



الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية
REPUBLIQUE ALGERIENNE DEMOCRATIQUE ET POPULAIRE
وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي
MINISTRE DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPERIEUR ET DE LA RECHERCHE SCIENTIFIQUE
جامعة محمد بوضياف بالمسيلة
UNIVERSITE MOHAMED BOUDIAF DE M'SILA
كلية الآداب واللغات
FACULTE DES LETTRES ET DES LANGUES
&
مخبر الدراسات اللغوية النظرية والتطبيقية
Laboratoire des Études Linguistiques Théoriques et Pratiques



Attestation de participation

Le doyen de la faculté des Lettres et des Langues, le président du colloque et le directeur du laboratoire attestent que :

Dr SAHED Bachir
Affiliation : université de M'Sila

a participé au colloque national : **Enseignement-apprentissage des langues étrangères par la langue maternelle** qui s'est tenu à distance, via Google Meet le 17 décembre 2022, avec une communication intitulée : **«Mapping Decolonization through the (M)other Tongue in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's Devil on the Cross»**.

Le président colloque

Docteur :
HADJ LAROUSSI Belkacer

Le directeur du laboratoire



Le doyen de la faculté



عميد كلية الآداب واللغات
عمار بن قريشي

Mapping Decolonization through the (M)other Tongue in *Devil on the Cross*

Dr Bachir SAHED
Mohamed Boudiaf University of M'sila, (Algeria)
bachir.sahed@univ-msila.dz

Abstract

This study explores the theme of decolonization in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's novel *Devil on the Cross* by focusing on the protagonist's journey of reclaiming cultural identity through the (M)other tongue. Employing a postcolonial approach, the research examines how language becomes a powerful tool for resistance and decolonization, allowing characters to challenge oppressive systems. The study aims to map the intricate relationship between language, identity, and decolonization in Ngugi's work, shedding light on the transformative potential of embracing the (M)other tongue as a means of cultural liberation.

Keywords: decolonization; *Devil on the Cross*; identity; language; thought

Introduction

Postcolonialism is considered to be a blessing on the ex-colonized because it extends the analysis of the effects of colonialism beyond what was believed to be an endpoint. Postcolonial discourse criticizes the neocolonial processes of exploitation like capitalism, corruption, excessive militarization, and male dominance. Ngugi's rethinking of the nature of knowledge production in postcolonialism is of a paramount importance. His work, *Decolonising the Mind*, is considered to be a crucial text in the process of decolonising black literary and cultural theory (Davies 144, 146).

Ngugi believes that Eurocentrism and European languages served as important tools for colonialism, affecting the writer's thinking as well as his literary production, "The domination of a people's language by the languages of the colonising nations was crucial to the domination of the mental universe of the colonised" (*Decolonising* 16). Hence, he defies Western epistemologies and paves the way for the process of decolonization and a literature of decoloniality.

During a presentation at Cambridge University, Ngugi put forward his idea of the close relationship between language and the construction of knowledge. He stated,

I find it contradictory in Africa today and elsewhere in the academies of the world to hear of scholars of African realities but who do not know a word of the languages of the environment of which they are experts. Do they think the Cambridge here would give me a job as a Professor of French Literature if I confessed that I did not know a word of French? ("Europhonism" 7-8).

This paradoxical situation, that knowledge about Africa can be attained through non-African languages, implies the African dependence on European languages in the construction of knowledge. This leads us to understand that knowledge about Africa continues to be constructed and interpreted according to Western epistemologies (Mazrui 151). In addition to the epistemological and cultural dimensions of language, Joseph Raz, in his famous essay "Multiculturalism", has also stressed the fact that there will be no socio-economic development as long as scientific knowledge is stored in foreign languages (202).

In his famous essay, "Ngũgĩ's Conversion: Writing and the Politics of Language," Simon Gikandi asserts that the discourse of history was controlled by the colonizer; it is extremely Eurocentric. Hence, when trying to rewrite the history and representation of Africa, nationalist writers addressed a field of study that was articulated in European terms. New literatures in Africa were written in European languages following European forms and style (142). Ngugi states in

Decolonising, “I believe that my writing in Gikuyu language, a Kenyan language, an African language, is part and parcel of the anti-imperialist struggles of Kenyan and African peoples” (28).

