Chapter 2

Literature Survey

The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine. How different are the
words home, Christ, ale, master, on his lips and on mine! I cannot speak or write
these words without unrest of the spirit. His language, so familiar and so foreign, will
always be for me an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words. My
voice holds them at bay. My soul frets in the shadow of language.

(Joyce 219)

The research related to the aftermath of the colonization and dismantling of power of
representation in the colonized societies had begun in the late 1970s, however seminal works
such as that of Foucault’s (1960), Fanon’s (1951, 1962) and Achebe’s have left an indelible
mark. It is with the texts such as Edward Said’s Orientalism (1978), which led to the
development of a new kind of discourse among the linguists on the basis of the colonial
impact on the linguistic attributes of the colonial nations. Said postulates:

To the extent that Western scholars were aware of contemporary Orientals or Oriental
movements of thought and culture, these were perceived either as silent shadows to be
animated by the Orientalist, brought into reality by them, or as a kind of cultural and
international proletariat useful for the Orientalist’s grander interpretive activity. (208)

Later the research has been further enriched by the works of Gayatri Spivak (1987, 1990,
1999) and Benedict Anderson (1982). The use and approval of the term was consolidated by
the appearance of The Empire Writes Back (1989) by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and
Helen Tiffin, which made readers rethink and redevelop the right perspective on the
construction of delusional identity and reality. Franz Boas postulated that "the internal structure of languages and societies must be allowed to emerge on their own, without the distorting imposition of European templates upon them" (1911)

The colonial implications on the language of an individual has always been a matter of concern, and when the language in question is that of drama, it is intriguing to know the use of cultural and ethnographic implications on it. The deviation is generally a resultant of the language sought after the experimentation with the colonial language. It results in the amalgamation of the colonial language, mainly the syntax of the indigenous language. Whereas, we already know that Ngugi and Soyinka unlike others have resorted to their native languages. Ola Rotimi argues:

The real issue should not be why an African writer resorts to perpetuating colonial tongue. Rather for the debate to be worthwhile, it should bear on how the writer uses that tongue to express the conditions and yearnings of his linguistically diverse people. (32)

However not many of the African writers, claim for this kind of ideology. Balme writes, "...it also reflects in the complex ways of the ideological issues outlined above: language in a post-colonial situation is almost linked to the question of power" (110). Balme comes to this conclusion of the colonial dominance of the language which can be attributed to the work of Ashcroft et al writes, "...the discussion of post-colonial writing...is largely a discussion of the process by which the language, with its power, and the writing, with its signification of authority, has been wrested from the dominant European culture" (7). He also maintains, "It is not possible to return to or to rediscover an absolute pre-colonial cultural purity, nor independent of their historical implication in the European colonial enterprise" (195-6).
As the language marched towards civilisation, a constant need to interact with the fellow beings emerged and these language came into existence. Language plays an important role in determining the socio-cultural status of a person. Language is not only indicative of a person's attitude and intellect but it also determines the social and cultural attitude of a person. It determines a person's identity as a whole. Perhaps that is why Macaulay in his 'Minute to Education' says, "In India, English is the language spoken by the ruling class. It is spoken by higher class of natives at the seats of government" (1835). India has been subjected to the colonial hegemony created in the form of language. It may have been said in 1835, but it is still relevant in the present day world. What India has gone through, is a case of linguistic atrocity which has been the case of other colonies as well. Perhaps when it comes to the English language writers in Africa have engendered a discourse of rejection of the crown of the English supremacy. This discourse deserves a special space on the map of postcolonial studies in terms of rejecting the idea of dominion. In Myth, Literature, and the African World (1990), Wole Soyinka states while talking about the difference between European and African Drama, "It is representative of the essential differences between two worldviews, a difference between one culture whose artifacts are evidence of a cohesive understanding of irreducible truth" (38). In order to understand the concept of language and identity one needs to take a close look at various aspects that have culminated in giving shape to the present ideologies and the rejection of English language. Colonial rulers not only targeted the wealth of the nations but the culture as well thereby perpetuating mental slavery along with physical slavery. The culture, which is the target, becomes a catalyst in establishing a dominion over the colonised people. Ngugi in his seminal work Decolonising the Mind (1986) discusses at length the cultural colonialism of which language is an integral part. He discusses the idea behind the objective of creating awareness about the language which rules the minds of people. He "laments a neo-colonial situation which has meant the
European bourgeoisie once again stealing our talents and geniuses as they have stolen our economics” (xii). This highlights the adverse effects of the spread of English on culture and on the people of colonised nations. Perhaps it is the efforts of the people like Ngugi that the colonised world is starting to think more about liberating themselves from the linguistics shackles of neo-colonialist agendas of the English speaking nations.

Ngugi made it very clear in his statement that Decolonising the Mind is his last work in English and that he is resorting to the native language, Gikuyu language, so as to enrich it and expand the horizon of its readers and also to provide the readers something to ponder on and ‘retrieve’, ‘revive’ and ‘revitalise’ their own identity in the world (xiii). A continuous tussle continues even to this day about the assertion of linguistic identities. In the depths of his disappointment towards such “betrayers.” Wa Thiong’O states that, “it is the final triumph of a system of domination when the dominated start singing its virtues” (20), and later states, “by our continuing to write in foreign languages, paying homage to them, are we not on the cultural level continuing that neo-colonial slaveish and cringing spirit?” (25). Mosobalaje states:

The writer therefore has a duty either to the members of the community by exploring the multiple creative dimensions and potentials of their codes or to subvert their interest for a different end. Ultimately in the exploration of the potentials of the codes of the community, the writer must always carry the members along in order not to jeopardize his or her agency for the group. (168)

It is very difficult for the one is at the losing end to rectify the situation. However, a resistant and aware activist would continuously try to revive this linguistic identity and to leave an indelible mark on the world linguistic map. The neo imperialistic agenda of the ruling class of the world has not only led to an economic impairment but also to cultural identity
impairment. For this scenario Ngugi says, “Imperialism is total: it has economic, political, military, cultural and psychological consequences for the people of the world today. It could even lead to holocaust.”(2). Imperialism led to capitalism and the supposed globalisation has led to a new neo-imperialistic nation of which perhaps Africa is the worst sufferer. However, there are many who are fighting for the freedom to choose their language of expression, to the revival of their cultural, social and ethnic identity. But this struggle does not seem to have an end in the near future and it is a long way for this freedom to be achieved.

