

The Effectiveness of Using Non Standard English as a Technique in
Writing Fiction Basing on Ken Saro-wiwa's Sozaboy and Brian
Chikwava's Harare North.

Godiah Rocky Imbukuleh

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DECLARATION

I declare that this project is my original work and has not been presented to any institution of learning for any award.

Candidate's Name: Godiah Rocky Imbukuleh

Sign:.....

Date:.....

The project paper has been submitted for examination with our approval as university supervisors.

Dr. Alina Rinkanya.

Signature:.....

Date:.....

(First supervisor)

Prof. C. Chesaina

Signature:.....

Date:.....

(Second supervisor)

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the memory of a fallen friend and former classmate in our Master of Arts in Literature class Anthony Mainga Nyambune. I loved your passion for literature and literary discourses.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effectiveness of using non Standard English as a technique in writing fictional works. The study is based on two novels written by African writers Ken Saro-wiwa's *Sozaboy* and Brian Chikwava's *Harare North*. In this study I argue, basing on the findings on the effectiveness of using the technique, that non Standard English to write fiction has benefitted the two writers in different ways, but most importantly, it has brought variety into African literature, apart from enhancing originality and creating humour. The study explores critical works on this technique and on the two novels from all corners of the world, and also provides evidence from the two texts and other secondary texts to support these arguments.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0. BACKGROUND TO STUDY

1.1. Introduction

Laura Wright in her essay “Syntax and Style in Raymond Chandler’s Fiction” asks the substantive question “Is there such a thing as standard literary English? Is there a dialect called Standard English or a standard literary form of the language?”

She goes ahead to say that at first thought it seems that the answer must be ‘no’ because there are so many ways of writing English literature. An author may choose to write in Dorset dialect, or in early modern English, or in a form of English that represents one’s peculiar experiences, social class and environment. And when it comes to poetry, it really seems as though there are no rules, and that nothing could really shock or upset the reader linguistically. However, it seems to her that there is, at least, an ‘unmarked’ way of writing English in the twentieth century novel. Pick any novel, take any page at random, and you would expect to see past tense and non past tense verbs, modals, auxiliaries, participles and other unfamiliar forms. Yet any other author may choose to restrict this choice for stylistic effect. Laura narrows down on Raymond Chandler’s fiction, comparing how he wrote his short stories using a standard variety of literal language, but later, when some of the short stories were adapted for film, he rewrote them using a different form of English from that he had employed earlier in his works in order to capture the cinematic effects. She says that some of Chandler’s revision contained higher proportion of morphological repetition; that is, instead of becoming more varied, he restricted his syntactic patterning even further. She looks at how Chandler employs the verb phrase in particular. She illustrates this using an extract from the short story “Killer in the Rain” as follows:

At five-thirty a pimply-faced kid in a leather windbreaker came out of the store and sloped up the side street at a fast trot. He came back with a neat cream-and-gray coupe. Stainer came out and got into coupe. He wore a dark green leather rain coat, a cigarette in an amber holder, no hat. I couldn’t see his glass eye at that distance but I knew he had one. The kid in the windbreaker held an umbrella over him across the side walk, then shut it up and handed it into the coupe. Stainerdrove west on the Boulevard. I drove west on the Boulevard. Past the business district, at Pepper Canyou, he turned north and I tailed him easily from a block back. I was pretty sure he was going home which was natural.

He left Pepper Drive and took a curving ribbon of wet cement called La VerneTerrece, climbed up it almost to the top. It was a narrow road with a high bank on one side and a few well-spaced

cabin-like houses built down the steep slope on the other side. Their roofs were not much above the road level. The fronts of them were masked by shrubs sodden trees dripped all over the landscape. (Chandler: 35.)

Her interpretation of this paragraph is that it is almost cinematic; in that the reader can visualize events as they happen in sequential order. We share the movement as we read. But when we get to the end of the passage, with the description of La Verne Terrece, the verb forms no longer cluster and the movement stops. This in my view is a clear case of a writer choosing to use a technique that suits the purpose of his work. As seen in this case, writers choose techniques that help them best convey their messages to the audience. But does Chandler's writing in this case constitute use of non-standard English? Or is this just creative use of language within the proper or standard literal English?

To answer this question, let us first establish what really constitutes Standard English and non-standard English.

Non-standard English, also written as nonstandard English, refers to use of English, especially regarding grammar, but also including other aspects of language, that is considered by convention to be sub-standard or not "proper".

That, however, does not mean it is not or cannot be used. Everybody, even the most conscientious language pundit, may at some moment of the day or his/her life "slip" into non-standard English, depending on context. In fact, the vast majority of the English language which we use today would certainly have been considered non-standard or incorrect at some point during the evolution of the language, and, to the horror of today's purists, today's non-standard may well become the Queen's English of tomorrow.

Then there is the question of register and unrecognised contractions. While some contractions such as "isn't" are recognised and acceptable in speech and informal written registers, others are acceptable in speech, but frowned on in all written forms of the language, some include:

- gonna for (be) going to (first recorded in the OED in 1913)
- wanna for want to (first recorded in the OED in 1896)

One form of non-standard language is slang. It has become especially common in pop, rock, jazz and rap music, as well as in films, all of which tend to have international audiences, and many foreign speakers who have learnt more formal registers are sometimes surprised when they hear expressions like: "I gotta go!" (I have to go now). In certain regions, certain dialects may have this non-standard language incorporated into "normal" speech. This therefore means that defamiliarization and distortion of the normal or the standard form of English is what would be considered strange and amusing by the reader. A Nigerian reader of *Sozaboy* may not find it as amusing as a Kenyan reader, because the Pidgin English variety is familiar to a Nigerian reader; he or she uses it on day to day basis. A Kenyan reader, on the other hand, will be slightly shocked and amused by the language. Still, the Nigerian readers of the same text written in pidgin English would relate more easily to the experiences and words of the characters in the book than they would if the writer had used proper English. Therefore the choice to use the pidgin or a dialect by any writer would be a conscious and manipulative one, and that is what this study is all about: to uncover the effectiveness of such a choice.

1.1.2. Dialects and Standard English

Standard English (often shortened to SE within linguistic circles), according to Tony Crowell in his book *Standard English and the Politics of Language*, refers to whatever form of the English language accepted as a national norm in any English-speaking country. It encompasses grammar, vocabulary, and spelling. In the British Isles, particularly in England and Wales, it is often associated with the "Received Pronunciation" accent (there are several variants of the accent) and UKSE (United Kingdom Standard English), which refers to grammar and vocabulary. In Scotland the standard is Scottish Standard English. In the United States it is generally associated with the General American accent and in Australia with General Australian.

Although Standard English is generally the most formal version of the language, a range of registers exists within Standard English, as is often seen when comparing a newspaper article with an academic paper, for example. A distinction also should be drawn between spoken and written standards. Spoken standards are traditionally looser than their written counterparts, and quicker to accept new grammatical forms and vocabulary. The various geographical varieties form a generally accepted set of rules, often those established by grammarians of the 18th century. The British English variety is the most widely used around the world where there are no native speakers, and where English is used as the language of education. The standard British English is therefore more formalised than other varieties and is less likely to take on newer

spoken geographical lexicon. For British English to take up a new word from any region in the world, the word would have been deemed common and significant enough to enrich the language. This is not strictly the case with other regional varieties.

Blake, in his article "A History of the English Language", asserts that English originated in England during the Anglo-Saxon period, and is now spoken as a first or second language in many countries of the world, many of which have developed one or more "national standards". English is the first language of the majority of the population in a number of countries, including the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Bahamas, and Barbados and is an official language in many other former Commonwealth countries.

As the result of historical migrations of English-speaking populations and colonization, and the ensuing predominant use of English as the international language of trade and commerce (*lingua franca*), English has also become the most widely used second language. In countries where English is not either a native language or is not widely spoken, a native variant (typically English English or North American English) might be considered "standard" for teaching purposes.

With rare exceptions, Standard Englishes use either American or British spelling systems, or a mixture of the two (such as in Canadian English and Australian English spelling). British spellings usually dominate in Commonwealth countries.

Without the notion of Standard English, we may find it hard to identify anything as a dialect at all - since the distinctiveness of a dialect consists in those things that are different from the Standard. (This does not mean that a dialect emerged from people who took Standard English and then changed it; it is more likely that the standard variety and the dialect variety developed from some common and some locally distinctive influences over time, or that the dialect forms are older, and have been more resistant to tendencies to converge towards a standard variety.)

Barrie Rhodes, in the same article, notes that the "standard" is a human choice that could have been otherwise (like driving on the right or left). It is not in any intrinsic way better or worse than other dialects. Nor are the historic regional dialects corrupt variants. Indeed, in many cases they preserve far older lexis, meanings or grammar than the so-called standard. However, from the discussion above, and for the purposes of scope of the study, Standard English would be limited to the British English as used in writing of fictional texts in Africa. That Africa was

partly colonised by Britain is a fact and English language being the main language used for purposes of communication education and writing in former British colonies cannot be gainsaid.

1.1.3. Social factors affecting variations within dialects as reflected in writings

Do dialect forms have any relation to social attitudes? William Labov's study of language use on the Massachusetts island of Martha's Vineyard suggests that they do. Labov linked this use to subjective attitudes and showed that variation was not random, but correlated with age, attitude and social situation.

One social factor that affects variation within dialects is the sex of a speaker - where women will be more likely to use forms that are seen as correct, while men will often choose to use a non-standard form and seek the covert prestige of resisting the ideas of respectability associated with Standard English. This is interesting, because the texts under study are all written by men- Ken Saro-Wiwa and Brian Chikwava. Labov explanation in this case shades some light on the fact that all the characters we encounter in the text under study here are male and it helps us to explain some of the reasons why they would rather use non Standard English in communication. It is also worth noting that few women, if any, are created by Ken Saro-wiwa and Brian Chikwava to carry the unique experience of communicating in pidgin or non-standard English

This is one possible explanation of the findings of Peter Trudgill in research in Norwich. In the late 1970s Trudgill interviewed people, whom he categorized by their social class and sex. He observed a number of variables against this (say the use of a particular speech sound in pronouncing a specific word) and recorded the data discussed below.

1.1.4. Why non-standard English has a place in literature

To understand why writers sometimes choose to write in non-standard English, we must borrow heavily from the work of Trudgill. Peter Trudgill's 1970s research into language and social class showed some interesting differences between men and women (find more in Professor Trudgill's *Social Differentiation in Norwich* (1974, Cambridge University Press) .

Trudgill made a detailed study in which subjects were grouped by social class and sex. He invited them to speak in a variety of situations, before asking them to read a passage that contained words where the speaker might use one or other of two speech sounds. An example

would be verbs ending in *-ing*, where Trudgill wanted to see whether the speaker dropped the final *g* and pronounced this as *-in'*.

In phonetic terms, Trudgill observed whether, in, for example, the final sound of *singing*, the speaker used the alveolar consonant /*n*/ or the velar consonant /*ŋ*/. Trudgill found that men were less likely and women more likely to use the prestige pronunciation of certain speech sounds. It appeared that, in aiming for higher prestige (above that of their observed social class) the women tended towards hypercorrectness. The men would often use a low prestige pronunciation - thereby seeking *covert (hidden) prestige by appearing "tough" or "down to earth"*. (my italics for emphasis) This is a plausible explanation of the results that Trudgill reported. But there may be others. Further observation may tend to support Trudgill's explanation, but with some further qualifications.

Trudgill followed up the direct observation by asking his subjects about their speech. This supported the view of men as more secure or less socially ambitious. The men claimed to use lower prestige forms even more than the observation showed they really did. Women, too, claimed to use high prestige forms more than they were observed to do. This may be a case of objective evidence supporting a traditional view of women as being more likely to have social class aspirations than men. But it may also be that, as social structures change, this may become less common - as women can gain prestige through work or other activities. (Trudgill: 1998).

This experimentation with language consciousness shows that many people who opt to use non-Standard English, even when they can easily use the standard variety, often do so in defiance of the mores and norms of a given society, and a form of protest. It is also a way of asserting their own personalities, identities and experiences.

1.1.5. Representations of dialect or non-standard variety in writing

Alina Rinkanya in her article "Code Switching in the Contemporary Kenyan Novel" argues that all authors who apply the code switching technique (in this study I will define it as the use of slang for certain effects during writing - given that code switching has a wider variety) appear to have the same aims. Not only do they want to denote certain aspects of African reality which do

not have adequate terminologies in European languages, but they also aim to spice up their texts with local flavours and colour up the speech of the personages. *This gives the speech additional characteristics, indicating the character's ethnic background. For example, to show that the character comes from a low social class—e.g a slum dweller—the author often coloured his speech by switching to broken English or, more recently, many Kenyan writers used similar expressions in sheng to characterise urban personages* (my italics for emphasis). My argument goes farther to state that this code switching technique can also involve switching codes from standard English to non-standard English, for varied effectiveness in written works, as evidenced in all the works that will be mentioned in this study, especially in the two selected texts for this study.

According to Chinua Achebe in his essay “The African Writer and the English Language”, while contributing to the language question which had turned into a big debate then, the African writer should aim to use English in a way that brings out his message best without altering the language to the extent that its value as a medium of international exchange will not be lost. *He should aim at fashioning out an English which is at once universal and able to carry his peculiar experiences* (my italics). And it is obvious that the same writer may want to fashion a language that is unique which would carry his or her experiences and at the same time create specific impressions as envisioned by the writer that appeals most to an African audience. This is more pronounced when we narrow down to *Sozaboy* and *Harare North* both written by African writers and therefore carry the African experience and impressions that appeals to African audience.

Gabriel Okara in his essay “African Speech...English Words” stated:

Trying to express ideas in one's own language is difficult because what is said or written is not often what one has in mind. Between the birth of ideas and its translation into words, something is lost.

“Once an African, always an African; it will show in whatever you write.” Take the expression ‘he is timid’ for example. The equivalent in Ijaw (Okara's mothertongue) is ‘he has no chest’ or ‘he has no shadow’ Now a person with no chest in the physical sense can only mean a human that does not exist. The idea becomes clear in the second translation. A person who does not cast a shadow of course does not exist. All these means a person who is timid is not fit to exist.

But the expression and use of this language in English does help create impressions like humour and originality. Humour and originality of the story can therefore be manifested in use of non-standard form of English as a result of direct translation of words and phrases from one language to another. It is in the same breath that I will argue that one of the reasons a writer would choose a dialect variety of literal English and use it in writing is in order to capture the geographical origins of the characters reflected in fictional works.

In *Betrayal in the City*, a play by Francis Imbuga, non Standard English is used to bring out rather humorously the character of Mulili, a cousin to boss, who is corrupt and tribal.

Jere: Do you know they only acted referees in a match between our sides? It was a battle where we fought ourselves.

Mulili: Who says that? Who says we fight against ourselves? They cross the river, go the other side and call themselves intellectuals. They hurl abuse at our symbol of national Securicor. A lot of public fund and time go wasted to bring the situation back to abnormal. They were retard progress, not for progress.

Then later:

Mulili: Alright, I am sorrowful. I honest doesn't know it will affect (Betrayal: 15)

When Mulili is accusing Kabito (wrongly and maliciously) he says Kabito is a geen grass in snake (Betrayal: 59)

This use of non Standard English creates **humour** in the play *Betrayal in the City*, and it is noteworthy that the Mulili character in this play is the main source of humour, because of his use of non-standard English. Apart from humour it also brings out the idea of illiteracy. We associate non-standard English with illiteracy in various social and political circles, and these are some of the effectiveness that this technique of non-standard English achieves in Literature.

According to Dohra Ahmad ("Rotten English: 6), use of non Standard English in writing has created several literary works of extraordinary originality, power and beauty. She says that some of the famous poems from the Caribbean and America written in non standard or rotten English employ a spectacular range of literary techniques, weaving together among other styles, direct address, personification, Biblical reference, and a good deal of humour and writers like Keens-

Douglas forge vernacular language into poems, short stories and novels that captivate readers with their artistry.

What would once have been pejoratively termed “dialect literature” has recently and decisively come into its own. Half of the novels that won the Man Booker prize over the past twelve years are in a non-standard English variety, not entirely though but partially: the British Commonwealth’s most prestigious award honours passages like “It ain’t like your regular sort of day” (the opening line of Graham Swift’s *Last Orders*) and “What kind of fucken life is this?” (The persistent refrain of DBC Pierre’s *Vernon God Little*). The reading public has been just as approving, eagerly devouring works like Alice Walker’s *The Colour Purple* and Junot Díaz’s *Drown*. Many vernacular novels, Walker’s own as well as Roddy Doyle’s *The Commitments*, Irvine Welsh’s *Trainspotting* and Alan Duff’s *Once Were Warriors*, have become acclaimed movies. This success is by no means limited to fiction; vernacular poetry has flourished in venues like the Nuyorican Poets Café and HBO’s *Def Poetry Jam*.

