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Revisiting the Language Question in African Philosophy

By Samuel Akpan Bassey, Nelson Robert Enang, Stephen N. Udofia
& John Gabriel Mendie

University of Ibadan

Abstract- Confronting the contemporary African Philosopher, is a major linguistic challenge, forged out of the controversies involved in using foreign languages, to do African philosophy. An increasing number of scholars are beginning to realize today, how the use of foreign languages in African Philosophy, is itself an obstacle, to a truly unfettered research into African thought.1 This is because to choose a language is to choose a particular thought pattern and the choice of the language already predetermines the most important issues. But, the critical responses of Africans to the intellectual onslaught of Eurocentrism, ironically had to be through the medium of the European languages (for example, English, French and Portuguese).2 This ipso facto, poses a methodological problem, arising from the need to ensure that African meanings, are not distorted in the process of analyzing them within the conceptual frameworks of alien languages. The problem is further compounded, with the realization that the African continent possesses many languages in which to express itself. This makes the problem more abstruse, thereby begging the question: in what particular language amongst the different languages in Africa is African philosophy to be genuinely constructed?3 Armed with the nitty-gritty of the ex post facto cogitations, this paper, therefore, attempts to bring to limelight the related issues, difficulties, problems and implications, associated with the use of linguistic imports that is sufficiently alien to Africa, in the Herculean task of rendering the discursive formations and ideas of Africa's culture, religion and philosophy.

Keywords: *language, african philosophy, eurocentrism and pragmatism.*

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Revisiting the Language Question in African Philosophy

Samuel Akpan Bassey [α], Nelson Robert Enang [σ], Stephen N. Udofia [ρ] & John Gabriel Mendie [ω]

Abstract- Confronting the contemporary African Philosopher, is a major linguistic challenge, forged out of the controversies involved in using foreign languages, to do African philosophy. An increasing number of scholars are beginning to realize today, how the use of foreign languages in African Philosophy, is itself an obstacle, to a truly unfettered research into African thought.[1] This is because to choose a language is to choose a particular thought pattern and the choice of the language already predetermines the most important issues. But, the critical responses of Africans to the intellectual onslaught of Eurocentrism, ironically had to be through the medium of the European languages (for example, English, French and Portuguese).[2] This ipso facto, poses a methodological problem, arising from the need to ensure that African meanings, are not distorted in the process of analyzing them within the conceptual frameworks of alien languages. The problem is further compounded, with the realization that the African continent possesses many languages in which to express itself. This makes the problem more abstruse, thereby begging the question: in what particular language amongst the different languages in Africa is African philosophy to be genuinely constructed?[3] Armed with the nitty-gritty of the ex post facto cogitations, this paper, therefore, attempts to bring to limelight the related issues, difficulties, problems and implications, associated with the use of linguistic imports that is sufficiently alien to Africa, in the Herculean task of rendering the discursive formations and ideas of Africa's culture, religion and philosophy. The paper jettisons the idea that only the use of African languages, guarantee authentic African philosophy and finally, recommends a rather pragmatic approach to the subject matter.

Keywords: language, african philosophy, eurocentrism and pragmatism.

I. Introduction

Occupying a conspicuous stead, among the multifarious concatenation of issues, that stir the mind about African philosophy, is the language question or the problem of language. This question arises as a result of the difficulties involved in doing African philosophy in a foreign language. This is because to choose a language is to choose a particular thought pattern and the choice of the language already predetermines the most important issues. In the view of Anthony Ojimba, *et al*:

> Language embodies the spirit of culture and mediates life and value. It identifies members of a group, carrying their cultural, political and religious truth. Each distinctive language is a different way of experiencing truth. Thus, it is often claimed that language cannot be understood except in the context of the culture of its origin. However, this poses a serious problem for the African philosopher: How can authentic African reality be experienced and expressed in a foreign language? Some African writers have made forceful advocacies for doing African philosophy in African languages, but how realistic is this advocacy? The problem is further compounded with the realization that the African continent possesses many languages in which to express itself. This makes the problem more glaring: in what particular language amongst the different languages in Africa is African philosophy to be genuinely constructed?[4]

The *onus* of this problem is brought to the glare of publicity, when the paucity of scholars argue that, on the basis of this linguistic challenge, African philosophy does not exist. This is because in their thinking, "European languages are totally inadequate to express the African philosophical reality,"[5] and so "if we wish to assert and preserve distinctly African ways of being and living, we must cultivate distinctly African ways of speaking,[6] reflecting and philosophizing. But, the problem of language in African philosophy, need not be about the language in which it is to be written; for Western philosophy was written in different languages, some, in English, some, in French, some, in German; yet, the philosophical status of their cogitations, was not denied. And so, that, African philosophy is written in different languages, does not alter the philosophicality of African philosophy, just as their Western counterpart.[7] Instead of taking away, or denying the status quo, it rather adds diversity to the beauty of African philosophy.

On a critical scrutiny of the thought provoking assumptions or problems highlighted above, one is forced to ask: Is language really what authenticates a people"s philosophy? Must African philosophy, necessarily be weaved in African languages for it to be accepted as philosophy? Is the Language problem a pseudo-problem? Even more seriously, if our response to the penultimate question is in the affirmative, then the follow up question would likely be: in what language, is African philosophy to be knitted or written, taking

Author α ω: Post Graduate Student, University of Calabar, Cross River, 540242, Nigeria. e-mail: samuelbassey15@yahoo.com
Author σ: Post Graduate Student, University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, 520261, Nigeria.
Author ρ: Department of Philosophy University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.

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cognizance of the linguistic fecundity of Africa, where there is a myriad or plethora of languages (and counting)? It is not enough to identify language as a problem in African philosophy, and yet have no unified replacement or solution to the problem identified. It is in the wake of these, and in a concerted effort, to leave no conundrum for which truth is concealed, that this paper, attempts a critical espousal of the problems often identified with doing African philosophy in foreign languages. The paper, jettisons the idea that the use of foreign languages, deny the existence of African philosophy. The paper, also shows that this problem, appears to be a banal whistle-blowing and moves on to recommend a pragmatic approach, as a more reasonable, defensible, philosophical model, to the language question in African philosophy. To launch this herculean task, the conceptualization of language, and African philosophy is apposite.

