

DOMESTICATION OF ENGLISH IN FEMI OSOFISAN'S DRAMA: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This essay examines linguistic manifestations of Nigerian English as a dialect of English in the plays of Femi Osofisan. The study provides reasons for language domestication and copiously highlights the sociolinguistic features of domestication of English in Nigeria. The discussion addresses some of the challenges posed by the domestication such as those of communication, acceptability, a standard variety, translation and codification. The values of domestication are also discussed. Some of the benefits include the emergence of a sociolinguistic model of English that is realistic and relevant to the needs of Nigerians such as the promotion of unity, deeper understanding and social interaction among the users of English. Such elements of the domestication of the English language are discussed from the lexical, syntactic and semantic perspectives. Nigerian English may sound exotic or incomprehensible to non-Nigerian speakers of English, yet it adequately conveys the message of the playwright to the target audience and thus meets the linguistic and socio-cultural needs of the people. Some of the advantages of domesticating the English language and its challenges are discussed.

Keywords: Osofisan, Language, Linguistics, Domestication, Drama.

1. Introduction

The overwhelming position and influence of English Language as a second and official language in a multilingual setting like Nigeria is a common linguistic reality especially in all the nations that were former British colonies. But despite the linguistic dominance of English, according to Bamgbose (2004, p.3), "an indigenous language can be found that has more speakers than English." This position is corroborated by Adekanbi (2013, p.33) when he says:

English has furthered its domineering influence on the world as the most widely spoken and used global language. After 53 years of independence, Nigeria has not been able to fight off English. Today, it is the most prestigious language. It is the official language and plays the role of national language by default...the development has occasioned what Adebite dubbed ""overuse' of English and 'underuse'" of the indigenous languages.

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Consequently, the Nigerian bilingual, in his attempt to communicate intelligibly and lucidly in English, encounters some difficulties that border on interference from his mother tongue. The Nigerian bilingual thinks and reasons in his mother tongue but he is compelled to express such thoughts in a language that is considered foreign to him. Such infelicities are regarded as errors in the students' essays in a public examination. This is why the failure rate in English at the West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (equivalent to Ordinary Level English) is very high. This is so because English in Nigeria is learned in the classroom without much reinforcement outside the classroom setting. Olajire (2004, pp. 471-472) provides the following examples of Mother Tongue interference with English in Nigeria:

1. His *machine* broke down ("machine is used for "motorcycle").
2. I want to drink *minerals* ("minerals" for "soft drinks").
3. I am *coming* (when the speaker is in fact going away from his listener).
4. *They* are calling you (when "they", which refers to one person, is used in an honorific/plural way).
5. I *wear* a taxi at Dugbe (The Yoruba word for "wear" also means "to go into.")

As a result of usages of this kind, communication and intelligibility is impaired. According to Bamgbose (2004, pp.10-11), there is a need for a paradigm shift which involves giving recognition to the role of English in a multilingual and multidialectal situation like Nigeria and emphasizing the "linguistic behaviour of the bilingual, bidialectal and bicultural speaker of English as he or she engages in international communication."

2. Theoretical Framework

According to Adebija (2004, p.20), the domestication of English is referred to as "acculturation," nativisation," "indigenization," adaptation and application of English for home use to suit our various "conveniences, experiences, nuances and sensibility." This is what Bamgbose (1995, p.26) means when he says the English Language has been "pidginised, nativised, acculturated and twisted to express unaccustomed concepts and modes of interaction." In other words, the English language has now become like a domestic servant in the hands of its master who does whatever he or she likes with it. The foreign flavour and attachment that was once given to the English language has now been localized, Nigerianised and Africanized. Domestication implies that English has not only become a Nigerian linguistic asset and possession, it has conscripted its linguistic complexities, foreign labels and appellations to make it serve as a carrier and a hauler of the cultural heritage of Nigerian peoples.

