

The Scope of Code-mixing in Tony D'Souza's *Whiteman*

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Abstract

In the context of globalization, which applies as much to individuals as to their cultures, civilizations and inventions, several issues are at stake, not least of which is culture. Languages are an integral part of culture, and are at the center of the debate, as their essence and even existence are often in jeopardy as some are almost swallowed up by others. Thus, in Tony D'SOUZA's *Whiteman*, a novel written by an American who lived in the northern region of Côte d'Ivoire, cultural and therefore linguistic interrelations are set in motion. The aim of this work is not only to analyze linguistic cohabitation in Tony D'SOUZA's work, but also to study the mechanisms whereby local languages, in this case Malinké and Peulh, can be perpetuated. From a postmodern perspective that is characterized by "an eclectic approach, [by a liking for] aleatory writing, [and for] parody and pastiche" (Barry, 2002, p. 62), and by means of an argumentative approach, we will attempt to highlight the mechanisms and/or social factors explaining linguistic variation (code-mixing) in the verbal production of several main characters.

Key words: African languages, code-mixing, cohabitation, terminologies

Résumé

Dans un contexte de mondialisation applicable autant aux individus qu'à leurs cultures, civilisations ou inventions, plusieurs enjeux apparaissent au nombre desquels on peut aisément associer la culture. De ce fait, les langues faisant partie intégrante de la culture sont au cœur des débats dans la mesure où leur essence voire existence sont bien trop souvent en péril du fait que certaines sont presque phagocytées par d'autres. Ainsi, dans *Whiteman* de Tony D'SOUZA, roman écrit par un Américain ayant séjourné dans la région septentrionale de la Côte d'Ivoire, les interrelations culturelles et donc linguistiques sont mises en branle. Ce travail se propose de non seulement analyser la cohabitation linguistique dans l'œuvre de Tony D'SOUZA, mais aussi d'étudier les mécanismes par lesquelles les langues locales, en l'occurrence le Malinké et le Peulh peuvent être pérennisées. Dans une perspective postmoderne caractérisée par « une approche éclectique, [par un goût pour] l'écriture aléatoire, [et pour] la parodie et le pastiche » (Barry, 2002, p. 62), et par le biais d'une approche argumentative, nous tenterons de mettre en évidence les mécanismes et/ou les facteurs sociaux expliquant la variation linguistique (code-mixing) dans la production verbale de plusieurs personnages principaux.

Mots clés : africain, code-mixing, cohabitation, langues, terminologies

Introduction

Languages play a fundamental function in human lives for they establish connection between the imagined and the real; it is the means whereby thoughts materialize in addition to being a distinctive feature between human beings who have languages, and animals which have systems of communication. The multiplicity of languages is both an expression of heterogeneity and

homogeneity: homogeneity since language is common to all human societies, and heterogeneity for human communities are determined by the specific language they speak.

This paper purports to delve on the use of multiple languages in the same verbal utterance. Migration and immigration for different reasons are the major realities that fuel the encounter of people, thus cultures. Though those encounters sometimes result in mistrust, defiance, stereotypes or even overt hostility, people more often rise above those preliminary problems to build more cosmopolite communities. Exploring Tony D’Souza’s *Whiteman* (2006), this study tries to relate code switching to cultural precepts and contemporary social studies.

To carry the above-mentioned objectives, we postulate three hypotheses. First, African languages preservation is tributary of cultural acquisition. In addition, cultural cohabitation is an interesting factor of mutual exchange, and language skills like reading, writing, listening and speaking are fundamental in the quest of safeguarding African cultures and languages. Last, the future of African languages lies in Creolization which is the appearance of new concepts or terminologies derived from existing languages to create a new one.

The setting places the narrator, an American citizen, in the septentrional part of the Ivorian country. The socio-political context is quite the worst ever because of a rebellion that broke out in 2002. The central character is confronted to a double linguistic barrier. He speaks English while his hosts speak local languages namely the *Malinké* and *Peul*. Language being an integrant part of cultures, code mixing in this perspective can be associated to cultural mixing. Therefore, in which ways does code mixing represent cultural tolerance? How does code mixing bespeak of cultural and linguistic preservation? In an increasingly capitalistic and modernistic world, how can indigenous languages be saved from linguistic imperialism?

