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15

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NOTICE OF ACCEPTANCE OF ARTICLE FOR PUBLICATION

I am writing to inform you that your paper titled "Decolonizing Nigerian Literature: Chinua Achebe's Use of the Igbo Lexicosyntactic.

Which you sent to us for publication has been accepted. It will appear in the Vol. 1/2 issue of The Nasara Journal of Humanities which is being prepared for printing.

Please accept our congratulations.

Aperu

Dr. J. O. Aper
Editor-in-Chief,
The Nasara Journal of Humanities

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(NAJOK)

Date: 2/8/05

Dr. (Mrs) Ibrahim B. F.

On behalf of the Editorial Board, I write to inform you that your article titled Decolonizing Nigerian Literature: Chinua Achebe's Use of the Igbo Lexico-Syntactic Aesthetic.

has been found publishable in Vol. 1 No. 2 of the Nasara Journal of Humanities on the following conditions.

1. That you effect all corrections and comply with assessor's comments strictly.
2. That you submit one hard copy and one diskette version for immediate printing / publication.
3. That you pay the sum of six thousand five hundred Naira N6,500 as publication fee as soon as you receive this notification to enable you get the acceptance letter.

Finally, this notification is not an acceptance letter.

Thank you.

Asperif
Dr. J. O. Asperif
Editor-in-Chief
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(NAJOK)

INTRODUCTION

Chinua Achebe as we all know, is a prominent West African Novelist. He was born in 1930. He is said to be the son of the first Igbo missionary teacher in Igboland. He has among other novels written Arrow of God, reflecting in all ramifications his immediate environment.

Africaness will therefore be examined from the novel of choice under the following headings -

the historical placement, geographical setting, field of discourse, mode of discourse, tenure of discourse, context of culture, Aspects of culture, Rhetorical devices, other figurative uses, the various varieties of language use in the novel such as pidgin English, African English, standard English and the Igbo translated English. The Aspects of culture will be re-classified under the following parameters. Names of weeks and the Igbo time concept, names of market days, names of villages, names of rivers, beliefs, proverbs, the Igbo cosmic view, names of Igbo gods, Igbo festivals i.e Yam-festival, the Festival of the Pumpkin leaves and the Igbo Morphology.

HISTORICAL PLACEMENT

The novel was written in 1964 but it reflects on the colonial contact with the traditional culture and religion. Phrases like the one on Page 92 of the novel proves this fact.

'Ezeulu merely wanted one of his sons to be his 'eye and ear' at this new assembly, this new religion...."

This extract sheds light on the history of the Igbo people. It can therefore be regarded as a socio-historical novel.

GEOGRAPHICAL PLACEMENT

It is the Igbo society of Nigeria that Chinua Achebe depicts in Arrow of God. The structural description of the setting and some of the lexical items used in this description readily reveals this fact.

His Obi, was built differently from other men's huts. There was the usual long threshold in front but also a shorter one on the right as you entered. The eaves on this additional entrance were cut back so that sitting on the floor, Ezeulu could watch that part of the sky where the moon had its door. P.I.

This structural building conforms to the a typical African house. The Igbo society is well known to be highly organised but stratified. The Igbo land can be located around the Eastern part of Nigeria. The contextual nature of the setting of the novel gives it away as an 'Igbo novel' translated into English.

The protagonist's house remains the focal point from which all other events takes off. Geographically, there are six Igbo villages mentioned in the novel which combined to form Umuaro in order to prevent foreign intervention. They are umuachala, Umunneora, Umuagu, Umuezeani, Umuogwugwu and Umuisiuzu.

FIELD OF DISCOURSE

There is a conflict between the colonial and indigenous cultures. The introduction of the European ways of life and religion brings nothing but chaos into the Igbo culture. The two cultures therefore clash.

"The place where the christians built then place
worship
of was not far from Ezeulu's compound. As he sat in
his Obi thinking of the Festival of the Pumpkin
leaves, he heard their bell" P. 42.

