

Review

Nigeria's Literary English: Lexical and Cushioning Techniques in Selected Novels of Zaynab Alkali and Chimamanda Adichie

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The meaning derivable from language is not only determined by the linguistic components of the expression, but also by the context of the given expression. This paper examines the lexical features and cushioning techniques that form part of the pragmatics of the language used by Zaynab Alkali and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in their selected novels. The selected novels are Zaynab Alkali's *The Virtuous Woman* and *The Stillborn*, and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of Yellow Sun*. This study adopts Braj Kachru's theory of Concentric Circle. The data analysis shows that the language used by the authors in the selected texts emanates from the Nigerian sociolinguistic environment as it contains lexical features and cushioning techniques from the author's Nigerian indigenous languages. The analysis shows also that Adichie's use of the identified lexical features and cushioning techniques is overwhelmingly higher than Alkali's even as there are some similarities in their language such as in kinship terms. These features capture the indigenous language habits of the Nigerian environment where the authors originate from.

Keywords: Nigerian Literary English; Nigerian English; Lexical Features; Cushioning Techniques; Pragmatics; Indigenous Languages; World Englishes; Concentric Circle Theory; Zaynab Alkali; Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

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Introduction

Literary works have predominantly been written by Nigerians in English in order to achieve a wider readership both nationally and internationally. The global spread and status of English (Crystal, 2003) ensures a global readership of any good literary work. In addition, English is a second language in Nigeria, and has become powerful language as it performs numerous functions such as official language, the language of education, inter-ethnic communication, etc. (Awonusi, 2004; Owolabi, 2012). Every educated Nigerian can effectively communicate in English, but the English used in Nigeria differs from the one inherited from the colonialists or the present L₁ speakers as it has undergone a lot of conditioning. In literary writing, Nigerians have equally conditioned their English by imposing their indigenous language habits such that their

writing exhibits peculiar features that have earned it the sobriquet 'Nigerian literary English', a term which accounts for the modifications English has undergone in the Nigerian environment which manifests in literary writing (Aboh & Uduk, 2016).

This paper focuses on the lexical features and cushioning techniques that form part of the pragmatic features of Nigerian languages and culture, evidenced in the selected authors' works in their literary communication. The works are Zaynab Alkali's *The Virtuous Woman* simply referred to in this paper as *TVW* and *The Stillborn* (*TSB*), and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of Yellow Sun*, now referred to in this paper as *PH* and *HYS* respectively for ease of the analysis.

The Literature

English used in Nigeria can be distinguished from other national varieties due to the peculiar ways it reflects features of Nigerian languages. English in Nigeria bears the mark of the socio-cultural patterns of language use in the various Nigerian indigenous languages both in its written and verbal forms. English used by Nigerian literary writers has been "altered to suit its new African surrounding" (Achebe, 1975, p. 62). Achebe's summation implies that the works though written in English language contain features of the indigenous language which aids in 'decolonizing' English.

Language use in Alkali's *TSB* and *TVW* has received little attention from analysts. Koroye (1989) makes no direct reference to Alkali's use of language in *TSB*, but alludes to Alkali's use of Islamic lexical items and expressions. Ibileye (2016) observes that Alkali's writing reflects the socio-cultural realities of her society, and that her thematic focus explores womanist issues, and their resolution, as she explores themes of traditional versus the emerging modern world. Koroye's (1989) allusion to Alkali's use of Islamic expressions as well as Ibileye's observation that the novels explore themes of traditional and the emerging new world are a metaphor for the relevance of language of the texts. For without the Islamic expressions, the reader may not understand the religious inclination of the characters, and by extension, the people of Northern Nigeria. Similarly, an emerging modernity such as the one Alkali writes on, without the inclusion of the language that comes with it (English) is stripped of its power of expression since English is part of the modernity which colonial education bequeathed to Nigerians and which Alkali uses in writing her texts.

Alkali affirms that it is very challenging to write in English about characters who speak another language (James, 1990). This challenge includes expressing accurately in English (in her novels) the cultural meanings and contexts of ideas and concepts inherent in her society which are better expressed in the indigenous Hausa language but which she renders in English in order to achieve wider readership (Loflin, 1998). Alkali's works, particularly *TSB* and *TVW*, alongside the works of some other African writers (such as Ali, and Gimba) explores the repertoire of 'spiritual practice', which promote such Islamic expressions as *shahadah* (monotheism), *Ibadat* (forms of prayer), *akhlaq* (Islamic virtue), *hijab* (veiling), among others (Edwin, 2016).

Apart from Alkali's infusion of Islamic lexical items to denote Islamic religion in her works, like other Muslim women authors, her works reflect 'hybridised texts' that 'thematise human existence on the verge of two cultures, being torn apart between their Muslim identity and the Western domain of their lives' (Šindelářová, 2008, p.17). Part of this 'Western domain of their lives' is their adoption of English as their literary language. Edwin ((2016) posits that the "native idioms" of Alkali's novels, (as Alkali calls it) does not refer so much to her language of communication but more to the 'texture of the issues she discusses in them' (p.29). Though Edwin (2016) would want the reader to see Alkali's use of native idioms as 'textures of the issues she discusses' rather than a linguistic issue, these issues are cultural and language is part of culture and gives it expression and therefore cannot be divorced from culture. Alkali in Edwin (2016) admits that her works possess the orality of Hausa culture and literary traditions and that she transcribes what is said by her characters into English though they (the characters) speak in another language (Hausa). Such transcription presents the "native idiom" as markers of the cultural landscape of Northern Nigeria. Alkali uses indirectness in the dialogue between the characters in her text (Ibileye, 2016).

On Adichie's works, Olusola and Lawal (2013) observe that her use of language projects her unique linguistic and ideological configurations of gender and power as she critiques the society. Her words and expressions highlight some of these gender and power relations. Adichie uses pragmatic devices such as deictics, implicatures, and indirect speech acts which bear unstated meaning that can only be deciphered by interactants through shared knowledge (Agantiem, 2013). Agantiem's study did not explore pragmatics from Nigerian English perspective but from Speech Acts point of view. He studied texts written by one author (Adichie) who is of Igbo extraction, rather than two authors, Alkali and Adichie, who are from the Northern and Southern parts of Nigeria (Hausa and Igbo).

Adichie's English has been influenced by Achebe (known for domesticating English in his novels) whose English variety is Nigerian (Anyokwu, 2011; Asoegwu-Ijezie, 2012; Osipeju, 2014). This English exhibits features of her Igbo indigenous

language and culture such as cushioning, lexical transfer, restriction, etc. in the text. These characteristics are pragmatic in nature and capture the variety of English termed Nigerian English. Enyi (2015) says that Adichie's *HYS* demonstrates evidence of the use of direct translation from the indigenous language, the use of semantic extension, code switching, proverbs, etc., and concludes that these findings suggest a nativisation process.

From the literature, none of the reviewed works used texts from Northern and Southern authors in Nigeria. Similarly, some of the works did not explore the Nigerian English perspective. Selecting texts from both authors is aimed at determining if the same features of Nigerian literary English present in Adichie's novels can be identified in Alkali's fiction. Second, the selection gives the researcher the opportunity of studying pragmatically Zainab Alkali's novels (as older generation writing) and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's works (as a new Nigerian author). Filling these gaps is the objectives of this paper.

Research Methodology

Data for the study were extracted from Zainab Alkali's *The Stillborn* and *The Virtuous Woman*, and Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of a Yellow Sun*. This includes lexical items or expressions whose meanings are contextual, and peculiar Nigerian English usages in relation to the identified features. The data were analysed quantitatively using simple percentages and qualitatively by discursively showing how they (the data) are used in the selected texts to manifest lexical features and cushioning techniques that originate from the Nigerian culture and linguistic environment, and the roles these selected data play in the creative communication of meaning in the four selected texts.

