

Implicatures of Domestic Discourse in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *PH* and *HYS*

Niyi Osunbade, PhD

English Unit, Department of General Studies
Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, PMB 4000, Ogbomoso, Nigeria
Email:adeniyiosunbade@yahoo.com

My PhD thesis from which this research is adapted was financed by the American Council of Learned Societies [ACLS] (Sponsoring information)

Abstract

Scholarly studies on Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's works have largely concentrated on characterization, thematisation, stylistic, lexico-semantic, discursal and pragmatic features of her texts. While the pragmatic studies of the texts have examined explicit meaning in them, very little attention has been paid to the contextual examination of implicit contents of her thematic foci. This study, therefore, is a pragmatic investigation of implicatures of domestic discourse in Adichie's novels, aimed at identifying the implicatural dimensions that emerge in the discourse in the novels and determining how they facilitate access to Adichie's thematic concerns. The Gricean Pragmatic theory, which accounts for context-driven meanings, served as the theoretical framework for the study. The two novels of Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus (PH)* and *Half of a Yellow Sun (HYS)*, were selected and all the domestic issues-motivated conversations in the novels, determined by transactional boundaries, constituted the data for the study. These were analysed using insights from Gricean theoretical notion of implicature. The result indicates that implicatures display two dimensions in DD in the texts, namely, figurative expression with additional meaning and non-figurative expressions with additional meaning. Implicatures in DD in *PH* relate to the themes of: subjugation, largely communicated through both figurative and non-figurative expressions flouting the maxims of manner and quantity; resistance against domestic violence, communicated through figurative expressions alone, with the maxim of manner being flouted; and self-centredness, communicated strictly through non-figurative expressions, which flout the maxim of quantity. Implicatures of DD in *HYS*, on the other hand, thematise love, corruption and inhumanity, which are all communicated through figurative expressions, flouting the manner maxim. Tribalism is also thematised, using non-figurative expressions, with the quantity maxim being flouted. The interaction between DD and implicit meaning in Adichie's novels facilitates access to a context-sensitive understanding of domestic issues in the texts, thereby revealing Adichie's utilisations of pragmatic tools in espousing the domestic experiences of Nigerians and by extension, Africans, in the fictional realities she has refracted in the novel.

Key words: Adichie, domestic discourse, implicit meaning, thematic concern, novels

1. Introduction

Conversational discourse has been subjected to linguistic analysis across different domains of language use such as medical (e.g. Odebunmi 2003; 2006), internet (Oni and Osunbade 2009), conflict (Kakava 2000), media (Odebunmi 2007), religious (Wallace 2012), etc. whether in real life, mediated, or literary contexts. However, given these diversities of the domains of language use, the discourse types that can be identified in any text or conversation are manifold, making it difficult to have a specific definition for discourse types. This observation therefore brings to the fore Meyer and Rice's (1984) acknowledgment that each researcher may need to establish his or her own definition, with consideration for salient and useful features relative to the purpose of the investigation (Meyer and Rice 1984: 343). This perspective probably influences Jiun-lung (2009) to use discourse type as an umbrella term referring to the characteristics of a text which assign a label to it based on the writer's communicative goals. Defining discourse type, Sarangi, who popularises the notion, construes it as the specific manifestations of language forms in their interactional contexts (see Sarangi 2000).

The fact is that, spurred by this submission, different scholars have characterised and investigated forms of talk such as medical discourse, religious discourse, legal discourse, internet discourse, political discourse, and so on, from different perspectives, namely, sociolinguistic, stylistic, discursal, and pragmatic. However, domestic discourse, which is another important discourse type is yet to be given any serious attention in linguistic studies in humanistic scholarship, whether in real life or literary contexts. This study plugs in this hole by investigating implicit meanings of domestic discourse, operationalised as a form of talk that captures routine

communicative activities in everyday family settings, in Adichie's novels, *Purple Hibiscus (PH)* and *Half of a Yellow Sun (HYS)*.

Our choice of Adichie is motivated by a number of factors. Apart from being the new voice of Nigerian literature whose novels have attracted several awards, especially in the contemporary literary scene (suggesting that she is an embodiment of intellectualism who has gained a measure of success that eludes many writers), there is a close relationship between her writing and her world, her society and life (see Adebayo 1995: 64); and her works bear relevance to the espousal of the domestic experiences of the characters among other significant issues that the novels mirror in the depiction of the totality of people's experiences in the post-colonial Nigeria. Our data consisted of family talks from the selected texts (i.e. *PH* and *HYS*). All the domestic discourses in the novels were sampled and analysed for occurrences of implicatures, using insights from Gricean Pragmatics. Apart from enhancing a better understanding of implicit meanings of conversational discourse in the texts, the study is also significant for shifting literature on pragmatics forward, and providing a new theoretical insight into the interpretation and understanding of contemporary African fiction.

2. Linguistic Studies on Adichie's Novels and Summary of Texts

Linguistic studies on Adichie's novels have been carried out from different perspectives, namely, stylistic (Tunca 2008, 2009; Ibhawagbele and Edokpayi's 2012), pragmatic (Osunbade 2009), lexico-semantic (Jegade 2010), and discursal (Udumukwu 2011, Lawal and Lawal 2013). The submissions of some of these scholars are reviewed below.

