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Decolonising Cinema through Film Production in Indigenous African Languages: The Nigerian and Cameroonian Experiences

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Abstract

The ability of language to enable colonialism or decolonisation in cinema production has so far remained an understudied phenomenon. This research paper fills this gap using the Cameroonian and Nigerian experiences as case

studies. Specifically, the paper hinges on semi-structured interviews with filmmakers and insights from recent research and case studies to attain three main objectives. In the first place, it examines the state of (de)colonisation of the Nigerian and Cameroonian video film industries. In the second place, it shows how production in English and French languages – popularly considered colonial tongues – is a driver of Western epistemic colonialism in both cinema industries and in the last place, it examines how filmmaking in indigenous languages could help amplify the decolonisation of the two cinema industries. The paper argues that filmmaking in indigenous African languages is the best approach to repositioning Nigerian and Cameroonian languages and to challenging Western languages' hegemony.

Keywords: *Decolonisation, Indigenous African Languages, Indigenous Language Films, Cultural Preservation*

Introduction

The bulk of research works devoted to decolonial currents in African cinemas has mainly focused on a few discursive fields: African film production paradigms, aesthetical issues and film education in African universities. In effect, this research has only explored such questions as 1) the emergence of non-conformist or "un-hollywood" production paradigms, 2) the indigenisation of some African film festivals, 3) African scholars' search for traditional African aesthetics and 4) the indigenisation of film curricula or pedagogies in African universities and other institutes of higher learning. Tomaseli and Eke (1995) focused on how the use of oral tradition in films could enable – and has been enabling –African filmmakers achieve local aesthetics. Similarly, Mahamane (2015) examined how the deployment of griots' narrative techniques in films could serve the Africanisation or de-Westernisation of local African movies. His study, which focused on some pioneer West African moviemakers, notably Ousmane Sembene, made a case for a decolonial African film aesthetic, which he nicknamed "filmagriotie". The nickname is a combination of film and griot. Akande (2020) on his own part examined how the popularisation of the apprenticeship system of training in Nollywood (Nigerian cinema) enables the promotion of the African Knowledge System in the Nigerian film industry. On her own part, Tomaselli (2021) examined the extent to which the *Journal of African Cinema* has published research works on the indigenisation of African cinemas. Thus, previous research works on the decolonisation of African

cinemas have overlooked the linguistic aspects of cinema. Indeed, the ability of language to function as a purveyor of colonialism or decolonisation in the domain of cinema production has so far remained an understudied phenomenon.

The present paper sets out to fill the gap mentioned above using the Cameroonian and Nigerian experiences as case studies. Specifically, the paper hinges on insights from recent research and case studies to attain three main objectives. In the first place, it examines the state of (de)colonisation of Nigerian and Cameroonian cinemas. In the second place, it shows how production in Western languages is a vector of Western epistemic colonialism in both cinema industries, and, in the last place, it examines how filmmaking in indigenous languages could help decolonise the two cinema industries. The paper argues that filmmaking in indigenous African languages is the best approach to appropriating and enculturating cinema as a technology.

Understanding the Concept of Decolonisation

Coloniality is hard to define in a universal way, particularly when the term is used in discourses that are related to culture. However, most scholars construe it as the aftermath of colonialism. In line with this, the concept is generally viewed as a situation where an exogenous culture tremendously influences or dominates over a local one. This domination may be political, economical, cultural, epistemic and/or intellectual. Thus, coloniality is often associated with hegemony theories, epistemic genocide, Westernisation, Euro-centrism, Europeanisation or the Eurocentric anthropological theory (Mignolo 2009). Asea (2022) explains that the Eurocentric anthropological theory, in particular, involves a paradox wherein Europeans know about "others" but fail to fully acknowledge these "others" as thinking and knowledge-producing subjects. By this paradox, Asea evokes the concept of epistemic colonisation which this work hinges on. Epistemic colonialism occurs when the dominance of the foreign or exogenous (mainly western) episteme is observed in a nation's socio-cultural patterns. This epistemic dominance may, to some extent, involve what Fanon (1956, 2008), on the one hand and Ngugui Wa Thiong'o (1986), on the other hand, call "mental colonisation". According to Wa Thiong'o, mental colonisation is "the domination of the mental universe of the colonised", which is a direct result of the coloniser's control over "the tools of self-definition

[which] a certain culture uses in relation to other cultures" (Thiong'o, 1986, p.16).

