EXPLORING *UBUNTU* THROUGH LINGUISTIC DEVICES IN CHIDIOGO AKUNYILI-PARR'S *I AM BECAUSE WE ARE*

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Abstract

This study explored the writer's use of specific linguistic devices (proverbs, and myths) in communicating *Ubuntu* in the novel, *I Am Because We Are*. Samkange's theory of *Ubuntu* is the theory on which this study is anchored. This theory has three fundamental maxims: human relations (building respectful relationships), the sanctity of life (valuing the wellbeing of the people), and people-centered status (providing humane leadership). The researcher used a qualitative (expository) research approach. Purposive sampling was used in identifying, selecting and analysing the linguistic devices used in the novel. The findings validated the writer's hypothesis that the concept of *Ubuntu* is embedded in the Igbo culture, and that Igbo myths and proverbs effectively communicate *Ubuntu*. It is recommended that researchers be more inclusive when analysing the linguistic devices used in literary works. More research should be carried out to establish the relevance of *Ubuntu* to the linguistic devices of other indigenous cultures in Nigeria.

Introduction

Ubuntu is a fairly unfamiliar concept among linguistic scholars especially when juxtaposed with linguistic devices. While the study of linguistic devices is a ubiquitous research topic, the same cannot be said of the linguistic study of *Ubuntu*. Firstly, decoding what *Ubuntu* means at first glance is almost impossible because it is not an English word. Secondly, the theory and concept of *Ubuntu* is predominantly African – South African, to be precise. This is why a study on linguistic devices being used to communicate *Ubuntu* is germane.

Interestingly, while the use of proverbs and myths in the works of African authors always piques the interest of language scholars, we are yet to fully appreciate the fact that these proverbs and myths are not being used arbitrarily. They all elucidate *Ubuntu*. This is the focus of this study. But what is *Ubuntu*? Summarily, *Ubuntu* is authentic personhood (Ogude, 2019). It is an elixir of interconnectedness existing among the individual, his ancestors, and their shared values. *Ubuntu* has many nuances and frameworks. However, Samkange's theory of *Ubuntu* is the theory on which this paper is anchored.

Again, the researcher observed that although literature classics are usually used to carry out similar studies, the works of upcoming authors are equally suitable for studies of this nature. Chidiogo Akunyili-Parr's *I Am Because You Are*, for example, contains an ample array of seventy proverbs. Twelve of these proverbs were randomly selected and analysed in this study. There is also a paucity of literature examining the use of Igbo proverbs and myths to portray *Ubuntu* in the Igbo culture. This is the gap this study intends to fill.

The purpose of this study is to provide a fresh perspective to an old but timeless discourse: the analysis of the use of linguistic devices (proverbs and myths) in African literature and its linguistic implications. The work is of immense significance to sociolinguists as it establishes that the concept of *Ubuntu* is embedded in the Igbo culture, and that the traditional myths and proverbs of the Igbo people can be used to communicate *Ubuntu*.

Research Questions

To sufficiently demonstrate that linguistic devices can be interpreted through the lenses of *Ubuntu*, the researcher came up with the following research questions:
● how is the concept of *Ubuntu* embedded in the Igbo culture?
● in what ways do Igbo myths, proverbs, and fables communicate *Ubuntu*?

Conceptual Framework
African literature has a whole new life of its own that still seeps through the pages of a literary work regardless of the fact that it is often rendered in the English language, which is a foreign language to the African culture. While it is true that the use of the English language in rendering African literature often subtracts from the rich depth of the culture, the creative use of linguistic devices often remedies and mitigates this challenge as many African authors have been immensely successful with their linguistic experimentation (Asika, 2011). As a result of this, their classic works remain relevant in the study of the use of linguistic devices in African literature.

