

Citation Styles: Towards a Scientific Model Proposed as Nsukka Multidisciplinary Style

by

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Abstract

From a critical approach, this essay foregrounds the subjectivity and referential arbitrariness characteristic of existing citation styles and establishes a need for objectivity. It also provides the framework of a new citation style built on principles with universal, that is, objective validity, hence, scientific. A scientific citation style is by implication decolonized. In addition, international citation styles so far are Western and since characterized by subjectivity and referential arbitrariness, defer to a citation style from Africa termed the Nsukka Multidisciplinary Style (NMS) which is scientific.

Introducing the Question

Together with other reasons, the success of knowledge as a universal, multifaceted and collective body of ideas relevant to society lies in the integrity of research that gave rise to it. In this wise, research designs and methodology are important considerations for the advancement of knowledge and as Kothari (2004), Marczyk, DeMatteo and Festinger (2005), and Ranjit (2011) underscore, this concern includes issues about proper framing of research questions which must be targeted at gaps within existing knowledge, methodology for collection of data, formats for organization and analysis of data, and documentation of research.

There are a number of internationally recognized citation styles and each is designed to be a complete world. These include the American Psychological Association (APA) style, the Modern Language Association of America (MLA) style, Harvard Referencing, the Chicago Manual of Style (CMS), the Council of Science Editors (CSE) style, and the American Institute of Physics (AIP) style. Besides these citation styles considered normative either for humanities or sciences, or for both, there are a good number of others in use in particular fields of study such as literature, linguistics, law, chemistry, mathematics, physiology, astrophysics, and engineering.

In addition, as have happened in the West and other regions, a number of African universities have formulated local citation styles in use among their staff and students just as some organizations have theirs too. While each of these styles, especially the internationally recognized ones, has a remarkable history of development having undergone several editions since its debut, each was the product of a handful of far-thinking scholars and professionals who came together to formulate principles that will guide what would become their brand of citation style. Once formulated, the new style was evaluated and once found fitting, was promoted for use and are still in use by an increasing number of scholars and professionals around the world.

Internationally recognized citation styles so far, which are a great legacy to humanity and scholarship, are (mostly) the products of Western or Western-based scholars and professionals. These citation styles have helped streamline the ever-broadening domain of research and documentation. One other significant thing about all these citation styles is that none can be judged right or wrong in respect of another, or correct and incorrect in respect of another. In other words, each is its own world. This is exactly the moment to pose a hard-hitting question: In a society where everyone is right at the same time even though describing the same reality in different and often contradictory ways, or wrong at the same time, by what methodology then can someone seeking a more holistic understanding of the said reality arrive at it? And since these problematic citation styles are all Western, can Africa provide something that works better?

The first question reminds one of the parable of the group of blind men touching different parts of an elephant at their first ever encounter and proceeding to describe what an elephant looks like based on that limited knowledge. How then can someone seeking holistic knowledge of an elephant get it? By lumping all conflicting perspectives together? Or by thinking outside the box to crystallize from those different views whatever it is that makes something an elephant, that is, principles and guidelines that make an animal an elephant? Adoption of a methodology built on experimental evidence which can be tested for confirmation and from which principles and guidelines can be formulated is scientific. Similarly, in the background of the plethora and often conflicting citation styles, how can a scholar seeking a more holistic citation style arrive at it? It will require nothing but a scientific methodology built on experimental evidence and from which hypotheses, theories, or laws with universal validity can be formulated.

Referential Arbitrariness

Arbitrariness as a concept in linguistics was introduced by the Swiss linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure. Saussure (1916) postulated that language (linguistic sign), which he considers “a system of signs that express ideas,” is arbitrary, that is, there is no logical connection (or one by necessity) between a word/sound and its meaning, or between a signifier and a signified.

Though arbitrariness as a concept exists in this form in structural linguistics, the concept has other applications independently of linguistics, for instance, in current discussions concerning a scientific approach to the formulation of citation styles. Citation styles so far are built on arbitrariness. Referential arbitrariness means a situation where an individual or a group of people seeking to formulate a new way of referencing, that is, a new citation style could decide on a format for the sequencing of citation items as they deem fit, subjectively or from their collective subjectivity, rather than from any objectivity, that is, by reference to any set of rules with universal validity and universal applicability. The said citation items or entries include the names of authors, titles of works, publication dates, places and publishers, which are main items, while auxiliary items include editions, volume numbers, issue numbers, paginations, and so forth.

