

Transliteration in Selected Nigerian Novels and The Discourse in Traditional Ceremonies in Urhobo And Ukwani

Monday Ojevwe Akpojisher, PhD¹ | Isama Evelyn Nkechi² | Abiodun Christiana Onotere, PhD³ | Okpan Ochuko Philomina⁴

¹ Delta State College of Education, Mosogar

^{2,4}Delta State College of Education, Mosogar, Department of English

³Delta State College of Education Evelyn Nkechi ISama AND Ochuko Okpan

Received 22-08-2024

Revised 24-08-2024

Accepted 20-09-2024

Published 22-09-2024



Copyright: ©2024 The Authors. Published by Publisher. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Abstract:

The study investigates the use and importance of transliteration in selected Nigerian novels as well as the discourse in traditional ceremonies such as marriage and funeral in Urhobo and Ukwani in Delta State. Unlike in literary works where some works have been done in transliteration, has been carried out on the English used in traditional ceremonies. Even in literary works, studies on transliteration are only aimed at how English is “domesticated” to reflect African culture. None of the studies has actually specified what aspects of African Culture each transliterated expression reflects. Owing to this gap in literature, this work aims at providing a socio-linguistic explanation for the special linguistic choices made in Achebe’s *Arrow of God*, *Anthills of the Savannah*, Chimamanda Ngozi, Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus* and in traditional ceremonies. The theoretical framework adopted for the study is the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis of communication accommodation, which attempts to explain the relationship between language and the interpretation of social reality. Data were sourced from the novels and the speeches of spokesmen in marriage and funeral ceremonies of heterogeneous nature and were analysed through descriptive method. The following research questions guided the analysis:

- i. Are there defining characteristics that determine the English used in the novels and the traditional ceremonies?
- ii. Are there similarities between the language used in the novels and the one used in the traditional ceremonies?
- iii. Is the variety of English used relevant to African Culture?
- iv. What specific aspects of African culture do the linguistic choices made reflect? The findings from the study show that the expressions identified reflect and promote African culture. The findings also show that there are similarities between the language of the novels and that of traditional ceremonies

Introduction:

The content of any literary work is mostly determined by the writer's culture and his social environment. The society influences the writer's philosophy and sensibilities, which are coloured by the nature of social experiences. Akpojisher(2004) notes that the writer, is not only influenced by the society, but also influences it culturally, socially and politically.

Akindele and Adegbite (1999) aver that language is the only creative property unique to human beings. Engolin (1965) cited in Akindele and Adegbite (1999) posits that language is the key to the heart of people, and subsequently to their knowledge and treasures.

Teibo (2011) cited in Okey-Kalu (2020) is of the view that there is a "lingering problem in Africa Literature" since there is a thorny issue of "whether or not the colonial linguistic media viz Portuguese, French and English, etc would be able to adequately express the social-cultural and linguistic realities of the African continent.

To find a way out of this linguistic dilemma, Achebe (1975) and Igboanusi (2006) are of the opinion that African writers would have to fashion the English language in a way to bear the weight of African experiences. African writers have been able to keep "within the English language while capturing the idioms and nuances of Africa languages (Igboanusi, 2006: 18). If the white man has not left any legacy for Africa, he has at least left a "tongue" for Africans to sing their songs.

Most Africans have used in their novels certain forms of English which can be seen to have some pattern of lexical and structural consistency capable of explaining it as a variety of English as a second language situation. Moreso, in traditional ceremonies such as marriages and funeral where people of different linguistic background are involved, interlocutors seem to use a variety of English that reflects very closely not only the lexicon, idioms and expressions of the primary language(s) of the environment, but also its socio-cultural contents.

The study examines these expressions and those used by Chinua Achebe in *Arrow of God*, *Anthills of the Savannah*, and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple's Habiscus*. The two writers who are Igbo, do not write in their mother tongue but in English, their second language. Achebe (1975) reports that a serious writer must look for an animal whose blood can match the power of his offerings.

In trying to communicate their thought and messages effectively, the writers and spokesmen in traditional ceremonies resort to transliteration, a stylistic device which assimilates a local expression in English. Transliteration also known as transform or simulated "vernacular" style has drawn the attention of linguists. The argument vigorously canvassed by most linguists is that since Nigerians have not been able to adopt an indigenous language to conduct their daily businesses they resort to English. But it would have to be a new kind of English. Achebe (1975) calls it "a new voice coming out of Africa". The African writer should aim to use English in a way that brings out his message best. (Achebe, 1975:61).

Other linguists who have underscored the importance of transliteration include Orisawayi (1989), Crystal (2008), Yeibo (2011), Regmi and Naido (2010), Igboanusi (2006), Ifejirika (2014) and Okey-Kalu (2020) to mention few. For instance, Orisawayi (1989) makes a case for the cultivation and use of this variety in the classroom. Igboanusi (2006), Yeibo (2011), Ifejirika (2014), Al-Azami Kenner, Ruby and Gregory (2010) and Okey-Kalu (2020) argue that transliteration is important in literary works as it enables writers incorporate culturally significant words from other languages.

In all available literature none has examined the importance of this simulated "vernacular" style in traditional ceremonies where it is also prominently used. Again, in literary works, efforts have not been made to account for the specific aspects of African culture the lexical choices made reflect.