Tunca (2009) is a stylistic analysis of *Purple Hibiscus*, which concentrates on Kambili's use of language to facilitate a deep understanding of how the notions of freedom and oppression are woven into the novel, especially with recourse to Fowler's theory of "mind-style". Her analysis of mind-style rests on the evaluation of the impact of vocabulary and syntactic arrangements on the interpretation of the text. Using a functional framework as a basis for the linguistic analysis, she argues that mind-style is a useful theoretical tool that has the impetus of "shaping some of the linguistic structures frequently used by Adichie's narrator, Kambili, into a coherent interpretive model" (Tunca 2009:4). Mind-style therefore manifests in her stylistic choices of silence-implicating clauses favouring those which shift Eugene's brutalities onto an object used as weapon; and the ones which appear to minimise the impact of his brutality/aggression. The study thus shows that "the mind-style Adichie creates for her character is a deceptively simple one, since the accessible vocabulary and plain syntactic structures it contains inconspicuously conceal Kambili's prejudices" (Tunca 2009:15). It further shows that the subsequent maturation of Kambili's idiolect into a more straightforward language depicts that her questioning her father's parochial and dominating principles translates into discursive freedom.

Osunbade (2009) explores explicit meaning in *Purple Hibiscus*, adopting Sperber and Wilson's (1986) Relevance Theory to account for the recovery of Adichie's thematic foci in the text through such enrichment processes as reference assignment, gap-filling, bridging, and disambiguation. The study demonstrates that these processes facilitate access to the author's thematic foci, character exposition, location of settings, and cohesive unity. It concludes that a study of explicature in *Purple Hibiscus* assists greatly in understanding conversations in the text, aids access to the intended meaning of the author vis-à-vis the overall interpretation of the text, and promises to provide a helpful tool for the teaching of literature.

In his own study, Jegede (2010) attempts a lexico-semantic analysis of Adichie's second novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, drawing randomly selected examples from the text. The study reveals four lexico-semantic choices. These are: collocative alliances of words to project the themes of bloodshed, horror and devastation in the novel; repetitive use of noun references of the main characters, especially to foreground their relevance to the themes of the text; engagement of simple, compound and complex sentences rather unambiguously to achieve laconicity of expression and make Adichie's thematic foci easily accessible; and the use of active voice to add vivacity to the memories of persons, events and places associated with the Biafran war. This study concludes that these lexico-semantic choices have implications for Adichie's narrative style vis-a-vis access to the meaning being communicated in the text.

Udumukwu (2011), however, analyses *Purple Hibiscus* with consideration for issues of ideology, adopting element of voice as a strategy for the constitution of the interplay of subject and interpellation. It demonstrates how the novel negotiates the tension between the two aspects of voice, that of who sees (whose perspectives) and that of who narrates. Three different perspectives represented by three characters drive the narrative in the novel. Eugene's perspective is the thesis, being the dominant patriarchal position in the text. Auntie Ifeoma's constitutes the antithesis, being that it catalyses Kambili's perspective. And Kambili's perspective functions as the synthesis, given that through it, a new voice, which forms the basis for action of resistance of Eugene's patriarchal dominance and oppression, is defined towards the end of the narrative. These tripartite levels of perception allows for the manifestation of multiple ideological subjects in the text. Ultimately, Adichie's presentation of a dialectical situation between characters understood as subjects has

implications for Nigerian novel's engagement in ideological issues vis-à-vis the crystallisation of the changing challenges of nationhood in Nigeria.

Ibhawaegebele and Edokpayi's (2012) study focuses code-switching and code-mixing as stylistic devices in three Nigerian prose fiction, among which is *purple hibiscus*. The study reveals that Adichie engages her characters in interactions in Standard English, Pidgin English and sometimes Igbo language, depending on the prevailing circumstances. The characters interact in Standard English in formal situations, but in situations such as riot or protest, pidgin is adopted. The study submits that Adichie portrays the emotional and psychological states of the characters such as anger, joy, surprise, shock etc, as situations demand, through code-switching. The study further reveals that Adichie's characters often code-mix by inserting Igbo words and expressions into their English sentences. The study's conclusion is that the use of code-switching and code-mixing is a demonstration of some of the attempts by Nigerian novelists (among whom Adichie is) to reflect the realities of the use of English in Nigeria.

The foregoing reveals that Adichie's novels have been largely approached from the stylistic and discursive perspectives. Also, it is obvious that while it is true that her prose fiction has got some scholarly attention from the pragmatic angle, none, to the best of our knowledge, has been devoted to the investigation of implicit meaning of domestic discourse in her novels. The present study therefore fills this gap.

Adichie's debut novel, *PH*, refracts the oddities in Nigeria. Particularly, the tyrannical trauma of anarchical-cum-draconian leaderships (both within the family, through the family of Eugene Achike; and society at large) being experienced by Nigerians are captured. Eugene is a wealthy man who adopts a conservative form of Catholicism. He appears to uphold moral standards, as he uses his newspaper, *the standard*, to challenge the socio-political malaise-cum-abuse of power that characterizes the governance in the post-independent Nigeria, but his private life is as dictatorial and abusive as the leaders whom he attacks. He constantly batters his wife and uses other violent means to correct members of his family. This weird behaviour therefore causes Kambili, her brother Jaja, and their mother, Beatrice, both physical and psychological destructions. However, Kambili and Jaja's stay with their aunt, Ifeoma, in Nsukka for a holiday plays a significant role in their self discovery and journey to freedom for the entire family. These children's exposure to Ifeoma's liberating and life-affirming approach to Catholicism, rather than the oppressive and conservative one upheld by their father, makes Kambili to slowly begin to rediscover her voice as well as desire freedom from her father's control, and equally makes Jaja to start to display defiance which seems to infect their mother, who also starts to disobey her husband. Beatrice eventually poisons Eugene so as to ensure their "freedom" from his inhumane acts towards them, this being the metaphoric connotation of 'Purple Hibiscus.'