Domestication confers on the educated Nigerians the liberty to adapt the English language to suit their linguistic milieu without compromising international intelligibility. It also gives the Nigerian artists the poetic licence to manipulate and maneuver the English language to project their ideological leanings and

dramaturgy using their creative and linguistic tools cleverly, deftly and opportunistically. Tamuno (1979, p.6) acknowledges this when he says that the English language “is no longer foreign to Nigeria, for we have effectively appropriated it”. Similarly, Bamiro (1991, p.7) comments on the domestication of English and says that:

It is useful to discuss Nigerian English in relation to the polylectal speech situation in Nigeria, which contributes to the nativisation of the English language. That an internal norm has developed is evident from the fact that numerous structures that would be totally unintelligible to native speakers of English are officially used at the highest level of government in Nigeria.

Writing on the inevitability of nativization, Adamo (2010, p.105) explained that “nativization involves integrating a language into the culture of a community or integrating the culture of the community into a language for the expression of the experience and the worldview of the community.” The submission made by Adamo further gives credence to the essence and concept of domestication.

3. Reasons for Domestication

Scholars in qualitative linguistics and sociolinguistics have been preoccupied with research on the development and use of English in Nigeria paying particular attention to the changing roles that the language has assumed. To many linguistic scholars like Adetugbo (1987, pp. 64-84), Awonusi (1990, pp. 31-36), Banjo (1993, p.3) and Banjo (1995, pp. 203-231), the domestication of the English language, which has produced Nigerian English, is a result of its intersection with the indigenous languages in a multilingual and multicultural linguistic environment . Predictably, such an interaction between the L1 and L2 will ultimately produce a variety of language that reflects and suits the needs of L2 users which could not be properly articulated and expressed in an L1. This is a Nigerian variety that Owolabi (2012, p. 488) believes “should be seen as an acceptable departure from the rules in diction, pronunciation or from what is generally regarded as the standard, but possessing mutual intelligibility even at international level.”

According to Adegbija (2004, pp. 22-23), the domestication of English in Nigeria is informed by the necessity to meet the linguistic and socio-cultural needs; the need to project the local customs and traditions, which could not be easily expressed in standard English without being locally coloured to reflect its new social and linguistic environment. This view is in tandem with the submission of Awhefeada and Ojaruega (2010, p. 394) when they attributed Nigerian English manifestations in the literary works of Nigerian younger writers to “either influences from indigenous languages or the ever-increasing domestication of English by contemporary socio-cultural imperatives.”

According to Adegbija (1989) “the indomitable, pervasive and omnipresent media influence” is also responsible for the evolution of the domestication of

English in Nigeria. Both the print and the electronic media, as agents of propaganda, have evolved and established coinages and neologisms such as “bottom power”, “national cake” which have been legitimized by L2 users as the standard Nigerian variety of English.

Adebija (1989) also submits that the need to standardize the idiosyncrasies and errors, which have gained “legitimacy, national respect, attention and admiration”, is also responsible for domestication. Certain striking erroneous usages such as “a man of timber and calibre”, “trouble-shooter” have continued to enjoy wide acceptability as standard Nigerian English “either because of the importance of the user or the topicality of the context of usage.” However, not all scholars concur that there is an emerging Nigerian variety of English. For such scholars, what is referred to today as Nigerian English are varieties of Standard British English which are “unintelligible” deviations from the standard linguistic norm. In spite of the reservation and uneasiness scholars have continued, through debate and research, to demonstrate their belief in the domestication of English in Nigeria to have an acceptable variety of English in the country that is handy and useful in transmitting the people’s culture and traditions.

4. Features of Domestication

Bamgbose (1995, pp.9-26) and Adebija (2004, pp. 20-44) have shown that domestication manifests at the following levels: Linguistic domestication involves replacement of intonational stress by tone, pluralization of some non-count nouns, introduction of culture-specific vocabulary items, back formation, semantic shift, reduced vowel system, a reduced intonation system, absence of glottalization in some contexts, the insertion of epenthetic vowels in some consonant clusters etc. All these “typify English in Nigeria and give it a unique, distinctive flavour and quality.” (Adebija 2004, p. 24).

