



*Covenant Journal of Language Studies (CJLS) Vol. 7 No. 1, June, 2019*  
ISSN: p. 2354-3582 e. 2354-3523



An Open Access Journal Available Online

# ***Covenant Journal of Language Studies (CJLS)***

Vol. 7, No. 1, June. 2019

**A bi-annual Publication of the Department of Languages,  
Covenant University.**

**Editor-in-Chief:** Prof. Innocent Chiluja  
innocent.chiluja@covenantuniversity.edu.ng

**Managing Editor:** Edwin O. Agbaike  
edwin.agbaike@covenantuniversity.edu.ng

**URL:** <http://journals.covenantuniversity.edu.ng/index.php/cjls>

© 2019, Covenant University Journals

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, electrostatic, magnetic tape, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

It is a condition of publication in this journal that manuscripts have not been published or submitted for publication and will not be submitted or published elsewhere.

Upon the acceptance of articles to be published in this journal, the author(s) are required to transfer copyright of the article to the publisher.

ISSN: p. 2354-3582 e. 2354-3523

Published by Covenant University Journals,  
Covenant University, Canaanland, Km 10, Idiroko Road,  
P.M.B. 1023, Ota, Ogun State, Nigeria

URL: <http://journals.covenantuniversity.edu.ng/index.php/cjls>

## Contents

Analysing verbal and visual indexes in internet memes on the APC-led administration and “change” slogan in Nigeria <b>Bukola Alfred</b>	<b>1</b>
English Language in a Tanzanian University <b>Amaka Edith Ideh</b>	<b>21</b>
New Names, New Identities: Globalization ‘Affects’ on Black Females in NoViolet Bulawayo’s <i>We Need New Names</i> <b>Adesunmbo Elizabeth Omotayo</b>	<b>32</b>
Postcolonial Trauma and Environmental Despoliation in Helon Habila’s <i>Oil on Water</i> <b>Victor Ocholi Idakwo &amp; Stephen Ogunpitan</b>	<b>47</b>
Le dialecte comme un defi au traducteur litteraire : le cas d’ <i>okuko nti ike</i> d’okeke Chika Jerry <b>Utah Nduka David &amp; Nwosu Adaeze Ngozi</b>	<b>59</b>



# Analysing Verbal and Visual Indexes in Internet Memes on the APC-Led Administration and “Change” Slogan in Nigeria

Bukola Alfred

Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria

Received: 26.03.2019 Accepted: 29.05.2019 Date of Publication: June, 2019

**Abstract:** This paper examines the complementarity relation of some verbal and visual signifiers in internet memes about the “change” slogan of the APC-led administration in Nigeria. The data comprised nine purposively selected internet memes transmitted through *Facebook*, *Nairaland* and *Twitter*, which were selected between February 2016 and January, 2017. The data was analysed using Kress’s (2010) approach of multimodal social semiotics. The studies revealed that all the memes were subversive in nature and were used to reflect negative dispositions of the text producers to the leadership style and agenda of the APC-president elect. The study concluded that the memes about the APC “change” slogan were used to express displeasure over the socio-economic realities in Nigeria and to dissuade viewers from voting for the APC in subsequent elections.

**Key words:** “change” slogan, memes, multimodal social semiotics, social-political protest, visuality.

## Introduction

The use of memes to project popular ideas on the Internet has become a current practice in many political terrains across the globe (Kulkarni, 2017). Nigeria seems to be one of the countries with the fastest growing internet culture in the world. The country, which has an estimated population of 180 million, has 92.4

million active internet subscribers. A number of popular social media sites subscribed to by Nigerians thrive on the creation and circulation of memes. These tend to contain images or videos and texts, projecting cultural symbols or social ideas, which often go viral on the Internet.

The term “meme” is largely attributed to Richard Dawkins - an evolutionary

biologist, in his book *Selfish Genre* (1976). But the word “meme” originates from the Greek word *mimēnia* which relates to imitation. Shifman (2013, p.363) describes memetics as “the theoretical and empirical science that studies the replication, spread and evolution of memes”. A meme is characterised by its ability to go viral through copying and imitation. Internet memes are images that are used to transmit social and cultural ideas on the internet. The ideas in memes may be re-modified with the designers’ captions. Backhaug (2011, p.42) posits that “internet memes propagate among people by means of e-mails, instant messaging, forums, blogs, or social networking sites.” And are “inside jokes or pieces of hip underground knowledge that many people are on.” While some memes are observed to spread virally, some others have also been observed to fade off in a short while. Dennet (1993, p.205) notes that a meme “replicates at rates that make even fruit flies and yeast cells look glacial in comparison”. In contemporary times, Nigerians seem to have been actively involved in the use of internet memes to depict their stances on political administrations and government policies.

### **Memes as Artefacts of Humour and Ideological Positioning**

Shifman (2007), reports that humour has co-existed with human activities for a very long time but changes in form, in order to suit socio-cultural and technological trends. Humour is intricately woven with emotional messages. From a Critical Discourse Approach, humour may have two

distinct forms – “reinforcing” and “subversive” effects as pointed out by Holmes & Marra (2002). This means that the intentionality of the deployment of political humour is either to reflect a solidarity relationship, as a reinforcing form, or challenge existing ideological position and power relations, as a subversive form. While the former intends humorous messages to censure political ideas, administrations or candidatures, the latter intends such to shut out prospective criticisms and establish commonality (Nilsen, 1990). Holmes & Marra (2002) posit that there is no neutrality in the appropriation of memes. This is echoed by Du Preez & Lombard (2014), who also note that all memes bear some form of ideological undertone. According to Adegaju & Oyeboade (2015), memetic communication is one of the genres of political humour. Silvestri (2014) refers to memetic communications as the use of digital content to spread opinions on issues or individuals and, establish shared relationships and cultures. Tsakona & Popa (2013) argue that memes could be considered as unconventional forms of political humour because the producers of such memes are usually not media organisations but individual citizens who consider such a good platform for identity (re)construction, rather than mere amusement. Political humour, the focus of this work, is humour which is characterised by images and texts on an array of political themes or injunctions created either by politicians or political critics to invoke hilarity (Tsakona & Popa, 2013). The (new) media (internet, websites, blogs and all other social

media platforms) have not only contributed to the virility of political humour but have also been a major proponent for its creation (Corner, 2012).

Taiwo (2018, p. 320) opines that the use of memes in online interactions is a growing culture and that “although, they may appear like playful acts in online interactions, memes raise very serious socio-political issues, critique social ills and communicate messages, which fulfil citizens’ social responsibilities”. Thus, memes could be considered as writings or pictorial representations with humorous content and satirical thrusts. Wiggins & Bowers (2014) note that the use of internet memes have attracted works of several scholars who have made attempts to understand digital culture. According to Grundlingh (2018), internet users view memes as speech acts in which the semiotic resources are meticulously chosen to perform specific communicative functions in online discussions. For this reason, the visual and verbal modes in memes are either created or recreated to complementarily facilitate communication between a meme designer and the internet community.

Aguilar, Campbell, Stanley & Taylor (2017) examined the use of memes in communicating mixed messages in religious internet contexts. The study identified the common genres that characterise these internet memes by examining the techniques used to frame ideas in this genre of discourse. The study also emphasised the importance of internet memes as a way to better understand the different perspectives to

religion amongst a group of people who have a common culture.

De Cook (2018) studied the use of memes for propaganda and collective identity. From a discourse analysis perspective, the study examined the images and texts circulated by a fraternity-like group ‘Proudboys’ on ‘western ideals.’ The author examined how this group have employed memes to project their ideologies and propaganda on ‘western ideals’ through *Instagram* memes.

Du Press & Lombard (2014) examined the role of memes in the construction of *Facebook* personae. Focusing on *Facebook*, the study examined how the offline life of an individual may be reconstructed by online memes on social media sites. Because memes seem to bear connotative judgements on persons and issues, the study found out that the true identity of an offline individual is often exposed through internet memes.

Taecharunroj & Nueangjamnong (2015) conducted a study on the styles and types of humours and virality of memes on *Facebook*. The study examined the various styles and types of humour in 1000 memes shared on Facebook pages. The authors found out that self-defeating was the most effective style. In the case of virality, it further found out that sarcasm and silliness were most prevalent types of humours used in the meme.

### **The Rhetoric of Visuality**

Pictorial representation emphasises the message of oral communication and even provide more than words could convey (Ademilokun & Olateju, 2015). The rhetorical strength of visuals as pointed out by Domke, Perlmutter &

Spratt (2002, p. 133-134) is seen in its ability to facilitate quick recollection of information, its iconic representation of themes or issues, its emotive effects, its aesthetics potentials and its instrumentality for political engagements. The points highlighted above explain the reason for the growing interest of netizens (or internet users) in the study of memes. The growing relationship between visuality and social protests in Nigeria could also be traced to the above. Netizens, in order to muster the spread of criticism against certain governmental policies, use images that they find appealing. The meme creator's intended message is presented in sensational captions or written somewhere beneath or above the visual images.

For instance, Hayes (2011) explored the impact of visual images in Omar Badsha's photo shoot pictures of the agitation against Apartheid in South Africa in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. Hayes' study found that Badsha's pictures were used to project the poor living conditions of the racialised South Africans and were also used to trigger revolutionary activities against apartheid. Similarly, Elebute (2013) examined the functionality of visual images in the Nigerian political situation of 1963, focusing on billboards, body paintings, television images and so on. Although the analytical coverage of these authors only relates to visual images in the television and print media, the rhetorical strength of visuals seems relevant in today's social media interventions.

### **Socio-political Protest Discourse in Nigeria**

The expression of dissatisfaction in the Nigerian politics started during the pre-independence era with the activities of some nationalists such as Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo and Tafawa Balewa who spearheaded the campaign for self-rule in Nigeria. Political activism developed further when Nigeria attained independence in 1960. Agitations have since taken several forms ranging from riots, industrial actions and protests with the use of placards, bill board, online posts and the creation and circulation of memes on social media platforms. The language use in these forms of socio-political activism has served as data source for some multimodal discourse analysts and critical discourse analysts.

Studies on socio-political protests within Nigeria have been conducted using the frameworks of critical discourse analysis and pragmatics. Chiluba (2015), for example, was a critical discourse analysis of *Facebook* posts on fuel subsidy removal protests of 2012. In another study, Agbedo (2012) analysed the placards of fuel subsidy crisis in Nigeria. In addition, Chiluba & Ifukor (2015) examined stance and engagement in the *#BringBackOurGirls* campaign discourse on *Twitter* and *Facebook*. Finally, Igwebuike, Abioye & Chimuanya (2014) studied 'occupy Nigeria group' online posts on the 2012 fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria.

Beyond these studies that underscore mono-modality in political texts, there are a few works in which descriptive analysis of multimodal texts for socio-political purposes are carried out.

Ademilokun & Olateju (2015) explored a multimodal discourse of some visual images in the political rally of 2011 electioneering campaigns in Southwestern Nigeria. The study drew on the political visual artefacts used in the political rallies of the two strongest political parties in Nigeria – Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) and People’s Democratic Party (PDP). The analysis revealed that vests were the most common visual artefact used (compared with caps) and these were inscribed the banners and logos of the political parties for mnemonic purposes. The study further revealed that all the semiotic resources identified were significantly used to project political, cultural and social affinity.

Adegoju & Oyeboode (2015) also examined the patterns of humour as discursive practice in the 2015 online presidential election campaign in Nigeria. The study examined both the verbal and visual resources created and disseminated by netizens on *WhatsApp*, *Facebook* and *Twitter* about their positions and anxieties on political issues in Nigeria. The study revealed that nonce-formation, parody, pun, hyperbole, ironic sarcasm, metaphor and imagery were satirically appropriated to negatively represent the persons of the political aspirants.

Akpati (2018) also analysed the audio-visual and lexical choices used to project the ideologies of the protesters in the Nigerian social protest videos. The selected video clips were those on protests in relation to the fuel subsidy removal, Academic Staff Union of Universities’ (ASUU) strike and the #BringBackOurGirls# campaign

between 2012 and 2015. The audio-visual and linguistic resources deployed in the video clips were used to discredit the Nigerian government and express displeasures of the protesters on these issues. The study also revealed abusive and solidarity songs used to create both local and global awareness on these issues.

In spite of this plethora of studies, there is a dearth of research on the multimodal semiotic study of internet memes on the APC-led administration and ‘change’ slogan in Nigeria. Thus, this study seeks to explore how internet memes were deployed to express individuals’ social and economic experiences during the APC-led administration and to rethink the concept of ‘change’ in the Nigerian socio-political setting. The verbal and visual resources employed in the memes were considered to reveal how these jointly convey the experiences of the Nigerian masses and present the political realities in the country. Evidently, Nigerians consider the use of memes, a subtle and more convenient way of expressing political ideologies possibly because it guarantees anonymity of the source of the meme. Memes are useful when there is a need to avoid open confrontation with the governmental officials. Another possible reason for preference of this medium could be because it has a viral nature and has a tendency to reach the targeted audience within a short time. Also, the images in a meme accommodate a caption which helps to pass the intended message.



### APC “change” Slogan in Nigeria

Slogans are instrumental phrases for championing a cause, for instance, campaign and marketing. In the political landscape, Awotayo (2018) opines that slogans are ideal where there are numerous ideas competing for attention. As catchy phrases, slogans are usually appropriated by political figures, corporate institutions and organisations as concise expressions of unavoidably lengthy agenda of these agents (Awotayo, 2018). Thus, slogans are deployed to create, drive and engrave the ideologies and interests of political parties or politicians on the minds of people.

Muhammadu Buhari ran for the presidential office in Nigeria in 2003, 2007 and 2011. In his 2014 declaration speech, Buhari and the All Progressive Party (henceforth, APC) portrayed themselves as crusaders of ‘change’ and won the Presidential election over the ruling People’s Democratic Party (henceforth, PDP) in 2015. Two independent political parties, Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) and Action Congress of Nigeria (CAN), from the northern and southern regions in Nigeria respectively, formed a strong coalition which produced the APC that displaced the PDP in 2015. The party adopted the ‘change’ mantra to signal a need for political replacement of the then President Goodluck Jonathan (who accused of a failing in his ‘Transformation Agenda’) and the supposedly entrenched PDP government (which had been in power since 1999 – 16 consecutive years). The party adopted the ‘change’ mantra to stir an expectation of positive turn and

eradication of the security and economic problems ravaging the nation. This slogan contributed to Buhari’s victory in the elections. ‘Change’ has been the slogan of the APC in Nigeria since 2014, especially during the electioneering campaigns.

Between January 2015 and 2019 when the APC government was re-elected for the second term, the slogan – ‘change’ – has triggered several discourse and pragmatic implications in the national political debate. Before the general elections in 2015, this slogan was used as a powerful political tool for contesting the presidential seat. It was used by the APC to portray a sharp contrast in administration, especially in relation to previous ones by creating the feeling of a better life for the entire Nigerian public if APC won the elections. However, since 2016, the ‘change’ slogan has primarily been employed by Nigerians to express a negative disposition of Nigerians to the realities of this slogan. This study intends to see what ‘change’ actually means in the internet memes created and circulated on the APC-led administration. A study of this nature affords an opportunity to unmask the ideological layers in internet memes on the APC-led administration and ‘change’ slogan in Nigeria.

### Methodology

Nine internet memes transmitted through *Facebook*, *Nairaland* and *Twitter* were selected. The selected memes were those which represented the perception of netizens on the APC-led administration and ‘change’ slogan across twelve months (February 2016 and January, 2017). This period is

critical because, at that time, the country was experiencing economic downturn, which was contrary to the 'change' slogan of the Buhari administration. Hence, the memes displayed aggressive and negative attitudes to the realities of the so-called 'change.' These memes match the purpose of this research since they generated the most views, comments and/ likes among memes in this category. The selected memes were observed to be laced with various visual and linguistic modes intended to make sense of 'change' in relation to the experiences of the Nigerian people during the APC administration and this was considered a crucial factor for analysis. The most dominant theme that characterised the selected memes is the socio-economic state of the country. Others were centred on the leadership style of the APC administration. This study adopts Kress' (2010) multimodal social semiotic approach to the effectiveness of the verbal and visual semiotic resources in the context of meaning production. Social semiotics

sees 'speakers and writers or other participants in semiotic activity as connected and interacting in a variety of ways in concrete social contexts' (Hodges & Kress, 1988, p. 1). Multimodal social semiotics views all semiotic resources (visual and verbal) as having social imports/representations, which are used to perform social functions including the transmission of values/beliefs, identity construction and social positioning/leaning (Kress, 2010; Van Leeuwen, 2005a). The study accounts for the meaning affordances of the verbal and non-verbal semiotic modes, following Kress' mode, genre, motivated sign and meaning potentials in relation to social structures and social relations. It examines how communicators couch and make meanings through multiple semiotic resources such as modes, genres, motivated signs etc. This approach is crucial because it offers sociological perspectives to the interpretation of semiotic resources.

## Analysis and Discussion

### (i) *The socio-economic state of the country*

Text1



(www.twitter.com)

Text 1 displays a meme portraying the side-view haircuts of two men. The semantic and visual representation serves as a cohesive blend for limiting the possible meaning of the meme, thereby relating the intention of the meme producer in multimodal modes. Text 1 is suggestive of the quality of life promised by the APC party during its campaign against the economic realities in Nigeria since the APC administration assumed office. To serve as an ‘index’, the verbal signifier “*The Change APC promised vs. what is presently obtainable because of the economy*” is strategically placed above the meme and written in appealing font. The verbal resource seems to be insufficient to generate the kind of emotive effect intended by the meme designer; hence is complimented with a visual mode.

This meme focuses on the quality of life that Nigerians have been living since the APC government took over power. The men in the memes are made to represent Nigerians. The image on the left is a projection of the mouth-watering kind of life that Nigerians were promised during the presidential campaign of the APC. It is the image of a young man with clean shaves in what looks like a classic barbing salon. The photograph of a young person on the right with an unfinished shave and popped out veins (a stress indicator), symbolises a life of hardship, suffering and financial crises that Nigerians have been exposed to in the APC administration. The incomplete haircut suggests that Nigerians face greater sufferings to come in the future. The background of the photograph on the left implies that the economy of the country has deteriorated during the APC

URL: <http://journals.covenantuniversity.edu.ng/index.php/cjls>

administration, and that Nigerians could barely afford a hair-cut in a barber’s shop. These difficulties make them shave their heads locally. It also suggests that those who could afford to visit a barber’s shop get only half the quality of service for the price they used to pay before. This suggests that the income made by Nigerians at the moment can only afford them half the quality of life they used to live. The designer seems to have employed the image (on the right) to depict a fall in the Nigerian currency during the APC administration.