This study aimed to fill the gap. It examined and provided evidence for the uniqueness of this

variety of English as a distinct language which can be cultivated and used in communication in all sectors in Nigeria, particularly in literary worlds and traditional ceremonies.

Problem statement:

Language has been a vector of people's culture and the vehicle for its transmission. The beliefs, attitudes and culture of a people are enshrined in their literature and traditions such as marriage and funeral rites. Nigeria is a heterogeneous linguistic society with over 400 indigenous languages and English which is a second language. For national unity and integration, English which is the superstructure has been adopted as a national language. Although the variety of English used as the national language does not reflect the culture of Nigeria. This underscores the importance of transliteration in Nigeria.

Language and Culture are inextricably linked that any attempt to separate them along parallel lines will culminate into a futile exercise. Olaosu (2003) cited in Ademola (2005) describes this relationship as that between "a snail and its shell- inseparable". This finds expression in Adesina (2004: I) that "cultural experiences, beliefs, learned behavior patterns and values shared by the people of a society inform the language use in that society".

To Alo(1989:160), differences in the ways of life of a people are indexed in the language of the people, language itself being an integral part of culture. Edward Sapir explores this association in his explanation of the interrelations between language, culture and personality. He avers that the real world is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of a people.

A study of the language of Achebe and Adichie in the selected novels as well as that used by traditional spokesmen/orators during marriage and funeral ceremonies will afford one the opportunity to discover this interaction between language and culture.

Achebe and Adichie in their novel created characters and put words in their mouths, and at some instances, infuse authorial comments and

narrations. These were based on the experiences of the writers. An examination of the utterances and expressions of interlocutors and spokesmen in the scenes of traditional ceremonies, takes one close to the real custodians of the culture.

Objective(s) of the study:

This study aimed at accounting for the use and importance of transliteration in Achebe's *Arrow of God*, *Anthills of the Savannah*, Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and the discourse in traditional ceremonies in Urhobo and Ukwani in Delta State. The specific objectives are to:

- i. identify the nature and characteristics of the English used in the novels and the traditional ceremonies.
- ii. discover the similarities between the language used in the novels and the one used in traditional ceremonies.
- iii. discover the relevance of the variety of English to African culture.
- iv. Identify the specific aspects of African culture the special linguistic choices made reflect.

Literature Review:

Transliteration which Lindfors (1979) calls "simulated vernacular style" is the process of transforming a local expression into English. McArthur (1996) and Catford (1965) cited in Ademola (2005) see transliteration as activity, operation and "process". Viewing transliteration as the action, process or result of converting one set of signs to another, usually involving one set of alphabetic letters. Catford sees transliteration as a linguistic operation and that in transliteration, source language units are replaced by target language graphological units, but these are not translation equivalents, since they are not selected on the basis of relationship to some graphic substance.

From these definitions we can infer that transliteration is both a deliberate and an unconscious linguistics activity and process. Catford (1965) lists three steps of undertaking a transliteration system:

- i. Source language (SL) letters replaced by source language phonological units. This happens when converting from the written to spoken medium.
- ii. The source language phonological units are translated into target language.
- iii. The target language phonological units are converted into target language letters or other graphological units.

According to Crystal (2008), transliteration is “the conversion of one writing system into another. Each character of the source language is given an equivalent character in the target language. Regmi and Naidoo (2010:18) posit that it is “a process of replacing or complimenting the words or meanings of another as sometimes the exact equivalence or exact meaning might not exist.

Igboanusi (2006) and Ifejirika (2014) are of the opinion that transliteration may be regarded as a form of translation “which is almost word for word”. Okey-Kalu (2020) thinks differently. He observes that the two concepts are not exactly the same thing. This finds expression in Yeibo (2011) which states that translation is “all tasks where the meaning of expressions in one language is turned into the meaning of another language....without recourse to the structures or rules of the source language. Translation focuses on meaning and not form. Transliteration focuses on changing the form and structure of the expressions in the target language.

Akan (2018) defines transliteration as “a type of conversion of a term or text from one script to another that involves swapping letters”. Transliteration is a useful stylistic tool which enables a bilingual or multilingual writer or speaker express his or her local experiences in foreign languages. Yeibo (2011:208) sees it as a method adopted by a writer to nativize a foreign language in order “to interpret his native sociolinguistic environment. Another importance of transliteration is captured in Ifejirika (2014). He avers that transliteration is employed by Nigerian renowned authors so that “uneducated or less educated characters” in their works can express their views using the English language as

equivalent to their vernacular. Al-Azami, Kenner, Ruby and Gregory (2010) state that transliteration is important in language teaching and helps the learner to express himself in the target language.

Chinua Achebe and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s variety of English:

Chinua Achebe hailed from Ogidi in Anambra State. He was a graduate of English from the University College, Ibadan (now University of Ibadan). He published several novels, essays, short stories and poems. His last publication is “*There was a country*”, where he gave the history of Biafra. He died in 2013 in the United States. *Arrow of God* and *Anthills of the Savannah* are some of his publications.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie was born in 1977. She hails from Abba in Anambra State. She holds a Bachelor’s degree in communication and political science from Eastern Connecticut State University and a master’s degree in creative writing in John Hopkins University and another master’s degree in African Studies from Yale University, all in the United States. Her publications include: “*Purple Hibiscus*”

The novels chosen for the study reveal the Igbo society, though set at different periods. The two writers are noted for their use of transliteration which enable them “Igboize” English.