In Adichie's second novel, *HYS*, which is the second source of data for this study, Adichie refracts the gory historic reality of Nigeria in the 1960s, being a turbulent, tension-soaked country as a result of the conflict between the Hausa and the Igbo who sought to secede from Nigeria after the widespread massacres of their people in the North, leading to the war of succession tagged "Biafran War". In the novel, while the characters struggle with different domestic and social problems, Nigeria itself gradually blows up in their faces. The Igbo attempt a coup against the Gowon-led Hausa in government, and the Hausa retaliate with a sweeping massacre that starts in the North. The conflict later on turns into a full-fledged war which blows out of proportion, claiming numerous lives. Odenigbo, Olanna and Ugwu, who are parts of the main characters in the text, take on the course of the revolution alongside other patriotic Biafrans. Consequently, the Igbo population is greatly reduced, but their desperation and lingering optimism propel them to retreat to Eastern Nigeria where they hope endlessly to form the Independent Republic of Biafra.

3. Gricean Theoretical Notion of Implicature

The approach of implicature was developed by H. P. Grice. Specifically, it was conceived in Grice's second approach which deals with the way people use language. In his theory of implicature, Grice (1975) identifies two types of implicature, namely conventional implicature and conversational implicature. Our discussion here is restricted to only conversational implicature, as it is the one adopted in this study, given its more important status in Grice's proposal. Grice proposes that, typically in conversation but not confined to conversation, communicative utterances are in accordance with a general principle of cooperation, called the Co-operative Principle (CP), which presupposes that communicators should be helpful (that is, co-operate with each other) in their conversational contributions. According to Grice (1975:45), the CP states thus:

Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.

He supports this principle with four maxims discussed below:

1. **Quantity Maxim:** Be just informative as required
Within the conversation, the participant should be as brief as possible.
2. **Quality Maxim:** Say only that which is true or for which evidence is available.
With this maxim, within the conversational context, the speaker should not claim to know more than he does so as to be helpful to the co-participants by not mis-leading them.
3. **Relation Maxim:** Ensure that you are relevant
The participants are expected to concentrate on the subject being handled at a particular stage and not introduce extraneous items into the conversation.
4. **Manner Maxim:** Be perspicuous.
This maxim relates to "the how" and not "the what" of what is said. The speaker is expected to be perspicuous, avoid obscurantism, ambiguity and prolixity; and be orderly. (see Odeunmi 2003:64).

Levinson (1983) observes that Grice's maxims clearly spelt out the way conversations can be carried out most efficiently, rationally and cooperatively, but also notes that trying to meet the Gricean standard is like living in a philosopher's paradise. He maintains that Grice himself did not idealize that such should be fully realized, but rather that:

in most ordinary kinds of talk, these principles are oriented to such that when talk does not proceed according to their specifications, hearers assume that, contrary to appearances, the principles are nevertheless being adhered to at some deeper level (Levinson 1983:102)

The following example of Levinson (1983:102) will make this clear:

- A: Where's Bill?
B: There's a yellow VW outside State's house

B's response obeys the maxim rather implicitly despite its appearance. If Bill has a yellow VW, it is possible that he is in State's house.

Grice thus observed that it is deviations of this nature that necessitate inferences; otherwise there would be no need for any. Grice has called this kind of inference an implicature or a conversational implicature. As Kearns 2000:254 says, Gricean pragmatics involves a theory of inference that hearers draw to arrive at a full understanding of what a speaker meant by an utterance, especially in those cases where what is meant goes well beyond the literal meaning of what is uttered. That which a speaker meant in addition to what is said is therefore the extra-information conveyed dubbed an implicature.

Levinson notes that inferences come in about two ways depending on the relations of the speaker towards the maxims. First, if the speaker is an observer of the maxim in a partially direct manner, he relies on the hearer to make the right inferences, assuming that the speaker is following the maxims. For example:

- A: (To a passer-by) I've just run out of petrol.
B: Oh! There is a garage just around the corner

(Levinson 1983:104)

B's response implicates that 'A' would obtain fuel in the garage. He would be less fully co-operative if the garage was no longer selling fuel for the day or had no fuel.

Second, inferences may be generated if 'the speaker deliberately and ostentatiously breaches or flouts a maxim' (Levinson 1983:104). We may consider the following example of Levinson's (1983:104):

- A: Let's get the kids something

B: Okay but I veto 1-C-E C-R-E-A-M-S

'B' flouts the maxim of manner by his spelling rather than pronouncing of 'Ice Cream', an act which goes with the inference that 'B' does not want to prompt the children to demanding ice creams by direct reference.

