

## Stylistic analysis of Tivisms in select Nigerian novels

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**Abstract:** The culture of a given people is reflected in their literature and language is a medium through which such a culture is expressed. Stylistic analysis of Tange's *The Legitimate Candidate*, Shija's *Whispers of Distant Drums*, Gar's *The Blood of the Ram*, Kwaghchimin's *A Star of Hope*, Tijah's *Slow Men at Work* and Norya's *The Luminous Flame* resonates with unique expressions which express Tivness. The study investigates the significance of semantic devices in the select novels using Style as a Manner of Expression Model. Methodologically, this study used primary and secondary sources of data. The data for analysis are Tivisms in the select novels. Tivisms refer to Tiv words, expressions, exclamations or interjections, phrases and sentences, unique narrative, dramatic and poetic techniques that are used in literary works talk about Tiv people, culture and language. The study shows that Tivisms serve the following purposes: identity construction, multimodality, beautification, speech flavour and local colour. The paper contributes the literature on language use in Nigerian or African literature.

**Keywords:** Nigerian novels, Proverbs, Semantic devices, Stylistic and Tivisms

### 1. Introduction

The use of language in literary texts reflects what authors want to portray and the people that they are writing for. The language use may be a standard one or it may be full of colloquialisms. Some Nigerian authors write entirely in their indigenous languages and most of them write in the languages of erstwhile colonial masters such as English and French. Most Nigerian authors prefer using English or its pidginised form in their novels, dramatic texts and poems. The domestication of English in Nigerian literary works is often laced with Nigerian cultural nuances such as translations, transliterations, proverbs, cultural allusions, bastardised English and indigenous metaphors. The contents of such literatures clearly foreground them as products of Nigerian culture.

Undoubtedly, the novels under study are products of Nigerian literature where the authors deployed variegated lexical items and expressions of Tiv origin hence the authors are from Tiv extraction. These expressions are usually explained in the course of writing such literatures to help non-native speakers to understand the meanings of such un-English expressions. More importantly, names of gods and deities, musical instruments, festivals, marriage systems, illnesses and historical events are written in the language of the immediate community then translated into English or any universally accepted language. Some authors provide glossaries for such lexical items and they italicise or quote such un-English expressions for clarity and emphasis. This style is prevalent in indigenous and foreign languages and it clearly shows the region where such critical works are published. The language used in the select novels expresses Tiv ways of speaking and writing. Proverbs, loanwords, translations, figures of speech that express Tiv worldview are laced in the novels under study. These meaning-related features are too conspicuous to be ignored. Writers of Tiv extractions have produced a lot of literatures such as prose-fictions, dramatic and poetic texts. In most of these works, a careful reader or scholar will notice how Tiv language is domesticated to spice or add flavour them.

As products of Nigerian literature, the select novels are loaded with Tiv loanwords. The use of linguistic aspects and styles which are peculiar to the Tiv people is what is termed *Tivisms* in this study. Tivism is an abstract noun that is derived from a noun *Tiv* which has tripartite connotations: name of a major tribe in the Benue State of Nigeria, the language spoken in Nigeria and the southern part of Cameroon and the ancestral father. Tivisms cover words (*ate gazebo, bashi brass, yam-she* exchange marriage), exclamations or interjections (*Uwu!, Ayooo!, Kpash!, Ahooh!, Wuooo!*), phrases and sentences (*Ayatutu ka u nō? Ka se!*). Tivisms also comprise the unique narrative, dramatic and poetic techniques that are used in literary works talk about Tiv people, culture and language. Examples of these literary or narrative techniques found in the novels under study are songs/poems, dances, music, riddles, epistolary styles, flashbacks, dreams, magico-rituals, witchcraft, story-within-story techniques.

Undeniably, the novels under study share certain literary and linguistic features. However, this study investigates proverbs, figures of speech, transliterations, Tiv loanwords, glossaries, translations, code-mixing and code-switching features that express Tiv culture. There is a paucity of scholarly studies on the select novels hence the attempt to fill this gap. This study, therefore, investigates the significance of semantic stylistic devices in Tange's (1999) *The Legitimate Candidate*, Shija's (2005) *Whispers of Distant Drums*, Gar's (2009) *The Blood of the Ram*, Kwaghchimmin's (2010) *A Star of Hope*, Tijah's (2012) *Slow Men at Work* and Norya's (2014) *The Luminous Flame*.

## **2. Literature review**

This section is devoted to the review of related literature and theoretical framework. This study looks at the concepts of style and stylistics, and identifies some semantic devices used in the texts under review. Theoretically, this study has adopted Style as a Manner of Expression Model to uncover some semantic devices that reflect indigenous Nigerian literature.

### **2.1. Conceptual review**

Stylistics is the scientific study of style. Crystal and Davy (1969) define style as linguistic idiosyncrasies of an individual; the language habits shared by a group of people at one time, or over a period of time; expressions that involve a value judgement and the language of literature. Crystal and Davy maintain that style is the language habit or idiolect of a particular author (Aorian /æːrɪən/ style, Achebian style, Adichian style and Miltonic style), era or period such literary works are produced (pre-colonial and post-colonial eras; Victorian Period [1880-1901], Elizabethan Age [1558-1603], Jacobean Age [1603-1625], Romantic Period [1785-1832]) and choice and use of words (use of indigenous metaphors, proverbs, translations, euphemisms and vernacular style). Crystal and Davy's definition of style as the language habits shared by a group of people at one time, or over a period of time is vitally important in this study. The select novelists are Tiv people who speak Tiv language, know Tiv history and culture thus employing their acquired skills and experiences in their novels.

