

## Dynamics of Power Relationship, English vs African Languages:

### A Cross Current of a Sort

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**Abstract:** The power interplay between African languages and English language is both interesting and intriguing. The English language backed by multifarious contact with several cultures and languages, the history of British colonial experiences and the absence of a regulatory English language academy have had considerable influence on African languages. At the literary level for example, in fact ironically, English is the dominant language of African literature. At the linguistic level, English phonetics/phonology, vocabulary expansion, syntax, as well as semantics has infiltrated into African languages. Also at the cultural level, it has equally assumed the status of even being the dominant medium of expression of African cultural heritage. On the other hand, the African languages are not completely down and out without some bruises on the “heels” of English. Our findings are that African literature and culture in English both still encapsulates relics of African languages that have not only sensitized the English speaking world of the existence and potency of these languages but also placed African linguistics image at the highest altar of literary coliseum. The seeming renaissance in linguistic research, scholarship and development of African languages and especially in the late twentieth and twenty first centuries, could hardly be extricated from this relationship. Our conclusion therefore, is that rather than the power equation between African languages and English being completely one sided in favour of English, it is a cross-current of a sort.

**Key words:** African Language; English Language; African Literature; African Linguistics

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## INTRODUCTION

The contact between African languages and other world languages dates back to a long period of history. According to Brann (2006, p. 149), in Guinea or Africa South of the Sahara, contacts with Europe also started in the age of discoveries” not least under the aegis of Henry the Navigator son of John I of

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Portugal and Philippa of Lancaster, herself daughter of John of Gaunt. The trading forts and castles built by the Portuguese along the Western and Eastern African coasts stand to this day. They were followed by Dutch, British, French, Danish, Swedish, Brandenburg merchant adventurers. Because of the unfavourable climatic conditions and endemic diseases, their wives did not accompany them, nor did they settle among the indigenous people; and they were either quickly relieved or died within a short time in what was known as the white man's grave". Exceptions to this were the Southern tip of the continent, where the Dutch first and then the British founded a settler colony; some plantocratic islands off the coast in the North West-the canaries- and the Mascareignes in the South-East; and to some extent the plateaux of Eastern Africa, where a much later type of Agricultural settlers felt at home. Otherwise, the colonies when they were officially taken over in the 19<sup>th</sup> century from the private or state owned companies, were all of the administrative type, as was British in Roman times.

The contact between Africa and the rest of the world signaled the contact, relationship and power interplay between African languages and other world languages such as Arabic, Portuguese, English, Spanish, French, German and Russian. Arabic is historically said to be the first of the world languages to arrive in West Africa in the 11<sup>th</sup> century through the drive into Mauritania by the Almoravid dynasty via Timbuktu and the trans-Saharan route. Islam and hence Arabic, reached the Hausa states of present day-Nigeria in the late middle ages. Islam thus spread through West African from the North and East down to the North of Cameroon. The Jihad of Usman Dan Fodio and the movement of people towards the coast spread it as a language of religion. However, it is confined as an indigenous language only in Mauritania and Chad according to Blanc (1971), Portuguese was introduced as a trade language as early as the 1450's through the discovery of Cabo Verde (Cape Verde) and Guinea and was used for centuries as trading ports along the coast, down to the Cameroon. German is said to be the last of the world languages to come to West Africa and the first to leave Brann (2006, p. 123).

English is said to have first been introduced through the presence of a string of trading posts along the coast, often like Elmina founded in 1482, taken from the Portuguese rivals, from the Gambia in the North to Bonny and Calabar in the South, starting in the 1640's with the settlement at Cape Coast. However, it was not until the settlement of Freetown in 1787 by slaves liberated from Portuguese and Spanish ships, that a proper educational effort was started with the aid of Christian missionaries through the zeal of these missionaries of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, English spread along the coast and into the forest belt in Ghana, Nigeria and Eastern Cameroon.

The focus of this paper therefore is to examine the dynamics of the power relationship between English as one of the world's languages in Africa and African languages from the period of contact. It further seeks to highlight the nature of this power interplay as well as the accompanying intrigues. Attempt is made to reveal areas of outright dominance, areas of symbiotic relationship and areas where these lesser known languages have pulled through some salient strides in relevance. In order to restrict ourselves in an otherwise vast discourse, we have decided to employ three parametric levels or indices for comparison. These include the linguistic level, the literary level and the cultural level. That could only be after a brief overview of the current status of English and African languages. We have not also failed to examine the implications of a seeming renaissance in linguistic research, scholarship and development of African languages especially in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as well as attitudes towards them.