The pragmatic use of English reflects the Nigerian cultural practices and nuances. This is obvious in the local ways of greeting as displayed in Osofisan’s plays: *Well done, Sorry (Fires Burn and Die Hard*, pp. 57, 63-66 and *The Inspector and the Hero*, p.98, p.133, p. 137), *Thank, you, thank you. I say thank you (Twingle-Twangle: A Twynning Tayle*, p.14). Also, the importance Nigerians attach to titles and positions manifests in the domesticated English usage such as *Lady Chief Dr Mrs...., Chief (Prof.) Knight, Apostle...Alhaji Honourable Chief (Dr) ...*When someone is addressed as *My dear mother*, this may be referring to an elder in one’s own town and not necessarily one’s biological mother. This shows the importance the Nigerian culture attaches to status and age. For instance, Jimoh in *Midnight Hotel* who is title crazy insists that everybody must address him as Chief Jimoh, an honorary Chieftaincy title bestowed upon him by the people of Ifetedo. In the same text, we have Hon. (Mrs.) Asibong, Councillor Bamigbade in *Birthdays are not for Dying* and Alhaja Kabirat in *Morountodun*.

Creative or semantic domestication elements of the Nigerian world- view are infused into English to produce expressions such as “*Your particulars*” (your vehicle documents), *to take in* (to become pregnant), *been-to* (one who has

travelled abroad), *I am coming* (when in actual fact the person is leaving), *I will follow you* (I will accompany you), *I want to drink minerals* (for I want to take soft drinks), *My stomach is paining me* (I have stomach ache), *four-one-nine* (a dubious/fraudulent person). These expressions are coined to reflect the Nigerian linguistic milieu. According to Abdullahi-Idiagbon and Olaniyi (2011, p.79):

Coinages or neologism are identified as new terms created for new experiences, especially where the speaker of the language either experiences dearth of correct standard lexical item to express himself or uses a word or an expression to satisfy the communicative purpose of his immediate environment. Such coinages are sometimes metaphorically explainable and could be a result of interference or transfer of traits from a speaker's first language to the target language.

Adegbija (2004, p.23) highlights other features of domestication to include: Hybridization, Analogisation, Direct translation and transliteration, Transfer, Affixation, Acronymisation, etc.

5. Problems of Domestication

Domestication poses a lot of challenges among others the problem of communication. A non-Nigerian audience or a Nigerian in Diaspora who has been alienated from his linguistic environment will find the Nigerian English variety unintelligible and incomprehensible. He will find it difficult to grasp the full meaning of Nigerianised expressions and idioms. Domestication also creates a problem of wide acceptability at both national and international levels. In a multilingual environment like Nigeria where the so-called Nigerian variety of English has not been standardized, the possibility is that there will be many varieties of Nigerian English. The possibility of establishing a standard variety among the varieties poses challenges such as ethnic rivalry, unacceptability, codification and so on. Another major challenge is the difficulty that linguists face in translating and adapting certain idiomatic expressions from mother tongues into English (Ogundeji, 2004, p. 673). Thus they end up coming up with defective and unsatisfactory expressions, which ultimately will impair understanding. Domestication also poses a problem of codification, but there is a need to standardize the Nigerian variety of English to make it widely acceptable.