Stylistics has several nomenclatures as literary linguistics, literary semantics, literary pragmatics, poetics, modern stylistics, the new stylistics, modern rhetoric and several others. Some scholars view it as a branch of linguistics (Crystal & Davy, 1969; McArthur, 1996; Binkert, 1997; Galperin, 1981); applied linguistics (Simpson, 2004); textlinguistics (Wales, 2001) and hermeneutics (Stockwell, 2006). Finch (2003) sees stylistics as a theory that is used in analysing literary and non-literary texts. Toolan (1996) and Yul-Ifode (2008) look at stylistics as a branch of literature, context and choice (Semino, 2011); method of textual interpretation (Simpson, 2004, 2014); branch of sociolinguistics or variation in language (Turner, 1973; Chapman, 1973); Cuddon (2003) calls it a science; and use of theories of linguistics and frameworks for analysing literary works (Gibbons & Whiteley, 2018). Aor (2019) affirms that stylistics is 'a branch of applied linguistics that makes use of texts as its 'raw material' – thus subsuming it under textlinguistics.' Scholars have varying opinions about the status of stylistics; it has been viewed as an autonomous discipline by some researchers and other critics consider it as sub-department of either Linguistics or Literature. Aor (2019: 28) is of the strong opinion that stylistics is 'an autonomous discipline, linking or yoking Linguistics and Literature.'

Simpson (2004 and 2014) identifies semantics, phonology/phonetics, graphology, morphology, syntax/grammar, lexical analysis/lexicology, pragmatics/discourse analysis levels of stylistic analysis. Simpson maintains that linguistic devices of

written and spoken texts explain why certain aspects of meaning are necessary. This study is within the purview of semantic expressive stylistics means. Semantics is the study of the meanings of words, phrases, clauses and sentences (Palmer, 1981; Saeed, 2003; Hurford, Heasley & Smith, 2007). Aor (2019) observes that semantic 'stylistic devices relate to various aspects of meaning' and the analysis of meaning is important in stylistics. That is why Tan (2002:170) avers that 'it is the detailed analysis of the text in relation to meaning and effect that is the *modus vivendi* of stylistic analysis.' The select novels have synonyms and antonyms, idioms, phrasal verbs, Nigerian Pidgins and slangy expressions and sociolinguistic codes. However, this study to semantic devices like proverbs, figures of speech, transliterations, Tiv loanwords, glossaries, translations, code-mixing and code-switching.

## 2.2. Theoretical framework: Style as a manner of expression model

Nørgaard, Montoro and Busse (2010) maintain that stylisticians use linguistic models, theories and frameworks as their analytical tools in order to describe and explain how and why a text works as it does, and how we come from the words on the page to its meaning. The analysis of literary and non-literary texts typically focuses on the phonological, lexical, grammatical, semantic, pragmatic or discursal features of texts. There are many approaches, models or theories of stylistics that stylistician employ. These approaches include style as a manner of expression, a choice of linguistic means, idiolect, deviation from a norm, recurrence of linguistic forms, variation, period or era and comparison.

This study has adopted Style as a Manner of Expression Model. Leech and Short (2007) posit that style as a manner of expression shows dualism, that is, every writer necessarily makes choices of expression that reflect the setting, situation and characters they use. According to Wales (2011), style is the perceived distinctive manner of expression in writing or speaking that reflects how writers domesticate language and style that is peculiar to them. Coupland (2007) emphasises that the social meanings of literary texts are made locally, in specific relationships, genres, groups and cultures of a given people. The writers reflect aspects of their culture in their literature because they share similar linguistic and cultural experiences. Writers that belong to same geo-linguistic areas use linguistic and literary resources that have some semblances. These semblances may be in form of allusions, proverbs, euphemisms, story-within-a-story technique, poetry-within-a-story technique, anecdotes, folktales, intertextualities, code-mixing and switching and linguistic borrowing. The manner in which stylisticians use language must have some elements of significance and these elements are called stylistic value, in a writer's choice to express a certain 'sense' in *this* rather than *that* way. Leech and Short (2007: 20) formalised Style as a Manner of Expression in this equation: 'SENSE + STYLISTIC VALUE = (total) SIGNIFICANCE.'

This theory is vitally important because of its eclectic nature. It subsumes style as idiosyncrasies, choice of linguistic items and recurrence of linguistic forms. It undeniably clear that every writer has his/her style. However, authors of given geo-linguistic affiliations may have similar styles in their works. Style as a manner of expression may identify authors' literary works and their nationalities because some of them have linguistic and literary devices they share. The select novels are replete with semantic devices that contribute the literature on language use in Nigerian or African literature. Significantly, new contemporary stylistics articulates that the production of meaning needs to be accounted for as a double exercise encompassing as much text-informed inferences as the mental processes that allow text comprehension.

