

A COMPARATIVE STYLISTIC STUDY OF ACHEBE'S USE OF
PROVERBS IN *THINGS FALL APART* AND *ARROW OF GOD*

BY

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Declaration

I, Abenitus, Isa'ac Matthew (MA/ESP/IT/05/0038), do hereby declare that all parts of this work have been researched and written by me, and that all the ideas, views and information herein are the product of my endeavour.

Any part of this Research Work which I claim to be the originator but which in fact has been written by another person or taken from any unpublished authority, apart from those acknowledged, shall make me liable to the official charge of plagiarism.

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Dedication

To my Father (Nyampi Vah Kwan), Mother (Andegi Nyampi) both of blessed memory, and my wife Emmy and children (Unity, Peace, Ningmila and Bankalo).

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Abstract

Every stylistic study is geared towards contributing to the understanding of the text. This study looked at the comparative stylistic study of Achebe's use of proverbs in *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*. The corpus for the study were analysed through the Eclectic method of analysis. It was centred on the semantic, lexical, syntactic and symbolic as well as metaphoric features of proverbs. The analysis revealed that these components have their interpretations and peculiar implications. The outcome shows that all the above features were dominated by simple and everyday vocabularies and less complex syntactically. The most common lexical items are nouns relating to man and his immediate environment. Because of the simple nature of the features used by Achebe, hence the understanding of the proverbs become very easy.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the Study

Language in its simplest form is seen as human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, feelings and desires by means of a system of sounds and sound symbols. It could also be a manner of using words. One can rightly say that language is a means of communicating ideas, used by a given people in a given geographical location. It is equally an integral part of people's culture. Language and culture therefore go hand in hand.

Linton (1947) holds the view that "a society's culture is the way of life of its members: the collection of ideas and habits which the people learn, share and transmit from generation to generation. Included among the elements of culture are the social institutions, such as: religion, marriage, traditional, political practices, social relationships, pattern of world view, occupational practices etc that make a people what they are. It is the importance of language to cultural existence that Haralambo (1980) says; to a large degree

culture determines how members of a society think and feel, it directs their action and defines their outlook.

It is in the above context that the character of language comes alive. These elements of a culture are embedded in language. So what language does in any cultural context is to mark among other things the system of usages and procedure, mutual aid, control of human behaviour, liberties peculiar to that society, etc.

The works of Malinowski (1923), Firth (1950) and Hymes (1967) lead to a renewal of interest in the study of ways in which language is used in different cultures. The use of language therefore is dependent on the context of situation. Halliday, McIntosh and Stevens, (1964) propose three features for the characterisation of the context of situation. These are: Field of discourse, Tenor of discourse and mode of discourse. Field of discourse thus refers to the subject matter or the aspect of human endeavour which forms the topic of discussion. Tenor of discourse on the other hand refers to the nature of the participants, their statuses and roles, and the purpose of the language use, either to inform, advise, persuade, admonish, appeal or to insult. While mode of discourse accounts for the medium used by the speaker or writer, whether written or spoken.

As field, Tenor and mode define the context of situation of a text, this study embarks on a comparative stylistic study of contextual use of proverbs in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*.

The style of a writer can be identified in his text, while the text embodies the communicative technique of a writer. Writers across the ages employ the use of deserved techniques and medium in the cause of their works. This they do in order to drive their messages home and to achieve the desired effects. One of these media is the use of proverbs. The use of proverbs in writings is not something new, because proverbs have been existing with man from time immemorial.

Going through Achebe's works one can discover that in some settings, Igbo names, greetings and addresses are used either as authorial comment or to report some certain events.

It is not either reading for pleasure or for examination that matters most in novels, but the ability to understand certain features in what one reads. The reader in understanding a piece of literary work needs to understand the subject matter or theme of the work, the use of language, especially proverbs used in that context. It is as

a result of these that the use of proverbs by Achebe becomes the cardinal focus of this study.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

This study focuses on the comparative stylistic study of Achebe's use of proverbs in *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*.

In choosing this topic the comparative stylistic study of Achebe's use of proverbs, the researcher identifies the neglect of the teaching of literature in our post secondary schools and tertiary institutions as the main problem of the study:

- the semantic and lexical features of proverbs,
- the syntactic features of Achebe's use of proverbs,
- the symbolic and metaphoric aspect of Achebe's use of proverbs as well as other related devices in the proverbs used by Achebe.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

No two writers write exactly the same way. Every writer writes for his specific purposes. Writers therefore differ in their approaches and mode of presentation through their diction and linguistic items. In the light of the above, the main aim of this research is to compare and

analyse Achebe's use of proverbs in *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*, while the specific objectives of the study are:

- i. To identify and interpret the proverbs used by Achebe.
- ii. To identify lexical items common to Achebe's use of proverbs.
- iii. To find out the syntactic features of Achebe's use of proverbs.
- iv. To determine the symbolic and metaphoric features of Achebe's use of proverbs, as well as other devices in Achebe's use of proverbs.

1.3 Research Questions.

For an in-depth understanding of the comparative stylistic analysis of Achebe's use of proverbs in *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*, this study will answer the following questions:

- i. What are proverbs in Achebe's works?
- ii. What are the lexical items common in the proverbs?
- iii. What are the syntactic features of proverbs used by Achebe?
- iv. What are the symbolic and metaphoric features of Achebe's use of proverbs?

1.4 Significance of the Study

Proverbs in novels are ornaments of conversation. They reveal the traditional ways of a people and help the reader to predict how the people will react to and deal with situations.

Many post secondary schools and tertiary institutions neglect the teaching of literature. They fail to understand that studying English without literature is like dressing without inner wears. This is as a result of the functions and roles of literature to the society.

The curriculum of the new 9-3-4 National Policy on education emphasises the teaching and learning of English studies which incorporates the study of the language and the culture. The cultural aspects can only be acquired through the study of literature.

This study, therefore, would be useful to teachers of literature and language in secondary schools, teachers and students in post secondary schools and those who read novels for pleasure to have an in-depth idea of why proverbs are used in novels and the importance for their usage. The study is thus targeted towards identifying the various proverbs and analysing them semantically,

lexically and morphologically. It will go further to investigate into the symbolisms, metaphors, vocabularies and other stylistic devices.

Relevance to ESP

Since reading is one of the basic language skills, this work will be useful to ESP because it will assist one to read ESP materials with understanding at any point in time. It can help in the teaching of reading skills which is part of. It can as well serve as illustrative materials, in an ESP class.

It will help writers especially in ESP to get their messages across to their readers or students. In that simplicity of language would be employed and proverbs will add more flavour to their works. The students will also be acquainted with various techniques of writing, which is a skill in English.

It can encourage language and theatrical artists in the planning and presentation of their theatrical works.

It will also assist ESP students to summarise and present their facts or points tactfully and concisely either as students or career workers.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study is designed specifically compare and to analyse the stylistic features of Achebe's use of proverbs in *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*. It is, therefore, limited to identifying and interpreting in context Achebe's use of proverbs, paying particular attention to: the lexical items that are common in the proverbs; syntactic features of the proverbs; symbolic and metaphoric features of the proverbs; as well as other stylistic devices.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature that is relevant to this study.

The review is made up of the following sub-headings:

- i. Language and Communication
- ii. Functions of Language
- iii. Styles and Stylistics
- iv. Proverbs
- v. Historical background of proverbs
- vi. Use of linguistic parallelism

2.1 Language and Communication

The American Heritage Dictionary (2003) sees language as communication of thoughts and feelings through a system of arbitrary signals, such as voice sounds, gestures, or written symbols. Such systems include its rules for combining its components, such as words. It could also be a system, used by a nation, people or other distinct community, often contrasted with dialect.

