
A STYLISTIC REVIEW OF THE DOMESTICATION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE'S *PURPLE HIBISCUS*

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Abstract: *Adichie in Purple Hibiscus has demonstrated uncommon linguistic skills, after the style of Chinua Achebe, in domesticating English for communicative purpose. This study investigated how the writer has used language to expose problems of religious extremism, political autocracy and cruelty, poor governance of University administration, female gender oppression, which constitute some of the themes in the text. Using a stylistic analysis was found best suited as a frame work of the study. By using Hallidayan Systemic Functional Grammatical Model, the following structures were used to examine how language was used to influence the thought of the reader. These are: Theme and Information Focus; Stylized Speech Analysis; the Meta functions; Mood Structures and Reference. All these features exhibited how Adichie domesticated language to influence the readers' thought. Finally, Adichie in Purple Hibiscus succeeded in agitating for a change from an old religious, political, corrupt system to a new, better and progressive system.*

Introduction

The focus of this work is to identify and discuss Adichie's use of language in her fictional text: *Purple Hibiscus* using a stylistic approach. The objective is to examine how the author's domestication of English has enhanced its communicative and aesthetic appeal. Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* is a multi-dimensional novel which has given room to several interpretations since its publication in 2006. The complex nature of its characters and the multiplicity of themes contributed greatly to this. The story in *Purple Hibiscus* is about Eugene, a successful businessman but a religious fanatic who ruled his family with high-handedness. Father Benedict, the parish priest, presents Eugene as a model of a good catholic adherent despite his wicked treatment of his immediate family members: Beatrice, his wife, Jaja – his son and Kambili – his daughter, despite their affluence are subjected to live a life of perpetual fear and sorrow under his mighty rule. In Eugene's household, the women were to be seen but not heard, therefore Beatrice and Kambili, her daughter, talk in 'whispers'. It is only the son, 'Jaja' who dares to react to his father's suppression and subjugation. The story gets to a peak when one fateful day, Eugene is found dead, having been poisoned. His son, Jaja, claims to be responsible and for which he is imprisoned. There is however hope for amnesty for his release. This puts an end to the life of the tyrant. Characters in the real world are ideologically represented by fictional characters. Other themes such as poor governance and victimization of outspoken people like Ade Coker, the editor of the news paper and Auntie Ifeoma, the lecturer and Eugene's sister, social happenings (political unrest) are accounted for. For

these reasons *Purple Hibiscus* is chosen in preference to *Half of a Yellow Sun*. From the linguistic perspective, it is observed that as much as language is a psychological and cognitive property of humans, the study of language is all about the beauty of its usage in literature. Stylistics as a new area of research attempts a relationship between language and literary studies. Hitherto many people have reviewed the text from the literary point of view, but in this analysis, it is viewed from the linguistic perspective.

This study is conducted using a stylistic analysis of the text via Systemic Functional Grammar to analyse the theme and transitivity structures, modality grammar point of view, mood structures, cohesive ties, group structures and mood choice.

Literature Review

Stylistics

Osoba (2002) remarks that stylistics is a discipline with several definitions, partly due to the fact that various linguists draw on different linguistic theories and approach and also partly because of the complex nature of style from which stylistics is derived. Below are some of the definitions of stylistics:

- a. The analysis of style. (Lyons)
- b. The application of linguistics to the study of literature. (Berry)
- c. The bridge between language and literature. (Leech)
- d. Stylistics enables us to identify and name the distinguishing features of literary texts and to specify the generic and standard subdivisions of literature. (Bradford)

Stylistics is thus concerned with the explication of the linguistic features of a text and how the writer uses them to convey his message (Osoba, 2001). Literary stylistics (Leech, 1969) is the study of the use of language in literature while linguistic stylistics studies in as much detail as possible the varieties of language, showing the formal linguistic features which characterize them.

Systemic Functional Linguistics

Unlike other grammatical theories such as traditional grammar which has been criticized for being notional and prescriptive and transformational generative theory (TGT) which has been criticised for being idealistic, prescriptive and decontextualised, the Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) also known as Systemic Functional Theory (SFT), according to Halliday (1994), sets out to establish and explain the principles of natural language as a system of systems as well as describe the system as it relates to actual instances of use. This is because, as Halliday notes, it is only through the study of language in use that all the functions of language or all the components of meaning are brought into focus. Halliday further opines that the nature of language is closely related to the demands its speakers make on it. In other words, language function determines language structure.

The Metafunctions

The systems and the metafunctions are basic factors of the systemic functional theory. Propagating a functional view of language, Halliday argued that although there are innumerable social purposes for which adults use language, they are reduced to a small set

of functional components or metafunctions. The metafunctions are made up of the ideational functions, the interpersonal functions and the textual functions.