II. The Conceptualization of Language and African Philosophy

There is a popular belief that, language is a veritable *instrumentum laborat* (working tool) for the communication of thoughts and the conception of reality. There is equally a lingering belief that, language pictures or mirrors reality,[8] either reality as an empirical fact out there or reality as connected to the way of life of a people. In this sense, language is seen as a tool in the formation of metaphysical and epistemological ideas, developing social and moral consciousness of a people.[9] According to Battista Mondin, language is the instrument with which man effectuates communication; through language, man actuates himself as a social being, as the *Mitsein*, as the I-Thou.[10] This implies the communicative and social function of language, which is reflective of the notion that, man is the only being referred to (and rightly so), as a *homo loquens* (a being that is capable of speaking or a self-speaking thing); a language-inventor and a *bona fide* language user.[11] In the history of philosophy, language has always been an attractive area and a fascinating topic for philosophers.[12] It is in the light of this assumption that Ki-Zerbo, argues that language is the treasury house of a people‟s philosophy. He further writes:

> Language is like a bank or museum in which, over the centuries, each ethnic group has deposited all it has built and accumulated in the way of mental and material tools, memories and resources of the imagination; by means of an in-depth and wide-ranging study of the language (both infra and supra linguistic).[13]

That language, is a quintessential tool in philosophy, is indisputable. It is, for many, the ultimate piece that brings to the glare of publicity a people‟s identity and thought formations.[14] As Benjamin Whorf observes:

> Particular languages embody distinctive ways of experiencing the world, of defining what we are. That is, we not only speak in particular languages, but more fundamentally become the person we become because of the particular community in which we grew up. Language, above all else, shapes our distinctive ways of being in the world. Language, then, is the carrier of a people‟s identity, the vehicle of a certain way of seeing things, experiencing and feeling, determinant of a particular outlook on life.[15]

Language, thus, is to a people what memory is to an individual, a people without language would suffer from collective amnesia groping from a pitiable state of lack. And so, in African philosophy, language is taken seriously. However, it is true that the word “African” poses a challenge on its own, for it seems all encompassing and therefore, eclectic. It is due to the seriousness of this challenge that Gene Blocker opines that “we cannot resolve any problem, question or idea in African philosophy, until we first of all settle the meaning of the term *African.*”[16] It is, to this effect, that this paper, construes or restricts the term “African”, to mean or designate a racial geographical entity; a continent inhabited by people of a particular race, which could be BLACK, WHITE, ARAB, NEGRO, and so on, but certainly with similar culture, custom, common history of colonial experience and tutelage.[17] From these piecemeal cogitations, we can say in the words of Godwin Azenabor that “African philosophy means and designates the philosophy that is nourished within an African cultural experience, tradition and history,”[18] (it is an activity, not a theory). Even more impeccably, we can also intone in Pantaleon Iroegbu‟s *vox potentia*, that “African philosophy is the reflective inquiry into the marvels and problematics that confront one in the African world, in view of producing systematic explanation and sustained responses to them.”[19] However, in doing so, we must not be oblivious of the retrospective polemics concerning the essence and existence of African philosophy,[20] which generated many controversial issues, the discussion of which forms the content of African philosophy today.[21]

Nevertheless, this debate has been described in recent times, as unnecessary. In Akin Makinde‟s view, although it is a sad reality, that the first book to be titled “African Philosophy” was edited by an American professor Richard Wright,[22] but, that notwithstanding, “what is necessary is, if African Philosophy exists, we should show it, do it and write it, rather than talking about it or engaging in endless talks about it.”[23] Now, given the *ex post facto* claims, the crux of the matter, regarding the role of language in African philosophy is that, some philosophers believe that, language embodies the spirit of culture and identifies members of a group, carrying their cultural, political and religious

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truth. But given that each distinctive language is a different way of experiencing truth, and the claim that language cannot be understood except in the context of the culture of its origin, how can authentic African reality be experienced and expressed in a foreign language? In fact, can African philosophy be said to retain its "status" taking cognizance of the linguistic challenge that seems to corrode the very pillars of its doxastic basicality? Is it the case that African philosophical cogitations exist, but only lurking in western linguistic clothing and fabrics? Attempts to delineate the various positions regarding these hydra-headed questions, constitute our immediate focus.

III. African Philosophy and the use of Foreign Languages: Issues and Problems

African philosophy, soars in the ocean of identifiable issues and problems. According to Pantaleon Iroegbu, some major problems, that have beset genuine African philosophizing today, include: "Education, Colonization, Civilization, Christianization and Language."[24] These problems are in themselves germane, and as such, stand as necessary evils, through which the Europeans sowed their seeds in the hostile invasion. But, the apogee of this conquest, is the enforcement of the colonial language(s) on the colonized; a process which many scholars claim, outrightly distorted the metaphysical, ontological, social, political, economical, spiritual, and even religious, cogitations of the African people. This tilt or linguistic turn, led to the underground assumption that, although there is philosophy in Africa, there is no African philosophy. Some accounts, even have it that, based on the languages employed, what Africans call their philosophy, is simply a rehearsal or transcript of Western philosophy. And so, an increasing number of scholars are beginning to realize today, how the use of foreign languages in African Philosophy, is itself an obstacle to a truly unfettered research into African thought.[25] To choose a language, is to choose a particular thought pattern. And the choice of the language, already predetermines the most important questions. This idea, is predicated on the fact that, language, is the key to any serious research into, and understanding of, traditional religion, culture and philosophy. It is, however sad, to note that most of those involved in the study of African philosophy are using the peculiar categories of English, French or German languages to analyze Akan, Yoruba, Hausa, Zulu, Ibibio, Efik, Igbo or Ebira thoughts, as the case maybe. This is, perhaps, the fundamental root cause of the language problem in African philosophy.

