CHAPTER IV
THE SOCIOLINGUISTIC FEATURES
OF THE NOVELS

4.1 Preliminaries

This chapter is dedicated to study the sociolinguistic features of Chinua Achebe’s novels. It studies the linguistic experiments made by Achebe. The novelist sets his novels and short stories in Nigeria. Factors influencing the characters’ language like education, age, social class, gender and ethnicity are taken into account while discussing the sociolinguistic features of the characters’ language. The chapter also examines the language features and their associations with sociological relations with respect to morphology and syntax. The language used by the major as well as the minor characters is evaluated using the principles of Sociolinguistics. The comments made by literary critics regarding Achebe’s use of language are discussed and evaluated thereafter. The researcher analyzes Achebe’s use of dialects in the novels with reference to the rural characters because they represent different social and economic classes.

Linguistic distinctiveness of these characters is examined thoroughly. Therefore, studying the characters from the viewpoint of Sociolinguistics gives legitimacy to the characters and thus, enhances the work of art to the level of aesthetic quality.

4.2 Factors Influencing the Characters’ Language

The factors that influence Chinua Achebe's writings especially the use of language are studied in this chapter. It is observed that Chinua Achebe's
quality of writing is positively influenced by several factors. In most cases he quotes, or translates Igbo proverbs and, idiomatic expressions. He has associated folklore to describe Igbo tradition; he mentions various Christian beliefs and offers European political views. This creativity and innovativeness on his part makes it easy for his target readers to identify with and understand the context of his work. In addition, Chinua Achebe’s understanding of African traditions, history, politics and the society at large makes it possible for him to compare European and African cultures before presenting such perceptive and well thought out novels.

The kind of education Chinua Achebe received from early childhood to graduation appears partly responsible for enhancing his writing skills. At the early age, Chinua Achebe attended the Church Mission Society School before joining Umuahia's X Government College for higher studies. His understanding of both African and European cultural traditions makes him better placed to critically analyze a broad range of matters revolving around race, religion, colonialism, academics and traditions. This has the general effect of minimizing preconception and fixed convictions in most of his writings. His work, therefore, considers several issues using varied cultural attitudes, making them acceptable to various readers across the world.

Chinua Achebe's approach towards the universality of human nature and active participation in Nigerian politics also influenced his writings, making them spread beyond the Nigerian borders and also beyond the political and sociological concerns of the post-independence Africa.

It is found that Chinua Achebe's writing was greatly influenced by the late 1960s civil war in the then Biafran Republic. His family and most of his close friends and colleagues were greatly affected by the consequences of the civil war. At the peak of the war, Chinua Achebe got involved in writing short essays and composing poems, whose themes rotated around
effects of the civil unrest, the rebellious struggle by his people, and extreme human suffering and annihilation surrounding him.

The poem titled *Refugee Mother and Child*, composed in 1969 is a clear illustration of the suffering faced by his people, the people of Biafra in their struggle for liberation. His language, a major component of his artistic strategy, which not only enriches the English language but also gives the reader the experience of a whole culture. Lloyd W. Brown (1979:65) aptly says:

“Achebe's fiction demonstrates his preoccupation with language, not simply as a communicative device, but as a total cultural experience. At this level, language is not merely a technique. It is the embodiment of its civilization and therefore represents or dramatizes modes of perception within its cultural grouping.” 01

According to C. L. Innes (1990:173):

“Achebe has striven to make the reader conscious of knowledge, speech and written discourse”. 02

With the above opinions of Achebe’s critics, it becomes obvious that Achebe gives utmost importance to language in his writings. He continuously tries to make great efforts to bring the readers closer to Igbo culture and makes them enjoy his world famous novels. His use of language brings out the Igbo culture, the Nigerian landscape and the African experience.

Chinua Achebe’s characters belong to different social backgrounds. Therefore, a variety of dialects spoken by them is bound to exist. An attempt is made to study the factors that have influenced the characters’ language as below.
4.2.1 Education

It is considered that a standard language is used by the educated class and the non-standard language is the opposite of it. It is often used by minor characters. Since the standard language is an educated language, non-standard language has almost been regarded as uneducated and unsophisticated. Hence, non-standard language has been a marker of class and of comedy.

The beauty of Achebe's novels lies in his use of language. He is far more successful than others in his perfect combination of language and content. He is able to achieve the difficult task of transcribing the working of African spirit from one medium to another, from a native oral tradition to a foreign form of European origin without demolishing the freshness and strength of the former.

Most of Achebe’s characters are rustic. Their speeches show the influence of education on the characters. Regarding dialogue and dialect in the English novel, the dialogue, either in standard language or in a dialect, discloses the character and the character’s intention is an established fact. Speech is an expression of thought, and, henceforth, discloses purpose. Thought is an internal aspect of the character.

The objective of this study is to explain the several dialectal characteristics, which Achebe has used to create the rustic scenes and to describe country life. In fact, Achebe uses dialect as a means to show social class and irony. Achebe exemplifies the amount of education of his characters through the dialogues. Following sample speech acts from all the novels show that the language of the characters is influenced by certain sociolinguistic factors. Achebe uses translated form of the language more than Igbo language in his novels. However, the translated form is equally effective. The language of
this translated form is observed to have been influenced by some Sociolinguistic factors. It successfully conveys the actual message of the author.

Some conversations from the novels are given below with the study of the impact of education on the language of the characters. Following conversations are taken from the novel Things Fall Apart:

A) “Ekwefi,” said Ezinma, who had joined in plucking the feathers, “my eyelid is twitching.”

“It means you are going to cry,” said her mother.

“No,” Ezinma said, “it is this eyelid, the top one.”

‘That means you will see something.’

B) “What will I see?” she asked.

“How can I know?” Ekwefi wanted her to work it out Herself.

“Oho,” said Ezinma at last. “I know what it is-- the wrestling match.”  T.F.A. (p. 37)

Most of the characters in Things Fall Apart are rustic. Hence, they are bound to speak a substandard form of language. Ekwefi and Ezinma are both uneducated. It causes an influence on their language. It also affects their thoughts having blind faith. In the above conversations, it is observed that the characters believe eyelid-twitching means to cry or see something.

By means of the twitching, the top eyelid they mean share the belief that one sees something. These linguistic expressions are well understood by the characters.

C) “When your wife becomes pregnant again,” he said “let her not sleep in her hut. Let her go and stay with her people.
In that way she will elude her wicked tormentor and break its evil cycle of birth and death.” *T.F.A. (p.70)*

The medicine man being educated advises Okonkwo how care is taken of a pregnant woman. Education that the medicine man has received makes him more cultured and caretaker. The linguistic expressions he uses belong to a standard category such as; *let her not sleep in her hut, Let her go and stay with her people, she will elude her wicked tormentor and break its evil cycle.* Achebe uses the translated expressions in the text. Therefore, they appear like expressions by a native speaker.

**D)** “If you bring us all this way for nothing I shall beat sense into you”, Okonkwo threatened. “I have told you to let her alone. I know how to deal with them,” said Okagbue. *T.F.A. (p.74)*

Okonkwo, being the chief of the clan, has better language skills than others. He uses the linguistic expressions for his commands such as *beat sense into you.* Other expressions like *you to let her alone* and *deal with them* show that Okagbue is uneducated. Although Okonkwo is not educated, his social status and prestige of being the chief of the clan has changed his social class, which is expressed in his use of language.

**E)** “Why can’t you take him down yourselves?” he asked.

“It is against our custom,” said one of the men. “It is an abomination for a man to take his own life. It is an offence against the Earth, and a man who commits it will not be buried by his clansmen His body is evil, and only strangers may touch it. That is why we ask
your people to bring him down, because you are strangers?”

“Will you bury him like any other man?” asked the Commissioner. T.F.A. (p. 186)

The District Commissioner has commanding suggestions for which he applies his language skills. On the contrary, one of the villagers being illiterate believes in superstitions and uses linguistic expressions accordingly such as it is against our custom, it is an offence against the Earth, his body is evil and only strangers may touch it. Other expressions like abomination, strangers may touch, clansmen and you are strangers show the impact of education on the character. Achebe illustrates the extent of the impact of education on his characters through the dialogue.

Some characters stick to the usage of the standard form, if they want to show that they have more knowledge than others do. In addition, the standard form is used by people from the higher class. While the non-standard form is used by people from the lower class.

F) “Take down the body,” the Commissioner, ordered his chief messenger, “and bring it and all these people to the Court.”

“Yes, sah”, the messenger said, saluting”.


The messenger, a minor character, is a villager and uneducated man. He only knows to follow orders of his boss. He applies his minimum linguistic skills as “Yes, sah” instead of “Yes Sir”. The incorrect use of spelling and the mispronunciation of the word “Sir” as “sah” indicate the same. Thus, the phonological variation along with the unusual spellings is the sign of influence of education or the lack of education on the language of the characters. The next conversations are from the novel N.L.E.
A) “I very nearly fell myself,” said Obi. Look out, Miss Okeke,” said Macmillan as Clara came round again. “The deck is very treacherous and I’ve just fallen.” He was still dusting his wet seat. The captain said we will reach an island tomorrow,” said Clara.

“Yes, the Madeiras,” said Macmillan. “Tomorrow evening, I think.” “And about time, too,” said Obi.

N.L.E. (P-30)

B) “Sir, we the officers and members of the above-named Union present with humility and gratitude this token of our appreciation of your unprecedented academic brilliance. . . .”

N.L.E. (P. 36)

The speakers are Obi Clara and Macmillan and the location is the deck of the ship. The speech of the educated speakers is presented. A welcome address is given to Michael Obi Okonkwo, B.A. (Hons), London, by the officers and members of the Umuofia Progressive Union on his return from the United Kingdom. These characters are well educated. It clearly shows the impact of education on the linguistic units they use. The linguistic utterances used by Obi “I very nearly fell myself“ which refers to his falling in love with Clara and “The deck is very treacherous“ which is the place where he gets attracted to her. The appreciation by the officers using the expressions such as “with humility and gratitude”, “appreciation of your unprecedented academic brilliance” show their abilities to use standard form of English. There are no variations observed in their language.

C) “Where is your stamp?” he asked as soon as Obi arrived.

“What stamp?” asked Obi.

“You get B.A. but you no know say you have to affix stamp to agreements?”
“What agreement?” asked Obi perplexed? *N.L.E.* (p. 76)

Mr. Omo asks Mr. Obi about the stamp for the agreement to be signed for the scholarship. Mr. Omo’s use of the linguistic expression like” You get B.A. but you no know say you have to affix stamp to agreements?” indicates the substandard variety of English. The syntactic variation is observed in this expression. Following conversations are from the novel *A.O.G.*

A)  “It’s nice and cool today, thank God.” “Yes, the first rain was pretty much overdue,” said Captain Winter-bottom. 

“Thank you very much. I found it most interesting. Perhaps Mr. Allen is a trifle too dogmatic. One could even say a little smug.” *A.O.G.* (p. 34)

Captain Winter-bottom and Tony Clarke are both educated and are the native speakers of English. It is reflected in their speech. Use of linguistic expressions of greetings, and politeness such as “It’s nice and cool today, thank God.”, “Well, not exactly” and “Yes, thank you very much” represent their linguistic abilities. The sentence constructions, vocabulary and the pragmatic use of language support the opinion. They represent the colonizer’s authority. Achebe has presented them through their language and mannerisms.

B)  “Tell them his bloody work must be finished by June.”

“The white man says that unless you finish this work in time you will know the kind of man he is.”
“No more lateness.”

“Pardin?”

“Pardon what? Can’t you understand plain, simple English? I said there will be no more late-coming.”

“Ohoh. He says everybody must work hard and stop all this shit-eating.”

“I have one question I want the white man to answer.”

This was Nweke Ukpaka.

“What’s that?”

Unachukwu hesitated and scratched his head. “Dat man wan axe master queshon.”

A.O.G. (p. 83)

Unachukwu translates what Mr. Wright speaks furiously. Some elements of incorrect language such as No more lateness, Pardin, Dat man wan axe master queshon are used here. The linguistic expressions used by the local people are the signs of their inadequate knowledge of English. Therefore, the message of Mr. Wright is translated by Unachukwu. Even Unachukwu uses incorrect expressions as “Dat man wan axe master queshon” which also indicates his lack of acquaintance and abilities of using correct English. The word queshon is used for question, Pardin is used for pardon and dat is used for that. It is the use of unusual spellings and the phonological variation. Besides this, expressions like No more lateness, shit-eating and axe master show the ineffective use of English. It is observed in the language used by the uneducated characters who are the natives of Nigeria.

C) “When is it you are going to Okperi?” Ezeulu asked.

“The day after tomorrow.” “For how long?”
“They say for two markets.”

Ezeulu seemed to be turning this over in his mind.

“What are you going for?” asked Akuebue.

“They want to test our knowledge of the holy book.”

Akuebue shrugged his shoulders.

“I am not sure that you will go,” said Ezeulu.

“But let the days pass and I shall decide.” A.O.G. (P. 98)

Ezeulu and Akuebue belong to an educated class, which is reflected in the above linguistic expressions. Expressions such as “two markets” and “test our knowledge of the holy book” are the indicators of the same. However, the expression “two markets” is from a dialect used by the Igbo people. In addition to this, Akuebue’s shrugging his shoulders is the appropriate reaction to the remark made by Ezeulu. The use of the words as test knowledge, holy books and I shall decide indicate their linguistic abilities.

D) “What are you talking about?” asked Akuebue in alarm. The court messenger continued to smile menacingly.

“Yes”, he said. “Your friend Wintobota” (he mouthed the name in the ignorant fashion of his hearers ) has ordered you to appear before him tomorrow morning.”...........

...........

“I said the fellow is mad. Who. . . .”

“He is not mad,” said Ezeulu. “He is a messenger and he must give the message as it was given to him. Let him finish.”

A.O.G. (p. 138)
The impact of education on the language of the characters is observed in this conversation. The court messenger being an uneducated and a village person plays a role of a minor character. He mispronounces the name of “Winterbottom” as “Wintabota.” The use of typical proverbs like “the new road makes even a cripple hungry for a walk”, and “We set out this morning at the first cock-crow” show the impact of education on the characters as they are skillfully used in the appropriate context. The impact of education of Ezeulu on his supportive approach is shown here.

Following conversations are from the novel A.M.P.

A) “It is an unprecedented crowd in the annals of Anata.” said Mr. Nwege.

“James, did you hear that?” the Minister asked the journalist.

“No, sir, what is it?”

“This gentleman says it is the most unprecedented crowd in the annals of Anata,” I said. This time I clearly meant by my tongue to be in my cheek. “What is the gentleman’s name?” Mr. Nwege called his name and spelled it and gave his full title of “Principal and Proprietor of Anata Grammar School.”

A.M.P. (p.10)

The characters Odili Samalu, the journalist and Mr. Nwege are educated. They are capable of using standard form of English. The linguistic expressions they use are influenced by education they have received. Such as “unprecedented crowd “, “Principal and Proprietor of Anata Grammar School “ and “my tongue to be in my cheek” prove their linguistic abilities to communicate effectively.

B) “Big man, big palaver,” said the one–eyed man. It was left to
Josiah, owner of a nearby shop-and-bar to sound a discontent if Jovial, note Me one,” he said, “I no kuku mind the katakata wey de for inside. Make you put Minister money for my hand and all the wahala on top. I no mind at all.” Everyone laughed. Then Mrs John said:

“No be so, my frien’. When you done experience rich man’s trouble you no fit talk like that again. My people get one proverb: “they say that when poor man done see with his own eye how to make big man e go beg make e carry him poverty de go je-je.” A.M.P. (p.15)

The uneducated one–eyed man uses the expression “Big man, big palaver.” In this expression, the term palaver means conference. It also implies controversy, while katkata suggests confusion. These are pidgin words. wey is used as a relative pronoun meaning “who”, the use of kuku means “for sure” or “beyond question”. Other expressions like Me one I no kuku mind, I no mind at all, No be so, my frien’ and the proverb like when poor man done see with his own eye how to make big man e go beg make e carry him poverty de go je-je are examples of the less familiarity with English. Je-je means onomatopoetic suggestion of “gently or easily”. The syntactic variation justifies it such as I no mind at all, when you done experience rich man’s trouble and you no fit talk like that again. Use of unusual spellings like frien, use of Igbo words such as e, de, je-je, kuku mind the katakata wey justify the linguistic variations.

C) “Without it,” said Mrs Nanga, “they would become English people.

“Don’t you see they hardly speak our language? Ask them something in it and they reply in English. The little one, Micah,
called my other ‘a dirty, bush woman’.”

“Terrible,” I said, laughing even though the thing wasn’t funny.

“Of course I slapped okro seeds out of his mouth,” said Mrs. Nanga proudly. “My mother not knowing what he had said began to rebuke me.” “Yes, it is good that you take them home sometimes. When do you come back?” A.M.P. (p.39)

The narrator, Odili Samalu is an educated man. Education has an impact on his speech. Through his response to Mrs. Nanga - (terrible) and laughing for no fun, it is understood how Odili Samalu handles the situation. He does not displease Mrs. Nanga. She proudly says how she had slapped okro seeds out of his mouth.

D) “He is the author of The Song of the Black Bird,” I said.

“I see,” replied Chief Nanga, whose attention was clearly elsewhere at that moment.

“So your society includes musicians as well?” he asked in one fleeting return of interest. But by the time Jalio said no”, his attention had again strayed from us. A.M.P.(p.63)

Chief Nanga is an educated man. Although he pays no attention to Odili Samalu, he is very sharp and alert in responding Odili Samalu. Education has added extra qualities in him.

E) “Is she coming into the house soon?”

“I don’t know. What is my own there? She can come tomorrow as far as I am concerned; the house is there. And she can take over from me and stay awake at night to talk
grammar; and in the morning her dress will be smelling of cigarette smoke and white people.” I couldn’t help laughing.