There was a debate over the question of language in African literature in the 1960s and even before. It was the main issue at the 1962 Conference of Writers of English Expression at Makerere, and it was the subject of study and publishing by many African writers, namely Achebe, Senghor, Okara, and Mphahlele. Fanon had also discussed the problem in the 1959 Congress of Black African Writers at Rome. Besides, Achebe, in “The African Writer and the English Language,” argued for the appropriation of the English language to depict the Igbo culture (Jackson 5).

The European intervention in Africa alienated speakers from their language and environment, and colonized their minds. The literature of nationalism and decolonization attempted to articulate a new African identity through the Africanization of the European languages. Nonetheless, this new literature was already affected by the categories and forms of these languages because any language carries a certain value system. Ngugi’s program of decolonization calls for a re-examination of the relation between language, ideology, and modes of production (Gikandi, “Ngũgĩ’s Conversion” 133).

In the 1970s, Ngugi did not concern himself with language as the main principle of African literature. He rather focused on the ideology of language. He endeavoured to express a more coherent materialist theory of linguistic practice and to Africanize the colonial language to liberate African culture from imperialism (“Ngũgĩ’s Conversion” 136-7). Ngugi criticized the content of the educational syllabi in Kenya and sought to decolonize it. He asserted,

The truth is that the content of our syllabi, the approach to and presentation of the literature, the persons and machinery for determining the choice of texts and their interpretation, were all an

integral part of imperialism in its classical phase, and they are today of the same imperialism but now in its neo-colonial phase (*Writers* 5).

Gikandi argues that the decolonization of the African mind can be possible only through the consideration of the division of the consciousness of African literature as an educational tool (“Ngũgĩ’s Conversion” 137).

Ngugi highlights the relationship existing between language and consciousness. It enables people to establish social relationships, “spoken words mediate between human beings and form the language of speech” (*Writers* 14). When he is asked about the issue of language choice, Ngugi affirms,

I think language is a key. I think the dividing line is really the issue of language, and when any people talk about colonialism or decolonization they must first and foremost address themselves to the issue of language and language choice (“The Language of Struggle” 154).

Thus, Ngugi’s discourse of decolonization aimed at parting with the Eurocentric conventions of writing. In his *Decolonising the Mind*, Ngugi put forward the idea that colonial legacy had disconnected the Africans from their language and colonized their minds, and the ultimate task of the African writer is to come to terms with a nationalist literature to free the African identities from the chains of Eurocentrism (Ogude, “Homecoming” 166). Ngugi is interested in using language as a way of “entering into the spirit of things” and creating unity with his environment (Duerden and Pieterse 121, 122). In *Writers in Politics*, Ngugi asserts, “If a Kenyan writer writes in English – no matter how radical the content of that literature – he cannot possibly reach or directly talk to the peasants and workers of Kenya” (54).

Besides, the discourse of decolonization provides “an Afrocentric means of reading and understanding texts” (Berger 142). Ngugi distinguishes between an authentic African literature in African languages and Afro-European literary practice. This is due to his belief in language as a structuring category of culture, thought, and experience (Gikandi, “Ngũgĩ’s Conversion” 133). Ngugi asserts that writing in European languages suggests being involved in the neocolonial process, employing a language of a foreign culture, limiting African languages and cultures (Almeida 82). Self-colonization happens when one discovers that he knows very little of one’s own language, and knows more of the foreign language (Ngugi, “On Writing in Gikuyu” 152).

So I thought that the best way of keeping alive in those circumstances was to resist that social disconnection by attempting to reestablish my links with the community. And the only connection I could think of now was language. I felt I had to write in that very language that was responsible for my imprisonment. And in terms of content, I had to seek the kind of material, or the kind of attitude toward my material, that was in harmony with what I conceived to be the needs of the peasantry. This is how I came to write *Caitani Mutharabaini* (or, *Devil on the Cross*) in Gikuyu while I was in prison (153).