Dohra defines “vernacular literature” (“*Rotten English*” pg 8), in terms of linguistic codes that are primarily spoken rather than written, and also ones that have generally been perceived as having a lower status than Standard English. Those primarily spoken languages have as many labels as variants: among others, non-standard, dialect, demotic, slang, pidgin, creole, and patois. Such designations are slippery and politically loaded: “vernacular,” for example, originally referred to the language of a house-slave, but sounds to the modern ear more neutral than the often derogatory “dialect.” And she says she prefers “vernacular” not only because of that neutrality, but even more so for the wonderful way in which it exemplifies the duality of the phenomenon it describes: from an openly debased slave language, to a mode associated with avant-garde experimentation and literary prowess. Other writers use different terms.

Edward Kamau Brathwaite, the West Indian, coined “nation language” for the explicit purpose of replacing “dialect.” If dialect is the language spoken by caricatures, Brathwaite writes, nation language on the contrary is “an English which is like a howl, or a shout or a machine-gun or the wind or a wave.” It is organic, dynamic, and confrontational.

As far as what to call it, Dohra’s own favourite formulation comes from the martyred Nigerian writer and environmental activist Ken Saro-Wiwa, whose compelling and heartbreaking *Sozaboy: A Novel in Rotten English*, Saro-Wiwa tells us of his goal to create a hybrid language

that “throbs vibrantly enough and communicates effectively”; Sozaboy, along with vernacular literature more generally, far surpasses those criteria.

Vernacular authors of our own time are not the first to revolt against an established literary language. Though we experience their works as innovative and fresh, they follow a literary lineage that dates back centuries. When Chaucer wrote his *Canterbury Tales* in Middle English instead of French, when Dante composed in Italian instead of Latin, they too offended prevailing literary sensibilities by using a primarily oral language. These literary revolts then became consolidated into standard forms, so much so that we now take their language completely for granted.

Linguists and literary scholars may disagree over how much credit to bestow upon individuals like Chaucer, or Shakespeare after him; but what is clear is that the combination of gifted and popular vernacular writers with print technology promoted the local lingo of one city – London – to an early version of what we now recognize as Standard English. (The Jamaican poet Louise Bennett makes this point brilliantly in her poem “Bans O’Killing,” reminding an apocryphal Standard-English-enamored listener that “Dah language we yuh proud o’/ We yuhhonor and respeck,/Po’ Mass Charlie! Yuhnohsey/ Dat it spring from dialect!”)

Over time the formerly colonized people of Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and the Pacific permanently transformed what Chinua Achebe identifies as “the world language which history has forced down our throats.”

The empire dispersed mutating Englishes around the world in three overlapping ways. In settler colonies like the United States, Canada, South Africa and Australia, the settlers’ languages naturally developed in their own directions, as languages always will. In trading colonies like India and Nigeria, pidgins (hybrid jargons that nobody used as a native language) evolved into creoles (naturalized off springs of pidgins). And across the Caribbean and southern United States, a new West African English emerged as captives arrived on slave plantations, their native languages banned. This was a new mode of communication, born in servitude, and incorporating centuries of oral tradition.

As Marlene Nourbese Philip writes in her innovative poem “Discourse on the Logic of Language,” English is the enforced “father tongue” that replaces a lost mother tongue. “I must

therefore be tongue dumb,” Nourbese Philip continues, though the beauty of her own writing belies that verdict.

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, two diametrically opposed forces affected the language of English literature. On the one hand, Samuel Johnson and Noah Webster poured their energy into regularizing the fluid and hybrid English language. On the other hand, a whole variety of other Englishes – all that escaped the regularizing impulse – found expression in regional and dialect literatures.

Robert Burns wrote in what many saw as a dying variant, Scottish English, thus preserving it in its most euphonious incarnation. In the United States, Mark Twain, Finley Peter Dunne, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Charles Chesnutt, and Joel Chandler Harris recorded the Southern, Irish-American and African-American varieties of the American language. George Bernard Shaw (in *Pygmalion*) and Rudyard Kipling (in his *Barrack-Room Ballads* and other Cockney poetry) explored the ways in which speech marked difference in not only race and region, but also class.

The literary trend of Modernism placed the vernacular mode into a still more central position. In their quest for immediacy and vibrancy, Modernist writers of the early twentieth century – James Joyce, William Faulkner, Gertrude Stein, Langston Hughes and others – held orality as a high virtue. Gertrude Stein, in her experimental work *Three Lives*, attempted to channel German immigrant and African-American voices.

Langston Hughes incorporated a blues idiom into his highly crafted poems. Zora Neale Hurston put her anthropological training to use as she collected folklore from rural Florida and as she invented the unforgettable characters of *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. James Joyce’s stream of consciousness broke decisively with conventions of Standard English.

For many of these writers the act of moulding oral expression into *literature had an implicitly political aim, notwithstanding Richard Wright’s view that the product pandered to a condescending white audience* (my italics). In the case of Hughes, like Twain and Burns before him, the political content was often explicit: tracking his work over several decades we can see a decisive shift from “I’s gwine to quit my frownin’/ And put ma troubles on the shelf” in 1925, to “Lies written down for white folks/ Ain’t for us a-tall:/Liberty and Justice –/ Huh! – For All?” in 1951.

It was during the anti-colonial struggles of the twentieth century that the latent political potential of vernacular literature fully emerged. The “New Englishes” *now began to serve a variety of liberatory purposes* (my italics). If colonialism and its assorted intellectual paraphernalia used English to enforce a deep-seated racial hierarchy, new versions of that same language now disassembled that hierarchy.

As Wole Soyinka writes, anti-colonial nationalists adapted the “enslaving medium” of English into an “insurgent weapon.” Since politics and culture operate symbiotically, vernacular literature was at once a cause and a result of political decolonization. By the end of the process, in the words of the Barbadian writer George Lamming: “English is no longer the exclusive language of the men who live in England. That stopped a long time ago.” Within the United States as well, writers like Ralph Ellison, Amiri Baraka and Piri Thomas used vernacular voices at once to communicate and to bolster the battles for civil rights.

In her poem “Colonization in Reverse,” Louise Bennett characterizes this process as “turnabout.” Just as her own vernacular writing turns classical poetry on its head, enfranchisement by formerly colonized people can “turn history upside dung.” Her diagnosis brings us into the contemporary period, in which non-standard English literature has flourished and proliferated.

Dohra further adds (10) that for even while decolonization resulted in at least nominally independent states, it also brought about the movement of bodies from the global South to the cities of the North. Those many exoduses produced first new vernaculars, and then new vernacular literatures. Bennett, along with Sam Selvon and Linton Kwesi Johnson, writes the lives and language of West Indians in London; Parv Bancil and Gautam Malkani of South Asians in London; Marlene Nourbese Philip of West Indians in Toronto; Rohinton Mistry of South Asians in Toronto; Junot Díaz of Dominicans in New York and New Jersey; Oonya Kempadoo of East Indians in the Caribbean; and Shani Mootoo and Sasanarine Persaud of the Indo-Caribbeans who then went on to Canada. Their fiction and poetry demonstrate how immigration has further reversed the top-down process by which culture was imposed during the colonial period: now – in Bennett’s words again – the former colonial subjects have come to inhabit and alter “de seat a de empire”.

Ngugi in his memoir *Dreams in Times of War* tells of the humiliation and physical abuse that would face any Kenyan schoolchild in the 1950’s who made the mistake of speaking Gikuyu at school. For Ngugi, the colonial legacy thoroughly taints English. Many others share his

experience, transposed to Jamaica, Ireland or Harlem; *yet the ways in which their own writing changes English provide sufficient redemption*. (My italics to mean it proves they are defiant and independent)

With their clear anti-institutional stance, these works eschew inclusion in a literary canon. Mutabaruka speaks for many authors when he declares (in his famous poem “Dis Poem”) that “dis poem will not be amongst great literary works/ will not be recited by poetry enthusiasts/ will not be quoted by politicians/nor men of religion.” This also means that, despite free use of classical techniques like metaphor, personification, alliteration and many others, there *is nearly no overt allusion to previous literary works. Instead of claiming a lineage, each piece of writing appears as created anew* (my italics to emphasis on this as one reason writers use such dialect—originality). The impulse is to appear direct, unmediated, and unliterary. Where we do find moments of literary allusion, or intertextuality – Sapphire, for example, openly acknowledges her debt to Langston Hughes and Alice Walker – they establish an alternative canon. Ultimately we have a new group of texts that speak directly to one another, constituting a strong literary tradition.

This literary tradition disdains propriety (my italics to mean that this can be a reason on its own why a writer would choose to use non-standard English). The harsh realities depicted in some of the pieces – rape, incest, drug abuse, war, genocide – are depicted in frank, unapologetic, often disturbing terms. Sapphire opens Push with the arresting lines, “I was left back when I was twelve because I had a baby for my fahver.” Drugged by his captors, Uzodinma Iweala’s child-combatant narrator proclaims, “I am liking the sound of knife chopping KPWUDA KPWUDA on her head and how the blood is just splashing on my hand and my face and my feets.” It would surprise no regular reader of Irvine Welsh when a hapless character must field from his girlfriend’s lover the question, “Ever fucked it up the erse?” That harsh material is often mediated, and sometimes magnified, by the blackest possible humour. These *works are imbued with humour that is sharp, witty, wry: comedy, here, always goes hand-in-hand with tragedy* (my italics to emphasise the effectiveness of such works). Even the lightest among these works follow the title of Langston Hughes’s 1952 book, *Laughing to Keep from Crying*; others both laugh and cry in the same breath.

Saro-Wiwa’s *Sozaboy* lives through and narrates Nigeria’s horrific Biafran Civil War of 1967 to 1970; Molloy’s Ann experiences firsthand Northern Ireland’s “Troubles.” Other works take it upon themselves to narrate unsung, unacknowledged histories. Mutabaruka’s “Dis Poem,” for

example, opens with the Middle Passage, announcing that “dis poem/ shall speak of the wretchedsea/ that washed ships to these shores.” Ironically, the literary works at once rely upon, mourn, and also provide redemption for, the traumatic events that they depict.

Each one of these works is acutely attuned to issues of language and power; each has a clear purpose of reclaiming and valorising codes that had thus far been presented (even, frequently, by their own speakers) as substandard. These writers salvage painful histories through linguistic invention that is almost aggressive in its spirit of playfulness. They seize and modify what Marlene Nourbese Philip calls “good-english-bad-englishenglish, Queenglish and Kinglish – the anguish that is english in colonial societies.” Puns, neologisms, musicality, orality, all function *as weapons against cultural domination (my italics)*; all provide ways of making an imposed language one’s own.

If one finds, as Selvon’s West Indian immigrants do, that “It ain’t have no word in the English dictionary” for an important concept, then in response “OUR PEOPLE make it up,” thus at once changing a language and asserting a community. In many instances here, the power of language is such that names and other words can often rob characters of their identities, as when Saro-Wiwa’s Mene becomes “Sozaboy,” or soldierboy. But in just as many other cases, characters use language strategically in order to take control over their circumstances. We frequently see how words that wound can be reclaimed: “faggot,” for example, in the case of R. Zamora Linmark’s Edgar; or “nigger” for Junot Díaz and Roddy Doyle.

The authors also exhibit a fear that even if vernacular literature can successfully reproduce the qualities of oral expression, it will ultimately doom itself through publication. Since its power arises in part from its oral and underground qualities, the logic goes, the act of becoming written literature will inevitably sap that power. One of the aspects of vernacular literature that makes its composition such a challenging endeavour is that authors must construct their own sets of rules for how to write it. They thus create new fixed codes as they transcribe, just as Shakespeare, Dante and Hu Shih contributed so heavily to consolidating a written vernacular English, Italian and Chinese, respectively, that had previously been primarily oral forms. This is of course a critical process in the growth and evolution of any language. However, in codifying vernacular codes, authors legitimize them and thus rob them of some of their anti-institutional force. We might call this the irony of arrival.

Mutabaruka's poem, for example, has now irrevocably appeared "amongst great literary works," and is itself recognized as one. This is a central paradox of vernacular and other radical literatures: their authors do in fact want readers, both to make a living and to ensure the vitality of their work. Further, when they find those readers, they foster new *literacies* and ultimately generate a new literary canon. But in creating those readerships and those new canons, they fundamentally change their relationship to concepts like authority and the 'establishment.' As Mutabaruka, himself, sums up the problem, "revolutionary poets/ 'ave become entertainers."

The above discourse has shown clearly that usage of non-standard English for purposes of writing has been used and been criticized by several scholars and critics, but as is evident; protest, liberation and originality were explored as major aspects of such an endeavour. Critics also read humour, protest, originality among other aspects of style and theme in such works but this is majorly in Caribbean and American works. Little criticism and research has been done on African writers such as Brian Chikwava and Ken Saro-wiwa on why they used non-standard English in their texts and on humour as a consequence of such tasks.

Some of the earliest attempts at use of non Standard English in writing are found in literary works. Novelists such as Emily Brontë, Charles Dickens, Thomas Hardy and D.H. Lawrence all depict speakers of dialect, in ways that show their grammar, lexis and accent. In the case of some dialects, we have more than one representation - so we can compare Hardy's rustics with the poems of William Barnes (who wrote in a Dorset dialect). Here is a fairly early example, from the second chapter of *WutheringHeights* (1847), in which the servant Joseph refuses to admit Mr. Lockwood into the house:

" 'T'maister'sdahnl't' fowld. Goarahnd by the end ut' laith, if yah went to spaketull him"

Alfred Tennyson (1809-1892) has a similar approach in his poem, *Northern Farmer, Old Style*:

"What attastannin' theer fur, and doesn' bring me the aäle?
Doctor's a 'toättler, lass, and 'e's allus i' the owdtaäle..."

Joseph comes from what is now West Yorkshire, while Tennyson's farmer is supposedly from the north of Lincolnshire. Here is an earlier example, from Walter Scott's *Heart of Midlothian* (1830), which shows some phonetic qualities of the lowlands Scots accent. In this passage the

Laird of Dumbiedikes (from the country near Edinburgh) is on his deathbed. He advises his son about how to take his drink:

"My father tauld me sae forty years sin', but I never fand time to mind him. - Jock, ne'er drink brandy in the morning, it files the stomach sair..."

George Bernard Shaw, in *Pygmalion* (1914), uses one phonetic character (/ə/ - schwa) in his attempt to represent the accent of Eliza Doolittle, a Cockney flower girl:

"There's menners f' yer! Tə-oobanches o voylets trod into the mad...Will ye-oopy me f'them."

However, after a few sentences of phonetic dialogue, Shaw reverts to standard spelling, noting:

"Here, with apologies, this desperate attempt to represent her dialect without a phonetic alphabet must be abandoned as unintelligible outside London".

The pioneering work in linguistics of the brothers Grimm led to a more scientific approach - and a great bout of activity as researchers began to make records of regional dialects. The emergence of a phonetic alphabet enabled researchers to produce accurate transcriptions of speech sounds.

Dialects do not normally have a standard spelling system. If one wishes to represent dialect in a way that shows the speech sounds, then use of phonetic transcription would be helpful. (The alternative is the kind of invented "phonetic" spelling that one sees in D.H. Lawrence: " 'Asna 'e come whoamyit?" - which is still common in literary works.)

For some kinds of study (where the focus is not on speech sounds), an approximation to Standard English forms is acceptable. Thus the Yorkshire adverb *happen* (=maybe) sometimes appears in the same written form as the Standard English verb to happen - even if we know that for some speakers the dialect word begins with the [æ] vowel. (Barrie Rhodes suggests that we should write it as *appen*, since there is no initial consonant for Yorkshire dialect speakers; the use of an apostrophe, as in '*appen*', suggests that the dialect form is somehow a mistaken or inferior variation of happen, even though *appen* is a different part of speech [adverb, where *happen*, in Standard English, is a verb] in the lexicon of the regional variety.

There are some modern authors who write novels, using (for dialogue alone, or both narrative and dialogue) an approximate transcription of a regional variety of English or a creole, and this

tendency is widespread in published poetry (which sometimes indicates the speech sounds used by the poet in performance).

For an example of the former, consider this extract from James Kelman's 1994 novel *How Late It Was, How Late*, which is written in modern Scots:

They shook hands.

Didnay take ye long, said Boab.

Naw it was just a wee footery job. Good saw by the way, good feel to it.

Aye like I says it was my fayther's. It's been in the family for donkeys'. I think it was my grandfayther's.

Is that right? Hh! Heh ye wouldnay have a bit of sandpaper?

Naw son sorry, ye're unlucky; I had some but it's away.

Just thought I'd ask.

The narrative also uses this variety of English - in this passage of dialogue we note the regional lexis (*wee, footery, didnay, wouldnay*) or variant meanings for standard lexis (*away*), as well as a representation of the Scots speech sounds (*fayther's, naw*, and perhaps *Boab*, of which the usual spelling is "Bob").

