

Högskolan i Skövde
School of Humanities and Informatics
English

Code-switching in Chinua Achebe's Novels

Hanna Larsson
English C-Course
Autumn 2007
Tutor: Ingalill Söderqvist

Table of contents

1. Introduction.....	2
2. Background.....	3
2.1. Code-switching.....	3
2.2. Proverbs.....	4
2.3. Pidgin Languages	5
2.4. Nigerian Pidgin English	6
2.4.1. Tense	7
2.4.2. Aspect.....	7
3. Method and material	8
3.1. Semantic Code-switching.....	9
3.1.1. Igbo Lexicon	9
3.1.2. Proverbs.....	10
3.2. Syntactic Code-switching.....	10
4. Analysis and result.....	12
4.1. The Igbo lexicon.....	12
4.2. Proverbs.....	15
4.3. Nigerian Pidgin English	17
4.3.1. The present	18
4.3.2. The past	20
4.3.3. The future	22
5. Summary and Conclusion.....	24
List of Works Cited	27
Primary Sources	27
Secondary Sources	27
Appendices.....	28
Appendix 1: List of Igbo vocabulary and their translations	28
Appendix 2.1: proverbs - animal.....	30
Appendix 2.2: Proverbs – Family	32
Appendix 2.3: Proverbs – Homestead.....	33
Appendix 2.4: Proverbs – people in general	34
Appendix 2.5: Proverbs – Spirit.....	35
Appendix 2.6: Proverbs – Miscellaneous.....	36

1. Introduction

The aim of this essay is to point out how Chinua Achebe uses different features of Igbo and Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) in four of his novels. Firstly, there will be an explanation of the terms code switching and proverb, followed by an overview of Pidgin Languages and Nigerian Pidgin English. This study will then deal with two aspects of code-switching in Achebe's novels: semantic, which includes intertwined Igbo vocabulary and proverbs; and syntactic, which is a study of Nigerian Pidgin English verb phrase constructions. The study will examine how the Igbo lexicon and proverbs function in the text and if/how it is possible to understand the meaning of the Igbo vocabulary. Further, it will examine how the verb constructions of the NPE dialogues are used and if they follow the norm set up by other linguists, or if Achebe alters their usage according to his own style.

Chinua Achebe was one of the first African authors to write in English – and to defend his use of the English language. In his essay “The Role of the Writer in a New Nation”, included in the collection *African Writers on African Writing*, he says:

For an African, writing in English is not without its serious setbacks. He often finds himself describing situations or modes of thought, which have no direct equivalent in the English way of life. Caught in that situation he can do one of two things. He can try and contain what he wants to say within the limits of conventional English or try to push back those limits to accommodate his ideas. The first method produces competent, uninspired and rather flat work. The second method can produce something new and valuable to the English language as well as to the new material he is trying to put over. *But* it can also get out of hand. It can lead to *bad* English being accepted and defended as African or Nigerian. I submit that those who can do the work of extending the frontiers of English so as to accommodate African thought-patterns must do it through their mastery of English and not out of innocence. (12)

By including many Igbo words, proverbs, folktales and the rhythm of the Igbo language, he shows his readers his world from a different point of view; not the view of the English, but of the Igbo people he portrays.

2. Background

2.1. Code-switching

”Code-switching (CS) can be defined as the use of two or more languages in the same conversation or utterance” (Gardner-Chloros 361). It is a common phenomenon in many parts of the world where much immigration or colonisation has taken place, and the population is bi- or multilingual. A few examples of code-switching could be:

- Speakers of Marathi, an Indo-Aryan language spoken in central India, insert many Sanskrit words into their speech in formal settings, but not in the market place.
- A Sicilian fishmonger addresses a customer in the local dialect. He switches to Italian in answering the customer’s questions, but then switches back to the dialect, while the customer continues speaking Italian.
- A Kikuyu speaker in a middle-class Nairobi home speaks Swahili to her children most of the time, but Kikuyu to tell them off. The children, too, speak mostly Swahili garnished with a lot of English insertions.

(Examples from Coulmas 112)

To people observing from the outside, the alternation back and forth with portions of different languages may be very difficult to understand, since many have problems recognising a pattern. This may lead to the assumption that the speakers who code-switch do this because they simply cannot master their language use. However, Coulmas thinks otherwise:

It is not necessarily for lack of competency that speakers switch from one language to another, and the choices they make are not fortuitous. Rather, just like socially motivated choices of varieties of one language, choices across language boundaries are imbued with social meaning. (109)

Coulmas goes on to say that the people who code-switch are very aware of the difference in language or variety and that they are able to keep them apart. They may not, however, do so habitually and they are not always aware that they do switch, even though code-switching is regarded as a controllable strategy (110).

Gardner-Chloros mentions different sub-categories of code-switching, namely situational and conversational CS;

Situational CS could be regarded as changes in language choice rather than CS proper; it refers to language switches which coincide with a change of interlocutor, setting or topic. *Conversational* CS, which many authors now would regard as CS proper, does not necessarily coincide with any such changes but is motivated by factors within the conversation itself. (361)

As mentioned above, it can be very difficult for outside observers to understand people who code-switch, but, according to Coulmas, “code-switching must be rule-governed” (114), and “it must be possible to determine the rules that speakers apply in code-switching” (114). These rules will not be discussed here. However, according to Coulmas, there is always a matrix language. This matrix language provides the “system morphemes” for the base or frame of the language, whereas other “content morphemes” can be inserted from whichever language (117).

A morpheme is the smallest unit of text which carries meaning, either grammatically or lexically. System morphemes and content morphemes can be compared to what are generally known as bound and free morphemes. Free morphemes, or content morphemes, are the morphemes that can stand alone and still mean something, like “child”. The morpheme cannot be split up any further, but bound morphemes can be added. Bound morphemes, or system morphemes, are the prefixes and suffixes added to change the free morpheme, which is also known as the root or the stem. These bound morphemes cannot stand by themselves, but must be added to the root, making it for instance “*children*”. Here, the suffix –ren changed the form of the root from a singular to a plural. Suffixes can also add possessive meaning, “the children’s”, and so on.

2.2. Proverbs

Proverbs are a very important part of the Igbo oral tradition, which in turn is extremely important to the Igbo people:

The oral tradition is very important to the Igbo in particular, and the Africans in general because their behaviours, thought, language and rhetoric are molded and shaped by their tradition. Similarly, their creative imagination, history, medicine, technology and philosophy were orally passed down to different generation [sic] through various forms of oral performance. The writer’s

experiences and world-views are nurtured by this tradition in spite of the language of expression. (Igboanusi 8)

The word proverb is defined by the *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* to be: “a short sentence, etc., usually known by many people, stating something commonly experienced or giving advice” (1017). Christina Alm-Arvius defines it structurally by saying that it consists of a whole lexicalised main clause (23).

Proverbs are extremely important to the Igbo people. They constitute the most important form of Igbo narrative custom. Achebe himself describes them in his novel *Things Fall Apart* as “the palm oil with which words are eaten” (6), which is a very striking metaphor, since there are almost no Igbo meals cooked without palm oil, “just as there is hardly any good Igbo speech that is not interlaced with proverbs” (Ogbaa 108-109). Since they are so important, part of the chapter about semantic code-switching will look into the proverbs of the novel *Arrow of God*.

2.3. Pidgin Languages

According to Crystal, “[a] pidgin is a system of communication which has grown up among people who do not share a common language, but who want to talk to each other, for trading or other reasons” (336). Crystal goes on to say that pidgin languages are much more simple, grammatically, vocabulary-wise and function-wise, compared to the languages they arose from. They are not the first language of any people, but they still serve as a “main means of communication for millions of people” (336).

Crystal also says that many pidgins are based on European languages – English, French, Spanish, Dutch and Portuguese – (336), which can also be called a superstrate language or, as Coulmas says, a matrix language. As mentioned in the chapter about code-switching, the matrix language provides the frame for the pidgin language, whereas other morphemes can be inserted from any other language (Coulmas 117). The second language is known as a substrate language.