Therefore, Ngugi asserts that to be accepted as part of African literature, a literary work must not just be rooted in African art, tradition and culture, but it must also be written in an African language (Kasanga and Kalume 51). He criticized African literature written in European languages as “the literature of the petty-bourgeoisie” (*Decolonising* 20).

Since it is widely known that history is written by the victor, the challenge for Ngugi and other African writers is not only to employ African languages, but also to create a type of literature that would reclaim African history. In doing so, they will be inspiring young African writers to embrace the struggle for language, history, and culture (Mazrui 154-55).

Ngugi's ideas in *Decolonising the Mind* are based on his view of language and its relationship to culture. He asserts that "Language, any language, has a dual character: it is both a means of communication and a carrier of culture" (*Decolonising* 13). Ngugi points out the misapplication of language as a carrier of culture as the literature, art, technologies, and education of a people become dominated by the colonizer's language (MacPherson 642).

He explains how the colonizer could dominate over the colonized militarily, politically, and economically, "But its most important area of domination was the mental universe of the colonised, the control, through culture, of how people perceived themselves and their relationship to the world" (*Decolonising* 13). Ngugi figures out two main ideas about mental control, which are destroying the native culture and imposing the colonizer's language. Hence, in a postcolonial world, it is necessary to decolonize not only communities but also people's minds (MacPherson 643).

Ngugi's argument for choice of language theoretically explains the imperialism latent in Enlightenment language theories. The debate over the relationship between language and culture led to the emergence of the notion of linguistic relativity. It puts forward the idea that language is culturally constructed (K. Williams 54-5). As such, Ngugi's conception of the language debate lies not merely in the dialectic opposition between the individual and the social, but transcends it to other relations, "Language as culture is thus mediating between me and my own self; between my own self and other selves; between me and nature" (*Decolonising* 15).

Thus, Ngugi creates a dialectic of language process that is both historical and communal. He asserts that "Language, any language, has a dual character: it is both a means of communication and a carrier of culture." He adds,

Language as communication and as culture are then products of each other. Communication creates culture: culture is a means of communication. Language carries culture, and culture carries, particularly through orature and literature, the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world (*Decolonising* 13-16).

As such, cultural and educational institutions are used as instruments of mental slavery. They are employed to maintain mental control of the colonized in the postcolony. In *Devil*, the native bourgeoisie represents the blind imitation of Western values. This is very apparent in the character of Kihaahu, the alienated black who seeks to be white in all respects. In the novel, Kihaahu changes his name as an act of mimicking Western values. Hence, Kihaahu's nursery school project can be considered the best example of Ngugi's satire on Kenyan bourgeois attitudes as it is associated with everything white (*Devil* 113).

Decolonization has for so long debated the nature and role of intellectuals in anticolonial struggles and newly independent states. Education played a major role in the process of decolonization and in anticolonial and anti-imperialist struggle. In the Gikuyu culture, forms of knowledge were viewed as foundations of power. Knowledge controlled by the *mbari*, clan elders, was called *kirira* (P. Williams 205).

Thus, Ngugi's novels depict the rise of the intellectual as an activist. In *Devil*, Gatuiria says of the fatal effects of European education on the colonized, "The kind of education bequeathed to us by the whites has clipped the wings of our abilities, leaving us limping like wounded birds" (*Devil* 63). Karega in *Petals* doubts the effectiveness of formal education in the nation's struggle, "He had already started to doubt the value of formal education as a tool of a people's total liberation" (252).

In *Petals*, Karega's change from teacher to manual labourer and from educator to activist and trade union organizer can be a good example of the emergence of the intellectual. Muturi, in *Devil*, is both a student and a worker. Ngugi's use of popular forms in his narrative, such as the meeting of thieves and robbers in *Devil* is also part of his intellectual activist practice. Ngugi's activism as an intellectual can be seen in his "The Quest for Relevance" and *Decolonising the Mind* (P. Williams 216-7). His aim is the indigenization of culture apparent in his shift from English to Gikuyu in his play *Ngaahika Ndeenda (I Will Marry When I Want)* in 1977, and *Caitani Mutharabaini (Devil on the Cross)* in 1982, and later *Decolonising the Mind* marking "[his] farewell to English as a vehicle for any of [his] writings" (*Decolonising* xiv).

