

LANGUAGE AS TROPE IN CHIMAMANDA ADICHIE'S *AMERICANAH*: A STYLISTIC (DE)-CODING

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Abstract

The paper examines language as trope in Chimamanda Adichie's *Americanah*. A trope is "the use of figurative language via word, phrase, or even an image for artistic effect." Language communicates and conveys ideas and meanings to readers, and narrative techniques aid the delivery of these ideas through the use of metaphor, symbolism, imagery, proverbs, and coinages that function as tropes in texts. Since language is the basic tool in creative writing, the study investigates the different levels of language employed by Adichie to convey coded messages in *Americanah*. Employing M.A.K Halliday's systemic functional grammar and Short and Leech stylistic theory as theoretical guides, the paper surmises that through the manipulation of language, Adichie reveals the thematic thrusts of her novel alongside other 'kinds' of meanings subtly encoded in the text. The study concludes that these language resources like symbols, code-mixing and code-switching, neologism vis-à-vis other subtle techniques like proverbs, point of view manipulated by Adichie in *Americanah* function as tropes employed for heightened artistic effects and to communicate other meanings relevant in appreciating Adichie's narrative oeuvre in *Americanah*.

Keywords: Language, trope, techniques, foregrounding, metaphor, symbolism, style

Introduction

Style is very crucial to any work of literature, just as the work itself is very crucial and of immense value to its readers. Style is the very aura of uniqueness and distinction that distinguishes a writer from the others and clothes him with a high degree of individual uniqueness, which he enjoys in a lifetime even beyond (Asika 2011:56). Abrams (1981) defines style as "the manner of linguistic expression in prose or verse – it is how a speaker or writer says whatever it is he says. The characteristic style of a work or a writer may be analyzed in terms of its diction, or choice of words, its sentence structure and syntax: the density and types of its figurative language, the patterns of its rhythm and its rhetorical aims and devices (190).

Style entails a writer's choice of word, diction, narrative technique, linguistic foregrounding, sentence patterning and structuring, direct transliteration, descriptive quality, tonal level and speech pattern among other distinctive qualities that mark one out of a crowd of the likes of him (Asika 2011: 60). Lyons (1981:20) states that style shows the elements and visas of a literary composition that give to it individual mark, marking it as the work of a specific author and producing a certain effect on readers. Abalogu *et al* (2005) agree that:

Literature is not just what is written, the story and the subject-matter, literature is more about how what is written has been written.... The excitement about literature is not just that literature tells a story but more about how that story is told... The totality of

what a writer does to achieve his objectives of creating beauty, granting entertainment, instructing and educating his audience can be summarized as style. (100)

For sure, to understand the style of an author, one needs to take time to study it, and the study of style is referred to as stylistics. According to Simpson (2004), stylistics is a method of textual interpretation in which primacy of place is assigned to language. Language in this case is important to stylisticians because the various forms, patterns, and levels that constitute linguistic structure are an important index of the function of the text. Ajeigbe in Olutayo and Ilechukwu (2015:1) explain that stylistics is used to elicit worthwhile information about works of literature and so has aided in the interpretation of texts. It makes readers aware of aspects of text that simple reading cannot do, thereby helping readers to appreciate an author's artistic creation better (1). By identifying the features of texts and their functions, stylistics gives opportunity for a better appreciation of texts. (Abubakre, 2012:263). Stylistic analysis aims at identifying the linguistic features of a particular style of discourse (language use) and their effects.

Language is an important tool in the stylistic analysis of any given text. While language is the choice of words, style involves both language and other forms inclusive of the narrative technique that a writer adopts to make his or her work interesting and peculiar. Language communicates and conveys ideas and meanings to readers, and narrative techniques aid the delivery of these ideas through the use of metaphor, personification, symbolism, and imagery that function as tropes in text. In this regard, Onyema C (2015) observes that:

Through linguistic expression, a writer excommunicates attitudes sensations, perceptions, themes and emotions and aspires to entertain and move the readers. The writer tries to achieve these goals through significant lexical and structural choices, figures of expression, eloquent phrasing vivid imageries and idioms of feelings (377).