## **CURRENT STATUS OF ENGLISH AND AFRICAN LANGUAGES**

English is genetically Germanic and are of the Indo European languages. As indicated earlier, it enjoys the status of a world language. According to Emenanjo (2005, p. 10) English is one of the richest world language. This is made possible by the multifarious contacts which English Language and culture has had with other cultures and their languages. English had long contacts with Graeco-Roman civilization and Greek and Latin in particular. This accounts for the proliferation of Greek Latin and by extension French, Spanish, Portuguese and Italian roots and words in English. Also, English Language has benefited immensely from the history of British colonial experience which culminated into the present-day-British commonwealth countries. Furthermore, English lacks the presence of an

institutionalized and regulatory language Academy, as it is with French. The implication of this is that English has adopted a “laissez faire” and accommodating capacity in terms of alien words and meta language terms. English today has become the international language of science and technology, the international language of information and communication technology (ICT) and the language of modern life and living. The socio-political, cultural and military influence of the United States of America as the unofficial ‘policeman’ of the world has also in no small way benefited the English language and projected its influence among languages of the world. A summary of the status of English in the world today is captured by Mazrui (1975) quoting an East African publication. “When a Russian pilot seeks to land at an airfield in Athens, Cairo or New Delhi, he talks to the control tower in English”. It was further reported that by 1966, 70% of the world’s mail was written in English and even larger percentage of cable and wireless transmissions while 60% of the world’s broadcasts were already in English. Comrie (2007) puts the number of speakers of English as a native or first language as 341 million while 167 million are speakers of English as a second language. With 508 million speakerships; English becomes undoubtedly the second most widely spoken language after Chinese with 1.2 billion speakers.

African languages do not have these advantages which English has. No African language is classified as a world language. For example, No African language is among the official or working languages of the United Nations Organization (UNO). In fact no African language is used as an official language in the African Union (AU) or in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). African languages classified by Greenberg (1963) and reclassified by Bender Samuel (1989) comprises of four main families namely; Afro-Asiatic, Nilo-Saharan, Niger-Congo and Khoisan. Afro-Asiatic languages occupy most of North Africa and also large parts of South Western Asia. It consists of several subfamilies including Semitic e.g. Amharic, the dominant language of Ethiopia, the Chadic branch spoken mainly in Northern Nigeria e.g. Hausa one of the most widely spoken languages of sub-Saharan Africa. Berber, Cushitic and Egyptian are other sub-families of the Afro-Asiatic family. The Niger-Congo family covers most of sub-Saharan Africa and includes such widely spoken West African languages as Igbo, Yoruba, Fulani as well as the Bantu languages of Eastern and Southern Africa which include Swahili and Zulu. The Nilo-Saharan languages are spoken mainly in Eastern Africa e.g. Masai, spoken by the massai people in Kenya and Tanzania. The Khoisan languages are spoken in the South Western corner of Africa and include the Nama language formerly called Hottentot.

With English possessing the salient characteristics of world languages namely, the power of attraction and the extent of dispersion, with African languages lacking the pedigree of English as summed up above, scholars would hastily conclude that there is no basis of comparison between English and African Languages. Exoglossic scholars will readily point to the fact that the power equation between English and African Languages, favour English only. They tend to see no relevance of African Languages in world Affairs or any gains made by African languages through the English language over the period of contact. This work is set to postulate a contrary view to the above and rather, possibly surprisingly, project a cross-current in the power relationship between African languages and English.

## **LITERARY LEVEL**

A common domain to readily understand the power relationship between English and African language is at the literary level. According to Halle (2006, p. 15), “Africans have been writing all kinds of texts for 5,000 years”. He further quotes Akpers (2000) as saying that “African verbal art can be found not only in Europe, North America and South America, but also in the middle East and around the shores of the Indian ocean”. Halle was optimistic that African literature will “burst at the seams at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century”. Iwuchukwu (2008, p. 1) vividly portrayed the vision and ambition of African literary scholars and critics in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This vision include, envisioning a new Africa which has achieved parity politically, technologically, economically and militarily with Europe and America. He however, faulted this ambition for its non-inclusion of the achievement of a linguistic parity and went further to propose a review of the curriculum of African literature in our universities to make for an all embracing teaching of African literature in English as well as African literature in indigenous languages.

