

Inferential Pragmemes in Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*

Eugene Chukwuemeka Onuoha
&
Micheal Chukwualuka Uyanne

Abstract

This study examines the lexico-pragmatic deployments in Chimamanda Adichie's novels; Purple Hibiscus and Half of a Yellow Sun. Using Linguistic Relativity, a variant of the Shapiro-Wharf Hypothesis, as a theoretical thrust and applying content analysis technique as a methodology, some significantly pragmatic expressions were extracted and analyzed. The result has clearly indicated that, Adichie employed different pragmatic features to showcase the capacity of English language to undergo contextual functionality in identifiable linguistic environments. The variety of English used for communication in the selected texts differs from other world Englishes. This study showed that the variety embodies the worldview of Nigerians and is expressed in quite different ways. It was also determined that the selected texts contain measurable traits of neologisms and sociologically induced coinages. Also, her works confirm linguistic substances of transliterated local expressions, idioms and proverbs as well as some figures of speech that are specifically African. The findings goes further to confirm writers are obligated to ensure effective message delivery through a deliberate and sustainable linguistic manipulation that submits to the audiences sensibility as well as the standard purpose of discourse. This study contributes to scholarship in fostering a more sustainable inquest and studies on how Nigerian literary artists and critics could

delve deeper in evaluating and appreciating the domestication of English language to accommodate the varied nuances and impulses within the Nigeria's socio-linguistic and cultural spectrum. More literary works should be studied in the context of pragmatics to underscore their extra textual value as well.

Keywords: *Idioms, Euphemism, Proverbs, Igboism, Linguistic Relativity*

Introduction

English in Nigeria exhibits features that distinguish it from other national Englishes, one of which is pragmatic in nature. Language is dependent on the society for its existence, spread, development, and survival. Each society, through cultural norms, context, and convention, determines the linguistic behaviour of speakers within a given environment. In a language contact situation, the second language (L2) is usually influenced by the linguistic environment, this causes the contact language to go through a process of rebirth linguistically, socially, as well as culturally (Kachru, 1995; Bamgbose, 1995; Adegbija, 2004). The influence of the indigenous languages in contact with English in Nigeria, the sociocultural and linguistic situations, all have contributed to the pragmatic behaviour of Nigerians in their use of English, particularly at the pragmatic cum lexical levels. This pragmatic behaviour equally reflects in Nigeria's literary English. Yeibo and Akerele (2014) describe the relationship between language and literature as 'watertight' given that 'language is the medium for literary communication' (p. 62). Although English is not

indigenous to Nigeria, its use for literary communication carries with it the pragmatic speech habits of Nigerians.

Literature Review

An authors' work has the imprint of his/her culture and society. These imprints create contexts that contribute to the meaning that their characters express through language. This implies that the authors' culture feeds their writings and expresses the contexts through their language use. Language is a social phenomenon, which cannot be separated from the social structure and value system of society. (Song, 2010, p. 877)

Previous studies on the language of Nigerian literary works have either dwelt on the sociolinguistics study of the language in the chosen texts (Ukamaka, 2015); phonological foregrounding (Yeibo & Akerele, 2014); the lexico-semantic analysis of the author's use of language (Ikpotokin, 2017); linguistic stylistics analysis (Orakwue, 2015) among others. Studies that focus on the pragmatic use of language, being influenced by the sociocultural and linguistic habits of Nigerians are very sparse. It is also probable that studies that have pragmatic orientation did not examine the lexico-pragmatic features in the given texts, and could not have used the same selected texts for their study. Igboanusi (2001) affirms that literary works written by Igbo authors exhibit features of 'lexical innovation, translation, linguistic and cultural transfer'. This paper argues that all Nigerian authored literary works manifest innovations and

transfers, albeit with possible variations in line with the culture and ethnic differences of each author. Although Adichie is a relatively young Nigerian literary writer, her works have been widely researched and have also received significant critical assessments. According to Olusola and Lawal (2013), Adichie's use of language, projects her unique and ideological configurations of gender and power in her critiquing of society. This is evident in her choice of words and expressions that highlight some of this gender and power relations. Agantiem (2013) studying the pragmatic devices in Chimamanda Adichie's fiction concludes that there are instances of pragmatic of pragmatic devices such as deictic, implicatures, and indirect speech acts which bear unstated meanings that can only be deciphered by interactions through shared knowledge. These devices show that Adichie's novels are loaded with communication events which are contextual and which show that in speech acts, interlocutors rely on shared knowledge to construct and interpret meaning. Agantiem's study shows that literary works approximate real life situations with regard to communication events. The study did not however, explore pragmatics from Nigerian English perspective as a variety but from speech acts spectrum. Osipeju (2014), observes that Adichie has toed the same line with Achebe domestication strategy by using an English variety that is Nigerian and that contains her Igbo indigenous language and culture. He further contends that these features, manifest in form of cushioning,, lexical transfer, restriction, extension of words, kinship terms, neologism, native figurative expressions etc. Osipeju further examined the elements of Nigerianisms in Adichie's Purple Hibiscus, identifying some

