

# STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF CHIMAMANDA ADICHIE'S *DEAR IJEWELE*

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## Abstract

This study is a stylistic analysis of Chimamanda Adichie's *Dear Ijeawe*. The study examines how stylistics connects language and literature. It investigates how language is used as a tool for the creation of a literary work. In this study, it has been pointed out how Adichie uses her linguistic choices in the text to portray the socio-cultural issues relating to gender roles in the Nigerian society and the world at large. The study adopts Systemic Functional Linguistics as its theoretical framework. Excerpts from Chimamanda Adichie's *Dear Ijeawe* constitute the data which are subjected to qualitative analysis at the morphological, graphological, syntactic and lexico-semantic levels. Findings reveal that these levels of language have salient contributions they make in the structural relevance of the text and delivery of the writer's intention from revealing the beauty of language use to the intensity of the meaning got from the usage.

**Keywords:** *Dear Ijeawe*, Chimamanda Adichie, Systemic Functional Linguistics, Stylistics, Feminism, Gender equality.

## Background to the Study

Language and literature are two interrelated phenomena. Both have a symbiotic relationship for the purpose of creativity. Literature becomes realistic through the existence of language. That is, there is no literature without language because all works of literature are fashioned from language. The works of literature are written in one language or the other so that those who understand the language will comprehend the message in those literary works. Drama, prose, poetry and all other

sub-genres of literature are products of language. Thus, language is the bedrock of literature because it gives life to literature.

Having established the fact that language and literature are interrelated, what then is stylistics? Baldick (1990, p.215) views stylistics as a branch of modern linguistics devoted to the detailed analysis of literary styles or of the linguistic choices made by speakers or writers in a non-literary context. Widdowson (cited in Oladosu 1997, p.217) sees stylistics as the study of literary discourse from a linguistic orientation.

Stylistics therefore, becomes the meeting point for the two seemingly different fields- linguistics and literature. Kolawole (2003, p.2) wonders how a student of literature can understand the phonological aspects of poetry such as metre, rhythm, rhyme, stress, without the knowledge of linguistics. Therefore, the knowledge of phonology as a branch of linguistics is very important in the understanding and the analysis of literary works such as poetry.

Kolawole (2003) and Leech (1969) maintain that stylistics is concerned with the idea of style in the analysis of literary texts and the use of language. In other words, stylistics is preoccupied with the analysis of the use of language and its effects on a literary text. By this, a stylistician examines what a writer does with various linguistic options at his disposal, what choices he makes and how he bends or breaks the linguistic or encoding norms to suit his purposes. This reinforces the fact that the analysis of a work of art is incomplete without proper examination of the interconnection of words, their sequence and relations. This is because words are not just arbitrarily combined as their combination is meant to create special effects stylistically. Therefore, it becomes necessary in this study to point out the likely effects of the various linguistic choices deployed in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Dear Ijeawele* and how these linguistic choices are likely to affect the text and the reader.

### Style and Stylistics

The concept of style and stylistics are interrelated phenomena. Style is, in fact, the mother of stylistics as we cannot talk of stylistics

without the existence of style. Therefore, style precedes stylistics. These concepts have been defined by various scholars based on their understanding of the concepts and how they are applied in various human activities. Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short (1981, p.10), opine that “style refers to the way in which language is used in a given situation, by a given person, and for a given purpose”.

Crystal and Davy (1969, p.9-10), also identify four main linguistic concepts of style which are:

- (a) Style may refer to some or all the language habits of a person. For instance, we talk of Shakespeare’s style.
- (b) Style may refer to occasional linguistic idiosyncrasies, which characterize an individual’s uniqueness.
- (c) It may refer to the effectiveness of a mode of expression “saying the right in a most effective way”.
- (d) It may also refer to the language habits shared by a group of people at one time over a period. For instance, we talk of the style of the Augustine Poet.

The above definitions from Crystal and Davy relate to the idea of style as the man, as conformity, and as a temporal phenomenon. That is, style is inherent in every human being and it changes from time to time. The second definition relates to the concept of “idiolect” as it shows that individual linguistic idiosyncrasies are forms of style.