Munira's failure and disillusionment can be read as an indictment of decolonization. Indeed, in creating subjects incapable of fulfilment, Ngugi implies that the process of decolonization has failed and has collapsed. Munira is portrayed as the prisoner of both the colonial past, described as "that long night of unreality" (*Petals* 88), and of postcolonial deceit. It is through Munira that Ngugi succeeds to narrate the crisis of national consciousness, and to highlight the failure of the postcolonial state. However, since he turns this failure into the situation of possibility of his identity, he is not fully capable to present an intelligible criticism of decolonization and its outcomes (Gikandi, *Ngugi wa Thiong'o* 156).

Just like Munira, both Karega and Wanja have suffered the events of postcolonial failure. Unlike him, they attempt to transcend the failures rooted in these events. Hence, Munira symbolizes Ngugi's use of the form of the bourgeois novel. On the other hand, Karega and Wanja are his first attempts to create the allegorical heroes of socialist realism (156).

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تعليم وتعلم اللغات الأجنبية باللغة الأم

Enseignement-apprentissage des langues étrangères par la langue maternelle

17 ديسمبر 2022

17 décembre 2022

Ouverture

9H00
9H 05
9H 10
9H15

	Hymne national
	Mot du doyen de la faculté
	Mot du directeur du laboratoire
	Mot du président du colloque



Session 1

Modérateur : Dr AMEUR Azzeddine

Lien de l'appel vidéo : <https://meet.google.com/fbb-enh-m-pfi>

9H20

Pr MANAA Gaouaou Dre CHIKHI Nadjet	CU Barika Université de M'Sila	Langue maternelle et langue étrangère : quel rôle réserver à la langue maternelle dans l'apprentissage d'une langue étrangère ?
Dre GAOUDI Fella	Université de M'Sila	Les séquelles et les répercussions de la langue maternelle dans l'acquisition d'une langue seconde.
د. زهية بوكاف، د. إيمان بوزريعة، د. عائشة زريقي (أعضاء فرقة البحث في المشروع)	INRE	دور الترجمة التعليمية في تعليم اللغات الأجنبية، تلاميذ الطور الثانوي أنموذجاً
Dre BELKACEM Hind	Université de Mostaganem	D'une langue à d'autres en classe de FLE : une relation dyadique en milieu plurilingue
Dre BOUMOUKRANE Amira	Université de BBA	La langue maternelle : moteur ou frein à l'enseignement/apprentissage du FLE

Débat

Session 2

Atelier 1


Modératrice : Dre. GAOUDI Fella

Lien de l'appel vidéo : <https://meet.google.com/fzx-bysn-tyv>

10H45

Dre AMARI Kahina Dre BENKHELIL Rima	Université de M'Sila	La langue maternelle au service des créativités lexicales françaises chez les apprenants algériens arabophones.
ZEGHLACHE Lina	Université de Tiaret	La langue maternelle et l'enseignement/ apprentissage du FLE

11H00



11H15	BENATALLAH Yasmina	Université Alger 2	<p>La lingua araba come lingua materna, una strategia per insegnare/ imparare la lingua italiana in Algeria. Caso di studio: Gli insegnanti e gli studenti del primo anno dell'università di Lounici Ali, Blida2.</p> <p>Arabic language as a mother tongue, a strategy for teaching/learning Italian language in Algeria. The teachers and students of the first year in the University of Lounici Ali Blida2.</p>
11H30	Dr Fayçal Benmahammed Dr KHENRICHE Manel	Université de Blida 2	Rôles et impact du recours à la langue maternelle comme stratégie de communication orale en classes de français.
11H45	NASRI Djamel	CU Barika	Le recours à la langue maternelle dans l'apprentissage du FLE
12H00	Dr DJOUBAR Ahmed	Université de M'Sila	L'utilisation de la langue maternelle pour l'enseignement \ apprentissage d'une deuxième langue