Theoretical Framework

The Concentric Circle is a Three-circle Model of World Englishes propounded by Kachru (1982) that distinguishes and categorizes the varieties of English in the World. Kachru described the spread of English around the world in terms of three concentric circles: the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle, and the Expanding Circle. This model advocates equal recognition of the English varieties irrespective of their classification and where they are used. In Kachru's words, "the concepts of the three concentric circles help us in understanding the pluralism and the institutionalization of English across cultures and languages".

The Inner Circle refers to the traditional bases of English dominated by the mother-tongue varieties, where English is a first language (White, 1997). These include such countries as USA, UK, Canada, Australia, etc., with about 375 million speakers, almost 70 percent of whom are from the United States. The varieties of English used here are said to be 'norm providing'. The Outer Circle, on the other hand, consists of the earlier phases of the spread of English to non-native settings, where the language plays an important 'second language' role in a multilingual setting (Rajadurai, 2005). Examples of the Outer Circle countries are former colonies of the UK or the USA, such as Malaysia, Singapore, India, Ghana, Nigeria, etc. (Rajadurai, 2005). English plays an important historical and governmental role in these countries owing to its background as a colonial language. The Outer Circle English is considered as 'norm-developing', and is used by an estimated population of 350 to 450 million speakers (Kachru, 1985). The Expanding Circle refers to the countries where English is learnt and used as a foreign language with no history of colonization members of the Inner Circle (i.e. Britain or USA). English does not play any institutional or social role in the territories. English is taught as a 'foreign' language as the most useful vehicle of international communication (White, 1997). The countries in the Expanding Circle include China, Japan, Greece and Poland (Crystal, 2003). The English used in the Expanding Circle is regarded as 'norm dependent', with about 750 million speakers.

Accordingly, the theory interrogates the traditional ownership of English with the dichotomy of native and non-native users of English (Higgins, 2003) and deems it irrelevant (Kachru, 1997). It also accounts for the variations in the use of English in the different national contexts due to the sociolinguistic realities of the nations. Kachru (1997) suggests two types of linguistic communities at present: the norm-providing varieties with English as a native or a second language and the norm-dependent varieties with English as a foreign language or an international language.

English is bound to have different varieties owing to its global expansion. The concentric circle theory helps to analyse the features of English found in the texts. It is believed that the writers are influenced to use English the way they do because of their cultural and social experiences, as well as their worldview. Holmes (2008, p.34) avers that "...language provides a means of encoding a community's knowledge, beliefs and values i.e. its culture". It is therefore expected that the cultural backgrounds of the authors influence the English used in their works under study, and that their pragmatic orientation manifests in their Outer Circle English, hence, contextual.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Lexical Techniques

The lexical techniques refer to the pragmatic use of words in the sampled texts that are regarded Nigerian specific because they approximate the people's way of life. These include the use lexical items that are either expressed in their indigenous language forms, or adapted into English, or both. The following table (Table 1) contains the frequency distribution of the lexical items found in the selected texts.

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of the Lexical Features

Lexical Features	<i>TSB</i>	<i>TVW</i>	<i>PH</i>	<i>HYS</i>	Freq	%
Loans words	2	0	51	56	109	55.3
Kinship/Endearment Terms	4	4	10	9	27	13.7
Loan blends	1	3	19	20	43	21.8
Neologism/Coinages	0	0	5	13	18	9.1
Total	7	7	85	98	197	100

Four major lexical features were identified in the data. These are loan words, kinship and endearment terms/expressions, loan blends, and coinages. In loan words, *TSB* had 1.01% (n – 2) occurrences, no loan words were observed in *TVW*, *PH* had 25.9% (n – 51) occurrences, and in *HYS*, 28.4% (n – 56) of loan words were observed. Loan words recorded 55.3% (n – 109) of the entire lexical features. For kinship, and endearment terms, *TSB* recorded 2.03% (n – 4), *TVW* recorded 2.03% (n – 4), while *PH* and *HYS* had frequencies of 5.07% (n – 10) and 4.56% (n – 9) respectively. Kinship and endearment terms had a total frequency of 13.7% (n – 27) in the whole lexical features. Loan blends had a total 21.8% (n – 43) occurrence. Of this frequency, *TSB* had 0.5% (n – 1), *TVW* recorded 1.5% (n – 3), *PH* 9.64% (n – 19) whereas *HYS* had 10.15% (n – 20) loan blends. Neologisms and coinages were not found in *TSB* and *TVW* respectively. *PH* recorded 2.5% (n – 5) of neologisms, whereas *HYS* had a frequency of 6.6% (n – 13) of coinages or neologisms. This means that this lexical feature accounted for 9.1% (n -18) of the lexical techniques employed by the authors in the studied novels. The total identified lexical strategies were 197 out of which *TSB* recorded 3.55% (n – 7) and *TVW* recorded 3.55% (n – 7) as its total as well. On the other hand, *PH* had a total 43.15% (n – 85), and *HYS* had a total of 49.7% (n – 98) out of the total figure of 197 lexical features. This result indicates that Adichie's *PH* and *HYS* overwhelmingly contain more identified lexical features and techniques, compared to Alkali's *TSB* and *TVW*.

Loan Words/Lexical Transfers

Borrowing may be inevitable when the borrowed words do not have equivalents in the language it is being adopted. In such a circumstance, an attempt to translate their meanings fails to appropriately capture or retain their original meaning and the intended messages might be distorted or misinterpreted or even completely lost hence the word is transferred. See examples in Appendix A. The identified loan words refer to different concepts such as religion/mode of worship, clothing or fashion, food/food items, etc. For instance, La'aser (*TSB*, p.38), Chi (*HYS*, p.506), Chukwu (*PH*, p.91), and Aja (*PH*, p.151), refer to religion/mode of worship and spirituality. La'aser (*TSB*, p.38) originated from the Arabic word *Ṣalāt al-ʿAṣr* which translates to afternoon prayer. This name varieties in different regions where Islam is practiced hence La'aser in Nigeria. It is the third of the five daily prayers (salat) performed by practicing Muslims. Chi (*HYS*, p.506) means God or god in Igbo (Capital 'G' for High God and small 'g' for small or personal god). The concept of God and god underscores one of the differences between the Igbo traditional religion and the Christian religion and how they conceptualise God/god. God as a word refers to the Almighty in Christianity. In Igbo traditional society/religion, there are two concepts of God: the High God (Chukwu – i.e Chi ukwu), and the small gods (chi). The High God can be reached or worshipped through the small gods which may be one's personal gods. The implication is that there are other gods that perform some specific functions. The following excerpts illustrate this view:

"This is what our people say to the High God, the Chukwu"... "Give me both wealth and a child, but if I must choose one, give me a child because when my child grows, so will my wealth" ... "Nekenem, look at me. My son owns that house that can fit in every man in Abba, and yet many times I have nothing to put on my plate..." (*PH*, p. 91)
 'God bless you, your *chi* will break away the rocks on your part. Do you hear me?' (*HYS*, p.121)

I knew you did not die, I knew your chi was wide awake' (HYS, p.506). In the first excerpt, Papa Nnukwu (in PH, p. 91) laments his abandonment by his very wealthy son Eugene, who sees his father as a heathen for refusing to convert to Christianity (Catholic) and severed all father and son relationship with him which includes fully supporting him financially. In this statement, Papa Nnukwu captures the Igbo conception of *Chukwu* as the High God.