Referential arbitrariness for instance comes out clearly in this comparison between APA style (6th ed.) and MLA style (7th ed.): the former stipulates that in-text, an author’s surname is separated by a comma before a date of publication (Achebe, 1958) whereas the latter stipulates absence of any comma (Achebe 1958). In the books-used section compiled at the end of a research work, the former calls that “References” and stipulates that a date of publication must be placed in parentheses immediately after an author’s name [Hart, O. (1995)] before the title of a work whereas the latter calls it “Works Cited” and stipulates that the title of a work must come immediately after the name of its author and puts the date of publication much later in the citation format. In the former, for two or more authors, all names come with surnames first followed by initials of first names and middle names if available (Satyarthi, K, Yousafzai, M.) whereas in the latter, only the first author’s name comes with the surname first while the names of co-authors come in the format of a first name, a middle name if available and which can be in initials, and a surname (Satyarthi, K, Malala Yousafzai). In the former, titles of books and journals are written with only the first letter of the first word in the title and first word after a colon in a title as well as proper names put in capital letters (Akuzurism: Best sustainable economic system) whereas in the latter, the first letters of the all main words in a title and subtitle are put in capital letters including proper names (Akuzurism: Best Sustainable Economic System). In the former, articles in journals and chapters in books are written without quotation marks in the references section (Akuzurism: Best sustainable economic system) whereas in the latter, they are put in quotation marks in the works cited section (“Akuzurism: Best Sustainable Economic System”). In the former, volume numbers are italicized while issue numbers are put in parentheses without any space between them [6(3)] whereas in the latter, both are separated by a period [6.3] and none is in italics.

It has earlier been established that despite the variance between citation styles, none can be judged correct or incorrect, right or wrong in respect of another. This is referential arbitrariness. Furthermore, this referential arbitrariness in the formulation of citation styles underscores a need earlier hardly acknowledged but henceforth to be increasingly acknowledged, for a scientific approach to the formulation and use of citation styles. The feat can well be achieved from any corner of the globe and it is quite a significant development that the idea for a scientific approach to citation styles originates the first time ever from an African university, the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. This feat has required scholars particularly from the English and Literary department of this noble institution to step forward and stand alongside top Nigerian-born international figures like Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, and a handful of others rather than line up in the shadows behind them. Indeed, Africa has a lot more to offer and will achieve this.

A Scientific Model: Referential Necessity

A scientific model for the formulation of citation styles has recently been proposed at an African university, the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and which grounds what will henceforth be known as Nsukka Multidisciplinary Style (NMS) or the Nsukka style. Existing citation styles share a good number of features in common. The NMS participates in that interrelationship. However, the NMS will be known more for its other clearly distinguishing features derived from certain scientific principles some of which one might consider self-evident and wonder why no one has thought about them before now! In this respect, the Nsukka style marks a clear departure from tradition.

While nothing may be wrong with not having any objective or scientific methodology for the formulation and use of citation styles and nothing wrong with leaving all that to the discretion or subjectivity of any individual or collective subjectivity of any group seeking to formulate one, and which does no harm to whatever work is written in line with the prescriptions of that citation style, however, when we can do better than that, when we can create order from chaos, when we can uncover a sequencing of citation items built on objective rather than subjective principles and which have verifiable universal validity, when we can replace referential arbitrariness with referential necessity, then the dialectics of knowledge imposes it on us to develop that alternative model, and we cannot shirk that responsibility or pass the buck.

It is with a view to fulfilling an obligation like this that some African scholars at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka have empowered the progress of research and knowledge by appreciating the role and relevance of a citation style derived from scientific rather than subjective principles. This marks a huge step forward in the advancement, documentation, storage and transmission of knowledge and the progress of civilization in general. In a sense, this is akin to an evolutionary transition from an age of superstition to an age of science.

(i) Theory of the Order of Thought

This theory was arrived at after a number of experiments have been conducted according to scientific rules and whose outcomes remain the same, with insignificant margins of error, and which can always be verified anytime and anywhere.