The American Heritage Science Dictionary (2005) sees the word language as a system of object or symbols, such as sounds or character sequences that can be combined in various ways following a set of rules, especially to communicate thoughts, feelings, or instructions. It could be referred to as communication by word of mouth. The dictionary goes further to say that the cognitive processes involved in producing and understanding linguistic communication is language. It is also the mental faculty or power of vocal communication.

Haugen (1966) cited in Fakuade (1998) says, language is a medium of communication between speakers of different dialects.

Language can also be seen as a means of expressing ideas which are needed for life in a society and which is able to change with the changing needs of the society. It is along this line that Opara (1999), states that a system that relates sounds with meanings, and when you know a language, you know the system. This system could be the rules a speaker uses to produce and understand set of possible sentences (Syntax). It could be the sound system of a language (Phonology); and it could also be the ways in which sounds and meanings are related (the Semantics).

Hornby (2001), defines language as human and non instinctive method of communicating ideas, feelings and desires by means of a system of sounds and sound symbols.

Language is a vital instrument in human existence. It is the most valuable possession of man; with language man has the capacity for dealing with changes in his environments, organising his society and facing other various emergencies in life (Eneke 2006).

NTI (2000) says language is a way or method of expressing our views, ideas, wishes and emotions. This is to say that language is used for the expression of feelings.

Lucas (2001) views language as the most remarkable thing in human creation. He says through language, we share experiences, formulate values, exchange ideas, transmit knowledge and sustain culture. That language is very vital in thinking.

According to Sapir (1970), language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols.... It is the tool of significant experience.

Having surveyed various definitions of language, one can conclude that language is a means of communicating ideas use by a

given people in a given geographical location, through the use of sounds or sounds symbols. It is equally an integral part of a people's culture. Therefore, language and culture are interwoven.

Communication on the other hand is referred to as the exchange of thoughts, messages, or information, such as speech, signals, writing or behaviour. It could be termed the art and technique of using words effectively to impart information or ideas, or the technology employed in transmitting messages.

Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia (2008) sees communication as something that is communicated by or to or between people or groups. It further says, linguistically, communication is a systematic means of communicating by the use of sounds or conventional symbols.

Looking at language and communication critically one can deduce that they are related terms. Language here is a means through which communication takes place. So language is one of the vehicles through which communication is carried out.

2.2 Functions of Language

The functions of language in this study cannot be left out, because it is the ways that language functions that gives rise to its use, in which proverb is part of the uses. Some of the functions of language include the following:

- (i) Le Page (1964), says that language functions as a means of understanding the experience and emotions of others. So we can understand the feelings and emotions of others through language.
- (ii) Haugen (1966) Brandle and Walsh (1982) cited in Fakuade (1994), see language as a medium of communication between speakers of different dialects, and therefore functions as a medium of communication linking individuals and groups one to another; and as a boundary marker separating one group of people from another. Language here functions as a link between people as well as a barrier between people.
- (iii) Language helps in making people full members of their community, this is because at the initial stage

language is the means of integration and communion; perfect communication entails complete identity.

- (iv) Allowing the individual greater possibilities of self expression. The most essential and greater way through which an individual can express himself better is through language.
- (v) Tool for exploration and analysis of concepts and their processes. Explorers, Researchers and Analysts use language to explore and to interpret whatever has been discovered. Most of what is known by man today is through the use of language. Take away language, and the entire culture of man is lost, which means that the total existence of man will be useless.
- (vi) NTI (2000) says, language is used to communicate feelings, emotions, wishes, viewpoints, information, and so on. It goes further to say language is used to exchange ideas, and is used for describing the world around us. Language enables us to express a multiplicity of world views, literature and ways of life.

Looking at what language can do, one can state that language cannot be used anyhow. It must be used properly and appropriately. Failure to use language properly can result to break down in communication, and when this happens, it can lead to serious consequences, such as strikes, disobedience to law and order, legal problems, war, and fatal accidents. As a result of this, language must be presented in an acceptable and intelligible manner.

2.3 Styles and Stylistics

Styles and stylistics have been defined differently by different people. The term style refers to the resemblance works of art have to one another. In looking at the word 'Style', a philosopher Berel Lang in the Free Encyclopedia (2008) is of the opinion that style is not only a science, but it is a version of fiction – a narrative form – tied to the literary trope of synecdoche in which one feature is an ingredient in all the others. Style here is described as a kind of fiction, even, a form of narrative or story telling that suggest something new.

According to Fakuade (1983), style is a controlled and guided manner of creating text: the controlling and guiding elements being the author's social and cultural environment, his message and his

audience and of course the author himself. The definition above has some characteristics that suit the research under review, this is because the guiding elements such as the author, his social and cultural environment, and the message are all embedded in the proverbs to be analysed. Another definition which worth noting for the sake of the research under survey is Abram's (1981), here, he is of the view that the characteristic style of a work or a writer may be analysed in terms of its diction, or choice of words, its sentence structure and syntax, the density and types of its figurative language, the patterns of rhythm, component sounds and other formal features and its rhetorical aims and devices.

Thesaurus and Encyclopedia (2008) see style as the way in which something is said, done, expressed, or performed. It is further seen as the combination of distinctive features of literary or artistic expression, execution, or performance characterising a particular person, group, school, or era. It is indeed a manner of presenting printed material, including usage, punctuation, spelling, typography, and arrangement.

Adejare (1992), asserts that the definition of style depends on one's field of study. He goes on to say that style is an ambiguous

term. Many try to define it in terms of their professional calling. To a Psychologist, style is a kind of behaviour; to a literary person, it is the characteristic of the writer. A linguist defines it as the varieties and functions to which language is put. With the linguist's definition, one can say, the knowledge of style can make one to be able to read with understanding works written in different styles.

It is clear that writers use language as an artistic medium and not just for mere communication and expression. They thus explore various options in language for effective communication. This can be likened to what Chatman (1971) cited in Fakuade (1998), that an author's style is the product of a particular linguistic habit, this habit in turn being strongly conditioned by writer's social, cultural and ideological environment. Every analysis of style is an attempt to find the artistic principles underlying a writer's choice of language. So a writer's choice of language and how the language is used is an essential aspect in stylistic studies.

Having seen what styles stands for, it is equally important to look at stylistics as a term that goes together with styles.

NTI (2000) defines stylistics as a word derived from style; that it is a discipline which studies different styles. It also states that

stylistics can be seen as the study of proper use of words or language in proper places.

Stylistics can further be defined as the study of the varieties of language function. This is based on the notion that different stylistic forms give language the varieties needed in order to make the language perform the various functions it is designed to perform. Thus one can say styles vary according to writers, their occupation and the situation of writing or speaking. With this, it is possible therefore to say that stylistics is also defined as language use in different situations.

Osuji (1982) cited in Fakuade (1998) says stylistics is the meeting point (confluence) between the literary and the linguistic river. He says stylistics analyse how language works or functions, while stylistic analysis can be referred to as the examination of how linguistic devices are used to portray and reinforce the meaning of a text.

With the views above, it is pertinent to draw a conclusion that stylistics, studies styles in literary works, which agrees with Banjo's (1982) definition, which says, stylistics is the exhaustive study of the use of language in literary works.

2.4 Proverb

Aguolu (1994) sees proverbs as a short familiar sentence that expresses a supposed truth or a moral lesson. He goes further to say, it is handed down from generation to generation, and that it offers advice or warning. Aguolu states further that proverb adds a special colour and freshness to matters under consideration if appropriately used.