speech acts in it such as the acts of greeting, advertisement, appreciation, abuse etc. Anyaokwu (2011) adds that Adichie has been significantly influenced by Achebe in matters of form. Asoegwu -Ijezie (2012) corroborates Anyaoku and Osipeju in her study avering that the use of English by Nigerian authors including Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Nwapa's *Efuru* and Okara's *The Voice* involve the deployment of strategies such as borrowing, interference, coinages and semantic extension of certain lexical items. Ikpotokin ((2017) did a lexico-semantic analysis of Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* and avers that Adichie uses figurative expressions with additional meanings that project the themes she explored. He posits that the implicatures in *Half of a Yellow Sun* thematize love, corruption and humanity. Commenting on the language of Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Inyima (2018,p50) posits:

Chimamanda Adichie soaring on the wings of her rich Nigerian literary heritage and dual cultural heritage uses her linguistic choices in *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun* as tools for the construction , assertion and sustenance of the Nigerian English variety.

The author observes that Adichie weaves an English variety that contains both her Igbo ethnic English variety (Igbo English) and the 'standard English variety' which is purged of ethnic colourations This variety contains elements of code switching, acronyms, loan words, transliterated local idioms,culture bound expressions, syntactic innovations as well as discourse particles. (Inyima, 2018)

Enyi (2015) compared socio linguistic aspects of the language in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* and found that both novels demonstrate evidence of the use of direct translation from the indigenous language such as the use of semantic extension, code switching, proverbs, culturally dependent speech styles, borrowings, coinages and hybridization and he avers that these findings imply a nativization process.

In their study of pragmatics of Nigerian English by Aboh and Uduk (2016), the posit that Adichie's use of English in her works show her 'Igboness' and bears an evidence of code-switching which indicates the importation of her Igbo culture into English. Mbarachi, (2017) corroborates with the opinion that there is significant proof of the presence of unique Nigerian expressions in the English Adichie uses and these 'reflect the language habits of Nigerians and are employed consciously by her to decolonize English'.

Purpose of Study

This paper is basically aimed at determining how Chimamanda Adichie, a renowned and internationally acclaimed novelist construct meaning in her narratives and also, through the mouthpiece of her characters from the pragmatic point of view. This study investigates the lexical cum pragmatic features of English as used by Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of Yellow Sun*, now referred to in this paper as *PH* and *HYS* respectively for ease of the analysis; to determine how these features reflect the Nigerian pragmatic behaviour. This study also

aims at determining how the imposition of the Nigerian pragmatic behaviour delineates the English used in the novels as Nigerian-specific.

2.0 Theoretical Thrust

Linguistic relativity hypothesis is one of the two variants of the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis (Sapir, 1974; Whorf, 1974; Hudson, 1996). This variant is of the view that the way humans think and see the world to some extent differs from culture to culture and depends on their language. Humans thus construct their reality based on the language they speak which invariably gives expression to their thoughts. By implication, the worldview of the speakers of a given language and their perception of reality, culture are partly determined by their language. Prior to the development of this hypothesis, Edward Sapir had canvassed this view. According to Sapir, cited in Whorf (1974) ‘...We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the language habits of our community predispose certain choices of interpretation’ (p. 64). By this statement, Sapir believed that the world view of the speakers of a language and the way they use language are to some extent conditioned by their linguistic environment.

Based on this model, the meaning of expressions (i.e. interpretations) in a particular language, resides in the relevant language community. Languages vary in their expression of concepts in noteworthy ways. Linguistic relativity, holds that

each language embodies a worldview to the extent that speakers of different languages think and express their worldview in quite different ways. Although there may be linguistic universals, there are often large differences in the lexical, morphological, and syntactic structures and in their expression of meanings (Swoyer, 2003). The pragmatic configurations of different languages differ also. Different languages have different lexicons, which may classify things differently, semantic features, employ different metaphors, or employ them in different ways and have different pragmatic contexts.

The application of this hypothesis is considered suitable to account for the different way Nigerians use English, and how they make it express their worldview and language habits even as it obeys English syntactic rules. The data analysis in this study indicates how Nigerian literary writers employ English to express their indigenous pragmatic contexts, in capturing expressions that are culturally Nigerian but expressed in English and at the supra-lexical level.

