

A STYLISTIC- ACCOMMODATIONIST ANALYSIS OF ADICHIE'S LANGUAGE USE IN *HALF OF A YELLOW SUN*

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Abstract

This paper attempted a stylistic – accommodationist analysis of Adichie's Half of a Yellow Sun. Half of a Yellow Sun is a symbol of the Biafra flag which reminded us of the Nigeria Biafra war that engulfed the nation which led to the pogrom-great and planned massacre of the Igbo in 1967. Many writers had written about this war but Chimamanda's work attracted more readers and interest that many people were asking whether her topic was new. This was as a result of her style as an accommodationist. In order to x-ray her style and her level of accommodation, the accommodation theory propounded by Howard Giles in 1971 formed the theoretical model. The data was got through purposeful sampling and was analyzed using the model developed by the researcher known as Genspecters which is a blend formed from the first three letters of general, first three letters of specific, and the last four letters of characters. Generally, Adichie's language use (style) was seen to be as simple as 'a' 'b' 'c'. This was what attracted more readers to her work. Again she was seen to accommodate all categories of people in the society through her convergence and divergence stance and hence her accommodationist stance. Some recommendations were made which included that writers and communicators should make their language of literary expression as simple as possible so as to enable them to pass their messages across to their readers. In conclusion, Adichie distinguished herself from other literary writers because of her unique, idiosyncratic use of language (style). It was this peculiar manner of language manipulation that made her famous. Some conclusions were drawn and recommendations made.

Introduction

One distinguishing factor of human beings from other organisms is their ability to use language in a variety of ways to express their thoughts, feelings and emotions and also to perform both the present, past and future activities. This is why language is referred to as species specific. Every normal human being is endowed with language. They don't use it with the same dexterity and this is why we talk about idiosyncrasy in language use. As a result of the differences that exist in language use, the same subject matter is handled differently by different writers or users. This is dependent on a number of factors like educational qualification, family background, sex, age, attitude and values and level of exposure to what is being discussed. All these give credence to and exposed the style of writers or users of a language(s). In the words of Buffon in Ebeogu (17) defined style as the man which implies that every user of a language has a style which distinguished him from others.

Adichie, a literary giant is not an exception. She equally has her own unique way of passing her message across to her readers. Though, as a literary writer, she has the license to use language within the rules and laws guiding literary writers, but decides to take or assume the position of an accommodationist, by making her works readable to all average readers of the society.

Writers do not write in a vacuum. As members of society they are writing for, they use language to reenact the social reality. This can only be achieved through simple language use. Adichie succeeds in doing this because of the simplicity of her language which had been described by many as elegant simplicity. She did a thorough analysis of her audience, and adopted a stand (accommodationist) that drew the majority of her readers to her, hence her numerous awards.

An accommodationist is a person or writer who does not undermine the social, economic, religious, sexual and academic backgrounds of the people in society when communicating. He assigns functions to every level of persons in society using the language suitable for each person regardless of his status, sex and position. By so doing, everybody is imbued with a sense of belonging which helped him/her to contribute meaningfully to the development of the work or society.

As a result of Adichie's accommodationist stance, the researcher adopted the accommodation theory in analyzing the data which were purposefully selected from the novel. For effective analysis, a model known as 'GENSPECTERS' was developed by the researcher which enabled her to showcase Adichie's stylistic virtuosity from the general use of language to specific character's language use. At the end, it was observed that generally, Adichie's language use or style is simple and her simplicity in language use made her accommodate numerous readers. This is why she is acclaimed a literary giant of her time. It was also observed that her accommodative stand took both downward and upward convergence and divergence respectively.

Some recommendations were made which include that writers or communicators should always make their language as simple as possible for their readers or listeners, so as to pass their messages across, in order to get the desired results. Again writers should in no way neglect any member of society in their language use, so as to create a sense of belonging to every member of society.

Adichie, a committed artist won her audience's attention through her style of language use. She exposed the causes and effects of the 30 months civil war that engulfed the Nigerian nation between 1967-1970. Through her linguistic manipulation, serious war issue was handled like a love story. Through her style, the Nigerian civil war that took place between 1967-1970 was reinvigorated in the minds of people. Through the fictional characters boredom was disregarded while reading the work. *Half of a Yellow Sun* became a household name in every family and Adichie became everybody's admirer even though thousands of writers had written on the same subject matter without much recognition. She proved to literary critics who believed that content and form are the same wrong because it is the 'how' of a message that determines the 'what' of the message. Her style is peculiar to her. It is unique and superb in its simplicity.