Some of the poems of James Berry, John Agard and Linton Kwesi Johnson resemble transcripts, using a simple "phonetic" representation, of urban black English varieties or Caribbean creoles. Here is an excerpt from one of Mr. Johnson's poems, *Di AnfinishRevalueshan*:

soh mi a beg yumistah man
 please come out a yu shell
 yucyaan dwell inna di paas
 cat laas fi evahyu know mi bredda
 now dat di sun a shine brite
 please come out a di doldrums a di daaknite

In the past, publishers and broadcasters may have silenced or excluded such voices. Nowadays they can find an outlet an audience. While this gives expression to a greater diversity of language varieties, it may cause us now to undervalue those who use regional varieties that approximate more closely to standard forms.

1.1.6. A summary of the two authors and their novels

Kenule "Ken" Beeson SaroWiwa (10 October 1941 – 10 November 1995) was a Nigerian writer, television producer, environmental activist, and winner of the Right Livelihood Award and the Goldman Environmental Prize. Ken Saro-Wiwa wrote *Sozaboy* in 1985 but the historical setting of the novel is immediately after Nigeria's independence and during the so called Biafran war. The main character is Mene who enters the war with many hopes of becoming a 'man' and gaining the woman, Agnes. He takes on a very naive view of what the realities of war are actually like. In the beginning, he thinks that being a soldier would be a wonderful experience, because he would get to wear the nice uniforms, march around singing, and get food three times a day. He also wanted to impress Agnes, as well as all the people in his village, Dukana. Once he becomes a soldier, he slowly realizes that being a soldier means going for days without food, and that was just the beginning of his disillusionment and suffering.

Brian Chikwava was born in August 1972 in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. He is an African writer who lives and works in London. His short story "Seventh Street Alchemy" was awarded the 2004 Caine Prize for African Writing, and Chikwava became the first Zimbabwean to do so. He has been a Charles Pick fellow at the University of East Anglia, and lives in London. The story in *Harare North* is set in London. The nameless narrator of the story is a former militia man who got caught up in the in-fighting between the Zimbabwean police and the Green Bombers, the notorious militia, and has to flee Zimbabwe when he is charged with murder. He seeks political asylum in the UK, but is planning to make the equivalent of US\$5,000 in London and fly back, as he is sure that with that kind of money he can buy his way out of the criminal justice process. His struggle to raise the money sees him resorting to the low-paid jobs in the underbelly of London, but he also takes advantage of Shingi, his friend and squat-mate, and blackmails his cousin's wife when he discovers that she's having an affair. The struggle intensifies as the narrator realises that he has to get back to Zimbabwe as soon as possible for a ceremonial ritual for his deceased mother. His mother's grave, in a rural village, may soon be destroyed by the Zimbabwean government, which is evicting the villagers to roll in mining operations, since valuable minerals have been discovered there. With events becoming increasingly fractious, the story comes to its denouement towards the end, when the narrator's mind begins to unravel and, simultaneously, he and Shingi become a single entity.

1.2.0. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A number of novels including Chinua Achebe's *A Man of the People*, Amos Tutuola's *The Palm Wine Drinkard*, Brian Chikwava in *Harare North* and Ken Saro-wiwa in his novel *Sozaboy—A Novel in Rotten English* employ non-standard English in various forms. In my research project I intend to find out the nature of non-standard English used in African novels and the effectiveness of using non-standard English as a writing technique in the selected novels mentioned below. I will base my research on the texts by two specific writers: Brian Chikwava in *Harare North* and Ken Saro-wiwa in novel *Sozaboy—A Novel in Rotten English*.

1.3.0. JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

By examining closely the use of non-standard English in African novel, I will help many readers and writers understand why this approach to writing is advantageous to both author and audience and why it has flourished especially in the African novel. The study will also assess critical responses to the texts mentioned and this would help evaluate the effectiveness of this technique. This knowledge can be useful to other aspiring writers and scholars who wish to experiment in this area in future. It is also important to note that very little has been written on this topic and little information exist that can be used by people interested in either writing using non-standard form of English or assessing such works as part of academic, leisure and journalistic engagements. My research therefore will help fill gaps in these areas of criticism.

1.4.0. SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF STUDY

This project only focuses on selected two African novels, namely: *Sozaboy—A Novel in Rotten English* and *Harare North*. Using these two African novels, I have endeavored to show the effectiveness of using non-standard English as a technique in writing novels. But in order to do this successfully and convincingly, I have looked critically at other works of literature from Africa, Europe and the Caribbean that relates to my work. I have done this in “Chapter One” of this study under “Introduction” and “Literature” review sections, by reading through texts and criticism of these works and gained insights into how various writers and critics view and use non Standard English to their works.

The limitations to this study are that I can only do library research and close reading with little input from other methods of research. This is because of the nature of study itself is based on the

textual evidence so much that other methods of research might not help a lot in influencing the final outcome.

1.5.0. OBJECTIVES

1. To establish nature and history of non-standard English used in the two selected African novels.
2. To establish the effectiveness of using non-standard English in writing novels.

1.6.0. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the nature and history of non-standard English that has been employed by the two novelists in their selected works?
2. What is the effectiveness of using non-standard English in writing novels?

1.7.0. HYPOTHESES

1. The use of non-standard English in writing texts, especially novels, is useful to both readers and writers in several ways and the reason writers some writers chose to write in non-standard English is among others to create humour as evidence in *Sozaboy* and *Harare North*. The reader of a text that makes use of non-standard English such as *Harare North* is bound to laugh and be tickled throughout the narratives because of the distorted and realistic way these writers engage with him or her.
2. The nature of non-standard English used by authors is basically a modified version of proper or Standard English that has borrowed many words, sounds and expressions from local languages.

1.8.0. THEORETICAL APPROACHES

In this study I will use the following theoretical approaches:

1.8.1. Reader-response theory: Reader-response criticism encompasses various approaches to literature that explore and seek to explain the diversity (and often divergence) of readers' responses to literary works.

It is a school of literary theory that focuses on the reader (or "audience") and their experience of a literary work, in contrast to other schools and theories that focus attention primarily on the author or the content and form of the work.

Although literary theory has long paid some attention to the reader's role in creating the meaning and experience of a literary work, modern reader-response criticism began in the 1960s and '70s, particularly in America and Germany, in work by Norman Holland, Stanley Fish, Wolfgang Iser, Hans-Robert Jauss, Roland Barthes, and others. Important predecessors were I. A. Richards, who in 1929 analyzed a group of Cambridge undergraduates' misreading; Louise Rosenblatt, who, in *Literature as Exploration* (1938), argued that it is important for the teacher to avoid imposing any "preconceived notions about the proper way to react to any work"; and C. S. Lewis in *An Experiment in Criticism* (1961).

Reader-response theory recognizes the reader as an active agent who imparts "real existence" to the work and completes its meaning through interpretation. Reader-response criticism argues that literature should be viewed as a performing art in which each reader creates their own, possibly unique, text-related performance. It stands in total opposition to the theories of formalism and the New Criticism, in which the reader's role in re-creating literary works is almost ignored. New Criticism had emphasized that only that which is within a text is part of the meaning of a text. No appeal to the authority or intention of the author, nor to the psychology of the reader, was allowed in the discussions of orthodox New Critics. Reader response criticism starts with what formalist literary criticism called the "affective fallacy" — that the response of the reader is relevant to understanding a text — and uses it as the focus of approaching a work of literature. There are different approaches within this school of critical theory, however; some look at the work from the individual reader's point of view, while others focus on how groups or communities view the text. For these schools of criticism, it's what the text does to the reader that's important (or reader to the text), and not necessarily the work itself, the author's intent, or the social, political, or cultural context in which it was written.

The label "reader-oriented criticism" has become popular since the reader's experiences and expectations often change as time passes. In addition, a reader may approach the text with

different points of view, or lenses. That is, the reader may be able to see the value in his or her own personal response, while also analyzing the text based on another critical approach.

Individual Readers

Louise Rosenblatt is generally credited with formally introducing the idea that the reader's experience and interaction with the text creates the true meaning. This idea developed into what came to be known as Transactional Reader Response Criticism. Rosenblatt argued that, while the reader is guided by the ideas and words that the author laid out, it is ultimately each individual reader's experience in reading the work that actually gives it meaning. Since each person brings unique knowledge and beliefs to the reading transaction, the text will mean different things to different people. It is that meaning — the reader's meaning — that should be assessed, as opposed to solely looking at the author's text in a vacuum.

Other critics focus on how the reader's mind relates to the text, in what is known as Psychological Reader Response Criticism. The reader is seen as a psychological subject who can be studied basing on his or her unconscious drives brought to the surface by his or her reaction to a text. Reading the text can become almost a therapeutic experience for the reader, as the connections that he or she makes reveal truths about his or her personality.

Psychological Reader Response Criticism in many ways fuelled another similar theory — Subjective Reader Response Criticism — which takes the personal, psychological component even further. In this theory, the reader's interpretation of a text is thought to be deeply influenced by personal and psychological needs first, rather than being guided by the text. Each reading is thought to bring psychological symptoms to the surface, from which the reader can find his or her own unconscious motives.

The Uniform Reader

Other schools of reader response criticism look not at the reader as an individual, but as a theoretical reader. The "implied reader," for example, an idea introduced by Wolfgang Iser, is the reader who is required for the text — the reader who the author imagines when writing, and who he or she is writing for. This reader is guided by the text, which contains gaps meant for the reader to fill, explaining and making connections within the text. The reader ultimately creates meaning based not only on what is in the text, but what the text has provoked inside him or her.

Theorist Stanley Fish introduced what he called the "informed reader," who brings prior, shared knowledge to the experience of reading.

Social Reader Response

Social Reader Response Criticism focuses on "interpretive communities" — groups that have shared beliefs and values — and how these groups use particular strategies that affect both the text and their reading behaviours. It is the group that then determines what an acceptable interpretation of the text is, with the meaning being whatever the group says that it is. A book club or a group of college students, for example, based on their own cultural and group beliefs, will generally agree on the ultimate meaning on a text.

As an extension of the social theory, these like-minded groups can also approach and view the text from different lenses. If the group finds certain elements to be more significant than others, it might examine the text from this particular viewpoint, or lens. For example, feminist literary critics may find focus on the female elements of a writing, whereas new historicists might focus on the culture and era in which the text is read.

Louise Rosenblatt in Literature as Exploration (23), In her 1969 essay, "Towards a Transactional Theory of Reading," summed up her position as follows: "A poem is what the reader lives through under the guidance of the text and experiences as relevant to the text." Recognizing that many critics would reject this definition, Rosenblatt wrote, "The idea that a poem presupposes a reader actively involved with a text is particularly shocking to those seeking to emphasize the objectivity of their interpretations." Rosenblatt implicitly and generally refers to formalists (the most influential of whom are the New Critics) when she speaks of supposedly objective interpreters shocked by the notion that a "poem" is cooperatively produced by a "reader" and a "text." Formalists spoke of "the poem itself", the "concrete work of art", and the "real poem." They had no interest in what a work of literature makes a reader "live through". I am therefore going to actively engage the text using this theory in finding out elements of humour in the select texts, as I see and experience them subjectively. In this case, I will use this theory to identify aspects of reading that can be understood to be humorous. Some effects of writing techniques such as humour can only be achieved if you consider situations in your own ways without being confined by rules. This theory is relevant to this study because humour can be subjective, and what some people might find funny, others might not.

1.8.2. Structuralist Literary theory

Structuralism originated in the early 1900s, in the structural linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure and the subsequent Prague, Moscow and Copenhagen schools of linguistics. In the late 1950s and early '60s, when structural linguistics was facing serious challenges from the likes of Noam Chomsky and thus fading in importance, an array of scholars in the humanities borrowed Saussure's concepts for use in their respective fields of study. French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss was arguably the first such scholar, sparking a widespread interest in Structuralism.

The most prominent thinkers associated with structuralism include Lévi-Strauss, linguist Roman Jakobson, and psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan.

In literary theory, structuralist criticism relates literary texts to a larger structure, which may be a particular genre, a range of intertextual connections, a model of a universal narrative structure, or a system of recurrent patterns or motifs. Structuralism argues that there must be a structure in every text, which explains why it is easier for experienced readers than for non-experienced readers to interpret a text. Hence, everything that is written seems to be governed by specific rules, or a "grammar of literature", that one learns in educational institutions and that are to be unmasked. Structuralism is used in literary theory, for example, "...if you examine the structure of a large number of short stories to discover the underlying principles that govern their composition...principles of narrative progression...or of characterization...you are also engaged in structuralist activity, if you describe the structure of a single literary work to discover how its composition demonstrates the underlying principles of a given structural system" (Tyson 197-198).

To successfully define non-standard English and differentiate it from proper English, this theory comes in handy. It helps me to understand the violation of the language to achieve certain objectives which are to be discussed herein.

1.8.3. Stylistic approach

Roman Jakobson had been an active member of the Russian Formalists and the Prague School, before immigrating to America in the 1940s. He brought together Russian Formalism and American New Criticism in his Closing Statement at a conference on stylistics at Indiana University in 1958. Published as *Linguistics and Poetics* in 1960, Jakobson's lecture is often

credited with being the first coherent formulation of stylistics, and his argument was that the study of poetic language should be a sub-branch of linguistics. The poetic function was one of six general functions of language he described in the lecture.

Michael Halliday is an important figure in the development of British stylistics. His 1971 study *Linguistic Function and Literary Style: An Inquiry into the Language of William Golding's The Inheritors* was a significant essay in terms of popularizing Stylistics in British universities.

Stylistics, is the study and interpretation of texts in regard to their linguistic and tonal style. As a discipline, it links literary criticism to linguistics. It does not function as an autonomous domain on its own, but it can be applied to an understanding of literature and journalism as well as linguistics. Sources of study in stylistics may range from canonical works of writing to popular texts and from advertising copy to news, non-fiction, and popular culture, as well as to political and religious discourse. Stylistics as a conceptual discipline may attempt to establish principles capable of explaining particular choices made by individuals and social groups in their use of language, such as in the literary production and reception of genre, the study of folk art, in the study of spoken dialects and registers, and can be applied to areas such as discourse analysis as well as literary criticism.

Common features of style include the use of dialogue, including regional accents and individual dialects (or idiolects), the use of grammar, such as the observation of active voice and passive voice, the distribution of sentence lengths, the use of particular language registers, and so on. In addition, stylistics is a distinctive term that may be used to determine the connections between the form and effects within a particular variety of language. Therefore, stylistics looks at what is 'going on' within the language; what the linguistic associations are that the style of language reveals which is useful to this research, because I am examining use of non-standard form of English and to what effects does a writer chooses to use it. It is also important to note that taking forward the ideas of the Russian Formalists, the Prague School built on the concept of foregrounding, where it is assumed that poetic language is considered to stand apart from non-literary background language, by means of deviation (from the norms of everyday language) or parallelism. According to the Prague School, however, this background language isn't constant, and the relationship between poetic and everyday language is therefore always shifting. This idea of foregrounding suits perfectly the idea of using non-standard English in texts which renders them unique and I will explore this uniqueness to unearth the effects it creates in these works using this theory.

1.9.1. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In this study, I have done mostly library research. I have read closely primary and secondary texts, read many texts discussed herein as part of literature review and responded to them accordingly in terms of their contribution to knowledge that informs this study. I have done research on the internet on sites cited and interacted with writers who have experimented with this approaches of non-standard English to create humour, many whose works are unpublished. I have read interviews of the selected writers discussed here and talked to some of my lecturers to gather their views about this.

1.9.2. Definition of key terms used

a) According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, a technique is a way of doing something by using special knowledge or skill. The term "literary techniques" refers to specific aspects of literature, in the sense of its universal function as an art form that expresses ideas through language, which we can recognize, identify, interpret and analyze. Literary techniques collectively comprise the art form's components - the means authors use to create meaning through language, and that readers use to understand and appreciate their works. They also provide a conceptual framework for comparing individual literary works to others, within and across genres.

"Literary techniques" is a catch-all term that may be distinguished from the term "devices". Literary techniques are literary moves a writer might make that are defined not so much by functional or descriptive actions as by imitation and repeated use by many authors at times. Instances of literary techniques tend to be harder to identify than instances of devices, and identification of techniques tends to be more dependent upon citing literary precedent; nevertheless, there is considerable overlap between the territory of devices and techniques. Irony, for example, challenges the distinction between a device and a technique because it refers to a handful of more-or-less easily identifiable literary actions, but also describes a recognizable but elusively complex attitude toward the subject of a whole or a part of a work of literature. It is debatable whether literary techniques or literary devices are the larger category.