3.0 Methodology

The selected texts were first content analysed and relevant expressions extracted for further analysis. These were excerpts that are non-lexical, as well as pragmatic in nature. The extracted data were analyzed quantitatively and discursively. Content analysis approach which is a research technique used to identify patterns in a piece of communication by interpreting and coding

contextual materials is applied. (Berelson, 1952; Neuendorf, 2017). The extracted data were analyzed to show that the language used in the texts was actually pragmatically and contextually Nigerian in spite of the use of English words and grammar. The pragmatic features originate from the Nigerian culture and linguistic environment, and the roles these selected data play in the creative communication in the two selected texts.

3.0 Analysis and Findings

4.1 Translation Equivalents

The texts contain different types of translation equivalents. Translation equivalents refer to expressions that reflect L₁ cultural habits. Igboanus (2001) describes translation equivalents as the linguistic processes which operate in the Igbo society which include: (i) the interference of Igbo patterns on English (ii) the translation or transliteration of Igbo speech habits into English (iii) the method and context of the teaching and learning of English, and (iv) the faulty language habits acquired in the primary school, or what Bamiro (1994: 54) calls “the inadequate exposure of many Nigerians to the English language.” (p. 62). Igboanus (2001) further identifies three different types of translation equivalents: Igboisms, proverbs, and imagery. In this study, translation equivalents have been subdivided into Igboisms and Hausaisms, idioms, proverbs, and cultural metaphorical usages, among others. The following is the quantitative analysis of the different types of translation equivalents.

Table 1: Frequency distribution of Translation Equivalents

Translation Equivalents	<i>PH</i>	<i>HYS</i>	Freq	%
Igboisms and Hausaisms	6	12	22	32.8
Transliterated Local Idioms	5	4	18	26.8
Proverbs	2	2	14	20.9
Faulty Language Habits	5	3	13	19.4
Total	18	21	67	100

Table 1, shows that *PH* and *HYS* have some component of Igboisms and proverbs as well as few local idioms. This indicates that the author employed these lexico-pragmatic strategies in her work prominently.

4.1.1 Igboisms

Igboisms refer to English usages that mirror the 'traditional and cultural habits of the Igbo' (Igboanusi, 2001, p.63), which either do not have English contexts or are expressed differently from the way they are expressed in English. These forms differ from coinages given that literal translation is employed in their usage, whereas coinages may be formed through paraphrasing. Igboanusi (2001) argues that Igboisms are peculiar to the Igbo L₁ speakers.

The adoption of this strategy by the author justifies our coining of Igboism following Igboanusi (2001). The essence of this adoption lies in the strategy applied in her use of the Igbo language. The speech habits transferred to English are made to

retain their indigenous texture and colour. They are fashioned into the English grammatical structure such that they ‘reflect the mood of the situation’ (Igboanusi, 2001, p. 64).

A similar expression is used in Igbo. For instance, *anam aza*, in Igbo translates to *I answer*, even as this means *my name is xyz*, or *I bear the name xyz* in British English. The name given to a person represents his or her identity (Mbarachi&Igwenyi, 2018), and the bearer’s acceptance of this identity depends largely on his or her response (answer) or otherwise when the name is called. The Igbo cultural meaning of *do for you*’ (HYS, p.55, 115), can best be understood through the proverb which says *one good turn deserves another*. In other words, good deed should be reciprocated. The use of *do for you* is a prayer, wish, and an appreciation or a show of kindness extended to one. Ugwu’s father uses this expression to appreciate Odenigbo, Ugwu’s master, for offering to take Ugwu’s mother to Nsukka for medical care when she falls ill. The following excerpt illustrates:

Ugwu climbed out of the car and stood there. His aunt dashed into the hut, and soon his father came out, eyes red-rimmed, looking more stooped than Ugwu remembered. He knelt in the dirt and clutched Master’s legs. ‘Thank sah. Thank sah. May another person *do for you*.’ (HYS, p.115)

In other instances, Adichie uses Igboisms to describe the health challenge Ugwu’s mother faces. When Ugwu's aunt in response to Odenigbo's question replies and says 'sah, her *chest is*

on fire' (HYS, p. 114), she means a burning pain which results from dry cough. Her answer has a cultural orientation. This is because the excerpt *fire* shares some semantic relationship with other words. Fire translates to *oku* in Igbo. Oku also has other meanings such as light (e.g. electricity), and hot. The combination of the Igbo word *oku* with other words gives rise to different meanings. For instance, *ahuoku* means feeling feverish; *ahu ire oku* - running temperature; *ekpemoku* - heat, etc. 'her chest is on fire' is thus a transliteration of the burning pain Ugwu's mother feels in her chest when she coughs as a result of her illness. Although all the excerpts in this section are English, they all have Igbo structure. Their meanings are culturally couched in Igbo but lacking in English contexts.