The Ideational Function

This refers to the way language conveys and organises the cognitive realities of experience. Language is used in metafunctions to express content, convey information, message, ideas, concepts, processes and experiences of the world. In other words, the ideational function is the expression of experience. It is realised by the processes, participants and circumstances of transitivity. Transitivity is fully discussed under clause analysis.

The Interpersonal Function

The interpersonal component of the metafunctions expresses the speaker's role in the speech situation, his/her personal commitment and also interaction with others. Leech and Short (2007) aver that it is about the relation between language and its users, that it communicates the speaker's attitudes and influences the behaviour and attitudes of the hearer. This context contains all examples of communication in dialogue or speech involving participation of two or more speakers.

The Textual Function

The textual metafunction engenders resources for presenting interpersonal and ideational meanings as information organised into text that can be ongoingly exchanged between speaker and listener. At the clause rank the major textual item is THEME. The textual component of the metafunctions expresses the structure of information and the relation of each part of the discourse to the whole and to the setting. Language is thus used to produce a cohesive text.

The textual function is realized in grammar by the message, structure, systems of theme and information, deixes, voice, presuppositions and cohesive patterns of reference will be discussed under clause analysis.

Methodology

Stylistic Analysis of *Purple Hibiscus*

Introduction

Here presented is a stylistic analysis of the theme and style in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*. In this analysis, the Systemic Functional Grammar is applied in the analysis of the themes, transitivity structures and stylistic features.

Themes and Thematic Structures

Theme is a resource for organizing the interpersonal and ideational meaning of each clause in the form of a message. Each clause occurs at some particular point in the unfolding of the text; this is its textual environment. The system of THEME sets up a local environment which provides a point of departure by reference to which the listener interprets the message. The local environment serving as a point of departure is the Theme. What is presented in this local environment is the Rheme. The clause as a message

therefore is composed of two thematic statuses: Theme and Rheme. The speaker organizes his message so that ideas stick together.

Some of the themes revealed in the text are as follows:

- The theme of Jaja's rebellion of Eugene's fanatical religious observances.
- The themes of traditional sayings, greetings and chieftaincy titles.
- The theme of victimization of the widow by her in-laws (Aunty Ifeoma and her in-laws).
- The theme of poor university administration.
- The theme of Papa Nnukwu's disillusionment at his son's rejection because of religious differences.
- The theme of religious celibacy leading to unconsummated love affairs between Father Amadi and Kambili.
- The theme of female gender oppression and patriarchal violence (Eugene and his wife, Beatrice).
- Conflict between the exponents of two religions: Eugene and the missionaries for Christianity, Papa Nnukwu and the masquerades for traditional religion.
- The theme of political unrest and violence (the murder of Ade Coker).

We examine how theme structures reveal the organization of the message and relate the clause to the overall development of text in context.

Thematic and Information Focus

Textual metafunctions are ways of using language to organize, understand and express information for effective communication. Thematic status is expressed mostly by position in sequence. Theme is often realized by initial position and rheme by non-initial position. E.g. in the following statement the information focus (for emphasis) is the theme (In 2009) while the rheme gives additional information on the theme.

In 2009, Doyin got married to a king.

(Theme) (Rheme)

However, there are a number of thematic options including the choice between 'marked theme' (as said above), and 'unmarked theme' (the subject in a declarative clause) e.g. Kambili arrived in Nsukka).

(Theme) (Rheme)

The Theme of Rebellion

In *Purple Hibiscus*, Jaja refuses to take the communion in a church service. This meets with the fury of Eugene, his father. The utterances below indicate Jaja's responses in a conversation between Eugene and his son, Jaja, which foregrounds Adichie's use of thematic and information focus as tools to organize her message. Here, Jaja rebels against a religious order and routine of receiving 'communion' at every mass. This contravenes his father's religious beliefs. Jaja gives his reasons for not receiving the communion as revealed in the following utterances and stands his ground.

- [1] The wafer gives me bad breath
 topical Rheme
 Theme
- [2] And The priest keeps touching my mouth
 Textual Topical Rheme
 Theme Theme
 conjunction
 .and It nauseates me
 Textual Theme Topical Theme Rheme
- Theme Rheme
 Given ←————— New
- [3] Then I will
 Textual Theme Topical Rheme
 Theme
 Then I will die, Papa
 Textual Topical Rheme
 Theme Theme

Purple Hibiscus, p.7, 8.

