

CREATIVE USE OF LANGUAGE AMIDST NIGERIAN LINGUISTIC DILEMMA

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Abstract

Many creative writers are facing the intricate challenge of choosing between 512 indigenous languages and English as a medium of expressing the Nigerian peculiarities in the absence of a national language. The choice of any of these languages in writing the Nigerian novel has its own setbacks; however, the English language has less consequential effects. Narrating the peculiarities of the Nigerian cultural environment with this non-indigenous language is yet another dilemma. This research shed light on how creative writers altered the English language to capture the Nigerianess in their creative writings. The study explores the transliterational varieties of the Nigerian English in Achebe's *Arrow of God* and Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* as the data for the study, using the qualitative descriptive method of data analysis. It was discovered that creative writers adhere more to the structure of Nigerian indigenous languages despite using English in writing their novels. This alteration of the English language by creative writers is a deliberate attempt to reflect the weight of the Nigerian experience. The study reveals that this alteration led to the emergence of the nativised English known as Nigerian English.

Keywords: Nigeria Linguistic Dilemma, Creative Writers, English And Transliteration

Introduction

Nigeria has about 500 indigenous languages, which makes it one of the most linguistically diverse countries in Africa. It also has exogenous languages such as the English language, which is a relic of the British. English, being a language of necessity, is an official language used for communication amidst the diverse multilingual situation in Nigeria. This interplay between the Nigerian indigenous languages and the English language has posed problems for creative writers. One of such problems is replicating the stories, experiences and culture of their people with a language that is non-indigenous to them. This is because language is an integral part of culture, which not only reflects the cultural values of the society in which it is used, but it also helps to communicate unambiguously the experiences of those people. It is on this bedrock that this study tends to x-ray the Nigerian novel to investigate the language use and how it is used to capture the Nigerian peculiarities and experiences with a non-indigenous language known as the English language.

The choice of the use of language in writing the Nigerian novel is a problem which has consistently cried for a solution but yet unresolved. It is in line with the above that Achebe in

Akere (2009, p.271) submits that “for an African writing in English is not without its serious setbacks. He often finds himself describing situations or modes of thought which have no direct equivalent in the English way of life.”

No doubt, the Nigerian socio-cultural environment differs extensively from other societies. These Nigerian unique socio-cultural features ought to be constructed with the structure of a language that reflects these socio-cultural features. This assertion is in line with Babatunde and Shohomehin’s opinion in Adeyanji (2007, p.112) that “language is an indispensable tool for cultural expression and that the content of every culture is expressible in its language.” Edhere (2018, p. 312) also avers that “language helps to reflect the culture of a particular environment through shared characteristics such as cuisine, religion, music, art, social habits and even language.” This implies that a people’s language is a vehicular tool for transmitting their culture. Taking cognisance of the above, certain questions become pertinent in relation to Nigerian creative writers' use of language. They are: what language should be adopted for creative writing in Nigeria? Can such a language reflect and capture the essence of the existentialism of the people?

The crux of this paper is centred on the questions raised above. That is, to write Nigerian novels in a borrowed language that cannot reveal the cultural identity of the people, thereby creating a non-existent identity for Nigerians or to recreate the Nigerian stories with any of the Nigerian indigenous languages, which truly captures the cultural identity of the people, notwithstanding that such a choice is capable of creating disunity among Nigerians? This dilemma can be likened to a situation of being between the devil and the deep blue sea. To unravel this puzzle, a quick retrospect into the Nigerian linguistic situation is necessary.

Nigerian Linguistic Situation: The dilemma

Nigeria is not just a multi-ethnic entity with diverse cultures; it is also a conglomerate of different languages in relation to the diverse ethnic groups. According to www.ethnologue.com, as of 17th July, 2025, Nigeria has 512 indigenous languages. Within this multilingual situation, she also contends with the English language, which is a relic of the British masters. The languages in Nigeria, therefore, are classified into indigenous and exogenous languages. Akindele and Adegbite (2005, p.20) assert that the indigenous languages are divided into major and minor languages. They further pinpoint that the major languages are Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo. These three major languages are scripted into the acronym ‘WAZOBIA’, where ‘WA’ stands for Yoruba, ‘ZO’ for Hausa and ‘BIA’ for Igbo.