These ways of communicating wherein languages are mixed, is most of the times referred to as “code mixing” or “code switching”. These notions are differently defined by some researchers like John J. Gumperz. To him, code switching is “the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems” (1982, p. 59). In other words, using for instance French and English languages in the same verbal utterance is a proof of code switching since these languages have different linguistic systems like the place of adjectives. Suzanne Romaine’s notion of bilingualism (1989) associates code switching in terms of sociolinguistic norms.

Kamwangamalu (2007) investigates the relation between code-mixing and modernization to disclose a tridimensional nature of code mixing. To him code mixing can be seen as an

expression of modernization. Second, code mixing has imposed itself on people both its advocates and critics. Last, code mixing has an impact on language structure. Mabule, in “What is this? Is It Code Switching, Code Mixing or Language Alternating?” (2015) explores the use of code switching in South African languages to discover whether south Africans use code mixing unintentionally.

In a postmodern perspective, we assume that code mixing constitutes a form of rupture or breaking apart from traditional norms or binary oppositions. The oppositions to grand narratives forms (just like differentiation between literary genres, separation between novels, short stories, poetry...), the interpretation or re-interpretation of universal truths, the application of literature to all phenomena and the value of culture are of tremendous importance. First, this paper investigates code mixing as tributary of cultural acquisition. Second, the perennation of indigenous languages through some terminologies of verbal forms. Last, it purports that the preservation of indigenous languages can be performed by means of written forms.

1. Code Mixing and Cultural Acquisition

In many respects, language and culture cannot be disassociated and that is why code mixing can be synonymous with cultural mixing. That form of cultural or linguistic hybridity both represent the encounter and evolution of people. In *Whiteman*, the setting is interesting insofar as it represents a shift in cultural paradigms. In fact, the protagonist being a white man, an individual of western culture, his language and cultural norms sometimes in contradiction with those of the host region. Therefore, the use of code mixing be it from the white protagonist of the local hosts can only be performed when the minimum cultural notions are acquired. That cultural acquisition is perceived through different stages.

First and foremost, the central character is baptized according to the region customs. In fact, the name is an important element of indigenous communities. in most African societies, the bears specific attributes. It namely plays the functions of blessing, benedictions or paying tribute either to a human being or a divinity. In *Whiteman*, explains his baptism in the following words:

I obeyed my village's customs and let them take my old name, Jack Diaz, from me, and baptize me with a new name, Diomandé Adama; no matter that I lived with them as they did and was ready some days to take up arms with my friends, to stand with them as though their families and grievances were my own (D'Souza, 2006, 15-6).

In African cultures, particularly in Côte d'Ivoire, the name DIOMANDE has a cultural significance. Being a Malinké family name, it represents a group of people who have a specific or dual worldview. They divide the world into categories: the village and the bush. When village is controlled by human beings, it is the physical or natural part of this world, whereas the bush can be referred to as the wild, the uncontrolled section of the world, governed by the spirits, the supernatural.

Thereafter, the name Jack Diaz and Adama Diomandé refer to the same and only person. Having accepted this ritual, this name, the protagonist spouses the village customs and traditions. He also agrees to conform to their principles and respect them, and that process cannot be carried out without language as means of communication and interaction. It is not surprising that during the rising actions of the plot, the protagonist becomes an accomplished hunter in the village and is called “*U-a-o fa*” (82). He went through all the processes of a traditional hunter. He eventually merges into these indigenous communities accepted and respected in villages, as the color line blurred. The protagonist's baptism somehow shaped his future in the village. Being “a Diomandé”, his traditional occupations are mainly farming and hunting. In accepting his name DIOMANDE, he accepts his traditional occupations. In learning how to farm and hunt, the protagonist eventually reaches a new social status. He explains it this way:

My proximity with Chauffeur [the protagonist's hunting instructor] gave me a new standing in the village, and the young men at the chief's compound who had once been happy to tell me that my nose was my nose and my eyes were my eyes now addressed me as *Va*, ‘father.’ Mamadou began to call me *Dosso*, ‘Mystical Hunter,’ and all about me I felt a certain space that in English we call respect. People stopped asking me for gifts, and sometimes among them, in a line and harvesting the season's rice, I'd forget that I wasn't black (D'Souza, 2006, 83).

DOSSO in this context is neither a traditional family name nor a surname; it is more a title than anything else. This title is given to any individual that has passed the initiation of the “*Dozo-ton*” (the co-fraternity of traditional hunters). Being acquired by a stranger, more importantly a white man, bespeaks of Adama Diomandé's integration in the traditional Ivoirian society.

