

**A STYLISTIC APPROACH TO CHIMAMANDA ADICHIE'S
WORK: A CASE STUDY OF *AMERICANAH***

By

Wabende Nabututu Scholastica

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DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been submitted in any other university.

.....

Date.....

SCHOLASTICA N. WABENDE

C50/75352/2012

This project has been written under our supervision and submitted for examination with our approval.

.....

Date

DR. MALOBA WEKESA

.....

Date.....

DR. GIDEON MARETE

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my husband Leonard Mariera for his kind support and unending love and to our sons Alex and Alvin.

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ABSTRACT

This project aims at investigating features of style in Chimamanda Adichie's *Americanah*. It majorly focuses on identification of features of style in line with contemporary stylistics and the analysis of the same features through graphological, syntactic and semantic levels. The features under study include: features that define textual medium, sociolinguistic code, actions and events, point of view, textual structure and intertextuality. This involves an explanation on how the meaning is realized through the mentioned levels. Foregrounding as a toolkit to studying of stylistics is a guide to this study. The study starts with an introduction to stylistics which gives an overview of what contemporary stylistics is. The study further demonstrates the motivation behind studying Chimamanda's work as well as the essence and the argument of stylistic theory. This study argues that meaning in a text is realized through the levels of style as proposed by Short and Leech (1981) and that the identified features add value to the text.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

This study focuses on a stylistic approach to Chimamanda's novel *Americanah*. The study involves a rigorous analysis of the features of stylistic domain that are foregrounded in the text. This work looks at how meaning is realized through the analysis of the different levels of style basing on the different levels of style as proposed by (Short and Leech, 1981, p.126).

Simpson's contribution to stylistics is viewed as one of the contemporary approaches to the field of study which was purely studied under literature (Lambrou and Stockwell, 2007,p.2).Stylistics is practiced in its broadest terms across the world, across all the fields of literary scholarship, genre, culture and period, and is increasingly used as the core discipline for further interdisciplinary encounters with literary historiography, critical theory, second language and cultural pedagogy and other forms of literary and language study (ibid).

Stylistics is usually drawn with its origins in classical rhetoric, though its modern incarnation stems most directly from the practical criticism and structuralism of the middle of the twentieth century. Stylistics has long outgrown this recent rebirth, and though it was never as formalist as its detractors liked to think, the field went on to gather to itself new analytical tools in pragmatics, text linguistics, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, computational corpus linguistics and cognitive linguistics.

There are two views of what stylistics is for, what its functions are, and what it can achieve according to (Lambrou and Stockwell, 2007, p.3). All stylisticians would agree that the discipline accounts for the workings of literary texts. That is a matter of describing as systematically and openly as possible the nature of the textual evidence which accompanies a particular reading of the text. Stylistics can always do this, and it works 100% of the time with all texts and all readings. This basic outcome of stylistics provides a descriptive account of textual mechanics and the reading process which is made available in a common currency of register, in order to allow other stylisticians to compare their own account, verify or take issue with the analysis.

Stylistics offers an intersubjective analysis that can be shared, compared, and evaluated on the basis of explicit criteria. One happy consequence of this fact is that engaging with stylistic analyses often enriches the reading experience: the stylistician-reader gathers together perspectives from others and can make imaginative leaps into different viewpoints and feelings about a literary work.

The other view is that, stylistic frameworks are certainly often productive of new ways of seeing the literary work. This means stylistics can sometimes produce the sort of startling, pleasurable and perspective-changing moments in reading that literary criticism traditionally stumbles over clumsily and inarticulately (Lambrou and Stockwell, 2007, p.4).

By looking at features of stylistics as proposed by (Simpson, 2004, p.5) the researcher tackles some of the contemporary issues in stylistics such as narratology, mind style and cognitive science (Simpson, 2007; Hoover, 1999; Toolan, 1998).

1.1.1 Background to the Study

Contemporary stylistics has approaches which range from cognitive poetics to corpus linguistics, from explorations of mind style and spoken discourse in narrative to the workings of viewpoint in lyric poetry, from word meanings and emotions of literary worlds, and more (Lambrou and Stockwell, 2007, p.4). Stylistics often forms a core component of many creative writing courses, an application not surprising given the discipline's emphasis on techniques of creativity and invention in language (Simpson, 2004, p. 2; Short and Leech, 1981, p.121).

By looking at Adichie's novel *Americanah*, this study conforms to the modern approaches to stylistics as it focuses on features of textual medium, features that define the sociolinguistic code, actions and events otherwise referred to as transitivity, point of view as pointed out by Lambrou and Stockwell (2007:118), textual structure and intertextuality. These are the elements that form narrative stylistics.

Stylistic theory as a theoretical framework offers that analysis of style involves analysis of levels style ranging from graphological, syntactic level and semantic level (Short and Leech, 1981, p.119) and within the three levels we have phonological and phonetic levels, lexicology and pragmatics (Simpson, 2004, p.5). This research intends to find out how these features are represented at the graphological and syntactic levels and how semantics which is purely meaning is realized through graphological and syntactic levels. Simpson provides that the levels of style that constitute linguistic structure are an important index of the function of the text hence through the analysis of the levels one needs to realize the meaning and not the structure alone.

Short and Leech (1981) propose that in studying style one looks at language as a code. A code is a means of conveying messages or a vehicle of communication whose operation is represented as follows in written language:

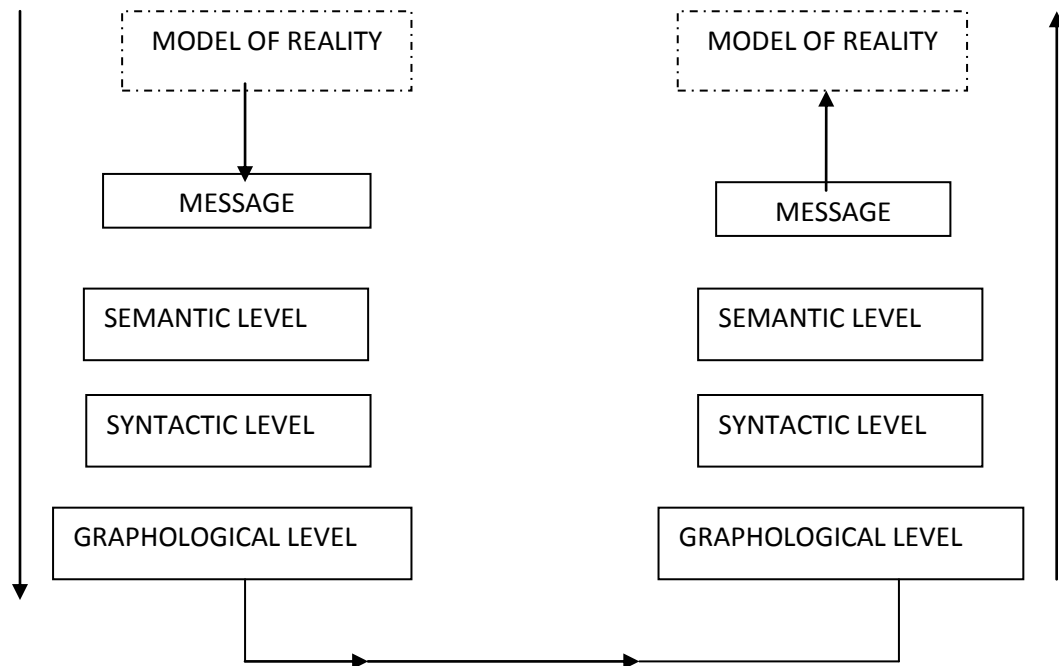


Figure 1.1 Model of Reality (Short & Leech, 1981, p. 126)

This study will borrow a lot from the above diagram since it aims at realization of meaning from graphological and semantic level. *Americanah* is Adichie’s latest novel alongside *Purple Hibiscus*, *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *The Thing around Your Neck* which is a collection of short stories. *Americanah* was chosen deliberately given that Adichie is recognized as the voice of Nigerian literature and the whole of Africa (Heather, 2005). Chimamanda’s earlier works have borrowed a lot from Chinua Achebe but *Americanah* takes a new turn which is realized through style and structure of the text, though this work does not intend to carry out a comparative study. Through *Americanah*,

Chimamanda enhances her theme through a love story between Ifemelu and Obinze who give their account of how blacks are treated in the USA and Britain. For example Obinze struggles to get hold of the ever elusive national security number that would enable him to work legally. When he was once invited for a party, he was shocked because food is served on self-consciously “ethnic plates” brought back from a holiday in India. Ifemelu also goes through a lot of torture as she tries to find a part time job. To achieve her themes she uses various features of style.

As argued by Kiguru (2012) Chimamanda’s work needs to be studied since she deals with themes that are relevant in the modern society for instance racial discrimination which is the main theme in *Americanah*. Kiguru argues that Chimamanda chooses unique language to pass across the themes that she deals with in her work. Chimamanda is one of the leading contemporary writers on the continent and this can be seen through her unique works (Yohannes, 2012). She proposes that Adichie’s uniqueness is seen through the use of different aspects of style like extensive use of translated and untranslated Igbo. The present study bases its argument on this proposition by identifying more aspects of style from *Americanah*. More arguments on the same are provided by (Heathers, 2005; Cooper, 2008).

Stylistics is viewed differently by different scholars for instance (Crystal and Davy, 1970, p.9) who define style as some or all the language habits of one person as when we talk of Shakespeare’s style or the style of James Joyce or when we discuss questions of disputed authorship. Style hence is mistakenly said to be a man or his thought. More often, it refers in this way to a selection of language habits; the occasional linguistic eccentricity

which characterize an individual's uniqueness. The present study borrows a lot from this assumption since it aims at identifying elements that make Chimamanda's work unique.

Language as a means of spoken communication is regarded both traditionally and in modern linguistics as a system for translating meanings in the speaker's mind into sounds, or conversely for translating sounds into meanings in the hearer's mind. Whether we think of the ENCODING (meaning-to-sound) or the DECODING (sound-to-meaning) process, syntax is the formal code which mediates between structures of meaning and structures of sound (Short and Leech, 1981, p. 121). This study is basically structured on this argument.

They further argue that language is open-ended in that it permits the generation of new meanings and new forms for example metaphorical meanings and neologisms and it also has no clearly defined boundaries as to what is in the code and what breaks the rule. It is this creative extendability of the linguistic code that the researcher formed a basis for this study.

Foregrounding refers to the salient features in a text which receive this salience through prominence (Short and Leech, 1981). What is prominent is what is recurrent in a text. This study will borrow a lot from this definition because this study aims at investigating features that have been given prominence in the text. Foregrounding, according to the *Routledge Linguistics Encyclopedia* by (Kirsten Malmkjaer, 2013), is a linguistic-stylistic toolkit which seeks to highlight noteworthy linguistic patterns in a work and then more, in a responsible scholarly fashion from description to interpretation and finally to evaluation. The patterns are deviation, repetition and parallelism.

According to Simpson (2004) stylistics is a method of textual interpretation in which primacy of place is assigned to language. Language in this case is important to stylisticians because the various forms, patterns and levels that constitute linguistic structure are an important index of the function of the text. The text's functional significance as discourse acts in turn as a gateway to its interpretation. While linguistic features do not of themselves constitute a text's 'meaning' an account of linguistic features nonetheless serves to ground a stylistic interpretation and to help explain why for the analyst, certain types of meaning are possible.

According to Simpson as quoted in the *Routledge Linguistics Encyclopedia*, stylistics forms a core component of many creative writing courses, an application not surprising given the disciplines emphasis on techniques of creativity and invention in language. One of the approaches to late twentieth-century includes Discourse stylistics which opened the way for sociolinguistic and pragmatic input into stylistics (Carter and Simpson, 2004).

(Simpson, 2007, p.20) provides stylistic elements that make up a narrative discourse which are represented as follows;

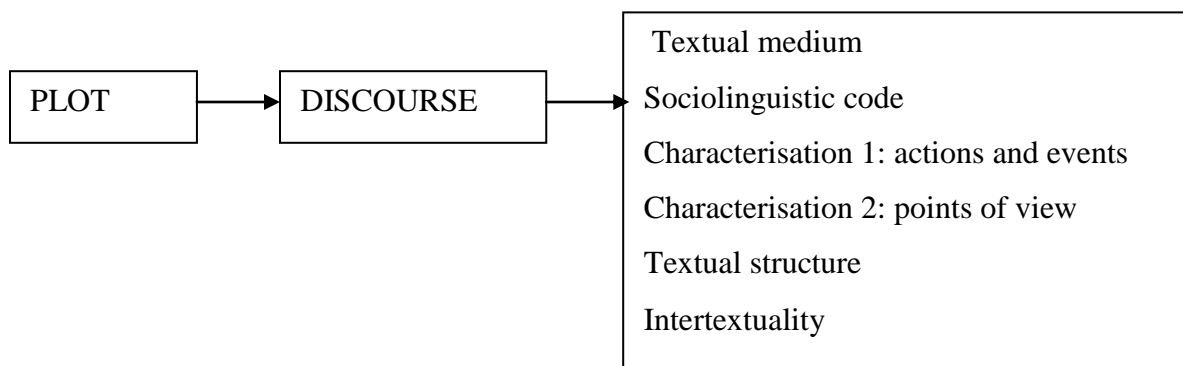


Figure 1.2: Stylistic Domain (Simpson, 2004, p. 4)

1.1.2 Operational Definitions

Dialect: Is a linguistic variety that is defined according to the user of language. It tells one thing about their social and regional background.