## 3. Research methodology

This study sampled Shija's (2005) *Whispers of Distant Drums*, Tange's (1999) *The Legitimate Candidate*, Gar's (2009) *The Blood of the Ram*, Kwaghchimim's (2010) *A Star of Hope*, Tijah's (2012) *Slow Men at Work* and Norya's (2014) *The Luminous Flame* using purposive sampling. The above six sampled novels belong to prose-fiction that have similar structures. They were published by Tiv authors, have semantic stylistic devices such as proverbs, translations/transliterations/glossaries, Tiv loanwords, figures of speech, code-mixing and code-switching. These novels discuss politics, abject poverty, power tussle, violence and fighting among political parties, individuals and tribes.

This study used both primary and secondary sources. Primary data consist of *Whispers of Distant Drums*, *The Legitimate Candidate*, *The Blood of the Ram*, *A Star of Hope*, *Slow Men at Work* and *The Luminous Flame*. The secondary sources are

textbooks, journal articles, theses and dictionaries. These secondary sources help in the review of related literature. The data for this study were obtained through reading of the select novels. After reading the select novels, the author jotted down proverbs, figures of speech and transliterations, Tiv loanwords, glossaries, translations, code-mixing and code-switching and discussed them as semantic devices using Style as a Manner of Expression Model.

#### **4. Data presentation and analysis**

There are many semantic stylistic devices that the select novels employ. However, this study discusses the following devices under:

- a. Proverbs as semantic device in the select novels
- b. Figures of speech as semantic device in the select novels
- c. Transliterations as semantic device in the select novels
- d. Tiv loanwords as semantic device in the select novels
- e. Glossaries as semantic device in the select novels
- f. Translations as semantic device in the select novels
- g. Code-mixing and code-switching as semantic device in the select novels.

##### ***Proverbs as Semantic Device in the select Novels***

Proverbs are wise sayings that are injected into literary works to add flavour. Novels that resonate with indigenous proverbs are rated as true Nigerian literature. Akindele and Adegbite (2005:46) affirm that proverbs give ‘socio-cultural roots to English in the Nigerian context particularly to its vernacular style.’ Akindele and Adegbite observe that African proverbs are introduced with the following strategies: ‘Our people have a saying;’ ‘as our people say;’ ‘it is our fathers who said;’ ‘we have a saying;’ ‘we always say’ and ‘the elders have said.’

Tiv cultural nuances are expressed through the use of proverbs. Shija (2005: 4) uses ‘...the blindness does not allow two successful frying pans of groundnuts to get burnt on the heart’ to warn people to be cautious in whatever they do. Again, Shija (2005: 26) injects ‘Our people say, when the whirlwind starts it starts with *Igbe*’ to inform the readers that everything has its root cause. The proverb that says ‘...one who bites the finger that feeds him’ (Shija, 2005: 51) means treat somebody that helped you badly. Furthermore, to give support to somebody is proverbially expressed as ‘I have blocked the upper part of the stream, that is why I am draining the lower part of it’ (Shija, 2005: 57); ‘We have a saying that an old man does not refuse his fellow a cow’s gullet’ (Shija, 2005: 59) to mean assistance or good gesture is reciprocal. If you refused to partake in anything, do not enjoy whatever that comes is expressed proverbially as ‘refusing to eat the meat of a billy-goat but opting to devour its liver (Shija, 2005: 61); ‘A dwarfish cow does not, however, go about with the sheep’(Shija, 2005:64) means befriend somebody that you share similar qualities. Shija (2005: 64) employs ‘This time around, it is virtually a situation of a mother toad instructing her little one on how to succeed while the little crocodile hides and listens’ (Shija, 2005: 65) to mean to be mindful of whom we divulge our secrets to. Procrastination is the thief of time is expressed in Tiv as ‘we say if you procrastinate, the beetle would escape with your rope’ (Shija, 2005: 65).

Shija (2005:65) also employs ‘...the heap of excrement has exceeded the buttocks’ to express helplessness or hopelessness. ‘But where does a talkative weaver-bird ever make a nest?’ (Shija, 2005:73) implies any person that is not doing the needful will not achieve anything. Shija (2005: 79) deploys ‘our people say, drum is not loud enough, you beat it hard and shake your buttocks’ to encourage people to keep on trying. Also, Shija (2005: 79) expresses the liberty that someone has in his household to operate as ‘our people also say that no matter your ugliness, when a decision is taken to bring a new bride into your mother’s closet, you fuck that woman.’ ‘But our people say, the child which says its mother will not sleep must also get ready to spend bitter sleepless nights’ Shija (2005: 177) warns people not cause any discomfiture for it will boomerang. To invite trouble for oneself is proverbially rendered as ‘they have knocked their heads against a beehive (Shija 2005: 177). Shija foregrounds some of the above proverbs by starting them with the phrase, ‘Our people say...’ to show that they are Nigerian proverbs.