Learning of traditional norms is as important as language acquisition. As a matter of fact, Adama Diomandé learns about the things to do and avoid doing in the Ivoirian village. One of those things is hunting. In most western cultures, hunting is more performed for entertainment than for needs. The protagonist would learn, in the Worodougou (one of the 30 administrative

division of Côte d'Ivoire), all animals are not to be hunted. This is the case for the Lahou bird that a *Dosso* is forbidden to hunt. He says: "I'd learned that lahous were one of the birds a hunter must never kill, or the ancestors would kill him with an illness in turn" (D'Souza, 2066, p. 23). In Worodougou culture, Lahou birds "watched the world of men for the ancestors from the tops of the tallest trees" (23). Here, trees have archetypical vows: they provide shelter both for animals and human beings. They feed people and animals with fruits. From their height, they establish a connection between the earth and the sky, between human beings and deities, between the natural and the spiritual, between the seen and the unseen.

Cultural acquisition is also conveyed through the village caretaking. Cultural acquisition is a process whereby an individual learns foreign cultural precepts. To guarantee his thorough integration in the indigenous community, the village chief chooses a resident [Mamadou] to assist him. The central character explains: "Mamadou was the companion the village had given me when I first arrived. They'd chosen him because we were roughly the same age and he spoke French. It was his duty to teach me how to behave politely, to know what was taboo and what wasn't" (D'Souza, 2006, 27). The ability to integrate the Worodougou culture leads the protagonist to avoid sweeping the house at night because "the ancestors take it as a great insult" since it means "you are sweeping away their welcome as they look for a place to sleep" (27). The same companion helps him understand that it is inappropriate to "talk to people before you've washed your face" because it is like "talking to them with shit on it" (27); something they consider humiliating.

The relation between cultural acquisition and code mixing is also understandable with Jack Diaz's mission. Considering his displacement from the United States of American to Africa, one can easily assume that the protagonist is more likely to go astray, to get lost since the environment changes. His humanitarian mission consisting of bringing clean and pure water to local population through the PWI (Potable Water Initiative) project, cannot be dissociated from the indigenous' cultural realities. Adama Diomandé understands that well when he pays regular visits to the neighboring communities. he explains his mission in the words that follow: "my mission is to live among the Worodougou as they do, to learn their language. I have grown a field so that they can see that I understand their work. It has taken much labor, and I've been in the forest every day" (D'Souza, 2006, 52). Naturally, and in a postmodern perspective, the project owners (this is important insofar as Americans are mostly seen as the tenants of imperialism and chauvinism) believe that no language is above another, no culture surpasses

another and their humanitarian project should align with the local realities particularly understanding the local languages to better pass their message on.

Proverbs are a pivotal aspect of cultural acquisition and code mixing. Proverbs can hardly be dissociated from literature be it oral or written. They are rhetorical devices that bear aesthetic, wisdom and cultural riches. They are rooted in African traditional literature. The mastery of a language and wisdom are sometimes quantified by means of proverbs. They are like a barometer to knowledge in most African traditions. The ability to communicate by integrating proverbs speaks of the protagonist's use of code mixing. In fact, he ceaselessly converts his native words into Malinké as well as proverbial expressions. More importantly, not only does the central character understand proverbs, but he also answers using proverbs. The dialogue between him and Mamadou, his assigned companion, is a testimony of that cultural integration. When Mamadou tells him: "As the ancestors say, 'A hungry goat will eat even his brother's wool'", Adama Diomandé replies, "As the ancestors also say, 'if cripple tells you he will win the race, know that he knows the other runners have no legs'" (D'Souza, 2006, 28). The capacities of communicating using proverbs talks about a form of code mixing between African traditional oral literature and western literature forms.

Code switching is clearly tributary of linguistic and cultural acquisitions and in D'Souza's *Whiteman*, the protagonist is an epistome of this narrative form by his learning of Worodougou cultures, his mastery of their language and the use of proverbs. These abilities being the starting point of code mixing, it bears another important issue which is the quest for preserving African traditional languages face to the numerous threats of their vanishing in this contemporary era. Consequently, *Whiteman* provides insights into that linguistic preservation in the forms of orality and writing.