The fact remains ironically however, that European languages like English has remained the dominant language of African literature. This does not in any way justify the theory of exclusive dominance in the power interplay between English and African languages. Rather, at the literary level, and other levels to be subsequently discussed, one discovers that African languages are not completely down and out without some “bruises on the heels” of English. African literature in English still encapsulates relics of African languages that have not only sensitized the entire world but particularly, the English speaking world of the existence and potency of these languages but also placed African linguistics image at the highest ‘altar’ of literary coliseum. Characterization, physical and historical settings among others feature significantly as tools employed by authors of the three genres of African literature in English to project the relics of African languages to the English speaking world. The authors have used these media to assert that these languages exist, are functional and that their speakers are equally addicted to their use as the speakers are addicted to the use of English.

<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Outstanding Characters</b>	<b>Physical Setting</b>	<b>Historical Setting</b>	<b>Genre</b>
Achebe, Chinua	Things fall apart	Okonkwo, Ikemefuna, Unoka, Ekwefi	Umuofia village in Eastern Nigeria	The socio-political, religious and cultural conflict arising from the contact between African and Western cultures	Novel
Soyinka, Wole	King Baabu	Bashal/Maariya, Fatasimu	Nigeria	Disgust for the decadence, intellectual poverty, greed and mindless brutality that was seen as the distinguishing characteristics of Abacha years in Nigeria.	Play
Anyidoho Kofi	Praise song for the land	Dog, Master	Ghana/Africa	Africa the cradle of civilization, now a beggar in the market place of the world.	Poetry
Armah, Kwei Ayi	In the house of life	Lindela, Biko Keepers, Shearers	Africa	African intellectuals since the advent of colonialism have been the victim of education that denied African achievement.	Novel
Udonsi, Sunny	The long Arm of the Frog	Peter, Tunde Omatshola	Port Harcourt, Potiskun, Sango Otta	Contemporary Nigeria	Novel
Munonye, John	Oilman of Obange	Jeremiah Okoh, Onugo	Obange, Ota, Ugili Ukeleke and Ania	Colonial/missionary days in Nigeria	Novel
Conton, William	The flights	Saidu, Mr. O’Neil, Mr. Kamara	Songhai, Lagos Airport in Nigeria Gatwick Airport London	Young independent African countries and their relationship with Western Nations	Novel
Njoku, Rose	Withstand the storm	Rose Njoku, Hilary Njoku, Isabelli Njoku, Philomena Njoku	Emekuku Owerri, Mbano Ihiala, Benin former Biafra, Nigeria	The Nigerian civil war period between 1967-1970	Novel
Ike Chukwue meka	The search	Ola Akenga, Kenange Alhaji Abubakar	Akure, Bauchi Abuja, Nigeria	Contemporary Nigerian society with political instability	

The physical and historical setting of most African literary pieces capture African environments both urban and rural whose names and images are projected to the English speaking world. Also, the historical settings, either fictional or real revolve around African based issues and times. Some African literary pieces are presented below with their physical and historical settings as well as a few central characters to lend credence to the above fact.

<b>Novel</b>	<b>Name of Igbo character</b>	<b>Meaning of Igbo Name</b>
Things Fall Apart	Okonkwo	Somebody born on Nkwo market day.
	Ikemefuna	Let not my strength/labour be in vain.
	Egonwanne	The money of a kinsman...
	Okoye	A man born on Orié market day.
	Okeke	A man born on Eke market day.
	Okafo	A man born on Afo market day.
	Ozoemena	Let it (death/bad omen) not happen again.
	Ojiugo	Precious kolanut.
	Ogbuefi	Chieftaincy title meaning: a cow killer.
	Ogbuefi Ezeugo	+ chief – King of birds.
	Ogbuefi Udo	+ chief – peace.
	Ogbuefi Ezendu	+ chief – King of life.
	Ogbuefi Ndulue	+ chief – long life (longevity).
	Ogbuefi Ugonna	+ chief – The father's eagle.
	Ogbuefi Ekwueme	+ chief – One that does what he says and says what he does.
	Unoka	House/home is great.
	Nwafia	Begotten in the wilderness.
	Nkechi	God's own.
	Maduka	A human being is greater than wealth.
	Nwakibie	The child that is greater than others.
	Nnama	Father knows.
	Njide (ka)	What one holds is greater.
	Chika	God is supreme.
	Akukalia	When wealth increases...
	Amalinze	Know the titled man.
	Chielo	God thinks/knows.
	Emefo	Realizing one's mistake.
	Akunna	Father's wealth.
	Amikwu	The compound of one's relation.
	Akueni	Wealth does not weaken.
	Aneto	As you grow...
	Ezelagbo	Avoid the kindred.
	Onwubiko	Death! Please.
Onwuma	Death knows.	
Odiche	Outstanding.	
Ofoedu	Justice guides/leads.	
Obiageli	Somebody that has come to enjoy.	
Umezulike	Let the misery stop.	
Ukegbu	Words cannot kill.	
Uzowulu	Let the road (link) remain.	
Udenkwo	The reign of man born on Nkwo.	
Uchendu	Thought of life (Good thought).	