Some pidgins, like Nigerian Pidgin English, are known as expanded pidgins because they have “added extra forms to cope with the needs of their users, and have come to be used in a much wider range of situations than previously” (Crystal 336).

2.4. Nigerian Pidgin English

Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) is, as the name suggests, an English-based pidgin language, functioning as a *lingua franca* throughout Nigeria. Thus, English is the superstrate language and the main substrate languages are Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa (answers.com). There have been many discussions whether NPE is really a pidgin language or already a Creole language, which is “a mother-tongue variety derived from a pidgin, i.e. the acquisition of native speakers by a language” (Melchers and Shaw 123). This discussion is relevant since many children learn NPE very early, and according to answers.com, NPE is the native language of approximately 3 to 5 million people. It is also the second language of at least 75 million more.

According to Melchers and Shaw, Nigerian [Pidgin] English shares many features with the Englishes of the rest of Africa, especially West African Englishes;

- [They have a] smaller vowel set than inner-circle varieties, compensated for by spelling pronunciations and nonreduction of vowels. Spelling pronunciations are normal and predominant. An example of how different the vowel patterns of African English can be, and yet how distinctiveness and redundancy are retained, Ebot (1999) cites Cameroon English *purpose* /pɔpɔs/, *perpetrate*, /pɛpɛtɛt/ compared with GA /pɜrɔs/, /pɜrɔtɛt/ or RP /pɜ:pəs/, /pɜ:pətɛt/ where every vowel is different both in realization and systematically and yet both varieties have three different vowel phonemes in these two words.
- Some vowel pronunciations [are] used as identity markers. In discussing NURSE, *first* realized as [nas] [fast], Schmied (1991) quoted Kenyans saying ‘I don’t want to strain myself so much to say [fɜ:st] only to sound British . . . This would seem snobbish to my colleagues’.
- Word stress [is] sometimes assigned according to local rules . . . as in West African *indi’cate* vs RP/GA *indicate* perhaps because stress is attracted to certain types of strong syllable.
- [There are plenty of] [f]igurative expressions based on the substrate languages. . . . *I have killed many moons in that hut* from Zimbabwe.
- In casual speech, [there are] long words which sound formal to inner-circle ears but do not necessarily have that value, since casual styles have had to be ‘reconstituted’ from language learnt at school. (155)

This essay will examine the verb phrase in NPE dialogues, more specifically tense and aspect.

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. In NPE, however, they express the past, and will therefore be discussed as past tense structures.

This is also discussed by Agheyisi, who recognizes a difference in meaning whether the particle “*don*” is used prior to an action verbal or a stative verbal: “[b]efore stative verbals, it often implies a change in state, and may therefore be glossed as ‘have become’; instead of the usual ‘have . . . en’”(136). She illustrates her statement with a few examples.

Action verbals:

185d. Tif don tek wi moni.
A thief has taken our money.

186d. Jon don kom fo wi haos.
John has come to our house.

187d. Jon don silip fo chie.
John has slept on the chair

Stative verbals:

188d. Meri don get plenty money.
Mary has had much money; i.e. Mary has become rich.

189d. Dem don no se wi don go.
They have known that we have gone.

190d. Di pikin don fain.
The child has fine; i.e. The child has become fine. (136)

A form not discussed by these three but fairly common in the novels examined is a sort of imperative construction. The function of an imperative is, according to Alm-Arvius, to give a command or request (28). In Achebe, these constructions take the main form of “make + infinitive”, as in “when you come for Monday make you bring am” (*Anthills of the Savannah* 119) or “[m]ake you shut your smelling mouth there, Mr. Lawyer” (*Anthills of the Savannah* 118). This form, with two slight alterations, will be discussed under the future tense. The reason for this is that the action proposed will have to be performed after the command or request is finished, placing it in the future.

3. Method and material

The material first intended for this essay was all five of Chinua Achebe’s novels. However, since the essay is split into two aspects of code-switching, it seemed more reasonable to

examine approximately the same number of pages for each part. Further, the use of different novels for different aspects of the research would give a fuller picture of the writing of Achebe, but I did not want to use the same novel for both fields of research. Thus, only four books were needed, and his second novel, *No Longer at Ease*, was excluded, since it contained the least material needed for this research. I have included all instances throughout the above selected novels, and have thus not excluded any pages of them. The material for the semantic part consists of a total of 379 pages, and for the semantic part there are 366 pages.

3.1. Semantic Code-switching

This essay will examine the Igbo lexicon interwoven in the main text, as well as the proverbs used. These features are a way of “expanding the frontiers of English” for Achebe and many other African authors who choose to write in English. The study will examine whether Achebe really is able to “accommodate African thought-patterns” in his own novels, or if the use of Igbo vocabulary and foreign proverbs makes it incomprehensible. It will also examine how the proverbs are used, and if they seem to be as important as Igboanusi says they are.

3.1.1. Igbo Lexicon

For the Igbo lexicon this study will be referring to *Things Fall Apart*. *Things Fall Apart* is the one of Achebe’s novels most focused on Igbo life and society, and therefore it was a suitable choice for studying the lexicon. The analysis will firstly show how many instances of Igbo vocabulary were found in the text. It will also examine how the inserted Igbo words and phrases can be understood by a reader who does not speak Igbo. Only those Igbo words and utterances which are italicised in the main text have been included.

An entire sentence, utterance, chant or poem in Igbo has been treated as one single instance. Quite a few of the words and/or utterances included occur more than once, and they have been counted again every time they occur. Thus, if a word occurs twice on the same page, it has been counted as two instances. However, if a word or sentence is chanted repeatedly without interruption, it is looked upon as one instance. An example of this is “It began by naming the clan: *Umuofia obodo dike* ‘the land of the brave.’ *Umuofia obodo dike! Umuofia obodo dike!*” (88). The short interruption here, “the land of the brave”, is simply a translation and is thus looked upon as a repetition, not an actual interruption. Several sentences can also be looked upon as one instance, if they are uninterrupted. For example: “*Agbala do-o-o-o! Agbala ekeneo-o-o! Chi negbu madu ubosi ndu ya nato y auto daluo-o-o!* . . .” (79).

There are two words which have not been counted but are still worth mentioning. They are not in Igbo, which is the reason for the exclusion, but in Nigerian Pidgin English. They are *tie-tie*, meaning rope, and *kotma*, meaning court messenger. Here, we can see the innovative techniques used for creating new words in pidgin; *tie-tie* being a repetition of a verb and then transformed into the noun used for performing the action of the verb. *Kotma* looks as if simply is a shortened version of the original word with a slight pronunciation difference.

3.1.2. Proverbs

For proverbs this study will be referring to *Arrow of God*. The analysis will show what influences the imagery of the proverbs by dividing the proverbs into different semantic groups. It will further show how the translation of the same proverb may differ and

how proverbs can be used in Igbo. The criteria for a proverb to be included is that it should be found in the text as a full main clause, it should contain some good advice or general truth, and it should not be a question. It should be a proverb originated in Igbo and translated into English, so if there is a common English proverb in the text, it has not been included. A good example of the proverbs included is; “A toad does not run in the day unless something is after it” (20). Proverbs referred to but not stated entirely have not been included. An example of this is: “[w]e are like the puppy in the proverb which attempted to answer two calls at once and broke its jaw” (188). Here, the speaker mentions a proverb but does not state it as a whole, and it has not been included. Another example is this:

- What do we say happens to a man who eats and then makes his mouth as if it has never seen food?
- How should I know?
- It makes his anus dry up. Did your mother not tell you that? (111)

The above dialogue could easily be turned into a proverb, but since it is not written as such in form, it has not been included. Also, similes and comparisons have not been included, for the same reason, that they do not have the form investigated.

3.2. Syntactic Code-switching

This essay will examine the verb phrases of the dialogues in Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE). It will look at tense and aspect according to Elugbe and Omamor and examine if Achebe uses the verb constructions in the way described by these two linguists, if he uses more standard forms, or if he creates his own way of expressing the verb phrase in NPE.