The register therefore becomes complex because of the complexity of the situation. There is a mixture of the Igbo transliterated English and standard English. This mixture of register is appropriate to the situation. All the other subject matters in the novel such as the internal dilemma of a chief priest, the dream motif, war disunity, the importance of ritual all revolve round the major theme of cultural clash making for a randomness of the subject matter.

MODE OF DISCOURSE

The novel is written to be read by the immediate audience of the author - the Igbo people of Nigeria and also for the general consumption of the African audience as the novel is symbolic of all that happened all over Africa during the colonial period, with particular attention to the Igbo situation. The novel according to the structuralists is "the model by which society conceives itself.

Infact, a kind of discourse that articulates the world" I

Of all the genres, the novel is the most tied to the world. The novel is written in narrative form in accordance with the Igbo traditional folktales. The effect of this mode on the audience is that it keeps their memory on the colonial activities intact and allows them to think of the atrocities of that period leading them to a sort of self awareness.

TENOR OF DISCOURSE

The author and this Igbo audience actually communicates. They are very much at home with each other because of a pick on cultural elements, the direct insertion of native words, translation from English into Igbo as can be seen in the earlier quoted speeches of pages 1, 42 and 92 and also some lexical words i.e Obi..... Ikenga..... Amadioha.... bud-beds e.t.c.

The Igbo characters themselves in the novel are in political conflict Nwaka for example refers to Ezeulu's speech before the public as a speech "told to Ezeulu by his father about the olden days..... Today, is a different period. From the contents of their speeches and responses to each other, we are able to deduce a rivalry situation between the African characters themselves!

The author also addresses the other general African audience through direct translations, pidgin English and the use of what can be called African language as will be seen under our classification of the varieties into groups, in the course of this paper.

No doubt, the language is raised beyond the comprehension of a child. The extensive use of proverbs examples of which be seen in the section under the aspects of culture, points at the language

use as that of the adults. To an ordinary reader, the text might appear difficult.

The author is definitely in support of his people. He condemns the foreign intervention and celebrates essentially the Igbo values as can be seen in the yam festival and the Festival of the Pumpkin leaves. These features used are to point to the reader all the good aspects they are about to lose to the Europeans.

The missionaries and the traditionalists are at logger-heads. This is why Ezeulu refuses to be imprisoned and explains his culture to the policeman - P. 152. The Europeans themselves argue on certain issues - See Winterbottom and Clarke PP. 34 - 38.

CONTEXT OF CULTURE

Generally, in Africa, the place of events are very important; more important than the time of events. In the Igbo society, there is the belief in gods, and spirits. Obika for instance sees a spirit near the ugili tree between his village Umuachala and the neighbouring village - Umunneora. He reports to Ezeulu who explains the function of that spirit and the rites involved. At the opening pages of the novel, Ezeulu is also seen praising the forces above and around him while praying. The effect of this context is the picture of a cultural unification portrayed to the audience.

As the new moon appears as well, the children are heard shouting on all sides - "Onwa atuo! onwa atuo!...." The introduction of the people's expectation of a new moon gives room for anxiety not only the characters there in the novel, but also the anxiety of the readers. Looking at the Igbo cultural context, Bu - Buakei Jabbi (1989) says that -

"The dominant myths, and rites of Limuaro with their intrinsic meanings are potential interpretative basis for a viable assessment of Arrow of God"².

The entire picture presented to the audience by Achebe is that of a complete cultural life which is armed with style markers, properly organised to fit into the native Igbo man's ways of life. The employment of cultural and local items such as "mud-beds,... wooden - bowls.... calabashes... goatskins.... gourds.... e.t.c. are Africa semantic features used to portray the Igbo cultural context.

LANGUAGE

Like culture, language according to Many Pratt and Elizabeth Traugott (1980).

".... is around us everywhere, in speech, writing, sign or in minds, Language is symbolic involving signs' Through language, community institutions which embody community aspirations and ways of life are created. Without language, culture would be impossible"³.

Achebe himself is of the opinion that,

"The price a world language must be prepared to pay is submission to many different kinds of use. The African writer should aim to use English in a way that brings out his message best without altering the language to the extent that its value as a medium of international exchange will be lost. He should aim at fashioning out an English which is at once universal and able to carry his peculiar experience"⁴. For this reason, Achebe chooses various dialects of the English language and writes in these dialects.