Language as an expressive tool is used in constructing every literary text and since Nigeria is a multilingual/multicultural society, the Nigerian writer is faced with the challenges of communicating in diverse ethnic dialects. Olutayo and Ilechukwu (2015) opine that "the unique characteristics of Nigerian English constitute the style of Nigerian Literature written in English. The style also consists of how each writer manipulates the language to suit his or her specific thematic concern" (10). Language is a very crucial aspect of style as writers are noted to manipulate language to reveal other kinds of meaning that may not be available on a mere surface reading of a text. Shrawan (2019) adds that "the language of literature is highly innovative and creative, and represents the most delightful and unique expression of the human soul" (7). This special manipulation of language for specific purposes is what Abrams (1981:102) refers to as "a conspicuous departure from what competent users of a language apprehend as the standard meaning of the words, or else the standard order of words, in order to achieve some special meaning or effect. The language of literature is highly innovative and distinctive from the everyday language and creative writers consciously make effort to exploit the resources of language for stylistic purposes and in order to achieve certain kinds of effects.

Asika (2011:59) opines that "English is no doubt the official language of many African countries... but this language is not free from 'mutilation' and 'adulteration' as it journeys its way deeper into the hearts and jungles of the African regions." This has become the case for African writers as evident in many of their creative works. Yeibo (2011) on Nigerian novelists and style supports that:

When a language is transplanted in soil other than its native land, it undergoes transformations, modification and adaptation. The variety spoken or written in the new land is invariably distinct from the original form. Signification (in) this linguistic phenomenon is also transferred to the bulk of literature that emanates from the new land, thereby, creating a distinctive literary style or code. This is the inexorable fate of the English language in the hands of the African literary artist (19).

Chinweizu et al (1980) recognize the stylistic peculiarities in African fictional works and highlight three aspects African writers exhibit stylistic peculiarities in their creative works. These three aspects include

the narrative language, the handling of expository materials that might be unfamiliar to some part of the African audience; the utilization of descriptive devices and techniques of characterization derived from African orature. They argue that African writers have over time experimented with the use of techniques and styles peculiar to their African setting of storytelling.

Chimamanda Adichie's *Americanah* in the novel, *Americanah*, displays her mastery of the intriguing elements and subtle techniques that decorate a work of art with not just an aura of authenticity but sublimity too. Day (2013) attests that: "There are some novels that tell a great story and others that make you change the way you look at the world. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* is a book that manages to do both... *Americanah* is a deeply felt book, written with equal parts lyricism and erudition. More than that, it is an important book – and yet one that never lets its importance weigh down the need to tell a truly gripping human story. (NP)

The study of language in prose text has earned Adichie special recognition in the critical space. Heather (2005) comments that "Adichie, as a prominent member of this generation of writers, has been metaphorically described in the literature who has gained a measure of success that eludes many writers both within and outside Africa". Osofisan agrees that: "she beautifully manipulates syntax and trope, as well as control irony and suspense" to achieve aesthetics. Adichie looks at society through her use of language and paints a picture of every environment in the minds of her reader.

Analyzing a work stylistically, therefore, entails a look at the various literary techniques employed by a writer in order to give his work a desired shape and to achieve a desired aim and purpose. This paper examines the style and techniques that are crucial in revealing shades of meaning and bequeathing Adichie's *Americanah* the stamp of uniqueness and authenticity it enjoys in the critical space.

Theoretical Framework

This paper adopts M.A.K Halliday's systemic functional grammar which highlights how language is used and not how it should be used. The theory provides a descriptive method for the analysis of language use. A language is not just a haphazard stream of symbols. It is essentially systematic. Halliday and Hassan defined text as a language that is functional. They also note that the important thing about the nature of a text is that, it is really made of meanings. These meanings, they say are expressed, and coded in words and structures. The use of language has remained a very important issue in the analysis of any discourse. The theory will go a long way in helping one to identify any special use of language employed in the novel under study and how it helps readers to understand the fact that language makes a better meaning when it is used in a particular/specific context since this research is a stylistic discourse (language use) sometimes socially used to convey broad historical meanings. (3) It is from this paradigm that we investigate language to use for stylistic purposes in Adichie's *Americanah*.