The colour of the skin of the men in the meme has possible implications. In the first photograph (on the left), the light, spotless, tender-looking face and scalp of the man is associated with good life. Conversely, the dark, coarse, unattractive complexion of the man in the second image may be associated with suffering and poverty. The contrast

portrays the campaign promises made by the APC as only a mirage compared to what actually obtains in the country. The indexical semiotic artefacts suggest that the experiences of Nigerians are at variance with the savoury promises made by the APC during its campaigns. However, taking a second look at the second photograph, the person on the right is seen smiling. This brings to mind the song of a popular musician in Nigeria, late Fela Anikulapo-Kuti - “suffering and smiling.” This is suggestive of Nigerians being able to comically relieve their tensions and amuse themselves despite the economic recession and harsh situations they go through. By using both modes, the designer is trying to reconceptualise the ‘change’ slogan. A comparison of the fantasised and realistic ‘change’ in the APC-led administration connotes the negative experiences of Nigerians.

Text2



(www.facebook.com)

Text 2 is a caricature of a legendary movie *Merlin*. *Merlin* tells the story of

young boy (Merlin) who is portrayed to possess magical powers and the ability

URL: <http://journals.covenantuniversity.edu.ng/index.php/cjls>

to make things happen. In the movie, the destiny of a kingdom rests on his shoulders. He controls the turn-outs of events. In the movie, the boy (Merlin) is portrayed in the positive light.

In Text 2, there is also a cohesive blend of both visual and verbal modes in conveying the message of the designer. A verbal text which reads “*in the land of no fuel, in the time of no light, the destiny of a great nation rests on the shoulders of an old man*” is placed below the memes, couched in the form of a subtitle and dotted with emoticons for eye-catching effect. The designer considers the verbal text indexical to the interpretation of the meme. *Genre* (the choice of an edited movie cover) comes to play here as the designer replaces the head of the young boy (Merlin) with that of a 74-year old Nigerian president (Muhammadu Buhari). The clothing, gesture, and flash light of the old man’s hand in the caricature is identical to that of Merlin. The image communicates a lot of ideas about the events that have accompanied the APC administration since Buhari took office. inauguration. The meme suggests that the APC administration is responsible for all the turmoil happening in the nation. It is suggestive of the existence of a man who is being depicted as a power sorcerer, who can inflict hardships.

Unlike Merlin, President Buhari is portrayed in the negative light, possessing black powers, which has bewitched the nation and brought untold hardship on the citizenry.

Worthy of note is the verbal text “one chance” couched in diminutive red letters below the word *Merlin*. *One Chance* is a term used in Nigeria for robbery gangs that operate as commercial bus drivers. These gangs usually have fellow members of their gang posing as genuine passengers heading towards the same direction as unsuspecting passengers. This team thereafter dispossess their victims of their personal belongings at gun points and push them out of moving vehicles. The designer employs the term *one chance* to show that the APC administration is deceptive and has only succeeded in parading itself as the ‘messiah’ and ‘saviour’ to the numerous Nigerian problems in order to be elected. *One Chance* portrays the APC as mischievous and suggests that the several pledges of good governance during the campaigns were populist in their nature. The incumbent administration is considered “one chance” and that which has exposed Nigerians to untold sufferings, hardships and pains than the country had ever witnessed.

## Text3



(www.facebook.com)

Text3 is a caricature of President Buhari and Asiwaju Bola Tinubu (an APC national leader - a business tycoon and former governor of Lagos state) engaged in a conversation. The meme mocks Tinubu, who is depicted as shabbily dressed (wearing a native Yoruba cap “Fila” and an English attire) without shoes on. He is sitting on a bucket with a lantern at the corner of his empty room. Tinubu has his lips tilted, head bent and right hand supporting his chin, which is a display of deep worry and anxiety.

The subtitle is presented in a conversational style to have a more persuasive effect on the viewer. The text producer’s choice of familiar faces is to

have emotional effect, showing that even the rich have not been spared in the hardship and sufferings ravaging the nation since the administration of the APC government. The complex noun phrase “*this Buhari’s period*” is used to depict hardship, torture, suffering, excruciating pain, scarcity and dryness. Also, the responsive verbal text “*It’s the new national anthem*” used in the captions connotes that all Nigerians (irrespective of financial status) have had their fair share of the sufferings in the APC-led administration. Ideologically, the text producer presents the much-anticipated change as a torturing one for both the poor and the rich in Nigeria.

## Text4



(www.twitter.com)

Text4 communicates a set of ideas about Nigerians during the fuel scarcity period that occurred in 2016. The photograph is one that was taken during the fuel scarcity. It is a blend of verbal and visual modes intended by the text producer to further portray the deplorable state of things in Nigerians and the level of sufferings in Nigerians. Both modes are persuasively used to evoke emotions.

The woman in Text4 and the several empty gallons by her side are loaded with meaning. While the woman's outfit represents her low-class identity, the meme is generally used to symbolise the

suffering of the masses. The black kegs covered with dust are magnified in order to display long hours of waiting, which is most likely to elicit emotion and sympathy for Nigerians who had no choice than to wait for the fuel. The image has an accompanying verbal text "*when you remember say you follow scream Sai Baba.*" The interconnected blend of both modes suggests regrets and frustration. The designer uses this meme to portray the regrets of Nigerians in voting Buhari into power and by showing support by screaming "Sai Baba" during the campaign.

## Text5



(www.facebook.com)

Text5 is a meme that portrays the perceptions and dispositions of Nigerians in the current administration. The meme shows a group of people running away with personal belongings. This scene suggests danger and the need to take cover and run for safety.

The meme is laced with a verbal text “in 2019, when Nigerians hear the word ‘change’”. Symbolically, the running individuals are Nigerians and what their reaction is when they now hear “change” and what is likely to be if the APC comes again with their “change” slogan in the 2019 elections. The meme connotes that Nigerians would not allow themselves to be cajoled and wooed again. The word “change” is here given a negative connotation in Nigeria as a result of the people’s experience in the current administration. As used by APC during the 2015 campaign, the notion of change suggests a transition from good

to bad. But with the current situation in Nigeria (lack of electricity, increase in pump price of fuel, lack of social high infrastructure, high rate of unemployment etc.), the meme suggests a breach of trust, disappointment and deceit.

This meme will now question whether the re-election of the Buhari administration in 2019 for another four years is really the people’s choice. Was this meme a product of the political enemies of the APC administration or was it an honest evaluation of the state of affairs in Nigeria? If indeed the average Nigerian feared the word “change,” as the above meme suggests, how did they vote the same APC administration to power for the second term? The implication of this meme would be that the 2019 presidential election was rigged in favour of Buhari and the ruling party.



ii. *The leadership style of the APC administration*

Text6



(www.nairaland.com)

In 2016, the Nigerian media reported a left ear infection (“meniere disease”) suffered by the Nigerian president. The text producer of Text6 uses the conditions of the disease to mock the health status and leadership style of the Buhari administration.

In Text6, the text written in Nigerian pidgin “no wonder Buhari no dey hear word” (no wonder Buhari doesn’t listen) strategically placed below the meme, makes fun of the report Buhari’s ear disease. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001), where several modes are co-present, they are significant to the overall message in a text. Such occurs when the text producer considers the previous mode insufficient to convey the intended message (Domingo, Jewitt and Kress 2014). The persuasive effect of the shifts in modes presents an “order” of interpretations. While the anchoring verbal text “Buhari has cancelled his trip to Lagos over ear infection” reads like a sympathy, the

other verbal text “no wonder Buhari no dey hear word” lends an air of mockery to the meme. The meme mocks both President Buhari’s leadership style and his health conditions. It suggests Buhari is both physically (health-wise) and politically unfit to run the affairs of a nation like Nigeria.

The choice of a sepia as the background colour of the image is a motivated sign as it suggestive of the age of the president and thus, his frailty. Also, the text producer enlarged the president’s two ears to achieve a comic effect. Medically, “meniere disease” only affects one ear at a time and clears after treatment, but in the meme, the two ears are enlarged. This suggests soullessness and gross insensitivity of the president to the plights of the masses especially when interpreted in relation to the verbal text below the image. This suggests that the president’s personality gives no room for the suggestions of his advisers, which have brought untold hardship to

URL: <http://journals.covenantuniversity.edu.ng/index.php/cjls>

the nation. Thus, the text producer portrays the Buhari's leadership style as a dictatorship bringing to mind that

Buhari was once Nigeria's military dictator, who came to power through a military coup in December 1983.

Text 7



(www.nairaland.com)

Text7 is a caricature of the Nigerian President standing in-between a heap of dirt. The president flings a broom towards Nigerians who run away from the approaching broom. The broom is the party emblem of the APC. The president expects that Nigerians would catch the falling broom.

The text producer employs this image to portray the president's deceptive role-shifts through the verbal text "change begins with you ...not me". This suggests that the proposed "change" has not come to play because Nigerians have not played their parts (as opposed to what was said during his campaign).

The running gaits and speed lines beneath the feet of the Nigerians in the meme connote the refusal of Nigerians to share responsibilities with the government on ensuring positive transformation in the country. The broom, assumed to be the tool for and cleaning and cleansing the society is flung towards Nigerians. During the campaigns, the APC had promised to rid the country of messy situations; hence, the broom as political symbol of good governance. Here, the text producer questions the credibility and capability of the APC administration to bring about the promised transformation, which the broom symbolises.

Text 8



(www.facebook.com)

Text8 is a meme of President Buhari and his vice - Professor Yemi Osinbajo. The image is a side-view shot of the two individuals comparing notes. The text producer employs a verbal caption in the form of a conversation between the two leaders. The meme's conversational style makes a mockery of the educational status / integrity of the Nigerian president. This is evidenced in the use of "dis" for "this" and the use of a small letter for "yemi" rather than "Yemi."

From the meme, President Buhari appeared to have forgotten or never really meant any of the promises he made during the campaigns. The designer either intends to present the president as a liar or as a deceitful politician, which are factors responsible for the hard times that Nigeria is facing today. In the image, the APC flag is seen folded up in a corner of the room. The message suggests that the President had since abandoned his promises and that the *change* slogan merely succeeded in getting the party to power.

Text9



(www.nairaland.com)

Text9 is a caricature of the Nigerian president performing a Chinese martial art (Kung Fu). In the meme, the President is dressed in a red Kung Fu costume. This hints at Buhari's vested anger and zero-tolerance to corruption in Nigeria. It also suggests that the culprits of corruption in Nigeria would definitely face law.

The focus of Text9 is on the corruption scheme proposed by the Buhari administration. Both the visual and verbal modes seem to be employed to reinforce verbal text in this meme "*am back from China ...*". The cohesiveness of the purpose "...to fight corruption", written in bold letters, with "*am back from China ...*" is striking in a rhetorical sense. Sarcastically however, the designer portrays the President with a handicapped right hand, which suggests

that even though the President has mastered the skills for tackling corruption like China, he might not be able to successfully implement this in Nigeria, because he lacks the political capacity to carry it out. The right hand symbolises strength and authority, but his is diminutive. The image is designed to make a mockery of President Buhari's promise to track down all corrupt leaders in Nigeria. Up till his second term in power, there were still accusations that his government is as corrupt as the ones before it.

### Conclusion

This paper has examined the interplay between verbal and visual resources as markers of social relations in internet memes on the APC-led administration and 'change' slogan in Nigeria. It also investigates how text producers use the

URL: <http://journals.covenantuniversity.edu.ng/index.php/cjls>

visual and verbal memes to reframe the APC 'change' slogan and express their attitudes towards the APC administration. This analysis demonstrates that the text producers made choices of *modes*, *genres* and *motivated signs* that could invoke the

intended emotive effect. The satirical thrust of the memes, suggests their subversive nature as they criticize the APC's administration and policies. Also, the memes were used to connote the sufferings of Nigerians.

## References

- Adegoju, A. & Oyeboode, O. (2015). Humour as discursive practice in Nigeria's 2015 presidential election online campaign discourse. *Discourse Studies* 1-20.
- Ademilokun, M. & Olateju, O. (2016). A multimodal discourse analysis of some visual images in the political rally discourse of 2011 electioneering campaigns in southwestern Nigeria. *International Journal of Society, language and Culture*. 4(1), 11-19.
- Agbedo, C. (2012). Placards as a language of civil protests in Nigeria: A systemic functional analysis of the fuel subsidy crisis. [www.linguisticsafrikana.com](http://www.linguisticsafrikana.com). Accessed on 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2018.
- Aguilar, G., Campbell, H., Stanley, M & Taylor, E. (2017). Communicating mixed messages about religion through internet memes. *Information, Communication and Society*. 20: 1498-1520
- Akpati, F. (2018). A multimodal critical discourse analysis of Nigerian social protest videos. An unpublished Doc thesis in Rhetoric, Theory and Culture. Michigan Technological University.
- Archakis, A. and Tsakona, V. (2005) Analysing conversational data in GTVH terms: A new approach to the issue of identity construction via humor. *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research* 18(1): 41–68.
- Awotayo, O. (2018) Contextualising 'Change': A critical discourse analysis of the 'change' slogan in Nigerian political discourse (2014 to present). An unpublished masters of science thesis in Rhetoric, Theory and Culture. Michigan Technological University.
- Bauckhage, C. (2011) *Insights into Internet memes*. Proceedings of the Fifth International AAI Conference on Weblogs and Social Media, Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence ([www.aaai.org](http://www.aaai.org)). Accessed on 25th September 2018.
- Chiluwa, I. (2015) "Occupy Nigeria": A critical discourse analysis of Facebook posts in the fuel subsidy removal protests," *CLINA*, Vol1-1, PP 47-69.
- Chiluwa, I. and Ifukor, P. (2015). "War Against our Children": Stance and

- engagement in #BringBackOurGirls# campaign discourse on Twitter and Facebook. *Discourse and Society*, Vol 26, 3.
- Corner, J. (2012). Putting the mock in democracy. *Media, Culture & Society* 34(8): 1052–1058.
- Dawkins, R. (1976). *The Selfish Gene*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- De Cook, J. (2018). Memes and symbolic violence: #proudboys and the use of memes for propaganda and the construction of collective identity. *Learning, Media & Technology*. 43(4): 485-504
- Dennet, D. (1993). *Consciousness Explained*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Co.
- Domke, D., Perlmutter, D., & Spratt, M. (2002). The primes of our times? An examination of the ‘power’ of visual images. *Journalism*, 3(2), 131-159.
- Domingo, M., Jewitt, C. & Kress, G.(2014) Multimodal Social Semiotics: Writing in online contexts. In K. Pahl and Rowsel (eds). *The Routledge Handbook of Contemporary Literary Studies*. London: Routledge.
- Du Preez, A & Lombard E (2014) The role of memes in the construction of Facebook personae. *Communication: South African Journal for Communication Theory and Research*, 40(3):253–270.
- Elebute, A. (2013). The tradition of marketing Nigerian politicians through the visual media. *Affrev ijah: An International Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 2(2), 255-269.
- Grundlingh, L. (2018). Memes as speech acts. *Social Semiotics*. 28(2): 147-167
- Hayes, P. (2011) Seeing and being seen: Politics, art and the everyday in Omar Badsha’s Durban photography, 1960s-1980s. *Africa*, 81(14), 544-566.
- Hodges, R. & Kress, G. (1988) *Social Semiotics*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Holmes, J. & Marra M (2002) Over the edge? Subversive humor between colleagues and friends. *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research* 15(1): 65–87.
- Igwebuike, E., Abioye, T. & Chimuanya, L.(2014). A pragmatic study of “occupy Nigeria group” online posts on the 2012 fuel subsidy removal in Nigeria. *XVII ISA World Congress on Sociology*, Yokohama, Japan
- Kress, G. (2010). *Multimodality: A social semiotic approach to contemporary communication*. London: Routledge.
- Kulkarni, A. (2017). Internet meme and political discourse: A study on the impact of internet meme as a tool in communicating political satire.
- Nilsen DLF (1990) The social functions of political humor. *The Journal of Popular Culture* 24(3): 35–47.
- Shifman L (2007) Humor in the age of digital reproduction: Continuity and change in Internet based comic texts. *International Journal of Communication* 1: 187–209. Available at: <http://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view>

**Bukola Alfred**

*CJLS (2019) 7(1) 1-20*

- wFile/11/34 (accessed 1 July 2018).
- Shifman L (2013) Memes in a digital world: Reconciling with a conceptual troublemaker. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 18(3): 362–377.
- Silvestri, L. (2014) Memes in digital culture, by Limor Shifman. *Popular Communication The International Journal of Media and Culture* 12(3): 198-200. Available at: [http://www.academia.edu/7904483/Book\\_Review\\_Memes\\_in\\_Digital\\_Culture\\_by\\_Limor\\_Shifman](http://www.academia.edu/7904483/Book_Review_Memes_in_Digital_Culture_by_Limor_Shifman) (accessed 02 October 2018)
- Taiwo, R. (2018) *Beyond the text: Critical Discourse analysis and the quest for meaning in cyberspace Interactions*. Obafemi Awolowo University: OAU Press
- Taecharungroj, V. & Nueangjamnong, P. (2015). Humour 2.0: Styles and Types of Humour and Virality of Memes on Facebook. *Journal of Creative Communications*. 10 (3): 288-302.
- Tsakona V & Popa DE (2013) Editorial: Confronting power with laughter. *European Journal of Humour Research* 1(2): 1–9. Available at: <http://www.europeanjournalofhumour.org/index.php/ejhr/article/view/Editorial/Tsakona%20%26%20Popa> (accessed 1 July 2018).
- Van Leeuwen, T. (2005a) *Introducing social semiotics*. London: Routledge.
- Veg, S. (2016). “Creating a textual public space: Slogans and texts from Hong Kong's Umbrella movement.” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 75(3), 673-702. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0021911816000565>

### **About the Author**

**Bukola Alfred** teaches in the Department of English, Obafemi Awolowo University Ife, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

Email: [johnarinola1@gmail.com](mailto:johnarinola1@gmail.com)



# English Language in a Tanzanian University

Amaka Edith Ideh

University of Benin, Benin, Nigeria

Received: 23.01.2019 Accepted: 29.05.2019 Date of Publication: June, 2019

**Abstract:** The dominance of Kiswahili in Tanzania limits the use of English and its proficiency to citizens who wish to interact with the wider world where English enjoys a special and widespread usage. Though the Tanzania language policy with regard to teaching and learning in post-primary schools favours English, proficiency in English is still far from being a reality. Most university students in Tanzania experience unusual difficulty in communication (especially first year students) due to their background with the use of English as the medium of instruction. This paper highlights the problems encountered by learners of English at a Tanzanian university and presents the results of a study conducted at St. Augustine University of Tanzania, which assessed if the students' poor communication in English reflects in their writing. The study focussed on first-year students from four different Departments studying for the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA), Bachelor of Science in Procurement and Chain Management (BSCP), Bachelor of Arts in Economics (BAEC) and Bachelor of Science in Tourism and Hospitality Management (BSCT). The participated students were given a topic to write within a period of 60 minutes; afterwards, all grammatical errors identified in the essays were classified and analysed. The analysis of the errors provided feedback to the researcher on the level of writing skills of first year students of the University.