For NPE this study will refer to *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah*. These two novels deal with life not only in Igbo villages, but in bigger cities, some time after the arrival of the English. Thus, they have many natural insertions of NPE in dialogues.

This essay will deal with the verb phrase of the dialogues in NPE, divided into three sub-chapters; the present, the past and the future. While Standard English (SE) only has two tenses, the present and the past, NPE has included the future, according to Elugbe and Omamor. See chapter 2.4 for further details. The different tenses will be examined through certain constructions:

- ***The present.*** Here, the use of three different verb constructions for the present tense will be discussed; the NPE form “de + infinitive”, the correct SE form and the deviant forms. The deviant forms includes all present tense forms which differ from correct SE and the more specific construction looked for.
- ***The past.*** Here, three different verb constructions will be discussed, namely the correct SE and the deviant SE forms, and the NPE form “don(e) + infinitive”. The form for tense used by Elugbe and Omamor, “I kom” (99), has been included among the deviant forms. The deviant forms includes all past tense forms which differ from correct SE and the more specific construction looked for. The NPE form is, according to SE grammar, really in the present tense, have + infinitive. It does, however, express the past tense and is used as a past tense construction in the material examined.
- ***The future.*** Here, the NPE form “go + infinitive” and the aspectual form “go + de + infinitive” will be examined. Also, three forms of imperative structures have been included. These are the main form “make + infinitive” and the two sub-forms “make + de + infinitive” and “make + go + infinitive”.

The division between the forms and any strange or differing use of them will be discussed.

There are many verb constructions which are common but will not be discussed in the analysis. There are also some which are identical to forms discussed but which deviate from the pattern, and have thus not been counted. An example of this is when the present tense form “de + infinitive” is used to express the past, as in “[w]e de go out before but you fit sidon small ”(*Anthills of the Savannah* 124). Here, “de go” means “were going”, which is in the past, and it has therefore not been counted. Further, the use of “de” by itself, without a following verb, is fairly common. An example of this is “[m]y hand no de for inside” (*A Man of the People* 15). This will not be discussed in the analysis.

The example “[w]e de go out before but you fit sidon small ”(*Anthills of the Savannah* 124) can be used to further demonstrate how the research has been done. Translated, it would be something like “we were going out before but you are fit to sit down a little”. The infinitive marker “to” is very often missing, but since the verb after it is correct in SE, it has been counted as a correct occurrence. Also, spelling has not been considered, so “sidon” will be counted as correct since the form is correct in English, “sit down”. The only times spelling has led to a verb being counted as deviant are in cases such as “if at all oga wan anything I fit getam for am” (*Anthills of the Savannah* 58). Here, “wan” has been counted as deviant, since it is referring to the third person singular, “he wants”. Had it been referring to the first or second person “I want”, it would have been counted as a correct form. “Getam” has, however, been counted as correct. Also, words like “sabi”, from French “savoir”, meaning “to know”, has been regarded as correct, since they cannot be inflected and thus have not been inflected incorrectly or in a deviant way.

There is a particle, “say”, which is quite common as in “I no think say I done see am before” (*A Man of the People* 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 is frequently occurring, 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 Man of the People* 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?” (*Anthills of the Savannah* 66). Here, it is simply a particle which cannot really be translated into English. Therefore, the particle “na” has been totally left out in the analysis.

4. Analysis and result

The analysis will be divided into three parts; the Igbo lexicon, proverbs and NPE.

4.1. The Igbo lexicon

In the 149 pages of *Things Fall Apart*, 179 instances of the Igbo lexicon were found. Two words, *egwugwu* and *obi*, occurred as often as 28 and 29 times respectively, whereas 26 words or phrases only occurred once. All different words/phrases and the number of occurrences for each one are listed in appendix 2, along with the English translation for those found. The translation of the words/phrases has been taken from different sources; partly from the novel itself, where a word has been followed or preceded by an explanation of it, partly

from the dictionary by Igboanusi, and partly out of my own conclusions based on the context in which the word/phrase occurs. This analysis will show if and how it is possible to understand the intertwined Igbo vocabulary used throughout the text. All page numbers in this analysis refer to *Things Fall Apart*.

As the list of vocabulary shows, most of the words/phrases used are local words with no real equivalence in English. Several words concern family relations, as *umunna*, *umuada*, and *Nne*. Many concern the religious belief of the Igbo tribe in some way, for example *egwugwu*, *chi*, *ogbanje*, *iyi-uwa* and so on. Others concern the homestead or village grounds, such as *obi* and *ilo*. There are many words/phrases used for local traditions, rituals, ceremonies and such. Examples of this are *ozo*, *isa-ifi*, *ochu* and *uri*.

Many of the words/phrases are explained or translated by Achebe himself, but not all of them. Several of them are translated or explained in the main text. The following two examples show how he gives us an explicit translation:

- That was how Okonkwo first came to know that *agbala* was not only another name for a woman, it could also mean a man who had taken no title (11).
- On her arms were red and yellow bangles, and on her waist four or five rows of *jigida*, or waist-beads (51).

Long chants by a priestess or another religious or ceremonial person are never translated at all, even though some words are understandable anyway. An example of this is *Agbala ekene gio-o-o-o! Agbala cholu ifu ada ya Ezinmao-o-o-o!* (73). Here, the word *agbala*, meaning “woman”, has been mentioned and translated by Achebe before, on page 11, and we also know that Ezinma is one of the daughters of the main character Okonkwo. Therefore, the conclusion that the above chant is about Ezinma can easily be drawn, although what is said about her is not that clear. This is a little different from a long chant which, based on the information given by Achebe, cannot be understood so easily. In *Chi negbu madu ubosi ndu ya nato ya uto daluo-o-o!*, the only word recognized is *chi*, meaning “one’s personal god”. There are many more different words here than in the previous example, and since we only understand one, the meaning of what is said is more or less lost.

However, many words or phrases can be understood due to their context, like *ochu*. On page 91 it says “[t]he crime was of two kinds, male and female. Okonkwo had committed the female, because it had been inadvertent.” This leads us to understand the word *ochu* when it is mentioned on page 95: “The old man listened silently to the end and then said with some relief: ‘It is a female *ochu*’”.

In some phrases, we can understand the semantic meaning even though we do not understand the words. On page 65, we are told that *Aru oyim de de de dei!* is a phrase used by the *egwugwu* to greet each other, but we are not told what it means.

A similar example is where we learn the meaning of the word *isa-ifi*:

He would speak to him after the *isa-ifi* ceremony. . . . The youngest of Uchendu's five sons, Amikwu, was marrying a new wife. The bride-price had been paid and all but the final ceremony had been performed. Amikwu and his people had taken palm-wine to the bride's kinsmen about two moons before Okonkwo's arrival in Mbanta. And so it was time for the final ceremony of confession. (97)

Since the mention of the *isa-ifi* ceremony comes directly before a description of a ceremony, we can draw the conclusion that *isa-ifi* is the final ceremony of a wedding ritual.

Another example of this is the word *iyi-uwa*. We are never told exactly what it is, but it is still quite clear from the context. We are first told that Ekwefi's daughter Ezinma is believed to be an *ogbanje* child, which is a child who keeps dying and being reborn to torment its mother. Then, we are introduced to the word *iyi-uwa*:

Ekwefi believed deep inside her that Ezinma had come to stay. She believed because it was her faith alone that gave her own life meaning. And this faith had been strengthened when a year or so ago a medicine-man had dug up Ezinma's *iyi-uwa*. Everyone knew then that she would live because her bond with the world of *ogbanje* had been broken. (58-59)

We are also told that the *iyi-uwa* "was a smooth pebble wrapped in a dirty rag" (59). With all this information, we understand that the *iyi-uwa* is a small item with a strong spiritual connection to the *ogbanje* child, and that when this is destroyed, the "curse" is lifted and the child can live on, the evil circle of death and rebirth is broken, and the child's mother will no longer have to suffer the loss of her child.

