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## **Narrative Strategy in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Novel „Americanah”: the Manifestation of Migrant Identity**

*Abstract:* In this essay I will examine the characteristics of narrative strategy used by Nigerian writer and activist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in her novel „Americanah” with special reference to Igbo language. The paper provides examples of several expressions in Igbo taken from the novel such as phrases, sentences, proverbs and other lexical items. Using the concept of the migrant identity for my analysis I argue that her narrative strategy including certain Igbo context as base for recognition could be interpreted as the method of manifestation of different self-identifications, global identities and a dynamic sense of belonging from a perspective of Nigerian writer living in the United States.

*Keywords* Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Anglophone Nigerian literature, Igbo, narrative strategy, migrant identity

### **Introduction**

Written African literature, and to be certain literary art in general, is responsive to social phenomena providing discussions over themes from cultural to political issues. Therefore, it is characterized by linguistic diffusion and significant cultural diversity within regions and countries. In the twentieth century most African writers preoccupied themselves with the use of English, French or Portuguese in their works following the postcolonial discourse. However, literary forms written in African languages also emerged, being determined by the fact that writers chose their mother tongue for addressing proper audience. Still, the problem of choosing the form and language appropriate for conveying the right message and expression has been researched by literary critics and linguists as the base for interpretation of representative intellectual movement or current social and cultural

issues, especially regarding postcolonial context. In this respect in the following essay I will provide the analysis of the strategy of contemporary Nigerian writer, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, who has described her approach toward literary work saying:

I think that what is important in the discourse is not whether African writers should or should not write in English, but how African writers, and Africans in general, are educated in Africa. I do not believe in being prescriptive about art. I think African writers should write in whatever language they can. The important thing is to tell African stories. Besides, modern African stories can no longer claim anything like ‘cultural purity’ (Azodo 2008: 2).

### **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie – biographical note**

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, born in 1977 in Nigeria, is an award-winning novelist and social commentator, representative of the black literary writers with African roots and young female cosmopolitan, who write in English. According to Nigerian writer and researcher Helon Habila, Adichie should be referred to as the third generation of influential and representative African female writer (Habila 2011: 7). Her works differ strongly from the postcolonial wave, roughly beginning in African countries in the 1960s, which brought international acclaim to first remarkable Anglophone female novelists like Flora Nwapa (1931-1993), Nadine Gordimer (1923-2014), Ama Ata Aidoo (b. 1942), Buchi Emecheta (b. 1944) or Zaynab Alkali (b. 1955). Recently, she received wide critical acclaim and high profile reviews, winning several main awards such as Commonwealth Writer’s Prize for Best First Book in 2005, the National Book Critics Circle Award for fiction (2014) and nominations, for instance for the Booker Prize and the Orange Prize for Fiction (2004), among others (Szupejko 2012: 145).

Her works include *For Love of Biafra* (1998), *Purple Hibiscus* (2003), *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), *The Thing Around Your Neck* (2009), *Americanah* (2013) and *We Should All Be Feminists* (2014). The novel *Americanah*, which will be analyzed below, was selected

by the New York Times as one of The 10 Best Books of 2013. Adichie, who divides her time between the United States and Nigeria, runs a summer writing workshops and academic lectures both at Nigerian and American universities.

In *Americanah* Adichie captures the complexity and range of Nigerian experiences through the eyes of migrant living in the diaspora by presenting the history of lives of two main characters: young woman Ifemelu and her friend Obinze, who are both from southern Nigeria. They fall in love with each other, but because of many unpleasant circumstances their paths separate, forcing them to migrate to the United States and Great Britain. In States, Ifemelu, well-educated and creative entrepreneur, writes a popular blog about her life-style and growing racial and gender consciousness of being black migrant. When she is back to Nigeria, her friends describe her with the name “Americanah”, as occurs in the title of the novel, to tease her about new americanized way of behaviour, as well as attitude toward conditions of living in her home country and sophisticated usage of American English.

The story of Obinze and Ifemelu set partly in Africa, partly in the Western countries, reflects events to which Adichie herself can relate – experiences of living and working in different settings within American society. It is a novel about the African diaspora experience, full of cultural references familiar to Western audiences, a kind of a social commentary on the discourse of gender and strong race divisions and how it affects the lives of black migrants, especially female migrants in the United States. She expertly portrays black male and female characters in a realistic way in order to make readers be able to identify with them and switches between characters' perspectives, giving them voice to speak out loudly their opinions, also in Igbo language. In so doing she tries to battle stereotypes and affliction of racism and sexism. Furthermore, she creates this by applying her own narrative strategy as a Nigerian writer.