Lindfors (1973:166) states that Achebe tends to favour a calm, graceful proverbs and studied idioms which resemble natural expression in his native language, Commenting on Achebe’s choice of a transliterated English, Orisawayi (1989:50-51) argues that:

- I. If he wrote using the flavor of British idioms and expressions, he would be transforming the African image and civilization into a hybrid which might have no real identity or root in both places, thus giving birth to a “sterile literature”..... it would further contribute to sustaining the political and intellectual dominion the whiteman had imposed on the Africans.

- II. The other choice was to prepare a potent medicine which would by Osmotic pressure transform and assimilate the English language into the African socio-cultural system without doing damage to its form as universally known and recognized.

The result of this is that English would have to make itself amenable to a new kind of usage in a new soil. Onyema (2010:154) notes the following strategies for nativization in Nigerian Contact Literature.

- i. Collocational deviation as a result of localized simile and metaphor. For example “anthill nose” “Oduche box is dancing”.
- ii. Fidelity to the oral traditional like folklore through the adoption of traditional story telling devices.
- iii. The borrowing of some vernacular words that lack adequate equivalents or approximations in the English language. Examples “Chi” “Egwugwu” used by Achebe, “Ogwu” and “gbo” used by Adichie
- iv. The transliteration of vernacular “idioms and proverbs into the English language, such that the cultural nuances of such expressions are effectively expressed.

The form of lexical choice in African novels of English expression tends to dominate both narrative and discourse and consequently to characterize language form that marks a variety.

Traditional ceremonies:

The traditional ceremonies used in the studies are marriage and funeral rites. The societies created by Achebe and Adichie are microcosms of a larger society. The characters in the novels are fictional ones who are assigned roles by the authors. The choice of traditional ceremonies thus, enabled the researchers have first hand information and clues from informants in "real" settings.

Marriage and funeral ceremonies constitute integral parts of African culture. The payment of bride price is the climax of marriage formalities "Funeral ceremonies are organised to “send” a dead person to the great beyond. Among the Urhobo and

the Ukwuani, it is believed that the spirit of the dead person would continue to hover around until the ceremony is held. In most Urhobo and Ukwuani communities, a woman who dies in her matrimonial home is often taken to her parent's home for burial. Akpojishi (2016) notes that some activities that took place the day her bride price was paid are replicated during her funeral ceremony.

In the two ceremonies, there are usually exchange between two interlocutors (the host and guest spokesmen). Where the participants and spokesmen are from different tribes and do not speak the same language, English becomes the language of communication. The spokesmen are expected to demonstrate good knowledge of the culture and tradition of the people. Such knowledge is based on rhetorical expressions laced with proverbs and figures of speech (Akpojishi, 2016:230).

In literary works and traditional ceremonies in Nigeria, English is often "tamed" to suit the situation. Edokpaji and Omo-Ojugo (2017) corroborate this when they write that "the Nigerian social context environment and culture to a large extent, affect the use of English in Nigeria and by extension the Nigerian literature. Emenyonu (2010) posits that in the case of English language, it had to be altered in several artistic and linguistic ways to "force" it to bend to Africa surroundings and sensibilities.

The study was based on Sapir-Worf Hypothesis theory. This theory was used to analyze special lexical choices which include local figurative expressions, coinages, semantic extension and English words with African referents. The theory holds sway since culture is the totality of the socially acquired knowledge about the way of life of a people and this includes their language. Edward Sapir states that " language does not, as a matter of fact stand apart from or run parallel to direct experience but completely penetrates it".

In the same vein, his former pupil, Benjamin Whorf opines that " the fashion of speaking, peculiar to a

people like other aspects of their culture is indicative of a way of their culture, which define the nature of the universe and man's position within it. Their views became known as Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis.

The thrust of the hypothesis according to Whorf (1956:213) is that:

We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native languages. The categories and types that we isolate from the world of phenomena we do not find there because they stare every observer in the face, on the contrary, the world is presented in a Kaleidoscopic flux of impressions which has to be organized by our minds and this means largely by the linguistic system in our minds.

Methodology:

The research involved two sets of data. The first set of data were sourced from Achebe's **Arrow of God** (AG) "**Anthills of the Savannah**" (AS) and Adichie's "**Purple Hibiscus**" (PH). These were done after an in-depth study of the novels by the researchers. Special lexical items relevant to the study were sieved from the texts. To achieve this, the transliterated expressions selected were grouped under the following sub headings:

- a. English words with African referents, like Kola-nuts
- b. Igbo lexical items such as eke, ofo, chi
- c. Local simile, metaphor and Proverbs
- d. Coinages and names
- e. Semantic extension and deviations
- f. Igbo expressions transformed to English.

The second set of data were obtained from marriage and funeral ceremonies in Urhobo and Ukwuani land in Delta State. Thirty social gatherings of heterogeneous nature were attended for each of urhobo and Ukwuani home land. This totals sixty social gatherings. The English expressions which instantiate the lexical features

relevant for the study were tape-recorded in each ceremony attended. The ceremonies span six local government areas in Urhobo land and three local government areas of Ukwuani land.