Accent: A way of pronouncing the words of a language that shows which country, area or social class a person comes from.

Anti-language: This is understood as extreme versions of social dialect.

Relexicalisation: This is substitution of new words for old.

Style: This refers strictly to choice and in this case choice of language.

Code: Refers to a system of words, letters, numbers or symbols that represent a message or record information secretly or in a shorter form: to break a code is to understand and read the message.

Sociolinguistic: This is the study of the connection between language and society and the way people use language in different social situations.

Code mixing: Is the alternate use of two languages in the same clause. It is when pieces of one language are used while a speaker is basically using another language. The speaker incorporates units of one language or dialect into another language. These language pieces are often words but can also be phrases or larger units.

Code switching: Is the complete shift from one language to another.

Stylistics: Is the study and interpretation of texts from a linguistic perspective.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This study investigates the features of style that are foregrounded in Chimamanda Adichie's novel *Americanah* focusing on the realization of the semantic level through graphological and syntactic use. The features under study include; textual medium,

sociolinguistic code, transitivity, point of view, textual structure and intertextuality. The choice of the text is deliberate given its uniqueness in both style and structure as argued by (Kiguru, 2012; Yohannes, 2012).Linguistic research to prove the uniqueness or otherwise of Chimamanda’s stylistic bend is a valid research engagement which can give impetus to studying emerging trends of writing.

1.3 Objectives

This study will be guided by the following aims:

1. Identify features of style that define textual medium, sociolinguistic code, transitivity, point of view, textual structure and intertextuality that are foregrounded in *Americanah* by Chimamanda.
2. Illustrate these features of style to show their stylistic bend through graphological levels and syntactic levels and how they are realized at semantic level.
3. To explain how stylistic theory in linguistics captures the milieu of the semantic realization.

1.4 Hypotheses

In this study the following hypotheses will be tested:

1. That Chimamanda’s *Americanah* has features of style that define textual medium, sociolinguistic code, transitivity, point of view, textual structure and intertextuality.
2. The features of style identified prove a stylistic bend through graphological and syntactic levels and are realized at semantic levels.
3. That stylistic theory captures the milieu of the semantic realization.

1.5 Justification of the Study

There has been a recent growing interest in the stylistic analysis of African novels (see for example Tunca, 2014 and Daramola, 2010). The present study is meant to contribute to this growing literature by exploring Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* from a stylistic theory perspective. The choice of *Americanah* is motivated by the fact that it is Chimamanda's latest work and also her earlier works tend to borrow a lot from Chinua Achebe in terms of content and style.

Chimamanda is a new writer, a modern writer and the voice for Africa (Heathers, 2005; Cooper, 2008). Her language has attracted many readers because of its simplicity. She comes up with new meanings for many words to make her work interesting and what is of more interest is the choice of digital discourse (Yohannes, 2012). It is this unique way of writing that motivated the researcher to carry out this study to prove the uniqueness of her work. The above arguments are backed up by (Short and Leech, 1981, p.121) who claim that language is open ended in that it permits the generation of new meanings and new forms for example, metaphorical meanings and neologisms and it also has no clear defined boundaries as to what is in the code and what is an infringement of it. It is this creative extendability of the linguistic code that motivated the researcher to carry out this study by looking at various forms of words in the text.

This study looks at features of style in a broader sense and how they aid in interpretation of the text as proposed by (Simpson, 2004). Simpson uses examples from European classics like *A morphology of the fairy tale* by Vladimir Propp hence the use of Propp's model in determining the textual medium, the researcher found it necessary to carry out the study using African novels.

1.6 Scope and Limitation

In this research, the focus is only on analyzing Chimamanda's work with emphasis on foregrounding and how the prominence given to certain features help in interpreting the text. The primary data for this research is available because the novel is available in bookshops and the researcher is an avid reader of Chimamanda's work. The researcher only focuses on *Americanah* though there are other novels that have been written by Chimamanda. This is because *Americanah* moves away from the style used by many African authors. The text is also voluminous and because of time the researcher will only look at a few chapters that are significant for this research. The stylistic elements as proposed by Simpson are wide and a lot of time is needed to identify and analyze them using the chosen text hence the researcher only picked on the major elements for the argument of the problem.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by stylistics theory to do a comprehensive stylistic analysis of the chosen text *Americanah*. Since stylistics is an eclectic discipline, the researcher found it necessary to borrow from (Short and Leech, 1981) stylistic theory.

According to (Short and Leech, 1981, p. 10) style has a fairly uncontroversial meaning: it refers to the way in which language is used in a given context, by a given person, for a given purpose, and so on. This is related to Swiss linguist Saussure's distinction between *langue* and *parole*, *langue* being the code or system of rules common to speakers of a language and *parole* being the particular uses of this system, or selections from this system, that speakers or writers make on this or that occasion. Style then pertains to *parole*: it is selection from a total linguistic repertoire that constitutes a style. Hence

stylistics which is defined as the study of style is rarely undertaken for its own sake, simply as an exercise in describing what use is made of language.

The study therefore attempts to find out if the collected data can be represented through the levels of style that are structural and offer an explanation as to why and how meaning is realized through the graphological and syntactic levels. At the lowest level, graphological, for instance, misspelling of words can be analyzed at syntactic level through how the misspelt words combine to form a sentence and later the meaning that is realized that is, at the semantic level. Short and Leech (1981, p.121) propose that in studying style one looks at language as a code. A code is a means of conveying messages or a vehicle of communication whose operation is represented as follows in written language:

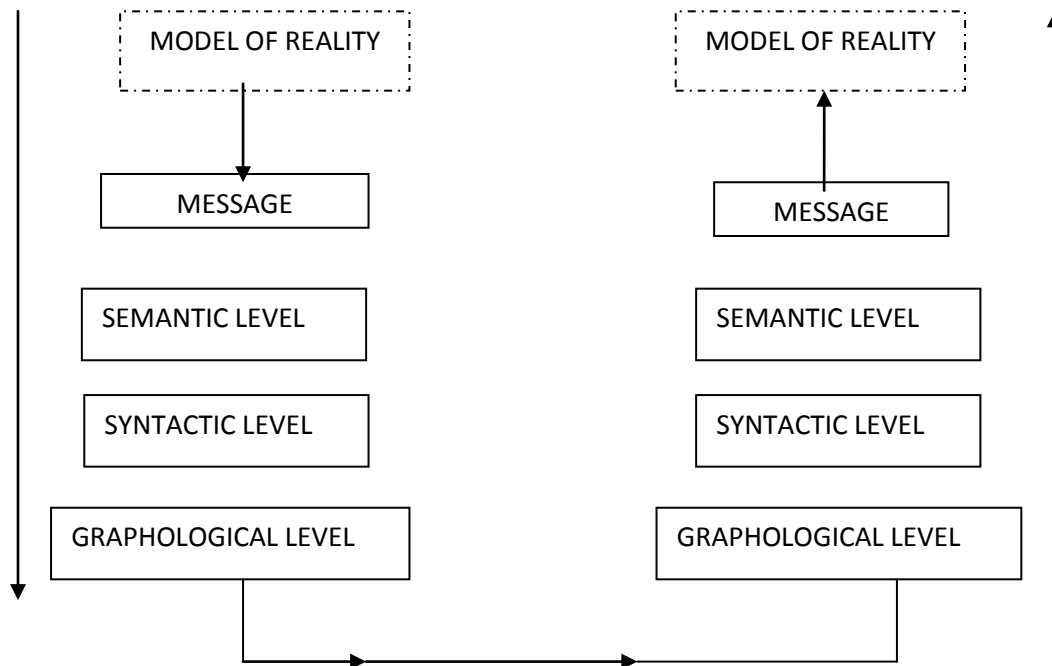


Figure 1.3 Model of Reality (Short & Leech, 1981, p. 126)

According to (Short and Leech, 1981, p.119) language is seen a system of communication and is often compared to a code, language is multileveled and through this it is necessary to distinguish three levels of organization in language. In addition to the level of SEMANTICS (meaning), there are the levels of SYNTAX and PHONOLOGY, which together form the expression plane of language. These two levels constitute what is often referred to as the ‘double articulation’ of linguistic form: phonology being the ‘sound pattern’ of the language (phonemes, stress, rhythm, intonation) and syntax being roughly speaking, the abstract grammatical and lexical form of language.

Language has been regarded both traditionally and in modern linguistics, as a system for translating meanings in the speaker’s mind into sounds, or conversely, for translating sounds into meanings in the hearer’s mind. Whether we think of the ENCODING (meaning-to-sound) or the DECODING (sound-to-meaning) process, syntax is the formal code which mediates between structures of meaning and structures of sound (Short and Leech, 1981).

In this analytical framework, the analyst essentially goes beyond what the text means to explain how and why it means what it does, that is, how language functions to orient readers towards particular possible meanings of the text (Halliday, 1994; Short, 1996) explain that the linguistic features of a text do not constitute an objective meaning of the text per se, but the pattern they form prompt readers towards reasonable meanings that the text engenders. Stylistics is not only interested in the meaning of literary texts, but it is as much interested in the language used to project that meaning. Stylisticians are

normally interested in the functions language performs, and particularly what the linguistic format of literary writings can contribute to our understanding of the nature and functions of language. (Simpson, 2004) contends that there will be no need to do a stylistic analysis if the analyst is not interested in language.

1.8 Literature Review

So much in stylistics has focused on features of style and linguistic characteristics in a text. However (Simpson, 2004) argues that in prose fiction stylisticians should further analyze features of stylistic domain which form a basis for stylistics. The realization of semantics through graphological and syntactic levels is important in analyzing a text especially when dealing with elements of foregrounding and backgrounding. An author can come up with his or her own way of style that is unique and that's why Chimamanda's work forms a basis for this study. The following works provide a basis for this argument.

Tunca Daria (2009) in her paper, An ambiguous "Freedom Song": Mind-Style in *Purple Hibiscus*, describes Mind style as a concept which denotes a persons or a characters idiolect, rests on the assumption that language has an ideational that is a representational function. Tunca looks at the linguistic choices that Adichie has selected and studies how these choices reflect her own views about the world. This means that the world-view of an author, or a narrator or a character is constituted by the ideational function of style which is different from what the present study deals with. Foregrounding and backgrounding are more of textual part of style hence the present study fills that gap.

Related to the above study is (Osunbade, 2009) work which looks at the processes by which linguistically modified word meanings are modified in different contexts of use in *Purple Hibiscus*, from relevance-theoretical perspective. The enrichment processes involved in making explicit information conveyed match contextual requirements have been discussed. The study provides that an understanding of such cognitive processes of contextual enrichment, reference assignment, bridging, and disambiguation, gap filling and embedding the propositional contents into a higher level description of the speaker's attitude casts some light on the recovery of what is said. Establishing that contextual enrichment of utterances is not merely a pragmatic but also a cognitive phenomenon, the paper has therefore revealed that context in which an utterance is made is important in understanding explicit meaning in a text. This study borrows some aspects from Tunca's research though using stylistic theory.

Further Osunbade (2013) in his paper looks at implicatures of domestic discourse in *Purple Hibiscus*. The thesis deals with a pragmatic investigation of implicatures of domestic discourse in Adichie's novels, aiming at identifying the implicatural dimensions that emerge in the discourse in the novels and determining how they facilitate access to Adichie's thematic concerns. This paper adopts the Gricean pragmatic theory which accounts for context-driven meanings. The study only looks at conversational discourse in the texts but does not look at textual relations. The present study will therefore fill this gap through foregrounding and the theory used in this present study is stylistic theory.

A different view is presented by (Kiguru 2012) though in literature. She deals with the role of the child figure in telling narratives of violence based in *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half*

of a yellow Sun. She explores the uniqueness of the child's voice in the two novels and the significance of the gender of the child narrator. She looks at the narrative techniques that the child narrator presents and how the gender of the narrator affects the presentation of this violence. The present study is partly based on Kiguru's argument but goes further by looking at more unique aspects of style to fill what Kiguru left out in her argument.