4.1.2 Transliterated Local Idioms

Idioms, apart from being fixed expressions, also denote the way a language may be used naturally by its native speakers. It may also reveal the language style of a people. Idioms are a type of multi-word unit (MWU) (Grant & Bauer, 2004), and an MWU on the other hand is 'a fixed and recurrent pattern of lexical material sanctioned by usage' (p.38). Idioms contribute to the prevalence of translation equivalents and the domestication of Nigeria's literary English (Igboanusi, 2001). See Appendix B for the local idioms excerpted from the sampled novels that have been translated into English.

The meaning of the idioms can hardly result from the compositional function of their constituents. These are institutionalized usages in Igbo language. As Grant and Bauer (2004) argue, in non-compositional reading, the text has to be 'reinterpreted in a way that explains the expression in its original context' (p.50). The meaning of locally translated idioms lies not in the constituents (although there may be clues), but in their original contexts. As expressions translated from L1 to L2, their meaning lie in the pragmatic competence of the L₁ speakers, who usually reinterpret automatically based on their competence whereas, L₂ speakers need to be taught (Grant & Bauer, 2004). This is perhaps why the author uses other strategies to assist the non-Igbo readers of her novels to understand the text. The argument in favour of the native speaker's pragmatic competence in the interpretation of meaning of the excerpted idioms can be illustrated using few examples,

'Her eyes must have opened in the North' (HYS, p.153); *'Obiora balances Auntie Ifeoma's family on his head'* (PH, p.293), and *'Original imported chassis'* (HYS, p.350). In excerpt 9, Anulika advises her brother against marrying Nnesinachi who she believes has been sexually exposed in the North in order to protect him. Nnesinachi has just returned from the North. This advice is aimed at protecting her brother's interest as she wants him to marry someone who will be faithful and sexually disciplined. The following excerpt presents her advice: "*Her eyes must have opened in the North. You can't marry her, so you had better take what she is offering, before she marries,*"Anulika said. (HYS, p.153)

In excerpt 11, Jaja confides in his sister of his inability to shoulder as much responsibility as Obiora shoulders in Auntie Ifeoma's family. He and Kambili are raised differently and this affects their social and psychological development. This is why he laments: 'Look at how *Obiora balances Auntie Ifeoma's family on his head* and I am older than he is' (*PH*, p.293). Jaja is worried that though he is older than Obiora, Obiora plays his role as 'the man of the house' in Auntie Ifeoma's family. He discusses his views with his mother and contributes freely on important family issues despite his young age. Contrary to Obiora's psychological development, Jaja is not mature psychologically and is unable to do or contribute in his family the way Obiora does.

In '*Original imported chassis*' (*HYS*, p.350), Eberechi uses an uneducated Nigerian English expression to show her surprise and excitement at the beauty and luxury that Professor Ezeké's car exudes. Many non-educated Igbo refer to a brand new car as 'chassis', a term which distinguishes the brand new ones from used vehicles popularly called 'second hand' vehicles in Nigeria. Chassis refers to the main frame of a vehicle, and this is why the chassis number, also known as the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) is assigned to every vehicle during the time of its manufacture and is usually engraved on the main frame. The expression therefore is a local idiom for a beautiful brand new car. The use of such local idioms is attributable to what Bamiro (1994) refers to as 'faulty language habits acquired in the primary school' (p. 54). The authors' use of these idioms enriched their novels and Nigerianised their literary English.

4.1.3 Proverbs

Proverbs form part of the conversational discourse of Nigerians hence Nigerian novelists capture this in their works. This is influenced in part by the oral tradition and to the literary significance of proverbs in Nigerian culture (See Appendix C for the extracted proverbs from the sampled texts). Proverbs are didactic in nature. In proverb number 13, the individual difference of people is captured. This teaches that everybody is not the same and what favours one person may not necessarily favour another. The proverb states this fact thus: ‘My grandfather used to say that other people farted but that his own fart always released shit.’ (*HYS*, p. 283).

Adichie uses few proverbs in *PH* and *HYS*. This is surprising for someone who is touted to be following the footsteps of Chinua Achebe, known for his use of proverbs in his works. This is surprising considering that she is Igbo and the studied novels are somewhat voluminous to engender sufficient proverbial components. Commenting on Adichie's insufficient use of proverbs in *PH*, Anyokwu (2011) observes that: “It is hard to believe that throughout the entire novel, Adichie hardly uses Igbo proverbs, apart from one or two instances: ‘our people say that after aku flies, it will fall to the toad’, Father Amadi said” (*PH*, p.226).