6. Benefits of Domestication

In spite of the challenges posed by the domestication of English in Nigeria, domestication also has some benefits. According to Adegbija (2004, p. 36), the benefits include: the fact that “an endonormative model of English, normatively different from the exo-normative model in native-speaking contexts, is both emerging and being developed.” In addition, domestication gives the Nigerian

English variety its linguistic identity. English in Nigeria can now be used in a way that communicates our manners, purposes, intentions in addition to expressing our views of the world around us appropriately. Domestication fosters unity, creates social interaction and promotes a deep sense of understanding among different users of English in the country irrespective of their linguistic backgrounds. Domestication can work against xenophobia and linguistic barriers associated with L2 users of Standard English in a multi-ethnic culturally diverse setting. Domestication has now given “English in Nigeria a strong and solid made-in-Nigeria aura. It has made Nigerian English users more confident and less self-conscious adopters of a language of former colonisers of the country to develop a Nigerian taproot embedded in the Nigerian psyche, culture, social life and sensibilities.”

7. Textual Analysis: Sociolinguistic Perspective

Osofisan writes basically for the Nigerian audience, hence, he indigenizes and domesticates English by spicing it with local flavours in order to reach his immediate audience. In order to reflect the Yoruba culture and tradition, the playwright uses the Nigerian variety of English language, which according to Adetugbo (1979, p. 137) is linguistically regarded as a dialect of English language. This variety of English is what Adelugba (1978, pp. 216-221) refers to as “a language which is not just Yoruba-English or Yoruba mixed with English but a many-sided attempt to catch the flavour, tone, rhythm, emotional and intellectual content of the Yoruba language and thought in an adventurous brand of English”.

This part of the study considers syntactically well-formed expressions in the plays of Osofisan that convey Yoruba indigenous language experience which expressions might appear semantically deviant to a British audience. Bimbola in *Aringindin and the Nightwatchmen* (1997, p.26) laments the looting of her shop by the robbers and says: “I told my mother not to sleep too fast in her grave! To always leave an eye to watch over me: Mother, why did you abandon me today?”

Bimbola’s statement captures a cultural belief of the Yoruba in the world of the dead. Africans generally believe that the ancestors and the dead are the guardians of the living. “Not to sleep” in Bimbola’s speech shows that the “dead” are not dead but that they are only sleeping in the grave. “Mother, why did you abandon me” is an apostrophe. It shows Bimbola’s belief that her “dead” mother is alive in the world beyond and that she can call upon her at anytime she needs her assistance. Also, Baale in *Aringindin and the Nightwatchmen* speaks to Oluode, one of the elders of the town, on why he wants him to join the Nightwatchmen:

Speak Oluode!
Remember, I sent you myself
To join the Nightwatchmen!
I asked you to be our eyes
And our ears there! (53)

This statement: "I asked you to be our eyes and our ears there" is similar to what Achebe says in *Arrow of God* (1964, p. 23) when he says "I want one of my sons to join these people and be my eye there." Both sentences are syntactically well formed in English, but the following alternatives would have perhaps been more meaningful to a non-African ear:

1. I asked you to **be our representatives there** (*Aringindin and the Nightwatchmen*)
2. I want one of my sons to join these people and **be my representative there**. (*Arrow of God*).

The question one should perhaps ask is whether or not the underlined phrases in the alternative sentences above express the same thing with Osofisan's and Achebe's in the underlined phrases in the sentences below:

3. I asked you to be **our eyes and our ears there** (*Aringindin and the Nightwatchmen*)
4. I want one of my sons to join these people and **be my eye there** (*Arrow of God*).

Osofisan's and Achebe's expressions actually express their emotions and feelings. "Be our eyes there" communicates Osofisan's feeling better than the alternative "be our representative there". Let us consider the examples below:

1. Temi: You are the **Mother** of the market (*Fires Burn and Die Hard*, 1990, p.86).
2. Mosun: Yes, you have gone to school, and **learnt books** (*Yungba-Yungba and the Dance Contest*, 1993, p. 65).
3. Ma Ayoka: Thank you, **my children**. Thank you, you're all so kind! Ah... **my only** daughter... I will continue to pray, and hope. (*Yungba-Yungba and the Dance Contest*, 1993, p.73)
4. Adigun: This is the hour when **men can talk forehead to forehead** before the women wake with their tongues. (*Farewell to a Cannibal Rage*, 1986, p.10).
5. Akanbi: How can one walk with **his eyes always turned to the back?** (*Farewell to a Cannibal Rage*, 1986, p.10)