Ngugi Wa Thiong"O, conceives language, as the particular system of verbal signposts, which over time, comes to reflect a people"s historical consciousness. It also becomes the memory bank of their collective struggle over nature and over the social product. Ngugi, further argues that the imposition of the European languages on Africans, furthers the oppression of the people, because their chances for mental liberation become remote.[26] Molefi Asante, adds that language is essentially the control of thought, and that "all languages are epistemic."[27] And F.O. Njoku, believes that "language is a mirror of culture in which it is used."[28] While, Akin Makinde, agrees with Wittgenstein that "the limit of our language is the limit of our world,"[29] he also observes that English and French have so gained the upper hand in the minds of many African scholars, that they have become foreigners to their own cultures. Makinde, reveals that: "the kind of powers derived from a belief in one"s culture and systems of thought, such as have helped Japan, China and India to develop on their own, is almost non-existent among African thinkers."[30] It is, on this *point d'appui,* that Makinde maintains that "until philosophy is written and taught in an African language, African philosophy may turn in the future to be nothing but Western philosophy in African guise."[31] Kwame Gyekye, forged in the umbilical cord, of the existing *espirit de corps,* holds that languages are vestibules to the conceptual world, and that every language implies or suggests a vision of the world, so, "a concept inferred from one language cannot necessarily be assumed for a people speaking another language."[32] A serious and concerted study of any one of the myriads of languages spoken all over Africa, will offer a glimpse into the inexhaustible wealth of knowledge contained in these „verbal signposts." For a people who did not write, their language itself is an encyclopedia of knowledge about their history, their religion, their cosmology and their value system. It is part of the resource "text" from which their history, philosophy and religion, could be written. All these comments, from African scholars, came as a reaction to the hegemony of what came to be known as Eurocentrism; a toxic virus that envisaged and presented the Western minds, methods and ways as the model of rationality. This outright devaluation of other models of rationality, has prompted a litany of scholars to react in various ways. In the words of Adeshina Afolayan:

> The critical responses of Africans to the intellectual onslaught of Eurocentrism ironically had to be through the medium of European languages- for example, English, French, and Portuguese. The significance of this is not only that the Africans were responding to certain problems that have different ontological suggestiveness and meanings within the European cultural context, these responses also came with the huge assumptions of the universality and equivalence of meanings between Europe and Africa.[33]

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Although this is laudable, Afolayan adds that this reactionary activity, "poses a methodological problem arising from the need to ensure that African meanings are not distorted in the process of analyzing them within the conceptual frameworks of alien languages."[34] With this difficulty in mind, the problem of doing African philosophy in a foreign language becomes crystal clear, with noticeable issues and problems, ranging from; the westernization of core philosophical concepts in African corpus; assassination of meaning; hermeneutic parsimony; erosion of history; cultural jettisoning; incommensurability oxbow lake; problem of originality; indeterminacy of translation; and even to the, devaluation of indigenous languages.

But one might ask, what really precipitated the spasmodic erosion of the indigenous languages, in the face of Western languages? Is it the case that the Language of the West had better economic value, power or international relevance, than the indigenous African languages? Well, one can only suppose that the *raison d'etre* for the swift safe-drive or conquest of the indigenous languages was partly due to the fact that, there is no single language shared by Africans. As S.O. Imbo notes:

> Nigeria, Sudan and Cameroun for instance, have above two hundred languages each.[35] This is, why, in the midst of this language confusion (affluence), the colonialists thought it was their God-given duty to control the use of indigenous languages as well as raise up the African salvage to a better linguistic tool and sound thinking. They felt justified in the way they treated the Africans as their Eurocentrism had already excluded Africanity and blackness from rationality, philosophy and civilization.[36]

This perceived conundrum, may have been a major cause of the hasty weeding, of indigenous languages, and the installation of English and other Western languages, as the language of the people (or as *the knight in golden amour*). Girded by the knowledge of this imperialistic ascendency, Anthony Kanu, observes rather poignantly that "what, perhaps, philosophers should be more concerned about as regards the problem of language in African philosophy is the impact of colonialism on African languages and the need for a cultural renaissance, so as to better express African philosophy in a language that profoundly mirrors African realities."[37] It is, exactly this concern, which motivated Leopold Senghor, to react that "African misfortunes, have been that our secret enemies, while defending their values, made us despise our own."[38] This unspeakable yet, forgivable incident has a great consequence on the development of African philosophy. When the colonial powers devalued the language of the African people, and enthroned European languages, it played a formidable role in exiling Africans from their languages and, thus, their philosophy. In fact, since language is loaded with worldviews and metaphysics; more importantly, since a person"s language determines, at least in part, the way the person perceives or conceives the world, when people lose their language, they also lose their philosophy.[39] This happenstance, have led in recent times to the clamour for *mental* and *Conceptual decolonization*, as a leeway, for the deepening of African Philosophy. It is envisioned that this mental or conceptual de-loading would pave a fertile ground for doing African philosophy in African languages. But this recommendation is not without its, shortcomings, weaknesses and challenges. It is, to this proposal, we now turn.

a) Mental Decolonization and Conceptual Decolonization in African philosophy: Quo Vadis?

The philosophy of decolonization stands as a major contribution of some African scholars to the debate on the language problem in African philosophy. Once a people undergo a linguistic alienation, the risk of their being uprooted from their modes of philosophical conceptualization, collection, conservation, and transmission, becomes almost certain.[40] Hence, the need for what can be termed: a „de-loading of the alien linguistic imports", is apposite. The domination of a people's language by the colonizing nations was crucial to the domination of the mental universe of the colonized; to colonize, then, destroys a people's language and make them learn the language of the colonizer.[41] As a reaction to this, some African scholars, like Ngugi Wa Thiong"O and Kwasi Wiredu,[42] have sounded the gong, regarding the dangers involved in doing African philosophy in foreign languages, and the urgent need for deconstruction and decolonization. In his reaction, Adesina Afolayan, opines that:

> For Ngugi and Wiredu, in as much as language is necessary for thought, and the latter is crucial in crystallizing cultural identities, then, Africa has neglected a more crucial deconstruction, the *deconstruction of the mind*, seen as the critical confrontation with the domination with which African philosophers and scholars, have unwittingly been carrying out the process of cultural reclamation and reaffirmation.[43]

The underlying thrust of this proposal is that, Africa was not only politically colonized, but also conceptually colonized. And so, to talk of a decolonization or deconstruction of the mind, presupposes some kind of mental colonization. For this reason, decolonization, can only be meaningful, if European languages are overthrown, in our attempt to shift the centre away from the West. As Ngugi hints, the effect of a cultural bomb is to annihilate a people's belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves. It makes them see their past,

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as one wasteland of non-achievement, and it makes them want to distance themselves from that wasteland. It makes them want to identify with that which is furthest removed from themselves; for instance, with other peoples' languages rather than their own.[44] Elsewhere, Ngugi observes rather poignantly that:

> Although present in all areas, economic, political, and so on, the Eurocentric basis, of looking at the world is particularly manifest in the field of languages, literature, cultural studies and in general, organization of Literature…Eurocentrism, is most dangerous to the self-confidence of the third world peoples, when it becomes internalized in their intellectual conception of the universe.[45]