Etymologically, "myth" is a Greek word (from "mythos") that means a tale, legend, fiction, or the story of a people (Study.com, 2022). They are unverifiable stories believed to be true, often containing deities, mystical objects or persons, embedded in a culture and orally communicated from one generation to the next (Shoniwa, 2012, as cited in Sibanda, 2015). They are "accounts of the origin of societies and institutions not subject to rationalization" but often employed in the quest to decipher African history (Jaja, 2014, p. 1). Their intent is to explain the beliefs, origin, and purpose of a culture (Study.com, 2022). Myths often revolve around a legendary hero and attempts to explain the mysteries of the universe, existence, or nature (Literary terms, n.d). They also help to communicate natural and social phenomenon such as Africa's cyclical concept of time and space – the fact that death is but "the beginning of a spiritual existence" (Ojaide, 1992, p. 53)

Proverbs are the "symbolic expressions of a people." (Omeora & Inegbeboh, 2013, p. 17) They are "a dynamic mode of discourse with unique identity…" (Jegede, 2008, as cited in Omeora & Inegbeboh, 2013, p. 17) Proverbs "form a pool of linguistic and thematic resources from which speakers and writers… draw inspiration" (Jegede, 2011, as cited in Omeora & Inegbeboh, 2013, p. 17). They depict the culture and history of a people (Al Timen, 2015), have universal applicability and make ample use of metaphors in communicating indisputable truths (Sibanda, 2015). Proverbs are used to embed and communicate the "wisdom, knowledge, experiences, and feelings" of an individual or cultural group (Nwabudike, 2020, p. 141). They may also refer to "specific contexts or even historic persons or movements" (Sibanda, 2015, p. 2) and are very instrumental in communication and in reflecting social relationships within a culture (Nwabudike, 2020). Proverbs often cuts across different cultures as a proverb in one language may often have equivalents in other languages (Al Timen, 2015).

Ubuntu is a traditional African concept which essentially means "humanity towards others" (New World Encyclopedia, para 1, 2020). *Ubuntu* is authentic personhood (Ogude, 2019). The "essential structures of authentic personhood" earmarked by (Obioha, 2020, pp. 118-123) are being: "a community person", "a respecter of social norms and customs", "a hospitable person", and having respect for other members of the society. *Ubuntu* implies that "an authentic individual human being is part of a larger and more significant relational, communal, societal, environmental and spiritual world." (Africa Social Network, 2021, para. 3) It is "rooted in a relational form of personhood… is different from the western notion of self which is rooted in individualism", and does not delete individuality (Paulson, 2020, 00:53). It emphasises values such as "caring, sharing, reciprocity, co-operation, compassion and empathy." (Ndjavera, 2019, p. 37)

Ubuntu is the basis of a common humanity, effectively bridging the divide of race, class or religion (Ogude, 2019). It makes individuals open to expressing "compassion, reciprocity, dignity, humanity and mutuality in the interests of building and maintaining communities with justice and communalities" (Poovan, Du Toit, & Engelbrecht, 2006, as cited in Khomba, 2011, p. 129). *Ubuntu* proposes that being human is reason enough to be treated equally and fairly. It is a concept that leans deeply on the morality of the human character as the basis of interpersonal relationships, and of the society at large (Ogude, 2019). It is also proof that African societies are "humanist, community-based and socialist in nature" (Khomba, 2011, p. 129). The crux of the *Ubuntu* philosophy is that the community is more important than the individual, fostering positive behaviour and the ability to think within the community context (Khomba, 2011).

Interestingly, regardless of the fact that the term, *Ubuntu*, is denoted differently in several African communities and languages (Lundin & Nelson, 2010), Teffo asserts that *Ubuntu* is not an African philosophy as it can be found in the different philosophies of the world (Eze, 2009, as cited in Ulvestad, 2012). In spite of these assertions, Nyanthu and Murithi affirm that *Ubuntu* is the building block of many African societies, essentially stipulating what it means to be human (Hailey, 2008, as cited in Ulvestad, 2012). Dandala avers that *Ubuntu* is an integral component of South African communities, "an African humanness in direct opposition to the Western humanness" (Hailey, 2008, as cited in Ulvestad, 2012, p. 22).