6. Baba Soye: **Owners of this house**, greetings. (*Farewell to a Cannibal Rage*, 1986, p. 41)
7. Baba Ibeji: I'm not man enough, but **I put twins, two male twins** too, **inside** your belly! Or you thought it was your mother's akara at the market that produced them? (*Twingle- Twangle A Twynning Tayle*, 1995, p. 2).
8. Erelu: Who will look at me, and remember I was once a queen here, in this broken city or that in that palace over there, now burning to ashes. **I gave my husband five splendid sons?** (*Women of Owu*, 2009, p.10).
9. Price Control Officer: **Zikism** is no **Jingoism** (*Who's Afraid of Solarin?* (1978, p.14).
10. Alowolodu: That's what I thought you said! **Nonsense and ingredient!** Obviously **you're not well in the head!** (*One Legend, Many Seasons* (2001, p.5).

In sentence 1, (Temi: you are the **Mother** of the market (*Fires Burn and Die Hard*), Temi volunteers to pay the sacrifice and dance round the market naked to avert the wrath of the gods over the old market that is burnt by an unknown arsonist. Temi dissuades Alhaja, the President of the Market Women Association from reducing herself to such a level by dancing naked round the market because she is the "mother of the market". "Mother of the market" in Yoruba interpretation means "*Iya Oja*" or "*Iyaloja*". If Alhaja is referred to as the blood parent of the market, it means that the "market" is projected as a human being. The alternative sentence can be: "You are the head of the market women" or "You are the President of the Association of the Market Women". Both sentences do not convey Osofisan's emotions and feelings like "You are the mother of the market". The concept of motherhood in the sentence conveys the type of filial love that exists between a mother and her children. Osofisan wants the audience to know that Alhaja is more than an ordinary president but that she is the live-wire of the market women. Such a feeling can best be expressed in Temi's language.

The second statement, (Mosun: Yes, you have gone to school and **learnt books** (*Yungba-Yungba and the Dance Contest*) is a literal translation from Yoruba of the sentence: "*Looto, o ti lo sile iwe, o si ti kawe*". The sentence by Mosun is syntactically well formed in English. It has two compound clauses with the second clause having an elliptical subject and predicator. The alternative sentence can be "Yes, you have gone to school and become educated". One may want to ask if there is any difference between "learnt books" and "become

educated". Yes, there is a difference! "Learn books" portrays school to be synonymous with "books" whereas the alternative phrase "become educated" equates school with education or being educated. Although to "become educated" is broader in scope than "learnt books", "learnt books" makes the concept of the school system or the function of schooling easier to understand than the alternative phrase "become educated". And that is Mosun's intention to Ronke in the play.

In the third statement, (Ma Ayoka: Thank you, **my children**. Thank you, you're all so kind! Ah... **my only** daughter!... I will continue to pray, and hope. (*Yungba Yungba and the Dane Contest*.), Ma Ayoka, thanks Ayoka's friends: Ponju and Modoyin on their concern for Ayoka's whereabouts, a bold and courageous activist whom Iyeneri the priestess has struck down mysteriously. As a mark of appreciation therefore, Ma Ayoka thanks Ayoka's friends. But there is a semantic ambiguity in her statement when she says: "Thank you, my children. Thank you, you're all so kind! Ah... my **only daughter**". This statement to a non-African ear or to a British speaker of English will mean that Ma Ayoka has many children when she says "Thank you my children". But that same British speaker of English will also get confused when he comes to the last phrase of the statement that says: "Ah.. **my only daughter**". How can Ma Ayoka who claims to have one daughter who is missing now be claiming to be showing gratitude to her "many children?" The many children in this case are obviously female and they are the market women who have been so kind to her.