Adebayo Lawal (2003, p.6) in his own view describes style as “an aspect of language that deals with choices of diction, phrases, sentences and linguistic materials that are consistent and harmonious with the subject matter”. He further claims that style involves the narrative techniques adopted by a writer in terms of choice and distribution of words and character. This assertion by Lawal reveals to us that style is a matter of choice – a deliberate choice. It is the choice a speaker or writer makes in relation to the context of situation and the subject of discourse.

Stylistics on the other hand, is simply and generally defined as the linguistic study of style. The term stylistics is, in fact, a yoking of style and linguistics. Therefore, stylistics studies how various linguistic

resources are managed in a spoken or written discourse. Many scholars have given diverse opinions on the concept of stylistics and their opinions gives us a clear picture of what the concept means in different areas, especially with particular reference to its relationship with linguistics and literature. Paul Simpson (1997, p.4) opines that stylistics is a method of applied language study, which uses textual analysis to make discoveries about the structure and function of language. This definition of Simpson tilts towards viewing stylistics as a veritable tool in the study the structure and language of a text. Crystal (1975, p.66) also opines that in its general sense, stylistics refers to the application of linguistic techniques to the study of particular kinds of language current within a given speech community, such as the language of science, of religion, of debate, or of literature or the language of different social classes.

Baldick (1990, p.215), also views stylistics as a branch of modern linguistics devoted to the detailed analysis of literary style or of the linguistic choices made by speakers or writers in non-literary context. This view also points towards the fact that stylistics links both language and literature together. Therefore, we can infer that stylistic analysis may be linguistic or literary. Widdowson (1975) views stylistics as the study of literary discourse from a linguistic orientation. In addition to this, Oladosu (1997, p. 217) supports Widdowson saying that stylistics is the act of using linguistics rules and regulations to characterize a literary output. These views further reinforce the idea that stylistics involves the use of linguistic resources in the analysis of style in texts. In his own contribution, Geoffrey Finch (2000, p.189), in his book, *Linguistic Terms and Concepts*, views stylistics as using the methodology of linguistics to study the concept of style in language. Going by this view, there is a clear evidence to show that stylistics is a connection between style and linguistics.

Stylistics is the study of the different styles that are present in a given utterance or a written text or document. The major concern of stylistics is to identify the consistent appearance of certain structures, items and elements in speech, an utterance or a given text. In all, style

and stylistics are, to a large extent, interrelated phenomena and their meeting point is in the use and analysis of language.

### **Levels of Stylistic Analysis: Morphology**

Spencer and Zwicky (1999, p.1) define morphology “as the study of word structure and words at the interface between phonology, syntax and semantics. It is the subfield of linguistics that studies the internal structure of words and the relationship among words. Adedimeji and Alabi (2003, p.30) define morphology “as a level of language analysis which deals with the internal arrangement of words and their inflections”. It seeks to analyze, describe and classify meaningful grammatical units and how these units are organized in the process of word formation. Tomori (2004, p.21) describes morphology as “the study of the rules governing the formation of words in a language”.

### **Graphology**

Crystal and Davy (1969, p.18) define graphology “as the analogous study of a language’s writing system or orthography as seen in the various kinds of writing or topography. In his own contribution to stylistic studies Babajide (2003, p.131) asserts that graphological analysis is concerned with the description of the physical appearance of the literary text-visual devices used. These concern such matters as spelling, capitalization, italicization, underscoring, hyphenation, paragraphing, etc. Every graphic element in a written text contributes immensely to effective communication. He further explains that foregrounding is a major device in the graphology aspect of a text.

Wales (2001) asserts that graphology is the study of handwriting as a means of character analysis. In other words, it also refers to the writing system of language as manifested in handwriting and topography. Writers have occasionally experimented with aspect of the written medium for expressive effects. Ogunsiji (2012, p.38) opines that graphology features are often used to achieve foregrounding in a text.

That is, assigning prominence to items in the text in order to draw attention to them.

### **Phonology**

Crystal (2008, p.365) defines phonology “as a branch of linguistics which studies the sound system of languages”. In other words, phonology studies how speech sounds are structured to function meaningfully in a language.

Pennigton (1997, p.1) describes phonology “as the study of the sound patterns of languages or of the pronunciation patterns of speakers. It is also the study and description of the pattering of the noise and silences of speech in regular ways within particular languages.

Ajileye (2003, p.60) says phonology can be said to be the part of linguistics that deals with the sounds of language. It is the scientific study of the organization of speech sounds; it can also be regarded as the science of speech sounds and their patterns. An analysis based on phonology will entail the use of alliteration, consonance and assonance.

