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**Voicing the Unwritten: A Comparative Study of Native Language and Oral Tradition in the Short Stories of Ama Ata Aidoo and Ousmane Sembene**

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**Article Received:** 11/03/2025

**Article Accepted:** 16/04/2025

**Published Online:** 18/04/2025

**DOI:**10.47311/IJOES.2025.7.04.551

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**Abstract**

This paper presents a comparative analysis of *No Sweetness Here* by Ama Ata Aidoo and *Tribal Scars* by Ousmane Sembene as two postcolonial African authors who use native language styles and elements of oral tradition as a means of cultural assertion and resistance. Drawing on Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's theory of the politics of language and Ruth Finnegan's scholarship on African oral literature, the study examines the presence of indigenous idioms, proverbs, narrative patterns and oral aesthetics infused into written texts forged in colonial languages. Whereas Aidoo sifts English through the cultural logic and patterns of dialogue of Ghana, Sembene arranges his French narratives along the lines of oral traditions in Wolof, destabilising the authority of colonial language systems. The paper also explores the gendered aspects of voice and storytelling, noting how both authors foreground women's experiences through culturally embedded speech and narrative agency. This research, which focuses on specific short stories from each of the collections, adds to a growing body of scholarship that challenges prevailing notions of language as a simple communication medium, by showing language in a much more conflicted light, as an active site of the struggle around identity and memory, and even resistance in the case of African literature.

**Keywords:** Native Language, Oral Tradition, Postcolonial Resistance, Ama Ata Aidoo, Ousmane Sembene

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**1.Introduction**

In postcolonial Africa, language has always been at the centre of battles for cultural self-definition. Colonisation brought with it not only political and economic domination but also a new empire of languages, pushing out indigenous languages and modes of expression. Having to contend with both the challenge of articulating native realities through the medium of borrowed tongues and the task of reclaiming cultural narratives that were erased or skewed by colonial discourse, African writers have, for decades in literature, been engaged in these tensions. As Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o argues in *Decolonising the Mind*, language is not a neutral medium but a carrier of culture and power; writing in colonial languages often leads to a disconnection from the writer's community and historical memory. (Ngũgĩ, 1986)

This tension has led many African writers to use native languages, oral traditions and local idioms in their creative works not only as stylistic choices but also as acts of resistance and cultural affirmation. Ama Ata Aidoo of Ghana and Ousmane Sembene of Senegal – whose linguistic realities diverge, as Aidoo primarily writes in English and Sembene in French – affirm and interweave indigenous linguistic aesthetics into their works. Hailing from societies with strong oral traditions, both authors purposefully tapped into these cultural resources to produce literary texts that were consonant with the rhythm, cosmology, and collective subjectivities of their native languages (Finnegan, 2012; Gikandi, 1987).

But Aidoo's *No Sweetness Here* and Sembene's *Tribal Scars* also present sensitive sites from which narrative tactics are integrated into written literature in order to reestablish African identity and worldview. These narratives mimic the tonal rhythms and dialogic forms of oral performance, privileging native epistemologies over systems derived from the West. In Aidoo's work, English is filtered through Ghanaian thought patterns and idiomatic expressions and Sembene, who writes in French, retains in his text structures and proverbs of Wolof oral traditions, occasionally incorporating them untranslated or adapting them within his text (Arnfred & Ricard, 2004).

This paper explores how Aidoo and Sembene deploy elements of their native languages and consciously pay homage to oral storytelling conventions in their short fiction in order to work against colonial linguistic power dynamics and foreground culturally situated knowledge systems. It goes further, examining how these linguistic strategies operate as vehicles for political commentary, social critique, and gendered expression. A comparative analysis of selected stories from both collections sheds light on the complex interplays of language, identity, and resistance present in this strand of African postcolonial literature, while providing a broader contribution to the understanding of African writers navigating the legacy of colonial languages through localised narrative forms.

**2. Literature Review****2.1 Language Politics in African Literature**

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Language is one of the most contentious and ideologically fraught issues in postcolonial literary studies and one of the most hotly debated questions in the realm of African literature. Central to this debate is Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's landmark book *Decolonising the Mind*, which contends that language is not only a medium of communication, but a vehicle for carrying culture, memory and consciousness. The argument being made by Ngũgĩ — that writing in colonial languages perpetuates the cultural alienation of African peoples and that one must return to indigenous languages when expressing their creativity — has been valuable and insightful. It is also a position that has deeply shaped discourses regarding linguistic authenticity and cultural sovereignty in African writing.