A view that is similar to Kiguru's argument is (Yohannes, 2012) who argues that Chimamanda is one of the leading contemporary writers on the continent and this can be seen through her unique works. She proposes that Adichie's uniqueness is seen through the use of different aspects of style like extensive use of translated and untranslated Igbo. The present study bases its argument on this proposition by identifying more aspects of style from *Americanah*.

On foregrounding, Mwanzia (2005) looks at linguistic deviations and their role in a text by pointing out how the choice of the names of characters is used to bring out meaning. This study was done in literature and did not focus so much on the linguistic issue which the present study dwells on. She quotes from (Leech, 1969, p.74) that the process of foregrounding results to formal and structural repetition which affects the formal patterning of the text. Leech asserts that these abnormal arrangements lend themselves to the forceful and harmonious presentation of ideas. Her study looks at lexical repetition and structural parallelism as foregrounded features that affect the meaning of the text. The present study borrows the argument on foregrounding and provides an explanation on why features are foregrounded.

Masanori Miyata (2008) deals with linguistic deviation and foregrounding. When a writer wants to make his language to be creative or inventive, he uses language different from the conventional and everyday of his day .Using conventional or original language, a writer can give his readers unexpected surprise and make a strong impression on their mind. This kind of the creative use of language is technically called linguistic deviation, by which he creates original language deviated from the norms of literary convention of everyday speech.

He quotes from Leech;

.....anyone who wishes to investigate the significance and value of a work of art must concentrate on the element of interest and surprise, rather than on the automatic pattern. Such deviations from linguistic or other socially accepted norms have been given the special name of foregrounding....The foregrounded figure is the linguistic deviation and the background is the language.

The present study follows the procedure that has been adopted by Miyata by looking at the different levels of analysis in foregrounding.

The present study looks at the communicative function of language as proposed by (Short and Leech (1981) which borrows a lot from Muchura (2008) who looks at the textual function of style in advertising using women images in Kenyan magazines. The study looks at the function of style as proposed by Halliday. It shows that style as an aspect has to be used in interpreting any text. This study moves away from that as it looks at what is related to ideational function of style.

1.9 Methodology

This section looks at methods of collecting and analyzing data. An in-depth reading of *Americanah* was done and the relevant chapters sampled.

1.9.1 Research Design

Research design is thought of as the structure of research. It is the “glue” that holds all of the elements in a research project together. A design is used to structure the research, to show how all of the major parts of the research project work together to try to address the central research question. In this case, a case study design is used since it seeks to describe a unit in detail, in context and holistically. The study aimed at collecting features of style from the text.

1.9.2 Methods of Collecting Data

Data collection involved judgmental sampling. Judgmental sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where the researcher selects units to be sampled based on their knowledge and professional judgment (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). Judgmental sampling is strengthened by pragmatic sensitivity and intuition about the data presented in the text. The data sampled depends on the context in which it occurs this is to assist the researcher in analyzing the significance of the collected data.

In this sample method, the researcher purposely targets a group of people believed to be reliable for the study and in this case the researcher targeted the chapters that had the features in mind. The power of purposive sampling can be used with both quantitative and qualitative studies. Purposive sampling can be carried out in addition to probability sampling. For example, after completing your baseline study based on a random sample,

you may recognize that certain sections of the project area are quite different from other areas due to variations in landscape, geography, culture etc. You may then purposively select those areas to get representative information about how the variations have influenced the behavior of the people. Purposive sampling is particularly relevant when you are concerned with exploring the universe and understanding the audience. For primary sources of data, the researcher samples various chapters that specifically have the features to be analyzed.

With secondary sources the researcher relies on library research by going through books, projects, thesis and papers presented on the same.

1.9.3 Methods of Analyzing Data

Data analysis involved scrutinizing the acquired information and making inferences. This research uses the thematic analysis technique of qualitative research. Themes refer to topics or major subjects that come up in discussions. This form of analysis categorizes related topics hence the researcher will go through the collected data and identify the information that is relevant to the research questions and objectives.

The researcher will further develop a coding system based on the sampled data and classify the features identified and further identify the intensity of the features to show the importance or emphasis given to the features. The main reason for choosing the qualitative design is that the present study, as is demonstrated by the research questions is exploratory in nature. As noted by (Creswell, 1994), qualitative research, with its flexible procedure, is the appropriate design for exploring and describing phenomena that are inconspicuous to the researcher.

CHAPTER TWO

FEATURES OF STYLE

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter I identify features of style that are foregrounded in *Americanah* by Chimamanda. These features include features of the textual medium, features of sociolinguistic code, features that describe transitivity, point of view, features that define textual structure and intertextuality. These are core elements that make up a narrative discourse and they are elements that (Simpson 2004, p.5) adopts in his analysis of style especially in prose fiction. These units nonetheless offer a useful set of reference points for pinpointing the specific aspects of narrative which form a stylistic analysis. The units are as follows:

2.1 Textual Medium

This refers simply to the physical channel of communication through which a story is narrated. According to Simpson's analysis of style, a narrative may be encoded in a variety of textual media, which include but are not restricted to film, cartoon, ballad, comic strip, prose fiction and oral vernacular. The following hence form what Propp's model suggest about what is core in defining textual medium as argued by (Simpson, 2004; Bradford, 1997).

2.1.1 Flashback

Flashback is a literary device wherein the author depicts the occurrence of specific events to the reader, which have taken place before the present time the narration is following, or events that have happened before the events that are currently unfolding in the story.

(*The Nairobi Journal of literature, 2006*). Flashback is related to textual anaphora which means ‘carrying back’.

Chimamanda’s story is about life in America, how life needed a hustler to survive and her preparations to go back home when life to her (the main character) is unbearable. Chimamanda however takes us back to life of the main character back at home before she left for America. The following example illustrates the use of flashback which is characterized by the word ‘back’ and the past tense:

When Ifemelu is employed as a babysitter for the first time she gives her story about her experience in the US and how different it was back in Nigeria.

“How are you finding the US so far?

Ifemelu told her about the vertigo she had felt the first time she went to the supermarket; in the cereal aisle, she had wanted to get cornflakes, which she was used to eating **back** home, but suddenly.....

“Yes, we’re really about excess in this country,” Kimberly said. I’m sure **back** home you ate a lot of wonderful organic food and vegetables, but you’re going to see it’s different here.” (pg 184).

2.1.2 Symbolism

Symbolism exists whenever something is meant to represent something else. It is a figure of speech that is used when an author wants to create a certain mood or emotion in a work of literature (*The Nairobi Journal of Literature, 2010*). This is the denotative meaning which is essentially about representation.

Ifemelu uses the hair as a symbol of racial discrimination. She describes how blacks struggle to make their hair look like that of Americans through the use of relaxers. The symbol of the hair is used singly and all through the novel, for example it can be realized through the following conversation:

She touched Ifemelu's **hair**. "Why don't you have a relaxer?"

"I like my **hair** the way God made it."

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

In another incident when Ifemelu goes to look for a job she is told to make her hair because in America hair was something taken seriously during employment which shows the discrimination as realized below. (pg 252)

When she told Ruth about the interview in Baltimore, Ruth said, "My only advice? Lose the braids and straighten your **hair**. Nobody says this kind of stuff but it matters. We want you to get that job."(pg 252)

2.1.3 Neologisms

Refers to new words or coined recently or the new use for an old word. Neologism is a new word, expression or phrase. Neologism is a feature of style which involves the creation or use of new words or senses. Neologism is the act of inventing a word or phrase. Neologism can be done through coinage. The term neologism comes from Greek word *neos* which means 'new' and *logos* which means 'word' while the suffix(-ism) forms the noun. The whole term stands for the lexical innovation in language. New created words are common and new phrases are no exception.

Google is a search engine but in the present world the noun has been changed to a verb and is used of the short form of 'searching through the internet.'

.....but she did not write at all and when he e-mailed her again.

He wanted to tell Gabriel that his girlfriend from University had just e-mailed him. (pg 26)

E-mail is the short form for electronic mail hence **e-mailed** is short form of sending messages through electronic mail.

He was quickly admitted into the clan of swaggering, carelessly cool males, the Big Guys; he lounged in..... (pg 65)

The word swaggering as used presently in the modern world has had a new meaning referring to anything that is fashionable or has kept with the latest fashion trends. Previously was used to refer to a kind of an arrogant walk.

The title of the novel is *Americanah* which has been coined to refer to the people who worked in America and because of frustrations decided to go back home (Nigeria). Ifemelu is one of them (those who have returned from America) and in a conversation between her and other ‘Americanah’s’ they say;

When one of them says, “She will come back and be a serious Americanah like Bisi” They roared with laughter, at that word “Americanah”.

The word was coined as an insult to those who had returned desperately from America.

2.1.4 Parallelism

A writer may balance two or similar words, phrases or clauses. He repeats similar or identical patterns in adjacent phrases, clauses or sentences. This device is used with the aim of improving writing style and readability. Parallelism is achieved in conjunction with other stylistic devices such as antithesis and anaphora (*The Nairobi Journal of Literature, 2010*).

Short offers an explanation with his parallelism rule as to what this might entail: what is interesting about parallel structures (1996, p.14). He argues that parallelism has the power not just to foreground parts of a text for us but also to make us look for parallel or contrastive meaning links between these parallel parts (Short, 1996, p. 15).

Chimamanda starts her story by the description of some of the towns in America and does it so well through parallelism. The linguistic parallelism can be seen through the following:

Princeton in the summer, smelled of nothing and although Ifemelu liked the tranquil greenness of the many trees, the clean streets and stately homes, the

delicately overpriced shops and the quiet, abiding air of earned grace, it was this, the lack of a smell, that most appealed to her, perhaps because the other American cities she knew well had all smelled distinctly. Philadelphia had the misty scent of history. New Haven smelled of neglect. Baltimore smelled of Brine, and Brooklyn of sun-warmed garbage. But Princeton had no smell. (pg 5)

2.1.5 Use of Italics

In novels with the conventional structure, italics are limited to highlighting new words, borrowed terminology or mother tongue vocabulary, title of a work of prose, of poetry, songs or some new word that has been coined by the writer (*The Nairobi Journal of Literature, 2006*).

Chimamanda uses italics in various ways:

The message that Ifemelu sends to Obinze is italicized for foregrounding purposes:

Ceiling, Kedu? Hope all is well with work and family. Ranyinundo said she ran into you some time ago and that you now have a child! Proud Papa. Congratulations. I recently decided to move back to Nigeria. Should be in Lagos in a week. Would love to keep in touch. Take care. Ifemelu. (pg 25)

The narrator in the text gives an account of testimonies given in church as follows:

I did not study because I was sick and yet I passed my exams with flying colours! I had malaria and prayed over it and was cured! My cough disappeared as Pastor started praying! (pg 53)

2.1.6 Colloquialism

Colloquialism is a word or phrase that is employed in an informal conversation or a piece of writing. Colloquial language is avoided in formal writing or speech. It refers to the choice of vocabulary and grammar that people use to speak to each other on an informal basis, usually in situations that do not require elevated language (*The Nairobi Journal of Literature, 2006*). The following words have been used to indicate the informality:

To size up-this more like phrasal verb is used in informal situations to form a judgment or an opinion about somebody or something. (pg 93)

Aren't you **hot** in that jacket?-The word 'hot' has been used informally to refer to smartness. (p 68)

Coz, this was the **bestest** day ever with you. The word bestest is formed from the word best which is in superlative form.

The use of **short forms** of words is also a form of colloquialism. Chimamanda is fond of such a kind of language to communicate to her audience and is a characteristic of digital discourse. The following short forms of words have been used:

SATs-is a short form of certificates

ID-Identity cards

LOCS-dreadlocks

The hall rep-the hall representative

Paper ad-paper advertisement

Coz-short form for cousin.

Grad- graduate.

Special ed- special edition.

All these words are used in informal situations.

2.1.7 Use of Acronyms

Acronyms involve use of abbreviations and are common in informal situations. In the text they have been widely used as follows:

DVD-Digital versatile Disc

TV-Television

CD-Compact Disc

FM-Frequency modulation

CV-Curriculum vitae

AIDS-Acquired immune deficiency syndrome

VC-Vice chancellor

2.1.8 Deliberate Misspellings

This refers to violation of rules in regard to spellings which is done deliberately by the author. Examples include:

Afrique- This is deliberately misspelt for the word Africa (pg 124)

I hope everything is fine, **sah**. It is very good to see you again, **sah**. How is work, **sah**? (pg 556)

Sah is deliberately misspelt for the word Sir.