And so, *mutatis mutandis*, there is dire need for the deconstruction or decolonization of the mind, as a leeway to grappling with the language question in African philosophy. Kwasi Wiredu, also shares Ngugi‟s concerns and the need for what he calls conceptual decolonization. By conceptual decolonization, is meant, the interrogation, through sustained and critical reflection, of the foreign categories of conceptualization which Africans inherited through colonization. It is, in Wiredu‟s words, "an African‟s divesting his thought of all modes of conceptualization emanating from the colonial past that cannot stand the test of due reflection."[46] The conceptualization of Wiredu‟s thesis is captured clearly; when he speaks of the need for conceptual decolonization in African philosophy and goes on to delineate what this project entails. This view, is captured vividly, as he writes:

> By conceptual decolonization I mean two complementary things. On the negative side, I mean avoiding or reversing through a critical conceptual self-awareness the unexamined assimilation in our thought (that is, in the thought of contemporary African philosophers), of the conceptual frameworks embedded in the foreign philosophical traditions that have had an impact on African life and thought. And, on the positive side, I mean exploiting as much as is judicious, the resources of our own indigenous conceptual schemes in our philosophical meditations on even the most technical problems of contemporary philosophy.[47]

This simply means that, the necessity for decolonization, was brought upon us in the first place by the historical superimposition of foreign categories of thought on African thought systems through colonialism. This superimposition, in Wiredu‟s thinking, manifested itself in three principal avenues: Language, Religion and Politics.[48]

With this in mind, the challenge remains therefore, for the African philosopher, to interrogate these colonial encrustations through the process of what Wiredu cognizes as the *domestication* and *decolonization* of foreign ideas. But what exactly are the concepts to be decolonized? Wiredu mentions only a few of the concepts that cry for a decolonized treatment. They are captured in the following catalogue:

> Reality, Being, Existence, Object, Entity, Sub-stance, Property, Quality, Truth, Fact, Opinion, Belief, Knowledge, Faith, Doubt, Certainty, State-ment, Proposition, Sentence, Idea, Mind, Soul, Spirit, Thought, Sensation, Matter, Ego, Self, Person, Individuality, Community, Subjectivity, Objectivity, Cause, Chance, Reason, Explanation, Meaning, Freedom, Responsibility, Punishment, Democracy, Justice, God, World, Universe, Nature, Supernature, Space, Time, Nothingness, Creation, Life, Death, Afterlife, Morality, Religion.49

As clearly seen above, these concepts, are in dire need of swift decolonization, diagnosis, prognosis, treatment and domestication. They are concepts, which find their way into our everyday interactions, with reality, and even in our intellectual transactions with others. As simple as they may seem, the true nature of their meanings, metaphysical and sociopolitical underpinnings, is highly polarized. Hence, the need for domestication; for, it is when we have successfully achieved the goals of deconstruction of the mind or conceptual decolonization, that we can launch a more Africanized way of cogitations, devoid of western entho-centric commitments. To this effect, many scholars, find strength in arguing for the possibility of doing African philosophy in an African language, but, the limitations of this proposal looms large. It is, to the fundamentals of this proposal, that we now turn our beam.

b) African Language for African Philosophy: Quelle Possibilité?

The clamour, for the formation of African philosophy in an African language, is increasingly gaining support across the continent. Some African scholars, believe if philosophy is not done in an African language, then, all we can ever have is African philosophy in western guise. Wole Soyinka, is said to have once moved a motion for the adoption of Swahili as an African continental language at the FESTAC colloquium in 1977,[50] but this proposal was met with a plethora of criticisms. Although, this was a step to curbing the language problem in Africa, the adverse effect of imposition it has, is no less different from the hegemony of Eurocentrism. John Bewaji, reacts to this suggestion, by asking: "Which language? Where is the wherewithal to disseminate such a language? If Nigerians cannot agree on a lingua franca, how would a continental linguistic agreement arise?"[51] These are questions, which are not easy to answer to the satisfaction of all concerned. Still on the need, for an African language for African philosophy, Pantaleon Iroegbu, observes quite expressively thus:

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The Linguistic expression of a people is definitional of their essential being and acting. Language is the soul of culture, the heart of the environment and the spirit that motivates and directs a people‟s life. The dynamism of the German language and the emotivism of the Italian, portray the being and character of the two peoples. African thought in a foreign language is not fully African thought. African philosophy, done in a foreign language is not yet authentically African philosophy…Thus, African philosophy must be definite-onally, that is, constitutively African.[52]

As an appendage contribution to the existing proposal, Akin Makinde, draws similar conclusions, in the process of distilling or making a clear-cut distinction between an African who specializes in African philosophy, and an American who specializes in the same subject. This distinction he believes, rest on language. And, if pushed further, then, it will reach a point where the very idea of an indigenous African philosopher of any description may be completely eliminated from current philosophical discourse. That is to say that, based on the language problem, an indigenous African philosopher may not exist, even if there is African philosophy.[53] Armed with this idea in mind, Makinde succinctly avows:

We might extend this argument to cover an African who claims to be an African philosopher writing and teaching African philosophy in English or French language. From this, it might be argued that whatever you call him, he is anybody but an African philosopher. This is so, because, the language of African philosophy is not an African language…Who, therefore, is an African philosopher? A Nigerian, a Ghanaian, a Senegalese, a Briton, or an American Philosopher? I leave this puzzle for the reader to solve. I am sure some people would find my position on this issue very shocking, but I would maintain that until African philosophy is written and taught in an African language, African philosophy may turn out in the future to be nothing but Western philosophy in African guise.[54]

And truly, Makinde‟s position came as a shock to many scholars. But, his controversial summation only gave room for further discussions on the nature of African philosophy. It is on this ground, that one can argue in rebuttal, that, even Makinde was *ipso facto* doing African philosophy, at least from the Humano-centric perspective, weaved in wonder, ponder and perpetual questing. According to John Bewaji, "one feature of language which Makinde seems not to have taken into serious consideration is the ability of language to borrow from other languages interacting with it. Even the so-called advanced European languages have exhibited this capacity for mutual assimilation."[55] Bewaji, further rejects the assumption that, most of the advanced countries of the world have spread their ideas, cultures, science and religions to other parts of the world through their languages. For him, the advanced countries that spread their cultures, ideas, science and religions, first colonized, by force or subterfuge, and because there remained a need to communicate, they then used language. Thus, in Bewaji‟s thinking, it is not language that investigates or captures reality and nature, instead, it is the users of language. For language, at some point may even prove to be an encumbrance where no firm pointers are provided.[56]