The classification of Nigerian indigenous languages into major and minor has generated issues. Baldeh (1990, p. 7) submits that Chief Anthony Enahoro vehemently opposed the proposal of Hausa as the country’s national language. Enahoro decries that “as one who comes from a minority tribe, I deplore the continuing evidence in the country that people wish to impose their customs, their languages and even more their ways of life upon the smaller tribe.” This outburst

would have endangered the continuing existence of the country if Hausa was adopted as the national language of Nigeria.

The national language problem, therefore, is an awkward situation begging a resolution. An attempt to adopt any of the indigenous languages as a national language is capable of causing systemic disintegration of Nigeria. Criticism such as Enahoro's outburst above has made it impossible to adopt a national language in Nigeria. Babanjide in Adeyanju (2007, p.40) aptly captures the situation when he argues that:

The need for a common tongue as a national language was prompted by the once popular but erroneous opinion that the oneness of a country is enhanced by a common language that will supposedly promote understanding and consolidate its unity. However, if this were so, the globalisation of English should have brought about global peace (40).

It is therefore almost unattainable, if not totally unrealistic, to adopt any of the indigenous languages as a national language in Nigeria. Even from the three major languages, none can conveniently accept the other to become the national language of Nigeria. This, of course, informs Ogonnia (2017, p.9) to remark that:

If we consider adopting Hausa as the official language for Nigeria, the Yoruba will shout 'Otio', his Igbo counterpart will circle his head and cast evil away, in spontaneous Mba! Mba! It was Yoruba or Igbo to be adopted as Nigeria's official language, the Hausa speaker is likely to exclaim, 'Kai! Kai! (9).

This problem has become a national problem with no headway in solving it in so soon. This is in line with Ehanire and Aikoriogie (2025, p. 67) assertion that "the resurgence of the clamour to jettison English and pick up one Nigerian language as a national medium of communication is, ordinarily, a fantastic idea, although difficult to realise."

From the issues highlighted above, it becomes more vivid that no Nigerian group is ready to accept another group's indigenous language as the national language of Nigeria for obvious reasons, such as fear of dominance and supremacy, pride and lack of trust. To jettison the problems stated above, to adopt any of the indigenous languages as a national language will trigger chants of disintegration. It is in the view of the above that Bamgbose in Babajide (2016, p. 43) points out that "the political survival of Nigeria as a country would be even more seriously threatened than it is now if any one of these languages were promoted by the government as being the national language."

The major challenge hindering the adoption of any of Nigeria's indigenous languages as a national language is therefore largely due to the unnecessary rivalry disposition of the native speakers of these indigenous languages. How then can creative writers enact Nigerian stories and experiences in the midst of this language quagmire?

Creative Writers' Use of Language: The Debate

To justify the enormity of the problem of this study, its origin can be traced to the serious controversy, according to Edhere (2018, p.16), on which language(s) African/Nigerian writers should or may use in writing their literary works. According to her, there was an African Writers' Conference held on the 1st of June, 1962, at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda, where the debate was staged. Present at the Conference were Obi Wale, Chinua Achebe, Ngugi Wa Thiong'O, Wole Soyinka, Tai Solarin, etc.

Obi Wale championed the use of native languages in communicating African/Nigerian literatures, thereby rejecting the English language as a medium of communicating African literatures. Obi Wale, in his article entitled 'The Dead End of African Literature', argues that "the whole uncritical acceptance of English and French as the inevitable medium for educated African writing, is misdirected and has no chance of advancing African literature and culture." He emphasises the danger of writing African literature with a foreign language (s), which can lead to uncreativity and frustration.

Toeing the same line with Obi Wale is a famous Kenyan writer, Ngugi Wa Thiong' O. He formerly supported and advocated for the use of African indigenous languages in writing African/Nigerian literatures. Ngugi Wa Thiong' O avers that "one can't study African literatures without studying the particular cultures and Oral tradition from which Africans draw their plots, styles and metaphors." These two writers obviously belong to the school of thought that emphasises the use of African Indigenous languages in writing African literature. Their point of view is that, first, language is a carrier of culture, which is a means of identification and secondly, that colonialism propagated English as a weapon to relegate African indigenous languages. They build their arguments for the use of indigenous languages in writing African literatures around cultural preservation, creating a vivid picture and promoting local relevance. Writing Nigerian novels in indigenous languages can help promote and preserve Nigerian cultures and traditions. Additionally, it can help create more authentic characters, and it resonates more deeply with local readers, thereby fostering a stronger connection to the narrative.