In *The Legitimate Candidate*, Tange (2009) uses the following proverbs to underscore the significance of Tiv culture in the novel. He says 'it was our fathers who said that one does not give somebody a wife, plus a bed' Tange (2009:15) to mean that you will only help someone but not to solve one's entire problems. Furthermore, 'one doesn't start running from the beast without knowing the direction of attack, otherwise one might even run into the beast itself' (Tange, 2009:85) means we should be decisive in any decision we want to take. 'A person should not continue shivering with cold when there is fire before him' (Tange, 2009: 95) encourages us to make maximum use of any opportunity that presents itself. Similarly, 'our people say that the dog relishes eating excrement only when hot' Tange (2009: 116) emphasizes that we should strike while the iron is hot. There is a cause or reason behind any action as seen in 'the owl does not fly in the day-time for the fun of it' (Tange, 2009: 116). The proverbs therefore serve or emerge as arenas for communicating societal values and norms, educating and inspiring younger folk.

Tange (2009:55, 118, 119 and 120) deploys 'it is the co-operation of two stones that cracks a nut;' 'two heads, they say, are better than one'; 'You know if Mbagbera had not sat together, they could not have perfected in designing metals' and 'The river was selfish and went alone, that is why it has bends' to foreground the importance of co-operation, unity, togetherness and oneness. Also, Tange's (2009: 124) 'imagine having a fish that has wandered into your trap and allowing it to swim back into the open water....' encourages us to grasp any opportunity that comes our way without letting it go. 'The fruits that ripen and fall by themselves produce better seeds' Tange (2009: 141) means that perseverance is a good virtue. 'You must understand that the hunter doesn't whistle when trailing an animal' Tange (2009: 142) implies that you do not expose your plan before executing it. Tange (2009: 190) employs 'the excrement had oozed past the buttocks' to mean that there is no remedy for something that happened. Most of these proverbs encourage us to be united, be cautious, persevere, decisive in our endeavours.

Gar (2009:9) says that '*Mba ker or sha kwagh u a doo nan yo, man i lu bee kwagh,*' then he translates as 'You trap a man using something he likes, and it is usually minor thing.' The import of this proverb is that we should not underrate anything or body. Kwaghchimin (2010: 13) uses this proverb 'If the rat had known it would die, it wouldn't have followed the aroma of the fried corn to the trap' to warn us about certain decisions we take in life and that some of the decisions will take us to our untimely graves. Kwaghchimin (2010: 12) also deploys 'Our people would say, it rains and the trees take bath' to emphasise the opportunity that comes our way. 'It's no use testing a cap on a knee when there is a head' Kwaghchimin (2010: 54) means we should go straight to the point. 'There has never been smoke without fires' (Kwaghchimin, 2010: 41) shows that everything has its cause and 'our people say, it's the child that comes to the door that is welcomed' (Kwaghchimin, 2010: 89) explains that we should make efforts or attempts.

Most of the proverbs that Tijah laces his novel with are English proverbs. For instance, Tijah (2012: 19) says 'Our elders say blood is thicker than water' is an English proverb that means family relationships are stronger than others. Kwaghchimin (2010: 81) deploys this proverb 'the elephants have been fighting and the grass is inevitably suffering' to underscore that the poor or downtrodden are at the receiving end. '*Ku mongo ngu nyoon ga* – Mass deaths are not painful (Kwaghchimin (2010: 148) is used when many people are involved in an unpleasant situation. Ageebee thinks that his two friends will also receive queries. Ironically, Ageebee is the only person that receives the query and is sacked.

There is a deluge of proverbial style in Norya's novel. Norya (2014: 23) uses 'our people say no matter how high the airplane flies in the sky, it must touch ground eventually' to show that wherever one goes, one must eventually come back to his root. 'When banana stem grows old it gives way for the young shoot to take over' (Kwaghchimin, 2010: 44) means the perpetuation of one's family. 'The *yiase* tree' that is twisted by the wind is the tree that is eventually used to carve a state drum (Kwaghchimin, 2010: 47) stresses the importance of everything. 'Our people say *zer gbem hembra kpaagh* (Kwaghchimin, 2010: 56) means persistence often brings success. '*Ahi nga hian orapishe atsenga ahar ga*' is translated as 'two pots of groundnuts cannot be overcooked by a blind man' Kwaghchimin (2010: 115) and '*Ishôhô ngi gbe yevese a tetan tsô ga*' translated as 'a toad does not run during the day for nothing' (Kwaghchimin (2010:4) is explained that there is a reason behind everything. Most proverbs in Norya are written in Tiv then translated into English.

The use of proverbs enhances the richness of select novels and illustrate that the characters have potential reservoir of Tiv proverbial expressions. It is therefore clear that the use of proverbs serves as a linguistic tool for measuring characters' proficiency in the Tiv language. The above proverbs are loaded with Tiv cultural nuances thus providing a vernacular style in the texts under review. Proverbs add linguistic flavour and authenticity to the select novels as products of African literature.

#### ***Figures of Speech as Semantic Device in the select Novels***

Tivism is also expressed using figures of speech or tropes and these figures of speech contribute to embellishing the novels under discussion. Figures of speech add the following to the select novels: style and creativity, beauty and colour, simplicity and freshness, vigour and precision, originality and familiarity, emphasis, contrast, visual and aural aesthetic appeals, embellishment, euphemistic purposes and comparison. They also contribute to connotative meanings in the select novels. The authors selected only figures of speech that have relevance to the understanding of the Tiv cultural and linguistic aspects of the chosen novels.

