
RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Effect of the Englishness in [De]Constructing the Identity in Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research paper investigated Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* (1988) in relation to Foucault's (1990) concept of circulating power relations. The researcher explored the destruction and construction of some of the characters' identities due to the impact of the 'superior' English colonial language. It shed light on the resurrection of some of the females' identities due to their exposure to colonial education that came as a result of their resistance to different forms of power, which is reflected in their speaking styles. The first section highlighted the unequal power relations and the effect of education inside the Rhodesian community. The second section highlighted the change in the power relations due to the 'Englishness' that resulted in helping some characters to retrieve their own identities after their productive resistance against patriarchal and colonial powers. In the end, the results of this study confirmed the circulating nature of power relations.

KEYWORDS

Identity, English, colonial, resistance, power.

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1. Introduction

Tsitsi Dangarembga's postcolonial feminist novel *Nervous Conditions* (1988) follows up the development of the female characters' reclaiming of their own identities, which in return threatens the identities of the patriarchal educated personalities with falling apart, all through the intruder language of the white English colonizers. The title of the novel is derived from Jean-Paul Sartre's introduction to Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), which indicates that the "colonial condition is a nervous condition"(20). In this novel, Dangarembga tackles several topics that are crucial to understanding the formidable damages the coercive system of colonization inflicts upon the colonized land, culture, and people.

Colonization is an oppressive system that feeds on the exploitation of the people's labor and natural resources, and it imposes its redoubtable system and ideology on them. In the colonial world, the world is divided into two halves, the colonized or Orient, and the colonizer or Occident and the power are appropriated for the one that is able to produce knowledge about the Other. In the texts written by the colonizers or Orientalists, the colonized is represented as a primitive, weak, voiceless, and subservient other. But, the counter story narrated by the colonized demonstrates the brutality of the colonizers that are covered and justified in their writings by the negative representations of the colonized, and it reveals the impacts of colonization on the colonized people.

As a female writer who was affected by these devastating impacts the British colonization brought on her culture, Dangarembga reveals one master aspect that manifests all the ugliness of colonization, i.e. humiliating the colonized that comes in the shape of claiming to enlighten or civilize them, disrupting their identities, whether to feel un-homely in their own home, mimicry or empowering the patriarchal society. This aspect is learning the English language.

Language always functions as a social mirror; not only it reflects social distinctions, but it also helps to construct these distinctions. As Frantz Fanon said in his book *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967), "A man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language." (p. 165). It is through language that the relations or communications among people or between countries can be strengthened or weakened. So, language plays an essential role in the communities that would reveal a person's social, religious, racial, gender, and even economic status. Amin Maalouf (2000) indicates that "language has the marvelous characteristics of being both a component of identity and a means of communication" (p. 109). However, as a person who can not only speak but also master several languages, he/she would definitely be able to deceive his/her surroundings with that language. Hence, language can be used as a tool to distract people's minds by pretending to be the opposite or imitating a certain position and wearing it as a mask to manipulate, control, and subjugate others. It can be as well a manipulating power that would put its speakers into the position of God-like or slave-like position. Therefore, people's identifications with a certain language reflect their minority or superiority.

Nervous Conditions uncover all this. The novel talks about the Shona community in Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, which was a British colony. While reading the novel, readers will notice the absence of any British military existence or any much clear, direct conversational confrontation between the white colonizers and the Shona members, black colonized. This is because Dangarembga cares so much about shedding light on the real life of the Shona community with the presence of the white "missionaries" and modernity. As well she intends to empower women's voices. The focus on the effects of the English language and the perspectives the Shona members have regarding learning or even speaking it is tremendous. All these effects are shown through the development of the female characters, such as Tambu, Nyasha, and Tambu's mother. Tambu worked hard to get into school and aspired to be like her brother, who lived with her uncle on the mission before his death. As for Nyasha, she is the girl who lived in London and came home back, finding difficulties and struggling to make a balance between the two ambivalent worlds. Nevertheless, when it comes to Tambu's mother, she is the smartest woman to first openly diagnose the germ of the English language on people's lives and identities. Her words addressing her daughter summarize it all. She says, "It is the Englishness. It will kill them all if they aren't careful... the problem is the Englishness, so you just be careful" (2004, p. 207).

This draws attention towards the mutual relationship between language and power. A language is a tool of power that would metaphorically kill a person. One way of this metaphorical death comes in the shape of shattering identities that, in return, would force some people to literally take their own lives. Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart* (1962) and Saeed in *Seasons of Migration to the North* (1966) exemplify it. Maalouf (2000) says, "language [is] one of the elements defining a culture or an identity... it is bound to remain the mainspring of cultural identity, and linguistic diversity the mainspring of all other diversities." (p. 108).