Other scholars have adopted more pragmatic positions. Chinua Achebe, among others, insisted that African writers could indigenize English — twisting English to fit African modes of thought and expression. This “Africanization” of the colonial language, according to Achebe, allowed for accessibility and global reach while still reflecting native realities (Achebe, 1975). Another of the important theorists of African literature, Obi Wali (1963), critiqued African literature written in European languages as “non-African,” calling for a literary revolution grounded in African languages. It is these fundamental debates that structure how we make sense of the choices by which African writers such as Aidoo and Sembene venture into muddy linguistic waters as they engage with their material.

## 2.2 Contemporary African Texts and Oral Narratives

Oral traditions are widely acknowledged as central to African narrative structures. Ruth Finnegan's *Oral Literature in Africa* is still the foundational work documenting the richness, diversity, and formal properties of African oral traditions from storytelling to proverbs to praise-poetry to communal performance. Finnegan asserts that orality is not a primitive precursor to literacy, but a sophisticated and enduring system of knowledge transmission. It allowed for this scholarship to be reflected in modern African literature analysis, from its structure to the voicing of it to the interaction with its audience.

The role of the oral tradition in written African narratives has also been emphasised by scholars like Isidore Okpewho and Harold Scheub, who have pointed to oral features such as repetition, call-and-response, moral framing, and metaphorical speech as working in the written tradition as well. These traits not only retain indigenous epistemologies but also function as tools of cultural continuity and resistance. In modern African fiction, these elements of orality serve as nuanced intrusions into Western literary modes that convert them into vehicles for indigenous expression.

## 2.3. Individual Studies on Aidoo and Sembene

Ama Ata Aidoo has been widely admired among feminists for her voice and her major focus on the lives of Ghanaian women informed by culturally grounded narratives. Scholars such as Florence Stratton (1994) and Anne Adams (2006) have noted Aidoo's

nuanced use of language, especially her practice of saturating English with Ghanaian idioms, speech rhythms, and proverbs. Aidoo's stories, they observe, "speak in English but think in Akan," a fact that exposes the layering of linguistic and cultural inheritedness that her fictions encompass (Stratton, 1994). Aidoo's deliberate disbursement of untranslated terms and culturally specific idioms corresponds to the speech of her characters and highlights the ways in which they ground themselves in local communities.

In the case of Ousmane Sembene, there has been a good deal of scholarly attention on his films, but his other written works, especially that of *Tribal Scars*, have equal cultural linguistic richness. Critics like Sheila Petty (2005) and Alain Ricard (2004) have remarked that Sembene's French-language fiction is intentionally "contaminated" with Wolof syntax, oral cadence, and the conventions of storytelling. Petty underscores that Sembene's short stories, like his films, engage in what she refers to as "orality-based literacy"—the conversion of oral tradition to written form without sacrificing its cultural and rhythmic integrity (Petty, 2005). His employment of parables, communal narrators and digressive narrative structures signals an allegiance to oral forms, even as he writes in the language of the coloniser.

Though these individual studies provide insight into Aidoo and Sembene's work, comparative scholarship that puts these two writers in dialogue, particularly in how they integrate native language aesthetics and oral traditions into the genre of short fiction, has been sparse.

#### 2.4 Identified Gap

Although there is a wealth of scholarship on the politics of language, orality and postcolonial identity in African literature, there is, however, a gap in comparative studies examining how Ama Ata Aidoo and Ousmane Sembene use native language structures and oral aesthetics in their short stories. Most scholarship on either author focuses exclusively on them, and while there is research into language orality, it is often subsumed in cultural or feminist analysis, and it fails to grapple with micro-textual techniques to replicate oral speech or maintain native linguistic meter.

Additionally, while feminist readings of Aidoo have emphasised her deployment of women's voices and cultural idioms, few have examined how these voices function within oral frameworks or in linguistic resistance. Similarly, Sembene's prose work is underexplored alongside the attention that has been paid to his films, even though his literary short stories give insight into how language and orality exist as tools for political critique and cultural affirmation.