One example of how Igbo vocabulary can be used in a metaphorical way is the phrase *oji odu achu iiji-o-o*, which means "the one who uses its tail to drive flies away" (84), which in simple English is a cow. By using the Igbo phrase and the translation of it instead of simply saying "cow", Achebe shows us a glimpse of how the Igbo people think and react to the surrounding environment.

4.2. Proverbs

In the 230 pages of *Arrow of God*, 121 proverbs were found. They are all listed, along with the page numbers they occur on, in appendices 1.1 – 1.6. All page numbers refer to *Arrow of God*. The proverbs have been sorted into different categories based on their scope of interpretation;

Animal: This group contains proverbs concerning animals: “The inquisitive monkey gets a bullet in the face” (44). This group consists of 31 proverbs.

Family: This group includes proverbs concerning the extended family of the clan and family situations: “He is a fool who treats his brother worse than a stranger” (95). This group consists of 15 proverbs.

Homestead: These are proverbs concerning the home or home environment: “Whatever tune you play in the compound of a great man there is always someone to dance to it” (46; 100). This group consists of 12 proverbs.

People: These proverbs are about people in general. They often, but not always, begin with “a man”, “a woman” etc.: “A man may refuse to do what is asked of him but he may not refuse to be asked” (86). This group consists of 26 proverbs.

Spirit: This group of proverbs concerns spiritual elements and gods: “If a man says yes his *chi* also says yes” (27). This group consists of 8 proverbs.

Miscellaneous: These are the proverbs still remaining after the sorting, and which did not have a natural insertion in any of the other groups. “If one finger brought oil it messed up the other” (187). This group consists of 30 proverbs.

This division shows clearly that the root of Igbo proverbs can be found close to home. They are influenced by Igbo culture and tradition and they display another way of thinking than English original proverbs. Some of them, however, have a similar match in English:

- “A coward may cover the ground with his words but when the time comes to fight he runs away” (50) is similar to the English “barking dogs seldom bite”.
- “He is a fool who treats his brother worse than a stranger” (95) is much like the English “charity begins at home”.
- “A disease that has never been seen before cannot be cured with everyday herbs” (133) is similar to the English “desperate times calls for desperate measures”.

- “There are more ways than one of killing a dog” (172) is almost identical with the English “there's more than one way to skin a cat”.
- The English “what you sow is what you reap” can be looked upon as a translation of “the man who brings ant-infested faggots into his hut should expect the visits of lizards” (144).

The above English proverbs have been taken from the internet site Wikiquote, and the matches have been made based on my own assumptions and conclusions.

The proverbs examined originate in Igbo and are translated by Achebe. One proverb, however, was written in Nigerian Pidgin English in the main text; “*it is this lick lick lick which prevents woman from growing a beard*” (65). It has not been counted with the other proverbs since it was not translated from Igbo.

The proverbs are not always translated in exactly the same way; the same proverb can occur several times with slight differences:

- “A man who brings home ant-infested faggots should not complain if he is visited by lizards” (61)
- “The man who brings ant-infested faggots into his hut should not grumble when lizards begin to pay him a visit” (132).
- “The man who brings ant-infested faggots into his hut should expect the visits of lizards” (144).

The above stated example shows the versatility local expressions may gain when translated into another language. The meaning is so well defined in the original language that it is difficult to make an exact translation. Sometimes, as in the example above, there may be a semantic difference between different translations. In the first translation of the proverb just stated, the host should not complain if he is visited by lizards, thus it is a conditional. In the second, it is clear that the lizards will visit him, and in the third translation, he should expect them to. Thus, the author/translator may choose to slightly alter the translation to better fit into the context. Another example of this is as follows:

- “A woman who began cooking before another must have more broken utensils” (100).
- “He who builds a homestead before another can boast more broken pots” (226).

These two proverbs may seem different at first sight, but they mean the same thing, only it is expressed in two different ways.

Proverbs are used frequently in the novel, as the number of them may suggest. They are common even in everyday dialogue between friends, as in this dialogue between Ezeulu and his friend Akuebue, when the former visits his friend and is offered a kolanut by Akuebue's son:

“Thank you,” said Ezeulu. “Take it to your father to break.”

“No,” said Akuebue. “I ask you to break it.”

“That cannot be. We do not by-pass a man and enter his compound.”

“I know that,” said Akuebue, “but you see that my hands are full and I am asking you to perform the office for me.”

“A man cannot be too busy to break the first kolanut of the day in his own house. So put the yam down; it will not run away.”

“But this is not the first kolanut of the day. I have broken several already.”

“That may be so, but you did not break them in my presence. The time a man wakes up is his morning.”

“All right,” said Akuebue. “I shall break it if you say so.”

“Indeed I say so. We do not apply an ear-pick to the eye.” (111-112)

In this fairly short passage, four proverbs have been found and counted. This shows that they sometimes occur very closely together, and that they are very common and natural in Igbo speech.

Often, the proverbs are introduced by someone saying for instance “[w]e have a saying that a man may refuse to do what is asked of him but may not refuse to be asked, but it seems the white man does not have that kind of saying where he comes from” (86). This example also shows that many proverbs are more than just sayings to the Igbo people; they are a little like rules which the people live by, and since the white man did not follow this rule, he probably had not heard of it.

4.3. Nigerian Pidgin English

As mentioned previously, this study will examine the verb phrase of the Nigerian Pidgin English dialogues in Achebe's novels. It will look at tense in three different sections: the present, the past and the future. Tense and aspect as mentioned by Elugbe and Omamor have been interwoven in the analysis to create a fuller picture of which structures are used to

express the different tenses. The analysis will examine how the verb phrase constructions are used and if they follow the norm set up by the linguists mentioned in chapter 2.4, or if they differ in any way.

There will be many examples in the text. These have not always been completely translated into SE. The reason for this is that I will focus on the verb phrases, and if the rest of the sentence is not relevant for the use of the verb phrase, it has usually not been translated. The following diagram shows the division between the tenses as a whole, showing us that present tense constructions are greatly predominant, while there is not much difference between the past and the future tenses.

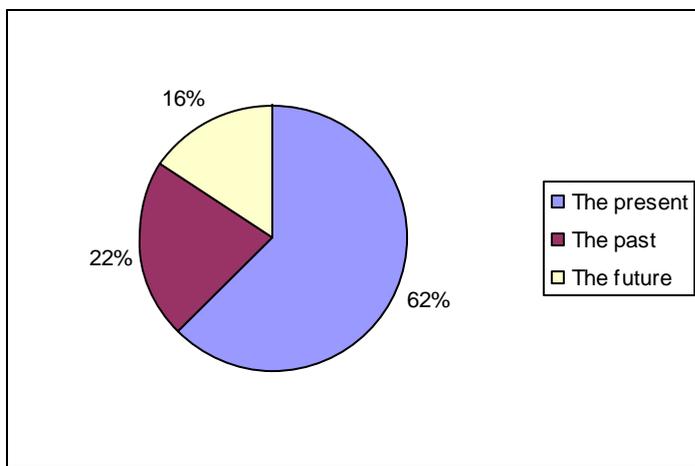


Diagram 1: Division between the three tenses

The following analysis will also examine which tense differs the most from SE.

4.3.1. The present

Here, the three structures previously mentioned have been examined, namely the correct SE present, the deviant SE present and the NPE structure “de + infinitive”. The result is shown in the diagram below.

As the diagram shows, the correct SE form, with its 65 percent of the verb constructions examined, is the dominant one in terms of the present tense. When it comes to non-standard SE forms, the NPE form “de + infinitive” and the deviant SE forms have almost the same number of occurrences.