A field – notably cinema scholarship or production – is therefore said to be colonised when the foreign episteme dominates all or most of its aspects. The ills of colonialism have naturally engendered counter movements and theories particularly from dominated or colonised people. In line with this, the concept of decolonisation has been advanced as a critique of foreign cultural, intellectual or mental domination. As its name indicates, decolonisation is a process whereby foreign domination is questioned, challenged and neutralised in a nation or in a specific discursive field. In other words, it is a move aimed at challenging and repositioning foreign power's dominance (real or imagined) both as a conceptual force and a representational norm. Waisbord and Mellado (2014) construe it as "an act of cultural defence, an anti-imperialist strategy to nurture academic sovereignty, a call for embracing an analytical perspective that reflects a decentered, dynamic contemporary world" (p.363).

Decolonial currents in Africa are mostly associated with concepts such as indigenisation, Africanisation, Afrocentrism and de-Westernisation. According to Glueck (2016), epistemic de-Westernisation in particular is a counter-hegemonic act which, in scholarship, is approached from two perspectives: Western and non-Western. While Western scholars "strive for cross cultural inclusiveness and subaltern perspectives to enrich research […] so that it does not fall prey to provincialism through [the] experience of few, untypical countries", non-Western academics "try to re-orient their intellectual work against Eurocentrism, foreign-imposed categories and ontology. They emphasise alternative frameworks and tailor interpretative paradigms in order to understand local social processes" (p.1-2). Thus, for non-Westerners, de-Westernisation automatically implies a form of resistance and liberation. It entails removing anything Western, even in contexts where defining "Westerness" is hard or futile (Gluck 2015; Wang 2011). In line with this, many African cinema scholars faultily think de-Westernising or decolonising cinema automatically means removing anything that appears or proves Western. In spite of its inherent ambiguity, the concept of decolonisation will be construed in the context of this paper as the inclusion of the African Knowledge System in the processes and areas of cinema production, pedagogies, scholarship and film distribution (Akande 2020). As noted by Weaver (2004), "We have to think of

independence in filmmaking as including not only the creation of films but also the distribution of films to the viewers" (p.131).

The State of (De) colonisation in Nollywood and Collywood

Since the pre-independence period, Western colonialism has been the strongest influence in African cinema. This follows from the understanding that, through the political and cultural policies they instituted in Africa, the Western colonisers not only laid the bases for the cinematic structures of their former colonies but also influenced to a large extent, the latter's ideological conception of cinema. Obiaya (2011) observes that Western colonialism engendered a situation of epistemic colonialism in which African countries' approach to cinema was the result of the influence of their colonial masters. From the artistic through the pragmatic to the downright revolution, these former colonies sought to follow the Western model of cinema production and depended badly on their former masters. Thus, colonialism affected African cinemas by facilitating both dependency on the West and the underdevelopment of African cinemas.

In Francophone colonies (including Cameroon) in particular, France's colonial control over local cinema was manifested in such fields as film funding, production paradigms, aesthetics and channels of distribution. The exorbitant cost of celluloid film production motivated most Francophone 35mm filmmakers to resort to Western funders – notably the Coopération Française [French Cooperation] – for their film productions. Unfortunately, the fund originating from these exogenous/Western sources always came with strings attached. In effect, these strings generally stifled creativity and hampered the development of indigenous film aesthetics in local Francophone African cinemas. Besides this, the string facilitated French supranational structures' systematic control over celluloid film production in Francophone countries, including Cameroon. Hayes (2011) underlines this regrettable scenario thus:

Until recently, most celluloid African films have been made with at least partial funding from the French government. The money came with important strings attached. It was fronted in exchange for the rights to distribute the films in non-commercial venues such as French Cultural Centres; after such screenings, it was unlikely that commercial distributors would be interested in the films. French cameramen, editors, and so on were often imposed on productions in order to guarantee

technical quality (and to guarantee work for people in the French film industry), which had the effect of compromising the development of indigenous film aesthetics; and postproduction work had to be done in France, with the result that no matter how many films were shot in Africa, Africa never acquired its own infrastructure for filmmaking (Haynes, 2011, p.69–70).