GRAMMATICAL LEVEL

The speech of each character is particularised. Characters speak according to their age, levels of education, status within the society and depending on their sex. Before we go into the classification of the language varieties, one will like to point out the effect of particularising the character's speeches. From the utterances of each character, we can easily get the character's

level of maturity, level of education, status, age, sex e.t.c.

There are four identified varieties of the English language in the novel.

(1) STANDARD ENGLISH

There is the standard English as can be seen in the language of captain Winterbottom. His is infact Queen's English.

When Winterbottom explains the function of the Igbo parsonal god to Mr. Clarke, he says,

"Ikenga is the most important fatish in the Igbo man's arsenal soto speak. It represents his ancestors, to whom he must make daily sacrifice P. 37.

Winterbottom carefully selects his diction in order to give the right picture of what an Ikenga is. He does not speak in proverbs.

His own variety is therefore not African but modern English.

Standard English can also be seen in Clarke's speech - P. 34.

An elder in the African setting is expected to use proverbs, I

idioms and wise sayings in serious I discussions such as this

but this is absent in the speeches of Winterbottom and Clarke.

Their educational background and status in the society could be

read from their speeches. The straightforwardness of their

speeches makes their language very informal. The effect is an

amusement of the audience and a critical outlook at the African culture.

(2) PIDGIN ENGLISH

Pidgin English can be exemplified from the speeches of the policeman - Mose Unachukwu, Boniface Winterbottom's 'boy' and his second steward - John Nwodika all of whom are African characters.

The policeman Says,

I use to tellam say blackman juju no be
something wey man fit take play. But
when I tellam na so so laugh in de laugh.
When he finish laugh, he call -
me John and I say, Massa. He say you
too talk bush talk'. P. 155.

From the Pidgin English, the reader is also to know the stark illiterates - the uneducated Africans.

(3) AFRICAN ENGLISH

What I decided to group as African English is the type of English spoken by characters like Edego and Children's language as depicted by Obiageli. African English is full of idioms. It is the language of the youngfolk in the novel. Edego says of Ezeulu for instance.

If Ezeulu said he merely wanted one of his sons to be his 'eye and ear' at this new assembly, why did he not send Nwafor who was close to his thoughts to carry out such a mission? p. 92.

'Eye and Ear' are idiomatic expressions typical of African speech. It stands for 'a representation of oneself'. The expression gives the reader both a visual and auditory effect.

(4) IGBO ENGLISH

The language of the protagonist - Ezeulu as the Chief Priest is a religious language. It is very prayerful, accompanied with certain speech acts. Besides, it is loaded with proverbs. Grammatically, it is a direct translation from English language into the Igbo language. This is clearly seen in the language of Nwaka. Also in the language of other elderly men and in the language of the women. Nwaka says,

"Wisdom is like a goatskin bag; every man carries his own. Knowledge of the land is also like that. Ezeulu has told us what his Father told him about the olden days.....
Would they go today and claim all those sites? p. 16.

In fact, the Igbo language is full of rhetorics. Many of the ideas are put into proverbs, witty sayings and wise sayings. The Igbo

man tries to put so many things in a single proverb and leaves the audience to debunk this. The effect of this is that the reader is forced to think and reflect on the issue and the readers attention is also sustained throughout the novel with this kind of use. You want to know the meaning of this and that and keeps on reading the novel.

It is noteworthy that the Igbo English clauses is characteristic of a preference for the use of more main clauses than the subordinate clause. A study of this whole of this particular speech by Nwaka reveals this fact. There are 26 main clauses in the speech while the subordinate clauses are only 15 in number.

Apart from direct translations, the influence of the mother-tongue interference can be seen in the Igbo English. Most of the Igbo words such as 'Obi.... Chi.... Ikenga e.t.c.' are also freely used and left untranslated. There is therefore a deliberate deviation in the language experimentation. There are piles of features and the deviation is at all levels of linguistic analysis. Ezeulu says to his son Edego,

"Perhaps I spoke with water in mouth"

A man who has never submitted to anything will soon submit to the burial mat", P. 11.