Jaja’s utterances function as illocutionary acts of complain, refusal and outright rebellion against a laid-down religious practice (receiving communion) highly upheld by his father, Eugene. The textual metafunction in form of ‘then’ and conjunction ‘and’ indicate the topical theme and rheme structures. The repetition (I will) is an assertion which expresses the psychological state of the speaker (Jaja) on the insistence that he would rather die than receive the communion again. The perlocutionary act is Eugene’s instant response because he has been enraged by Jaja’s utterances and nonchalance. The ideational function of Jaja’s refusal to take the communion is to give the story a turning point. His effrontery is so daring that henceforth activities mount up and point directly at the climax of the story because ‘things have fallen apart’. Eugene reacted by throwing the missal at Jaja.

Stylised Speech Analysis

In this analysis we examine the special way speech is used in given context and mode which are aspects of textual metafunctions. The following are some stylized speech used in the text. These highlight the linguistic and situational context of Igbo speech pattern. The themes of traditional greetings, titles and sayings are seen in the following utterances:

- [5] **Ezinne:** ... You know she started calling you ‘backyard snob’ because you don’t talk to anybody.

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[6] People: *Gudu morni. Have you woken up, eh? Did you rise well?*

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[7] People: *"Gudu morni. Did the people of your house rise well, oh?"*

[8] Jaja and Kambili: *Good morning, Papa. Good morning, Mama.*

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[9] Man: *Omerlora!* (Chieftaincy title name)

[10] Papa: *Ogbunambala!*

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[11] Jaja: *Papa Nnukwu are you well? How is your body?*

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[12] Anikwenwa: *"Ifukwa gi, you are like a fly blindly following a corpse into the grave!"*

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Analysis: In extract [5] the metaphorical meaning of *backyard snob* is a haughty person. One who has an offensive air of superiority about her. This is speech act of abuse whereby the addresser highlights the assumed pride and haughtiness of the addressee with this expression. Extracts [6] and [7] indicate loan words 'Gudu morni' for lexical *Good morning*. The rhetorical questions which follow are the second language greeting pattern transferred into the utterance in order to highlight Igbo speech pattern. Loan words 'papa' stands for father, and 'mama' stands for mother in item [8]. 'Omerlora!' in [9] and 'Ogbunambala!' in [10] are speech acts of greeting using chieftaincy title names. The rhetorical questions in [11] are also speech acts of greeting by asking after the welfare of the addressee using Igbo expression. Utterance [12] is idiomatic Igbo expression, meaning Eugene is blindly following the whiteman's religion. The code mix in utterance [13] expresses greeting: *Kedu?* Means *how are you?*

Transitivity Structures

In the analysis of a novel, Halliday relates linguistic observation to literary effects. The linguistic choice as previously noted are meaningful and stylistic, brought about by the transitivity processes. The ideational metafunction enables language to represent and define real and imaginary events. This section of our analysis reflects social action and how Adichie represents and classifies the world she is describing in the text.

The theme of poor administration: The writer portrays the crises in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, where Ifeoma lectures. The conversation between Chiaku and Ifeoma indicates a breakdown of law and order which is the subject matter and the activities which determine the ideational meaning in the theme of rebellion against the imposed leadership of the Sole Administrator.

Extract [15]

Okafor who lives on Fulton Avenue. His son Chidifu ...
 Actor P: material Cir: Location Carrier Identified

Yes, that one. He stole his
 P: P: Intensive Identifier Actor P: material

Relational
 father's exam papers and sold them to
 Participant type: Goal P: Intensive P: material P: Relational
 his father's students. Yes. Now that university is
 circumstances type: the Actor P: material
 Location

closed, the students came to the house, to
 P: material Actor P: material circumstance:
 Location

harass the boy for the money. Of course
 Goal Participant: beneficiary Cir: extent

he had spent it. Okafor beat his son's
 Participant: P: Goal Actor P: material
 Actor material l

front tooth out yesterday. Yet this is
 Circumstance: Location: Actor Carrier Process: relational
 extent Adjunct

the same Okafor who will do anything to win
 Intensive: Identified Cause
 attributive

favour with the Big men in Abuja. He is
 Identifying Circumstantial: Actor P: material
 Location

the one who makes the list of lecturers who are disloyal.
 Process: Participant: Circumstances:
 material Goal Extent

I hear he included my name and yours.
 Sayer P. Verbal Reported Circumstances: Target: Target
 role participant

Material Processes

Material processes bring out what is done by or what happened among one or more participants in a text. The material processes have the transitivity structures of Process + Actor + Goal. I exemplify with these clauses from the data:

- a. Okafor beat his son's front tooth out yesterday.
- b. He is the one who makes the list of lecturers who are disloyal.
- c. We cannot sit back and let it happen, mba.
- d. A governing council votes for a vice-chancellor.