It can be seen from the above that the physical settings and most of the outstanding characters convey relics of African languages, although the historical settings are written in English, but it is either the ancient pre-colonial or contemporary time predominantly in Africa.

Characterization provides a clearer insight into the spreading of African linguistic and cultural identities through the English language in literature. The table below is a very significant number of Igbo characters in Achebe's "Things Fall Apart" and their meanings in Igbo language. Igbo is one of the three major languages in Nigeria, and West Africa whose speakers including Achebe himself could noticeably be seen in every part of Africa and the world. It is one of the eight major languages in the Benue-Congo group of African languages (Manfredi 1989).

All the names above and others not included because of space, were written in the author's dialect which constitute part of the diverse linguistic forms, that are antecedents of the modern standard Igbo. As indicated earlier, Achebe is not alone in projecting African language named characters in their works. Soyinka named some of his characters as "Baabu meaning 'nothing' in Hausa language, Amope meaning 'she is moulded complete' –in Yoruba, some named in Ghanaian South African as well some in east African languages e.g. Nkruma, Jomo, Lumumba in his "play of Giants". Udonisi used such names as 'Tunde' meaning 'dead father is back' Adisa (he refused to run). Omatshola (child is wealth) all in Yoruba as well as Ejiro in Urhobo. According to Mensah (2006, p. 143), Anyidoho's poetic work praise song for the land relies for the effect, on the same clever juxtaposition and play on resonating African names which was a feature of the earlier ontology as shown below,

The Asante the Azande and the Mandé

The Mandingo and the Bakongo

The Basuto the Dagaaba and the Dogon

Studies in names and naming in general have been undertaken by a number of researchers (Essien 1986, Daaba 2003, Iwundu in Ubahakwe (2004, p. 288). Essien (2004, p. 105) submits that the more we know about our names, the more we know about our language, our history, our values, our cosmology, our traditional religion, our ethnic cultures and above all ourselves. Though the cultural implication of this will yet be addressed in its proper subsection, suffice it to say in the light of the above unarguable submission, that Achebe and a host of African literature writers have through the English language taught the world more about African languages, history, values, cosmology, traditional religion, ethnic values as well Africans themselves. Undoubtedly, translators of the several languages into which Things Fall Apart which golden anniversary was recently celebrated across the world, have been rendered, must have studied to understand these names before settling to adopt them as borrowed, loan, calqued or domesticated words into their languages.

Besides, it is not only names that represent African languages in African literature. There are complete words, phrases and even sentences of African languages in a significant number of those literary pieces. William Conton's *Flights* and Sunny Udonisi's "The Long Arm of the Frog" went beyond the inclusion of names, phrases and sentences in African languages to the projection of a complete symbiotic relationship between them. Conton used his protagonist Saidu to emphasize the relevance and functionality of African languages as he needed to go to school to learn how to speak Hausa in order to listen to the news on the radio and of the parliament. Even when he travelled to the capital of his state, he discovered that they did not understand English, but were getting on well with their normal life using Hausa/Fulani, their indigenous languages. on the other hand, he realizes that his mission of fighting for the repealment of an obnoxious land act, by an imperialist government would not be achieved without him knowing their language. He enrolled in a school where he learnt English. English in Africa tend to be an accident of history. Africans lived and survived on their own prior to the contact with English. They were however, immersed into English, partly, as the only way of contending against the imperialists who own and spoke the language. Nevertheless, the presence of English has not made a significant number to abandon the use of their mother tongue. Udonisi captured this when Peter, one of the characters was greeting the Madam in English while the Mallam was replying in an African language. Peter had to say "Nagode Mallam" which is Hausa word for thank you. The police inspector's interrogations in English was answered with Nigerian pidgin English. It tends to be appropriate at this point to assume and infer in line with Mensah's (2006, p. 146) opinion that since a piece of literature like a novel gives life to mere information, provides wider dissemination of information which makes it "wrestled from the grasp of a closed circle of specialists", making it available to a wider readership; these relics of African languages in them must have gotten to a wider readership of the English speaking