The order of thought or hierarchy of points of interest refers to the manner in which the human mind responds to the stimulus of new information in respect of getting more details about a published work that has just caught its attention. Anyone can with some care design or replicate this experiment. Let's say someone is reading in his or her study and a friend walks in. Then, standing by the door and at a good distance from the person reading, the friend waves a book unfamiliar to the reader in the air and asks, "Have you read this book yet?" (or, any other variation, including "Seen this book yet?" – which can be used on the phone). Now, here is the order of thought: the reader's first response will be, "What book is that?" (or, "Can I have a look at the title?" or other variations). The friend, still standing by the door, gives the title. If the reader is such a scholar, he or she will want to know more, otherwise the conversation will taper off from here if the reader loses interest in the book.

But let's say it is a scholar, the next response or question (bear in mind, this is a sequencing of questions targeted at getting details of the book, that is, a citation), will be, "OK. Who is the author?" (or any other variation), and the friend gives the name. The scholar's next question will be, "Interesting. When was it published?" The friend says the year; followed by "OK. Where was it published and by who?" (or other variations; some responders might ask, "Who published it and where?" but they will often be outnumbered with a close margin by those who will ask for place of publication before publisher). And as soon as the friend provides these information, the reader/scholar will show some satisfaction at having been acquainted with these details (which are here grouped as main citation items) and may hardly bother about getting information about editions, volumes, and so forth (hence, grouped together as auxiliary citation items seeing as they are relevant too for helping a scholarly mind zoom in on the individual identity of a work among many).

Since this experiment wherever it is repeated will always yield this same sequencing of citation items according to this order of thought or hierarchy of interest, we have the liberty to consider this the theory of the order of thought. It has a scientific attribute akin to the regularity with which fundamental physical events follow the laws of physics. In this wise, the Nsukka Multidisciplinary Style (NMS) which is at the heart of the scientific approach to citation styles, offers a citation format in the sequence of Title followed by Author's Name followed by Year of Publication followed by Place of Publication followed by Publisher for main citation items. Auxiliary citation items hardly come in any marked order of thought, as experiments will show, which also justifies grouping them together as auxiliary details.

However, the NMS provides a sequencing for them too but which, as should be acknowledged, is a sequencing entirely based on the collective subjectivity of scholars from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka who collaborated in putting together those parts of the NMS citation style too (that is, an arbitrary sequencing).

It should also be acknowledged that by reason of the close margin between a scholarly mind asking for information about place of publication of a work before its publisher, and asking for the publisher before place of publication, although the NMS settles with putting place of publication before publisher, opinions that want publisher before place of publication have good reasons too. In an email letter, Onyeka Odoh (“Onyeka’s Response” 26 July 2017), describes NMS sequencing as TINYPP (Title, Name, Year, Publisher/Place). One might prefer this acronym to take the form of TiNYPP and this will be the name given to the type of experiment that establishes the order of thought, thus, the TiNYPP experiment.

(ii) Theory of Familiarity

Some disciplines in the humanities and social sciences study human relationships and offer insights into the forms and characterizations of human interrelationships. A number of studies, such as Segal (1979) and Altman and Taylor (1973), have been carried out in this very relevant area, which underscore the point that if individuals can be better equipped to integrate in more meaningful ways, a significant percentage of the crises we face in family, business and society will come under better management or cease.

The Nsukka Multidisciplinary Style (NMS) postulates research as also an area of study in the social sciences by characterizing research as another form of social relationship seeing as it is a relationship between a researcher and an author or authors through their published or publicly available works. In society, people meet on social media, whether one puts a face to them or not, and may spend the rest of their lifetimes communicating with people they have not met or will not meet in the real world. That is a form of human interrelationship, which no doubt comes with both helpful and unhelpful traits. Baym, Zhang and Lin (2004) and Curran and Gurevitch (2005) provide interesting studies in this area.

By researching a work or by researching an author and even by reading an author’s work for leisure, one establishes an interpersonal relationship with the author, whether the author is a contemporary who one could meet in the street someday or from a bygone generation. Whether one agrees with what an author is saying on the pages of a work or not, it is communication. Communications are assumed to be at least two-way, an exchange between individual A who says or gestures something in a meaningful way while individual B hears or understands it and says or gestures something back in a meaningful way too, which individual A also hears or understands. Very helpful insights about communication have been provided by Knapp and Daly (2002).

In reading a work, the author is individual A saying something to the reader and to which the reader as individual B responds even if mentally since the author probably is not there to listen to the reader's opinion. In letter writing, individual A talks to individual B through a letter and that is communication in the fullest sense of it whether individual B has to write back or not. Same applies in the use of social media. The role and utilitarian importance of social media in this and other respects are underscored by Couldry (2012) and Correa, Hinsley and Zúñiga (2010).