The video revolution that cut across African countries in the last part of the 1990s, starting from Nigeria, is believed to have partially liberated African filmmakers. This is based on the fact that the revolution somewhat reduced African filmmakers' dependency on the West for film funding, technology, and artistic creativity. The democratising powers or potential and the relatively cheap and fast nature of video technology-enabled – and has continued to enable – a number of shifts in cinema production paradigms in Africa, including Cameroon and Nigeria. Under the video revolution, shoe-string budget films and non-conformist models of production have been made possible. The Nigerian model of production, characterised by filmmakers' tendency to produce cheap and fast, saw the light of the day. This model even exploded on the African continent and spread to Cameroon (as in many other parts of Africa), giving birth to Collywood in 2008. Like most Nollywood cineasts, Cameroonian filmmakers have, since the inception of the video revolution, been deploying a cinematic model where, production is mainly driven by capitalistic/economic motives and where "movies are shot with very small budgets, over short periods, and with a star system which helps market the movies" (Robold 2017, p.36).

From many indications, this Nigerian video filmmaking model – which is also prevalent in Collywood – proves remarkably non-conformist to established cinema canons. From production to distribution/exhibition of films, "Nollywood's defining characteristics [has in fact, been] lack of order" (Geirger 2012, p.62). Mahajan underlines such non-conformist mantra in his comparative perspective on Hollywood and Nollywood. He observes that: "Hollywood is very concerned about the potential for loss for intellectual property. For Nollywood, an estimated half of its revenue is lost to piracy […] it shouldn't be a profitable market, and yet it is. It is a different model. And it works in Nigeria –very well" (Mahajan, 2017, p.150).Differences between the Nollywood model and "established" filmmaking paradigms have questionably pushed many Western and Westernised authors to exoticise and otherise Nollywood and its filmmakers. Gieger (2012) notes that this Western or Westernised Westernised critics' tendency to view

the Nollywood model as the "Other" emanates from a colonial mindset. To him, many critics who exoticise African cinema are driven by colonial ideals of "bringing order and aesthetic unity to the disruptive African scene" (Geiger, 2012, p.62).

In spite of the controversy it fuels in intellectual quarters, the Nollywood filmmaking model is good evidence– nay example – of African resistance to artistic/aesthetic colonisation in the domain of cinema production. Akande (2020) underlines this truism in a reflection devoted to the teaching of cinema in Nigerian universities. The scholar claims that by giving much importance to the Nigerian indigenous knowledge system and by hinging so much on indigenous apprenticeship systems, Nollywood producers not only enable the emergence of new African film aesthetics but also resist, in some ways, the hegemony of the Hollywood filmmaking model. In his words, Nollywood is "an indigenous film industry characterised by its broad rejection of Western film traditions and a considerable degree of industrial insulation from Western influences" (Akande 2020, p.6). Thus, Nollywood's non-conformism gives way to Africanised models of storytelling and cinema aesthetics. Besides this non-conformism, Nollywood and Hollywood stories have contributed in no small measure to deconstructing many colonial myths and stereotypes early spread by Hollywood and other Western cinemas. The two cinemas have for instance challenged colonial myths around Africa's primitivism, inferiority and passivity. Nollywood and Collywood's deconstruction of Hollywood narratives and "European/Western lies" about Africa is one of their greatest contributions to decolonising cinema. As Knopf (2008) puts it:

The decolonisation of the media chiefly involves raising Indigenous voices and creating self-control-led media in the process of asserting Indigenous identity, cultural values, and historical and contemporary experiences. As well as this, it involves contesting the grand Western narratives of Indigenous history, ethnography, and sociology. In this way, Indigenous filmmakers strive to work against assimilation through Western media discourse and against the appropriation of Indigenous discourse within these works of anti-colonialist. (p.17)