#### ***Use of Allusions***

Allusion is a reference to historical, cultural, religious (biblical), literary and classical events. The allusions used in the select novels have historical, cultural and religious undertones. Historical allusion is reference to events that happened in the past. Cultural allusions are events, behaviour, dressings, music, songs and so on that refer to the culture of a given people. Biblical allusions are references to the biblical chapters and verses. There are references to historical events in Shija's (2005:25) thus:

Look at what they did to Tor Abagi, the Clan Head of Shangev-Tiev. Here was a great warrior; son of the Great Lion, Rider of the invincible air, the one who stood alone and slaughtered a thousand resilient warriors in the war we fought against *Ugee* that bitter war. Tor Abagi the son Kpanju, whose angry eyes flashed like lightning, whose thuds trumped like the clap of thunder.

Abagi was a Clan Head of Shangev-Tiev who was forcefully accused by his brother and hanged without proper investigation in the colonial era. Historical reference is also made to 'Moji Azagile, a man from Jeechira known for his outspokenness and Abuul Benga, a man from Ukan known for his ability to tame humanity to slavery' Shija's (2005:26). Moji Azagile and Abuul Benga were traditional rulers in Jeechira and Ukan known for their rhetorical capabilities and ruthlessness, respectively. There are allusions to *Inyambuan*, *Ijov* and *Haakaa* anti-witchcraft movements in Shija. Gumh (2012) affirms that *Haakaa* (throw away witchcraft emblems) and *Inyambuan* (meat has turned sour) uprisings happened in Tivland in 1927 and 1939. These movements came to cleanse Tivland of *tsav*, witchcraft. Kwaghchimin (2010:25) mentions Takuruku, the ancestral father of Tiv thus 'Indyer announces joyful moments of marriage or sorrowful moments of death calls on Takuruku, our great ancestor.'

Gar (2012:20) alludes to 'the ancient Tiv practice of wife inheritance' where Wan Gyegwe, the bride of Sase Dakor, later becomes the wife of Gbilaigba through leviration or widow inheritance. Widow inheritance is a cultural cum historical allusion. Gar also alludes to '*yamshe*, marriage by exchange of females' (Gar, 2012:21) that was vogue in pre-colonial era. Similarly, Kwaghchimin (2010:78) summarises the Tiv marriage system thus: 'You know we started this marriage sort of thing with trade by barter, we later went into paying bride price in cash.' After the abolition of exchange marriage, Tiv people started using *bashi*, bars of brass, for the payment of bride price.

Apart from historical cum cultural allusions, the select novels are replete with biblical allusions that show that the authors are conversant with the bible. Kwaghchimin (2010:97) says '...in every Jericho there is a Joshua.' This is a reference to Joshua, the son of Nun, who led the people of Israel to the Promised Land. 'Everyone struggles as they take their cross and march in the direction of their Calvary' (Kwaghchimin, 2010:131) is a reference to the synoptic gospels where Jesus told his disciples to carry their own cross and follow him. Calvary is a place where Jesus was nailed. Norya (2014:108) likens the behaviour of Tery, a major character, 'who became the prodigal son in their eyes.' This is an allusion to Luke

15:11-32 where the younger son demands for the share of his father's inheritance and his father gives him. He therefore goes to unknown country but later comes back and apologises for his sin and he is forgiven.

Furthermore, Tijah (2012:32) cites Matthew 7:7 where Jesus said 'if you asked, you would receive; if you sought, you would find and if you knocked, it would be opened unto you.' Tijah (2012:37) cites 1 Samuel 11-3; 19 where 'Hannah prayed for a child' and 'allowed her husband to go into her' as a biblical allusion. There is also a reference to Genesis 2:24 where God said '...a man and woman shall leave their parents and come together as one flesh never to part except upon death.' Tijah (2012:33) quotes Romans 5:35 thus: '... but we also rejoice in our suffering, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His love unto our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom He has given us.'

### **Synecdoches**

Synecdoche is a figure of speech in which a part stands for a whole. Synecdochic examples that refer to body parts standing for human beings are: Tange (2009:7, 122 and 122) uses *head*, *heads* and *hands* to stand for a king and many people as seen in: 'Many *heads* popped out of the huts to greet him;' 'he wouldn't mind even sacrificing a few *heads* on the battlefield;' 'the clan *head* of Mbahondo had gone to his ancestors' and 'it ought to be grabbed with both hands.' Tijah (2012:141) uses *face* to refer to a child or offspring – 'There is pride in seeing one's *face*.' Also, Shija (2005:81 and 153) uses *eyes* in – 'Mr Agom was aware of many *eyes* watching' and 'All *eyes* turned towards the door to welcome the headmaster...' to stand for many people. Shija (2005:59) employs *ear* in 'That's why our *ears* now filled....'

Furthermore, the select novels employ seasons to stand for years. A season represents one year, two, three, four seasons stand for two, three, four years, respectively. Shija (2005:59) asks, 'How many *seasons* have passed?' and response is 'Four.' 'Adagi to use the land for only *five seasons*...' (Shija (2005:59) and 'There were *several seasons* ago' (Shija (2005:64). Gar (2012:23) also says that 'Dakor's two sons were not alike in anything, although only *three farming seasons* separated them in age.' *Three farming seasons* stand for three years.' In Tange's (2009:13 and 29) 'I never really forgot that little conversation we had *many moons* back' and 'It was now *three moons* since he last visited the chief,' *moons* stand for days and *three moons* represent three days. Zegejav tells Wanzer to give Asua 'another *calabash* of wine' (Tange, 2009:36). *Calabash*, a unit of measure, stands for the liquor inside it.