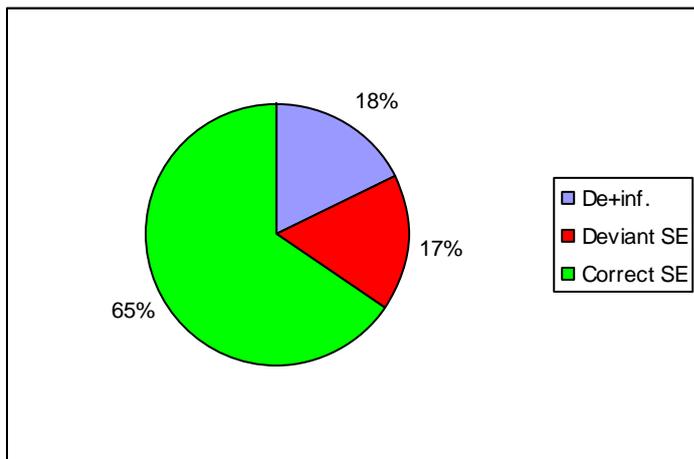


Diagram 2: The present

Aspects have not been considered here; in “[y]ou de ask why, instead to thank God that they done withdraw your case?” (*A Man of the People* 142), “to thank” should probably be “of thanking” in SE, but since it has an infinitive marker instead, it has still been regarded as a correct form.

The form “de + infinitive” should, according to Elugbe and Omamor (100), be used as representing a continuing or habitual action. This holds for many instances in the material examined as well, as in “[m]y friend de drive taxi like myself and. . .” (*Anthills of the Savannah* 124) and “[w]etin you de chop for your own house?” (*A Man of the People* 46). In the first example “de drive”, meaning “drives”, represents a habitual action in form of a profession, to drive a taxicab. In the second, “de chop”, “eat”, also represents a habitual action, “what do you (usually) eat in your own house?”

There are, however, exceptions. As mentioned in chapter 3.2. the “de + infinitive”-form is sometimes used to express the past tense, both on its own as in “[w]ho tell you say we de make small quarrel?” (*Anthills of the Savannah* 126) and with the particle “done” as in “. . . you done de begin meet another Elsie for party?” (*A Man of the People* 59). In such cases it has not been included in this area of research. There are also instances where this construction is modified to express the future tense, as in the imperative construction “[m]y sister, make you de ask them for me-o” (*A Man of the People* 62) or the aspectual structure “go + de + infinitive”. These forms will be further discussed under the future tense.

There are several instances where a verb has been ellipated. These instances have been treated differently depending on the following word. In this example “[y]ou suppose to know” (*A Man of the People* 59), which should be “you are supposed to know”, the ellipated “are” has made the “suppose” be regarded as an adjectival construction, and the “suppose” has thus not

been counted as a verb. Neither has “are” since only verbs actually in print have been included. Therefore, in the example “I no shy at all” (*Anthills of the Savannah* 206), which has an ellipped “am”, the ellipped verb has not been included.

The infinitive marker “to” is very often missing, but the verb in the infinitive has been treated as correct. An example of this is “[w]e wan help poor people like you” (*A Man of the People* 114). Here, the most logical SE construction would be “want to help”, but the infinitive marker is missing. The verb is, however, correct in terms of form and has been treated as such.

Many of the deviant present tense verbs concern the verb “to be”. In a sentence like “[n]o be so, James?” (*A Man of the People* 18), the correct SE sentence should be “isn’t it so, James?” Thus the verb has been regarded as deviant since it is still in the infinitive form where it should have been inflected to suit the subject.

In NPE, it is common to use the verb “get” instead of “have/has”, as in the example “[y]ou no hear when he say I no get common sense?” (*Anthills of the Savannah* 118). This occurred 16 times in the material researched, and these constructions have not been counted at all. They are obviously not correct in SE, but they are not really incorrect either, since it is a re-occurring feature commonly accepted in NPE.

4.3.2. The past

Here, as in the research of the present tense, three forms have been examined; the correct SE form, the deviant SE forms and the NPE construction ”done + infinitive”. The result is shown in the diagram below.

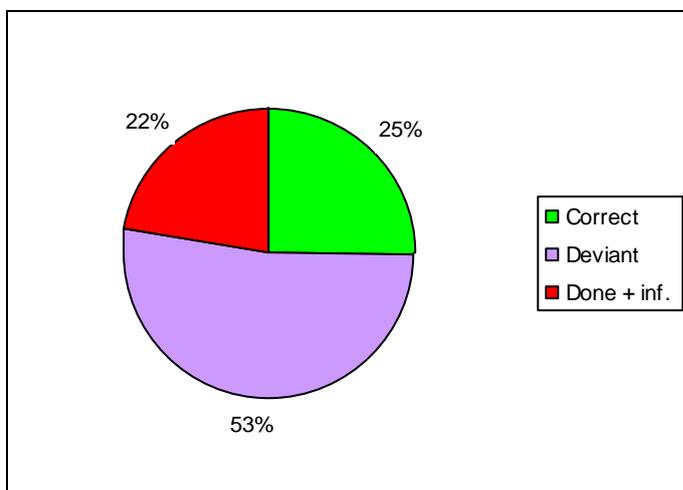


Diagram 3: The past

There is a major difference between the past and the present tense. Whereas 65 percent of the present tense verb constructions used are correct SE constructions, the same percentage for the past tense is only 25 percent. Here, the major group is the deviant SE forms, which measures up to as much as 53 percent, compared with 18 percent for the present tense. The NPE form is slightly more frequent here as well, 22 percent compared to the present tense 18 percent.

Negative constructions are usually expressed with the particle “no”, as in “Abi, you just discover I no pay you complete?” (*Anthills of the Savannah* 124). Here, the ellipited verb has been considered and the particle “no” has been read as it should be translated into proper SE, like “did not”. In that case, the verb “pay” becomes correct. This is almost exclusively applied in negative constructions, but there are a few exceptions. In the previous example, the verb “discover” has been regarded as correct as well, since the most natural thing to say in English would be “did you just discover”, and thus the verb is correct in form. Most of the past tense verb constructions regarded as correct are, however, negations.

Another example of how an ellipited auxiliary can make the following verb be regarded as correct, is “[h]e give you appointment?” (*A Man of the People* 32). Here, the verb “give”, which expresses the past tense, can be looked upon in two different ways. Either as deviant, since it does not have the form of the past tense (gave), or as correct, since the most proper SE construction would simply include the ellipited “did”, making it “did he give you appointment?” Since the verb is correct with the inclusion of the logical, ellipited auxiliary, it has been regarded as correct.

The deviant verb constructions are mainly “incorrect” because they have not been inflected into past tense verbs, according to SE, but have maintained their infinitive form. An example is “[y]ou no see say because you no tell me, I come make another big mistake” (*Anthills of the Savannah* 126), which in proper SE would have been “I went and made another big mistake”. As discussed earlier, “tell” has been treated as a correct SE form since the “did” is ellipited. “See” is in the present tense and will not be dealt with here. The point of this example was to show how “come” and “make” have been used. They have the form of the present tense infinitive, and this might be quite confusing if the context is not clear. If read without caution, it might even be mistaken for a future tense construction, leading to “I will come and make another big mistake”, which is not the case here.

The “done + infinitive”-form is used quite frequently as well, mainly to mark a completed action as in “[t]ell me one thing you done read” (*Anthills of the Savannah* 125) or

“[g]overnment done pass new law . . .” (*A Man of the People* 21). This concurs with what Elugbe and Omamor say about aspect in chapter 2.4., that the “don[e]” particle is used to express an action which has been completed before the “time of utterance” (Elugbe and Omamor 100). It is often very definite, absolutely not continuous. We can see this in the example “[a]nyways, the President done disappear. They no fit find am again” (*Anthills of the Savannah* 197). Here, there is no question that the action has been completed, the president has completely disappeared and cannot be found.

4.3.3. The future

Here, the SE forms have not been analysed. There were not many of them, and since there were so many occurrences of the unique “make + infinitive”-form, it seemed wise to examine that one together with the “go + infinitive”-form mentioned by Elugbe and Omamor (100).

