

## APPROPRIATION OF NIGERIAN ENGLISH IN SELECTED NOVELS OF ADIMORA-EZEIGBO AND CHIMAMANDA ADICHIE

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### **Abstract**

The fluxional nature of language in contemporary Nigerian literature shows that literary works have been marked by a circuitous and revolving paradigm of intertextuality. The creative writers in this milieu have revealed the interrelationship between Nigerian English and Nigerian literature on the one hand, and the creative expression of the language viz-a-viz the cultural and linguistic identity of the Nigerian people. This paper attempts to ascribe a presumption that there is a deliberate attempt by the Nigerian novelist to provide a trajectory for a higher level of engagement following the domestication process. This work establishes that the deployment of indigenous linguistic elements by the selected contemporary Nigerian novelists has shown that the English language can be affable, malleable and adaptable in the accommodation of the thoughts, fancy, intents purpose and reality of the Nigerian culture. This paper adopted the postcolonial theory of Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffin and Tiffin Helen (1989). Their postulation is premised on the notions of 'defamiliarization and literariness' through a deliberate subversion of the conventional literary form. Findings revealed that multiple linguistic and discursive alliances dominate the works of the selected writers. It suggests that the author's deployment of glossing, untranslated words, inter-language syntactic fusion, code-switching and vernacular in the novels of Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo and Chimamanda Adichie is aimed at achieving aesthetic ambience and intertextual correlation. It then concludes that the appropriation of the English Language in the Nigerian fictional space offers an alternative discourse to the adopted British English imposed as a result of the historical reality of the Nigerian people.

**Keywords:** Nigerian English; contemporary Nigerian literature; postcolonialism; Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo; Chimamanda Adichie.

### **Introduction**

Nigerian fictional writing started formally with the writing of *Itan Segilola Eleyinjuege* in the late 1800s by Issacs B. Thomas. However, with the partitioning of Africa during the Berlin Conference of 1885, different writers within the various geographical spaces under the British colony attempted to portray the linguistic identity of their people. This act is underscored by the appropriation of indigenous languages in the narratives of Nigerian novelists. It is against this backdrop that Nigerian novel writers of English expression especially those from Igbo background sought a means of establishing a unique linguistic identity through the incorporation of their indigenous language in their narratives. In a seminal paper titled *African Writing, Aesthetics and Cultural Apocalypse* Oyegoke Lekan (2016, p.28) notes that:

(Nigerian) writing has had a large input from the creative writers, many of whom have had formal training in different disciplines which exposed them to the critical

traditions of the language of colonialism. The result of this is that most of these writers have become to a lesser or a greater degree bilingual and multilingual in the indigenous and colonial languages of creative expression.

(Consequently), Nigerian writers have the potential advantage of being able to think in two, sometimes more, important languages.

The literary production of Adimora-Ezeigbo and Chimamanda Adichie reveals that both novelists have contributed to national literature by developing a unique vocabulary peculiar to their ethnic demography while communicating the peculiar cultural and linguistic ecology of the Igbo people. Given the above, one characteristic of national literature is that the values inherent in the works are shared by a group of people with the same language, culture and history.

On the creation of national literature, Joe Cleary (2002, p.54) posits that ‘the creation of a national literature is something that evolves quite slowly and (within) that process there is an insistent emphasis both on domestic identity...and international difference’. To this end, the enunciation of the heterogeneous identity and interlingual abilities of Adimora-Ezeigbo and Adichie is geared towards reflecting the writers’ indigenous identity and linguistic patterns.

Elucidating on the nature, character and scope of modern Nigerian literature Ogede (2023) avers that modern Nigerian literature is a written literary piece that creates an ideological position through which the peculiarity of our customs and beliefs, traditions and religion, language, behavior and attitudes are brought into a proper perspective to produce modernity with coherent meaning and conceptual validation for the Nigerian people. It is against this backdrop that this paper attempts to explore modern Nigerian literature on one hand and the dynamic use of the English language in Modern Nigerian Literature.

In tandem with the reality of a new wave of creativity by Nigerian novelists, it is important to state that modern Nigerian literary writers transmute canonical works to create a model which reflects a hybrid of indigenous material and Western ethos. Ogede (2023, p.10) observes that modern Nigerian literature is an act ‘of making something new through the alteration of tradition’.