While theoretically examining the implications of language in shaping the socio political and cultural identities of a country or community, recent researches in African literature have aimed to decipher the ongoing reminiscence among the African writers in order to reclaim their own past and glorious literature. Edgar Wright traces back the genesis of English in his works:

Since the war it has inevitably been brought home to them far more forcibly than ever before that there are many other authors writing in English besides Englishmen. In practice that means, overwhelming, Americans. But in addition writers from Commonwealth or ex-Commonwealth countries- figures as different as A.D. Hope and Chinua Achebe – are at least beginning to count for English readers in their own right, not as curiosities or poor relations, and this is going to be more and more the case as time goes on.(2)

Thus, acknowledging the role of Commonwealth writers who were once colonies, it is by far clear that writers such as Achebe, Ngugi, Raja Rao have created a space for themselves. However, this can still be the case as defined by Braj Kachru by the means of three concentric circles creating the inner and outer circle to distinguish the different users of English. Edgar Wright too, differentiates the versions of English in literature i.e. English as
the mother tongue i.e. of Australia, America, English as second language i.e. Africa and English where it is creolized such as that of West Indian English. (3)

The debate over English language has risen to the level of categorising English into their respective ethnicity. Soyinka on the other hand urges the literary world not to categorize them as African writers but only as writers. He wishes to make out his identity as a writer which is not based on any socially demographic location but as an artist who uses his language and carves out his linguistic identity as a writer of a varied and rich literature.

Language and literature hold on to different perspectives, yet these are conjoined at the same time. Language forms literature and literature is an integral part that forms a nation’s identity. Thus, encouraging writings in English not only attacks the cultural, social, political and moral identity of a writer but is also an attack on the readers’ identity which is formed when the readers connect with the writers through social and cultural relationships. The dilemma of the writers and the readers in the postcolonial era is very well addressed by Stuart Hampshire. He states:

It is possible for someone fully to understand, and to be able to use correctly, the idioms of the conventional morality, while rejecting this whole terminology as superstitious or in some other way inadequate... He is then in position similar to (but not the same as) that of the anthropologist, or the student of comparative religion, who learns to use or to understand a language, or part of language, while denying that many of the distinctions or classifications involved in the language correspond to any reality. (271)

While acknowledging the factual basis of English literature based on the English cultural norms it is important to understand the theory without lacking on what the orient intends to do with it in practical world. As culturally and socially diverse society fails to relate to the
English world theories formed on the cultural basis thereby undermining one’s own consciousness and intellectual basis, since the assumed orient is only becoming the customers in the market rather than participating in the whole process of the making of the intellect. However there are many who have succumbed to the needs and pressures of the English world. Yet at the same time there are a few among the many indigenous writers who reject this call for English for all. Soyinka has been a staunch advocate of ‘reclaiming our past’ since he believes that writings should reflect native culture and it is one’s duty to abide by the faithfulness towards one’s motherland. Soyinka writes:

I borrow seasons from an alien land

In brotherhood of ill, pride of race around me

Strewn in sunlit shards. I borrow alien lands

To stay the season of a mind. (12)

Thus it comes at a point where it is important to understand the concept as inscribed by the term ‘negritude’ which was the resultant of casting away from the cultures of the colonial nations.

Edgar Wright examines the use of language by the Africans. He elaborates on Totuola’s language and terms it as “strange” (14) since it does not hold any resemblance with the Nigerian English whereas he also presents a critique of Gabriel Okara’s The Voice and considers the language as an ‘artificial language’. These generalisations have been made based on the fact that none of these writers have done justice to their own respective mother tongues whether it is Totuola’s language or Okara’s attempt to illustrate Ijaw. According to Wright Okara’s attempt to translate the idioms and other features of language has led to the deterioration of the language. Yet if we look closely we can clearly identify two sides of
African literature where at one point when the writers such as Achebe are supporting the English language and the writers such as Soyinka, Ngugi and Obi Wali completely disregard the use of English language and emphasise on the use of vernacular tongue which is their mother tongue. It is because of these efforts by such writers that they have brought about a change such as James Ngugi dropped his first work name which is English to embrace his African birth name i.e. Ngugi wa Thiong’o and Obi Wali wrote his novel Ngugi dili Chukew (1963) in Igbo. This emerges as a sort of ultimatum for the advocates of English language over the cultural identity while restoring the creative and cultural integrity of the writer. It can be highlighted as literary non-cooperative movement. Wright says, “Literature is still a prime medium for acting in the minds and imagination of readers in such a way as to make them understand through various experience customs, behaviour, emotions.” (13)

However Young highlights the assertive nature of Soyinka’s efforts for the use of English language. He says:

It is Soyinka, too, who among African writers has most liberated the English language from more mechanistic preoccupation with style. He still uses the devices of cushioning; it is true, though his preference for glossary and notes does something to avoid intrusion of information at the wrong moment. But above all, as with his use of the heritage of tradition, it is his reassertion of intuitive response to the linguistic environment as he finds it in all its complexities that assures him his success. It is this that makes his prefatory note in the translation of The Forest of a Thousand Demons, in which he asserts ‘sense’ over the ‘precise original, the most significant statement on the subject by an African writer to date, and that book as a whole is the most successful attempt at continuous translation. The total linguistic environment is neither to mother tongue nor English. It is for him the leap for Yoruba, to English, pidgin or to any number of shades of illusion and meaning between, the reflection of
experience, whole as it is all these, or the best mean at the best moment. (Quoted in Wright 46)

At this conjecture comes the important aspects of understanding the role of English language in the development of culture and linguistic diversity of once colonial nations as E. D. Jones says that in order for African literature to be ‘universal’ it must first be ‘truly local’ (18-20). This projects reconciliation with Raja Rao’s words, “Yet English is not really an alien language to us. It is the language of our intellectual make up...we cannot write like the English. We should not. We can write only as Indians” (5). Rao claims that one has to understand that one cannot despise English and its use. But the aim should be that the writer be identified as a writer of English rather than submitting to the Western identity. Thus, it is important to give English language an ethnic identity of one’s nation. Young also observes:

From mere reminiscence and example for enlightened argument to protest and rejection, the African writer has worked out his relationship to the wider world. Over two centuries he has sought to realize the assertion of ‘felt values’ in the reconciliation of his own identity and literary integrity. Now, on his own terms, he offers it against ‘the values of the great world’. It is a meaningful internationalism that West cannot afford to ignore. (49)

However over the long period of time English has attained a status for itself. Perhaps as the people are increasingly becoming inhabitants of a global village the need to press for one’s identity is strengthening too. Once colonised countries are coming out from their shell and asserting the identity of individual streak. Binou writes:

Economic propriety has changed attitude towards Indian English. Having jobs and incomes, and being noticed by the rest of the world, have made Indians confident - and the same confidence has attached itself to their English. (Quoted in Clark 2)
And this is not only a point to be taken into consideration in the context of India’s conquest by the British but also the other countries like Africa who have shared the colonial experience. Since literature is the best means to show the outburst of the ages of suppression, writers have now used it to enhance their own culture, roots and identity. Bonvillain says:

Understanding meaning is necessarily contextual, situating speech in interpersonal and cultural contexts. All culture provide rules for appropriate communicative interaction, defining behaviours that should occur, that may occur and that should not occur in given contexts. (85)

In order to create meaning out of a text it has to be written in the given behavioural contexts of the people for whom and by whom the literature is being written. This understanding of culture is an important aspect of meaning making and establishing an identity which is unique and true to a person’s ethnicity. It is impossible to situate language and identity of an individual into separate compartments. However, studies have proved testimony to the fact that language has long been the reason of racial and other discriminations in the world map. The role of language in shaping the society and culture, and thereby the identity of a community can be traced in the words of Rampton:

Linguistic ethnography generally holds that language and social life are mutually shaping, and that close analysis of situated language use can provide both fundamental and distinctive insights into the mechanism and dynamics of social and cultural productions in everyday activity. (584-67)

It becomes important to understand the relationship of language and identity. Calvet opines:

To speak a language or a language form, to prefer the use of one of form over another, as always something more than simply an instrument of communication. Speaking a
language always indicates something besides what I am in the process of saying in the
language. (63)

The language that one uses is actually an expression of one’s identity which is needed to
reveal in order to understand the role of relationship of how language is used as an aftermath
of war rather if it is to be termed so. Language is no less than a war weapon curbing the
reality of individuals and creating identity crises. Joseph remarks:

Language, in the sense of what a particular person says or writes, considered from the
point of view of both form and content, is central to individual identity. It inscribes
the person within the national and other corporate identities, including establishing the
people’s ‘rank’ within the identity. It constitutes a text, not just of what the person
says, but of the person, from which others will read and interpret the person’s identity
in the richest and complex of ways. Indeed, the over-readings the produce will be
richer than the text itself can sustain. (255)

Joseph points out that language upholds a great part of an identity of an individual. Riley too
rightly points out:

In social terms, identity can, by definition, only be treated by reference to others,
since others are its principal sources. Discussing social identity as if it were an
intrinsic quality of one person makes about as much as sense as discussing the sound
of one hand clapping. I take this to be the point of Berkeley’s dictum Esseestpercepi
(To be is to be perceived) and Sartre’s ‘Il suffit qu’on me regards pour que je soisceque
je suis’ (It only needs someone to look at me to become what I am). Socially
speaking, identity is as much the product of the gaze of others as it is our own
making. (87)
Based on identifying the role of language and identity, Clark identifies four dimensions of the relationship of language and identity. She states:

1. Firstly, *formal properties or characteristics* of a language are properties that it objectively possesses that can be interpersonally verified. Every language has them. These are formal, linguistic properties, the properties of its lexicon as given in dictionaries morphology and syntax as given in grammars; the changes that these properties have undergone and so on;

2. Secondly, there is a *sociolinguistic dimension*: who speaks it and under what conditions. What proportion of its speakers are native; whether or not it has written form, the degree to which it is standardised and the like;

3. Thirdly, and in contrast to (1) and (2) above, the *identity* of a language cannot be said to be objectively verified. It is neither true nor false, rather, it is to be believed or to be rejected;