Stylistics

There are camps in the definition of this concept. To some scholars style and stylistics are vertically synonymous. The difference between style and stylistics are in usage. Style is favoured by the critics, while stylistics is favoured by the linguists. Some scholars see the two as different entities. Whichever are the camps in the definition of these concepts, the researcher is of the view that both concepts are not the same and because of this view, few definitions of the concepts will be given to help us situate Adichie's style.

Onwukwe, defines stylistics quoting Crystal, as being in some way dependent on linguistics since style cannot be clearly defined without reference to the grammar... The aim of stylistics is primarily classificatory". (27) This definition makes us understand that stylistics is related to linguistics and that we cannot discuss style without making reference to the grammar of a work.

Again, in the words of Ogunsi et al, stylistics is the study of the different styles that are present in either a given utterance or a written text or document. (13) This definition has made us understand that stylistics is used to study style and that every writer has his style. If every writer has a style, the question that will be asked here is what then is style? But before we go ahead to answer this, this work will be situated on the definition of stylistics by Onwukwe which states that stylistics is

a branch of linguistics which studies the features of the distinctive uses or varieties of language in different situations. It tries to establish principles capable of accounting for the particular choices made by individuals and social groups in their use of language. (27)

Furthermore, style is defined from the point of view of deviation. This concept states that when an idea is presented in a way that is different from the expected way, then we say such a manner of carrying it out has deviated from the norm. In the case of Adichie's narrative, she deviated by presenting a serious war issue as if she was writing a love story. This is one of her styles that drew her closer to many people in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. A novel about the Nigeria/Biafra war which hundreds of people had written about which attracted so much attention because of her peculiar style.

Similarly, style is defined from the point of view of choice. Style as choice deals with the variation of and the options that are available to the author. This is seen from the perspective of the author who makes a choice as to how he is to use language in a way different from normal use. According to Ebeogu this choice are of two aspects – the preverbal and the verbal choices. (211)

The preverbal choice according to him can be:

cultural, psychological and aspirational or all the three combined. Culturally, preverbal choices arise from the fact that an author belongs to a speech community. This language already has rules of communication; rules that are phonological, lexical, syntactic and semantic. For example, there are basic laws that guide the way a language is spoken, the manner in which words combine in that language to establish its syntax, and a convention that guides the pattern... An author who shares this language with others is bound to

obey many of these rules... to communicate effectively to an audience. It is at the level of lexical and semantic choice that he exercises greater freedom of departure from the acceptable standard. Therefore, at the level of culture, there are choices already, made for the writer even before he begins to express himself verbally, and to put his thought on paper. (211)

Adichie belongs to the Igbo culture and the reasons for the choice she made whereby she combined her indigenous language with the English language to make her work to flow (Anglicization)

At the psychological choice, there are so many factors that predetermine a writer's use of language. The writer's early experiences in life help to determine his repertoire of linguistic expression, and it is from this repertoire that he draws some of his expressive preferences without conscious choice of verbs/categories.

Adichie's linguistic expression was fluid as a result of her experiences in life. She is born into an elitist family, and as a result, was exposed to the people that matter in the society. The experiences she got from friends and family members helped her a lot in her language use.

Choices of style is also, naturally made at the moment of expression of the language of the text. The author makes this choice consciously by examining the linguistic facilities available in the language, and decides which of these facilities to use and which to reject. For example, a writer has at his disposition a large repertoire of lexical items from which he chooses his performances. Words have synonyms, and the writer deliberately chooses the ones he thinks expresses his thought most effectively. Style as choice equally can be inspirational since creativity is involved in literary writing. It is not for nothing that many cultures all over the world attribute the creative outflow to some deity who controls the imaginative activity going on in the individual's sub-consciousness. In Adichie's works, there are lots of creativity imbued and this was one of the reasons her works attracted so many readers. All these choices, both the ones that existed for her and the ones she made for herself made her style unique. It is this choice that Adichie made whereby she combined her indigenous language with the English language to make her work flow. Some writers described her language choice as perfect English that matches her perfect Igbo, English that is deliberately laced with Igbo vernacular, African inflections and literal use of proverbs, which neglect the African thought pattern and psyche. She has a choice to use the English language alone but decides to combine both.