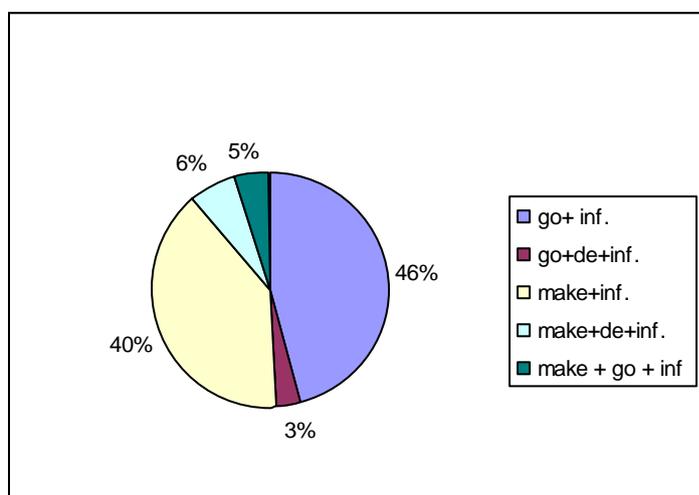


Diagram 4: The future

As shown, the main forms “go + infinitive” and “make + infinitive” are the most common ones, their sub-forms only making up a total of 14 percent. On the whole, there is an almost even division between the “go”- and “make”-forms; the “go”-forms summing up to a total of 49 and percent and the “make”-forms to 51 percent.

The “go + infinitive”-form is commonly used in the material examined as a future tense indicator, used for all regular verb phrases expressing the future, as in “I no go tell master lie” (*A Man of the People* 46) and “[w]e must go repairam” (*A man of the People* 132). A few occurrences have also been altered into “go + de + infinitive”, as in “. . . na only two times a day person go de chop now” (*A Man of the People* 21). This gives the sentence a more habitual context, meaning this will not occur only once, but repeatedly.

The structure “go + de + infinitive” as mentioned by Elugbe and Omamor (100) seems to have been altered by Achebe. He makes “de” and “go” switch places into for example “I think I tell you say Chief Nanga de go open book exhibition for six today” (*A Man of the People* 62) and “so instead for me to sidon rest for house like other people I de go knack grammar for this hot afternoon” (*Man of the People* 62). Here, we can see that although these structures could be divided into two forms, “de go” and “open”/”knack”, it expresses the future tense, “is/am going to”. This would be regarded as the present tense in SE, but it could well be looked upon as an alternation of the future aspect in NPE. They have therefore been counted into the group of “go + de + infinitive”.

There are also a few examples where the “go + infinitive” construction seems to express the past instead of the future. Consider the following short dialogue from *Anthills of the Savannah*:

- Ah, madam I no know say I go find you here, self.
- Why you no go find me here? This man na your sister husband? (124)

Here, in the first line, the proper SE translation would probably be “I did not know I was going to find you here”, thus the past tense. The presence of the past tense is not as strong in the second line; “why would you not find me here?” Neither of these have been excluded from the sum of “go + infinitive”-forms. This is mainly because although the verb “was” is in the past tense, and the whole sentence starts with an ellipted “did”, the whole phrase “I go find you here” expresses the future, he did not know before he went there. It could also be translated into “. . . that I would find you here”. This still leaves the ellipted verb “did” in the past tense, where it has been analysed, but the “go find” still expresses the future, although it may seem otherwise.

Since barely half of the future tense constructions examined matched what Elugbe and Omamor said, we can see that Achebe has also used a more personal form for expressing the future. The “make”-forms are mainly used as some sort of imperative, requesting or encouraging someone else to do something: “[m]ake you go sidon” (*Anthills of the Savannah* 32) and “make you go call dat sister of yours” (*Anthills of the Savannah* 33). It can also be used for more brusque orders or commands: “[m]ake you shut your smelling mouth there, Mr. Lawyer” (*Anthills of the Savannah* 118).

In a few cases it is also used as some sort of conditional, as in “[m]ake you put Minister money for my hand and all the wahala on top. I no mind at all” (*A Man of the People* 15).

Here, it expresses a wish or condition “if you should give me the Minister’s money I wouldn’t mind”.

There is not really a difference between the main “make + infinitive”-form and the sub-forms “make + de + infinitive” and “make + go + infinitive”. Since “de + infinitive” is used to express a habitual or continuing action in the present tense, one would assume that it would have more or less the same function in this construction as well. This is somewhat true for the sentence “. . . take one good Peugeot from office as others de do and take one driver make he de drive am for you” (*Anthills of the Savannah* 128). Here, “make he de drive” would represent a habitual action, since he would be driving the car always. However, this does not hold for all these constructions. In “[q]uick, make we de go!” (*Anthills of the Savannah* 177), it represents a more instantaneous action that will take place in the future. It will not be made a habit of and it is not continuous, and thus the use of “de + infinitive” together with the particle “make” is different from the original use of “de + infinitive”. Since this construction is not mentioned by Elugbe and Omamor, or Agheyisi, it seems as if Achebe has created this structure to fit his purposes and personal style.

5. Summary and Conclusion

The aim of this essay has been to examine how Chinua Achebe uses elements of both semantic and syntactic code-switching.

The essay has provided background information about and examples of code-switching, and explained what a proverb is. Further, it has provided an overview of Pidgin Languages and more specifically of Nigerian Pidgin English, and the verb tense constructions of the language.

The analysis has been divided into two categories, semantic and syntactic. Those have been further divided, semantic into Igbo vocabulary and proverbs, and syntactic into the present, the past and the future tenses of the verb. The analyses look into and examine the material obtained from the four primary sources and give examples showing how a certain element is used in the novels.

The semantic analyses showed that the use of Igbo vocabulary is fairly common but that most of the words and/or phrases can be understood to at least some degree. It also showed that proverbs are very common even in everyday speech and that they can be translated in different ways, giving them slightly different semantic meaning. It is up to the author to

translate the proverbs in the way he or she chooses, and Achebe has given us several examples of how he alters the English translation of a proverb to better fit into the context. The proverbs give us a vivid picture of how the Igbo people experience the world around them, especially when compared to English proverbs having approximately the same meaning.

The syntactic analysis showed that the use of NPE constructions was not consistent for all tenses. In the present tense, only 18 percent were of the NPE construction, and a total of 35 percent were non-standard English. In the past tense, however, 22 percent of the verb constructions were in the NPE form and as much as 53 percent more were in a non-standard English form, giving a total of as much as 75 percent. This shows that although the past tense constructions on the whole were much less common than present tense constructions, it is the past tense constructions which really differ from SE, portraying a different language and culture.

We have also seen that while SE only recognizes two tenses, NPE has three. NPE also has other ways of looking at aspects, not looking only at the verb as such but at the semantic meaning of it.

All the future tense constructions examined were non-standard forms, so a comparison with the present and past tenses cannot be properly made. However, since part of the reason for examining only non-standard forms was the lack of standard ones, it can be concluded that it seems as if Achebe has a tendency to let his characters express the future tense in non-standard forms while speaking NPE. It can also be concluded that it is in the future tense that Achebe mostly alters the verb phrase to suit his style and needs, creating a new verb construction not discussed in the material by the three linguists used for the background. Also, although the future tense constructions were relatively few compared to the present tense, we can see that these, partly together with the past tense, really make up the uniqueness of the pidgin language examined by differing from SE.

This study has examined whether Chinua Achebe, as he himself expresses it, “extend[s] the frontiers of English” to “accommodate the African thought-pattern”. The result is that he is quite successful in this task. He easily interweaves Igbo expressions and vocabulary without making the text incomprehensible, thus giving us an expanded view of Igbo society. He often explains himself what the foreign words mean, if not verbatim then at least by the way he uses them in different contexts.

