A STYLISTIC STUDY OF CODESWITCHING IN CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE'S *PURPLE HIBISCUS*

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Abstract

This study presents a stylistic analysis of code-switching expressions in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel: *Purple Hibiscus*. Through a qualitative approach, the study examines the linguistic functions of code-switching expressions in the novel, exploring how Adichie employs these expressions to enhance overall comprehension of the text. The study adopts Donald Freeman's theory of "Linguistic Stylistics" as its theoretical framework. The theory emphasizes a stylistic analysis of a text based on "scientific rules" of language. Such rules will embrace the lexical, grammatical, figurative, and contextual categories of the text. It essentially concerns the use of language and its effects in a text. Therefore, this study analyses the use of code-switching expressions in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, revealing the expressions as powerful linguistic devices which enables Adichie to capture and sustain the attention of her audience, particularly the Igbo-speaking audience. The study contributes to the understanding of code-switching as a stylistic feature in literary texts, highlighting its role in the overall comprehension of the text.

Keywords: codeswitching, style, stylistics, linguistics

Introduction

Unarguably, the overall understanding of a literary text may be hampered if the author is deficient in appropriating the requisite skills of writing. To ease readers' comprehension of texts, authors usually employ certain stylistic features in their writings. The term "stylistic features" as used in stylistics refers to the ways in which aspects of a text (such as words, phrases and sentences) are arranged and how they affect meaning. Such arrangement of words, phrases and sentences can manifest in the form of codeswitching and can distinguish the work of an individual author from another.Therefore, this study attempts to identify code switching in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*, show the frequency of occurrence of codeswitching expressions in the text, indicate how codeswitching facilitate readers' understanding of the text, and highlight the authors reasons for using codeswitching technique in writing the text.For a proper contextualization of the subject, it is pertinent to define the terms "stylistics" and "codeswitching" as umbrella concepts which underpin this study.

Stylistics

The term "stylistics" is used in referring to the branch of applied linguistics concerned with the study of "style" in texts, especially, but not exclusively, in literary works. It concerns the study

and interpretation of texts of all types and/or spoken language in regard to their linguistic and tonal style, where style is the particular variety of language used by different individuals and/or in different situations or settings. Ufot (2006, p.13) posits that stylistics "is the linguistics study of style. It consistsin a celebration, understanding and critical appraisalof the manner in which a particular writer (or speaker)communicates both aesthetic and informational qualitiesthrough language.Furthermore, stylistics can be defined as the systematic and scientific study of style in spoken and written natural languages. It is basically a kind of criticism which has the goal of deriving the ultimate message or meaning in spoken or written texts. However, stylistics must go beyond the step by step analysis of the linguistic features of texts to establish their full meaning potential to interpreting the relevance or contribution of these features to the aesthetics and meaning of the text. It is inevitable to note that style is both crucial and central to the study of stylistics because "no style, no stylistics" (Babajide, 2000, p.123). Stylistics, then, becomes in its simplest form, the study of style. Therefore, for a proper understanding of the concept of stylistics, it is pertinent to know what the notion of "style" implies.

Style

The term "Style" may be defined as "*appearance; as things appear. It is the way in which things are presented; the way ideas are expressed; the manner words are uttered or texts are written".* This is the core definition of the term. However, viewed from the scholarly perspective, different scholars have defined "style" in different ways. According to Leech and Short (1981, p.10), style "refers to the way in which language is used in a given context, by a given person, for a given purpose, and so on." It is a person's distinctive language habits or the set of individual characteristics of language use – for example: *Shakespearean* style, Soyinka's style, Achebe's style, etc. Babajide (2000, pp.123-124) presents the following definitions of style as attempted by others: Lucas defines styles as "the effective use of language whether to make statements or to rouse emotions involving first of all the power to put facts with clarity and brevity". Devito defines style as the "selection and arrangement of linguistic features which are open to choice". Crystal and Davy posit that style "is the effectiveness of a mode of expression achieved by saying the right thing in the most effective way".

Codeswitching

The term "codeswitching" is used to refer to "a speech behaviour in which a speaker or writer employs two different languages within a single speech or writing exercise. In this process, he begins his speech in one language and ends in another. The first language choice could be his mother tongue while the second is his second language" (Inyangetuk, 2010, p.19).In Nigeria, where English is used as a second language, users of the language often have reason to switch from English to their mother tongue, and vice versa, in the course of speaking. The following utterances exemplify codeswitching from English to Efik:

   i.   When you come, ***eyekut mi*** (When you come, you will see me).

   ii.   Give me the money, ***mbok*** (Give me the money, please).