In other words, it is communication in the fullest sense of it when a reader is listening to an author's opinion through a book even when the opportunity is not there for the reader to convey his or her responses directly back to the author. The conveyance can be done indirectly. We cannot then insist that an author must be capable of hearing from a reader or getting some form of feedback directly from a reader before this epistemological framework can be communication.

It is communication when a parent gives orders to a child or a military training officer barks commands at soldiers during a drill and they simply obey! They do not have to talk back to their superior whether or not the superior is present there to hear their opinions or see facial expressions and bodily gestures in response to that. Whatever response the child or soldier or reader might have can be meaningfully carried over to other areas of life, to that matrix of social interconnections to which all generations of humanity contribute and in which they all participate, and this is the indirect way the response from the child, soldier or reader finally gets around to the other.

From this sociological understanding of research is derived what will be called the theory of familiarity which is founded on an established norm in social interactions. One clear marker that an interpersonal relationship between individual A and individual B has reached quite meaningful levels, including when individual B is a superior to individual A, is when the latter tells the other to dispense with the formalities and call him or her by a first name. The formalities are there to serve a purpose but voluntarily opting to dispense with them in agreement with the other party is indicative of a more meaningful level of interpersonal relationships.

The theory of familiarity refers to a situation where a researcher indicates the high level of meaningful relationship he or she has established with an author under study by beginning to address the author within a research writing by his or her first name even in the physical absence of the author. We must not lose sight of the fact that it is only a matter of convention from existing citation styles that authors are to be mentioned in-text by their surnames (if full names will not be given) and in books-used lists (references, works cited, bibliography) too (at least, the surname of the first author among co-authors). This tradition is a social construct and as a practice built on subjective preferences, can be dispensed with in favour of one that is actually built on objective principles.

The surnames-first tradition is a formality that can be meaningfully dispensed with as a clear indication that a researcher has arrived at such a sufficient level of understanding with an author he or she is researching, whether he or she actually agrees with the author's ideas or not, that if it were in the social world, individual A as the author will be requiring individual B as the researcher, or both will be requiring each other, to dispense with the formalities and use a first name. Same theory of familiarity applies when citing editors, translators, and so on.

On the strength of objective evidence then, the Nsukka Multidisciplinary Style (NMS) requires researchers and writers to mention any author (including any editor, translator, and so forth) they are researching by his or her first name both in-text and in books-used lists (references, works cited, bibliography) unless where a full name has to be given and which will be given in the format of a first name followed by a middle name(s) if any and in initials if so desired, and a surname. This format applies for both cases of single authors and multiple authors (editors, translators, and so forth).

This theory of familiarity, just like the theory of the order of thought, is also built on objective evidence (we see it happen among many people in society) that can be subjected to experimental confirmation anytime. However, the Nsukka Multidisciplinary Style (NMS) acknowledges the fact that there are a significant number of social situations where even though partners in a social interaction have reached a high level of closeness, they still will not see any sense in bothering whether they address each other by first names or not.

Indeed, out there in the world, familiarity is a very influential factor in determining the quality and direction of human interrelationships. In this sense, humanity always stands to gain whenever familiarity is brought under study. The locus and role of familiarity as a brand of experience within interpersonal interactions have been broadly explored by a number of scholars such as by Rockett and Okhuysen (2002). In addition, the "familiarity breeds contempt" cliché has been critiqued by Reis, Maniaci, Caprariello, Easwick, and Finkel (2011) who underscore the view that familiarity is a great asset in social networking since it leads to, sustains, promotes and protects attraction and friendships.

(iii) Concession to Tradition

The Nsukka Multidisciplinary Style (NMS) breaks with tradition but that is only in some important respects rather than in every respect. This Nsukka style continues tradition in other respects such as by offering both the author-date format and footnotes format (which incorporates the interests of scholars and professionals who might have preferences between the two), and by adopting the stipulation that book titles must be italicized and DOIs (digital object identifiers) included if available. There are many other features that continue tradition.

Some scholars might also opine that another way the Nsukka style can continue with tradition is by negotiating a concession from it whereby the Nsukka style will offer two formats applicable to sequencing of main citation items. In this wise, it will offer both placement of titles before authors' names, which is built on referential necessity, and placement of authors' names before titles, which is built on referential arbitrariness and which is the present tradition. However, whether the Nsukka style gets to make this concession or not, the sequencing must be according to the theory of familiarity in either case, that is, putting first names first.