Finally, style is defined as period or time... This demonstrates that writers existed within different periods. Some writers existed within the 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s and so on. Writers equally belonged to different levels in terms of their writing style. The year and level that a writer existed has a great influence on his style. Adichie belongs to the 70s and falls under the fifth level according to Akachi's classification. This level according to her is the last and final group of writers who were not yet born at the time of the war. (19) Little wonder her language use reflects her period of existence. She was realistic in describing sexual scenes. For examples Kainene asking Olanna about Chief

Ozobia: “So you will be spreading your legs for that elephant in exchange for Daddy’s contract? (35)

Again, Kainene upon finding out about the feelings between Olanna and Richard angrily remarks: It meant nothing, it of course meant nothing, you were just fucking my lover, after all! (254)

These two examples could be regarded as vulgarity in language use during the time of Achebe and writers who existed within that period. But today, the issue of sex which was seen as a taboo in language use, and not meant for children were freely used by Adichie. Adichie does not shy away from any sexual or taboo words. She uses them freely in all her works, and when asked why she was so carefree in handling sexual matters, she replied:

Writers always make choices about how to approach sexuality. I own my own choices. For me and perhaps as part of my reaction to the gross hypocrisy around sexuality in our country; I am most interested in writing about it in the most upfront and demystifying way. (57)

On Adichie’s linguistic and stylistic inventiveness, Onukaogu and Ezechi say, The distinctiveness of the Igboness of her narrative; her sublime sense of imagery and descriptive excellence, the passion and humanity that go into the delineation of her characters, the naturalness and effectiveness of her humour and the subtlety of her irony, among other aspects of her vibrantly innovative creative consciousness, has placed her in a class of her own among old and new writers. (308)

In summary, Adichie’s style is idiosyncratic to her as no two persons write or speak alike. It is her style of writing that distinguishes her from other writers both of her age, level/s and period.

Theoretical Framework: The Accommodation Theory

In order to look at the ways the different choice of words affected the characters in the novel, the accommodation theory was adopted. The accommodation theory is a social linguistic theory propounded by Howard Giles, a professor of communication at the University of California, Santa Barbara, in 1991. It argues that when people interact, they adjust their speech, their vocal patterns and their gestures to accommodate others. It explores the various reasons why individuals emphasize or minimize the social difference between themselves and their interlocutors through verbal and non-verbal communication. This theory is concerned with the links between “language, context and identity”. It focuses on both the intergroup and interpersonal factors that lead to accommodation as well as the ways in which power, macro and micro-context concerns all affect communication behaviour.

There are two main accommodation processes described by this theory. The convergence and the divergence. Convergence refers to the strategies through which individuals adapt to each other’s communicative behaviour, in order to reduce their social differences. Convergence always takes place when the speakers like one another

or where one speaker has a vested interest in the other or to put them at ease. Converging towards the speech of another person is usually considered a polite speech strategy. It implies that the addressee's speech is acceptable and worth imitating. Using the same pronunciation and the same sort of vocabulary for example is a way of signaling that you are on the same wave length.

Divergence on the other hand contradicts the method of adaptation and in this context the individual emphasis is on the social difference and non-verbal differences between the interlocutors. Deliberately choosing a language not used by one's addressee is the clearest example of speech divergence. Divergence in speech does not always indicate a speaker's negative attitudes towards the addressees where the divergent forms are admired. Divergence can be used to benefit the diverger. The two processes usually are dependent on the characteristics of the interlocutors, people accommodating their communication while interacting with a person who has higher standards and other characteristics which they believe are better than theirs.

A speaker may also deliberately diverge both from their own usual speech style and that of their addressees towards the style of a third party for special effect. This is labeled referee design. The third party referred to, is not present. Convergence and divergence can be upward or downward respectively. Upward convergence refers to convergence towards the speech of someone with more power or status, or someone deserving respect in the context. While downward convergence refers to convergence towards the speech of someone with less status or power.

There are also four major assumptions under which this theory is based. These are:

1. While communicating there will be similarities and differences in the speech and behaviour of communications. The characteristics that people exhibit are based on our experiences and the cultural background that we grew up in.
2. A conversation is evaluated by understanding the perception of the speech and behaviour of the other. Through evaluation people decide to accommodate and fit in.
3. The social status and belonging is determined by language and behaviour, while people communicate they tend to accommodate the behaviour of those who are in the higher social status than them.
4. Finally, norms guide the accommodation process which vary in the degree of appropriateness. Norms define the behaviour of people and they are expected to act accordingly. Again, when people code switch they are at the same time trying to accommodate others.