A.M.P. (p.89)

This is Mrs. Nanga’s speech with Odili Samalu. She is not highly educated. “What is my own there? The question asked by her shows she is impatient and worried about Eddy. Odili Samalu begins laughing at the comment of Mrs. Nanga.

Following conversations are from the novel A.O.S.

A) ‘Imagine. . . To put a girl for taxi at midnight to go and jam with arm robbers in the road.’
‘You know very well, Elewa, that there are no more armed robbers in Bassa.’
‘The women dem massacre for Motor Park last week na you killam.”
‘Nobody will kill you, Elewa.’
‘Nobody will kill you Elewa. Why you no drive me home, yourself if say you know arm robbers done finish for Bassa. Make you go siddon.’ A. O. S. (p.32)

The above conversation between Ikem and Elewa shows the standard form of language used by Ikem. Ikem’s speech has a standard quality while Elewa, an uneducated person uses a nonstandard form of English. He uses the linguistic expressions like Motor Park last week na you killam and Why you no drive me home yourself if... show his inability of using correct linguistic expressions. He uses the words like na meaning “is.”
B) No be like dat madam,’ he said gallantly. ‘Your girl polite well well. She tell me make I siddon, she even ask wetin I wan drink. So no be her fault at all madam. Na me one refuse for siddon. You know this soja work na stand- stand work e be.’

‘OK. You are taking me to the Palace? I am ready.’

‘Ah madam. No be Palace we de go. Na for Palace dem tell you?’

‘What? Na where we de go?’  

A. O. S. (p.67)

This conversation is between the soldier and Beatrice. The soldier is not educated. He is a minor character. Therefore, his language is rustic and has a substandard form. The linguistic expressions used by him such as ‘Ah madam. No be Palace we de go. Na for Palace dem tell you and soja work na stand- stand work e be indicate his inefficiency in using English in its correct form. Na means “it is”, e stands for “pronoun subject of verb: ‘he, she or it’. He being the solider understands to follow orders of his superiors. The Igbo words like na,(is/was),wetin (what),de (indicator of continuous action),e (he/she) are Pidgins which such characters regularly use.

C) ‘Will you be good enough, BB, to tell me in what way have now offended you.’

‘Offended me? Who said you offended me?’

‘Then why are you behaving so strange.’

‘I am not behaving strange. You are! Chris, you are behaving very strange indeed. Listen; let me ask you a simple question, Chris. I am the girl you say you want to marry. Right? OK, I am taken away in strange, very strange circumstances last night I call you beforehand and tell you.
You come over here and all you say to me is: don’t worry, it’s all right.’ A.O. S. (p.106)

The above conversation is between Beatrice and Chris. They are educated and belong to a high-class society. Therefore, they use a standard language. The question asked by Chris and the response given by Beatrice are the examples of the same variety. The use of correct grammatical structures in interrogative sentences and exclamations are typically used. In addition to this the use of Initialism as BB to refer to Beatrice, O.K. is also noticeable.

D) ‘Is she all right?’ asked Abdul a little ahead of other inquirers.

‘No trouble. To cry small no be bad thing. BB no be like me wey de every day like baby wey him mother die.’

A.O.S. (p.221)

The above conversation is between Abdul and Elwa. Elwa gives information about Beatrice’s health to Abdul. She uses the pidgin words like no, be, de and wey in order to make it easy to understand to Abdul as he is uneducated and knows little English.

Thus, it is discovered that education of a person has a big role to play in the choices of the words the characters make while talking to their conversational partners. Besides education, gender also plays a significant role in the linguistic behavior of the characters.

4.2.2 Gender

As gender plays a significant role in deviations in language, it is essential to consider the opinion of Peter Tridgill (2000:64):

It is known from linguistic research that in many societies the speech of men and women differs in all sorts of ways.03
It is understood with this statement that the difference is also called as a linguistic sex difference. In view of this, the factors influencing the linguistic expressions of the characters are explained in Chapter Two. Gender being one of those factors, plays a significant role to create an impact on the linguistic utterances of the characters. The novels have the social background of Igbo community. An attempt is made to highlight some of the characteristics of Igbo community as far as gender is concerned.

Male characters are generally sharp in their tone and a little more commanding. The female characters, on the contrary, are tender and affectionate and have low tone. Achebe has shown that the girls are very soft, weak and tender. Mothers tell their daughters various stories to teach them how to behave to attract their husbands and win their hearts.

Traditionally, boys of this community are taught to be adventurous, tough, and learn to think for themselves. Girls, on the other hand must depend on their mothers as they grow up, and so they are taught a kind of dependence that is desirable for their future roles as wives. Boys and girls each learn a different set of skills. Girls learn home-making skills, as well as a few creative skills like dancing, singing, and pottery making. Boys learn a variety of skills including how to perform sacrifices, use masks and musical instruments, as well as develop physical skills, like wrestling so that they are taught to withstand pain. It is observed that this a kind of impact on the conversations of male and female characters is noticeable.

Gender distinguishes the dialect of women from men. In chasing the theme of the five novels of Chinua Achebe, the difference of gender of the characters in his novels and their linguistic interactions is studied.
The selected conversational pieces from all the five novels given below help to illustrate how gender of the speakers affects the content and manner of speech of the characters.

A)  

Okonkwo bit his lips as anger welled up within him.

“Where are her children? Did she take them?” he asked

With usual coolness and restraint. “They are here.”

answered his first wife, Nwoye’s mother. Okonkwo bent down and looked into her hut.

Ojiugo’s Children were eating with the children of his first wife.

“Did she ask you to feed them before she went?”

“Yes,” lied Nwoye’s mother, trying to minimize jigu’s thoughtlessness. T.F.A. (p. 27)

Igbo society is predominantly patriarchal where the status of women is vulnerable and weak. Nwoye’s mother, being a female character, has a soft tone. Okonkwo, on the other hand, is tough in his speech. The reaction and body language of Okonkwo show his being a dominant character such as Okonkwo bit his lips as anger welled up within him. Nwoye’s mother lies trying to minimize the pressure in that situation. The above linguistic interaction shows clearly the way women speak of the opposite sex in the society of Achebe’s countryside.

B)  

“Who killed this banana tree?” He asked.

A hush fell on the compound immediately.

“Who killed this tree? Or are you all deaf and dumb?”
In fact, the tree was very much alive. Okonkwo’s second wife had merely cut a few leaves off it to wrap some food, and she said so. Without further argument to Okonkwo gave her a sound beating and left her and her only daughter weeping. Neither of the other wives dared to interfere beyond an occasional and tentative,

“It is enough, Okonkwo,” pleaded from a reasonable distance.” T.F.A. (p. 35)

Okonkwo is always tough and commanding in his speech. He repeats his question, “Who killed this tree? Instead of saying who cut this tree? He says, “Who killed this tree? It shows that for him cutting a tree means killing a tree. A character like him who is very much familiar with killings and slaughters will think only of the same. He calls the other women if they are deaf and dumb. With these linguistic expressions, he underestimates the women in the context. All the women keep distance from him, as they are scared of him. One of them pleads from a distance that it is enough and wants to stop it. Okonkwo's difficulty is that he is concerned about nothing but social status. In fact, he is deeply stamped by the brand of social class. For him, gaining titles and becoming a lord of the clan is his supreme goal in life. Once he reaches the goal, his anxiety becomes how to secure his social status as a respected titled man in the Igbo community. In short, Okonkwo is possessed with attaining and maintaining a prominent social status.

C) “Sit like a woman!” Okonkwo shouted at her. Ezinma brought her two legs together and stretched them in front of her.

“Father, will you go to see the wrestling?” Ezinma asked after a suitable interval.

“Yes,” he answered. “Will you go?”
“Yes.” And after a pause she said: “Can I bring your chair for you?”

No, that is a boy’s job.” Okonkwo was specially fond of Ezinma. T.F.A. (Pp. 41,41)

The conversation of Okonkwo shows he is dominant here also. He expects Ezinma to be like a woman. Ezinma after a suitable interval asks him whether he is going for the wrestling. She has a very low tone with which she makes a polite question .She, in a very soft voice, asks her father if she should get a chair for him. However, Okonkwo says it is a job of a boy as No that is a boy’s job.

The irony in the novel Things Fall Apart is that Okonwo’s boy Nwoye runs away from his father, while his sister Ezinma, dotes on Okonkwo. It was not only that this surprising bond was there in between the father and his daughter, Okonkwo even wishes if Ezinma were a boy:

D) “You have not eaten for two days,” said his daughter Ezinma when she brought the food to him. “So you must finish this.” She sat down and stretched her legs in front of her. Okonkwo ate the food absent-mindedly. “She should have been a boy”, he thought as he looked at his ten-year-old daughter T.F.A.(p.57)

Achebe also shows another incidence to put emphasis on the bond between Okonkwo and Ezinma. While on exile, when Okonkwo expresses his desire that she should hold off getting married until his return to Umuofia, Ezinma dismisses all good suitors from Mbanta, their place of exile.

E) “Remember that if you do not answer truthfully you will
suffer or even die at child-birth,” she began.

“How many men have lain with you since my brother first expressed the desire to marry you?”

“None,” she replied simply.

“Answer truthfully,” urged the other women.

“None,” asked Njide.

“None,” she answered.

“Swear on this staff of my fathers,” said Uchendu.

“I swear,” said the bride. **T.F.A. (p. 120)**

The bride is innocent. Her answers are simple but honest. Her tone is low. She appears innocent, simple and obedient in using the linguistic expressions such as “None,” and “I swear,” are the responses of Njide when she is asked some questions. These linguistic units show that she is not annoyed with the questions related to her chastity. It is because she is a female from Igbo community having no voice to argue.

Sex and love are equally the important topics for both sexes, but of course women speak of it differently from men. It is demonstrated how men and women ask the questions to each other and respond to them in above conversation.

A) **“Dancing is very important nowadays. No girl will look at you if you can’t dance. I first met Joy at the dancing school.”**

“Who is Joy?” asked Obi, who was fascinated by what he, was learning of this strange and sinful new world.

“She was my girlfriend for –let’s see . . .” –he counted off his fingers-“. . March, April, May, June, July-for five months.
Joseph tells Obi how dance is very important. He further tells Obi that no girl will look at him if he cannot dance. These linguistic expressions show that females are underestimated by males.

B) “I noticed you were not looking very well,” she said in Ibo, “so I brought you some tablets of Avomine.” She gave him an envelope with half a dozen white tablets in it. “Take two before you go to bed.” Thank you very much. It’s so kind of you.” Obi was completely overwhelmed and all the coldness and indifference he had rehearsed deserted him. “But,” he stammered, “am I not depriving you of er . . .” “Oh, no. I’ve got enough for all the passengers, that’s the advantage of having a nurse on board.” She smiled faintly. “I’ve just given some to Mrs. Wright and Mr. Macmillan. Good night, you’ll feel better in the morning.” N.L.E. (p.28)

Clara offers some tablets of Avomine to Obi, as he is not feeling well. Her being more tender and caring for him is because she is a woman. Her tender expressions such as “Take two before you go to bed”, “I’ve got enough for all the passengers” and “Good night, you’ll feel better in the morning.” show the gentleness in a woman’s language, her behavior and her approach.

A) “Are you telling us, Father of my Mother, that you regard us as market women? I have borne your insults
patiently. Let me remind you that my name is Okeke Akukalia of Umuaro.” A.O.G. (p. 23)

The expressions of Akukalia such as “you regard us as market women “and “I have borne your insults patiently” show how women are treated as substandard section of society. The use of the kinship term, Father of my Mother is typically done.

B) As soon as they set out Akueke asked: “What do you think was Matefi’s annoyance this morning?”
“I should ask you; is she not your father’s wife?”
“Her face was as big as a mortar. Did she ask if you were ready to go?”
“She did; but it went no deeper than the lips.” “In all the time I have come across bad people,” said Akueke, “I have not yet met anyone like her. Her own badness whistles. Since my yesterday her belly has been full of bile.” A.O.G. (Pp. 68, 69)

The conversation shows how female characters differently use the language from the male characters. The examples such as “Her face was as big as a mortar, her own badness whistles and her belly has been full of bile” depict that female use exaggeration in their speech.

C) “Shut your mouth,” Ezeulu commanded. “You tell me to shut my mouth,” screamed Matefi, When Oduche takes my daughter to the stream and beats her to death.
How can I shut my mouth when they bring back a corpse to me? Go and look at her face; the fellow’s five
Matefi stopped her screaming. She moaned resignedly: “I have shut my mouth. Why should I not shut my mouth? After all Oduche is Ugoye’s son. Yes, Matefi must shut her mouth.” A.O.G.(p.129)

The linguistic expressions like Shut your mouth, I say shut your mouth! Are you mad? show that Ezeulu has a commanding voice. He is not ready to listen to Matefi. However, Matefi is not able to tolerate the beating to her daughter savagely by Oduche. She is dominated by Ezeulu and forced to stop her screaming. She is shown helpless and pathetic using the expressions like You tell me to shut my mouth, How can I shut my mouth and the repetition of I have shut my mouth. Why should I not shut my mouth?

The conversation of the women-folk characteristically comprises of superstitions, religious concerns and household affairs. Here goes an example:

D) ‘Moon, may your face meeting mine bring good fortune. But how is it sitting? I don’t like its posture.’
‘Why?’ asked Matefi.
‘I think it sits awkwardly—like an evil moon.’
A.O.G.(p.2)

It is important to mention that other than speaking such ‘trivia,’ no woman is allowed to speak on the important affairs of the clan or even regarding her husband’s or father’s decision. Anyone found straying in that direction is disregarded to silence. This portrays the sidelining of women in the clan. Other than the unlettered village folks, the clan also comprises of semi-literate people who have learnt English on account of their closeness to the
Europeans. They use it in the form of broken English or pidgins while conversing with the white men.

A) The girl with the Minister.”

“His girl-friend.”

“I see.”

“Actually it was more than that. He is planning to native law and custom. Apparently his misuse is too ‘bush’ for his present position so he wants a ‘parlour- wife’ to play hostess at his parties.’

A.M.P.(p.23)

Women play traditional roles, such as singers and dancers, or women adoring rich politicians like Chief Nanga who plans to marry another girl of his daughter’s age. His misuse is too ‘bush’ for his present position, so he wants a bright new ‘parlour-wife’ to play hostess at his parties.

B) “No, my brother, I won’t spoil anybody’s good fortune. When Eddy’s father married me I was not half her age. As soon as her mother recovers let her come and eat Nanga’s wealth,...The food is cooked and the smell of the soup is around. Let nobody remember the woman who toiled and starved when there was no money...”She rubbed her eyes with a corner of her lap and blew her nose into it. A.M.P. (Pp.89,90)

This is Mrs. Nanga’s speech. She addresses Odili Samalu as ‘my brother’. She expresses her grief about women, their early marriages and
exploitation. According to her Eddy is also being exploited by her father and Chief Nanga. Her sympathetic view makes her express her feelings as: \textit{I won’t spoil anybody’s good fortune}. She cannot do anything but to rub her eyes and blow her nose.

BB didn’t respond immediately except to get a little closer to me. Then she asked: ‘\textit{You mean people actually do that?’}

\begin{itemize}
\item[A)] ‘\textit{All the time.’}
\item ‘\textit{Disgusting,’ she said.}
\item ‘\textit{Well, I don’t know.’}
\item ‘\textit{You sound as if you wouldn’t mind yourself. Or perhaps you have done it already.’ No, I haven’t. It’s the girl who does it.’}
\item ‘\textit{All right Mr Smart. Has any girl done it for you?’}
\item ‘\textit{Let’s not make it personal.’} \textbf{A. O. S. (p.64)}
\end{itemize}

The above selected conversational pieces help to illustrate how gender of the speaker affects content and manner of speech. Expressions like ‘\textit{Disgusting, You mean people actually do that?’} and ‘\textit{Has any girl done it for you?’} show the female linguistic style of rejecting or disapproving anything.

Achebe creates in Beatrice a Conservative but extremely intelligent girl. Chris describes her accurately as “beautiful without being glamorous. Peaceful but strong. Very very strong.” Her strength of character and genius give her crucial central role.

Even the Head of the state comments:

\begin{itemize}
\item[B) \textit{Beatrice Okoh... the only person in the service, male or}
\end{itemize}
female, with a first class honours in English. And not from a local university but from Queen Mary College, University of London. Our Beatrice beat the English to their game. We’re proud of her. A. O. S. (p.75)

4.2.3 Ethnicity

The third factor that influences the language of the characters is Ethnicity. The sociolinguist, Peter Trudgill (2000:46) in this regard opines:

*Just as languages are social constructs, so ethnic groups are also relatively fluid entities whose boundaries can change and which can come into being and/or disappear during the course of history*.

The above quotation throws light on this factor explaining that languages are social constructs and that ethnicity is the fluid entity, which changes the languages. It is a significant aspect to discuss while studying Achebe’s characters and its effect on their linguistic expressions. During pre and post-colonial period, different ethnic groups were formed and developed. The Europeans and the missionaries became powerful. As a result, the natives were forced to adopt Christianity. In this course of time, several problems were faced by the natives. Among these was a problem of language. The natives had to use some kind of English to cope with the situation. This is reflected in the novels of Achebe.

Achebe’s use of language and culture displays that they are vital tools of ethnic survival. He modifies his use of English language in a manner that amounts to a linguistic coup that conserves the Igbo language. Achebe’s
proverb, “the palm oil with which words are eaten”, is too well known example of his manipulation of language and culture for self-definition.

The proverb “Let the kite perch and let the eagle perch too. If one says, „no“ to the other, let his wing break” summarizes the doctrines of civilization such as order, equity, social decorum, fairness, peaceful co-existence, and the sacredness of other people’s rights.