As mentioned before, language has the power to put you into the position of a master or a slave. When it comes to the English language, it is connected with modernity. Therefore, speaking English would give you power, and so does own the language. What helped colonizers to spread their own ideologies, as is the case in Africa, is through spreading their languages inside the colonized world. Thus, as producers of the modern language, this would facilitate their spread of dominance, attracting people to assimilate with their modernity through their newly learned language.

From this point, this mingling of language as power and as a component of identity has consequences in the short and long term for people. This research paper explores this in relation to Foucault's (1990) concept of power.

1.1. Significance of Study

This research paper examines the effect of "Englishness" in (de)constructing the colonial identity. In interpreting the impact of the colonial language the whites imposed on the colonized people in *Nervous Condition*, many critics pay great attention to the unequal power relations inside the community (Butler (1997). They do succeed in showing how unequal power relations play an essential role in reshaping the relations between men, women, colonizers and colonized all through the language they speak. They highlight the negative impact of power and its resistance on the characters, not focusing on all the dimensions of power. However, it is difficult to discuss the concept of power or the power of the discourse without bringing up Michele Foucault's concept of power. Actually, the more we read Foucault's interpretation of power, the more we become able to comprehend the power of the language/discourse in subverting the subjugation of the characters. In fact, this study attempts to reflect on how other critics ignore the positive effect of power in reclaiming one's resistance through language. Hence, this paper explores the crucial role the language of superiority, which is English, plays in triggering the characters' resistance and questing for or repairing their own identities.

1.2. Research Objectives:

This analytical study aims:

1. To reveal how some characters reconstruct new identities and rebel against the colonial, patriarchal hegemony.

2. To reflect, through the analysis of the behaviors of two male characters, how the language they master did not help them to completely assimilate with the sovereign colonial power.
3. To find out how the deconstruction of the identity is due to the aspiration for complete assimilation with the colonizer and gender inequality through the practice of power.
4. To reveal how language reflects the fragility of the patriarchal society that was made up and empowered through stable unequal power relations.

1.4. Research Questions:

The study will investigate the following research questions:

1. In their quest for their real own identities, to what extent do the characters succeed in resisting the power they are subjected to with all its forms?
2. In the light of examining language as the [de]constructor of identity, what insights do the theorists achieve if they take power as a relation rather than a negative possession?

2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

2.1. Foucault's concept of power

Foucault (1990) defines power as an unstable productive relation that cannot be owned by anyone. For him, power "is not negative; and it is not possessed by an individual or group of individuals. Power can be productive and positive; it is a relationship, not a thing"(p. 4). Many feminists and post colonialists debate whether Foucault's concept of power is appropriate in discussing the relationship between men and women and the colonizer and the colonized. On the one hand, the feminists Judith Butler and Simone De Beauvoir argue that Foucault's concept of power is appropriate for studying women's subordination in society. In her book *The Psychic Life of Power*, Butler (1997) shows that power is one of the characteristics of subjection, and it shapes our behaviors and existence. She agrees with Foucault on the idea of the instability of power. For her, power not only makes the condition of subordination temporal and not static, rather it can be reversed and shifted (p. 17). She maintains that it is up to the subject to internalize the power or to become subject to it because the subject gains its agency from the power it opposes, and that confirms the existence of resistance within the existence of power. Moreover, Beauvoir (2010) agrees with Butler on the instability of power and the temporalization of subordination. Beauvoir argues that women's subordination is not inherent in them, but it comes as a result of social, economic, and political power relations. For her, as well as Foucault, power is not a possession; rather, it is a relation. The present position of exercising power today can be reversed due to the changes in the domains in which you are. Furthermore, the post-colonialist Robert J.C. Young (1995) argues that Foucault's theory of power is also a central reference for many postcolonial studies. He confirms that his theory is essential in understanding the relations between the colonizer and the colonized and the West and East. He agrees with Foucault on the overlap between power and resistance. For him, every colonized has resistance against the power exercised by the colonizer. He assures that power is not stable because the colonized has the ability to revolt against the colonizer.