However, it must be underlined that some colonial currents persist in both Nollywood and Collywood. In spite of the emergence of the cheap video film technology, many Cameroonian and Nigerian filmmakers still continue to seek funding for their films in Western sources. Such funding is not always strings-free. In an online article devoted to film production, Cameroonian journalist Essimi (2022) mentions the colonial

effect of such funding. He cites[1] the particular case of a popular local cineaste, Kepoumbia, who sought UNESCO funding for his TV series *Madame Monsieur* (Manly Woman) but was directed by the prospective international funder to include LGBTQ related messages in his series. The directives were irrespective of the criminalisation of homophilia in mass media production in the Cameroon. Besides local video filmmakers' dependence on foreign funding which are attached to artistically nefarious strings, there persists a mental colonisation which makes many local filmmakers to continue viewing the Nigerian model as sub-standard compared to the Western model. This mental colonisation makes both filmmakers and critics to see the Hollywood model as the ideal, while relegating the Nigerian filmmaking style to mere pragmatism. In effect, since the emergence of Nollywood in 1992, Nigerian celluloid filmmakers such as Tunde Kelani (cited in Coulon 2010) have often referred to Nigerian video filmmaking as a lack of respect for cinema. So too have critics such as Akande (2010) applied double standard in their comparison of Nollywood with Hollywood. This tendency of directly or indirectly idealising the Hollywood model is explained by Karam (2018) thus: "The de-Westernisation and 'Africanisation' of film theory is nothing more than a makeshift or 'conciliatory' effect. The underlying ideology remains the same: 'West is best'; with Hollywood being its established signifier" (Karam 2018, p.111). The "West-is-best theory" has been confirmed by a number of comparative studies of Hollywood and Nollywood. In a survey study aimed at comparing local Nigeria audiences' preference between local and Hollywood films, Akpabio and Lambe (2008) observed that Nigerian audiences consider foreign films as being superior to their Nigerian counterparts. This preference follows from American films' high quality of production.

The persistence of the aforementioned colonial mindset is partly favoured by a form of snobbism and questionable purism – that is, the reluctance of many local Nigerian and Cameroonian filmmakers to creatively break the canons of artistic production. Ethiopian born

[1]Essimi actually cites Kepoumbia as saying "I have rejected funding from a big international donor. The Funding was for my TV series titled *Madame, Monsieur*. The funders requested me to introduce a gay couple in my series. I immediately rejected their offer. It is good to make some money out of filmmaking; however, it is improper to seek financial gains at all costs. We must be conscious of the role we are supposed to play in the preservation of our cultural values and identity" [Our translation].

filmmaker Haile Gerima underlines this factor in his description of what he calls "decolonised filmic mind". He says:

Oftentimes, the stereotype about mainstream cinema, one of the dangers of its tradition, is that it monopolistically imposes itself on people as a kind of complete reality and can sometimes replace a person's original and intuitive knowledge and temperament. It displaces those sensibilities. It makes its own standard the official standard. You are taught to believe that cinematic stories can only be told in certain ways about certain validated subjects. It's a very overwhelming medium. Its capacity to overwhelm is enormous. (Cited in JacksonJr.2010, p.27)

In line with Gerima's contention, mental colonisation may arguably be regarded as an unavoidable phenomenon in cinema as a whole. So long as there are established cinema canons or perceived superior forms of artistic expression, the devils of mind colonisation will, in some ways, persist. As illustrated in the preceding paragraphs, this theory is true to Nollywood and Collywood.

Filmmaking in Western Tongues as Mental Colonisation

Numerically speaking, indigenous African languages are predominant in Nigeria and Cameroon. They are estimated at about 300 in Cameroon and 500 in Nigeria (Etchichi, 2019). Despite their numerical strength, these languages are politically inferior to the colonial tongues (English and French) with which they coexist in the two countries' sociolinguistic spheres. They are marginalised, and some are even endangered. Meanwhile, colonial tongues are promoted in various ways by government policies. In effect, Cameroon and Nigeria have adopted English and French as their official languages of administration, diplomacy, education and wider communication. In addition to English and French, the two countries have adopted other European and Asian languages as second languages taught in their secondary and tertiary institutions. Thus, the language policies of the two countries marginalise indigenous languages in various ways in favour of Western and Asian languages. The policies either favour a few dominant indigenous languages (Nigeria) or totally neglect African tongues (Cameroon). This has engendered a situation where the languages of the former colonial masters enjoy a clear hegemony over indigenous languages. These colonial tongues are regarded as languages of prestige, opportunity and of the future in both countries. They are even used more than indigenous languages in such informal sectors as cultural production. Only hybrid

languages, such as Pidgin English and Camfranglais (a language combining English, French and Cameroonian languages), compete with English and French in the two countries.

