nature, proverbs, and other peculiarities.

I.3.2 In Post-colonial Period:

The language of African literature has always been a subject of controversy in most postcolonial debates. To resist the linguistic colonization of African literature, a number of writers and theorists have confirmed the necessity of writing a body of African literature in indigenous African languages. Most of the literature written in

colonial and postcolonial Africa is written in European languages. This shows the continuous colonial domination and imposition of European languages on African societies. Hence, it is imperative to discuss the writers' choice of language in the context of colonialism.

There exist a number of languages that are considered to be the natural languages of literary and political discourse. English, as French and Portuguese, is considered the language of negotiation between people in and outside Africa. Since Africa is known for the multiplicity of languages, these European languages are viewed as being the refuge able to unify African nations. Hence, many African writers choose European languages as a borrowed means that, for them, is able to carry the heavy African experience. Their efforts are put on how good they can make use of European languages so that to convey particularities like African proverbs, myths, and customs. (Ngugi 6- 8)

In the years following independence, African writers came across a central issue concerning language choice. Some writers, including Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Obi Wali, Abiola Irele, and Chinweizu; have chosen to reject European languages in favor of their own native African languages. By writing in English or any other European language, Ngugi theorizes, African writers are elevating European cultures at the expense of theirs. What concerns these writers is the fact that other languages than African one can never portray the complexity of the African experience and culture. Moreover, they believe that by writing in European languages they are excluding the majority of the African audience who are unable to read in these languages and who should be, logically, principally addressed.

Obi Wali is among the writers who strongly support the use of African languages in the writing of African works. Wali believes that writing in European language will certainly lead to a lifeless end which might lead to desolation, infertility, and obstruction. Wali's indication is due to the fact that the use of European tongues diminishes the texts which are written in African languages. Similarly, Irele thinks that the African writer can reach "deep recesses of what he calls the African ontology" only through using African languages. While Chinweizu maintains that African languages must be at the foreground of the African people's productive quest, Ruhumbika proclaims that African languages are the only possible means through which writers represent prospered African writings. (Samuel Gyasi Obeng et al. 98- 100)

Supporters of the use of African languages are opposed by a number of African writers including Chinua Achebe, and others who challenged the effectiveness of this standpoint although they are not necessarily against it. In fact, Achebe is conscious of the alienation outcome when the African writer uses a foreign language since it shows, in his view, a disloyalty of one's own origins and identity. Hence, the African writer's choice of another language echoes a fundamental crisis. (Obeng et al. 100)

The selection of a European language is unquestionably dangerous; however, Achebe argues that the crisis also provides another opportunity for the African writer. For Achebe, African writers can recreate an English language that best suits their atmosphere. Achebe believes that some European languages, as a matter of fact, have been used in the African land for so long period that they can no more be considered as foreign. According to Achebe, African writers can adapt English to their special conditions and engage it expressively. (Obeng et al. 100- 101)

Out of such linguistic choices, one might raise a similar investigation as Ngugi wa Thiong'o's:

Why, we may ask, should an African writer, or any, writer, become so obsessed- by taking form his mother tongue, to enrich other tongues? Why should he see it as his particular mission? We never asked ourselves: how can we enrich our languages? How can we 'prey', on the rich humanist and democratic heritage in the struggles of other peoples in other times and other places to enrich our own? Why not, have Balzac, Tolstoy [...] and Plato in- African languages? (8)

Such questions enforce one to wonder about the reasons behind the Africans' lack of personal literary shrines. Where does the charge of African writers for the struggles of their peoples lay? What seemed more important for Afro-European literature producers is how finest they can conveniently use a foreign language without being criticized by native speakers.

Conclusion:

The core concern of postcolonial writings is to reflect the real experiences of previously colonized peoples. Postcolonialism thus refers to the number of assumptions that tend to retrieve and rebuild what colonization has ruined. Postcolonial theorists attempt to discover what might happen when a number of cultures clash especially when one of them assumes imperialistic endeavors. Language, thus, is among the great concerns of postcolonial thinkers.

The choice of the language of authorship that better represents the African culture is among the core concerns of postcolonial studies. This linguistic selection implies the

writers' interactions with the people for whom they write and their knowledge about the function, nature, and meaning of both language and literature. African writers are assigned the tasks of being sharpeners and educators of their societies. For these tasks to be efficiently accomplished, African writers have to write in the languages that can be read and understood by their targeted audience.

For this to be reached, African writers should better write in the language that their people understand. Linguistic imperialism tends to continuously take the African indigenous languages' rights. By writing in European languages, African writers might run the risk of being themselves supporters of linguistic imperialism. The African culture may be threatened if the African indigenous languages disappear. However, culture is not the only issue affected by linguistic imperialism. Linguistic dominance might result in multiple effects on African people. Hence, postcolonial African teachers, thinkers, and writers should be dedicated to finding solutions towards linguistic democracy.

Chapter II: The Effects of Linguistic Imperialism on Postcolonial Africans and Ways of Liberating the African Language.

Introduction:

Colonial practices actively reformed the linguistic make-up in African countries and applied terminological and educational systems that were undoubtedly designed to outfit their own needs. European colonizers were mainly concerned with teaching notions of European morality to their colonial subjects and at creating economic labor profits. Hence, the colonizers introduced the tribe/dialect conception alongside an educational system that tends to elevate their prestigious language and culture. With such linguistic changes, most regions found it hard to free their language and culture from colonial inheritance even after they obtained national liberation.

Literature on colonialism tends to emphasize issues related to Europe's economic manipulation of many regions including Africa. While these concerns have been of great importance, it is equally necessary to comprehend the linguistic practices that are linked to European colonial or neocolonial rule. These practices played an important role in allocating superiority to the colonizer's language and culture and in assigning low prestigious characteristics to indigenous African languages.

Although most of the formerly colonized countries have gained their national independence, the linguistic and cultural decolonization of these nations is scarcely complete. After the WWII, a struggle took place which attempts to eliminate the disgrace from non-European cultures and languages, and interrogates the artificial European supremacy. By examining the colonial status quo, the formerly colonized African populations aim to find their way out of the linguistic imposition that they continuously suffer from. Towards liberating the African language, a bunch of theoretical ideas have

filled numerous papers. However, there must be a real step headed for liberating African languages. The educational system seems to be the main battlefield towards reaching absolute linguistic freedom.