Summarily, asides other claims of cosmology, philosophy, and religion, Teffo lays claim to universality, and Broodryk, Mnyaka, Dandala, and Nyathu to African ownership (Ulvestad, 2012). Regardless of seemingly contrastive schools of thoughts as regards *Ubuntu*, *Ubuntu* was a contemporary tool for rebuilding South Africa (Ulvestad, 2012). Unlike Wim van Binsbergen, the famous anthropologist, who professed that Ubuntu was only relevant to Africans in terms of their religion and not in everyday life, Tutu recognised that to Africans, "religion is life, and life is religion." (Ulvestad, 2012, p. 23)

Theoretical Framework
This study is anchored on Samkange's theory of Ubuntu. Mbiti and Samkange are regarded as "the fathers of written *Ubuntu*" because although *Ubuntu* had always existed orally it had never been written about until they put it into writing (Mugumbate & Chereni, 2019, p. 29). According to Samkange and Samkange (1980, as cited in Mugumbate & Chereni, 2019), *Ubuntu* has three fundamental maxims centered on human relations (building respectful relationships), the sanctity of life (valuing the wellbeing of people), and people-centered status (providing humane leadership) (Mugumbate & Chereni, 2019; Africa Social Work Network, 2021). *Ubuntu* can also be said t0 have three pillars: "interpersonal values (regard for others), intrapersonal values (regard for self), and environmental values" (Maphalala, 2017, p. 29, as cited in Mugumbate & Chereni, 2019).

Generally, *Ubuntu* has many nuances and four basic divergent frameworks: the orature, scholarly, liberation, and practice (Mugumbate & Chereni, 2019). However, it is worthy of note that as a theory, *Ubuntu* has been applied successfully in social work, computer programming (linux operating system), application software, corporate management, ecclesiology and religion, literary writings, history, philosophy, healthcare, and in the criminal justice system (Idoniboye-Obu &Whetho, 2013). While the analysis of the use of myths and proverbs especially has become a recurrent theme in scholarly papers on language use in African literature, there is a dearth of papers on the application of the *Ubuntu* theory in the analysis of literary works. Hence, the focus of this paper is on the analysis of Chidiogo Akunyili-Parr's *I Am Because You Are* through the lenses of the *Ubuntu* theoretical framework.

Summarily, in this study, Samkange's theory would be brought to bear on the analysis of some of the linguistic devices (proverbs and myths) used in Akunyili-Parr's *I Am Because We Are*. Proverbs and myths employed by the novelist would be randomly selected and analysed through the lenses of Samkange's theory to demonstrate the relevance of Igbo proverbs and myths to *Ubuntu*.

Empirical Review
Garmon and Mgijima (2012) studied how *Ubuntu* could be propagated across cross-cultural barriers via language use and linguistic devices. They posit that *Ubuntu* confers identity and interconnectedness on the individual and on societies (Garmon & Mgijima, 2012). They also foregrounded particular linguistic devices (storytelling, proverbs, myths, and fables) that are characteristic ingredients of communication among members of various African, *Ubuntu* societies (Garmon & Mgijima, 2012). However, Garmon and Mgijima's study differs from this present study as its focus of was on the use of *Ubuntu* in bridging cross-cultural communication barriers, whereas this present study centers on exploring *Ubuntu* in the Nigerian context via the use of linguistic devices.

Smith (2007) studied how the art of storytelling in South African literature helps in restoring human dignity. With his analysis of the plot of three novels – Antjie Krog's *Country of My Skull,* Nadine Gordimer's *Burger's Daughter,* and J.M Coetzee's *Disgrace* – he highlighted the importance of the principle of *Ubuntu* in African societies, touching on how storytelling plays a crucial role in the portrayal of *Ubuntu*: in healing, restoration, shared values, and communal living. Smith's study differs significantly from this present work on two major counts. Firstly, it is anchored on the use of just one linguistic device (storytelling) for the portrayal of *Ubuntu*. And secondly, its focus was on the portrayal of *Ubuntu* in the South African culture as only novels portraying South African literature was used. This present work is anchored on two linguistic devices (proverbs and myths) and x-rays the portrayal of *Ubuntu* in the Igbo culture.