In tandem with the popularity and hegemony of colonial tongues, a large – if not the greatest – part of the cultural production in both countries is done in English, French and the hybrid languages mentioned above. Except in such areas as popular music, sitcoms, community radio or TV broadcasts, community radio or TV broadcasts and literature, artistic/cultural productions are mainly done in English, French, Camfranglais and Pidgin English. Following this same trend, films in the two countries have mainly been produced in colonial tongues and Pidgin English. The quality of French or English used in films is often broken or creolised, but they remain Western tongues or "imitations" of them.

It is hard to obtain reliable statistics on film production in Cameroon and Nigeria. However, according to the extant literature, only one indigenous language film – Daniel Kamwa's *Mah Sah Sah* (2008) – has been released since the inception of Cameroonian cinema (Ayonghe 2015). The situation is slightly different in Nigeria, given that there is an old indigenous language filmmaking tradition in the country. In spite of this positive situation, production in English continues to be more visible if not predominant in the country overall cinema ecosystem. For instance, some of the pioneer films of the Nollywood film industry – notably Chris Rapu's *Living in Bondage* (1992) – were produced in indigenous languages. Added to this, McCain Carmen (2013, 2012) claims that many statistics released by the Nigerian Film and Video Censors Board suggest that indigenous language film productions are considerable in the country. In spite of these factors, English language film production continues to be the ideal form of film enterprise for the mostly capitalistic Nigerian filmmakers.

Profit-making motives mainly drive preference for English language in filmmaking among Nigerian cineasts. Most filmmakers tend to believe that production in English has greater economic prospects than that of indigenous language filmmaking. A case in point is filmmaker Darington Abuda (cited by Obiezu 2019, p.15) who contends that "In Nigeria, if I do a purely [indigenous] language film, I have made my film a regional film [...] It will not get the appeal and audience traction that it needs in the other parts of the country". Drawing on Abuda's contention, Obiezu (2019) argues that it is naturally difficult to convince most Nigerian filmmakers to go for indigenous language production. In his language, "convincing Nigerian filmmakers to turn away from

English – the language that ties the country together and with the world - will remain a challenge" (p.15). The Black Film Centre and Archive (2012) confirms the capitalist motives behind filmmakers' preference for English language film production but suggests that this aspect of philistinisation in Nollywood is more prevalent among filmmakers of particular tribal origins. The Centre writes that:

> The common narrative is that Igbo filmmakers prefer making films in English, while Yoruba and Hausa filmmakers make films in their respective languages. What has made the Igbos think that it is better and more commercial to do these films in English? If making a film in English guarantees awesome box office sales, why do Yoruba movies still do well? (The Black Film Centre and Archive, 2012)

A similar situation prevails in Cameroon where most filmmakers are engrossed in producing their films in French, English, Camfranglais or Pidgin English in view of commercial success. In a personal interview, filmmaker Nde Stephane affirms that:

> Doing films in indigenous languages can only be laudable given that such an industry will be in line with culture preservation [...] however, I wonder what will be the size of the audience and market for such films in our country [...] Our youths who constitute the bulk of the potential market, are less and less proficient and less interested in indigenous languages. I presume that an indigenous language movie will hardly enjoy an impressive commercial success in our country, mainly because of the status of local languages. (Nde, 2023, Interview)