On the other hand, Nancy Hartsock (1990) and Robert Nichols (2010) claim that Foucault's theory of power is not appropriate to either theories. For Hartsock (1990), Foucault does not provide a theory for women. Her main reason behind this is that Foucault writes from the position of the colonizer. Foucault confirms that power moves from down-up. But, Hartsock (1990) says that Foucault is a white European colonizer. So he does not mention anything about unequal power relations because he looks at the power from the top-down. She maintains that power is only possessed by the patriarchal society that defines women's behaviors and distances them. This shows that women's oppression appears as equality because it comes from the patriarchal society. Thus, Foucault's power is a useless tool because it is possessed and cannot be found everywhere. In addition, Nichols (2010) claims that Foucault is Eurocentric in his works. He suggests that Foucault's theory of power enslaves people because it does not give any opportunity for resistance. For him, resistance was a major tool for the colonized people. He observes that Foucault's theory goes only in one direction because it is only possessed by a particular group but not a relation. This monolithic notion of power prevents any resistance. Moreover, Edward Said (1979) agrees with Hartsock and Nichols on the possession of power and how it goes on one way. He confirms this by tracing back the origin of the relations between the Orient and the Occident. He observes that the West owned power a long time ago, which reveals that power is stable. Hence, he disagrees with Foucault, who emphasizes the instability of power.

2.2. Feminists and Postcolonial Interpretations of Nervous Condition

In interpreting *Nervous Conditions* (1988), many theorists focus on the discursive nature of power. This discursive nature reveals the negativity of power that puts the subject into servitude and subjugation and makes the subject's resistance devastating. In her interpretation of the novel, Mbatha (2009) argues that "even though gender oppression against women is widely discouraged, unequal power relations between the sexes still lingers."(p.17). Her view of these power relations comes in the shape that they put

men in the position of oppressing women. In this case, women depend on men to stay alive or to take care of the house, as is the case with Jerimeh and his wife. In another case, if women work, their husbands control their salaries, like Babamukuri's wife. As well in her article "Women's Voices from Southern Africa: Gender, Class, and Ethnicity", Manuela Gonzalez (2013) discusses how the author of the novel uses a female protagonist by which she empowers women and gives voice to the subaltern. The female characters, as she says, "break the stereotypes built around the category of the third world women"(p. 12). So, she sees this novel as revolutionary to "empower women and subvert the patriarchal control"(p. 18). In addition, Randi Rodgers (2013) explores the representation of traditional women's roles and "how they are changing to include that of provider, educator, and autonomous"(p. 29). She focuses on female relationships in the text since these relations are "for the basis for the novel's reflections on female solidarity and its functions within a patriarchal system."(p. 35). Hence, all these interpretations focus on one aspect of stable power in the hands of oppressors, colonizers and patriarchal. Women's resistance is seen more as a destructive weapon than of that a constructive one.

On the other hand, in their article "The Formation of a Hybrid Identity in Tsitsi Dangaremba's Novel *Nervous Conditions*", Pieman Baharvand and Bahman Zarrinjooee (2012) focus on the hybrid identities of some women characters like Nyasha. She says, "Nyasha's hybridity is seen from her attitude, a way of thinking, actions, perceptions, and language"(p. 45). Her actions show her stance in a "clash between Zimbabwe and the West"(p. 46). They examine Nyasha's efforts to fit into the society she was born in with the ideology of the Europeans. As well in their article "Identity Formation and Discourse of Power", Fahmida Manzoor and Fouzea Khan (2018) indicate that *Nervous Conditions* portray the "disturbance experiences of the colonial era of colonization and the consequences of the pattern of life under the historical and cultural change"(p. 7). They explain how the author depicts the difficult environment of colonialism, racism, segregation, and domination and its effects on the natives. In addition, by giving women a voice or writing back and showing the real history of colonialism, unlike what has already been known, she "challenges the dominant discourse"(p. 9). In addition, Sarah Miller (2018) investigates that "the most evident colonial power structure is the education system"(p. 3). Even though education opens opportunities for the female characters' "advancement" and "expressions", yet also "coincides with their disillusionment and suffering"(p. 4). Most importantly, she points out that "the contrast between Tambu and Nyasha is an attempt to clarify or differentiate the otherwise irresolvable paradox of language and education in colonial contexts."(P.4). Here, these postcolonial interpretations of the novels shed light on the negative impacts of colonialism along with the colonial power of education on disrupting the identities of the natives paying little attentions towards how the power of education returns in complete help for women.

Thus, in the discussion of Tsitsi Dangaremba's postcolonial feminist novel, *Nervous Conditions* (1988), and in relation to Foucault's concept of power, this paper investigates the effect of the circulating nature of power embodied in the language of education in constructing the females' identities.