Similarly, Saule's (1998) study on S. E. K. Mqhayi's contributed essays to *Umteteli Wabantu* (a contemporary South African newspaper that expressed the opinion of black people) sought to establish that Mqhayi's articles were structured around the tenets of *Ubuntu*. While Saule's assertions were validated, his study also shows that *Ubuntu* differs across African societies because the culture of each society is distinct, and it is the culture that defines acceptable norms and behaviours (Saule, 1998). This study differs from Saule's study because it does not just dissect the tenets of *Ubuntu* but highlights how proverbs and myths can be used to communicate the tenets of *Ubuntu*.

Methodology
The researcher used a qualitative (expository) research approach. The researcher's hypotheses are that: the concept of Ubuntu is embedded in the Igbo culture, and; Igbo myths and proverbs effectively communicate Ubuntu. Purposive sampling was used in identifying, selecting and analysing the linguistic devices used – twelve proverbs from the seventy, and nine myths from the thirteen used by the author to communicate *Ubuntu* in the novel. The study employed Akunyili-Parr's novel, *I Am Because We Are,* as its major instrument. The corpus of this study consists of specific linguistic devices (proverbs and myths) identified in the novel.

Analysis
Proverbs
Proverbs are part and parcel of the *Ubuntu* tradition. This novel is replete with a powerful array of seventy proverbs that effectively communicate *Ubuntu*, providing a depth of meaning that can only be deciphered by readers who are conversant with the Igbo culture and its proverbs. Each chapter of the novel is introduced with a proverb, weaving the entire tapestry of the novel even more intricately. 12 of these proverbs were randomly selected, with their meanings and relevance to *Ubuntu* documented in **Table 1**.

Table 1

Excerpts of Proverbs from Chidiogo Akunyili-Parr's "I Am Because You Are"

	Proverb	Relevance to Ubuntu
1.	"It takes an entire village to raise a child." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, p. 20)	Communal living, societal well-being
2.	"When the roots of a tree begin to decay, it spreads death to the branches." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, p. 68)	Interconnectedness
3.	"A person who arrives at a feast when the cooked meat is being pulled out of the pot does not know what was endured by others to catch it and cook it." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, p. 105)	Human relations, authentic personhood
4.	"If the hen stops clucking, what will she use to train her children?" (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, p. 157)	Intrapersonal values
5.	"When the food is properly done, soft enough so that crumbs fall, it reaches the ant." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, p. 222)	Leadership, societal well-being

6.	"We desire to bequeath two things to our children; the first one is roots, the other one is wings." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, p. 249)	Parental training, interpersonal values
7.	"The millipede says that one who steps on it cries out, but it itself who was stepped on does not cry out." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, p. 290)	Human relations, societal justice
8.	"Where the corpse lies is where the vultures congregate." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, p. 276)	Societal well-being, human relations
9.	"When you wrestle with a pig, you both get dirty, but the pig enjoys it." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, pp. 294, 285)	Parental training, interpersonal values
10.	"A fully grown-up tree cannot be bent into a walking stick." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, p. 322)	Human relations
11.	"A bird on an iroko tree cannot be shot down with a bow and arrow." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, p. 373)	Human relations, societal well-being
12.	"A society grows when old men plant trees whose shade they know they will never sit in." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, p. 378)	Leadership, human relations, societal well-being

Myths

Ubuntu cultures incorporate spirituality into the fibre of their belief system, as they maintain that late ancestors are still very much of their society. Interestingly, the advent of Christianity has not greatly altered this as it has its fair share of myths. The following extracts from the novel represented in **Table 2** illustrate this:

Table 2
Excerpts of Myths from Chidiogo Akunyili-Parr's "I Am Because You Are"

	Myth	Relevance to Ubuntu
1.	"And with a cry of pain, and of defiance, a premature baby with low chances of survival – not unlike an Ogbanje – but with every intention of living was born. Her name was the Republic of Biafra..." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, pp. 52-53)	The spirit world, inter-connectedness, religion, societal well-being
2.	"The skin of my twins was still wrinkled and covered by blood and the white creamy film of their internal protection. Only one had fed and the other was wailing when the midwife heard the sound of approaching feet… They took them from my breasts. Their only crime being that they were twins – an evil omen that had to be killed to safeguard the village and its people from harm." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, p. 38)	Religious values, societal well-being, spirituality, interpersonal values
3.	"I was offered a bitter drink, which I knew not to refuse… Nne's voice… urged me to stay still as hands began to coax my legs apart… The touch of the blade was as painful as I feared. I couldn't stay still if I wanted to. "Why are they doing this?" cried my whole being in unison, mind, body, and spirit screaming against having a piece of myself removed." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, pp. 39-40)	Communal living, societal well-being, authentic personhood
4.	"…Mama explained the situation to him... How and why Ben was denying that PY had any claims to the land… some	Spirituality, religion, societal

	of the villagers suggested that they bring the dispute before the local deity… The general consensus was that Papa and Ben would wait ten days after their visit; should any form of malaise befall one of them, this would be the proof of their guilt. Ten days later, and both Ben and Papa were unharmed and healthy in every way. The gods had spoken: Papa was to leave his Obi and seek shelter elsewhere." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, pp. 57-59)	well-being, human relations
5.	"Ben, as the story goes, eventually passed away… As is customary with the Igbos, his body was to make its way back to Nanka… The car carrying his body broke down three times. By the third engine breakdown, with his corpse smelling from decay, there was a consensus by union members that the land had rejected his body… Benedict Obikelu was buried instead in the bushes of Taraku in Ugwu Hausa… Many believed and continued to believe that it was because of what was considered to be an abomination he committed against PY and against the gods." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, p. 59)	Spirituality, societal well-being, human relations, interconnectedness
6.	"Igbo tradition has a deep reverence for… the importance of being buried in one's ancestral land, that the departed may easily find their way home, and continues with the… libations of gin and palm wine poured into ant holes, that the spirit of the dead might drink… Such efforts are rewarded when the spirits return to the land of the living as masquerades..." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, p. 369)	Spirituality, interconnectedness, human relations
7.	""He who brings kola brings life,"… (for everyone knows that the kola nut does not hear English)…" (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, p. 17)	Spirituality, interconnectedness, human relations
8.	"In those moments I have to remind myself of all the ways I am held by a greater force, which now includes the very spirit and essence of my mother. It brings me a smile to know that our bond could be formed after her death." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, p. 355)	Interconnectedness

Discussion of Findings
In keeping with the study's objectives, research questions, and analysis of data, the research yielded the following findings:

Research Question 1: Is the concept of *Ubuntu* embedded in the Igbo culture?
Yes, this study validates the researcher's hypothesis that the concept *Ubuntu* is ingrained in the Igbo culture. The concept of *Ubuntu* is succinctly summarised in the Igbo proverb, *Egbebelu, Ugobelu. Nkesiibeyaebena, nkukukwaya* (meaning, "live and let live"). **Table 1** and **Table 2** unveil the

embedding of *Ubuntu* in the Igbo culture via highlighting the relevance of the selected proverbs and myths to *Ubuntu*.