Much as this argument sounds well, there are criticisms of this point of view. The criticisms range from the issue of balancing a global reach and accessibility with the use of African indigenous languages. For this reason and others, Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka and others championed the use of the exogenous language (English) in writing African/ Nigerian novels. Soyinka argues that the traditional mode of Africa before colonisation can no longer stand in isolation in the face of modernity and globalisation. He decries that the world is more connected now than ever before because of new means of communication, rapid movement of people, and new technologies that make the entire world a global village. Soyinka strongly advocates the use of English in communicating African literature for global accessibility. He also notes that cultures are being exchanged through writings and that the only sustainable language that can give a global outreach is the use of English in writing African/Nigerian novels. In a similar vein,

Achebe, who championed the use of the English language in writing African/ Nigerian novels, argues that although English is a product of colonialism, it is a language that brought literacy and freedom for Nigerians. He argues that:

Those of us who have inherited the English language may not be in a position to appreciate the value of the inheritance, or we may go on resenting it because it came as part of a package deal which included many other items of doubtful value, and the positive atrocity of racial arrogance and prejudice which may yet set the world on fire. But let us not, in rejecting the evil, throw out the good with it (Emenyonu 1995, p.330).

Chinua Achebe recognises that the English language, though it came through oppressive means, there are unavoidable advantages attached to using it to communicate African literatures.

English as a Unifier

Obviously, all the colonies of the British speak the English language. Edhere and Maledo (2023, p. 132) aver that “English is a second language in former British colonies such as Nigeria and Ghana.” It is an undisputed fact that the English language, despite being an exogenous language amidst numerous indigenous languages in Nigeria, it has cemented the oneness of Nigeria amidst the linguistic diversities. English becomes a unifier amidst the strident conditions of adopting a national language from among the indigenous languages in Nigeria. The language plays a critical role in nearly all sectors in Nigeria, including social, education and governmental functions. As Ogbonna (2017, p. 9) rightly captures that “ the English Language is used as a unifying language of social interaction, as an official language, language of politics, diplomacy, language of classroom instruction, language we conduct research in, language of official business, conferences, seminars and workshops and language of commerce.” Nigerians from diverse ethnic and linguistic groups can communicate with one another in English. It has no boundaries. It is used in the daily lives of Nigerians for politics, administrative, judicial, official, diplomatic, education and commercial duties. Without English, this study would not have been carried out. It is therefore an alpha language without which the continued peaceful existence of Nigeria would have been disrupted long ago.

A New English in a New Environment: The Nativised English in Nigeria

In the absence of a national language and the universality of English across ethno-linguistic groups in Nigeria, creative writers have to opt for the use of English as a medium for literary expression. The adoption of English as a medium of writing Nigerian novels has less consequential effects, however, there is the burden of how to reflect the cultural identity and the experiences of the Nigerian people in the Nigerian novel with this language. This has led to the nativisation and domestication of the English.

Nativisation results from the fact that the English language finds itself in the Nigerian environment, where the culture differs extensively from the native speakers of English, the original owners of the English language. Ogu in Edhere (2018, p.20) sees nativisation as “a way

of using the English language in Nigeria to reflect the socio-cultural norms without unnecessarily surrounding bookish.” This implies that a new variety of English, which reflects the cultural values and experiences of the people, has to emerge. This becomes imperative as Nigeria is not the ancestral root of the English language. Creative writers in Nigeria have contextualised the English language to suit the cultural norms of the environment. This is in line with Achebe in Ogu (2016, p.113) that:

The English that the artist fashions must be able to effectively bear the burden of his present unique experience, while at the same time, must retain its metropolitan Englishness ... feel certain that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings (113).

Achebe has been able to define the usage of the English language, especially by creative writers in Nigeria, that though the language should be used for creative writings, it must be a new English that is woven around the Nigerian culture. This new English must possess characteristics of the Nigerian culture, but must be mutually intelligible internationally. It is on this note that this study investigates the use of language in the Nigerian novel to ascertain how the English language is used to capture the Nigerian experience. The study, therefore, examines Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God* and Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* to unveil and explicate the nativised use of the English language via transliteration and to also state the Standard British forms of such nativised variety where necessary.