II.1 Colonial Linguistic Practices:

II.1.1 Tribe and Dialect:

The Tribe/dialect dichotomy is one of the main labels in colonialist cultural discourse. Both terms show the manners through which the dominant group differentiates itself from the non-dominant one. These two concepts have always been part of the racist ideology practiced by Europeans who claim that they are a nation possessing a language while others are tribes having dialects. (Phillipson 38)

Through such terms, the colonizer enclosed expressions of superiority merely to European nations. The Eurocentric nature of these terms is stressed in a Ugandan political scientist comment:

One might further ask what a tribe is. There was a time when the word possessed scientific content, when it characterized social formations that did not possess a state structure—the communal, classless societies, as, for example, the Germanic tribes. Today, however, every single ethnic group in Africa is referred to as a tribe regardless of the nature of its social development. What is it that makes two million Norwegians a people and just as many Baganda a tribe? A few hundred thousand Icelanders a people and fourteen million Hausa-Fulanis a tribe? There is only one explanation: racism. (Mahmood Mamdani 3)

Concepts like language and dialect need to be thoroughly defined. Traditional linguistics has been unable to define such terms in relation to social command. In his study of language and colonialism, Calvet concludes that “a dialect is never anything other than a defeated language, and a language is a dialect which has succeeded politically” (qtd. in Phillipson 39). Thus, colonial discourse tends to intentionally classify all African languages in the rank of dialects. Instead of using the terms language and dialect, Calvet opts to use dominant language and dominated languages due to such linguistic maltreatments.

Kashoki criticizes the western research that defines a ‘tribe’ as a stagnant monolingual group. He leans on a number of sociolinguistic studies of numerous African countries which show that the concept ‘tribe’ in Africa is used to describe bilingual and multilingual, individuals and communities, to be in urban or rural regions. He determines that “the present conception of African languages as essentially tribal tools of communication might have little basis in fact” (qtd. in Phillipson 40). However, it seems unlikely at present-day to deprive the concept ‘tribe’ from its colonialist conceptual load. (Phillipson 40)

II.1.2 Education:

Education is crucial in any type of society for the preservation of the lives of the members and the maintenance of the social structure. Under certain circumstances, education also promotes social change. The greater proportion of that education is informal, being acquired by the young from the example and behavior of elders in the society. Under normal circumstances, education grows out of the environment. Therefore, the learning process is directly related to society.

The European colonizers used a number of tactics to introduce a system of schooling that was so foreign so as to ensure that African nations be severely exploited. Colonial education arose out of the need for European colonizers to politically control their colonies in order to guarantee their economic interests. To ensure total control, European colonizers directed their educational procedure towards language imposition. This colonial educational system played a major role in placing the colonizer's language in its powerful status since by their feature, colonial educational programs "subserved in their various ways the political, economic and cultural aims of the colonial governments" (John Spencer 538).

Initially, the Protestant missions took the lead in the establishment of education and enforced native language teaching. The missionaries generally preferred using an indigenous language of instruction over English out of pragmatist principles. They believed that the Christian faith could only be appropriately transmitted to the colonized Africans through their own language. Hence, "the 'formal' school was regarded as the institutional agent of the spiritual church, with the mother tongues as the media." (Timothy Awoniyi 36). However, latter attempts encouraged the policy of vernacular education with "English introduced gradually" (Awoniyi 39) until it became the dominant medium of instruction and interaction at schools. African mother tongues were used so as to solve comprehension problems merely.

Colonial mother tongue education was not a generous effort towards building a more educated African persona. Colonial education was geared to the colonizers' own interests. The European colonizers found it necessary to make a moral and cultural grounding for the colonial subjects so as to enhance their co-operation and eventually to facilitate colonial dominance. In order to reach this, the African culture should be replaced by another seeming to be higher in status. Since language is "a carrier of culture" (Ngugi

13), the colonial regime worked on replacing the indigenous language with their own to ensure a cultural transfer. Students who were caught speaking in their native language were punished by colonial educators. Ngugi explains this through extracting from his own experience at a colonial school:

English became the language of my formal education. In Kenya, English became more than a language: it was *the language*, and all the others had to bow before it in deference. Thus one of the most humiliating experiences was to be caught speaking Gikuyu in the vicinity of the school. The culprit was given corporal punishment — three to five strokes of the cane on bare buttocks — or was made to carry a metal plate around the neck with inscriptions such as I AM STUPID or I AM A DONKEY. (11)

A British Council yearly report confesses that though the British administration has no economic and military control to enforce its power over many parts of the world, British authority persists through the voracious demand for the English language. The report states that Britain benefits greatly from the spread of the English language. The report portrays English as an “invisible, God-given asset” (qtd. in Birgit Brock-Utne 15). Therefore, linguistic imperialism did not die after the former colonies obtained political independence. Phillipson writes, “[t]he professionalism of ELT has been built up and propagated. These developments are a natural extension of colonial language policies and are legitimated analogously” (132-133).

II.2 The Effects of Linguistic Imperialism on the African Persona:

II.2.1 The Psychological Impact:

The language we speak allows us to express our thoughts, feelings, faith, dreams and the way we perceive the surrounding world. Hence, language is the medium through

which we transmit mental ideas into concrete descriptions. It is through language that we analyze our everyday, interrogate our past and strategically organize our future. Language, thus, enables one to communicate our inner constructed thought which is an agent of either development or reversion.

As a matter of fact, the language we speak represents the overt demonstration of what is covert in mind. According to one nationalist school of thought, there exist a direct relationship between language and thought. In Africa, therefore, only African languages are capable of making a tight link between Africans themselves and their view of the African world. Peter Mwaura describes this through a clear cited statement:

Language influences the way in which we perceive reality, evaluate it and conduct ourselves with respect to it. Speakers of different languages and cultures see the universe differently, evaluate it differently, and behave towards its reality differently. Language controls thought and action and speakers of different languages do not have the same world view or perceive the same reality unless they have the same culture or background.

(27)

The colonial rule definitely caused a break in the articulation of African people's thought. African colonized people were forced to use the language of the colonizer as the only official language. African languages were destined to the rank of dialects. Hence, thought which continued to be voiced by African dialects was downgraded. With the language of the colonizer deeming superiority, Africans unconsciously found themselves striving to learn this dominant language. However, the language of the colonizers no longer meshes African thoughts.

Since ideas expressed in African native languages were marginalized, Africans gradually felt that their thoughts are primeval, barbarous, recessive, incompetent, and incapable of displaying development. Hence, any knowledge transmitted through African languages was condemned as non-knowledge. Moreover, thought expressed by African indigenous languages was viewed subversive since it could neither be appreciated nor be normalized by the European colonizers. African thought had, and have, to be silenced. (Kum'a Ndumbe III)

II.2.2 Cultural Impact:

Culture encompasses a whole body of values through which we place ourselves in the world and through which we perceive ourselves. How people perceive themselves is crucial in how they look at their politics, production of wealth, and at their relationship to both other beings and to the environment. Language as a carrier of culture cannot be detachable from ourselves as a group of human beings having a particular nature, a particular history, and a particular relationship with the entire world. (Ngugi 16)

The language we learn first, the language we use with our family members and friends, the language we hear our parents using will always form our identity. Folklorist Crats Williams describes language as “culture expressing itself in sound” (qtd. in Ovando 341). Language offers identity to the individuals and groups who use it. There exist a prevailing relation between the language we speak and the socio-cultural identity. When the language we use in our daily interactions is degraded, for example by replacing it by another language deemed fit for teaching; the child will feel that his identity and culture are also being degraded.