2. Orality and the Preservation of African Languages

Languages are primarily meant to be spoken. Religiously, language is the tool of Creation. The Bible is clear as far as the power of language is concerned. In Genesis, Genesis 1:3, one reads: "And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light." The Gospel according to John is more explicit about what language is. In John 1:1-5, one can read: "In the beginning was the Word, and the word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made, and without Him nothing was made that has been made". The Word, that is synonymous with language, is a divine tool and even associated to God

Himself. Therefore, keeping the language, is keeping the Divine, keeping God as losing one's language is removing or losing God, one's religion or spirituality.

In *Whiteman*, indigenous languages can be preserved through oral communication. The protagonist Adama Diomandé exemplifies language preservation by means of its daily use with indigenous characters. As a matter of fact, an aspect of that linguistic preservation is perceived in salutations. In most African cultures, and the Worodougou in particular, salutations go beyond the exchange of two sentences just for the sake of doing it. Greeting conveys a quasi-ritualistic obligation. It is a ceremonial moment that shows people care for one another in typical African vernacular terminologies. This form of transcribing an African language helps both the reader and the writer to keep linguistic tracks of one's culture and customs. The integration of that cultural notion is seen in the following dialogue between the protagonist and Ama Méité. It goes as follows:

Manisogoma (good morning, respected mother)
Say va! Ah see la (thank you respected sir. Did the night pass well?)
Em'ba, Ama (thank you, respected mother, yes)
Allah bis sonya! (God bless your morning)
Amina, Ma. (Amen, Mother)
Allah kenna ahdi (God grant you beautiful health)
Amina, Ma
Allah ee balo
Amina, Ma
Allah bato luma (God nourish your home and family)
Amina, Ma
Allah bo numa (God bless all that you do)
Amina, Ma (I [the protagonist] said louder than before, indicating in their way that I'd received all the benedictions I could bear. *Iniché, iniché. Allah ee braghee.*)
Amina, Va!
Allah den balo, Ma (God bless and protect your children)
Amina, Va!
Allah kenna ahdi (God grant you beautiful health)
Amina, Va!
Allah sosay djanna (God grant you long life)
Amina, Va!
Allah bis sonya (God bless your morning)
Amina, Va ! Iniché. Adama Diomandé (Amen and thank you, respected Adama Diomandé)
D'Souza, 2006, p. 2-3, emphasis original

These morning salutations reveal how well the protagonist understands and makes use of the Worodougou vernacular language. The passage also introduces the reader with some Malinké terminologies that would help him/her carry out formal salutations in purely Worodougou culture. Though this passage is a transcript, the reading clearly shows that it is performed, articulated and acted in normal conversation way in such a way that linguistic performance

allies the practice of terminologies typical to a community or even a geographical area. In that respect, Denis Creissels, in *lexique mandinka-français* (2011), upholds that “Mandinka is both relatively homogeneous and clearly distinct from other varieties of Mandinka, including those spoken in eastern Senegal, with which Mandinka has the most similarities” (*lexique mandinka-français* (p. 2).

This kind of linguistic performance, like morning salutation, contributes to the vulgarization of local languages and in the same way, help to save them from becoming extinct. Adama Diomandé understands that it is “a cultural requirement you couldn’t ignore in the biggest of rushes, even if, say, you felt like the world was ending” (D’Souza, 2006, p. 2). The popularization of local languages so to speak, start with indigenous people, their offspring who should be brought to daily practice it, before promoting it to other cultures.

Moreover, sociability permits the vulgarization and perennation of local languages. The protagonist socializes to better apprehend both grammatical rules and vocabulary items vital to mastering a language. In fact, two of the most salient competences for a language acquisition are undoubtedly “listening and speaking”. For the sake of improving those capacities, Adama Diomandé socializes with people of the village, essentially individuals of his age, partaking in the different activities like farm work and entertainment. In so doing, he “played soccer with the men of” his age, “listened to them tease each other about women”, and naturally “learned new important word” (D’Souza, 2006, p. 26). These linguistic immersions prove crucial as he quickly mastered both the host culture and languages.