All these, reactions, amount from one shocking proposal by some African scholars on the need to do African philosophy in an African language. But, as can be seen in existing literature, experts have confirmed the existence of hundreds of African languages. In fact, for F.O. Njoku, "it stares us in the face that Africa, with its people, is linguistically and socially a heterogeneous bunch."[57] The bottom line is that there is no single language shared by Africans. This multilingual nature of Africa, as a continent, and even in the sub-states, poses a great challenge to the proposals on ground. The situation is further complicated, when, we see very clearly, some detestable actions in Africa, that seem to apotheosize Western linguistic delights or tools. For example, in Nigeria, we see this play out vividly in schools, where children are seriously punished for speaking vernacular. Here, English is exalted at the disservice of the traditional languages. Why would children not be allowed to speak their local languages, when there is no provision made for a unitary African language? Some scholars, have argued that, the best way to succeed in this project of doing African philosophy, in either an African language, or African languages, is to promote the use of indigenous languages in schools at all levels of education. We cannot opt for decolonization of the mind, conceptual decolonization, or even propose that African philosophy, be done in an African language, when we still embrace or retain the Western Education System, religion, culture, and so on. It is either we opt for one, and let go of the other, or end up losing out on both sides. A pigheaded insistence, would only lead to an exercise in futility. And so, in order to avoid this scenario of trans-generational chaos, bitterness, unnecessary speculations and continental deception, it is only necessary, reasonable and philosophically defensible to settle for a pragmatic approach to the language problem in African philosophy.

IV. Towards a Pragmatic Approach to the Problem of Language in African Philosophy

Beyond the emphasis, of Bongasu Tanla Kishani, that "Africans cannot continue to philosophize *sine die* in European languages and according to European models of philosophy, as if African languages cannot provide and play the same roles",[58] there is need

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to tilt the binoculars towards a pragmatic approach. We understand clearly the concerns of scholars, of Kishani‟s descent, but, we also admit the innumerable difficulties inherent in their seemingly utopic recommendations, for African Philosophy, in African Languages. If we really wish to show the fly, the way out of the fly bottle, then, the use of foreign languages to do African philosophy, can serve a rather pragmatic-transactive-purpose, that allows people to cope with their immediate non-linguistic existential realities. Even though language, is always one of the principal determinants in the conception, collection, conservation and communication of every philosophy, what is really at stake here is how to fight this linguistic problem without putting all chances of success at risk.[59] It is better for an African writer and philosopher to think and feel in his own language and then look for an English transliteration, approximating the original.[60] The renowned literary writer, Chinua Achebe, in all his literary fames/writings, has always seen the need to maximize the white man‟s *instrumentum laborat* (working tool). In Achebe‟s thinking, we need a language that is understandable to the colonizer, who contributed to the cultural disintegration and distortion of a people, so that the colonizer himself knows, in order to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past.[61] Anthony Ojimba *et al,* think, it was Achebe's conviction that the English language, would be able to carry the weight of his African experience.[62] Although, at this point, it will have to be "a new English, still in full communication with its ancestral home, but altered to suit new African surrounding."[63] Thus, in using the language of the colonizer, Achebe sees himself free to add his cultural touch and intuitions, as he employs „a new English‟ with which he artistically weaves African proverbs, traditions, conversations and songs. It is not a big deal to think in English as the situation warrants, but, what would be shameful is to see the necessity of adopting this language as a sign of weakness or a mark of inferiority.[64]

We need to turn at this point to utility, practicality and relevance, in our quest for self definition and even identity. In the proposed pragmatic approach, we would not be concerned about the superiority or inferiority claims, but on the practical, utility of these Non-African languages, to Africans. This would serve as a spring board, and a source of motivation to the development of our traditional languages, to the status, that would engineer cross-cultural fertilization and cross-cultural exchange. If we can do philosophy in Western languages, that is because, we can access the rubrics of the language, hence, the herculean task remains for us to upgrade seriously on our indigenous languages; to make it more accessible and systematically structured,[65] for others who have interest in Africa to fetch from the wellspring. Through this practical approach, we submit that foreign languages, need not be fundamentally opposed to the African realities, and need not fundamentally impede the substance of African philosophy. From this realistic canvas, foreign languages, need not be at the disservice of African philosophical reflections. It is, reasonable and philosophically defensible to ask not for the meaning of words, from the hegemonic throne of grace or from the armchair of dominion, but, for its use. Here, the meaning of a word or an expression would rather depend on the context of use. This means that, as we employ foreign languages, in the expression of our worldviews, we would have to assign new meanings to the chosen words, to suit the African reality, we seek to covey. If this exercise, plays out fine, then, it would serve as basis for the conceptualization and communication of African realities at ease. We must not be oblivious, of the fact that, language, has many tasks and many levels, as such, on each occasion we must find out what language is being used for, the role it is playing and the function it designates, in that given form of life, paradigm, state of affairs or context of use. From the *ex post facto*, it becomes crystal clear that African experiences can be expressed in any language including foreign languages. Thus, we need not write in African languages, in order to write authentic African philosophy. What we need, therefore, is to express our thoughts in a language that is universally understandable and intelligible and to avoid foreign categories and models.[66] In addition, learning, understanding and writing in African languages is not what really matters; rather, what matters is sharing the lived-experiences and *Weltanschauung* of African people. Once the experiences of the people, their world views and values, are able to be communicated, by any means possible, then, we would be content in the knowledge that, in the final analysis, language (anyway), does not necessarily determine the authenticity of African philosophy.