Short and Leech Stylistic Theory

Aware that stylistics is an eclectic discipline, the study also applies Short and Leech's 1981 stylistic theory for a robust and valid analysis of Adichie's *Americanah*. According to (Short and Leech, 1981:10) style has a fairly uncontroversial meaning: it refers to the way in which language is used in a given context, by a given person, for a given purpose, and so on. This is related to Swiss linguist Saussure's distinction between langue and parole, langue being the code or system of rules common to speakers of a language and parole being the particular uses of this system, or selections from this system, that speakers or writers make on this or that occasion. Style then pertains to parole: it is a selection from a total linguistic repertoire that constitutes a style. Hence stylistics which is defined as the study of style is rarely undertaken for its own sake, simply as an exercise in describing what use is made of language. (Wabende 2014:12). (Short and Leech, 1981:121) argue that language is open-ended in that it permits the generation of new meanings and new forms for example metaphorical meanings and neologisms and it also has no clearly defined boundaries as to what is in the code and what breaks the rule. It is this creative exploration of the linguistic code that formed the basis for this study.

Relying on this awareness, on what has already been done by previous scholars applying this theory, the study will examine the various linguistics resources of language employed by Adichie both on the syntactic, semantic and lexical levels to interpret the novel and unveil meanings inherent in these linguistic explorations.

Language as Tropes in Chimamanda Adichie's *Americanah*

Adichie's third novel, *Americanah*, is a coming of age story, a very ambitious and prodigious narrative that cut across many continents of the world. *Americanah* is a story of love, love in its multi-faceted dimension. In the novel, we encounter love adventures trapped in the web of continental dreams and cultural conventions. The story of Obinze and Ifemelu set partly in Africa partly in western countries reflects events to which Adichie herself can relate experiences of it living and working in different settings within American society. Fleeing unfavourable socio-political and economic conditions in their home countries, the 'movement away' from Africa ushers them into the American and European environments already in wait to redefine and reorder their existence, worldview, and humanity.

Chimamanda Adichie in *Americanah* adopts a variety of stylistic approaches considering her writing in English. She manipulates her English and indigenizes her language to suit the various socio-cultural milieus that provided the setting of her novel. In an interview with Ada Azodo, she confirms and use of Igbo and English language and justifies the stylistic usage thus:

I come from a generation of Nigerians who constantly negotiate two languages and some time three if you include pidgin. For the Igbo in particular, ours is the Elite-Igbo generation and so to somehow claim that Igbo alone can capture our experience is to limit it. Globalization has affected us in profound ways. I'd like to say something about English as well which is simply that English is mine. Sometimes we talk about English in Africa as if Africans have no agency, as if there is not a distinct form of English spoken in Anglophone African countries. I was educated in it, I spoke it at the same time I spoke Igbo. My English speaking is rooted in a Nigerian experience and not in a British or American or Australian one. I have ownership of English (2)

Significantly, *Americanah* has been interwoven with Igbo phrases and sentences, which can only be decoded by a non-Igbo reader through a clever analysis of the context they were employed or reference to the Igbo lexical catalog. This language use goes a long way to symbolically portray the dynamics of her narrative which is predicated on the mediation of race and identity among cultures and continents. Among the stylistic strategies employed by Adichie, this paper keeps track of these conspicuous elements in the novel: symbolism, untranslated words, syntactic fusion code-switching, vernacular transcription, loan-words coinages, proverbs among few others. The idea of these selections conforms with Leech's (1969) position that "to talk of studying the 'style of an author does not usually imply a study of everything in the language it has used but only an attempt to isolate define, and discuss these linguistic features which are felt to be peculiarly his, which help to distinguish him from other authors."

Symbolism

Symbolism in literature refers to something that represents something else. It deals with the denotative meaning of words in relation to their other kinds of representation. Adichie employs certain words, ideas, and even characters as symbols to advance the thematic thrusts of her novel. One of the prominent symbolic ideas in the novel is the use of 'hair'. Hair as used in the novel moves beyond the mere knowledge of hair to become a symbol of racism common in western societies which the novel exposes and condemns, most importantly, in the degrading and caricaturing manner it affects the blacks in these societies.