In the case of colonialism, the act of linguistic replacement in Africa forced children to learn a new language— a new culture. The colonial authority wanted to control

the mental sphere of the colonized subject. Thus, they colonized the African culture, the African people's way of perceiving themselves and their relationship to the world surrounding them. Colonialism could only reach such control through destruction of the African culture: art, religions, history, education, Orature, and literature. This destruction could not take place unless the African language is devastated. (Ngugi 16)

The language of formal education in Africa resulted in a divorce between the written, and in some cases oral, language that the child has at school and the spoken language used outside the school compound. This might result in what Ngugi calls "colonial alienation" where the child disconnects the language of learning and the language he/she uses in "natural and social environment." Colonialism reinforced this alienation by teaching a history, music, and geography where European bourgeoisie are always considered superior. (Ngugi 17)

The linguistic cultural aspects of colonialism are greatly discussed by Alastair Pennycook in his book *English and the Discourses of Colonialism*. Pennycook investigates the way cultural and economic practices of the colonizers play an important role in the construction of the Other, for example African culture, and in shaping the self, for example British culture. By forming such negative discourses about the 'Other' colonized, colonizers implicitly assign positive characteristics to themselves and to their language and culture. These colonial buildings have had much effect on the demonstration of the colonized culture and language as inferior. (Isabelle Léglise et al. 4)

Thus, when the African colonized subject believes that their language is at the bottommost of the linguistic hierarchy of all world languages; they automatically believe that their culture is downgraded. Hence, African people started venerating the colonial language and culture at the expense of theirs. They not only learned the language of their

former colonizers but also adopted the colonizers' culture. These linguistic cultural crises are not empty of immediate or belated effects. Kwesi Kwaa Prah summarizes the cultural influence of linguistic imperialism in the following:

No society in the world has developed in a sustained and democratic fashion on the basis of a borrowed or colonial language[...]Underdeveloped countries in Africa remain under-developed partly on account of the cultural alienation which is structured in the context of the use of colonial languages. (71)

Unquestionably, it is even worse when the African child is exposed to depiction of his/her own world exhibited in the language of the colonizer. This might unconsciously link his/her native language, and therefore culture, to the position of disgrace, low-status, stupidity, savagery, and non-intelligibility. When the African language is replaced by the language of imposition, the African persona will see the world as reflected by the European culture. Therefore, as long as an African language disappears, its culture is also suppressed. However, despite these colonial attempts to linguistically colonize Africans psychologically and culturally, African populations continued to think and articulate their thoughts in their own native languages.

II.3 Decolonizing the African Language:

The linguistic landscape in Africa is highly dominated by European languages. Typically in Sub-Saharan Africa, European languages upstage the official scenes of "Government, law, administration and official business" (Douglas A. Kibbee 262). This colonial linguistic legacy hinders Africans from gaining absolute freedom. African languages, thus, play a number of unofficial roles at domestic and international levels. What seems more problematic is that European languages are "spoken by elites of 10 to

20% of the population” (Kibbee 262) and they remain minority languages. With such linguistic crisis in Africa, can there be democracy without liberating African languages?

It is common that in countries like Mongolia, Korea, Japan, Finland Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Italy profit from starting their formal education in their native languages— the language that they naturally use with their parents and everybody around them. The use of a familiar language in formal education undeniably facilitates learning. Nearly all teachers agree on the fact that students understand better when they learn through their mother tongue. As argued by David Klaus “There appears to be general agreement that students learn better when they understand what the teacher is saying” (1).

Fostering the use of African languages in educational and public domains, in courts, and in media is intensely linked to social democracy for the majority of Africans. Social justice has been the main concern of most postcolonial African leaders. However, few of them showed interest in the social injustice that is manifested in the language used in schools which constitutes a blockade for most African children. The use of a familiar language and culture might indicate the government’s inclination to set equality between the elite and the common people. The director of the Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society (CASAS), Kwesi Kwaa Prah, believes that only if we transform knowledge of modern science to the common people in their language that we can end poverty in Africa and reach development. However, Prah also calls for a standardization and harmonization of African languages which themselves show conflict.

There is a greatest need to change English by natural languages especially in science teaching. Mahinda Ranaweera maintains that when changing English by natural languages in science instruction we can break the barrier “that existed between the privileged English educated classes and the ordinary people; between the science educated

elite and the non-science educated masses; between science itself and the people” (423). He believes that this gives confidence to the African laymen that science is not beyond their capacities. It also affords confidence to both teachers and pupils that mastering English is not obligatory for learning science. Ranaweera provides much attention to teaching science through native African languages for two main reasons. First, science education is regarded the central step towards national development and therefore towards improving life quality in Africa. Second, in order to achieve better understanding of science, learners need more interaction, discussion, and dialogue with the teacher and among themselves.

Babs A. Fafunwa holds a similar view as Ranaweera’s. He thinks that the imposed means of communication in Africa is the main factor hindering the distribution of both knowledge and skills in Africa. This inequality militates against the social and economic welfare of Africa. Therefore, Fafunwa believes that there exist a relationship between the use of foreign languages as official ones and the embryonic situation in African countries. Ali Mazrui raises a similar investigation, he claims:

Can any country approximate first-rank economic development if it relies over-whelmingly on foreign languages for its discourse on development and transformation? Will Africa ever effectively ‘take off’ when it is so tightly held hostage to the languages of the former imperial masters? (qtd. in Brock-Utne 15)

The majority of African people, craftsmen, and farmers perform their daily activities using Igbo, Ga, Hausa, Yoruba, Kiswahili, Wolof, Bambara, Arabic and many other African languages. Hence, using a European imperial language as a medium of instruction inhibits the African majority from improving their economic, political, and

social tasks through their mother tongue—the only language they know. Why we focus on teaching them English or French as a must step before they could pass to modern technology. (Fafunwa 103)

If the African child faces a linguistic problem in his learning, as perfectly stated by Obanya, then all focus of African policy-creators and the claimed to be aid from Western donors should be directed to fostering African languages especially in basic formal education as a step towards decolonizing the African language. The concept ‘education for all’ becomes totally vacant if the linguistic condition of the child’s basic education is not considered. (Birgit Brock-Utne 77)

Africa can reach intellectual liberty by moving through some chains of freedom. Ali A. Mazrui has suggested a model of decolonization in Africa which involves five processes: indigenization, domestication, diversification, horizontal inter-penetration, and vertical counter-penetration. Indigenization involves maximization of the use of all indigenous resources. Domestication encompasses Africanizing the Western institutions that exist in Africa so that they meet African needs. The third strategy of decolonization is diversification which means diversifying the sources of knowledge. In the case of Africa, the principle of diversification is related to varying cultures and countries that Africa is reliant on since a total dependence on only one culture is dangerous. The fourth strategy is related to horizontal inter-penetration among all African languages. That is to say, African countries had better exchange skilled human resources by encouraging the horizontal brain-drain of temporary or permanent immigration for example from Nigeria to Zambia. The fifth approach towards decolonization is the vertical counter-penetration. This process is linked to vertical brain-drain where intellectual penetration is directed to the north industrial states. (James W. Tollefson 276-277)