2.1.9 Imagery

Imagery is among the most widely used but poorly understood terms occurring in so many different contexts that it may well be impossible to provide any rational, systematic account of its usage in the text. It may be a metaphor, simile, or figure of speech, a

concrete verbal reference, a recurrent motif, or a psychological event in the readers mind (*The Nairobi Journal of Literature, 2006*).The linguistic feature with imagery is the explicit meaning that is communicated. Imagery has been used widely as in the following way, and these makes the characters unlikeable and unattractive as illustrated below:

She looked improbable like sunlight.(pg 80)

The ‘she’ referred to in this simile is Kimberly, a lady who employed Ifemelu as a babysitter once she was in the US. She looked unreliable and of course she sends Ifemelu parking.

She began over time to feel like a vulture hacking into the carcasses of people’s stories. (pg 8)

The hair lay on the floor like dead grass. (pg 50)

2.2 Sociolinguistic Code

Sociolinguistic code expresses through language the historical, cultural, and linguistic setting which frames a narrative. It locates the narrative in time and place by drawing upon the forms of language which reflect this sociocultural context. Sociolinguistic code encompasses amongst other things the varieties of accent and dialect used in a narrative, although the concept also extends to the social and institutional registers of discourse deployed in a story. Sociolinguistic code is a term referring to the pool of linguistic varieties that both derive from and shape the social and cultural backdrop to a text. Sociolinguistic code is a key organizing resource not just for narrative but for all types of literary discourse (Simpson, 2004).

In Nigeria literary context, Standard English is mixed with West African Pidgin English and the indigenous African language, Yoruba. The term code-switching is normally used to explain transitions between distinct languages in a text, and literary code-switching is a sophisticated technique which signals movement between different spheres of reference and has important consequences for a range of thematic intentions.

2.2.1 Idiolect

It is a truism of modern linguistics that no two speakers use language in exactly the same way. We all have our own linguistic mannerisms and stylistic idiosyncrasies and the term reserved for an individual's special unique style is idiolect. Idiolect defines mind style which is an approach to stylistics.

This can be seen in the example below:

In the text it is clear to identify the different accents by different speakers especially the speakers of English from different regions are identified through the accent. Ifemelu the main character narrates her experience in America when she first of all visits one of the salons in Trenton to have her hair made. She realizes that her braider is an African from Senegal through the accent. The braider says:

“Igbo men take care of women real good, “Aisha repeated. “I want marry. They love me but they say the family want Igbo woman. Because Igbo marry Igbo always.” (pg 18)

She further says:

“You don’t know America. You say Senegal and American people, they say, Where is that? My friend from Burkina Faso, they ask her, your country in Latin America?... (pg 165)

Ifemelu is given directions by one of the students who through the accent realizes was also an Americanah:

Yes. Now. Are. You. An. International. Student?

You. Will. First. Need. To. Get. A. Letter. From. The. International. Students. Office.

I. Need. You. To. Fill. Out. A. Couple. Of. Forms. Do. You. Understand. How. To. Fill. These. Out? (pg 165)

2.2.2 Dialect

This is a linguistic variety that is defined according to the user of language. It tells you things about their social and regional background. Dialects are distinguished by patterns in grammar and vocabulary while accents are distinguished through patterns of pronunciation. The language used in the narrative is English but there are other varieties of the language. The term dialect is used to describe differences in speech associated with various social groups or classes. A dialect is almost certainly no more than a local non-prestigious (therefore powerless) variety of a real language (Wardhaugh, 2010, p. 46).

Chimamanda’s way of writing encompasses various dialects from Nigerian English and American Slang which are seen in the following examples. When Obinze was once

imprisoned while in the UK, he would hear fellow inmates conversing which showed how difficult it was. They use the Nigerian English:

In the TV room, there was a group of men, many of them Nigerians, talking loudly. The other men sat around slumped into their own sorrows, listening to the Nigerians trade their stories, sometimes laughing, sometimes self-pitying.

“Ah this na my second time. The first time I come with different passport,” one of them said.

“Na for work wey they get me o.

“E get one guy wey they deport, him don come back get him paper. Na him wey go help me,” another said.

Use of American Slang can be seen through the following:

Amma like, oh Gad, Az someh-referring to I’m like, Oh God, I was so mad (pg 12)

Ahn-ahn! All of us were waiting!

You shouldn’t of done that. There is three things. I had a apple. A couple days. I want to lay done.

Pooh reet back-Put it back

2.2.3 Use of translated and untranslated Igbo dialogue

Chimamanda’s novel is full of conversations that are directly translated from Igbo. This was argued by Yohannes as being part of the unique style that Chimamanda uses in her work. She does this as a way of identifying herself with her language through the

narrator's point of view. Most Nigerians when they speak they tentatively add an 'O' at the end of every utterance. Examples include the following:

I hope he did not get his mother's fighting genes o. (pg 66)

You don't win by hitting the ball with anger o. (pg 74)

I told he must buy it in my name o. (pg 78)

It was the image of The General that would endure in Ifemelu's mind, Dike's arms around his neck, his face lit up, his front teeth jutting out as he smiled, saying, "He looks like me o, but thank God he took his mother's teeth." (pg 102)

2.2.4 Register

Hudson (1919) describes register as sets of language items associated with discrete occupational or social groups. Your dialect shows who or what you are, whilst your register shows what you are doing. Register is defined according to the use to which language is being put. A register shows, through a regular, fixed pattern of vocabulary and grammar, what a speaker or writer is doing with language at a given moment. Register describes the choices made by the user, choices which depend on three variables:

- a) Field-refers to what the participants are actually engaged in doing for example discussing a specific subject or topic.
- b) Tenor-relates to who is taking part in the exchange.
- c) Mode-refers to the use to which language is put.

Swear words and taboo languages are important features of register, and not as is commonly assumed of dialect.

Chimamanda uses different registers in her writing which include:

- a) Register related to the salon. Chimamanda uses vocabulary that is used in the salon to emphasize on the issue of the hair and how it brought out the issue of racial discrimination in the US. The following example illustrates this:

She thought of buying a wig, but wigs brought anxiety, the always-present possibility of flying off your head. She thought of a texturizer to loosen her hair's springy coils, stretch out the kinkiness a little, but a texturizer was really a relaxer, only milder, and she would still have to avoid the rain. (pg 260)

- b) Register related to the internet. The whole text is full of internet register as in the examples below:

To send a text- means to send a message through the phone. (pg 20)

To compose an e-mail- means to send a message through electronic e-mail. (pg 20)

He stared at the BlackBerry-is a kind of a make of a phone. (pg 25)

He Googled the black American- means to search for information through google search engine.

I am going to put this one up on Facebook- Facebook is a social site. (Pg 483)

He clicked delete and empty trash. This means he deleted the messages. (Pg 299)

She scoured Nigerian websites, Nigerian profiles on Facebook, Nigerian blogs, and each click brought yet another story of a young person who had recently moved back home, clothed in American or British degrees.....(pg 9)

2.2.5 Use of taboo words

This is also a kind of register otherwise known as euphemism. The following are taboo words:

Ifemelu tells her Aunty,

“We ate the food a week ago” she says that because she suspected that she was pregnant. (pg 113)

He can still score a goal at his age. That meant that he was not too old to have children (pg 101)

“But you should do something for him, no matter how small,” Obinze is told to give out some money.

2.2.6 Antilanguage

Antilanguages are the semi-secretive languages born out of subcultures and alternative societies. These societies, ‘antisocieties’ are consciously established as alternatives to mainstream society such that their relationship to the dominant social order is one of resistance, even active hostility. Antilanguages are therefore typically characterized by references to proscribed drugs to alternative sexual behaviors or more generally to the various activities of a criminal underworld (Halliday, 1978).

Antilanguages play an important part in and often dominate completely the style of literary works which are thematically concerned with such subcultures and antisocieties. The most important process in the formation of an Antilanguage is relexicalisation which involves recycling established words in the language into new structures and meanings.

According to (Simpson, 2004), in the stylistic analysis of sociolinguistic code, we need to identify and explore the connections between features like accent, register or Antilanguage in a text. The following is an example:

Corrupt people in Nigeria are referred to as **419 men**. In a conversation one of the characters says:

“Chief Omeka is a 419 and everybody knows it.” This church is full of 419 men. This is an Antilanguage.

Americanah is a word used to mock the returnees from America since most of them return to their countries while frustrated.

Chicks-this is a word used to refer to young girls or ladies of a certain character that is not likeable to others. (pg 299)

2.2.7 Code-Switching and Code Mixing

Code-mixing is a sociolinguistic phenomenon. It occurs without changes in situations of utterances. (Hudson, 1980) calls this situation “conversational code-switching,” involving a situation, where a fluent bilingual talking to another bilingual changes code without any change at all in situation. Code-mixing occurs randomly due to the inability of the speakers to find suitable words or expressions with which to express the ideas they intend to pass across. It is therefore, intra-sentential, that is, occurring within sentences.

According to (Essien, 1995) code-mixing is “a language phenomenon, in which two codes or languages are used for the same message or communication.” Code-mixing generally takes place in informal situations, usually among speakers with the same linguistic background. Code-mixing is done for specific purposes, serving both linguistic and social functions. Essien also asserts that code-mixing is ad hoc and strongest in areas such as the academic disciplines, the professions, politics, the economy etc. According to (David, 2003, p.79) code-mixing involves the transfer of linguistic elements from one language into another.

Code-mixing is one of the features of the use of language in Nigeria, resulting from the complex linguistic system and biculturalism. Instances of code-mixing abound in Nigerian fiction. It involves the presence of the dominant English language (the target language) and the indigenous Nigerian languages (the source languages) in literary creation.

Chimamanda in her writing prefers code switching to code mixing, the two being different in use as argued by Meyers Scotton. She uses tag switching for communicative purposes. Examples of code switching are seen below:

When Obinze and his wife visit the Chief who made him rich and known in Nigeria after he came back from Britain, she was beautifully dressed and her skin glowing that there was no need for the Chief switching on the lights to see her, that’s when the Chief says:

Sunshine in the evening! Asa! Ugo! (pg 28)

He still thinks that one day I will agree for him. Ha, o di egwu, for where?
(pg 30)

Obinze's cousin said this with an intention to take Obinze who had hustled for sometime after coming from America.

Ahn ahn! O gini? Are you the first person to have this problem? (pg 30)

This was said by Obinze's cousin to encourage him face Nigeria as it was after he had come back from England.

Ifemelu's father was difficult to be understood and their house help once told Ifemelu:

You should have heard your father's big word now! O di egwu! (pg 56)

When Ifemelu is send by her mother to go and iron for her the dress and she argued that it was not rumped or creased, her mother tells her,

It is rumped. Ngwa, go and iron it. (pg 58)

Ifemelu shares a lot on the kinds of books the two like:

What about other books? Which of the classics do you like?

Classics, kwa? I just like crime and thrillers (pg 71)

2.3 Characterization: Actions and Events

Much of our everyday experience is shaped and defined by actions and events, thoughts and perceptions and is an important function of the system of language that it is able to account for these various goings on in the world. This means encoding into the grammar of the clause a mechanism for capturing what we say, think and do. More so it means that one looks at patterns of transitivity that describe a character. Transitivity is a linguistic

framework where grammar is encoded in the clause and it is one of the implicit and subtle linguistic features of a literary text.

It also means accommodating in grammar a host of more abstract relations such as those that pertain between objects, circumstances and logical concepts. When language is used to represent the goings on of the physical or abstract world in this way, to represent patterns of experience in spoken and written texts, it fulfills the experiential function. The experiential function is an important marker of style especially for prose fiction because it emphasizes the concept of style as choice. This is line with Short and Leech's (1981) idea on pluralism as an approach to stylistics. What is of interest to stylisticians is why one type of structure should be preferred to another.

The particular grammatical facility used for capturing experience in language is the system of transitivity. Transitivity here refers to the way meanings are encoded in the clause and to the way different types of processes are represented in language. Transitivity normally picks out three key components. The first is the process itself which is typically realized in grammar by the verb phrase. The second is the participants associated with the process typically realized by noun phrases.

Less importantly, transitivity picks out the circumstances associated with the process and the third element is expressed by prepositional and adverb phrases. Linguists working with this functional model of transitivity are divided about how exactly to 'carve up' the experiential function. How many sorts of experience for example should the system distinguish? How easy is it to place discrete boundaries around certain types of human experiences when those experiences tend to overlap or shade into one another?

In the brief account of transitivity, six types of processes are identified:

2.3.1 Material Processes

These are processes of doing. Associated with material processes are two inherent participant roles which are the actor, an obligatory role in the process, and a goal, a role which may or may not be involved in the process. The examples of material processes follow the standard notation conventions which place the textual example above its individual transitivity roles. Examples of material processes are as follows:

Her skin _{Actor} pricked _{Process: Material}

She _{Actor} was watching him _{process}, waiting for his explanation _{circumstance}

She _{Actor} shifted _{process: material} on the chair _{Attribute}

She _{Actor} walked _{process} back to the station, mourning _{process: behavioral} the train fare. (Pg 179-180)

The choice of the material processes by the narrator is deliberate to show how Ifemelu, the main character was desperately looking for any job in America for survival. Apart from the above sampled processes there are other material processes that describe Ifemelu and other characters.