The English expressions that were tape-recorded were those of spokesmen or orators during the ceremonies. Literate informants who are competent speaker of Urhobo and Ukwuani and are also versed in their culture were interviewed in these ceremonies to get their views about the special linguistic choices.

Data Analysis:

Chinua Achebe:

English words with African referents, semantic extension and igbo expressions transformed to English.

Illustrative samples are displayed below:

*I want one of my sons to join these people and **be my eyes there** (Arrow, 45)*

*We have Osodi in Bassa, he is there as **our eye and ears** (Antilles p. 126)*

"Be my eyes and ears" are used instead of be my representative. With this expressions, Achebe enriched the English language with a firm reality which the lexical item 'representative' lacks. This reality is extended further by other lexical choices. 'bring home my share', stand in one place, 'my spirit tells me', 'cunning has entered the talk used in the above pages of both novels. The semantic function of "eye" and "ear" is more significant in the context than "representative". As important organs of the body, they have thorough awareness of what happens around. Used in another context, "eye" could mean 'plan' or 'intention'. This can be seen in John Nwodika's speech:

My eye is on starting a small trade in tobacco (Arrow, 170)

The speaker knows the importance of "eye" and the 'mind'. This association between the 'eye' and mind

is "X - rayed in Ifeme's speech after Ezeulu had returned from Okperi:

There is no quarrel between Ezeulu and Ifeme. I was thinking all the time that I must visit Ezeulu, **my eyes reached you but feet lagged behind** (Arrow, 185)

Here Ifeme means that he had the intention to visit Ezeulu

'Hand' is another part of the human body used to "decompose" meaning:

If you choose to fight a man for a piece of farmland that belongs to him " I shall **have no Hand in it** (Arrow, 15).

The expression is used instead of " shall not participate".

Nwaka in an attack of Ezeulu's speech says:

Elders and Ndichie of Umuaro

Let everyone return to their house

If we have no heart in the fight (Arrow, 16).

This is used instead of " have no courage " While expressing his disappointment over Oduche's behaviour in the new religion, Ezeulu uses the following expressions " your mother's son", 'goat's skull', ' I have no spirit for talking now. Lizard that ruined his mother's funeral. This disappointment is further revealed in:

Are your people saying to Umuaro that if anyone brings **his sacrifice to your shrine**, he will be safe to harvest his yams?. (Arrow, 220).

Ezeulu's choice of " sacrifice " and "shrine " instead of "Thanksgiving" and "Church". May be due to the fact that he sees no difference between the white man's religion and "Ulu" Again, "Church and Thanksgiving" would not have conveyed the same meaning as " shrine" and "sacrifice" Ezeulu expresses his annoyance to Ezidemili thus.

Go back and tell **Ezidemili to eat shit**.... Tell Ezidemili that Ezeulu says he should go and fill his mouth with shit.

"Eat shit" is used instead of "damn Ezidemili" or "go to hell, Ezidemili". There are snatches with

local colour in the prayer of Elewa's uncle, during her child's naming ceremony in **Anthills**.

What brings us here is the child you sent us. **May her Path be straight.. May she have life and may her mother have life...** Fighting will not begin unless **there is First a thrusting of fingers into eyes**.

'May her path be straight instead of "may she live a worthy life".

"May she have life". Instead of "may she live long".

From Elewa' Uncle's prayer, we can see how Africans propose a toast:

If something pursues us we shall

Escape but if we pursue something

We shall catch it. Ise.....

Everyone's life, Ise(Anthills, 229)

The old man's speech also reveals how Africans establish protocols in occasions:

How do we salute our fellows

When we see them massed in

Assembly so huge we cannot.....

Call each man by his title? Do

We not say '**To everyone his due?** 'To every man his own!

To each his chosen title? (Anthill 123)

Other lexical items in Anthills are:

Our neighbours Hand was

Inside handcuff (p. 166)

Meaning " Our neighbours was handcuffed "

"..... the taxi driver **union to put**

Their mouth into the nonsense

Story of Ikem's death (p.181)

Meaning: 'To deliberate on Ikem's death'

But if you ask me which of them **takes the eagle feather**

I will say boldly, the story (p. 124)

Here, 'eagle feather' means prominence.

'Every girl knows that from her mother's breast (p.88)

This means 'from cradle'

'World inside a world inside a world without end (p.85)

This means 'life eternal'

I am not a mind reader (p.24) meaning " I am not a clairvoyant"

Achebe also imbued English expressions with Igbo words: They are names of people, things and places:

His Obi was built differently from other men's huts (Arrow, 1)

... Children's voices took up the news on all sides onwa-atuo ... Onwa- atuo, onwa-atuo (Arrow, p.2)

... I hear... that you are carving an alusi for a man of Umuaro? (Arrow P.5)

His ikenga, about as tall as a man's forearm... Its human body jostled with fateless Okposi... and his short personal staff of ofo (Arrow p.16)

How could a young bride hesitate over a handsome Ugonachonma like Obika? (Arrow, p 68).

Okeke Onenyi learnt many herbs and much anwansi ... from his father. But he never learnt this particular magic whose name was oti- anya afu-nzo (Arrow, P.147).

And in **Anthills** we have:

Uwa-tu'uwa was a building block of my many solitary games.