In relation to the linguistic liberation in Africa, Mazrui's five mentioned processes of decolonization can be effectively implemented. In Tanzania, for example, promoting Swahili instead of English is an example of indigenization. Through using Swahili in educational systems, Tanzania could lessen its reliance on the U.S. Hence, more African countries need to indigenize the language used in schools in order to localize the needs of their African educational systems. As part of indigenization, African pupils should also be exposed to other home-grown forms of knowledge that are uttered in African languages. (Tollefson 277)

The process of domestication, on the other hand, involves transferring the alien colonial linguistic medium of communication to make it suitable for the diverse regional linguistic demands. Therefore, English in Africa, for example, needs to encompass African different meanings while African languages need to cope with the modern state of knowledge. (Tollefson 277)

Domestication and indigenization are closely interrelated processes and they are both better applied in educational settings. Domesticating the African school first demands indigenization of African personnel. This requires commitment on the part of the government to train policy-makers at many levels. Besides, both the government and employers should show readiness to create required structures that attract most Africans. Moreover, politicians should stimulate the creation of curricula that is Africa-based. In addition, foreign components of the syllabus must be strictly domesticated to force their relevance to local specifications. More importantly, African languages should turn to be languages of instruction though a gradual planning for their introduction to African schools. (Tollefson 277)

Diversifying the African languages has to do with responding to other civilizations than the Western one. Some western works have been translated into African languages. Some of Shakespeare's plays exist in Hausa, Swahili, and Zulu. The works of Marx, Lenin, and Frantz fanon also exist in African languages. However, Indian great works are hardly translated into African languages. Language cannot be liberated unless it faces new challenges and confronts new ideas that need to be expressed. The school seems to be the natural place for such a change. If Swahili, for instance, neglects Arabic and keeps borrowing from English merely, admittedly it may become modernized. However, this act of modernization is undoubtedly at the expense of Westernization. (Tollefson 277)

Translation between different African languages might serve the needs of both horizontal inter-penetration and vertical counter-penetration. However, both processes of decolonization are less directly relevant for African languages. Thus, African societies need to give-and-take their cultural riches in indigenous languages. Similarly, African works written in local languages need to be translated into Western languages and therefore taught in western schools. Adding an African ingredient to the global civilization might raise Africans confidence in their language and culture. (Tollefson 277)

African writers can also be engaged in the process of decolonizing their native African languages. Ngugi wa Thiong'o makes an urgent call for African writers to start writing literature in their own mother tongue languages. This way, as wa Thiong'o states, the literature written in African languages is directly linked to African people's struggles to gain absolute freedom. For him, since he posits language as the carrier of culture, the task of the African writer in the postcolonial period is essentially political. When writing fiction in English, African writers promote a neocolonial mindset. Conversely, writing in African indigenous languages is a setback to imperialistic oppression. Ngugi believes that writing in his mother tongue is a step that every African writer can take to liberate his people's

native language, their thought, their culture, their minds, and therefore their nation. Ngugi concludes:

I believe that my writing in Gĩkũyũ language, a Kenyan language, an African language, is part and parcel of the anti-imperialist struggles of Kenyan and African peoples [...] I want (Kenyans) to transcend colonial alienation [...] We African writers are bound by our calling to do for our languages what Spencer, Milton and Shakespeare did for English; what Pushkin and Tolstoy did for Russian; indeed what all writers in world history have done for their languages by meeting the challenge of creating a literature in them, which process later opens the languages for philosophy, science, technology and all other areas of human creative endeavors. (28)

Conclusion:

Colonial linguistic policies have been a straight-out negative impact on both the psychological and the cultural domains of African populations. Little effort has been done to change the educational system to make it culturally-bound and linguistically easy for all African pupils. Even after independence, most regions found it hard to penetrate from the cultural, mental, educational, and terminological labeling of colonial authority because the previous colonizers and native local elites did their best to keep Africa in a status quo.

Most people in African countries still receive an inadequate education and continue to be burdened by discriminative linguistic policies. One might admit that the educational situation in Africa is highly unsatisfactory and is among the main hurdles of reaching liberating societies and building national development. If the educational condition in Africa remains without reforming the linguistic situation, Africa will never be part of international practices.

The language question in Africa is all about authority. The choice of a language in African schools is a mere political choice— a choice that may contribute to the distribution of powers at both national and global levels. African writers need also to actively participate in the political linguistic decisions in Africa. Their duty to their people rests in writing in indigenous African languages where they not only reach the elites but also the masses. By doing so, African writers can really be part of the process of liberating African languages, and therefore, decolonizing Africans' minds and cultures. Choosing a native language of instruction— a language that all people speak, are acquainted with, and which belongs to their cultural legacy, would be a great step towards attainment of absolute cultural and linguistic freedom.

Chapter III: Exploring Linguistic Imperialism in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*.

Introduction:

To regain linguistic rights in Africa, a number of postcolonial writers tend to portray linguistic issues in their texts. The Zimbabwean writer Tsitsi Dangarembga is among those writers who added to the growing body of literatures in Africa. When she published her first novel *Nervous Conditions* in 1988, Dangarembga has shown knowledge about the linguistic dilemmas found in Zimbabwe, in particular, and in Africa as whole. The novel depicts the struggle of a number of Africans who strive to define their identity in spite of colonial linguistic dominance. Hence, the subjects of linguistic exile and cultural alienation are simultaneously tackled in the novel.

A number of linguistic practices by the English colonizers redesigned the linguistic makeup in colonial and postcolonial countries, as in Zimbabwe, in the 1960s and 1970s. In *Nervous Conditions*, Dangarembga exhibits how education in English weakens Africans both psychologically and physically. European colonizers use all forms of domination to keep African languages marginalized. Since the English is elevated in the colonized society, the Shona language comes to be dishonored. Throughout the novel the reader is made aware of the dreadful effects made by replacement of the native Shona with English. Characters who have the chance to learn English seem to gradually forget Shona language. As a result of such linguistic suppression the Shona tradition and culture seems to gradually disappear.

Nervous Conditions depicts the struggle of a group of Africans who face hardships while trying to gain cultural identity. Most characters in the novel choose the wrong path to free themselves from such linguistic dominance. Only few of them manage to escape the drawbacks of learning the colonizers' language. Successful escape is engrained both in appreciation of local language and culture and in awareness of how destructive can this colonial linguistic dominance be.

III.1 Background of the Novel:

III.1.1 Author's Biography:

Tsitsi Dangarembga was born in 1959 in the town of Mutoko, Rhodesia which is now known as Zimbabwe. As a young girl, she moved to England with her parents to receive her elementary education there. When she was six years old she returned to Zimbabwe and completed her education in a missionary school where she also re-learned her mother tongue, Shona. She returned to England in 1977 to study medicine at Cambridge University.

Dangarembga returned to Rhodesia in 1980 to study psychology at Harare University. Shortly afterwards, her country gained political independence from the United Kingdom and turned to be known as Zimbabwe. Dangarembga discovered her love of theatre when she worked as a copywriter for a marketing agency. She wrote many plays that were put into production at university. Dangarembga joined Robert McLaren's theater group, Zambuko, when her play *The Lost of the Soil* attracted his attention. Dangarembga also wrote the play *She No Longer Weeps* in 1987 and her first short story *The Letter* that was published in Sweden in 1985.