In the novel, the writer describes how Ifemelu struggles to retain her natural hair against conventional practices. Ifemelu seems alone in this regard. All the black girls in America take special care to relax their hair through the aid of relaxers to make them look like that of Americans and perhaps gain acceptance. The hair transcends from its meaning to a symbol of Africans, perhaps the African women

seeking acceptance and employing every artificial means to transform their identity to fit into the American cultural identity unconsciously viewed to be superior to theirs. To survive in America, one has to pass through the painful process of losing one's personhood and assuming a new identity which Adichie explains in the symbolic pains of African women relaxing their hairs, which Ifemelu argues against: "She touched ifemelu's hair 'why don't you have a relaxer? 'I like my hair the way God made it'" (23) The writer depicts:

Ifemelu had bought her own comb. She gently combed her hair, dense, soft and tightly coiled, until it framed her head like a halo. "It's not hard to comb if you moisturize it properly," she said, slipping into the coaxing tone of the proselytizer that she used whenever she was trying to convince other black women about the merits of wearing their hair natural. Aisha snorted; she clearly could not understand why anybody would choose to suffer through combing natural hair instead of simply relaxing it. She sectioned out Ifemelu's hair... (16).

Elsewhere in the novel when Ifemelu goes to look for a job she is told to make her hair because in America hair was something taken seriously during employment which shows the discrimination as realized below. (252). This justifies certain socio-cultural standards America imposes on the blacks and in the quest for survival, these cultural modes are imbibed against former practices. Ifemelu challenges these cultural conventions. She stands out as a lone voice ready to stand for her race, and project her identity, little wonders she opens her blog to decry racism— a justification of the reason she had to bid farewell to American society and returns to Nigeria where she believes she truly belongs.

Again, the characters of Auntie Uju, Emenike, Ifemelu, Obinze, Ginika are symbolic prototypes of the plights of black immigrants in America. These characters leave, armed with nothing but hope to survive and pursue their dreams in America, Europe and Asia only to be ushered into another vista of experience and torture. In America as elsewhere, these characters encounter a racial world that in most situations reduces them and forces a new identity on them. The psychological and traumatic effects of these experiences reform these characters, upturn their values and personhood and in their place, a new person emerges, blighting out the lights of who they formally were before the move away to America and Europe. Few who could no longer guarantee their sanity in check, take the bold decision to return home. The rest are consumed by the racial world as they sacrifice their personhood to the American myth and dream.

Obinze's mother is also symbolic of the patriots in Nigeria broken by the unbearable ennui engulfing the nation. Not driven by any material, economic, religious, or political gains, Obinze's mother burns to uphold sanity in the teaching profession which culminates in a psychological inner quest. But this quest is tempered by the changes and degeneration witnessed in the country. Corruption, like a monster, engulfs the academic system and the fall was imminent. In the end, she compromises her integrity and lies that Obinze is her research assistant just to smuggle him to London, away from the degeneration escalating in Nigeria, unchallenged. The experience is traumatic, filled with betrayal and loss of self. Later, she dies, unfilled and our sympathies at this point are enlarged as we consider the fate of thousands of people like Obinze's mother, trapped between what they want from life and what life offers them in return and the only escape is death.

The religious turmoil in Ifemelu's mother's life is only a metaphorical representation of the sorry story of religion in African society and its effect on millions of individuals and the black nod in Adichie's narration all are symbols of disorder, frustration, and hopelessness that Ifemelu dares to challenge.

The word "ceiling" in the novel is a symbol of sexuality, longing, and self-fulfillment. The word was used the first time Ifemelu and Obinze engaged in a sexual entanglement: "The first time she let him take off her bra, she lay on her back moaning softly, her fingers sprayed on his head, and afterward she said, "my eyes were opened, but I did not see the ceiling. This never happened before." It was a huge sincerity on the part of Ifemelu for while other girls would have pretended that they had never let another boy touch them, but not Ifemelu. There was a vivid honesty about her; she began to call what they did

together ceiling”. (20). ‘Ceiling’ became symbolic in their lives, a guiding light that propelled them in their years of wandering. After sixteen years of separation, the word ‘ceiling’ was all it took to end his marriage with Kosi and reunite Ifemelu in her arms. Ifemelu confesses after their reunion:

... She remembered clearly the firmness of his embrace, and yet there was, also, a new use of their union; their bodies remembered and did not remember... both of them smiling, sometimes laughing, her body suffused with peace, she thought how apt it was, that expression “making love”. There was an awakening even in her nails, in those parts of her body that had always been dumb... she propped herself up and said, “I always saw the ceiling with other men.” He smiled a long, slow smile. “You know what I have felt for so long? As if I was waiting to be happy (447).

Towards the end of the novel, Obinze appears at her door, Ifemelu opens and says these words that ended the novel, “ceiling, come in”, a final acceptance of their inevitable fate as lovers, friends, and perhaps man and wife. The word ‘ceiling’ therefore connotes sexual and erotic fulfillment, desires, freedom, harmony, and the quest for fulfillment for Obinze and Ifemelu, the protagonists of Adichie’s novel. In extension in consonance to our argument, the word ‘ceiling’ is symbolic and core to Adichie’s stance on migrant experiences and the desire for peace and serenity away from the place that was once their home.

Neologisms

This refers to the idea of creating new words or the act of inventing a word or phrase through coinages. Adichie employed a number of new words that are worthy of note. Words like emailed, goggled among others: “...but she did not write at all, and when he e-mailed her again. He wanted to tell Gabriel that his girlfriend from University had just e-mailed him. (26) Wabende (2014:23) agrees that E-mail is the short form of electronic mail hence e-mailed is a short form of sending messages through electronic mail. Another instance of neologism is in the use of the word, ‘swaggering.’: “He was quickly admitted into the clan of swaggering, carelessly cool males, the Big Guys; he lounged in..... (65). The word swaggering as used presently in the modern world has had a new meaning referring to anything that is fashionable or has kept with the latest fashion trends. Previously was used to refer to a kind of an arrogant walk. Chimamanda coins words to achieve relevance in her work. This choice of the new vocabulary makes *Americanah* part of post-modern literature. The meaning of the text has been enhanced through neologism. He had hated it so much that he Googled the black American-and why should she give him the man’s full name if not because she wanted him Googled? (26) Wabende (2014:23) Are all instances of neologisms that were effective weaving in Adichie’s fictional narrative to enhance meaning.

Furthermore, the title of the novel is also another form of neologism employed by Adichie in *Americanah*. The word ‘Americanah’ is a coinage that refers to returnees from America whom Ifemelu is one of them: “She will come back and be a serious Americanah like Bisi” They roared with laughter, at that word “Americanah”. The manner they laugh is also the manner the word appears derogatory even in the context it is used in the novel. The title *Americanah* is a metaphorical construct designated by Adichie to sum up the various sides of migrants’ experiences both at home and in the diaspora. The title represents migrants who return to their home country and struggle to find their balance between two opposing worlds– one economically promising and fulfilling with its trauma of racism and discrimination– the other economically hopeless and depressing but with acceptance and mark of identity not felt elsewhere in the world.

Proverbs

The use of proverbs is another language aspect of Adichie’s novel worthy of note. Though she did not make copious use of them, nonetheless, she made her characters make sparing use of them. One of the key areas we note is the proverb game between Obinze and Ifemelu: “But I bet I speak Igbo better than you. Impossible he said and switched to Igbo. Amam atu ilu, I even know proverbs. Yes, the basic one everybody knows. A frog does not run in the afternoon for nothing. No. I know serious proverbs- *Akota*

ife ka ubi, e lee oba. If something bigger than the farm is dug up, the barn is sold. Ah, you want to try me she asked laughing? Acho afu adi ako n' akpa dibia. The medicine man's bag has all kinds of things. Not bad, he said. Egbuo dike n' ogu uno, e luu na ogu agu elote ya. If you kill a warrior in a local fight you'd remember him when fighting enemies. They traded proverbs. She could say only two more before she gave up, with him still raring to go. How do you know all that? She asked impressed many guys won't even speak Igbo, not to mention knowing proverbs. "I just listen to when my uncles talk; I think my dad would have like that" (78).