4. Identity as expressed through language can thus never be neutral. This is because an individual’s expression is legitimised through and by the *discourse or discursive practices* of the social groups to which any of us may belong. Such practices may seem neutral, since they have become legitimised, neutralised or structurally favoured over, in some cases, hundreds of years. (8)

Thus, according to Clark, as an individual one needs to identify that not only IS language is important; the prestige attached to it is not a false one but an identity of an individual. It is quite evident as Clark signifies that language expresses, embodies and symbolises cultural reality (Krash, 1998:3) pluralistic English – or Englishes – take on double roles: one is the manifestation of Western and the Judeo –Christian tradition, the other is the representation of
the culture of its speakers (19). However, Kachru states, “English has multiple identities…in the international contexts, English represents a repertoire of cultures, not a monolithic culture.” (19)

English has such manifestation on the society that it becomes hard to identify with the formula of single language for all or lingua franca. As Eagleton says, “Any actual language consists of a higher complex range of discourses, differentiated according to class, region, gender, status and so on, which can by no means be neatly unified into a single homogeneous linguistic community.” (4)

In order to retain a distinct national identity to embrace the uniqueness of individual is the utmost important task which needs to be taken into consideration while acknowledging the worth of an individual nationalistic identity. Stuart Hall points out:

A national culture is a discourse – a way of constructing meanings which influences and organises both our action and our conception of ourselves…National cultures construct identities by producing meaning about ‘the nation’ with which they can identify; these are contained in stories which are told it, memories which connect its present with its past, and imagines those which are constructed of it. (12)

Hence literature arises from our individual experiences thereby it is actually a narrative of our conscious which should and must speak for ourselves. It is now important to identify the term postcolonial with a reference to the present study in focus. Leela Gandhi states that “Postcolonialism can be seen as a theoretical resistance to the gap to the mystifying amnesia of the colonial aftermath.” (4). She further states:

The colonial past is not simply a reservoir of ‘raw’ political experiences and practices to be theorised from the detached and enlightened perspective of the present. It is also
the scene of intense discursive and conceptual activity, characterised by a profusion of thoughts and writing about the cultural and political identities of colonised subjects.

Thus, in its therapeutic retrieval of the colonised past, postcolonialism needs to define itself as an area of study which is willing not only to make, but also to gain, theoretical sense out of that past. (5)

This colonial mind set is with the colonised people who certainly started to praise the manifestations of the colonisers. Although one may be free from the military, economic and political rule yet one is, in Prakash’s terms facing a different kind of violence, “enduring hierarchies of subjects and knowledges – the colonisers and the colonised, the Occidental and the Oriental, the civilised and the primitive, the scientific and the superstitious, the developed and the developing.” (1995: 3, 15). Thus a clear demarcation has been inflected in the minds of individuals of the world. Nandy in this context says:

This colonialism colonializes minds in addition to bodies and it releases forces within colonised societies to alter their cultural priorities once and for all. In the process, it helps to generalise the concept of the modern West from a geographical and temporal entity to a psychological category. The West is now everywhere, within the West and outside, in structures and in minds. (xi).

To which one can attribute Fanon’s ideas where he argues, “... The Negro wants to be like the master. Therefore he is less independent than the Hegelian slave. In Hegel the slave turns away from the master and turns towards the object. Here slave turns towards the master and abandons the object. (Fanon 1967: 221)

However what the scholars are identifying today is clearly an underlying objective of the colonial rule which can be identified through the words of Macaulay’s “Minutes on Education in India” which states:
The intrinsic superiority of the Western literature is indeed fully admitted by those members of the committee who support the oriental plan of education... It is, I believed, no exaggeration to say that all the historic information which has been collected in the Sanskrit language is less valuable than what may found in the paltry abridgment used at preparatory schools in England. (Quoted in Said 12)

The colonial aftermath faced by Africa is no different as V.G Kieman observes:

The notion of the African as minor... took very strong hold. Spaniards and the Boers had questioned whether natives had souls; modern Europeans cared less about that but doubted whether they had minds, or minds capable of adult growth. A theory came to be fashionable that mental growth in African ceased early, that childhood was never left behind. (Quoted in Nandy 15)

Foucault resolves:

We must free ourselves from the sacralisation of the social as the only reality and stop regarding as superfluous something so essential in human life as thought. Thought exists independently of systems and structures of discourse. It is something that is often hidden, but which always animates everybody behaviour. There is always a little thought even in the most stupid institutions. (155).

However Said writes in Culture and Imperialism:

Neither imperialism nor colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both are supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formation's which include notions that certain territories and people require and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with that domination. (8).
If we relate the imperialistic notions we have to take into consideration notion inflicted by Orientalists like William Jones. He writes:

Some men have never heard of the Asiatick writings, and others will not be convinced that there is anything valuable in them; some pretend to be busy, and others are really idle; some detest Persians, because they believe in Mahomed, and other despise their language, because they do not understand it; we all love to excuse, or to conceal, our ignorance, and are seldom willing to allow any excellence beyond the limits of our own achievements: like the savages, who thought the sun rose and set for them alone, and could not imagine that waves, which surround their island, left coral and pearl upon any other shore. (158).