Dangarembga's first novel, *Nervous Conditions* was published in England in 1988, when Dangarembga was only in her twenties. *Nervous Conditions* is the first English novel published by a black Zimbabwean woman. Only a year after the novel's publication, the novel won the African Section of the Commonwealth Writers Prize in 1989. *The Book of Not*, the novel's sequel was published in 2006. *Chronicle of an Indomitable Daughter*, the last part of *Nervous Conditions* trilogy, was published in 2013.

Dangarembga was also interested in film direction. She studied at the Deutsche Film und Fernseh Akademie in Berlin where she produced a number of narrative and historical films. Her debut *Everyone's Child*, was the first film directed by a black Zimbabwean woman. Dangarembga wrote the scenario of *Neria*, the upper-most grossing film in the history of Zimbabwe. *The Independent* classified Dangarembga as one of the fifty best writers modeling the African continent. Despite her multiple arty concerns, it is her novel that has given her with the power to define the experiences undergone by her people. Tsitsi Dangarembga lives currently in her hometown Harare, Zimbabwe.

III.1.2 About *Nervous Conditions*:

Nervous Conditions is a semi-autobiographical novel written by Zimbabwean author Tsitsi Dangarembga. The novel takes place in the late 1960s and early 1970s in Rhodesia. It emphasizes the themes of gender, race, and linguistic alienation. Through the eyes of Tambu, the young female protagonist, readers can notice how language change in Rhodesia causes many alarming effects. The novel's title is derived from Jean Paul Sartre's introduction to Frantz Fanon's 1963 book *The Wretched of the Earth*, where he states that the position of the colonized 'native' is a nervous condition. Dangarembga enlarges Fanon's investigation about the oppressed Africans during colonialism by integrating concerns related to cultural transfer and the power of language. Characters in *Nervous Conditions* suffer from a linguistic nervous condition resulting from the colonizers'

imposition of English as the only means towards economic, cultural, and social improvement. *Nervous Conditions* is the first English novel published by a Zimbabwean woman. The novel was finished in 1985, however due to years of refusal; the novel was published three years later in 1988.

This spectacular bildungsroman is a story of the coming of age girl Tambudzai (Tambu), and her quest towards being freed from cultural alienation. Tambu believes her dreams to become true when her uncle, Babamukuru, offers to sponsor her education after her brother's, Nhamo, death at the mission. Tambu's chance to get an education is coupled with her moving to her uncle's house where she also gets a Western lifestyle. Raised in England, Nyasha can no longer speak her native language, Shona, and she feels as a stranger among her own people in Rhodesia. Her discussions with her roommate cousin, Nyasha, give her the chance to reflect on colonial effects, linguistic matters, and societal issues. Tambu faces different reality while watching her cousin, Nyasha, who is caught between two cultures, and paying the full price of estrangement.

Since the story is semi-autobiographical, some events of the novel mirror Dangarembga's primary years of her life. Changing autobiographical facts of Dangarembga's own life into a mysterious work loaded with psychological richness shows her talent. By exhibiting the effects of colonial education and language on a single African family, Dangarembga manages to generalize what linguistic effects are there in Africa. Instead of directly representing the effects of colonialism on language, Dangarembga dramatizes the burdens these forces through different characters. Several literary scholars deem *Nervous Conditions* to be one of the most valuable African novels of the 20th Century.

III.2 Why English in Tsitsi Dangarmebga's *Nervous Conditions*:

One of the major themes in *Nervous Conditions* is the loss of the mother-tongue Shona in favor of colonial English. The novel's style also reflects this theme. The fact that the novel itself is written in English portrays this linguistic influence. This is very controversial since Dangarembga herself shows how dreadful the effect of placing a native language with a colonial one is.

The novel's style is overwhelmed by a British trace. Words in *Nervous Conditions* are written with a British spelling such as 'apologise' (instead of the American spelling 'apologize') and 'mum' instead of 'mom.' Smattering some Shona words throughout the novel indicates that Shona language is disappearing due to colonial linguistic and cultural practices. These words consist of 'pada' and 'nhotu' which both refer to childhood games, and the word 'dare' which refers to a Shona family meeting. However, Dangarembga's way of showing that characters, even those Anglicized ones, address one another in terms that are deeply rooted in the Shona culture demonstrates survival and resistance of Shona culture in spite of colonial plans. Jeremiah uses the word 'mukoma,' which Shona people use to call an older brother or sister of the same gender, to refer to Babamukuru. 'Baba' is a term used to call a man who is also father. 'Sisi,' as Netsai calls Tambu, is the Shona equivalent of sister and 'tete' refers to aunt.

The question of autobiographical presence is equally controversial. Tambu's adult voice of narration portrays:

Detachment, wry amusement, and pointed self-irony, and one cannot help wondering where Dangarembga herself is in relation to this older, more worldly-wise voice. What is Dangarembga's view of 'Englishness' and its potential hazards, given the sophistication, lightness, and flair of her own

writing style? Has it trapped or empowered her as a writer? (Gilian Gorle 182-183)

Examining the novel's thrilling ending might help readers to unveil the author's own position about 'Englishness.' Dangarembga ends the book cleverly with a captivating direct voice which appears to indicate an autobiographic frame, "the story I have told here, is my own story, the story of four women whom I loved, and our men" (Dangarembga 204). It seems here that Dangarembga's own position towards 'Englishness' is the same as entailed through Tambu's voice. Thus, we come to believe that Dangarembga thinks that losing your own language in favor of the colonizer's language will bring about horrifying consequences; yet, learning the colonizer's language while being aware of some ways to keep your own language and culture might bring about good results.

It can be argued that Dangarembga's accomplishment, through Tambu's reflective voice, proves a success in the "struggle over the word" (Gorle 192) since she exhibits ability to appropriate the colonial language and skillfully use it to portray the different mechanisms of linguistic domination on several levels. Dangarembga shows that education in English might help Africans to escape poverty. However, she also demonstrates the psychological and cultural effects of English education if an African cannot escape the linguistic nervous condition he/she faces.

III.3 The Effects That the English Language Makes on Characters in *Nervous Conditions*:

Language is not a mere form of communication; it is also the soul of any culture. In Zimbabwe, language is predominantly essential since cultural knowledge and history were customarily carried out orally. When the British colonialism occupied Zimbabwe, native people showed a willingness to learn English due to the economic, social, and political

advantages they think it brings. In *Nervous Conditions*, Dangarembga explores the dilemmas which formal schooling in English brings to Shona families. The story shows the impact, either empowering or disempowering, that such an 'English' education have on Shona-speaking people.

The Shona history and tradition was passed from one generation to another through oral tradition. This idea is introduced at the opening pages when Tambu's grandmother tells her a "history that could not be found in textbooks" (Dangarembga 17) while they are both working in the field. The grandmother is a symbol of the Shona past and her death is representative for the possible end of traditional Shona culture.