Ifemelu and Obinze in the above excerpt engage in a proverb game which to them is a mere game but unconsciously reflects the thematic oeuvres of Adichie's narrative in the novel. The frequency with which Adichie employs vivid imagery of proverbs in her works also in *Americanah* may partly be interpreted as a significant influence of Igbo oral traditions that are continued largely through the literature of Igbo speaking writers.

Proverbs are short and terse in nature and they are the embodiment of wisdom and philosophy about life and nature formulated in time past by our forefathers in their bid to understand and explain their world better. Through the use of proverbs, writers try to express the wealth of philosophy, wisdom, and perception of life as they affect and control their community. These proverbs serve as a way of asserting the African unique cultural values. By allowing her characters to use proverbs, Adichie recognizes the crucial role of this long-aged oral tradition of the Igbo people and it is only ironic that Ifemelu cannot offer as many proverbs as possible which points to the reality of our present-day Igbo society in its elitist composition. The Igbo language is dying and parents no longer make effort to teach their children the language as well as the values embedded in the oral lore of the people. By making these children talk about them and poke at them as if they were mere games meant to be recited like nursery rhymes, even the sparing examples available to them— all portray how far we have lost touch culturally and perhaps the urgent need to remedy this anomaly since culture is the totality of one's existence. In another light, the proverbs, though unconsciously employed by these characters in the games forecast several realities in the novel:

A frog does not run in the afternoon for nothing (78). This proverb serves as a pointer to the socio-economic realities, those forces that propel Nigerians to seek refuge and survival away from their home country. This is not far from the literal interpretation of the proverb— Acho afu adi ako n' akpa dibia. Insecurity, poverty, bad leadership, underdevelopment, corruption, and hopelessness are but few instances. The bastardization of education and the incessant strike actions forces Ifemelu to seek admission abroad and the economic turmoil with its depressing feeling later propelled Obinze to relocate to London. Nigeria appears as the medicine man's bag that has all kinds of things, but sadly, bad things that they can ever boast of good. Yet, aware of this, Adichie reminds us that home is where we belong and a foreign country can never be home enshrined in the philosophical underpinnings of the proverb— *Egbuo dike n' ogu uno, e luu na ogu agu elote ya*. Nigeria is that warrior we must be wary not to kill in a local fight because we will certainly need it when fighting enemies. Home is always home which Ifemelu demonstrates after she abandons her assumed successful accomplishments in America— as a sort of rejection of the western values— to return home to Nigeria, a love the writer unconsciously engineers in us all. We argue that Adichie, though unconsciously, asserts the underlying thematic oeuvres of her novel through the manipulation of linguistic elements, which proverb rank among them.

Code-switching and Code-mixing

According to (Crystal 1969: 79) code-mixing involves the transfer of linguistic elements in literary creation. Code mixing is one of the features of the use of language in Nigeria resulting from the complex linguistic system and biculturalism Instances of code-mixing abound in Nigerian fiction. It involves the presence of the dominant English language (the target language) and the indigenous Nigerian language (the source language) in literary creation. Chimamanda in her writing prefers code-switching to code-mixing all for effective communicative purposes: "When Obinze and his wife visit the chief who made him rich and known in Nigeria after he comes back from Britain she was beautifully dressed and her

skin glowing that there was no need for the chief switching on the lights to see he that's when the chief says 'Sunshine in the evening! Asa! (34)

He still thinks that one day I will agree for him. Ha, o di egwu, for where (36). Obinze is cousin said this with an intention to take Obinze who had hustled for sometime after coming from America. Ahn ahn! O gini? Are you the first person to have this problem? (35). This was said by Obinze's cousin to encourage him face Nigeria as it was after he had come back from England. Ifemelu shares a lot on the kinds of books the two like. What about other book? Which of the classic do you like? Classic kwa? I just like crime and thrillers (77).

All of these are pointers that Adichie is not just an Igbo writer but a talented writer who keeps up with the nuances of her characters irrespective of the social circumstances and socio-cultural milieu that found themselves in.