### **Syntax**

Radford (1997, p.1) opines that syntax is concerned with the way in which words can be combined together to form phrases and sentences, it helps to know how words relate to one another and this is usually indicated by the order in which the words are arranged. Tomori (2004, p.21) submits that “syntax is the study of the rules governing the formation of linguistic units larger than the word” Tallerman (2005, p.1) says syntax means sentence construction; how words are grouped together to make meaningful sentences. It is essentially the grammar of a language as it specifies the rule which governs the arrangement of words into phrases, clauses and sentences.

Babajide (2000) submits that at syntactic level of analysis, sentence structures: simple, compound, complex and compound complex are examined. He explains further that elliptical, paratactic, hypotactic; right and left-branching sentences are also examined.

### **Lexico-semantic**

Wales (2001, p.233) says lexis means words; it is used as a general and technical term for vocabulary or diction. Adedimeji and Alabi (2003, p.32) report that semantics “is the study of meaning both in general and theoretical terms and in reference to specific language’, semantics is a wide sub-discipline of linguistics which refers to the study of meaning. Saeed (2009, p.1) defines semantics as the study of meanings of words and sentences; it is the study of meaning communicated through language.

Lexico-semantic is the study of what the words of a language denote. It refers to the relationship between the words or phrases of a particular language and the various semantic categories formed by the human mind. A lexico-semantic analysis in this work will entail the use of collocates, hyponyms, figures of speech and exact lexical repetition.

### **Theoretical Framework**

It will be a matter of great importance in this study to examine the linguistic descriptions found in the theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics as the theoretical model suitable in carrying out the stylistic study of the novel, *Dear Ijeawele* . This choice becomes inevitable because, as Tomori (1997, p.39) observes, every type of linguistic description or analysis is guided by certain theoretical assumptions.

Finally, the systemic model relates to the form of a language and the function the language performs, paying attention to language in use and sees meaning, as Tomori (1977, p.43) contends “an overt process, as opposed to a hidden mentalistic one”. Also, systemic grammar, in its clause structure formula and system of mood and transitivity, makes provision for describing varieties of language of which literary texts of L2 writers are typical. The model also recognizes lexis as a unit of grammatical description and makes it an independent level of description. Lexis functions as the basic element of the group - Nominal, Verbal and Adverbial Groups respectively.

## Data and Data Analysis

The data for this study is *Dear Ijeawele* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. The book adopts epistolary narrative mode. This is a technique whereby the entire narrative is conveyed through an exchange of letters, diary entries, etc. The word epistolary comes from the Greek word, “epistole”, which means “letter”. Epistolary forms often add realism to a narrative due to its imitation of real life situations. It makes the literary piece a real experience for the readers. This is what permeates the entirety of the narrative *Dear Ijeawele* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. The author adopts this technique in order to speak directly to the readers (the entire human race, especially Nigerians) and not just the person whom she addresses in the novel (Ijeawele).

## Morphological Features

Morphology has been defined as the study of word formation and the structure of words in a language. Some word formation processes which include compounding, abbreviation, acronym, lexical reduplication, etc. have been identified by language scholars. In our text, the writer has made use of some morphological formations such as abbreviations, compounding and neologism to create certain effects. These are further discussed below.

## Abbreviation

Crystal (2008, p.1) opines that “the sense of abbreviation has been refined in linguistics as part of the study of word formation distinguishing several ways in which it can be shortened.” Examples in the text are:

US	-	United States	(p. 10)
TV	-	Television	(p. 29)
Mrs	-	Mistress	(p. 24)
Mr	-	Mister	(p. 25)

The abbreviated words in the examples above are used by the writer to shorten the full words. For instance, the abbreviation, US is used by the



writer while recounting her experience with a Nigerian mother in the United States of America. “Mr” “Mrs” are used by the author while expressing her dislike for the title “Mrs” as to her, Nigerian society gives it too much value and as such many think “those who are not “Mrs” have somehow failed in life” (p. 24).