Various registers - political, religious, conversational are therefore mixed in the Igbo variety, making the language a complex one. The Igbo sentences are usually very long because in translating, the Igbo man tries as much as possible to follow the narrative nature of his native language. Examine,

(i) 'Ezeulu could watch that part of the sky where the moon had its door p.1.

(ii) 'Someday, he would have to rely on someone else's eyes as his grandfather had done when his sight failed' P.1

Most of the words are also stressed and the effect is for emphasis.

Another translated sentence is -

- (iii) The woman who will bear the
man who will say it has not
been born yet P. 3.

In standard English, that sentence would read,

'The woman who will bear the man
who will say it is not yet born'.

The singular present tense - auxiliary verb 'is' is therefore
changes to the present perfect tense in the Igbo translation. The
Igbo man is fond of using the passive voice and therefore transforms
the sentence.

The use of the adverbial clause of place someday in sentence-
11) above brings our thoughts to the aspects of the Igbo culture.

ASPECTS OF IGBO CULTURE

(a) The Igbo Cosmic World

This can be easily interpreted by making a glossary of
the Igbo terms. An attempt at doing this reveals the naming and
a distinction of the various Igbo gods - Ahajoku, Amadioha, Agbara,
Ani e.t.c. Most interestingly, the names of these gods all begin
with the same capital letter 'A'. This is to stress their impor-
tance within the Igbo cosmic world. This is also probably why
Achebe does not also use these Igbo words to merely suit the purpose
but goes further in each case to explain them. For example, when
he mentions,

Amadioha he says - god of thunder

Ani - mother earth.

The functions of these gods within the cosmic world are enumerated
for us. The effect on the reader is a full understanding of the
Igbo cosmic world.

The local images used also goes a long way to point at the basis
of the Igbo existence and their believe in traditionalism. i.e.

'calabash.... woden bowl.... pumpkin
leaves.... new yam... guns...arrows
... machets.... medicine hut...pots
... taboos.... etc. "pp. 228 - 285

There are also yam festival and the 'Festival of the pumpkin leaves.

(b) The Igbo Time concepts, names of weeks and market days .

The series of the time noun are joined together by the prepositions ".....into....on..... at..... "P. 71. The market days are calculated by the use of the following vocabulary.

'The next day..... the following day

..... Afo..... Nkwo..... Eke..... Oye

.....".

They are all market days calculated within a single narration. The audience is able to realise that the Igbo concept of a week is only a matter of four days interval.

IGBO MORPHOLOGY

In the names of the villages,

Umuaro - Umuachala,. Umuonwofa, Umuagu,

Umuazeani, Umuagwugwu and Umuaiswo, we can deduce a morpheme bound. 'Umu' is presupposed to be a morpheme meaning 'A place of.....' Secondly 'the name of our protagonist evidently consists of two morphemes.

Eze and Ulu since

Ulu is the name of a deity then

Eze = priest of

Ezeulu = priest of Ulu.

We also said that the names of the Igbo small gods all begin with the capital letter 'A'.

'A' in the Igbo concept is a morphemic letter standing for the supreme-god.

Amadioha - god of thunder'

Amajioku - god of the earth e.t.c.

IGBO PHONOLOGY

There is no doubt that there is a conventional relationship between sound sequences and their intrinsic meaning in the translation of the following extract from the text

'Take away that word dare, he replied to his enemy.

'Yes I say take it away. No man in allUmuaro
can stand up and say that I dare not. The
woman who will bear the man who will say
it has not been born yet. P. 3.

We get a speech situation in which an 'I' (1st person pronoun) is
addressing some 'you' (second person plural).

There is also a preference for the use of consonant clusters-

(pl) as in replied

(my) as in enemy

(rd) as in word

(st) as in stand

(wh) as in who e.t.c.

Most of the Igbo phonemes are stressed with a varied vowel qualities.