The term "literary elements" is partly analogous to these two terms; but it tends to be invoked to describe the most universal literary techniques or devices—those that least mark out the work as an example of a particular, recognizable tradition or literary lineage. Genres are defined by

literary elements; schools of literature are defined by literary techniques. Literary devices are not determinate of either of these categories, although certain devices predominate traditionally in, e.g., tragedy vs. comedy. Noted works of literature often result when an author successfully takes on the challenge of using a specific literary device or technique in a type of work where, historically, it has been uncommon. (princeton.edu on Literary technique) This audacity is what this study is dealing with.

b) Non-standard English is English language that is sub standard or broken. Writers like Ken Saro-wiwa uses the term rotten for the same. It is no simple matter to define the difference between a standard and a **nonstandard** variety of language. However, for our purposes, we can define a standard dialect as one that draws no negative attention to itself On the other hand, a nonstandard dialect does draw negative attention to itself; that is, educated people might judge the speaker of such a dialect as socially inferior, lacking education, and so on. A nonstandard dialect can thus be characterized as having *socially marked* forms, such as *ain't*. A socially marked form is one that causes the listener to form a negative social judgment of the speaker.

"It is important to understand that identifying a dialect as standard or nonstandard is a sociological judgment, not a linguistic one." (F. Parker and K. Riley, *Linguistics for Non-Linguists*. Allyn and Bacon, 1994)

"Nonstandard dialects of English differ from Standard English most importantly at the level of grammar. Examples of widespread nonstandard grammatical forms in English include multiple negation." (Peter Trudgill, *Introducing Language and Society*. Penguin, 1992)

"In fiction nonstandard forms are mostly found in dialogue and they are used as a powerful tool to reveal character traits or social and regional differences." (Irma Taavitsainen, et al., *Writing in Nonstandard English*. John Benjamins, 1999) .

c). Ideophones are words that evoke an idea in sound, often a vivid impression of certain sensations or sensory perceptions, e.g. sound, movement, colour, shape, or action. For instance, words like *twa!* Can refer to a sound made when a person has been whipped. This word, which also imitates sound, can evoke in the reader vivid images of pain and punishment. A word such as *shruuh!* Can refer to the quick movement of an object through the air and the accompanying sound to such movement.

Ideophones are found in many of the world's languages, though they are relatively uncommon in Western languages (Nuckolls 2004). The word class of ideophones is sometimes called

phonosemantic to indicate that it is not a grammatical word class in the traditional sense of the word (like 'verb' or 'noun'), but rather a lexical class based on the special relation between form and meaning exhibited by ideophones. In the discipline of linguistics, ideophones have long been overlooked or treated as mysterious words (Voeltz and Kilian-Hatz 2001:2), though a recent surge of interest in sound symbolism, iconicity, and linguistic diversity has brought them renewed attention (Imai et al. 2008, Güldemann 2008, Gasser et al. 2010, Nuckolls 1996).

A pidgin is “a language with a reduced range of structure and use, with NO native speakers.” It grows up among people who do not share a common language but who want to communicate with each other.

A creole is “a pidgin which has become the mother tongue of a community,” and therefore has native speakers.

(Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language).

1.9.3.0. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.9.3.1. CRITICAL WORKS ABOUT KEN SARO-WIWA'S SOZABOY

In his article "War, violence and language in Ken Saro-Wiwa's *Sozaboy*" (2011) Uwasomba Chijioke looks at the nature of the language and implications on the English language in Nigeria. He also attempted an understanding of the moral and political consequences of war on humanity in general and the special effect of the Nigerian civil war on the minority areas within the Biafran enclave in particular as epitomized by Dukana, the setting of *Sozaboy*. The essay concluded that the novel itself was a bold attempt at experimentation with language, considering the fact that it was written in what the author himself described as 'rotten' English.

Ato George in his essay, "Established Trajectories of Representation in the Narratives" (2008), narrowing down to *Sozaboy*, he says, *Ken Saro-Wiwa's deviationist pattern* of language in *Sozaboy* has generated a lively debate among critics as regards its effectiveness as a mode of communication. In a useful way, Okere (1992:9:15) and Adegboyin (1992:30:38) have separately scrutinized the notional and grammatical dimensions of the writer's subaltern idiom, and they agree that its use enhances the narrator's credibility.

Dianne Feely in her article (on Solidarity-us.org) says Saro-Wiwa employs sustained use of pidgin English. Other authors, notably Achebe, have used such English in their dialogue, but Sara-Wiwa has constructed its language in order to reflect the reality of life during the Nigerian civil war. Referring to Saro-Wiwa's preface to the novel, she further adds:

Above all, Saro-Wiwa reflects the chaos and lawlessness of the war by introducing the chaos and lawlessness of the language. Of course it only appears to be chaotic. But it creates an idiomatic rhythm that both functions to provide comic relief and the power of a distinctive voice.

Yet it is only at the novel's end that one realizes the whole story is like a letter read aloud. The glossary in the back lets the reader not only look up the unfamiliar expressions, but gives evidence to the writer's control over the chaos.

Ian Lambert, in his article "Chris Abani's *Graceland* and Uziduma Lweala's *Beast of No Nation*: Non-standard English, intertextuality and Ken Saro-wiwa's *Sozaboy*", agrees with earlier critics that Ken Saro-wiwa succeeded in his linguistic experiment of using crude language to portray the crudity and cruelty of war and concludes that, the particular significance of Saro-

Wiwa's deviationist 'English' lies in its 'decanonizing' power, its ability to bypass the protocols of "standard" English and yet retain its comprehensibility as a medium of expression.

1.9.3.2. CRITICAL WORKS ABOUT BRIAN CHIKWAVA'S *HARARE NORTH*

Sean Christie in an article "Limning Insanity in Migrant London—Brian Chikwava's *Harare North*" observes that Chikwava does manage to create a voice in his work capable of both exposing and representing (the narrator has lost his sanity by the end of the book) the psychological pressures of migrant life in London, Chikwava has mixed elements of Nigerian pidgin ('everyone's buttock holes get vex'), Dread Talk ('more fire'), London slang ('graft', 'wicked', 'the score'), with a laugh derived from the Afrikaans word for shit—kakkakkak. That Chikwava has created a patois of one. Zimbabwean pidgin sounds very different, comprising southern African linguistic influences and a range of non-lexical expression in which mimics delight—short surprised ah's, enraged yehyehyeh's, portentous drawn out O's and terrified eeeh's. This disjuncture alone is enough to convince him that *Harare North* is not 'almost entirely about Zimbabwe,' as one reviewer has suggests, but overwhelmingly a book about a young black migrant, who could quite as serviceably come from the Caribbean, losing his mind in a major European metropolis.

Annie Gagiano in her review of *Harare North*, an article on African Library columns (litnet.co.za/Article/african-library), says that the language of the narrative is an accessible but often ungrammatical English, with very occasional Shona expressions, but the narrator's frame of reference is almost entirely Zimbabwean, even in London, since he lives among and is involved primarily with compatriots. His speech (the text being almost entirely written from a first-person perspective) is wonderfully vivid and convincingly evokes an outsider / underdog's awareness.

Jane Bryce in her essay "Grammaticalisation the Invention of Language in New African Fiction, while quoting Makuwe, asserts: "It's noticeable that the two African reviewers are far more positive about Chikwava's fellow-Zimbabwean, Pettina Gappah's, collection of short stories, *An Elegy for Easterly*, written in impeccable Standard English with frequent canonical references, for example to Shakespeare and Karl Marx.

She then asks these questions: Is there then a limit to the extent to which readers are willing to suspend their disbelief in the cause of dramatising imaginary worlds through invented language? Is the substitution of an idiolect for national specificity and authenticity an authorial mis-step?

Alternatively, if not properly indigenised, can Chikwava's language be commended for nonetheless conveying the disturbing otherness of a barely-repressed psychopathic consciousness? But the questions are posed but not answered; perhaps, it is a challenge to scholars to put them into consideration when researching on the topic.

And, still interrogating the language use in *Harare North*, she adds that Chikwava's language if not strictly conforming to the 'palimpsest' of indigenous syntax, the language, nonetheless, has other important qualities of orality: the robust figuration of reality in concrete terms, the dramatization of a philosophical perspective without recourse to abstraction, the direct address to a living audience. What if the language of these texts is an example of what Christopher Miller calls 'intercultural literacy', or the way 'cultures construct themselves by constant reference to each other'? (Miller:157)

Flora Veit-Wild, discussing code-switching between Shona and English in some of the new urban forms in Zimbabwe, lends some support to this possibility: 'It can be expected that the fundamental changes that Zimbabwean society is undergoing at this historic moment will generate enormous creative energies, which will, in turn, be reflected in further dynamic shifts and re-inventions in language and the verbal arts.' (Veit-Wild, 2009: 697)

CONCLUSION

To conclude, it is evident that little studies have been carried out concerning the use of non standard English in the writings of Ken Saro-wiwa, and specifically on his novel—*Sozaboy*, and also on Brian Chikwava's novel *Harare North*, as seen above. These studies have focussed on the crude and so called "rotten English" of *Sozaboy* and how the language mirrors the reality the characters confront during war. It is evident that these criticisms, although coming from different standpoints all come to the conclusion that the use of non Standard English creates an original representation of the reality of life in Nigeria at that time. And, again, these arguments lead us to the conclusion that using non Standard English in writing is a brave experience and decision by any writer because it needs a lot of skill and sacrifice to fully exploit the technique and achieve success.

It is also clear that not a lot of criticism and research has been levelled on Chikwava's *Harare North* and the few who have attempted have mainly focussed on the use of non Standard English as a tool of resistance and protest. This study therefore will look further into these two texts with an aim to uncover the effectiveness of non Standard English in writing fiction in addition to those highlighted.

1.9.3. 3.CHAPTER OUTLINE

2.1.1. Nature of Non Standard English Used in the African novel

2.1.2. Character and History of Pidgin English (Non Standard English)

3.0. Chapter three: Effectiveness of Using Non Standard English in Writing Fiction.

3.1.0. Usefulness of Idiophonic Sounds in Capturing African Settings.

3.2.0. Non Standard English as a Symbol of Illiteracy and Naivety.

3.3.0. Non Standard English as a Courier of Tensions.

3.4.0. Use of Non Standard English in Code Switching for Informality.

3.5.0. Use of Non Standard English as portraiture of Reality and Authenticity

3.5.1. Use of non Standard English to create humour and satire

Humour in *Sozaboy*

Humour in *Harare North*

3.6.0. Use of non Standard English as Euphemism

3.7.0. Use of Non Standard English to Manifest Terror and Oddity

Conclusion

2.0. CHAPTER TWO

2.1.1. Character and History of Non Standard English Used in *Sozaboy* and *Harare North*

The texts under scrutiny are written in West African Pidgin in the case of *Sozaboy* and in Zimbabwean variety of Pidgin in the case of *Harare North*, which is largely the creation of the writer, who uses his skill to weave in English a combination of languages from Zimbabwe.

According to the constitution of Zimbabwe, the country has 16 official languages:

English, Shona, and Ndebele are the most widely spoken languages in the country.

Approximately 70% of the population Shona as their first language, and around 20% are Ndebele speakers. It is a fact that all these languages have borrowed words from English, and at the same time, English has adopted words from these languages. The narrator of *Harare North* borrows from these languages words like *sadza* (pg36), *mudzimu* pg 44, *mamuka seyi* pg45, *mamhepo* , *paparapapara* pg47, *zongororo* pg 52 , *chibuku* pg 53 , *geje geje* pg 56, *nhayi* pg 93, *sadza nemusoro watsomba* pg 94, and incorporates them into his narrative. Brian Chikwava as the author makes use of these terms and many others to achieve originality and authenticity of speech.

According to Richard Nordquist (*West African Pidgin English*), West African Pidgin English, also called Guinea Coast Creole English, was the lingua franca, or language of commerce, spoken along the West African coast during the period of the Atlantic slave trade. British slave merchants and local African traders developed this language in the coastal areas in order to facilitate their commercial exchanges, but it quickly spread up the river systems into the West African interior because of its value as a trade language among Africans of different tribes. Later in its history, this useful trading language was adopted as a native language by new communities of Africans and mixed-race people living in coastal slave trading bases such as James Island, Bunce Island, Elmina Castle, Cape Coast Castle and Anomabu. At that point, it became a Creole language. This adaptation would later reflect in the literature from the respective communities that developed after independence. Novels written in these localised English or Pidgin, like *The Palm Wine Drinkard* and subsequent books by Amos Tutuola, were at first not considered proper literary works, but later, because of their artistic beauty and originality, have gained critical acclaim as experimental works that best capture the crude and sometimes matter-of-fact ways of

a people. This originality can be seen in *Sozaboy* where the experiences of the main character are depicted in unsophisticated and sometimes even cruel terms as shown below:

“All our camp don broke down well well. Everywhere was full pit and pit. And inside one pit, you will se the head of soza, and in another pit, the hand of soza. Everywhere, soso human flesh in small small pieces! Finger, nail, hair, prick, blokkus. Oh, I just begin cry like woman. Oh, foolish man, na who sed me make I go join soza? Then I just remembered say I never see bullet. My heart cut one time. Abi Bullet don die? Ehn? God, whowhosai ‘e dey I begin run about deyhala well well, ‘ Bullet, oga Bullet, Bullet whereyoudey? (pg 111).

Some scholars call this language "West African Pidgin English" to emphasize its role as a lingua franca pidgin used for trading. Others call it "Guinea Coast Creole English" (Nordquist: pp 19) to emphasize its role as a creole native language spoken in and around the coastal slave castles and slave trading centres by people permanently based there.

West African Pidgin English arose during the period when the British dominated the Atlantic slave trade in the late 17th and 18th centuries, ultimately exporting more slaves to the America than all the other European nations combined. During this period, English-speaking sailors and slave traders were in constant contact with African villagers and long-distance traders along thousands of miles of West African coastline. Africans who picked up elements of English for purposes of trade with Europeans along the coast probably took the language up the river systems along the trade routes into the interior where other Africans who may never have seen a white man adopted it as a useful device for trade along the rivers.

The existence of this influential language during the slave trade era is attested by the many descriptions of it recorded by early European travellers and slave traders. They called it the "Coast English" or the "Coast Jargon." (Nordquist: 24)

A British slave trader in Sierra Leone, named John Matthews, mentioned pidgin English in a letter he later published in a book titled *A Voyage to the River Sierra-Leone on the Coast of Africa (year and reference)*. Matthews refers to West African Pidgin English as a "jargon," and he warns Europeans coming to Africa that they will fail to understand the Africans unless they recognize that there are significant differences between English and the coastal pidgin:

“Those who visit Africa in a cursory manner...are very liable to be mistaken in the meaning of the natives from want of knowledge in their language, or in the jargon of such of them as reside upon the sea-coast and speak a little English; the European affixing the same ideas to the words spoken by the African, as if they were pronounced by one of his own nation. [This] is a specimen of the conversation which generally passes....:

Well, my friend, you got trade today; you got plenty of slaves?

No, we no got trade yet; by and by trade come. You can't go.

What you go for catch people, you go for make war?

Yes, my brother... gone for catch people; or they gone for make war." (Mathews: 7)

Like other pidgin and Creole languages (the difference between Pidgin and Creole is shown under terms), West African Pidgin English took the majority of its vocabulary from its target language (English), and much of its sound system, grammar, and syntax from the local substrate languages (West African Niger–Congo languages).

The English dialect that served as the target language (or lexifier) for West African Pidgin English was not the speech of Britain's educated classes, though, but the Nautical English spoken by the British sailors who manned the slave ships that sailed to Africa. Nautical speech contained words from British regional dialects as well as specialized ship vocabulary. Evidence of this early nautical speech can still be found in the modern pidgin and creole languages derived from West African Pidgin English. In Sierra Leone Krio, for instance, words derived from English regional dialects include *padi* ("friend"), *krabit* ("stingy"), and *berin* ("funeral"). Words from specialized ship vocabulary include *kohtlas* ("machete"), *flog* ("beat," "punish"), *eys* [from "hoist"] ("to lift"), and *dek* ("floor").

The various pidgin and Creole languages still spoken in West Africa today—the Aku language in The Gambia, Sierra Leone Krio, Nigerian Pidgin English, Ghanaian Pidgin English, Cameroonian Pidgin English, Fernando Poo Creole English, etc. -- are all derived from this early West African Pidgin English. Indeed, these contemporary English-based pidgin and Creole languages are so similar that they are sometimes grouped together under the name "West African Pidgin English," though the term applies more properly to the trade language spoken on the West African coast two hundred years ago.

According to Mathews, the similarities among the many English-based pidgin and Creole languages spoken today on *both* sides of the Atlantic are due, at least in part, to their common derivation from the early West African Pidgin English. Note the following examples:

- **Sierra Leone's Creole English commonly written as**

Sierra Leone Krio:

Dem dey go for go it res -- They are going there to eat rice

- **Ghanaian/Nigerian Pidgin English:**

Dem dey go chop rais -- They are going there to eat rice

- **Cameroonian Pidgin English:**

Deydi go for go chop rice -- They are going there to eat rice

- **Gullah:** Creole language spoken by Gullah people of South Carolina (USA), whose ancestry are West Africa and Bahamas.
- *Dem duh gwinefuh eat rice* -- They are going there to eat rice

(Matthews, John pg:88)

From the notes above by Mathews, it is clear that the history of Pidgin varieties of English in West Africa are varied, Nigerian Pidgin is an English-based pidgin and Creole language spoken as a lingua franca across Nigeria. The language is commonly referred to as "Pidgin" or "Brokin". It is distinguished from other Creole languages since most speakers are not true native speakers, although many children do learn it at an early age. It can be spoken as a pidgin, a Creole, or a decreolisedacrolect by different speakers, who may switch between these forms depending on the social setting.