In Yoruba tradition, any adult who is old enough to give birth to one is qualified to address such a one or ones as his or her child or children. In non-African cultures, especially European, one's children are those whom one biologically gives birth to. So, since Ponju and Modoyin are the age mates of Ayoka, Ma Ayoka is then free to call them her children. Yet, everybody knows that only Ayoka is her biological child. Osofisan uses this style to reflect the local colour of the semiotic and linguistic universe to which he belongs. Again, sentence four (Adigun: This is the hour when **men can talk forehead to forehead**, before the women wake with their tongues, (*Farewell to a Cannibal Rage*) is syntactically well formed using the standard English syntactic rules of sentence formation. The statement comprises an independent clause and a subordinate clause introduced by "when", a subordinator. But semantically, to a non-Nigerian speaker of English, the statement is deviant. The statement is a literal translation of this Yoruba expression: "Asiko naa niyi ti awon okunrin n fi ori kori ki awon obinrin to ji pelu oro enu won." A non-Nigerian speaker of English language may understand the concept of men talking "forehead to forehead" (There's a comparable originally French idiom in English: tete-a-tete). Osofisan is trying to show the intimacy, sincerity and frankness that are involved in an African situation when men have a serious discussion. For instance, no one likes to have a discussion with a man who turns his forehead or looks away. It is believed that if there is going to be a frank discussion, the two interlocutors should face each other. Anything short of this borders on insincerity. Adigun believes that the type of discussion he will have with Akanbi over his proposal to marry Olabisi must be a frank one. That is why

Adigun is frank and bold after the discussion to tell Akanbi that: “You cannot marry that girl”.

Sentence five, (Akanbi: How can one walk **with his eyes always turned to the back?** (*Farewell to a Cannibal Rage*) is a literal translation of: “*Bawo ni eniyan se le ma lo iwaju ki o ko oju re sehin?*” Usually, it is an aberration for a man to walk with his eyes turned to his back. Osofisan, through Akanbi, is trying to show that “vengeance is in the past” and that the people must forget the rift of the past and look at the glorious future with love and compassion. To walk with one’s eyes turned to the back will mean to be retrogressive. But to Osofisan, man must be progressive leaving behind him all the horrors, heartaches and bitterness of the past so that there can be progress. That is the lesson Akanbi wants Adigun to learn. A non-Yoruba speaker of English may find it difficult to decode the message of Akanbi’s text. Similarly, the underlined part of sentence six, (Baba Soye: **Owners of this house,** greetings, (*Farewell to a Cannibal Rage*, 41) is also a literal translation of “*Eyin onile yi*” in Yoruba. The act of greeting in this way portrays the importance that Africans attach to having a house. When a man builds a house in African society, it is often seen as a great achievement. A house is seen as great inheritance in Yoruba culture with a strong sentimental attachment between it and its owner. So, when Baba Soye says “Owners of this house”, he is actually referring to the owners and possessors of the house. The statement does not imply that the house is rented at all. Actually, Baba Soye is referring to Titi, the mother of Olabisi, the owner of the house.

In the seventh sentence, (Baba Ibeji: I’m not man enough, but **I put twins, two male twins too, inside your belly!** Or you thought it was your mother’s akara at the market that produced them? (*Twingle-Twangle: A Twynning Tayle,*), Osofisan equates conception with the act of actually putting the twins and not the semen inside the “belly” and not in the “womb”. To a non-Nigerian speaker of English, the sentence could mean that Baba Ibeji is a surgeon or a gynecologist who transplanted two male twins into Mama Ibeji’s “belly”.