It seems that Anyokwu’s (2011) observation is more pronounced in *HYS* which is lengthier than *PH*. By choosing to

use fewer proverbs, Adichie elects not to fully utilise this important linguistic, rhetorical, and philosophical resource of her Igbo culture in pragmatically enriching and nativising her literary English. It is an established fact that Igbo proverbs “are replete with allusions to the cosmic world-view, oral tradition, and philosophical tenets of the Igbo language” (Onukaogu & Ezechi, 2010, p.300). While critiquing Achebe’s use of proverbs, Lindfors (1978) posits that in using proverbs, African writers evaluate the actions of their protagonists, reminding the readers of the motifs in their works such as the relevance of status, hard work and achievement, the idea of man fashioning his destiny, as well as caution against unwholesome and foolish actions (pp. 47-65). As one of the language habits of Nigerians, the authors’ translation of these proverbs to English, becomes their way of ‘exporting’ this rich oral tradition and speech habit, and by so doing, enrich English and give it a Nigerian context.

4.1.4 Faulty Language Habits

Faulty language habits (acquired in primary schools) are the third factor that leads to translation equivalents in the studied novels. Bamiro (1994, p.54) attributes this to “the inadequate exposure of many Nigerians to the English language.” The author of the studied texts explored the faulty language habits to bring to light the uneducated variety of Nigerian English. This feature is more pronounced at the phonological level although, they are lexical. By adopting this technique in number 5, ‘reconnaissance mission’

is wrongly pronounced by High-Tech who produces the expression as *rayconzarmeechon* (HYS, p.433) due to his lack of, or faulty primary education. Reconnaissance mission is a military term that refers to the monitoring or surveillance of an area to gather information, especially about the strength. In these excerpts such realisations as *sah* - sir, *afun* - afternoon, *morni* - morning, *tank* – thank have been identified as one of Adichie’s ways of capturing the faulty phonological language habits of some of her characters in her sampled novels.

In number 12, Adichie captures the phonological interference problem that characterises the Hausa variety of spoken Nigerian English. Most Hausa speakers of English in Nigeria have interference problems with the /p/ and /f/ sounds which results in the replacement of the /p/ sound with the /f/ sound and the /f/ sound with the /p/ sound. This is why Haruna the gateman produces *pather*, *emfloyer*, *helped*, *wipe*, *oppice*, etc., instead of father, employer, helped, wife, and office respectively. Adichie affirms that this is the Hausa accent of English thus:

His name was Haruna, he told Jaja and me a few days before, and in his Hausa-accented English that reversed *P* and *F*, he told us that our ourpather was the best Big Man he had ever seen, the best emfloyer he had ever had. Did we know that our patherfaid his children’s school pees? Did we know our patherhelped his wipe get the messenger job at the local government oppice?’ We were lucky to have such a pather. (PH, p.111)

Accent is one of the distinguishing factors of the regional varieties of English in Nigeria, and the Hausa accent of English is used by many speakers of English in Northern Nigeria. Adichie's introduction of the Hausa accent of English is pragmatically strategic. First she uses the term 'gateman' which is an expression preferred in Nigerian English to the British English variant 'security man'. Then she introduces Haruna the gateman, and educates her readers on Haruna's accent of English which is representative of Hausa accent of English, before presenting the accented English. This strategy clearly shows that Adichie intentionally shares her knowledge of this variety of English in Nigeria with her readers.

Adichie also uses the term *Big Man* (No. 12: *PH*, p111), another Nigerian English expression for a rich or wealthy man. The use of initial capital letters is also a pragmatic technique which indicates that this expression has gained currency in Nigeria and is preferred by many to the British English variant. The term 'Big Man' is contextual in the sense that it can be used to express different but related contexts. For instance, it refers to a rich man, a successful man, a political office holder, etc. It is used both in Nigerian English and in Nigerian pidgin. In number 13, 'Fada' (*PH*, p.231) is used by the boys who play with Father Amadi instead of Father. In 'Fada', the voiced alveolar sound /d/ is used to replace the voiced dental sound /ð/ in 'Father'. This is a common phonological problem in Nigerian English. Ogbulogo (2000, p.18) affirms that most Nigerian speakers of English substitute the /ð/ with the /d/ sound. Alkali and Adichie have both appropriated the faulty language habits of Nigerians and

effectively used same in espousing the Nigerian English through the novel genre.