However, we cannot ignore the fact that “Imperial relations may been established initially by guns, guile and disease, but they were maintained in their interpolative phase largely by textuality”. (3)

Gandhi analyses it thus:

Said’s Orientalism treats European colonialism as a ‘discourse’, namely, as the project of representing, imagining, translating, containing and managing the intransigent and incomprehensible ‘Orient’ through textual codes and conventions. It is Said’s contention that colonial or Oriental discourse manifested itself as an influential system of ideas, or as an inter-textual network of interests and meaning implicated in the social, political and institutional contexts of colonial hegemony. In writing the ‘Orient’ through certain governing metaphors and tropes, Orientalists simultaneously underwrote the ‘positional superiority’ of Western consciousness and, in so doing, rendered the ‘Orient’ a playground for Western ‘desires, repression, investments, projections. (8)
Phillipson’s views on the imperialistic domination of English are echoed in the concerns and thrusts of other theorists like the Ghanaian sociolinguist Gilbert Ansre (1979), who throws light on the concept of English Language Teaching as an imperialist agenda in terms of professional world which needs to be scrutinized. Gilbert opines that the native minds under the colonial rule are programmed in such a way that they believe it to be a matter of pride to use the colonial language in various aspects of life, such as, education, philosophy, literature, administration and justice. This foregrounds the captivation of the minds of the natives and hampering the subtleties of the language. (56)

David Crystal and Phillipson deliberate on the same issue with different perspectives. They examine the growth of English but situate their arguments in contrast to each other through with a very thin line of opposition. On one hand Crystal identifies the domination of English language as a result of political, economic and military power. Phillipson, on the other, identifies the power of English and its status as enjoyed today being the result of an imperialist agenda. Crystal states, “But international language dominance is not solely the result of military might. It may take a military powerful nation to establish a language, but it takes economically powerful one to expand it” (7-8). Whereas Phillipson argues that both power and ideology are important factors in the promotion of English.

Phillipson (1982) and Crystal (1986) are of the view that English language has been in the present times been associated with the status of an individual. However, Quirk (1972) discards any social status associated with the English language rather he is of the view that English serves a purpose of econo-cultural factor that is of communication. Quirk also rejects the whole concept of sociolinguistic varieties of English and proposes that the Englishes as provided by some scholars cannot be given a way in the pedagogical attributions. However he gives the idea that the presence of English can be termed as ‘twice born’ (1972). Many scholars have further criticised the varieties of English which have emerged due to the
colonial expeditions Kachru identifies the American variety of English as 'Transplanted English' (1983, 212) which is seconded by linguists such as Turner (1966) and Ramson (1970). However, Graddol identifies English as a vehicular language for international communication, thereby constructing identities (58). The resentment regarding the acceptance of English as the supreme language can be seen in the writings of various prolific writers of the postcolonial identity, such as Achebe, Ngugi, Raja Rao and others. Achebe asserts that it is not mandatory for him to follow the native like nuances of English language; rather, he seeks the impetus provided by the English language to carry his identity as a Nigerian. His views on this are seconded by Raja Rao, who talks of making the English language our own. Anchimbe (2007) on the other hand proposes that the postcolonial world in the present world is generally characterised by 'complex, hybridised (and hybridising) patterns of lingual and cultural identity construction' which requires one to not only look through the perspective of a historian, linguist or sociologist but rather from the fresh perspective of "identity fluctuations of people in postcolonial multilingual contexts" (ix) which they face. He is of the view that in order to be heard the empire does not need to write back rather present themselves in their own identity.

African writers such as Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, Kofi Awooner and Camera Laye and Ngugi Wa Thiong'o among others wrote about the various linguistic atrocities they had to face at the hands of the colonizers but it is through their writings that not only the language politics is revealed but also the civil realities of the Africa are revealed to a greater extent, since these writer attempt to "reproduce or re-enact in their writings what is happening in the streets" (Nkosi 43). Thus, the colonial past of these writers and the atrocities faced by the culture, language, literature and history of their country has found an outpour in their literary works. These writers have used the colonial imposition of English language to be a blessing to reach out to world and assert their identity of African origin English writers.
The unrest among the African scholars has taken a toll about which Ngugi states “Far from settling for a mere reformation of teaching practices”. Ngugi and his fellow authors challenged the dubious cultural and pedagogical pre-eminence of English literature within a decolonised African context. They maintained that insofar as literature was duty-bound to illuminate the spirit animating a people, it was far more appropriate that the unauthentic discourse of Englishness be replaced by a radical centralisation of authentically African literature and language. English literature would find a place within this new disciplinary schema, but in keeping with its brief enrolment in African history, it would be accommodated where it belonged - at the margins of African culture.

In Wole Soyinka’s words:

I have been preoccupied with the process of apprehending my own world in its full complexity, also through its contemporary progression and distortions ... For after (or simultaneously with) an externally directed and conclusive confrontation on the continent must come a reinstatement of the values authentic to that society modified only by the demands of a contemporary world. (ix)

Soyinka criticizes the colonial policies of language in the light of the effect on the social, cultural and political aspects of the colonized. Since the colonized were not given the acceptance as the mainstream writers of having the consequences of the western norms of language which can be understood by the western audiences.

Even the postcolonial writers who wrote in English language were not identified as the authentic ones and it was difficult for them to achieve an acclaim since they were importing the language of the colonizers mixed with the colonial practices, cultures and norms which made them stand in the queue of those who were trying to be like the ones who once ruled them. African drama is no different to all the other genres of African literature that
have suffered due to the colonization and then in the post colonization phase, the world is still under the rule of colonial powers in term of their identity as an individual as an ethnicity and as a nation Joseph Okpahu, while talking about the authenticity of the African drama states:

Frozen [African Literature] in this anachronistic mode and there by deprived [it] of the opportunity to grow and develop along with the growth and development of ....