In the second excerpt (HYS, p.121), Odenigbo's mother blesses Ugwu, her son's houseboy. The *chi* that she refers to in the excerpt is Ugwu's personal god. This is why she uses the possessive pronoun '...your *chi* will break away the rocks on your part' (HYS, p.121), indicating that the god belongs to Ugwu alone. When a person's god breaks rocks on one's part, it means that the obstacles that impede the individual's progress are removed by the given personal god. This meaning of *chi* implies that the personal god guides and protects the person. This is the meaning in Nnesinachi's conversation with Ugwu who everyone thought had died in the war (HYS, p.506). Nnesinachi's assertion that she knew that Ugwu's *chi* was wide awake means that the said god was very vigilant and had been looking out for Ugwu and protected him from being killed in the war. Again the use of the possessive pronoun 'your *chi*...' indicates that the speaker refers to the personal god instead of the High or Almighty God. The personal god differs from the High God in that the High God is supreme and superior to the other gods. This conception of God differs from what obtains in Islam and Christianity. Adiche's use of the Igbo loan words *Chukwu* and *chi*, shows her understanding of the two contexts, and is also a strategy she adopted in making English to bring these pragmatic contexts and meanings to the non-Igbo reader of her novels. 'Igbakrismas' (PH, p.86) on the other hand refers to the celebration of Christmas by Christians to commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ. The gifts associated with the celebration captures the concept of *igbakrismas* in Igbo.

Some loan words in the texts refer to different concepts such as clothing and fashion, for example *Agbada* (HYS, p.48), *Isi owu* (PH, p.58), and *Shuku* (PH, p.58); food and food items, for example *Uziza* (HYS, p.111), *Ube* (PH, p. 140), and *Suya* (HYS, p.134), etc. *Agbada* (HYS, p.48) is a long, loose-fitting, often embroidered gown with wide sleeves worn especially by Yoruba men. The name *Isi Owu* is derived from the material used in making the hair (Owu) and *isi* (head). It is a hair style for women. A literal translation is *thread head* which instead of referring to the hair style, refers to the head that wears the hair style. Here the head which is a whole is used to refer to the hair (something that relates to and grows on the head). This use of metonymy as a figure of speech is a carryover from the Igbo language where the word *isi* (head) is always used in place of *ntutu* or *ntutuisi* (hair) in relation to hair styles. For instance, the terms *ikpuisi* (head cut) is used for barbing and *ikpaisi* (head weaving), instead of haircut and weaving respectively. However hair means *ntutuisi* but people hardly use the appropriate Igbo lexical items when referring to the different hairstyles during discussions in Igbo. Due to the cultural and language contacts brought about by socialisation, the loan words that refer to fashion and hairstyles have become Nigerianised irrespective of the ethnic group of their origin, hence they have become regular lexical items in expressing these concepts in Nigerian English.

Uziza is a scented vegetable used in making different types of soup especially 'pepper soup', used mainly for preparing food for a nursing mother in Igbo land, believed to have medicinal value. *Ube* is pear in English. The name refers to two types of pear. One used in eating corn and the other one is known as avocado pear. However, the one referred to in this instance is the one used in eating corn in Nigeria. This is affirmed in the following excerpt:

"We'll go into town to see if there is any decently priced *ube*, in the market. I know Father Amadi likes ube, and we have some corn at home to go with it" (PH, p.140)

Suya on the other hand is a spicy skewered meat, and is of Hausa origin. It is also found in other West African countries. Although it originated from Northern Nigeria, as a food, its consumption has permeated the entire Nigerian society, as different ethnic groups have their recipe and methods of preparing it. It has become a national delicacy as it is enjoyed by people from all the ethnic groups. Just as the grilled meat has become part of the Nigerian culture, the word (*suya*) has been loaned to most languages in Nigeria and English language given that nobody refers to it as spicy skewered or grilled meat but rather as *suya*. Hence *suya* has become a Nigerian English lexicon. These loan words have been adopted as lexical items in Nigerian discourse. Though lexical, the loan words are also pragmatic in that they are appropriated from the indigenous languages to express concepts and contexts derived from Nigerian culture, which cannot be adequately expressed in English.

Kinship, Affection Terms/Expressions

These are lexical items used to express kinship, or used to show affection to those one is related to by blood or marriage, or to loved ones, found in the studied texts. These terms and expressions show how the language used in the texts is a reflection of how kinship is expressed in Nigerian culture, and how Nigerians linguistically bond with those they

are related to, or those they love, and how this way of life is pragmatically incorporated into English in Nigeria. See examples in Appendix B.

Appendix B shows some examples of kinship and endearment terms found in the texts. Those that refer to siblings are: *son of my mother* (TVW, p. 43 & TSB, p. 21), *children of my mother* (TSB, p.38), *daughter of my mother* (TSB, p.96), *nwanne* (HYS, p. 41), *nwannem-nwanyi* (PH, p.257), and *ejima m* (HYS, p.301). *Son of my mother* which means *yaro mama na* in Hausa, descriptively refers to a brother. The use of *yaro mama* (which the English translation represents) is more informal or personal. In other words, this is only used by people who are related and who use it to express affection based on the relationship they share. The same can also be said of the expressions *children of my mother* (*yara mama na* or *ya'ya mama na*) and *daughter of my mother* (*yarinya mama na* – in Hausa). Whereas *yara mama na* in Hausa means children of my mother, *ya'ya mama nain* Hausa means seed of my mother. They both refer to children born by the same woman. Rather than use the words brother and sister which are known concepts in English, Alkali prefers to transliterate the Hausa endearment variants into English. Alkali also did not opt for the use of the Hausa words for brother and sister which are *danwa* and *yarwa* respectively. This pragmatic strategy is significant because the author forces English to express the same concept in English as it is done in Hausa by establishing the bond rather than just using a term for the concept.

On the other hand, Adichie uses *nwanne* (my sibling) which actually translates to child of my mother (HYS, p. 41), *nwannem-nwanyi* (sister) – daughter of my mother (PH, p.257), and *ejima m* (my twin) (HYS, p.301). *Nwanne* (sibling) is gender neutral in that it does not indicate whether the sibling is a male or a female. *Ejima m* can only be used by one twin to refer to his/her co-twin. Adichie uses these kinship terms exactly how they are used in Igbo. Although these terms are similar to Alkali's, Adichie imposes the Igbo terms on English without translating as Alkali does. In a way, in terms of kinship and endearment terms, the two authors, Alkali and Adichie, use the same method but adopted two different languages – one transliterating in English and the other imposing her Igbo language on English. Both however, succeed in imposing the Hausa and Igbo kinship and endearment culture/habits on English using these two different approaches.

Loan blends

Loan blends involves a combination of lexical items from Igbo and English languages (Igboanusi, 2001). Butlgwenyi (2015) observes that contrary to Igboanusi's submission, such a blend does not exclusively involve a combination of Igbo and English, but is also applicable to the combination of English and other Nigerian indigenous languages. Though loan blending commonly manifest in Igbo-authored novels, it can also be found in novels authored by Nigerians of other ethnic backgrounds. In loan blends, the word from the indigenous language acts as the modifier within the nominal group, whereas the English word is usually the headword.