Transliteration: A variety of Nigerian English

There are different varieties of Nigerian English in the Nigerian novel. They include transliteration, coinages, proverbs, semantics extension and shift. One of the Nigerian varieties of the English language is transliteration. Edhere (2018, p.29) defines transliteration as “the direct translation of an expression from Nigerian mother tongue (L1) into English language (L2) such that the structure of the L1 is domineering.” This assertion confirms that the user of transliterational variety of the Nigerian English is a bilingual who understands his/her mother tongue very well. This informs why Akpojishi et al (2024, p.132) state that transliteration is a “transform or stimulated Vernacular.” They further assert that transliteration is a stylistic device which assimilates a local expression. Transliteration is basically a process of representing expressions (semantically and syntactically) from the structure of the mother tongue, such as Isoko, Ijaw, Igbo, etc., into the English Language. No wonder Crystal (2008, p.494) defines it as the conversion of one writing system into another. As a variety of Nigerian English, it is employed in writing the Nigerian novel to make the language more accessible to readers, hence it incorporates elements of local languages into the English writing in the absence of the use of the indigenous language as a medium of writing Nigerian novels. These elements include the culture (way of life of a people) and the structure of the mother tongue. The use of transliteration in writing Nigerian novels helps to reflect and promote the Nigerian culture. This helps to reveal

the weight of the Nigerian experience. It also helps to concretise the thoughts of readers which facilitates easy and comprehensive understanding of the views shared by the Nigerian writer.

This study examines the language use in the Nigerian novel by explicating the transliterational variety of the Nigerian English in Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God* and Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design. It employs both descriptive and interpretative methods of data analysis. The data are sieved from two notable Nigerian novels. They are Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God* and Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*. Excerpts of language use in the two novels, which reflect the Nigerian cultural setting and the structure of Nigeria's indigenous languages, are sieved out and given proper interpretation. The excerpts are coded for easy identification, such that CAAG represents transliterational varieties in Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God*, while CAP represents transliterational varieties in Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*. A total of ten (10) excerpts is drawn from each of the two novels. The twenty (20) excerpts are randomly selected.

Theoretical framework

The best theoretical framework for this study is Halliday's functional grammar. This theory is propounded by M.A.K. Halliday (2014). It is basically concerned with the role language plays in every communicative instance. Halliday views language as a social system for making meanings and reflecting various social and cultural contexts. It is therefore a linguistic model that accounts for a range of choices that language users make according to the context and function of communication. According to Kamalu (2018, p. 74), "Halliday perceives grammar as a strata subsystem of language in context." This is in line with Matthiessen and Halliday (2014) that "language is embedded in a context of culture or social system and that any instantiation of language as text is embedded in its own context of situation." This implies that language use is tailored to the context of the situation which affects how a text is written.

The study, therefore, unveils the selected nativised variety of the English language in the Nigerian novel. The study gives explicit interpretation, taking cognisance of the context of usage and equally giving the SBE variety where necessary. The study is limited to transliterational varieties, which are mostly socio-culturally constituted.

Excerpts of Transliteration in Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God*.

- CAAG A = May your face meeting mine bring good fortune. (pg. 2)
- CAAG B = Its legs were up in the air. (pg.2)
- CAAG C = Perhaps I spoken with water in my mouth. (pg. 4)
- CAAG D = ... the kind of woman who carried her father's compound into the house of her husband. (pg. 10)
- CAAG E = Nobody eats war. (pg. 17)
- CAAG F = I want one of my sons to join these people and be my eye there. (pg. 45)
- CAAG G = ...I would have given you something to remind you always of the day you put your head into the mouth of a leopard. (pg.54)
- CAAG H = If you want this compound to contain the two of us.... (pg. 62)
- CAAG I = I shall carry your message to him. (pg. 86)
- CAAG J = I think there is water in the sky.

Analysis:

In CAAG A, the expression as seen in page two of the novel is a direct translation of the structure of Nigerian Indigenous languages into the target language. It also reveals the cultural setting of the indigenous people of Igbo land. The moon is very symbolic in most Nigerian cultures. It is used to analyse time, infer meanings in relation to its different postures. There is also the belief that the moon's posture can signify either evil or good. In the novel, *Arrow of God*, Matefi and Ugoye heard the beat of the ogene, which signifies the appearance of a new moon. Traditionally, the appearance of a new moon is the beginning of new things.