African society. (Quoted in Gilbert and Tomkins 54)

This attitude towards the oriental world or in specific the African literature creates a resistance in the minds and attitude of the people who are facing a new phase of neocolonialism. New colonialism is a resurgent colonial phase which colonized world is facing at the hands of the English speaking nations. Ngugi talks of it, “Writers who should have been mapping paths out of the linguistic circumvent of their contentment also come to be defined and to define themselves in terms of the language of imperialism imposition” (201). This empowers the neo-colonialist agenda where language is used to provide impetus of the growing empire of English and to uproot the colonized from their culture, their indigenous identity to make them slaves of western impositions. However, in the present times writers such as Wole Soyinka, Ngugi etc who belong to the postcolonial world in the field of literature often refuse the colonial implications on their own identity especially which come in the form of language. These postcolonial writers try to maintain their own identity defying the colonized version of their historical past. It is like a constant tussle between the colonial history of these writers and their war of freedom to assert and get recognized not as somebody’s subject but as individuals. This opposition towards the neocolonial rule in the form of language has been severely dealt by the writers of the present world where they try to assert their identity which is culturally, linguistically and socially rich as opposed to the imperialistic impositions on them. Thus, the postcolonial writing may “offer opportunity to recuperate the colonized” (205). Postcolonial writers can be said to have been recuperating
from the subjugation and identity submission for the appeasement of the western audiences. The aesthetic marker for a person’s identity is his art and in this case the art of writing in one’s own language. It can be noted that Gilbert and Tompkins, while talking about the African theatre state:

It is crucial to remember, however, that such marker are inscribed on the body through discourse visual, verbal or otherwise - rather than simply being unmediated or objectively given. In other words, the perceived (constructed) binary categories of male/female and white/black are never merely biologically determined, but are also historically and ideologically conditioned. (205)

Similarly, it is can be said that the colonized world needs to be largely determined by its language and thus in turn its identity of the speaker. the postcolonial writers’ resistance focuses on customs of one’s own. Such as in the plays of Wole Soyinka where in each of his play he tries to assert the rituals and practices as well as the society of the Africans/Nigerians. He has not only used the African setting for his plays but also the language which is targeted for the native audience rather than the western world. This can be seen in his play Death and the King’s Horseman which is inspired by a true incident that took place in Oyo in Nigeria in 1946. (67) The play has the central character Elesin, who is the horseman of the king. Elesin in this play prepares to die as a result of a ritual in Nigeria where after his death; he will accompany the king who died thirty days prior to the setting of the play. It is believed that if Elesin fails to perform his duty to die the king will curse all the people as a result of failure towards his duties. However, in the course of the play one finds that such ritual is shunned by the district officer who is a commandant of colonial rulers. This sacrifice has to be made while performing a dance act in which when Elesin fails, humiliated by him, his son Oluande performs it. Soyinka in the play has contrasted this ritual to that of the colonizer’s masque ball while asserting that somehow the colonizers and the colonized are the same. Femi
Osofisan states that this attempt of Soyinka in rejuvenating the African ritual is actually a “crucial interrogation of history” (77).

The colonial rule had such an authority over the colonized that one is not surprised to see such an emphasis on the assertiveness of the identity of the writer as an African native. Soyinka tries to recuperate and reinterpret his own ethnicity and identity by revisiting the history and the glory of his own culture. On the eve of Nigeria’s Independence Day celebrations, Soyinka presented an address to the audience as stated by Crow and Banfield:

Soyinka seems to have been insisting that a truly humane modern state can only emerge from a collective recognition of the real historical inheritance and a visionary transformation of it, accomplished through the bringing together of past, present and future in a moment of ritual ‘vision’. (88)

Soyinka through his writings has tried to emphasize the authenticity of the African values in the contemporary world which is dominated by the colonial powers. Crow and Banfield suggest:

He (Soyinka) has pioneered, with extraordinary imaginative and technical resourcefulness, the creation of dramatic and theatrical forms capable of such an exploration incorporating and working the mythic forces and actual performances of his traditional culture. (90)

Gylem A. Odom explores the relationship and void created by lack of formal representation of Soyinka’s time as a colonial subject who is developing a Yoruba identity and as another Soyinka who is a liberated one and is struggling to become the person of this own thoughts. Odom remarks, “Soyinka magnifies the fluidity contained in traditional Yoruba virus of time in order to combat the forced static control implied by pre-independence political discourse” (206). Soyinka has stood up for the fight to assert his own identity as a liberated African and more assertively as an independent Nigerian. That is why he states:
The difference... between European and African drama as one of man's formal representation of experience is not simply a difference of style or form nor is it confined to drama alone. It is representative of the essential differences between two world views, a difference between one culture whose very artefacts are evidence of a cohesive understanding of irreducible truths and another, whose creative impulses are directed by period dialects. (38)

It is true in the case of African literature that it had the great oral tradition of telling stories and most of which formed the literature. These stories are part of the identity and thus, it is with the writer such as Wole Soyinka that the past, present and future of African literature must be led so that it may be free from the imperialist powers who are hegemonising and creating a new phase of colonial rule in the form of dominion of their language over the colonized. This assertiveness of the glorious past on the African world can be seen clearly in the speech of Azikive in Foot Prints on the Sand of Time (1962) where he spends two-third reciting the list of names and their achievements to the audience on whose name the building at the University of Nigeria were named so as to establish the University as a place of international importance.