Scholars have noted that failure to observe a maxim to generate an implicature can occur, while still obeying the cooperative principle (see Thomas 1995, Kearns 2000). Thomas (1995) discusses five ways in which the maxims may not be observed, as identified by Grice, namely, flouting a maxim, violating a maxim, infringing a maxim, opting out of a maxim and suspending a maxim.

A maxim is flouted when a speaker "blatantly fails to observe a maxim at the level of what is said with the deliberate intention of generating an implicature" (Thomas 1995:65). Flouts can exploit all the maxims, i.e. quantity, quality, relation and manner. Flouts exploiting the maxim of quality occur when an untruth is said or when the utterance cannot be adequately proved. Flouts that exploit the maxim of relation occur when conspicuously irrelevant responses are given to questions or queries. Flouting the maxim of quantity involves a speaker giving more or less than the required information in particular situations (Thomas 1995: 65-71).

Infringing a maxim involves "a non-observance [which] stems from imperfect linguistic performance rather than from any desire.., to generate a conversational implicature" (Thomas 1995:74). A maxim can be infringed as a result of incompetence in a language, psycho-social impairment, cognitive impairment or incapability to speak clearly. Opting out of a maxim means that "the speaker is unwilling to cooperate in the way the maxim requires" (ibid). A maxim is suspended when the non-fulfillment of maxim is by participants, and therefore does not generate any implicature (Thomas 1995:76)

However, according to Thomas (1995: 65):

the situations which chiefly interested Grice were those in which a speaker **blatantly** fails to observe a maxim, not with any intention of deceiving or misleading, but because the speaker wishes to prompt the hearer to look for a meaning which is different from, or in addition to, the expressed meaning.

Invariably, therefore, the most important category of non-observance of the maxim in Gricean account is flouting a maxim, especially to generate additional meaning called *conversational implicature*. Ultimately, this Gricean approach theoretically accounts for how implicit meaning can be recovered and this study draws relevant insights from it.

4. Analysis and Findings

Domestic discourse (henceforth DD), in the present context, refers to discourse that concerns family or private lives as well as domestic experiences of the characters in the novels. It is a significant discourse type that emerges in our data, given Adichie's portrayal of the tyrannical trauma of anarchical-cum draconian leadership being experienced by Africans using a domestic setting to justify that humans constantly struggle with a number of domestic issues.

Our findings show that pragmatic inference contributes to what is implied in DD in Adichie's novels and they display two broad dimensions: figurative expressions with additional meaning and non-figurative expressions with additional meaning. Figurative usage, which is scarcely engaged in the corpus, features figures of speech, namely, euphemism and metaphor, and proverbial expressions. Non-figurative expressions, however, dominate the data, indicating that many implicatures in *PH* and *HYS* do not appear in figurative garbs, but they go with additional meanings. The conversational maxims that are flouted or exploited to generate implicatures, in both the figurative and non-figurative dimensions are the Gricean maxims of quantity and manner.

The result indicates that implicatures in DD in *PH* relate to the themes of subjugation, resistance against domestic violence, and self-centredness. Subjugation is largely communicated through both figurative and non-figurative expressions flouting the maxims of manner and quantity; resistance against domestic violence is communicated through figurative expressions alone, with the maxim of manner being flouted; and self-centredness is communicated strictly through non-figurative expressions, which flout the maxim of quantity. Implicatures of DD in *HYS*, on the other hand, thematise love, corruption and inhumanity, which are all communicated through figurative expressions, flouting the manner maxim. Tribalism is also thematised, using

non-figurative expressions, with the quantity maxim being flouted. Implicatures vis - à - vis figurative expressions are first handled.

4.1 Figurative Expressions and Implicatures in Adichie's Novels

The engagement of figurative expressions to implicitly project the themes of subjugation, resistance against domestic violence and corruption in domestic discourse in the data is largely characterized by the non-observance of the maxims of manner. Let us consider examples illustrating these:

Example 1: (Background: Beatrice just returned from the hospital after accidentally losing her pregnancy as a result of her husband's physical abuse on her)

Mama [Beatrice] (T₁): My children, *there was an accident, the baby is gone.*
Kambili (T₁): When Mama? What happened Mama?
Sisi (comes in and cuts in): Good afternoon, madam. Will you eat now or after you bathe?
Mama (T₂): (Turning to Kambili) *Nne*, this is your study time. Go upstairs.
Kambili (T₂): I want to stay here.

(*PH*, p. 34-35)

Example 1 instantiates the projection of the theme of subjugation, using a figurative expression (euphemism) to mask the brutality of Eugene's abuse in the conversation between Beatrice and her daughter, Kambili. Beatrice's T₁ is uttered when she returns from the hospital after suffering a miscarriage resulting from the heavy beating she gets from her husband:

My children, there was an accident, the baby is gone

The figurative expression used here is a euphemism, which flouts the maxim of manner in its obscure nature and triggers the search for an implicature. Beatrice could simply have said "my children, your father beat me; I have a miscarriage or the pregnancy is lost". Instead, she has chosen not to express the proposition clearly and leave this information implicit. Euphemism is engaged because it is not pleasant to tell the children that she suffers miscarriage as a result of the beating she gets from her husband. Her failure to observe the maxim of manner is, therefore, occasioned by the need to mask Eugene's brutality that leads to the loss of the pregnancy and the imperativeness of hiding his identity as the cause of the problem.