world. Furthermore, it does appear that African's use of English is a political and linguistic strategy to access the owners in order to effectively wrestle out of their hands, an entrenched oppressive policies. One wonders who is dominating the other. If a Kenyan or an African, in addition to knowing his mother tongue, decides to know and use English in order to call the shot of world affairs where he had hitherto been treated as a second class citizen and no voice to be heard, then the African tend to have conquered his esthwhile godfather. If a decision is taken in an African language and for the purpose of wider communication communicated in English, African language cannot be said to be of no relevance. After all, this was equally the strategy adopted by the English owners and other western world when it was time to partition Africa. In addition to their mother tongues, they spent so much for the study and development of African languages as a necessary tool for consolidating their hold and presence in Africa.

## **CULTURAL LEVEL**

At this level, it is also readily observed that African culture and cultural affairs is more recently predominantly expressed through the English language. As in the literary level, relics of African languages are also spread through the dominant medium of African cultural expression. Referring to our previous table of Igbo personal names in *Things Fall Apart*, the cultural import and significance tend to outweigh the literary relevance. Names in Igbo language and indeed many languages have a lot of cultural undertones. They are not mere labels of identity. Names could be given according to the circumstances that surround the birth of a child, it tells stories about the bearers. It points to the values of the society into which the individual is born. Olaoye (2006, p. 15) believes that naming is a sociolinguistic exercise which can be used to trace the history of a lineage, trace historical and linguistic changes that have taken place over the years, both diachronically and synchronically. Names are also derived from war, migration, colonization, peace, conquest, political and religious crisis, religious conversion, their bilingual or multilingual astuteness, prowess, business acumen, spiritual uprightness, wisdom, sagacity, idiocy, idiosyncrasy, intellectual prodigiousness or wizardry etc.

Specifically, Igbo names have been classified into broad based semantic categories namely; theosphoric, testimonial, ideational and monumental Iwundu in (Olulkpe 2004). Theosphoric names are derived from the names and attributes of the supreme God like Chika (God is supreme), Chielo (God thinks/knows). Testimonial names testify to the individual's fortunes with respect to procreation, good luck and adventure e.g. Akunna (father's wealth), Nwakaibeya (the child that is greater than others). Ideational names are names that reflect cultural ideas. They encapsulate the traditional views on a number of general issues such as, the Igbo concept of man, society, universe, life and death. Example, Madukaku (Human being is greater than wealth), Umezulike (Let the misery stop). The monumental names expresses personal achievements in physical prowess, amasing of wealth, social status, professional excellence. The names suggest courage, brevity and industry e.g. Akukalia (when wealth increases), Ogbuefi (Chieftaincy title of being a cow killer), Ekwueme (One who does exactly what he says and vice versa).

It can be observed that culture which is the totality of a people's way of life is comprehensively packaged through the Igbo names Achebe spread out in his most popular literary work was well delivered to the English speaking world and beyond where several translated versions have been rendered in more than the world's major languages. Achebe must not have done that only in *Things Fall Apart*. Also as shown in our first table, a significant number of African literature writers tend to have adopted the trend including Soyinka. Achebe and Soyinka by their works and renown are admissible not only as 'jurors' but as adjudicators of the highest 'altar' of literary coliseum in the world today. The noble prize for literature and several other literary prizes as well as international spread of one's work could be used to determine our "highest altar of literary colliseum". In any case, the existence, potency and functionality as well as cultural milieu of Africans through their languages have been ably represented in the English medium.

The film industry in Africa especially in Nigeria have also helped to package African culture through African languages to the English speaking world. The acceptability of Nigeria's Nollywood as a counter

part or better alternative of the Hollywood in the USA tend to be the acceptance of African languages as counterparts of the English language. Some of the films are acted with indigenous African languages with translations in English. In a few cases, they are acted in English with translations in an African language. This is nothing but a symbiotic relationship of a sort.