### Neologisms

Odeunmi (2006, p.54) describes neologism as creating new words or using existing words with new meanings. This can also be viewed as coinage which is one of the morphological processes in the English language. Examples of neologism in the text are the following:

Mr. Mum (p.7)

Feminism Lite (p.13, 43)

Lady mechanic (p.19)

The above words are deliberately used by the writer to debunk some people’s assumptions or beliefs about certain gender roles in the Nigerian society. For instance, the word “Mr. Mum” used by the writer’s friend to address himself because he has to do the daily care-giving for his children in the absence of his wife. However, Adichie makes the reader understand the man is not being “Mr. Mum” as he is discharging his duty as a father on his children.

Also, the phrase, “Feminism Lite” is used by Adichie to refer to some women who claim to be feminists but are not feminists in the real sense or do not understand what it means to be feminist. In fact, she refers to it as “the idea of conditional female equality” (p.13).

The phrase “Lady Mechanic” is also a common expression used to address ladies or women who are found in the profession of road side mechanical engineering. The word “Lady” attached to the phrase is what she finds inappropriate as she a mechanic is a mechanic irrespective of gender. Therefore, she points the attention of Ijeawele to it that she should teach Chizalum, her daughter about gender equality.

## Graphological Features

Simpson (1997, p.25) posits that graphology describes the general resources of written language system, including punctuation, spelling and typography, alphabet and paragraph structure. He further notes that graphology can be extended to incorporate any significant pictorial and iconic devices which supplement this system. The following are examples of the various features of graphology found in the text *Dear Ijeawele*.

### Capitalisation

Alabi (2007:174) opines that capitalisation of initial letter or whole lexical items is for emphasis. In our text, capitalisation is an important graphological feature used both conventionally and stylistically as a foregrounding device. Examples of words that capitalized in the text are:

OK, that snark was to cheer you up (p.4)

Teach her that it is NOT a man's role to provide. (p.44)

Did I ever tell you about going to a US mall...? (p.10)

It will be in the TV shows she watches... (p.31)

The examples of capitalized words above are used by the writer for different reasons. For instance, the word, "OK" is used to expression comprehension or affirmation of truth. The "NOT" is used by the writer emphasize the idea that men should not be seeing as the only provider. The words, "US" and "TV" are simply abbreviations for the United States and Television respectively.

### Italicisation

Italicisation is one of the foregrounding devices used in a literary text to bring some linguistic items to the fore or to make them stand out among other items. Examples of italicized words in the text are given below:

*For many Igbo women, the conditioning is so complete that women think of children only as father's.* (p.36)

*Allowed.* (p.13)

*Allow is a troubling word. Allow is about power. (p.14)*  
*Tell her that if someone does not like her, there will be someone else who will.*

The major stylistic effect of the italicized words used by the writer is that it reminds the reader that italicization is a way of placing emphasis on words, phrases or even sentences in the English language.

### **Punctuation Marks**

Punctuation is an important aspect of written language. It is an integral part of meaning and, invariably, an aid to clarity in writing. Some punctuation marks are brought to the fore in the text. They are made prominent because of the way they are deployed by the author. Examples are:

1. Dash (—)

Please know that I take your charge \_\_\_ how to raise her feminist \_\_ very seriously. (p. 1)

I know you are annoyed \_\_ and you should be \_\_ but it is really best to ignore her. (p. 4)

Parenting is about practice \_\_ and love. (p.4)

Chudi should do everything that biology allows \_\_\_ which is everything but breastfeeding. (p.6)

And never say that Chudi is ‘baby-sitting’ \_\_ people who babysit are the people for whom the baby is not a primary responsibility. (p.7)

Dashes in the text are used by the author to show omissions, dissatisfaction and incomplete sentences. The writer also uses dash to indicate explanation of certain expressions.

2. Colon (:)

Colon is another punctuation device used in the text. The writer uses colon to give further explanation on some expressions. Examples are:

You say to her: You like palm oil but some people don’t like palm oil.

She says to you: why?

You say to her: I don't know. It's just the way the world is.  
(p.46)

This is the only form of humility: the realization that difference is normal. (p.46)

In the above examples, it is observed that the writer uses colon to show further explanations on some expressions.

### 3. Inverted Commas (Quotation Marks)

One of the important punctuation marks used in the text is inverted commas. The author deploys it in the text in order to call the readers' attention to certain words and to also indicate that some words or expressions have implied meaning.