More closely related to the subject of appropriation of language in modern Nigerian literature is the politics of language in African countries. Ngugi ‘Wa Thiongo in *Decolonizing the Mind: Language Politics in African Literature*, opines that imperialism is the root of all the problems in Africa. He noted that ‘with the division of Africa into the different languages of the European powers during the Berlin conference of 1884, African countries came to be defined in terms of the languages of Europe’ (1986, p.4). He adds that what colonisation did is to destroy both language as a means of communication for daily life and language as a carrier of culture. Ngugi avers further that because literature carries culture, what foreign European literatures did was impose European culture on Africans. The consequence of this according to Ngugi is that Africans began to see themselves and their place in the world through the eyes of Europe and European literature. As a result of the foregoing, Ngugi avers that the European language should be jettisoned in African Literature because ‘language is the biggest weapon wielded... by imperialism’ (Ngugi, 1986, p.3).

In furtherance to the aforementioned, Ngugi opines that when an African child learns African literature in a European language, such a child would have racist outlooks inscribed in the very literature given to him, and the European description of the African way of life would be the one he would accept as a perfect prototype. Also, while Ngugi argues that “one of the evils of colonialism is a conspiracy to place English in the position of national language in many parts of Africa’ (1975, p.34), Achebe, on the other hand, does not deem the English language one of such evils. Contrarily, Achebe argues that the English language is a tool, a positive inheritance that came with colonialism. To Achebe, (colonialism) ‘did bring together many people that had previously gone their several ways, and it gave them a language with which to talk to one another’ (p.34). Consequently, Achebe believes that present-day African nations have no option but to tame and make one own the language(s) imposed upon the continent’s literature.

Akindele and Adegbite (2005); Awobuluyi, (2006); and Dairo (2015) have noted that there is a resurgence in the critical attention paid to Nigerian English. They observe that the linguistic flexibility and pluralism of Nigerian English is an indication of the need for national literature. On this note, these scholars stress that the identification and official reawakening of the various modes of indigenous expression is a tool to facilitate the admission of Nigerian English into the mainstream of the political, social and cultural experiences in Nigerian literature. Thus, across different genres of literature, an exploration of classics such as *Things Fall Apart*, *Death and the King’s Horseman*, *Idanre and Other Poems*, and *The Famished Road* shows that the English Language has become subservient to the impulse of creative writers. Achebe in *Morning Yet on Creation Day* (1975) explains that his decision to employ English as a language of artistic expression is to develop a new English language which is still in communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings.

To this end, the position of this paper is that Nigerian English has been deployed as an effective tool in carrying the discursive burden and value of the Nigerian people. The domestication process revealed in the selected novels reveals that contemporary Nigerian novelists attempt to transpose and expand the unfamiliar features of indigenous Nigerian languages. The preference for Nigerian writers of Igbo expression is aimed at assessing their appropriation of Standard English and the Igbo language. To put it differently, Adimora-Ezeigbo and Adichie, appropriate the English language to provide an alternative discourse to the generally acceptable English while validating the authenticity of Nigerian English in contemporary literary discourse.

### **Review of Related Literature**

The novels of Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo and Chimamanda Adichie have enjoyed scholarly exploration, particularly their use of language. Awa (2017) investigates Adimora-Ezeigbo’s domestication of the English language from the angle of Systemic Functional Linguistics. The study finds out that the ‘nativisation’ of the English language is aimed at selling the African culture to the world. Amadi (2019) underscores the dynamics of language as an instrument for ensnaring young female victims in intercontinental prostitution and therefore suggests that language has a negative perlocutionary effect in activating the forced migration of African women across borders. Ijem and Agbo (2022) investigate the representation of masculinity and its resistance in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Having uncovered that the superiority of the masculine gender over the female is a cultural creation, the study reveals that socio-linguistic and cultural variables give meanings,

expressions, and thought patterns to the ideological underpinnings of the male gender. Urujian (2022) examines the linguistic choices and construction of ideology in Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Trafficked*. Findings in the work show that language shapes ideology and ideological sentiments shape the way people use language.