Point of View as a Narrative Technique

Point of view refers to the angle a writer chooses to tell his story. According Simpson (2014:28):

The perspective through which a story is told constitutes an important stylistic dimension not only in prose fiction but in many types of narrative text. Much of the feel, colour or texture of a story is a direct consequence of the sort of narrative framework it employs. A story may for instance be told in the first person and from the viewing position of a participating character-narrator whose account of actions and events is the one we must as readers share. Alternatively, the story might be narrated in the third person by a detached, invisible narrator whose 'omniscience' facilitates privileged access to the thoughts and feelings of individual characters.... These issues of the narrative organization are very much at the heart of story-telling and, as note, function as an important index of characterization in fiction.

Adichie in *Americanah* employs the heterodiegetic viewpoint in her narration, a technique that enables us to have an overview narrative of a fictional work from the author's narrative voice. A narrative is heterodiegetic when the narrator is external, detached and situated outside the story as such. In other words, the narrator is 'different' from the exegesis that comprises the story (Simpson 2014:29). Told in the omniscient point of view, Adichie assumes a heterodiegetic stance to unveil a story that portrays the harsh realities of racism and African diasporic experiences.

This point of view seems apt in *Americanah* since the novel is set on three different continents in the world. Adichie finds comfort in the third-person (omniscient) narrative method. She assumes a status of a God who sees and knows everything and is therefore narrates the events to us. As an omniscient narrator, Adichie knows everything and can even delve into the innermost thoughts of her characters to unveil their thoughts at will which aids our understanding of several aspects of the story unlike if she had used the first-person point of view. In this regard, Lowdon (2013) confesses that "With *Americanah*, Adichie has chosen to loosen that tightrope – to step on to the more dangerous slackrope... No issue is left uncovered. Everything is held to account... (*Americanah*) will challenge the way you think about race and show you a radically defamiliarised version of western society, as seen through African eyes" (NP).

Adichie's handling of racism through the omniscient viewpoint helps her to attain a height of patriotism, boldness, and dexterity which unarguably *Americanah* enjoys. For sure, Adichie has a very high stake to discuss racism owing to her years of exposure to the outside world and as a member of the American society. She is part of it and is close enough to tell about it in the gripping, fearless manner with which she did. Colum McCann praises that: *Americanah*... is not just a story that unfolds across three continents; it is also a keenly observed examination of race, identity, and belonging in the global landscapes of Africans and Americans. (I)

Adichie's narrator is more like our guide who already knows her way around all the characters and event in the novel. She, therefore, holds our hands and leads us through them in the best way she pleases and this aids our deeper understanding of the thoughts, actions and inactions of the characters. All these

are part of the narrative techniques foregrounded by Adichie in *Americanah* to unveil her thoughts and achieve her thematic concerns geared towards social re-ordering and re-educating that we all are in dire need of.

Conclusion

Eustace Palmer once suggests that one expects that a good novelist apart from his preoccupation with his message (theme) should show some concern for the appropriate style and technique which will help him to achieve clarity (3). Adichie in *Americanah* foregrounds certain techniques as a trope to pass other shades of meaning. They include symbols, coinages, code-mixing, proverbs, and points of view among others. The language use of Chimamanda has social significance in line with the themes of the novel. Adichie through her use of Code-mixing/switching, proverbs, and transliteration brings the work home on Nigerian. To this end, it is clear through Adichie's characters that the full impact of racism is foregrounded. The characters are symbols and prototypes of the physical, environmental, psychological, and traumatic side of the stories of the emigrants who left their fatherland in search of greener pastures and survival on the 'other' side of the earth. Even the foregrounded title 'Americanah' is a trope, a derogatory, a mockery of those who abandoned their fatherland, language, and culture in pursuit of better in America but only to realize that Nigeria is where they belong. *Americanah* seemed more like laughter, a caricature as Ranyindo used the word. They are the 'Americanahs', near bats who must, just like Ifemelu, struggle to reintegrate themselves in the dreams of their homeland. Adichie's manipulation of syntax and tropes through language resources in her novel is important in appreciating the narrative oeuvre of her novel and in a fuller appreciation of various thematic thrusts that make *Americanah* as compelling as it is moving and commendable.

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