### **Narrative strategy characteristics**

Narrative strategy, defined as the theoretical category depicting certain writing techniques and practices, is used by literary researchers for the analysis of narrative and social discourses and merely to indicate particular features of the investigated text. It has become the key concept of literary studies since 1965 (Souvage 1965). Tjupa (2014: 2) suggests that the narrative strategy is a configuration of three aspects of a single utterance:

- 1) narrative modality (the speech subject's rhetorical competence),
- 2) narrative world picture (the sphere of objects that are of narrative interest),
- 3) narrative intrigue (the aspect of plot that correlates the story with the recipient's expectations), that influence each other constructing a communicative event.

In this study I will use that concept to present the implementation of Igbo lexical component into plot of the novel that not only depicts the speaker's preferences and creative behaviour, but also might be seen as the indicator of the author's manifestation of the process of creating identity from the perspective of the migrant living in the diaspora. Similarly, it may be understood as product of interconnected identifications, which require a dynamic understanding in the context of postcolonial globalized world. The novel itself is structured around several intersectional issues such as retrospectives to childhood and youth life of Ifemelu and Obinze, being mobile, love tribulations and are related to the reconstruction and negotiation of identity during whole migration processes, for instance changes of place of living and the sense of belonging.

### **Migrant identity theoretical framework**

I would suggest that Adichie, while using expressions in Igbo, proceeds her story by explaining the theoretical framework of Nigerian migrants' ethnic identity, and essentially what has been called by A. Constant, L. Gataullina and L. Zimmermann – the *ethnosizer* (Zimmermann 2007: 1). It indicates the strength of association with

either or both the culture of origin and the new host culture exhibited by the individuals. The *ethnosizer* is the concept that consists of four distinct combinations of commitments and identifications: assimilation, integration, marginalization, separation with respect to five key elements of ethnic identity: language, visible cultural elements, ethnic self-identification, ethnic networks and future citizenship plans (Zimmermann 2007: 6). This means that if one follows the two-dimensional model of the measurement of ethnic identity he believes that commitments to different societies – as in this case to Nigeria, United States or United Kingdom – can coexist simultaneously and may influence each other in several ways<sup>1</sup>. As a result, all identity elements are visible in human attitudes and behaviours in their material consequences and appear strongly in verbal communications. The Igbo language – one of the important identity marker – is used by Adichie as an *ethnosizing* narrative strategy and can be subjectively appropriated.

Homi K. Bhabha, critical and literary theorist, in *The Location of Culture* (1994) examines “the processes of cultural identification and cultural variation in identity construction and transformation, by examining the self-positioning against the ascribed identities, the negotiation of categories for self-identification, and the deconstruction of those categories. As a product of belonging to multiple affiliations, the hybridization of being at the borderlands poses serious challenges to the existing hegemonic culture of society” (La Barbera 2007: 5).

However, contemporarily many researches show the broken illusion of the essential relationship between culture and place (Gupta and Ferguson 1992: 10). This may be applied to the portrait of some

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<sup>1</sup> However, the assumption of two-dimensional model of migrant identity recognizes that a migrant, who identifies with the values of culture of origin, may or may not have a strong involvement with the host culture. Secondly, a migrant with a strong affinity to the beliefs of a receiving country may or may not totally identify with his or her culture of ancestry. Similarly, migrants could be completely detached from the home or host country (Zimmermann 2007: 5). All of the options are well illustrated in the novel.

individuals from the novel (like Ifemelu, Auntie Uju), who actually do not have the aspirations to abandon their roots and habits while living in the new country and re-negotiate language and cultural practices by using multilingual communication (English, Igbo, Nigerian Pidgin English) or creating spaces for identifiable community of Nigerian or Africans (barber shops, beauty and hair salons, grocery shops with so called 'African' food). In this group there are also others, who claim to be considered more Western and educated and come back to home country in order to be given a name “Americanah” by their compatriots.