2.3.2 Mental Processes

These constitute the second process. These are essentially processes of sensing. They inhabit and reflect the world of consciousness and involve cognition which is encoded in verbs such as thinking or wondering, reaction as in liking or hating and perception which involves seeing or hearing.

The participant roles associated with mental processes are the sensor that is the conscious being that is doing the sensing and the phenomenon which is the entity that is sensed, felt, thought or seen. The role of sensor is an important feature of the semantic basis of the transitivity system that the participant roles remain constant under certain types of grammatical operation.

The following are examples of mental processes:

Ifemelu _{sensor} imagined _{process} her _{phenomenon} working in a market in Dakar...

Ifemelu _{sensor} thought _{process} little of Nollywood _{phenomenon}.

She _{sensor} wondered _{process} why there was no place she could braid her hair _{phenomenon}.

She _{sensor} still wondered _{process} if he had read it _{phenomenon}. She _{sensor} hoped _{process} so.

But she _{sensor} nodded _{process} in agreement _{phenomenon} because to hear 'Nigeria' and 'good' in the same sentence was a luxury. (pg 16-18)

The roles of sensor and phenomenon relate exclusively to mental processes. This distinction is necessary because the entity 'sensed' in a mental process is not directly affected by the process, and this makes it of a somewhat different order to the role of goal in a material process. It is also an important feature of the semantic basis of the transitivity system that the participant roles remain constant under certain types of grammatical operations. The mental processes represent the world of the main character who believed that she was not black until that time she landed in America. This view of the main character can be said to represent the view of the author whose biography shows her life in America. The mental processes have Obinze and Ifemelu as their grammatical

subject which shows that the processes have been given prominence to illustrate the state of thinking of these two characters.

2.3.3 Behavioural Processes

These processes embody physiological actions like ‘breathe’ or ‘cough’ although they sometimes portray these processes as states of consciousness as in sigh, cry or laugh. They also represent processes of consciousness as forms of behaviour as in ‘stare’, ‘dream’ or ‘worry’. The key participant in behavioral processes is the behavior, the conscious entity who is behaving.

The following sentences illustrate the processes:

She behavior looked process at photographs of these men and women circumstance
and felt the dull ache of loss. (pg 9)

She behavior smiled process at him circumstance. (pg 6)

She behavior scoured process Nigerian websites, Nigerian profiles on
Facebook...circumstance. (pg 9)

She behavior stared process at buildings and cars and signboards circumstance, all of
them matt, disappointingly process matt; in the landscape of her imagination,
the mundane things in America were covered in a high-shine gloss.

The role of Behavior is very much like that of a sensor, although the behavioral process itself is grammatically more akin to a material process. These processes represent the curious nature of Ifemelu who thought by leaving for America would be a life changing idea thou it turned out to be not. This is clearly seen through the behavioural processes.

2.3.4 Processes of Verbalization

These are processes of 'saying' and the participant roles associated with verbalization are the sayer (the producer of the speech), the Receiver (the entity to which the speech is addressed) and the verbiage (that which gets said). Examples include:

So she _{sayer} told _{process} him _{receiver} that she was moving back home _{verbiage}. (pg 9)

He _{sayer} mentioned _{process} Fela _{verbiage} casually, intimately, as though it was something... (pg 187)

Kimberly _{sayer} hired somebody else but she _{sayer} said _{process} she'll keep you in mind _{verbiage}. (pg 187)

"If I get this job, I will give you my first month's salary," _{verbiage} Ifemelu _{sayer} said _{process}, and Ginika laughed.

The verbiage participant which incidentally is not a term used in any derogatory sense, can cover either the 'content' of what was said or the 'name' in speech act terms, of what was said. It is also important to note that the process of saying needs to be interpreted rather broadly, so that even an inanimate sayer can be accommodated. The process of verbalization is significant as it shows Ifemelu's point of view especially on the difficult life that she finds in America.

2.3.5 Relational Processes

These are processes of being in the specific sense of establishing relationships between two entities. The processes can be expressed in a number of ways and not all of the numerous classifications which present themselves can be accommodated here.

There are three main types:

- a) Intensive relational process posits a relationship of equivalence, an 'x' is 'y' connection between two entities as in; for example:

I'm carrier: process chair of the board of a charity in Ghana Attribute. (pg 211)

This is said by one of the women from Africa, this is a contradiction because there is no proof that the lady was actually the chair.

I am carrier: process an agnostic respecter of religion attribute. (pg 50)

This is said by Ifemelu's father who also lived in denial after losing his job in Nigeria because she did not call his boss 'madam'.

African women carrier: process are gorgeous, especially Ethiopians Attribute. (pg 210)

The intensive relational processes posit the extent to which characters are out of which does not remove their problems or end their problems. The processes seem to capture the contradiction in the thinking of the characters. When Ifemelu is introduced to other African ladies as a baby sitter, this makes her out of place, she is told, "African women are gorgeous." This is meant to keep them going since America had reduced them into what they could not easily accept.

- b) A possessive relational process plots an 'x' has 'y' type of connection between two entities, which is seen through the following:

When Ifemelu is asked about what she does she would say, "**I write an anonymous blog**". This is relational.

When asked if she would share a meal with other African ladies in the salon she replied, **“I’m fine. I have a granola bar.”**

That showed she was uncomfortable sharing with other African ladies but she would have done so with whites meaning there was no trust among fellow Africans.

- c) Thirdly, circumstantial relational processes are where the contextual element becomes upgraded as it were so that it fulfills the role of a full participant in the process. The relationship engendered is a broad ‘x is at/is in/is on/is with/y’ configuration, realized in constructions like:

The party was more crowded (pg 38)

That is the party at the Chief Omeka’s home, one of the corrupt officers in Nigeria.

The three way classification is rather complicated by the fact that it intersects with another distinction between attributive and identifying relational processes.

In the attributive mode, the entity, person or concept being described is referred to as the carrier, while the role of attribute refers to the quality ascribed to the carrier. The attribute therefore says what the carrier is, what the carrier is like, where the carrier is, what it owns, and so on. In the identifying mode, one role is identified through reference to another such that the two halves of the clause often refer to the same thing. This means that unlike attributive processes all identifying processes are reversible. In terms of their participant roles, one entity (the identifier) picks out and defines the other (the identified).

2.3.6 Existential Processes

These processes basically assert that something exists or happens. Existential processes typically include the word there as a dummy subject. An example can be seen through the following:

There was process: Existential in his storytelling, an expectation of successful seduction. (pg 187)

This was something that Ifemelu discovered about Don a husband to Kimberly, one of the ladies who employed Ifemelu as a babysitter.

There was process: Existential something furtive about him and she felt rather than saw that he had just ended a cell phone conversation. (pg 211)

Ifemelu also noticed that there was something Don was interested in about her through the existential processes.

What happens in the existential version is that no role other than Existent is specified, and that role, moreover is filled by a nominalised element which is created by converting a verbal process into a noun.

The transitivity patterns described so far reflect the typical way of expressing situations and encoding experience. Actors or agents do things that affect other participants. Sensors perceive phenomena, and entities are assigned attributes. In addition, processes are realized by verbs, entities by nouns and attributes by adjectives, for instance (Downing and Locke, 2006).

2.4 Point of View

Traditionally it is defined as the perspective or vantage point from which the narrator of prose fiction perceives the events, actions and happenings in the story (Simpson, 2004). Point of view is a very flexible literary technique and creative writers exploit it by combining a number of means to position themselves in relation to the story they tell. This situation appears to pose a problem for a neat classification of different types of point of view. However, three main types are often identified by literary critics. These are first person point of view, third person omniscient point of view and third person limited point of view.

Americanah is told in the third person omniscient point of view, however, the narrator, who is external to the story, has a panoramic view of the story. S/he has equal knowledge of all the characters and can tell us how and what they feel and think. The omniscient narrator often knows more than what the characters know about themselves and can decide to enter or restrain from their feelings and thinking processes at will and at any time. (Simpson, 2004; Arp and Johnson, 2006).

(Simpson, 1993) conceptualizes point of view as a speaker's or writer's particular style of conceptualizing a worldview (Iwamoto, 2007) and associates a writer's point of view with other terms such as 'angle of telling,' 'angle of vision,' 'perspective' and 'authorial interest' (Simpson, 1993).

Several scholars have applied (Simpson's, 1993, 2004) notion of point of view in exploring the ideologies that are encoded in texts such as political speech and newspapers

e.g. (Iwamoto, 2007). (Simpson, 2004; Breem, 2005) have also explored how this notion of point of view interacts with transitivity in literary texts.

Chimamanda's text is told through the third-person narration where the narrator has moved into. (Short, 1996) claim that certain linguistic items create the effect of the narrative in question being told from a particular point of view and that identifying these linguistic indicators can enable us to understand how these viewpoint effects are brought out. The following are the indicators of point of view in Chimamanda's text:

2.4.1 Verbs of Cognition

The verbs of cognition in *Americanah* have Ifemelu as their grammatical subject. This reveals the intention of the author hence representing her world view or otherwise studied under mind style. The narrator describes how the main character narrates how she goes around Princeton state in search of a salon to braid her hair. Though these are faulty cognitions since they leave some information unexpressed.

This can be seen through the following example:

But she did not like that she had to go to Trenton to braid her hair. It was **unreasonable** to expect a braiding salon in Princeton-the few black locals she had seen were so light-skinned and lank-haired she could not **imagine** them wearing braids-and yet as she waited at Princeton Junction station for the train, on an afternoon ablaze with heat, she **wondered** why there was no place where she could braid her hair. (pg 6)

She still **wondered** if he had read it. She **hoped** so. Often, she would sit in cafes, or airports, or train stations, watching strangers, **imagining** their lives, and **wondering** which of them were likely to have read her blog. Now her ex-blog. She had written the final post only days ago, trailed by two hundred and seventy-four comments so far. All those readers, growing month by month, linking and cross-posting, knowing so much more than she did; they had always frightened and exhilarated her. (pg 7)

2.4.2 Graphological Deviation

According to Lambrou and Stockwell a writer's point of view is realized through graphological deviation to attract the attention of the readers. Chimamanda foregrounds the idea of racial discrimination through the use of italics especially the blog posts which were much describing racial discrimination. The following blog posts illustrate this:

After Ifemelu hung up, still amused, she decided to change the title of her blog to *Raceteenth or various Observations About American Blacks (Those Formerly known as Negroes)by a Non-American Black.*(pg 401)

To add on italicized blog posts the writer has other literatures on racism in bold for foregrounding purposes:

Job Vacancy in America-National Arbiter in Chief of

“Who Is Racist”

In America, racism exists but racists are all gone. Racists belong to the past. Racists are the thin-lipped mean white people in the movies about the civil rights era. Here's the thing: the manifestation of racism has

**changed but the language has not. So if you haven't lynched somebody
then you can't be called a racist.....**

2.5 Textual Structure

Textual structure accounts for the way individual narrative units are arranged and organized in a story. A stylistic study of textual structure may focus on large-scale elements of plot or, alternatively, on more localized features of story's organization; similarly, the particular analytical models used may address broad-based aspects of narrative coherence or they may examine narrower aspects of narrative cohesion in organization.

Cohesion and coherence are terms used in discourse analysis and text linguistics to describe the properties of written texts. Coherence refers to the way a text makes sense to readers and writers through the relevance and accessibility of its configuration of concepts, ideas and theories. On the other hand cohesion refers to the grammatical and lexical relationship between different elements of a text which hold it together (Halliday and Hassan, 1976).

According to Halliday and Hassan (1976), a text is a semantic unit whose parts are linked together by explicit cohesive ties. This cohesive tie is a semantic and/or lexico-grammatical relation between an element in text and some other element that is crucial to interpretation of it. Even though within sentence ties occur the cohesive ties across sentence boundaries are those which allow sequences of sentences to be understood as text. (Halliday and Hassan, 1976) identify general categories of cohesive devices that signal coherence in texts.

2.5.1 Reference

It could be called co-reference or cross-reference cohesion because it covers all those cases where we use a grammatical word in one sentence in association with a word or phrase in a separate sentence (Toolan, 1996, p. 26)

There are three kinds of reference cohesion:

- a) Personal pronouns-These include personal pronouns; I, he, she etc, possessive pronouns; mine, hers, his etc, possessive determiners; my, your, her. For example:(pg 227)

Sometimes **she** told the same story twice. How **she** had gone to the public library the other day, had forgotten to bring out the unreturned book from **her** handbag and the guard told **her**, “**You** people never do anything right.” How **she** walked into an examining room and a patient asked “Is the doctor coming?” and when **she** said **she** was the doctor the patient’s face changed to fire clay.