This concessional format is an affirmation that in the eventuality that someone seeking to introduce a new book to a friend has as his or her first question, "Have you read this work by Ikenna Dieke?" or any other similar formulation, and the friend is really interested in getting more details of the book, his or her responses or questions will ask for the title of the book, year of publication, where and by who (or by who and where). In this sense, except for displacing title from its position, the rest will still follow the theory of the order of thought.

Some Notable Features of the Nsukka Multidisciplinary Style (NMS)

Other important features characteristic of the Nsukka style though based on referential arbitrariness and in line with tradition still have some logic to them, a trait that gives them an advantage over features of some existing citation styles which are all based on individual subjectivity or collective subjectivity.

- 1) Commas are used all through citation entries and periods only at the end of an entire entry except in-between titles where a colon does the job. In other words, commas are used to separate titles from their authors, to separate between multiple authors, to separate authors from years of publication, to separate years from publishers, to separate publishers from places of publication, and so forth. The logic here is that a citation entry must display the essential continuity that ties a work to its author, year of publication, and so forth. This is contrary to what the use of colons and periods convey since they rather indicate a break in this essential continuity.
- 2) The Nsukka style recommends that keywords and core expressions used in a research work should all be highlighted in bold the first time they occur in-text so that a page glance at the work will project those words and phrases and which might even offer a view-summary of that page or work.
- 3) The books-used list of the Nsukka style is called "Bibliography" and they will be arranged alphabetically according to first words in titles (or for the concessional format, by the first names of authors/corporate authors/editors/translators, and so forth, both for single author and multiple author situations).

- 4) Page numbers are cited with p.[spacebar]number. It is pp.[spacebar]number-number, whereby a hyphen in-between two page numbers indicate range.
- 5) To make entries circumspect and for brevity, middle names will be in initials. Same with ed. for edition, eds. for editions, vol. for volume numbers, and iss. for issue number(s).
- 6) Citation of editions, translations, volume numbers and issue numbers may or may not be included in-text but it is recommended they be restricted to inclusion in bibliographies.

Keeping all these in perspective, the Nsukka Multidisciplinary Style (NMS) thus visibly contrasts with existing internationally recognized citation styles. These other citation styles, which have all been developed in the West, are characterized by subjectivity and referential arbitrariness and by implication defer to the characteristically scientific Nsukka Multidisciplinary Style (NMS) as developed by an African university.

Decolonization of Research by Means of a Scientific African Model

Literature is a window to the world; it is an interpretation of society. Every interpretation of society, however, emanates from a particular socio-cultural context in history and is structured according to that context. This, in turn, becomes a sufficient reason to question that socio-cultural context. Literature is one of those fields of knowledge that have seen a lot of questionings of socio-cultural contexts particularly since the end of, and as a consequence of colonialism, due to the rise of critical consciousness about coloniality and decolonization.

In this wise, many scholars from Africa and other parts of the world have elaborately criticized colonialism, which is the approximately five centuries (16th to mid-20th century) of European intrusion and forceful takeover of non-European territories in Africa, the Americas, and Asia Pacific chiefly for their economic and political interests, then religious reasons too.

One core concern is that just as the Euro-Western world imposed itself physically on people in some other parts of the world, it did the same psychologically too, that is, by configuring native mindsets to fit a Euro-Western vision. This setup has to be questioned and transformed, as was done to colonialism. One major area of questioning and transformation is the parameters of research (research methods/methodology), among which is citation methodology. In this respect, by formulating a scientific, hence, universally valid citation style, African scholars succeed in liberating both the prerogative and the validity of citation styles from Western domination. Furthermore, non-scientific or pre-scientific citation styles by implication defer to this scientific African model, namely, the Nsukka Multidisciplinary Style (NMS).

The argument here is that through colonialism, Europe configured (most of) the world to suit its understanding of reality and through neo-colonialism, the West continues this practice by adopting whatever policies and institutions that will protect and advance its position and interests as the self-appointed leader of the civilized world. In the particular area of research, the fact that all or most of the existing international citation styles and other parameters of research originated from the West, which is actually a credit to them, makes this qualify to be interpreted as another manifestation of Euro-Western hegemonic domination of the world. Citation styles developed by the West have been made the universal norms every scholar and professional from any corner of the globe must abide by if his or her work will be judged standard. Indeed, he who formulates an idea is its lord, justifiably. But this is exactly what the ideology of decolonization of methodology is critiquing, and it calls for the democratization of this platform, justifiably too.