## LINGUISTIC LEVEL

The power interplay between African languages and English could again be viewed from the linguistic perspective. The long period of contact has seen English phonetics/phonology, vocabulary expansion. Syntax as well as semantics infiltrating into African languages. At the morphological level, a large number of English lexical items have become diffused into African languages like Igbo. Such lexical items could be categorized into; complete sub-loans and unstabilized items. The sub-loans are those that represent non-existing concepts in Igbo. They are distinguished by the fact that, it is difficult, almost impossible to trace historically or culturally their native equivalents in Igbo. Examples of such items are, Monde (Monday), Over-Rail, Coal Camp. The remote loans or unstabilized lexical items are those that fall under the vocabulary of the native (borrower) language, Igbo e.g. Anumanu (animal), Mbroda (umbrella), Mamiwota (mermaid). Lexical influence can also be observed in the spelling of a number of Igbo words e.g. Oji (Orji), Onicha (Onitsha), Eke (Ekeh). Here, the Igbo word structure is altered through prefixation, suffixation and interaffixation of English morphemes such as - r, - h, - sh.

Phonologically, blending and contractions which were hardly found in Igbo language, have been introduced. In blending, the first and back formations of two different words or name are coined together to form one name e.g. Mbaitoli + Ikeduru – Mbaike, Anambra + Imo – Animo, Okwu + Ugiri Ike – Okwiike. The attempt to form metalanguage in Igbo has led to contractions. In this, some sounds or certain parts of a sentence are dropped in such a way that the other parts or segments may be joined together e.g.

<b>Igbo Origin Translation</b>	<b>English Word</b>	<b>New Igbo Technical</b>
Íkè ná èsì – áó	Balance	K àn èsì á ó
M á á-ih è-d úm	University	M á á úm
Kw è-k á-ih èg áá	Conductor	Kw èg áá

A ‘Rivers’ primary school project of Kay Williamson further altered the phonological structure of a number of Igbo towns and villages through the introduction of the alveolar liquid /r/ in the initial environment of the words. Example,

<b>Original Igbo name</b>	<b>New name</b>
Umukoro	Rumuokoro
Umudara	Rumuodara
Umola	Rumuola

Syntactically, linguists are divided as to the possibility of an interlingual influence. Since the writer belongs to the school that admits the possibility of a syntactic influence, there is observed influence of English on Igbo at this level. Adjectives in Igbo usually come after the nominal they modify with the exception of ajoy or ojoo. However, such utterances as this heard from Igbo speakers; oji ojoo ‘He is bad’ ‘Nwoke ahụ di ojii’, ‘that man is black’, o di ukwu, ‘It is big’, tend to suggest that Igbo adjectives are being joined to the English predicative use of Adjectives. They are not performing the attributive functions of Igbo adjectives.

Semantically, the influence of English on Igbo is manifested at all the other levels already discussed. Also, there were a lot of ambiguities in the translation of the bible and a lot of religious literature using the orthography developed by missionaries. Some of these ambiguities arose as a result of the contextual use of words like ‘sheep’ (aturu), dialectal variations, no clear distinction of diagraphs eg/nw/and/n/,



ambiguous use of vowels e.g. /o/ and /o/ as well as non-distinction of tonal ambiguities e.g. ɔ̀k̀è(male). Ók̀è(Rat) and ɔ̀k̀è(Boundary).

It must be pointed out that the issue of interlingual influence is not restricted to English and African languages but to all languages in contact. Besides, African languages is not completely down and out in this regard without some bruises on the 'heels' of English language. African languages have equally significantly influenced the English language. While we may not go into the detailed phonological, syntactic, morphological and semantic influence, because of space, it is however pertinent to draw attention to the fact that it is an aggregate of this linguistic effects on English that led to the numerous variants of English in Africa such as, Igbo English (Igboanusi 2002), Nigerian English (Banjo, 1971) and Ghanaian English (Sey, 1973). Such constructions below, heard from some Igbo speakers of English are only but evidence of Igbo syntactic influence of English.