The accommodation theory is relevant in this study because according to Giles "language is not a homogenous, static system. It is multi-channelled, multi-variable, multi-faceted and capable of vast modifications from context to context by the speaker, slight differences of which are often deleted by listeners and afforded social significance". (17)

Supporting this theory Onukaogu and Ezechi said;

Part of the distinction Adichie achieves as a language conscious artist is tied to her sensitivity to the context of

situation of the conversations involving the characters. In each of her dialogues, Adichie distills the identity of her characters by maintaining a careful appropriateness in the language that she gives them. This language of course takes into consideration the variables of levels of advancement of thought the relative statuses and classes of the interlocutors, their kinds of exposure and educational backgrounds and the objects of discussion from the sublime to the banal, from the intellectual to the illiterate, from the sophisticated to the naive, Adichie constructs dialogues that not only enhance the realism of her prose but also underscore the humanity of her characters. (310)

Here what Onukaogu and Ezechi called realism is what the writer refers to as accommodationist stance. Nobody is left out in the discussion.

Finally, we accommodate others by adjusting our communicational behaviour to the requisite roles that participants are assigned in a given context. The study of accommodation theory helps to reveal the extent to which language impinges on our lives which results in the maintenance or breakdown of human relationships. Accommodation involves both verbal, non-verbal and non-linguistic aspects of language.

Summary of *Half of a Yellow Sun*

The Novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* is Adichie's second novel. It is published in 2006 by Knopf/Anchor. The title of the novel is symbolic. It tells the story of the Nigeria/ Biafra war through the perspective of the characters of Olanna, Ugwu, Richard and others. The war was a fallout of the January 1966 coup that was championed by Junior army officers of Igbo extraction. The West and Northern regions suffered more casualties. The North claimed that it was an Igbo coup that led to the ascension of power by General Aguiyi Ironsi who is an Igbo officer. Similarly, on July 29, 1966 a counter coup was staged by army officers of Northern extraction which brought Gen. Yakubu Gowon to power and led to the death of Gen. Ironsi. This coup and counter coup generated ethnic tension, acrimony, bad blood and mistrust, which led to the brutal killing and massacre of Igbo (pogrom) living in the north.

Lawlessness, molestation, looting of property of easterners by other sections of the country particularly the north were the remote and immediate causes that led Colonel Odumegwu Ojukwu, the then Governor of the Igbo dominated south-eastern region to proclaim the secession of the south-east and declare it a new independent Republic of Biafra on May 30, 1967. With this declaration, the rift between the Eastern Region and the rest of the country was total. Police action was declared against the Biafra state which led to a thirty month old war that is argued to be Africa's first genocidal wars. The war was characterized by dehumanization, massacre, looting, and wanton destruction of property, brutality and monstrosity at its peak with the Biafra side suffering more casualties than the Nigerian army referred to as 'federal Troupes' perhaps owing to military might and financial muscle, population and established structures and nations that were in her favour.

Adichie relies on this history to present this gory story of what has been referred to as genocidal tragedy. According to her "... I wrote this novel because I wanted to engage with my history in order to make sense of my present, many of the issues that led to the war remain unresolved in Nigeria today ..." She successfully marries fiction with facts as she tells AzukaOgujiba.

... I have a lot of research notes that I did not end up using because I did not want to be stifled by fact. I did not want the political events to overwhelm the human story. It was important that I got the facts that mattered right. All the major political events are factually correct but what was important to me in the end was the emotional truth. I wanted this to be a book about human beings, not a book about faceless political events. (19)

Adichie refreshingly explores some crucial thematic concerns through which the horrific experiences of this novel were highlighted and explored. She explores the theme of war which obviously is the central theme with other sub themes emanating from and woven around it. There is also the recurrent theme of love, betrayal of love, trust and friendship. All these are presented using different characters in her work. Adichie, in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, artistically interweaves historical facts.

Analysis of *Half of a Yellow Sun* using the accommodation theory

The accommodationist approach is used to analyze this novel. For easy analysis the researcher developed a blend known as 'Genspecters' which is got from the initial letters of General and Specific and the last letters of Characters.