Ihemere (2006) reports that Nigerian Pidgin is the native language of approximately 3 to 5 million people and is a second language for at least another 75 million. Variations of Pidgin are also spoken across West Africa, in countries such as Equatorial Guinea, Ghana and Cameroon. Pidgin English, despite its common use throughout the country, has no official status.

But whether it has achieved this ‘official status’ or not, has not prevented many Nigerian writers like Ken Saro-wiwa and Chinua Achebe from using it.

As regarding Brian Chikwava’s *Harare North*, the author had to create his own unique form of non Standard English because unlike in Nigeria, where Pidgin English is a popular and established language, in Zimbabwe there is no such dominance of a non standard form. Jane Bryce in her essay “Grammaticalologisation—the Invention of Language in New African Fiction”, while quoting Makuwe, asserts, ‘As Africans we have “Africanised” the English language to a stage where one can pick where the other is from through the way they express themselves in English, and Chikwava’s language came out to me as pidgin, mostly associated with the Nigerian community, which might give an impression to some readers that that could be the way Zimbabweans speak, *which is not the case* (my italics).’ *The Sunday Times* reviewer was kinder in describing the language as: ‘back-to-front English and spiky argot (which) throw up sly, acidly comic observations on Zimbabwe’s ruined economy’ (Lewis, 2009).

Chikwava himself describes it as ‘a mixed grill’ of Ndebele and Shona, and the narrative is peppered with words, phrases and sayings in these languages. Ikhide, however, blames ‘publishers eager to publish and sell reams of Africa’s dignity to a willing and gullible Western audience’, while Makuwe warns, ‘It is in order to advise aspiring writers ... that not all narratives from Africa need to be served up in its (sic) own patented variant of language. It may be eloquent shorthand for authenticity but we must beware its fetishisation.’ (Makuwe, 2009)

And Sean Christie, reviewing the novel, notes: ‘Chikwava has mixed elements of Nigerian pidgin...Dread Talk...London slang...with a laugh derived from the Afrikaans word for shit – ‘kak kak kak,’ and concludes that as a result, the novel is a narrative, not of Zimbabwe, but of ‘the way life at the wrong end of London’s formal economy can cause the mind of the African migrant to unravel’ (Christie, 2010: 96).

And all these can be read in his interview conducted by Maya G. Vinuesa for the educational journal *Teaching African Literatures and Translation* (Vinuesa 2012, in press), where Brian Chikwava provides the following information on why he chose to write in non Standard English and other related questions.

1. What is (are) your mother tongue(s)?

I was born into a family that spoke Ndebele, from my mother's side, and Shona, from my father's side, and English from both parents.

2. As a writer from Zimbabwe, where English is one more language with Shona, Ndebele, and others, what is your stand on the use of English as your literary language?

Chikwava: Because of the way personal or national identity is constructed around languages, I like to think that having multiple languages opens up a lot of possibilities, which for a writer is a real asset. There are a handful of reasons for not choosing to write in either Ndebele or Shona, though they form the scaffolding over which I hang the English language. I choose to write in English because it gives me an instant platform in transnational conversations; that way I do not have to be confined to the 15 million Zimbabweans. Indigenous languages tend to isolate experiences, colonial languages tend to aggregate experiences but that is a historical accident and, from a writerly perspective, if one intends to engage in conversation with other corners of the world that do not speak Shona or Ndebele, it may even be interesting to see that historical outcome as offering possibilities for self re-imagination, reconstruction and renewal.

3. What kind of English do you want to represent in your hero's speech? Different readers perceive it differently, and some of them seem to miss the point that this is fiction, and thus the hero's language may also be a fiction rather than a reflection of what a real Green Bomber might speak like. An angry reviewer states that this boy should speak in Shona, rather than in English while a happy reader feels that this is a unique voice...

Chikwava: I'm not so much seeking to put forward a certain kind of English in Harare North but finding an idiom that, from a purely artistic perspective, best captures the Green Bomber narrator. The Green Bomber may not speak that kind of English because he would mostly express himself in Shona or Ndebele but to translate that straight into Standard English means that one loses a lot of the colour of the narrator's internal psychology, logic and other traits that are drawn from Shona or Ndebele. Yet to have written the book in Shona/Ndebele would have meant confining myself to a Zimbabwean readership only which, given the size of the nation, would translate into a couple of hundred readers if I'm lucky. That would have been a crazy choice to make, especially in today's rapidly converging world.

CONCLUSION

From the discussions above, it is clear that there are several dialects of non-standard English that are used to communicate, mainly for trade, in certain parts of Africa; mainly in the West. And

that some of these varieties are a result of geographical, historical and social circumstances that the language is able to capture. These varieties are the Aku language in The Gambia, Sierra Leone Krio, Nigerian Pidgin English, Ghanaian Pidgin English, Cameroonian Pidgin English, Fernando Poo Creole English, among others.

Pidgin borrowed heavily and still does from the local languages in countries where it is used. This borrowing is what makes it useful because it then captures all aspects of the physical, social and even idiophonic environs. Yet more importantly for this study is that of all these varieties only Nigerian Pidgin English has been used widely as a distinguished literal language by prominent scholars including Chinua Achebe and Ken Saro-wiwa in their works for the effectiveness discussed in the next chapter. From this research also, is evident that other varieties of spoken non-standard English otherwise known as pidgin have not been utilised in writing as such. In the case of *Harare North*, Brian Chikwava did not rely upon an established dialect of non-standard English, as does Ken Saro-wiwa, but instead created his own distortion of Standard English to achieve his ends as discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

EFFECTIVENESS OF USING NON-STANDARD ENGLISH IN *SOZABOY* AND *HARARE NORTH*

In this chapter I will demonstrate that non Standard English is very useful to an African writer of fiction as evidenced in the two selected novels under study.

According to Bill Ashcroft et al (1989: 57), one of the strategies enlisted by minority writers in their attempt to formulate distinct emancipatory aesthetics is the destabilization of the “privileged centrality of English by using language to signify difference while employing a sameness which allows to be understood”. This is what Saro-wiwa and Chikwava attempt at in their texts.

Use of Non Standard English can be liberating to a reader who is much used to ‘proper’ English and attractive as well, depending on his or her experiences, because it is usually able to capture various aspects discussed further in this study in a much more holistic way to an African audience than the so called ‘Standard English’.

In the author’s note prefacing the narrative, Saro-wiwa explains his use of “rotten English” in the novel:

Sozaboy’s language is what I call “rotten English”, a mixture of Nigerian Pidgin English, broken English and occasional flashes of good, even idiomatic English. This language is disordered and disorderly. Born of a mediocre education and severely limited opportunities, it borrows words,

patterns and images freely from mother-tongue and finds expression in a very limited English vocabulary. To its speakers, it has the advantage of having no rules and no syntax. It thrives on lawlessness, and is part of the dislocated and discordant society in which Sozaboy must live, move and have not his being (Author's note, *Sozaboy* –3).

In this study I will focus on the usefulness of this approach based on selected novels.

3.2.0. Usefulness of Ideophonic Sounds in Capturing African Settings

As defined earlier ideophones are words that evoke an idea in sound, often a vivid impression of certain sensations or sensory perceptions, e.g. sound, movement, colour, shape, or action.

In *Sozaboy*, Saro-Wiwa conducts this linguistic subversion partly through the introduction of a variety of local expressive elements into the formal structures of the English language. For instance, we find the specific use of local ideophonic words to convey sound-based meanings in the text.

According to Ato George (“*The Language of Ken Saro-Wiwa's Sozaboy*” in *Critical Essays on Sozaboy*), the writer uses different ideophonic sound imitating beats of the narrator's heart to indicate different levels of fear – from slight apprehension to dreadful fear; and the meaning is further enhanced by the statement coming either before the ideophone or the statement after it. For instance, when Mene first sights armed soldiers in Dukana, he tells us:

“I was afraid small. My heart begin cut, gbum, gbum, gbum, gbum” (38). Here, the sound of his heart is used to signify the narrator's slight apprehension (“I was afraid small”).

When, however, in his dream the soldiers attempt to conscript him into the army, Mene's fear is mixed with unwillingness and the sound of his heartbeat changes to

“Tam tum tum. Tam, tum tum. Tam tum tum.”

This is because according to him, “I am afraid of the sozas. I do not want to join the sozas.” The tam tum tum of his heart signalizes that fearful unwillingness. Again, when as prisoner of war Mene is taken by Manmuswak to a superior officer who would decide his fate, Mene says: “my heart was beating drum, bambam- bam-bam- bam”, indicating mortal fear this time, because he says: “So truetrue, they want to kill me, I wanted to cry, I cannot cry” (122). He survives his worst fear however, and begins a search for his wife and mother. But as he approaches the forest of Dukana, Mene is again seized by another form of fear, the monstrous fear of uncertainty, and again the beat of his heart changes. This time he tells us “my heart was beating drum – dam dim dam dim dam dim dam dim. Because I do not know what is waiting for me” (P.171).

Indeed, as the writer uses the ideophonic words imitating the beats of the narrator's heart to suggest the varying levels of apprehension and fear experienced by his character, every 'heartbeat' becomes a complex freighter of meaning. Other instances of ideophonic words in the text are: "...they begin to shoot their guns: Tako, tako, tako, tako (47). "...and all of us will move our right leg and stamp it on the ground gbram (71). "One time, the bullet just pass over my head. Heeuun! Heeuun! (105).

All these therefore capture how the writer systematically weds standard and idiomatic English with a demotic variety of the language, and yet manages to achieve a meaningful communication. Which, in this case, concerns the danger, the insecurity and the fear that grip soldiers and civilians alike during war. By use of these Ideophonic words, the writer captures the raw, vivid fear and trauma that surrounds all those involved in war coupled with the uncertainties. The writer's aim is to make us experience with his character the terror and the fear that are caused by such sounds as captured by words in the given hostile context.

3.3.0. Non Standard English as a Symbol of Illiteracy and Naivety

In the body of the text, these varieties of English occurs dynamically in different guises and serves different purposes. For instance, it is through the agency of language that we are able to see the difference in the levels of formal education between Mene and his group commander, Bullet. While Mene uses a demotic variety of English throughout his narration and dialogues because of his limited formal schooling, Bullet's remarks to Mene come dressed in the "standard" English form. We know from the narrator that Bullet "...have gone to school plenty...and have read plenty book" (P.91). The following sample dialogue between both characters demonstrates this point clearly:

"Careful, be careful" Bullet said.

"Whasmatter?" I asked

"The enemy", Bullet answered. "The enemy is over there"

"Is it the enemy that is shooting?" I asked.

"Yes"

"So he have already begin to formfoolwey day never broke and we get newgun for our hand"

"He was just greeting us."

"Is that the way to greet people for Iwoama?"

"That is a greeting at the front" And Bullet begin to laugh small small (89).

However, the conversation takes an interesting and hilarious turn when Bullet tries to explain some basic principles of war to Mene in “standard” English, and Mene complains that he could not understand Bullet’s “big grammar”. In the sample dialogue below, Bullet tells Mene (103):

“Look, Sozaboy, we are in war front, ok. And in the war front, there are all sorts of people. Drunkards, thieves, idiots, wise men, foolish men. There is only one thing that binds them all. Death. And everyday they live, they are cheating death. That man came to celebrate the fact” (95).

But Mene replies, complaining about Bullet’s ‘high’ code of expression:

“Bullet no vex, I said, I beg you, no make too much grammar for me. I beg you. Try talk the one that I will understand. No vex because I ask you this simple question” (95).

Thus, the writer uses language to inscribe educational disparities between his characters.

But even beyond that, we are also able to notice the innovative potential of Saro-Wiwa’s informal aesthetics or creative use of non Standard English. By negotiating a rhetorical interface between two varieties of English dramatized through dialogue between his characters in the text, the writer subtly interrogates the assumed universality of “standard” English (while Bullet could perfectly understand Mene’s suburban variety of English, Mene has difficulty comprehending Bullet’s “standard” medium). But as Bullet quickly reverts to non Standard English in order to maintain the communication chain with Mene, the writer effectively dethrones the privileged status of “standard” English as the only acceptable medium of communication. We find, finally, that despite his obvious educational advantage over Mene, Bullet’s expressive possibilities in the narrative are ultimately overruled by Mene’s narratological authority. As far as the story goes it is to Mene, rather than Bullet, that we must turn if we are ever to make sense of the narrative’s many turbulent dramas. Ken Saro-wiwa is only able to achieve this distinction between characters in terms of their educational backgrounds through code switching between Standard English and non Standard English, as seen above.

3.4.0. Non Standard English as a Courier of Dramatic Tensions

In his article “War Violence and Language in Ken Sare-Wiwa’s *Sozaboy*”, Chijioke Uwasomba says that the unique characteristic of Ken Saro-Wiwa’s “Rotten English” is his use of short, abrupt and repetitive sentences to indicate tense physical activity at moments involving his central character, and to create vivid scenes, as part of the descriptive effect of the writer’s narration technique. The sentence pattern changes and becomes longer and more “normalized” as the narrative tension dissipates. For example, when Mene was asked by Manmuswak to demonstrate his driving skill by actually driving a Land Rover car which was parked in the

premises, Mene gets tense, as he enters the car and begins gradually to move it. Here, the sentence pattern quickly changes and acquires a brisk, dramatic quality as we see in the following string of short sentences:

“I moved it. No trouble at all. I drove. I drove. I drove. No accident. I turned it into the compound. I entered the main road. I revised.” (125). The repetition of the sentence “I drove” is grammatically unusual, of course, but is notionally and circumstantially accurate and is used here by the writer *to underline the moment of tense progression experienced by his character* (my italics to emphasise on the effectiveness of the technique). Even the prominent use of the first person pronoun “I” almost overflows its grammatical banks in the example above, and begins to function as a pointer to the particular actional capacity of the narrative’s main character.

According to Uwasomba as well, there is evidence that the writer uses language not only to humanize, but also to sexualize non-living objects in the text. And we find that whenever this is done in the narrative, the aesthetic intention was to raise the relationship between man and object to a level of intimate warmth normally noticed only between two human beings. We find for example that when a gun was assigned to Mene as a combatant, his love for the gun is strikingly reminiscent of his romantic passion for his wife, Agnes. Mene affectionately pets and speaks of the gun using a human-like and sexually charged idiom. He says:

That morning they gave all of us gun. Every porson one gun. It is the second time that I hold gun for my hand. And I am telling you I was very very proud of myself. New uniform plus gun. Even sef that gun dey wonder me plenty. I look am for him mouth. I look am for belly. I look am for bottom. Just small and thin. And with plenty power... I carry the gun for my hand. I put am down. I clean am small small. I pull him tooth. ’e talk small small. I come proud well well. And I dey laugh for myself. ...But I like this my new gun. It was like the time that I first married Agnes. I wasprouding of myself plenty (P.88).

But, alas, Mene is not alone in treating the gun as though it were his wife. As he tells us:

“Everybody was looking at his gun like new wife dem just marry for am”(P.88).

Similarly, when Mene was captured and turned over to enemy service, his relationship with his new gun even in his new unhappy circumstances remained ever more intimate and sexual:

“They also gave me one short thick riffle like this. Very fine rifle. I like it. I held it in my hand as I for hold Agnes my young wife with J.J.C. I told the riffle that him and me will sleep and wake together and if anybody come disturb us, we will just finish him one time.” (126).

In this example non Standard English suits the main character well in bringing out the naive obsession with a foreign, and yet powerful object. This infatuation is best conveyed in non Standard English to sound natural and real within the context of the war immediately after Nigerian independence when literacy was not widespread and a gun was a wonder and a rare thing that gave the holder power he or she had never experienced before. Therefore this technique helps the writer bring out the dramatic tensions, both psychologically and physically, that the narrator experiences and forms part of his daily life whether in the forest as is the case with Mene in *Sozaboy* and the narrator of *Harare North*.

3.5.0. Use of Non Standard English in Code Switching for Informality.

H. Larsson in his article, “Code Switching in Chinua Achebe’s Novels”, defines code switching as “the use of two or more languages in the same conversation or utterance” (Gardner-Chloros 361). It is a common phenomenon in many parts of the world where much immigration or colonisation has taken place, and the population is bi- or multilingual.

Achebe, for one, uses Pidgin English rather regularly in his novels like *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah*, as well as some of his short stories collections, such as *Girls at War*. Generally, code-switching is a common feature in Nigerian prose. This involves the characters in the choice of appropriate linguistic codes for different contexts in their interactions. The authors employ this as a stylistic device to cater adequately for the varying local situations in their novels. For instance, in *A Man of the People*, Achebe engages his characters in code-switching, depending on the situations in which the characters find themselves. Choices of appropriate codes enable the characters assume corresponding roles, which best serve their communicative needs in different speech encounters (Azuike, 1987).