3. Methodology:

This research paper uses a qualitative methodology in an attempt to focus on literary devices used by the characters in their interactions. Following the allegorical approach that Gilbert and Gubar (2000) applied to *Wuthering Heights*, the researcher reads these characters and their behaviors and interprets their dialogues through language, identity, and power theories. In particular, these elements are examined in relation to gender differences and colonial education through the prism of resistance and the circulating reality of power.

This study mainly concerns Michel Foucault's (1990) concept of power relations that plays an essential role in leading up the plot in *Nervous Condition*. In fact, it highlights the positive impacts of the circulating nature of power that some characters like Nyasha, Tambu and her mother benefited from in defeating the coercive systems around them. As well it reflects, through the development of the novel events, how the mutability of the power relations due to language disrupts the identity of the educated male characters, who aspire to be similar to the whites, such as Babamukuru and Nhamu.

This qualitative study aims to show that the deconstruction of the identity might be due to the aspiration for complete assimilation with the colonizer. It also explores gender inequality through the practice of power. Nevertheless, the reaction to these powers, because of their circulating nature, plays an important role in revealing the quest for and construction of new identities through the reversing of the colonial discourse.

4. Discussion and Analysis

4.1. Unequal power relations

As language and society are intertwined, unequal power relations are reflected through the characters' different speaking styles. In this novel, there are many factors that may affect the speaking styles, such as gender, level of education, colonial position, and economic status.

Normally, the patriarchal society exercises power over women and renders them mere objects or commodities that are to use and abused inside their domestic sphere. As Tambu's mother said, "the business of womanhood is a heavy burden...when there are

sacrifices to be made, [women] are the ones who [have] to make them..."(p. 16). Equally important, in a patriarchal society that witnessed the exercise of colonial power, women, in this case, face double oppression as females first and colonized second. It is also worth mentioning if they are black, which is seen as a triple oppression inside the community. Tambu's mother continued by saying, "with the poverty of blackness on one side and the weight of womanhood on the other. Aiwa! What will help you is to learn to carry your burdens with strength"(p. 16). Unequal power relations appear in the relationship between uneducated husbands and wives in the village, between educated and uneducated black men, and of course, between educated black husbands and wives in the mission.

The first place of unequal relations occurs between uneducated husbands and wives in the village, that is, in return, transcends or passes on to their children. To illustrate, Tambu's father is a typical example of the traditional patriarchal man who oppresses women and keeps glorying male children and rich or white men. One way of showing his manhood power is by always saying to his wife or daughter, "always and never". Tambu said, "words like always and never were meaningful to my father, who thought in absolute"(p. 25). He always makes fun of his daughter's ideas and even words. When he wants to say something to his daughter, even if she is in front of him, he refers to her as a third person, as if to detach her from the manly business. For example, when Tambu suggests to her father that she grows seeds and sells them to pay for the school fees, he mocks her, as she describes, "he annoyed me tremendously by laughing and laughing in an unpleasant adult way"(p. 17). He said, addressing his daughter and his wife, "can you tell your daughter that there is no money. There is no money. That's all"(p. 17). In another incident, he said, "tell this child of yours [meaning his daughter Tambu] she cannot go to town with that man"(p. 25). In doing so, he is objectifying his female daughter as an invisible object. As well he assigns women roles just for housework with no chance for education. He says, laughing when his daughter asks him to let her go to school, "Ha-a-a-a! can you cook books and feed them to your husband? Stay at home with your mother. Learn to cook and clean."(p. 15). The danger of this is that the patriarchal father's ideology is implanted and transcended to his male son. This is reflected in his behavior with his sisters. To clarify, when Tambu and her brother were discussing her going to school, he said, "You can't study. It is the same everywhere. Because you are a girl. That's what Baba said"(p. 21). As well he intentionally leaves some of his luggage at the shops at the bus terminus so that one of his sisters would forcibly go and fetch them. Tambu interpreted this by saying "that he only wanted to demonstrate to himself and us that he had the power, the authority to make us do things for him"(p. 10). Therefore, here power is seen through the interactions between men and women. As Pamela Fishman (1983) argues that "power is a human accomplishment, situated in everyday interaction; it is partly through interaction that the hierarchal relation between women and men are constructed and maintained"(p.89).