‘She’ has been repeated severally in the example above to show that it is the same person Ifemelu that is being talked about.

- b) Comparative constructions involving the following items: (the) same, similar, such, different, other, more, less, ordinal numbers (first, secondly, etc), as + adjective, and comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs. The point about this second type of reference cohesive device is that, when one of them is used, they invariably only make full sense in relation to adjacent text.

The following is an example:

In America, tribalism is alive and well. There are four kinds-class, ideology, region, and race. **First**, class. Pretty easy. Rich folk and poor folk. **Second**,

ideology. Liberals and conservatives. They don't merely disagree on political issues, each side believes the other is evil. Intermarriage is discouraged and on the rare occasion that it happens, is considered remarkable. **Third**, region. The North and the South. The two sides fought a civil war and tough stains from that war remain. The North looks down on the south while the South resents the North. **Finally**, race. (pg 230)

The connectors give reasons as to why tribalism in America exists to emphasize further why racism is there and will continue being an issue in America.

- c) Demonstratives which essentially refers to a form of verbal pointing; this, these and here which point at the proximity to the speaker, while that, those and there which imply distance from the speaker. These also include adjectives in a comparative degree like bigger, faster and adverbs such as identically, likewise, so, such etc. The following example illustrates this:

Aisha reminded **her** of what Aunty Uju had said, **when** she finally accepted that Ifemelu was serious about moving back-*Will you be able to cope?*-and the suggestion, that she was **somehow** irrevocably altered by America, had grown thorns on her skin. **Her** parents, **too**, seemed to think that she might not be able to "cope" with Nigeria. "**At least** you are **now** an American citizen, **so** you can always return to America," **her** father had said. Both of them had asked if Blaine would be coming with **her**, their question heavy with hope. (pg 20-21)

2.5.2 Ellipsis

Ellipsis is the second of the four major kinds of cohesion (Toolan, 1996, p.26-27). Again, a point in the flow of text is made sense of by making a mental connection to some adjacent text (called the co-text), but here what characterizes the point in the flow of text is the ellipsis of understood material. Material is left out since its repetition or near repetition is felt to be unnecessary (ibid). These are the subtypes:

- a) Nominal ellipsis which is ellipsis within the nominal group.
- b) Verbal ellipsis which is ellipsis within the verbal group.
- c) Clausal ellipsis is an ellipsis in which an entire clause is elided from a sentence

When Ifemelu is asked to confirm if she is an international student, her response is just ‘yes’ after doing away with the other part of the clause which should have been:

Yes, I am an International student.

Ellipsis has been used to do away with monotony which affects the flow of the narrative.

2.5.3 Substitution

Substitution involves replacement of one item by another. There’s a relation in the wording rather than in the meaning. There are three types of substitution:

- a) Nominal substitution. This is where the nominal substitutes for noun head, for nominal complement and for attribute. The following is an example:

Ifemelu wondered if the stranger she had met in the train had read the blog post;

‘She still wondered if he had read it (the blog post). She hoped so.

“So” substitutes “he had read it”

- b) Verbal substitution. The verbal substitute in English is ‘do’. The following is an example:

Ifemelu informs Blaine her boyfriend that she was yet to go back to Nigeria,
“So she told him that she was moving back home and she added, “I have to
(do so)” (pg 9)

- c) Clausal substitution-The clausal substitutes, for positive; so, and for negative; not.
In clausal substitution the entire clause is presupposed, and the contrasting
element is outside. So presupposes the whole of the clause. That example can be
seen through the following:

When Ifemelu goes to look for a course in one of the colleges in America she met
a woman who seemed to be also a non-American. The lady easily notices that she
was also a foreigner, Ifemelu confirms her doubt:

“I speak English,” she said

“I bet you **do**,” Cristina Tomas said.

“Do” has therefore substituted the whole clause. (pg 166)

2.5.4 Conjunctions

These are words or group of words that are used to connect words, phrases or clauses.
According to (Halliday and Hassan, 1976), the conjunction is one of the four kinds of
cohesive devices in texts, “expressing certain meanings which presuppose the presence of
other components in the discourse,” and the relationship expressed by the conjunctions is

termed as conjunctive relations. (Halliday and Hassan, 1976) further subdivided conjunctions into four categories:

- a) Additives-The connectives that link units of semantic similarity. The additives introduce discourse units that repeat and emphasize the key points or add relevant new information to the prior expression. For example:

On election night, before Blaine kissed her, his face wet with tears, he held her tightly as though Obama's victory was also their personal victory. **And** now here she was telling him it was over. (pg 10)

- b) Adversatives-The connectors that bring in the expressions that are contrary to expectation. The expressions indicate a contrary result or opinion to the content mentioned previously. In this sense, the adversatives signal the beginning of a different viewpoint.

They had lived together for three years, three years free of crease, like a smoothly ironed sheet, until their only fight, months ago, when Blaine's eyes froze with blame and he refused to speak to her. **But** they had survived that fight, mostly because of Barack Obama....(pg 10)

- c) Causals-The connectives are used to introduce result, reason or purpose. The clauses connected are related to each other either in the cause-and-effect relation or in the conditional relation. For example:

Readers like Sapphic Derrida, who reeled off statistics and used words like "reify" in their comments, made Ifemelu nervous, eager to be fresh and to impress, **so** that she began, over time, to feel like a vulture hacking into the carcasses of people's stories... (pg 8)

- d) Temporal-These are the connectives that express the time order of events. In order to manifest the temporal relations of successive and simultaneous events this category includes the preceding, sequential and simultaneous connectives as in the following example:

Third, region. The North and the South. The two sides fought a civil war and tough stains from that war remain. The North looks down on the south while the South resents the North. **Finally**, race. (pg 230)

2.5.5 Lexical Cohesion

This is achieved by the selection of vocabulary. There are two types of lexical cohesion,

- a) Reiteration-a form of lexical cohesion which involves repetition, synonym or near synonym, superordinate and a general noun. This also includes repetition (pg 1)

Ifemelu liked the tranquil greenness of the many trees....., **she liked** taking deep breaths here. **She liked** watching the locals....., **She liked** the campus.

- b) Collocation-This is cohesion that is achieved through the association of lexical items that regularly co-occur. These lexical items or words tend to occur in similar environments.

The following is an example:

Nigeria became where she was supposed to be, the only place she could sink her roots in without the constant urge to tug them out and shake off the soil.

After going through so much in the US Ifemelu realized that she needed to go back home.

2.6 Intertextuality

The term intertextuality, the sixth narrative component is reserved for the technique of ‘allusion’. Narrative fiction, like all writing, does not exist in a social and historical vacuum, and it often echoes other texts and images either as ‘implicit’ intertextuality or as ‘manifest’ intertextuality. In a certain respect, the concept of intertextuality overlaps with the notion of sociolinguistic code in its application to narrative, although the former involves the importing of other, external texts while the latter refers more generally to the variety or varieties of language in and through which a narrative is developed (Simpson, 2004).

The term intertextuality was first coined by poststructuralist Julia Kristeva in 1966. The intertextual view of literature, as shown by Roland Barthes supports the concept that the meaning of a text does not reside in the text, but is produced by the reader in relation not only to the text in question, but also the complex network of texts invoked in the reading process. Linguist Norman Fairclough states that “intertextuality is a matter of recontextualization.” According to Per Linell, recontextualization can be defined as the ‘dynamic transfer-and-transformation of something from one discourse/text-in-context to another. Recontextualization can be relatively explicit for example when one text directly quotes another or relatively implicit as when the “same” generic meaning is rearticulated across different texts.

Intertextuality seems such a useful term because it foregrounds notions of relationality, interconnectedness and interdependence in modern cultural life. In the text, Chimamanda uses part of Obama's speech to enhance the theme of racial discrimination.

“Young and old, rich and poor, Democrat and Republican, black, white, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, gay, straight, disabled, Americans have sent a message to the world that we have never been just a collection of red states and blue states. We have been and always will be the United States of America. (pg 456).

Chimamanda uses language from digital discourse which makes her work conversational.

She scoured Nigerian websites, Nigerian profiles on Facebook, Nigerian blogs, and each click brought yet another story of a young person who had recently moved back home...(pg 9)

2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter therefore the researcher has identified the features of style that make up a narrative discourse. The features conform to the studies in contemporary stylistics that in analyzing prose fiction there is more than just identifying stylistic devices. The study proves that the elements identified are related in one way or another are important aspects in studying style. In the next chapter therefore I offer an explanation on how the elements are represented at different levels and how they are realized semantically through graphological and syntactic levels.

CHAPTER THREE

LEVELS OF STYLE

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter I illustrate the identified features in chapter two by representing them through the levels of style as proposed by (Short and Leech, 1981). The levels under study include graphological which includes phonological effects, syntactic which includes lexico-grammar, and semantic levels.

3.1 Graphological Level

Graphological variation is relatively minor and superficial part of style concerning such matters as spelling, capitalization, hyphenation, italicization and paragraphing. Such matters are to a great extent determined conventionally by syntax and become noticeably expressive only when a writer makes a graphological choice which is to some degree marked or unconventional such as deliberate misspelling. Examples of unconventional graphology are found in the work of writers such as Sterne, Dickens, and Joyce, who, although widely separated in age and style, share an interest in the expressive power of the written symbol.

The following are examples from *Americanah*:

3.1.1 Italicization

Chimamanda uses italics for various reasons. The main character is a blogger and has various blog posts and all these posts have been italicized for foregrounding purposes.

The blog posts majorly talk about race which was an issue in America. Ifemelu would say vaguely about what she did:

“I write an anonymous blog called Raceteenth or various observations About American Blacks (Those Formerly known as Negroes) by a Non-American Black” (pg 6)

Ifemelu once imagined how possible Obama would win the elections yet he was black.

This thought is italicized to represent her world view:

How can a monkey be president? Somebody do us a favor and put a bullet in this guy. Send him back to the African jungle. A black man will never be in the white house, dude, it's called the white house for a reason. (pg 448)

The narrator in the text gives an account of testimonies given in church;

I did not study because I was sick and yet I passed my exams with flying colours! I had malaria and prayed over it and was cured! My cough disappeared as Pastor started praying! (pg 53)

The above has been italicized to criticize some people who use Christianity as a way of running away from their responsibilities.

The e-mail messages that both Ifemelu and Obinze write to each other are in italics, this is to represent the change in technology and to capture the intergenerational gap. This is because the use of e-mails is still not acceptable to some people as a way of communication. The following example illustrates this:

Ceiling, Kedu? Hope all is well with work and family. Ranyinundo said she ran into you some time ago and that you now have a child! Proud Papa.

Congratulations. I recently decided to move back to Nigeria. Should be in Lagos in a week. Would love to keep in touch. Take care. Ifemelu. (pg25)

3.1.2 Use of Acronyms

The acronyms used in the text are represented graphologically and their foregrounding indicates states of informality as follows:

DVD-Digital versatile Disc

TV-Television

CD-Compact Disc

Short forms of words can also be captured graphologically to indicate the informal situation. Chimamanda is fond of such a kind of language to draw the attention of her audience and the use of such words is a characteristic of digital discourse. The following are examples:

SATs-is a short form of certificates

ID-Identity cards

LOCS-dreadlocks

The hall rep-the hall representative

Paper ad-paper advertisement

Coz-short form for cousin.

3.1.3 Deliberate Misspellings

The words in bold are deliberately misspelt hence foregrounded to represent unmastered standard pronunciation.

Afriqye-The correct spellings are Africa (pg 124)

I hope everything is fine, **sah**. It is very good to see you again, **sah**. How is work, **sah**?

Sah has been used instead of Sir. (pg 556)

3.2 Phonological Effects

Although a written text has no phonological level of style as such Leech and short (1981), we cannot ignore, in a treatment of levels of language, the phonological potentials of the written word. Phonological choices form a distinct level of style in oral literature, and in written literature the implicit sound pattern can always be made explicit in reading aloud. To a large extent, this implicit phonology is determined by choices of words and structures at the syntactic level, where it can be regarded as an important ingredient of stylistic value. However, since the writing system is in many respects a system for representing the sound pattern of speech, a further source of phonological effects is graphology, particularly in the evocation of a character's style of speech in dialogue. For instance, the addition of letter 'o' in conversations is a clear imitation of how Nigerian English is different from other varieties of English which brings the phonological effect. This can be seen through the following:

3.2.1 Use of Translated and Untranslated Igbo Dialogue

Chimamanda's novel is full of conversations that are directly translated from Igbo. This was argued by Yohannes as being part of the unique style that Chimamanda uses in her work. She does this as a way of identifying herself with her language through the narrator's point of view. Most Nigerians when they speak they tentatively add an 'O' at the end of every utterance. Examples include the following:

I hope he did not get his mother's fighting genes o. (pg 66)

You don't win by hitting the ball with anger o. (pg 74)

I told he must buy it in my name o. (pg 78)

It was the image of The General that would endure in Ifemelu's mind, Dike's arms around his neck, his face lit up, his front teeth jutting out as he smiled, saying, "He looks like me o, but thank God he took his mother's teeth." (pg 102)

A motorcycle in Nigeria is referred to as Okada and this is what the author uses in the text without a translation as in the following example:

Obinze got on the next okada and was soon speeding behind her..... (pg 113)

3.2.2 Accent

The author presents the idea of accent as important to Americans who cared a lot about pronunciation to differentiate between Americans and Africans especially as seen in the following example:

"Igbo men take care of women real good, "Aisha repeated. "I want marry. They love me but they say the family want Igbo woman. Because Igbo marry Igbo always."(pg 18)

This was said by Aisha one of the braiders in Trenton. Apart from revealing her accent that she came from Senegal we learn a lot about how desperate the African women were when it came to getting African men whenever they wanted to get married while in America.