Débat

Atelier 2

Modératrice: ATOUI-LABIDI Souad

Lien de l'appel vidéo : <https://meet.google.com/gfu-ikbx-ntx>

10H45	Dr SEDDARI Bounouar	Université de Médéa	L'apport de la culture éducative à l'enseignement de la composante formelle
11H00	MEDJDOUB Hynd	Université Sétif 2	Les interférences linguistiques entre le français et l'arabe dans les productions écrites des apprenants de 3^{ème} année secondaire Français
11H15	Dre SEKHRI Ouided	Université Constantine 1	Foreign Language Learning Strategy Assessment and Training Among Algerian Students: The Case of Frères Mentouri Constantine 1 University
11H30	SLAMA Khaoula	Université Blida 2	L'usage de la langue maternelle des apprenants pendant le cours d'une langue étrangère (L'alternance codique en classe)
11H45	Dre MEKAOUSSE Naima	Université Batna 2	L'alternance codique, pivot de l'enseignement /apprentissage du français langue étrangère au primaire.

12H00

Dr SAHED Bachir

Université de
M'SilaMapping Decolonization through the (M)other Tongue in
Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Devil on the Cross*''.

Débat

Atelier 3

Modératrice : Dr CHIKHI Nadjat

Lien de l'appel vidéo : <https://meet.google.com/fbb-enh-m-pfi>

(Même lien que la première session)

10H45

Dre HOCINE Naima

Université de
Chlef

Textes littéraires et interculturalité en classe de FLE

11H00

BOUDIAF Karima

Université de
MédéaLe recours à la langue maternelle dans l'enseignement-
apprentissage de la production orale en FLE

11H15

SLAMA Ahmed Yassine

ENS
ConstantineL'enseignement/apprentissage des langues étrangères à l'aune
des approches
Modernes

11H30

GUELLANE Fatma Zohra

Université de
ChlefLe rôle de la langue maternelle dans l'apprentissage des
langues étrangères

BERRIM Sara

Université de
Ouargla

دور ترجمة أستاذ اللغة الإنجليزية للكلمات المجردة لتلاميذ الطور المتوسط

11H45

Dre NADJAR Aroua

Université de
BBALe rôle de la langue maternelle des apprenants en cours de
langue étrangère du point de vue linguistique

12H00

BOUKOUROU Salah Eddine

Université de
MascaraL'importance de l'emploi de la langue maternelle dans
l'écriture collaborative d'un texte de spécialité en contexte
universitaire algérien.

12H15

HEZLA Nabila

Université de
MédéaL'utilisation de la langue maternelle par le professeur en cours
de FLE : une aide ou un obstacle ?"

Débat

Atelier 4

Modérateur : NAÏT AMARA Ghezali

Lien de l'appel vidéo : <https://meet.google.com/hjq-unat-dos>

10H45

LOUIFI Meryem
Dre HASSANI Rima AidaUniversité de
KhenchelaLe rôle de la langue maternelle dans la compréhension de
textes numériques en langue étrangère

11H00

KHALFALLAH Abderrachid

Université de
M'Sila

واقع تدريس الفرنسية في الجزائر



11H15	BENHADJ AHMED AMINE	Université de M'Sila	L'alternance codique dans les interactions didactiques dans la classe du FLE au secondaire
11H30	ZEBIRI Abderrazek	Université de M'Sila	L'émergence de la LM dans la L2 : représentations et pratiques
11H45	Guenoune Nihad	Université de Bouverd	L'impact du recours à la langue maternelle dans l'apprentissage du FLE au niveau du primaire.
12H00	Dre Samia Ilhem NOUADRI	CU Barika	Le recours à la langue maternelle en classe de français langue étrangère
12 H 15	Noria Gouzi	Université d'Adrar	La langue maternelle en classe de FLE : un obstacle ou une stratégie efficace.
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Débat</i> <i>Session 3</i> <i>Lien de l'appel vidéo : https://meet.google.com/fbb-enh-m-pfi</i> <i>(Même lien que la première session N° 1 et l'atelier N° 3)</i></p>			
12H30	Lecture des recommandations		
13H00	Clôture		