Moreover, power is placed in a hierarchal position also within patriarchal relations. Education gives the male characters a prestigious position inside the community and among their comrades. In the novel, there is only one adult educated black male. Due to his position as an educated person, as well as his higher economic status, all the men villagers see him as a "God". Tambu describes her dizziness with her uncle by saying, "he had made himself plenty of power. Plenty of power. Plenty of money. A lot of education. Plenty of everything"(p.50). They all admire what the whites have made of him. So, "he inspired confidence and obedience"(p.44). When he comes to visit in the holidays, he always brings with him gifts and money to all his relatives and asks about their progress in life. As an example of the hierarchy of power, after the feast, when the relatives approached Tambu to wash their hands as she had the water dish, she describes that she hated doing this because "you had to be very sure of the relative status of everybody present"(p.40). She was doing great, but the situation deteriorated after her grandfathers and uncle Babamukuru had washed because "after that, the hierarchy was not clear"(p.40). In this case, Tambu's father, who is used to showing off his masculinity inside the house, is perceived as a puppet in the presence of Babamukuru. His daughter describes him by saying, "my father had always been ingratiating in Babamukuru's presence. The performance he staged on the occasion of my uncle's return was magnificent by anybody's standards"(p.31).

Furthermore, with the power of masculinity, economic status, and education, Babamukuru exercised all these powers on his wife and daughter, proving that his European white education does not erase his patriarchal ideology. Rather, white colonial education helps to duplicate male hegemony. To illustrate, in one of his threats to Tambu, he said, "I am the head of this house. Anyone who defies my authority is an evil thing in this house"(p. 169). Also, his verbal threats have changed to become physical threats. When he hit Nyasha, he said to her, "you must learn to be obedient"(p. 117). When he talked to Tambu, punishing her for not going to the wedding, she described his speech, saying that he "talked to me calmly, authoritatively, and at length"(p. 171). He expected women to be polite and obedient. Here, internalizing not the language of the colonizers but their own violent mentality and mimicking their deeds would turn him to be another oppressor. In addition, Babamukuru's wife has got an MA degree from London and works hard as a teacher, but no one knows that she travelled to continue her education. All they know is that she went to take care of her husband as a woman role. However, her husband is in control over all the salary that he spends on his relatives who live in the village. At the beginning of the novel, his wife seems to accept all his patriarchal hegemony. His power practiced on his wife can be called a patriarchal hegemony. Antonio Gramsci (1971) showed a distinction between rule and hegemony. He indicated that hegemony is "where the exercise of power is so disguised as to involve rule with the consent of the governed"(p. 319). When Tambu asks her about the money she earns, she says, "your uncle wouldn't be able to do half of the things he does if I didn't work

as well"(p. 103). Tambu thought the government was taking the money, and Babbamukuru's wife laughed and said, "you could say that"(p. 103). Here, she refers to her husband as the government that controls everything. What makes her stay with him is feeling "secure" as a married woman. She talks to him in a very polite way; it is like baby talk. For example, when he was angry that he thought they did not count him for dinner, she immediately chirped, "no, no, my Daddy-dear"(p. 81). However, knowing that his wife had knowledge makes him feel irritated. To demonstrate, when her daughter asked her about a technical point, and she explained it well, Tambu said, "I was really impressed by her mental agility, but Babamukuru was irritated by it"(p. 102); he immediately told his daughter to stop asking questions and pretended to "have some matters [he] want[s] to discuss with your mother"(p. 102).

4.2. The Effect of Education in shattering the Colonized Identities.

In *Nervous Conditions*, people absorb the colonial ideology directly through education. It is exclusive for boys in the village unless the family have enough money for the girls to attend school. Babamukuru describes the importance of education; he said, "These children who can go to school today are the ones whose families will prosper tomorrow"(p. 45). Nevertheless, all of their education is taught in English. They learn everything from the books introduced to them by the white colonizers. For example, Tambu was overwhelmed with the modernity that she thought came from the white people; she kept asking questions about the new things she saw in the city and never saw in her village. Her teacher told her, "you will learn about them in Standard one when you read about *Ben and Betty in Town and Country*"(p. 27). This book is an English textbook they learn at their school. People aspire to be educated, especially the young, to know and live modernity and get rid of their "dirty" homestead life. When Tambu heard of this, she said, "it became evident to me that I had no alternative but to sell the maize and go back to school"(p. 27). Hence, English is connected with modernity and civilization, while the Shona is connected with the traditional peasant life.

