LEXICAL AND DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY IN SELECTED TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY NIGERIAN NOVELS

BY

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ABSTRACT

Construction of identity constitutes a major means by which novelists, dramatists and poets deal with the interface between themes and social realities in their writings. Given the centrality of this engagement to literary discourse, elaborate attention has been given to identity construction in most literary genres, especially, poetry, drama and autobiographies. However, inadequate attempt has been made to explore the role of contextualised vocabulary choices in identity discourse in the novel, which contains clearer and more elaborate testimonies of identity construction than other literary genres. This study, therefore, investigates lexical and discursive construction of identity in selected twenty-first century Nigerian novels in terms of forms and lexico-discursive features. This is with a view to determining how identity is indexicated in the novels.

The study adopted aspects of Ruth Wodak's discourse-historical analysis, together with lexical semantics and Manuel Castells' identity theory. Four Nigerian novels were purposively sampled: two Nigeria-based authors: Abimbola Adelakun's *Under the Brown Rusted Roofs* [RR] and Vincent Egbuson's *Love My Planet* [LP]; and two foreign-based authors: Helon Habila's *Waiting for an Angel* [WA] and Okey Ndibe's *Arrows of Rain* [AR]. Habila's and Egbuson's award-winning novels were sampled over their other novels, while Adelakun's and Ndibe's only novels were respectively selected. The texts were selected because they manifest issues relating to identity construction. The language of the novels was subjected to lexical and discursive analyses.

Four forms of identities – national, ethnic, social, and religious – manifested in the novels. National identity bifurcates into cultural sameness and uniqueness – lexicalised through borrowing and innovations and politics, characterised by indigenous abbreviations. Ethnic identity, indexed through borrowing and naming, is laden with conflictual and antagonistic moves, indicating resistance to the outgroup. Three types of social identities are negotiated: professional, ingroup and outgroup. Professional identity is lexicalised through borrowing from Spanish, Latin and French, and Nigerian Pidgin; ingroup identity indexicated by emotive slangy expressions; and outgroups by naming and euphemisms that are replete with disaffiliating strategies. Three forms of religious identities, constructed through religious expressions, manifested: legitimising, resistance and powerlessness. Legitimising and resistance identities are respectively characterised by domineering and resistant discourse moves and powerlessness by attitudinal indexes, effusive and affiliating mappings. Sexual identity, constructed through naming, slangy and euphemistic expressions, are contested on the discursive strategies of inclusion and exclusion marked by tagging, subversive and aggressive moves. While the religious expressions in LP, AR and WA encode Christian identity, RR's exploration of Arabic expressions constructs Islamic identity. Although LP and WA borrow extensively across indigenous languages to legitimise national identity and ethnic identity construction, evident in elaborate adoption of Yoruba and Igbo expressions, there are no significant differences in their choices of lexico-discursive features.

Twenty-first century Nigerian novelists deploy lexico-discursive features in the construction of identity forms; beliefs, religion and education play significant roles in the construction of identity. These demonstrate an exquisite interplay of form and function elements in the construction of identity in the Nigerian novel.

Key words: Twenty-first Century Nigerian novels, Lexical devices, Discursive features, Identity forms

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Alice, I met you a few days to my defence; and the way you laugh sounds like music to my soul….

CERTIFICATION

I certify that Romanus Agianpuye Aboh in the Department of English, University of Ibadan carried out this work under my supervision.

……

Supervisor:
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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated:

First, to my mountain mover, God Almighty: all I have comes from You, loving and merciful Father.

Second, to everyone who supported this “adventure.”

Finally, to students across the globe who struggle to acquire knowledge.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Below is a list of abbreviations used in the study:

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

IMF – International Monetary Fund

NE – Nigerian English

TGG – Transformational Generative Grammar

SFL – Systemic Functional Linguistics

CoS – Context of Situation

DA – Discourse Analysis

CDA – Critical Discourse Analysis

CL – Critical Linguistics

CLS – Critical Language Study

CS – Code Switching

MR – Member Resources

CP – Co-operative Principle

LB – Lexical Borrowing

NP – Nigerian Pidgin

CHAPTER ONE
GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

Identity and its construction in social practices has become one of the most central themes in linguistic research in the past two decades. The theoretical frame of reference for the study of identity has been radically shifting from the blend of linguistic variables with preexisting social categories such as class and socioeconomic status, typical of sociolinguistic research in the 1970s and 1980s, to a focus on how those social categories are negotiated through language and other symbolic systems by interactants in discourse situations. The main drive toward this shift has come from the social constructionist paradigm (Hall, 2004; Fairclough, 2001; Weiss and Wodak, 2003), which has taken the lead in most discourse analytic research on identity. That paradigm is based on the primacy of interactants' local construction of social reality and on the centrality assigned to the concept of practice. Based on these principles, researchers in the field of identity studies have shown that individuals and groups build and project images of themselves that are not independent of and do not preexist the social practices in which they are displayed and negotiated. Participants in social activities "do" identity work and affiliate with or distance themselves from social categories of belonging depending on the local context of interaction and its insertion in the wider social world.

In a communicative situation, for example, when a language user chooses to use one word or a phrase instead of another, it is not for the semantic content only, but also for the construction of the idea(s) that are embedded in such use, or the ideological effects of such a situation. During the uprising in Libya, for example, the American government continuously used the expressions "Ghadaffi is killing his own people" and "liberate the Libyan people." The choice of the adjective "own" is calculated and strategic. It makes the world feel the intensity of the crime Ghadaffi was committing against his people and to let the world see the need why the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) had to invoke the letters of Resolution 1973 on Libya. The NATO Resolution 1973, among other things, include the imposition of No-fly Zones in war torn countries, which means that no aircraft was allowed to fly over the Libyan air space. If any air plane did, NATO had the right to bring it down.

In using the adjective, the American government succeeded in constructing the idea that Americans and its allies (NATO) are good people, doing what is needed to be done. By using the adjective, the American government constructed a positive identity for the allied forces in general and America in particular. Moreover, the chosen word, "liberate", could be seen from two perspectives: one, as a euphemism to gloss over the word "invasion" (a word with a negative connotation often used to refer to America's occupation of some Middle East countries). Two, it can be seen as a way of positioning the liberal ideology of the American government. In this regard, language becomes a programme with which people work to *legitimize* their identity.

The foregoing sustains the hypothesis that language is an important instrument which people employ in the social construction of everyday life (Fairclough, 1995, 2001, Rahim, 2008). Language is, therefore, a continuously active social process. Every time people speak or write, the form of their sentences necessarily articulates and reproduces their identities and ideological views. Evidently, the language we use whether it is our mother tongue or not, by and large, describes who we are. Corroborating the claim that language describes who we are, Gibson (2004:1) notes that "language is a control feature of human identity. When we hear someone speak, we immediately make guesses about gender, level of education, age, profession, and place of origin." Beyond this individual matter, a language is a powerful symbol of national and ethnic identity.

Language is a critical component in the construction of identity. If identity is seen as a set of characteristics that define an individual or a group, then language is an important means by which these characteristics are communicated. At the level of the individual identity can be expressed through personal and family names which distinguish that individual from others in society. In terms of ethnic, group identity can be communicated through terms of ethnic affiliation which not only bestow membership on those within the group, but also exclude those deemed outside the group. With reference to nation or state, membership can be defined as referring to those who are considered to be citizens, usually persons entitled to a passport. Membership of the nation is therefore determined in law (Clarke, 2005). While nationality in this sense is a comparatively simple matter to determine, the way in which the identity of those belonging to the group is expressed beyond the term used to denote nationality is far from simple.

However, if a Nigerian in the United States of America, for instance, meets with another Nigerian, it will be a great pleasure precisely because it is a meeting between people who speak the same language (at least Nigerian English or Nigerian Pidgin). This is a form of collective identity. Collective identity is seen as "the discourse of 'languages' as the 'natural' reflexes of national identities" (Auer, 2007:1). Collectivities are treated as unique "quasi-beings which express their identities" (p: 2) through certain features equally unique to them. Among these features, the national language has a privileged role.

The idea that collective identities and languages are connected in an essentialist way has been a key concept of modernity; it underlies the legitimisation of nations and continues to be deeply rooted in our language ideologies. According to this idea, each collectivity (particularly a nation) expresses its own individual character through and in its language. Against this backdrop, the dominant idea in the adoption and adaptation of indigenous expressions in 21st-century Nigerian novels is more or less radically the *legitimization* of a Nigerian identity. Collectivities – nations, but also ethnic or social groups – are no longer assumed to naturally exist, for example, on the basis of genetics, ancestry or birth, but are seen as social and ideological constructs, which rely on language. But can one find a monolithic collectivity? This question will certainly answer itself as this discussion progresses.