Achebe describes the pain and agony experienced by Africans due to the colonial rule. His novels depict the Igboas as victims of European colonialism. In Things Fall Apart the helplessness of the indigenous people in the hands of the missionaries is shown. The Igboas are shown having no option but to accept the new religion. The colonial impact is also seen in Arrow of God where Igboas are shown accepting the new religion against their will. In No Longer At Ease, Achebe takes the readers a step further. In Anthills of the Savannah, the protagonists are shown as active members of the new government after getting the western education. This gives a brief account of the rise of ethnicity. It causes the influences on the language of the people in the country. An attempt, in this regard is made to highlight such influences on the linguistic expressions of the characters in the novels of Achebe as below.

Though people are not different biologically, the color of their skin is the most noticeable difference among themselves, and it affects the way people interact with one other. Racial wars carry a long history of abuse from colonization. It resulted into the establishment of a major group and minor group. This situation still prospers but ethnicity, gender, and economic status further inform the experience of the minority. In this way, Ethnicity is best defined as the practices and traditions.
An attempt is made to select some conversations as given below from the novels under study which help in understanding the influence of ethnicity on the linguistic behavior of the characters.

A) \textit{The ancient drums of death beat, guns and cannons were fired, and men dashed about in frenzy,}

\textit{T.F.A. (p.110)}

The language of drum is one of the most significant and fascinating features of Igbo culture. The importance given to fine arts such as music and dance in a society of Umuofia shows the sense of aesthetics in that particular culture. Music and dance constitute the second nature of the Igbo folk. Whatever be the nature of the occasion, be it gay, solemn or sad, there is a song readily composed and tuned and a dance designed to go with it as: \textit{“The rain is falling, the sun is shining, alone Naadi is cooking and eating.}}

\textit{T.F.A.(p.32)}

B) \textit{“We have now built a church,“ said Mr. Kiaga, “and we want you all to come in every seventh day to worship the true God.”}

\textit{T.F.A. (p. 137)}

The missionaries settled in Umuofia. They built churches and began spreading Christianity among the Igbo community. They also attempted to convert the Igbo people to Christianity. Mr. Kiaga in his speech appears determined to convert the natives to Christians. He, therefore, strongly appeals them to go to the Church on every seventh day to worship the true God. He strongly believes that the Christian God alone is a true God. It shows how the ethnicity has greatly influenced the white men to make them detectors of the same thoughts. The use of linguistic terms like \textit{church} and \textit{every seventh day and true god} symbolize the influence of Christianity.
“Before God,” he said, “there is no slave or free. We are all children of God and we must receive our brothers.”

“You do not understand,” said one of the converts. “What will the heathen say of us when they hear that we receive osu into our midst? They will laugh.”

“Let them laugh,” said Mr. Kiaga. “God will laugh at them on the judgment day. Why do the nations rage and the peoples imagine a vain thing? He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh. The Lord shall have them in derision.” “You do not understand,” the convert maintained. “You are our teacher, and you can teach us the things of the new faith. But this is a matter which we know.” And he told him what an osu was. T.F.A. (Pp.142,143)

The above conversation reveals the impact of ethnicity on the language of the characters and its influence on the converts. Mr. Kiaga appeals the converts in his soft tone to understand that all are equal before God. We are all children of God. Mr. Kiaga refers the converts as brothers. However, one of the converts expressed his doubt. Mr. Kiaga convinces him that God would laugh at them on the judgment day. The deliberate use of some linguistic expressions such as the judgment day, He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh and The Lord shall have them in derision are the result of the impact of Christianity upon the Igbo people.

“Let us not reason like cowards,” said Okonkwo. “If a man comes into my hut and defaecates on the floor, what do I do? Do I shut my eyes? No! I take a stick and break his Head.

That is what a man does. These people are daily
Okonkwo strongly denies the encroachment of the Christian missionaries. Okonkwo calls his people cowards for not protesting against the missionaries. He does not approve of the missionaries’ preaching his people and converting them into Christian religion. He violently reacts that he would take a stick and break someone’s head if he does any act as above. Okonkwo is proud of being Igbo and he wants his clans to continue to be the same. Okonkwo’s linguistic skills appear to some extent influenced by the European companies. It, therefore, appears in his conversation frequent use of linguistic terms in English such as cowards, defaecates; I take a stick and break his Head and pouring filth.

E) “We should have killed the white man if you had listened to me,” Okonkwo snarled.

“We could have been in Umuru now waiting to be hanged,” someone said to him.

“Who wants to kill the white man?” asked a messenger who had just rushed in. Nobody spoke.

“You are not satisfied with your crime, but you must kill the white man on the top of it.” He carried a strong stick, and he hit each man a few blows on the head and back. Okonkwo was chocked with hate. “Unless you pay the fine immediately,” said their headman, “we will take your leaders to Umuru before the big white man, and hang them.” T.F.A. (p. 176)
Okonkwo protests against the white men from the beginning. However, the missionaries continue spreading the Christian religion and converting the natives. This causes a great wrath in the mind of Okonkwo. The above conversation throws light on the thoughts and reactions of Okonkwo. He is not afraid of his own death. He is full of hatred and expresses his fury against the white men. It is discovered that there are some linguistic expressions used under the influence of ethnicity such as the white man, crime, to be hanged, pay and the fine used by the Igbo people. These words are not generally used by the Igbo people but they use these words due to their regular meetings with the British people and the need of time.

*No Longer At Ease* presents the duality in the Umuofian situation. In view of Andrew Peack (1980: 113):

> “Aspects of the English colonial culture (bureaucratic administration, the city, the English language and the written word, above all, the competitive ethic, materialistic values and the power of money) ambiguously co-exist with traditional values and systems,...”

It is, therefore, intended to present some linguistic expressions to throw light on the influence of culture, ethnicity and traditions on the language of the characters.

**A)**

> “White man don go far. We just de shout for nothing.” he said.

Then he seemed to realize his position. “All the same they must go.

> This no be them country.” He helped himself to
another whisky, switched on the radio, and sat down.

“Do you have just one Assistant Secretary in your Ministry?” asked Obi. N.L.E.(p.78)

The conversation between the Minister and Obi shows the influence of elements of ethnicity. The linguistic expressions like ‘White man don go far’ (instead of the British must go), ‘All the same they must go’ and ‘this no be them country’, whisky (instead of the palm wine), switched on the radio show how the natives are strongly affected by the white men and their thoughts and habits. Therefore, the natives feel that the white people should leave their country. They are possessive about their country. The expressions used as above are alien for the Igbos. Yet, they use initially as a matter of influence and then habit.

B) “If you don’t mind, shall we talk in Ibo? I didn’t know you had a European here.” “Just as you like. Actually I didn’t think you were Ibo.

“What is your problem?” He tried to sound casual.

“Well, it is like this. I have a sister who has just passed her School Certificate in Grade One. She wants to apply for a Federal Scholarship to study in England.”

N.L.E. (Pp.98,99)

In the above conversation between Mr. Mark and Obi, the expressions such as “shall we talk in Ibo?” Actually I didn’t think you were Ibo “We are both Ibos” “and you know what our country is” reveal the impact of ethnic
elements. The conversation of Mr. Mark is in Igbo but some words like “School Certificate and Scholarship” are in English. It is the effect of the European influence. As they are both Igbo, they feel comfortable to speak with each other using their own language and feel that they can assist each other.


“Call it what you like,” said Joseph in Ibo "You know more book than I, but I am older and wiser. And I can tell you that a man does not challenge his chi to wrestling match.” N.L.E. (Pp.46,47)

D) “I don’t think it matters. We are Christians.” “We are Christians, “he said. “But that is no reason to marry an OSU.” ‘The Bible says that in Christ there are no bond or free.’ N.L.E. (p.151)

In the above conversations (C and D) the use of the expressions like colonial mentality, we are Christian and The Bible says in Christ there are no bond or free indicate the influences of Christianity on the language and the affinity to that religion. It changes the behavioral and linguistic approach of the characters in the novel who use these expressions regularly.

The social class in their rational Nigerian world has some distinctive characteristics. It is not specifically defined by titles, size of barns, or number of wives and children as it is in Things Fall Apart. Nor is it defined by how many human heads one may get during wars. In No Longer At Ease, social class is specifically defined by salaries, cars, houses, and jobs.
Odogwu, one of the villagers in Umuofia, observes what "greatness" means to people nowadays. He talks to Obi who is going to England.

**A) If we are Christians, we must be ready to die for the faith’,** he said. “You must be ready to kill the python as the people of the rivers killed iguana. You address the python as Father. It is nothing but a snake, the snake that deceived our first mother, Eve. If you are afraid to kill it do not count yourself a Christian.” **A.O.G. (p. 47)**

It is the conversation between Mr. Goodcountry and the converts of Umuaro. He dislikes the behavior of the early Christians of Niger Delta who fought against the bad customs of their people. Mr. Goodcountry is proud of being a Christian. As he belongs to a certain ethnic group, he respects it and wishes others to follow it. He wants the snake to be killed as it had deceived our first mother, Eve. (Ref. Bible). With this reference, he says “If you are afraid to kill it do not count yourself a Christian.” This shows the influence of Christianity. His opinion of killing the python represents his strong dislike of the Igbo customs. His reference to the Biblical illustration of the snake and the first mother expresses the ethnicity.

As far as the appointment of Paramount Chiefs is concerned, Capt. Winterbottom is strongly against the idea. In order to destroy the African atmosphere, the African mind, the whole foundation of his race—**A.O.G.(p.56)**

the British Administrators, by introducing such measures as employing Warrant Chiefs, **Making a dozen mushrooms kings grow where there was none before. A.O.G.(p.58)**
Secure old savage tyrant on their thrones—or more likely filthy animal skins. *A.O.G.* (p.36)

Such contempt shows the Europeans’ inadequate understanding of the natives. The anarchy of his mind, which fails to realize the inherent harmony of the traditions and customs have preserved the Igbo society’s flexibility and openness.

**B)** “You say you are a man of Umuru?” asked Ezeulu.

“Do you have priests and elders there?’”

*Do not take my question amiss. The white man has his own way of doing things. Before he does anything to you he will first ask you your name and the answer must come from your lips.”* “If you have any grain of sense in your belly, said Obika,”You will know that you are not in the house of the white man but in Umuaro in the house of the Chief Priest of Ulu.” *A.O.G.* (p. 137)

In this conversation, the sharp reactions such as “*Do you have priests and elders there?”,* ‘*the white man has his own way of doing things’* and Obika’s sharp threatening “*You will know that you are not in the house of the white man but in Umuaro in the house of the Chief Priest of Ulu*” reveal the respect for the native religion and hatred for the alien which the researcher feels is the impact of ethnicity.

**C)**“*You are sure you have given the entire message?”*

“Yes, the white man is not like black men. He does not waste his words.”

This is the conversation between the Court Messenger, Obika and Ezeulu. The messenger is proud of him and is loyal to his duties. He underestimates the black people. He boasts that the white man differs from the black man who does not waste his words. : the white man is not like black men and he does not waste his words. It shows the influence of Christianity on the use of the language upon the messenger.

A) “America may not be perfect,” he was saying, “but don’t forget that we are the only powerful country in the entire history of the world, the only one, which had the power to conquer others and didn’t do it.” A.M.P. (p.45)

The above conversation between Odili Samalu and John throws light upon their ethnic attitudes. According to Odili Samalu, they are the only powerful country in the world having power to conquer others.

B) “Is that what you call national dress in your place?” pursued Chief Nanga mercilessly. “I dress to please myself, sir,” said the writer becoming suddenly defiant. “Let me tell you,” said Chief Nanga in a softened but firm tone. “If you want me to attend any of your functions you must wear a proper dress. Either you wear a suit...or if you don’t like it you can wear our national costume. That is correct protocol.” A.M.P. (Pp.63,64)
Chief Nanga speaks with Mr. Jalio, the author of *The Song of the Black Bird*. Chief Nanga is not happy with the dress of Mr. Jalio. He advises the author to wear the national costume, which can be a correct protocol. The use of the linguistic expressions like national dress, national costume and correct protocol represent the influence of the ethnic elements. The writer’s getting defiant is also his respect for his own country.

...thin yellow border on which the manufacturer advertised in endless and clear black type: 100% WOOL: MADE IN ENGLAND. A.M.P. (p.65)

The man, whose robes are made of expensive foreign material, shows it every time by hitching up the sleeves that indicates the influence of ethnicity on the use of the language.

C) “Never mind Sir, I am no guest here. I regard here as my house and yourself as my father. Whatever there in Bori because we have the backing of people like you at home. All these young boys who are saying all kinds of rubbish against me, what do they know? They hear that Chief Nanga has eaten ten percent commission and they begin to break their heads and holler up and down. They don’t know that all the commissions are paid into party funds.” A.M.P. (p.117)

This conversation goes between Chief Nanga and Odili Samalu’s father. Chief Nanga tries to seek favor of Odili Samalu’s father. The ethnic attitude arouses in him, which attracts the attention of Odili Samalu’s father. The elements of regionalism also play a significant role in making the above language of Chief Nanga more influencing. The linguistic units such as I
am no guest here, we have the backing of people, commission and begin to break their heads make the utterance more ethnic.

A) “You are wasting everybody’s time, Mr. Commissioner for information. I will not go to Abazon. Finish! Kabisa! Any other business?”

‘As Your Excellency wishes. But…’

‘But me no buts, Mr. Oriko! The matter is closed, I said. How many times, for God’s sake, am I expected to repeat it? Why do you find it so difficult to swallow my ruling. On anything?’

‘I am sorry, Your Excellency. But I have no difficulty swallowing and digesting your rulings.’  A. O. S. (p.01)

From the above conversation, it is noticed that Chris eventually pretends not to have conceded victory to Sam - but he ultimately subscribes to His Excellency’s (Sam’s) directives, as subsequently seen in the novel.

The political commotion in the novel basically stems from the class struggle and power play, which are arguably fuelled by cultural materialist requirements. The change between Sam, His Excellency and Chris Oriko, the Commissioner for information is an indication of power play and class war, which are fully developed as the novel progresses. The linguistic utterances like wasting everybody’s time, Finish! Kabisa, As Your Excellency wishes, but me no buts, to swallow my ruling and I am sorry support the utterance to be under the influence of ethnicity.

B) ‘Perhaps he doesn’t hear very well,’ said Mad Medico.

‘Nonsense,’ said His Excellency. ‘His hearing is perfect. I had breakfast with him on the fifth morning.

He heard everything I said and has the most lively mind and
the most absolutely delightful sense of humor.’

‘So he wears his mask-face only for the gathering-in of the tribes,’ I said. **A. O.S. (p.48)**

His Excellency speaks with Mad Medico. High Education has made His Excellency a stubborn and determined. It is shown with the use of commanding expressions like *Nonsense and His hearing is perfect* where ethnicity causes an influence on their language.

C) ‘Quite right. I should have added that. My primary duty as Commissioner for Information, you see, is to decide what is inconvenient and inform Ikem who promptly rejects the information. . . But going back to the more interesting subject, I confess I broke the code later and divulged the secret to BB.’

‘To me? Asked Beatrice, wide-eyed. ‘My own Beatrice?’

‘Yes, I told you, didn’t I, of the girl with the . . . how shall I call it . . . the invigorating tongue.’ **A.O.S. (p.56)**

The Commissioner for Information is very firm in his behavior. He does not approve of Ikem’s view. He expresses his regret for divulging the secret to BB. The characters use the linguistic expressions like *primary duty* and *I confess I broke the code later* which show the intention of the speakers to be more ethnic.

### 4.2.4 Social Class

The social class is an important factor in which the characters live and grow, influences the language of the characters. The social-class accents, grammatical features and the messages carried through the conversations of
the characters are understood only by understanding of the social background of the characters.

The aim of this study is to exemplify several dialectal characteristics, which Achebe uses to create the impression of English language and to combine local color to his rustic scenes and to describe country life. In fact, Achebe uses dialect as a vehicle to indicate social class and irony. Peter Trudgill (2000:17) in this regard says:

As society is reflected in language in this way, social change can produce a corresponding linguistic change.06

This quotation means everything about the relation between language and society in relation to linguistic changes. In the words of Ronald Wardhaugh (2006:10):

“The social structure may either influence or determine linguistic structure and/or behavior”. He further asserts:

“The linguistic structure and/or behavior may either influence or determine social structure”.07

The above statements of the Sociolinguists highlight the significant roles of both the social structure and the language. In the novels of Achebe, the social changes have brought a considerable change in the language of the characters. Achebe's writings bear qualities of his society while still communicating in a second language. The experiences he reveals relate to the customary practices of his people, the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria. The immediate needs of intelligibility and realistic representation would therefore determine the language he adopts.
While reporting life in Igbo society, Achebe integrates into English the Igbo similes, wise sayings, proverbs, riddles, songs and other traditional art features. Proverbs, in particular, set up the backbone of language use in traditional Igbo society. The Igbos describe it as 'the palm oil with which words are eaten'.

*Things Fall Apart* examines traditional Igbo society former to and at the point of its clash with European colonialism. In *Arrow of God*, the author displays the Igbo Society as it attempts to accommodate the European system. *No Longer At Ease* studies life in Nigeria at the edge on national independence when the traditional values of the Igbo society suffered terribly as different cultures met and attacked. The last two novels, *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah* are mainly concerned with contemporary domestic matters of corruption, tyranny and military repression in Nigeria.

The actual pre-colonial Igbo situation depicted in *Things Fall Apart*, the social relationship between the ruling class and the ruled is based on their different religious orientations. The priests who are in the position to interpret religious principles become the willing class. Secondly, it is based on personal achievement, such as material possessions and personal performance during the tribal wars. Persons having more physical possessions and courage in the wars have titles, and become distinct members of the *title society*. At the bottom of the society, there are also the social outcastes and women, who do not have any titles. They are actually the ruled class of the Igbo community. The European is an alien force from the outside, and does not fit into any of these social groups.