The question of which language is more appropriate shapes the whole novel. Instead of providing clear answer to this question, Dangarembga opts to present a number of outstanding drawn images of social and linguistic eradication. These images expressively portray the phenomenon that Meenakshi Mukherjee names 'the exile of the mind.' As Mukherjee accounts, this exile is portrayed by fictional characters who "without being physically away from home remain outsiders in their own country due to certain circumstances in their history, language or education" (8).

A conversation in Babamukuru's house eloquently exemplifies the bilingual dilemma in the novel:

Babamukuru came through the back door as we finished saying grace. 'Good evening, Baba,' Maiguru greeted him in Shona. 'Good evening, Daddy,' Nyasha said in English. 'Good evening, Babamukuru,' I said, mixing the two languages because I was not sure which was most appropriate. (80)

‘The exile of the mind’ might bring about a number of experiences which compose an essential concern in *Nervous Conditions*. Linguistic eradication is a complex phenomenon which differs according to each person’s experience. Hence, Dangarembga tends to exhibit each character’s experience of exile differently though they share the same internal exile through language. Since European influence varies according to each character’s circumstances, personality, and coping tactics; Dangarembga manages to vary the effects of English education of different characters. (Gorle 180-181)

This divergence is apparent in Dangarembga’s exhibition of Tambu, her cousin Nyasha, her aunt Maiguru, her brother Nhamo, her cousin Chido, and all other characters who suffer to some degree from exile in the novel. Though Tambu struggles throughout the whole novel, a sense of hope at the end of the story indicates that her predicament is the least desperate. On the other hand, her Anglicized cousin, Nyasha, might not recover from anorexia. Nyasha, of all characters, suffers the most from the alienation caused by the treacherous effects caused by linguistic dominance. (Gorle 181)

Simultaneously, Nyasha’s mother Maiguru struggles to settle for a stable marriage and social status at the expense of her professional ambition. Nhamo, Tambu’s brother whose death is declared without sorrow at the opening line in the novel, seems proud to disconnect with his Shona language even after the bewilderment of his mother Ma’Shingayi who believes ‘Englishness’ to be a fatal social illness. Nonetheless, Nyasha’s brother, Chido, appears to welcome ‘Englishness’ without any sign of agony. (Gorle 181)

Tambu’s internal exile through language is the most apparent and accessible in the novel. Examining both the fourth and the last chapters is necessary to understand Tambu’s linguistic clash. The last chapter reechoes the fourth chapter where Tambu starts her education in a missionary school after her brother’s death. Chapter 4 is the starting point in

investigating Tambu's gradual eradication. At exactly this phase in *Nervous Conditions*, Tambu's aim is clear. She thinks that the English education is the only way out of poverty. (Gorle 183)

Tambu's chosen pathway is aggravated by her parent's opposing opinions about the effects of English education. Tambu's mother is suspicious about the linguistic and cultural colonial hegemony. On the contrary, Tambu's father, Jeremiah, thinks that English teaching is the only way to emancipate his family from poverty. Hence, Tambu is caught between her parents conflicting views about what might 'English' cause. It takes her a long time to understand and validate her mother's words. When Tambu realizes that her mother's fears are true, her mother's opinion becomes more cynical since she is certain that 'Englishness' ruined Nhamo and is to "kill them all if they aren't careful" (Dangarembga 202). (Gorle 183)

Chapters 4 and 10 show transitional phases in Tambu's life. First, she moves to the mission school at the age of thirteen where she lives with her uncle Babamukuru who is the new head of the mission. At the age of sixteen, Tambu gets a scholarship to Sacred Heart abbey. Both chapters show the complexity of Tambu's reactions when she encounters the world of English writings and Western culture. (Gorle 183)

At the opening of chapter 4, Tambu welcomes the "rerouting of everything I had ever defined as me into fast lanes that would speedily lead me to my destination. My horizons were saturated with me, my leaving, my going. There was no room for what I left behind" (Dangarembga 58). Tambu, thus, thinks that she is secure from what destroyed her brother Nhamo. She leaves her mother behind her, the only person against her English education and against her moving to Babamukuru's house, as "no more than another piece of scenery to be maintained, [...] an obstacle in the path of my departure" (58).

At exactly this phase of the story, Tambu thinks that her horizons are limitless. However, after her horizons start to shade. Though overwhelmed by the well-being of Babamukuru's home, she feels that there is a large gap between her and her uncle where there exist "bridge; at the bottom spiked crags, as sharp as spears. [...] For the first time I caught sight of endings to my flight from the homestead that were not all happy" (Dangarembga 64-65). Similarly, in the final chapter, tambu's fears are confirmed after Nyasha's breakdown. Flashing back on this step-by-step realization, the narrator's adult voice announces, "No longer could I accept Sacred Heart and what it represented as a sunrise on my horizon" (203).

Nyasha's life experiences are totally different from Tambu's. When Nyasha was five years old her family members left Rhodesia to live in England. Nyasha can never become as stable as Tambu because when she returns home she faces a complex situation due to holding a mixture of English and Shona cultures. On their return, Tambu describes Maiguru as "dressed in flat brown shoes and a pleated polyester dress [...] did not look as though she had been to England. My cousin Nyasha, pretty bright Nyasha, on the other hand, obviously had" (Dangarembga 37). As a result of living abroad in England, nearly all members of Nyasha's family are back home with a Western world. What seems furthestmost annoying for Tambu is that Chido and Nyasha are no more able to speak Shona. Tambu is surprised: "Shona was our language. [...] Now they had turned into strangers" (Dangarembga 42).

This linguistic distancing has extensive outcomes causing extreme social alienation among cousins. Tambu is upset when she discovers that language is becoming a barrier between her family members. She questions the reason they come back Rhodesia for: "If they could not enjoy themselves with us, there was no reason for them to have come home" (Dangarembga 43). Nyasha's perplexity is appears in her silence, and her

unwillingness to play Shona games with the children. Tambu misses the old days with her cousin and friend Nyasha, she comments:

I missed the bold, ebullient companion I had had who had gone to England but not returned from there. Yet each time she came I could see that she had grown a little duller and dimmer, the expression in her eyes a little more complex, as though she were directing more and more of her energy inwards to commune with herself about issues that she alone had seen.
(Dangarembga 51-52)

Nyasha's sense of linguistic alienation is so great that it takes her three years before she can explain her condition to Tambu who has now moved to Babamukuru's house and is sharing Nyasha's room. For Nyasha the problem is not fluency in English since both girls show proficiency in speaking the English language though Tambu speaks with a local pronunciation. Nyasha's problem rests in her Anglicized way of speaking and in her newly linguistically-shaped mind attitudes. Therefore, her years abroad have not only taken her Shona language but also they have transformed her outlook to some degree that she faces difficulty connecting to her native language, to her parents, and to her friends. Evidence is the fact that when she behaves spontaneously— by speaking English and assuming an English mind-set, she seems to challenge her Shona culture where her father must be dominant. Explaining her condition, Nyasha tell Tambu:

We shouldn't have gone [...]. The parents ought to have packed us off home. They should have [...]. Maybe that would have been best [...] because they are stuck with hybrids for children [...]. And I don't know what to do about it, Tambu, really I don't. I can't help having been there

and grown into the me that has been there [...]. Really, it's very difficult.
(Dangarembga 78)

Sue Thomas points out to this same point and maintains that Nyasha “finds it difficult to adjust to her father’s puritanical expectations that she should excel scholastically in an English educational system, and conform to his myth of Shona femininity” (30).