This paper thus fills this scholarly void by providing a comparative analysis of Aidoo's *No Sweetness Here* and Sembene's *Tribal Scars*, particularly in terms of how both authors construct linguistic and narrative strategies to valorise native language aesthetics and oral

traditions operating within a colonial linguistic context. This study has foregrounded the idea of conversation here as an answer to the implicit call for a more complex understanding of postcolonial African literature's engagement with language, identity and resistance by bringing the two authors into generative dialogue.

### **3. Theoretical Framework**

The study is positioned in postcolonial theory, especially in relation to language politics, orality and feminist discourse with respect to contemporary African literature. Inspired by scholars such as Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Homi K. Bhabha, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, the framework interrogates the politics of representation, linguistic subversion and cultural identity in literary narratives informed by colonial history, yet rooted in indigenous epistemologies.

#### **3.1 Postcolonial Language Theory**

Central to this study is Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's argument of the need for linguistic decolonisation, which maintains that African literature must reclaim its indigenous languages if it is to advance any form of cultural liberation. Ngũgĩ argues that the continued dominance of colonial languages, like English and French, in Africa's literary production alienates African writers from their intended readers and perpetuates colonial hegemony over African knowledges and hence representation (Ngugi, 1986). The linguistic indigenisation that neither Ama Ata Aidoo nor Ousmane Sembene can best be described as a residue of the native tongue, and both infuse linguistic residue in their texts despite the predominance of indigenous languages in their writing. The subversive appropriation of colonial languages is in line with Ngũgĩ's exhortation to "seize back the language" and domesticate it to local realities.

The analysis of language in these texts is also supported by Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity. According to Bhabha, postcolonial cultures are produced out of a space of hybridisation in which colonial and native languages interact with each other, producing a third space that escapes both its indigenous and colonial pasts, a site of negotiation (Bhabha, 1994). Sembene and Aidoo occupy this hybrid territory by others in that they speak an internal conversation across these spaces, creating their literary voices against African oral traditions, and across forms and fields, further challenging colonial languages against linguistic purity or cultural erasure.

#### **3.2 Orality and African Aesthetics**

The study also engages with African-centred theoretical approaches to oral tradition. From Ruth Finnegan and Isidore Okpewho, we learn that oral performance is not merely a historical stage from which modern literature has evolved, but a complex, vital system of knowledge transmission that informs the form and content of written African texts. Orality is, as Okpewho points out, "a functional and creative process of communication" that

“invokes communal memory, repetition and performative stratagems to convey moral and cultural values” (Okpewho, 1992).

This research therefore interprets orality not just as content but as a structuring and stylistic force — visible in the deployment of proverbs, the dialogic form, and the episodic quality of both *No Sweetness Here* and *Tribal Scars*. These oral aesthetics empower each author to merge the written and spoken forms of their narratives, pushing against the conventions of Western-based literary traditions and reclaiming African authority over African narrative.

### **3.3 Feminist Postcolonialism**

Integrating a feminist postcolonial lens, specifically guided by theorists such as Chandra Talpade Mohanty and Florence Stratton, into this study allows a more explicit critique of how language and orality coalesce at the intersection of gender and voice. In her argument against the homogenizing tendency of Western feminist paradigms, for the necessity of local, context-specific accounts that engage with historical colonial formations and cultural distinctiveness (Mohanty, 1988). Stratton moves this analysis further, showing that African women writers such as Aidoo reshape narrative space to reflect women’s voices and experiences and modes of knowing.

In *No Sweetness Here*, Aidoo discloses women’s oral expression — through gossip, storytelling and communal dialogue — as cultural knowledge and resistance. Similarly, while Sembene’s prose has been criticised for its patriarchal framing, several of his stories in *Tribal Scars* foreground women’s perspectives, often using oral testimony to subvert dominant male-centred narratives. Framed by this lens, the study examines the different ways language and oralities manifest as sites of gendered resistance and cultural affirmation.

## **4. Comparative Textual Analysis**

This segment provides a distilled comparative reading of how Ama Ata Aidoo and Ousmane Sembene use native language structures and oral aesthetic elements within their short fiction. The analysis covers four interrelated dimensions: the indigenisation of colonial languages, oral narrative strategies, gendered linguistic voice, and the deployment of language as cultural resistance. Their focus, however, is on how these techniques work toward larger thematic goals of gender empowerment, cultural preservation, and anti-colonial assertiveness.