'Congratulations' feels too slight. (p.1)

'Not if only'. 'Not as long as' (p.2)

...the closest I have to a formula are my two 'Feminist Tools'...  
(p.1)

'Never apologize for working. You love what you do, and loving what you is a great gift to give your child' (p. 3)

People will selectively use 'tradition' to justify anything. (p.4)

(I do wish, though, that the word 'parent' had not been turned into a verb, which I is the root of the global middle-class phenomenon of 'parenting' as one endless, anxious journey of guilt). (p.5)

Share child care equally. 'Equally' of course depends on you both... (p.6)

In the examples above, it is clear that Adichie stylistically deploys the use of inverted commas to give special attention to certain words and expressions. Sometimes in the text, the writer uses inverted commas to indicate her dissatisfaction with the way certain words are used in the Nigerian society to refer to the female gender.

## Syntactic Features

Under this segment, a stylistic analysis will be carried out on sentence structure, clause structure, phrase structure and functional types of sentence based on the data extracted from the text.

## Sentence Classification

Sentences are classified on the parameters of functions and structures. Babajide (1998, p.29) says sentences are categorized into four on the basis of their structural components which include; Simple, Complex, Compound and Compound-complex sentences. Functional types of sentence are: Declarative, Imperative, Interrogative and Exclamatory sentences.

## Declarative Sentence

This is a sentence that states or declares or asserts something. The following are the instances of declarative sentences found in the text:

Chudi is not helping you by caring for his child. He is doing what he should. (p.6)

Chudi does not deserve any special gratitude or praise... (p.7)

The knowledge of cooking does not come pre-installed in the vagina. A husband is not a headmaster. (p.14)

In the above examples, the writer uses declarative sentences to assert her views about what she thinks or believes is right in an ideal society where we have gender equality.

## Interrogative Sentence

This is a sentence that asks a direct question. Babajide (1998, p.38) submits that in an interrogative sentence, there is always the process of inversion (Subject-Verb inversion). When a declarative sentence has a copula verb, the verb is made to come before the subject in order to make it interrogative. An interrogative sentence usually has a question mark. Examples of interrogative sentences in our text are:

What is your premise? (p.1) The second tool is a question: can you reverse X and get the same result? (p.2) Do you have a headache after reading all this? (p.47) \_\_\_ isn't it odd that in most societies in the world today, women generally cannot propose? (p.43) Why were we raised to speak in low tones about periods? To be filled with shame if our menstrual blood happened to stain our skirt? (p.40) What should she call it? What word should she use? (p. 39)

Through the deployment of interrogative sentence in the text, the author is able to question some societal beliefs or assumptions which she thinks are not ideal enough with regards to the gender dichotomy between men and women in the society.

### **Imperative Sentence**

An imperative sentence is one that makes a command or an entreaty or a prayer. The subject is usually "you" but it is often deleted because it is understood. It can be subtle and polite just as it can be sometimes plain and blunt. Examples of imperative sentences in the text are:

Never apologize for working. (p.3)

Tell her that a double-income family is actually the Igbo tradition... (p.4)

Do it together. (p.5)

Share child care equally. (p.6)

Teach that the idea of gender roles is absolute nonsense. (p.8)

Do not measure on a scale of what a girl should be. (p.11)

Beware of the danger of what I called Feminism Lite. (p.13)

Teach Chizalum to read. Teach her to love books. (p.16)

From the above examples, it is clear that the writer uses imperative sentences to direct her reader to carry out certain instructions. Since *Dear Ijeawele* is an epistolary writing in which Adichie is suggesting to her friend on how to raise her daughter feminist, she deploys the use of imperative sentence at the beginning of every 'Suggestions' in the text as a means of giving directives or advice.

### Simple Sentence

A simple sentence is a group of words that expresses only one thought. It must have a subject, which can be in simple (one) or compound form. Babajide (1998:29) opines that a simple sentence must have only one verb, which can be a verb or a verb phrase. Examples in the text are:

She is so beautiful (p.1)

S P C

I don't have a set-in-stone rule; (p.1)

S P Cs

Be a full person (p.3)

P C

Do it together. (p.5)

P C

Cooking is learned. (p.8)

S P

Allow is a troubling word. (p.14)

S P C

A husband is not a headmaster. (p.14)

In the text, the author uses simple sentences to assert her views and to create room for better understanding of her message by her reader. It is observed that a good number of the simple sentences deployed by the writer in the text are in the imperative form. This makes it very easy for the writer to drive home her points.