Furthermore, Dojack and Abu-Obeida (2023) explore the stylistic style of figurative language and its role in reflecting the theme of race in Chimamanda Adichie's *Americanah*. The study discovers that figurative language can be used to reflect the theme of race poignantly. Judging from the above-highlighted studies on the use of language by Adimora-Ezeigbo and Chimamanda Adichie, little efforts seem to have been made to examine the manner Adimora-Ezeigbo and Chimamanda Adichie integrate influences from indigenous conventions adapted from traditional Igbo discourse in *Roses and Bullets* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Against this background, this study investigates how well the novelists can subvert the Standard British language in their representation of the Nigerian experience.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theory deployed in this paper is premised on the postulations of Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin in *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and practice in post-colonial literatures* (1989). These scholars aver that in postcolonial writings, there is 'defamiliarization and literariness' through a deliberate subversion of the conventional literary form. Ashcroft et al. further opine that postcolonial writing is largely a discussion of the process by which the language, with its power, and the writing, with its signification of authority, has been wrested from the dominant European culture' (7). Elucidating this argument further Ashcroft et. al. opines that 'language is a medium through which a hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated, and the medium through which conceptions of 'truth', 'order', and 'reality' become established'. The position of Ashcroft et al. corroborates the thrust of this study that the appropriation of the English language by Nigerian novelists is an attempt to de-emphasize and demystify the abrogation of the 'standard' British English inherited from the empire. Suffice it to say here that the emergence of non-canonical voices in postcolonial literary space is a means of negating the imposition of the 'standard' British English.

Using D.E.S Maxwell's model for examining postcolonial literatures, Ashcroft et al. pointed out that in societies where the indigenous people are colonized on their territories, writers were not forced to adapt to a different landscape and climate, but had their own ancient and sophisticated responses to them marginalized by the world-view which was implicated in the acquisition of English. They added that 'whether English actually supplanted the writer's mother tongue or simply offered an alternative medium which guaranteed a wider readership, its use caused a disjunction between the apprehension of, and communication about, the worldview' of the writers (1989, p. 24). Overtly, given that the circumstances that allowed the creation of postcolonial works of literature are highly social and political, critics must note that for the Nigerian novelists, language is an engaging tool to dispose the dominance of the Centre. For the contemporary Nigerian novelists therefore, appropriating the English language allows the voices of former colonial subjects to be heard and at the same time, it subverts the dominant Western styles of thought and imagination.

Corroborating Ashcroft et al., Homi Bhabha in 'Signs Taken for Wonders', explores how the colonizers use 'the book' as an instrument of control of colonized peoples. To Bhabha, 'the book'

carries with it a logocentric and ‘civilizing’ power that displaces the subaltern’s experiences. The result of this displacement according to Bhabha is that the colonized embrace the master’s discourse and simultaneously recreates their experience in the language of the colonizer. Elucidating the position of this paper, Bhabha believes that the misappropriation of the colonizer’s discourse is an act of resistance, both against all that the oppressor represents and against the power over the oppressed that the word authorizes.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted a qualitative descriptive content analysis method. The study deploys the postulation of Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffin and Tiffin Helen (1989) that deliberates subversion of conventional writing style is a characteristic feature of postcolonial writing. The choice of the writers and the texts was made out of the conviction that the selected writers’ choice of lexicon is an attempt to draw attention to the literary conventions and narrative habits that have coalesced in the imaginative expression of Adimora-Ezeigbo and Adichie. Additionally, the choice of the writers’ ethnic background is premised on their reflection of the ethno-cultural and linguistic peculiarities of the Igbo people.

### **Textual Analysis**

*Roses and Bullets* is a love story set before and after the war. It revolves around the two central characters: Eloka and Ginikanwa. The story widens to reveal the experiences of the two characters and their families during the war and the effects of the war on them. Ginikanwa and Eloka and Ginikanwa are fond of each other. In a bid to defend the Biafran nation, Eloka enlists in the army. Ginikanwa attends a party with her friend Janet with whom she works at the refugee camp. At the party, she was drugged and raped by a faceless soldier. A few months after the incidents, she informs her Aunt Chito. Ginikanwa and Chito went in search of Eloka to explain the situation which resulted in the pregnancy but they could not locate him. On her return back home, she informs her parents-in-law who sends her away. Ginikanwa's parents also reject her which leaves her with no choice but to live with her aunt. In due course, Ginikanwa gives birth to a malformed baby, who dies shortly after birth. The war ends and Eloka returns home to hear about what happened to his wife in his absence. Ginikanwa later finds Eloka but he refuses to listen to her explanation.