Beyond the level of language that signals recognition (identity), there is the manifestation of personality, i.e. either as an individual or as a member of a group. This is a form of social identity where individuals employ linguistic items to identify with the people they consider as theirs or members of their group. Here, language is a constant of identity with which people surround themselves according to their linguistic identities (Poynton, 1989). The tendency for people, therefore, to associate freely with other people is always facilitated by the fact that the people involved speak the same language. The fact is that language does not only embody the world-view of a people; it also carries their belief system. Though language is not synonymous to belief, it is a conduit through which belief systems are expressed and retained. Belief is not just power, it determines to a large extent, if not totally, the way people use language to mean. Language in this regard becomes a powerful instrument in the construction and reconstruction of identities (Aboh, 2010).

Given people's understanding of the role language plays in their daily existence, it has gone beyond the level of merely representing world-views to the construction of reality and belief systems. This position seems to represent Escober's views as he notes that:

> I do not conceive of it (language) as a mere politically direct instrumentality or as an "object" of study that belongs exclusively to linguistics or any other academic discipline. Language must be something alive – not a closed (dead) system of signs. It is not equivalent to ideology either (Escober, 1992: 1).

Escober's perspective on language seems to suggest that beyond its crucial function as a means of communication and its central role as the representation of the people who use it, language, given its organic existence in society, influences users' behaviour. Language is therefore more importantly a construction of ideas, identities and ideologies that shapes the culture and thought of people. While this creates the image of language as a living, independent and ever-evolving phenomenon, it is the users who are responsible for the way it is used to create meaning. "The cyclic process of language use and meaning construction", Rahim (2008: 2) argues, "is the magical property that makes language a powerful social phenomenon." Power and identity construction are especially evident in the way people use language. Apart from the constitutive role of language in the construction of identity, religion, an individual's political affiliations, origin, level of education, literature, among others, are indicators of identity.

Literature has over the years functioned as a site for the expression of and the contestation of identities. Literature functions as a focal point of cultural consciousness, and writing weaves into language the complex as well as the mosaic relations between identity and literature. In corollary, literature does not only provide a platform for writers' demonstration of their knowledge about a language and other cultural practices or belief systems, but also points axiomatically to how language can be calibrated and foregrounded along the complex dynamics of identity construction. Literature therefore functions as a tool for self-expression and discovery. Literature, like other sites of knowledge becomes, as Gates argues, "one of the sites for contest and negotiation, self fashioning and refashioning" (1994:11). The novel can also function, through its analysis of different lexical devices employed by writers, as a link to religious, ethnic, national, social and sexual identities.

Maxwell's (1965) approach to language and place, for instance, suggests that in the case of invaded societies like those in India and Nigeria, where indigenous people were colonised on their own territories, writers were not forced to take up to a different landscape and climate, but had their own ancient and sophisticated responses to them marginalised by the world-view which was implicated by the acquisition of English. Whether English supplanted the writer's mother tongue or simply offered an alternative medium which guaranteed a wider readership, its use caused a disjunction between the apprehension of, and the communication about the world. For Maxwell, where post-colonial writers originated, they shared certain outstanding features which set their works apart from England. In the light of Maxwell's views, the writer brings an "alien" language, English, to his own social and cultural inheritance. The wrestle with words and meanings aims to subdue the purported supremacy of the language.

Implicit in Maxwell's analysis of language and post-colonial discourse is a kind of double vision not available to uncolonised writers. This vision is one in which identity is constituted by difference: intimately bound up in love or in hate with a metropolis which exercises its hegemony over the immediate world of the post-colonial. The English used in Nigeria is one of the varieties of New Englishes, which are nativised English varieties that have emerged around the world owing to the spread of English. One of the features of Nigerian English (NE) is the adoption and adaptation of the life and culture of the Nigerian people. Such adoption and adaptation is evident in the area of creative writing. If such adoption and adaptation of lexical items and other forms of language use are found in the Nigerian novel, it should interest one to investigate the rationale for such usages. This is because Bailay (2007:37) argues that "some expressions are metaphorically loaded" an indication of the way language users "exploit the indexical potential of certain codes or forms to claim and enact identities in context-specific ways." Since historical antecedents have imposed English on Nigerians, does the way writers use the English language in the 21st-century Nigerian novel betray any sense of identity? If the question is stretched further to cover the caveat of this study, does the use of language by the 21st-century Nigerian novelist suggest that language embodies the identity of its users?