V. Conclusion

Let us bring this elaborate and engaging discourse to a close. We set out to delineate the issues and problems that arise from the use of foreign languages, to do African philosophy. The opinion of scholars on this subject, seems quite polarized. On one side, are people like Akin Makinde, Pantaleon Iroegbu, Anthony Kanu, Alena Rettová[67] and so on, who argue that, for African philosophy to retain its *status quo*, it must be done definitionally and constitutively, in an African language. On the other side, are scholars like Ngugi Wa Thiong‟O and Kwasi Wiredu, who both set out to make the above proposal possible, by arguing for decolonization of the mind and conceptual decolonization, respectively. But away from these proposals, scholars like John Bewaji, think that language may not necessarily be a challenge to African philosophy, and wisdomites like Anthony Ojimba, Paul

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Haaga and Bruno Ikuli and so on, opt for the pragmatic approach to the problem of language in African philosophy. In reiterating the nature and significance of the role of African languages in African philosophy, Alena Rettová writes:

> Since the beginning of the development of the corpus of African philosophical writing, African philosophy has been written exclusively in European languages. African philosophers write in English, in French, in Portuguese, in German, in Latin, and if we may include the non-African authors who made substantial contributions to African philosophy and the languages into which the major works of African philosophy were translated, we would arrive at a large number of European (and possibly even Asian) languages, but very few, if any, African ones. There are authors among African philosophers who stress the importance of a renaissance of the traditional thought systems; some go as far as to claim that the usage of African languages may have far-reaching consequences on the philosophical conclusions at which we arrive. In spite of this, the same authors often acknowledge certain shortcomings of African languages to express philosophical ideas. In any way, they all continue writing in European languages.[68]

From the above, one may ask: what would prompt these authors to keep writing in European languages, even when they collectively muse that there is need to do African philosophy in African languages? To this question, Rettová further reveals that:

> The reasons for this state of affairs are obvious. Historical conditions such as colonialism, economic and political dependency, contribute to the fact of the international weakness of regional languages, this being the case, not only of African languages. English and French, but especially English, have a large international public, books in English get sold, get read, and so on. Since, African languages were ignored or even suppressed during the colonial era, speaking a European language became a matter of high prestige, whereas African languages were looked down upon. Even if that changed, economic underdevelopment leads to cultural underdevelopment, propagating African languages is only possible if there are the means to do it. But even then, there is the large number of African languages: which are we to choose?[69]

From the foregoing, one would readily consent, that the subject matter before us is admittedly sensitive than anyone can ever imagine. Proposing African languages for African philosophy is a legendary step, but it is not enough. We also need to consider the economic implications; besides, which African language do we philosophize in and which African language has the economic power to compete confidently at the international scenery? The unquenchable truth before us is that most African languages are underdeveloped; lack the vocabulary to express realities of modern life and even if they do, are not readily accessible. If this reasons hold water, is it, then, possible to write philosophy in African languages? Or even do African philosophy in an African language? To insist on the baking of African philosophy in an African language, some lethal problems are bound to arise, which is chiefly the crisis of relevance and the struggle for dominance. Now, in trying to exorcise the demons of Eurocentrism, we must be careful not to awaken the monster of Afrocentrism. For, in fighting a monster, one must be careful not to become one himself.[70]

Mutatis Mutandis, there is need for a practical approach to this problem. There is need for some kind of participatory ontology or what Innocent Asouzu calls complimentary reflection, where all that exists, serve as missing links to reality.[71] African languages, need not be fundamentally opposed to the foreign languages, even in the expression of reality; for the limitation of our languages should be the joy of being. To push for difference, would lead to the distortion and exclusion of the missing links of reality, thereby, fuelling what Asouzu terms "ethno-centric commitments", which has the potentials of instigating an ontological boomerang effect.[72] Today, it is still necessary in Africa for authors to write in European languages, not as their exclusive means of expression, but as an alternative: as a language of choice. It is also essential to develop, use and promote the African languages that have recorded oraural and literary African traditions, subversively. As we look forward to the time, the rubrics of African languages are properly developed and made more scientific/accessible to the outside world; and as we anticipate a time when a unified African language is agreed upon, African thoughts and reflections ought to continue, to be written and expressed in foreign languages. Additionally, learning, understanding and writing in African languages is not what really matters at this point. Rather, what matters is sharing the lived-experiences and *Weltanschauung* of the African people. Once the experiences of the people, their world views and values, are able to be communicated, by any means possible, then, we would be content in the knowledge that, in the final analysis, language (anyway), may not necessarily determine the authenticity of African philosophy.

End Notes

1. Ehus"ani, G.O. 1991. *An Afro-Christian Vision: "Ozovehe!", Towards a More Humanized World.* Maryland: University of America, Inc. 104.
2. Afolayan, A. 2006. The Language Question in African Philosophy. Oladipo, O. (ed). *Core Issues in*