### **Analysis of Adichie's narrative strategy**

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's adopted the variety of stylistic approaches considering her writing in English. In the interview taken by Women's Caucus of the African Literature Association in 2008, Adichie, when asked about the reasons for choosing both the English and Igbo language as the medium of the expressive writing, replied:

I come from a generation of Nigerians who constantly negotiate two languages and sometimes three, if you include Pidgin. For the Igbo in particular, ours is the Engli-Igbo generation and so to somehow claim that Igbo alone can capture our experience is to limit it. Globalization has affected us in profound ways. I'd like to say something about English as well, which is simply that English is mine. Sometimes we talk about English in Africa as if Africans have no agency, as if there is not a distinct form of English spoken in Anglophone African countries. I was educated in it; I spoke it at the same time as I spoke Igbo. My English-speaking is rooted in a Nigerian experience and not in a British or American or Australian one. I have taken ownership of English. (Ada Uzoamaka Azodo 2008: 2)

Significantly, *Americanah* has been interwoven with Igbo phrases and sentences, which could be decoded by the non-Igbo speaking and Western readers through usage of general lexical context or simply, dictionary. This makes the readers aware that some of her

characters would be speaking in Igbo to one another, and that the story is mediated between two or more identities. It is worth mentioning that all Igbo expressions are highlighted in the novel through italics.

In the post-colonial novel, such as *Americanah*, the narrative strategy includes: glossing, untranslated words, interlanguage, syntactic fusion, code-switching and vernacular transcription (Anyokwu 2011: 82ff.). However, Igboanusi (2002:56ff.) went on to assert that there are seven linguistic categories that occur in the processes of writing and are identified as sources of Igbo English in the Nigerian novel, such as loan-words, coinages, loan-blends, translation equivalents, semantic extension, collocational extension and colloquialism. Also in this novel they foregrounded the unique sense of place and contextual realism and worked inimitably into the complex tapestry of her narrative (Anyokwu 2011: 83). Thus, Onukaogu and Ezechi (2010) described three main strategies in Adichie's narrative:

- 1) Linguistic Appositioning (refers to glossing);
- 2) Narrative Framing (meaning is contextually explicated);
- 3) Discourse Implicature (reader as co-creator).

Regarding the main function of Igbo language component in the novel with relation to ethnic identity, the most important feature is Discourse Implicature, which means that the reader, by using his or her *ethnosizer* skills, is required to decode the meaning from the flow of narrative and is able to notice nuances of the indigenous communicative code.

### **Phrasal and lexical level**

To be specific, in the novel there are not any Nigerian nicknames for most of Nigerian characters such as Ifemelu or Obinze. Besides, in the text Ifemelu herself gives the explanation about the meaning of her Igbo name, which is „leave us in peace” (Adichie 2013: 32). It reveals that Igbo meaning has been transferred not only to fill lexical gap, but also to capture the Igbo cultural worldview as the mean of identification. To show more of the Igbo rhetoric adopted widely as the narrative strategy I would indicate instances selected from the

text of novel. This is the examination Adichie's deployment of Igbo language in the novel. The meaning of the items is provided in square brackets.

“Ifem, I don't know what got into me. *Ndo*.” [I am sorry] (Adichie 2013: 83)

“But on that first day, she liked Kimberly, her breakable beauty, her purplish eyes full of the expression. Obinze often used to describe the people he liked: *obi ocha*. A clean heart.” [clean heart] (Adichie 2013: 147)

“He reminded her of Obinze's expression for people he liked. *Obi ocha*. A clean heart.” [clean heart] (Adichie 2013: 353)

“Darling, *kedu ebe I no?* Where are you?” [where are you?] (Adichie 2013: 21)

“Ahn ahn! [an exclamation remark] *O gini?* [What?]” (Adichie 2013: 23)

“The Zed, *o gini?* What is it? Is it just tiredness?” [what?] (Adichie 2013: 472)

“What? *Gini?* Ifemelu asked.” [What?] (Adichie 2013: 119)

“Ha, *o di egwu*, [it is wonderful] for where?” (Adichie 2013: 24)

“But calm down first. It will be okay, *inugo?*” [take my words, okay?] (Adichie 2013: 95)

“*Adi m ime*, [I am pregnant] she said simply.” (Adichie 2013: 83)

“Normal *kwa?* [raising doubt on what is taken to be normal] It's not normal at all.” (Adichie 2013: 141)



“Ugly *kwa?* [raising doubt on what is taken to be ugly] What are you talking about? The house is beautiful.” (Adichie 2013: 393)

“Classics, *kwa?* [raising doubt on what he likes] I just like crime and thrillers.” (Adichie 2013: 60)

“Mummy, *nno*, [welcome] he said. She acknowledged his greeting with a nod and put down her bag on the centre table.” (Adichie 2013: 234)