Besides its agenda in world politics and economics, in the area of research (research methods/methodology), decolonization calls for contextualization. It also calls on writers, scholars and professionals from Africa and the rest of the developing world to do more of, or to an equal degree make use of linguistic and conceptual frameworks from their socio-cultural settings rather than continue to depend on those of the West in the bid to achieve something deserving of international recognition. Finally, decolonization seeks to democratize international standards and platforms for the recognition and *trophying* (*trophilization*?) of outstanding scholarship (that is, the selection and giving out of awards/trophies for outstanding scholarship).

A need to decolonize African literature for instance is underscored by Chinweizu, Jemie and Madubuike (1980) who point out that “contemporary African culture is under foreign domination. Therefore, on the one hand, our culture has to destroy all encrustations of colonial mentality, and on the other hand, it has to map out new foundations for an African modernity” (239). This viewpoint dovetails with Smith’s (2008) about decolonizing knowledge and research, and who points out that, “Decolonization is a process which engages with imperialism and colonization at multiple levels. For researchers, one of those levels is concerned with having a more critical understanding of the underlying assumptions, motivations and values which inform research practices” (20). Indeed, many scholars call for a critical questioning of the socio-cultural settings from which the parameters of existing research methods/methodologies have been fashioned. The question of citation styles is rightly situated within a broader discussion of the decolonization of knowledge and research.

Concerning decolonization’s call for African and Third World scholars and professionals to do more of, or to an equal degree make use of linguistic and conceptual frameworks from their socio-cultural settings, first generation African writers just emerging from the shadows of colonialism as independence movements swept across the continent particularly from the 1950s were caught in a bind. How does one write a novel, poem, drama or work of literary criticism in one’s local language and expect wide readership across the world when most of the world do not understand the language?

Writers from the developing world should address this question and as wa Thiong'o (1981) maintains, "Literature cannot escape from the class power structures that shape our everyday life. Here a writer has no choice. Whether or not he is aware of it, his works reflect one or more aspects of the intense economic, political, cultural and ideological struggles in a society.... Every writer is a writer in politics" (ii).

This is a crisis of knowledge and research that has not been satisfactorily resolved till date, and hardly ever will. In response to this crisis, first generation African writers were divided, a division that still persists, between those who simply want to continue making maximum use of the linguistic and conceptual tools of the West, even though they would wish history had not turned out as it did, and which will offer them better chances of winning international recognition, on the one hand, and those who want to begin making less use of such Western tools so as to pay more attention to linguistic and conceptual tools available in their socio-cultural settings in the hope that one day their local/African heritage will enjoy international recognition and compete favourably against those of the developed world.

While wa Thiong'o (1986) was among those who championed the promotion of local/African heritages and actually wrote some works in Gikuyu and Swahili besides those written in the English language, and Ubesie (1973, 1974) who wrote some works in Igbo, others like Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka who actually went on to win very prestigious international prizes advocated dominant use of Western languages and conceptual frameworks. For Achebe (2012), this option is justifiable on the grounds that tackling weighty issues such as slavery, imperialism, independence, and racism "while at the same time trying to help create a unique and authentic African literary tradition would mean that some of us would decide to use the colonizer's tools: his language," in the hope that it will be "altered sufficiently to bear the weight of an African creative aesthetic, infused with elements of the African literary tradition" (54-55).

But while Achebe's stand does not help the continental vision to promote African languages to competitive levels with international (Western) languages, at the local level too, he criticizes a project to standardize his ethnic Igbo language. Achebe (1979) opposes a project to generate a standard Igbo language (successively called *Isuama Igbo*, Union Igbo and *Igbo Izugbe*), which is a "common" Igbo developed from relevant linguistic features taken from various dialects spoken by different Igbo communities in south-eastern Nigeria. One of his major objections, which Azuonye (2002) reinforces, is that adoption of a common Igbo language will lead to the loss of significant features basic to the identity and dialects of different Igbo communities. What he advocated for instead was to select one dialect out of many and universalize it across Igboland. However, such a selected dialect will still need standardization before it can be in a form easily accessible to people of other dialects. In addition, many national and international languages around the world underwent standardization in different ways.