Table 2: Frequency Distribution of Loan Blends

Type	TSB	TVW	PH	HYS	FREQ	%
Indigenous Modifier/ English Headword	0	2	10	13	25	58.1
English Modifier/ Indigenous Headword	0	1	3	0	4	9.3
English/English or Indigenous/ Indigenous	1	0	6	7	14	32.6
Total	1	3	19	20	43	100

Where:

TSB = *The Still Born*

TVW = *The Virtuous Woman*

PH = *PurpleHybiscus*

HYS = *Half of a Yellow Sun*

As shown in Table 2, forty three loan blends were identified in the sampled texts. These loan blends were classified into three types such as those that have indigenous words as modifiers while the English words serve as the headwords, those that have English words as modifiers whereas the indigenous words function as the headwords, and finally those

that either have English words as both modifiers and headwords, or indigenous words as both modifiers and headwords. The total number of the loan blends that have indigenous lexical items as their modifiers and English words as headwords were 25 which represent 58.1% of the total loan blends. Table 2 shows that out of this frequency (25), *TSB* had no occurrence of this type, *TVW* had 4.65% (n = 2), *PH* had 23.3% (n = 10) and *HYS* had 30.2% (n = 13). The frequency of the loan blends that have English word as the modifier and the indigenous language as the headword is 4. Again, this type was not found in *TSB*, *TVW* had 2.3% (n = 1), *PH* had 7% (n = 3), whereas *HYS* had no occurrence of this type. On the frequency distribution of the last type, Table 2 shows that *TSB* had 2.3% (n = 1), *TVW* had no occurrence of this type, *PH* had 14% (n = 6), and *HYS* had 16.3% (n = 7). This frequency distribution shows that Adichies works (*PH* and *HYS*) have more loan blends than Alkalis works (*TSB* and *TVW*) with a total of 83.3% (n = 20) incidences of loan blends compared to Alkalis 16.7% (n = 4).

As indicated above, three types of loan blends have been identified in this study. In the first type, which has already been identified by Igboanusi (2001) and Igwenyi (2015), one of the words (usually a Nigerian indigenous word) acts as the modifier, whereas the other (usually the English word) acts as the head word. The following are some of the loan blends that belong to this category found in the sampled texts:

Loan Blends	Meaning
Dipcharima Capa	decorated Hausa hat (<i>TVW</i> , p. 26)
La'aser prayers	prayers by Muslims at 4.00 pm (<i>TVW</i> , p.38)
Onugbu soup	a popular Igbo soup cooked with bitter leaf (<i>PH</i> , p. 20)
Ugu leaves	vegetables derived from pumpkin leaves (<i>HYS</i> , p.122)
Ube trees	a variety of pear producing tree (<i>HYS</i> , p.152),
Aro festival	a yearly cultural festival (<i>PH</i> , p.94)
Egusi soup	soup cooked with melon (<i>PH</i> , p. 18)
Anara plants	the plant that bears garden eggs (<i>HYS</i> , p. 294)
Oyibo man	a white man (<i>HYS</i> , p. 172)
yeye woman	bad, naughty or foolish woman (<i>PH</i> , p. 235)
afia attack	trading along enemy territories. (<i>HYS</i> , p. 293)
ezi butterfly	good butterfly (<i>PH</i> , p. 50)
Jollof rice	a one pot rice dish (<i>HYS</i> , p. 37, <i>PH</i> , p. 40)
Oji tree	the tree bearing kola fruit (<i>HYS</i> , p.257)
Ede plant	cocoa yam plant (<i>HYS</i> , p.236) (osisiede in Igbo)

In the above examples, the loan blends involve the use of lexical items from two languages, one an indigenous (Nigerian), and the other English. For instance, in *Dipcharima Cap* (*TVW*, p. 26), *Dipcharima* (Hausa word) modifies the word *cap* which is an English word and the headword in the loan blend. The cap is named after Zanna Bukar Dipcharima, a former Federal Minister in Nigeria. In *La'aser prayers* (*TVW*, p.38), *La'aser*, an indigenous lexical item modifies *prayers*, an English word to complete the blend. The Igbo word *Egusi* in the loan blend *Egusi soup* (*PH*, p. 18), modifies the English word *soup*. *Jollof rice* (*HYS*, p. 37, *PH*, p. 40), on the other hand is cooked with all the ingredients included in the same pot of rice. It is common in West Africa, particularly in Nigeria. *Jollof* is a Pidgin word blended with *rice* an English word. *Jollof* is the modifier, while *rice* is the head word. This loan blend is meant to describe a concept that does not have an indigenous or English name.

The second type of loan blends involves the combination of English and Nigerian indigenous lexical items whereby the English words function as the modifiers, whereas the Nigerian words function as the head words. The following are examples of this type of loan blends found in the sampled texts:

Loan Blends	Meaning
Embroidered kaftan	a long flowing gown with embroidery (<i>TVW</i> , p. 26)
Ripe agbogho	a girl of marriageable age (<i>PH</i> , p. 72)
Metal ogenes	metal gongs used as musical instrument and by town criers (<i>PH</i> , p. 94).

In the above examples, *embroidered*, which is an English word, modifies *kaftan* (*TVW*, p. 26) which is an Arab word for a type of dress influenced by Islamic religion. This is adopted in the Northern part of Nigeria which is predominantly occupied by Muslims. In the second example, the English word *ripe* modifies the Igbo word *agbogho* (*PH*, p. 72), which is the head word in the loan blend *ripe agbogho*. In the next example, the word *metal* in the loan blend *Metal ogenes* (*PH*,

p. 94) modifies the head word *ogene*. It should be noted that although *ogene* is an Igbo word, it is used here with the English apostrophe “s” to depict plurality as if it were an English word, even as Igbo nouns are not pluralised the same way as English words. These examples present loan blends with the combination of English and Nigerian indigenous lexical items.

The third type of loan blends involves the combination of English and English, or the combination of two lexical items from Nigerian indigenous languages. The combination of English with another English word in this type indicate that although the concepts are couched in English, they describe concepts that are Nigerian specific, which do not have English alternatives, in which case the English words are used to describe these concepts. On the other hand, two different Nigerian lexical items may also be used to describe a particular concept for clarity purposes. The following are some examples of this type of loan blends.

Loan Blends	Meaning
Backyard pumpkins	pumpkin fruits grown at the back of the house (<i>TSB</i> , p. 35)
Goatskin bag	a bag made of goatskin (<i>HYS</i> , p. 15)
Fish pepper-soup	a peppery sauce prepared with fish (<i>HYS</i> , p. 32)
Bitter leaf	a bitter vegetable used for cooking soup (<i>HYS</i> , p. 94)
Ewuawusa	a goat from the Northern part of Nigeria (<i>HYS</i> , p.456)

Heathen festivala traditional festival considered as heathen by a fanatic brand of Catholicism (*PH*, p. 82)

Fada John	Reverend Father John (<i>PH</i> , p. 92)
Palm wine	fermented juice from palm tree (<i>HYS</i> , p.259)
Rain holder	a person believed to be able to stop rains (<i>HYS</i> , p.245)
Bad medicine	a spell or fetish juju (<i>HYS</i> , p. 263)

In the example *backyard pumpkin* (*TSB*, p. 35), two English words are used as loan blends: backyard and pumpkin. *Backyard* is the modifier here and *pumpkin* is the headword. In its British English sense, the word *backyard* means an area behind the house which is covered with a hard brick or stone. The name *backyard pumpkin* is therefore used to refer to the pumpkin fruit grown at the back of the house. The use of *backyard* only adds more meaning by differentiating this type of pumpkin (grown at the back of the house), from the ones grown in the farm. This underscores the use of free spaces around the residential houses by many Nigerians for planting vegetables and other food crops instead of planting only flowers as done by most Westerners.