<b>English</b>	<b>Influenced Igbo English</b>
The boys are playing	The boys are playing play
When I finish eating...	When I eat finish
Wait for me here	Wait me here
I did not reply him	I did not voice him

The Igbo English constructions above, are as a result of the influence of the mother tongue. They represent approximations of Igbo syntactic structure embedded in the English language. Also, English has borrowed from several African languages to enrich its vocabulary repertoire. Part of Achebe's message to the English speaking world through the Igbo names in his novel, is a lexico-semantic and syntactic analysis of Igbo grammar. One could easily detect from the table, the Igbo language distinction for gender in personal names. E.g. 'Okorie/Okoye' is a man born on orie market day while 'Mgborie' is a woman born on the same market day. This is also the case for 'Okeke and Mgbeke' as well as Okeafu and Mgbafo.

## AFRICAN LANGUAGE STUDY AND DEVELOPMENT

There is a seeming renaissance in African languages study scholarship and development in the late twentieth and twenty first centuries. Presently, African languages scholarship and plans of development is flourishing in institutions in Africa and around the globe. Several institutions in Europe and America are providing research grants for studies in African languages. In fact, African languages have provided impetus for linguists globally to study, especially, language description and documentation. A number of Nigerian languages that have witnessed monumental developmental strides in both research and development such as Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba, Ibibio, Fulfulde, Edo, Tiv, Efik have been through the ingenuity of scholars whose antecedents were rooted on the study of English language. Such scholars as Emenanjo, Ubahakwe, Nwachukwu, Nwadike, Ndimele etc for Igbo, Bamgbose, Banjo, Fafunwa, Badejo etc for Yoruba, Munzali, Junaidu, Amfani etc for Hausa, Essien, Eka, Urua for Ibibio and Elugbe for Edo. They have their scholarship and research roots in English language. They have taken these languages to heights that are almost comparable to the English language.

Until the 1980's Ibibio language, one of the lower cross languages had no written orthography and was simply regarded a minority language in Nigeria. Okon Essien, who had English linguistics tutelage both at the University of California, Los Angeles and the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, and began his academic/research career as a lecturer in English, eventually shifted to his mother tongue, Ibibio. Through his untiring effort, Ibibio language today, not only have a standard orthography, well developed grammar, but also books and primers as it is taught in both primary and secondary schools in the state where it is predominantly spoken. Two Universities in Nigeria have thriving academic programmes in Ibibio which have attracted students, researchers and scholars from Universities in Brazil, Germany etc. It is currently enjoying documentation work and one of the few African languages on the internet. According to Noah (2007, p. 1), by 2001, within two decades, Ibibio is ranked as one of the 200 major world's languages. Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba, through the effort of those scholars mentioned and some not mentioned, have gone far above Ibibio. The point therefore, is that this seeming renaissance in the

scholarship and development of African languages even in Tanzania with Swahili, is not extricable from their contact with English, which projects a symbiotic relationship of a sort.

## CONCLUSION

Perceiving the power relations between English and African languages is quite revealing. It has exposed us to seeing their long period of contact and how. We further see that currently English is a global language with accompanying salient characteristics including divergent channels of dispersion and vast extent of dispersion coupled with powerful socio-political attraction. African languages on the other hand does not have the above characteristics as no country in Africa has a language spoken by 60% of the population i.e. a clear majority of the population (Brann 2006, p. 126). A closer analysis of the power interplay unveils that the present status of English has in no way vitiated the potency, vitality and relevance of African languages. At the linguistic level, they have collaborated and benefited mutually from each other phonologically, syntactically morphologically, semantically and in the expansion of their vocabularies. Literarily, and culturally, the dominance of English as the medium of expression has carried along African languages thereby sensitizing the English speaking world of their existence and placing African linguistics image in the committee of revered scholars and nations. The romance with English has equally provoked an avowed commitment and awareness for the use, research and development of African languages. English has not taken the place of African languages, rather, African languages have adopted English as a strategy to unclasp, challenge and turn around the age long socio-political and economic oppression and stigmatization suffered over the years. It is a cross current of a sort.

The overall implication of this is that the bifurcation of the world into “knowledge driven, non-knowledge-driven, developed and undeveloped or developing, rich and poor nations etc should not mislead us to a developmental paradigm that is flawed: ‘Master and servant’. An emerging new world anchored on justice, equity and fair play must look up to the new ontology of “Ibuanyidanda” (complementarity) (Asouzu, 2008) as expressed in Igbo language. There must be mutual dependence and interdependence in complementarity with all missing links of reality. Within a complementary framework, units, in their insufficiency, stand to benefit from each other mutually. This is what African writers like Achebe have done bringing in African languages in their works in English. This is also what we think the power relationship holds between African languages and English.

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