There can still be a semantic confusion. Such confusion can arise because babies can be transplanted into a woman’s womb and not into the “belly”. To a Nigerian speaker of English, a woman’s belly can be used synonymously with her stomach and womb. Here, Osofisan succeeds in using the local flavour to make his point. Both Baba Ibeji and Mama have two male twins. Baba Ibeji and Mama Ibeji are biological parents to the twins. Osofisan is trying to emphasize the fact that Baba Ibeji is a real man, who is capable of impregnating a woman. The point is that he is the biological father of the twins. . It is also an attempt to show Mama Ibeji that as the father of the twins he is deserving of some respect. Similarly, in Sentence 8: Erelu: Who will look at me, and remember I was once a queen here, in this broken city or that in that palace over there, now burning to ashes **I gave my husband five splendid sons?** (*Women of Owu*). Osofisan showcases the femininity and the reproductive fecundity of Erelu, the Wife of Oba Akinjobi, and the reigning Olowu of Owu Ipole by transferring the meaning from the indigenous Yoruba language into English. To an English speaker, **the concept of giving one’s husband five splendid sons** suggests the concept of offering or making

available but since Erelu is the biological mother of the seven sons, the use of **I gave**, therefore, will be very apt though more intelligible to the Yoruba speakers than to the English speakers.

Sentence 9: Price Control Officer: **Zikism** is no Jingoism (*Who's Afraid of Solarin?*). **Zikism** is an example of lexical domestication. It is a philosophical concept that teaches and follows the dogma and beliefs of the late Dr Nnamidi Azikwe, the Nigerian first President and the founder of the NCNC party in Nigeria. The **Zikism** concept is similar to Marxism, Leninism and Maoism and other philosophical ideologies.

Sentence 10: Alwolodu: That's what I thought you said! **Nonsense and ingredient!** Obviously **you're not well in the head!** (*One Legend, Many Seasons*). The underlined expressions are examples of the infusion of the Nigerian semantic ambience into English. **Not well in the head** indicates a state of mental or psychological disorder. It is a subtle way of describing somebody's action or conduct as foolish and not necessarily a condition of insanity as will be interpreted by the native speakers of English.

There is further illustration of pragmatic and cultural domestication of English in Osofisan's drama. According to Adegbija (2004, p. 28), "the English word "sir," is much used in Nigerian English as a marker of respect from subordinates to superiors." Let us consider the following examples from *Midnight Hotel* (1985):

- Jimoh (subordinate): Surely you're not going to sleep there, **Sir?**
- Asibong (superior): Give me the key to Room 7.
- Jimoh (subordinate): As you please, **Sir**.
- Asibong (superior): I've wondered what ghosts look like. Maybe I'll know tonight.
- Jimoh (subordinate): You will, **Sir**. No doubt about that.
- Asibong (superior): Are you trying to frighten me?
- Jimoh (subordinate): No, **Sir**.
- Asibong (superior): In the papers! Well... nothing will happen to me.
- Jimoh (subordinate): Well, as you wish, **Sir**. It's your funeral.
- Asibong (superior): Show me into the room.
- Jimoh (subordinate): Just a moment then, **Sir**
- Asibong (superior): What's that?
- Jimoh (subordinate): Candles, **Sir**. (pp.15-17).

In the indigenous African languages and culture, it is generally considered as an act of disrespect and rudeness for a subordinate not to use "Sir" while addressing his superiors. Jimoh's frequent use of sir is typical; he is a receptionist at the hotel who addresses Asibong, a housing agent-cum architect in *The Midnight Hotel* (1985).

8. Conclusion

The analysis reveals that all the sentences are syntactically well formed in English. The lexis is available in the English lexicon. But when the sample structures are compared with similar sentences in Standard English, in terms of the meanings they convey, they tend to contrast because Osofisan concocts them to meet the needs of his local audience. Osofisan manipulates the English language to reflect the cultural richness of the Yoruba experience. He takes advantage of being bilingual in English and Yoruba to translate and communicate his vision and experience through a fusion of English and Yoruba languages in such a way that his plays become intelligible to his immediate audience. Femi Osofisan has joined other creative writers of his age in the attempt to domesticate or Nigerianise English. What remains is for the linguistic experts to resolve the issue of codification of the effort by the growing number of creative writers who favour this fascinating technique.

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