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African Philosophy. Ibadan: Hope Publications. 41-58.
3. Ojimba, A.C. Haaga, P.T. and Ikuli, B.Y. 2015. On the Problem of Language in African Philosophy. *Contemporary Journal of Arts and Science* 1.1: 104-113.
4. Ojimba, A.C. Haaga, P.T. and Ikuli, B.Y. 2015. On the Problem of Language in African Philosophy. *Contemporary Journal of Arts and Science* 1.1: 104.
5. Kunene, M. l992. Problems in African literature. Research in African Literatures 23.1: 27-44.
6. Owomoyela, O. l992. Language, Identity, and Social Construction in African Literature. *Research in African Literature* 1: 83-94.
7. Kanu, I.A. 2015. *African Philosophy: An Ontologico-Existential Hermeneutic Approach to Classical and Contemporary Issues.* Jos: Augustinian Publications. 156.
8. Wittgenstein, L. 1961. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus.* Pears, D.F. and McGuiness, B.F. Eds. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. 4.01.
9. Fasiku, G. 2008. African Philosophy and the Method of Ordinary Language Philosophy. *Journal of Pan African Studies* 3: 100-116.
10. Mondin, B. 1985. *Philosophical Anthropology.* India: Theological Publications. 129.
11. Lyons, J. 1981. *Language and Linguistics: An Introduction*. London: Cambridge University Press. 1-3.
12. For a detailed analysis of why philosophers have always been interested in language, see Hacking, I. 1973. *Why Does Language Matter To Philosophy?* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; and Oyeshile, O.A. 2008. What has Philosophy got to do with Language?- The Nature and Relevance of the Philosophers interest in Language. *West African Journal of Philosophical Studies (WAJOPS)* 11:129-145.
13. Ki-Zerbo, J. 1981. *General History of Africa, Methodology and African Prehistory*. Berkley: University of California.
14. Oyeshile, O.A. 2008. What has Philosophy got to do with Language?- The Nature and Relevance of the Philosophers interest in Language. *West African Journal of Philosophical Studies (WAJOPS*) 11:129-145
15. Whorf, B.L. citied in Bell, D. 1993. *Comm-unitarianism and its Critics*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 158-159.
16. Blocker, G. 1987. African Philosophy. *African Philosophical Inquiry* 1.1: 2-15.
17. More emphatically, "by African (in the words of Pantaleon Iroegbu), is understood the geopolitical and socio-cultural entity englobed by the continent of Africa: North, middle and south. It includes the old Afro-Islamic Egypt. Sub-saharan black central as well as white South Africa are all included in this geo-political definition. Equally, included are the historically African-originated Afro-American and Afro-Asian peoples whose roots are African. Though they live no longer in the African continent, yet they are tied by history and origins to Africa. They are part of and parcel of the African reality". Cf. Iroegbu, P. 1994. *Enwisdomization & African Philosophy*. Owerri: International Universities Press, Ltd. 116.
18. Azenabor, G. 2000. The Idea of African Philosophy in African Languages. *Indian Philosophical Quarterly* 27.3: 321-
19. Iroegbu, P. 1994. *Enwisdomization & African Philosophy.* Owerri: International Universities Press, Ltd. 116.
20. For a detailed analysis of this debate, See for instance, Hountondji, P.J. 1983. *African Philosophy: Myth and Reality.* London: Hutchinson University Library for Africa; Bodunrin, P. 1991. The Question of African Philosophy. Serequeberhan, T. Ed. *African Philosophy: Essential Readings.* New York: Paragon Publishers; Wiredu, K. 1980. *Philosophy and An African Culture.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Oruka, H.O. 1995. *Trends in Contemporary African Philosophy.* Nairobi: Shirikon Publishers; Oladipo, O. 1992. *The Idea of African Philosophy: A Critical Study of the Major Orientations in Contemporary Africa.* Ibadan: Molecular Publishers; and Makinde, M.A. 2007. *African Philosophy: The Demise of a Controversy.* Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press.
21. Owolabi, K. 2000. African Philosophy: Retrospect and Prospect. *Issues and Problems in Philosophy*. Owolabi, K. Ed. Ibadan: Grovacs Network. 12.
22. He was here, referring to Richard Wright‟s 1984 edited book titled, „African Philosophy‟. For verification of this claim, see, Wright. R. 1984. *African Philosophy*. New York: University press of America.
23. Makinde, M.A. 2007. *African Philosophy: The Demise of a Controversy.* Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press.
24. Pantaleon Iroegbu, further argues that, these obstacles do not totally negate the reality of African philosophy. Its history shows that we have something already behind and with us. But a deeper search for the roots is called for, not only to address fundamentally constituting influences, but above all to guarantee its genuineness and autonomous identity. African philosophy, must be definitionally, that is, constitutively African. Cf. Iroegbu, P. 1994. *Enwisdomization & African Philosophy.* Owerri: International Universities Press, Ltd. 134.
25. Ehus‟ani, G.O. 1991. *An Afro-Christian Vision: "Ozovehe!", Towards a More Humanized World.* Maryland: University of America, Inc. 104.
26. Ngugi Wa Thiong‟O, further notes that language, any language, has a dual character: it is both a

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means of communication and a carrier of culture. That is why today, an African child grows up admiring the culture carried by these foreign languages, and looks down upon the culture carried by the language of his or her particular nationality. Cf. Thiong"O, N.W. 1986. *Decolonizing the Mind*. London: Currey Press. 13; also Cf. Thiong"O, N.W. 1981. *Writers in Politics.* London: Heinemann. 43.

27. Asante, M. 1988. *Afrocentricity.* New Jersey: Africa World Press. 31.
28. Njoku, F.O.C. 2002. *Essays in African Philosophy, Thought and Theology.* Enugu: Snaap Press Limited. 107
29. Makinde, M.A. 1988. *African Philosophy, Culture and Traditional Medicine.* Ohio: Ohio University Press. 17; Also for a detailed analysis of this view by Wittgenstein, see Wittgenstein, L. 1961. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus.* Pears, D.F. & McGuiness, B.F. Eds. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. 5.61.
30. Makinde, M.A. 1988. *African Philosophy, Culture and Traditional Medicine.* Ohio: Ohio University Press. 20.
31. Makinde, M.A. 1988. *African Philosophy, Culture and Traditional Medicine*. Ohio: Ohio University Press. 56.
32. Kwame, G. 1987. *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought.* New York: Cambridge University Press. 173.
33. Afolayan, A. 2006. The Language Question in African Philosophy. Oladipo, O. (ed). *Core Issues in African Philosophy.* Ibadan: Hope Publications. 41
34. Afolayan, A. 2006. The Language Question in African Philosophy. Oladipo, O. (ed). *Core Issues in African Philosophy*. Ibadan: Hope Publications. 41.
35. Imbo, S.O. 1998. *An Introduction to African Philosophy.* Maryland: Rowman &Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 98.
36. We also see this kind of reasoning, clearly knitted out in the Hegelian dichotomizing cogitations about the Negro (Africans). Cf. Imbo, S.O. 1998. *An Introduction to African Philosophy*. Maryland: Rowman &Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 98.
37. Kanu, I.A. 2015. *African Philosophy: An Ontologico-Existential Hermeneutic Approach to Classical and Contemporary Issues*. Jos: Augustinian Publications. 157.
38. Senghor, L. 1976. *Prose and Poetry*. Keed & Wake (trans.). London: Heinemann. 17.
39. Kanu, I.A. 2015. *African Philosophy: An Ontologico-Existential Hermeneutic Approach to Classical and Contemporary Issues.* Jos: Augustinian Publications. 159.
40. Kishani, B.T. 2001. On the Interface of Philosophy and Language in Africa: Some Practical and Theoretical Considerations. *African Studies Review* 44.3: 27-45.
41. See Thiong"O, N.W. 1986. *Decolonizing the Mind.* London: Currey Press. 13; also Cf. Thiong"O, N.W. 1981. *Writers in Politics.* London: Heinemann.
42. Balogun Noah, has attempted a review of Wiredu and Oladipo"s views on Mental Deconstruction and Development. For a detailed insight on this position, see Balogun, N.O. 2014. A Review of Wiredu and Oladipo"s views on Mental Deconstruction and Development. Ademowo, A and Offor, F. Eds. *Humanism, Existential Predicaments and Africa, Essays in Honour of Olusegun Oladipo*. Ibadan: Hope Publications. 81-94.
43. Afolayan, A. 2006. The Language Question in African Philosophy. Oladipo, O. (ed). *Core Issues in African Philosophy.* Ibadan: Hope Publications. 45.
44. Thiong"O, N.W. 1986. *Decolonizing the Mind: the Politics of Language in African Literature*. Portsmouth: Heinemann. 3.
45. Thiong"O, N.W. 1993. *Moving the Center: The Struggle for Cultural Freedoms.* Portsmouth: Heinemann. 17.
46. Wiredu, K. 2004. Introduction: African Philosophy in our Time. Wiredu, K. (ed). *A Companion to African Philosophy.* Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers. 1-27.
47. This particular work, contains four essays, by Kwasi Wiredu. Selected and introduced by Olusegun Oladipo in 1995. Wiredu, K. 1995. *Conceptual Decolonization in African Philosophy*. Ibadan: Hope Publications. 22-23.
48. Wiredu, K. 1995. Conceptual *Decolonization in African Philosophy.* Ibadan: Hope Publications. 22-23.
49. Wiredu, K. 1996. *Cultural Universals and Particulars: An African Perspective.* Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press. 137; see also Wiredu, K. 2004. Introduction: African Philosophy in our Time. Wiredu, K. (ed). *A Companion to African Philosophy.* Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers. 15.
50. This proposal by Wole Soyinka, was quoted in one of the footnotes of Akin Makinde"s major work. See Makinde, M.A. 2007. *African Philosophy: The Demise of a Controversy*. Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press. 425.
51. Bewaji, J.A.I. 2002. African Languages and Critical Discourse. Oladipo, O. (ed). *The Third Way in African Philosophy, Essay in Honour of Kwasi Wiredu*. Ibadan: Hope Publications. 279.
52. Iroegbu, P. 1994. *Enwisdomization & African Philosophy.* Owerri: International Universities Press, Ltd. 134.
53. This can be seen as a very difficult position to hold, especially for scholars like those of Makinde"s pedigree. In fact, the question that an inquisitive mind might ask is: how does Makinde see himself or regard himself in the intellectual cosmos? Does he regard himself as an African philosopher, a Philosopher of Africa, a philosopher in Africa or even