“That thing can do wonders to your head, *eziokwu*. [ascertaining the truth of the statement] It has not been easy at all for him.” (Adichie 2013: 240)

“It will happen for you, don't worry, *rapuba*.” [forget what happened, it will be fine] (Adichie 2013: 240)

“Look my brother. You won't sell it at that price, nobody will buy. *Ife esika kita*. [Things are very costly or difficult now] The recession is biting everybody.” (Adichie 2013: 455)

“They sat in the living room, eyes on the screen, and Obinze said, “Mummy, *chelu* [wait a moment], let's hear”. (Adichie 2013: 71)

“The Yoruba man is there helping his brother, but you Igbo people? *I ga-asikwa*. [It can't be possible] Look at you now quoting me this price.” (Adichie 2013: 456)

“*Obinze ma ife* [Obinze is wise or intelligent], he imagined Edusco saying. Obinze is not like some of these useless small boys with money. This one is not stupid.” (Adichie 2013: 456)

“The Zed! You are really quiet today,” Okwudiba said, now on his fifth glass of champagne. “*Aru adikwa?*” [surprised at the magnitude of evil or stange occurrences] Obinze shrugged. “I'm fine. Just tired”. (Adichie 2013: 469)

“Iloba spoke up in Igbo. “Vincent, my brother here is trying to save money and do his papers. Thirty-five is too much, *o rika biko*. [it is too much] Please just try and help us”. (Adichie 2013: 250)

“Ifem, *kedu?* [how are you?] Auntu Uju asked. “I thought you would be in Nsukka” (Adichie 2013: 99)

“Ifem, *kedu?* [how are you?] Auntu Uju said. Auntu Uju called too often to ask if she had found a job.” (Adichie 2013: 141)

“It is rumped. *Ngwa* [quick], go and iron it”. (Adichie 2013: 49)

“*Ngwa*, scrub between your legs very well, very well”. [Quick] (Adichie 2013: 128)

“You’re a joker,” she told him. “*Biko* [please], I’m changing to Nsukka as well”. (Adichie 2013: 89)

“What kind of man bleaches his skin, *biko?*” [please, tell me] (Adichie 2013: 117)

“Auntu, *biko* [please], leave my hair alone,” Ifemelu said.” (Adichie 2013: 216)

In the extract above, we can identify the use of Igbo lexical items, which stand between or instead of English phrases, observations, states and situations that deliver actual information. However, the Igbo forms serve important functions as motivators, introducers and affirmers (Onukaogu, Ezechi 2010: 273). Adichie employs the pattern of using single phrases in Igbo, apparently to suggest and reinforce the contextual meaning, affirming the articulation, introducing, giving it more strength and emphasis. It shows that she did evolve her own variety of multilingual communication in the text, which might be a reflection of the habits of thought and speech patterns of the many Igbo speakers from United States, who use code-switching or second language inclusions. In addition, this writer’s strategy can

be seen as the effective way of mentioned previously – *ethnosizer* mechanisms, like achieving the space for representation and status of being at once „local“, „international“ or „global“ and also, which is essential for identity formation, as voicing to some extent the predicament of Nigerian migrants, who live in the junction of global influences, hybrid interconnections and traditions and recognize themselves in the narration. Hence, does Igbo language might be a formula which enables writer to be relevant?

According to Herbert Igboanusi, the phenomenon of Igbo English is said to be found in creative writing (in novels) “as a deliberate but significant stylistic device, which arises from the influence of the Igbo language and culture on English [...] Has spawned what has been categorized as „ethnic literary tradition“, and, as such, African literature today is characterized by „linguistic diffusion and cultural diversity“ (Igboanusi 2002: 2). He remarks that certainly the uniqueness of first-generation Igbo English writers, such as Chinua Achebe, Cyprian Ekwensi, Buchi Emecheta, Flora Nwapa, Elechi Amadi, manifests in three strategies: their experimentation in language, in recreating distinct Igbo discourse in English and in stylistic innovations. He concludes that their writings demonstrate a good instance of so called “Igboization of English” (Igboanusi 2002: 2). With regard to the Adichie's works, many researchers claim that she consciously follows what has come to be referred to as „the Achebe model“ described by Anyonkwu (2011: 81)<sup>2</sup>:

the deployment of supra-linguistic, para-verbal nuances such as folklore, proverbs, wise sayings, folksongs and other allied

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<sup>2</sup> Indeed, one of the novel's character is asking “Have you read *Things Fall Apart*?” (Adichie 2013: 425). Moreover, Adichie admits: „I like to think of Achebe as the writer whose work gave me permission to write my own stories [...] Achebe is the most important writer for me, and so every opportunity I have to pay tribute to him I'll take it (Adichie 2008: 42). Extraordinary was also the fact that Adichie grew up in the house that had once belonged to Chinua Achebe's family.

forms of language games, stylistic strategies which emboss and semiotize the Africanity or the sense of place in the novel. Much as Nigerian (African) writers have preoccupied themselves with the „fleshpot“ of the African past, the question of content did not bother literary critics as such. But the issue of form was another matter.