### **4.1 The indigenisation of colonial languages**

Aidoo’s manipulation of English suggests a purposeful Africanization of language. In “The Message”, she imitates the intonation and rhythm of Akan speech patterns, striking a particular preference for proverbs and elliptical structures: “Is it not said that when the game is over, the king and the pawn go back into the same box?” (Aidoo, 1970, p. 32). Still said in English, the propositional cadence contains a gloss of Akan wisdom, recording the

coiled modesty and mutability of dominion that artfully declines the literal commonsense of colonial reason.

In *Tribal Scars*, for example, Sembene, who writes in French, follows Wolof-inflected syntax and cultural logic. In “The Bilal’s Sermon”, for example, for instance, Sembene adapts the sermon-like cadence of Islamic preaching with ironic undertones: “Mes frères, donnez à Allah ce qui lui revient, donnez au Prophète ce qu’il mérite... et donnez-moi ce qui me revient!” (Sembene, 1974, p. 43) [My brothers, give to Allah what is His, to the Prophet what he deserves... and give me what is mine!]. The refrains and religious linguistic structures are borrowed from Arabic-influenced Wolof discourse, yet subverted in ways that take to task hypocrisy and manipulation.

In this way, the writers both deconstruct the purported neutrality of English and French, reconstituting these imperial tongues as vehicles for African expression and critique.

#### 4.2 Oral Aesthetics and Narrative Structure

Both Aidoo and Sembene are steeped, also structurally and stylistically, in oral narrative traditions. Another example from the paradigm of collective storytelling is Aidoo’s *No Sweetness Here*, where the storytelling voice often changes perspective and adds commentary from so many social actors. The narrator in the title story confesses: “It is difficult to say where it all started. Perhaps with Maami Ama. Or was it Maami Esi?” (Aidoo, 1970, p. 3). It is this absence of a single, monolithic narrative that reflects the structure of collective memory in African oral storytelling, where truth itself is plural and derives from a collective social experience.

Sembene’s embroiled work *Tribal Scars* opens with a communal scene, where men are “seated under a tree in Dakar, telling stories while drinking tea” (Sembene, 1974, p. 11). The narrator — more a vessel than a character — recalls, “We didn’t believe Samba. He said he knew how the custom of tribal scarring began.” This narration is interspersed with elements of call-and-response as well as digression and moral inference. As Samba narrates, his story gains traction, not due to its factual accuracy but because of its resonance: “And that is how the scarring began—not from vanity, but resistance” (Sembene, 1974, p. 18)

These oral devices — dialogue-heavy narration, episodic progression, repetition, rhetorical questions — are not nostalgic artefacts but political techniques. They reimagine orality as a contemporary epistemology belied by colonial knowledge hierarchies that place written, linear texts at a higher level of value.

#### 4.3 Gendered Use of Language and Voice

Aidoo frames women’s voices and private speech spaces as centres of resistance. Mercy, the protagonist of “Two Sisters”, asserts her autonomy by speaking in a colloquial Ghanaian-English register: “Look, Connie, I have never taken a pesewa from a man without giving him his change” (Aidoo, 1970, p. 42). A defiant challenge to colonial morality and

patriarchal expectation, her language is sharp, witty and unfiltered. This informal and often humorous discourse locates women's everyday speech as a highly productive political site, rather than a marginal one.

In contrast, Sembene's "Her Three Days" offers a woman's fixed interior monologue that violates narrative decorum. And the unnamed mistress, betraying the sense of entitlement more common to African male writers of his time, tells her story without shame: The unnamed mistress, in a rare move for African male writers of his time, narrates unapologetically: "C'est pendant ces trois jours que je suis l'épouse. Et alors? Je ne vole pas" [During those three days, I am the wife. So what? I'm not stealing] (Sembene, 1974, p. 61). Her voice mixes defensiveness with emotional honesty, sounding like an oral confession in the tradition of Wolof women's storytelling circles. Sembene's straightforward first-person narration turns the spotlight on the complexities of acknowledging female sexual agency given the socio-religious strictures.

Aidoo uses a plurality of female voices — gossips, mothers, sisters — as chorus-like interlocutors, whereas Sembene offers a singular female voice an audacious narrative centrality. Both critique gender silencing in postcolonial literature.

#### 4.4 Language, Resistance, and Cultural Reclamation

In both authors' work, language emerges as an active site of resistance — not only against colonial domination, but also against internal cultural degradation. In "Something to Talk About on the Way to the Funeral", Aidoo, during a debate on modernisation, includes this proverb: "What has a young man who has never seen a goat's skull got to say about sacrifice?" (Aidoo, 1970, p. 109). The coded cultural reference situates moral authority in lived indigenous experience, not imported education. English becomes a carrier of ancestral logic, undermining colonial didacticism.