However, both Nhamo and Nyahsa are victims of disruptions to their own sense of identity caused by colonial education. This confusion leads them to be torn between their feelings of belonging and, at the same time, their feelings of being alienated outside and even inside their homes. The aspiration for white English education makes them feel an unstable sense of identity. Their feeling of belonging to one's home is now shattered. They live ambivalent life, trying to cooperate with both ambivalent spheres. To explain, before going to study at the mission, Tambu's brother agreed that "although our squalor was brutal, it was uncompromisingly ours"(p. 7). He loved what it was like at the homestead. But, after going to the mission, "something that he saw at the mission turned his mind to thinking that our homestead no longer had any claim upon him.....poverty began to offend him or at the very least to embarrass him"(p. 7). Here, his education at the mission starts to change him into an anti-social person. Hence, he avoids coming to visit his family, which is connected with peasant life and prefers to stay at the mission. He detests the roads he used to walk in in the past. The reason for this, as Maalouf (2000) describes, "modernisation has constantly meant abandoning of part of themselves. Even though it has something been embraced with enthusiasm, it has never been adopted without a certain bitterness, without a feeling of humiliation and defection... without a profound identity crisis"(p. 60). As in the case of Tambu's brother as well, he detached himself from his family due to the English language. Tambu said, "There was one terrible change; he had forgotten how to speak Shona. A few words escaped haltingly, ungrammatically and strangely accented when he spoke to my mother, but he didn't speak very often any more.....when he did answer; he answered in English"(p. 53). Here he restricted his communication with his family members to "insignificant matters"(p. 53). All the family members noticed his change except for the father. His mother knew that "someone on the mission is bewitching her son"(p. 53). She totally understands the "spell" of the whites on her people. She described this as "the evil wizard's spell"(p. 51). Here, the mother was "alarmed" with the change that may destroy her child. When they came to tell her about her son's death, she anticipated this before they even speak, "without warning my mother keened shrilly through the dark silence...first you took his tongue so that he couldn't speak to me, and now you have taken everything...you bewitched him, and now he is dead"(p. 54).

Similarly, the English language and staying in England have changed Nyasha into a stranger. Tambu said, "I missed the bold, ebullient companion I had had who had gone to England but not returned from there"(p. 52). Tambu is aware that Nyasha is physically present but consciously and mentally not, "as though she were directing more and more of her energy inwards to commune with herself about issues that she alone has seen"(p. 52). After her visit to London, Nyasha forgets how to speak Shona, which irritates Tambu by saying, "Shona was our language; what did people mean when they forgot it?"(p. 42). When she visits the homestead, she keeps observing her surrounding, trying to mimic how they speak or act just to renounce her identity. Tambu said, "I saw her observing us all; she said little, but sometimes her lips would move to rehearse the words when someone used complicated language. She was silent and watchful, observing us all with that complex expression of hers-what we said, how we said it, how we did it"(p.52). Here Nyasha did what she did in London, trying to imitate others to be part or attach herself to a group. Later on, she describes her visit to the homestead as a "real shock". She said "we had forgotten what home was like, I mean really forgotten... all the things to do and say and not to do and say. It was all strange and new"(p. 79).

However, even though both characters feel alienated from the people and the village in which they live, the difference between Nyasha and Tambu's brother is in the ability to cope with two identities and comprehend or absorb the language itself. To illustrate, Tambu's brother absorbed the modern white English language in a superficial way that led him to feel as if he were betraying

himself. Thus, in the end, he got sick due to the internal conflict between choosing one identity. He got sick, and the doctor did not know the reason. An example of his superficial absorption of the language is that he could not express himself in important matters using English. Tambu said, "when a significance issue did arise so that it was necessary to discuss matters in depth, Nhamo's Shona-grammar, vocabulary, accent and all-would miraculously return for the duration of the discussion, only to disappear again mysteriously once the issue was settled"(p. 54). On the other hand, Nyasha seems to understand English well and is aware of all its effects and dimensions, as to be discussed later. Tambu said, "when Nyasha Spoke seriously, her thoughts came in English"(p. 78). Thus, in the end, Nyasha was able to survive the effect of English education, unlike Nhamo, Tambu's brother.

5. Results

Foucault (1990) confirms that "power is everywhere not because it embraces everything, but it comes from everywhere"(p. 93). Throughout the novel, it is obvious that all the relations are determined by different forms of power, and unequal power relations are prevalent inside the colonized patriarchal society, with all its social and economic domains. As mentioned before, men are the ones who "hold the position of economic and social privilege"(Beavour, 2010, p. 1411). But, as for Foucault, people with high economic status, either men or women, are able to exercise power due to this privilege. In the patriarchal society, men are seen as "the ruling caste" (Beavour, 2010, p. 1409). They are allowed to work outside the house and bring money, unlike women who are seen as only "for hearth and home" (p.1408). Thus, they gain an economic position which enables them to exercise power over women who have the less economic privilege. Using this power in a negative way allows them to create a subservient group and gives them the excuse to refer to women as mysterious, which results in categorizing them as a subjugated group. But, this position is not permanent; rather, it is reversed if women "hold[s] the position of economic and social privilege"(Beavour, 2010, p. 1411). Hence, this emphasizes what Foucault says that "the power of men over women is possessed by no specific individual" (p. 61) because our current position of exercising power is not the same in the future. Beauvoir (2010) states that the mystery men accuse women of due to the power they have "does not pertain to one sex rather than the other, but to the situation" (1411). So Butler reveals in her book *Gender Trouble* (2002) that the difference between men and women is socially constructed and shaped by power relations. Here, she means that no one is born to be a male or a female, but rather the relations of power alongside society shape people's behaviors.