Again, in CAAG B, the expression "its legs were up in the air" as seen in page 4 is also a transliteration. This expression is used to capture the Nigerian experience, where people could infer the different postures of the moon. Such a posture depicts either positivity or negativity. Ugoye, Ezeulu's younger wife, declares, "I don't like its posture." According to her, the posture of the moon connotes evil. Matefi disagrees with her that the posture of the moon is different from the one when Okuata died. The question is "Does the moon kill?" just like Obiageli asked in the novel. No, it is just an aspect of the Nigerian culture where the appearance and posture of the moon signifies a lot of things, such as farming seasons, time of the day, positivity and negativity, etc.

The expression in CAAG C, "perhaps I spoke with water in my mouth," is written with the structure of Nigerian indigenous languages. It connotes silence. In the novel, Edogo refused to respond to his father's question. Achebe deploys this expression to paint a vivid picture of his

narration. The expression connotes there was no response from Edogo when his father asked him, “What did I tell you about carving the image of gods?” Edogo was silent. Within the Nigerian context, such a situation is perceived as if there is water in the speaker’s mouth, which makes the words unclear. This is because with water in one’s mouth while speaking, there will be mumbling, which makes it difficult for the listener to understand.

In CAAG D, the expression “the kind of woman who carried her father’s compound into the house of the husband” is in relation to the Nigerian context where a woman from a rich family tends to disrespect her husband because the father is wealthy. Again, the writer uses the expression exactly the way it is used in Nigerian indigenous languages.

In CAAG E, as seen in page 17 of the novel, the expression “nobody eats war” is used by the writer to make his language more accessible to his readers and to gain the weight of Nigerian experience, where there are always inter-tribal and ethnic clashes emanating from land disputes, as seen in Umuaro and Okperi’s land dispute in *Arrow of God*. The expression also reflects the structure of Nigerian indigenous languages.

Another transliterational variety in *Arrow of God* is CAAG F. The expression, “I want one of my sons to join these people and be my eye there”, is synonymous with the structure of Nigerian indigenous languages. It is believed that the person sent to represent one is the eye of the sender. This is the case of Ezeulu (the sender) and Oduche, his son (his eye).

In CAAG G, the expression “... I would have given you something to remind you always of the day you put your head into the mouth of a leopard” is in the structure of most Nigerian languages. This literally means that something risky would have happened to the person. It also signifies that the speaker seems to be referring to an action or discussion that had serious consequences. The writer uses the expression to unveil a unique experience in Nigeria, where if one is sent on an errand, they might receive some consequential action. The author uses the expression to replicate an experience in the novel. This is seen when Ezidemili sent a young man from Umunneora to find out from Ezeulu how he was going to purify his house. Oduche committed an abomination by locking the sacred python in a box. The writer uses the Nigerian English (transliteration) to reveal the weight of that experience.

In CAAG H, the expression “if you want this compound to contain two of us” is written in the structure of most Nigerian indigenous languages. The writer paints a vivid picture of a Nigerian experience. The SBE may not be able to reveal the weight of such experience. The speaker, Ezeulu, uses the expression to remind Matefi, his first wife, that unless she gets some cassava to prepare food for Akueke’s husband and his people, there will be a serious fight between the two of them that may end up sending her (Matefi) from his compound.

Similarly, CAAG I, the expression “I shall carry your message to him” is also a transliteration. The word ‘carry’ connotes that ‘message’ is a weighty item that can be housed in a bag. The expression means, “I will send your message to him.” The writer uses the Nigerian expression in

relation to his environment. Lastly, in CAAG H, the expression “I think there is water in the air, is a direct translation of Nigerian indigenous languages into the English Language. In SBE, it means “there is a change in the weather, which implies that it is going to rain.”

Excerpts of Transliteration in Chimamanda Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus*

CAP 1: Have you no words in your mouth? – pg 21

CAP 2: ...Somebody had tied up my womb pg 28

CAP 3 :Jaja spoke to me with his eyes. Pg 38

CAP 4: Her eyes were vacant. pg 42

CAP 5: Does my house chase you away? pg 75

CAP 6: The cloud had lifted from her face. pg 169

CAP 7:She had fat yams on her legs. pg 149

CAP 8: The sun is warning us of the rain. pg 256

CAP 9: ... as if she needed to blow her nose. pg 55

CAP 10: I do not know if my head is correct. pg 253

Analysis:

In CAP 1, the expression “have you no words in your mouth” is a Nigerian expression which signifies speechlessness. The speaker, Eugene, uses the expression to describe Jaja’s refusal to comment on the new product (wine) which was brought from the company. The expression reveals the frustration and disappointment of the speaker. The writer, Chimamanda Adichie, uses the expression in relation to the structure of Nigeria’s mother tongue to reveal the peculiarity of the Nigerian environment.