**Keywords:** Error analysis, second language learning, proficiency, English language, Tanzania

## Introduction

Tanzania is a multiethnic and multilingual country. It is home to approximately 120 languages (Ström, 2009: 229) in addition to English and Kiswahili. At the secondary education,

most of the learners struggle throughout the school trying to master English, which is the MoI, and at the same time working hard to understand the subjects' contents being taught in



English. Tibategeza (2009) reveals that teachers themselves do not assist learners to improve with their English. This is because of their focus on subject content and never on the language issue when teaching or marking students' assignments. According to Swilla (2009:5), the students who attended English-medium primary schools have an advantage over those who attended Kiswahili-medium schools, because English is the MoI in secondary education. This different primary school background of the learners categorises the students into two: those who can read and speak English and those who cannot read or speak English fluently.

Though English is the official language and MoI in post-primary education, it is poorly used in the classroom and often not in use outside the classroom. This situation leads to lack of proficiency in English, and causes students to withdraw from anyone who does not possess adequate proficiency in the use of Kiswahili. With regard to this language situation, Qorro (2008) states that:

“Students in Tanzanian universities acquire medium level of proficiency. Here, the students are able to give person directions on where to go, or how to reach a certain place. They have superficial understanding of what s/he hears or what is taught in the language. The chances of students not understanding at all or misunderstanding the intended meaning of the speaker exists. Language is still a hindrance in active participation during teaching/learning and normal conversation”.

As observed, students understand and fluently speak Kiswahili and prefer its use in all contexts. The context of English usage is limited and affects proficiency in the language. The mastery of English remains a challenge to students and also to lecturers who examine students' work. In most cases, lecturers hardly understand students' thought or what they want to express. On how to find solution to the lack of English proficiency, St Augustine University of Tanzania (SAUT) management exercises caution on their approach. For example, the management of the institution said in the meeting with the academic staff on April 18<sup>th</sup> 2011 that “the University is not a secondary school where you can wake up and command all the staff and students to start using English in every context in order to help the students to improve their spoken English”. This comment was in response to the suggestion made by the Head of the Department (HOD) of Linguistics that the school should create more avenues to make students speak English. In the opinion of the HOD, the University authority should ask all the lecturers to interact with their students only in English. However, the management of SAUT acknowledges the problem the students encounter with English, which is the medium of instruction and official language of the institution. In their quest to improve the students' English, they introduced the “Basic English Language Course” in addition to “Communication Skills” to all first-year students during the first and second semesters. The course was designed to raise the English language

proficiency of the students in both academic and professional communication. The course was also to assist the students in handling their academic work better and to improve their spoken and written communication. The course takes a practical approach, such as group presentations and regular exercises in order to minimize errors in both spoken and written contexts.

According to Lenonn (2008), language errors are not only inevitable among second language learners but also, very importantly, a necessary feature of learner language, without which improvement cannot occur. Errors are not seen as indications of failure to learn the target language; errors are seen as positive evidence that learners are making progress in testing hypotheses about the language they have already acquired. Therefore, error analysis is systematic observation of learner's language. In other words, it is what scientific study could reveal about the real problems of second language learners. Richards (1971) cites four types or causes of errors, they are overgeneralisation, ignorance of rules restrictions, incomplete application of rules, and false concepts hypothesized.

### **English in Tanzania**

English is not the mother tongue of any segment of the Tanzania population; this means that access to the language is limited (Swilla, 2009). However, it was declared a co-official language in Tanzania, and was taught as a compulsory subject in primary schools, though with unqualified teachers (Ideh, 2012) up to the first four years of secondary education (o'level). English has remained the only official MoI at post-primary level, leading to a

situation which does not promote multilingualism (Tibategeza, 2009). According to Stegen (2005:2), restricting education to only one language as the medium of instruction (in this case English) is equivalent to limiting the educational opportunities in a multilingual environment like Tanzania to very few people. The dominance of English is only in post primary school classroom, even at that context, it competes unfavourably with Kiswahili (Ideh, 2012).

The position of English in Tanzanian institution of higher learning (except in the classroom and in documentation) goes against the language policy of the country with regard to language use. The language policy states that the "medium of instruction for teachers' education at degree level shall be English, except for foreign language teaching, which will be in the relevant language itself" (United Republic of Tanzania. 1995:49). The dominance of Kiswahili in all contexts in Tanzania, especially in the school environment, even in classrooms, creates poor spoken English among the students. That is, English is rarely heard outside the classroom, except in transactions involving a foreigner (Tibategeza, 2009). Some studies (such as Qorro, 2008) have shown that lack of English language proficiency by students in institution of higher learning affects their academic performance. Swilla (2009:3-4) states that the retention of English as the MoI in post-primary education in Tanzania may have been influenced by the need to avoid the high costs of financial and human resources required in the preparation of teachers and teaching materials. According to Kamwendo (2006), there is no doubt that the policy of official

linguistic pluralism is not cheap, that one thing that is clear is that the government is reluctant to invest in language policies on account of the cost. One of the reasons for using English as official language as well as language of education is to acknowledge the country's membership in regional and international communities. Globalisation may have played an important part in the resurgence of English as a MoI in Tanzanian private primary schools (Swilla, 2009). Whatever the reason for the choice of English might be, there is need to re-assess the language used in teaching and learning in post-primary schools in Tanzania.

The MoI in the Tanzanian seven years of primary education is Kiswahili, while English is MoI in post-primary education. English, however, is a language which most learners do not possess adequate proficiency for effective learning to take place, and this affects their success in school. The poor English proficiency among the students calls for concern with regard to the standards and quality of academic writing produced among the students both in secondary schools and institutions of higher learning. There is an outcry from many lecturers on difficulties they encounter with the students who are unable to express themselves convincingly in spoken English. Moreover, there is the effect of Kiswahili transfer to English among the Tanzania students. For example, in personal interaction with many of the students, they would often say "I come to *collect* my report/assignment" while what they meant is "I come to *submit* my report/assignment". Some students prefer to keep quiet than to utter any

word in English. Some are afraid that people may laugh at them when they speak English; some feel that they have not mastered the language and might make mistakes; instead, they prefer not to speak English to avoid the errors. Others just do not feel comfortable speaking the language no matter the situation. The problem of English as MoI in universities is causing a great challenge both to the students and the lecturers.

Lack of proficiency in English language has continued to be a common problem for the students, where they feel marginalized and excluded. The fact that some knowledge, technology, skills and techniques relevant to and acquired for national development are confined to and transmitted in a foreign language used by relatively small fraction of the population means that the majority who do not speak the official foreign (English) language are literally marginalized and are excluded from development equation (Chumbow, 2009: 24). Students are generally expected to have acquired high levels of proficiency in the language they use in reading, writing and receiving instructions. However, many studies (such as Tibategeza, 2009; Qorro, 2008) have indicated that students have not mastered the use of English as a language of learning. The poor English leads to dominant use of Kiswahili in all contexts of the university. In the classroom where English is the MoI, students make announcements and communicate with one another in Kiswahili. Some students sometimes also request to ask questions in Kiswahili or request the lecturer to explain concepts using Kiswahili. From interactions with some students and

hearing their views on the same issue from members of the academic staff, it is evidence that many of the students have not yet reached adequate proficiency in spoken English. One staff that teaches the “Basic English Language Course” and the “Communication Skills” in an informal chat with this author, narrates how a student came to his office and spoke Kiswahili to him and in response, he asked the student to use English. The student in disappointment quietly walked out of his office. Also, from informal class observation at SAUT, it is discovered that some lecturers sometimes resort to teaching in Kiswahili and some do not in any way discourage the use of Kiswahili in the classroom by the students.

### **Review of Literature**

There are many studies on the challenges of English language teaching and learning in Tanzania. Some of these studies have assessed language as the medium of instruction (Roy-Campbell, 2001), the contradiction in ideology, policy and implementation of language in education (Swilla, 2009), and the analysis of language-in-education policy implementation (Tibategeza, 2009), among others. The study conducted by Qorro (2006 cited in Qorro 2008:11) reveals that most Tanzanian secondary school students have extremely low-level proficiency as they cannot understand anything in English language but learn everything by heart, which makes quality education impossible (Qorro, 2008:10). Other studies such as Mlama & Matteru (1978 cited in Qorro, 2008); Tibategeza (2009) also show that most students and teachers are seriously handicapped when using English as the

language of teaching and learning. Trappes-Lomax (1985:11-12) attributes the reasons for the decline of success in school to the position of English and English language teaching in Tanzania; the absence of opportunity and incentive to use English particularly in the primary school, lack of specialist English teachers at primary level; and inadequate qualification of many primary school teachers. After almost four decades of Trappes-Lomax’s study, the problem of English language in Tanzanian schools continues to increase. Other studies (such as Tibategeza, 2009 & 2010) have shown that not only do the learners who graduated from primary school do not possess good knowledge of English to be able to access learning in the language in secondary education, but they are also faced with learning from teachers who themselves have not master the language.

Recent studies on problems of English in Tanzania, such as Mosha (2014) investigates the factors that have contributed to students’ poor performance in English in Zanzibar ‘O’ level secondary schools. The data for Mosha’s study was collected from interviews, classroom observation, questionnaire and documentary review. The study outlines certain factors as responsible for the low performance of students. These include untrained, and under qualified teachers teaching the subject, infrequent use of English language at school and at home, large class size, teachers’ other responsibilities, poor conducive teaching and learning environment in the classrooms, skipping of difficult topics in the syllabus by the teachers, the absence of teachers’ in-service training to raise the quality of teaching,

excess work load, lack of teaching facilities particularly textbooks, the absence of school debates and English clubs.

In another study, Mbagu (2015) examines effectiveness of classroom interactions in promoting English language learning in secondary schools in Tanzania. The study reveals the factors which hinder meaningful classroom interactions to include; large classes, lack of books, limited classrooms, teaching equipments, and lack of teachers who are well trained and motivated.

With the continuous use of English in education and its effects on the learners' performance, comes a proposal for Kiswahili to be used in all levels of education as a MoI. But for the fear of English to lose ground in Tanzania, the British government established English Language Teaching Support Project (ELTSP) in 1987, with the goal of eradicating the problems related to English language teaching and learning, and to ensure continued use of English as the MoI. This project includes: The Zanzibar English Language Improvement Programme (ZELIP); The Form 1 English Language Orientation Programme (F1ELOP), and the Secondary English Language Orientation Programme (SELOP). However, different studies such as Lwaitama and Rugemalira (1990); Byoya (1992) and Brock-Utne (2005) as quoted in Tibategeza (2009:127) indicate that "ELTSP did not achieve its main objectives of improving English teaching and learning in secondary schools".

From literature, many studies have been conducted on challenges facing English language teaching and learning in Tanzania and analysis of English

language errors both within and outside of Tanzania. For instance, Al Karazoun (2016) investigates some linguistic errors committed by Jordanian EFL undergraduate students when translating news headlines in Jordanian newspapers from Arabic to English and vice versa. Results of the study indicate that the EFL students commit grammatical and lexical errors. Ali (2011) is an empirical cross-sectional survey research on errors and feedback in second language acquisition in Bangladesh. The study generalizes the way the Bangladeshi English language teaching practitioners view their students' errors and the ways they correct the errors. The survey consisted of a questionnaire which aimed at producing quantitative data. The participants were sampled from the English language teaching (ELT) practitioners in Bangladesh, practising at different levels: primary, secondary, higher secondary levels. The findings of the study reveal that learners' English as a Second language (ESL) error correction is important. The result also indicates that the ELT practitioners in Bangladesh have tolerance for the errors made by their students, and that the teachers believe that learners' errors are indeed part of their learning process.

Sebonde and Biseko (2013) examine the issues related to morpho-syntactic errors among secondary school students in Tanzanian English Language Classrooms. The study specifically assesses the corrective feedback techniques that teachers use to handle their students' morpho-syntactic errors in speech and writing. The study was carried out in Dodoma region of Tanzania. A total of 54 students were involved from nine

randomly selected secondary schools from three districts of Dodoma in Tanzania. The study also involved 20 teacher training college (TTC) diploma trainees, as well as nine secondary school teachers of English language (one from each secondary school) with an experience of more than five years at work. The study reveals that a total of four Corrective Feedback techniques are commonly used in Tanzanian English Language Classrooms (ELCs). These techniques include focused Corrective Feedback, direct Corrective Feedback, indirect Corrective Feedback and metalinguistic Corrective Feedback. The study also reveals that teachers prefer the use of indirect Corrective Feedback when they mark written assignments while explicit and recast are the most applied techniques in handling students’ oral errors. Msanjila (2005) gets closer to the present study but the focus is on

Kiswahili writing problems among some secondary school learners. However, there are relatively scarce researches that have focused on the analysis of university students’ English language errors in Tanzania, which this study sets to bridge.

**Data/Methodology**

This study was conducted at St. Augustine University of Tanzania, Mwanza, among some selected first year students from for programmes, totaling 482. They all have gone through approximately the same number of years of education through primary and secondary education in Tanzania. All of the participants come from non-English speaking backgrounds and rarely communicate in English outside the classroom. The distribution of the students according to their disciplines/programmes is shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Participants and their programmes

Discipline/Degree in view	No. of Participants
Business Administration, BBA	198
Procurement and Chain Management, BSCP	93
Tourism and Hospitality Management, BSCT	51
Economics, BAEC	140
TOTAL	482

The participated students were asked to write in three paragraphs within a period of 60 minutes on the topic, “My Home Town”. The study identifies all the errors in the essays and classifies them into various categories. The idea was to assess the students’ writing skills, and identify errors (if any). The analysis of the errors made by the participants on the given essay

provides feedback to the researcher on the level of their writing skills.

**Analysis and Discussion**

The findings of this study show that 51% of the students’ English expressions were either incomprehensible or takes the reader quite a long time to understand the sentence(s). There were many errors associated with grammar and spelling. There was also the lack of connective

words. The assessed essays show six most common errors committed by most participants. These errors are summarised under the following headings:

- i. wrong use of verb tense;
- ii. wrong choice of vocabulary;
- iii. subject-verb agreement errors;
- iv. spelling errors;
- v. omission of some sentence elements, and
- vi. wrong punctuation.

These aspects of writing in English pose the most difficult problems to the student participants and are seen as a challenge also to lecturers who are unable to read the students' written tasks. The analyses of the errors are shown below:

#### (i) *Verb Tense*

The study shows that some of the participants are not aware of the different rules for tense usage. The examples of such errors are shown in the following sentences.

- i. I am (was) born in a quiet city by the name Dar-es Salaam.
- ii. The main economic activity are (is) agriculture.
- iii. My home town Arusha have (has) got a lot of tourist attraction.
- iv. This make (makes) the economic performance very actively.

#### (ii) *Choice of Vocabulary*

In the following sentences, the words in brackets are the correct forms of the wrongly used words, which were underlined. In sentence (vi), the underlined pronoun "it" is redundant.

- i. The one thing I lovely (love) mostly (most) about my home town is electricity.
- ii. There (they) sell yam.

iii. Kigoma is a place where culture is grately (greatly) maintained.

iv. My home town as (has) got so many tourists.

v. the people who live their (there) have been blessed

vi. Dar-es-Salaam it is a big town with a lot of activities...

vii. There (they) sell beans.

#### (iii) *Subject-Verb Agreement*

Subject-verb agreement is another aspect of grammar that poses as a challenge to the students. The students are unable to select the correct verb form that matches the subject of the sentence; in other words, they are unable to show the agreement between the subject and the verb in a sentence. Some of the examples in the data are shown in the following examples.

- i. Those things makes (make) me miss my region
- ii. Tabora are (is) found in Tanzania country
- iii. This make (makes) the economic performance very actively
- iv. Nera have (has) several social services...

According to Firth (1978:157), errors which omit the third person singular morpheme (-s) remove the necessity for concord, thus reducing the learner's linguistic burden.

#### (iv) *Spelling Error*

Most common words were wrongly spelt as they do not align with either the British or American spellings. Examples are shown below:

- i. Beatiful (Beautiful)
- ii. Agustine (Augustine)
- iii. Discipline (Discipline)
- iv. Dispite (Despite)
- v. Becouse (Because)

- vi. Histori (History)
- vii. Tuarisim (Tourism)
- viii. Atract (Attract)
- ix. Satification (Satisfaction)

#### (v) Punctuation

All the participants punctuate either the sentence wrongly or do not punctuate the sentence at all. One student wrote this:

“On the issue concerning business. Dar es Salaam is the best one most of the investors and famous business man invest at that town and got more profit”

From the above sentence, incorrect punctuation leads to either a run-on sentence or sentence fragments.

#### (vi). Omission

Some of the participants often omit some verb elements and add some pronouns (e.g. “it” where they are not required) as seen in the following sentences:

- i. is the District which (is) found at Kilimanjaro. (second ‘is’ omitted)
- ii. Kagera is found (at) North West of Tanzania. (‘at’ omitted)
- iii. There (is) somebody who do not want to give his or her money... (‘is’ omitted)
- iv. Dar-es-Salaam it is a big town with a lot of activities... (‘it’ not required)

#### Conclusion

The roles of English in Tanzania as well as in most African countries as the official language and primary medium of instruction in school, as

well as the language of international communication, and language of the Internet empower the development of the language, and the prestige it enjoys in the entire country. This study explores the challenges of English language in Tanzania in general and identified common errors of English usage by university students in particular. The study reveals that the problem that the students face with regard to spoken English also reflects in their writings. The errors cited from the students’ essay are of great concern. These errors are consistent in the assessed students’ writing. The study sheds light on the “trouble-spot” of the students where the teachers need to put extra effort to help the students in minimizing the errors and improve their written English. The results of this study can also be used in the preparation of a more effective program on “Basic English language course” at SAUT.

Since the institution has introduced “Basic English language course” to reduce the challenges facing students with the use of English, a subsequent study will be conducted to assess the level at which these students improve after completing the two semesters’ course in “Basic English Language Course”. The assessment will compare the first-year errors in written work to the ones in the final year.