. . . that if ogili was such a valuable condiment (Anthill. P.88).

Agatha is roasting corn and ube (p.94)

Singing ogwogwo mmili takumei ayole (p.95)

Idemili devotees increased in all the country to the omambala and iguedo (Anthills p.103).

I don't know why my tongue is cracking away tonight like a clay-bowl of ukwa seeds (Anthills p.126)

Ife onye metalu a statement unclear and menacing . . . (Anthills p.203)

Proverbs, simile, and metaphor

Proverbs are used by Achebe to reveal character's power, authority and background. We can see this in Nwaka's utterances during Idemili festival:

. . . the first friend I made turned out to be a wizard. I made another. . . he was a poisoner. . . my third friend. . . was a leper. I Ogalanya who cuts kpom and pulls waa. . . (Arrow, 39).

This proverb also features in Elewa Uncle's speech in **Anthills**:

.... When my wife here came to me and said: our daughter has a child and I want you to come and give her a name" I said to myself . . . We did not hear kpom to tell us that the palm branches has been cut before we hear waa.

I did not hear of bride-price and you are telling me about naming a child. (Anthill, 227)

This proverb is meaningful to Africans whose occupation is palmfruit/palm wine tapping. 'Kpom' and 'waa' are idiophones. The former is heard when the tapper strikes a palm branch with his matchets. The latter results when the branch falls. This connotes the ability to begin and end a process, thing and action.

Thus, ogalanya had both 'powers' to begin and win a fight. Elewa's uncle wonders who authorised her "husband" to impregnate her when he did not pay bride-price as demanded by customs. The invitation for a naming ceremony thus, 'shocks' him. Other Proverbs are:

.....As soon as we shake hands with a leper he will want an embrace. . . a man who brings ant-ridden faggots into his hut should expect the visits of lizards. (Arrow, 177).

.... The cock that crows in the morning belongs to one household but his voice is the property of the neighborhood (Anthills, 122).

. . .When we want to make a charm, we look for the animal whose blood can match its power; if a chicken cannot do it we look for a goat or a ram. If

that is not sufficient we send for a bull but sometimes even a bull does not suffice, then we look for a human (Arrow, 231).

This proverb underscores the reason Ezeulu sends his son (oduche) to the white man's school and religion. Griffiths (1997:58) notes that:

. . .Ezeulu's son is to be the human sacrifice which will enable the clan make medicine of sufficient strength to hold the new "disease" in check. . . Ezeulu decides to sacrifice his son in order to gain power to cope with the changing times.

Ezeulu earlier said:

The world is like a mask dancing. If you want to see it well, you do not stand in one place (Arrow p.55)

The question is whether Ezeulu's action is an appropriate response to the problem caused by the new religion. Some elders think it is not, and blame Ezeulu for aggravating the ugly situation. The importance attached to an action is echoed in the following Proverbs:

If the Lizard of the homestead neglects to do things for which its kind is known, it will be mistaken for the Lizard of the farmland (Arrow p 520-21).

Let us first chase away the wild cat, afterwards we blame the hen (Arrow,122)

We do not apply an ear-pick to the eye (Arrow, 138)

In Anthills, a proverb is made to reveal power and its relevance to a man:

Our people say that an animal whose name is famous does not always fill a hunter's basket (p.121)

This proverb is anchored on African cosmology where certain small animals are accorded respect in animal kingdom because of their wit or wisdom. For example, the 'tortoise' and 'spider'. The proverb depicts Ikem, who, despite his small stature is presented as an intelligent journalist who is useful to the Bassa community in Anthills.

Simile is also used to describe the behaviour of Nnabeyi when Ezeulu invites the Umuario elders to inform them of his invitation to Okperi:

. . . His anger was not caused by

open hostility such as Nwaka. . . but by the sweet words of . . . Nnabeyi. They look to him like rats gnawing away at the sole of a sleeper's foot, biting and then blowing air on the wound to sooth it and heal the victim back to sleep(Arrow, 145).

. . . I don't know, said Akuebue . . .

Every lizard lies on its belly, so we cannot tell which has a belly ache (Arrow, 171).

In reply to this suspicion, Ezeulu declares:

. . . Nwodika's son has a straight mind towards me. I can smell a poisoner as clearly as I can a leper. (Arrow, 171).

As he savoured this wonderful sense of achievement gained in so short a time spreading over the soaking into the core of his thinking and his being like fresh red tasty palm oil melting and diffusing itself over-piping hot roasted yam (Anthills, 22)

The above simile enables the reader know a typical delicacy in Nigeria and how the character described here reflected deeply on his achievement.

Morning herself went into the seclusion of a widow's penance in soot and ashes (Anthills, 56)

This metaphor aptly depicts how scorchy the sun was. The usual coolness that goes with "morning" was not felt as the sun 'chased' it into hiding. This metaphor makes more meaning to people abreast with Igbo culture of mourning the dead. A widow is expected to 'wear' ashes and goes into hiding for weeks to mourn her late husband.

This absence of the widow from public is compared with the absence of the coolness that goes with the "hot morning".