Generally, Adichie's language simplicity can be discussed using the following headings: General language simplicity, linguistic appositioning, narrative/conversational framing, sporadic code switching, and proverbs. Adichie's language use generally has been described variously by different writers and critics. Onukaogu and Ezechi said that:

Adichie's simple language use is elegant simplicity from two main factors in her narrative attitude. The first is the depth of local flavor discernible in her fiction, which... we have said somewhere else that this kind of English language "is fluid in its simplicity, but still possesses that infectious grip which enrapture the audience until the end of the story. (309)

They further said that her simplicity in language use differentiates her from other 21st century writers who muddle their works with extreme poetic intentions that could limit both accessibility to the message and the entertainment potentials of their writing. She "Igbonized" English language and Anglicized Igbo language. Her level of language simplicity can be summarized thus: the simplicity of her Igbo language makes her work easily accessible to all classes of people, both the literate and all average users of both the English language and Igbo.

An extract from the novel to demonstrate the simplicity and fluid nature of her language can be seen thus:

‘Oh that is toothpaste. We use it to brush our teeth’, Ugwu felt proud saying ‘we’, so that his mother would know that he too used it. But she did not look impressed. She snapped her fingers and picked up her chewing stick, “what is wrong with using a good *atx* That smell has made me want to vomit. (92)

What a simple language. This is a downward convergence done intentionally to carry her readers along and to effect some changes in her characters. Another example of her simplistic nature can be seen in the following statements.

I want to write about war... to look it in the face and not use vague language. I think it’s real in the sense that as bombs are falling, people are loving. People go on life. The aim was to humanize my characters. I wanted the reader to remember that these people had full lives before the war. (3)

This is language in its simplicity. That is Adichie for you. Not only did she write in a very simple language lower than her social and academic qualifications. She equally recognizes every member of society in her language use through the application of both the standard and non standard, formal and non-formal, colloquial and other varieties of the English language. She converges when necessary and diverges when relevant. Adichie also showcased her accommodationist stand through the discussions in terms of linguistic simplicity from the discussion between Richard and Jomo which portrays their levels of educational background:

It’s alright, Jomo. I don’t want any of the fruits’, Richard Said, ‘By the way, would you know of any herb for men? For men who have problem with... with being with a woman?’
Yes, sah! Jomo kept watering as if this was a question he heard everyday. ‘You know some herb for men?’
Yes, Sah!
Richard felt a triumphant leap in his stomach. “ I should like to see them, Jomo’
‘My brother get problem before because the first wife is not pregnant and the second wife is not pregnant.
There is one leaf that the dibia give him and he begin to chew. Now he has pregnant the wives!
‘Oh. Very good, could you get me this herb Jomo?’
Jomo stopped and looked at him, his wise wizened face full of fond, pity. ‘It will no work for white man, sah’
‘Oh, no. I want to write about it’
Jomo shook his head. ‘You go to dibia and you chew it there in front of him. Not for writing, sah’ Jomo turned back to his watering, humming, tunelessly. (Half 74)

In the dialogue above between Richard, a British academic researcher with the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and his illiterate gardner, Jomo, it is clear who is who in terms of race, class and educational attainment. Richard, though educated, was made to use a simple English that Jomo did not find difficult to understand. From this discussion too, Richard demonstrates a downward convergence perhaps because of the

issue at stake. This shows that communicants can accommodate both upward or downward depending on the topic of discussion. Adichie's accommodationist style can also be looked at from linguistic appositioning, narrative framing proverbs and sporadic mixing.

Linguistic Appositioning

Linguistic apposition is when two constructions which are equivalent are placed side by side. These constructions may be English and another language. In these constructions, it is either that the English words, phrases or sentences come before their equivalents which follows immediately or the other language.

According to Onukaogu and Ezechi, linguistic appositioning is the process of placing Igbo expression side-by-side with their direct or contextual English equivalents in the narration. This can happen at the word level and can manifest in dialogues than in authorial narration. In this strategy, the meaning of the Igbo word, phrase or sentence is located in the very next or previous or almost next or previous English word, phrase and sentence to it. (291)

Examples of such words abound in her text. These are:

'Go well, jee ofuma. (Half.36)

'what's your name, kedu afagi. (Half.15)

'Have you brought him, ikpotagoya? (Half. 2)

'That is what the relatives of the ugly monkey, enwe, told him...(Half.42)

I told master you will learn everything fast, osiso osiso. (Half.14)

'Yes, Ugwu, look here, *nee anya*. (Half.17)

'He thinks he knows everything just because he lives with a white man. *Onye nzuzu!*

Stupid man! (Half. 93).

'Egg yolk is finished! *Ogwula!*. (Half. 328)

'*Bia nwany!*!Come back woman. (Half. 33)

Her accommodationist stance can also be looked at from the point of Narrative/Conversational framing:

Narrative/Conversational framing:

Narrative/conversation framing is the placement of two similar constructions of different languages apart. The first construction is used to interpret the second which is distanced from the other. In narrative/conversational framing, the equivalent of the first construction is not placed side by side but which seen far away from the first.