Sometimes, characters communicating in English switch to indigenous languages or Pidgin English. In informal occasions, Pidgin or local languages are employed, while English is the medium of communication in formal situations. In *A Man of The People*, Chief Nanga, a minister and a major character in the novel, switches codes in his communication as situations demand. For instance, in the reception organized in his honour in his hometown, Anata, a formal

occasion, he addresses the audience in Standard English. This is because it is a formal occasion. In addressing the journalist in his entourage, he employs Standard English saying:

‘It is a mammoth crowd.’ (11)

The proprietor of Anata Grammar School also interacts in Standard English during the official reception saying:

‘It is an unprecedented crowd in the annals of Anata.’ (11)

Explaining the serious effort he puts in while organizing the reception, Mr.Nwege says:

‘I had to visit every section of the village personally to tell them of your- I mean to say of the minister’s visit.’ (11) Aware of the official nature of the occasion, Chief Nanga and Mr.Nwege communicate in Standard English to suit the occasion.

But soon after the official reception, when Chief Nanga and his entourage are hosted in Mr.Nwege’s lodge, an informal occasion, the minister who had earlier been communicating in English switches to Pidgin English. In response to Odili, the narrator’s remark that the minister might have spent so much money on the various dance groups, the minister says in Pidgin:

“You call this spend? You never see some thing my brother. I no de keep anini for myself, na so sotroway. If some person come to you say ‘I wan make you Minister’ make you run like blazes commot. Na true word I tell you...”(16)

Chief Nanga’s switch to Pidgin English in the extract above depicts a close relationship between him and Odili, his former school pupil, and his awareness of the informal situation in which they are interacting.

Soon after, the minister switches code back to Standard English in addressing Odili on a serious and an important issue, bordering on the idea of Odili’s postgraduate studies overseas. In Standard English, he invites Odili to his house in the city, saying:

‘If you come as soon as you close, you can stay in my guest room... you can live by yourself and do any thing you like there.’(20)

Immediately, Mrs. John, a lady in Chief Nanga’s entourage, warns Odili against him. In response to Mrs. John’s remark Chief Nanga switches to Pidgin, telling her jokingly not to disgrace him:

‘Eleanor, why you want disgrace me and spoil my name for public for nothing sake. Wetin I do you?’ (20)

Similarly, Chief Nanga switches code during the incident of the suspected poisoned coffee taken by Chief Koko, his friend. He employs Standard English as he makes a distress call on phone, inviting a doctor for help without success.

Angry with the doctor, he shouts at him on phone. Abusing and threatening him, he says:

“This is Chief the Honorable Nanga speaking’,

‘I will see that you are dealt with. Idiot . That is the trouble with this country. Don’t worry, you will see. Bloody fool...’ (38)

Chief Nanga communicates in Standard English on this occasion because of the seriousness of the matter. He expects that the doctor would take him more serious and respond promptly to his phone call. But when the On another occasion, Chief Nanga engages in a telephone conversation in Standard English with the Honourable Minister for public construction popularly called T.C. Because of the seriousness of the issue and the importance Chief Nanga attaches to the tarring of the roads, he communicates in Standard English with Honourable T.C. Kobino on phone saying:

‘Look T.C. we agreed that these roads should be tarred. What is this dillying dallying...?’ (47)

In the above examples, Achebe puts code differentiation to effective use. He uses different language codes to suit different situations. He engages his characters in code-switching, based on the different occasions and situations in which they operate, thereby paying a great deal of attention to appropriateness in language use. Oyeleye, Lekan (1994) quotes Gumperz and Hymes as defining ‘appropriateness’ as a specification of what kinds of things to say in what message form, to what kinds of people and in what kinds of situations. Achebe’s display of linguistic craftsmanship in A Man of the People, confirms the assertion that different situations and role shifts demand appropriate language codes for effective communication.

The use of Pidgin English by the character above reflects the Nigerian environment, where Pidgin cuts across the different classes of people in the society. It also depicts the level of education acquired by most members of the Nigerian police force, who have little or no formal education. But mostly importantly, it enables writers to depict informality or casual environs in both speech mannerisms of the characters and the aura of friendliness and openness that envelops them. In *Sozaboy*, this code switching is used when the narrator captures the words of the police

boss who had come to give a speech to people in the Dukana village urging them to join the army. His words are captured in proper English although the narrator makes certain that he says them casually to bring to the fore his lack of comprehension of these words. After that, the interpreter makes a summary of what the police boss had said.

The man with fine shirt stood up. And begin to talk in English. Fine fine English. Big words. Grammar. Fantastic. Overwhelming. Generally. In particular and in general'. Haba, God no go vex. But he did not stop there. The big grammar continued. "Odious. Destruction. Fighting. I understand that one. "Henceforth. General mobilisation. All citizens. Able bodied. Join military. His excellency. Powers conferred on us. Volunteers. Conscription'. Big words. Long long grammar. "Ten heads. Vandals. Enemy'. Everbody was silent. Everywhere was silent like burial ground. Then they begin to interpret all that long grammar plus big words in Kana. In short what the man is saying is that all those who can fight will join army." (*Sozaboy*: pg 46—47).

The writer uses this technique to show the dichotomy in education and experience between the police boss on one side and the Dukana people on the other. He is able to capture the formalities of the speech and its effect on the people who are used to a rather different kind of formal conversations (and not to such long, high sounding speeches).

In *Harare North*, when one day the narrator is in company of Shingi, and they get by KFC, down Cold harbour Lane, up Acre Lane, down Brixton Road, up Efra Road and 'up in the sky', the narrator who has so far, almost entirely been communicating in non-Standard English, associated with migrants from Zimbabwe, suddenly switches to Standard English in order to capture the formalities of street preachers that attract his attention. He says (note that proper English has been foregrounded in my italics):

Brixton is a funny place this afternoon. You can just see it when you look around. Them, the street vendors, skunk dealers, the incense vendors, tube ticket touts, homeless people and thieves. I don't trust no one here.

(non Standard English in this case lies in the wrong usage of pronouns; for instance saying 'them, the street vendors' and in double negatives eg. I don't trust no one)

Then switching to Standard English, the narrator reports what they say:

“Repent! Repent! Humble yourself because the Second Coming of the lord is as the first!

“ One man cry. He is speaking to us.

“... He says he doesn’t like his brother, but he loves the Lord Jesus?”

He raise his bible up in the air as if he expect someone from the crowd to respond. Then he slam it into his left hand to emphasise, *“Do not be deceived. Do not let the Devil deceive you, my brothers and sisters!”* Before we know it the police is upon us; fat man and thin wire-like woman.

Relax, think like e...e...everything is normal; p...put the suitcase down and relax..

After this, the narrator reverts to non Standard English. (*Harare North* pg 139—140). (Again, here, non Standard English is manifest in breaking rules of grammar. There is no subject—verb agreement in the line ‘He raise his bible’ and even in ‘he slam it into his left hand’. It should be ‘raises’ and ‘slams’)

By code switching between non Standard English and Standard English, these two authors achieve what had been discussed above. Namely, they are able to differentiate characters and what they say on the basis of their language mannerisms. We easily understand that the preachers are people who have lived in Harare North or London for a long time, and, therefore they language is proper and different from the narrator.

3.6.0. Use of Non Standard English as Portraiture of Reality and Authenticity.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, authenticity means a state of having a claimed and verifiable origin or authorship; not counterfeit or copied. The realism of the origin of experience that can be verified in a certain historical and geographical context is the focus of this section in relation to use of non Standard English in the two select novels.

Nikki Jecks article on BBC World Service, in which he interviewed Brian Chikwava, gives a glimpse on the motivation behind Chikwava’s endeavours to write the novel, and especially write it in non Standard English.

Chikwava: "What I was trying to bring out is almost a different class of urban people who exist...this kind of underclass of people living in very squalid conditions and trying to make ends

[meet] under very difficult circumstances, those who are hidden from view, this is what I find interesting."

The novel is set in Brixton in south London, and it offers a view of London as seen through the eyes of its migrant population, particularly Africa's dispossessed. Hence, Harare North, is the title and ironic name the book's unnamed hero gives to London. He arrives in London as an illegal immigrant, hoping to make enough money to pay off his debts and bribe his way out of a series of charges he is facing back in Zimbabwe. He plans to stay just long enough to achieve this, hoping to return quickly to Zimbabwe - the land made great, he believes, by his idol Robert Mugabe. While he is in London, the Zimbabwean dollar begins its perilous descent, and his unflinching support of Robert Mugabe begins to cause problems among his new found friends.

But the author says the novel is not about Zimbabwean politics and British immigration policy. Instead, he says it is about the people his narrator meets on the streets of Brixton and in the illegal squat that eventually becomes his home.

The narrator of the story is a surprisingly unsympathetic character - a crooked, ex-militia member, and strong supporter of Robert Mugabe. He is an unexpected and unlikely hero for Zimbabwe's displaced and sometimes forgotten Diaspora - perhaps more anti-hero than hero.

"He really is not a nice person; the way he looks at the world is sometimes completely screwed. It can be hilarious and you end up empathising from that point of view," says Chikwava.

But he says creating such an unlikely hero and narrator enabled him to explore people and communities that often get overlooked.

"I wasn't really trying to get people to feel sorry for them or eliciting any sympathy, but just as a way of saying, here is a different life," he says.

"Sometimes you see people walking past or through the streets, especially here [in London] and sometimes you've got no idea how this person lives or how they survive."

Brixton, he says, was the perfect place to situate the novel because of its eclectic mix of people and communities.

"The crowd has changed over the years, but when I first started going there, it was really such a mixed crowd of people, homeless people, asylum seekers and people from all over the world."

Chikwava was born in Bulawayo and spent his later years in Harare, before moving to London in 2007.

He himself knows what it's like to land in a foreign country with few friends and hoping for a fresh start.

"Sometimes it is hard, especially in a land where people don't really know how things work. They just have to survive one way or the other."

"This is the case with a lot of Zimbabweans who have left the country for economic reasons, they just come and want to find a job and survive...they just try to make ends meet in whichever way they can."

"It was really a story I decided to write, because the moment I found the voice, I thought I would just follow it through, because I found it interesting, and see where it takes me."

In this interview, it is clear that the major reason Chikwava chose to write the book in non Standard English was so that he can capture the realities of Zimbabwean, and other African migrants, living in London illegally and with little education. He wanted a technique that would replicate their sense of confusion, fear, desperation and behaviour through their characteristic and indigenous speech.

The technique is employed successfully in Chikwava's *Harare North*. The language helps the narrator show impressions in uncorrupted and realistic way. Consider the following:

When the narrator is walking in the train station Brixton Tube (trying to run away from his relatives) he describes impressions of his vision. What he saw, felt and thought about in a blatant realistic way.

To the right of the station entrance one newspaper vendor stand beside pile of copies of Evening Standard. On front page of every one of them papers president Robert Mugabe's face is folded in two. I can still identify His Excellency. The paper says that Zimbabwe has run out of toilet paper. That make me imagine how after many times of bum wiping with the ruthless and patriotic *Herald* newspaper, everyone's troubled buttocks holes get

vex and now turn into likkle red knots. But except for this small complaint from them dark hairy buttocks, me I don't see what the whole noises is all about. Outside LambethTown Hall I plough through small bunch of mothers in they tracksuits as they dither by bus stop, blocking the pavement with prams and they large earrings. They give me loud looks (Harare: pp1).

Because the narrator suffers from split personality or identity, he also manages to bring about this confusion through slightly incoherent English or non-standard English. This confusion coupled with the unusually realistic and rude way, the narrator puts it is obviously characteristic of many illegal immigrants who arrive in London looking for opportunities but with little education.

When he lands in London, or Harare North, we later come to realise that the narrator and a character he keeps on mentioning called Shingi are one and the same. But this realisation is never apparent from the very beginning because the narrator himself doesn't acknowledge it as such. The writer also makes it subtle and it is only through close examination of the narrator's relations with Shingi that one can come to this conclusion. He says:

Walking on am worryful about what kind of mouth Shingi is going to start throwing around if he ever recover. Although he is still knocked out, maybe when he come around nightmare will start for me if he start spinning jazz numbers about me. But there is nothing I can do. Me I should not be bothered by none of this (pp2: prologue).

Again, this expression is authentic in the manner the narrator uses language casually and in a mixed, almost ridiculous way, combining wishes and thoughts as matters of facts, which is characteristic of people in the mould of Shingi.

In the Introduction to the novel *Sozaboy*, written by William Boyd, we are told that throughout the novel, Saro-wiwa exploits rotten English with delicate and consummate skill (pg: 4 *Intro*). We see everything through Sozaboy's naive eyes, and his hampered vision-even in the face of the most shocking sights - is reproduced through inevitable understatement. Sozaboy's vocabulary simply cannot encompass the strange concepts he encounters or the fearful enormity of what he is undergoing. Yet these silences, these occlusions and fumbling for expression exert marvellous power on the story and this power is fairly manifest in form of humour.

Here, for instance, a fifth columnist has been undermining the new recruit's shaky morale.

“So that night Manmuswak did not spend long time with us: After some time, he told us that we must be careful because nobody can know when the war will come reach our front. So we told him goodnight, and he began to go away, small small like tall snake passing through the bush, making small noise.” (pg 36)

We can visualise Manmuswak walking ‘small small’ or gingerly. This kind of language is more vivid to a semi illiterate African audience(that is used to speaking pidgin English or any other form of non Standard variety), than Standard English would be.

When chief Birabee calls a meeting to tell the villagers of Dukana that the government wants them to pay taxes, the dialect employed helps create or recreate an environment of innocence and uncertainty in the manner people in a distant African village of the 1960s would talk and behave. Broken English helps the speakers sound unsophisticated and semi-illiterate, which befit the characters of the people of Nigerian villages at that time.

“My people listen to me carefully. As all of you know, there is plenty trouble now. True, the trouble never reach Dukana yet... because we are good people, we must respect and obey government. Everbody.Man. Woman.Picken. Anybody who get money, chop or doth must bring it. We go give am to those persons wey just return. Is not by force, oh. We cannot by force anybody. That is what government talk. But as all know, government cannot talk say it will by force anybody. But government is government. And although government will not talk that it is byforcing. So therefore, we must try to find all those things that government is asking for... “ (pg 6)

And the stories of the war (in this case of the First World War), when narrated in Pidgin English, gathers exaggerated elements as shown here; and, this erosion of stories with time is a characteristic feature of oral narratives in Africa, where before the advent of writing and reading, the passage of information across generations was through the word of mouth:

“In all my life this is the second time that this thing have happened.” Kole said. “The first time naHitla do am. Hitla very strong man, oh. If as he is fighting, they cut off his arm today, he must return tomorrow with another hand completely new. Very tough man at all...” (Sozaboy:pg 24.)

‘Authenticity’, in fact, is one of the cherished concepts by writers who use non Standard English – along with communal responsibility, kinship and loyalty. This is according to Jane Bryce. She

says this desire for a writer to replicate authentic experiences in language and context is seen in *Harare North* as brought out in the following passage:

Southbank is crawling with them Africans in they colourful ethnic clothes, it make you feel like you is not African enough. Many of them is also lapsed Africans because they have live in London from the time when it was OK to kill kings, queens and pigs... We is only one wearing jeans. But this is make up for by the fact that after the concert we have good cheerful smiles because of the one person who have had the sense not to lumber himself with them ethnic things. That's the original native from Kinshasa.' (HN, 137)

Are we convinced, in spite of the 'inauthenticity' of language, by the narrator's confrontation of his old commander on the streets of Brixton and accusation of betrayal?

Truth is like granite rock because if someone hit your head with it, your head feel sore. One rock of truth can crack your head, comrade commander. Now, after all this heap of time I step on the truth about what game you play. It bite my foot and I wake up...' (HN, 183) – The writer here makes a case for use of broken English to carry his broken experience or, the experience that is uncertain and fractured—f in a fractured in the sense that he is in London illegally and is ever trying to figure things out. Nothing is ever clear and definite to him. Bryce calls this 'inauthenticity' and she argues that Chikwava uses inauthentic language to highlight authentic experience that is illegal or unorthodox in a foreign country.

3.7.0. Non Standard English as a Source of Humour and Satire

Satire is a genre of literature and sometimes graphic and performing arts, in which vices, follies, abuses, and shortcomings are held up to ridicule, ideally with the intent of shaming individuals, corporations, government or society itself, into improvement. Although satire is usually meant to be humorous, its greater purpose is often constructive social criticism using wit as a weapon and as a tool to draw attention to both particular and wider issues in society. (*Satire: Origins and Principles*) pg 45 .

According to [Britannica online](#), humour is the quality of being amusing or comic, especially as expressed in literature or speech. This quality is manifested through various ways. In general terms humour is the tendency of particular cognitive experiences to provoke laughter and

provide amusement. The term derives from the humoral medicine of the ancient Greeks, which taught that the balance of fluids in the human body, known as humours (Latin: humor, "body fluid"), controlled human health and emotion.