### **Euphemisms**

Euphemism is a polite, decent and pleasant way of saying something that is impolite, indecent and unpleasant. The commonest euphemisms used in the select novels are death euphemisms. Death is a tabooed subject in the Tiv cosmology therefore the select novels avoid mentioning *died* and *death*. Instead of saying Gumnor and the Clan Head of Mbahondo died, Tange (2009:75 and 146) euphemistically says, '... Gumnor *passed away*' and '... the clan head of Mbahondo *had gone to his ancestors*.' Shija (2005:206) says that 'Kuleve *had gone on a long journey* in the land of Damkors.' The question in Norya (2014:35), 'Is it how you will abandon your siblings when I *pass on*?' is euphemistically clothed. The word 'die' has been ignored. Kwaghchimin (2010:142) avoids saying armed robbers but euphemistically refers to them as '...the gentlemen of the highways off the road.' Finally, a character in Tijah's (2012:142) says, "I missed my *period about two months ago*..." to mean she has been pregnant for two months. Allusions, synecdoches and euphemisms heavily reflect how Tiv people express themselves in spoken and written discourses. Their choice is deliberate hence they are vitally important.

### **Transliterations as Semantic Device in the select Novels**

Transliteration is one of the dominant devices that qualifies this study as literary output of Tiv novels. Though written in English, select novels express speech mannerism of the Tiv people. On the use of transliteration in prose-fiction, Mphalele (1962) affirms that 'it is better for an African writer to think and feel in his own language and then look for an English transliteration approximating the original.'

- i. 'They take place behind our back' (Tange 2009:60).

- ii. 'Are my eyes deceiving me or what?' (Tange 2009:113).
- iii. 'You've got me, Jindi (Tange 2009:115).
- iv. 'When has it become our tradition to climb on the heads our brothers in the quest for political power?' (Tange, 2009:178).
- v. '...including buying up some people' (Shija, 2005:28).
- vi. '...the gurgling water in the cow's gullet...' (Shija, 2005:66).
- vii. 'At last I have not eaten anybody's thing' (Shija, 2005:102).
- viii. 'I salute my paternal people/The paternal people salute a worthy....' (Shija, 2005:106).
- ix. "Wan Daba tells Dakor, 'Go and bring me my wife, let me see her and die!'" Gar (2009).
- x. 'Well, I have found myself on a knife's edge' (Kwaghchimin 2010:106).

The select novels are written in English but the meanings of phrases and sentences have been *tivised*, given Tiv connotations or interpretations. The *tivisation*, the transliteration of the above examples shows that these novelists of Tiv extraction have common linguistic experience at their disposal. Example one means to do or say something in one's absence; example two implies that the character is not recognizing another character; example three means you understood what I said; example four refers to conspiring against somebody and example five means bribing or hiring people. Furthermore, in example six, 'cow's throat' is a transliterated phrase for a culvert. Example seven is a refusal to collect kickbacks or bribes; example eight expresses how Tiv people greet their kinsmen, example nine suggests that Dakor should pay bride price on Wan Gyegwe and bring her (daughter-in-law) to Wan Daba and example ten means to have a serious problem. Transliteration of sentences foregrounds the significance of Tivisms in the select novels.

#### ***Tiv loanwords as Semantic Device in the select Novels***

The beauty of the select novels is the admixture of loanwords which constitutes vernacular style. The language of literature is laced with colloquial and lexical items from the indigenous languages. The select novels are replete or resonate with words and phrases that portray the Tiv cultural world-view. This presupposes that loanwords suggest cultural context relevant to the interpretation of the select novels. The use of loanwords adds local colour to the texts under discussion. Black (2006) avers that loanwords showcase identity of the character and contribute to characterisation in the select novels. Yu (2017) maintains that in fiction, loanwords differentiate between the standard and non-standard languages. English words that could have been used were replaced with Tiv loanwords to foreground their meanings.

Certain words that relate to magico-rituals are written in Tiv then glossed into English. These words are Tange's (2009:2) 'Atsuku cult' is an oracle believed to bring luck to the owner, *swende* (2009:199) unnatural death, *Mku*, a ritual performed to exorcise evil spirits; Gar's (2009:28) *ikpagher* talisman; Kwaghchimin (2010:2 and 64) *igbe*, *vegh akombo* and *akombo-adam* Tiv traditional rituals and *akpiti* paralytic sickness, respectively. Words belonging to anti-witchcraft movements are written in Tiv – *Inyambuan* (meat has gone sour), *Haakaa* (throw away witchcraft artifacts) and *Ijov* (sprite or fairy) (Shija, 2005:26); names of Tiv traditional attires 'tugudu' cloth for burying dead bodies (Shija, 2005: 56), 'anger' black and white cloth (Kwaghchimin, 2010, 30); names of musical instruments – 'Indyer' (Tange, 2009:8) talking drum, *Ajo* (Shija, 2005:103) hour-glass drum; marriage terminologies such 'yamshe' (Tange, 2009:78; Gar, 2009:21) exchange marriage, 'ingyôr' female relation and 'bashi' brass as a unit of money (Gar, 2009:21). Other lexical items *Ukiliki* junior wife, *ate* reception hut or gazebo, *Aôndo* God and *ivumbu* cudgel (Tange, 2009); *Atem Tyo* head crushing and *burukutu* (Shija, 2005) local liquor; *Tor-kpande* Chief-tax-collector, *gbaga* prostitute, *Ior i ver iyol!* People should give way and *Or ya* head of the family (Gar, 2009); *Orne* this person and *angereke* gossip (Tijah, 2012) and Norya's (2014) *agbajen* locally made raffia chair, *iwenge* waist and *iwên* stone. These loanwords and expressions are stylistically marked hence they reflect Tiv culture. Most of these words and expressions have equivalents in English but the authors deliberately used to show context and identity. The injection of loanwords in the select novels captures what the authors want to say verbatim.