Socialization brings confidence, closeness and builds trust between people of different backgrounds. In the case of *Whiteman*, the protagonist establishes connections between him and the village, so they eventually come to set a relation of confidence. To him, that trust derives from two essential factors: “the most important thing was simple time, and a close second was language” (D’Souza, 2006, p. 70). Language brings closer people, no matter what their origin and color of the skin. Sharing the same language is also sharing the same culture. Therefore, to foster those bonds of friendship, the protagonist practices the words he learns both from people of his age and children. His daily languages practices with children reinforces his learning journey. In the novel one can read:

“What’s this, Adama Diomandé?” a naked seven-year-old would say and lift up er leg
“*Bau-o*” I’d say, and they’d all laugh.
“what’s this?” another would say, and point to his penis, and I’d blush and say, “*Mogo-o*.”
then they’d all cover their mouth and run away. (D’Souza, 2006, p. 70)

To put it in a nutshell, indigenous languages acquired in the forms of listening and speaking. By listening and repeating the Worodougou language, the protagonist and his other white counterparts of the PWI project mastered the custom and language of the local people. However, apart from listening and speaking, other linguistic competences encourage language acquisition: reading and writing.

3. Language Perennation via Western Methods

Multilingualism essentially due to migratory factors, voluntarily or involuntarily leads to code mixing. In fact, the locutor will sometimes find more suitable words and expressions in one language or another to encode his message. The four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) of language acquisition are diverse forms whereby a message is encoded and decoded. Coding and decoding can be subject to various interpretations; however, this work would lay emphasis on communicative and semiotic views on the notion of code.

In communications, a code is a rule for converting a piece of information (e.g, a letter, a word or phrase) into another form or representation not necessarily of the same sort. (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2010:273). As for semiotics, the notion "code" plays a pivotal function. According to Ferdinand De Saussure, a sign bears meaning and value only when they are decoded in relation to each other. In that perspective, interpreting signs or codes is tributary of a certain familiarity both from the locutor and the interlocutor when the first encodes and the second decodes. The first shows abilities in encoding a message in given languages, confident that the second has the necessary tools to decode his message. From a social perspective, signs or codes (in this case languages) have conventions or meanings that permit us to pass on messages. Stuart Hall refers to that as "a preferred reading" (Hall, 1980:134).

The author Tony D'Souza, by incorporating an African culture into a book exemplifies code mixing since an indigenous culture is expressed and transmitted via a western form of expression. *Whiteman* is therefore an example of code mixing since the linguistic elements of Malinké, French and English are tied to produce a meaningful verbal production. To Suzanne Romaine, in code mixing, the linguistic elements "in question form part of the same speech act. They are tied together prosodically as well as by semantic and syntactic relations equivalent to those that join passages in a single speech act" (Romaine 1989, p. 111). For sure, the combination of French, Malinké and English respect both syntagmatic and paradigmatic rules. The syntax being about the combination of words according to their nature (nouns, pronouns,

verbs, prepositions according to specific grammatical rules), and the paradigm being the meaning attached to a spoken or written utterance. The success of such combinations represents a cross-cultural possibility and that languages are interconnected.

The protagonist Adama Diomandé in *Whiteman* uses reading and writing to foster his language learning. These skills were popularized by western culture and constitute the central elements of western literature based on the written form. His encounters with villagers are transformed into open classes where local languages are molded into his own culture in the form of writing. He describes the way he proceeds this way. He posits:

Each evening, in the early days, I sat in the chief's courtyard by the fire among his young sons, and I'd point to my nose, my ears. They would laugh and tell me the Worodougou words: "*nu-ay-o*, Adama, *now-o*," and I'd write them in my notebook. In the mornings, I'd walk through the village, teasing the children that followed me, "these are my eyes, this is my nose". (D'Souza, 2006, p. 70)

Writing those Malinké words naturally entails their reading when he is alone so as to revise and memorize them. This way of proceeding helped major European languages survive over hundreds of years. Numerous African countries inherited those languages through reading and writing. They are learned and taught throughout the world. Many African countries suffer linguistic imperialism in such a way their own citizens find it challenging to use their mother tongues.

One of the most salient examples of code mixing through reading and writing is the western schools built in the Worodougou villages. Schools are built in former African colonized countries to teach the colonizer's language. However, there is no place to teach local languages. In *Whiteman*, students are even forbidden to speak their mother tongues. The director of a school explains: "tribal languages are not allowed in school. French is the national language. The students must study in French" (D'Souza, 2006, p. 58). This is a paradox that disadvantages vernacular languages. The protagonist aims at fixing that issue by explaining notions in students' mother tongues. This places French, English and Malinké languages on the same stage where none is dominated by the other. The combination of local and foreign languages in the learning process might be an efficient way and surely innovative way of making some pupils better grasp lessons and at the same time contributing to preserving our local languages. As Kamwangamalu, Mudipanu, Nkonko, (2007, 321) concludes, code mixing, "whether for expressing modernization or any other function, is generally accompanied by changes and

innovations in the structure of the languages involved. Some such innovations and changes are presented with reference to vernacular-English CM across cultures.” Innovation, whatever it is, appears to be vital to local languages survival.