The New Encyclopedia Britannica (1987) states that a proverb is a succinct and pithy saying in general use, expressing commonly held ideas and beliefs. Proverbs are part of every spoken language. It is as a result of its function in spoken language that Aguolu (1994) says, if it is appropriately used, it can add more colour and freshness to matters under consideration.

Proverb according to Finnegan (1970) is generally considered as a brief witty saying in common use that conveys a moral. It couches conventional wisdom in clever form and imagery, thereby making it memorable and easy to pass on from one generation to another. Finnegan adds that proverb may state cultural truisms in the form of an empirically valid statement, an existing superstition or

social norm. That proverb may also be either prescriptive or descriptive. It could either prescribe a behaviour or describe by highlighting a common irony or tendency in life.

Webster's Dictionary (1913) is of the view that proverbs are popular sayings which contain advice or state a generally accepted truth. Because most proverbs have their origins in oral tradition, they are generally worded in such a way as to be remembered easily and tend to change little from generation to generation.

Proverbs function as "folk wisdom", general advice about how to act and live. And because they are folk wisdom, they often strongly reflect the cultural values and physical environment from which they arise. Examples; those who live in Island have proverbs about the sea; those in cold region, about snow, and the Africans, about things within the African region. Proverbs are used to support arguments, to provide lessons and instruction, and to stress shared values.

It is important to note that proverbs are often used metaphorically, and it is in understanding their metaphorical nature that we can un-vail their meaning. For example; "Do not count your chickens before they are hatched". But some people do count their chickens before they are hatched. Proverbs also make use of

grammatical and rhetorical devices that help make them memorable; these include alliteration, rhyme, parallel structure, repetition of key words or phrases, and strong imagery.

2.5 Historical Background of Proverbs

Proverbs originated from oral tradition. They are found in various parts of the world. Though they show the same kernel of wisdom, but may be gathered under different cultural conditions and languages.

The English proverb “A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush” originated in Medieval Latin and variants of it are found in Romanian, Italian, German, Portuguese, Spanish and Icelandic.

Proverbs, together with fables, folktales, folksongs and riddles are part of every spoken language. They (Proverbs) have been handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation, until they were recorded and became a folklore treasure for posterity.

The first appearance of proverbs in literary work is often an adaptation of an oral saying. Example, the Biblical proverb – “The Love of Money is the root of all evil”, has become, “Money is the root of all evil”. Most proverbs today refer to obsolete customs.

Most literate societies have valued their proverbs and collected them for posterity. The ancient Egyptian collections dated from as early as 2500BC. The Old Testament attributed some 900 proverbs to king Solomon of Israel (10th century BC). Proverbs were said to be used in ancient China for ethical instructions and the veridic writings of China used them to expand philosophical ideas.

One of the earliest English proverbs collection is the so-called “proverbs of Alfred” (C1150-1180) containing religious and moral precepts. Proverbs were used in monasteries to teach Latin to novices in schools of rhetoric, and in sermons and didactic works.

The use of proverbs in literature and oratory was at its peak in England and America in the 16th and 17th centuries. Notable among the users were John Heywood, Michael Drayton and Benjamin Franklin.

The first person, however to engage more systematically in the collection and classification of proverbs was the Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-322 BC). According to the neo-platonic philosopher Synesius (AD 370-413), Aristotle considered proverbs a survival of an older wisdom: proverbs are classified as elements of old philosophy which survives the brevity and dexterity of the old. Aristotle in his

rhetoric gives the following definition: A proverb is a type of metaphor . . . if a man for instance, introduces into his house something from which he expects to benefit, but afterwards finds himself injured instead, he is reminded of the Carpathian and the hares; for both have experienced the same misfortunes.

The rhetorical power of the proverb is described from its authoritativeness or rather its ascription to authoritative sources.

In several cultures in Africa, proverbs authorship is ascribed to elders or ancestors. Even though proverbs authorship may also be attributed to specific individuals and sometimes non human entities of wisdom, responsibility and exemplary behaviour. It is said that the belief in the prophetic power of words spoken by elders is what triggers proverbs in several African cultures. This is supported by an Akan saying; “The Mouth of the elder is more powerful than a charm”.

In several western cultures however, the proverb is prefaced with a formula (prefatory formula) attributing it to an indefinite source. They say that the proverb speaker may use a factive phrase (“You know that . . .” “Remember that . . .”) to imply that the statement that follows is conventional knowledge, a cultural fact or truth, and should facilitate appreciation of his argument.

The use of proverb is governed by social norms, and a good proverb user does not only know its logical application and meaning, but also its appropriate social use; which proverb to select and which to avoid in what social situations.

Certain stylistic features appear to be common with proverbs in general and set them aside in discourse. These include: terseness, impersonal character, and the use of some other literary devices like rhyme, metaphor, simile, alliteration, hyperbole, assonance, parallelism, etc.

The proverb may be a straight literal statement “Covetousness is the punishment of the rich” or be presented in the form of a simile; “Wife is like a blanket”, when you wrap yourself in it, you feel warm, when you cast, you feel cold. Most proverbs are metaphorical while many others are exaggerations.

2.6 Use of Linguistic Parallelism

By linguistic parallelism is meant the use of design repetition in a literary text for a particular stylistic effect. Parallelism operates at all three levels of linguistic organisation. At the phonological level pattern congruity may take the form of chiming (or alliteration); internal or end

rhyme; or stress isochronicity in two or more structures. At the semantic level, lexical items that occur in the same paradigm (or belong to the same grammatical category) may be related either synonymously or antonymously. And we say that structures are syntactic equivalents when they have similar patterns, like NP¹ + VP + NP² (or S V O). Structures may also be marked as equivalents when they are initiated by the same lexical item, for instance, by a WH-Question form, or by a comparative marker like, 'As' or by an adverbial like 'perhaps'. We can also say that two or more structures are equivalent by virtue of the fact that they express the same proposition.

On literary writing, Widdowson (1977) is of the view that at the heart of literary creation there is the struggle to devise a pattern of language which will bestow upon the linguistic items concerned just those values which will convey the individual writer's personal vision. Every creative writer according to T. S. Eliot (1995) wrestles with words and meaning in order to convey his unique vision. (Linguistic parallelism represents the creative artist's search for an appropriate linguistic means of expressing the inexpressible) it is an attempt to

capture a fugitive feeling. It is thus a feature of linguistic foregrounding.

Parallelism, according to Geoffrey Leech (1980), sets up a relationship of equivalence between linguistic items and strongly urged a connection between them. This is considered as the stylistic effect of parallelism. Linguistic parallelism can be used for rhetorical emphasis, Leech (1980). Parallelism therefore is a device use in literary works to aid understanding.

Repetition: it is a means of presenting messages for understanding rather than elaborating the message or word used. Repetition is a fundamental device of intensification aimed at understanding rather than elaborating the message, it presents a simple emotion with force, it may further suggest a suppressed intensity of feeling – an imprisoned feeling, as it were, for which there is no outlet but a repeated hammering at the confirming walls of language. This goes to say that repetition is a well-known, universal rhetorical device, because it serves the purpose of hammering home a message by placing it at the forecourt of the listener's mind.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology employed by the researcher for data collection and analysis. The chapter covered the following:

- (i) Research design
- (ii) The corpus
- (iii) Criteria for the selection of corpus
- (iv) Method of data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

The study is a corpus based study which involved the comparative stylistic analysis of proverbs in two (2) related texts of the same author: Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*.

3.2 The Corpus

The texts that made up the corpus for the study are: *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and *Arrow of God* (1964). The corpus is made up of one

hundred and five proverbs randomly selected from the novels listed above.