The existential "there was" in the utterance indicates that "something happened" and this linguistic form is engaged to guide the addressees' (her children) interpretation process. The fact that Beatrice produces the utterance therefore suggests that she expects the children to supply the assumption that:

If a pregnant woman has an accident, the baby she is carrying is not safe.

Bringing this contextual assumption (i.e. inference) to bear on the interpretation, vis-à-vis its combination with the original utterance yields the implicated conclusion:

The pregnancy is lost.

This implicature indicates silence around implicating Eugene in the traumatic event which he is guilty of, suggesting that his abusive behaviour has a tongue-tying effect on his family members. Therefore, underlying the implicature here is the idea of subjugation, which is thematised.

Resistance against domestic violence is another DD-related theme sometimes communicated implicitly, in *PH*, using figurative expressions, with the maxim of manner being breached. Example 2 can be considered:

Example 2: (Background: Kambili is hospitalised after being brutalised by her father and Auntie Ifeoma visits her in the company of Father Amadi)

- Mama (T₁): (addressing Aunt Ifeoma and Father Amadi) At first, they could not find a vein and I was so scared.
- Father Amadi (T₁): Kambili, Kambili. Are you awake?
- Aunt Ifeoma (T₁): *Nne*, Kambili, *nne*.
- Mama (T₂): The medication knocks her out.
- Aunt Ifeoma (T₂): (Clutching Kambili's hand): *Nne*, your cousins send greetings. They would have come, but they are in school. Father Amadi is here with me.
- Kambili: (attempts to open her eyes but too weak to)
- Aunt Ifeoma (T₃): (Facing Beatrice) This cannot go on, *nwunyen*. *When a house is on fire you run out before the roof collapses on your head*.
- Mama (T₃): It has never happened like this before. He has never punished her like this before.

(PH, p.208-209)

In a thought-provoking conversation between Beatrice (known as Mama in the context of the novel) and her sister-in law (Ifeoma), Ifeoma addresses the proverbial saying in the second segment of the utterance in her T₂ to Beatrice at Kambili's bedside at the hospital:

When a house is on fire you run out before the roof collapses on your head.

In the proverbial usage above, a metaphoric mapping is employed to focus on the gravity of the problems Beatrice encounters in Eugene's house. The marital life of Eugene and Beatrice which suffers unending hardships orchestrated by Eugene is, thus, metaphorically presented as a house which is on fire. Obviously, the intended meaning of this proverb is obscure, suggesting a flout of the manner maxim. Reliance on shared cultural knowledge for the understanding of the implied meaning is, therefore, necessary.

The fact that Ifeoma produces the proverbial utterance indicates that she expects Beatrice to draw the inference (i.e. supply the implicated assumption/premise) that "a serious problem is in need of an urgent solution", given her belief that she (Beatrice) already has this assumption among her existing assumptions. The effect of Ifeoma's utterance is then to appeal to Beatrice's belief in the factuality of the assumption. The proverb is actually an exhortation to act fast before a rather dramatic situation becomes irrevocable. Hence, the implicature is that *Beatrice is urged to protect her children and herself from Eugene's perpetual act of violence before the situation becomes more serious*. With the proverbial expression, "when a house... collapses on your head", which employs metaphor to give off this implicature, Ifeoma proclaims her Igbo identity, and plays a significant role in indirectly motivating Beatrice to resist her husband's act of violence. The theme of resistance against domestic violence is thus raised by the implicature drawn on by the proverb.

Instances of non-observance of the manner maxim in the use of figurative expressions to project the theme of corruption are however found in *HYS*. Example 3 will suffice:

Example 3: (Background: Odenigbo had an illicit affair with Amala and this act pushed Olanna too to have an affair with Richard. Surprisingly, Olanna confessed to him, driven by the flagrant way Odenigbo continued to sidestep responsibility and blame his mother for his own misconduct).

Odenigbo (T₁): Let's get married. Mama will leave us then.

Olanna (T₁): *I slept with Richard*.

Odenigbo (T₂): (painfully) No.

Olanna (T₂): Yes.

Odenigbo (T₃): Do you have feelings for him?

Olanna (T₃): No.

(HYS, p.250)

Odenigbo involves in a sexual intercourse with Amala, the house help his mother brings from the village and this act poses threats to his relationship with Olanna. He then proposes marriage as a way out of the problem of insecurity posed by his infidelity, but Olanna surprises him with the shocking news of her own vengeful infidel act with Richard. This is communicated in her T₁, using a figurative expression (euphemism) to veil the act:

I slept with Richard

The euphemistic expression “to sleep with someone” implies to have sexual intercourse with someone”. Like most figurative language usages, this euphemism flouts the maxim of manner, as its interpretation goes beyond a surface recovery of the proposition expressed. Euphemism seems employed here to make the ugly act sound pleasant. The confession of “love-making” with Richard, which is communicated, ultimately implicates that she (Olanna) is an infidel just like him (Odenigbo) and the marriage being proposed might not work. This implicatural content of the expression therefore favours corruption, especially infidelity. This is the interpretation reached by Odenigbo, which provokes a painful emotional outburst “no!” in his T₁.