Another innovative perspective to explore is the possibility to transcript as many as African languages as possible. eminent African writers at the image of Ngugi wa Thiong'o is one of the African pioneer and leading figure of contemporary African literature. He started writing in the English language before shifting to kikuyu, his mother tongue. Likewise, in D'Souza's *Whiteman*, a great number of Malinké words and expressions are written in such a way that a native Malinké speaker can get the meaning. This is the case when the protagonist or other important character make use of that language to express most of the time benedictions. Or to tease an interlocutor: “*Anisogoma Fla ché, oh! I be i muso chulla?* Good morning, Mr. Peul! Are you off to salute your wife?” (96). This is a way to local women to tease the protagonist about his proximity with Peul people; *Allah ee kisse*, Adama. God bless your route (203) to express benediction towards a loved or dear one; and sometimes to tell one's bewilderment “*regards! Regards! It's whiteman! Toubabou! Toubabou! Le blanc! Coutoubou! Crazy!*” (D'Souza, 2006, 7). This passage incorporates French, English and Malinké languages to express the same idea of bafflement.

In the same alignment, creolization seems to be one of the future characteristics of code mixing. In fact, multilingualism, as known in many African countries has imposed on people the use of some specific words to convey specific ideas or meanings. In *Whiteman*, the intrigue is interspersed with linguistic words from different origins. Apart from Malinké, French and English, an Ivorian dialect is used by the author: *the Nouchi*. This is a dialect born from the combination of French, English and Ivorian dialects like Malinké and Baoulé. The following dialogue between Adama Diomandé and Mamadou his companion reveals the alternative use of English, Malinké and Nouchi. The protagonist explains it this way:

Mamadou came to my hut in the night. He sat on the stool by my doorway and lit a cigarette. He said, “My *go* is pregnant.” “*Allah den balo*. God bless your children” I said to him.
“And your *go*?”
“She is a *maquis go*” (D'Souza, 2006, 132, emphasis original)

“*Go*” is Ivorian Nouchi word for girlfriend. This combination of Ivorian *Nouchi* and English sets a bridge between two cultures (a western and African dialect) determines the blending of creole and western languages to express Mamadou and Adama Diomandé's ideas of love affairs.

In addition, the term “maquis” has different meanings. It might refer to a type of vegetation or some sort of restaurant. But in this case, “maquis” refers to a kind of open-air bar popular in Côte d’Ivoire where alcohol, food and sometimes prostitutes are found.

In the same vein, the Ivorian culture via incrustrated in *Whiteman* via *Nouchi* language. The words “*blofwé*” (268) and “*gbaka*” (272) are other examples of cultural and linguistic creolization. In fact, *blofwé* (meaning whiteman, the equivalent of *toubabou* in Malinké) and *gbaka* (a word that refers to popular minibuses in Ivoirian cities) is a mixture of Baoulé and a creole word.

Conclusion

This paper purported to investigate on code mixing in Tony D’Souza’s *Whiteman*. The main objective was to relate the scope of code switching to cultural precepts and the possibility of saving indigenous languages from vanishing.

By the end of this research, we conclude that code mixing is tributary of cultural acquisition. Language is part of any culture and in that respect, no language can fully be encoded without the bare minimum of cultural knowledge. The protagonist acquired Malinké and Peul languages during his stay in the Worodougou region. His baptism, the learning of cultural norms like hunting, and the mastery of proverbs enhance the integration of indigenous cultures.

Orality is a strategy whereby local languages can be preserved. The protagonist makes use of cultural forms of salutations, benedictions people express to one another, and his socialization permits orally preserve local languages. Finally, it would be quite beneficial that African languages to adapt and innovate. Reading and writing are two important skills that can help preserve local languages. By transcribing Malinké languages into English, the protagonist implicitly opens the possibility of writing African languages that remain for the vast majority in the oral form. Last, creolization appears as a futuristic aspect of our traditional languages as exemplified by the Ivorian *Nouchi*.

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