The corpus for this study consists of fifty proverbs from *Things Fall Apart* and fifty-five from *Arrow of God*. The proverbs differ in length and meaning because their contexts of use or utterance differ.

3.3 Criteria for the Selection of Corpus

Proverbs were selected based on simple random sampling technique to ensure that the proverbs which constitute the corpus have equal opportunity of being selected. The proverbs were therefore selected based on their availability and accessibility. Accessibility here refers to the ease with which data or material which constitutes the corpus of a particular study can be collected or gathered. It may also mean the knowledge which a researcher has about the content of the discourse in the text being analysed (Nwogu 1990). This knowledge can as well be used for different reasons. In other words, accessibility could be referred to as the extent to which the texts are accessible to the researcher.

3.4 Method of data analysis

This is a sub-section that discusses how the data collected for this study were analysed. Despite the fact that there are various approaches to stylistic description, this study adopted the eclectic method of analysis. This is owing to the fact that the method allows the use of different linguistic methods.

The method is a combination of various models that can be used for the stylistic analysis of fictional prose. It was chosen for the purpose of achieving comprehensiveness as it offers a wide variety of procedures in the analysis of a text.

In order to analyse the data collected adequately, the model of analysis proposed by Crystal and Davy (1969) was adopted. This is a model of language description which involves taking the object of study which could be a particular piece of a language or text and discuss it in terms of a number of inter-related levels of description. It selects in every level of description an aspect of the way in which language is organised to study or describe.

In certain situations, Halliday (1964) model of textual component is used. Here, the textual component is divided into the

structural and non-structural systems. The structural systems consist of the thematic and information system while the non-structural system consist of the cohesive relations. And Leech and Short (1981) model of linguistic and stylistic categories. They suggest using a checklist of linguistic and stylistic categories. The categories are placed under the four general headings; lexical categories, grammatical categories, figures of speech and context. These models refer to the context of situation in which the texts were analysed. The lexical, syntax, semantic and the figures of speech were analysed.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses the selected proverbs from *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*. The data are presented as follows:

- i. Achebe's use of proverbs and meaning.
- ii. Lexical items common in Achebe's proverbs.
- iii. Syntactic features of proverbs in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*.
- iv. Symbolic, metaphoric and other features and devices used in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*.
- v. Comparism of Achebe's use of proverbs in *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*.

4.1 Achebe's Use of Proverbs and Meaning

Proverbs, folktales and riddles are part of every spoken language. They were handed down from generation to generation, until they were recorded and became a folklore treasure for posterity. Proverbs therefore, are one of the essential features of modern African writings, (Karagiorgos 2008).

Proverbs are quite important in language because of the functions or uses they render in language use.

Proverb is important in language because it helps a speaker to make his point tactfully and concisely. This kind of proverbs are

usually found at the beginning or in the middle of a discourse. For example; when the “Owner of words” Nwaka stood up to contribute his point on the impending war with Okperi, his first words were proverbial. He said; “Wisdom is like a goat-skin bag, every man carries his own”. (AOG p. 16).

Proverbs are used to define and evaluate characters. They are also used to explain some personality traits. For example, when Okonkwo hanged himself in *Things Fall Apart*, Obierika his friend made a clear statement to illustrate Okonkwo’s position in the society, he says; “That man was one of the greatest men of Umuofia; you drove him to kill himself, and now he is going to be buried as a dog”. In order to act appropriately and responsibly in a society, a man must know his limitation. For example, the people of Umuaro’s displeasure at the arrogant behaviour of their Chief Priest Ezeulu, find expression in the following proverbs. “Like Nza the little bird who ate and drank and challenged his personal god to a single combat”. (AOG 14). “No matter how strong or great a man was, he can never challenge his Chi”. (AOG p. 27).

Peter (1980) says, sensitive issues and intrigues of characters can be vividly explained by means of proverbs. For instance, when Unoka was visited by a contemporary musician (Okoye) who came for his money; after the presentation and eating of the Kolanut and alligator pepper, Unoka told him that our elders say: “the sun shines on those who stand, before it shines on those who knell under them”. (TFA p. 6). Meaning, I shall pay my big debts first before paying the

smaller ones. This is an indication that proverbs can be used effectively to solve sensitive issues.

Apart from being responsible, a member of a society is expected to act out his part for the achievement of group goals. This idea can be conveyed through the use of proverbs. Example: "An adult does not sit and watch while the she-goat suffers the pain of child-birth tied to the post". (AOG p. 18).

Proverbs are used in language to précis idea and be applied to fix a point. In Ezeulu's attempt to send his son (Oduche) to the new religion compared the white-man to a new disease. "A disease that has never been seen before cannot be cured with everyday herbs". (AOG p. 133). This stand is further justified with the following proverbs: "I am like Eneke Nti Oba who says, "Men of today have learnt to shoot without missing, so I have learnt to fly without perching". (AOG p. 45). "The world is like a mask dancing, if you want to see it well, you do not stand in one place". (AOG p. 46). This is akin to Okonkwo's shouting at his second wife (Ekwefi) when she complained that slaughtering three goats and fowls were too much for the farewell feast in Mbanta. Okwokwo snarled at her and said, I am calling a feast because I have the wherewithal. I cannot live at the bank of a river and wash my hands with spittle. (TFA p. 117). These proverbs are thematic statements reminding us of some of the motives in the novels, the importance of status, the value of achievement and the idea of man as shaper of his own destiny.

Proverbs can be used as a means for conflict resolution and social change when confronted with new experience. "What a man

does not know is greater than he”. “An animal more powerful than nte was caught in nte’s trap”. (Pg 85) “As soon as we shake hands with a leper, he will want an embrace”. “A man who has no where else to put his hand for support puts it on his own knee”. “The puppy which attempted to answer two calls at once (at a time) broke its jaw”. (AOG p. 134). All the above proverbs are clusters, because they are proverbs of the same kind and are closely grouped together, their meanings are almost the same or closely related as well.

Proverbs contain keen observations of everyday life, constitute popular philosophy of life, and provide an insight into human behaviour and character. They survived thanks to their brevity, their rhyme and rhythm which delighted the ear and helped the memory. It is in line with the above that proverb is seen as a terse didactic statement that is current in tradition or as an epigram. It ordinarily suggests a course of action or passes a judgment on a situation.

Some other proverbs used in *Things Fall Apart* and their meanings can be seen below:

When Okonkwo began to fend for himself, he therefore began to mingle with elders and came to term with the proverb which says: “If a child washes his hands, he can eat with kings” (pg 6). This proverb shows that children’s hands are always dirty, that is why their foods are served to them separately, or being fed by their parents in order not to mingle with the elders. This proverb shows that if a child or a person is hard working or industrious, he could mix up with wealthy people. Quite right, Okonkwo worked from dawn to dust to

keep his family and parents on. He is thus qualified to mingle with the elders.

“A man who proves respected create avenue to his own greatness” (pg. 14). As Okonkwo respected elderly and great men, he was indirectly creating avenue to his own greatness. For example or instance, he carried a pot of palm wine and a cock to Nwakibie – a wealthy man in Umuofia, who has three large bans of yams, nine wives and thirty children, simply to borrow yam seedlings for planting. In short, Okonkwo had respect for elders and wealthy men. No wonder he became wealthy too, even before and after his exile.