#### References

- Al Karazoun, G. A. (2016). A Linguistic Analysis on Errors Committed by Jordanian EFL Undergraduate Students: A Case of News Headlines in Jordanian Newspapers. *English Language Teaching*, 9(8): 170-189.
- Ali, M. M. (2011). The Study of Errors and Feedback in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) Research: Strategies used by the



- ELT practitioners in Bangladesh to Address the Errors their Students Make in Learning English. *IJUC Studies*, 8:131-140.
- Chumbow, B. S. (2009). Linguistic Diversity, Pluralism, and National Development in Africa. *Africa Development*, 34 (2): 21-45.
- Frith, M. B. (1978). Interlanguage Theory: Implications for the Classroom. *McGill Journal of Education*, 13(002): 155-165.
- Ideh, A. E. (2012). Kiswahili as Sole Medium of Instruction in Tanzania Primary Schools: The Implications. *Dzimbahwe Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 1(1): 28-45.
- Kamwendo, G. H. (2006). No Easy Walk to Linguistic Freedom: A Critique of Language Planning during South Africa's First Decade of Democracy. *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 15(1): 53-70.
- Lennon, P. (2008). Contrastive Analysis, Error Analysis, Interlanguage. In: S. Gramley and V. Gramley (eds) *Bielefeld Introduction to Applied Linguistics*. Bielefeld: Aisthesis, pp. 51-60.
- Mbaga, S. (2015). Classroom Interaction: A Key to Effective Teaching and Learning in Secondary Schools in Tanzania. A Case of Arusha City. *General Education Journal*, 4(1): 44-52.
- Mosha, M. A. (2014). Factors Affecting Students' Performance in English Language in Zanzibar Rural and Urban Secondary Schools. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 5(35): 64-76.
- Msanjila, Y.P. (2005). Problems of Writing in Kiswahili: A Case Study of Kigurunyembe and Morogoro Secondary Schools in Tanzania. *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 14(1): 15-25.
- Qorro, M. A. S. (2008). *Prospects of Mother Tongue and Bilingual Education in Africa: with Special Reference to Tanzania*. A Collection of Conference Papers. Retrieved 12 October, 2011, from <http://www.uddannelsesnetvaerket.dk/rdb/1205421604.pdf>
- Richards, J. C. (1971). A Non-Contrastive Approach to Error Analysis. *English Language Teaching*, 25(3): 204-219.
- Roy-Campbell, Z. M. (2001). *Empowerment through Language: The African Experience: Tanzania and beyond*. Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc.
- Sebonde, R. Y. and J. M. Biseko (2013). Handling of Morpho-syntactic Learners Errors in Tanzanian English Language Classrooms. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 4(6): 1191-1199.
- Stegen, O. (2005). *Developing Bantu language Descriptions in Swahili Strengthening both Tanzanian Vernaculars and Swahili in Education*. Presentation for the SACHES Conference, September 16-19, 2005, at Dar es Salaam University.

- Ström, E. (2009). *The Situation of Ndengeleko: A Coastal Tanzanian Language*. Selected Proceedings of the 38th Annual Conference on African Linguistics, ed. Masangu Matondo et al., 229-241. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.
- Swilla, I. N. (2009). Language of Instruction in Tanzania: Contradictions between Ideology, Policy and Implementation. *African Study Monographs*, 30 (1): 1-14.
- Tibategeza, E. R. (2009). *Language-in-Education Planning in Tanzania: A Sociolinguistic Analysis*. PhD Thesis, University of the Free State.
- Tibategeza, E. R. (2010). Implementation of Bilingual Education in Tanzania: The Realities in the Schools. *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 19(4): 227-249.
- Touchie, H. Y. (1986). Second Language Learning Errors: Their Types, Causes, and Treatment. *JALT Journal*, 8(1): 75- 80.
- Trappes-Lomax, H. R. (1985). English Language Teaching in Tanzania: A Colloquium. *Utafiti: Journal of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences*. University of Dar es Salaam, 7(2): 11-26.
- United Republic of Tanzania (1995). *Education and Training Policy*. Dar es Salaam: MoEC.

### **About the Author**

**Dr. Amaka Edith Ideh** is a lecturer in the Department of Linguistic Studies at the University of Benin, Nigeria. She has taught Linguistics at St. Augustine University of Tanzania to both undergraduates and postgraduate students. She obtained her undergraduate and Master's degrees in Linguistics from the University of Ibadan, and PhD from the University of the Free State, South Africa. Her areas of research include discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, and applied linguistics.

**E-mail:** amakaide4j@yahoo.com



# New Names, New Identities: Globalization ‘Affects’ on Black Females in NoViolet Bulawayo’s *We Need New Names*

Elizabeth Adesunmbo Omotayo

The Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro/Covenant University Ota, Nigeria

Received: 28.11.2018 Accepted: 31.05.2019 Date of Publication: June, 2019

**Abstract:** The study examines the roles of globalization and technology on identity construction and alteration of black immigrants in the United States. Through the depictions of women and female characters in her novel, *We Need New Names*, Bulawayo offers a problematic of the role of technology in the lives of African characters and espouses some of the contradictions that they engender in identity alteration. The study argues that the big world has actually been made small and this has been reflected in the way everything happens, especially also with literary works. This study offers the theoretical basis for identity change by relying on the phenomenon of globalization, the concept of subaltern and the postcolonial term, “otherness” to evaluate the critical ways by which the identity of the protagonist and other black female migrants have changed in the Western diaspora.

**Keywords:** globalization, identities, subaltern, cultures, “affects.”

## Introduction

Although globalization remains to be venerated as a theory in itself, its influence across disciplines has been so far-reaching that Sengupta (2001) concludes it has led to formulations of “several antithetical and mixed concepts such as homogenization, differentiation, hybridization, plurality, localism, and

relativism and also the mixed concept like “glocalisation” (3137). Giddens (1990) further argues that the phenomenon presents “the intensification of world-wide social relation, which links distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles

away and vice versa” (64); an assertion which reflects the reality of some young girls in Bulawayo’s debut novel. While the emergence of far-right politicians as leaders of some countries may appear to have thrown spanner in the works of globalization, its impact will continue to be with us for as long as nations are linked via technology and share contacts and connections.

Aside giving a glimpse of the time setting of a literary work, the technology depiction by writers also presents “affects” on characters even though in an unintended broad sense. To scholars like Ofitserova-Smith (2003), homogenizing and other inimical tendencies of globalization always come to the forefront. Although there is the recognition of positive economic and global growth impacts of the phenomenon, there is genuine concern by many on its deleterious moral and cultural influences. Globalization’s universalizing tendencies plays out on culture and values in these three different ways as enunciated by Nederveen (2004) and Tomlinson (1999): homogenization as a result of global cultural convergence; heterogeneity due to cultural resistance to homogenization; and hybridization which points to new and constantly evolving cultural forms and identities produced by transnational processes or fusion of cultures. The prevalent outcome of the impact of globalization on many cultures is hybridization.

Bulawayo’s debut novel *We Need New Names* published in 2013, although relatively recent, has touched on contemporary history of the novelist’s native Zimbabwe, chronicling Mugabe’s

misrule, rigged elections, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) pandemic, the culture of foreign Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs) going to “third world” and of course, migrant experience from the perspective of a child and later as an adolescent. Writing mainly from a child’s perspective, the stage which is deprived of voice, might have been a deliberate choice by the novelist as the affective is expected to be more intense than in character formation and identity negotiation. The writer’s depictions and focus on how change of environment and exposure to new technologies have affected the lives of those caught in migrant flow is one with both moral and cultural implications.

NoViolet Bulawayo (born Elizabeth Zandile Tshele) is a female African writer in the diaspora who has adopted a pseudonym to mask her identity. The pseudonym adopted is one paying tribute to her late mother and her homeland. “NoViolet,” which literally means “with Violet” is one picked to honour her mother whose name was Violet and who passed away when the novelist was only eighteen months old. Bulawayo is Zimbabwe’s second largest city, where the novelist grew up before leaving for college in the United States at the age of eighteen. The assumption is that Bulawayo is the imaginary setting where Paradise, Budapest and Shanghai are located. Bulawayo and many other new African diaspora writers, especially those who have won awards for their writings have often been charged for pandering to the West by writing “sob” stories about Africa. Frassinelli (2015) while praising her for making her book

accessible to non-African readers also observes that she “contorts the continent’s past and present” (5). Habila, a fellow African diaspora writer also views Bulawayo’s novel as “performing Africa” for the global audience and the Western publishing houses. This charge is denied by Bulawayo whose commitment is “writing and honoring the damn story,” as she exhibited the courage and boldness in engaging with postcolonial discourse of laying bare the experiences of the colonized in her native Zimbabwe and the dilemma of the migrant’s “otherness” at the centre.

*We Need New Names* is a novel whose narrative styles are quite unique: the capturing of socio-political history of Zimbabwe through the lens of a ten-year old narrator; the sense of urgency and immediacy in the unravelling of the plot; and of course the humorous language, which made light the grave discourse of developmental challenges of post-colonial Zimbabwe and the attendant effect on the citizenry. The critical reading of this novel is one done from the ambit of the phenomenon of globalization and Spivak’s concept of the subaltern with a view to highlighting the impact of globalization on the lives of the female characters in the text.

Interpretation of the text based on the phenomenon of globalization exposes technology “affectiveness” on the characters in the novel. The real spaces, aided by the advancement in technology expressed in Computer-Mediated Communications (CMC) and free movement of people and services in contemporary time come with attendant effects on identity. Tesfamichael (2010),

recognizes the importance of technology as the driving force of economic, social and political shrinkage of the world ensuring ease of communication and travel. Beyond facilitating ease of communication and travel, technology is deemed to play greater roles in “affects” and identity alteration of many migrants and those who are in homeland. CMC has proven to be major tool of globalization and has enabled the deterritorialization of people even when they have not left the home space.

The collapse of the diverse geographical and cultural spheres and spaces into what is today known as a global village, where individuals operate and where new identities may be forged as a result of new experiences and exposure to things happening in faraway places has been largely the effect of globalization. Indeed, this effort posits that the globalized world is a “small world,” where we experience an apparent collapse of geographical spaces and spheres and where individuals experience changes that may affect their identities. This study avers that the big world has actually been made small and this has been reflected in the way everything happens, especially also with our literature. In this instance, the effort has been about inquiring into how the craft of Bulawayo has reflected the morphing of the world in African literary life as portrayed in her novel, *We Need New Names*. Having experienced globalization elements both from the core and periphery spaces, the depiction of new affects has been through CMC that the characters have been exposed to even in the homeland long before translocation.

Given that the novel was written within proximate years after the phenomenon of globalization has been examined from several disciplinary perspectives, it becomes important to examine works like Bulawayo's to see how female African fiction writers have created and inadvertently modeled the transformation of individuals when they relocate to new environments. Bulawayo's novel, which came within the proximate years of the dialectics of the globalization phenomenon, straddles two continents: her African home state of Zimbabwe and the United States of America, her "hostland." With Bulawayo's migration to the US and that of her protagonist who goes by the name "Darling," we are presented with a character who travels distances in seconds and faces the reality of life as a poor subaltern in her homeland and as a powerless and illegal migrant living through "unbelonging" in a hostland and struggling to carve a new identity while living or existing on the fringe in her adopted place of residence.

While Bulawayo's novel can be seen from the perspective of migrant literature through its thematic preoccupation, this work can be viewed also as querying the extent to which characters can travel and transcend disparate places and be involved in identity changing realities in somewhat virtual spaces and large geographical distances of Zimbabwe and the United States. This study does not seek to structure its outcome within a confined location and culture, but rather, it explores the problems of identity change foisted on the female characters in the novel through technology as an affective

represented by its liminal characters, the illegal migrants.

### **Identity Change: Biological or Social?**

The process of change of identity in the individual can be conceived of from either a biological or social sense or even both. How does change occur in the individual? Is it more biological or social? The changes that occur can both be biological and social and the predominance of one over the other depends on the physiological and psychological states of the individual at the time of the consideration. However, the change in Darling, the protagonist of *We Need New Names* (WNNN), is both biological and social considering her transitioning from a child in one environment to the adolescent experience in another. The writer portrays a young protagonist from childhood through adolescence transiting between the biological and the social identities. Harris (2014) in "Awkward Form and Writing the African Present" sees WNNN as a novel "that problematizes constructions of identity defined in geographically bonded terms by exploring the heterogeneity, porosity and mobility of the many borders that crisscross our globalized world" (7). This observation sums up the precariousness of fixed identities in a global world, where even before physical movement; there is already importation of cultures and ways of life via CMC. In fact, Harris is of the opinion that before Darling's migration, there is already polysemy and multiplicity of borders marked by the crisscrossing between Paradise through Budapest and then Shanghai, all fictional locations within the city of

Bulawayo representing different class stratifications and living conditions.

This study lays the theoretical basis for identity change by relying on the phenomenon of globalization, the concept of subaltern and the postcolonial term, “otherness” to evaluate the critical ways by which the identity of the protagonist and other black female migrants have changed in the Western diaspora. Bhabha (1994) famously articulates identity formation to a similar kind of liminal condition engendered by cultural difference, and conceiving of interstitial subjective space as the territory between competing identity structures that are often imagined in the binary of the mother country and its former colony.

This view suggests that the characters of interest here namely Darling, Aunt Fostalina and Marina to some extent are subjective outcomes of the environment they relocated to. Their identities can no longer be normal because they are indeed no longer “wholesome Africans,” because their identities have certainly been altered. In the section titled “How They Left” in the text, the narrator stepping out of Darling’s voice states: “They will never be the same again because you just cannot be the same once you leave behind who and what you are, you just cannot be the same” (WNNN 148). Of course, this quote points to the reality of all migrants: male or female; white or black. The novelist herself lays bare this view of translocation challenges to Hartselle in an interview:

“Everyone who leaves their homeland to live in another has to deal with all sorts of adjustments and of course one of the easy ones,

as in Darling’s case, is food. But beyond that she has a hard time with the harsh Michigan winters (when we first meet her, she is indoors and not by choice, but because the cold and the snow have taken over the outside, making it unliveable for someone who’s otherwise spent most of her life outdoors). There’s also alienation from the homeland itself, the geographic space, and from family. There is the language barrier that may be dealt with but not totally done away with. And that specific melancholy that may occasionally seize an immigrant because the body and soul remembers another space and will crave for it.”

All of the key issues identified by the novelist in the quote such as translocation, food, environmental factor, alienation from family and friends, language barrier and the issue of melancholy all express the vulnerability of migrants and are deemed partly responsible for the efforts to assimilate and with subsequent identity alteration or change. And as rightly observed by Isaacs (2016), as the female migrants navigate their emerging selfhood, they are forced to forge an identity among several competing subjectivities. Like iron in fire, that does not come out the same way it enters the furnace, and as humans, these characters cannot be expected to reflect a pristine African identity anymore, because they have been through the “fire of diasporic confusions and ambivalences.” Not only would they struggle to maintain a duality of existence, they would be expected to satisfy the two environments, which do play out in the

tendency to acculturate, assimilate or even resist the new norms and always resulting in hybridity at various levels. The identities of the black female migrants can no longer be internally coherent due to gendered migration experiences of the characters. We can even before analyzing them and putting them in perspectives, locate them within established theories of social change. It has been noted that social identity and self-categorization theory, for example, suggests that collective self-representation emerges from basic categorization processes (Turner, 1999). Having established a group-level sense of self, it can then influence goal-directed decision making. For instance, Darling, the protagonist of the novel has been subjected to self-categorization as an immigrant without papers and has inadvertently self-absorbed the status and forged an identity that indeed is temporal. At first, she nurses the hope that very soon Aunt Fostalina will be buying her a ticket to visit home when she says “I’ll just go maybe for two weeks and then I’ll come back, I say even though Aunt Fostalina is still ignoring me” (WNNN 191). And later a permanent identity, which she has to negotiate through what is known in theory as a “group-level sense of self.” In Darling’s attempt to achieve this, she seeks to go home and then return to assert her complete diaspora self-identity. This has to happen if she is to function properly as an immigrant living under the law. The reality is stated below in the dialogue between the protagonist and Aunt Fostalina:

“Child, it’s not like your father is Obama and he has the Airforce One; home costs money. Besides

you came on a visitor’s visa, and that’s expired; you get out, you kiss this America bye-bye, Aunt Fostalina says...But why can’t I come back? I can just renew my visa, I say, I say... Darling leave me alone, do I look like the Immigration to you? She says (191).”

### **Globalization and Identity Change**

In Richard Applebaum’s 2005 book, *Critical Globalization Studies*, Robinson advances the far reaching effect of globalization emerging across the disciplines and attests to how it is reshaping how we view our world. The phenomenon of globalization in literature is not much different from its variants as expressed in other disciplines. It is the coalescing of disparate cultures, perceived elimination of physical distances and affective consequences of CMC in the relational system of individualized or a grouped world. It is fusing the local and the global through movement of people, goods, capital, technology and services. Not only do all these things move, they also move at such speed that distances have been collapsed and there is now almost a perfect asynchronous harmony even in the way people relate as global communities formed across the globe enabled strongly by new technologies. In a telephone conversation with her friends back home, Darling marvels at the power of technology to transport people over far flung locations in the following quote: “Time dissolves like we are in a movie scene and I have entered the telephone and traveled through the lines to go home. I’ve never left, and I’m ten again” (WNNN 207). Robinson recognizes how “the pace of



social change and transformation worldwide seems to have quickened dramatically in the latter decades of the twentieth century, with implications for many dimensions of social life and human culture” (126-127).

The globalization era has brought about different tools of engagement across the globe (e.g. the Internet) that has enormous potentials to alter and change identities. In *WNNN*, Darling begins to experience identity change right before migration due to her exposure to an American medical drama seen on television. The chapter from where the novel got its title “We Need New Names” is one where the identity alteration of Darling and the other girls begin to manifest even without travelling as a result of the influence of an American medical drama “Emergency Room” with the acronym ER. In their bid to rid Chipo their eleven-year-old friend of her pregnancy, the young girls go to a secluded place to remove her “stomach” once and for all because they don’t want her to have the baby and die in the process. In their attempt to remove the unwanted pregnancy, the girls decide to assume the identities of the American doctors in the medical drama: “In order to do this right, we need new names. I am Dr. Bullet, she is beautiful, and you are Dr. Roz, he is tall, Sbho says” while the third identity assumed by the third girl named Forgiveness is “Dr. Cutter” (84). And Chipo whose “stomach” is to be removed asks “Who am I” (84). The influence of a medical drama recorded thousands of miles away is so far reaching that some poor girls in Zimbabwe already have America

imaginary fully ingrained in their subconscious.

Depictions of Darling, Chipo, Sbho and Forgiveness as female children in African space who have tried to morph into characters thousands of miles away show how the global can have a great influence on those in a local environment and how flimsy the divide line between environments and cultures have become. The female children with criminal innocence yield to global influence that one can conclude that they exist in dual environments: the first being the materially deprived Paradise located in Zimbabwe; and the other being materially rich American society represented by the medical drama, ER, and one that is transmitted electronically. What can be gleaned from this incident is that the technology/computer/communication mediated environment is causing people to accept the unreal with it assuming a vehicle for identity alteration.

As stated in the introduction, globalization process is one viewed by scholars like Robertson (1992) and Giddens (1991) to have universalizing tendencies and promoting modernity and homogenization of cultures. The assertion of homogenization of cultures may not be absolutely overwhelming because of the cultural pushbacks to imperialism, which postcolonialism attempts to propagate. It may be acceptable to say that there has been a cross-cultural exposure that has led to a better understanding of cultures and customs; and which can be ascribed for hybridization at different levels. The female African characters portrayed both within the local and global spaces

in *WNNN* can be located within this perspective and we can assume that they are no longer pure in their “Africaness.” Perhaps if this is true, it may then be extended to mean that they are changed Africans and certainly as the title of the novel suggests, they may indeed need new names to describe their new identities. Just as the narrator states that because many of the migrants are staying illegally, they remain subalterns in a fringe existence: “We hid our real names, gave false ones when asked” (*WNNN* 244). And when the migrants have their own children who are availed of right to American citizenship, they are given names without cultural and national ties leading to total loss of identity. The narrator puts it thus:

We did not name our children after our parents, after ourselves; we feared if we did they would not be able to say their own names, that their friends and teachers would not know how to call them. We gave them names that would make them belong in America, names that did not mean anything to us: Aaron, Josh, Dana, Corey, Jack, Kathleen (249).