3.2.3 Dialect

Chimamanda's use of various dialects in her writing is a reflection of various classes in America. It is clearly seen that Nigerian English was spoken by people of the lower classes. In the prison for example we get the following conversation:

“Ah this na my second time. The first time I come with different passport,”
one of them said.

“Na for work wey they get me o.

“E get one guy wey they deport, him don come back get him paper. Na him
wey go help me,” another said.

This is the time Obinze was in prison while in the UK and it reveals how at so many occasions Nigerians have landed in prison.

3.3 Syntactic Level

This is the abstract grammatical and lexical form of language. The distinction between grammar and lexis which we used in the last chapter cuts across this distinction between levels. Syntax (in the broad sense in which it is commonly used today) is the level of lexico-grammatical form which mediates between the levels of sound and meaning. Thus it includes both lexical choice-choice of words from the vocabulary of the language-and the grammatical choices involved in combining these words. The following are examples:

3.3.1 Parallelism

Chimamanda uses parallelism for effective communication of the themes which can be seen through the following:

Princeton in the summer, smelled of nothing and although Ifemelu liked the
tranquil greenness of the many trees, the clean streets and stately homes, the

delicately overpriced shops and the quiet, abiding air of earned grace, it was this, the lack of a smell, that most appealed to her, perhaps because the other American cities she knew well had all smelled distinctly. Philadelphia had the misty scent of history. New Haven smelled of neglect. Baltimore smelled of Brine, and Brooklyn of sun-warmed garbage. But Princeton had no smell. (pg 5)

The linguistic part of this is the repetition of phrases and clauses to bring out the description of the major towns in America. The effect of this kind of parallelism is to foreground the relation between parallel words and phrases which fill the variable positions.

3.3.2 Substitution (Ellipsis)

Chimamanda uses elliptical constructions for the sake of cohesion in the text, as seen in the following example:

Taylor was excited. Can I help? Can I help? He asked the carpet cleaner.

“No thanks buddy,” the man said. “I got it.”

“I hope he doesn’t start in my room,” Morgan said.

“Why?” Ifemelu asked.

“I just don’t want him to”

To has substituted the phrase, “I don’t want him to start in my room.”(pg 127)

3.3.3 Code Switching

The author uses Nigerian language for aesthetic purposes and more so to keep in touch with her roots since she is a Nigerian. Code mixing and code switching is part of lexical choice.

He still thinks that one day I will agree for him. Ha, o di egwu, for where?

(pg 30)

Obinze's cousin said this with an intention to take Obinze who had hustled for quite sometime after coming from America.

Ahn ahn! O gini? Are you the first person to have this problem? (pg 30)

This was said by Obinze's cousin to encourage him face Nigeria as it was after he had come back from England.

3.3.4 Colloquialism

This is the use of informal language which makes the novel conversational. For instance:

To size up-this is more like phrasal verb is used in informal situations to form a judgment or an opinion about somebody or something. (pg 93).

Aren't you **hot** in that jacket?-The word 'hot' has been used informally to refer to smartness.(pg 68).

Coz, this was the **bestest** day ever with you. The word bestest is formed from the word best which is in superlative form.

This is lexicology and the choice of the vocabulary is motivated by the informality of the conversations.

3.3.5 Neologisms

Chimamanda coins words to achieve relevance in her work. This choice of the new vocabulary makes *Americanah* part of post-modern literature. The meaning of the text has been enhanced through neologism.

He had hated it so much that he Googled the black American-and why should she give him the man's full name if not because she wanted him Googled? (pg 26)

Google is a search engine but in the present world the noun has been changed to a verb and is used of the short form of 'searching through the internet.

He was quickly admitted into the clan of swaggering, carelessly cool males, the Big Guys; he lounged in..... (pg 65)

The coining of these words is a representation of the digital discourse. This is lexical deviation.

The title of the novel is *Americanah* which has been coined to refer to the people who worked in America and because of frustrations decided to go back home (Nigeria). Ifemelu is one of them (those who have returned from America) and in a conversation between her and other 'Americanah's' they say;

When one of them says, "She will come back and be a serious Americanah like Bisi" They roared with laughter, at that word "Americanah".

The word was coined as an insult to those who had returned desperately from America.

3.3.6 Use of Taboo Words

This is a kind of register otherwise known as euphemism. The following are taboo words:

Ifemelu tells her Aunty, “**We ate the food a week ago**” she says that because she suspected that she was pregnant. (pg 113)

He can still score a goal at his age. That meant that he was not too old to have children (pg 101)

“But you should do something for him, no matter how small,” Obinze is told to give out some money.

3.3.7 Antilanguage

These semi secretive languages serve different purposes in each society. The following example illustrates this:

Corrupt people in Nigeria are referred to as **419 men**. In a conversation one of the characters says:

“Chief Omeka is a 419 and everybody knows it.” This church is full of 419 men. This is an Antilanguage.

Americanah is a word used to mock the returnees from America since most of them return to their countries while frustrated.

Chicks-this is a word used to refer to young girls or ladies of a certain character that is not likeable to others. (pg 299)

3.3.8 Transitivity

Chimamanda uses various processes to describe the characters in the novel as well as for thematic purposes. The processes as defined are used as follows:

a) Material processes

The choice of the material processes by the narrator is deliberate to show how Ifemelu, the main character was desperately looking for any job in America for survival. The processes below describe how Ifemelu left her employer's home after given an odd job that did not match her qualifications.

Her skin Actor prickled Process: Material

She Actor was watching him process, waiting for his explanation circumstance

She Actor shifted process: material on the chair Attribute

She Actor walked process back to the station, mourning process: behavioral the train fare. (Pg 179-180)

b) Mental processes

The mental processes reflect the character's mind and their world view. Ifemelu had a lot of hopes when she left for the US, a good job, a nice house, a nice car and generally a comfortable life. She however does not get this which is reflected in the mental processes.

Ifemelu sensor imagined process her phenomenon working in a market in Dakar...

Ifemelu sensor thought process little of Nollywood phenomenon.

She sensor wondered process why there was no place she could braid her hair phenomenon

She ^{sensor} still wondered ^{process} if he had read it ^{phenomenon}. She ^{sensor} hoped ^{process} so.
(pg 16-18)

Related to the above processes are behavioural processes that whatever Ifemelu did reflected her conscious mind just like in the example below she wondered how different America was from Nigeria.

She ^{behavior} stared ^{process} at buildings and cars and signboards ^{circumstance}, all of them matt, disappointingly ^{process} matt; in the landscape of her imagination, the mundane things in America were covered in a high-shine gloss.(pg 9)

c) Processes of verbalisation

These processes represent what Ifemelu said and this also shows her point of view about life in America. This can be seen in the following example:

He ^{sayer} mentioned ^{process} Fela ^{verbiage} casually, intimately, as though it was something... (pg 187)

Kimberly ^{sayer} hired somebody else but she ^{sayer} said ^{process} she'll keep you in mind ^{verbiage}.(pg 187)

“If I get this job, I will give you my first month’s salary,” ^{verbiage} Ifemelu ^{sayer} said ^{process}, and Ginika laughed.

d) Relational processes

These are processes of being in the specific sense of establishing relationships between two entities. An example is the Intensive relational process which posits a relationship of equivalence, an ‘x’ is ‘y’ connection between two entities as in:

I’m chair of the board of a charity in Ghana. (pg 211)

This is said by one of the women from Africa, this is a contradiction because there's no proof that the lady was actually the chair. Though this demonstrates that African ladies lived in denial when in the US because what they expected when they left for America was not what they got.

3.4 Semantic Level

At the semantic level, as other levels, a writer exercises choice in terms of 'a grammar of possibilities'. But this codification, or structuration of meaning, applies only to meaning narrowly, though centrally, defined as conceptual or logical meaning. There is a whole range of language communication, particularly that which involves the interrelation between speaker and hearer, which cannot be fitted into this conceptual view of semantics, (Short and Leech, 1981, p. 122). The following features are represented at this level:

3.4.1 Imagery

The type of imagery used widely in this text is the use of the similes. What is important about this kind of imagery is the explicit meaning of what is likened to. The following is an example:

She looked improbable like sunlight (pg 80)

The 'she' referred to in this simile is Kimberly, a lady who employed Ifemelu as a babysitter once she was in the US. She looked unreliable and of course she sends Ifemelu parking. This is a representation of how the rest behaved especially to the desperate Africans who seek jobs in the US.

In another example Ifemelu felt guilty of the blog posts because she would mostly talk about people's characters especially the non Americans:

She began over time to feel like a vulture hacking into the carcasses of people's stories. (pg 8)

3.4.2 Flashback

Chimamanda's story is about life in America, how life needed a hustler to survive and her preparations to go back home when life to her (the main character) is unbearable. Chimamanda however takes us back to life of the main character back at home before she left for America. We are introduced to love between teenagers in school and how they are separated by fate as one leaves for America and Obinze leaves for Britain. When Ifemelu is employed as a babysitter for the first time she gives her story about her experience in the US and how different it was back in Nigeria.

“How are you finding the US so far?

Ifemelu told her about the vertigo she had felt the first time she went to the supermarket; in the cereal aisle, she had wanted to get cornflakes, which she was used to eating **back** home, but suddenly.....

“Yes, we're really about excess in this country,” Kimberly said. I'm sure **back** home you ate a lot of wonderful organic food and vegetables, but you're going to see it's different here.” (pg 184).

The above example shows how the main character will be taken by surprises over how things are different in the US.

3.4.3 Symbolism

Symbolism exists whenever something is meant to represent something else. It is a figure of speech that is used when an author wants to create a certain mood or emotion in a work of literature. (*The Nairobi Journal of Literature, 2010*).

Ifemelu uses the hair as a symbol of racial discrimination. She describes how blacks struggle to make their hair look like that of Americans through the use of relaxers. The symbol of the hair is used singly and all through the novel, for example it can be realized through the following conversation:

She touched Ifemelu's hair. "Why don't you have a relaxer?"

"I like my hair the way God made it."

The hair is an issue in America and that is why African ladies struggled to have the hair relaxed so as to be like whites. This is ironical because in her stay in the US, Ifemelu struggled so much with having her natural hair done as compared to other Africans who struggled to relax their hair.

In another incident when she goes to look for a job she is told to make her hair because in America hair was something taken seriously during employment which shows the discrimination as realized below:

When she told Ruth about the interview in Baltimore, Ruth said, "My only advice? Lose the braids and straighten your hair. Nobody says this kind of stuff but it matters. We want you to get that job." (pg 252)

3.4.4 Intertextuality

The term intertextuality, the sixth narrative component is reserved for the technique of ‘allusion’. Narrative fiction, like all writing, does not exist in a social and historical vacuum, and it often echoes other texts and images either as ‘implicit’ intertextuality or as ‘manifest’ intertextuality. In a certain respect, the concept of intertextuality overlaps with the notion of sociolinguistic code in its application to narrative, although the former involves the importing of other, external texts while the latter refers more generally to the variety or varieties of language in and through which a narrative is developed (Simpson, 2004).

“Young and old, rich and poor, Democrat and Republican, black, white, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, gay, straight, disabled, Americans have sent a message to the world that we have never been just a collection of red states and blue states. We have been and always will be the United States of America. (pg 456)

Chimamanda uses language from digital discourse which makes her work conversational.