“The lizard that jumped from the high Iroko tree to the ground said he would praise himself if no one else did” (pg 15). This refers to Okonkwo’s endeavour and struggles in life. After he had gotten eight hundred yam-seeds from Nwakibie and four hundred from his father’s friend at Isiuzo totaling one thousand two hundred. Despite the fact that his village experienced the most draught that year, yet he never regretted, because he planted his first. He had three wives and many children. All these were through his sweat and he had made it in life. Since nobody could praise him, after re-appraising his effort, he had to praise himself.

When Eneke the bird was asked as to why he was always on the wing, he replied: “Men have learnt to shoot without missing their mask and I have learnt to fly without perching on a twig”. (Pg 16). This proverb is used in both *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*. Its first usage is by Nwakibie when he explained that since young men have refused to farm, they only dump their yams on the ground.

Therefore, he had learned to be stingy with his yams, but promised to give Eight hundred yams seeds to Okonkwo instead of the four hundred Okonkwo previously demanded.

‘Eneke’ the bird is a clever bird (swallow) that never perches easily and only target getters could kill it.

The evident meaning of this proverb is that people must change when the circumstance of their lives change. Further, they must change when in such a way as to reduce the problems the new circumstance may cause. Okonkwo could not use this proverb. Indeed, he seems unaware of it, when circumstance changed, he did not know. Not even the fact that Ikemefuna calls him father can restrain him his (Okonkwo’s) unchanging pattern of behaviour. He does not change when the new government is strong in Umuofia. He had behaved as Okonkwo of the beginning and as he desired. Umuofia would have been destroyed like Abame, as Obierika is forced to remind him.

Umuofia is not like Okonkwo, it is like Eneke, and to Okonkwo’s disgust, some of his people began to adopt the new religion as soon as they learnt of its power. Okika uses the proverb for the second time after Nwakibie used it to support his plan to make his point viable, it could equally be used to argue for moderation. The key point is that proverbs show adaptability to changes.

“As a man dances, so the drums are beaten for him” (pg 118-119). This is a reversal of a usual state of affairs in which the dances are to the beat of the drums. What the proverb is saying is that some people are so powerful in their action or authority that the way they

behave determines what others will do. In context therefore, the proverb refers to only the missionaries: Brown, Smith and their different styles of governance in the church. The proverb goes further to say that people influence certain people in the novel: Okonkwo seems destined to be a leader, but at the end of the novel, his leadership has been lost to those who as the proverb implies beat the drum for others to dance. A common characteristic of this proverb is that it deals with change. It teaches that change must be expected in everything anytime.

“If one finger brings oil, it will soil the other fingers” (pg 87). Although it warns against change, it does not deny the fact that change will take place. It applies to the novel as a whole. One person who converts to the new religion leads others into it.

“Where are the young suckers that will grow when the old banana tree dies?” (pg 46). Okonkwo expresses his worries and dismay over the kind of children he has. Only Ezinma seems responsible like him, and she is a girl. None of his male child appears to be a man, and he is perturbed about who will care for the family the way he is doing when he is no more? Like he said, “I am worried about Nwoye (the eldest son), a bowl of pounded yams can throw him in a wrestling match. His two younger brothers are fairly promising; But my children do not resemble me”. (Pg 46).

Arrow of God

In *Arrow of God*, Achebe uses the style of tactfulness and conciseness to portray some of the proverbs in the novel. Good speakers use tactfulness and conciseness, especially when proverbs

are to be employed. These types of proverbs are usually in the beginning or at the end of a speaker's speech. An example is when the owner of words Ogbuefi Nwaka stands up to contribute his quota on the case of Okperi Umuaro war. He opens his speech with a number of proverbs. He contended that:

“Wisdom is like goat skin bag, every man carries his own”. (Pg 16).

This is an indication that he affirms to the fact that everyone has knowledge build within him and it is left for one to display his own talent as given by the supernatural being.

Also when an old man from Akukalia's village stands up to speak, he warns the emissary to Okperi by saying:

If the lizard of the house fails to do things for which it is known, it will be mistaken for the lizard of the farm land. (pg 17).

This is centered on responsibility. It states that one is expected to act his responsibility accordingly, for it is unfair to allow some one else to act your responsibility for you. In addition to being a responsible member of the society, one is also expected to play his own part for the achievement of group posts. This idea is conveyed in another proverb.

An adult does not sit and watch while the she-goat suffers pain of child birth tied to a post. (Pg 18).

Everyone in the society is expected to play or act his own part. The elders should advise as elders and the youths should carry out

actions or orders as part of their responsibilities and duties to their society.

Ezeulu's sending of his son (Oduche) to a mission school is being regarded by some elders as highly inappropriate an action for a Chief Priest to take, no matter what his motivation is. His enemies interpret his action for sending his son to the new religion as a gesture of friendship towards the white-man. Thus, when the district commissioner sent for him, courtesy demands that he reports to the office within twenty four hours. But Ezeulu calls the elders together to ask if they think he should heed the summon of the white-man. One elder confidently replied in certain number of proverbs that Ezeulu must either suffer the consequences of the friendship with the white-man or do something to end the friendship. He said: does Ezeulu think that the friendship should stop short of entering each others house? Does he want the white-man to be his friend only by word of mouth? Our elders say:

as soon as we shake hands
with a leper, he would want
an embrace . . . (143)

A man who brings anti-
infested faggots into his hut
should expect the visit of
lizards. (144)

But if Ezeulu is now telling us that he is tired of the white man's friendship; our advice to him should be:

You tied the knot, you should also know how to undo it. You pass the shit that is smelling, you should carry it away. Fortunately, the evil charm brought in at the end of a pole is not too difficult to take outside again. (pg 144).

Ezeulu in his response to the above statements counteracted by pointing out that he did not bring the white man to his people, rather, his people brought the white man up on themselves by failing to oppose him when he came. He said they should blame themselves for mercily submitting to the white man's presence and power, thus he said:

the man who brings ant-ridden faggots into his hut should not grumble when lizards begin to pay him visit. (pg 59 & 132).

This is a key proverb in *Arrow of God* for it enunciates a major theme and must bear their consequences. But in addition to being responsible for their actions, a man is also expected to act responsibly. This idea is conveyed in another key proverb which is used four times in the novel.

An adult does not sit and watch while the she-goat suffers the pain of child birth tied to a post. (Pg 18).

Ezeulu uses this proverb twice to reprimand elders for encouraging the village to fight a "war of blame" against a neighbouring village. He reminds them that elders should not neglect

their duties to their people by acting responsibly, it should not be forgotten that this same proverb is used later by elders to rebuke Ezeulu for failing to perform the ritual that will permit new yam to be harvested. The elders suggest that Ezeulu is doing nothing to prevent or relieve the suffering of his people.

Ezeulu sincerely believes that he is the instrument of a divine power “an arrow in the bow of his god”. When his section brings disaster upon himself and his people, he does not feel responsible, but rather feels betrayed by his people. “Why”, he asked himself again and again. Why had Ulu chosen to deal thus with him? To strike him down and cover him with mud? What was his offence? Had he not divine the god’s will and obeyed it?

When was it ever heard that a child was scaled by the piece of yam its own mother put in its palm? What man would send his son to bring fire from a neighbour’s hut and then unleash rain on him? Whoever sent his son up the palm to gather nuts and then took an axe and felled the tree?

(Pg 229).

Tortured by these questions, Ezeulu finally goes mad. The elders come to regard him as a man who brought tragedy upon himself by failing to recognise his own limitations. In order to act appropriately and responsibly, a man must know his limitations. This idea finds expressions in some proverbs in the novel, such as:

No matter how strong or great a man was, he should never challenge his Chi. (pg 27).

The man Who carries a deity is not a king. Only a foolish man can go after leopard with his bare hands. (pg 85).