In CAP 2, the expression, “somebody had tied up my womb with ogwu”, is a Nigerian English used in relation to the societal belief that the inability of a woman to have children is connected to some gods in the land. Such gods are believed to have spiritually tied up the woman’s womb. The expression is used along with cultural dimensions of the Nigerian socio-cultural setting to describe the supernatural beliefs about fertility.

The expression “Jaja spoke to me with his eyes as seen in CAP 3, is also a direct translation from the structure of the mother tongue into the target language. In SBE, the eyes are organs for sight and not for speech or talking. In the Nigerian context, people can communicate through a glance. It symbolises non-verbal communication between Kambili and Jaja. The writer uses this nativised variety to explicate the Nigerian experience, which the SBE probably would not

capture vividly. The Standard British variety of it is “he conveyed the message to me with his looks.”

In CAP 4, the expression, “her eyes use vacant” is also a transliteration. In SBE, it signifies that one is emaciated, looking pale and weak. The expression vividly paints the effect of the emotional trauma of Kambili’s mother after having a miscarriage. The writer aptly captures the situation with a nativised English to reveal the weight of the experience. Again, in CAP 5, the writer, Chinua Achebe, twisted the English language in relation to the structure of the Nigerian indigenous language. The expression “does my house chase you away?” means “why are you leaving so quickly? From the narration, Kambili and Jaja are forbidden to stay too long in their grandfather’s house. Papa Nnukwu has a shrine in his house, which he offers sacrifices to most times. This has led Eugene, Kambili’s father, to deprive them of staying with his father, Papa Nnukwu.

In CAP 6, the expression “the cloud had lifted from his eyes” suggests that he had a troubled look. It means that Auntie Ifeoma was previously worried and troubled because of her father’s deteriorating health condition. The expression means there was a look of relief on her face. This means her face was now bright. In CAP 7, the expression “she had fat yams on her legs” is used by the writer to create a vivid image and to also convey a particular idea. It paints a picture of the appearance of the lady’s legs in a vivid and evocative way. In SBE, it means her legs are fat and sturdy.

Also, the expression in CAP 8 is a direct translation from Nigeria’s MT into the English Language. “The sun is warning us of the rain” is figuratively used by the writer to paint the enormity of the scorching sun, which is believed that such an experience usually ends with rain. It means that the sun is scorching, and it will later rain in SBE.

In CAP 9, the expression, “...as if she needed to blow her nose,” is a transliteration. In SBE, it means to expel phlegm from one’s nostrils. The writer captures it in the exact way Nigerian indigenous languages would put it. Lastly, for this study, from Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus* is the expression in CAP 10. The expression “I do not know if my head is correct” is captured in the structure of Nigeria’s MT. In the Nigerian socio-cultural milieu, anything or situation that is abnormal is regarded as ‘not correct.’

Summary of Analysis

The language used in the two novels by these writers, Chinua Achebe and Chimamanda Adichie, in their novels, *Arrow of God* and *Purple Hibiscus*, reflect the indigenous Igbo culture. The language use (nativised variety) via transliteration reveals that Nigerians have their ways of life, which are reflected in the indigenous languages. Nigerian creative writers, therefore, tend to twist the English language to properly showcase the Nigerian experience. This accounts for the Nigerianised variety of the English language. This is in line with Achebe’s assertion that the English language has to bend to suit the socio-cultural setting of the people.

Conclusion

This study has been able to analyse how creative writers in Nigeria navigate a complex linguistic dilemma characterised by the country's vast multilingual and cultural diversities. It explicates how Nigerian writers blend English with the structure of Nigerian indigenous languages to reflect the socio-cultural realities of Nigeria. This allows writers to authentically represent Nigerian experiences amid the linguistic challenge and also to access a wider audience. The study reveals that the use of the nativised English through transliteration is a deliberate attempt by Nigerian creative writers to expand language boundaries and affirm multicultural identities.

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