While mourning Eloka’s rejection, Ginikanwa is arrested for the murder of Sergeant Suke whom she has asked to circumcise himself if he wants to marry her. While in detention, she was raped. Udo, informs Nwakire about Ginikanwa’s arrest. He confronts Eloka and shoots him. After that, he locks himself in his room and shoots himself. Udo discovers him dead after breaking his door. After several futile attempts to rescue Ginikanwa BY Uncle Ray and Udo, Ginikanwa is rescued by Miss Taylor, her foreign teacher. The teacher flies her to a hospital where she is admitted for six months. After her recovery, she gains admission to the university.

Chimamanda Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun*, on the other hand, focuses on the Nigerian Civil War. Adichie delves into Nigeria's horrific historical past to depict the impact of war's brutalities on peasants and intellectuals alike through a careful exploration of the incidents before, during, and after the war. Through the character delineation of the Odenigbo, Adichie reveals that for the Biafrans, the desire to be free from the marginalisation which characterised post-independent Nigeria is the singular reason the Biafrans want to secede from Nigeria. Similarly, Adichie confirms

that anything can happen in the face of war through the experiences of her characters. Through the portraiture of Ugwu and Olanna's experience of the war, Adichie avers that war is capable of stripping humanity from individuals. Odenigbo diminishes into a drunk lacking the lack of zeal for intellectual engagement. In all, Adichie presents the collective trauma for all the individuals who contested for a new nation

### **Appropriation of English Language in Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Roses and Bullets* and Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun***

A careful study of Adimora-Ezeigbo's novels shows how adept she is at creating a syncretism between standard British English and her indigenous Igbo language. In an interview titled 'On African Cultures, Literatures and Languages' Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo points out that 'people should write in the languages they are proficient in, they should make efforts to write in their mother tongue' (Azodo, 2014). This explains why narratives such as *The Last of the Strong Ones* (1996), *House of Symbols* (2001), *Children of the Eagle* (2002), *Trafficked* (2008) and *Roses and Bullets* (2011) are fused with indigenous Igbo words to reflect the 'local flavour' and culture of the people. Therefore, Adimora-Ezeigbo's fusion of both languages conforms to Ashcroft et al.'s position that there is a need 'to overcome an imposed gap resulting from the linguistic displacement of the pre-colonial language by English' (p.9). Technically, in *Roses and Bullets* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*, there is the appropriation of English, glossing, untranslated words, inter-language syntactic fusion and, code-switching, and vernacular.

Appropriation a common feature of colonized society occurs when a writer adopts and conforms to the elements of the culture of the colonizer. In postcolonial writing, appropriation occurs when there is a cultural influence from both the native people being colonized and the enforced cultural values of the colonizers. Interlanguage syntactic fusion is characterised by the narrative preserving features of standard British English while generalizing some second language speaking rules. It is idiosyncratically based on the learner's experiences with the second language. Code-switching is the practice of alternating between the English and Igbo languages.

In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie interweaves the English expressions of her characters with the Igbo language. The novelist's intention, in the novel, is to allow these characters to speak about peculiar African experiences locatable in the culture of the Igbo people. Adichie presents an apt description of the Igbo culture, the lucid manner she presents her narrative rehashes the intuition of a native speaker. Lombardo (2018, p.3) describes Adichie's novels as 'hybrid, interlingual and intercultural'.

Adichie's deployment of the indigenous language shows her ingenuity in operating at 'a third-space of enunciation' Homi K. Bhabha (1994). According to Bhabha, the space in-between two languages and two cultures where two identities evolve and old stereotypes and beliefs are dismantled is the reason for the variegated patterns noticeable in postcolonial writings. Following Chinua Achebe's pattern, Adichie, in *Purple Hibiscus*, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, *A Thing Around Your Neck* and *Americanah*, modified the standard English to suit specific cultural elements. Similarly, Adichie's mastery of the English language and portraiture of indigenous cultural elements shows that she is adept in her creative oeuvre.

In *Roses and Bullets*, Adimora-Ezeigbo explores the socio-cultural context of the environment where her fiction is set. Glossing is an act of explaining and translating indigenous words using a second language to help readers learn the meaning of the word. In some instances, Igbo words are left untranslated. Where this is applicable, readers are left with the option of decoding the meaning of such words from the context of the passage. Adichie deploys the technique of glossing which is coloring a text with indigenous words to add ethnographic colors to a literary piece. Her strong view on the appropriation of her indigenous language depicts her as a subversive postcolonial writer. A careful study of her novels reveals that when Adichie uses Igbo words, sometimes translations are offered; at other times the reader is left with no option but to decipher the meaning of the words from the ensuing context. Below is an example:

After the *iku-aka*, the rest of the ceremonies which should have taken weeks or even months were compressed into just one visit to her home, on a Friday.