4.2 Nativised Figures of Speech

Novelists usually deploy different figures of speech in their writings in order to achieve different literary effects. In the same vein, the analysis of the data shows that Adichie has used different figures of speech as pragmatic tools to domesticate her literary English. These are devices of sound (Onomatopoeia and ideophone), metaphorical usages, simile, euphemism, personification, and hyperbole. These literary devices in the novels are made to acquire local colour by the authors, reminiscent of how they are used in Nigeria, as an affirmation that they are domesticated, even if they are expressed in English.

Table 2: Frequency distribution of nativised figure of speech

Translation Equivalents	<i>PH</i>	<i>HYS</i>	Freq	%
Metaphorical Usages	4	2	12	33.3
Euphemisms	3	6	14	38.9
Personification	5	1	10	27.8
Total	12	9	36	100

Table 2 shows that *PH* and *HYS* have 4 and 2 respectively. This shows that they both have equal number of occurrences of this feature. *PH* and *HYS* have more euphemisms than metaphorical components. As for personification, *PH* has 5, and *HYS* has 1. This indicates that the author did employ such lexical pragmatic

strategies. She however, used more personification especially in *PH* than *HYS*.

4.2.1 Metaphorical Usages

The analysis has revealed the existence of many metaphorical usages in the studied texts. The excerpts underscore these usages. Metaphors are used for comparing one thing with another. But unlike similes, comparative words such as *like* and *as*, are not used. See Appendix E for the samples of the metaphorical usages.

In number 2, *a kola here, a kola there*, refers to bribery and corruption. *Kola* becomes a metaphor for *bribe* which when offered to the members of the law enforcement agency, makes them to deliberately overlook their duties and responsibilities, hence the agency becomes ‘crippled’ (inefficient). In number 3, the metaphor *the brain of a chicken* means to be unintelligent. In number 5, sheep translates to *aturu* in Igbo. Calling someone a sheep in Igbo is insulting and is like calling someone a fool. A sheep is known for its docility and is also perceived as an unintelligent animal in Igbo. In 6, ‘the woman of my house’ is a metaphor for my wife. In 7, the speaker figuratively compares her reproductive organs to an infertile land that is still ‘brown and unyielding’ (unproductive). She would only return to her village when the ‘land’ is covered in green (when she conceives and becomes productive). This metaphor underscores the significance of reproduction (childbirth) in the life of Nigerians. Green is associated with life and fertility.

In 8, Odenigbo's mother reminds Olanna that she (Olanna) did not suck her mother's breast. This is not a mere statement as it connotes other meanings. First, it is traditionally abnormal for a child not to be breastfed by the biological mother. Second, In Igbo culture, a child that is not properly breastfed by the mother is seen as lacking in intelligence, familial and societal bond that breastfeeding is believed to bequeath the child. The excerpt is a metaphor for Olanna's rejection and the perceived abnormality of her childhood which lacked proper breastfeeding by her mother, which Odenigbo's mother reminds her of in negative light. Adichie uses this metaphor to transfer these cultural meanings into English through her literary communication.

In 9, *somebody had tied up my womb with ogwu* means that someone is spiritually responsible for her inability to bear a child. A non-Igbo speaker would wonder whether *ogwu* is like a rope with which someone can bind something. However, *ogwu* simply means medicine or fetish/charm. In this context, it means charm. Tying someone's womb with a charm means using charm to spiritually block the person's reproductive organs so that the person will not get pregnant. This is based on African belief system that such spiritual powers exist. In 10, the children's bellybuttons are compared to small balloons. This is a way of indicating how big they are. In numbers 11 and 12, the size of some of the pots and Auntie Ifeoma's hand are compared. In 11, the size of the pots is compared with the quantity of meat from an animal they can contain - one whole goat. In 12, Amaka describes her mother's hand as comparable to metal when she uses it to slap

someone. This is why she prefers flogging to being slapped whenever her mother punishes her.

In these metaphorical usages, the Adichie makes comparisons and used ideas, images, concepts, and notions that relate to their Nigerian environment and their worldview. These situate the metaphors and how they are expressed within the Nigerian context hence, they result in the nativisation of the English. It is important to note also that Adichie effectively deployed this literary device in her works.

4.2.2 Euphemisms

The term euphemism refers to polite, indirect expressions that substitute other expressions that may be found too harsh, offensive, or unpleasant. Euphemism may be an idiomatic expression, or which refers to something else, in order to hide its unpleasantness. For instance, he 'passed on' in place of 'he died'. It can also belong to other figures of speech such as metaphor or idiom. Some euphemisms are intended to amuse, while others use plain, inoffensive terms for concepts that the user wishes to downplay. See Appendix F for the excerpts of the euphemisms.