Thus, the form consists of certain narrative strategies that are used in order to make the works truly and authentically Nigerian, but still remaining in the migrant context. However, what is foregrounded in the novel is not only the unified Nigerian migrants national identity, but the diversity of African experiences and many variant points of views from characters that are different with regards to ethnicity, race, gender, social class, age.

### **Phrases with English equivalent**

In some cases, a sentence in Igbo is followed by the exact English translation. Those phrases are not strategically pivotal in the narrative, but still it is clear that Igbo rhetoric has enriched the text. It is strongly visible in the dialogues between Nigerian characters, mainly Ifemelu, Obinze, Ifemelu's aunt Uju, her cousin Dike and other relatives. Here are some examples:

“Curt touched Ifemelu's shoulder gently, asked if she was okay, before going back outside. “*O na-eji gi ka akwa,*” [pampered, adored and handled with care like egg] Aunt Uju said, her tone charged with admiration. Ifemelu smiled. Curt did indeed hold her like an egg.” (Adichie 2013: 219)

“She stopped on the platform to fumble in her bag for it and, at first, because Aunt Uju was incoherent, talking and sobbing at the same time, Ifemelu thought she said that Dike was dead. But what Aunt Uju was saying was *o nwuchagokwa* [he nearly died] *Dike anwuchagokwa*. Dike had nearly died. (Adichie 2013: 365)”

“When the male and female voices sang in Igbo, Obinze sang along with them, glancing away from the road to look at her, as though he was telling her that this was really their conversation, he calling her beautiful, she calling him beautiful, both calling each other their true friends. *Nwanyi oma*, [beautiful woman] *nwoke oma*, [handsome man] *omalicha nwa*, [beautiful or good child] *ezigbo oyi m o*” [my good friend].” (Adichie 2013: 443)

“You put on some weight and it suits you. *I maka*”. [You are beautiful – as in flattering someone] She felt shy, a pleasant shyness, hearing him say she was beautiful.” (Adichie 2013: 430)

## Proverbs

Another instance of the deployment of this specific strategy in the text can be found in the extract below. It presents part of conversation made by main characters – Ifemelu and Obinze, who talked about their ability of speaking Igbo language and knowledge of traditional proverbs. The frequency with which Adichie employs vivid imaginary of proverbs in her works – also in *Americanah*, may partly be interpreted as significant influence of Igbo oral traditions, that are continued largely through literature of Igbo speaking writers. They are common statements that enable speakers to display not only their wisdom and intelligence, but also distinctive ability to use language for manipulation. They express specific meanings, which derive from the Igbo pre-suppositions and socio-cultural contexts of the speech community in Nigeria and diaspora and as H. K. Bhabha said, in order for self-positioning (Bhabha 1994: 179).

- But I bet I speak Igbo better than you.
- Impossible. - he said, and switched to Igbo. - *Ama m atu inu*. I even know proverbs.
- Yes. The basic one everybody knows. A frog does not run in the afternoon for nothing.
- No. I know serious proverbs. *Akota ife ka ubi, e lee oba*. If something bigger than the farm is dig up, the barn is sold.

- Ah, you want to try me? - she asked, laughing - *Acho afu adi ako n'akpa dibia*. The medicine man's bag has all kinds of things.

- Not bad - he said - *E gbuo dike n'ogu uno, e luo na ogu agu, e lote ya*. If you kill a warrior in a local fight, you'll remember him when fighting enemies.

They traded proverbs. She could say only two more before she gave up, with him still raring to go.

- How do you know all that? - she asked, impressed. - Many guys won't even speak Igbo, not to mention knowing proverbs.

"I just listen to when my uncles talk. I think my dad would have liked that." (Adichie: 2013: 61-62).

In second instance, the characters exclaim:

- Dike, *I mechago?* [Have you finished?] Ifemelu asked.