Further, he shows us the language much used in Nigeria today, the Nigerian Pidgin English. He does this partly according to the norm set up by Elugbe and Omamor, and partly

by altering these norms into his own personal style, without violating them in a disturbing way. This does not only enhance the cultural value of the novels, but it also gives us greater knowledge of pidgin languages, their structure and when they are used. It also shows the flaws of the language, how it might be misunderstood by outsiders who only understand standard English. If one is not careful and pay attention to the verb constructions, we have seen that it can be easy to make mistakes and misunderstand the intended meaning, not the least because of all the different constructions used.

Had the novels been written without the features analysed here, the reader's picture of the society would probably have been much different. It would have been the view of the English and not, as intended, the view of the Igbo.

List of Works Cited

Primary Sources

Achebe, Chinua. *A Man of the People*. New York: Anchor. 1966.

---. *Anthills of the Savannah*. New York: Anchor, 1987.

---. *Arrow of God*. New York: Anchor, 1964, 1974.

---. *Things Fall Apart*. London: Penguin, 1958.

Secondary Sources

Achebe Chinua. "The Role of the Writer in a New Nation." *African Writers on African Writing*. Ed. G. D. Killam. London: Heinemann, 1973.

Agheyisi, Rebecca Nogieru. *West African Pidgin English: Simplification and Simplicity*. Ann Arbor: UMI, 1971.

Alm-Arvius, Christina. *Introduction to Semantics*. Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1998.

Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary. 2nd ed. 2005.

Coulmas, Florian. *Sociolinguistics: the Study of Speakers' Choices*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005.

Crystal, David. *The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of Language*. 2nd ed. 1997.

Elugbe, Ben Ohi, and Augusta Phil Omamor. *Nigerian Pidgin (Background and Prospects)*. Ibadan, Nigeria: Heinemann, 1991.

Gardner-Chloros, Penelope. "Code-switching: Language Selection in Three Strasbourg Department Stores." *Sociolinguistics: A Reader and Coursebook*. Ed. Coupland, Nikolas, and Adam Jaworski. New York: Palgrave, 1997.

Igboanusi, Herbert. *A Dictionary of Nigerian English Usage*. Ibadan, Nigeria: Enicrownfit, 2002.

---. *Igbo English in the Nigerian Novel*. Ibadan, Nigeria: Enicrownfit, 2002.

Melchers, Gunnel, and Philip Shaw. *World Englishes*. London; Arnold, 2003.

Ogbaa, Kalu. *Understanding Things Fall Apart*. Westport: Greenwood, 1999.

Electronic Sources

"Nigerian Pidgin". *answers.com*. 10 Dec. 2007

<<http://www.answers.com/topic/nigerianpidgin>>

"English Proverbs". *wikiquote.org*. 5 Jan. 2008.

http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/English_proverbs

Appendices

Appendix 1: List of Igbo vocabulary and their translations

Igbo word	Occurrences	English translation
Obi	29	(here) family house; main hall (Igb.) Masked people acting as the masked spirits of the ancestors of the clan. These are very powerful and frightening, and are held in the highest respect. (own)
Egwugwu	28	A loanword for "one's own personal god"
Chi	11	(Igb.) Exclamation (Umuofia is the clan of the people portrayed)
Umuofia kwenu!	9	Mystery child believed to be possessed by spirits, and likely to die young, and to reincarnate repeatedly to the torment of its mother. (Igb.)
Ogbanje	7	Igbo social rank, a title holder (Igb.)
Ozo	7	Exclamation
Ee-e-e!	6	Small item with a strong connection to an ogbanje child. As long as this exists, the ogbanje child can keep dying and being reborn to torment its mother. (own)
iyi-uwa	8	musical instrument made of metal or iron, open at one end; also used by the town crier when he makes his rounds to proclaim an important announcement. (Igb.)
ogene	6	Exclamation
Yaa!	6	The village playground (TFA 31)
ilo	5	
Agbala do-o-o-o! Agbala ekeneo-o-o-o!	4	wooden musical instrument, hollow inside
ekwe	4	(Igb.)
jigida	4	(Strings of) waist-beads (TFA 51) Kinsmen; sons of the kindred; men born to the kindred; direct male descendants; a group of men who are related (Igb.)
umunna	4	
efulefu	3	Worthless, empty men. (TFA 105) Jaundice, or jaundice-like fever; high fever associated with malaria; fever in general.
iba	4	(Igb.)
agadi-nwayi	2	Old woman; a war medicine. (TFA 10) Woman; man who has not taken a title (TFA 11)
agbala	2	
gome gome gome gome	2	Sound of the ogene (own)
ndichie	2	Elders (TFA 10)
Ogbu-agali-odu	2	One of the evil essences loosed upon the

	world by the potent ‘medicines’ which the tribe had made in the distant past against its enemies but had now forgotten how to control. (TFA 76)
Aru oyim de de de dei!	1 How the <i>egwugwu</i> greet each other (TFA 65)
Chi negbu madu ubosi ndu ya	
nato ya uto daluo-o-o!	1
ege	1 A wrestling style (TFA 37)
eneke-nti-oba	1 This is the name of bird in a folktale (TFA 39)
Ikenga	1 A carving of a god. (TFA 131) Being unduly proud; to be impressive or to behave in a manner as to attract attention to oneself. (Igb.)
inyanga	1 The final ceremony of a wedding ritual (own)
isa-ifi	1 Our father (TFA 15)
nna ayi	1 Mother (TFA 56)
Nne	1 Welcome (TFA 144)
nno	1 Crime? (own)
nso-ani	1 A little bird in a folktale (TFA 23) Crime. (This is the word used when Okonkwo
nza	1 has accidentally killed a man) (own)
ochu	1 Medicine (TFA 136) The one that uses its tail to drive flies away =
ogwu	1 a cow (TFA 84) Part of Igbo caste system. (Igb.) Outcast(s)
oji odu achu iiiji-o-o!	1 (TFA 115)
osu	1 One of the four days in the Igbo week (own)
Oye	1
Tufia-a!	1 Musical instrument (own) An item which is used to draw patterns on the
udu	1 body. (TFA 71) Direct female descendants; daughters of the kindred; women born to the kindred, excluded women married into the kindred; a group of women who are related in Igbo traditional
uli	1 society (Igb.)
umuada	
Umuofia obodo dike! Umuofia	
obodo dike! Umuofia obodo	
dike!	1 A celebration day on which a bride’s suitor brings palm-wine to the bride’s entire
uri	1 umunna. (TFA 81)
Yao!	1 Exclamation
Total number of instances	179

Igb. = translation taken from the Igboanusi dictionary.

TFA = translation taken from Things Fall Apart

Own = My own translation, derived from the context.

Appendix 2.1: proverbs - animal

31 instances

A: 17: If the lizard of the homestead should neglect to do the things for which its kind is known, it will be mistaken for the lizard of the farmland.

A: 18; 206: When an adult is in the house the she-goat is not left to suffer the pains of parturition on its tether. (18) – An adult does not sit and watch while the she-goat suffers the pain of childbirth tied to a post. (206)

A: 20; 138; 203: A toad does not run in the day (...time 138, 203) unless something is after it. (20)

A: 26; 226: The fly that has no one to advise it follows the corpse into the grave / . . . the ground (226).

A: 40: When we see a little bird dancing in the middle of the pathway we must know that its drummer is in the near-by bush.

A: 44: The inquisitive monkey gets a bullet in the face.

A: 61; 132; 144: A man who brings home ant-infested faggots should not complain if he is visited by lizards (61). - The man who brings ant-infested faggots into his hut should not grumble when lizards begin to pay him a visit (132) ... should expect the visits of lizards. (144)

A: 62; 226: The very thing which kills mother rat prevents its little ones from opening their eyes. / The very Thing which kills Mother Rat is always there to make sure that its young ones never open their eyes (226)

A: 85: Only a foolish man can go after a leopard with his bare hands.

A: 128: The offspring of a hawk cannot fail to devour chicks.

A: 130; 226: The fly that perches on a mound of dung may strut around as it likes, it cannot move the mound. / The fly that struts around on a mound of dung wastes his time; the mound will always be greater than the fly (226).