The analysis shows that Adichie has used euphemism in the sampled texts. Coinages may be used as euphemism. For instance, in the number on the list of euphemisms, Harold Wilson Syndrome is a coinage which uses the name of the British Prime minister during the Nigerian civil war, as euphemism to substitute

kwashiorkor. Kwashiorkor is disease caused by severe child malnutrition with symptoms such as swollen stomach and big head. It was mostly experienced by children during the Nigerian - Biafran war. In this excerpt, rather than referring directly to the disease, the name of the then British Prime Minister is used as substitute. In number 9, 'spread their legs for them' (*HYS*, p.347) is a euphemism for rape and sexual abuse. But in 10, Alice uses the euphemism *he could not even do* to refer to her former man's inability to sexually satisfy her as she shares her disappointing romantic experience with Olanna.

The examples in the discussion above indicate that the authors have successfully used euphemism as a literary device to underplay some expressions that may have been inappropriate. Literature mirrors reality and in real life situations, people navigate through their conversations by using culturally acceptable expressions, depending when and where such conversations are made. Given that each society has its stock of these acceptable expressions, speakers of the given language draw from the societal reservoir when they are necessary. Adichie seems to have done this even as she writes in English .The euphemisms in the list of examples are drawn from the Nigerian environment although transferred into English.

4.2.3 Personification

Personification is a figure of speech or a literary device that gives humanlike characteristics to non-human entities, or the

representation of an abstract quality in human form. In other words, personification takes place when non-human objects or abstract qualities are portrayed as if they have the ability to act like human beings. The use of personification as a literary device is universal, but the ones used in the selected novels by Adichie bear domestic imprints which can truly be linked to the way Nigerians use language. See Appendix G for the excerpts.

In number 5, ‘fear’ is presented as a human being that can move from one person to the other such that it could leave ‘Jaja’s eyes and move into Papa’s eyes’ (*PH*, p. 21). In number 6, ‘a drizzle’ is portrayed as possessing the human attribute of ‘coming’ meaning that it moves (*PH*, p. 27). Drizzle is a light rain that cannot move but drops or falls. In 7, stories which ordinarily come out of a person’s mouth are said to be in his eyes (*PH*, p. 49). While in number 8, ‘waiting for fuel’ and ‘the fuel did not come’ present fuel as a human being that can be waited for or that can move from one place to another (*PH*, p. 84). In number 9, trees are portrayed as having legs with which they stood firmly on either side (*PH*, p. 138). ‘The kind of *rainy day that wore the indigo colour of dusk* although it was noon’ (*HYS*, p. 43), is a literary device that personalises ‘rainy day’ by giving it human attributes of wearing coloured cloths. In this personification, the evening-weather-look usually experienced on rainy days (especially in the afternoons) is here expressed in colour terms – indigo colour of dusk, which the day wears. This figure of speech is used in the excerpt to make the reader come to terms with the brightness, or lack of it, which the rainy day brings.

In the listed personifications, Adichie domesticates this literary device within the Nigerian sociocultural context where for instance, people participate in moon dance as indicated in number 3, or where the endless wait for fuel during the fuel scarcity of Nigeria's recent past made life unbearable as captured in number 8. Gmelina and *Dogonyaro* are known trees in Nigeria. Using them in a personification makes it easier for Nigerians to identify with their presence and usefulness as demonstrated in number 9. Although the name Gmelina is known worldwide, *Dogonyaro* on the other hand is the common Nigerian name for Neem tree. In adopting the name *Dogonyaro*, Adichie transfers this Nigerian name to English, hence a loan word.

5.0 Conclusion

This study has shown that the literary English used by Adichie uniquely embodies and expresses Nigeria's worldview. This English has been greatly influenced by the Nigerian sociocultural and sociolinguistic environment in that it has been in contact with the numerous indigenous languages in Nigeria since its emergence. The analysis shows that the pragmatic features used in literary communication by the author indicates some Igboisms transliterated local idioms and proverbs. She used localized figures of speech, though not significantly.

The contribution of this work is significant based on a need to add more value to the linguistic studies that engender more semantic cum pragmatic values and exigency within the context

of domestication of English within Nigeria's social milieu. Most linguistic studies dwell on the linguistic aspects of L2 and L1 contact with little or ephemeral attention on the pragmatics of this phenomenal contact. The status and significance of language in a heterogeneous society as Nigeria requires a persistent and sustainable exploration on the dynamics of language and its function especially contextually.