Research Question 2: Can Igbo myths and proverbs communicate *Ubuntu*?
This study affirms the researcher's second hypothesis that Igbo myths and proverbs can indeed communicate *Ubuntu*. All excerpts of twelve proverbs and nine myths analysed demonstrate *Ubuntu*, both via meaning and in relevance. Although many non-Igbo readers may not be able to fully grasp and appreciate a good number of the proverbs and myths used in her work, their use sufficiently illustrate *Ubuntu*. Indisputably, the essence of this novel – the plot, the linguistic devices used, the themes, setting, and even the title of the novel – can be summarised to one word: *Ubuntu*! These meanings of the selected excerpt of myths and proverbs are highlighted in **Table 3** and **Table 4** below:

Table 3
Some Igbo Proverbs and their Meanings

	Proverb	**Meaning**
1.	"It takes an entire village to raise a child." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, p. 20)	No one is a compendium of wisdom. We are to look out for and learn from one another.
2.	"When the roots of a tree begin to decay, it spreads death to the branches." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, p. 68)	We are all affected by what happens to every member of our society.
3.	"A person who arrives at a feast when the cooked meat is being pulled out of the pot does not know what was endured by others to catch it and cook it." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, p. 105)	One cannot fully appreciate what it takes to get or do certain things if one has not experienced it firsthand.
4.	"If the hen stops clucking, what will she use to train her children?" (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, p. 157)	When someone or something loses its characteristic quality, it becomes obsolete.
5.	"When the food is properly done, soft enough so that crumbs fall, it reaches the ant." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, p. 222)	Good leadership looks out for the needs of the disadvantaged in the society.
6.	"We desire to bequeath two things to our children; the first one is roots, the other one is wings." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, p. 249)	A proper offspring is one who knows where he is from and where he is going. These are what guarantees success.
7.	"The millipede says that one who steps on it cries out, but it itself who was stepped on does not cry out." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, p. 290)	Never judge a matter on the surface. The guilty one is usually the first to cry foul.
8.	"Where the corpse lies is where the vultures congregate." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, p. 276)	A man's gifting and abilities attract those in need of it to him; people only go where there is something to gain.
9.	"When you wrestle with a pig, you both get dirty, but the pig enjoys it." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, pp. 294, 285)	When you fight one below your level or class, you will suffer more loses because you went below your standard.
10.	"A fully grown-up tree cannot be bent into a walking stick." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, p. 322)	Old habits die hard.
11.	"A bird on an iroko tree cannot be shot down with a bow and arrow." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, p. 373)	A person who is surrounded by great people or people of goodwill can never be overcome by adversaries.

12.	"A society grows when old men plant trees whose shade they know they will never sit in." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, p. 378)	The glory of great men is in the ace young men they groom, the capable hands that succeed them and preserve their legacies.

Table 4
Some Igbo Myths and their Meanings

	Myth	**Meaning**
1.	"And with a cry of pain, and of defiance, a premature baby with low chances of survival – not unlike an Ogbanje – but with every intention of living was born. Her name was the Republic of Biafra..." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, pp. 52-53)	Reincarnation, as well as the belief that there are certain children who are not destined to live but to die after their birth and be reborn (in an endless cycle), are established beliefs in the Igbo tradition. They are referred to as "Ogbanje". The brief existence of Biafra was likened to this. The spirit world, inter-connectedness, religion, societal well-being.
2.	"The skin of my twins was still wrinkled and covered by blood and the white creamy film of their internal protection. Only one had fed and the other was wailing when the midwife heard the sound of approaching feet… They took them from my breasts. Their only crime being that they were twins – an evil omen that had to be killed to safeguard the village and its people from harm." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, p. 38)	Twins were considered a bad omen. The belief that twin children are evil and are to be disposed of (killed or left to die) in the evil forest as they are unfit to dwell among humans is a long discarded myth and practice among the Igbo people. The birth of twins is now a celebrated occurrence.
3.	"I was offered a bitter drink, which I knew not to refuse… Nne's voice… urged me to stay still as hands began to coax my legs apart… The touch of the blade was as painful as I feared. I couldn't stay still if I wanted to. "Why are they doing this?" cried my whole being in unison, mind, body, and spirit screaming against having a piece of myself removed." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, pp. 39-40)	The practice of female genital mutilation is a practice hinged on the belief that the circumcision of the female genitalia would help to put the sexual urges of the female in check, as women who were uncircumcised were prone to being promiscuous. Sadly, despite the influence of civilisation, this practice is still being upheld and practiced by some.
4.	"…Mama explained the situation to him... How and why Ben was denying that PY had any claims to the land… some of the villagers suggested that they bring the dispute before the local deity… The general consensus was that Papa and Ben would wait ten days after their visit; should any form of malaise befall one of them, this would be the proof of their guilt. Ten days later, and both Ben and Papa were unharmed and healthy in every way. The gods had spoken: Papa was to leave his Obi	In the Igbo sociocultural worldview, the gods can be consulted (via the chief priest of the deity) for the resolution of disputes between individuals or communities. The gods are considered to be the all-knowing arbiters of truth, capable of passing judgment and executing justice.