This force slowly becomes one of the major concern of the Igbo community because it begins to influence and control the society both morally and economically. Nigerian society cannot ignore this social
reality, but has to deal with his alien force as a ruling class as depicted in Achebe's second novel, *No Longer At Ease*. Okonkwo not only brings honor to himself but also to his clan. Ponnuthrai (1974: 97) points out:

*Okonkwo, knowing his culture intimately, seeks to maintain it and live up to his standards.*\(^{08}\)

Okonkwo seemingly possesses most of the positive qualities that his society advocates. One may be amazed at his extraordinary industry to plant seed-yams for survival during a bad year. Nor can one fail to be impressed by his bravery and masculinity. Achebe introduces his hero thus:

A)  *Okonkwo was well known throughout the nine villages and even beyond. His fame rested on solid personal achievements. As a young man of eighteen he had brought honor to his village by throwing Amalinze the Cat.... He was tall and huge, and his bushy eyebrows and wide nose gave him a very severe look. He breathed heavily, and it was said that, when he slept, his wives and children in their out-houses could hear him breathe. When he walked, his heels hardly touched the ground and he seemed to walk on springs. T.F.A. (p.3)*

Achebe uses some cultural practices to project certain native values towards achieving self-representation. He shows the richness and warmth of how Africans relate to one another in a manner that brings out the reality of traditional socialism. In Umuofia and Umuaro everybody is his/her, brother /sister’s keeper as seen in the timely help Okonkwo enjoys from his maternal relations under banishment from his paternal home.
An attempt is made here to analyze some categorically selected conversations from the novels. Following conversation, throw light on the influence on the language of the characters caused by the social aspects.

B) “Every year,” he said sadly, “before I put any crop in the earth, I sacrifice a cock to Anil, the owner of all land. It is the law of our fathers. I also kill a cock at the shrine of Ijfejioku, the god of yams. I clear the bush and set fire to it when it is dry. I slow the yams when the first rain has fallen, and stake them when the young tendrils appear. I weed—”

T.F.A. (p. 16)

Unoka tells his conversational partner about his practice of sacrificing a cock to Ani, the owner of land. The social customs and traditions cause the effect on the utterances of Unoka. He feels the above practice is the law of his fathers. He continues mentioning some of his practices like killing a cock at the shrine of Ijfejioku, clearing the bush and setting the fire to it when it is dry etc.

C) “Somebody told me yesterday,” said one of the younger men, “that in some clans it is an abomination for a man to die during the Week of Peace,”

“It is indeed true,” said Ogbuefi Ezeudu. “They have that custom in Obodoani. If a man dies at this time, he is not buried but cast into the Evil Forest. It is a bad custom, which these people observe because they lack understanding. They throw away large numbers of men and women without burial. And what is the result? Their clan is full of the evil spirits of these
unburied dead, hungry to do harm to the living.”

T.F.A. (p.29)

This assertive speech act shows the social custom of the Igbo community like an abomination for a man to die during the Week of Peace, if a man dies at this time he is not buried but cast into the Evil Forest. It results into throwing away large number of men and women without burial and getting the clan filled with evil spirits.

D) “I cannot understand why you refused to come with us to kill that boy,” he asked Obierika.

“Because I did not want to,” Obierika replied sharply.

“I had something better to do.”

“You sound as if you question the authority and the decision of the Oracle, who said he should die.” T.F.A. (p.60)

This conversation is between Obierika and Okonkwo. The impact of social aspects like custom and tradition influence Okonkwo’s linguistic behavior and communication style with others. However, Obierika strongly denies and says that he had to do something better.

E) “All their customs are upside-down. They do not decide bride-price as we do, with sticks. They haggle and bargain as if they were buying a goat or a cow in the market.”

“That is very bad,” said Obierika’s eldest brother. “But is good in one place is bad in another place. In Umunso they do not bargain at all, not even with broomsticks.

The suitor just goes on bringing bags of cowries until his in-
laws tell him to stop. It is a bad custom because it always leads to a quarrel.” T.F.A. (p.67)

F) “If a man kills the sacred python in the secrecy of his hut, the matter lies between him and his God.” T.F.A. (p. 145)

The hatred of the people towards Ezeulu's positive attitude to the whites finds expression in the proverb given below. The sacred python is an example that shows the blind faith of the Igbo people. The python is basically poisonous yet it is worshiped as a sacred entity.

After eating and drinking palm-wine, the men talk about the customs of their neighborhood. The impact of different social aspects is clearly observed through the expressions such as deciding bride-prices with sticks, haggling and bargaining while buying a goat or cow in the market.

Obeirika’s eldest brother does not approve of these practices he feels which leads to a quarrel. The drum is used during all the ceremonies, celebrating birth, wrestling contests, title taking ceremonies and feasts. It reflects the pulse of clan’s life, echoing the very life rhythm of the people. In Umuofia there is an old saying: As a man danced so the drums were beaten for him.(p.131) The people of Umuofia live in close proximity with nature. It inspires them to weave poetry that abounds in lyrical beauty.

On the occasion of the New Yam Feast, when Okafo emerges the winner, young men sing his praise to the clap of the young women:

G) “Who will wrestle for our village? Okafo will wrestle for our village. Has he thrown a hundred men/ He has thrown four hundred men. Has he thrown a hundred Cats/ He has thrown four hundred Cats .Then send him word to fight for us.”

(T.F.A.p.46)
The language used in such songs tells the readers about the joyful atmosphere that prevailed in Umuofia before the advent of the white man.

A) “The civil service is corrupt because of these so-called experienced men at the top,” said Obi “You don’t believe in experience? You think that a chap straight from university should be made a permanent secretary?”

“I didn’t say straight from the university, but even that would be better than filling our top posts with old men who have no intellectual foundations to support their experience.” “What about the Land Officer jailed last year?” He is straight from the university.” “He is an exception,” said Obi. N.L.E. (Pp.22/23)

The corruption in civil services being one of the social aspects causes an influence on the language of the characters like Obi and Christopher. The examples quoted by them such as appointments of inexperienced persons on the top posts and the land officers, a highly educated person from the university who was jailed the previous year show the impact of the social context on these characters and their language.

B) “Do they serve Nigerian food here?” Joseph was surprised at the question. No decent restaurant served Nigerian food. “Do you want Nigerian food?” Of course. I have been dying to eat pounded yams and bitter-leaf soup. In England we made do with semolina, but it isn’t the same thing.” “I must ask my boy to prepare you pounded yams tomorrow afternoon.” “Good man!” said Obi. N.L.E. (p.39)
The habits such as serving Nigerian food, pounded yams and bitter-leaf soup are related to the European habits. These habits are adopted by the Nigerian people, which show the impact of these social customs on the habits of the characters and their language. The expressions like dying to eat and Good man show the direct influence on the linguistic units.

C) “Azik,” he called, meaning Isaac, “bring us a kola nut to break for this child’s return.” “This is a Christian house,” replied Obi’s father. “A Christian house where kola nut is not eaten?” sneered the man. “Kola nut is eaten here,” replied Mr. Okonkwo, “but not sacrificed to idols.” N.L.E. (p.59)

Impact of some social aspects is observed in this conversation which takes place between the old people of the clan and Obi’s father during the reception of Obi. Obi’s father does not approve of the kola nut to be eaten in his house. According to him, his social customs do not allow it. The sneering of the old man shows his disapproval and surprise. Mr. Okonkwo’s sharp reaction indicates the impact of social customs on his linguistic expressions such as bring us a kola nut, not sacrificed to idols etc. The use of the expressions like kola nut and to break for this child’s return are related to the Igbo customs. Kola nut is eaten to celebrate some event, which is a social practice. A good example in No Longer At Ease is Clara, an Igbo girl, and also an osu is notable. Though the rural Nigerian society in the novel still has prejudice against her, the urban, more westernized world of Lagos embraces her. Like any other intelligent young Nigerian, she is able to study in England, and when she returns, she may have a decent job in a hospital.
After his return from England Obi is compared to a little child returned from wrestling in the spirit world. *N.L.E.* (*p.* 47) Other examples are:

“Groaning and creaking like old machinery”. *N.L.E.*(*p.* 31)

“The gap in the decayed set of teeth looked like a vacant plot in a slum”. *N.L.E.* (*p.* 60)

The change in the society is indicated by parodying the whites and their culture as creaking like old machinery.

A) “Different people have different customs,” said Otikpo after his laugh. “In Okperi it is not our custom to welcome strangers to our market with the ikolo.” *A.O.G.* (*p.* 23)

Otikpo and Ebo speak with each other. Otikpo does not agree to welcome strangers to our market with the *ikolo*. The impact of social context is clearly seen through Otikpo’s use of linguistic units such as: “Different people have different customs and to our market.”

B) “The world’s changing,” he told him. “I do not like it. But I am like the bird, Eneke-nti-oba. When his friends asked him why he was always on the wings, he replied: Men of today have learned to shoot without missing and so I have learnt to fly without perching. I want one of my sons to join these 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.” *A.O.G.* (*p.* 46)
It is an example that shows how Ezeulu is attached to the white man’s church. It is Ezeulu’s explanation to his son. He wants to satisfy himself that the white man wants to build a house and live there permanently. Ezeulu wants his son, Oduche to go to church. His use of expressions like 
The world’s changing, Eneke-nti-obá, so I have learnt to fly without perching and if there is something there you will bring home my share show the effect of the social context in which he takes the decision and makes his statements.

C) “Is he not your husband?” asked Adeze. “If he dies tomorrow are you not the one to sit in ashes in the cooking-place for seven markets? Is it you or me will wear sackcloth for one year?” “What am I telling you?” asked Akueke, changing the subject. “My husband and his people came the other day.”

A.O.G. (p.75)

Achebe’s use of folk wisdom equally highlights how the poverty successfully coped with the challenges brought about by the white man’s incursion. The social context makes a great change in the behavioral as well as linguistic approach of the characters as the linguistic expressions like sit in ashes; cooking-place, seven markets and wear sackcloth are related to the social customs such as: If someone dies, his wife sits in ashes in the cooking-place for seven markets. This custom has influenced the linguistic abilities of the characters.
D) “Only the woman’s barn,” he replied. “But that could wait. There will be no cocoyam to put into it until harvest time.” “Nothing will wait,” said Ezeulu. “A new wife should not come into an unfinished There will be no cocoyam to put. I know such a thing does not trouble the present age. But as long as we are there we shall continue to point out the right way. . . Edogo, instead of working for me tomorrow take your brothers and the women to build the barn. If Obika has no shame, the rest of us have.” A.O.G. (p. 13)

The social practice of not allowing a new wife into an unfinished homestead is depicted in this conversation. Ezeulu is very strong in expressing it. Being the chief priest, Ezeulu practises the custom of dictating terms. The woman’s barn, There will be no cocoyam to put, and we shall continue to point out are examples of the social customs which cause influence on his linguistic expressions.

E) “But if it is the sickness of the Spirits, as you say, there is no medicine for it—except camwood and fire.” “That is so,” said Akuebue, “but we cannot put our hands between our laps and watch a sick man for twelve days. We must grope about until what must happen does happen. That is why I spoke of this medicine-man from Aninta.” A.O.G. (p. 113)

This conversation between Ezeulu and Akuebue shows that their language is influenced by social beliefs such as the sickness of the Spirits, no medicine for it—except camwood and fire. The convincing speech of Ezeulu is the result of the impact of the social context.
A) “Odili, the great”, said the Minister boyishly. And still out of breath. “Where have you been all this time?” I told him I had been to the University, and had been teaching for the last eighteen months. “Good boy!” he said. “I knew he would go to a university. I used to tell the other boys in my class that Odili will one day be a great man and they will be answering him sir, sir. A.M.P. (p.09)

The Minister has social and political background. He makes Odili’s inquiries very tactfully. As any politician; he has a tongue of flattery. He praises Odili with high sounding words such as Odili, the great, Good boy!, be a great man and sir, sir. Therefore, the social context in which the Minister lives creates an impact on his language.

B) “Minister or no minister,” he said, “a man who is my senior must still be my senior. Other ministers and other people may do otherwise but my motto is: Do the right and shame the Devil.” A.M.P. (p.11)

The Minister, Chief Nanga, is a true but corrupt politician. The impact of social and political experience influence his language. He makes show of his honesty by uttering his motto as Do the right and shame the Devil. The linguistic units as a man who is my senior must still be my senior shows his socially influenced linguistic ability.

A) The women are, of course, the biggest single group of oppressed people in the world... But they are not the only ones. There are others--rural peasants in every land, the urban poor in industrialized countries, Black people everywhere including their own continent, ethnic and religious
The social status of women is explained in the above linguistic piece. In spite of women, rural peasants, and the urban poor in industrialized countries, black people everywhere including their own continent, ethnic and religious minorities and castes in all countries have low social status. It is represented by using the terms like *group of oppressed people, rural peasants, urban poor, Black people, ethnic and religious minorities and castes.*

B) *I was determined from the very beginning to put my career first and, if need be, last. That every woman wants a man to complete her is a piece of male chauvinist bullshit I had completely rejected before I knew there was anything like Women's Lib.*  
* A. O. S. (p. 83)

This extract from the novel shows how Beatrice's struggling role begins when she describes in detail her background, personality and relationship with Sam, Chris and Ikem. Notably, she is aware of the duty in her society. Therefore, the Western education that Beatrice receives defines that she is far away from the lower-class people. Like Ikem, Beatrice is burdened with heavy social responsibilities. Ikem has always had a heart for the lower-class people. As editor of the “National Gazette”, he speaks in the interests of the people regardless of his personal safety.

According to Beatrice Ikem has *"the most profound respect for three kinds of women: peasants, market women and intellectual women".* Ikem makes an eloquent speech acknowledging:
C) ‘Our people say that when a titled man comes into a meeting the talking must have to stop until he has taken his seat. An important somebody has just come in who needs no introduction. Still yet, we have to do things according to what Europeans call protocol. I call upon our distinguished son and Editor of the National Gazette to stand up.’ A.O.S. (p.116)

It is observed that Ikem has profound knowledge of and deep sympathy for the lower-class people which is expressed by the linguistic expressions such as Our people, and our distinguished son.

"Oh my god. You don't owe me any apology. None whatsoever. I should apologize to you, my friend." A.O.S. (p. 130)

Ikem undergoes a great change though, especially after he meets the two taxi-drivers whom he has bullied in the traffic jam. They come to apologize for that road contest, and at the same time, thank him for his inspiration as editor of the National Gazette. The noble act of the taxi-drivers educates Ikem, who cries out. Ikem feels awkward but is somehow elated. The typical use of expressions like Oh my god, You don't owe me any apology,. I should apologize to you and my friends are the indicators of the influence by the social context.

A few critics have dealt with social class as an important element in Achebe's novels. Emmanuel Ngara (1982: 122) criticizes Achebe for depicting African society from the viewpoint of one class:

the "petit bourgeoisie" or "intelligentsia." As a result, the
oppressed and deprived people are not given major roles to play in their society. They are "either pushed to the periphery or relegated to oblivion." 09

There finds a huge gap between the hybrid class of intellectuals and the downtrodden class of the poor. This observation is confined to Achebe's latest novel, *Anthills of the Savannah*. In other words, these critics overlook the fact that social class is a crucial element in all of Achebe's novels, which is the main argument of this study.

In *Anthills of the Savannah* Ikem, Chris and Beatrice are portrayed as the representatives of the awakening intellectuals. They are conservative by nature and therefore are alienated from the members of the downtrodden class. Nevertheless, through their direct contact with the people, they gradually realize their own limitations, and eventually manage to cross the border of social class.

Market legends are also mentioned (*A.O.G.Pp. 1,19*) since they are important in the Igbo society. The popularity of the legends shows that the traditions of the clan are kept alive causing linguistic variations.

The elaborate description of the various ceremonies gives an opportunity to have a closer look at the well-developed sense of the symbolic view of religion in the ancient societies. They also lend temptation to the narrative, as do the stars to the night sky. Some interesting ceremonies include the appearance and proceedings of the Egwugwu (*T.F.A.p. 63, 84; A.O.G.p. 199*), the first coming of Ulu (*A.O.G.p. 71*), the Idemili festival (*A.O.G.p. 39*)
4.2.5 Age

It is understood that age of a character influences his language. The linguistic forms of different ages use specific linguistic utterances. They vary from one another. Children have specific spoken variety while adults or old characters have their own variety of spoken language. The sociolinguist, Petra Jesenska (2010: 44) in this regard observes:

“Age variety is a stable variety which varies a population based on age. That is, speakers of a particular age will use a specific linguistic form in successive generations. 10

In the novels, similar varieties of language of characters of different ages are found. Following conversations from Achebe’s novels prove how the age factor plays a significant role in influencing the character’s language in the novels and ultimately cause variation in it.

A) “You need some sleep yourself,” said Nowye’s mother.

The conversation between Noeye’s mother and Ekwefi show the impact of age group of Noeye’s mother. She takes care of Ekwefi to the best of her abilities and uses the expressions like You need some sleep yourself and You look very tired. A person of this age group normally takes care of the younger generation.

B) There was silence. “I want Okonkwo to answer me,” said Uchendu.
   “I do not know the answer,” Okonkwo replied.
   “You do not know the answer? So you see that you are a child. You have many wives and many children-more children than I
have. You are a great man in your clan. But you are still a child, my child. Listen to me and I shall tell you. But there is one more question I shall ask you. Why is it that when a woman dies she is taken home to be buried with her own kinsmen? She is not buried with her husband’s kinsmen. Why is that? Your mother was brought home to me and buried with my people. Why was that?” T.F.A. (p.121)

The above conversation is between Okonkwo and his paternal uncle, Uchendu. As a father and an old man, Uchendu’s language is typical. The linguistic units he uses are commanding and suitable to any father when he says you see that, you are still a child, Listen to me, I shall ask you. These expressions have a shade of age of the character. The old persons generally have commanding voice and they expect positive responses in their favor such as I want Okonkwo to answer me, You do not know the answer? The special feature of the old age is that these people always feel that others are children before them as: you are still a child, and they have their questions all the time like: Why is that?, Why was that? It indicates that the linguistic expressions of the old persons are typically influenced. Following are some of the glaring examples from the novel:

A) The old man waited patiently for him to finish and said: “You are not a stranger in Umuofia. You have heard our elders say that thunder cannot kill a son or daughter of Umuofia. Do you know anyone either now or in the past who was so killed?” Okonkwo had to admit that he knew of no such person.