4.2 Non-figurative Expressions and Implicatures in Adichie’s Novels

The use of non-figurative expressions to communicate implicatures necessitated by the flout of the quantity maxim is also found in our data. Example 4 and 5, which illustrate the theme of subjugation and self-centredness can be considered:

Example 4: (Background: Eugene and Ifeoma’s families were in Abba, their hometown for Christmas and Ifeoma came to take Eugene’s children for sightseeing alongside her own children)

Aunty Ifeoma: Are you ready, Jaja and Kambili?
(Turned to Beatrice) Nwunye m, will you not come with us?

Beatrice: (shaking her head) *You know Eugene likes me to stay around.*

(PH, p. 80)

In the conversation above, Ifeoma wants to take her children and her brother’s children, Jaja and Kambili out for sightseeing, and she extends the invitation to Beatrice, the brother’s wife, but she declines. When asked whether she would join them for the outing, she says:

You know Eugene likes me to stay around.

Instead of giving this response, Beatrice could simply have said “no” and this would give the maximum amount of information required by Ifeoma in the situation. By giving this much weaker and less informative response, she flouts the maxim of quantity to generate an implicature. The pragmatic implication of this is that it prompts Ifeoma to look for addition meaning that “she (Beatrice) is not joining them for the outing”, based on inference. The fact that Beatrice is being restricted from leaving the house is, therefore, communicated to underscore the theme of subjugation.

The findings further reveal that non-figurative expressions are also common in communicating implicatures, which are necessitated by the non-observance (i.e. flout) of the quantity maxim to project the theme of self-centredness. Example 5 and 6 will illustrate this point:

Example 5: (Background: Kambili come second in the class and Eugene follows her to school, and engages her in a challenging conversation in front of her classroom building).

Eugene (T₁): Where is Chinwe Jideze?

- Kambili (T₂): (Pointedly) She's the girl in the middle.
- Eugene (T₂): Look at her, how many heads does she have?
- Kambili (T₂): One.
- Eugene (T₃): (Pulled a small mirror from his pocket). Look in the mirror. How many heads do you have?
- Kambili (T₃): One.
- Eugene (T₄): The girl has one head too, she does not have two. *So why did you let her come first?*
- Kambili (T₄): It will not happen again, Papa.
- Eugene (T₅): *Why do you think I work so hard to give you and Jaja the best? You have to do something with all these privileges.*
- Kambili (T₅): Yes papa.
- Eugene (T₆): *I didn't have a father who sent me to the best schools... I would be nothing today but for the priests and sisters at the mission. I was a house boy for the parish priest for two years. Nobody dropped me off at school. I walked eight miles every day. I was a gardener for the priest while I attended St. Gregory's secondary school.*

(PH. p.45-47)

The above is a conversation involving Eugene and, her daughter, Kambili. The conversation reveals Eugene's disapproval of Kambili's academic performance and its implication for the projection of the theme of self-centredness, which is implicitly communicated, using non-figurative expressions. Implicatures manifest in Eugene's utterances in his T₁, T₅, and T₆ in the conversation above. In Eugene's T₁, the second segment of the utterance "so why did you let her come first?" which gives off an implicature, is deliberately engaged to make it manifest that he (Eugene) is most displeased with Kambili's second position in the class in her previous result. The utterance flouts the maxim of quantity in its under-informativeness, costing Kambili extra efforts in searching for the additional meaning conveyed. She then first accesses the contextual assumption that:

The person that came first (Chinwe Jideze) is not better than her in any way.

This assumption then forms the context for reaching the father's implicit communication that: *Kambili came second out of her own volition.* This implicated conclusion pragmatically captures Eugene's belief that everything could be controlled in one's favour, thereby revealing his egoistic and self-centred character.

Eugene's displeasure with Kambili's performance is further established by uttering the utterance in his T₅:

Why do you think I work so hard to give you and Jaja the best? You have to do something with all these privileges

This utterance also flouts the quantity maxim, as it is less informative than Kambili needs to understand the force of his father's utterance, and expectedly, forces Kambili to access the assumption that:

- (i) Being sent to the best school is a rare privilege.
- (ii) One has to always come first to justify this privilege.

These assumptions thus serve as inferential premises that eventually yield the implicature:

Eugene expects her (Kambili) to always come first.

The implicature here encapsulates Eugene's projection of his uncompromising belief that humans have the ability to control their situations. This attitude of self-aggrandizement subsequently leads him to employ another implicit style in his T₆ to cap his thought in the conversation. Equipped with the more than necessary information supplied by the utterance in Eugene's (T₆), Kambili is able to supply the contextual assumptions that:

- (i) Eugene didn't have the opportunity of a good life she and her brother have, as he went through hard times in his school days;
- (ii) Eugene attained success by hard work.

Ultimately, the fact that Kambili is expected to take a good advantage of the rare opportunity she has is thus implied. Succinctly put, the implicature derived from the inferences above is that *Eugene is motivating Kambili to success and, at the same time, not giving her a choice in this endeavour*. As such, Adichie's thematic focus on self-centeredness (that is typical of many highly placed individuals in the society) is demonstrated.

In another transaction between Kambili and her cousin, Amaka, Kambili implicitly communicates a thought that reveals her father's behavioural traits, and her own dogmatic internalization of his dictates to underpin the theme of subjugation, using non-figurative expression which flouts the quantity maxim:

Example 6: (Background: Amaka strikes a conversation with her cousin, Kambili, on the topic of watching TV).

Amaka (T₁): You have satellite here, don't you?

Kambili (T₁): Yes.