Similarly, codeswitching is considered as "a situation in which a speaker uses a mixture of distinct language varieties as discourse proceeds" (Akmajian, A. *et al*, 2010, p.305). This kind

of situation is quite common in everyday language activities, especially in speech, for example, when a speaker switches from the formal style to the informal in a single speech activity.Therefore, this study focuses attention on how ChimamandaNgoziAdichie appropriates particularly the stylistic feature of codeswitching to enhance readers' comprehension of her novel: *Purple Hibiscus.*

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used for this study is "Linguistic Stylistics". The term was coined in 1968 by Donald Freeman to quell the duel between literary critics and linguists. The concept has to do with a stylistic study that relies heavily on the "scientific rules" of language in its analysis. Such rules will embrace the lexical, grammatical, figure of speech, contexts and cohesion categories. Linguistic stylistics is essentially concerned with the use of language and its effects in a text. Given a piece of literature, a poem, for example, a linguistic stylistic analyst will be interested in describing the form and function of language in the poem – paying attention to certain curiosities that may be accounted for in linguistic terms. This does not imply that linguistic stylistics ignores the meanings which a poem conveys. In fact, the meaning is the focal point. But what the system of language is used to do is of paramount importance to the stylistician who works within the system of linguistic stylistics.

Research Methodology

This study used the Corpus-Based Research Method in collecting and analyzing data. This research methodology was adopted because scholars agree that it is "a source of systematically retrieving data and a paradigm for linguistic investigation" (De Klerk, 2003, p.229). Fromkin and Rodman (1988, p.438) describe *corpus* as an analysis that "can be conducted on existing texts… or on utterances gathered from spoken or written sources". This means that the term *corpus* denotes texts and / or utterances gathered for analysis and the process of the analysis itself. Besides, *corpus* "means more than a collection of text materials as a basis for linguisticanalysis; it means that the compilationaims at a representative sample oflanguage used within certain categories" (Schmied, 1995, p.344). This implies that *corpus* is not usually a collection of an entire language, but rather samples that relate to the phenomenon the researcher seeks to investigate in the said language. Renouf (1986) corroborates this view by noting that "when constructing a text corpus, one seeks to make a selection of data which is in some senserepresentative, providing an authoritative body of linguisticevidence which can supportgeneralizations, and against which hypotheses can be tested" (Renouf, 1986, p.2). This indicates that *corpus* is a very important linguistic method that enables the researcher to arrive at certain generalizations and also formulate hypothesis. This signifies that the researcher normally selects corpus that truly represents what he/she wants to investigate.

Method of Data Analysis

This research work employs the "Textual Analysis" method in presenting and analyzing data. Textual Analysis is the method of communication researchers use to describe and interpret the characteristics of a recorded or visual message. The purpose is to describe the content,

structure, and functions of messages contained in texts. The important considerations in textual analysis include selection of the types of texts to be studied, acquiring appropriate texts, and determining which particular approach to employ in analyzing them. One of the approaches employed in textual analysis is "Content Analysis". This approach to textual analysis is used to identify, enumerate, and analyse occurrences of specific messages and message characteristics embedded in texts. Therefore, with the aid of tables, the analysis and results from data collected for this study are presented in numerical terms. The data are critically analyzed to reflect their total number; their frequency of occurrence and their usefulness in the text.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

The presentation, analysis and discussion of the data collected from Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel: *Purple Hibiscus* indicate the findings in relation to the data received from the text in respect of codeswitching expressions.

Presentation

A total of twenty-five (25) codeswitching expressions were extracted from the text. The expressions manifested in the form of complete thoughts – sentences. A Table indicating the codeswitching expressions and the English translations of the Igbo lexical items employed by the author of the text is presented on Table 1 below:

Table 1: *Codeswitching and the English Translations of the Igbo Lexical Items*

S/N	Codeswitching Expressions	English Translation of Igbo Lexical Items
1.	Mba, there are no words in my mouth (p21)	No
2.	Ozugo, stop coughing! (p22)	It's okay
3.	Let me stay in the car and wait, biko. (p37)	Please
4.	Nne, go! (p43)	Mother
5.	Nne, this is your study time, go upstairs! (p47)	Mother
6.	They will receive their due. But not on this earth, mba. (p50)	No
7.	Ifukwagi! you are like a fly blindly following a corpse into the grave. (p78)	You see you
8.	Did you not say the children were coming soon okwia? (p80)	Is it not
9.	Nnaanyi, are you not tired of predicting your death? (p90)	Our father
10.	Our daughter, ke du? (p102)	How are you
11.	Ngwanu, we will see. (p105)	Alright
12	Nne don't behave like a guest (p122)	Mother
13.	O maka, so beautiful! (p136)	So beautiful
14.	Amarom, we can try (p140)	I don't know
15.	You still don't have an idea where and when okwia (p197)	Is it not
16.	That streak of madness has returned and is disturbing you again, okwia. (p197-198)	Is it not

17.	Nna m o! my father! (p190)	My father
18.	O zugo, it is enough, mum. He has joined the others. (p190)	It's enough
19.	Ngwanu, mom wants to remind aunty Beatrice of something. (p210)	Alright
20.	Ozugo. Don't!(p213)	It's okay
21	Nnam, you have never killed a chicken …. (p329)	Father
22	Ginidi, what are you saying? (p255)	What are you saying
23	Go biko! (p268)	Please
24	Your aunt thinks …...inugo (p273)	Have you heard
25	Are you sure nne? (p280)	Mother