(*Roses and Bullets*, p.274)

In the above example, *iku-aka* may mean a formal introduction. In the context of the text, it is a formal ceremony that shows the intention of young people to become man and wife. The use of vernacular is meshed into a text without rendering the meaning of such vernacular words differently.

In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie's use of untranslated Igbo words shows that she manipulates indigenous words to build up vocabularies whose meaning can be deciphered by readers outside the Igbo culture. Her unconventional approach to narrative composition allows her to create a specific syntactic pattern noticeable in her writing. Her linguistic style has created a niche for her in national literature. Adichie uses Igbo words at length without translating them. On a specific occasion when the Caritas, a non-government organization donated dried fish to the Biafran relief center, the women at the center sang:

Caritas, thank you  
Caritas si anyi taba okporoko  
na kwashiorkor ga-ana (*HYS*, p.253)

While Adichie did not provide the literal translation of these Igbo words, one can garner from the excerpt that the women praised Caritas for giving them dried fish which will prevent them from developing kwashiorkor during the Biafran war. Still, in another case in point, translations are offered, at other times, words are left untranslated. Through the character portraiture of Olanna, the protagonist of the novel, Adichie presents elite who foregrounds her knowledge of the Igbo culture. Despite Olanna's wealthy background and educational exposure, the infusion of indigenous vocabulary in her discourse shows that Adichie is intentional about dismantling the presumption of the colonized world on the civility of the marginalized 'Other'. On a visit to her Aunt, Olanna intones:

My aunty! *Kedu?*  
'I am even better now that I see you!  
'Arinze is not back from her sewing class?'  
'she will be back anytime now'.  
'How is she doing? *Ona-agakwa?* Is her sewing going well?

‘The house is full of patterns  
that she has cut? (HAYS, 38 )

Asking about her cousin Arinze from her aunt, *Kedu* means ‘how are you’? While *Ona-agakwa*, for instance, may mean ‘Is her sewing going well?’ In *Half of a Yellow Sun.*, From this context, Igbo words are followed immediately by their English meaning. To a large extent, this provides a means of interpreting and decoding specific words which belong exclusively to the indigenous culture of the novelist. This is what Ashcroft et.al describe as ‘selective lexical fidelity’ (p.64). Consequently, the idea of postcolonial novelists appropriating the standard British English is to present a discourse infused with cultural and linguistic translation as well as linguistic transliteration. Invariably, when postcolonial writers write in two languages, they use words from their indigenous language which forces readers to understand the relevant aspect of the culture of their people described in the novel.

In *Roses and Bullets*, songs are rendered freely in Igbo. Ginika sings in Igbo:

Gbapee, gbapee, gbapee  
Onye obuna gbapere ayi uzo  
Na ayi na-abia-eee!  
Gbapee, gbapee, gbapee  
Gbapere ayi uzo  
Na ayi na-abia-eee!  
‘Biafra nwe mmeri  
Ojukwu nye anyi egbe’ (R & B, 237).

Other Igbo words used include: *agbogho mmuo*. ‘*Ozuone*, ‘*daa*’, ‘*akputu*’ ‘*dede*’, ‘*ewo*’ ‘*Kpuchie onu*’ ‘*Udara*’ ‘*Kedu*’. In this instance, Adimora-Ezeigbo develops a new language in her attempt to domesticate the English language. This process according to Ashcroft et al. is a ‘genuine and discrete linguistic system employed by learners of a second language. ‘It is ‘cohesive and distinct both from the source language and the target language’ (p.67). Invariably, when writers write in a second language, the lexical items found in such expressions can be harnessed to reflect the linguistic terms found in the language of the native speaker. In this instance, postcolonial writers marry the syntax of the indigenous language to the lexical forms of English. Hence, writers who wish to remain connected to the "rhythm of the vernacular voice" (p.69) may deploy syntactic fusion. Such fusion might include using nouns as verbs, metonymic use of adjectives and double comparatives found in native language construction.