“But that is the work of God,” he said.

“It is the work of our forefathers,” said the oldman.
“They built a powerful medicine to protect themselves from thunder, and not only themselves, but all their descendants forever.” N.L.E. (p.56)

The conversation in ‘A’ between the old man and Obi reveals the opinion of the experienced old man. He was patiently waiting for Obi as it happens with any old man. It also shows his affinity to Obi. The expressions of the old man such as the work of our forefathers and they built a powerful medicine focus on his respect for Umuofia and his forefathers.

B) His father broke the silence at length. “Lord, now letest thou thy servant departs in peace according to thy word.”

“What is that, Father?” asked Obi.

“Sometimes fear came upon me that I might not be spared to see your return.”

“Why? You seem as strong as ever.”

Obi’s father ignored the false compliment, pursuing his own train of thought. “Tomorrow we shall all worship at church. The pastor has agreed to make it special service for you.”

N.L.E.(p.64)

The conversation in ‘B’ takes place between Obi and his father. It reveals the aged father’s affinity for his son. The father also feels that he may not be alive to see Obi when he returns. Such feelings are commonly observed among the old persons as in Lord, now letest thou thy servant departs in peace according to thy word, Sometimes fear came upon me that I might
not be spared to see your return and Tomorrow we shall all worship at church. The pastor has agreed to make it special service for you show the impact of growing age of Obi’s father on the use of his language. He seems to have lost his confidence.

C) “Yes”, said his father slowly. “A job is the first thing. A person who has not secured a place on the floor should not begin to look for a mat.”

After a pause he said: “There are many things to talk about, but not tonight. You are tired and need sleep.”

“Good night, my son, and God bless you.” N.L.E. (p.68)

Obi’s father advises Obi in such a manner, which is suitable to any responsible and old father. He tries to convince him about the necessity of a timely job. The age factor of Obi’s father creates an impact on his language. He uses a proverb like: A person who has not secured a place on the floor should not begin to look for a mat. He takes care of Obi when he is tired and wishes to speak on the same topic the next day.

A) “Moon,” said the senior wife, Matefi, “may your face meeting mine bring good fortune.”

“Where is it?” asked Ugoye, the younger wife. “I don’t see it. Or am I blind?”

“Don’t you see beyond the top of the ukwa tree? Not there. Follow my finger.”

“Oho, I see it. Moon, may your face meeting mine bring good fortune. But how is it sitting. I don’t like its posture.” A. O.G. (p.2)
The sight of the moon is being matched by the senior and the younger wife of Ezeulu. The difference in their age is noticed in their Linguistic expressions like ‘am I blind’, ‘follow my finger’, ‘is it sitting’, like its posture’ and others.

B) “What is it, my son?” Ezeulu asked again and again, But Obika trembled and said nothing.

“What is it, Obika?” asked his mother, Matefi, who had run on to the obi and was now shaking worse than her son.

“Keep quiet there,” said Ezeulu. “What did you see, Obika?” A.O.G.(p.8)

Obika’s father, Ezeulu and mother Matefi care for their son. They being old, speak with utmost responsibilities and feelings of care using the expressions like: what is it my son? may your face meeting mine bring good fortune. They also wish him to follow them as trembled and said nothing, shaking more than her son and what did you see? However, Ezeulu has a very sharp tone while the mother is tender. It is observed as the impact of age.

C) “I want one of my sons to join these 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 be saying 'had we known' tomorrow.” A.O.G. (p.56)
Ezeulu wants his son to go to the white man and collect all necessary information. As any father, he expects his son to be his eye. His entire linguistic expression reveals the impact of his age group on his language, which is sensible and full of responsibility. It also indicates his confidence as *My spirit tells me that*...

The element that contributes to the success of Achebe's fictional art is his subtle use of English to suit the African sensibility. Ezeulu's expression to Oduche has a distinct African style.

A) “Why, Papa, what has he done?” asked my friend in alarm.

“I have said it. . . . I don’t blame you, my son, or you either, because no one has told you. But know it from today that no son of Hezekiah Samalu’s shelters under my roof.” He looked outside. “There is still light and time for you to get back to the school.” *A.M.P. (p.30)*

The impact of age of Odili’s friend as well as the old father on their language is seen. The old father is determined not to allow any son of Hezekiah Samalu in his shelter as *no son of Hezekiah Samalu’s shelters under my roof*.

However, the friend is excited to know why the father is not allowing him to stay there. The response of the father is very suitable to the age of an old man: *There is still light and time for you to get back to the school*. The children on the contrary, are innocent who do not understand any sarcasm of the old people.

B) “Lazy boy,” he said indulgently. “Don’t worry. I know you must be dog-tired after yesterday’s journey. See you later. I am off to the office now,” *A.M.P. (p.38)*
The Minister, Chief Nanga utters the above expression referring to Odili Samalu. Odili is at the home of Chief Nanga and is late to wake up. For Chief Nanga Odili is a small boy. Instead of getting annoyed at Odili’s sleeping till late that morning, Chief Nanga reacts as above. Chief Nanga is an adult having the sense of understanding the situation. The linguistic terms used are: Lazy boy, don’t worry and See you later.

The use of idioms lends Achebe's language and style a native flavor and force. Besides giving a close and convincing picture of a society in change, this technique helps his characters sound natural while speaking an alien tongue. The sociolinguistic factors are found influencing the language of the characters.

A few such idioms deserve a special mention here.

1. *Okonkwo’s fame had grown like a bush-fire in the harmattan.* T.F.A.(p. 3)

2. *Kola is symbolic of prosperity. He who brings kola brings life.* T.F.A. (p.5)

3. *Okonkwo’s hard work is like pouring grains of corn into a bag full of holes.* T.F.A. (p.16)

4. *Okonkwo drank palm wine from morning till night and his eyes were red and fierce like the eyes of a rat when it was caught by the tail and dashed against the floor.* T.F.A.(p.44)

5. *Obierika’s house is as busy as an anthill.* T.F.A. ( p. 102)

6. *Okonkwo felt as if he had been cast out of his clan like a fish onto a dry sandy beach, panting.* T.F.A.(p. 92)

7. *Mother is supreme.* T.F.A.(p. 94)
8. *The bicycle is an iron horse*" and the white man is an albino. *T.F.A.*(*p. 97*)

Among the Igbos an excellent wrestler is one who wins not only in the human world but also in the world of spirits. Thus, Okonkwo’s ability at wrestling is aptly compared to that of 'the founder of the town' who according to folktale engaged a spirit of the wild for seven days and seven nights." *T.F.A.*(*p. 30*)

The novel *A Man of the People* has a number of proverbs that clearly trace the deterioration of the cultural values of the Nigerian society. Selfishness and greed for power and money are the characteristics of political leaders like chief Nanga. The general motto of the people and their leaders is, “*ours is ours but mine is mine*.” Achebe's refined characters use proverbs less repeatedly. This suggests that they have lost the gift of poetic speech because they have become acculturated by contact with and acceptance of European values. Following are some notable examples:

1. *Ezeulu’s power is like the power of a child over a goat that was said to be his.* *A.O.G.*(*p. 3*)

2. *Women carrying pots are like a spirit with a fantastic head.* *A.O.G.*(*p. 19*)

3. *The new road made a man feels lost like a grain of maize in an empty goatskin bag.* *A.O.G.*(*p. 81*)

4. *Obika shivered like the sacrificial ram.* *A.O.G.*(*p. 82*)

It is observed that the impact of the white culture is visible in several similes and metaphors as shown below.

*But a white man’s ship that runs on water as a snake runs on grass.* *N.L.E.*(*p. 58*)
Some proverbs are based on spiritual wisdom of the Ibo culture. For example,

*If one finger brought oil, it soiled the others.* T.F.A. (*p. 89*)

This proverb shows the effortless spreading of anarchy among the natives after the advent of the white man.

*“You have the yam and you have the knife.”* A.O.G. (*p. 12*)

This saying is generally used with regard to a powerful deity. But leaders like Ezeulu and Nwaka are also greeted thus because they are rich and influential, and command the respect of the clansmen.

*When a handshake goes beyond the elbow, we know it has turned to another thing.* A.O.G. (*p. 13*)

When Ezeulu fails as the guard of the clan's safety, people give vent to their anger by quoting some sayings such as, *“No matter how strong or great a man was, he should never challenge his chi.”* A.O.G. (*p. 27*)

Some proverbs reveal moral and spiritual wisdom as is shown in the following examples:

1. *“As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.”*

2. *“Wherever something stands, another thing stands beside it.”*

   N.L.E. (*p. 145*)

*“She who has people is richer than he who has money.”* N.L.E. (*p. 72*)

Achebe's characters make use of folklore to make their arguments forceful and effective. It also helps in criticism and mockery. It illustrates moral values.
4.3 Linguistic Features in the Novels and their Sociological Relation

The presentation and analytical interpretation of the sociological background of the characters and some sociolinguistic elements which create impact on the linguistic expressions of the characters in the novels have been offered in the previous section and the chapter. The linguistic features in the novels and their sociological relation are presented in this section. This helps in throwing light on the variations in the language of the characters in the novels.

Achebe's novels possess historical reality in the use of English language. He has developed several prose styles. He is careful in each novel in selecting the style that suits best to the subject and the context. A Westernized African character does not speak similar to an uneducated villager. Achebe is a talented ventriloquist and so he has personalized his characters by assigning them certain unique features of speech. Achebe’s setting out of language and culture similarly shows that they are essential tools of translation or ethnic survival. He amends his English usage in a manner that amounts to a linguistic revolution that conserves the Igbo language.

The present study discovers the impact of overall English on the Igbo people. As observed, with the coming of Standard British English, the limits of languages within Igbo land began to change. Europe and Igbo land struck, and the cultures changed as much as the languages did. Where once two leading languages governed, four languages soon shared the stage.

In addition to Standard British English and the language of Igbo, two middle ground tongues ascended: Nigerian Pidgin English and the more dominant Nigerian English Creole. Standardized British English is the style of English imposed by the Europeans and used in schools and
administration. Nigerian English is an African Creole that is used throughout Nigeria as a lingua franca.

The linguistic variation that has taken place in Africa is due in large part to the development of Creole. A Creole is a language that develops out of two or more joining languages. It develops much in the same way as any other language, with speakers who agree on semantic meaning and who begin using words in order to share aural and verbal communication.

By using English Achebe reaches many more readers and has a much greater literary impact on them. The English language in Nigeria shows certain characteristic features that cannot be overlooked. This situation results from the range of social, ethnic and linguistic limitations posed by the second language context in which the language operates.

It is observed that Achebe’s literature reveals a cultural and characteristic use of language allows that the reader to see Achebe’s novels in a more thoughtful way. Achebe is the source of Igbo culture, and as a native speaker he is the best resource for a linguistic study too. Chinua Achebe, as an educated man with self-reflective tendencies, uses the language with planned deliberateness.

Achebe comes across a problem in presenting the African tradition and culture in a language that can never describe it effectively. An understanding of Igbo culture is only possible when the alien can relate to the Igbo language and vocabulary. Achebe resolves this problem by linking elements of the Igbo language into his novel. By uniting Igbo words, rhythms, idioms, and concepts into an English text about his culture, Achebe goes a long way to bridge a cultural rift.

It is discovered that the Igbo vocabulary is amalgamated into the texts effortlessly so the readers understand the meaning of most Igbo words with the context. An attentive reader of Things Fall Apart becomes familiar with
words and concepts represented by *chi*, *egwugwu*, *ogbanje*, and *obi*. Such Igbo terms as *chi* and *ogbanje* are essentially untranslatable, but by using them in the context of his story, Achebe helps the non-Igbo reader identify with and relate to this complex Igbo culture.

*Chi*, for example, denotes a noteworthy, multidimensional Igbo concept that Achebe repeatedly refers to by explaining the concept in various contexts throughout the story. Achebe translates *Chi* as personal god when he first remarks Unoka's bad fortune. As the novel advances, it slowly picks up other shades. The *Chi* concept is more complex than a personal god or even fate, another frequently used substitute. *Chi* suggests elements of the Hindu concept of karma, the concept of the soul in some Christian values, and the concept of individuality in some mystical philosophies. The understanding of *Chi* and its significance in Igbo culture grows as one advances through the novel.

Another example of Achebe's merger of Igbo elements is his frequent reference to traditional Igbo proverbs and tales. These specific elements give *Things Fall Apart* a trustworthy African voice as discussed below.

The Igbo culture is primarily an oral one — that is:

"Among the Igbo, the art of conversation is regarded very highly, and proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten." *T.F.A. (p.06)*

To provide an authentic feel for Igbo culture, it would be impossible without the proverbs which play a significant role in the novel. In spite of the foreign origin of these proverbs and tales, the alien reader can relate very well to many of them. They are knitted efficiently into their context and require only occasional explanation. These proverbs and tales are, in fact, quite similar in spirit to Western sayings and fables.
Speech patterns and rhythms are seldom used to represent moments of high emotion and tension. The sound of the drums in the night in Chapter 13 *(T.F.A.p.109)* (go-di-di-go-di-go); the call repeated several times to unite a gathering followed by its group response, first described in Chapter 2 *(T.F.A.p.10)* *(Umuofia kwenu...Yaa!)*; the painful call of the priestess seeking Ezinma in Chapter 11 *(T.F.A.p.91)* *(Agbala do-o-o-o!)*; the repetitive pattern of questions and answers in the *isa-ifì* marriage ritual in Chapter 14 *(T.F.A.p.119)*; the long narrated tale of Tortoise in Chapter 11; and the quotations from songs in several chapters are examples of the same.

Achebe's use of Igbo language, speech patterns, proverbs, and richly drawn characters help in creating a genuine African story. It excellently links the cultural and historical gap between the reader and the Igbo.

Achebe includes a few examples of Pidgin English in his creative use of language. Achebe uses only a few Pidgin words or phrases — *tie-tie* (to tie); *kotma* (a crude form of court messenger); and *Yes, sah* — just enough to suggest that a form of Pidgin English was being established.

The language of *Arrow of God* is simple but not unsophisticated. The use of conversation, dialogue, folklore and stories by Achebe’s characters and more importantly, the promising use of proverbs make the novel convincing.

Achebe’s effective use of language has gained a lot of intellectual interest. The unusual linguistic performance that gives Achebe’s writing a typical flavor has largely been accountable for his success as a writer. The effective use of the standard of economy, short and catchy sentences and orthodox unity between characters and their linguistic exchanges all combine to make his novels a genuine work of art. The strength of Achebe’s use of language is associated with the notion of identity.
Achebe (1965: 30) explains his use of English as a type of linguistic advancement. He says:

“I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit its new African surroundings.” \(^{11}\)

He considers it further unnecessary for an African to speak like a European. For, when he was asked if an African could ever learn to use English as an English man, Achebe’s (1965:101) response was:

“I should say, I hope not. It is neither necessary nor desirable for him to do so.” \(^{12}\)

In the *Arrow of God* like most of his other works, Achebe’s language sparkles with a peculiar strength that is beneficial to the readers. The distinctive sharpness and freshness, the peculiar taste and spirit, support the semantic implications of the following expressions and the processes of nativization or variation behind them. Some expressions given below throw more light on this statement:

a) “May your face meeting mine bring good fortune.” *A.O.G.* (p.2)

b) “... perhaps I spoke with water in my mouth.” *A.O.G.* (p.5)

c) “... I will make you eat shit.” *A.O.G.* (p.23)

d) “... of palm wine a good drinker could take without losing knowledge of himself” *A.O.G.* (p.78)

e) “The white man is like hot soup and we must take him slowly- slowly from the edges of the bowl.” *A.O.G.* (p.85)
f) “You have the yam and you have the knife.” A.O. G. (p.96)

g) “This hen will follow me home.” A.O.G. (p.120)

h) “My friend, don’t make me laugh.” A.O.G. (p.134)

The three language strategies Narrative Techniques, Pidgin English, and Proverbs are used creatively by Achebe to help highlight the distinct and developing themes in his novels. This hints at the connection between people’s culture and the literary works evolving from the society. Since these linguistic devices are the products of history and tradition, by adopting them in his writings, Achebe acquaints his readers with the words to which he is introducing them.

In this regard, African writers confront with a great task in representing in English, experiences and realities that are peculiar to Africa given the complex linguistic environment in which they operate. Emmanuel Ngara's (1982: 19) view in this regard is relevant. He maintains:

"[t]he African writer's position is a complex one. His chosen tongue is not his own, neither is it his own people's language. His society has its own linguistic system with its own prejudices and world views while his chosen language reflects those of its native speakers."

In the words of Ernest Emenyonu (1978: 156):

“the proverb serves to emphasize and deepen the force of what is said ... and [also] allows intent to emerge without having to resort to bare and blunt words.”

It is understood with this opinion that for the Igbo man, it is impossible to display wit, wisdom and skills in language use without a good knowledge
of proverbs. The linguistic situation is further complicated by the existence of Pidgin English, which a large number of people in the society adopt.

Achebe then informs the readers that proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten. Such a well-crafted metaphor captures the attention of African and non-African readers alike, for the precise wording create an unforgettable picture in the mind. African critic R. N. Egudu (1981: 44) explains the importance of proverbs and metaphors in an article entitled “Achebe and the Igbo Narrative Tradition”. In this article, Egudu says of African writing:

“it is, therefore, anecdotes with such other devices as striking descriptive images and names that more than any other factor make for effectiveness in storytelling in Igbo land.” 15

With reference to the above opinions of the scholars, it is examined closely that Achebe employs the literary techniques to communicate his message to African and non-African readers. Achebe's choice to certain language strategies seems acceptable by the historical periods with which he is dealing and the messages, political and cultural, he wants to convey.