In the two instances where there are suggestions of needing new names, they connote much more than changing names, but identities as well.

#### Depictions of New Identities in *We Need New Names*

One of the factors that have been identified as playing a role in identity change or formation has been the protagonist’s adoption and exposure to new technology narrated by Darling in her observation of her cousin TK:

“Once I went up there to see what he was doing and I found him just sitting in his bed with that thing on his lap and *tobedzing* and *tobedzing* and *tobedzing* , bullets and bombs raining on the screen, I said, what are you doing and he said, Can’t you see I’m playing a game? And I said, what kind of game do you play by yourself? And he said, Get the fuck out, I will not be friends with TK; he shuts himself up there like he lives in his own country by himself (*WNNN* 155).”

And in another instance, she presents Uncle Kojo’s opinion of her aunty thus:

And he says, Fostalina, ever since you started this weight thing you never cook. When was the last time we actually had a real dinner in this house, heh? You know in my country, wives actually cook hot meals every day for their husbands and children. And not only that, they actually also do laundry and iron and keep the house clean and everything (157).

The new technologies mentioned in the novel are those that fall under the general terminology referred to as communication technology, and those referred or alluded to are: cameras, phones and devices such as IPOD and the GPS navigators; smart online technologies like Google; direct online applications such as Netflix, XTube, RedTube; and Social Media applications such as *Facebook* and *Instagram*.

The importance of the new technology to identity alteration and eventual change can be considered and viewed from the perspective of globalization.

The narrow niche that affects our work here has to do with CMC driven by a slew of hardware and online applications with all enabling the real time communications between individuals, people and groups. These new technologies have been adopted and used in the literary field in a way that they drive characters and depict affects in different ways by authors writing in contemporary times. Affects which imply influence or to have an impact on something are important when we critique literary works because they are important in transmitting messages and intentions and are also outcomes in the characters that are portrayed. The use of CMC definitely suggests that characters may be virtually construed as being so and when they do; it means that they communicate across electronic spaces that collapse distance and synchronize time. It therefore means there is an “in-betweeness” that exists. It is this that certainly mediates the communication that takes place between characters. With CMC, writers employ products of technology as harbingers of cultural equalization or domination. For example, the use of computers to watch pornography can be considered as an act of sexual mediation. In *WNNN*, the protagonist’s identity has been greatly shaped by the exposure in her new environment to new technology.

I have decided the best way to deal with it all is to sound American, and the TV has taught me just how to do it. It’s pretty easy; all you have to do is watch *Dora the Explorer*, *The Simpsons*, *SpongeBob*, *Scooby-Doo* and then you move on to *That’s So Raven*, *Glee*, *Friends*, *Golden Girls* and so on, just listening and imitating

the accents.....The TV has also taught me that if I’m talking to someone, I have to look him in the eye, even if is an adult, even if it is rude (196).

The inference that can be drawn from Bulawayo’s novel is that technology in a significant way mediates the transition from childhood to adolescence of the protagonist, Darling and her friend Marina, both adolescent female African migrants. No mention is made of when Marina made it to the United States other than her being the grand-daughter of a chief from Nigeria and the daughter of a mother who does only night shift in an American hospital. Darling and Marina with their African American friend, Kristal have their sexual education being facilitated by their exposure to XTube and RedTube both online applications, which are technologically driven and meant for consumption of adults, while the female adults around are totally oblivious of the young girls’ experiments.

The sex education of young adolescents in an African space is handled by mothers and older female family members who act as guide to prevent embarrassment with unwanted pregnancies. In Adichie’s *Americanah*, a novel written same year as Bulawayo’s *WNNN*, Auntie Uju is Ifemelu’s guide on issues bothering on relationship with the opposite sex. When Ifemelu has unprotected sex with her boyfriend Obinze while in a Nigerian University, in a manner typical of adult females around, Obinze’s mum, a college professor condemns it and advises privately that the two people wait until when they are able to assume responsibility for its consequences. For Darling and Marina, their location has

exposed them to flicks on all manner of sexual indulgencies that exist in the West. Darling narrates their escapade thus: “When we come from school, we fling our book bags by the door and head straight to the downstairs computer. Before, we used to watch XTube, but now we have discovered RedTube, which is way classier and doesn’t have many viruses” (202). The young girls, unknown to female adults around them already have sexual awareness and are already indulging in sexual gratification through CMC without their knowledge and the unexpected outcome being identity alteration.

Bulawayo through the protagonist and her friends depicts the role that the new free socio-electronic space can play in identity alteration. For growing female children, it is expected that they learn how to transit from adolescence into adulthood from those who know and share cultural affinities with them. Among Africans, the experiential development of the female child is brokered by female adults in their societies who take them through the rituals and cultural norms of the society. In the absence of this cultural society in the protagonist’s hostland, she joins the other young females to fill the gap by learning in free spaces of online communities represented by YouTube, XTube and the likes. Aunty Fostalina who is her primary host appears to have also failed in guiding the young protagonist. Nowhere in the novel is there a mention of Darling receiving any lesson on African cultural expectations of the female child. Darling, and the other adolescent female African

migrant, Marina do not seem to have imbibed any lesson from their culturally aware female adults. This means that the identities of these characters have been altered by the absence of the informal cultural education that could have helped to shape their “Africaness”.

In the novel, Darling, Marina and Kristal always hurry home without adult supervision to watch pornography on socio-media platforms. They are seen to have substituted the lack of a real physical community of adult life coaches with the ubiquitous socio-media with its lack of cultural mediation. So, the new technology becomes their teacher and shapes their identities. For the two young female African characters; Darling and Marina, the identities formed are totally different from what could have been if they were back “home” in Africa. They experience a cultural transition that has been mediated by online applications that really do not belong to anyone and is controlled by unknown forces whose intentions may be shady. With the nature of the access they have to new technology, they forge identities that are totally contradictory to their homeland culture. In this passage we see the protagonist wishing she could talk back to her mum:

“I start to call her crazy but I hold it and tell myself that it is one of the American things I don’t want to do, so I just roll my eyes instead. On TV, on Maury Show and Jerry Springer and stuff, I’ve seen these kids calling their mothers crazy and bitches and whores. I’ve practiced the words, but I’ll never say them aloud to my mother or any other adult (206-207).”

Bulawayo portrays the young Darling and Marina receiving first lessons in sex education from technological devices that suffer from lack of real ownership and viable cultural identity. They eventually graduate to masturbating without the adults knowing. In these depictions they become students and practitioners of sexual acts learnt from “unowned” technological sources. The portrayal here is the author’s way of condemning the unsupervised access to the socio-media of the young and the impressionable represented by Darling and her friends. The indictment of the adult females in the diaspora is narrated in the following lines by Darling: “Aunty Fostalina asks if I want to go places with her. She leaves me alone and does not force or beat me up like perhaps Mother or Mother of Bones would if I was not doing what they wanted” (160). The indulgence and nonchalance by Aunty Fostalina coupled with the exposure to technology lead to identity alterations of Darling and Marina. Their new identities certainly have been negotiated more through free “unowned” social spaces.

The television also plays a major role in Aunty Fostalina’s effort to be thin like white women as she is constantly following on aerobics and weight loss exercises relayed on it. The novel portrays how the TV creeps into her life with it virtually controlling how she thinks and looks; she is enthralled by the powerful TV culture that influences daily lives in her adopted country: “she has to keep up with the women on TV-four-five-six, and walk, and walk” (151). Uncle Kojo retorts on Aunty Fostalina’s attempt to be thin:

“I actually don’t understand why you are doing all this. What are you doing to yourself, Fostalina, really-exactly-what? Kick. And punch. And kick. And punch. Look at you, bones, bones, bones. All bones. And for what? They are not even African, those women you are doing like, shouldn’t that actually tell you something? That there is actually nothing African about a woman with no thighs, no hips, no belly, no behind (153).”

Certainly, with this portrayal, her identity has been altered to suit her “hostland” where thinness is revered. Given her obsession with wanting to alter her weight and become thin, the writer simply stops short of changing her name to “Aunty Fostathinner.” No doubt Aunty Fostalina’s identity has been altered and it is possible her name which holds no cultural identity might have been acquired on her arrival in the United States.

The TV has also been very effective in Darling’s quest for assimilation especially in her attempt to sound American all for the purpose of integration and assimilation in the new environment. She presents her efforts this way:

“I have decided the best way to deal with it all is to sound American, and the TV has taught me just how to do it. It’s pretty easy; all you have to do is watch *Dora The Explorer*, *The Simpsons*, *SpongeBob*, *Scooby-Doo*, and then you move on to *That’s So Raven*, *Glee*, *Friends*, *Golden Girls*, and so on, just listening and imitating the accents. If you do it well, then before you know it, nobody will ask you to repeat what you said (196).”

But the mimicry attempt, a process in assimilation is always one producing absurd results. Aunt Fostalina sounds so funny such that when “rolling her *r*, the sound of it is like something is vibrating inside her mouth” (199), a mimicry Darling finds irritating. With time and practice, Darling begins to sound American that when on a phone conversation with her mum she quips: “America has taught you to speak English to your mother and with that accent” (206). But the old accent creeps in anytime she talks fast and gets excited and Darling observes when that happens: “I start to sound like myself, and my American accent goes away” (223). Imitating American accent means assumption of a new identity which is unreal, an absurdity which points toward assimilation.

The process of identity change is not only restricted to the young ones, even the adults are also affected by migration in many ways than just mere attempt at mimicry. Aunt Fostalina in her relationship with her partner and live-in lover, Uncle Kojo, suggests an identity very alien to Africa. Of the relationship, Darling reveals “Uncle Kojo, TK’s father, who is like Aunt Fostalina’s husband but not really her husband because I don’t think they are married-married” (150). The relationship between Aunt Fostalina and Uncle Kojo appears transactional as he laments the abandonment of African culture where the wife cooks and cares for the husband. As Aunt Fostalina does not cook for Uncle Kojo and they are not married, then they are both considered co-tenants.

Aunt Fostalina’s transition to someone new transcends the physical where she is exercising rigorously in order to shed weight and be like a white woman. Her decision to live with a man without being married to him is one that shows total disavowal of African culture or it may have been a deliberate choice due to her legal status in America. The narrator states that Uncle Kojo is also without papers. But while he is not presented as engaging in infidelity, Aunt Fostalina is portrayed as disrespectful of Uncle Kojo because without caring for his feelings and ego, she gets involved in a relationship with her white neighbour, Eliot whom she brings to the same home she shares with Uncle Kojo for sex. Aunt Fostalina’s involvement with another man and more harrowing, a white man is probably the reason Uncle Kojo drowns his sorrow and bruised ego in alcohol.

Aunt Fostalina’s relationship with a white man, a representative of the imperialist, who probably will be gloating within himself is an affront against Uncle Kojo, a postcolonial subject. And for agreeing to get amorous with Aunt Fostalina in the same space she shares with Uncle Kojo shows this feeling by Eliot that “I can have your woman all I want even within your space.” This incident is a carry-over from slavery era where according to Hallam in “The Slave Experience: Men, Women and Gender” white men felt entitled to their black female slaves’ bodies. The white masters saw their black female slaves as objects of fantasy and even raped some of the married ones due to their husbands’ inability to protect them. Of course, in Africa,

women also get involved in infidelity/adultery but it is never flaunted. Darling when in Zimbabwe narrates how her mother becomes involved in adultery in the absence of her husband. The man she is involved in adulterous relationship with always steals in under the cover of darkness and leaves before daybreak. In actual fact, the infidelity act is likened to the act of stealing and the identity of the man shielded from Darling.

### Conclusion

Bulawayo may not have set out to depict the roles of technology in identity alteration deliberately; however, she has portrayed how lives of her characters are entwined with new “thingies.” Her depictions of technological devices show how our lives have become tethered and entangled with them. The roles they play in the lives of her characters most especially the females show both their positive and negative impacts. These depictions in her novel indicate the influences and power of the CMC in a postmodern world. She has used technology to portray class difference (the children seeing the phone as a novelty) in her native Zimbabwe; as a tool of dubious humanitarian services (the NGOs, CNN and BBC networks constantly taking their pictures); a symbol of cultural imperialism (Aunty Fostalina trying to get thin) and an imperfect system (Uncle Kojo’s navigation system not working right) to which we have tethered our daily lives and have inadvertently lost our identities.

There are no instances where Bulawayo exclusively portrays the other gender as being superior users of the new

“thingies”. What she has simply done is to give a realistic representation of how new technology engages with the daily lives of the African characters either as migrants in hostland or citizens in homeland. She gives an informed perspective of the state of new technology usage among the people in her society. Through her depictions of women and female characters in her novel, *We Need New Names*, she offers a problematic of the role of technology in the lives of African characters and espouses some of the contradictions that they engender in identity alteration. This may have been occasioned by an identity crisis following her migration to the United States of America where many of the migrants face the process of acculturation and assimilation.

The sudden access to technological resources also appears to have been presented as a steep learning curve. This makes it difficult for the African migrants to experience gradual cultural modulations of self and to be able to adjust to new experiences and form identities that are negotiated and constructed consciously by themselves. The technological adaptation can be daunting as to lead to unintended outcomes as the migrants’ identities change with inadvertent mediation. The inference drawn at the end of it all is that the portraiture and depictions of the effects of technology on female characters written from the perspective of a female examined through the lens of globalization is one that is not necessarily gendered. Globalization driven mainly by proven and the new emerging innovations in technology has been shown to have tremendous effects

on the identity of the major characters, both male and female, but with the

novelist beaming a search light on mainly the female characters.

## References

- Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. (2013). *Americanah*. Lagos: Farafina.
- Applebaum, R. and W. Robinson (2005) *Critical Globalization Studies*. New York: Routledge. Print.
- Bhabha, Homi. (1994) *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Bulawayo, NoViolet. (2014). *We Need New Names*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Frassinelli, Pier Paolo. (2015). "Living in Translation: Borders, Language and Community in NoViolet Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*." *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, Vol. 51(6) pp.711–722. DOI:10.10801/17449855.2015.1105855.
- Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and Self – Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Hallam, Jennifer. "The Slave Experience: Men, Women and Gender" Thirteen Media With Impact. <http://www.thirteen.org/wnet/slavery/experience/gender/history2.html>. Web. 10 April, 2019.
- Hartselle, Christian. Interview with NoViolet Bulawayo. *Manuscripts*, Vol. 80 (1), article 53. <https://digitalcommons.butler.edu/manuscripts/vol80/iss53>. Web. 17 July 2018.
- Harris, Ashleigh. (2014). "Awkward form and Writing the African Present." *The Salon*, 7: pp.. 3–8. Print.
- Isaacs, Camille. (2016). "Mediating Women's Globalized Existence through Social Media in the Works of Adichie and Bulawayo." *Safundi*, Vol. 17 (2) pp. 174–188, DOI:10.1080/17533171.2016.1179463.
- Nederveen Pieterse, J. (2004). *Globalization and Culture: Global Melange*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Ofitserova-Smith, Maiia. (2003) "Moral Implication Of Globalisation" *Polish Sociological Review* 143, pp. 259-273.
- Robertson, Roland. (1992). *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*. London: Sage.
- Robinson, Williams. (2008) "Theories of Globalization." in George Ritz (ed) *The Blackwell Companion to Globalization*. Hoboken, New Jersey: Blackwell Publishing.
- Sengupta, Chandan. (2001). "Conceptualising Globalisation Issues and Implications" *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 36 (33), pp. 3137-3143.
- Tesfamichael, Meala. (2010). "Diaspora's Contribution to the Developmental Process of the Homeland: the Case Study of the Eritrean Community in Switzerland" Unpublished BA dissertation, University of Westminster.
- Tomlinson, John. (1999). *Globalization and Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.



Turner, J. C. (1999). "Some Current Issues in Research on Social Identity and Self-categorization Theories" in (Eds.) N. Ellemers, R.

Spears, & B. Dossje, *Social Identity: Context, Commitment, Content*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell. Pp. 6-34.

### **About the Authors**

**Elizabeth Adesunmbo Omotayo** is a doctoral student of English (Literature) at the Department of Languages and General Studies, Covenant University, Ota and a Principal Lecturer in the Department of General Studies, Federal Polytechnic Ilaro, Nigeria. She is a member of Modern Language Association (MLA) and African Literature Association (ALA).

Email: [sunmbo\\_omotayo@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sunmbo_omotayo@yahoo.co.uk)

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1634-417x>



## Postcolonial Trauma and Environmental Despoliation in Helon Habila's *Oil on Water*

Idakwo Ocholi Victor<sup>1</sup> & Stephen Ogunpitan<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Covenant University Ota/The Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro

<sup>2</sup>Lagos State University, Ojo, Nigeria

Received: 29.11.2018 Accepted: 31.05.2019 Date of Publication: June, 2019

**Abstract:** This study looks at Helon Habila's novel, *Oil on Water* (2012) in its engagement of the destruction of the landscape and reflection of the nature of socio-economic conditions of citizens of the Niger Delta of contemporary Nigeria. The novel reveals the domestic and social ruptures that the devastation of the ecology by man's hunt for fortune has occasioned. By using Frantz Fanon's postcolonial notion of colonial mentality as a preferred approach to this discourse, the study critically analyses the novel and views the novelist's utilization of the changing scenery as a creative trope for the description of trauma. Through the pulsating narrative of the quest for the kidnapped British wife of an expatriate petroleum executive, the excesses of colonial institutions and the complicity of government functionaries in despoiling the region are brought to the fore. Thus, personalities are redefined and communities are either restructured or dispersed in a fashion that re-events the colonial reality. The conclusion is drawn on the supposition that environmental wreckage resulting from industrial production reveals a paradox of lack in the midst of abundance for the individual and the community. The work enjoins literary artists to seek avenues for constructing new tales that will acknowledge the distortion and also fascinate readers beyond the parables that western trauma doctrine endorses.

**Key Words:** Landscape, Postcolonial theory, Environmental trauma, Wreckage.

### Introduction

In postcolonial literature, disaster narratives have often registered a compelling presence, reaching across

regional and political divides to reveal a broader perspective of human suffering. The ensuing effects of natural traumas, take even greater significance when

URL: <http://journals.covenantuniversity.edu.ng/index.php/cjls>

considered from the view-point of Frantz Fanon's categorization of citizens and subjectivities of the developing world as "the wretched people of the earth." Countries that fit into this mould have a long history of the dehumanizing effects of slavery, the pain of colonial conquest and oppression, agitations for independence, and futile efforts of post-independence nation-building. Their narratives are usually viewed against the milieu of psychological torture, virtual and visible rape as well as the depletion of the rich resources of their land. For some countries which have had political autonomy for more than half a century, social fractures that had been ingrained in their experiences during the era of colonialism have continued to linger to the present moment.