Ezeulu in trying to adjust the challenging times, take certain appropriate actions which later lead him to neglect his duties and responsibilities. Not knowing his limitations, he goes far and plunges himself and his people into disaster.

No man however great can win judgment against a clan. (Pg 131). This statement was directed to Ezeulu by Akuebue. It is loaded with meanings.

- i. It predicts Ezeulu's final rejection, humiliation and tragic fall. It is discovered that towards the later part of the novel, Ezeulu tries to fight the entire clan, but in the end, the verdict of the people prevailed, hence his fall.
- ii. The statement served as a voice of reason, is supposed to help curb Ezeulu's excessive ambition.
- iii. It is also linked with the theme of the book. It is therefore thematic.

4.2 Lexical Items Common in Achebe's proverbs.

Technically, the word lexis is related to all the words in a language. It could stand for vocabulary or the stock of words in a language. It is a known fact that every society has its culture and the lexical items that are common to that society.

One of the most important technical devices which Achebe uses in the two novels is language. He uses language in all its ramifications. He gives so clear a description that the reader feels that he is where the writer is leading him to. Some of these are worded in proverbs that can be seen below. They are fresh and simple.

Although the first rain was overdue, when it did come, it was unexpected. Throughout the day the sun breathed fire, the world lain prostrate with shock, the birds which sang in the morning were silenced, the air stood in one sport, palm trees and coconut trees swayed from their waist and their long hair streaming behind them. (AOG 30).

The lexical items that are common in the proverbs that Achebe uses are simple everyday words which are common to the African context. They are thus words within the settings of the two novels and are used proverbially. He personified the coming of the first rain in clear and simple language which touches on the readers' imagination.

Some other simple language and sentences use by Achebe could be seen through the following proverbs as well.

Ezeulu's power was no more than the power of a child over a goat that was said to be his. (AOG. 3).

A boy sent by his father to steal does not go *Stealthily* but breaks the door with his feet. (AOG 18).

The fly that has no one to advise it follows the corpse into the grave. (AOG 27).

When we see a little bird dancing in the middle of the pathway we must know that its drummer is in the nearby bush. (AOG 40).

What this new religion will bring wears a hat on its head. (AOG 45).

Unless the wind blows we do not see the fowls rump (AOG 59).

Achebe reveals in most of his proverbs a high sense of economy and simplicity in the use of words. Words are properly chosen and sentences that form the proverbs are brilliantly

constructed. The below proverbs in *Things Fall Apart* would justify the above in addition to those proverbs of *Arrow of God* earlier on stated.

“An old woman is always uneasy when dry bones are mentioned in a proverb” (pg 13).

“You can tell a ripe corn by its look” (pg13).

“When mother cow is chewing grass, its young ones always watch its mouth” (pg 49).

“A man who makes trouble for others is also making it for himself” (pg 68).

“Looking at a kings mouth one would think he never sucked at his mother’s breast” (pg 19).

The analysis of proverbs has revealed that the lexical items are highly dominated by simple and everyday vocabularies. Special or technical vocabularies are less, and this brings about the easy reading and understanding of the proverbs and the entire texts. The extracts above can justify this assertion.

Except for the two words: *Stealthily* and *rump* which may sound strange for the average readers, the other proverbs consist of words that an average reader can easily comprehend.

The analysis of the lexical features shows that the proverbs use by Achebe are characterised by simple words that helps to add more beauty to the entire texts. The commonest of the lexical items are nouns like: “the rain, the sun, the birds, the world, the trees, an old woman, dry bones, ripe corn, mother cow, men, kings mouth, a child, a goat, the fly, the grave, drummer, the wind” etc. These are everyday words that are common in use, though they are specially used as proverbs, but yet their meanings in the proverbs are easily understood based on their simplicity.

The results of the analysis of the proverbs revealed that the vocabularies are not out of place. The words do not make the proverbs obscured - difficult to read and understand. The lexical features has shown that one can understand proverbs through the understanding of the lexical items used or the vocabularies.

4.3 Syntactic Features of Proverbs in Achebe’s Works.

By syntax, we mean the way words are arranged to form sentences or phrases, or the rules that describe how words and phrases are used in a language. Reference to this unit, some syntactic structure of the proverbs use by Achebe are:

A	S	V	O
When the moon is shining / the cripple/ becomes/ hungry for a walk///(TFA pg 7).			
= ASVO			

S	V	A	C
A toad/does not run/in the daytime/ for nothing./// (TFA pg 13)			
= SVAC			

An old woman / is / never old/ when it comes to the dance she knows./// (pg 69) = SVCA

S V C
The death that will kill a man/begins/as an appetite.///(pg 89).
= SVC

S V O₁ O₂
A man/ does not speak/ a lie/ to his son./// (pg 93). = SVOO

A S V O
When two brothers fight/a stranger/ reaps/ the harvest./// (pg 131) = ASVO

The extracts above are proverbs drawn from the two texts under study. What the extracts illustrate is that Achebe does not necessarily restrict his syntactic structure to one predictable pattern, rather he mixes them up (i.e. the syntactic structures).

Sentence one of *Things Fall Apart* above reveals that the structure is ASVO and sentence two SVAC. Sentence one of *Arrow of God* is SVOA while sentence two is SVOO. The study of the syntactic features has therefore shown that understanding proverbs depends largely on the understanding of the complexity of the syntax used. But despite the fact that Achebe mixes his structures up, yet the reading of his proverbs are easy and the understanding fairly easy to comprehend. The mixture did not create difficulties in the comprehension of the proverbs.

In a nutshell, as the above analysis is, it does not task the grammatical knowledge of the reader. This is to say that the enjoyment and appreciation of Achebe's syntax in the proverbs he uses do not demand much of the reader linguistically.

4.4 Symbolic and Metaphoric Features as well as other devices in Achebe's Use of Proverbs.

The crowning glory of Achebe's novels is undoubtedly his use of language. He claims that the English of the African will have to be a new English in communion with its ancestral home, but altered to suit its new African surroundings. This is why he says: "Language is a weapon and we use it, and there's no point in fighting it". (Gallager 2008). A whole range of human experience is brought before our minds eye by his consummate use of imagery drawn from both native and alien sources. Apart from proverbs, Achebe makes use of other devices like folktales and religious tenets, speeches and song sequences in his writings.

Beside trying to instill pride and self-respect among his fellow Africans, Achebe's novels also provide the world with a mode of perceiving black aesthetics. The wisdom and philosophy, the poetry and beauty of traditional Africa are impressively subsumed in the language of his fiction. To him, in Africa, a good speaker is he who uses language with skill and wisdom. For the Igbos, the core of conversation is the appropriate use of proverbs. They believe that "proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten".

In his novels, Achebe makes prolific use of proverbs and popular adages which reflect the good and lean times through which their societies pass. He also uses proverbs base on the spiritual wisdom of his culture. "when a man says yes, his chi says yes also'. (TFA 19).

“Mother is supreme” (TFA 94). In African traditional society, mothers are accorded respect. When a man falls into misfortune as in the case of Okonkwo in *Things Fall Apart*. He seeks solace at his mother’s place.

When Ezeulu fails as the keeper of the clans safety, people give vent to their anger by quoting some sayings as:

“No matter how strong or great a man was, he should never challenge his Chi”. (AOG 27), and “only a foolish man can go after a Leopard with his bare hand”. (AOG 35).

Both Okonkwo and Ezeulu for their apparent arrogance are compared to the little bird ‘Nza’ who so far forget himself after a heavy meal that he challenge his Chi. (AOG, 14).