According to Onukaogu and Ezechi, this is when the Igbo expression is not exactly close by as in the case of linguistic appositioning. Hence, the meaning is farther deeper in the narrative, sometimes as far as a paragraph away. The narrator may not need to give a direct translation of the Igbo expression, or factors of context will enhance meaning... Sometimes, this direct translation comes up, but within the narrative frame not next to or almost next to the Igbo expression that demands interpretation. (293)

Some of the examples are:

'A bu m onye Biafra'. Richard said, the man laughed and Richard was not sure if it was a pleasant or unpleasant laugh. 'Eh!awhiteman who is saying that he is a Biafran! Where did you learn to speak our language?'. (81)

Nwanne dinamba, Richard said enigmatically, hoping that he had not mixed things up and that the proverb meant that one's brother could come from a different land. (51)

'Afa m bxJomo, 'he announced, as if Ugwu did not know his name. some people call me Kenyatta, after the greatman in Kenya. I am a hunter. (15)

Again, using the examples from Richard, a white man, who is an expatriate in Nigeria during the Civil war, we can as well identify communication convergence because he wants to identify himself with the Igbo. To him, it is the only way he will gain the love of his Igbo girl friend- Kainene. This aligns with our theory which says that people tend to converge when they like their interactors.

Sporadic Code mixing

This is when Igbo words are used randomly without their English equivalents. There are so many Igbo words used in such a way in the novel. These are: *akpu* (Half. 7) *Okwuma* (Half. 14) *Ike* (Half. 98) *anara plants, oji tree* (Half. 310). *Nkem* (Half. 320) *tufiakwa* (Half. 340), *Ejimam* (Half. 315), *makwa* (Half. 315), *osiso osiso* (Half. 323) *Nwanyia* (Half. 329) and others.

Proverbs

Proverbs are short and witty sayings whose interpretations are not based on the surface meaning but have underlying meanings. They are like phrasal verbs in English. At the level of proverbs, a lot of Igbo proverbs were used to draw her closer to her Igbo identity. Some of these Igbo proverbs were anglicized, that is, though written in English but are direct translation of Igbo proverbs and hence the use of the Igbo say. Examples:

- The Igbo say that a mature eagle feather will always remain spotless.
- The Igbo say who knows how water entered the stalk of a pumpkin.
- The Igbo say unless a snake shows its venom, little children will use it for pepper soup.
- The Igbo say that when a man falls, it is his god who has pushed him down.
- The Igbo say let us salute the deaf, for if the heavens don't hear, then the earth will hear.
- The Igbo say that a fish that does not swallow other fish does not grow fat.

All these proverbs were relevant in the contexts they were used. These were the Biafra experiences from the beginning of the war to its end. All that have been said concurred with this statement that convergence can occur in language switching to reduce interpersonal differences. It leads to intimacy and provide positive relationships.

The second level of her accommodative stance can be seen through her specific characters such as Ugwu, Olanna, Richard, Odenigbo, Kainene, His Excellency and many more. Her characters always show either downward convergence or divergence whenever they are dealing with characters of the same Igbo origin. There are always a chipping in of the Igbo words (code mixing). This is a sign of people who share the same attitude and values and who belong to the same ethnic group. An example can be drawn from the time Olanna took Baby to the hospital to see a doctor. She told the nurses that she was an old colleague of his.

It's terribly urgent', she said, and kept her English accent crisp and her head held high.

A nurse showed her into his office promptly, one of the women, sitting in the corridor cursed 'Txf[akwa! (divergence) we have been waiting since dawn. Is it because we don't talk through our noses like white people?' (accommodation convergence from the nurse).

Dr. Nwala raised his willowy body from his seat and came around to shake her hand. 'Olanna he said, looking into her eyes. (convergence)

How are you, doctor?'

'we are managing', he said, and patted baby's shoulder. 'How are you?'

'very well. Okeoma visited us last week'...

'Baby has been coughing for some days now',

Olanna said loudly.

'Oh! He turned to Baby. He placed the stethoscope on her chest and murmured *ndo* as she coughed. (310) (Downward convergence).

From what happened in this brief conversation, one can deduce that, the nurses were drawn close to Olanna because of her sound English which the woman referred to as speaking through her nose, that is to say that the nurse accommodated her (convergence) while she was diverged by the older woman. Again, the doctor converged with Olanna knowing that they belonged to the same class while at the same time converged downwardly while referring to Baby by saying *ndo* as she coughed.