Achebe's response to the debate about the decolonization of language dovetails with Soyinka's (1975), who in criticism of Chinweizu's, Jemie's and Madubuike's call "to map out new foundations for an African modernity" opines that "Chinweizu's conception of the laws and sensibilities that should give birth to contemporary art forms are predicated on a non-existent African reality" (38). Indeed, it will really be a very difficult journey before any African language or any linguistic or conceptual framework from any developing country steps up to the level of global recognition at which moment scholars or professionals from that region and elsewhere can comfortably write their works and be sure they will actually be read internationally without having to be translated first.

However, the call for decolonization of knowledge and research sees this matter very differently. This is because what are known as international languages today each had its own historical and probably difficult journey, and being so, other languages and conceptual frameworks deserve an opportunity to make same journey too.

One can say that literature from a developing country can never come to full realization of its potential *clothed* in a foreign language. It can only do so *naked* in its language. This was how English literature for instance, finally came to acquire a global status, though English is a composite language stemming mainly from two invasions of England. The first was by North Germanic tribes in the 5th century AD whose socio-linguistic invasion of England initiated the Old English (or Anglo-Saxon) period. Further linguistic transformations were stimulated by a second invasion of England in the 11th century AD by Normans from northern France (originally Vikings from Scandinavia) who spoke Old Norman and which inaugurated the Middle English period. Besides the Great Vowel Shift (14th to 17th century), a number of other historical factors contributed to the dawn of the Modern English period largely from the 17th century. Largely aided by colonialism, the English language thereafter took over most of the world.

Decolonization is meant to resolve or counter the linguistic and conceptual domination of (most parts of) the world by the West and which continues through neo-colonialism. A handful of scholars discussing colonialism and decolonization introduced the concept of coloniality although it is often directly attributed to Walter D. Mignolo. Mignolo (1995) describes "coloniality" as probably the darker side of colonialism/modernity and postulates that the "imaginary of the modern/colonial world arose from the complex articulation of forces, of voices heard or silenced, of memories compact or fractured, of histories told from only one side that suppress other memories, and of histories that were and are told from the double consciousness that generates the colonial difference" (28).

As a concept, “double consciousness,” which was introduced by W. E. B. Du Bois in the twentieth century, refers to inner conflicts characteristic of individuals from former colonies and which Mignolo says “captures the dilemma of subjectivities formed within the colonial difference: that is, the experiences of anyone who lived and lives modernity from coloniality.... That is, the consciousness lived from the colonial difference is double because it is subaltern” (28-30). One may, however, consider double consciousness to have two readings here. Firstly, it could refer to the aspect of being torn between two worlds, that is, the colonized’s and the colonizer’s. Secondly, it could refer to the aspect of an individual owning a socio-cultural heritage which is the cumulative outcome of or which is derived from two (or more) different worlds.

Quijano (2000) and Escobar (2004) also discuss colonialism and how the coloniality of power impacts the psyche and living conditions of colonized people by imposing a social construction of reality built on the standards of the colonizer, the submissive acceptance of this Euro-Western worldview by (formerly) colonized people, and continuation of this status quo through neo-colonialism. This viewpoint is in line with the interests of decolonization in questioning why rules formulated in the West are now the global standards guiding research.

However, although the project of decolonization of research rightly opposes hegemonic domination of one socio-cultural context over others, one cannot be in doubt that whatever citation style that will come into use internationally has to be formulated by some people somewhere in the world. And if so, then, by means of their citation style, they establish some form of hegemonic domination of other parts of the world where that citation style will be used.

Establishment of a scientific citation style is a solution – among others – to the question of decolonization of research. It liberates scholars and professionals from Africa and other parts of the world from further dependence on citation styles formulated from the background of a Western vision of the world. A critic might opine that in that case even the Nsukka Multidisciplinary Style is in turn Africa’s attempt at hegemonic domination of the world. But this is a misreading of the Nsukka Style. A phenomenon built on verifiable scientific principles has universal validity and applicability. It is a great credit to Africa that until now only it could provide the milieu within where a scientific model could be designed. Beyond this, its scientific character is free of the individual or collective subjectivity and referential arbitrariness by which a given socio-cultural context can establish hegemonic dominance over others.

A scientific citation style is like the sun that is seen by all and used by all as deemed fit. A citation style formed on these terms is not liable to critical questionings from decolonization. Such are the pre-eminent features that characterize the Nsukka Multidisciplinary Style (NMS), Africa’s unique contribution to the practice of research and advancement of knowledge.

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