Leave this young man alone to do

What he is doing for Abazon

and for the whole of kangan;

the cock that crows in the morning

belongs to one household but

his voice is the property of the

neighborhood. You should be

proud that this bright Cockerel

that wakes the whole village comes from your compound. (p.122)

In his word “The sounding of drum which calls people to war and the fighting of war are good but giving account of the war takes the “eagle feather”

Ikem the journalist, is 'the bright cockerel' that wakes the whole village comes from your compound. (p. 122).

The premium Achebe attaches to a true story teller in the society is evoked in the following snatches:

But the lies of those possessed by

Agwu are lies that do no harm to anyone.

They float on the top of story like the white bubbling

at pot-mouth of new palm-wine.

The true juice of the tree lies coiled up inside waiting to strike (p.125)

It is Achebe's belief that those who incite people to war as well as those who fight in the war are not as useful as the man who survives to tell the story of the war. In his word “The sounding of drum which calls people to war and the fighting of war are good, but giving account of the war takes the “eagle feather”. But the story teller must be an accomplished one not a charlatan. A charlatan is like the ‘bubbling or foaming’ on top of the palm wine.

The alcohol is not on the bubbling but at the bottom of the container. To Achebe a charlatan (poor story teller) is the:

liar who can sit under his thatch and see the

moon hanging in the sky outside. His chalked

eye will see every blow in a battle he never fought (p.125).

The expression “chalked eye” is a metaphor which makes sense to those familiar with communal wars among the Igbo.

During preparations for wars, the warriors usually stain their eyes with “native chalk” often, some cowards escape from the wars but later boast of what they would have accomplished if they went to the war.

I don't know why my tongue is

cracking away tonight like a

clay bowl of “ukwa” seed toasting

over fire, why I feel like a

man, who has been helped to lower a heavy load from off

his head (Anthills, 126)

“Ukwa” is a local nut which bursts and loses its substance when toasted over fire. This loss of the content in ukwa seed is what the old man compares with the loss of his voice because of prolonged speech.

Chimamanda Ngozi Achebe

Purple Hibiscus

Though it is a contemporary novel, Purple Hibiscus (PH) contains expressions which are transliterated English (TE) and their standard (SE) versions.

TE: “slowly, I turned and headed upstairs to change out of my red Sunday dress” (PH, P.16).

SE changed my church dress

TE “I want the chicken leg” (PH. 127)

SE I want the feat of the chicken

TE The big people in Abuja not wanting such a story out now that the commonwealth nation were meeting (PH, P.205)

SE Senior public servant

TE The money has gone into people's pocket (PH, P.181)

- SE Public funds has been diverted by corrupt public officers for their selfish consumption.
- TE “If some big man in Abuja has stolen the money, is the VC suppose to vomit money from Nsukka? (PH. P.139)
- SE Should the VC bear the consequences of replacing the money?
- TE “He opened his eyes before many of our people did (PH,75)
- SE He embraced civilization
- TE “Kambili, have you no mouth? (PH.177)
- SE Are you deaf and dumb?
- TE “But I will not ask my brother to bend over so that I can lick buttocks to get these things (PH. 103).
- SE I will not concur with my brother regarding all that he says to get these things.
- TE Does my house chase you away? (PH 44)
- SE Does my house repel you?
- TE One is still sucking my breast (P.45)
- SE One is still an infant
- TE “I began to fend for myself at an age when most people still suck at their mother’s breast”. (PH. 98)
- SE I became independent at a very tender age
- TE “If we did not have the same blood in our veins, I would sell you my daughter (p.99)
- SE If we are not kinsmen
- TE “So he has gone to rest”
- SE He has passed on
- TE You people think I ate the money for the zinc
- SE You think I misappropriate the fund for the zinc.
- TE “This is not a good time for NEPA to take the light” (p.165)
- SE Not a proper time for power cut.
- TE “Where is running water? (p.233)
- SE Where is tap water?
- TE That soup smells like something Amaka washed her hands well to cook (p.162)
- SE That soup smells delicious / was properly cooked
- TE They even said somebody had tied up my womb with Ogwu (p.28)
- SE They even said somebody has made me barren with evil powers
- TE Go take power from the devil (p.243)
- SE Go and prepare charms.
- TE How many heads does she have? (p.243)
- SE How intelligent is she?
- TE A girl who wore a miniskirt to evening lesson even though she had fat yam on her legs (p.149)
- SE A girl who wore a miniskirt to evening lesson irrespective of her fat buttocks
- TE Do you know that I sucked my mother’s breast when your mother sucked his mother’s (p.70)
- SE Do you know your father and I are mates?
- TE Gudu morni. Did the people of your house rise well, oh? (PH, P.58)
- SE Good morning, I hope you and your family slept well?
- TE I have three children, one is still sucking my breast (PH, P.37)
- SE I have three children and one is still breast feeding

TE Buy from me, oh. I will sell you well (PH.P. 54)

SE Patronise me. I will give you affordable price

TE Our people say that after Aku flies, it will fall to the toad (PH, 221)

SE Anything that goes up must come down

TE I want to see if I can buy Christmas things for my children at oye Abagama

SE I want to go to market for Christmas shopping for my children

TE Prayer has entered the drink

SE The drink is sanctified

TE The wife you gave us have used her body touch ground

SE The woman you gave us is dead

TE The wife you gave us has gone to her world

SE The wife you gave us has one to the great beyond

Proverbs used that give English expressions local colour include:

TE You call dog its real name before calling it a waster of time

SE A man is identified by his real name

TE The little blood lizard has, it has used it to rub stick

SE We entertain you with this little token

TE When its sounds kpoo it will sound waa

SE When someone has done the needful, liberty is guaranteed him

TE Your hook is still shaking to catch fish

SE There is more money for your entertainment

TE I put my talk inside coat

SE I want to pause for a while

TE Animal with horn has entered hole

SE A great person is dead

TE When a hunter has wondered enough, he will look at the setting sun

SE When someone has become very old, he or she will go to her maker.