Achebe is of the opinion that a wealth of culture is stored in the folklore of a race. This is why he makes use of folklore as a means of providing answers and solutions to the questions and problems of the people. His characters make use of folklore to make their arguments forceful and effective. It also help in criticism and mockery. It illustrates moral values.

Legend is one of the many elements that lend fascination to *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*. For example; the legend of Idemili (AOG 41), the legend of Egwugwu (TFA 63 and AOG 199).

Another element of language use that contributes to the success of Achebe’s fictional art is his **subtle use of English** to suit the African sensibility. Ezeulu’s speech to Oduche has a distinct African style:

I want one of my sons to join this people and be my eye there. If there is nothing in it, you will come back. But if there is something there, you will bring home my share. The world is like a mask dancing, if you want to see it well, you do not stand in one place. My spirit tells me that those who do not befriend the white-man today will besaying 'had we known tomorrow (AOG 45-46).

The language acquires naturalness despite frequent allusions to African terms, mostly because he is adept in integrating the African panorama into English.

In the traditional African society, most of what they do have symbolic interpretations, especially the naming systems. For instance, the fortunes or misfortunes which characterise a family at any point in time can be given expression in names given to children born to that family. Thus when the times are good, the names selected for children are supposed to tell the stories of goodness. And when events happen otherwise, the names reflect the character of the time. It is in this latter perspective that we see Amechi, the name of Edogo's second child as being symbolic. Amechi literally means 'who knows tomorrow?' For Edogo and Amoge, tomorrow is uncertain, following the untimely death of their first born. Amechi is a prayerful name. (AOG 90).

Salutation names are also important in Africa as they are portrayed by Achebe in his novels. This is exemplified in Ekwefi's attempts to save the children by the name she gives them: nine died before one daughter (Ezinma) survives. The names are attempts to break the cycle of Ogbanije children. Examples: 'Onwumbiko': Death, I implore you; 'Ozoemena': May it not happen again'; and 'Onwumna': Death may please itself. (TFA 70). Name calling such as ant-hill nose; long throat; descriptive phrases such as: the tongue with which to tell the story (TFA 125); looking with the tail of his eye, (AOG 158) in addition to curse, prayers, blessings and traditional taboos such as; forbidding titled elders tapping palm wine, or forbidding outsiders into the meetings of elders (AOG 141), all contribute to give the reader a new experience of reading the same language.

The ***use of idiom*** lends Achebe's language and style a native flavour and force. This technique helps his characters sound natural while speaking an alien tongue. Some of these are:

Like a hen whose only chick has been
Carried away by a kite. (TFA 720).

Okonkwo's fame had grown like a bush
fire in the harmattan. (TFA 3).

He felt like a drunken giant walking
With the limbs of a mosquito. (TFA 44).

He had been cast out of his clan like a fish
Onto a dry sandy beach, panting.
(TFA 92).

Kola is symbolic of prosperity “He who
brings Kola brings Life”. (TFA, 5).

Some idioms in *Arrow of God* are:

The young man’s behaviour was like a heavy
load on his father’s head. (AOG, 79).

The new road made a man feel lost like a
grain of maize in an empty goatskin bag.
(AOG, 80).

Obika shivered like the sacrificial lamb.
(AOG, 82)

The moon she saw that day was as thin as
an orphan fed grudgingly by a cruel foster-
mother (AOG, 1).

Simile which is a comparative device has been widely used by Achebe. No device has been used sparingly as the simile and imagery in the texts. They are used in most of the proverbs either to make its understanding easier or to help in comparison.

The impact of the white culture is visible in several similes and metaphors in both *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*. This is seen in the idioms above.

Other Examples of Simile:

“Obierika’s house is as busy as ant hill”
(TFA, 78).

“The earth burned like hot coals” (TFA,
17).

“Women carrying pots are like a spirit with
a fantastic head (AOG, 19).

“Obika and his friend were like a pair of
Night Masks caught abroad by daylight”
(AOG, 79).

Imagery

Achebe also uses variety of imagery to convey message to his readers. Imagery is used to signify the objects and qualities of sense perception referred to in a work of literature either by literal description or by analogues. It is easy to form the mental picture of most of the nouns that were mentioned in most of the proverbs Achebe used. So imagery plays a vital role in understanding Achebe’s use of proverbs. One can easily imagine the exact incidence of the proverbs and view them clearly in the sub-conscious mind.

Most of the imagery used comprises simile and metaphor which are figures of similarity or comparison. The main characters’ patterns of behaviour are described in terms of animalistic behaviour, though

some are of plants. For example; ***Animal Imagery***: Ebo in respond to Akukalia one of the emissaries of Umuaro said:

“If you want to shout like a castrated bull
you must wait until you return to Umuaro.
This place is called Okperi”. (AOG, 24).

Also in describing Obika’s helpless situation when he was whipped by the white-man, Achebe puts it thus:

“He only shivered like the sacrificial ram
which must take in silence the blows of
funeral dancers before its throat is cut”
(AOG, 32).

Umunna also in thanking Okonkwo during the initiation rites of his children laments over the attitudes of their young men towards their culture after receiving the new religion. He has this to say.

“A man can curse the gods of his father
and his ancestors, like a hunter’s dog that
suddenly goes mad and turns on his
master”. (TFA, 118).

The didactic animal tale appears in almost all the novels of Achebe. They expose the wicked nature of beings. They also point out indifference and inconsiderateness of human beings. For example, the story of the mother Kite shows the folly of the people of Abame in *Things Fall Apart*. (P. 98).

Men’s and women’s stories illustrate male and female values. While Okonkwo’s stories exemplify warfare and violence in order to inculcate courage in children (TFA, 37, 57). Ekwefi’s stories of the

mosquito (TFA, 53) and Obiageli's unending chain tales (AOG, 65) are meant for entertainment.

Plant Imagery

Okonkwo in trying to express his dismay over the weakness of his son Nwoye says:

"I am worried about Nwoye. A bowl of pounded yams can throw him in a wrestling match".

"Where are the young suckers that will grow when the old banana tree dies?"
(TFA, p 46).

Nwoye is Okonkwo's eldest son who is supposed to succeed his father when he joins his ancestors, but he (Nwoye) is too weak to be relied on.

Also, Achebe in expressing the situation of farm produce in the rainy season has this to say:

"But the year had gone mad. Rain fell as it had never fallen before, the yams put on luxuriant green leaves" (TFA, 17).

The rain that year was heavy. Farm produce putting on green leaves is a sign of bumper harvest to come. This is to express that plants are enjoying.

In order to tell the growing rate of Ikemefuna the young lad in Okonkwo's house, Achebe says:

“He grew rapidly like a yam tendril in the rainy season”. (pg 37).

The speedy rate of his growth is compared to yam tendril in the rainy season, which grows very fast.

The bicycle is an iron horse and the white-man is an albino (TFA,97).

The white-man is the masked spirit of today (AOG, 154).

As daylight chases away darkness, so will the white-man drives away all our customs. (AOG, 84).

The year had gone mad ... then the rain become less violent and the yams put on luxuriant green leaves. (TFA, 17).

Personification of the year, rain and the yams.

The drums went mad. (TFA, 35). The drum is **personified**.

The nights were as black as charcoal ... one could not have known where one's mouth was in the darkness of that night. (TFA, 67). This is a **hyperbolic** statement

which exaggerates the darkness of the night.

In Umulke market, there are so many people that if you threw up a grain of sand it would not find a way to the earth again.... They can steal your cloth from off your waist in that market.” (TFA, 79). This is also a **hyperbole** on the over crowdedness in Umulke market.

The new moon sometimes hid itself for days behind rain clouds so that when it finally come out, it was already half grown. (AOG, 1).The new moon is **personified**.