In the conversation that continues to challenge imperial notions, radical transformation is frequently reflected to present an insight that human tragedy is no longer constricted to the isolated grandiose event. It is now taken as an experience that is instigated by an assortment of factors. Luckhurst (2008) citing Bruno Latour in a different context has described the challenges confronting man across cultures as "knots" or "hybrid assemblages" that respond to "questions of science, law, technology, capitalism, politics, medicine and risk" (14-15).

In the light of colonial realities, Fanon has argued that the psychic problems that impact on the colonial subject have become even more multifaceted than ever before, as we consider the "array of the larger problems of modernity" (iv). In the era of the post colony, several reflections of our habitually

modernizing world are listed as instigating elements that complicate life further. As such, the old methods that Western scholars have provided for the enterprise of analyzing the human condition, have become obsolete and redundant (Afolayan 2014). This is so because such methods had originally been fashioned for an intellectual assessment of socio-cultural conditions of the Westerner, and they do not agree with the realities of our dynamic world. Earlier on, Caruth (1995) had succeeded in stirring the debate among scholars by challenging them to inquire into other sites of cultural realities that serve as essential factors in the definition of trauma. For this, Rothberg (2014 xiii) welcomes the call for the decolonization of trauma theory so that new paradigms would be introduced to displace "those of classical, psychoanalysis-inspired predecessors."

Consequent upon the foregoing, this work engages Frantz Fanon's postcolonial thought which views the colonial contact between Western powers and the developing societies of the South as a violent encounter that cannot be redressed outside the context of violent resistance. Fanon had argued that owing to the nature of colonial conquest which "first encounter was marked by violence" (26), displacing the structures of such a system which were entrenched "by dint of a great array of bayonets and cannon[sic]" cannot be achieved through "magical practices... or friendly understanding" (25). Drawing from this Fanonian argument which endorses the use of violence to dislodge colonial structures, the paper examines how Helon Habila's *Oil on*

*Water* (2012) portrays characters whose frequent experience of upsetting incidents exacerbates their hopeless plunge into the quagmire of denied existence. It views the novel's depiction of lurid violence as an experience that disperses communities and redefines individuals – settlers and natives alike. In order to liberate themselves from their confined conditions, the oppressed natives take their destinies into their own hands by taking the battle to the group that had all through their chequered history been the aggressor. The consequences are far-reaching as they impact on both the settler and the native. Nevertheless, the degree of impact for the warring clans is not the same.

### **Review of Traditional Trauma Notions**

It is essential to note that human misfortune is not revealed exclusively where we seek opportunities to draw a line between the perpetrator and the victim of a traumatizing incident. Sometimes, even in the event of a natural disaster, which is evidently an act of nature, we are apt to probe further, seeking explanations for how someone may have either directly or remotely contributed to the disaster. For instance, lingering pain resulting from human-induced climate change and environmental degradation as manifested in industrial sites across the globe, impacts adversely on man in a manner that is different from event-based extremities. Nixon (2009:2) describes this as a kind of 'slow violence'. On this, he encourages scholars to pay attention to the kind of violence that is neither stunning nor

immediate, "but rather incremental and accretive."

Rothberg insists that recognizing the brand of violence that is slow but sustained should place a demand on scholars to seek new parameters for assessing painful experiences that displace the situation of the victim and the perpetrator. His concept of human tragedy, highlighting the incongruities of the impact of climate change perpetrated by the rich West, the pain of which is borne more significantly by the poor South is in accord with Fanon and Marxist postcolonial notions, both of which are hinged on a system that foregrounds a persistent exploitation of the weak by the strong.

In an attempt to adopt the Anthropocene – classical notion of trauma – Chakrabarty (2009) describes the material reality of the modern age by linking the insight of "geological agency" to postcolonial thoughts with an all-embracing awareness of a general challenge. This is not to minimize "the historical role that the richer and mainly western nations have played in emitting greenhouse gases...[b]ut scientists' discovery of the fact that human beings have in a process [of capitalist modernization] become a geological agent points to a shared catastrophe that we have all fallen into" (218).

Chakrabarty's analysis presents a paradox of the climate as another agent of human suffering, admitting that catastrophes arising from changes in the climate are "unintended consequence[s] of human actions" (221). The temporality and subjectivity that this contradiction implies should inspire further inquiry into facets that trauma

scholarship is yet to address satisfactorily. This is further revealed in the conversation on industrial production and the consequential climate change. Our fear is further justified when we note that colonial theories are ill-equipped and predictably reluctant to adequately and objectively account for the experiences of people in other climates that are still subsisting at the fringes of a modern world that is propelled by the train of capitalist production.

West and non-West dichotomy is crucial to our appreciation of the conflicting western theories and postcolonial discourse. Kwame (1991: 346) had stated that retheorization that will accommodate the proliferated contexts of our modern world should not be undervalued in a mono-cultural sense. To define the preoccupation of postcolonial discourse therefore, it is usually considered as a mixed-grill of intellectual engagements that scrutinizes the circumstances of colonial encounters between the developed nations of the North and the developing nations of the South. Afolayan sees this in the context of a critical review of the “literal encumbrance of relationship between erstwhile colonial masters and their ex-colonies” (315). On his part, Oyegoke (2000: 279) believes that “The temporality and spatialization of postcoloniality in African writing makes the seductive attraction more irresistible (as) the terms seek to describe literary and intellectual activity emanating from the vast, frequently misunderstood and ill-used space named Africa”. He takes the argument further by stating that African literature has the peculiarity

which stands it out as a genre that has always been “multicultural, polyglot and increasingly multiracial” (283).

The Westerner usually savors the erroneous perception that former subjugated societies are homogeneous cultural entities. It is by this same assumption, during the era of colonialism that the colonizing powers of the West embarked on the forceful balkanization of homogeneous groups and integration of those that are heterogeneous. In a vicious sense, a similar scenario is still being played out again in the form of typifying contiguous societies and their respective cultures. Afolayan observes that beyond the far-reaching remarks on existing unequal relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, “the heterogeneity of ex-colonies which had existed before the time of imperialism becomes even more complex after autonomies were granted” (317). In spite of the obvious differences between the sub-entities, postcolonial discourse points at the blurring lines, which seem to make the previous differences between them inconsequential. To a limited extent, this broad labeling may be factual; but the varying temporal and spatial indicators would no longer permit us to always make such sweeping generalizations.

### **Traumatic Aftermaths of Colonial Exploitation in *Oil on Water***

*Oil on Water* is a fictive narrative of the physical violence that the oil-rich communities of the riverine region of Nigeria suffer as a result of oil exploration activities. The story which is episodic in structure opens with the report that Isabel Floode, the British

wife of an expatriate engineer has been kidnapped. It is the incident that would lead to the search for which Zaq, a veteran journalist would be contracted to locate the kidnappers and mediate between them and James Floode, the kidnapped woman's husband. Zaq therefore leads a pack of journalists on a boat cruise that takes them into the heart of the creeks that is believed to be the militants' fortress. But in a strange twist of events, Zaq himself dies in the course of the search for Isabel having contracted a water-borne hemorrhagic disease which Dr. Dagogo-Mark describes as "dengue fever." The other journalists who had initially been enthused by the allure of career fame soon suffer disillusionment when they discover that their expedition has not only become interminable but life-threatening.

The novelist frequently presents a panoramic view of the sea and the villages along the creeks and from time-to-time, reveals how the search crew comes across unsettling images of despoiled ecology and floating carcasses. Through the eye of Rufus who has submitted himself to Zaq's mentorship, Habila reveals gory impressions of the exploitative and destructive activities of the oil extracting firms. According to Rufus, they "saw a human arm severed at the elbow bobbing away... its fingers opening and closing, beckoning" (34). The effect that this spectacle registers on the witnesses is grim. Several days afterwards, the lingering memory of the "lone arm floating away, sometimes with its middle finger extended derisively, before disappearing into the

dark mist" (34) continues to torment Rufus. He states that, compounded with recurring brushes with death, the morale of the group continues to suffer a downward gradient. With the prolonged uncertainty about the fate of Isabel, they make a rational decision to return to mainland Port Harcourt.

The first village the explorers pass through looks "as if a deadly epidemic had swept through it." (7). The narrator reports that at the back of one of the houses, they discover a chicken pen with all the occupant's dead. In an evocative manner, he draws the reader's attention to the decomposing remains of the occupants whose maggots are "trafficking beneath the feathers" (ibid.). From every indication, this village used to be a thriving one, luminous with life, but it has now become a desolate shadow of its old self. A stroll from "one squat brick structure to the next, from compound to compound... [reveals rooms that] ... were all empty, with wide open windows askew on broken hinges." (ibid.)

The aftermath of oil-exploration that is reflected in the many deserted villages is a clear reflection of the social tragedy that Rodney (1972) describes as the disrupted life of a community that was once thriving and self-sustaining. The narrator explains that the gloom that pervades the atmosphere over these communities is picturesque of the restiveness instigated by the destructive agents of industrialization and modernity. The oil companies leave on the trail of their production activities, abandoned rigs, oil spillage that pollutes the surrounding water, dead fish bobbing up on water surface and

decomposing animals killed either by hunger or by exposure to the chemicals seeping out as industrial wastes. Further indicators are infestation of mosquitoes with their swarms of larvae paddling over the surface of every collection of water (8, 9, 71-72).

To register their discontent with the persistent rape of the resources of the land, angry young men in the novel take up arms to sabotage the activities of the oil firms. In desperate situations, they resort to kidnapping oil workers, especially the expatriates and their family members on whom they demand huge ransoms. Greed takes a better hold of the militants considering the huge fortune that their militancy brings to them.

It is significant to note that the horrendous episodes in the creeks validate Fanon's view that colonialism with all the institutions that shot out from it is usually sustained by violence. Accordingly, violent resistance and assertion is what the colonized subject will need to do in order to stem its tide (*The Wretched of the Earth* 25). In an approach that is akin to Soyinka's depiction of violence in *The Man Died* and *Season of Anomy*, Habila echoes Fanon's "defense of violence against the colonial oppressor" (Whitefield 25). He insists in his call in *Oil on Water* that both at the level of the individual and the community that violence begets violence. Thus, violence is an inevitable tool left for the native to use for the protection of his interest. For the community, the people are forced to band up in the commonality of their trauma to dislodge a common foe,

which in this instance encompasses all the residues of colonial oppression.

### **Despoiled Landscape as Trope for the Portrayal of Traumatic Reality**

In a narrative style that is reminiscent of Ernest Hemingway's novel, *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952), Habila presents a panoramic view of the sea to reveal the depressing circumstances of some of his characters. The scenery leaves the reader in a state of suspense where he continues to anticipate that something ominous would happen. In one of the episodes, he likens the mournful atmosphere that hangs over the crew to that of a ghost ship. Even the engine of the boat transporting them is "muffled by the saturated air" (9). They are suffused by a haunting silence as they cruise over "the black expressionless water [where]... no birds or fish or other water creatures" are in sight (loc. cit).

Even though seafaring may actually hold an appeal to a wanderlust adventurer, a seemingly interminable voyage such as the one in which the anxious reporters have embarked upon, turns out disappointingly to be an uninspiring and an unexciting voyage. Thus, the uncertainty that hangs over the seascape continues to evoke a sensation of tragic eventuality that neither the crew nor the string of communities can do anything to avert. Even the occasional stopovers at some of the villages along their route offer little or no succor to the fatigued and disillusioned explorers. In their spent state, they are depressed with another unsettling realization that the promise of a safe haven for them to camp for the night cannot be fulfilled. This turn of events is contrary to the assurance that

they had received from their guide, Tamuno that his friend Karibi would house them for the night. The reason for their reluctance to host the journalists is that a military invasion on

- .... Him say we must go. We no fit stay.
- But we just got here. Is something wrong?
- Yes. Dem hear say soja de come here today. Dem de come find am.
- Find am for what?
- ....
- Dem say he de help de militants.
- So why isn't he hiding? (11)

A community that is this terrified is in no position to offer shelter to strangers whose real mission is still shrouded in mystery. As a result of the commotion, which has become a frequent experience among the creek dwellers, friendship and filial ties are frequently sacrificed for the sake of self-preservation. For example, in a later episode, Rufus describes how a similar scenario manifests in the relationship between him and Boma his sister. Even though she is compelled to move into his small room for a temporary accommodation after her husband had abandoned her, he is unable to render any lasting assistance that would lighten her scarred face.

In a bid to depict the contrast between urban life and rural life, Habila presents the relative comforting atmosphere of the Lagos Bar Beach under which floundering people bask, and he juxtaposes it to the tense atmosphere under which the communities of the Niger delta manage to scratch a living. Through the character of Zaq, Habila presents the contrasting conflict that some of his characters find themselves—first as a Lagos socialite, and secondly as a veteran journalist leading other

the village was imminent. It results in eerie pandemonium both for the residents and the passers-by. The following conversation expresses their fear and vulnerability:

reporters on the quest for the abducted British woman in the riverine villages. Through the dramatic turn of events in Zaq's life, Habila is able to present an objective perspective on the injustice suffered by the oil-producing villages.

In his narration, Rufus reports that right from the time that the journalists set out from Irikefe on the trail of the kidnapers, they are frequently confronted with disturbing sights of “abandoned villages.... hopeless landscape...[and] gas flares that always burned in the distance.” (23). Nine days into the search, after the other reporters had returned to Port Harcourt, Rufus begins to entertain the thought that the entire exercise is after all misadventure (3-4). He too has started missing the relative peace and promise of a better life that attracts people to the city.

The irony in the comparison that Habila draws between life in the city and survival in the riverine villages is reflected in the fact that the ostentatious life style of city dwellers is actually financed by the resources harnessed from the degraded wetlands of the oil-producing communities. Tragically, life in the villages does not hold any appeal



to the residents. That is why Tamuno makes a passionate appeal to the journalists to take his malnourished and sea-washed son, Michael to Port Harcourt where he is optimistic that he will enjoy a more promising future. From every indication, life in the creeks has not treated him well as Rufus' description of his appearance reveals:

His hair was reddish and sparse, his arms were bony like his father's. They were both dressed in the same shapeless and faded homespun shirts and trousers, their hands looked rough and callused from seawater, they smelled of fish and seemed as elemental as seaweed. (5)

Having missed the chance to be accommodated in the first few villages they visited, the determined Tamuno with his son serving as guide to the journalists takes them to his own village. On arrival, Chief Ibiram welcomes them and graciously hosts them for the night. The condition of living in this village contrasts sharply with that of the other villages that have suffered the devastating impact of oil exploration activities. From every indication, it is yet to be torched by the polluting influences of modernity.

Habila is consistent in ensuring that Chief Ibiram's village remains anonymous because the residents are perennially nomadic. But unlike the journalists who are on the trail of the kidnappers, the village is on its own quest for communal peace and tranquility, which can be found only in places that are far from the polluting activities of the oil companies and the violence that they often provoke.

Presently, they can still boast of houses that enjoy the mirth and warmth of a healthy and a thriving community. They even enjoy the luxury of sufficient food, which they are most willing to share with visitors. To a reasonable degree, they can also boast of a modicum of security, where they are free from any form of infiltration from outside. To the narrator, every event in the surroundings is an essential element for reassuring the visitors and even the reader that Chief Ibiram's village has all the necessities for life. For instance, the smoke from the hearth that streams out through the thatch roof is indicative of lively and promising human activity that the other ransacked villages have lost. The old woman telling stories to children is also a reminder of what life used to be in the other villages that now can only boast of broken monuments which are relics of a glorious past. It is the same reason why Rufus is encouraged at the moment of his waking up to "hear the voices of children and women." (24). We are however reminded that the present state of affairs in the village may not be permanent after all, because the clan's present location is its fifth since the Chief Molabo led his clansmen to flee their ancestral village owing to the threat that gas flaring and other exploration activities had posed to their lives.

By narrating the harmonious atmosphere that permeates Chief Ibiram's village, Habila reflects on the pattern of life that predates the era of colonialism. He draws our attention to the once flourishing industry that has now been truncated by colonial contact. During

the primeval period as portrayed in the novel, men, women and children were all gainfully and rewardingly engaged in agrarian and fishing vocations. The men were not idle, neither were the women and the children. For instance, the men who had gone out to fish at the wake of dawn, are sighted at the end of a rewarding fishing expedition “hauling their canoes out of shallow water and tying them to the house stilt” (25). The narrator reports that they have brought in their catch in plastic buckets and wicker baskets evidencing a bountiful catch. They relish the harvest and this satisfaction puts a smile on each of their faces.

As promising as their condition seems to be, Habila alerts us to the bleak future that awaits the residents of the village. The narrator bemoans the fact that their own peace and promise may soon suffer the same fate of the other plundered villages once the explorers, the military and the militants set their foot on its soil. The imagery that the novel conjures by personifying the sun as “huge and dying, spilling orange and red” (25) symbolizes the prosperity of primordial societies which is threatened and disrupted by the ravaging system of colonialism and industrialization. The system continues to ravage the ecosystem that had previously sustained human life. Contrasting to the peace and economic buoyancy enjoyed in Ibiram’s village is the “rust on the shallow river and the mangroves” that the other villages suffer as a result of colonial contact (25). Rufus melancholically reflects on how some of the resources have disappeared, recalling his boyhood days when he and

his sister used to catch crabs. But the crabs have long disappeared. He laments that even the “water is not good” (25). With the use of flashback, the narrator mourns the reality that the surrounding water has been polluted to the extreme condition that now endangers aquatic life on which the communities used to thrive. He remembers that before things actually went sour, he had sustained himself from selling crabs that he picked at the shores. From the money he made from this harmless trade, he paid his way through school. All this is only recollected as a nostalgic reflection of a season of prosperity that gradually disappeared when industrial explorers invaded the communities.

From the foregoing, Habila reveals the consequences of the despoliation of the environment on the living conditions of some of his characters. They undergo periodic personality transmutations, which the narration reveals as fallouts from the extreme conditions that they are often exposed to. Noteworthy is the fact that Zaq’s personality dips from a person full of life and zest to a wasted man waiting for his painful death. Zaq had been introduced as a nationally celebrated journalist when he featured as a guest speaker at the Lagos School of Journalism. Afterwards, at the Chinese Restaurant, where he is celebrated by many girls and admirers, his wit and enthusiasm as a celebrity is revealed. But his riotous life style, especially in the area of excessive drinking of alcoholic beverages is one that sets him on the sloppy path of self destruction. As much as everyone is desirous to listen to his wit and pay

attention to the tips that he jocularly shares from his journalistic experience, Zaq is perceived to be a person who “seemed more focused on getting wasted” in his excessive consumption of intoxicating drinks (18).