In *Nervous Conditions*, Tambu exemplifies this change of economic status that, in return, helps her to achieve what she wants and to defy the patriarchal society. What triggers her to do so is her aspiration for education. To illustrate, the only beneficiary of all the money her father gets is her male brother. With the money earned, he can then go to school. Tambu wants school as well, so she decides to earn money on her own. She told her father, "I shall go to school, and I'll earn the fees"(p. 17). Her father agreed and knew deeply that she would not succeed. Her mother, in return, "began to prepare {her} for disappointment long before {she} would have been forced to face up to"(p. 20). However, in the end, she earned money "ten pounds"; she said, "we never ever talked about that much money at home"(p. 29). Thus, she was able to pay "for the first term of next year onwards"(p. 30). But her father did not believe her, so he went to school and called the teacher who helped her as a "real thief" and asked the headmaster to give him back the money, as he said, "you have taken my money... that money belongs to me. Tambudzai is my daughter. So isn't it my money"(p. 30). Here, the father felt helpless in reclaiming his daughter's money and abandoning her to get back to school. In this regard, Tambu succeeds in reversing the power and getting back to school due to the money she earns.

On the other hand, power "is neither intentional nor fully realized; it is rather 'a multiple and mobile field of force relations, wherein far-reaching, but never completely stable" (Young, 1995, p. 5). Therefore, interpreting the colonizer and colonized power relation is somehow different. To illustrate, the colonizers always exercise power over the colonized. The position of a colonizer is given to both white men and women in their encounters with the black colonized. That's to say that colonization gave white women political power over black men. For example, when Tambu went with her teacher Mr Matimba to sell her maize, a white woman saw her and accused him of forcing Tambu to work. The white woman "raising her voice to address Mr Matimba...without waiting for an answer, she gave him a piece of her mind". She talked about "Child labor, slavery" (p. 28). Here, the white woman, despite being a woman, is in a position to practice her colonial power over a black man. This indicated that power relations do not stay stable but circulate in accordance with the situation. The narrator describes her speech with Mr Matimba highlighting words like "she railed...she commanded...she darkened like a chameleon"(p. 29). In comparison, in talking to her, Mr Matimba was described as "he spoke most sorrowfully and most beseechingly"(p. 29). Most importantly, even though the white woman knew that she was among people who may not speak or understand English, she went to talk to a girl, and she kept speaking in English, unable to downward to a lesser prestigious or powerless. This reflects how she maintains her position as a superior colonizer through the language she speaks. Hence, as Foucault (1990) describes, power goes in all directions. An oppressed might become an oppressor due to power relations. Foucault added that "the power of men over women is possessed by no specific individual"(1990, p.61)

Most importantly, power becomes a productive tool because new changes happen due to the change in its relations. Foucault (1990) says that "Power can be productive and positive". Since power is not a negative possession, it can be positive in a way that creates resistance and reverse the discourse and the subjugation of the subject. In this novel, knowledge and education help to reverse all the power relations and trigger the females to claim their own distorted identities. Nyasha is a typical example of all of

this. To demonstrate, Nyasha is Babamukuru's daughter. Her parents are both educated. When she was young, she went with her parents to London to stay there until they finished their higher education. However, when she returns back home, everything about her changes, as mentioned before, from the way she dresses to the way she speaks, and that indicates that she has lost her Shona. Nyasha has used different means to fight the effect of the English language, culture, and habits that try to strip her out of her own real identity. For example, when she visits her homestead, she keeps observing how other people speak or act in an attempt to mimic them. In the mission, she dresses, speaks, and smokes cigarettes like the whites. Her mother described her saying, "they are too anglicised...they picked up all these disrespectful ways in England"(p. 74). Thus, she suffered from an identity crisis. She is not accepted among the whites and inside her own black community. They consider her as an outsider. For example, Tambu describes the way her classmates and friends see Nyasha, "the girls did not like the way she spoke. They still imitate her behind her back...she thinks she is white. They used to sneer, and that was as bad as a curse"(p. 95). She is as well "proud" of that. During all this, Nyahs kept internalizing all the negative powers imposed on her, whether colonial or patriarchal powers. People are able to modify themselves differently and/or resist the processes of internalizing power through alternative modes of self-making. These types of power can be seen as "disciplinary powers". Disciplinary power shapes and normalizes subjects who eventually become, speak, think and act in similar manners (Foucault, 1991, p. 177–84). In this sense, Discipline 'makes' individuals; it is the specific technique of power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise' (Foucault, 1991, p. 170).