- Please don't speak Igbo to him, Auntie Uju said. - Two languages will confuse him.

- What are you talking about, Auntie? We spoke two languages growing up.

- This is America. It's different. (Adichie 2013: 109)

As we see here, this narrative strategy is intertwined with such simple moments, where an action, dialogue or thought reflected by characters show the distinct differences in conceptualization of Igbo and English; for some people using two languages might be confusing. This short extract visualizes somehow the discourse within which the migrant works – being herself or himself an Igbo, who lives in American context and has to redefine language usage. Adichie goes beyond certain day-to-day situations of migrants' lives, trespasses the boundary of their origin by interweaving global motifs, sometimes going back into the Igbo roots and tradition for example proverbs. Ethnic experiences are here expressed in a heritage language and connections with home country. However, in the novel there are also several indirect references to Igbo without special translation, as in the following example:

His grades were falling. Auntu Uju threatened him more often. The last time Ifemelu visited, Auntu Uju told him, “I will send you back to Nigeria if you do that again!” speaking Igbo as she did to him only when she was angry, and Ifemelu worried that it would become for him language of strife. (Adichie 2013: 171).

It perfectly reveals the attitude of Ifemelu and Uju toward using Igbo to express certain feelings and emotions. For Auntu Uju Igbo is considered as more appropriate language to express personal negative feelings like being angry. It shows how the character perceives the language use for different situations and negotiate it in communication.

### **Nigerian Pidgin English component**

Moreover, Adichie utilizes lexical items of Nigerian Pidgin English such as *abi?* [right? Isn't it?] and Hausa such as *haba* [No, I disagree]. Those examples may be seen as instances of Nigerian Pidgin English, today used also by non-Igbo speakers, but their origin can be traced to the Igbo language and culture.

“Your mother is an American, *abi?* [right?] So you have an American passport” Emenike asked. (Adichie 2013: 65)

“With a magic handkerchief, *abi?* [right?] Zemaye scoffed. (Adichie 2013: 418)

His name is Ndudi. Cool name, *abi?* [right?] You can't get more Igbo than that. (Adichie 2013: 387).

But to get up and say you have no problem with your wife but you are leaving for another woman? *Haba*. [No] (Adichie 2013: 472).

As these various examples show – and as I will also argue, the aim of Adichie's strategy could be interpreted as the method of mani-

festation of identity and useful device for articulation of sense of belonging. Firstly, the self-identification of social interaction is mediated by symbolic resources available within a given culture, including in particular – the language. Secondly, obtaining identity occurs during interaction, sending, receiving and interpreting messages, which are all crucial to the reconstruction of relational and oppositional identity. Language works similarly, it is the base for recognition, as in the novel two languages appear either in opposition, or in supplementary mode to each other, giving the recognition and the feeling of empowerment. The identity manifests itself in practices. Hence, using Igbo phrases stands for mapping writer's roots on a big map of global literature (La Barbera 2007: 4). Therefore other functions are for instance: expression of specific aesthetics, putting emphasis on the literary composition, communication of cultural ideas and the life patterns of the Nigerian people, a or simply willingness to reach readers more widely (Owolabi, Owoeye 2013: 28).

### **Closing remarks**

Like many other Nigerian authors Adichie has been working to deconstruct particular matters by expressing her artistic thoughts using Igbo vocabulary. Those phrases are used to convey communication, states of mind, feelings and opinions, expressions of affection, endearments and addressative forms. Patterns of identification regularly relate to the translation of proverbs, idioms, cultural phrases from Igbo into English. The language Adichie uses is a clear indicator of her status mingling within two worlds, not only one. In one of her statements she admits:

Igbo is a major influence since most of my characters speak it and since I mutter in Igbo when the writing is not going well. Language and style are very important to me; I am a keen admirer of good prose stylists and I can tell, right away, which writers pay attention to style. I care about the rhythm of a sentence. I care about word choice. I much respect poetic prose done well (Tunca: 2008).



Taken this into consideration, one could argue that her literary approach presents that Igbo language plays a vital role in Adichie's writing process as well as English and in the globalized world both are crucial part of migrant identities formation. Analysis of her narrative strategy in reference to languages gives the opportunity to see the constant need for reconsideration of a fluid and dynamic identity. The novel may act as an example of polyphony and illustration of Adichie's awareness of contemporary global phenomena as well as her open attitude toward deploying linguistic flexibility and creative skills to reflect controversial and shifting social practices and post-modern tendencies in global literature.

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