### **Translations as Semantic Device in the select Novels**

The use of translations in Nigerian novels is an age-long tradition that portrays the linguistic dexterity of the chosen novelists to explain or gloss un-English loanwords and expressions. It also points out that the select novelists love their language and the fusion of Tiv expressions is in consonance with what Wali (2007:283) enunciates that ‘an African writer who thinks and feels in his (or her) own language must write in that language’. The preponderance of Tiv words and expressions in the select novels is therefore a clarion call that the select authors answer. Translation is therefore a linguistic tool that explains the meaning of words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs and discourses. Instances of translations in the select novels are:

- i. ‘Suswam refers to a sharp-edged reed that grows in the swamps which is hard to tackle’ (Tange, 2009:43).
- ii. ‘Each age-grade, *kwav* had its own court’ (Tange, 2009:80).
- iii. ‘Asua proved his meddle and arose to become the commander (Kurtya) of army of Mbahondo’ (Tange, 2009:108).
- iv. ‘...the chief’s common room (*ate*)...’ (Tange, 2009:133).
- v. ‘The symbol of authority was represented by *Swem*, a pot which was tied round with fresh leaves’ (Tange, 2009:189).
- vi. ‘Ayoo! Iortim! *Or nan too ve nan nem ga la ikpongo tswar i nan neoo*’ (That the person who does not pour it out for me to drink has ballooned arse!) (Shija, 2009:158).
- vii. ‘Welcome darling *U hide vee?*’ (Tijah, 2012:152).
- viii. ‘Yes hygiene *ker Africa ga*, Africans are ignorant of the rules of hygiene’ (Tijah, 2012, p.139).
- ix. ‘Terungwa my son, *msugh u za van*, welcome home!’ (Norya, 2014: 8).
- x. ‘*Kwaghyan doom ayoosu ga*, it is not good to talk while you have food in your mouth (Norya, 2014:15).
- xi. *Kwagh ka er man i ôr kwagh amin ye*, something happens before they talk about it (Norya, 2014:16).
- xii. *Ka or u a ye ican, a va mase tor ye*, one who is poor today may become king one day (Norya, 2014:51).
- xiii. “Good,” Karshima said, “Atim, my *Tien*, my mother’s elder brother... (Kwaghchimim, 2010:100).

The examples have different shades of translation. Number defines *Suswam*; *kwav* means age-grade in number *i* and it is italicised; commander also means (Kurtya) in number *iii* and it is bracketed and common room is synonymous with (*ate*) in number *iv*. Tiv expressions and proverbs have equally been translated into English. Words and their translations have been discussed under loanwords, code-mixing and switching.

### **Use of Glossaries in Semantic Stylistic Device in the select Novels**

*The Legitimate Candidate*, *The Blood of the Ram* and *A Star of Hope* have glossary section that explains or glosses lexical items, phrases, indigenous proverbs and entire songs. These glossaries provide definitions and explanations to Tiv words and sentences so as to ease the understanding of the select novels. Some examples of this technique are seen below:

- i. *Atsuku* – oracle, believed to bring luck to the owner (Tange, 2009:207).
- ii. *Idugh* – fidelity test for married woman (Tange, 2009:207).
- iii. *Ifan* – the pouring of libation (Tange, 2009: 207).
- iv. *Kerasongo* – a delicious specie of mushroom (Tange, 2009:207).
- v. *Tia* – a fine (Tange, 2009:208).
- vi. *Tyekpe* – a large multipurpose calabash (Tange, 2009:207).
- vii. *Ingyôr* – a sister entrusted into a brother or uncle’s care (Kwaghchimim, 2010, p. 163).
- viii. *Kunekune* – Whiteman (Kwaghchimim, 2010:163).
- ix. *Indyer* – town crier (Kwaghchimim, 2010:63).
- x. *Swende* – violent or sudden death, considered unnatural (Gar, 2009:172).
- xi. *Gbaga* – a prostitute (Gar, 2009:173).
- xii. *Tsav ka vande yeren* – the essence of witchcraft is, hide-first (Gar, 2009:174).
- xiii. *Kulaiyol* – self-protection (Gar, 2009:175).