### Compound Sentence

A compound sentence is a combination of two or more simple sentences. In other words, two or more thoughts or ideas are expressed in a compound sentence. These thoughts can be individually expressed as independent clauses. Instances of compound sentences in our text of study are:

You say to her: You like palm oil but some people don't like palm oil (p.46)

Grammatical Structure:

You like palm oil. (Independent Clause)

But (Coordinating Conjunction)

Some people don't like palm oil. (Independent Clause)

Grammatical Structure:

Some people go to church. (Independent Clause)

And (Coordinating Conjunction)

Some others go to church. (Independent Clause)

You love what you do, and loving what you is a great gift to give your child. (p.3)

The author joins two or more independent clauses through the use of coordinating conjunctions, "and" "but", and the use of comma to form compound sentences. The implication is that each of the clauses can stand on its own and make a complete sense. However, the stylistic significance of the sentences is that the author wants to balance ideas discussed in the text.

### Complex Sentence

A complex sentence is a sentence that has only one independent clause and one or more subordinate clauses. Unlike compound sentences that are joined by coordinating conjunctions, complex sentences are joined by subordinating conjunctions like: after, although, if, because, when, until, unless, etc. In our text, examples are:

I looked at the toy section, which was also arranged by gender. (p.10)

Grammatical Structure

I looked at the toy section, (Independent Clause)

which was also arranged by gender. (Sub-ordinate Clause)

Grammatical Structure

Teach her to try to fix physical things when they break. (p.12)

Grammatical Structure:



Teach her to try to fix physical things (Independent Clause)  
when they break. (Sub-ordinate Clause)

The stylistic significance of the above complex sentences shows dependency relationships of the sentence. The author uses complex sentence to express the complexity of gender roles and the negative effects it will have on young children in our society.

### Compound-complex Sentence

A compound-complex sentence is a sentence that has at least two independent clauses and one or more subordinate clauses. It is simply a compound form of the complex sentence. A complex sentence has only one independent clause; a compound-complex sentence must have two or more independent clauses. Therefore, a compound-complex sentence has features of a compound sentence as well as features of a complex sentence. Example in our text is:

We also use evolutionary biology to explain male promiscuity, but not to explain female promiscuity, even though it really makes evolutionary sense for women to have many sexual partners. (p.37)

Grammatical Structure:

Teach Chizalum that biology is an interesting and fascinating subject, but she should never accept it as justification for any social norm. (p.37)

Grammatical Structure:

Teach Chizalum (Independent Clause)

that biology is an interesting and fascinating subject  
(Subordinate Clause)

but (Coordinating Conjunction)

she should never accept it as justification for any social  
norm. (Independent Clause)

The stylistic significance of the compound-complex sentences above is that the playwright blends independent ideas with dependent ones at a stretch. This gives the novella more beauty and it aids the reader's

understanding of the text. More so, the writer uses the sentences to explain her ideas and thoughts about social norms.

### Group Types and Structures

Tomori (1977, p. 59) argues that the group is a syntactic unit that may be referred to as an endocentric construction, that is, a construction with a headword which has the same possibility of occurrence in the proper contexts as the whole structure. The group usually has an obligatory element which cannot be omitted from the group and determines which lexical items come before and after it.

The obligatory element is called a headword and the group is named after the class or part of speech of the headword. Tomori (1977, p.57) identifies four main types of group in English grammar. However, only the Nominal Word Group, the Verbal Word Group and Prepositional Word Group are examined in this study as a result of their prevalent use by the author.

### Nominal Word Group (NWG)

NWG is a group that has its head and it can be replaced by a noun. It may be pre-modified by a pre-determiner, determiner and post-modified by a prepositional group, a non-finite clause, or an adjective. However, the NWG structure is MHQ (Modifier, Head and Qualifier) but the modifier and the qualifier are optional but the headword is obligatory. This structure is represented in the following examples:

I don't have a set-in-stone rule; (p.1)		
a set-in-stone	rule	
(Modifier)	(Modifier)	(Head)
Be a full person (p.1)		
a full	person	
(Modifier)	(Modifier)	(Head)

### Prepositional Word Group (PWG)

This group is a group that is preceded by a preposition and followed by a prepositional complement which is characterized by a noun phrase. The following instances are found in our text:

Marriage is such a major step in your life (p.43)

in	your life
(Preposition)	(Nominal Group)

Do not measure her on a scale of what a girl should be. (p.11)

on	a scale
(Preposition)	(Nominal Group)

of	what a girl
(Preposition)	(Nominal Group)

### Verbal Word Group (VWG)

This is a combination of lexical (main) verb and auxiliary verb(s). However, the main verb is obligatory. According to Tomori (1977:59), in modern English, the highest number of words that can be brought together in a verbal group is four. Examples of verbal group in the text:

Expect to be helped (p.4)

be	helped
(Auxiliary)	(Main)

She would know this if reading books were not such an alien enterprise to her. (p.4)

would	know
(Auxiliary)	(Main)

The result of our findings shows that the three groups discussed above play dominant roles in realizing the themes of our text. The three groups identified are prominent in the text and have stylistic significance. Through their deployment, Adichie is able to relate her experience to the readers.

## Lexico-Semantic Features

Lexical semantics is concerned with the meaning of words and the meaning of syntactic units larger than the word. However, the lexico-semantic consideration of our text deals with the lexical and semantic features of the text. At the lexical level of analysis, lexical items and lexical choices that are related to the subject matter are put into consideration.

## Collocation

Felicity and Michael (2008, p.6) define a collocation as a combination of two or more words which frequently occur together. In other words, it is a natural combination of words. It refers to the way English words are closely related with one another. Some words deployed by the author in the text collocate with one another. Examples are:

The girls will grow up to be women preoccupied with marriage. The boys will grow up to be men who are not preoccupied with marriage. (p.21)

If she likes fashion, let her dress up. (p.31)

Verb + Preposition: grow up

Verb + Preposition: dress up

In the above examples, it is observed that words are consciously chosen or selected by the author for the purpose of collocation. Certain verbs co-occur with certain prepositions. The stylistic significance of the collocations in the text is that their use calls the reader's attention to the author's conformity to the norms of word association in English language.

## Summary of Findings

After applying the theory and its basic elements to the analysis of the data, it was discovered that Adichie manipulated language expressly to create stylistic effects which help to generate meanings in the text. Our findings reveal that thematic pre-occupations of the text (themes of feminism, child upbringing, gender equality, marriage, etc.)

are projected through the levels of stylistic analysis mentioned in chapter two. They also contributed greatly to the accessibility of the text. Our findings at the morphological level of the analysis reveal that words are structured meaningfully to catch the reader's attention through the use of abbreviations to derive short forms of words and compounding is used to join two or more independent words together. It also helps us to know how words are organized in the process of word formation. Neologisms point to the author's power of creativity.

At the graphological level, it is observed that capitalization, italicization, boldening and punctuation marks, contribute to the reader's understanding of the text. The stylistic effects of Adichie's use of language are also shown graphologically through the use of italics to show how important some words are; boldening is used to differentiate between the chapters which are written as 'suggestions' from other words in the text. Capitalizations are used for clarity and emphasis. Dashes in the text are used to show omissions, dissatisfaction and incomplete sentences. The writer also uses dash to indicate explanation of certain expressions. Colons are also used to show further explanations on some expressions and inverted commas are used to call the reader's attention to certain words.

At the syntactic level, it is observed in the text that all structural and functional types of sentences are used by the author. Declarative sentences are used in the text by the author to assert her views about the equality of both men and women in the society. Interrogative sentences are used by the author to question some African ideology about gender-role. Imperative sentences are used to make the reader face the reality and to give directives or suggestions, while simple sentences are employed for the purpose of the language simplicity and accessibility of the text. Complex and compound-complex sentences are used to place subordinate and independent ideas side by side.

At the lexico-semantic level, we have been able to identify collocations which are noticed in some sentences and expressions in the text and they draw the reader's attention to the way the author deploys language to achieve some stylistic effects.

Finally, the second person point of view used by the author justifies the text as an epistolary writing. Through this technique, the reader is spoken to directly by the author using the second person pronoun 'you'.

## Conclusion

There is no doubt that stylistics is a connection between language and literature. It allows the critic or analyst to demonstrate his instinctive knowledge or sensitivity on a text at any given time and therefore paving the way for the reader's receptiveness to new ideas. Therefore, this study has been able to tie literature and language together through the rope of stylistics.

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