The voice of the market was carried in all directions like an approach of a great wind. Today it was as though all the bees in the world were passing over head. (AOG, 67).

There are combination of devices used here, these comprise of **simile**, **personification** and **hyperbole**. They all combined to bring the message home.

Parallelism

“The drums beat, the flute sang and the spectators held their breath”. (TFA, 3)

“I am evil forest, I am dry meat that fills the mouth,

I am fire that burns without-faggots”. (TFA, 66).

“You tied the knot, you should also know how to undo it. You pass the shit that is smelling, you should carry it away”. (AOG, 144).

“If I have spoken it with my mouth, or I have seen it with my eyes, or if I have heard it with my ears, or if I stepped on it with my feet, or if it has come through my children...”. (AOG, 72).

The above sentences illustrate parallelism. They are structural parallelism because their structures are similar, this calls for their relationship. The first two above indicate that their structures are related synonymously, while the third and fourth are antonymously related.

4.5 Comparison

Having surveyed Achebe's use of proverbs, it will be pertinent to identify the following similarities and dissimilarities in the two novels as a means of comparison.

Similarities	Dissimilarities
<p>- Proverbs are used in the two novels to help speakers make their points tactfully and concisely. They are used as well to evaluate characters, especially Okonkwo and Ezeulu.</p> <p>- Proverbs are used to express the need to change when circumstances change. This can be seen through the words of Eneke the bird who said "men have learnt to shoot without missing their mask, and I have learnt to fly without perching". This proverb is used in both novels to state that one must change when in such a way as to reduce the problems the new circumstance may cause.</p>	<p>- In as much as the texts talk about heroes, the heroes are of different status. Okonkwo was a hero through hard work and achievement while Ezeulu was a divine priest of Ulu. A hero by birth.</p> <p>- Okonkwo was a rigid hero who was against the white-man's religion in totality, but Ezeulu was a flexible hero like Eneke the bird. He said; "I want one of my sons to join the white-man's religion and be my eye there".</p> <p>- The syntactic features of the randomly selected proverbs analysed have shown that most of the structures of the proverbs in the two novels have nothing in common. They are mixed up.</p>

- Lexically, Achebe's use of proverbs contain simple everyday words comprising of nouns within the settings of the two novels. His sentences are quite simple and he uses words economically.

- There are syntactic features that seem similar in the two novels. For example; "When the moon is shining, the cripple becomes hungry for a walk". (TFA, 7). The same structure of ASVO with "When two brothers fight, a stranger reaps the harvest". (AOG, 131).

- Other devices such as symbolism, imagery, metaphor, simile, hyperbole, personification and parallelism are very common in the texts.

For example; the first proverb from *Things Fall Apart* has ASVO as the structure, while the first proverb from *Arrow of God* has SVOO as its own structure. Second proverb from *Things Fall Apart* = SVAC; and that of *Arrow of God* = SVC. So the syntactic components differ.

- Situation of utterance or circumstances that lead to the expression of the proverbs in both *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* are different. Every proverb has the reason for its utterance, and the circumstances are not the same, this resulted into their dissimilarities .

- Despite the fact that the titles differ, yet they contain some messages in them. For example: “things fall apart, the centre cannot hold”, or “the white-man is very clever... he has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart”. This is similar to when Ezeulu was described as nothing but “a mere arrow in the bow of the gods”.

- The parallel structures in *Things Fall Apart* are synonymously related while that of *Arrow of God* is antonymously related which indicates that the parallel structures are divergent in the two novels under study.

Having read through *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God*, one will discover a lot of common issues apart from the use of proverbs which is the cardinal point of focus. Summarily:

- i. both *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* expose traditional life in rural Africa before the coming of European civilization and Christianity.
- ii. Both novels talk about the encounter between traditional civilization and colonial Christian civilization.
- iii. They all talk about conflict within traditional society. They also talk about traditional heroes whose admirable qualities are marred by fatal flaws in their characters; such as Okonkwo and Ezeulu.

- iv. The two novels likewise talk about weaknesses within traditional society, and how the fatal flaws of the heroes lead to their tragic ends.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0 Introduction

This is the concluding chapter, where the entire work draws its conclusion. The chapter will present the summary of the findings, the conclusion and the recommendations. This will be done in the order below.

5.1 Summary of Findings

5.2 Conclusion

5.3 Recommendation

5.1 Summary of Findings

The analysis of the corpus was based on eclectic method. The main focused were the semantic, lexical, syntactic and symbolic as well as metaphoric features of proverbs used by Achebe.

Stylistically, Achebe's narrative shows his artistic dexterity in exploring limitless possibilities in the use of language to express his message.

Semantically, proverbs are used for several reasons and contributed meaningfully to several settling of sensitive issues. Proverbs are used in a language to précis idea and be applied to fix a point. Many examples of proverbs were put forward and their meaning given; as well as how they were used in the texts either for conflict resolution or any other purpose.

On lexical items, this is one of the areas in which Achebe's style is most manifest, that is his use of words or language. His use of English is clear and simple. The average reader can understand the stories without difficulty. His sentences are straight-forward and his choice of words are everyday words that are not difficult to understand.

Achebe's syntactic structures are mixed up. He did not follow the same pattern of arrangement; hence the difference in the sentence structures. Because of his ability to use the English language very well, the mixture of the pattern of his sentence structure could not alter the understanding or simple nature of his work.

Apart from using the proverbs sparingly which is the central theme of this work, Achebe also use imagery which is drawn from the local community. Ants, Lizards, she-goats, palm wine etc all bear a local colour. Oral tradition is also used. He uses metaphors, similes, personifications, hyperboles, parallelism and symbolisms in his proverbs with the aim of creating more beauty for his artistic work.

To sum it up, we have discovered that Achebe is economical with words, uses simplicity of language, direct translation, and incorporation of un-translated Igbo words, proverbs and African imagery to give his novels their African flavour.

5.2 Conclusion

This research has shown that Achebe's use of proverbs in *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* are very simple and easy to be

understood. This is so because Achebe uses simple everyday language without complexity. The proverbs used are both functional and situational.

Achebe used the weapon of language to convince outsiders that Nigeria is a nation with great potential.

Things Fall Apart and *Arrow of God* interpose western linguistic forms and literary traditions with Igbo words and phrases. Achebe writes in English, the language of the coloniser, but incorporates idioms and proverbs, imagery, fables, tales and other elements of African oral and communal story telling traditions in order to record an African oral traditions as well as to subvert the colonialist language and culture.

In the final analysis, Achebe emerges as a writer of acclaim for his efficient use of European language to portray the 'gyres' that African life is made to 'whirl' through. His language is a major component of his artistic strategy, which not only enriches the English language but gives the reader the experience of a whole culture. Therefore, Achebe had taken both his African and European readers to talk through his proverbs, a job well done.

5.3 Recommendation

Some post secondary schools and tertiary institutions neglect the teaching of literature in their school syllabi, such should be discouraged completely because literature is undoubtedly a sine qua non for English. The researcher, therefore, recommends that subsequent researchers should carry out similar researches on

similar topics and various books, because an indebt study in similar topics would enable future researchers to dwell properly on their promises for a better society.

It is necessary that the Federal and State Governments should encourage our local publishers to publish literature textbooks. This they can do by offering them with loans for that purpose. Moreso, there are many fresh enthusiastic graduates in literature who have written some literature texts but have no where withal to publish them, the Governments should come to their aid as well.

The researcher hopes that a helping hand by the federal and state Governments would enhance the academic enthusiasm and zeal of subsequent scholars.

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