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more seriously, a Western Philosopher? It is exactly this kind of worry, that John Bewaji, attempts a stifling of Makinde"s thesis. For a detailed analysis of Bewaji"s riposte, see, Bewaji, J.A.I. 2002. African Languages and Critical Discourse. Oladipo, O. (ed). *The Third Way in African Philosophy, Essay in Honour of Kwasi Wiredu.* Ibadan: Hope Publications. 271-295.

54. Makinde, M.A. 2007. *African Philosophy: The Demise of a Controversy*. Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press.58
55. Bewaji later reveals that the relationship between English, Spanish, French, and Latin/Greek, is a good example here. This has not been dissimilar to that, between Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo languages. The words "wahala" or "fitina", "kudi," "aboki", "alafia" and "gejiya" are Hausa words for "problem", "money", "friend", "peace", and "tired" respectively which have found their ways into Yoruba language. So also, are Igbo words found in Yoruba Language and vice versa. Cf. Bewaji, J.A.I. 2002. African Languages and Critical Discourse. Oladipo, O. (ed). *The Third Way in African Philosophy, Essay in Honour of Kwasi Wiredu.* Ibadan: Hope Publications. 279.
56. Bewaji believes, if the situation had been different and language were so paramount, the West African king of the early modern period who journeyed to Mexico would not have done so, because it would have been difficult to conceptualize such new phenomenon in a new environment. Bewaji"s position, though contestable, is insightful. SeeBewaji, J.A.I. 2002. African Languages and Critical Discourse. Oladipo, O. (ed). *The Third Way in African Philosophy, Essay in Honour of Kwasi Wiredu*. Ibadan: Hope Publications. 279.
57. Njoku, F.O.C. 2002*. Essays in African Philosophy, Thought and Theology*. Enugu: Snaap Press Limited. 106.
58. Kishani, B.T. 2001. On the Interface of Philosophy and Language in Africa: Some Practical and Theoretical Considerations. *African Studies Review* 44.3: 27-45.
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62. Ojimba, A.C., Haaga, P.T., and Ikuli, B.Y. 2015. On the Problem of Language in African Philosophy. *Contemporary Journal of Arts and Science* 1.1: 111.
63. Achebe, C. 1975. *Morning Yet on Creation.* London: Heinemann. 44.
64. Ojimba, A.C., Haaga, P.T., and Ikuli, B.Y. 2015. On the Problem of Language in African Philosophy. *Contemporary Journal of Arts and Science* 1.1: 111.
65. The relevance of this proposal, is what A.J. Ademowo attempts to show in one of this works. See Ademowo, A.J. 2012. Indigenous Languages and Techno-scientific Development in Africa. *Afro-Asian Journal of Social Sciences*, volume 3, no.3.
66. Cf. Azenabor, G. 2000. The Idea of African Philosophy in African Languages. *Indian Philosophical Quarterly* 27.3: 321-328.
67. Rettová, A. 2002. The Role of African Languages in African Philosophy. *Rue Descartes, Philosophies Africaines: Traversées Des Expériences* 36: 129-150.
68. Rettová, A. 2002. The Role of African Languages in African Philosophy. *Rue Descartes, Philosophies Africaines: Traversées Des Expériences* 36: 129-150.
69. Rettová, A. 2002. The Role of African Languages in African Philosophy. *Rue Descartes, Philosophies Africaines: Traversées Des Expériences* 36: 129-150.
70. In F.O. Njoku"s thinking, Africans should be mindful of not falling prey to the same faults of Eurocentric spirit of claim of superiority. Cf. Njoku, F.O.C. 2002. *Essays in African Philosophy, Thought and Theology.* Enugu: Snaap Press Limited. 119.
71. See Asouzu, I.I. 2011. *Ibuanyidanda and the Philosophy of Essence (50th Inaugural Lecture Presented at the University of Calabar*. Calabar: University Press.
72. See Asouzu, I.I. 2013. Ibuanyidanda (Complementary Reflection) and Some Basic Philosophical Problems in Africa Today. Oguejiofor, O.J, Ramose, M.B, and Onah, G.I. Eds. *Studies in African Philosophy*, Vol. 8. Zurich: Lit Verlag GmbH & Co. KG Wien.

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