As a result of his heavy exposure to the elements and to the sewage of industrial production, Zaq’s immunity to dengue fever collapses. Tragically set on an irreversible slide to his end, he loses his wit and he becomes introverted and melancholic. We see him gaze vacantly at life and the glitz of career success as an abyss of hopeless adventure, his frustration and general irritability becoming increasingly manifest (26-7). His failing health is a metaphor of the state of the plundered land that had at a certain time in the past been a very fertile and sustaining one. The destruction that his abuse of alcohol has wrecked on his health is similar to the abuse that the once fertile land and water resources of the creeks have been subjected to through the persistent rape of the gifts of nature, resulting in the irreparable degradation of the environment by oil exploring companies. Zaq’s career is therefore truncated in the same way that the dreams and the aspirations of the Niger Delta people have been shattered.

At the social level, Habila portrays Chief Ibiram’s village as a community whose collective will to distance itself from the ravaging influences of city life and industrial pollution is now broken. Towards the end of the novel, the narrator describes Ibiram as a rudderless and an uncertain chief whose clan is at the mercy of the rising flood water which has forced them to relocate again

(185). His clan is also threatened by the militants who now see him as a traitor trying to return Isabel to Port Harcourt for a reward (197-197). He now leads the surviving members of his clan northwards, towards Port Harcourt, the very place that their patriarch, Chief Molabo had turned his back on just a while ago (182-183). It is a traumatizing admittance of defeat to the suffocating and ravaging influence of industrial production powerfully financed by the oil companies, which are agents of the rich nations of the West. The failure of Ibiram’s clan to maintain the tempo of its resistance to Western influences confirms Fanon’s conclusion that the colonial system which derives its sustenance from violent domination and repression is still as vicious as it was during the era of pre-independence.

The discussion in this study may not have focused on the sufferings of Isabel Foolde during the period, but it is essential to observe that her abduction is just one of the trouble realities of her life. She had suffered loneliness, alienation owing to the geographical and psychological distance from her husband long before she discovered his betrayal in having an illicit affair with his maidservant. Her trauma which stems from marital insecurity resulted in her excessive reaction that culminated in the events leading to her kidnap. Even for James her husband, whose indiscretions with the maid, a lover to Salomon his driver is the trigger-point for the erratic actions of Isabel. James suffers his own trauma as he agonizes over the kind of torture that his wife would be subjected to in the hands of

her kidnappers. When he offers to join the search party, it turns out to be desperate move to atone for his illicit affairs, but he is restrained from doing that because of the fear that he was vulnerable to being kidnapped by his wife's abductors. Zaq like James during the period of his physical and emotional torment, embraces alcohol for solace.

### Conclusion

This study has drawn on the conversation of postcolonial trauma to argue that the future of trauma theory lies in extending her look beyond the traditional characterization of the perpetrator of trauma and the victim. The line that separates the perpetrator from the victim of trauma in the 21<sup>st</sup> century world is blurred as Habila reveals that the actors can be undeniable members of either sides of the divide. The definition of what constitutes human suffering varies from one cultural setting to another. For the people of the delta villages, their individual and social tragedies are fueled by confutations arising from the complicity of local and foreign forces

### References

- Afolayan, K. (2014) "Wole Soyinka's Samarkand and Other Markets I Have Known: a Postcolonial Reading." *English Language Teaching Today ELLT*, 10 (2). (pp. 315-323.
- Caruth, C. (1995). 'Introduction,' *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth. Baltimore and London. John Hopkins UP. (pp. 3-12). Print.
- Chakrabarty, D. (2009) 'The Climate of History: Four Theses'. *Critical Inquiry* 35.2. 197 – 222.

whose actions erode the very elements upon which the communities had subsisted for generations.

In the context of Fanon's postulation that colonial encounters are disruptive of the developmental processes of primordial societies, the characters in *Oil on Water* are torn between the conflicts in a technological-driven modern world where the consequences of domestic suffering, and perpetration of violence on a communal scale and the despoliation of natural endowments may from time-to-time overlap. This study has therefore viewed the novel as a fictive portrayal of the ugliness that laces postcolonial subjects' quest for personal and communal solace in a rapidly disintegrating world. It concludes by contemplating Habila's success at utilizing his creative resources to reveal the changing nature of violence and power, which objective is to continue in the tradition of distinguishing between the privileged powerful South and the oppressed poor North.

- Fanon, F. (1967) *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York. Penguin.
- Kwame, A. A. (1991) "Is the Post in Postmodernism the Post in Postcolonialism?" *Critical Inquiry* . Vol 17 No 2 (Winter) Chicago.
- Habila, H. (2012) *Oil on Water*. Lagos. Parresia Press.
- Hemingway, E. (1952 ) *The Old Man and the Sea*. New York. Charles Scribner& Sons
- Luckhurst, R. (2008) *The Trauma Question*. London. Routledge.

- Nixon, R. (2009) *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Cambridge. Harvard University Press.
- Oyegoke, L. (2000) "Aesthetic Juggling: Spatiality, Temporality and Postcoloniality in African Writing." In Rita Wilson and Caron von Maltzan (eds). *Spaces and Crossings: Essays on Literature and Culture in Africa and Beyond*. Oxford: Peter Lang.
- Rodney, W (1972) *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. London. Bogle-L'Ouverture.
- Rothberg, M. (2014) Preface: 'Beyond Tancred and Clorinda – Trauma Studies for Implicated Subjects'.
- In *The Future of Trauma Theory: Contemporary Literary and Cultural Criticism*, eds. Gert Buelens, Sam Durrant and Robert Eagleton. London and New York, Routledge. (p. xi).
- Soyinka, W. (1980) *Season of Anomy*. Walton Thames. Nelson.
- Soyinka, W. (1975) *The Man Died: Prison Notes of Wole Soyinka*. Harmondsworth. Penguin.
- Whitehead, A (2008) "Journeying Through Hell: Wole Soyinka, Trauma and Postcolonial Nigeria". In *Studies in the Novel*. Vol. 40. No. 2. *Postcolonial Trauma Novels*. (Spring & Summer). (pp. 13-30).

### About the Authors

**Idakwo Ocholi Victor** is a doctoral student in the Department of Languages and General Studies, Covenant University, Ota and a Principal Lecturer in the Department of General Studies, the Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro in Ogun State, Nigeria. His research interest is postcolonial discourse of traumatic elements in the narrative of selected works of African novelists. Idakwo studied English at the University of Jos and Literature at the University of Lagos.

Email. ocholi.idakwo@stu.cu.edu.ng; ocholi.idakwo@federalpolyilaro.edu.ng

**Dr. Stephen Ogunpitan** teaches literary studies at the Lagos State University, Ojo. He specializes in critical terrorism studies and has published widely on American and Nigerian civil war literature.

Email stephen.ogunpitan@lasu.edu.ng



## Le dialecte comme un défi au traducteur littéraire : le cas d'*òkùkò nti ike* d'okeke Chika Jerry

Utah Nduka David<sup>1</sup> & Nwosu Adaeze Ngozi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup>Abia State University, Uturu, Nigeria

**Received: 18.12.2018 Accepted: 19.05.2019 Date of Publication: June, 2019**

**Résumé:** Un auteur a tout le droit d'écrire son œuvre dans n'importe quelle langue de son choix, et dans la langue choisie, il peut décider d'écrire dans un dialecte. Est-ce possible que cela peut poser un défi au traducteur d'un œuvre littéraire ? Le dialecte est l'un des aspects les plus complexes de tout processus de traduction que le traducteur doit maîtriser pour éviter une traduction fautive ou la perte de sens et d'intention. En utilisant la théorie de variation linguistique, précisément l'aspect de la théorie de dialectologie linguistique de Williams Labov (1966) et la théorie de sens en traduction de Danica Scleskovitch et Mariane Lederer (1984), cette communication a montré comment le dialecte peut affecter l'acte de la traduction. Afin d'illustrer les défis posés par les dialectes dans la traduction littéraire, nous avons examiné l'œuvre, *Òkùkò Nti Ike*, un roman Igbo rempli d'un dialecte Igbo (le dialecte d'Enu-Onitsha). Nous avons donné des explications à ces mots et expressions dialectiques d'Enu-Onitsha pour aider le traducteur qui en fait face.

**Mots Clés:** la langue, le dialecte, la traduction, le défi

**Abstract:** An author has every right to write his works in any language of his choice and in a chosen language; he can also decide to write in any dialect of the language. Is it possible for these choices to pose a challenge to translator of a literary work? Dialect is one of the most complex aspects of translation process that a translator must master to avoid a wrong translation or lose the meaning and intention. Using the theory of linguistic variation, precisely the aspect of linguistic dialectology of Williams Labov (1966) and the theory of meaning in translation of

Danica Scleskovitch and Mariane Lederer (1984), this study showed how dialect can affect translation processes. In other to showcase the challenges posed by dialect in literary translation, we studied a literary work titled *Okuko Nti Ike*, an Igbo novel that has a lot of Igbo dialect (Enu-Onitsha dialect). We explained these dialectic words and expressions derived from Enu-Onitsha so as to enable the translator overcome the challenges he may encounter while translating the work.

**Keywords:** language, dialect, translation, challenges

## Introduction

La langue joue un rôle clé dans la traduction étant donné que c'est à travers la langue que la traduction s'exprime. Cependant, la langue peut être un obstacle aux traducteurs. Taylor (2017) note que la langue elle-même n'est pas le seul obstacle que les traducteurs qualifiés doivent surmonter pour réussir et rendre les documents accessibles à un public plus large. Il existe aussi le défi des dialectes. Que ce soit en arabe, où il existe un grand nombre de versions différentes parlées dans un certain nombre de pays dans une région du monde ou en espagnol, où les colonies historiques ont répandu une langue à travers le monde, les dialectes signifient que même si la langue est la même chose à la base, il existe des différences distinctes qui affectent la compréhension du mot parlé et écrit.

Grace à la traduction que Seleskovitch et Lederer (1986) voient comme « la restitution du sens dans une autre langue, c'est le rendre intelligible sur deux plans ; c'est le faire comprendre sans rendre brumeux ce qui était clair, ni ridicule ce qui était digne » la compréhension entre les langues devient facile. Farnoud (2014) ajoute que la traduction est un exercice de compréhension et de réexpression d'un discours qui suppose la mobilisation de connaissances linguistiques et thématiques.

Des précédents, c'est évident que la traduction permet au traducteur, ayant les connaissances requises, de transmettre de l'information d'une langue à une autre. Et que le message contenu dans la langue source doit être compris et puis réexprimé d'une manière claire, correcte, fidèle et efficace dans la langue d'arrivée. Il est donc, nécessaire que le traducteur comprenne tous les mots de l'auteur et nous voulons voir si les dialectes peuvent empêcher la compréhension.

## La langue et le dialecte

Le Dictionnaire, *Le Petit Robert* (1982) définit la langue comme un « système d'expression du mental et de communication, commun à un groupe social (communauté linguistique) » et le dialecte comme « la variété régionale d'une langue ». Pour Marie (2014), la définition des termes « langue » et « dialecte » n'est pas toujours très claire. Voici les définitions données par le dictionnaire en ligne, *le Trésor de la langue française*. La langue c'est un « système de signes vocaux et/ou graphiques, conventionnels, utilisé par un groupe d'individus pour l'expression du mental et la communication » (1). Quant au mot Dialecte c'est une « Forme particulière d'une langue, intermédiaire entre cette langue et le patois, parlée et écrite dans une région d'étendue variable et parfois instable ou confuse, sans le statut culturel ni le plus

souvent social de cette langue, à l'intérieur ou en marge de laquelle elle s'est développée sous l'influence de divers facteurs sociaux, politiques, religieux, etc. » (1)

Si l'on s'en tient à la définition du dictionnaire et à l'usage qu'en font de nombreux linguistes, les dialectes sont donc des formes particulières d'une langue appartenant à un sous-groupe des locuteurs de la langue. Néanmoins, dans de nombreux cas, les deux termes sont utilisés indifféremment et on rencontre souvent le terme « dialecte » pour parler des langues régionales, aussi appelées langues minoritaires.

De sa part, Taylor (2017) a ceci à dire :

A dialect differs from a language in that it is not, strictly speaking, its own official form of the spoken or written word. Two dialects can both be versions of the same language, but they are different in their own way. Roughly speaking, a dialect is a form of an official language that is limited to a certain social group, region, or even country.

Un dialecte diffère d'une langue étant donné qu'il n'est pas, à proprement parler, sa propre forme officielle de mot parlé ou écrit. Deux dialectes peuvent être des versions de la même langue, mais ils sont différents à leur manière. En gros, un dialecte est une forme de langue officielle limitée à un certain groupe social, une région ou même un pays. (Notre traduction)

À la différence des accents ou de l'argot, les dialectes ne changent pas simplement la façon dont certains mots sont prononcés ou utilisés, mais ont tendance à apporter leur propre version

de mots, voire leurs propres mots distincts, qui les rendent différents dans une certaine mesure. Cela signifie que même deux personnes parlant l'igbo, par exemple, pourraient ne pas être entièrement capables de se comprendre, car leurs versions de la langue qu'ils connaissent ont été dictées par leur lieu de résidence et leur entourage.

### **Pourquoi les dialectes causent-ils des problèmes de traduction?**

Le dialecte, quand il se présente dans une activité traductive peut poser des blocages au traducteur s'il n'est pas bien géré. Ces problèmes se manifestent aussi au niveau inter-linguistique qu'intralinguistique. Claire (2018) a fait une étude commentée sur « Jane Hodson, *Dialect in Film and Literature* » ou elle postule que le dialecte est plus qu'une combinaison de variations régionales et sociales. Pour lui, il s'agit donc d'une exploration stimulante des nombreuses façons dont le dialecte doit être compris comme un médium artistique participant à la caractérisation du monde social et esthétique des œuvres de fiction dans lesquelles il est utilisé. En d'autres termes, bien que généralement considéré comme une garantie d'authenticité, le dialecte est une construction nécessitant la collaboration active de l'écrivain ou du cinéaste avec son public ou son lectorat pour être pleinement fonctionnel.

Courriol (2015) dans sa thèse de doctorat intitulée « Pour une étude traductologique du plurilinguisme littéraire : la traduction française de l'insertion du dialecte dans le récit italien contemporain » examine la situation linguistique particulière de l'Italie, plus précisément le phonème du



plurilinguisme à travers quatre œuvres littéraires italiennes. Le travail a analysé cette langue mêlant deux systèmes linguistiques différents sous l'angle de la traduction pour pouvoir dresser un parallèle entre les situations italienne et française. Sa recherche conclut qu'il est possible de recréer les mêmes effets culturels dans la version traduite quand le traducteur fait recours à un parler régional dans la langue d'arrivée.

Traduire les dialectes d'une langue à l'autre vient toujours avec des problématiques. Taylor (2) souligne qu'il y a deux grands défis causés par le dialecte y compte le défi de trouver le bon traducteur et de gérer un manque de traduction directe. Le premier d'entre eux est un problème qui survient souvent lorsque quelqu'un parle un dialecte différent de la langue d'origine. Le deuxième défi qui se pose lorsque l'on traite des dialectes est l'absence de traduction directe de certains mots. Les dialectes basés sur des divisions géographiques peuvent souvent développer leurs propres mots distincts au fil du temps, ce qui signifie que même si l'on parle couramment deux langues, on aura du mal à traduire directement le texte.

Si quelqu'un utilise des mots dans les documents originaux tirés d'un dialecte géographique spécifique, il peut être impossible de trouver la traduction directe dans une autre langue. Dans ce cas, le travail du traducteur devient plus complexe, donc il doit être capable de lire et de comprendre la signification et le ton du document original, puis de la traduire dans l'autre langue aussi bien qu'ils peuvent sans perdre de leur signification et de leur ton. C'est une

tâche difficile qui nécessite la contribution et les compétences d'un traducteur expert d'où évoque l'exigence de la théorie de sens de Danica Scleskovitch et Mariane Lederer (1984).

Le dialecte est sans aucun doute l'un des aspects les plus complexes de tout processus de traduction et, s'il n'est pas correctement géré, il peut en résulter une traduction incorrecte, voire une perte de sens et d'intention. Pour cette raison, il est extrêmement important qu'un traducteur soit capable de gérer les différences présentées par le dialecte et de les surmonter. Voilà pourquoi, nous faisons ce travail pour savoir à quel point le dialecte peut être une pierre d'achoppement à une bonne traduction.

### **La langue Igbo et les parlars d'Onitsha**

La langue Igbo est l'une des langues majeures parlées au Nigeria, surtout dans la région du sud-est du pays et dans quelques parties du sud-sud. La langue a plus de 20 millions usagers qui l'emploient comme langue maternelle. Au début, elle utilisait l'alphabet *nisibidi* mais a cause de l'harmonisation phonétique et graphique, elle utilise maintenant l'alphabet latin dans son écriture. C'est une langue tonale qui possède plusieurs variations. Moyogo (2008) atteste qu'il y a des centaines de dialectes et de langues igboïdes mutuellement intelligibles avec l'igbo standard, tels que l'ikwere, l'enuani ou les dialectes ekpeye. Parmi les dialectes les plus courants d'igbo, il y a umuahia, owerri-isuama, umuahia-ohuhu, oka-awka, afikpo, aniocha, bonny-opobo, eche, mbaise, asa, ngwa, nsuka, oguta, unwana-ungwana, pour citer que cela.

Ugochukwu (2010) en citant Echeruo (1998) divise la langue igbo en deux zones dialectales principales :

- La zone d'Onitsha, composée de quatre sous-régions : Igbo de l'ouest, Osomari, Nsukka-Udi et Izzi-Abakaliki, Awka et Ihiala-Uli étant considérées comme des régions de « fortes variations locales » et de « marques territoriales ».
- La zone d'Owerri, composée de cinq sous-régions : Mbaïse, Afikpo-Eda, Ohafia-Bende-Ohuhu, Ngwa-Azumini et Ikwerre-Ahoadia.

Donc, le parler d'Onitsha (Onicha) est l'un des dialectes principaux d'Igbo utilisé dans la ville d'Onitsha, un centre commercial qui se trouve dans l'Etat d'Anambra où il existe deux « *sous-dialectes* » : 'Otu-Onitsha' et 'Enu-Onitsha'. Williams (1972), Emenanjo (1976), Okeke (1984) et Echeruo (1998) soutiennent cette catégorisation de parler d'Onitsha en deux groupes. Nkamigbo et Eme (2011) en citant Ikekeonwu (1987) expliquent que le dialecte d'Otu-Onitsha est parlé par les non-indigènes d'Onitsha surtout les commerçants qui y se sont installés tandis que le Enu-Onitsha est le parler des indigènes originaux d'Onitsha.