Anthills of the Savannah, Achebe’s most recent novel, discovers storytelling in contemporary Nigeria/Africa and tries to answer the question: who has the authority to narrate the national stories? His manipulation of language strategies, especially narrative mode and African proverbs, show his conviction that it is the ordinary people, the embodiment of traditional values and cultures, who are largely entitled to tell African stories.
The study of Achebe’s setting out of language and culture similarly shows that they are essential tools of translation or ethnic survival, the impact of overall English on the Igbo people, Nigerian English is an African Creole, the linguistic variation that has happened in Africa, Achebe's merger of Igbo elements is his frequent reference to traditional Igbo proverbs and tales and the three language strategies: Narrative Techniques, Pidgin English, and Proverbs are used creatively by Achebe to help highlight the distinct themes and develop them in his novels which is a great linguistic success.

Apart from these influences on the language of the characters other features such as 1) Phonological Features, 2) Morphological Features and 3) Syntactic Features are studied along with examples from the novels as below. This shows how the language used by Achebe’s characters is influenced by several factors causing deviations to achieve linguistic success.

4.3.1 Phonological Features

Achebe uses Igbo terms and a mixture of English words in the language for his characters. Pronunciation and the stress or intonation in some situations appear to be his main concern. Therefore, an attempt is made to study different linguistic features of the language used by Achebe in the novels such as Phonological Features, Morphological Features and Syntactic Features.
Some Phonological Features are studied in the novels as follows:

1. **Length and Stress on the Syllable:** It is observed that each syllable of a given speech of the characters in the novels is of nearly the same length and given the same stress. Following are some glaring examples:

i) “*Look round and count your teeth with your tongue.*” *A.O.G. (p.137)*
   In this speech the words *look, round, count, teeth* and *tongue* have syllables of similar length and they are given same stress.

ii) “*Lazy boy, don’t worry, I know you must be dog-tired after yesterday’s journey.*” *A. M. P. (p.38)*
   The above speech has the words like *lazy, worry, dog-tired* and *journey* which have syllables of similar length and stress.

iii) “*You no get kola nut for eat?*” *N.L.E. (p.52)*
   This expression has the words with syllables of similar length and stress such as *get, nut* and *eat*.

The use of such words with syllables of same length and stress has enriched the quality of Achebe’s novels. It makes the language of the characters more appealing and authentic in terms of Sociolinguistics.

2 **Stress Misplacement:** The stress pattern of English words in NE is Different. It is shown in the following table:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SBE (Standard Br. Eng.)</th>
<th>PNE (Popular Nig. Eng.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Madam</td>
<td>maDAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLANtain</td>
<td>planTAIN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SALad</td>
<td>saLAD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congratulate</td>
<td>congratuLATE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigate</td>
<td>investigate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DeVElopment fund</td>
<td>Development FUND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It SHOULD be</td>
<td>It should BE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The language used by Achebe in his novels reflects the similar stress pattern. Other glaring examples in the novels are:

i. husBAND, \textit{A.O.G. (p.75)}

ii. WreSTLER, \textit{T.F.A. (p.26,46,55,..)}

iii. houseHOLD, \textit{T.F.A. (p.15)}

iv. motherLAND, \textit{T.F.A. (p.122)}

v. gentleMAN, \textit{T.F.A. (p.21)}

This technique of the stress pattern makes the language of the characters effective and reader friendly. Apart from these examples, there are some other words used in all the novels.
3) **Interference**: The language used by the characters of Achebe is English in most circumstances. However, their native language is Igbo. It is, therefore, natural to cause some kind of intervention on their language use.

It is, thus, studied how these interventions play the role. Interference is the negative relocation of what obtains in the source language or Nigerian languages to the target language or English. Phonological intervention is of five types: a) Over-Differentiation of sounds, b) Under-differentiation of sounds, c) Re-Interpretation of sounds and d) Actual sound substitution.

**a.** Over differentiation arises when distinctions made in Nigerian languages that are not realized in English are forced on the English language. Look at the following examples:

i) ‘Charging battery na pure waste of money.” *A.O.S.* (*p.49*)

The sound like *na* causes over differentiation.

ii) “Your chi is very much awake, my friend.” *T.F.A. (p.44)*

The word *chi* is an Igbo word. In the expression (ii), it causes the over differentiation. This technique helps the author enrich the language of his characters and make the exchange of knowledge of Igbo culture easy.

**b.** Under-differentiation occurs when more than one sound in mother tongue is used for more than one sound in English. Generally, Nigerians tend to substitute long vowel sounds with the short sounds, the latter of which is only applicable in their mother tongues. This variation occurs as the natives are forced to understand and use English language. Their regular contact with English language and no formal learning of this foreign language created the above mentioned differentiations. It is observed that there was no mechanism to make appropriate and timely corrections in their use of this language.
Hence,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actual Vowel</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Vowel used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/i:/</td>
<td>Chi</td>
<td>/i/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/a:/</td>
<td>sir</td>
<td>/a/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/u:/</td>
<td>sure</td>
<td>/u/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above examples are taken from the novels of Achebe. These are the sample examples. Achebe repeatedly uses this technique in his novels.

c.) Reinterpretation occurs when a sound in English is realized as its close counterpart in English. As there are many words and expressions used in this respect by Achebe, only some samples are taken from the novels as below:

i) /ʌ/ is interpreted or realized as /ɔ/,

eg. “kotman” is realized as “kotmon.”

ii) /ə/ is interpreted / a /

eg. “sah” instead of “sir”,

iii) /æ/ is interpreted as / a /

eg. “/dat/” instead of “/dæt/”

iv) /f/ is interpreted as / p /.

eg. “friend” is interpreted as “prien”
d.) It is further found that actual sound substitution is occasioned by the substitution or replacement of sounds. Following examples throw more light on this statement:

i) \( / \delta / \) is substituted with \( / d / \)
   
   eg. ‘dem’ instead of ‘them’

ii) \( / t\phi / \) is substituted with \( / \ddot{\iota} / \) or \( / s / \)
   
   eg. ‘queshon’ instead of ‘question’

iii) \( / z / \) is substituted with \( / s / \)
    
    eg. ‘pleased’ is pronounced as /pli:sd/

iv) \( / t / \) is substituted with \( / d / \)
    
    eg. ‘de’ instead of ‘to’

v) \( / \theta / \) is substituted with \( / \iota / \)
    
    eg. ‘tink’ instead of ‘think’ or ‘ting’ instead of ‘thing.’

The substitution or replacement of sounds is the technique used by the writer to enhance the native qualities of language use and make the sociocultural impact stronger.

4. Tendency to Match Orthography with Pronunciation: There appears a symmetrical relationship between orthography and pronunciation in the English used in the novels. Words are pronounced as they are written. This is not so in English and the situation results in awkward pronunciation:
The following examples throw more light on this kind of language technique.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actual Words</th>
<th>Words in BE</th>
<th>Words used in the novels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listen</td>
<td>/lisən/</td>
<td>/listin/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quay</td>
<td>/ki:/</td>
<td>/kwei/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>/ɔfən/</td>
<td>/ɔftun/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam</td>
<td>/ɪɡzɔm/</td>
<td>/ɛksam/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dat</td>
<td>/ðæt/</td>
<td>/dæt/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>/a/</td>
<td>/h/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“ask”</td>
<td>/aːsk/</td>
<td>“hask”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“answer”</td>
<td>/aːnse/</td>
<td>“hanswer”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. **Tone and Intonation:** It is discovered from the language used by the characters in the novels, that tone and intonation possess special features in their language. They are also recognized as the features of Nigerian English as given below.

a) The rich intonational resources of Standard English are neglected by most of the users of English in the novels.
i. “For whom is it well, For whom is it well?

There is no one for whom it is well.”  *T.F.A.*  (*p.122*)

ii. “Girl fit answer am also.”  *A.O.S.*  (*p. 213*)

iii. “Dem talk say make rain come quick quick.”  *A.O.G.*  (*p. 31*)

In the above examples, it is observed that the rich intonational resources of Standard English are neglected. However, it is found that even without these resources the language of the characters is rich and capable of carrying the desired message of the author.

b) The falling tone in Popular Nigerian English used by the characters occurs more frequently than in SBE. Following are the glaring examples:

i) “*I tink so sah.*”  *A.O.G.*  (*p.174*)

ii) “*O. K. Mr. gentlemen*”  *A.M.P.*  (*p.21*)


c) PNE more often assigns a rising tone to a question than SBE does. Following conversations throw more light on this skill of language use.

i) “*Did they not say that you died two markets come next Afo?*”  *A.O.G.*  (*p.94*)

ii) “*How the go de go?*”  *A. M. P.*  (*p.21*)

iii) “*What about a Bible?*” Clara asked. “*What Bible?*” “To go with the ring. Don’t you know that?”  *N.L.E.*  (*p. 83*)
6. Consonant Elimination: In Nigerian English, elimination of consonants occurs intermittently. For instance ‘film’ becomes /fim/, ‘neglect’ /niglekt/, becomes /niglet/, ‘friend’ /frend/ becomes ‘frien’ /fren/. This technique is applied by Achebe very skillfully in all his novels. In most cases, Achebe eliminates the consonants, which suit to the rustic characters in the novels.

7. Other Phonological Features: English used by the characters in the novels is chiefly syllable timed. It is understood that in syllable timed languages, unstressed syllables are not reduced and syllables tend not to be compressed between stresses. Following examples show how this skill is significant in enriching the quality of language of the characters in the novels. Following are some of the striking examples:

i) “My daughter’s suitor is coming today and I hope we will clinch the matter of the bride-price”.  
T.F.A. (p.59)

ii) “Bo, son of man done tire.”  
A.M.P. (p.21)

iii) “I tink so sah, “ said the interpreter.  
A.O.G. (174)

It is noticed that the language used by Achebe has fewer vowel contrasts than RP English. For example, the distinction between “chip” and “cheap” may not be continued, and similar vowel contrasts, such as those made between caught, court, and cot, may not be observed.

The study shows that diphthongs in RP are typically reduced to single vowels in the language used in the novels, such that the diphthong vowels in “hear” and “hair” found in RP become reduced.

It is observed that the pronunciation of consonants in the language used by Achebe’s characters differ from the R.P. In general, however, the fricative sounds /θ/ and /ð/, as in “thin” and “this,” are replaced by /t/ and /d/, as in
“tin” and “dis.” This is thought to be due to linguistic intervention from Igbo.

Moreover, the consonant /ʒ/, as in rouge, is replaced in Igbo influenced English with sh, as in “roosh.”

8. Pronunciation of Igbo Names and Words: The Igbo language is a tonal one. The differences in the actual voice pitch and the rise or fall of a word or phrase can produce different meanings. In Chapter 16, (T.F.A.) for example, Achebe describes how the missionary's translator, though an Igbo, cannot pronounce the Mbanto Igbo dialect: "Instead of saying 'myself' he always said 'my buttocks.'

It is observed that Igbo names usually represent meanings or entire ideas. Some names reflect the qualities that a parent wishes to bestow on a child. For example, Ikemefuna means my power should not be dispersed. Other names reflect the time, area, or other circumstances to which a child is born. For example, Okoye means man born on Oye Day, the second day of the Igbo week. In addition, Igbo parents also give names to honor someone or something else. For instance, Nneka means mother is supreme. Afa means an Igbo oracle, Agbala is a male deity of the Igbo people, Idemili is the god of Water, and Mbanta is a small settlement in Nigeria.

As the above linguistic examples have illustrated, Nigerian English is an undoubtedly vibrant and rich language which, arguably, in both oral and written forms, addresses one of Achebe’s injunctions. Achebe (1965:18) suggested:

“while English should not lose its “value as a medium of international exchange,” it should be used by the African
writer in order to “carry his peculiar experience,” especially by the author wishing to say “something new, something different.” 16

Thus, the above discussion shows that the pronunciation of Igbo names and words have special features. It is also noticed that the deliberately misspelled words put in the mouths of the characters are proposed to bring out the distinctions of his unaccustomed phonetics as shown in the following example:

There are instances of broken English in Unachukwu’s dialogues to Mr. Wright, like:


4.3.2 Morphological Features

The study of Morphological Features is a must here as it plays a significant role in the novels. An attempt made to highlight the skilful inclusion of Affixation, Borrowed Words, Acronyms, Initialisms, Pidgin English, Creolization, Terms of Greetings, Honorific Terms and Terms of Abuses by Chinua Achebe along with interesting examples from his novels.

Morphology is the study of internal structure of words. Words can be broken down into smaller unit by analysing their structure and identifying systematic processes that allow speakers to add new words to the lexicon and indicate grammatical information such as tense and number. Hugh R. Brown (1981: 70) refers to the use of Igbo words and explains:

“Achebe’s handling of words whose semantic meanings are generally ascertainable can be put into three categories.”
First, he explains in a non-dialogue passage words that appear, or have appeared, in dialogue, second, he explains Igbo words within the dialogue in which they appear, third, he places the words in contexts in which their meanings are relatively clear.”  

As quoted above, Achebe uses the language skill in his novels such as the word ‘Ikenga’ is explained after giving its meaning. Achebe’s main intention is contained in an Igbo proverb, which finds expression in Arrow of God:

“a man who does not know where rain started to beat him cannot know where he dried his body.” A.O.G. (p.132)

Let us study the morphological features of Achebe’s novels one by one.

A) Affixation

It is observed that an affix is a morpheme that is attached to a word stem to form a new word. English word formation is generally divided in to two main parts. The first part includes affixation (prefixation and suffixation), compounding and conversion; the second part includes unpredictable formations like blending and acronyms. Achebe skilfully uses the techniques to decorate the language of his characters. Since, the natives are well acquainted with Igbo language and are forced to use and understand English language, have to apply such language tools.

Following are some specific tools that Achebe has used for word formation. The first tool applied by Achebe is Affixation. Playing with language is a unique technique that Achebe applies in his novels. It is reflected in the use of several words and expressions by his characters. Compounding the words by bringing two or more words together is frequently used in the
novels. This has helped to establish authenticity and credibility of the characters.

The following table shows the examples of Affixation from the novels:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Compounded Words</th>
<th>Meaning in English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td><em>Nnaayi</em></td>
<td>Our father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii.</td>
<td><em>Isa-if ceremony</em></td>
<td>A cleansing ceremony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii.</td>
<td><em>Efuluefu</em></td>
<td>A foolish man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv.</td>
<td><em>Nso-ani</em></td>
<td>An offense against earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.</td>
<td><em>Dwarf wall</em></td>
<td>Small storage for yams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi.</td>
<td>Parlour- wife</td>
<td>A girl friend</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B) Borrowing

In this process a word is imported from another language. Oral and written forms of Nigerian English are the most distinguishable from Standard varieties of English with respect to vocabulary. There are three distinctive groups of words that are found in NSE:

i) Borrowings from Pidgin and local languages: This type shows that words or expressions are borrowed from the native or Pidgin languages. This technique is widely used by Achebe. It is used on a very special occasion and at a
particular time. The example given below has an expression *Ogbu-agali-odu* which is a pidgin expression.

“She thought of that night long ago, when she had seen *Ogbu-agali-odu*, one of those evil essences loosed upon the world by the potent medicines’ which the tribe had made in the distant past against its enemies but now had forgotten how to control.” (T. F. A.p. 104)

ii) Loan-translations from local languages: *throw water* = to offer a bribe.

iii) Words coined for local purposes, given local meaning: *decampee* = one who moves to another political party.

Following is a list of some borrowed words from British R.P. These terms are commonly used by the Igbo people while speaking in Igbo language. As a part of necessity, these words or expressions are used by the native speakers. As mentioned above, no formal education was given to the Igbo people nor any training was provided.

However, the natives were compelled to use some English. The people did not bother about the correctness and appropriateness of the English they used. It is discovered in the novels that the minor characters who specifically used such words or expressions were humiliated and also abused by the socially upper class characters. Some of them are deliberately misspelt or mispronounced as given on the next page.
| i. | **Yaa** | Yes |
| ii. | *Cocoyam porridge* | A kind of soup |
| iii. | Gorment | Government |
| iv. | telegram | telegram |
| v. | essah | Yes Sir |
| vi. | Troway | Throw away |
| vii. | Chicken Puri | Food item |
| viii. | Cake omelette | Food item |
| ix. | Cadillac | A type of car |
| x. | Chop | Food, eat, chop |
| xi. | Kidney pie | Food item |
| xii. | Money | Money |
| xiii. | Markets | Markets |
| xiv. | Lorry | Truck |
| xv. | radio | radio |
| xvi. | Book Exhibition | Book Exhibition |
C) **Acronyms**

The forms of shortening are initialism (also called alphabetism) and acronyms, which reduce each component word to its initial letter. The difference between the two types lies in how the resulting word is pronounced in spoken language, namely letter by letter or without intermission. Acronyms are a type of word formation process, and they are viewed as a sub-type of blending.

Examples:  

i) *POP*  (People’s Organization Party)  

   It is a word used informally to popular music.

ii) *PAP*  (Progressive Alliance Party)  

   It is a word for light breakfast.

   *A.M.P. (Pp.125,126127,..)*  

   Both POP and PAP connote “eating”.

iii) *T.V.* (Television)  

iv) *HE*  (His Excellency)  It refers to Sam.

   *A.O.S. (p.10,12,13…)*

D) **Initialism**

It is an abbreviation formed from the initial components in a phrase or a word. These components may be individual letters or parts of words. There is no universal agreement on the precise definition of various names for such abbreviations or on written usage. In English and most other languages, such abbreviations historically had limited use, but they became much more common in the 20th century. Some examples are given from
the novels. As these words of Initialisms are repeatedly used by Achebe in all his novels, page numbers are not given after the examples.