	and seek shelter elsewhere." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, pp. 57-59)	
5.	"Ben, as the story goes, eventually passed away… As is customary with the Igbos, his body was to make its way back to Nanka… The car carrying his body broke down three times. By the third engine breakdown, with his corpse smelling from decay, there was a consensus by union members that the land had rejected his body… Benedict Obikelu was buried instead in the bushes of Taraku in Ugwu Hausa… Many believed and continued to believe that it was because of what was considered to be an abomination he committed against PY and against the gods." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, p. 59)	After the gods are consulted in mediation, the events that follow are considered to be the response of the gods and not mere coincidences. Here, the consistent breakdown of the vehicle conveying Ben's corpse was unanimously agreed to mean that the gods had, in the end, passed judgment on Ben's corpse, declaring him to be the guilty party in the dispute.
6.	"Igbo tradition has a deep reverence for… the importance of being buried in one's ancestral land, that the departed may easily find their way home, and continues with the… libations of gin and palm wine poured into ant holes, that the spirit of the dead might drink… Such efforts are rewarded when the spirits return to the land of the living as masquerades..." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, p. 369)	The Igbos believe in reincarnation as well as the afterlife. The cultural preference and insistence that one's body be buried in one's ancestral land is rooted in the belief in the afterlife. The spirits of the dead are believed to live on, not too far away from the people they once knew and loved during their human lifetime.
7.	""He who brings kola brings life,"… (for everyone knows that the kola nut does not hear English)…" (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, p. 17)	The kola nut is offered by the host to his guests and is a sign that he fully accepts and welcomes the guest into his home. The kola nut symbolizes the continuity of life, as the ancestors who have gone over to the great beyond are usually invited to partake in the breaking of the kola nut. Prayers are also offered to whatever deity (or deities) the adherent believes in.
8.	"In those moments I have to remind myself of all the ways I am held by a greater force, which now includes the very spirit and essence of my mother. It brings me a smile to know that our bond could be formed after her death." (Akunyili-Parr, 2022, p. 355)	In the Igbo culture, there is the belief that we, the living, can communicate with dead loved ones telepathically. This implies that life is a continuous stream that never ends, as we would never lose touch with those who have lived before us as well as those who would be born long after we are gone.

Conclusion

Ubuntu is an indigenous way of life. It symbolises our past, present, and future. In *Ubuntu* lies the key to unraveling our personal, national, and societal challenges – if we are indeed willing to glean from the knowledge, experiences, and choices of our progenitors who have walked this path before us. Language use (the use of linguistic devices that portray our rich indigenous culture) is also key to the effective communication of our rich history, be it in writing or in speech. Through the intentional use

of language, we would be able to proffer solutions to societal challenges, communicate effectively, and infuse creativity into our speeches and writings.

Recommendations
- Researchers should be more inclusive when analysing the linguistic devices used in literary works.
- The works of modern authors should be used rather than literature classics in order to make research of this nature less stereotypical.
- More research should be carried out to establish the relevance of *Ubuntu* to the linguistic devices of other indigenous cultures in Nigeria.

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