In addition, the loan blend ‘backyard pumpkin’ is used in the text metaphorically by Li’s Grandma. The intended meaning is better appreciated in this excerpt:

‘I didn’t need to do anything,’ she replied. ‘I was good to look at. My breasts were the size of backyard pumpkins and my buttocks the envy of the village maidens. The men could not resist me...’ (*TSB*, p.35)

In the above excerpt, Grandma implicitly compares her breast with the pumpkin that is usually grown at the back of the house (backyard), in a bid to describe how beautiful she used to be in her prime and how full her breasts were. Vegetables grown at the back of the house are known to do very well and produce very beautiful and healthy fruits. This comparison may be in terms of the size of her breasts, the smoothness, freshness, or how full and rounded they were. This comparison also captures the agrarian nature of Nigerians as exemplified by the Hausa community (where the novel is set) and a type of crop they cultivate (pumpkin) which can easily be related to by both the speaker, Grandma and Li the granddaughter. In comparing her breast to the pumpkin Grandma contextualises her ‘beautiful’ breasts in relation to how her society conceptualises a young woman’s beauty. According to Halliday and Hassan (1989), “... the words that are exchanged in ... contexts get their meanings from activities in which they are embedded, which again are social activities with social agencies and goals” (p.17). The metaphorical comparison by Grandma therefore enables the reader to imagine how beautiful she must have been in her youth and to relate such beauty to both the agricultural and social activities in the village.

On the other hand, the loan blend *Goatskin bag* describes the material used in making the bag (skin of goat) as no other known English word could be used by the writer to capture the exact concept to the understanding of non-Nigerian readers of the novel. *Goatskin* therefore modifies the word *bag* which is the head word. *Bitter leaf* (*HYS*, p. 94) (onugbu in Igbo) is the Nigerian English name for a bitter vegetable which is used for cooking soup. The word *bitter* is the modifier

and is derived from the bitterness of the leaf, and *leaf* is the headword. However, in its Igbo translation, *ofe* (soup) becomes the modifier while *onugbu* becomes the headword. It should be noted also that there are different leaves that are bitter in Nigeria but this particular one has assumed the loan blended name *bitter leaf* and does not share it with any other leaf that has a bitter taste.

With regard to *Ewuawusa* (HYS, p.456), two Nigerian languages are involved: Igbo and Hausa. *Ewu* (goat in Igbo) is the headword whereas *awusa* (a corrupt or nativised pronunciation of Hausa) is the modifier. This simply means *Hausa goat*. When a person is referred to as *Ewuawusa*, it is derogatory, meaning that the person is a fool. As for *Fada John* (PH, p. 92), *Fada* is the modifier and John is the headword. *Fada* is also a corrupt pronunciation of *Father* which refers to a Catholic Reverend Father named John. The use of the word *Fada*, underscores one of the interference challenges observed in Nigerian English phonology which involves the use of the voiced alveolar sound /d/ in place of the voiced dental sound /ð/. Hence *father* becomes *fada*.

The creative use of these loan blends pragmatically situates the English used in the novels as uniquely Nigerian, given that the blends contain Nigerian indigenous words or concepts with their Nigerian meaning in combination with English words. The use of loan blends as both a lexical strategy is also part of the ways Nigerian novelists attempt to capture their worldview. Adichie affirmed this view in an interview she granted to Obie Brooke when she was awarded the NBCC award in 2014 thus:

I've always had Igbo [in my writing]...[because] for me what was more important, for the integrity of the novel, was that I capture the world I wanted to capture rather than to try to mould that world into the idea of what the imagined reader would think. (Adichie, NBCC Fiction Award).

Neologisms/Coinages

This lexical feature involves the practice of forming new words or phrases, or of extending the meaning of existing words or phrases based on the existing sociolinguistic factors (Igboanusi, 2001, p.61). It is very common where none exists, or where the existing word or phrase does not capture the intended cultural meaning or context. In some of the examples, the coinages also involve the reduplication or repetition of the lexical items. The following excerpts exemplify this feature in the sampled texts:

tie dye boubou, (PH, p. 247); osisoosiso (HYS, p. 14); fast – fast (HYS, p. 88); moinmoin (PH, p. 29, HYS p. 109); chin chin (HYS, p.125) ; ngwongwo (PH, p. 40); water mermaid" (HYS, p. 68); rain holder (HYS, p. 200); palm wine. (HYS, p. 120); okada (PH, p. 135); Street affair (TVW, p.7); Big man (HYS, p.125); Ogbunigwe (HYS, p.340); Moto (HYS, p.350); Mme mmesuya (HYS, p.426) – roasted lizard; Child – bride (TVW, p.40)

The neologism *tie dye boubou*, (PH, p. 247) refers to the indigenous (Nigerian) textile design which involves the tying off of some parts of the clothing material and putting in a dye. This is with a view to imposing some colour prints on plain coloured cloths (usually white) which does not show on the tied section of the clothing material. This local method of designing colours on clothing materials is commonly known as *tie and dye*. *Tie dye boubou* therefore refers to a cloth material that has been designed using this local colour printing method. *Osisoosiso* (HYS, p. 14), and *fast – fast* (HYS, p. 88) mean the same but are rendered in two different languages: Igbo and English. One of the creative features of Nigerian English is the reduplication/repetition of lexical items (Bamgbose, 1995; Jowitt, 2012; Mbarachi, 2017). According to Mbarachi (2017) such pragmatic use of English language by Nigerians forms part of what Bamgbose (1995, p.22) refers to as "Igbo-like English". For instance, the repetition of *osisoosiso* (HYS, p.14) which translates to *fast fast* (HYS, p.88) emphasises the urgency needed in carrying out a duty, instruction, or running an errand. It is a pragmatic transfer from the indigenous languages to English and nativises the English language.

On the other hand, *moinmoin* (PH, p. 29, HYS p. 109), *chin chin* (HYS, p.125), and *ngwongwo* (PH, p. 40) are coinages that refer to some types of foods in Nigeria. Whereas *moinmoin* is a beans pudding which is prepared by blending the washed beans and mixing all the ingredients in its thick paste-like state before cooking in small aluminium plates, containers or wrapped in some leaves, *chin chin* is prepared with flour and either baked or fried. *Ngwongwo* is a broth prepared with assorted types of meat. These are Nigerian coined names. For instance, *chin chin* is a pidgin name, whereas *ngwongwo* is Igbo, a name derived from the method of preparation. The use of these names to refer to these food varieties is an indication that there are no known English names for them. The names therefore conceptualises the food varieties, and it is therefore not surprising that Adichie adopts these names in her literary communication.

The coinage *water mermaid* (HYS, p. 68) simply refers to a mermaid which is a mythical sea creature that has the head

and upper body of a woman and the tail of a fish, instead of legs. This mythical being is known as *mammy water* in Nigerian pidgin and is believed to be extraordinarily beautiful. It should also be noted that the term *water mermaid* seems to suggest that there is another type of mermaid which resides in other locations (e.g. air), hence the need to properly identify the particular type being referred to. This is however not the case. Rather, the coinage *Water mermaid* is the Nigerian English translation of the Nigerian pidgin variant *mammy water* which is presented as a loan blend, with the word *water* modifying the headword *mermaid*. However, in its Nigerian pidgin variant (*mammy water*) the pidgin word *mammy* is the modifier to the word *water* which is the head word. The difference in the structure of *mammy water* and *water mermaid* underscores the difference that exists in the grammatical structures of Nigerian pidgin and Nigerian English. *Water mermaid* is used in the text metaphorically by Okeoma to capture Olanna's beauty as she is likened to the mermaid thus: "I thought Odenigbo's girlfriend was a human being, he didn't say you were a water mermaid" (HYS, p. 68). Okeoma's equation of Odenigbo's girlfriend to the *water mermaid* is an affirmation of her (Olanna's) extraordinary beauty which approximates the beauty of the mermaid.