The following examples are from the novel *No Longer At Ease*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr.No.</th>
<th>Initialisms</th>
<th>Full Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>C.M.S.</td>
<td>Church Mission Society School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii.</td>
<td>C.I.D.</td>
<td>Central Investigation Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii.</td>
<td>U.P.U.</td>
<td>Umuofia Progressive Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv.</td>
<td>N.C.N.C.</td>
<td>A Dancing Club in England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.</td>
<td>O.K.</td>
<td>All Correct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi.</td>
<td>Hon.</td>
<td>Honours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vii.</td>
<td>R.S.V.P.</td>
<td>Rice and Stew very plenty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viii.</td>
<td>A.S.</td>
<td>Assistant Secretary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These words help in enriching the language of the characters and ensure their authenticity in the given circumstances.
The examples given below are from the novel *A Man of the People*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr.No.</th>
<th>Initialisms</th>
<th>Full Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>M.P.</td>
<td>Member of Parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii.</td>
<td>Dr.</td>
<td>Doctor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii.</td>
<td>B.A.</td>
<td>Bachelor of Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv.</td>
<td>T. V.</td>
<td>Television</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.</td>
<td>C.P.C.</td>
<td>Common People’s Convention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi.</td>
<td>D.O.</td>
<td>District Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vii.</td>
<td>V.I.P.</td>
<td>Very Important Person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viii.</td>
<td>P.I.V.</td>
<td>Poor Innocent Victim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ix.</td>
<td>L.L.D.</td>
<td>Doctor of Legislative Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x.</td>
<td>OHMS</td>
<td>Our Home Made Stuff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xi.</td>
<td>A.R.</td>
<td>Assistant Ralf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xii.</td>
<td>GTC</td>
<td>A Place for repairing a battery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following examples taken from the novel *Anthills of Savannah*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr.No.</th>
<th>Initialism</th>
<th>Full Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>OAU</td>
<td>Organization of African Unity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii.</td>
<td>MM</td>
<td>Mad Medico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii.</td>
<td>NTBB</td>
<td>Not To Be Broadcast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv</td>
<td>BB</td>
<td>Beatrice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.</td>
<td>H.E.</td>
<td>His Excellency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following examples are taken from the novel *Arrow of God*

i. H.H. His Honour

ii. A.D.O. Additional District Officer

iii. C. M. S. Christian Missionary School

**E) Pidgin Words or Expressions**

Pidgin English serves as an inevitable medium of communication between the natives of Nigeria and British people. Incidentally, when the same natives converse with their clan-fellows they switch from pidgin to Igbo. However, a reverse case to this is established by the two Igbo officers
who go to Umuar to arrest Ezeulu. They purposefully address each other in Pidgin language and the villagers in Igbo.

Pidgin English is a good example of that language that the imperialist heritage used as a very important part of communication with the natives. It can be appropriated by the formerly colonized people and used creatively and powerfully as a counter-expansive strategy in a postcolonial context.

Achebe’s exploitation of Pidgin English as a linguistic strategy which mirrors his acute consciousness in using language as an indicator for social changes in the Nigerian context. It also shows his genuine craftsmanship in using English, an imperialist language, to mirror African realities. His success in this adds a good footnote to the expressive function of Pidgin English. The use of Pidgin words or expressions in the novels is studied which has an enriched impact on the conversations of the characters and consequently the quality of the novels. An attempt is made to highlight some examples from the novels followed by the discussion.

Some of the Pidgin words regularly used by Achebe are given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Pidgin Words</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Novel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>sabi</td>
<td>understand</td>
<td><em>T.F.A.</em> (<em>p.16</em>),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>A.M.P.</em> (<em>Pp.46,115</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii.</td>
<td>Tie-tie</td>
<td>Palm branches fashioned into a rope</td>
<td><em>T.F.A.</em> (<em>p.13</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii.</td>
<td>Jesu Christi</td>
<td>Jesus Christ</td>
<td><em>T.F.A.</em> (<em>p.133</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv.</td>
<td>Kotma</td>
<td>Court man/ Court messenger</td>
<td><em>T.F.A.</em> (<em>Pp158,161,162</em>)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

vi. Palavers Conferences (T. F. A)(A.M.P.p.15)

vii. ‘dem talk say make rain come quick quick’ (A.O.G.) (p.30)

viii. Pickins children (A.O.G.p.31)

ix. Katkata Problem/ trouble (A.M.P.p.15)

x. Natin nothing (A.O.G.p.34,35,85,138)

xi. Eke name of the day (A.O.G.p.112)

xii Deven sah good evening sir (A.O.G.p.155)

xiii. Massa Master (A.O.G.p.34)

xiv. ego nato a tiny basket (A.O.G.p.211)

xv. wey who/which/that (N.L.E.p.50)

xvi. wetin what, which, what thing (A.M.P.Pp.45,46,47..)

xvii. “Who dash frog coat” (A.M.P.p.11) ”You must be kidding.”.

xviii. ”E fool pass garri” (A.M.P.p.61) “He is very foolish”.

xiv. ”True, give me tori” (A.M.P.p.20) “Oh really, tell me about it. ”

xx. ‘My pickens na dat two wey de run yonder...’(A.O.G.p.31)

In the example (xx) ‘na’ means ‘is’ which may serve as an intensifier. The subordinating pronouns ‘who’, ‘which’ and ‘that’ are indicated by ‘wey’. ‘De’ in this context is a verbal indicator. Thus, the sentence reads as ‘My children, they are those two who are running yonder.’ Such
examples are repeatedly used in the novels of Achebe. Understanding the meaning of these words and expressions make the novels easy to enjoy. These are only some examples chosen for this research work.

The following Pidgin words are repeatedly used in all the novels. Therefore, the page numbers are not given.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Pidgin Words</th>
<th>Meanings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td><em>Abi</em></td>
<td>general interrogative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii.</td>
<td><em>Done</em></td>
<td>indicator of completed action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii.</td>
<td><em>De</em></td>
<td>indicator of continuous action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv.</td>
<td><em>Im</em> (him)</td>
<td>pronoun; objective, possessive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(him, her, it)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.</td>
<td><em>Kuku</em></td>
<td>for sure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi.</td>
<td><em>Na</em></td>
<td>is, was, it is, if it is, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vii.</td>
<td><em>Sabi</em></td>
<td>understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viii.</td>
<td><em>Waa</em></td>
<td>exclamation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ix.</td>
<td><em>Wetin</em></td>
<td>what, which, what thing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x.</td>
<td><em>sotay</em></td>
<td>until</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xi.</td>
<td><em>chop</em></td>
<td>food, eat or make use of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Achebe's first novel, *Things Fall Apart*, shows little use of Pidgin English. The language here is virtually Standard English. The only departure from the imperialist language are the Igbo words Achebe introduces when there are no English equivalents to convey the same
ideas, or when he intends to insert Igbo coloration in English. Examples of this include *chi* (personal god), *egwugwu* (a masquerade impersonating the ancestral spirits), and *Osu* (an outcast who has been consecrated as a god).

An attempt is made to explore the use of Pidgin words and expressions in other novels of Achebe.

When Nanga in *A Man of the People* accuses himself of poisoning his coffee, he desperately defends himself in Pidgin English:

"Me? Put poison for master? Nevertheless!"...

"Why I go kill my master? . . . Abi my head no correct? And even if to say

*I de craze why I no go jump for inside lagoon instead to kill my master?" A.M.P. (p. 34)

Pidgin English, as a means of communication between people of different linguistic families in *A Man of the People*, is also used as a means of class identification. The Pidgin English spoken by Mrs. John and Nanga's cook shows itself as a language for the lower classes. Edmund O. Bamiro (1991:276) draws a connection between language code and social class in Nigerian society. He points out:

"The linguistic polarization between the dominant and dominated groups . . . will reflect the social polarization between the powerful and powerless social classes in Nigeria." ¹⁸

The "powerless class," to which he refers includes traders, cooks, clerks, laborers, policemen, peasants among others. In *A Man of the People* they are the people who almost always speak Pidgin English.
Odili and Nanga are able to speak standard English still they choose to converse in Pidgin English when they are discussing intimate topics such as women:

"E fool pass garri," said Chief Nanga. "Which person tell you am na bobby them de take to do the thing? Nonsense." "But that woman na waa," I said. "Who put that kind sense for im head?"

"Woman?" rhapsodized Chief Nanga. "Any person wey tell you say woman no get sense just de talk pure jargon. When woman no want do something e go lef am, but make you no fool yourself say e lef the thing because e no get sense for do am." A.M.P. (p.61)

Nanga, trying to be better acquainted with Elsie, whom he later seduces, chooses to speak in Pidgin though he knows Elsie speaks English and though he is not quite familiar with her: "If somebody wan make you minister . . . make you no gree. No be good life." A.M.P. (p.62)

Some other Pidgin words in the novel are mentioned here. Pidgin English is used to foster close relationships in Anthills of the Savannah, especially in intimate and private conversations. Following conversation between Ikem Osodi, the editor of the National Gazette, and Elewa, Ikem's girlfriend, in which the latter asks why Ikem asks her to go back home at midnight. The conversation starts with Ikem speaking Standard English and Elewa pidgin:

Ikem: "You know very well, Elewa, that there are no more armed robbers in Bassa_"

Elewa: "The woman dem massacre for motor park last week na you killam."
"I can't take you home because my battery is down. I have told you that twenty times already."

"Your battery is down. Why your battery no down for afternoon when you pick me." (A.O.S.p.32)

From this conversation, it can be concluded that Elewa, though unable to speak Standard English, does not have any problem in understanding it. However, when Ikem becomes more and more desperate to convince Elewa that he does not want her to leave because another woman is coming, he switches to Pidgin English:

_I said totally and deliberately over her head, "the reason is really quite simple. I no want make you join all the loos women for Bassa who no de sleep for house." She stared at me with her mouth wide open, quite speechless. A.O.S. (Pp.32,33)_

Obviously, Ikem shifts to pidgin towards the end of his conversation with Elewa because subconsciously he wants to curtail the psychological distance between himself and Elewa, and to influence the latter to believe what he says. Similarly, Pidgin English is used by Beatrice, Chris and Ikem when the topics are very intimate. Look at the following examples:

i. _Okro seeds_ means ‘teeth’. A.O.G. (p.112)

ii. “_I think there is water in the sky._” It means ‘clouds’.

A.O.G. (p.96)

iii. “_Drink one horn more._” means ‘goblet’ of wine.

A.O.G. (p.98)

iv. “_They say for two markets._” means two ‘days’.
A.O.G. (p.98)

v. “Uwatuwa” means ‘world inside a world’. (A.O.S.)

Odili employs Standard English to formulate his disagreement with Nanga and the society he represents. However, Nanga as a man of the people, uses Pidgin:

“You call this spend? You never see something, my brother. I no de keep anani for myself, na so troway.”

“Minister de sweet for eye but too much katakata de for inside. Believe me yours sincerely”. A.M.P. (p.16)

Achebe takes artistic freedom by writing some dialogues in Pidgin English. It is strongly supported by Bernth Lindfors (1980:50) who appreciates Achebe’s style:

“to use untranslated Igbo and unadulterated pidgin in his fiction is evidence of a significant change in his orientation as a writer.”

Pidgin English is used by Mr.Winterbottom’s household-workers to commune with him. For example, in reply to his queries about the native children in his compound, his steward says, “‘my pickin na dat two we de run yonder and dat yellow gal. Di oder two na.

The pervasive use of Pidgin in Anthills of Savannah as idiolect for character identification as with the half-literate Elewa and the taxi-drivers is illustrative of the author’s concern for linguistic mimetism. He has also achieved sound satirical and other implicit effects by dexterous manipulation of language.
'Which one of you is called Ezeulu?' asked the corporal.

'Which Ezeulu?' asked Edogo.

'Don't ask me which Ezeulu again or I shall slap okro seeds [teeth] out of your mouth. I say who is called Ezeulu here?'

'And I say which Ezeulu? Or don't you know who you are working for?' 'All right,' said the corporal in English. 'Jus now you go sabby which Ezeulu. Gi me dat ting [handcuffs]'. A.O.G.(Pp.151,152)

This passage is another example of how African writers seek to elaborate their texts by interchanging a standard colonial language with a locally formed variety. These policemen, who think they are speaking standard English, seek to distinguish themselves from the local villagers by showing off their knowledge of the 'Whiteman’s language'. The words just, give, that, thing are mispronounced as jus, gi, dat, ting respectively.

Pidgin English, thus, becomes a means to boast their privileged position in a colonial society. They feel that they are superiors when dealing with the villagers. It is rather ironic that such a cross language becomes the assembling point for a group of colonized people who would stop at nothing to oppress and exploit their own people. Pidgin expressions thus, replace English in its role as the language of tyranny and symbol of colonial power. In Things Fall Apart Chinua Achebe uses a Pidgin word in an English sentence for local colour: Ezinma had been making inyanga with her pot. (T.F.A. p. 3)

The word means 'showing off', and is used here to reflect the kind of showing off that little boys and girls make a fuss of. Ezinma attempts a balancing act with a pot of clay on her head.
F) Creolization

It has been discussed in the Chapter Two what Creoles are and how they are developed. The use of Creoles in Achebe’s novels is inevitable as the social background to the characters force them to develop the Creoles and practically apply them. Achebe’s predicted Creolization process hypothesizes that he will

a) Retain the functional words of Igbo (the semantically insignificant units of meaning) and

b) He will begin supplementing the Igbo structure with words from the Standard British English.

However, Achebe, instead of taking the structure of Igbo, accepts the English syntax and grammar system as the basis for his Creolization process. The novels are widespread with Igbo culture, from the imagery and figurative language discussed above, down to the use of Igbo words and sentences. Several times throughout the novels Achebe uses whole Igbo chants to promote the influence of the language.

The use of obi for hut, achi for tree, or ike for the word power allows the pages to come alive with African life and culture. Achebe captures the life of his people putting into practice the Igbo and pidgin words, strengthening the languages.

Some of the expressions from the texts which function as a Creole are given below:

i) “You no get kola nut for eat?” N.L.E.( p.52)

ii) E go make plenty money there. N.L.E.( p. 89)

iii) “Na me go look your car for you.” N.L.E.( p.126)

iv) “No be so, my frien” A.M.P.( p.15)

v) “Why I go kill my master? A.M.P.(p.34)
vi)  *Ah This na the Famous Cadillac?*  
A.M.P. (p. 59)

vii) “*What Mass go drink?*”  
A.O.G. (p. 34)

viii) “*Yessah.*”  
A.O.G. (p. 35, 36…)

ix) “*Pardin?*”  
A.O.G. (p. 85)

x) “*I tink so sah.*”  
A.O.G. (p. 174)

xi) “*Dat na true word.*”  
A.O.S. (p. 214)

xii) “*Abi Aina no true Moslem.*”  
A.O.S. (p. 215)

Chinua Achebe has skillfully used the language techniques. The characters are well acquainted with their Igbo language and are getting familiar with some of the European terms. During their conversation with the British, they switch or mix some words or terms of either languages. It results in to Code Mixing or Code Switching. As a matter of practice and necessity, the language finally takes the shape of Pidgins and Creoles.

The above discussion elaborate Achebe’s intention to familiarize the alien readers or non-Africans to the Igbo language and culture as well.

4.3.3 Syntactic Features

Since, most of the characters in the novels are either uneducated or have poor educational environment, they are bound to create syntactic deviations in their use of language. It is, therefore, necessary here to study some of the Syntactic features of the language used by the characters in the novels. It is observed in the earlier section that Phonological and Morphological deviations regularly occur in the linguistic expressions of the characters.

It is discovered that the language used by Achebe’s characters in the novels possesses significant features in use of A) Different Parts of Speech, B) Use of Definite Article, C) Auxiliaries, D) Ignorance of Question Tags, E) Use
of Tenses, F) Aspect, G) Subject Verb Concord and H) Other. These are discussed at length as follows:

A) Different Parts of Speech

i) Use of Nouns: Uncountable nouns are frequently treated as countable ones: *he had no fruits to eat*. Countable and mass nouns are not differentiated: Uncountable nouns are sometimes affixed with plural markers such as “*staffs, stationeries chalks, cutleries, furnitures, grasses*” are observed as common Nigerian English usages.

ii) Use of Certain Pronouns: The word *im (him)*, a pronoun is used as an objective, possessive or predicative nominative eg. him, hers, it.

‗*wetin‘ is used as an interrogative pronoun for *what, which, what thing*. It functions for all these three pronouns. The word ‘wey’ functions as a relative pronoun for *who, which and that*. In the above examples, single word functions as a pronoun for three different pronouns in English.

iii) Misuse of Preposition: This involves using prepositions where they are not required. *eg. discuss about, comprises of, emphasize on, order for, vanish away, voice out etc.* Substitution of preposition *eg. “congratulate for”* instead of “*congratulate on*, “*chat to”, instead of “*chat with*” and omission of preposition where they are required. *eg. “enable him do it”* instead of "*enable him to do it”*, “*reply her letter” instead of “*reply to her letter*”.

B) Use of Definite Article

The rules governing the use of definite article are sometimes the opposite of those in Standard English. *ex. What do you think of *the* post-modernism?*
C) **Auxiliaries**

Modal verbs *could*’ and *would*’ are frequently used in place of *can*’ and *will*’.

D) **Ignorance of Question Tags**

Examples are: “you are not coming to school tomorrow, will you?(are you)”, “you have done your assignment, don’t you?(haven’t you)”; such ignorance is manifested in answering questions: “Are you not coming to school tomorrow?” “yes” while the person means “he will not come”.

E) **Use of Tenses**

Use of correct tense forms is a feature of good English. However, in the novels of Achebe the use of tense has a special characteristic features. It is significantly found in the Nigerian English. It enhances the authenticity of the roles of the characters in the given situations. The following notable features are fond in the language used by Achebe. In terms of tense, Elugbe and Omamor (1991:99) say : NPE shows a three-way distinction illustrated by forms such as:

(i) \( I \ de \ k\om \) “He comes/he is coming”

(ii) \( I \ k\om \) “He came”, and

(iii) \( I \ go \ k\om \) “He will come”.