In being aware of all of this, Nyasha was devouring western knowledge viciously to understand every piece of knowledge produced about her culture. Tambu said, "Nyasha had an egalitarian nature and had taken seriously the lessons about oppression and discrimination that she had learnt first-hand in England"(p. 64). In doing so, Nyasha comes to the resolution that she has to resist all this. The first step in resisting the patriarchal power is by "punching [her father] in the eye"(p. 117). Her father represents the patriarchal, brainwashed society that double oppresses women. When he was above her hitting her, he represented all the weight of the patriarchal society. Thus, in hitting him back, she is making her first step towards resisting the whole black patriarchal society, and she is challenging the notion of what it is to be a woman or a man. Her father said, "She has dared to raise her fist against me; she has dared to challenge me"(p. 117). Then after that, he said, "we cannot have two men in this house"(p. 117). What irritates her father the most is her "being proud" of what she did. Her father said angrily, "she is proud. That is her problem. She is proud. Pthu! sis! She is not my daughter"(p. 117). Foucault (1990) states that "Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power"(p. 95). For him, one can never find resistance if power is a possession, not a relational one. This confirms how power circulates in all directions.

Moreover, Nyasha continues her path of resistance. After digesting the colonial powers, she then starts teaching and telling Tambu about their brutality. Then, she reaches a level where she "vomits" all the imposed ideology she was trapped in. This resulted in her "losing weight steadily, constantly, rapidly"(p. 203). However, it seems negative to lose weight, but, in return, she is cleaning her interior self of all the colonial deadly leftovers. In his description of disciplinary power, Foucault (1990) confirms that power prevails as negative, disciplinary and repressing. However, he maintains that power is not only "repressive" but also productive. In the end, Nyasha is getting rid of this so that she would not be living a trauma or pass it on to her children or grandchildren as Tambu's mother and grandmother did. She is admitting out loud, which is a way of resisting and recovering. The most important thing she did was "breaking mirrors" that have false images of her. Thus, she is questing to form a new real identity. Power transforms a person into a tool for other interests and a tool that is increasing its productivity and effectiveness. It creates new subjects. (Lilja, M., & Vinthagen, S. 2014, p.17). At first, she questions what happened to her, her father, and all the black men; she represents all the educated African women by saying with rage in a Rhodesian accent, "why do they do it to me, and to you, and to him,...they have taken us away....they have deprived you of you, him of him, ourselves of each other"(p. 205). Nyasha here summarizes and interprets what the whites have done to her people's identities. The reason for her is that they want the black people "to grovel for a job, for money, to them, to him"(p. 205). She starts fighting them mentally and physically by saying with her body quivering, "I am not a good girl. I'm evil; I'm not a good girl" "they want me to, but I won't". Another form of resisting this is by tearing out their books. She "rampaged, shredding her history book between her teeth (their history, fucking liars, their bloody lies"(p. 205). Here, she shows her knowledge about them by destroying them between her teeth as a form of resistance. She concluded by saying, "I'm not one of them, but I'm not one of you"(p. 205).

Nyasha, in this case, is using their knowledge against them. She is reversing the colonial discourse by tearing it away and teaching those around her about the colonial ugliness that is internalized into black people's lives through the lies of education. What leads Nyasha to go through all of this is, as Tamub's mother said before, "it's the Englishness. It'll kill them all if they aren't careful... it's the Englishness. It's a wonder it hasn't affected the parents, too"(p. 207).

6. Conclusion

To conclude, this qualitative study examined the effect of the English language the whites imposed on the colonized black Africans in shattering their own belongings and enslaving them into internal conflicts. It reflects how women succeed in reclaiming their own identities after being double oppressed inside the colonial patriarchal society, while in return, the patriarchal power shatters into pieces. The results prove the circulating nature of power relations that change all the relations between the characters. Power

is neither intentional nor fully realized; it is rather multiple and mobile fields of force relations. Therefore, even though gender oppression against women is widely discouraged, unequal power relations between the sexes still linger.

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