The use of '*Tufiakwa!*' by one of the women is a total rejection of the 'impartiality demonstrated by both the nurses and the doctor. To her, turns should be taking in seeing patients and not jumping the line.

Let's see Odenigbo as a character. From the description of Odenigbo in this novel, he is seen as an educated elite. From the opening paragraph we have these statements made about him: "Master was a little crazy; he had spent too many years reading books overseas, talked to himself in his office, did not always return greetings and had too much hair... But he is a good man". (2) With his level of education, one would be surprised to hear him speak Igbo to his house boy but in his accommodative nature he downwardly converged to the level of his houseboy by adding some chunks of Igbo expressions. For example 'oh, yes you have brought the houseboy. *Ikpotagoya*'?(2) '*keduafa g*[? What's your name? (10) '*Ngwa*' go to the kitchen; look here, *nee anya* do you know what that is? The use to which vernacular is put here has two interpretations. One is that Odenigbo knew very well that his house boy is an illiterate and wanted him to feel at home hence, a mixture of the English language and vernacular. Again, vernacular according to Holmes (201) are often used between

people who share attitude and values, and who may belong to the same ethnic group. Odenigbo as the head in-charge of the home has left a question for us to answer. How accommodative are you in your home with your house helps? Do you use it to suppress the less privilege? As an educated person in the society how do you relate to the illiterate ones? These attitudes of Odenigbo drew his house boy closer to him and Ugwu served him with all humility.

The same Odenigbo is seen in another context, moving upward in his accommodative behavior. This is normally when he is in the midst of his elite colleagues, Professor Ezeka, Dr. Patel, Okeoma, Miss Adebayo and so on. Now hear them:

We should have a bigger Pan-African response to what is happening in the American south rally. Professor Ezeka said.

Master cut him short. You know Pan-African is fundamentally a European notion’.

You are digressing, Professor Ezeka said, and shook his head in his usual superior manner.

Maybe it is a European notion’, Miss Adebayo said, ‘but in the bigger picture, we are all one race. (33)

When we look into these conversations, we would discover that the interactants belong to the same class and as such converged upward. They did not mince their words neither was there any code mix. There was no attempt to diverge because of the context and the people involved in the discussion.

Again, lets hear from Olanna, Odenigbo’s mistress. From her description in the words of Ugwu she is an educated woman whose English cannot be compared to Odenigbo’s or any other educated person around. According to Ugwu:

He had always thought that master’s English could not be compared to anybody’s, not Professor Ezeka, whose English one could hardly hear or Okeoma who spoke English as if he were speaking Igbo, with the same cadence and Pauses, or Patel, whose English was a faded lit. Not even whiteman Professor Lehman with his words forced out through his nose, sounded as dignified as Master. Master’s English was music, but what Ugwu was hearing now from the woman (Olanna) was magic. Here was a superior tongue, a luminous language, the kind of English he heard on master’s radio rolling out with chipped precision. It reminded him of sliced yam. Her Igbo words were softer than her English words... English, that perfect, that sit beside equally perfect Igbo. (22-23)

This is the Standard English with the R.P. pronunciation. The context that Olanna finds herself, made her not to diverge but maintained a convergence which enabled her to maintain a rapport with her elite class.

Lets hear her speak to Ugwu:

He greeted her, his Good afternoon’ a mumble, his eye on the floor.

‘Kedu?’ she asked

‘I’m well, Mah! (36)

Again, when Ugwu was about to pour the cold coke into Olanna’s glass, she touched his hand and said.

‘*Rapuba*, don’t worry about that!’ (36)

In another context, while Ugwu was trying to rinse the bed sheet he washed, Olanna requested to help out and in the process discovers a ripe pawpaw. She smiled and said ‘oh, look, those pawpaws are almost ripe. *Lotekwa*, don’t forget to pluck them’. Olanna converged in her accommodation behavior, so as to make Ugwu feel at home. (500). Her smile also is an indication of convergence (Non verbal convergence). Ugwu took an upward convergence when discussing the killings of the Hausa by the Igbo. Hear him:

She was talking about the Northerners in Onitsha who had been killed with reprisal attacks. He liked how the reprisal attacks came out of her mouth

It’s so wrong she said...

‘Ojukwu is a guest man

‘Yes he is, but we are all capable of doing the same thing to one another really’.