Here, the form (i) is a form for present tense “*with a specifically imperfective meaning*”. It represents a continuous or progressive or a habitual action depending on the context and the specific verb used.\(^{20}\)

(ii) is a simple past tense, while

(iii) is a form indicating future tense.
“Plenty plenty. I been see am long time, my dear.” A.O.S. (p.86)

Following are some instances of this type:

a) “Your battery is down. Why your battery no down for afternoon when

b) “you come pick me.” (A.O.S.p.32) This sentence has a simple present tense and the next sentence has a simple past tense.

c) “Ah, she does-o. I no go Modern School.”(A.M.P.p.89) (I did not go to a Modern School.) Simple past tense is shown in this sentence.

d) “What department he de work?”(N.L.E.p.56) Progressive action is shown by the use of “de”.

No verb in the above examples shows the past tense. This differs from Standard English, which only has two tenses, the present and the past while the future is regarded as an aspect.

F) Aspect

Two “notions” marked are observed in NPE, namely the imperfective and the perfective. The imperfective is also known as the progressive aspect, representing continuous or habitual action.

Examples of the progressive are as follows:

“A de kõm” “I am coming or I usually come”.

“Ago de kõm” “I will be coming or I will continue/make a habit of coming”.

It is observed that NPE makes a distinction between a situation which has been begun before the “time of utterance”, as in A dôn de kõm I have/had started coming”A go dôn de kôm.” “I will have started coming” and a situation which has been completed as a whole before the “time of
utterance”, as in *A don kom* “I have come/arrived.” “A go don kom” “I will have come/arrived”. These structures differ from Standard English (SE) in that they would not be regarded as the past, but as the present, since the verb “have” is in the present.

G) Subject Verb Concord

The sentence constructions in the novels are differently made at certain points by Achebe. The structural patterns are used by misplacing the parts of speech. The subject verb agreement is observed to be of less or no importance. This kind of use appears suitable to the illiterate characters. Some sample examples of the linguistic utterances given below are uttered by either the minor or uneducated characters.

i) Why I go kill my master? A.M.P. (p.34)

ii) Why I no go fear? A.M.P. (p.35)

iii) Why you put poison for my coffee? A.M.P. (p.34)

iv) For sake of what? A.O.S. (p.33)

v) What work you de do? A.O.S. (p.184)

vi) Weting I been de eat all afternoon? N.L.E. (p.52)

vii) What Massa go drink? A.O.G. (p.34)

The subjects in the above sentences are used immediately after wh-interrogatives. There is no use of the helping verbs like “do”. Still the interrogative sentences are formed.

i) They done go. (Use of “do”) A.M.P. (p.142)

The auxiliary “do” is frequently used instead of “be.”
ii) “My sister, make you no worry yourself.” (Sentence structure)

   A.O.S. (p.143)

Chinua Achebe regularly makes use of incorrect sentences to show the incompetence of the characters in using the language as shown in the following examples.

   “Massa say make I putam for gaddaloom?” A.O.G. (p.156)
   “No be say I deaf sah but....” (Don’t say. A.O.G. (p.156)

Sentence structures in the examples are uncommonly made.

H) Other

The imperatives also possess the similar irregular structures. Achebe achieves a great success as a novelist perhaps due to his skill of application of language skills. There is a particle, “say”, which is quite common as in “I no think say I done see am before.” (A. M.P.p.59) Here, it is just a particle and not a verb on its own, and has thus simply been left out in constructions like these.

Another verb-like particle regularly takes place, namely “na”, which, derived from the context, often seems to represent the word “to be”. It is used in situations like “[h]e na my old teacher, you know” (A.M.P.p.75). However, it can also be used in situations where it does not make sense for it to represent “to be”, as in “[n]a where we de go?” (A.O.S.p.66). Here, it is simply a particle which cannot really be translated into English.

4.3.4 Use of Unusual Spellings

Most of Achebe’s characters being rustic and less familiar with English language, use different kinds of sentence patterns. The use of unusual spellings is a special technique that Achebe applies in his writings to ensure the authenticity of his works and the cultural impact. However, these
characters serve their purpose with this technique of use of unusual spellings of English words.

Examples cited from the novels justify the appropriateness of the novelist in using these words and expressions in the available contexts. Following examples are taken from Achebe’s novels. They are used at several places simultaneously in one or more than one novels. Therefore, page numbers are not given after the examples. Words with unusual spellings are listed along with their meanings in English.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Words with Unusual Spellings</th>
<th>Meanings in English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td><em>Jus</em></td>
<td>Just</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii.</td>
<td><em>Sah</em></td>
<td>Sir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii.</td>
<td><em>Gaddaloom</em></td>
<td>Guardroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv.</td>
<td><em>Dey</em></td>
<td>They</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v.</td>
<td><em>Lateness</em></td>
<td>Late</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vi.</td>
<td><em>Shurrup!</em></td>
<td>Shut up!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vii.</td>
<td><em>Kotman</em></td>
<td>Courtman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viii.</td>
<td><em>Im</em></td>
<td>Him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ix.</td>
<td><em>Comot</em></td>
<td>Come out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sr. No.</td>
<td>Words with Unusual Spellings</td>
<td>Meanings in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x.</td>
<td><em>Pardin</em></td>
<td>Pardon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xi.</td>
<td><em>Dat</em></td>
<td>That</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xii.</td>
<td><em>Ting</em></td>
<td>Thing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xiii.</td>
<td><em>Tink</em></td>
<td>Think</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xiv.</td>
<td><em>Yesaah</em></td>
<td>Yes, Sir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xv.</td>
<td><em>Foolis</em></td>
<td>Foolish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xvi.</td>
<td><em>Natin</em></td>
<td>Nothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xvii.</td>
<td><em>Gonment</em></td>
<td>Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xviii.</td>
<td><em>Frien</em></td>
<td>Friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xix.</td>
<td><em>Wey</em></td>
<td>Which</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xx.</td>
<td><em>Queshon</em></td>
<td>Question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xxi.</td>
<td><em>Massa</em></td>
<td>Master</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xxii.</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>He/she</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xxiii.</td>
<td>Hanswer</td>
<td>Answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xxiv.</td>
<td>Listin</td>
<td>Listen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xxv.</td>
<td>Hask</td>
<td>Ask</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above examples are taken from the novels which are repeatedly used in several context.

The syntactic study shows that the use of the sentence constructions is not consistent for all the tenses. Although the past tense constructions on the whole are much less common than present tense constructions, it is the past tense constructions which really differ from SE, which portrays a different language and culture.

4.3.5 Kinship Relations

In traditional African society, kinship relations are often expressed in ways that are foreign to Western culture. References to kinship relations are often expressed in terms of phrases that are unambiguous explanations of the kind of family ties there are between relatives. In the novel Achebe's *Arrow of God*, the expression *Son of our Daughter* is used by a maternal grand-uncle to refer to the son of his niece. The 'son' in turn refers to his maternal grand-uncle as *Father of my Mother* since the grand-uncle could very well represent his maternal grand-father who is no longer alive.

'You can now see, Son of our Daughter, that we cannot get our elders together before tomorrow,'
said Otikpo.

'If a war came suddenly to your town how do you call your men together, Father of my Mother! Do you wait till tomorrow? Do you not beat your Ikolo?'
asked Akukalia.  *A.O.G.*( p. 23)

These kinship references, which are literal translations from Igbo, play a significant role in the texts. For instance, the references are used as a focusing or a foregrounding technique. The young man, Akukalia, is sent
by his father's village on an important errand to his mother's village. The two villages are on the edge of war and Akukalia has been sent to ask his mother's people to choose between war and peace. His maternal grand-uncle, who is aware of Akukalia mission, refers to him as *Son of our Daughter* in order to remind Akukalia of his blood relations with his mother's relatives to whom he is about to deliver a message of war. The kinship reference, thus, expresses the pragmatic function of identity.

The reasons for using the technique of mixed language are aesthetic, sociological and historical. The following passage from Achebe's *Arrow of God* shows how two African policemen working for the colonial administration would speak to their countrymen in the local vernacular but would confer with each other in Pidgin English, as if it had become a private code for a new class of Africans.

Following are the glaring examples from the novels with respect to the kinship relations. These terms are repeatedly used in almost all novels, therefore, page numbers are not given.

\[
\begin{align*}
Nnaayi & \quad \text{“Our Father”} \quad (T.F.A.) \\
Nne & \quad \text{“Mother”} \quad (T.F.A.)
\end{align*}
\]

The novelist makes the conversations of the characters more intimate with these kinship terms.

### 4.3.6 Code-Switching and Code-Mixing (CS/CM) in the Novels

In linguistics, Code-switching is switching between two or more languages, or language varieties, in the context of a single conversation. Multi-linguals sometimes use elements of multiple languages in conversing with each
other. Thus, Code-switching is the use of more than one linguistic variety in a manner consistent with the syntax and phonology of each variety.

Chinua Achebe uses the CS and CM techniques to express certain specific functions in social dealings. The most common form of CS and CM used by him is between colloquial speech and English. In the situation where Achebe finds him unable to adequately express African socio-cultural reality in a European language, he uses the alternative use of local words and expressions. Achebe’s novels in English language often are replete with words and expressions from the native languages of the characters.

An attempt is made to list out the sample examples of CS and CM from the novels.

(1) *He is Okonkwo kpom-kwem, exact ;perfect.* T.F.A. *(p.49)*

(2) The proper name for a corn-cob with only a few scattered grains was *eze-agadi-nwayi* or the teeth of an old woman. *T.F. A. (p.32)*

(3) *Where did you bury your iyi-uwa? You buried it in the ground somewhere so that you can die and return again to torment your mother.*

*T.F. A. (p.73)*

Example (1) is a case of *'intra sentential'* switching in which the meaning of the Igbo expression *kpom-kwem* is carefully rendered by the adjectives *'exact, perfect.'* However, even juxtaposing the adjectives does not come close to capturing the stylistic significance of the Igbo term as expressed in its rhythmic and onomatopoeic qualities. Example (2) is an instance, of *'inter sentential' switching.*

*eze-agadi-nwayi* is a complete statement in Igbo and its gloss translation "*the teeth of an old woman*" is introduced by an "*or*" as if it were just an
alternative, an after-thought, meant for a non-Igbo person who might be listening.

Number (3) is another example of 'intra sentential' switching. The term iy-uwa is heavily charged with mythological beliefs and traditional lore.

“Your chi is very much awake, my friend.” T. F. A. (p. 44)

The Igbo word “chi” is mixed in the English sentence.

“Where did you bury your iy-iuwa?” Okagbue had asked Ezinma. T. F. A. (p. 73)

The Igbo term “iyi-uwa” is mixed in the English sentence.

“Dem talk say make rain come quick quick.” A. O. G. (p. 31) Here, the words like quick quick from English are mixed. Similarly, in the following sentences either Igbo words are mixed in English sentences or English words are switched to the native language:

1)“My pickinna dat two wey de run yonder and dat yellow gal.”

A. O. G. (p. 31)

2)“sorry sah,” said the steward, looking very worried. “Dey says na dat bad juju man for yonda way…” A.O.G. (p.155)

3)“You see wetin I de talk. How many minister fit hanswer sir to any Tom, Dick and Harry wey senior them for age? I hask you how many?” A.M.P. (p. 11)

4)“Why na so so girl, girl, girl, girl been full your mouth. Wetin? So person no fit talk any serious talk with you. I never see.” A. M. P. (p. 21)

5)“Na him make I no de want carry you book people,” N. L. E. (p. 50)
6) “You no get kola nut for eat?” asked one of the traders from the back. *N. L. E.* (p. 52).

7) ‘Charging battery na pure waste of money; once battery begin de give trouble you suppose to buy new one. Kabisa.’ *A. O. S.* (p. 49)

8) ‘Da na true word,’ said Braimoh. *A. O. S.* (p. 214)

### 4.3.7 Greetings

Language is a beautiful toy for Chinua Achebe. While applying different sociolinguistic skills, Achebe carefully deals with all possible means to make his literary writing a unique masterpiece. Apart from the above mentioned sociolinguistic tools, Greetings also plays a significant role in communication. Different characters in the novels have different socio-cultural and socio-economic background. They use expressions of greeting or regards in various ways.

However, the characters seem to have taken maximum care of abiding by their native language. Expressions of greetings, honor and abuse are repeatedly use by the characters in different contexts. It is further discovered that some sample expressions of Greetings, Honorific Terms and Abusive Expressions are regularly used by Achebe in his novels. The list given below shows the varieties of such expressions. The novelist has left no scope for arguments for the appropriate inclusion of the above mentioned terms in precise contexts in the novels.

Following are some of the glaring terms of Greetings used in the novels:

a) *Nno* welcome *T.F.A.* (p. 112)

b) “Hi Micah, hi Margret,” said the woman. *A.M..P.* (p. 44)
c) Hello, Jalio, "I said.  
A.M.P. (p. 64)

d) “Good gracious! Max shouted.  
A.M.P. (p. 75)

e) “Good morning Mrs. Nanga,” I said.  
A.M.P. (p. 104)

f) “Devensah, “said the man.  
A.O.G. (p155)

g) “Hello, Peter. Hello, Bill.”  
N.L.E. (p. 04)

h) “Hello. Yes, sir.”  
N.L.E. (p. 75)

i) “Good Morning, he said. Smiling broadly.  
N.L.E. (Pp. 29, 97, 103…)

j) “Good Morning”, “Pleased to meet you.”  
N.L.E. (p. 158)

4.3.8 Honorific Terms

Achebe has applied every skill of language to enrich the quality of his writings. The honorific terms used in the novels play significant role in enhancing the impact of his literary work. The educated as well as uneducated characters use these terms in appropriate context. Some examples from the novels are given below:

i) Nnaayi---“Our Father” a greeting offered to male leaders (T.F.A.)p. 13

ii) “Come and shake hand with me.”  
T.F.A.(p.59)

iii) “Uzoulu’s body, I salute you?”  
T.F.A.(p.82)

iv) “Yes, sah,” the messenger said, saluting.  
T.F.A. (p.187)

v) “Good boy!”  
A.M.P.(p.09)

vi) “No, Sir, what is that?”  
A.M.P. (p. 10)

vii) “No be so my friend.”  
(A. M. P. (p. 15)
viii) “Yes, sir, master,” said the driver. A.M.P. (p.32)
ix) “I salute you all” A.O.G. (p. 18)
x) “Son of our Daughter” A.O.G (p.23)
xii) “Yes, sah, ”said Samson. N.L.E. (p. 77)
xii) “ah, no, Oga, Master.” N.L.E. (p. 110)
xiii) “That was very kind of you,” said Obi. N.L.E. (p 111)
xiv) “As Your Excellency wishes.” A.O.S.(Pp. 1,4,5,7,9,14…..)
xv) “I go to prepare a place for you, gentlemen.” A.O.S. (p. 9)
xvi) “Yes, Madam.” A.O.S. (p. 111)

4.3.9 Abusive Expressions

As mentioned above, Achebe plays with language as a toy and uses the language techniques in all possible ways. His characters mainly come from the rural background. They are bound to use all substandard varieties of language similar to Thomas Hardy’s rustic characters. These characters bring the readers closer to reality by using their language. Abusive expressions is such a technique used in the novels. Some examples are given below to support the argument:

i) Efulefu A foolish man T.F.A (Pp. 83,89)

ii) Akelogoli Good for nothing T.F.A.( p 50)

iii) Tufia-a repulsed curse T.F.A.( p.61)

iv) “They deserve to be hanged,’ shouted Mr. Nanga. A.M.P. (p.5)
4.3.10 Diminutive Expressions

Achebe makes use of Diminutive expressions in his novels skillfully in the appropriate context to make the language of his characters more effective. This results in sensitivity and affection of the characters to each other. Some examples from the novels are given below.

i) Spirits wine N.L.E. (p.77)

ii) radiogram wireless telegram N.L.E. (p.78)
Apart from Code Mixing and Code Switching strategies, other sociolinguistic techniques such as use of Terms of Greetings, Honorific Terms, Abusive Expressions and Diminutive Expressions are used to establish the authenticity of the characters and the situation in which they are involved.

### 4.4 Conclusion

This chapter discusses the use of language and dialect made by the characters in Chinua Achebe’s novels. It has been explained earlier in this thesis that Achebe’s characters come from a region of Nigeria where the standard language is scarcely used and the regional dialect is more predominant. Factors influencing characters’ language, linguistic features in the novels and their sociological relations are discussed with appropriate examples.

Pronunciation and the stress or intonation in some situations appear to be Achebe’s main concern. Therefore, an attempt is made to study the Phonological Features of the language used. Achebe’s skillful use of other linguistic tools of expressions, such as Unusual Spellings, Terms of Greetings, Honorific Terms, Abusive Expressions, Pidgin words, Creoles
and Code- Mixing and Code-Switching and Grammar have been classified as Morphological and Syntactic Features of the study.

The sociology of language and language variation, the nature of dialect, accent and related concepts and several factors influencing the way characters in the novels speak are examined with sociolinguistic point of view. An attempt is made to give as many examples as were evident in the novels for each factor and linguistic feature.
REFERENCES


4. Ibid.(p.46)


   London: Heinemann, (p.122)

10. Petra, Jesenska (2010), *Essentials of Sociolinguistics,* Universitas,
    Ostraviensis, Ostrava, (p. 44)

    Rpt. In Morning Yet on Creation Day. (p.30)

12. Ibid. (p.101)

    London: Heinemann, (p.19)


    Research in African Literature 12, Spring, (p.44)

    Rpt. In Morning Yet on Creation Day. (p.18)

    Research in African Literatures, 12, Spring, (p.70)