Les deux variations de la langue Igbo parlées à Onitsha viennent de la même famille des langues de Benue Congo, qui est l'une des sous-familles des langues de Niger-Congo. Onumajuru (2016) opine que ces parlers d'Onitsha diffèrent à l'Igbo central aux niveaux des sons vocaliques, consonantiques et les items lexicaux et syntaxiques. Dans cette étude, nous avons à faire avec l'aspect écrit d'Enu-Onitsha, tels qu'il est employé dans la création romanesque par Okeke Chika Jerry dans

l'un de ses romans intitulé *Okukọ Ntị Ike*.

### Résumé d'*Okukọ Ntị Ike*

*Okukọ Ntị Ike* est un roman igbo publié à Edumail Publications Limited, Onitsha en 2013. Cette œuvre de dix chapitres et quatre-vingt-quatorze pages parle d'un jeune garçon appelé Ifeanyi. Le père d'Ifeanyi, Uwakwe avait tout fait pour aider son fils à devenir honnête et travailleur mais Ifeanyi a décidé d'avoir des mauvaises compagnies jusqu'au moment où ceux-ci lui ont mené à sa ruine et il était mis en prison. Cet emprisonnement et sa condamnation à mort lui a fait penser de sa vie et il a regretté ses actions et s'est repenti. Heureusement, les prières et la foi de son père l'ont aidé et Ifeanyi a été pardonné par le gouvernement.

### La vie de l'auteur de *Okukọ Ntị Ike*

*Okukọ Ntị Ike* est écrit par Okeke Chika Jerry. Il vient de l'état d'Anambra du Nigéria. Il a fait ses études secondaires à Community Secondary School Ezinifite, Anambra, et sa licence en Linguistique à Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra. Il a obtenu des autres licences en Théologie, en Génie Civil et en Administration Publique de l'Institute of Management and Technology, Enugu. Okeke Chika Jerry a écrit beaucoup d'œuvres surtout en langue Igbo. Parmi ses œuvres sont : *Ka Anyi Sụa Igbo*, *Uwa Dị- Okpara*, *Aturụ Murụ Ebunụ*, *Amaghị Igbo Asụ Oyibo*, *Maka Ego*, *Onye Oso Ahia*, *Okosisi*, *Asamma*, *Ihe Chi- Fotere* et *Okukọ Ntị Ike*.

A noter c'est que, venant de l'état d'Anambra, l'auteur utilise souvent le dialecte d'Enu-Onitsha dans ses œuvres.

### Cadre théorique

Cette étude est encadrée autour de deux théories en tenant compte de la nature de la recherche. Il y a d'abord la théorie de variation linguistique, précisément l'aspect de la théorie de dialectologie linguistique avancée par Williams Labov (1966) et la théorie de sens en traduction autrement appelé l'approche interprétative de la traduction proposée par Danica Scleskovitch et Mariane Lederer (1984).

La théorie de Labov soutient fortement le principe de l'étude d'isoglosses en dialectologie et la géographie linguistique. L'isoglosse s'occupe des décalages qui distinguent un dialecte particulier. Ces distinctions peuvent être de nature lexicale, sémantique, phonologique, phonétique, ou un autre type. Quant à la théorie de sens de Danica Scleskovitch et Mariane Lederer, trois principes sont les piliers sur lesquels elle repose. Ils ont présenté ces principes sous forme d'un schéma -> Compréhension -> Déverbalisation -> Réexpression. Suivant ce schéma, la déverbalisation permet une extraction du message de sa forme linguistique afin de permettre une réexpression dégagée de l'influence de la langue source.

La théorie de Danica Scleskovitch et Mariane Lederer soutient que le sens appartient au discours, à la parole et au contexte. La signification linguistique étant donc un sens des mots en dehors de l'usage. Le sens, la théorie soutient, est axée sur les significations

linguistiques, mais c'est l'ensemble du texte qui permet de comprendre le vouloir dire de l'auteur. Cette théorie appelle donc au traducteur la tâche de communiquer la pensée de l'émetteur d'un message.

Ces théories sont aptes à la présente étude dans la mesure où la théorie de Labov nous aidera à dégager et à classer les différences existantes entre l'Enu-Onitsha et l'Igbo central tels que nous les récupérons dans le corpus '*Okukọ Ntị Ike* d'Okeke Chika Jerry. C'est avec la théorie de sens de Scleskovitch et Lederer qu'un traducteur peut arriver à produire une version fidèle de ce roman dans une autre langue.

### Méthodologie de l'étude

Nous avons fait une lecture détaillée du roman en étude pour identifier les expressions et mots dialectiques d'Enu-Onitsha tels qu'ils sont employés par le romancier. Nous les avons analysés en proposant la version de l'Igbo centrale appelé 'Igbo Izugbe' pour qu'un traducteur n'ait pas de confusion dans son quête de produire une version fidèle dans n'importe quelle langue d'arrivée.

### Les mots dialectiques trouvés dans le roman, *Okukọ Ntị Ike*

Nous voulons relever les mots dialectiques (MD) que nous avons trouvés dans *Okukọ Ntị Ike* et nous donnerons les mots standards (MS) Igbo de ces mots dialectiques

	Les Mots Dialectiques	Les Mots Standards
1)	...wee <b>rue</b> n'ụlọ ya (p.4)	wee <b>ruo</b> n'ụlọ ya
2)	Mmiri <b>magbadoro</b> ha niile (p.4)	mmiri <b>mara</b> ha niile
3)	... bụ <b>etu</b> nnwa ya nwoke (p.4)	... bụ <b>otu</b> nnwa ya nwoke
4)	... <b>eje</b> akwụkwọ n'oge (p.5)	... <b>aga</b> akwụkwọ n'oge

	Les Mots Dialectiques	Les Mots Standards
5)	... nna ya <b>jewe</b> oru ... (p.5)	... nna ya <b>gawa</b> oru...
6)	... n'ime <b>ugbedee</b> (p.6)	... n'ime <b>mgbedee</b>
7)	... ebe o <b>jere</b> (p.6)	... ebe o <b>gara</b>
8)	Ihe Ifeanyi ji <b>alata</b> (p.7)	Ihe Ifeanyi ji <b>arata</b>
9)	Ọ bu <b>etu a</b> ... (p.8)	Ọ bu <b>otu a</b>
10)	... si arusa <b>obe</b> le umuaka (p.8)	... si arusa <b>obere</b> umuaka
11)	... ọ huru ya n'anya <b>ri nne</b> (p.11)	ọ huru ya n'anya <b>nke ukwu</b>
12)	... <b>ure</b> akwukwo (p.11)	... <b>ule</b> akwukwo
13)	...ga-apia Ifeanyi <b>utarị</b> (p.12)	...ga-apia Ifeanyi <b>utali</b>
14)	N'elu <b>ekpema</b> (p.15)	N'elu <b>tebulu</b>
15)	... <b>rue</b> taa (p.15)	... <b>ruo</b> taa
16)	... <b>gugbadoro</b> akwukwo (p.18)	... <b>guchara</b> akwukwo
17)	<b>Lekenu</b> ka iha (p.21)	<b>Leenu/ Lee</b> ka iha
18)	... <b>etu</b> ihe ahu (p.22)	... <b>otu</b> ihe ahu
19)	... <b>kugbue</b> ya (p.22)	... <b>kugbuo</b> ya
20)	Ifeanyi <b>kulili</b> (p.23)	Ifeanyi <b>kuliri</b>
21)	<b>Eri oge</b> Achuike... (p.24)	<b>Kemgbe</b> Achuike
22)	... umunna anyi bia <b>be m</b> (p.25)	... anyi bia <b>nanke m</b>
23)	... gawa <b>be gi</b> (p.25)	... gawa <b>na nke gi</b>
24)	... <b>ijeghi</b> uka (p.26)	... <b>igaghi</b> uka
25)	Ị <b>ge-ejeriri</b> uka taa (p.26)	Ị <b>ga-agariri</b> uka taa
26)	... <b>a tuchiri</b> onu uzo <b>atuchi</b> (p.27)	... <b>e mechiri</b> onu uzo <b>emechi</b>
27)	Ifeanyi <b>na-aruso</b> ... ọgu (p.28)	Ifeanyi <b>na-aluso</b> ... ọgu
28)	Ifeanyi <b>ruru</b> ọgu (p.29)	Ifeanyi <b>luru</b> ọgu
29)	... akwukwo <b>onugbu</b> (p.30)	... akwukwo <b>olugbu</b>
30)	Ọ <b>rughikwa</b> ọgu (p.34)	Ọ <b>lughikwa</b> ọgu
31)	... <b>oyi</b> (p.37)	... <b>enyi</b>
32)	... <b>ukpaka</b> (p.37)	... <b>ugba</b>
33)	Akwa ka ha abuo <b>begudoro</b> (p.39)	Akwa ka ha abuo <b>begidere</b>
34)	... ọ jughi <b>ase</b> ya (p.40)	... ọ jughi <b>ese</b> ya
35)	Ihe <b>laputara</b> Echezona (p.40)	Ihe <b>raputara</b> Echezona
36)	... wee <b>ritue</b> (p.42)	... wee <b>rituo</b>
37)	... o wee <b>nwua</b> (p.42)	... o wee <b>nwuo</b>
38)	... <b>hafee</b> ya n'aka Chineke (p.46)	... <b>nyefee</b> ya n'aka Chineke
39)	... anaghi <b>elota</b> Ifeanyi (p.47)	... anaghi <b>echeta</b> Ifeanyi
40)	... <b>bue onu</b> wee kpee ekpere (p.47)	... <b>buo onu</b> wee kpee ekpere
41)	... tupu o <b>lwa</b> di (p.49)	... tupu o <b>lwo</b> di
42)	... <b>zue</b> oga ya ohi (p.53)	... <b>zuo</b> oga ya ohi
43)	... ebe ahu a <b>na-ele</b> mmanu (p.55)	... ebe ahu a <b>na-ere</b> mmanu
44)	... ọ <b>na-aru</b> n'ogu... <b>na-aru</b> ọgu (p.60)	... ọ <b>na-alu</b> n'ogu... <b>na-alu</b> ọgu
45)	... ha na ya <b>na-ayi</b> (p.63)	... ha na ya <b>na-eso</b>
46)	... <b>onu</b> ya (p.64)	... <b>olu</b> ya
47)	... wee <b>na-egori</b> (p.64)	... wee <b>na-anuri</b>
48)	Ihe eji mara ya <b>riri nne</b> (p.67)	Ihe eji mara ya <b>hiri nne</b>
49)	... zigara ha ka ha <b>gwa</b> (p.71)	... zigara ha ka ha <b>guo</b>

	Les Mots Dialectiques	Les Mots Standards
50)	Otu <b>omaricha</b> nwata (p.74)	Otu <b>omalicha</b> nwata
51)	Uwakwe buoro ya <b>ghafuee</b> (p.82)	Uwakwe buoro ya <b>kwafuoo</b>
52)	...ndi mmadu <b>na-ekiri ya</b> (p.89)	...ndi mmadu <b>na-ele ya anya</b>

### Commentaires

Nous avons constaté beaucoup de mots dialectiques dans l'œuvre en question. Malgré le fait que cela peut faire partie du style de l'auteur, il peut être une pierre d'achoppement au traducteur. Prenons quelques exemples :

- Le mot dialectique en cas 12 « ure » en Igbo standard signifie quelque chose qui est gâté, donc le traducteur peut être trompé en pensant que l'auteur parle d'un livre gâté tandis que l'auteur veut dire « ule akwukwo » ce qui signifie « un examen »
- (14) le mot 'ekpema' au lieu de 'tebulu' (une table) n'est pas commun aux Igbos qui ne sont pas d'onitsha. Cependant, l'auteur a mis le mot 'tebulu' en parenthèse pour aider les lecteurs. On voit qu'il savait que les lecteurs auront du mal à saisir le mot s'il n'a pas mis 'tebulu' en parenthèse.
- (28) le mot 'ruru' veut dire littéralement 'a fait un travail ou a construit quelque chose'. Mais le

vouloir dire de l'auteur 'luru' signifie de 'battre quelqu'un'.

- (39) l'auteur a utilisé 'elota' au lieu de 'echeta'. On peut être trompé en pensant que l'auteur parle d'avalier quelque chose car en Igbo standard, 'ilo' veut dire 'avalier'. Ici, l'auteur veut dire 'se souvenir de quelqu'un'.
- (43) ; ici, l'auteur a écrit 'na-ele' au lieu de 'na-ere'. Le mot 'na-ele' veut dire 'de regarder' mais l'intention de l'auteur est de parler 'de vendre quelque chose'
- (46) 'onu' au lieu de 'olu', l'usage du lettre 'n' au lieu du lettre 'l' change le sens du mot en Igbo standard, 'onu' veut dire 'la bouche' tandis que 'olu' signifie 'la voix' mais on sait que l'auteur parle ici de la voix de quelqu'un.

Des exemples ci-dessus, nous avons observé qu'il y a un type de modèle dans l'écriture du dialecte d'onitsha par exemple

i) L'usage de la lettre 'r' au lieu de 'l' et vice versa e.g

- a. 'Alata' au lieu de 'arata'
- b. 'obele' - 'obere'
- c. 'ure' - 'ule'
- d. 'utari' - 'utali'
- e. 'kulili' - 'kuliri'
- f. 'na-aruso' - 'na-aluso'
- g. 'ruru' - 'luru'
- h. 'rughikwa' - 'lughikwa'
- i. 'laputara' - 'raputara'
- j. 'omari cha' - 'omalicha'

ii) L'usage de la lettre 'e' au lieu de 'o'

- a. 'rue' au lieu de 'ruo'

- b. 'etu' - 'otu'
- c. 'kugbue' - 'kugbuo'
- d. 'ritue' - 'rituo'
- e. 'bue' - 'buo'
- f. 'zue' - 'zuo'
- iii) L'usage de la lettre 'a' au lieu de 'o'
  - a. 'nwua' au lieu de 'nwuo'
  - b. 'lua' - 'luo'
  - c. 'gua' - 'guo'
- iv) L'usage de la lettre 'n' au lieu de 'l'
  - a. 'onugbu' au lieu de 'olugbu'
  - b. 'onu' - 'olu'

Des précédents, on constate que le traducteur d'un œuvre igbo doit faire beaucoup d'attention aux dialectes car l'auteur peut écrit en son dialecte et si le traducteur n'est pas conscient de ce fait, il peut être trompé et ceci mènera à une mauvaise traduction.

### Conclusion

Eke (2010 :63) a bien dit que la traduction littérature s'avère la plus difficile parmi les trois catégories de la traduction, à cause de la qualité d'équivocité qui est l'attribut de la littérature et que l'écrivain est bien des fois un linguiste qui joue avec les mots et les énoncés. La littérature, étant une entreprise entièrement intellectuelle, oblige le traducteur de faire un effort pour déchiffrer la portée psychologique et socioculturelle de chaque ouvrage avant de le traduire. Dans cette

communication, nous avons essayé d'illustrer, à l'aide du roman Igbo, *Oku ko Nti Ike*, comment l'écrivain, soit à son insu, soit à sa volonté, peut écrire en un dialecte, et comment les différences en orthographe entre une langue et ses dialectes peut tromper un traducteur d'un œuvre Igbo. Nous avons relevé quelques mots dialectiques, en donnant leur fausse signification et leur vrai-dire. Enfin, c'est évident que les dialectes posent un défi au traducteur. Nous avons aussi démontré le modèle d'orthographe du dialecte d'onitsha pour aider les traducteurs en face de la traduction d'œuvre Igbo écrit en dialecte d'Onitsha. En conclusion, nous espérons que notre recherche sera utile aux traducteurs des œuvres littéraires surtout les œuvres Igbo.

### Oeuvres Citées

Ben Taylor. « The challenges of handling dialects in translation » *Language Connect*. 6/11/2017. <https://www.languageconnect.net/blog/language-connect/the-challenges-of->

handling-dialects-in-translation/#  
Accès le 11/08/18.

Claire Hélie, « Jane Hodson, *Dialect in Film and Literature* », *Études britanniques contemporaines* [En ligne], 54 | 2018, mis en ligne le 01 mars 2018, consulté le 16 mai 2019. URL :

- <http://journals.openedition.org/ebc/4412>
- Echeruo, Micheal. *Igbo-English Dictionary of the Igbo Language*. London: Yale University Press. 1998
- Eke, Livinus. *Créativité en traduction littéraire : Étude critique de la traduction de L'Etranger et de La Peste de Camus*. (2010) <http://www.unn.edu.ng/publications/files/images/Eke,%20Livinus%20Kelechukwu.pdf>. Accès le 11/08/2018
- Emenanjo, Nolue. *Aspects of the Phonology and Morphophonemics of Onicha (A Dialect of Igbo)* Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan. 1978.
- Florence Courriol. Pour une étude traductologique du plurilinguisme littéraire : la traduction française de l'insertion du dialecte dans le récit italien contemporain. Linguistique. Université de Bourgogne, 2015. Français. ffNNT : 2015DIJOL027ff. fftel-01354171f
- Ikekeonwu, Clara. *Igbo Dialect Cluster: A Classification*. A paper presented to the Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. 1987.
- Labov, Williams. *The Social Stratification of English in New York City*. Washington D.C.: Centre for Applied Linguistics. 1966.
- Le Trésor de la langue française informatisé. <https://www.le-tresor-de-la-langue.fr/definition/langue#top>. Accès le 13/08/2018
- \_\_\_\_\_. <https://www.le-tresor-de-la-langue.fr/definition/dialecte#top>. Accès le 13/08/18.
- Martin, Marine. « Le statut des dialectes en France » *Veille CFTR*. 24/01/2014. <https://www.sites.univ-rennes2.fr/lea/cftr/veille/p=743> Accès le 11/08/2018
- Moyogo. « Igbo » *Wikipédia*. 25/07/2018. <https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Igbo>. Accès le 11/08/18
- Nkamigbo Linda and Eme Cecilia. Igbo slang in Otu-Onitsha: Towards enriching the Igbo language. *International multidisciplinary Journal*. Vol. 5(6). Pp 83-94. 2011.
- Okeke, Chika Jerry. *Okuko Nti Ike*. Edumail Publications Limited, 2013
- Okeke, Vincent. *Key to Igbo Language*. Obosi: Pacific College Press Limited. 1984.
- Onumajuru, Emeka. Contrastive Study of Two Varieties of Onicha and the Central Igbo language. *International Journal of Arts, Humanities*. Ethiopia. Vol. 5(2), Pp. 225-240. 2016
- Robert, Paul. *Le Petit Robert*. 107, avenue Parmentier- 75011 Paris ;1982
- Selekovitch, Danica et Lederer, Marianne. *Interpréter pour traduire*. Paris : Didier, 1984
- Ugochukwu, Françoise. *L'Igbo*. 2010. <http://www.sorosoro.org/l-igbo/>. Accès le 13/12/2018

### **About the Authors**

**Utah Nduka David** holds a PhD in French Language and Linguistics. His research interests are Discourse Analysis, Second Language Acquisition and Morpho-Syntax.

**Adaeze Nwosu Ngozi** is a graduate Assistant at the Department of Foreign Language and Translation Studies, Abia State University, Uturu. Her research interests are machine and literary translation.