Throughout the novel, Dangarembga perfectly manifests the competition between Shona and English languages. As being dominated by white colonizers, learning English became obligatory to receive an education and therefore success and power in Rhodesia. Dangarembga portrays this through a comparison between Jeremiah’s and Babamukuru’s lives. Jeremiah stays at the homestead and lives at poverty since he is uneducated. His brother, on the other hand, is raised in a missionary school and given the chance to study abroad where he learns English by heart. Unlike Jeremiah who embraces tradition, Babamukuru embraces change and is a wealthy man. Undoubtedly, most of young natives aspire to be like Babamukuru as clear in Nhamo’s attitude once he knows that he will go to study at the missionary school, he says, “I shall no longer be Jeremiah’s son” (Dangarembga 48). By this statement, Nhamo not only shows disrespect to his father; but also he embodies natives’ eagerness to reach Babamukuru’s success even if it means adoption of English and total abandonment of the mother-tongue.

Even though Tambu and Nyasha receive the most devotion in Dangarembga’s investigation of the internal exile, they are not the only characters suffering from this exile. Maiguru, Chido, and Nhamo are similarly influenced by the clash of English and Shona worlds. Babamukuru is also as stuck as his daughter; he is caught between two cultures where he clearly favors the English one. As exhibited by Dangarembga, Babamukuru is wealthy and acquires a good social status. However, he never appears happy throughout all

novel pages. Whereas his daughter suffers from an anorexia nervosa, he suffers from an apparent physical nervousness due to the cultural clash he suffers from.

Changing one's own native language can result in a person's estrangement from society as demonstrated by the novel's characters Nhamo, Nyasha, and Chido. At the homestead, Nhamo speaks English to enforce his superiority. However, this costs him disconnectedness with his language, culture, history, and family. Likewise, Nyasha suffers from a nervous breakdown due to her loss of her Shona language. Tambu believes that their loss of their native language is because they both opt to abandon their culture and people. Hence, this loss of 'Shona' language leads to rejection of both Chido and Nyasha by their native society. Moreover, their color causes rejection by the white people even if they master English. Thus, they are hybrid children suffering from a linguistic nervous condition where they are struggling to be accepted in the Shona society. Hence, Nhamo, Chido, and Nyasha are models of how the loss of one's own native language can result in a serious alienation and how language hegemony is essential for building a strong nation.

III.4 Escaping the Linguistic Nervous Condition:

The term 'emancipation' is seminal throughout the whole novel. Generally, the term is used to refer to the state of being freed from slavery or to a country being freed from colonial authority. In *Nervous Conditions*, however, Dangarembga uses the term to describe the struggle to regain identity under the British rule. When the term is applied to characters of the novel, it takes innovative and loaded associations.

In the introductory paragraph the narrative voice of Tambu echoes what will happen at the end of the story. Tambu describes the novel a story about "[her] escape [...] and Maiguru's entrapment; and about Nyasha's rebellion" (Dangarembga 1). Thus,

Tambu's future appears less miserable than Nyasha's. However, her escape seems abrupt across about 200 pages.

In *Nervous Conditions*, the meaning of the term 'escape' is taken into a broader scope. In the fourth chapter Tambu's willingness to escape from her hometown has a gloomy implication of aiming at erasing her whole past. Ma'Shingayi believes that Tambu's behavior is exactly the same as Nhamo's through which both children indicate leaning on the fatal illness of 'Englishness.' Her escape, from the bad situation at home enables her to achieve a partial liberation yet a fearsome space from her 'Shone.' By learning 'English,' she is running the risk of turning alienated from her family and her Shona language and culture as a result of the educational chance she gets. (Gorle 182)

Difference in Tambu's and Nyasha's response to nearly similar linguistic conditions is rooted in their childhood different experiences. Tambu spends her early childhood at the family's homestead. She receives her early education at a local primary school. Thus, her Shona language is deeply engrained in her mind. She, therefore, has little opportunity to loose contact with her Shona traditions. When she moves to live with Babamukuru, she learns to speak English fluently; however, she keeps using her native language. Moreover, due to knowledge of Shona decorum, Tambu is able to control her behaviors while holding absolute freedom to be herself. While Nyasha is caught between the English outlooks— which constitute a great part of her identity, and her Shona tradition; Tambu keeps recalling her sense of Shona dignity. Thus, the girls' reactions to similar linguistic conditions are engrained in their different identities. Tambu's consciousness of what can be and what can never be challenged or changed contribute to her stability. (Gorle 185- 189)

What also contributes to Tambu's strength is her awareness of what damage can the English language do, she comments: "everything about [Nyasha] spoke of alternatives and possibilities that if considered too deeply would wreak havoc with the neat plan I had laid out for my life" (Dangarembga 76). These are the main differences between the two girls provoking their massively separate responses to the English education and the cultural clashes it carries.

Due to losing her Shona language, Nyasha appears in the novel as being entrapped in a hazardous nervous condition, deprived of any identity defining her. In the final pages of the novel, Nyasha is described as no longer she herself knows where she belongs; she declares: "They've trapped us. They have trapped us. [...] Look what they've done to us. [...] I'm not one of them but I'm not one of you" (Dangarembga 201). Her disease is a sign of rebellion against the western culture and language. She wants to regurgitate all the Western knowledge she learns. However, her non-recovery seems a sign of the never-recovery if one completely deletes his/her language. Dangarembga describes how dangerous is through her character Nyasha who is suffering from a physical and psychological breakdown. Nyasha discovers that language can open the door to a path from which there may never be a getting-back plan. She is trapped due to her childhood experience in England. Writing to Tambu she tells her:

They do not like my language, my English, because it is authentic and my Shona, because it is not! They think [...] that I think I am superior to them [...] because I beat the boys at maths! [...] I very much would like to belong, Tambu, but I find I do not. [...] I cannot help thinking that what antagonises is the fact that I am me. (Dangarembga 196-197)

To save Tambu from such a breakdown, Tambu warns her from the trap interpolated in the Sacred Heart scholarship which contains “more evils than advantages to be reaped [...] a marvelous opportunity [...] to forget who you were, what you were and why” (Dangarembga 178-179). Nyasha’s experience abroad— especially her schooling in England and her act of replacing her Shona with English, has made her incapable of accepting things belonging to the Shona culture. She eventually becomes bitterly aware of the colonial forces that are reshaping the country’s history. Miki Flockemann describes her as being “deeply critical of the very values she has assimilated” (42). Her outlook is, to a great extent, portrayed as bleak in the novel both physically and psychologically. Her hybrid identity is carried as a heavy burden and her linguistic condition is a difficult puzzle which she can never solve.