In other instances, In *Roses and Bullets* that which is Standard English is rendered differently. The aim of this is to show alterity. Instances in the text include:

Whoever takes the cup from you and drinks the wine is henceforth to be known as  
your husband, as far as we are concerned. ‘Daughter is that clear?’ ‘  
(*Roses and Bullets*, p.275)

In the extract above there are no Igbo words but the text is glossed with clearly appropriated English that reflects an indigenous Igbo culture. An important aspect of solemnizing a marriage ceremony is the presentation of wine to the husband. The idea of wine presentation is infused into the text to add an ethnographic color.



Another literary subversion which Adimora-Ezeigbo deploys is code switching and vernacular transcription. This involves the use of direct transcription in the vernacular language alone or a code switch between the indigenous language and English language within a text. By incorporating them into contemporary novels, its use is likely to rekindle interest in the study of Igbo as one of the indigenous languages in Nigeria. For instance, Ginika heard another youth shout him down. 'Mechie onu gi', shut your mouth! You will for sure catch a leopard with bare hands' (p.54). In another conversation between Ginika and her mother-in-law, Ginika's mother-in-law expressed her dissatisfaction when she learnt that Ginika and Eloka both agreed not to have any child until the war was over. She quizzes: 'Hei, you quite agree, eh? Lekwenu muo, look at me – o! Why do people get married? Is it not to have children?' (p.313).

Elucidating on Adimora-Ezeigbo's style of narratives, Susan Arndt (2008) observes that she leans on Western innovations but "refuses to accept the Western prose convention as binding" p.22). She deploys the literary medium to express her own cultural experiences.

In *Roses and Bullets*, Adimora-Ezeigbo employs a lexicon of Nigerian English which she infuses freely in *Roses and Bullets*. Examples of such words are: *Mammy wota*, *wrappa*, *intorica*, and *chinchin*. Apart from building up a plethora of Nigerian English expressions, the repertoire of the linguistic pattern of Ezeigbo reveals that a level of interlingual heterogeneity can be achieved through a fusion of the vernacular Igbo language and Nigerian English.

In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie uses terms that reveal her Igbo background. Some excerpt taken from the novel shows the novelist's cultural distinctiveness, especially her linguistic representation of Igbo words in English expression. This according to Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1989) is the hallmark of alterity. These illustrative examples elucidate the flora within the Igbo environment.

1. They were opportunities to find her bent over, fanning firewood or chopping *ugu* leaves for her mother's soup pot. (*HAYS*, p.17)
2. His grandmother had not needed to grow her favourite herb, *arigbe*, because it grew wild everywhere. (*HAYS*, p.21)
3. Chicken boiled with *uziza* (*HAYS*, p.64)

Adichie's domain of English language usage allows her the liberty of drawing symbols from her bucolic environment. She seems to be interested in showing the hybridious and fecund nature of Nigerian English. The significance of the Igbo words conceived in terms of the natural environment and forage representation will enhance an understanding and appreciation of flora in an indigenous Nigerian language.

In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie uses colloquial expressions and proverbs such as: "The white men will poke and poke the women in the dark but they will never marry them" (*HAYS*,80), and 'he who brings kola nut brings life', 'You and yours will live, and I and mine will live', 'Let the eagle perch and let the dove perch and, if either decrees that the other will not perch, it will not be well for him' (*HAYS*,164). Proverbs enhance the aesthetic quality of modern Nigerian literature and it also shows the terseness and quality of style of the novelists. Adichie's process of appropriation seems to be bound up in her cultural experience. Thus, while the language of her Igbo characters is direct and unambiguous, the proverbs presented have to be appropriated to be perceived in the light of the

specific situation, moment or context of the given discourse. Therefore, the meaning applicable and relevant is uniquely determined by the nature of the context or human situation of usage. A close examination of Adichie's appropriation technique reveals the full implication and meaning of the proverb even to cultural outsiders.

### Conclusion

Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie exhibit the cultural elements and patterns of social behavior of the people that make up the South Eastern part of Nigeria where they both hail from. In *Roses and Bullets* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*, the expressions of the characters are glossed with clearly appropriated English to reflect the authenticity of the Igbo culture. In addition, the novelists seem to have shown a remarkable resilience in handling ideas and concepts alien to how meaning is expressed in the English structural system. Having fitted the language into their cultural mold; Adimora-Ezeigbo and Adichie modified British English to suit local communication needs. Similarly, there is the transfer of cultural meanings from the indigenous language into Nigerian English. Both novelists attempt a reinterpretation of existing meanings in English to cover new areas of experience in Nigerian English.

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