References

- Adegbija, E. (2004). The language situation in Nigeria and a tentative language register. In Adegbija, E. (Ed.), *Multilingualism: A Nigerian Case Study* (p.37). Africa World Press.
- Anyokwu, C. (2011). Igbo Rhetoric and the New Nigerian Novel: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*. *African Symposium*, 11(1), 80-90.
- Bamgose, A. (1995). English in the Nigerian environment. In A. Bamgose, A. Banjo & A. Thomas (Eds.), *New Englishes: A West African perspective* (pp. 9 – 26). Ibadan: Musoro.
- Bamiro, E. O. (1994). Lexico-semantic variation in Nigerian English. *World Englishes*, 13 (1): 47-60.
- Berelson, B. (1952). *Content analysis in communication research*. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press.

- Carley, K. (1990). Content analysis In R. E. Asher et al (eds.), *The encyclopaedia of language and linguistics*. Edinburgh, UK: Pergamon Vpres. Vol.2, pp. 725-730.
- Egudu, R. N. (1975). Negative Expression for Positive Attribute in Igbo Language: An Aspect of Igbo Idiom. In: Ogbalu F. C. and Emenanjo E. N. (Eds.), *Igbo Language and Culture*. Ibadan, Oxford University Press.
- Enyi, P. U. (2015). A comparative study of the sociolinguists of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*. M. A. Thesis of University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Grant, L. & Bauer, L. (2004). Criteria for redefining idioms: Are we barking up the wrong tree? *Applied linguistics* 25(1):38-61. DOI:10.1093/applin/25.1.38
- Hudson, R. A. (1996). *Sociolinguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ibibleye, G. (2016). Saying the unmeant, meaning the unsaid: A pragmatic reading of The Stillborn. In Ndimele, O. (Ed.), *Convergence: English and Nigerian languages*, (pp.497-505). Port Harcourt: M & J Grand Orbit Communications Ltd.
- Igboanusi, H. (2001). The Igbo tradition in the Nigerian Novel. *African Study Monograph* 22(2), 53 - 72.

- Ikpotokin, S. O. (2017). A lexico-semantic analysis of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Universal Academy, Ekpoma Broadcasting Service/Press Club.
<https://universalacademyekp.wordpress.com/2017/05/23/a-lexico-semantic-analysis-of-chimamanda-ngozi-adichies-half-of-a-yellow-sun-okara-nke-a-odo-anyanwu/>
- Kachru, B. B. (1995). Transcultural creativity in world Englishes and literary canon. In Seidlhofer, B. and Cook, G. (eds.) *Principle and practice in applied linguistics: In honour of Henry Widdowson* (pp. 271–287). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lindfors, B. (1978). The palm oil with which Achebe's novels are eaten. In C.L. Innes and Bernth Lindfors, (Eds.), *Critical Perspectives on Chinua Achebe*. Washington: Three Continents Press, pp. 47-66.
- Mbarachi, C. S., & Igwenyi, E. (2018). Language, Identity and the Cultural Context of Names in Selected Nigerian Novels. *International Journal of Language and Literature*, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 29-37. doi.org/10.15640/ijll.v6n1a5
- Neuendorf, K. A. (2017). *The content analysis guidebook*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Ogbulogo, C. (2000). *Oral English Manual*. Lagos: Logomedia Publications Company.

- Onukaogu, A. A., & Ezechi, O. (2010). *Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: The aesthetics of commitment and narrative*. Ibadan: Kraft Books Limited.
- Orakwue, E. E. (2015). A linguistic stylistic analysis of Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus and Half of a Yellow Sun*. M. A. English Thesis Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
- Sapir, E. (1974). Language. In B. G. Blount (Ed), *Language, culture and society: A book of readings* (pp. 46 – 66). Massachusetts: Winthrop Publishers Inc.
- Song, L. (2010). The role of context in discourse analysis. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 1(6): 876-879. doi:10.4304/jltr.1.6.876-879
- Swoyer, C. (2003). The linguistic relativity hypothesis. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy Archive*, Spring 2015 Edition.
https://stanford.library.sydney.edu.au/archives/spr2015/entries/relativism/supplement_2.html
- Whorf, B. L. (1974). The relation of habitual thought and behaviour. In B. G. Blount (Ed), *Language, culture and society: A book of readings* (pp. 67 – 87). Massachusetts: Winthrop Publishers Inc.
- Yeibo, E. & Akerele, C. (2014). Phonological Foregrounding in Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*. *International*

Journal of Language and Linguistics, Vol. 1, No. 2, 61-71.

Eugene Chukwuemeka Onuoha Ph.D, is a lecturer in the department of English Language and Literature, Alvan Ikoku Federal University, Owerri.

Micheal Chukwualuka Uyanne ia a lecturer in the department of English and Literature, Nnamdi Azikiwe Universit, Awka.