The idea of one possessing the power to supernaturally stop rainfall, as believed in Nigerian culture, necessitates the coining of the expression *rain holder* (HYS, p. 200). Although the expression is rendered using English words, the concept is Nigerian (or African) and is translated from the indigenous languages to English. For instance in Igbo, the expression *ijimiri* means holding of rain. *Oji mmiri* on the other hand, means *holder of rain* or *rain holder*. It refers to one who is believed to possess the power of 'holding' rain. By holding rain, it means that the individual can either stop rainfall or suspend it. The term *rain holder* would not make sense to an L₁ English speaker who does not know about this Nigerian art or the belief in one possessing such powers. The coining of this name therefore gives expression to a Nigerian concept or belief system which does not have an English equivalent.

The coinage *okada* (PH, p. 135) means motorcycle. The name derives from the name of an airline Okada Air. The use of this name for motorcycle started in Lagos, the main 'commercial capital' of Nigeria and is a metaphor for escaping the regular traffic experienced on Lagos roads. This is because the use of motorcycles as means of transportation particularly in Lagos then became successful when it was newly introduced and they later became popular due to their ability to meander through the ever busy Lagos traffic to take their passengers to their destinations faster than taxis and buses. Due to its popularity, the name *okada* gained currency and has become a household name in Nigeria that most people hardly use the word motorcycle in reference to it. This popularity is also captured in this excerpt:

"what are *okada*?" Jaja asked...

"Motorcycles," Obiora said. "They have become more popular than taxis." (PH, p.135 - 136)

The coinage *street affair* (TVW, p.7) refers to a casual sexual relationship, or fling. The reference to Hajjo as a product of *street affair* means that she was born out of wedlock. This is why she does not know who her father is. The pidgin expression *big man* (HYS, p.125) is used to refer to a rich or wealthy man. It may also refer to a successful man who may not be so wealthy but who has achieved success in his field of endeavour. As for *ogbunigwe* (HYS, p.340) it refers to bomb. The name was coined during the Nigerian/Biafran war when the Biafran army produced the locally made bomb named *ogbunigwe*. The name translates to 'that which kills in large number'. The name does not indicate explosion or the instruments used in manufacturing it, but its efficacy in killing many people at the same time.

The coinage *child – bride* (TVW, p.40) on the other hand refers to a young newly married girl. In this instance, the bride is being taken to her husband by an escort (a woman). Traditionally, marriage between young couples can be contracted by families without the presence of the groom. There are two senses in which *child – bride* may be used. It can refer to the bride who is still a child in the sense that she is not old enough to take care of herself. Marriage to under aged girls is common in Northern Nigeria. *Child – bride* can also mean that the bride is that of one's child. However, since the statement is made by the woman escort, *child - bride* in this context refers to a newly married girl.

The use of these coinages by the authors denotes the creative use of English by Nigerians to express concepts and contexts that are Nigerian specific, which do not have alternatives in English. When English words are used, the coinages capture Nigerian contexts which can hardly be understood by non-Nigerian speakers of English. The creative use of both the indigenous and English lexical items to coin new words that are adopted in English becomes one of the lexical strategies used by the authors in the selected texts.

Cushioning

Cushioning is the inclusion of lexical items that aids none L₁ readers to understand transferred L₁ materials in L₂ writing. Palmer (1972) in Osipeju (2014) observes that cushioning is more into fashioning the immediate context of transferred

material so that its meaning is made as clear as possible. This implies that cushioning enables the intelligibility of the L₁ material to readers. In terms of classification, although cushioning involves the use of lexical items, it is not entirely supposed to be discussed under lexical features as cushioning is also done using simple sentences. This means that some expressions are cushioned by using lexical items whereas others are beyond lexical and are simple sentences.

In cushioning, there is a juxtaposition of English language and indigenous language lexical items in the text. Two types of cushioning have been identified in this study. One involves the use of Nigerian indigenous lexical items or expressions, and 'cushioning' it with English lexical items, and in the second type, the English version is presented first before the indigenous lexical item (s) is presented.

Indigenous Language to English Cushioning

This type of cushioning involves the use of the indigenous language first, and introducing the English variant of the same indigenously introduced word or lexical item. This strategy imposes the indigenous words on English, and provides the contextual meaning of the indigenous items in English to the understanding of the non L₁ reader of the text. The following are examples of the first type of cushioning observed in the studied texts:

1. Hakuri- patience (*TVW*, p.35)
2. Allah Kiyaye - God protects (*TVW*, p.35)
3. Allah Sarki , God is king (*TVW*, p.35)
4. Chelukwa. Wait a minute (*PH*, p. 144)
5. Nne, Nne, Mother, mother (*PH*, p. 167) (See Appendix C for the full list)

In the above examples, the indigenous language words or sentences are cushioned by the English translation. It should be noted that there are lexical cushioning such as *Nno nu* – welcome, *Nkem* – mine, etc., as well as clausal or sentential cushioning such as *Asusuanya* – language of the eyes, *E gbukwala!* – don't kill it! *Ginimezie?* – What happened next?

English to Indigenous Language Cushioning

In the second type of cushioning, the meaning of the indigenous lexical items is offered in English first by the author through the mouth piece of her characters before the indigenous lexical items are rendered by the character. In this type, the lexical items from the indigenous language, sort of, reinforce the already expressed English version of the same words. The following are examples of the second type of cushioning observed in this study.

1. The high God, the Chukwu (*PH*, p. 91)
2. You have brought the houseboy, ikpotagoya (*HYS*, p.15)
3. Look here, nee anya (*HYS*, p.17)
4. Safe journey, ijeoma (*HYS*, p.40)
5. Original! Ezigbo! (*HYS*, p.49) (See Appendix C for the full list)

Cushioning as a literary communication strategy is repetitive in nature in the sense that the same thing is stated twice, one in an indigenous language and the other in English. It changes the structure of English such that it becomes Nigerian specific as lexical and semantic items from both languages cohabit with each other seamlessly within the communication exchange. The following excerpts illustrate this co-habitation and reinforcement of one set of lexical items or sentence by another:

The houseboy, sah.'

'Oh, yes, you have brought the houseboy. I kpotagoya (*HYS*, p.15)

Ugwu is here presented by her aunt to Odenigbo as the houseboy he requested for. Odenigbo acknowledges that she has brought him in English in one sentence but repeats the same thing in Igbo again. This is repetitive and a reinforcement of what he acknowledges. It should be noted that although the two sentences refer to the same person – Ugwu, they do not mean exactly the same and cannot be said to be the exact translation of one by another. 'You have brought the houseboy' is more informative than the Igbo sentence *I kpotagoya*, which translates to 'you have brought him'. Whereas the English sentence is specific on who is being referred to, the Igbo sentence relies on the shared knowledge between

Ugwu's aunt and Odenigbo. Note also that *ya* in Igbo, means either him or her (hence gender neutral). The presence of cushioning in the data for this study, to some extent, emphasises the multilingual reality of the Nigerian society and the fact that every educated Nigerian is at least bilingual.

Discussion

The analysis has shown that there are lexical strategies and cushioning techniques adopted by the authors in their selected texts which indicate that the English is both pragmatic Nigerian specific. These techniques capture the socio-linguistic and cultural peculiarities of English in the Nigerian environment. The identified lexical strategies is characterised by loan words, kinship and endearment terms, loan blends, and neologism/coinages. Two types of cushioning were observed. The first one involved the use of English materials to cushion the indigenous language materials used in the texts. In this type, the indigenous materials occur first before the English items that cushion it. In the second type, the English version is presented first while the indigenous language variant is presented afterwards. The cushioning technique does not only involve the use of lexical items but also for other higher levels of grammar such as sentences. The authors' importation of these features into English is influenced in part by the Nigerian indigenous languages as well as their socio-cultural setting which aid in the domestication of English in Nigeria and in the studied novels.