A: 136: A snake is never as long as the stick to which we liken its length.

A: 143; 226: When a man sees a snake all by itself he may wonder whether it is an ordinary snake or the untouchable python. / A common snake which a man sees all alone may become a python in his eyes (226).

A: 156: A fowl does not eat into the belly of a goat.

A: 169; 229: If the rat [can]not run fast enough it must make way for the tortoise (169). / If the rat cannot flee fast enough let him make way for the tortoise! (229)

A: 171: Every lizard lies on its belly, so we cannot tell which one has a bellyache

A: 172: There are more ways than one of killing a dog.

A: 173: When mother-cow is cropping giant grass her calves watch her mouth.

A: 226: The little bird which hops off the ground and lands on an ant-hill may not know it but is still on the ground.

A: 226: White ant chews *igbegulu* because it is lying on the ground; let him climb the palm tree and chew.

A: 226: Bat said he knew his ugliness and chose to fly by night.

Appendix 2.2: Proverbs – Family

15 instances

F: 16: A father does not speak falsely to his son.

F: 16: The lore of the land is beyond the knowledge of many fathers.

F: 18: A boy sent by his father to steal does not go stealthily but breaks the door with his feet.

F: 63-64: A man's debt to his father-in-law can never be fully discharged.

F: 64: The man who has no gift for speaking says his kinsmen have said all there is to say.

F: 93: If a man sought for a companion who acted entirely like himself he would live in solitude.

F: 93: To say *My father told me* is to swear the greatest oath.

F: 95: He is a fool who treats his brother worse than a stranger.

F: 99-100: A man always has more sense than his children.

F: 100: It is from a man's own stock of sense that he gives out to his sons.

F: 100: A boy who tries to wrestle with his father gets blinded by the old man's loin-cloth.

F: 131; 220: When two brothers fight a stranger reaps the harvest. / when brothers fight to death a stranger inherits their father's estate (220).

F: 168: A woman cannot place more than the length of her leg on her husband.

F: 226: The boy who persists in asking what happened to his father before he has enough strength to avenge him is asking for his father's fate.

Appendix 2.3: Proverbs – Homestead

12 instances

H: 46; 100: In such a place [A great man's compound], whatever music you beat on your drum there is always someone to beat on it /Whatever tune you play in the compound of a great man there is always someone to dance to it (100)

H: 85: When Suffering knocks at your door and you say there is no seat left for him, he tells you not to worry because he has brought his own stool.

H: 100; 226: A woman who began cooking before another must have more broken utensils / He who builds a homestead before another can boast more broken pots. (226)

H: 112: A man cannot be too busy to break the first kolanut of the day in his own house.

H: 112: We do not by-pass a man and enter his compound.

H: 113: A man who visits a craftsman at work finds a sullen host.

H: 113: Greeting in the cold harmattan is taken from the fireside.

H: 161; 222: Until a man wrestles with one of those who make a path across his homestead the others will not stop. / Unless a man wrestled with those who walked behind his compound the path never closed (222).

H: 171-172: A woman who carries her head on a rigid neck as if she is carrying a pot of water will never live for long with any husband.

Appendix 2.4: Proverbs – people in general

26 instances

P: 11: The man who has never submitted to anything will soon submit to the burial mat.

P: 20: When a man of cunning dies a man of cunning buries him.

P: 62: When a man sees an unfamiliar sight, then perhaps his death is coming.

P: 70: An old woman is never old when it comes to the dance she knows.

P: 71; 226: A man who knows that his anus is small does not swallow an udala seed (71). /
He who will swallow udula seeds must consider the size of his anus. (226)

P: 71; 208: The man (person 208) who sends (sets 208) a child to catch a shrew will also
give (find 208) him water to wash (the odour from 208) his hand.

P: 85: What a man does not know is greater than he.

P: 86: A man may refuse to do what is asked of him but he may not refuse to be asked.

P: 100: When we see an old woman stop in her dance to point again and again in the same
direction we can be sure that somewhere there something happened long ago which
touched the roots of her life.

P: 112: We do not apply an ear-pick to the eye.

P: 133: A man who has nowhere else to put his hand for support puts it on his own knee.

P: 133: When we want to make a charm we look for the animal whose blood can match its
power.

P: 138: When we open our mouths we know the men from the boys.

P: 142: If you thank a man for what he has done he will have strength to do more.

P: 168: A traveller to distant places should make no enemies.

P: 169: A man of sense does not go on hunting little bush rodents when his age mates are
after big game.

P: 184: The man to fear in action is the one who first submits to suffer to the limit.

P: 189; 212: A man must dance the dance prevalent (prevailing 212) in his time.

P: 204: A man who asks questions does not lose his way.

P: 224: He whose name is called again and again by those trying in vain to catch a wild
bull has something he alone can do to bulls.

P: 226: No man however great [is] greater than his people. (230)

P: 226: No one ever won judgement against his clan. (230)

P: 226-227: The man who belittles the sickness which Monkey has suffered should ask to
see the eyes which his nurse got from blowing the sick fire.

P: 226: An ill-fated man drinks water and it catches in his teeth.

Appendix 2.5: Proverbs – Spirit

8 instances

S: 27: If a man says yes his *chi* also says yes.

S: 39: A man might have Ngwu and still be killed by Ojukwu.

S: 51: The only woman whose breasts stayed erect year after year was the maiden-spirit.

S: 129: A man does not talk when masked spirits speak.

S: 136: No matter how many spirits plotted a man's death it would come to nothing unless his personal god took a hand in the deliberation.

S: 154: When a masked spirit visits you you have to appease its footprints with presents.

S: 209: A god who demands the sacrifice of a chick might raise it to a goat if you went to ask a second time.

S: 226: The man who walks ahead of his fellows spots spirits on the way

Appendix 2.6: Proverbs – Miscellaneous

30 instances

M: 2: A bad moon does not leave anyone in doubt.

M: 13; 226: When a handshake goes beyond the elbow we know it has turned to another thing (13). / When a handshake passes the elbow it becomes another thing. (226)

M: 26: (Let) the slave who sees another cast into a shallow grave know that he will be buried in the same way when his day comes.

M: 50: A coward may cover the ground with his words but when the time comes to fight he runs away.

M: 60: Unless the wind blows we do not see the fowl's rump.

M: 85: When the roof and walls of a house fall in, the ceiling is not left standing.

M: 89: The death that will kill a man begins as an appetite.

M: 91: Utterance ha[s] [the] power to change fear into a living truth.

M: 112: The time a man wakes up is his morning.

M: 120: The flute player must sometimes stop to wipe his nose.

M: 127: A ripe maize can be told by merely looking at it.

M: 133: A disease that has never been seen before cannot be cured with everyday herbs.

M: 143: Unless the penis dies young it will surely eat bearded meat.

M: 143: When hunting day comes we shall hunt in the backyard of the grass-cutter.

M: 144: As soon as we shake hands with a leper he will want an embrace.

M: 144: The evil charm brought in at the end of a pole is not too difficult to take outside again.

M: 146: Only those who carry evil medicine on their body should fear the rain.

M: 159: The eye is very greedy and will steal a look at something its owner has no wish to see.

M: 160: Every land ha[s] its own sky.

M: 187: If one finger brought oil it messed up the other.

M: 193: The noise of even the loudest event must begin to die down by the second market week.

M: 226: Darkness is so great it gives horns to a dog.

M: 226: It is *ofo* that gives rain-water power to cut dry earth.

M: 226: The sleep that lasts from one market day to another has become death.

M: 226: The thing that beats the drum for *ngwesi* is inside the ground.

M: 226: Even when people are still talking about the man Rat bit to death Lizard takes money to have his teeth filed. (226)

M: 226: The mighty trees fall and the little birds scatter in the bush. (226)

M: 226: When the air is fouled by a man on top of a palm tree the fly is confused. (226)

M: 227: When death wants to take a little dog it prevents it from smelling even excrement. (227)