The Actor (Okafor) is the Topical Theme of clause (a). He consciously performs the action of beating his son's front tooth out. The action of the transitive verb 'beat' allows for the transfer of activity from the Actor, Okafor to the Goal, his son. The action of beating also has a high transitivity function because it has an end-point. In (b), the transitivity function of the verbal group 'makes' is high as the action of the process actually happened as Okafor makes a compilation of the list of the lecturers. In (c) the activity of the process 'cannot sit back' and the negation is emphatic of the fact that quick action must be taken to put things right in the administration of the university. The Actor brings out the action of the verb in the external worlds. In (d) the material process is in the verbal group 'votes' which has high transitivity and an endpoint. The choice of the lexeme 'votes' is highly applicable and stresses the fact that vice-chancellors are voted for by the university governing council and not an imposition by the powers that be. Transitivity clauses allow the writer the option of placing the participants in Theme position and of representing 'concrete, physical events' which made it possible for Chimamanda Adichie to get her message across, in this way, transitivity structures express the main theme of the clause which is represented in the form of processes with associated participants and circumstances.

Experiential Structure of Material Processes

Material processes like the other types of processes are realized as Nominal + Verbal + Nominal Groups. We are able to indicate meaning in the clauses when we analyze their experiential structure.

In the clause:

Okafor beat his son's front tooth out yesterday

The Nominal Groups are realized respectively by the proper nouns 'Okafor' and common noun 'son'. These NGs (nominal groups) are expressed by the verbal group 'beat'. The relationship between the Actor, Okafor, and the Goal, his son is that they are joined by the material process. The focus of the information falls on the Event 'beat his son's front tooth out' just as it falls on 'makes the list', 'cannot sit back' and 'votes for' in the other clauses analyzed. Okafor represents the sycophants found at the different sectors of the economy in the society who have sacrificed their conscience to gain promotion and political power and lick the boots of their masters. The clauses also talk about rebellion and a need for a social change in the university system whereby vice-chancellors are duly elected and there is order in the university system. The clauses analyzed highlight features

indicating cardinal transitivity clauses typical of structure of narratives storyline clauses full of actions or fore-grounded clauses. Things (nominal groups) are more highly organized than events (verbal groups) because initial position is thematic; and the natural theme of a process or participant is its relation to the here – and – now, while the final position is informative and contains news of a process or participant.

Relational Processes

Relational processes are processes of being, which may be intensive, circumstantial or possessive. The modes may be attributive or identifying. Relational processes feature in the data as illustrated in the dialogue below in a conversation between Pa Nnukwu and Ifeoma while going on sightseeing with the children.

Their conversation centered around two issues:

- (1) Papa Nnukwu regrets allowing Eugene, his son to follow the whiteman’s religion: Christianity – this is the topical theme.
- (2) The value of a male child ‘Eugene’ compared to a female child ‘Ifeoma’.

The relational processes have the transitivity functions of Process + Identified + Identifier for the identifying relational processes and Process + Carrier + Attribute for the attributive relational clauses. According to Halliday (2000) the identifying clauses are often reversible while the attributive ones are not. They indicate that an entity is the identity of another or serves to define the identity of another. Chimamanda Adichie uses relational clauses to describe the degree of loss a traditionalist like Pa Nnukwu feels at the fanatical adherence to Christianity of a son as Eugene. Adichie also uses these clauses to describe the Igbo belief system which places more value on a male child than on a female. We examine them with these examples of the data.

- a. This is what our people say to the High God, the Chukwu.
- b. I should not have let him follow those missionaries.
- c. Nna anyi, it was not the missionaries.
- d. But you are a woman.
- e. You do not count.

Mental Processes

Mental processes feature in situations where they are used to describe psychological events and not actions. They are processes of thinking perceiving and feeling.

The theme of religious celibacy leading to unconsummated love affairs between Father Amađi and Kambili is seen here:

[18]	I	looked	up	to find	Father Amađi’s	eyes on me,		
	Senser	P:	Preposition	Phrase	Phenomenon			
		Mental						
and	suddenly	I	could not	lick	the ube	flesh	from the	seed.
	Cir. adverb	Actor	P: material		Location		Manner	
I	could not	move	my tongue,	could not	swallow.			
Actor	P: material		Location	P: material				

The following clauses indicate mental processes:

- a. I looked up to find Father Amadi's eyes on me.
- b. I was too aware of his eyes, too aware that he was looking at me and watching me.
- c. Father Amadi's musical voice echoed in my ears until I fell asleep.