Language used by Wole Soyinka in all his plays has a consistency in it due to the "explosive reactions on the part of audience reception" (106) which is actually a resultant of the dramatic text of dialectal variation or linguistic variation. Balme identifies three problems faced by the playwrights such as Wole Soyinka who are living in a multicultural identity thus making them multilingual: the first being the ideological factor in which "the choice of the colonial language as the means of dramatic expression is fraught with social and political implication." (107). Balme acknowledges this factor with the corresponding debate over the use of colonial language which is still much talked about in the African literary world. This dilemma over the use of colonial language has been rigorously criticized and debated over. In
this context one of the staunch exponents of the use of colonial language Ngugi while talking of the plays written in English says:

Where everybody speaks impeccable English, although it is understood that the characters are actually speaking in an African language [...]. There are other contradictions too: These characters speak English but when it comes to singing they quite happily and naturally fall back into their language. (Quoted in Balme 108)

Thus, Soyinka has emerged as one of the writers who has striven hard to empower, acknowledge and enunciate his identity an African laureate and a Yoruban speaker. His plays which dwell in the consciousness to and negation of linguistic coloniality are tools in order to replenish his own language. This diversion from English to Yoruban to the pidgin language is evident in each of plays. Soyinka’s excellence has been described in the words of Niyi Osundare, who states:

…I know of no other African writer today that embodies and typifies the ideals of the aesthetic and social accountability of art the way Soyinka so impressively does…No Nigerian writers’ works capture more sensitively, more audaciously, the vicissitudes of Nigerian, nay African existence. Soyinka is the excoriative, the admonitory, regenerative vision. (150)

Soyinka has proved his genius at words with various illustrious works in the field of literature. He has achieved a position where he among the literary giants such as Chinua Achebe, President Leopold Sengozu and Ngugi WaThiong’o. He has time and again tried to assert his Yoruban identity. However, he has been critiqued by many for his writings being considered his own interpretation of Yoruban traditions (Anlkany Kwame 1992) and Soyinka presents his stand in the matter of his writing while replying to his critiques he says:

I cannot claim a transparency of communication even from the sculpture, music and poetry of my people the Yoruba, but the aesthetic matric is the fount of my own
creative inspiration: it influences my critical responses to other cultures and validates selects eclecticism as the right of every productive being, scientist and artist. (4)

Roy on the other hand identifies the works of Soyinka in terms of:

idiosyncratic interpretation on the grounds that myth and tradition have always been open to multiple interpretations, revelation, that the Yoruba tradition presented by Soyinka are his personalized creation should warn the reader not only against accepting Soyinka’s views on what constitutes Yoruba tradition as definitive but also against essentialist narratives of self and community reflected in valorizations such as ‘Africanness’ and ‘Yorubanness’ fashionable discourse of commonwealth literature.

(18)

Soyinka himself fondly takes a jibe at his concept of negritude. “A tiger does not boast about its tigritude” and so has let his actions speak for himself. Considered by many of his critiques like Osundare (1983) or Ziodun Jeyifo, his writing have a difficulty level which is attributed to the ‘linguistic speak alone’ (Osundare). Soyinka’s postcoloniality has been identified by many scholars as one of the major fundamentally political movement of his own ideas. Ian Adam and Helen Jiffin define postcolonialism as “writing … from countries or regions which were formerly colonies of Europe…or as a set of discursive practices, prominent among which is resistance to colonialism ideologies and their contemporary forms and satisfactory legacies.” (XII) Soyinka proving every critique to be just another word for him has ignored it with fervour. He has taken it in his stride and has worked towards carving his own identity as a writer when it comes to language and identity. Pable, et al identifies. “In our view identity is first foremost a linguistic label. and like any other word, it cannot be segregated “from the sequentiality of the rest our existence” as stipulated by the principle of contemporaneity (Harris 81-82). Pable Harris and Christe analyse the theories of language and identity with the “ethnographically inspired sociolinguistics” (671).
Norton and Toohey's article, "Identity, Language learning and Social Changes" throws light on the contemporary poststructuralist theories of language where they discuss the plight of an Eastern European mother is an eye opener as it portrays the plight of those who are striving hard to carve out their identity in this English speaking world. There are various aspects which construct the identity. Canagrajah (2004) while inspecting the language policies and practice under the control of the USA and Sri Lanka, identifies various factors affecting the second language learning like recognition among the elite class of the world and social and economic benefits. He argues that this teaching of English is serving as the main catalyst towards identity formation of the postcolonial context.

McKinney & Evan Pletzen's (2004) research carried out with the participants from South Africa provides the examples of the identity formation in the postcolonial context. They found that the students when given the South African literature as part of the curriculum at University in South Africa disregarded and resisted it.

Adejumobi (1998) discusses translation as a practice in African literature as a part of postcolonialism. He recognizes three kinds of translation found in African literature, which are compositional translation, unauthorized translation and complex translation. These translations talk of the identity of an African origin towards the European language text and also to "embrace mobility between languages and identities as inescapable in postcolonial Africa" (163) Gabriel Okara remarks in the context of translation:

... as a writer who believes in the utilization of African ideas, African philosophy and African folk-lore and imagery to the fullest extent possible I am of the opinion that the only way to use them effectively is to translate them almost literally from the African language native to the writer into whatever European language he is using as a medium of his expression. (15)
However translation as a practice to carve out one’s identity can be a tedious task. Though it can be used as practice supporting the writers of other language to be known and identified yet it has been criticized by many such as Gikandi, who say with reference to Ngugi’s translation of his work *Matigari Ma Njrungi* into English:

If Ngugi’s intention was to make the Gikuyu text the great original to which all the translations would be subordinated, this intention is defeated not only by the political repression of *Matigari Ma Njrungi*, but the act of translation itself… The act of translation is hence a double-edged weapon: it allows Ngugi’s text to survive and be read, but it is read and discussed as if it were a novel in English. (166)

Thus, translation sometimes poses a threat to the sanctity of the text and more in the case of the writer as well as the questions the identity of the author at the first place. Ige (2010) on the other hand identifies the aspect of identity and language and the construction of collective identity of the speaker. He says, “Identity in many respects is shaped by language and conversely, language choices may relate to identity. Identity, like language, is both personal and social” (374). He further identifies the scenario linguistic postcoloniality in terms of the history of its colonial past. He says, “Given the history of dominion in South African during the apartheid era, language resistance, especially to Afrikaans, was a key weapon in the struggle against the regime. The legacy still linger, as does the language resistance” (348).