At first sight, one may think that only the political economy theory could suitably be used to rationalise this Nigerian and Cameroonian cineasts' preference for film production in English language. However, a closer examination of this preference may reveal some vestiges of mental/language colonisation. The preference subtly ascribes superior economic values to the English and French languages. It makes these colonial languages appear superior to indigenous ones, in the minds of the local Cameroonian and Nigerian cineasts (Smith & Tuhiwai 1999). The universality of the language of filmic images is downplayed in favour of age old colonial myth and stereotypes about the superiority of colonial tongues. In an interview granted this author, Cameroonian filmmaker Wandji Narcise (2023) underlines this form of mental colonisation using his personal – arguable – reading of some 1980s African audiences' reception of Hong Kong *Kung fu* films. He notes that "[...] Many local filmmakers view indigenous languages as being handicapped and second-

class linguistic codes due to their inability to be understood by large pockets of international and exolingual audiences. But this view is irrespective of the commercial and critical success of the Chinese martial arts films which were a compelling watch for African audiences in the 1980s and 1990s. These films were in Mandarin. They were hardly dubbed into our languages. Yet, we loved watching them [...] certainly because the filmic image has a universal language" [Our translation].

What intensifies the mental coloniality mentioned above is even the fact that this local Nigerian and Cameroonian cineasts' belief in the economic viability and superiority of filmmaking in colonial tongues (English and French) is not backed by empirical evidence. A number of studies mentioned by the Black Film and Archive (2012) suggest that this superiority myth is not proven. Thus, the cineasts tend to conjure on the basis of the myth of English's and French's hegemonic status in Nigeria and Cameroon.

The cineastes' preference of colonial language also enables – nay intensifies – the phenomena of "linguicide" and "epistemicide" which naturally emanate from the marginalisation of less dominant languages. This problem will be explained in greater details in the subsequent part of this paper.

Indigenous Language Filmmaking as Decolonial Strategy

The extant literature on indigenous language filmmaking in Nigeria and Cameroon has mainly focused on the role such a production paradigm may play in the revitalisation and promotion of indigenous African languages. This literature has not really explored some of the decolonial effects indigenous language film production may have on cinema. Actually, indigenous language filmmaking is the best way to amplify the decolonisation of Nollywood and Collywood. This follows from the understanding that indigenous languages, better than English or French represent Nigerian and Cameroonian cultures. Better than colonial tongues, indigenous languages enable the linkage of African film audiences with their roots. Films in these local languages reposition African languages and automatically deconstruct the myth of Western linguistic hegemony. It is partly in view of this enormous cultural potential that pioneer African filmmakers such as Ousmane Sembene made many of their films in indigenous African languages. To these pioneer cineasts, making films in colonial languages defeated their de-colonial and political mantras (Weaver, 2004). In line with this, African

governments, filmmakers and other stakeholders of the cinema industry should see indigenous language filmmaking as a strong decolonial forces, capable of repositioning African cultures and negate the forces of Western cultural imperialism.

Besides repositioning indigenous languages vis-à-vis Western colonial tongues, film production in local African languages is an enabler of indigenous artistic creativity. The production paradigm facilitates the application of indigenous film techniques that are hard or impossible under classical Hollywood filmmaking traditions. In an ethnographic study of some Tiv filmmakers, McCain (2012) mentions a number of cineastes who share this view. Ukuma, a Tiv language filmmaker, contends that: "There are some things that are hard to interpret into English. So they lose their originality the moment you attempt to produce them in English. But when you produce them in indigenous languages, people are quick to identify with them and get the true meaning of what you're saying" (cited in McCain, 2012, p.48).

Ukuma's contention is in line with the postulations of many early apologists and advocates of indigenous language filmmaking. A case in point is Ousmane Sembene – the father of African cinema – who, in defence of his exclusive use of Wolof in some of his early movies, underlined the urge to both fulfil artistic integrity and achieve indigenous artistic creativity. To this icon of African cinema, many aspects of indigenous African languages are so idiomatic and difficult to transpose that most attempts to translate them into Western linguistic and cinematic codes are either futile or likely to produce reductionist representations of Africa identities. Sembene tried to illustrate this position using a few errors committed in the dubbing into French of some of his indigenous language films. In his critique of the dubbing of *Xala*, he specifically says:

> For us, *Xala* is a myth on class struggle and the revolt masses must undertake to overthrow the bourgeoisie. The masses must fight for its cause till the end. This fight is symbolically represented with the aid of what French language may call "spitting" (Xala). However, the correct French translation of "Xala" is not "spitting" but "vomit" or better, "pour your bile". Xala means pour your bile. It actually signifies pouring your bile on the bourgeoisie. It is a social representation and a popular expression. And through the depiction of this myth in my film, I do a filmic representation that cannot be rendered through French journalistic approaches. This follows from the fact that it is difficult to express things in a way

> that is as direct as our Wolof language. [Our translation][2] (Cited in Jonassaint, 2010, p.243).