In "Tribal Scars", the concluding lines are crucial: "Yes, we scarred our faces so that the white man could not take us again. Our scars told him: 'We know who we are'" (Sembene, 1974, p. 18). This claim — even if fictionalised — draws from the oral myth to turn history into a report of resistance rather than submission. It is an exercise in selfhood via physicality, memory and language — three sectors frequently withheld from the colonised.

In both writers' cases, recentering entails habitually exploiting the narrative form and linguistic texture to shift the focus away from Eurocentric perspectives and towards African epistemologies. But the embeddedness of proverbs, speech rhythms, and oral logic in English and French undermines any overweening claims one might make about the superiority of Western literary traditions.

#### 4.5. Converging Strategies, Diverging Emphases



Both of these writers indigenize the language of the coloniser and sanctify the oral tradition, but their thematic and stylistic priorities differ. Aidoo's stories are intimate, concerned with interpersonal conflict, domestic spaces and the invisible burdens of Ghanaian women. Her quiet, dialogue-driven narratives depend on what's unsaid rather than said, often weaponising silence, hesitation and gossip. Her strategy, however, is deeply feminist, pulling complex female worlds out of the oral weeds.

But Sembene's were more declarative, more socio-political. His stories work with a pedagogical purpose, frequently closing with a definitive moral or political lesson. His characters — corrupt imams, exploited wives, disillusioned soldiers — progenitors of his own fables, parables even. This embrace of orality is a revolutionary move for him, not a nostalgic one; it's a means of reconstructing African self-image after the trauma of colonisation.

Thus, whereas Aidoo stresses the emotional and gendered aspects of oral aesthetics, Sembene directs them toward historical memory and collective defiance.

## **5. Findings and Discussion**

This section synthesises the main findings distilled from the comparative examination of *No Sweetness Here* by Ama Ata Aidoo and of *Tribal Scars and Other Stories* by Ousmane Sembene, underscoring how their insistence on native language structures and oral aesthetics operates not simply as stylistic options but targeted interventions within postcolonial African literary discourse. The findings emphasise the struggle against linguistic imperialism, their valorisation of indigenous systems of knowledge, and the complex interplay of gendered experience.

### **5.1 Language — A Site of Cultural Survival**

One of the main findings is that both authors strategically subvert the colonial languages in which they write — English and French — by inserting into them the semantic and syntactic features of African oral languages. Aidoo's introduction of Akan proverbs and idiomatic expressions is such that she makes English into a mode of Ghanaian cultural expression. In "The Message", for instance, the old woman's utterance— "Even the tortoise, when it is too much for him, he will cry out" (Aidoo, 1970, p. 29)—is not mere linguistic spice but a culturally loaded, almost axiomatic expression that conveys moral truth in an African epistemological register.

Sembene, too, undercuts the formal stiffness of French by injecting it with sentence structures and idioms that bear the imprint of Wolof. In "The Promised Land", a character says, "Ce n'est pas la France qui nous changera. C'est nous qui devons changer la France" [It is not France that will change us. We must change France (Sembene, 1974, p. 33). This assertive reversal of expectation is a staple of African rhetorical strategy and is politically charged. This negotiation between African orality and colonial language is not only revealing

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of the writers' intent to appropriate and reshape the literary medium itself.

### 5.2 Oral Tradition as a Method of Resistance

A second salient finding is the use of oral storytelling techniques. Both Aidoo and Sembene draw on oral modes — not just thematically but structurally — to subvert Eurocentric narrative conventions. Aidoo's *No Sweetness Here* often resists linearity, favouring circularity, anecdotal memory and communal reflection. This style is similar to traditional African storytelling, in which the story unfolds through conversation and the community's interpretation rather than the omniscient narrator common in Western literature.

Sembene does this too in *Tribal Scars*, which features a communal beginning, then grows through the layering of individual memories and intermissions. The wilful refusal of a single authorial voice takes back the plural, democratic ethos of the griot tradition. The final statement— “We invented them ourselves, so they wouldn't take us again”—is not a historical claim, but a cultural declaration, rooted in the oral tradition of assigning meaning to trauma (Sembene, 1974, p. 18). This storytelling practice, based on community and performance, performs a form of cultural resistance by validating African systems of historical knowledge.