Nhamo’s and Chido’s escape from the linguistic exile is occasionally portrayed since Dangarembga’s focus in the novel is in female subject as well as linguistic exile. The little information we know about Chido shows that he is much distanced from his Shona language and culture. At the first chapters readers might believe Chido to be a survivor. He is not facing a psychological problem as his sister Nyasha. However, Dangarembga could successfully help readers suspect his dreadful ending through Ma’Shingayi who hold no optimism for her nephew’s future:

can hardly speak a word of his own mother’s tongue, and you’ll see, his children will be worse. Running around with that white one, isn’t he, the missionary’s daughter? His children will disgrace us [...] he may look all right, but there’s no telling what price he’s paying. (Dangarembga 203)

Analyzing Ma’Shingayi’s words enable one to expect a similar future for Chido as his father Babamukuru. Nhamo, on the other hand, cannot survive the linguistic nervous

condition as portrayed clearly by Dangarembga. After living with Babamukuru's English-speaking family, Nhamo returns to the homestead with little memory of Shona; Tambu explains: "when nhamo came home at the end of his first year with Babamukuru [...] there was one terrible change. He had forgotten how to speak Shona" (Dangarembga 52). Thus, Ma'Shingayi's description is true. The mission does kill her only son and her fears are all right. Hence, Englishness causes Nhamo's death and he can never escape the linguistic nervous condition.

What helps Tambu in her struggle against being entrapped by English is her growing understanding of the importance of her Shona roots. Moreover, Tambu keeps remembering her mother's warning about 'Englishness' and its power to ruin one's identity. Though no clear answer is provided to Ma'Shingayi's desolate question about Sacred Heart scholarship:

Tell me, Tambudzai, does that man want to kill me, to kill me with his kindness, fattening my children only to make them away, like cattle are fattened for slaughter? Tell me, my daughter, what will I, your mother say to you when you come home a stranger full of white ways and ideas? It will be English, English all the time. (Dangarembga 184)

Tambu's voice in the closing paragraph shows that "seeds do grow," (Dangarembga 203) and that even her "process of expansion" (204) is hard and slow. Tambu states: "something in my mind began to assert itself, to question things and refuse to be brainwashed, bringing me to this time when I can set down this story" (204). Hence, her 'escape' seems fruitful. Tambu's growing awareness and evolving perceptions help her to gradually decolonize her mind and her language. Though Tambu is fluent in English, she never forgets her Shona language and customs. Using the colonizer's language to write a story where she

successfully portrays the linguistic mechanisms of the colonizer is in itself an effective escape.

Conclusion:

Writing *Nervous Conditions* in English indicates either Dangarembga's talent or her entrapment. One, however, may argue that Dangarembga could appropriate the language of the colonizer to suit the African experience. She manages to portray the cultural clash caused by English linguistic imperialism. Her exact standpoint for one's language choice is unclear, yet deep analyses of the novel show her belonging and attachment to the Shona culture and to her native language.

Most characters in *Nervous Conditions* suffer from the restrictions set by 'Englishness.' Characters that have the opportunity to learn English seem to generate a feeling of being alienated, in various manners and degrees; from their traditions, language, and people. Dangarembga exhibits the disastrous results of such exile in Nhamo's death, in Nyasha's anorexia nervosa, and in Tambu's struggle to maintain her Shona identity.

Dangarembga manages to portray the effects of missionary colonial education on the African persona. With English, rather than Shona, as the language used for education, the coming generation will no longer be able to learn their 'real' history and they take a further step in the direction of assimilation into a Western community. Colonial education plays a major role in characters' agony. At some point in the novel, Tambu thinks that missionary education will make all her dreams happen. However, the narrator's voice demonstrates that some characters are stuck in an in-between state when they hold a mixture of both local ideas and westernized ones. Thus, escaping the linguistic nervous condition is necessary for the preservation of the native language.

General Conclusion

For Africans to reach absolute freedom, they need to continuously reflect on linguistic matters. Africans should voice up their minds and thoughts in both national and international spheres using their own language. No other means or language can adequately represent their experience other than theirs. Hence, Africans should work together to remove the white legacy and restore their linguistic rights. This cannot be done unless policy-makers start reflecting on language-choice in both academic and public spheres. Using the colonizer's language causes a gradual loss of one's own language and culture. Therefore, the African culture should be well-preserved before it gradually disappears. African postcolonial writers should hold such duty to free their language. All Africans should unify their linguistic interests in order to clear Africa from the sediment colonial remains. Teachers should also raise their students' awareness about the dangers of assuming a second language while forgetting one's own.

After the departure of colonization, African languages have been endangered alongside African cultures. This caused a clash of cultures for many Africans where some of them are still trapped in an in-between status. People with such a clash suffer from psychological and physical breakdowns. Some of them fail even to express their ideas to their family members and friends. They cannot be part of their local community and they can never be part of the European society. They are, thus, stuck in a linguistic dilemma and the only way out of such problem is through erasing the colonial language that is never innocent and getting back to what is local and innate.

As seen in *Nervous Conditions*, the numerous faces of the mind exile through language express dissimilar however complementary stories of the 'plans' that are buried in the colonial language. Final endings (whether terminal linguistic exile, rebellion, entrapment, or emancipation) will not only depend on "recognizing the ideology inherent

in all language but also on finding the power with which to tackle it on one's own terms” (Gorle 192). Though Dangarembga shows how male and female circumstances differ radically, both sexes appear to equally suffer from the dangers of cultural alienation through language. The novel describes the multiple choices accessible for the Africans who want to escape their linguistic complex situation and the prices of making the erroneous choices. This Zimbabwean author has done much for Africans by creating a piece of art which visualizes the linguistic issues that we, Africans, experience every day. While reading *Nervous Conditions*, every African feels that his experience is addressed through the lens of one of the characters. Hence, as Africans, it is urgent that we find the right path to emancipate Africa from this labyrinth of multilingualism by creating more practical ways.

Africans can manage to liberate their languages through implementing the politics of the possible. The act of decolonizing the culture and of escaping the current state, through which we are involved in ‘Othering’ our own languages, should start from the individual’s choice of his/her own language. According to Skutnabb-Kangas and Canagarajah, education should recognize linguistic rights. However, waiting for the government or for the suitable educational system to unveil our culture from such colonial frocks would never be the solution. Therefore, teachers should be part of enabling their learners to critically think about language-choice.

Without language liberation African nations will never gain complete political liberation. The linguistic condition in Africa must continue to form the chief concern of postcolonial works. Native languages should play a central role in the education of African children. Besides, schools and mass media should offer programs that enrich native languages and native cultures. Further researches had better explore language policy decisions, linguistic and cultural imperialisms, native language enforcement, and how to

change negative attitudes towards native languages. Teachers are supposedly the ones to effectively preserve language and pass linguistic concerns to their people. Yet, one may raise the question: Are foreign language teachers promoters of linguistic imperialism? In future studies, it would be stunning if this enquiry is taken a step further.

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