People of all ages and cultures respond to humour. Most people are able to experience humour—i.e., to be amused, to smile or laugh at something funny—and thus, are considered to have a sense of humour. The hypothetical person lacking a sense of humour would likely find the behaviour induced by humour to be inexplicable, strange, or even irrational. Though ultimately decided by personal taste, the extent to which a person finds something humorous depends on a host of variables, including geographical location, culture, and maturity, level of education, intelligence and context. For example, young children may favour slapstick such as Punch and Judy puppet shows or cartoons such as Tom and Jerry, whose purely physical nature makes it more accessible to them. By contrast, more sophisticated forms of humour such as satire require an understanding of its social meaning and context, and thus tend to appeal to more mature audiences. This study argues that use of non-standard English can help create humour in a work of fiction.

3.7.1. Humour in *Harare North*

The narrator employs metaphors in an amusing way, when on page 8, he compares truth to a snake and he says:

She (Sekai) doesn't even know comrade Mugabe. The president can come out to whip you with the truth. Truth is like snake because it is slippery when it move and make people flee in all directions whenever it slither into crowds, but Sekai doesn't know. Comrade Mugabe is powerful wind; he can blow snake out of tall grass like it is piece of paper—lift it up into wide blue sky for everyone to see. Then when he drop it, people's trousers rip as they scatter to their holes. (8—9)

The use of metaphors directly lifted from local milieu in Zimbabwe and rendered in non Standard English helps the reader get the 'mystery' of Mugabe in a humorous and ridiculous way. From the perspective of the narrator, Mugabe is a very powerful figure and he loves the truth—while the people are ever so ready to run away from truth; because truth is like a snake, it can hurt you (in this case truth may refer to historical injustices and exploitation that Mugabe keeps reminding Britain and USA about, but people want to move on and forget because dwelling on this truth and dispossessing former colonial settlers their 'land' is ruining the

economy) and that only Mugabe can fight it. That is—fight to restore justice in Zimbabwe, and because Mugabe is hell-bent on this agendum, he is seen as a mystery by his people. All these details ridicule and satirize the character of Mugabe.

Again, the narrator uses borrowed words like *kaka* for faeces:

They also have likkle sausages dog that do *kaka* on the carpet while Sekai cry, “Sheila, darlin’, stop it,” as if this is naughty likkle girl.(13)

And this adds childlike perspective on the narrative. He assumes the voice of an innocent child who can only vaguely communicate in broken English and this attempt is amusing to the reader.

I post that the narrator aimed at a distinct way of bringing out ordinary activities, like laughing and going to the toilet, in the manner it is perceived by Zimbabweans as compared to the English or Londoners. And, this distinction is humorous. *Kakakaka*, for example, is used by the writer to describe derision or deep laughter in the Zimbabwean way as opposed to the English, whose laughter would sound much more like *hahaha*. (*Harare North*: Pg 25.). This kind of wordplay is amusing because the usual way of describing laughter is changed and the resulting description is weird in its character. The reader can only visualise someone laughing in such a manner to be tickled into laughing themselves. It is also weird that the manner of laughing that is *kakakaka* has the same sound as the manner of defecating where now the sound *kaka* is employed. This is even more amusing.

Williams Linda in his book *Figures of Desire: An Analysis of Surrealist Film*, looks at humour as a technique bordering on ridiculous rendition of events and child-like narration. Surreal humour (also known as absurdist humour), according to him, is a form of humour predicated on deliberate violations of causal reasoning, producing events and behaviours that are obviously illogical. Constructions of surreal humour tend to involve bizarre juxtapositions, non-sequiturs, irrational or absurd situations and expressions of nonsense.

The humour arises from a subversion of audience's expectations, so that amusement is founded on unpredictability, separate from a logical analysis of the situation. The humour derived gets its appeal from the fact that the situation described is so ridiculous or unlikely. This kind of humour has roots in Surrealism in the arts. (Williams: 10).

Sekai give me hard time about where I have been. I tell her that I decided to sleep over at friend's house because he promised to find me a job but she keep going on yariyari saying don't I know that I am not allowed to work in this country. (*Harare North*: 39)

Following on his outlook thus, in this paragraph, the narrator of *Harare North* uses the phrase *yariyari* to indicate gibberish or meaningless words. The phrase is borrowed from Zimbabwean Shona idiom, and he uses it playfully which creates humour in the story.

He again uses football expression 'sliding tackle' (39) to refer to unfair criticism. This is unconventional, or not a common idiom in the usage of the English language, and, he is able to weave this expression together in his non Standard English, which in the end creates hilarity in the story.

"Is there somewhere secret that you are stashing the bread because I don't understand how since you arrive it disappear so fast?" Sekai ask me when things have calm down. Now this style of sliding tackle that she is tearing into me with, me I don't know what to do with it..."

In terms of description non-standard English, when used in description, adds humour to a story and a certain level of mischief.

On Saturday morning we is still lying in bed and this Zimbabwean woman called MaiMusindo come to our house. She is by women with small head, hard-bitten face and tongue that is like old shoe leather... MaiMusindo is frightful woman... MaiMusindo used to be spirit medium; she still do rituals and is in touch with them mudzimu, the spirit... when she talk, she speak slow, you can't hurry she, she can even wave death away like it is some nuisance fly. But Tsitsi say that she is the fastest weaver in the salon. She carry the spirit world with she and wear this old funny air that force you to pay attention to every word that she say because it come out and drop like stone falling on concrete floor...(44—45).

In this case, the casual way the narrator talks about MaiMusindo, using expressions like 'and this Zimbabwean woman called MaiMusindo..' coupled with the broken nature of his language, using singular verb, where a plural verb is needed; for instance 'women...is like...' added to this; the unusual description of body parts using non Standard English "*with small head, hard-bitten face and tongue that is like old shoe leather*" renders the passage funny.

In another scene, we see how use of non-standard English can be amusing especially when describing a desperate situation.

The bus arrive and we queue up to get in. Suleiman is first. He flashes his fake bus pass and immediately put this hard-set look on his face, looking ahead straight ahead rigid as he march like soldiers past the bus driver.

“Excuse me, sir can I see your pass?” The driver stop him. It’s at moments like this that the city can get chance to break your disguise with them questions: What’s your name, sir; where did you get this, sir; you know this is crime offense, sir? Where did you get your card from, sir?”

The driver say playing big mischief with politeness. This title that the mud-shifting boy have been given is too heavy for him now. “Sir?” The driver pull down his glasses in a professor style so they sit low on his nose. This ‘sir’ thing put Suleiman in proper straitjacket. His tongue weigh same as hippo and he can’t lift it now. He turn his head to the door, spot an opening and go for it. His trousers explode and rip at the crotch as he leap over the door. He land on pavement, stumble and regain his balance...Harare North is big con. (51).

The humour in this case arises because of the clash between a desperate situation and its expression in an unusual language, so that in the end, the reader gravitate more towards finding the situation Suleiman is caught in funny than deserving sympathy. This humour is brought about by the language of the narrator failing to capture the reasons for Suleiman’s flight, and the motive for the driver’s persistent polite mannerisms. The narrator cannot best capture this in his language because people in Zimbabwe, or Africa in general, do not treat a suspected thief politely, calling him Sir! Obviously, this is a clash of two different cultures, and the narrator would have used Standard English if he had wanted the audience to sympathise with Suleiman but instead, he opted for non Standard variety to create humour which, indeed, he does.

Again, the writer uses similes of animals and object found mainly in Africa, and, which in London sounds just funny. For instance when he says, “*His tongue weigh same as hippo and he can’t lift it now*”; by which he meant, he was tongue-tied and would not speak because he had been found out.

Again, in portraying a serious situation when Aleck, who had impregnated Tsitsi, failed to take responsibility or provide for the child, and, Tsitsi invites MaiMusindo to arbitrate on the matter;

the narrator uses non-standard English to add humour and familiarity to the monologue or the chiding that MaiMusindo unleashes on Aleck:

“My son,” she gasp for air and clear she throat and start another heap of words: “Oh yeeee you will bawl when your ancestral spirits lay they long stick on you, and you will remember me; them English say you break it you buy it. You have break this child’s life, buy it or fix it. You run around saying you is Mr.Big Man Shop assistant, so what? What good is that if she even too frightened to ask you to help? She is not like ipod that you keep in your house if it break. You poke poke poke she, give she this baby and now you deny she, pretend you don’t know she and you think no one see? Now you leave she with these problems. What kind of manners is that?”

Aleck try to answer but that only give MaiMusindo more fire: “Oh you have to tell me many times what you think. Oh now is my time; if you had keep that front tail inside your trouser none of this will have happen; chop it off if you can’t be responsible for what it do.”

It’s as if with the crack of the whip that is she tongue, MaiMusindo have strike all clothes off our district administrator and leave him naked and cheap like proper vegetable—vendor boy.

“I don’t come here another time; don’t give me blood pressure oh.” With that, she put she tongue back inside she mouth and leave everyone reeling from this heavy stuff. (110—111).

In this part, the narrator captures the typical confrontation between two illegal immigrants from Africa living in London, both with limited education, and how they would normally solve ‘family issues’. MaiMusindo, who is clearly an elderly woman, gives a piece of advice to Aleck, who, according to the narrator, had hitherto pretended to be such an important fellow that the narrator refers to him as the district administrator. In his mix of standard English and non Standard English, the narrator manipulates the common English phrase “the crack of a whip” and instead says “crack of the whip that is she tongue” so that the tongue is made to act like a whip, whipping Aleck, and, at the same time, capture the suddenness that the idiom conveys in the traditional meaning of the phrase. All these paint a ridiculous picture of the two characters in their seriousness, which is amusing to the reader especially when the narrator says,

“MaiMusando have strike all clothes off our district administrator and leave him naked and cheap like proper vegetable.” The reader will certainly be amused by this simile.

Annie Gagiano in her review of Harare North, an article on African Library Columns (1), says that the language of the narrative is an accessible but often ungrammatical English, with very occasional Shona expressions, but the narrator’s frame of reference is almost entirely Zimbabwean, even in London, since he lives among and is involved primarily with compatriots. His speech (the text being almost entirely written from a first-person perspective) is wonderfully vivid and convincingly evokes an outsider / underdog’s awareness of the protagonist’s situation; *the language concomitantly creates humour in the manner the narrator captures minor observations in an unusual and funny way e.g Shingi grinning in a nervous way and looking at ‘them people’ around them. Or ‘them people on the bus pointing eyes at the narrator and Shingi’.* This manner of narrating is amusing because it is unorthodox and embedded in non Standard English. (my italics to emphasise on humour).

One scene that vividly illustrates this occurs aboard a bus, when the narrator and his friend Shingi (but we later learn that it is the same person) are on their way to a free concert, having just bought a loaf of bread at a supermarket:

I pull and tear [the loaf] in half. Shingi grins in nervous way and he look at them people around us. The bus is full and everyone on the bus point they eyes at us.

I apply myself on the bread. This feeling that I have not have in years now come over me; my senses get more fire. I clutch the half loaf between them arm and ribs, and rip into it with them fingernails. The warmth of bread against my body, together with the happiness of discover the freedom to tear down loaf of bread on London bus, send message of goodwill to my bones. I feel free.

Then out of the blue skies we get ourselves some fan; one small plump boy sitting with his mother leap to his feet with big eyes. He wear T-shirt written ‘Made Of Money.’ Shingi have good talent at reading them people so he see quick that likkle boy Made Of Money is in grip of big hunger. He break small piece from his bread and stretch out in that good-old-uncle kind of way, and hand it to the likkle man. The look of horror on the likkle boy’s mother’s face can kill a hippo. She look on but she is helpless. I can see that she want to stop she son from taking the bread but hold she self back because she is

frightened of the racialism thing. She remain on she seat, and only watch with sickly smile as she son hit the bread with more fire. (136-137)

Humour in this case is also achieved through use of accentuated words that are not proper English like 'likkle' to mean little. It is a form of how Africans who are usually semi-illiterate mimic Englishmen when speaking. Again, the refusal by the narrator to observe the pronoun case as part of proper Standard English like when saying *She remains on she seat* instead of 'she remains on her seat' is amusing to the reader, because it makes little sense. As defined before, humour arises out of the nonsense and the ridiculous.

At the beginning, upon arriving in England, the narrator who is nameless is detained in the airport because he made a mistake of mentioning to the airport officers that he was in England seeking asylum. But he says this is due to his ignorance. He never knew it would be disastrous for him to mention that word 'asylum' especially being from Africa. Non-standard English here comes in handy to help us first see that the narrator lacks sophistication and familiarity, not only with the English language, but also with the customs clearance at the airport. He says:

No one bother to give me proper tips before I come to England. So on arriving at Gatwick airport I disappoint them immigration people because when I step forward to hand my passport to gum-chewing man sitting behinddesk, I mouth the magic word—asylum—and flash toothy grin of friendly African native—They detain me.

Brian Chikwava achieves two things here. The reader is bemused by the narrator's naivety and what can be seen as cheekiness, and also the reader is immediately alerted to the his innocence and 'bushiness' or even foolishness. As the same time as readers we immediately notice that we are dealing with a person of low status and we are curious to see what happens. He says "I mouth the magic word—asylum—and flash toothy grin." This use of unconventional language embedded in non Standard English is amusing to the reader. This technique also allows the narrator to lie the immigration people as the narrator would say 'spinning them a jazz' (a funnily unusual phrase in English) by saying he had been harassed by Mugabe people in Zimbabwe who are after him. He says:

'The story I tell the immigration people is tighter than a thief's anus.' (4)

This comparison, which employs the Shona imagery, is just meant to bring out humour.

Now upon arrival the narrator tells us that he brought along a bag of groundnuts as a gift to Paul and Sekai (Paul is his cousin who lives in London, and, who is to host him for a while before he finds a job. Sekai is Paul's wife also working in London and they live together). Here again, it is non-standard English or English modelled entirely on the Zimbabwe's Shona that creates humour. He says:

I have bring Paul and Sekai small bag of groundnuts from Zimbabwe; groundnuts that my aunt bring from she rural home. Sekai give the small bag one look and bin it right in front of me. She say I should never have been allow to bring them nuts into the country because maybe they carry disease. Then she goes out and buy us MacDonald's supper.
(7.)

In this case, if the narrator had used proper English, the Zimbabwean feel and originality will be lost and with it the humour. For instance, the sentence:

“She say I should never have been allowed to bring them nuts into the country because maybe they carry disease.

If you say it in proper English it would sound as follows:

She says that I should never have been allowed to bring groundnuts into the country because that could probably be diseased.

Using Standard English therefore makes the text lose humour because the humour is only realised in this case when language rules are violated or twisted e.g. in the use of 'them nuts' instead of proper English 'the nuts'.

3.7.2. Humour in *Sozaboy*

In Ken Saro-wiwa's *Sozaboy*, humour is also brought out in the use of non Standard English to explain situations that wouldn't sound so funny in proper English.

The scale of corruption in Nigeria before the civil war and immediately after independence, for example, is portrayed with humour, which was necessary because of the environment in which the book was published. Strict censorship of creative works was so common at that time, with Nigeria sliding from one dictatorial regime to another, and these dictators had no patience with

perceptible criticism however harmless. Saro-wiwa therefore had to use seemingly innocent humour to criticise the state of political leadership at that time:

“...inspector Okonkwo na him be the worst when he was sarzent before they promoted him. He chopped bribe from drivers until he can be able to marry four wives and build a better house for his town. Even when they promote him to inspector my master and myself went to gratulate him. But lo and behold, when we reach there now, inspector Okonkwo was crying. He was crying with water from his eyes no joke oh. I have not seen such kain thing before. How can personwho get promotionbegin cry? Instead of to be happy. When my master ask Okonkwo why e’ dey cry, Okonkwo said: “Smog,” that is how he used to call my master,-- “Smog, how I no go cry? Look my house. Fridge, radiogram, carpet, four wives; look my house village. You think say na my salary I use for all dese things? If I no stand for road dere to be traffic you tink say I for fit? Ah did promotion, na demotion. Make dem take de inspector, give my myserzent. (I)

In short he was crying because he had been promoted to be inspector from sergeant. As sergeant, he would pocket bribes from motorists and he was doing better, making investments, marrying more wives and living large. As inspector his hands are tied. So it sounds like a demotion. The writer by using Pidgin English which is a form of non-standard English creates humour in words like “he chopped bribe from drivers”. Chop in Standard English has a negative meaning of cutting or trimming something and when used here by the narrator to indicate getting or even extorting, the reader is amused by the ambiguity of the verb, on one side implying literary cutting bribe from drivers (who are never pleased to give it in the first place), and again another meaning which implies receiving slyly.