TE We are not “agbe dada” that traps fish and refuses to leave it.

SE We will not continue to keep you, you are free to depart

Urhobo Marriage and Burialceremonies:

TE The day for the marriage has completed

SE Today is the date fixed for the traditional marriage

TE The drink that tie head is on the table

SE There is dry gin on the table

TE We see your presence

SE We recognize that you are here

TE The kola nut is on my hand

SE I am with the kola nut

TE Prayer has entered the kola nut

SE The kolanut has been blessed

TE Let good things touch our hands

SE May good things happen to us

TE Let bad things run from us

SE May we not experience evil

TE The good thing we come for should reach our hands

SE May we successfully achieve our aim of coming here

TE Any mouth that eat the kola nuts should eat it with peace

SE May we be blessed and nourished as we chew the kola nuts

TE It is the pot (food) of the face that first cooked.

SE Hospitality was first shown by the brightness of your faces.

TE It is the one that gave to you that you give

SE The one who gives also receives

TE Your daughter you gave us has gone to rest

SE The daughter you gave us is dead

TE Kola nut does not understand English

SE Permit me to bless the kola nut in native language to effectively commune with the ancestors

Ukwani Marriage and Burial Ceremonies

TE What you place on plate, we hold it

SE We gladly accept what you presented to us

TE Elderly one we have come

SE We crave your indulgence and solicit your prayers our elderly one

TE Let us go high

SE May we prosper

TE Young girls that dress fine. Women who cook soup. Young men who rub "Ulie"
Those who walk "ligho ligho ligho"
"Aje aje". "Ishagwari" (Establishing protocols)

SE Young and beautiful maidens. Our women versed in hospitality. Our young and energetic men. The elegant youths. Our respected elders. I greet you

TE We are happy for your coming

SE We appreciate your visit

TE Everyone receive what you are greeted

SE All protocols observed. Ladies and Gentlemen

TE The owner of the house says there is kola

SE The host presents kola nut for your entertainment

TE The hand that cares for kola nut cares for the house

SE The host presents the kola nuts in appreciation of your visit

TE The ship has entered the fast water current

SE We humbly beckon on the oldest man to bless the Kola nuts

TE Kola nut is life. May life remain among us

SE Kola nut symbolises good life. May we have good life as we chew the kola nuts

TE The one who chases a chick will fall

SE May anyone who wishes you evil be consumed by evil

TE River has carried clay pot away

SE The wife you gave us has passed on

TE Bad thing has happened

SE A sorrowful thing has occurred

TE Now that it has happened this way, we have to go and come back

SE We beg to take our leave, we will be right back

TE Thanks so much for showing we are all one. You did not stress us and there was no trouble.

SE We appreciate your kind heartedness and treating us as your family members.

Findings and Conclusion:

The analysis shows that the characteristic features of the variety of English used exists in the areas of lexical choice, idioms, local simile, metaphor and expressions firmly rooted in standard English syntax. They reflect very closely the lexicon, idioms as well as the expressions of the language of the African environment and its socio-cultural

contents. These lexical items are mostly associated with the characters in the novels selected for the study and orators or spokesmen in traditional ceremonies. These are custodians of the African culture.

Some snatches that express phatic relations and protocols in occasion and good will as well as those related between the primary and secondary data include:

May she have life and may her mother have life (Anthills 229)

To everyone his due to
everyman his own (Anthills 123)

prayers has entered the Kola nut (Urhobo ceremony)

Let good things touch our hands (Urhobo ceremony)

Kola nut is life. May life remain among us (Ukwuani ceremony)

Everyone receive what you are greeted (Ukwuani ceremony)

How do we salute our fellows....

Do we not say 'to everyone his due... To every his own

To each his chosen title? (Anthill 123)

I ogalanya who cuts kpom and pulls waa ... (Arrow 39)

We did not hear kpom to tell us that the palm branch has been cut before we hear waa (Anthill 227)

When it sounds kpoo it will sound waa (Urhobo ceremony)

The findings also reveal communal living and extended family systems among Africans and the religious belief and worship:

I shall have no hand in it (in the fight (sic) (Arrow 15)

...the taxi driver's union put their mouth into this nonsense story of Ikem's death (Anthills 181)

... that if any one brings his sacrifice to your shrine he will be safe to harvest his yams (Arrow 220)

... world inside a world inside a world without end (Anthills 85)

... they even said somebody has tied up my womb with 'ogwu' (PH, 28)

... the wife you gave "us" has used her body touch ground (Urhobo ceremony) thanks so much for showing we are all one (Ukwani ceremony)

The expression "morning herself went into seclusion of a widow's penance in soot and ashes (Anthills, 58) shows an aspect of African culture of mourning and according the death respect. Moreso, 'his thinking... like fresh red tasty palm oil melting and diffusing itself over-piping hot roasted yam (Anthills 22) denotes a typical food in Africa. Other snatches include:

...the cock that crows in the morning' used as a clock by Africans

'The woman you gave us has gone to her world' shows that Africans believe there is another world aside earth.