In another critique, Sembene underscores the lack of French equivalent for the Pular and Wolof word "Ceddo", a term he used to name his eponym indigenous film. He affirms that:

> Originally the term "Ceddo" was used to refer to a community that resisted Islam in view of preserving their cultural identity. The original members of this community were called "ceddo" meaning "outsiders". This is surprisingly a Pular term. A "ceddo" is therefore an individual who rejects mainstream thinking. This notion of rejection is the meaning that has been associated with the term over the centuries. Among the Wolof, the Sereres and Pular people, "ceddo" means having a caustic spirit, being jealous of your absolute freedom. To be "ceddo" also means to be a warrior, one who fights for a noble cause or a mercenary. A "ceddo" is neither an ethic group nor a religion [as French translations suggest]. It is rather a way of being that follows a number of rules. [Our translation][3] (Cited in Jonassaint, 2010, p.243)

Thus, the use of indigenous languages in film production is susceptible to enable authentic representations of African realities and the emergence of typically indigenous aesthetics. All this shows the decolonial potential of indigenous languages.

Conclusion

This study sought to show how language contributes to the colonisation or decolonisation of Collywood and Nollywood film industry. It explores

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[2]Pour nous, [*Xala*,] c'est un mythe sur la lutte des classes, et la lutte que la masse doit faire pour renverser la classe bourgeoise. La masse doit aller jusqu'au bout, ce que symbolisent les crachats. En fait, la vraie traduction n'est pas cracher, c'est plutôt vomir, sortir sa bile le mot exact, c'est la bile : il faut « dé-biler » sur la bourgeoisie. C'est une image, un mot populaire et par le mythe, à travers le film, nous faisons un travail que l'écriture journalistique ne pourrait faire parce qu'il est difficile d'écrire les choses d'une manière aussi directe.

[3]À l'origine, il s'agissait d'un groupe d'individus qui se sont opposés à la pénétration de l'islam pour ne pas perdre leur identité culturelle. Ces premiers hommes qui refusèrent de se convertir étaient appelés ceddo, « gens du dehors ». Il s'agit vraisemblablement d'un mot pular. Le ceddo est un homme de refus. C'est ce refus qui est demeuré à travers les siècles, et qui a donné au mot sa signification. Chez les Ouolofs, les Serères, les Pulars être ceddo, c'est avoir l'esprit caustique, être jaloux de sa liberté absolue. Être ceddo, c'est aussi être guerrier : parfois combattant pour des causes justes, parfois mercenaire. Le ceddo n'est ni une ethnie, ni une religion, c'est une manière d'être, avec des règles.

the ways in which non-conformist production paradigms and the deconstruction of colonial myths in the two cinemas have been contributing to the decolonisation of cinema as a medium of expression and as an art. The paper argues that production in indigenous languages could be an excellent way of amplifying decolonial moves in the two cinemas. This idea stems from the understanding that, better than Western/colonial tongues, indigenous languages represent Nigerian and Cameroonian cultures. Using them more and more in local film production will participate not only in the revitalisation of indigenous languages, but reposition the indigenous vis-a-vis the Western. In other words, indigenous language filmmaking will definitely contribute in challenging the hegemony of the colonial tongue.

In addition to this, indigenous language filmmaking will enable indigenous aesthetic creativity as it will facilitate artistic expressions that are possible only when local African languages are deployed. It must however be underlined that for this decolonisation effect to be possible, government cultural policies, cinema stakeholders' mentality and audiences' perceptions and attitude will need to be pro-indigenous languages. How favourable are these different entities' attitudes towards the promotion of indigenous filmmaking is a good question for future research.

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