### **Code-mixing/Code-switching as Semantic Stylistic Device in the select Novels**

Speakers and writers of two or more dialects or languages can use more than one dialect or language in their novels. They may mix two or more codes or speak them separately. The former refers to as code-mixing and the latter means code-switching. O'Grady, Archibald and Katamba (2011) define code-switching as the admixture of two languages in a given discourse. Code-switching and code-mixing are stylistically significant because they allow writers or speakers express or write in the languages they control of so as to convey indepth meanings. Code-mixing and code-switching portray that the writers have good command of their languages.

Code-switching and code-mixing are marked by italicising Tiv words, phrases and sentences. These examples are: 'Nothing more than the *Mku* ritual, which you must perform...' 'May *Aôndo* bless you....' and 'Chile was playing a game of *shiva* with Ikwuen... (Tange, 2009:99, 100 and 140). *Mku* is a kind of ritual that brings good luck. *Aôndo* means God in Tiv and *shiva* is a kind of Tiv traditional game. 'My son, it is good that you have come back from *tar buter*...' (Norya, 2014:14). The phrase *tar buter* means Whiteman's country. 'When the women returned from the farms, *ruam* was quickly pounded, and the *Orbuter* was seen to heartily, from the same plate with Dakor' (Gar, 2009:102-3) and 'Rev. Bergsma told them about the love of *Yesu Kristu*, the son the Great *Aôndo*, who would come one day to take away all good people, to a wonderful place in the sky' (Gar, 2009:103-4). *Ruam* is pounded yam; *Orbuter* means Whiteman, *Yesu Kristu* is Jesus Christ and *Aôndo* is God.

'When I ask, who are the *Ayatutu*?' (Shija, 2005:58). *Ayatutu* refers to Tiv people who eat food while it is hot. It is a kind of slogan that is used in the gatherings of Tiv people. Its full version is: *Ayatutu ka unô? Ka se!* which is translated as: Who are the *Ayatutu*? We are the ones. 'It is raining, but the fairy-queen is busy drumming an *ajo* in the backyard' (Shija, 2005:103). *Ajo* is an hour-glass drum. 'Ageebie called out loudly: "*Dooshima! Dooshima!! Dooshima ngu gaa?*"' (Tijah, 2012:136). '*Dooshima ngu gaa?*' means Dooshima where are you? What have you been doing? Sleeping! Yes! At this hour of the day! *M de ga m...*' (Tijah, 2012:136). The elliptical statement is rendered in Tiv to express Ageebie's annoyance. '*M de ga m...*' means 'If I have not restrained myself (I would have beaten you).'

Switching and mixing of codes help in character delineation and indicate the geo-linguistic location of the novels under discussion. Code-mixing and code-switching promote linguo-communal solidarity among those that belong to the same speech community such as Tiv. Code-switching and code-mixing amplify or emphasise our utterances. They quote what characters say verbatim. They flavour or spice our discourses and mark off side comments from the main narrations. Code-mixing and code-switching serve as glossaries of un-English words and expressions hence they explain them. Code-mixing and code-switching add aesthetic appeals hence they are italicised, bracketed, quoted and underlined. This adds graphic substance to the select novels in the text under review.

### **5. Contributions of the study and implications**

This study has meaningful contributions and implications to make in linguistics and other sister disciplines. These contributions and implications are:

- i.** This study shows an interface between stylistics and cultural studies.
- ii.** The employment of indigenous lexical and semantic devices in the select novels foregrounds Nigerian literature.
- iii.** The Style as a Manner of Expression Model used in this study can equally be used for analysing other genres of literature.
- iv.** Pedagogically, this study will be used as a reference material for teaching literature, stylistics and linguistics.
- v.** This study broadens the scope of semantic analysis, thus enhancing the meaning of the select texts.

### **6. Conclusion**

The domestication of indigenous semantic features in the select novels adds local colour and attests that the select novels are products of Nigerian Literature. Semantic stylistic devices used in the select novels characterised what Tiv people express in oral and written discourses. These semantic devices have cultural relevance in understanding of the novels under

review. Tiv loanwords spice the narrative structures of the select novels thus foregrounding the significance of these lexical items. Semantic Tivisms are also loaded in the multitudinous deployment of proverbial expressions which clearly indicate that Tiv people have advanced communication system. These proverbs express cultural nuances of the Tiv people and they measure the linguistic capabilities of characters in the select novels. Figurative expressions have cultural and linguistic implications hence they advance the settings and plots of the select novels. Code-mixing and code-switching also reflect picturesque descriptions of how Tiv writers and speakers sandwich words and expressions in their normal discourse. Most of the semantic devices discussed in this study contribute to vernacular and colloquial styles and the glossing of words and expressions enhance understanding of the novels under study. Finally, stylistics of meaning is highly significant because it discusses various aspects of meaning that the select texts foregrounded, thus reinforcing and enhancing the meaning of the select texts. This study is highly inexhaustible, therefore, further studies will be carried out to fill this research gap. These areas include:

- i. Authors should discuss denotative and connotative meanings in using literary texts.
- ii. Studies should be carried out on syntagmatic and paradigmatic aspects of meaning.
- iii. Furthermore, research should be done on phonosemantics, pragma-semantics and lexico-semantics.
- iv. Again, semantic parallelisms and deviations should be treated using literary texts.
- v. Scholarly studies on semantic figures of speech should be written.
- vi. Lastly, theories of meanings should be employed using poems, prose-fictions and dramatic texts.

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