'It is the pot (food) of the face that first cooked shows that Africans cherish hospitality. 'Kola nut does not understand English' shows that Africans reverence their ancestors whom they believe are not 'dead'.

'the ship has entered the fast water current', a proverb that shows Africans accord regard to elders.

'River has carried clay pot away' is a proverb which shows that Africans believe that death is inevitable.

There is the use of semantic extension in 'eagle feather'. To the native speaker, it refers to an object of flight. But in this context, it implies a high title holder which in turn means 'takes the lead or leader. Again, 'chalked eye' to a native English speaker may imply one who provides fun but in the context where it is used, it elicits fear because it refers to a warrior.

References:

1. Achebe, C (1964) "*Arrow of God*". London: Heineman
2. Achebe, C (1975) " The African Writer and English Language *Morning Yet on Creation Day*. London: Heineman
3. Achebe, C (1987). *Anthills of the Savannah*. London: Heineman
4. Adesina, O (2004) " A contrastive analysis of the colour and kinship Terms in English and Yoruba. A graduate Seminar paper in the department of English, University of Ibadan
5. Ademola, O.E (2005) " Transliteration in Nigerian literary English: the case of Amos Tutuola. " *Perspectives on language & Literature!*. Olateju, M & Oyelaye, L. (Ed's), Ibadan: Obafemi Awolowo University press. 105-116.
6. Akan, M.F (2018). Transliteration and translation of Bangla into English: A
7. problem solving approach " *British journal of English Linguistics*, 6(6), 1-21.
8. Akindele, F & Adegbite, W (1999). *The sociology and politics of English in Nigeria. An introduction*. [Le-Ife: OAU Press.
9. Akpojisher, M.O (2004). " Lexical Choice and it's implications in China Achebe's
10. *Arrow of God and Anthills of the Savanna*. Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Calabar, Nigeria.
11. Akpojisher, M.O (2016) " An analysis of rhetorical devices in the discourse of Avwra people in marriage and funeral ceremonies"*Abraka Humatynities Review*. 7(1) 229-240
12. Alo, M (1989). " A prototype approach to the analysis of meanings of Kingship terms in non-native English. *Language sciences*". 11(2)149-176
13. Al-Azami, S, Kenner C. Ruby, M & Gregory E. (2010). Transliteration as a bridge
14. to learning for bilingual children: *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*. 13(6), 683-700
15. Catford, J.C (1965): *A linguistic theory of translation*. London: Oxford University press
16. Crystal, D. (2008). *A dictionary of linguistics and phonetics*. Malden: Blackwell publishing.
17. Emenyonu, E.N (2010) *ideas and Challenges in Nigeria Education*. Enugu: New Generation.
18. Ifejirika, E.(2014). "Transliteration as a linguistic error or literary style? A study of
19. Selected statements from African novels and student's essays "*Journal of Resourcefulness and Distinction*". 7(1), 1-12.
20. Igboanusi, H. (2006). Style and meaning in Igbo English novels. " *The Reading Matrix*. 6(1). 18-24
21. Lindfors, B (1973). *Characteristics of Yoruba and Igbo Prose style in English in Nigeria Literature*. New York: African publications
22. Lindfors, B (1979) " The palm oil with which Achebe's words are eaten. Lindfors, B & innes C.L (eds). "*Critical Perspective on Chinua Achebe*, London Hwineman. 47-65.
23. McArthur, T (1996). *The Oxford companion to English language*. McArthur, T.(ed). New York: Oxford University Press. 906-964
24. Okey-Kalu, O.J. (2020). Transliteration in Nigeria Novels: A study of Chinua

25. Achebe's "Things Fall Apart and Chimamando Ngozi Adichie's Purple Hibiscus . Osisanwo, A, Bamigbade, W, Igwebuike E and Tella A.(eds) " Applied Linguistics, linguistic variations and English usage. Ibadan University Press. 609-620
26. Olaosun, I. (2003). The influence of Yoruba culture on Yoruba Secondary Pupils
27. letter writing in English in Oyeleye, L and Olateju, M. (eds). "Readings in language and literature. Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press.
28. Edokpaji, J.N & Omo-Ojugo, G.I (2017), African culture and the context of
29. situation: A study of the language of the novels of Chinua Achebe. "Humanities Today? 3(1) 45-62
30. Onyema, C.C (2010). " The English Language in Nigeria. Port-Harcourt: Projects & Books Press LTD.
31. Orisawayi, D. (1989) "Chinua Achebe's variety of English: One for possible cultivation in Nigeria? *Journal of English studies* (5) 49-64.
32. Whorf, B.L (1956). *Language, thought and reality* London: MIT Press.
33. Yeibo, E. (2011) "Nativization of English in African literary texts: A lexico-
34. semantic study of transliteration in Gabriel Okara's. "The Voice". *International Journal of Humanities and social science*. 1(13), 202-208.

Acknowledgement

We wish to sincerely appreciate Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) for sponsoring this research work.