Amaka (T₂): Can we watch CNN?

Kambili (T₂): *We don't watch a lot of TV.*

(*PH*, p. 79)

In this exchange, instead of simply saying "no", Kambili engages, in her second turn (i.e. T₂), an indirect answer to Amaka's utterance in her own T₂. When Kambili says "We don't watch a lot of TV", the utterance flouts the quantity maxim in its being less informative in the context of use. Kambili informs Amaka that they (i.e. Jaja and herself) do not watch a lot of TV, but does not make any mention that it is their father's directive. She therefore demands from Amaka the extraction of the contextual assumption:

Kambili and her brother do not just watch TV at will.

This assumption, expected to be accessed with the advantage of Amaka's shared knowledge of Kambili's father's strict rules, is then needed for the recovery of the implicit interpretation that:

They cannot watch CNN.

By resorting to this implicitly conveyed information, Kambili's intention is to make it manifest that they (her brother and himself) strictly operate according to the scheduled routine dictates of their father. Her implicit refusal to consent to Amaka's idea of watching TV exposes her unquestionable internalization of her father's set standard of living and her dogmatic adherence to them even in his absence. Eugene's evolving personality is thus inherently depicted, as he totally subdues his family members; hence, Adichie's thematic focus on lack of freedom/subjugation, in *PH*, is implicitly demonstrated in the implicature derived.

In the context of DD in *HYS*, non-figurative expressions are equally engaged to project tribalism, flouting the maxim of quantity. For example:

Example 7: (Background: The topic of marriage forms the focus of the discussion between Arinze and Olanna, her elderly cousin)

Arinze (T₁): So you are moving to Nsukka to marry Odenigbo, sister?

Olanna (T₁): I don't know about marriage yet. I just want to be close to him and I want to teach.

Arinze (T₂): It is only women that know too much book like you who can say that, sister. If people like me who don't know book wait too long, we will expire. I want a husband today and tomorrow, oh! My mates have all left me and gone to husbands' houses.

Olanna (T₂): You are young. You should focus on your sewing for now.

- Arinze (T₃): Is it sewing that will give me child? Even if I had managed to pass to go to school, I would still want a child now.
- Olanna (T₃): So why are you talking marriage-marriage like this, Ari? Have you seen anybody you like? Or should I find you one of Mohammed's brothers?
- Arinze (T₄): *No. Papa would kill me first of all if he knew I was even looking at a Hausa man like that.*

(HYS, p. 42-44)

The conversation between Olanna and her cousin, Arinze, above exposes the intensity of the tribal sentiment between the Hausa and the Igbo. In the discourse, marriage is depicted from Arinze's perspective as a necessity that should be given consideration at an early stage of a woman's life with consciousness for tribal boundary in the choice of the partner. It is this tribal consciousness that is implicitly communicated by Arinze in her T₄, which flouts the quantity maxim:

No. Papa would kill me first of all if he knew I was even looking at a Hausa man like that.

By this utterance in her T₄, Arinze has blatantly given more information than required; he could simply have said "no" alone, and this contribution would be maximally relevant to the communication. However, by giving extra information in sentence 2 of the utterance, she breaches the quantity maxim. This non-observance of the maxim therefore sets in motion a process of (informal) reasoning, leading Olanna to derive an additional piece of information that: "her parents (i.e. Arinze) would not support her marriage to any of Mohammed's brothers, being Hausa men". An implicit projection of tribalism is thus evident.

5. Conclusion

This study has carried out an investigation of the pragmatic processes by which implicit meanings of conversations conveyed are interpreted in the domestic contexts of language use in Adichie's novels, *PH* and *HYS*, within the ambit of Gricean theory of implicature. The study anchors Gricean pragmatics on a necessary recourse to the inference that hearers draw to arrive at a full understanding of what a speaker meant by an utterance, especially in those cases where what is meant goes well beyond the literal meaning of what is uttered. It then reveals that what a speaker meant in addition to what is said is therefore the extra-information conveyed dubbed implicature, which displays two dimensions in DD in the texts, namely, figurative expression with additional meaning and non-figurative expressions with additional meaning, that project the different thematic foci of Adichie in the domestic discourse in the texts. Implicatures in DD in *PH* relate to the themes of: subjugation, largely communicated through both figurative and non-figurative expressions flouting the maxims of manner and quantity; resistance against domestic violence, communicated through figurative expressions alone, with the maxim of manner being flouted; and self-centredness, communicated strictly through non-figurative expressions, which flout the maxim of quantity. Implicatures of DD in *HYS*, on the other hand, thematise love, corruption and inhumanity, which are all communicated through figurative expressions, flouting the manner maxim. Tribalism is also thematised, using non-figurative expressions, with the quantity maxim being flouted.

This study on the exploration of the interaction between DD and implicit meaning in Adichie's novels facilitates access to a context-sensitive understanding of domestic issues in the texts, thereby revealing Adichie's utilisations of pragmatic tools in espousing the domestic experiences of Nigerians and by extension, Africans, in the fictional realities she has refracted in her novels.

References

Primary Texts

- Adichie, C.N. (2003). *Purple hibiscus*. Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books. Reprinted 2006.
Lagos: Farafina.
- _____ (2006). *Half of a yellow sun*. London: Fourth Estate.