The study of language and identity and its effect on the formation of nation has been authenticated by Taylor-Leech’s study of the concept in East Zimor. The finding emphasises on an urgent need to reconstruct an inclusive plurilingual national identity that can encompass diversity.

Linguistic deviations or innovations reflect a great part of the identity of the writer. These deviations are generally a resultant of cultural enrichment of the text. Kachru with reference to the indiannness in the Indian literature in English identifies these innovations as
local borrowings, translations, loan shifts, collocational deviations and so on. Kachru also acknowledges the fact that these innovations have been accepted by the masses and thus have attained the terms of Africanisms and Indianisms.

Theorists like Crystal, Philipson P, Ngugi, Raja Rao, Achebe and Kachru among others signify the essential spirit of postcolonialism which negates the generalisation, universalisation and centrality of the paradigm. This prepares a ground for inquiry into Soyinka’s plays with postulation that each one of the African writers conducts his own experiments upon language usage in order to propound linguistic postcoloniality. Therefore there is a need to read Soyinka’s plays through an exclusive focus against the backdrop of linguistic postcoloniality. Adejare notes that:

Although Soyinka has not written a literary text in Yoruba, he makes use of the language, where appropriate, in the English texts he has produced. Bilingualism implies biculturalism. Soyinka often exhibits a deep knowledge of Yoruba culture and a studied understanding of English culture. (15)

Soyinka is highly educated in English, and he makes positive use of his African linguistic heritage by a combination of techniques, thus establishing his bilingualism with natural ease. Further identified by Adejare as the tools for innovation in the language are the coinages, names, nick-names, titles and titles of printed matter, Nigerian varieties of English, idiolects, functional varieties, register and imagery (vi-ix). Apart from these features one can find innovations at the level of transliterations, English words with African referents, and African words.

Soyinka’s use of Nigerian Pidgin English in his plays is in fact a matter of study. Okpiliya has also commented on Soyinka’s creative use of Nigerian pidgin in The Jero Play. He says, “[Soyinka]…is…. interested in the spoken words and in the meaning of their speeches… At the revivalist meetings, the utterances of the crowd make little sense. What
one admires is the beauty and rhythm of such statements” (3). One of the innovative
techniques used in African literature as identified by Essien. He observes, “naming can have
linguistic, cultural, religious, historical, psychological and even philosophical implications”
(12). This explains Soyinka’s use of local names like Miseyi, Kingboli, Sematu etc. Soyinka
consciously uses the Nigerian names in order to place the text in its local setting and to pass
across the message of the play.

Soyinka, arguably because of his widely recognised talents, is one of the authors
critiqued in Obiajunwa Walli’s invective for not writing his literature in Yoruba. These
critiques notwithstanding, many scholars have discussed the linguistic diversity present in
many of Wole Soyinka’s fictional works. For instance, his highly anthologized play, The
Trials of Brother Jeru (1963), not only exemplifies Soyinka’s linguistic and dialectical
heterogeneity, but, moreover, provides several instances of the author’s deployment of code-
switching, the moving back and forth between English and another language, or dialect.
Soyinka’s fiction is said to use a wide “spectrum of linguistic varieties such as English,
Yoruba, West African pidgin English, [and] non-standard English” (OMole 385), which,
James OMole argues, reflects Nigeria’s diverse linguistic society, and arguably reveals
Soyinka’s linguistic realism (OMole). However, discussions of Soyinka’s aesthetics are
rarely left un-politicized, and in The Trials of Brother Jeru, speech, and more specifically, the
use of acrolectal versus basilectal forms of Nigerian English, have more pointed functions.
The deployment of various forms of English is overtly linked to one’s social status, wealth,
and alacrity in the play. James OMole, in his discussion of Soyinka’s novel The Interpreters
(1965), talks of the characters that approximate acrolectal pronunciation: “if […]
performance in a second language is as perfect as or very close to that of […] native speakers
of that second language, such a person becomes culturally suspicious in his society” (OMole
394). Thus one can clearly understand the postulations as emphasised by Soyinka in his plays

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that however English of the colonizers is the medium in which he writes primarily, but he simultaneously engenders the assumed coherence of this language of the Nigerian identity through the deployment of the nativised features of the language in the plays.

The literature survey has undertaken an account of various theoretical postulations relevant for the present study. What emerges from this survey is the fact that within the framework of postcolonialism there is no uniformity among the positions held by various theorists and litterateurs. This multiplicity of theoretical positions is the real strength of postcolonialism because any generalisation, agreement of opinions on a centre and uniformity would be counter-productive to the essence postcolonialism. Philipson is different from Crystal, Ngugi is different from Achebe, Kachru is different from Wright and so on. The journey to negate the centre generated out of colonialisation is aptly indicated in the disagreements present within these arguments referring to the linguistic postcoloniality. African writers have consciously refrained from sounding similar in their creative rejoinders to the hegemony of English language. Thus, having surveyed this range of differing voices on linguistic postcoloniality it is imperative on the part of the present study to freshly venture into reading Soyinka’s play. The forthcoming chapters undertake the assessment of linguistic postcoloniality in Soyinka’s play with an aim to engender a fresh paradigm of such analyses and not strictly adhering to what has already been defined as existing theoretical frameworks.

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