Analysis

A careful study of the data revealed that the codeswitching expressions manifested in the form of complete thoughts (ideas) – grammatically referred to as sentences. From the functional viewpoint, sentences are usually categorized into five (6) categories, namely: declarative, interrogative, imperative, exclamatory, optative and negation. Consequently, the data contained the following functionally types of sentences as presented on Table 2 below:

Table 2: *Codeswitching and the Functional Types of English Sentences they Encapsulate*

S/N	Codeswitching Expressions	Functional Type of Sentence	No. of Occurrence
1	i. Ifukwagi! you are like a fly blindly following a corpse into the grave. (p78) ii. Ngwanu, we will see. (p105) iii. Amarom, we can try (p140) iv. O zugo, it is enough, mum. He has joined the others. (p190) v. Ngwanu, mom wants to remind aunty Beatrice of something. (p210) vi. Your aunt thinks …...inugo. (p273) vii. Nnam, you have never killed a chicken …. (p329)	Declarative	7
2	i. Did you not say the children were coming soon okwia? (p80) ii. Nnaanyi, are you not tired of predicting your death? (p90) iii. Our daughter, ke du? (p102) iv. Ginidi, what are you saying? (p255) v. Are you sure nne? (p280)	Interrogative	5
3	i. Ozugo, stop coughing! (p22) ii. Nne, go! (p43) iii.Nne, this is your study time, go upstairs! (p47) Imperative iv. Nne don't behave like a guest (p122) v. Ozugo. Don't! (p213) vi. Go biko! (p268)	Imperative	6

4	i. Mba, there are no words in my mouth. (p21) ii. They will receive their due. But not on this earth, mba. (p50) iii. You still don't have an idea where and when okwia. (p197)	Negation	3
5	i. maka, so beautiful! (p136) ii. Nna m o! my father! (p190)	Exclamatory	2
6	i. Let me stay in the car and wait, biko. (p37)	Optative	1

Discussion

As can be noticed on Table 2 above, it is evident that there is a preponderance of codeswitching expressions in ChimamandaNgoziAdichie's novel: *Purple Hibiscus* which manifest in the form of functional types of sentences – declarative sentences occurred 7 times; imperative sentences occurred 6 times; interrogative sentences occurred 5 times; sentences indicative of negation occurred 3 times; exclamatory sentences occurred 2 times while optative sentence occurred only 1 time. Consequently, an appreciable number of twenty-five (25) occurrences were recorded from the data.

It is insightful to note that the preponderance of codeswitching expressions in the text facilitates, to a large extent, the overall understanding of the text, especially by Igbo speakers. Furthermore, it is highly probable that the author of the text consciously employs codeswitching as a stylistic feature to achieve the following aims:

    i.   To make Igbo language known to others

    ii.   She wants to celebrate her language.

    iii.   She wants non- Igbo speaker to learn and understand the language

Conclusion

The concern of this study has been to bring to the fore how ChimamandaNgoziAdichie appropriates the stylistic feature of codeswitching to enhance readers' comprehension of her novel: *Purple Hibiscus.* The study was encapsulated in the topic: A Stylistic Study of Codeswitching in ChimamandaNgoziAdichie's*Purple Hibiscus*. The researcher posited that in order to ease readers' comprehension of literary texts, authors usually employ certain stylistic features in the course of writing their texts.

The term "stylistic features" as used in stylistics refers to the ways in which aspects of a text (such as words, phrases and sentences) are arranged and how they affect meaning. Such arrangement of words, phrases and sentences – the stylistic features – can manifest in the form of codeswitching. These stylistic features often distinguish the work of an individual author from another.

It is revealing from this study that there is a preponderance of codeswitching expressions in ChimamandaNgoziAdichie's text: *Purple Hibiscus*. The study has also revealed that the frequency of occurrence of codeswitching expressions in the text is substantial. It is also insightful that the study has brought to the spotlight that the codeswitching expressions facilitate readers' understanding of the text.This informs the author's reason for employing the codeswitching expressions in the text.

Recommendations

Since I have no monopoly of knowledge, and researchers, globally, belong to one research community, I make the following recommendations, believing that if meticulously implemented, would be of tremendous help in unravelling other related research gaps that my work could not addressed:

i.   Further studies should be undertaken by prospective researchers to unravel more stylistic features (not only codeswitching) in Adichie's literary works.

ii. Just as the stylistic feature of codeswitching has been studied in this research work, the same study should be carried out by potential researchers on the literary works of other literary artistes.

iii. Other stylistic features should be carried out on Adichie's other literary texts, and should be used for comparative analysis.

iv. Literary artistes should be encouraged to employ the stylistic feature of codeswitching in their prospective literary texts since it facilitates text comprehension by non-native speakers' of the English language.

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