Secondary Texts

- Adebayo, A. (1995). *Critical essays on the novel in francophone Africa*. Ibadan: AMD

Publishers.

- Grice, H.P. (1975). Logic and conversation. *Syntax and Semantics*. P. Cole and J. Morgan. Eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 41-58.
- Ibhawagbele, F. O. & Edokpayi, J. N. (2012). Code-switching and code-mixing as stylistic devices in Nigerian prose fiction: A study of three Nigerian novels. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences* 2(6), pp. 12-18.
- Jegede, R. (2010). The issues of accessibility: A lexico-semantic reading of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *half of a Yellow Sun*. *Journal of Arts and Contemporary Society* 2, pp. 1-9.
- Jiung-lung, L. (2009). An investigation of the effect of discourse types on Taiwanese college students' reading strategy use. Ph.D. Thesis. Department of English. Indiana university of Pennsylvania.
- Kakava, C. (2001). Discourse and conflict. In D. Schiffrin, D. Tannen and H.E. Hamilton (eds.). *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers. 650-670
- Kearns, K (2000). *Semantics*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lawal, M. and Lawal, F.A. (2013). Language and ideology in Chimamanda Adichie's *purple hibiscus*. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, (13)1, pp.8-16.
- Levinson, S. 1983. *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Meyer, B. J. F. and Rice, E. (1984). The structure of text. P. D. Pearson and R. Barr. (Eds.), *Handbook of Reading Research*. New York: Longman. 319-352.
- Odebunmi, A. (2003). Pragmatic features of English usage in hospital interactions amongst medical practitioners and patients in south-western Nigeria. Ph.D. Thesis. Department of English. Obafemi Awolowo University.
- _____ (2005). Co-operation in doctor-patient conversational interactions in south-western Nigeria. *Perspectives on Language and Literature*. M. Olateju and L. Oyeleye. Eds. Ile-Ife: OAU Press. 239-251.
- _____ (2007). Explicatures and implicatures in magazine's editorials: the case of the Nigerian TELL. *Perspective on Media Discourse*. R. Taiwo, A. Odebunmi, and A. Adetunji. Eds. Muenchen: LIMCOM GmbH. 84-99.
- Oni, W. and Osunbade, N. (2009). Pragmatic force in synchronous computer-mediated communication in Nigeria. In Akin Odebunmi, Arua E Arua, and Saila L. Arimi (eds.). *Language, Gender and Politics: A festschrift for Yisa Kehinde Yusuf*. Lagos: CBAAC, pp 357-376.
- Osunbade, N. (2009). Explicatures in conversational discourse in Adichie's *purple hibiscus*. *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, (18)2, pp. 138-153.
- Sarangi, S. (2000). Ats, Dts and international hybridity: the case of generic counselling. *Discourse and Social Life*. S, Sarangi and M, Coutthard. Eds. Harlow: Longman. 1- 27.
- Sperber, D. and Wilson, D. (1986). *Relevance: communication and cognition*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Tunca, D. (2008). Style beyond borders: language in recent Nigerian fiction. Ph.D. Thesis. Universite de Liege, Belgium.
- (2009). An ambiguous "freedom song": Mind-style in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *purple hibiscus*. *Postcolonial Text*, (5)1, pp. 1-18.

Thomas, J. (1995) *Meaning in interaction: An introduction to pragmatics*. New York: Longman.

Udumukwu, O. (2011). Adichie's *purple hibiscus* and issues of ideology in the constitution of the Nigerian novel. *Tydskrif vir Letterkunde*, 48(1), pp. 184-204.

Wallace, C. R.. (2012). Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *purple hibiscus* and the paradoxes of postcolonial redemption. *Christianity and Literature*, (61)3, pp. 465-483.

About the author: Adeniyi Oluwagbemiga *Osunbade*, holds the B.A (English) degree of Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, and M.A and Ph.D. (English) degrees of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. His research interest lies in pragmatics and interactional linguistics. He is a Senior Lecturer in English at the Department of General Studies, Ladoko Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso, Nigeria, an AHP-ACLS dissertation fellow and an AHP-ACLS postdoctoral fellow alumnus at the Department of English and Linguistics, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South-Africa.

This academic article was published by The International Institute for Science, Technology and Education (IISTE). The IISTE is a pioneer in the Open Access Publishing service based in the U.S. and Europe. The aim of the institute is Accelerating Global Knowledge Sharing.

More information about the publisher can be found in the IISTE's homepage:

<http://www.iiste.org>

CALL FOR JOURNAL PAPERS

The IISTE is currently hosting more than 30 peer-reviewed academic journals and collaborating with academic institutions around the world. There's no deadline for submission. **Prospective authors of IISTE journals can find the submission instruction on the following page:** <http://www.iiste.org/journals/> The IISTE editorial team promises to review and publish all the qualified submissions in a **fast** manner. All the journals articles are available online to the readers all over the world without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. Printed version of the journals is also available upon request of readers and authors.

MORE RESOURCES

Book publication information: <http://www.iiste.org/book/>

Recent conferences: <http://www.iiste.org/conference/>

IISTE Knowledge Sharing Partners

EBSCO, Index Copernicus, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, JournalTOCS, PKP Open Archives Harvester, Bielefeld Academic Search Engine, Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek EZB, Open J-Gate, OCLC WorldCat, Universe Digital Library, NewJour, Google Scholar