Adichie overwhelmingly uses more lexical techniques in *PH* and *HYS* than Alkali in *TSB* and *TVW*. This is attributable to the size of the studied novels. Zaynab Alkali's *TSB* has about 106 pages, while *TVW* contains 88 pages. Contrastively, Chimamanda Adichie's *PH* is a novel of 310 pages, whereas *HYS* is up to 522 pages. The high number of pages in Adichie's works is multiple times more than that of Alkali and indicates that the lexical items and features in Adichie's texts should surpass that of Alkali. The volumes of Adichie's texts disadvantage Alkali's texts in terms of their linguistic contents given the high number of pages.

The highly skewed number of lexical techniques observed in Alkali's and Adichie's texts may be due to their ethnic origin. Alkali is from Northern Nigeria (Hausa) whereas Adichie is from the South Eastern Nigeria (Igbo). The Igbo culture and particularly Igbo language may predispose Adichie's texts for the increased number of lexical features compared to the few observed in Alkali's who is Hausa. It has already been acknowledged that Nigerian English has its ethnic varieties, one of which is Igbo English. In his earlier argument, Igboanusi (2001) posits that there is an Igbo tradition in Nigerian literature through the use of English language and that "language of the writers of Igbo literary tradition is an ethnic variety of Nigerian English" (p. 53). Igboanusi, posits that this literary tradition stems from Igbo language and culture and can be identified in the works of other Igbo writers such as Chinua Achebe, John Munonye, Buchi Emecheta, Chukwuemeka Ike, Cyprian Ekwensi, etc.

The significant difference in the use of lexical and cushioning techniques by the two authors, which favours Adichie's texts, may be attributed in part to the fact that Adichie is believed to follow the footsteps of Achebe, who is known for using a lot of lexical items and non-lexical linguistic resources from his Igbo linguistic environment. Scholars such as Anyokwu (2011), Asoegwu-Ijezie (2012), Osipeju (2014), Enyi (2015), and Inyima (2018) among others believe that Achebe influences Adichie. Adichie has also admitted that in addition to sharing the same ethnic origin with Achebe, she is greatly influenced by the older writer (Achebe) whom she calls her "literary hero" (Adichie, 2012). In an interview, (Van Zantan, 2010), Adichie adds that:

Growing up an Igbo child, I was fortunate to be educated, but my education didn't teach me anything about my past. But when I read *Things Fall Apart*, it became my great-grandfather's life. It became more than literature for me. It became my story. I am quite protective of Achebe's novels in a way that I don't think I am with any other book that I love.

If Achebe has influenced Adichie's writing as she states, Adichie's writing will therefore reflect some of the noticeable features in Achebe's works, especially as they share the same ethnic origin and language.

On how Alkali and Adichie use kinship and endearment terms, the analysis shows how both authors, to a large extent, force English to accommodate their indigenous languages in their works. For Alkali, such expressions as *son of my mother* (*TVW*, p. 43, *TSB*, p.21), *daughter of my mother* (*TSB*, p. 96), *children of my mother* (*TSB*, p. 38), etc., are used to depict brother, sister, and siblings respectively. These are direct translations of Hausa indigenous kinship terms into English without using their exact Hausa forms. The translated forms make it easier for the non-Hausa reader to understand their meaning. Adichie on the other hand uses the Igbo kinship terms without any translation. E.g., *nwanne* (child of my mother) - my sibling (*HYS*, p. 41), *nwannem-nwanyi* (daughter of my mother) - my sister (*PH*, p.257), etc. Rather than translating them, Adichie uses cushioning in some cases or provides clues that aid the non-Igbo reader to understand the terms. By

imposing these indigenous kinship terms on English, the authors force English to express kinship terms exactly the way Nigerians perceive and contextualise them, but impose also the semantic extension of such usages.

Kinship terms in Nigeria carry with them the burden of extending the meaning of all the terms beyond their L₁ English contexts. For instance, terms sister or brother in Nigeria, express meanings beyond being children from the same biological parents. This corroborates the findings of Ushie (2008) who in a previous study, explains the peculiarity of kinship terms in a Nigerian indigenous language and notes that:

The Bette- Bendi expression “unwaiindeye / unwaandagi” translates directly into English as “child of my mother”. The “child” may be male or female, and may not necessarily share a mother or even father or grandfather with the speaker. This expression is what represents English “brother”, “sister” or “cousin” in Bette-Bendi. (p. 25)

Ushie’s explanation captures the Nigerian context of brother or sister exactly how Alkali uses these kinship terms in *TVW* and *TSB*. Adichie however uses the Igbo form *Nwanne m* which also translates directly to English as ‘child of my mother’, without indicating whether the person referred to is a male or a female unless *nwoke* – male (indicating brother), or *nwanyi* – female (indicating sister) is added to the kinship term *nwanne m*.

From the analysis, the authors used three structural types of loan blends in their texts. These are: (a) indigenous language modifier with English head word, (b) English language modifier with indigenous language headword, and (c) either an indigenous language modifier plus an indigenous language headword, or English language modifier with English language headword. These pragmatic combinations of the loan blends indicate how Nigerians adapt to the co-existence of their indigenous languages with English and its reflection in the novels.

Conclusion

This paper investigated the lexical features and cushioning techniques in Zaynab Alkali’s *The Virtuous Woman* and *The Stillborn*, and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus* and *Half of Yellow Sun*. It was found that both texts exhibit lexical features and cushioning techniques that approximate that of Nigerian indigenous languages, particularly from the authors’ ethnic origins hence their adoption of Nigeria’s literary English. Although there are similarities in the authors’ use of language, Adichie’s texts contains more of the identified features and techniques than Alkali’s texts. However, both authors have succeeded in exporting their linguistic culture to their global readers by their pragmatic adoption of a language that affirms the existence of Nigeria’s literary English.