She scoured Nigerian websites, Nigerian profiles on Facebook, Nigerian blogs, and each click brought yet another story of a young person who had recently moved back home.....(pg 9)

3.5 Conclusion

The features identified are represented through the levels of style and proof that stylistics is not only about patterns and forms but is also about meaning and that this meaning has been captured through graphological, syntactic and semantic levels. In the next chapter therefore I provide an explanation on the tenets of stylistic theory to explain the essence of semantic realization.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ESSENCE OF STYLISTIC THEORY IN SEMANTIC REALIZATION

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter I offer an explanation on how stylistic theory is adequate in capturing the milieu of semantic realization through graphology and syntax. This will be done by synthesizing the data in chapters two and three while focusing on the nexus between the two chapters by way of illustration. I will begin by explaining the basic principles of stylistic theory before delving further into the formulation by Short and Leech (1981) on which this research is premised on.

4.1 Principles of Stylistic Theory

According to (Short and Leech, 1981, p. 10) style has a fairly uncontroversial meaning: it refers to the way in which language is used in a given context, by a given person, for a given purpose, and so on. This is related to Swiss linguist Saussure's distinction between *langue* and *parole*, *langue* being the code or system of rules common to speakers of a language and *parole* being the particular uses of this system, or selections from this system, that speakers or writers make on this or that occasion. Style then pertains to *parole*: it is selection from a total linguistic repertoire that constitutes a style. Hence stylistics which is defined as the study of style is rarely undertaken for its own sake, simply as an exercise in describing what use is made of language. We normally study style because we want to explain something. This is related to Chimamanda's choice of style as back in her mind she wanted to explain the extent of racial discrimination in America.

Though (Short and Leech, 1981, p. 65) offer a list of style markers and features that are necessary in a stylistic analysis they are not important for this study as the researcher has gone ahead to define the markers that are relevant in contemporary stylistics, (Lambrou and Stockwell, 2007) and (Simpson, 2004). What is of importance is the representation of these features at the different levels of style as suggested by (Short and Leech, 1981,p.119).This can be seen by looking at language as a means of communication and it is necessary then to distinguish three levels of organization in language. In addition to the level of semantics, there are the levels of syntax and phonology which together form the expression plane of language.

According to the theory, language is seen as a means of spoken communication and is regarded both traditionally and in modern linguistics as a system for translating meanings in the speaker's mind into sounds, or conversely, for translating sounds into meanings in the hearer's mind. Whether we think of the ENCODING (meaning-to-sound) or the DECODING (sound-to-meaning) process, syntax is the formal code which mediates between structures of meaning and structures of sound.

The following examples illustrate this essence of semantic realization:

1. *"I write an anonymous blog called Raceteenth or Various Observations About American Blacks (Those Formerly known as Negroes) by a Non-American Black"* (pg 6)

This utterance was said by the main character who when asked about her career she would say that without knowing that that was not a major career. In this utterance there is

the palpable physical substance of the utterance which when written, comprises graphetic substance or when spoken, phonetic substance.

In terms of graphology this sentence is written in Italics since it is a blog post and at the beginning of each word there's a capital letter which provides that the sentence is to be read loudly with a lot of emphasis to bring out its effect now that in America race was an issue to be dealt with. The character chooses the word "Raceteenth" to refer to the various problems that originate as a result of racial discrimination in America. The word has been coined since 'teenth' is an ordinal number.

The sentence further takes us into the domain of language organization known as the grammar, or more appropriately perhaps, given that both lexis and word structure are normally included in such a description, the lexico-grammar. Grammar is organized hierarchically according to the size of the units it contains, and most accounts of grammar would recognize the sentence as the largest unit, with the clause, phrase, word and morpheme.

The sentence is a complex sentence with two clauses. The subject is the "I", the predicator is "write" and the complement is "*an anonymous blog called Raceteenth or Various Observations About American Blacks(Those Formerly known as Negroes) by a Non-American Black*"

More so the use of 'by' indicates that the sentence is in passive form though the 'I' in the sentence is still the Non-American black.

A semantic analysis is concerned with meaning and will be interested, amongst other things, in those elements of language which give the sentence a 'truth value'. A truth

value specifies the conditions under which a particular sentence may be regarded as true or false. The 'I' in the sentence, points to the reader that it is the speaker who does the writing of the blog posts. What is implied in the sentence is that racial discrimination is real in America but nobody wished to talk about it public which can be seen through the use of the word 'anonymous'.

The sentence has also the use of the word 'those' which has been used deictically to point at the black Americans as well as the Africans.

Above the core levels of language is situated discourse. This is a much more open-ended term used to encompass aspects of communication that lie beyond the organization of sentence. Discourse is context-sensitive and its domain of reference includes pragmatic, ideological, social and cognitive elements in text processing. That means that an analysis of discourse explores meanings which are not retrievable solely through the linguistic analysis of the levels surveyed.

The sentence when analyzed in within the context that is said presupposes the following; that Ifemelu did not get a worthy job hence the only job that she has and which is unpaid is running the blog post. Secondly, the sentence asserts that in America the only issue that people talked about is race which could also be seen through the use of accent, dialect and idiolect.

The second example used to demonstrate the adequacy of stylistic theory is the following:

2. How can a monkey be president? Somebody do us a favor and put a bullet in this guy. Send him back to the African jungle. A black man will

never be in the white house, dude, it's called the white house for a reason.

(pg 448)

What is significant about this sentence is the punctuation that is the use of the question mark as well as the declarative sentences. The use of italics captures the reader's attention on the issue of a black person being a President.

Firstly, the use of the question represents the graphological substance which arouses curiosity in the mind of the reader now that the setting of the text is around the time politics was at peak in the US in the year 2004. The use of the declarative sentences include:

Somebody do us a favor and put a bullet in this guy

Send him back to the African jungle

The sentences illustrate the extent the issue of having an African being the President of the United States of America had made the Americans as desperate as wanting to have the candidate for the presidency killed.

The semantic analysis of the sentence is realized through the following words: monkey, jungle, white house etc. Africans are compared to monkeys that live in a jungle hence it would be impossible for animals to stay in the white house which of course was not a black house. The meaning in context of the above statement reveals the way Africans were mistreated while in the US.

3. "Ah this na my second time. The first time I come with different passport," one of them said.

"Na for work wey they get me o.

“E get one guy wey they deport, him don come back get him paper. Na him wey go help me,” another said.

The above example can be realized phonologically through mimicry that the author was imitating these characters' accents who talk about their plight in America. Such mimicry, of course, often extends to the use of unorthodox spelling to suggest a character's accent. At the syntactic level the wording of these sentences is incorrect and there's deliberate misspelling which suggest the unmastered use of spellings by these Nigerians as is seen from the accent. At the semantic level therefore the deviation in the sentences suggest how Nigerians ended up in the US and how they managed to stay without the required documents.

4. You don't know America. You say Senegal and American people, they say, Where is that? My friend from Burkina Faso, they ask her, your country in Latin America? (pg 165)

At the graphological level the sentence is analyzed by looking at the use of rhetorical questions for example; 'Where is that?' is a rhetorical question which shows the extent which African countries are not known to Americans that once one introduced himself or herself in America then definitely one was asked about their country of origin which is actually an issue about racial discrimination.

At the phonological level there's the use of mimicry, the Africans could be easily noticed through which was totally different from Americans. Syntactically the word order in the sentences is wrong and even some words are omitted. This shows that Africans apart

from struggling with the issue of the hair they also struggled with speaking the American English which was impossible.

5. He was quickly admitted into the clan of **swaggering**, carelessly cool males, the Big Guys; he lounged in the corridors with them, stood with them at the back of the hall during assembly. (pg 65)

The word swaggering is a coined word hence it is represented at the lexico-grammatical level. The sentence is a complex sentence which is separated by the use of the semi-colon. At the graphological level there's the use of the punctuation marks and the capital letters in the words 'Big Guys' is an emphasis on the word swaggering. The use of the pronoun 'He' is a personal pronoun referring to Obinze and 'them' referring to his friends back in school.

At the semantic analysis we get then that the word swaggering refers to a group of boys who are referred to as 'carelessly cool males, the Big Guys' which in turn gives us the meaning and truth value of the sentence that these are people who shared certain traits of keeping up with the latest fashion.

6. **SATs**-is a short form of certificates

ID-Identity cards

LOCS-dreadlocks

The hall rep-the hall representative

Paper ad-paper advertisement

Coz- is short form for cousin.

Grad- graduate.

Special ed- special edition.

Informal use of words and phrases is common in informal situations but Chimamanda uses this informal language to make her text conversational and to describe the social aspect of the text that in the modern world use of short forms of words is a major characteristic. This is captured at the graphological level since the use of short forms of words is an issue with the graphetic substance.

7. To **send a text**-means to send a message through the phone. (pg 20)

To **compose an e-mail**- means to send a message through electronic e-mail. (pg 20)

He stared at the **BlackBerry**-is a kind of a make of a phone. (pg 25)

He **Googled** the black American- means to search for information through google search engine.

I am going to put this one up on **Facebook**- Facebook is a social site. (Pg 483)

He **clicked delete** and **empty trash**. This means he deleted the messages. (Pg 299)

The choice of vocabulary in this case is represented at the syntactic level or the lexico-grammatical level. The internet language is what is common among people of all ages nowadays and Chimamanda is keen on the choice of these words to bridge the gap between the olden days and the modern days.

8. She scoured Nigerian websites, Nigerian profiles on Facebook, Nigerian blogs, and each click brought yet another story of a young person who had recently moved back home, clothed in American or British degrees....(pg 9)

At the syntactic level this is a complex sentence made up of different simple sentences and the 'she' refers back to Ifemelu the main character who on kept checking on the internet to find out how, how many people suffered the same fate as hers, 'being in America'. At the semantic level, the phrase, 'clothed in American or British degrees' is sarcastic because most of the returnees ended up desperately that's why they had to go back home it was better at home.

9. Chief Omeka is a 419 and everybody knows it. This church is full of 419 men.

At the graphological level, 419 was to be written in words but is written in numbers to capture the attention of the readers. 419 according to Chimamanda's website is a group of corrupt men in Nigeria and to emphasize on that they are even found in churches.

10. Ifemelu **wondered** why there was no place she could braid her hair. She still **wondered** if he had read it. She **hoped** so. But she nodded in agreement because to hear 'Nigeria' and 'good' in the same sentence was a luxury. (pg 16-18)

The choice of the processes in the above sentences account for the grammatical processes that give the world view of the main character that when she left for America she hoped for the best. Through the processes again we realize how Nigerians were contemptuously

referred to; it is not possible to have 'good' and 'Nigeria' in one sentence meaning there was nothing good in Nigeria according to Americans.

4.2 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that stylistic theory does not only capture forms, patterns and level but also demonstrates the essence of semantic realization. According to the theory these forms, patterns and the levels of style are an important index of the function of the text and it is up to the reader to decode the message from graphological to semantic level.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This final chapter of the project summarizes the major aspects of the study and draws conclusions and implications from the research findings. Specifically, the chapter begins with a summary of the aims, methods and approaches adopted in the study and then proceeds to highlight key findings of the study. This is followed by the conclusions and implications drawn from the study. The chapter ends with recommendations for further research.

5.1 Summary of Aims and Methods

The general aim of the study was to explore patterns, forms and levels of style and their significance in Chimamanda's text *Americanah*. In light of these, the study sought to address concerns of stylisticians which was to identify the features of style as proposed by Simpson (2004) i.e. features of textual medium, sociolinguistic code, actions and events, point of view, textual structure and intertextuality. This is because these features form part of what contemporary stylistics is about. The other concern was to represent the features using the levels of style by Leech and Short (1981). The study employed Short and Leech (1981) stylistic theory.

Being descriptive and exploratory in nature, the study adopted the qualitative research design. The design is interested in deriving and interpreting meaning from signs such as words or texts, pictures and /or observable behavior.

5.2 Findings

- 1) Through the identification of features, this work demonstrates that in narratology there's need for stylisticians to also identify features that define sociolinguistic code, the use of point of view, transitivity, features that define the textual structure as well as intertextuality.
- 2) The features identified in this study can be represented through the levels of style; graphological, syntactic level and semantic level.
- 3) This study also demonstrates that stylistic theory captures the milieu of semantic realization through the identified features for example point of view.

5.3 Recommendations for Further Research

Stylistic theory does not capture explicatures and implicatures in the text; this can be captured well by relevance theory to fill this gap. The study has only used stylistic theory, the researcher recommends that other theories like mind style and cognitive stylistics should be used in analysis of the same data. A comparative study is also important to determine the difference in terms of the features of style, for instance the difference in choice of style between Kenyan authors (East African) and Nigerian authors, how does this choice affect the essence of semantics in the texts.

5.4 Conclusion

In this concluding chapter, the aims, methods and findings of the study have been summarized based on the findings, conclusions have been made in relation to the research questions and assumptions of the study. The chapter concluded with recommendations for future research which are mainly based on some limitations of and insights drawn

from the study. The study confirms that the choice of linguistic forms in a literary work is motivated (Halliday, 1971; Simpson, 2004). This study demonstrates that Chimamanda foregrounds particular features of style to attain the thematic concerns.

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