‘No, mah, we are not like those Hausa people. The reprisal killings happened because they pushed us! His reprisal killings had come out sounding close to hers, he was sure. (222) This is a discussion between madam and a houseboy – Olanna and Ugwu. This upward convergence by Ugwu was made possible because His Master and Madam sent him to school. This is to show that education is a key to upward convergence.

As said earlier in this paper, that people can put up divergent behavior to show or demonstrate their social differences through non-verbal communication, it is reflected in this paper through the family of Ozobia, Olanna’s parents. See the extracts below:

‘Thank you, Maxwell, she said.

‘Yes, aunty’, Maxwell mumbled, and moved on with his tray.

Olanna looked around the table. Her parents were focused on Chief Okonji, nodding eagerly as he told a story about a recent meeting with Prime Minister Balewa...

None of them thanked Maxwell. Olanna wished they would; it was such a simple thing to do, to acknowledge the humanity of people who served them. She had suggested it once; her father said he paid them good salaries, and her mother said thanking them would give them room to be insulting. (320)

From this conversation, two levels of accommodation can be drawn, the Ozobia family are well to do politicians who accommodated only people who belonged to the same cadre with them, hence their nodding in support of Chief Okonji who is also a top politician, a finance minister (non-verbal convergence). On the other hand, Maxwell is just an ordinary house boy who is referred to as a steward and hence their non appreciative behavior when he served them food at a party meant for the “who is who”. (nonverbal divergence behavior) The question is: do we have such people in our society?

Let’s move further to what is obtained in the school using a character in the novel – Ugwu; Ugwu arranged three benches on the veranda for Olanna’s class and two by the

compound entrance for Mrs. Muokelu's; from his own class with the youngest pupils, he placed two benches near the pile of cement blocks.

We will teach Mathematics, English and Civic everyday... we will teach them to speak perfect English and perfect Igbo, like His Excellency. We will teach them pride in our nation.

From the way Ugwu used 'we' it showed that they all accommodated one another. 'We' is a sign of solidarity. As teachers, it means that there should be team teaching. (accommodation convergence)

Let's listen to one of the mother's of the children being taught by Ugwu, Olanna and Muokelu

'Is this one a teacher?' she asked.

Yes,

'Is he not your houseboy?' Her voice was shrill 'since when has a servant started to teach, *bikokwa?* (divergence). This also shows that teaching is not meant for an illiterate and should be abhorred.

'If you do not want your child to learn, take her home, Olanna said (356)

The woman pulled her daughter by the hand and left. (communication divergence).

To our church leaders, how do we accommodate? Let's exemplify with a passage from a character in the novel Ambrose, referred to as Pastor Ambrose.

Pastor Ambrose was praying by the banana trees. His red, long-sleeved robe shimmered in the waning sun. 'Holy Jehovah destroy the vandals with holy-ghost fire! Holy Jehovah fight for us!...

Alice slapped away a mosquito 'Ambrose is pretending to be a pastor to avoid the army.

This is a communication divergence caused by context. Originally, Ambrose was not a pastor but because of the warring situation, he diverged to use the religious register. This is outright religious bigotry, pretence and deceit. Finally, let's hear from Ojukwu who was frequently referred to as His Excellency.

In accord with my own frequent affirmations that I would personally go anywhere to secure peace and security for my people, I am now travelling out of Biafra to explore.(501)

Let's have a look at the situation when this statement was made:

That small child, Nneka, just died and her mother has refused to (490)

A woman was wailing from one of the classroom. Kainene had left to trade with enemy at *af /a* attack to trade across enemy lines and had not yet come back. (503)

The situations described in these scenes, show a state of hopelessness, chaos and anarchy but His Excellency declared he was travelling abroad. He demonstrated a communication divergence. He will be miles away from the led. Again, his use of 'I'

and 'my' portrayed him as an egocentric person/ruler. He did not accommodate the people he is representing 'we' and 'our' should be used instead.

Recommendations and Conclusion

Having looked at Adichie's language use in *Half of a Yellow Sun* from the accommodationist point of view, it is pertinent that language users apply both the convergence and divergence methods when communicating as these will go a long way in endearing their listeners to them. It is only when your listeners are endeared to you, that your message can easily be communicated. Communication is not about how high sounding one is, but the ability to use simple language in arriving at one's message. This is what makes Adichie a literary giant of her time. She observed all language nuances such as the context of the speech event, the speaker's involved, the subject matter discussed, the ages and sexes of her audience and above all, their educational qualifications.

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