### 5.3 Gendered Resistance Through Language

One key finding is the centrality of women's voices and ways of talking to the writers' linguistic strategies. Aidoo's representation of female language is highly political. Mercy, in “Two Sisters”, speaks in clipped, confident tones that upend traditional gender expectations: “There are some things only a sugar-daddy can fix, Connie. You should know better” (Aidoo, 1970, p. 45). That language resists moral judgment; it embraces survivalism—a commentary on socio-economic marginalisation articulated through the idioms of lived experience.

In Sembene's “Her Three Days”, the woman's monologue is unmediated by a male narrator. Her raw words, “J'avais droit à ces trois jours” [I had a right to those three days] (Sembene, 1974, p. 61), bespeak emotional and sexual agency. Her voice is transgressive and vulnerable at the same time, sitting in this liminal space that's partly personal, partly political. The prioritisation of informal, non-literary speech is both a sonic register and a narrative trope of sorts, and functions as a determinant against framing African women strictly as archetypes, instead positioning them as speaking subjects with multivalent cultural presence.

### 5.4 Literary Innovation Through Cultural Reclamation

Both authors are innovators, bending colonial forms of literature to make room for indigenous expression. Aidoo creates hybrid texts that read as both modern short stories and oral performances. The lack of definitive closure in stories like “For Whom Things Did Not

Change” mimics the unresolved nature of many folk tales. The didacticism of “The False Prophet”, for example, is not so much a critique of religious hypocrisy as an affirmation of the griot’s moral authority.

This convergence of oral aesthetics and narrative form is no nostalgia-fuelled exercise, but a conscious reclamation of African intellectual traditions. It contests European literary paradigms and validates African ways of telling things as forms of critique, memory, and resistance.

#### 5.5 Identified Research Contribution

This study fills a significant gap in postcolonial literary scholarship; although works by Aidoo and Sembène have been examined individually for their preoccupations with issues of colonialism, gender, and politics, there are few comparative studies of how Aidoo and Sembène both employ indigenous language patterns and unapologetically exploit oral narrative strategies in their short fiction. We argue that the choices of language and structure are triggering the auto-narrative of this decolonial-literary praxis. It resituates each author not only as a thematic critic of oppression but as a formal innovator within African literary traditions.

### 6. Conclusion

By experimenting with native language structures and oral aesthetics in the short fiction of Ama Ata Aidoo and Ousmane Sembene, this study has shown how both authors remap the colonial literary space by rooting it in African linguistic, cultural and epistemological spaces. Aidoo and Sembene both write in colonial languages — English and French, respectively — and they do not simply translate Africa into European tongues; they alchemise those languages to express the pulse, metaphor, idiom and worldview of their native cultures. The act is not only a reclamation of narrative authority, but it is also evidence of the resilient life that African oral traditions lead in contemporary literary space.

This paper demonstrates that both writers leverage oral storytelling techniques to craft a type of storytelling that resists Eurocentred literary conventions through a comparative lens—dialogic narration, proverbial speech, repetition, and nonlinear temporality. Aidoo’s use of Akan speech forms and Sembene’s use of Wolof-inflected French expand their style but also become acts of resistance against linguistic imperialism. Their stories complicate the notion that English and French serve as neutral vehicles of expression; instead, these languages are resculpted to reflect indigenous realities and communal identities.

Crucially, this study has emphasised the gendered dimensions of linguistic and narrative resistance. Aidoo’s attention to women’s everyday speech, gossip, and domestic narratives repositions female voices as central to African literary discourse. The significance of female monologues in Sembene’s “His Hundred Words” is likewise complicated by the

decision to focus on males and female monologuing, as few African writers, notably among males of his age, focus specifically on women talking.

This study's comparative method provides important fresh illumination on a significant gap in extant studies. While much has been written about Aidoo and Sembene as individual writers of political commitment and cultural affirmation, few studies have juxtaposed their use of indigenous language structures and oral aesthetics in the short fiction form. This study can be seen as the opening statement, as it is an intersection between the gender of the research, language, and postcolonial aesthetics.

In reimagining English and French through African oral traditions, Aidoo and Sembene do more than tell stories—they remake the literary landscape itself, proving that the true power of postcolonial fiction lies not only in what is said, but in how, and in whose voice, it is spoken.

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**Citation:**

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