Minor Processes

The Verbal, Behavioural and Existential processes feature as minor processes in this data. The types of processes are indicated in brackets and the processes themselves are italicised. Examples (a) and (b) indicate the theme of female gender oppression and patriarchal violence.

- a. There's blood on the floor. (Existential process)
- b. There was an accident, the baby is gone. (Existential process)
- c. There are tears in your eyes. (Existential process)
- d. The traders say it is hard to transport their food because there is no fuel, so they add on the cost of transportation (Existential process)
- e. They said he was like Chukwu. (verbal process)
- f. They said he was the son, but that the son and the father are equal. (Verbal process)
- g. This is what our people say to the High God, the Chukwu. (Verbal Process)
- h. The students said they could not study and asked if the exams could be rescheduled, but they were refused. (Verbal Process)
- i. She cried for a long time. (Behavioural Process)
- j. She cried until my hand, clasped in hers, felt stiff. (Behavioural Process)
- k. She cried until she fell asleep, her head against the seat of the chair. (Behavioural Process)

With the data analyzed, Chimamanda Adichie has effectively employed the transitivity processes to drive home the themes of:

1. Gender oppression through Eugene's manhandling of his wife.
2. Unconsummated love as seen in the interpersonal relationship between Father Amadi and Kambili.
3. Poor governance as expressed by the people on fuel scarcity, lack of electricity and high cost of transportation.
4. Conflict of two religions: Christianity and traditional religion. Eugene and the missionaries standing for Christianity while Papa Nnukwu and the masquerades are advocates of traditional religion.

Mood Structures

Mood structure indicates interpersonal meanings in the verbal exchange between speaker and listener, writer and reader. It depicts the roles of the participants and the attitudes and judgements of the speaker. In the following dialogue between Yewande and Eugene our analysis is guided by the interpersonal metafunction which correlates with tenor (style of discourse) in the context of situation. This is because tenor relates to the relationship

between interactors, the roles they perform and attitudinal comments. In this dialogue Yewande Coker (the wife of Ade Coker, Eugene's editor) cries to Eugene in despair.

Dialogue

A1 *They have taken him! They have taken him!*

All. *Yewande, Yewande.*

B1. *What will I do, sir? I have three children! One is still sucking my breast! How will I raise them alone?*

BII. *Yewande, don't talk that way. Ade will be fine, I promise you. Ade will be fine.*

Declarative Mood

Yewande Coker initiates her speech (in 1A:1) by declaring that Ade Coker, her husband has been arrested, in the declarative mood which has the syntactic structure of Mood + Residue. The proposition 'They have' is an assertion of an action that has taken place in the mood structure.

Interrogative Mood

In the first dialogue Adichie presents Yewande in distress over her husband's disappearance. This is expressed in the mood structure 'What will...', 'How will...' (subject-finite) question format, to which Eugene provides an answer.

Imperative Mood

An utterance in the imperative mood could function as a command, a request, an appeal or an alarm. In dialogue A, Yewande's illocution could be regarded as an alarm raised to alert Eugene of the situation of her husband as a result of the cordiality or interpersonal relationship between the two families. This illocution achieves the intended effect as Eugene undertakes the perlocutionary act of appealing to her saying: 'don't talk that way', with a promise that 'Ade will be well.'

Reference

Reference describes the writer's or speaker's use of linguistic expressions to indicate a relationship between the expressions used in a text and the objects to which they refer which are entities in the outside world of the language user. Adichie makes use of various types of references to construct information as seen in the following data.

[1] *This is what our people say to the High God, Chukwu.*

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[2] *They can go with you, but you know I do not want my children near anything ungodly.*

Pg. 78

Analysis:

In sample [1], the demonstrative pronoun 'This' is a cataphoric reference to the saying or prayer of the people to their God, Chukwu. In sample [2] 'They' is third person personal pronoun used in cataphoric reference (reference forward) to the children.

Conclusion

An examination of the metafunctions in the conversation between Jaja and Eugene revealed the theme of rebellion among other themes in the text. The writer also used stylised speech in given contexts to highlight the linguistic and situational contexts of Igbo speech pattern. The transitivity structures examined the linguistic choice of the writer in defining real and imaginary events through the use of transitivity processes. The modal grammar point of view reveals the attitudinal features of language the writer employs to express her view and her narrative style of writing, and her attitude is indicated by the linguistic choices she used to express her themes. She also made use of cohesive ties and dream metaphor to make the text wholistic and meaningful. She has also domesticated English effectively for communicative and aesthetic purposes.

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