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Appendix A

Examples of Loan Words or Lexical Transfers

Items	Meaning	Source	Novel & Page
Baba Maigadi	Gateman/security man	Hausa	<i>TSB</i> , p.38
La'aser	Muslim prayers at 4.00pm	Arabic	<i>TSB</i> , p.38
Agbada	A flowing gown	Yoruba	<i>HYS</i> , p.48
Isi owu	Hair plaited with thread	Igbo	<i>PH</i> , p.58
Shuku	Weaved hairstyle	Yoruba	<i>PH</i> , p.58
Akpu	Food made from fermented cassava	Igbo	<i>HYS</i> , p.18
Arigbe	Cent leaf	Igbo	<i>HYS</i> , p.27
Uziza	Wild scent vegetable used in soup	Igbo	<i>HYS</i> , p.111
Suya	Spicy skewered meat	Hausa	<i>HYS</i> , p.134
Ukwa	Breadfruit	Igbo	<i>HYS</i> , p.151
Ugba	Oil bean seed used for salad	Igbo	<i>HYS</i> , p. 263
Ogiri	Soup flavouring made of fermented oil seeds such as sesame seed or melon	Igbo	<i>HYS</i> , p.308
Akidi	A tiny but nutritious beans variety	Igbo	<i>HYS</i> , p.387
Akara	Bean cake	Igbo/Yoruba	<i>HYS</i> , p.382
Anara	Garden egg	Igbo	<i>HYS</i> , p.294 & <i>PH</i> , p.29
Okpa	A snack made from Bambara Groundnut or Bambara Beans. It is also known as Bambara nut pudding	Igbo	<i>PH</i> , p. 81
Ube	Pear	Igbo	<i>PH</i> , p. 140
Garri	Fried cassava grain		<i>PH</i> , p. 163
Utazi	A bitter vegetable believed to be medicinal	Igbo	<i>PH</i> , p.18
Agidi	Flour meal made from corn	Igbo	<i>PH</i> , p. 62
Fufu	West African staple food made with cassava flour	Pidgin	<i>PH</i> , p.170
Okwuma	A local massaging ointment	Igbo	<i>HYS</i> , p. 26
Dibia	Native doctor/herbalist	Igbo	<i>HYS</i> , p. 97
Mmuo	A spirit or masquerade	Igbo	<i>HYS</i> , p. 112
Ogbanje	A spirit child	Igbo	<i>HYS</i> , p. 293
Amosu	A witch or wizard	Igbo	<i>HYS</i> , p. 480
Chi	God/god	Igbo	<i>HYS</i> , p.506
Chukwu	Almighty/High God	Igbo	<i>PH</i> , p.91
Ogwu	Medicine/herb/charm/juju	Igbo	<i>PH</i> , p.28
Igbakrisma	Christmas celebration	Igbo	<i>PH</i> , p.85/86
Aja	Sacrifice	Igbo	<i>PH</i> , p.151
Nzu	Native chalk with spiritual functions	Igbo	<i>PH</i> , p.173
Abi	Isn't it? /right?	Yoruba	<i>HYS</i> , P. 168
Oya	Begin, start or do, hurry up, etc	Yoruba	<i>HYS</i> , p. 166
Araba	To secede	Hausa	<i>HYS</i> , p.183
kwalikwata	Bedbugs (Kwarkwata in Hausa)	Hausa	<i>HYS</i> , p. 471

Appendix B**Tble 3: Kinship and Endearment Terms/Expressions**

Terms/Expressions	Meaning	Source Novel
Son of my mother	Brother	<i>TVW</i> , p. 43, <i>TSB</i> , p.21, 49
Mother of men	Mother/grandmother	<i>TVW</i> , p. 45
The ancient head	Grandfather (expresses old age/role)	<i>TVW</i> , p. 12
My village sister	Every female born in the village as the speaker	<i>TVW</i> , p. 75
The woman of my house	Wife	<i>TSB</i> , p. 49
Children of my mother	Siblings (brothers and sisters)	<i>TSB</i> , p. 38
Daughter of my mother	Sister	<i>TSB</i> , p. 96
Nkem	Mine	<i>HYS</i> , p. 37 & <i>PH</i> , p. 215
Nne	Mother (to referring to her daughter here)	<i>HYS</i> , p.50, & <i>PH</i> , p. 16
Umunna	A group of men who are related in a community	<i>PH</i> , p.28 & <i>HYS</i> , p.18
Umun	My children	<i>PH</i> , p.42
Nwa m	My child	<i>PH</i> , p.91
Nnaanyi	Our father	<i>PH</i> , p.90
Nwunye m	My wife	<i>PH</i> , p.80
Di m	My husband	<i>PH</i> , p.239
Nna m	My father	<i>PH</i> , p.163
Nwanne	My sibling	<i>HYS</i> , p.41
Nwannem-Nwanyi	My sister	<i>PH</i> , p.257
Ejima m	My twin (brother or sister)	<i>HYS</i> , p. 301
Ada anyi	Our first daughter	<i>HYS</i> , p.55
Omalicha	Beautiful	<i>HYS</i> , p.53
My aunty,	Aunt	<i>HYS</i> , p.55
Ola m	My jewel/gold	<i>HYS</i> , p.267

Appendix C: Examples of Cushioning Indigenous Language to English Cushioning

1. Hakuri- patience (*TVW*, p.35)
2. Allah Kiyaye - God protects (*TVW*, p.35)
3. Allah Sarki , God is king (*TVW*, p.35)
4. Chelukwa. Wait a minute (*PH*, p. 144)
5. Nne, Nne, Mother, mother (*PH*, p. 167)
6. Nna m o! My father! (*PH*, p. 190)
7. Nwunye m, my wife (*PH*, p. 81)
8. Shh! These are mmuo, spirits! (*PH*, p. 95)
9. Nno nu. Welcome (*PH*, p. 99)
10. O maka, so beautiful (*PH*, p. 136)
11. Makana, because... (*PH*, p.198)
12. Ozu, a corpse (*PH*, p. 191)
13. Ekene n keUdo - ezigbonwanne m nye m aka gi, the greeting of peace - my dear sister (*PH*, p. 246)
14. Asusuanya, a language of the eyes (*PH*, p. 308)
15. Omelora, after all, the one who does for the community (*PH*, p. 56)
16. "Chelu nu" – wait (*PH*, p.247)
17. "Ginimezie?" What happened next? (*PH*, p.247)
18. O zugo, it is enough (*PH*, p.190)
19. Nkem, mine (*HYS*, p. 37)
20. lotekwa, don't forget... (*HYS*, p.38)
21. nwanne m, my brother (*HYS*, p. 41)
22. Ndi be anyi! My people! (*HYS*, p.54)
23. Aruamakagi! You look well! (*HYS*, p. 56)
24. Na gode, Thank you Hajia (*HYS*, p. 63)
25. E gbukwala! Don't kill it! (*HYS*, p.66)

English to Indigenous Language Cushioning

1. The high God, the Chukwu (*PH*, p. 91)
2. You have brought the houseboy, ikpotagoya (*HYS*, p.15)
3. Look here, nee anya (*HYS*, p.17)
4. Safe journey, ijeoma (*HYS*, p.40)
5. Original! Ezigbo! (*HYS*, p.49)
6. Go well, jeeofuma (*HYS*, p.52)
7. Yes these are better, famakali (*HYS*, p.65)
8. Get up, kunie (*HYS*, p.115)
9. The Sardauna was an evil man, ajommadu (*HYS*, p. 163)
10. Mmadu! Is this you? O gi di ife a? (*HYS*, p.174)
11. Our eyes have seen plenty. Anyiafujugoanya. (*HYS*, p.179)
12. Eh! You speak! I na-asu Igbo! (*HYS*, p. 189)
13. How are things? Ana emekwa? (*HYS*, p.213)
14. It is well. O di mma. (*HYS*, p.217)
15. Do not lie... Isikwanaasi (*HYS*, p. 236)
16. You are a sheep, aturu (*HYS*, p. 257)
17. What am I to say to him? Gwayagini? (*HYS*, p.265)
18. Where are you going? E bee ka I naeje? (*HYS*, p. 336)
19. A teacher? Onyenkuzi? (*HYS*, p. 361)
20. Such a nice girl, ezigbonwa. (*HYS*, p. 363)
21. Well done, jisie nu ike. (*HYS*, p. 376)
22. We are all Biafrans! Anyinchabu Biafra! (*HYS*, p. 389)

23. It did not kill me, it made me knowledgeable. O gburomegbu, o mee ka mmaluife. (*HYS*, p. 421)
23. Forgive me. Gbaghalum (*HYS*, p. 429)
24. Go, gawa (*HYS*, p. 432)
25. It gets worse and then it gets better. O dikatanjo, o dikwamma. (*HYS*, p. 471)
26. What of Ekene? Ekenekwanu? (*HYS*, p. 496)
27. Mummy Ola don't cry; ebezina. (*HYS*, p. 498)
28. This is a joke. O naegwuegwu (*HYS*, p. 500)