Diphthongs are also inclusive especially the

(ai) as in take, away e.t.c.

The speech is also adequately punctuated; in question and answer
forms with exclamation marks. There is a total vocalisation and
this is to appeal to the readers emotions as they feel the psycho-
logical position of the character speaking.

IGBO RHETORICAL DEVICES

Most of the characters especially those examined under the
Igbo variety of English in persons of Nwaka and Ezeulu speak in
proverbs, using concrete images, metaphors, symbols to express their
power, control of medicine, herbs, sacrifices and referring to in
animals. Ezeulu for example refers to the scorpion as "the mighty
one of the scrubland". P.6.

Among the proverbs used in the text are

- (i) When death wants to take a little dog,
it prevents it from smelling even
excrement (P. 226).

Interpretation
of the Proverb - The change in situation did not allow Ezeulu
to realise in good time that his decision
to punish the Umuaro people will mean a
self - destruction.

Example of
Proverb (ii) - Like a leper, allow him a handshake and he
wants to embrace (P. 321).

Interpretation: Giving the Europeans too much change, will make
them want to totally rule out our culture.

The reader is effectively able to get the theme of the novel from
these proverbs.

With the use of rhetorics, Achebe in fact dramatises the
thoughts of his characters. The reader is able to read meaning
into the minds of Obiageli for example when she asks,

Does the moon kill? Does the moon kill people? P. 2.

There is also the use of simile for example in the example
of the second proverb above for instance. like a leper and
as a rock P.11.

This gives a literary effect. Ideas are compared with the aid of
concrete nouns. There are instances of balancing and parallelisms
to show the conflicting situation between traditional religion
and christianity. The two are contrasted.

The phrase,

'...Submit to the burial mat' in Ezeulu's earlier on
referred to speech is also metaphorical. It makes the contrast
between oratory and cowardice clear to us.

The Imagery of

"Why should a man with a pain between his legs be
carried away from his house and his village" P.2
is also a rhetorical device showing the weakness of Akuekolu's
husband.

Akuekolu also begins his speech in Okperi with visual images.
He says,

Characters use the type of grammar that befit their status. Amala for example uses wrong grammar in order to indicate his illiteracy. Others except for Mr. Pilkings the white man, use translated from of language, from English to Yoruba. This is an attempt to depict the realism in a particular setting.

CONCLUSION

Since the white man uses his language to write ^{his literature,} and in order to give ~~more~~ ^{as well} ~~an~~ ^{Nigerian} ~~air~~ ^{Nigerian} of authenticity to ~~African~~ ^{African} writings, ~~African~~ ^{African} writers pay particular attentions to the issue of ~~the~~ ^{between them} communication ~~between them~~ and their ^{immediate} audience. And to achieve this desired effect, the writer cannot but bring into focus, the language of the setting in which he writes. English language is still being used, but it is used with full local inclination and translations. ^{as he has attempted above from his texts} By so doing, the collective ~~African~~ ^{like} sentiments can be built upon a firm foundation of an identity and self-recognition. ^{Hence, this becomes} And ~~should~~ ^{therefore} be the committed stand for future African writings. Achebe's contention ~~below~~ ^{therefore} supports ~~his~~ ^{his} opinion.

The African writer should aim at using English in a way that aims to bring out his message best.... He should aim at fashioning out an English which is at once universal and able to carry his peculiar experience ... I feel that the English Language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communication with its ancestral home and altered to suit its new African surroundings. ^{as the Nigerian} Hence, a better enrichment of ~~African~~ ^{Nigerian} Literature, ~~this course~~ ^{and} advocates for the use of ^{Nigerian} ~~African~~ "English" in literary writings. Only this will help to delimit the continuous manifestation of the western imperialism under the disguise of the use of good grammar; good writings in English language, ^{English} the devised language by the ^{Achebe becomes} Africans is a medium of communicating their culture and ^{the} ~~wishes~~ ^{of his people} of his people. Total emancipation can come from freedom in the choice of diction, local insertions, collocations and the general free use of language, in context, ^{exemplified by Achebe's literary works}

11

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