The writer, again, uses Pidgin English to show how excited Mene was with the barmaid who was serving him, and this infatuation reveals to the reader that Mene has no experience with women, and that he is naive. This naivety is also revealed to us in a humorous way:

So that night, I was in the Upwine Bar. No plenty people at first. I order one bottle of palmy from service. This service is young girl. Him bottom dey shake as she walk. Him breast na am, my man begin to stand small small. I beg am make ‘e no disgrace me especially as I no wear pant that night. I begin to drink my palmy. The service sit near me I dey look am too with the corner of my eye. I want see how him breast dey. As dey look, thebaby catch me. (Sozaboy:13)

The technique also captures the animated thoughts of a young man thinking about a woman. He uses phrases like ‘everything in the hotel was sweating me’ ‘calabash breasts’ which make use of local images from Nigerian rural life, and, when seen from the perspective modern life it sounds amusing. The use of Standard English in the same case would not have similar originality and humour as best captured in Pidgin:

The gramophone was still playing. After ‘ashewo’, it began to play ‘bottom belly’. Everything in the hotel was sweetening me. Especially the young baby who was making service. I tell you, I would like baby who do not shame. And she come show me her calabash breasts. Paraps the girl love me oh. Ha! Ha! Paraps she love me. And na Dukana girl. But why ‘e dey talk like tha? Snakes and all. Snake. Like that name. I call it, ‘man’ or ‘prick’ before. But the girl call am ‘snake’. Ha! Ha! Ha! I begin to laugh. This nawaya, oh. (Sozaboy: 18).

Snake in this case refers to the man’s manhood when he is sexually excited. Such imagery is directly borrowed from the local languages. African languages employed metaphors of wild animals because they lived side by side. In this case, therefore, the imagery relates well with readers who grew up in such an environs, but the same metaphor is amusing because the reader has to associate Mene’s manhood with a snake, which can bite, and the comparison is funny.

The episode below later enables the writer portray the narrator as naive in his decision to join the army and in his capabilities as a soldier. The portraiture is done in such a manner to create humour; humour being part of the stock in trade for the writer:

Two weeks like that, then we stop. By that time all those Sozas done become like woman. If no be for man like myself I think we all for don shame. But when they see me, they were all prouiding because the officers were saying what fine man I am, what fine man I am. I know that I will bring back Hitla and the salt to Dukana. (Sozaboy:28)

Thus the Sozaboy thinks joining the war will make him powerful, so powerful that he could even capture ‘Hitla’, by then long dead, if he wanted to. And, that he would enable the ships arrive safely so that his people could get their share of salt which was no longer available because. This in itself is ridiculous, and, of course, ridicule is the main way the writer uses to create humour. But this ridicule is achieved by the writer exploiting the narrator’s limited language (non Standard English). E.g (by this time sozas done become like woman). That the soldiers had all cowed and he was the only brave one remaining.

Again, the reason for Mene joining the army is as vague and naive as his personality:

Many many times I used to think of this two things. Number one. Zaza. That ye-ye man, proper yafuyafu man, just moving about in Dukana prouiding because he fights against Hitla and abusing young people like myself that we must go and fight. Then number two. Agnes. Fine girl. Very fine. Very fine girl at all. She likes strong man who will defend am if trouble come. Awright. I will show Zaza that I am not yekpe man like himself. I will show that Agness that I am not a coward man. I can defend her anytime. Oh yes. I will show her proper.”

Humour in this case is achieved through the use of local slang e.g ‘yeye man’ (which means an important person), ‘yafuyafu’ (man of substance), ‘yekpe’ man’ (useless man) - all these funny references to the people Mene either admires or despises sound funny and exotic, and this adds humour to the story. This can only be achieved by code switching which is heavily utilized by the writer in this case.

Again humour is achieved in the manner Mene narrates his encounter with delegates from the government who came to announce that people who can fight should enlist in the army. Here humour is created through the clash of the two cultures: traditional and modern, as represented in the language mannerisms. To the villagers, including Mene, the standard English that the men who came to address them use is so impressive and comical at the same time in its grandeur; but to the reader this observation, and the manner in which the speech is reported – in the incoherent manner - only serves to cause more amusement. This kind of code switching, as seen in other works above, is very useful to any writer, and Ken Saro-wiwa is able to utilize it for this purpose in *Sozaboy*.

Dukana people will always talk. After some time, chief Birabee with idiot smile looking at policeman begin to shout “Keep quiet all of you, oh! Keep quiet all of you. Oh! Then after some time he shout again...the people will keep quiet for small time then after some some time they will begin to hala again...” Then later Silence!” shouted the police. “Silence, I say!”

The people cannot understand him. They were laughing because of how he was shouting. Myself too, I was laughing. Then the police came to where I was sitting and used his stick on my head. Everybody kept quiet. I stopped laughing by force. That is how my

own things are. Everytime trouble. Always. So I kept quiet with several people shouting little shouts inside my head from the policeman's stick's blow.

The man with fine shirt stood up. And begin to talk in English. Fine fine English. Big words. Grammar. Fantastic. Overwhelming. Generally. In particular and in general'. Haba, God no go vex. But he did not stop there. The big grammar continued. "Odious. Destruction. Fighting. I understand that one. "Henceforth. General mobilisation. All citizens. Able bodied. Join military. His Excellency. Powers conferred on us. Volunteers. Conscription'. Big words. Long long grammar. "Ten heads. Vandals. Enemy'. Everbody was silent. Everywhere was silent like burial ground. Then they begin to interpret all that long grammar plus big words in Kana. In short what the man is saying is that all those who can fight will join army." (Sozaboy: 46—47).

Phrases like "I stopped laughing by force" are directly translated from Shona dialect to English and they sound funny. The use non Standard English in this situation makes the occasion to be more chaotic than it would in proper English. This is the reason the text sounds funny when read.

3.8.0. Use of Non Standard English as Euphemism.

Euphemism is the indirect expressions which replace words and phrases considered harsh, impolite or which suggest something unpleasant. Euphemism is an idiomatic expression which loses its literal meanings and refers to something else in order to hide its unpleasantness. For example, 'kick the bucket' is euphemism that describes the death of a person. In addition, organisations use the word 'downsizing' for the distressing act of 'firing' its employees. Euphemism depends largely on social context of the speakers and writers where they feel the need to replace certain words which may prove embarrassing for a particular listeners or readers in a particular situation. (Literary dictionary)

Nadine Smith and Demand Media in their article "Euphemism in Literature" define: 'A euphemism as an idiomatic expression whose literal meaning has been lost. For example, "kicked the bucket" might refer to the buckets from which slaughtered pigs were hung in East Anglia. This expression has taken on the meaning "died," even though the original reference to pig slaughtering has been forgotten. Other times euphemisms may take the form of a technical term, such as "civilian casualties" instead of "deaths" or "murders."

According to them, euphemisms sometimes depend on the social context of the speaker or writer. For example, at a social gathering, one might ask the location of the “ladies' room” or “powder room,” instead of “toilet”. Society has used various terms throughout history to denote that a woman is pregnant. The King James Bible referred to pregnancy as “being with child.” Victorians described pregnant women as having “a delicate condition.” In the 20th and 21st centuries, euphemisms for pregnant women have not been so kind: “knocked up,” “up the duff” and “bun in the oven” are a few humorous examples you might hear on a sitcom. Writers of literature must consider the social contexts of their characters to use euphemisms in a believable manner.

In *Harare North*, Non-standard English is also used to bring about euphemisms. When the narrator who has a split personality and would therefore sometimes refer to himself as Shingi, picks on a prostitute, he says:

There is them kind of women that is always pushing big camel's hoof that you can see from Scotland—tat is the one I drag into the house. All the time I am tring to stop myself from going kakkakkak. She is prostitute, and me I hold she hand just to show off Tsitsi the kind of wild things that is now coming inside this house that she don't want leave. She go hide in she room quick.

Shingi have big foolish grin. He think the woman is English girl, but she is Polish, she can't speak one lick of English. He wonder how I manage to talk to she, I can tell. I lure she into the squat after I pounce on she on Josephine Avenue. She was busy doing she make-up... then I spin she some number about how your bed is lice infested and ask if she want to help to help you kill them by rolling many times on the bed and crush them likkle things. Shingi go kakkakkakkakkak now now because he head is full of skunk smoke. Polish girl is quiet and look frightened, only giving them Eastern European hard set looks. But killing lice, it turn out she is right old riot. Within minutes of them getting into Shingi's room we hear the original native squal as they task come to sweet end. Hooray; viva, comrade! I shout loud for Shingi so Tsitsi can hear. (161).

In this case, instead of the narrator saying he picks up a prostitute on Josephine Avenue and they go to have sex, and after sex he shouts loudly for Shingi to hear and feel jealous, he skirts around the issue, using Shona expressions of ‘killing lice’ in reference to sex. In the end what he achieves by using non Standard English expressions like ‘*she was busy doing she make up....or*

original native squal.. ' coupled with shone expressions like *killing lice* creates a more palatable language for people who are more likely to get offended by blatant erotic description of the scene in proper English.

In *Sozaboy*, the narrator uses euphemism when talking about Agnes, the girl of his dreams, by calling her—service instead of bar maid. He also refers to her sexual attractiveness as *Jonny Just Come* (pp13), instead of saying she is sexy, or voluptuous. He still refers to his penis as *my man* which in the African sense sounds more respectful to the reader or audience.

3.9.0. Use of Non-Standard English to Manifest Terror and Oddity

Non-standard English helps the author create an added effect of unfamiliar terror in respect to the atrocities of the war as experienced by Sozaboy. The language gives Mene a certain kind of innocence and unfamiliarity with the modern warfare that baffles him, and the reader at the same time, because his language is not very clear, the magnitude of what he describes burgeons.

All our camp don broke down well well. Everywhere was full pit and pit. And inside one pit, you will se the head of soza, and in another pit, the hand of soza. Everywhere, soso human flesh in small small pieces! Finger, nail, hair, prick, blokkus. Oh, I just begin cry like woman. Oh, foolish man, na who sed me make I go join soza? Then I just remembered say I never see bullet. My heart cut one time. Abi Bullet don die? Ehn? God, who who sai 'e dey I begin run about dey hala well well, ' Bullet, oga Bullet, Bullet whereyoudey? (Sozaboy:111).

The way Mene gives details of the war in this part using Pidgin English shows that he is not used to this kind of events, nor had he ever seen this kind of terror. His rhetorical questions when said in Pidgin are almost incoherent which adds weight to the incomprehensible war as it appears to him. He uses words like *Oh, foolish man, na who sed me make I go join soza?* The non Standard English even makes bullet seem alive and monstrous when he says, ' *Bullet, oga Bullet, Bullet where you dey*. He addresses bullets as if they are alive and terrifying. This is how Pidgin operates, because it borrows expressions a lot from local Nigerian languages, like Ogoni and Yoruba.

The same situation can be seen in *Harare North* where the language itself is odd and it therefore paints the narrator as a strange atypical fellow. He is not the kind of person you can easily meet on the streets of London.

So how comes you know about Freezits and rock buns? Me I ask Aleck. He get funny. “Ah, you know, my auntie used to sell them...’ yep yep yep and all that kind of talk which people do when they have been catch out. Me, Shingi and Farayi just look.(95.)

People who talk like this in the 21st century are obviously dwindling in numbers especially in a metropolis like London, when the world is getting smaller and smaller with technology and access to education.

4.0. CONCLUSION

In this chapter I endeavoured to demonstrate the effectiveness of using non Standard English as a technique in writing. From the discussions above it is clear that use of non Standard English in writing has numerous advantages to the writer. But these advantages come at a cost. For those writers who had to use pidgin in their works, creativity and courage were their biggest test as seen this interview that Achebe gave years back.

In his interview to Robert Serumaga, later published in *African Writers Talking*, Chinua Achebe stated the following:

SERUMAGA : And how do you work with languages? Because, you seem to get in all the authenticity of your particular language—in the way they speak, and translate it so beautifully into English. Now, can you describe exactly how you do this, if you can?

ACHEBE : No, it is not easy. I feel consciously that if you were going to write about a certain character and I put down the dialogue between A and B, that somehow it will sound right or wrong, and there's no way I can describe it except that it sounds wrong to my ear. If A talks like this and this is not right, I immediately feel it, that this is not right. I don't really see how else I can...

SERUMAGA: There is no conscious intellectual process in transposing one language into another on your part?

ACHEBE: No, no, no. I just feel that this is the right way to convey this atmosphere, this speech or this idiom, this kind of language, you see. If you put in modern slang, for instance, it would jar immediately.

In his article “The Role of a Writer in a New Nation (*African Writers on African Writing*, 34) Chinua Achebe also says that for an African, writing in English is not without its serious setbacks. He often finds himself describing situations or modes of thoughts which have no direct equivalent or modes in English way of life. Caught in that situation, he can do one of two things. He can try and contain what he wants to say within the limits of conventional English, or he can try to push back those limits to accommodate his ideas. The first method has frequently produced competent, uninspired and rather flat work. The second can produce something new and valuable to the English language, as well as to the material he is trying to put over. *But* it can also get out of hand. It can lead to bad English being accepted and defended as African or Nigerian. He

submits that those who can do the work of extending the frontiers of English so as to accommodate African thought patterns must do it through mastery of English and not out of innocence. Of course there is the obvious exception of Amos Tutuola. But even there, Achebe adds, it is possible that he has said something unique and interesting in a way that it is not susceptible to further development..."for the rest of us it is important first to learn the rules of English grammar and afterwards break them if we wish" (35). The good writers will know how to do this and the bad ones will be bad anyway.

I can only agree with him and add further that, indeed, these writers who used non Standard English in their works successfully created something new. They deviated from the norm and in so doing brought variety to the African novel. Ken Saro-wiwa for instance created a novel that best captures the suffering of the soldiers and the crudity of the Biafran war in Nigeria in mid 1960s. This is done by using non Standard English (Pidgin English), which best capture the Ideophonic sounds that add authenticity to the story by replicating sounds found in the environments in Nigeria at that time. The code switching as used by both writer, Saro-wiwa and Chikwava, in their novels helps to differentiate characters in terms of their literacy and social class. Semi-illiterate characters are given broken English and literate ones speak Standard English. This helps writers differentiate these traits.

The writer has to therefore be patient and experiment with words, with patterns and even with his or her audience in mind to fully utilize this technique. Writers, such as Chinua Achebe and other authors of his generation, and the younger ones, such as Ken Saro-Wiwa, and Brian Chikwava were brave in their decisions to use non Standard English in their writings, and their efforts paid off significantly, and in the end they produced works of great originality, as is evident with *Sozaboy* and *Harare North*. The use of non-standard varieties of the language allows these characters to report to us their experiences in a true, realistic and unflinching way .At the same time, the non Standard English creates humour because we are not accustomed to this kind of brutal honesty. As readers also, we fall in love with the rogue narrator who mutilates language to bring to the fore the language of semi illiterate immigrants working casual jobs in London and trying to run away from the law in *Harare North*. We are fascinated with the naive character, Mene, who cannot fully comprehend modern warfare and the conflict in language between military commanders and illiterate soldiers.

I concur with Uwasomba when he concludes in his essay that indeed, one of the remarkable achievements of Ken Saro-Wiwa's experimental language in this novel is that despite its mixed

character, its syntactic sequence is unforced *and words flow with a certain torrential originality* (my italics to emphasise on the effectiveness of the non Standard English). This is why no matter how deeply he sinks into the doldrums of war and misery, words never fail the narrator as he describes, explains and narrates his plight and the plights of other soldiers

The technique also allows the characters use euphemisms in situations where they otherwise would resort to vulgar language, especially as part of the mannerism of war as evidenced in *Sozaboy*. The vulgar language would have been inappropriate in a novel written in proper English, thus the colloquial expression mask them by giving them a context and a purpose.

It is also evident that writing in non Standard English is a form of rebellion. As Trudgill finds out in his studies with language and gender, males tend to be more rebellious to societal norms as expressed through proper language mannerisms than women. And it is not surprising therefore that all the novels discussed in this study are authored by men, and, again, all the main characters who use pidgin or non Standard English in their conversation are male. The perception here is that men are often on the frontiers of rebellion to societal mores. These acts as constructed by the writer can also manifest the underlying contempt for standards by these writers. They don't like formalities all the time, and so they resort to informalities. It can be asserted therefore that writers who resort to non Standard English as a form of writing, apart from their bravery, are often language and cultural rebels.

This study has demonstrated that use of non Standard English is useful to both the writer and the reader/audience. This usefulness as seen in the discussion here, can help the writer create humour in the story is evident in both *Harare North* and *Sozaboy*; the technique also helps writers create authentic settings both in relation to the physical environment and its sounds and social environment as captured when people interact in a given context. As evident in the two text studied again, non Standard English can be used to capture terror and strangeness of experience especially if the experiences are unfamiliar to the characters as is the case of war to Mene in *Sozaboy* and the sophistication of London life to the narrator of *Harare North*. The technique also helps to recapture reality of experiences because it can be used in code switching to help the writer differentiate classes of people through their language mannerisms as seen in *Harare North* between the narrator and preachers; and, in *Sozaboy* when the language of military leaders confound Mene who is barely literate.

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