The adaptation and adoption of indigenous linguistic items are efforts geared at upholding the identity of the people the novel is written to represent. In order to avoid

obliteration, Nigerian writers such as Helon Habila, Abimbola Adelakun, Vincent Egbuson and Okey Ndibe, who have been selected for analysis in this study, consciously adopt linguistic items from their respective indigenous languages, other Nigerian languages as well as peculiar Nigerian linguistic expressions for their creative projects. What follows is the production of literature that speaks on behalf of the multiple ethnic nationalities that form the Nigerian nation. In spite of the multi-ethnic composition of Nigeria, Nigerian proselytes have used their creative projects to construct as well as to *legitimize* their Nigerian identity. Besides the *legitimization* of a Nigerian identity, these novelists adopt various lexical items to construct diverse forms of identities.

The impact of language on identity construction is the premise upon which this research on the twenty-first century Nigerian novel is based. The foci of the study are on the lexical devices deployed by selected Nigerian novelists, the politicisation of these lexical devices to give pre-eminence to Nigerian languages over the hegemony of English and how these lexical devices frame the fragmented nature of identities in the Nigerian novel. Besides the deployment of lexical devices, discoursive features such as naming strategies, slangy expressions, euphemisms, Nigerian Pidgin expressions and religious indexicals/expressions are employed to construct various forms of identity. The hypothetical consideration of the study is that language is a repository of identity. Operationally, identity construction can be seen as a social process that is mediated in communication through language. It is, therefore, interesting to see how lexical devices and discursive features are used to construct, reconstruct and negotiate identity in the 21st-century Nigerian novel. It is hoped that such an effort will take us a step further in critical language study because language will not be seen as one objective mirror of pre-existing social structure which, to a reasonable extent, has failed to recognise the constitutive role of language in shaping the social order. The next section discusses the interwoven relationship among language, identity and ideology.

1.1 Language, Identity and Ideology

In the preceding section, it was mentioned that language is a critical component of identity construction. If identity is seen as a set of characteristics that define an individual or a group, then language is an important means by which these characteristics are

communicated. But just what is understood by identity? Identity is a difficult concept to define. This is because it is best seen as a plurality and not as a unitary construct. However, from the perspective of social and collective theories of identity, identity is seen as the individual's concept of the self, as well as the inner group and the larger society. Identity formation is not simply a conscious process, but it is influenced by unconscious psychological processes (De Vos, 1992). Norton (1997: 410) defines identity as "how people understand their relationship to the outside world, how that relationship is constructed across time or space, and how people understand their possibilities for the future." This line of argument points to the fact that identity is a reflection of people's individuality, and language either helps in, or hinders individuals from constructing respective forms of identity. This definition has its shortcomings because people can forge identity.

When people speak (or write), then, they are telling other people something about themselves. Identity, thus, is a joint, two-way production. It may be done in a more or less active way such as when people unconsciously perform a particular socially inducted identity. Identity, then, is not just a matter of using language in a way that reflects a particular identity. It is rather a socially–constructed self that people continually construct and reconstruct in their interactions with each other. This leads to different ways of doing identity with different people in different situations. A person's identity then:

> is not something fixed, stable and unitary that they acquire early in life and possess forever afterwards. Rather, identity is shifting and multiple, something people are continually constructing and reconstructing in their encounters with each other in the world (Cameron, 2001:170).

Identity is a "negotiated experience" in which people define who they are by the way they experience themselves as well as by the ways they and others reify themselves. Identities are not fixed, but are constantly being reconstructed and negotiated through the ways individuals do things and ways of belonging (or not) to a group. Individuals' identities are further developed as they increase their participation in particular communities of practice. These identities, further, are based on shared sets of values, agreed-upon cultural

understandings and the ideologies which underlie their use of spoken and written discourse (Blommeart, 2005).

Hall (1996), from a classical perspective, sees identity as a concept that is unified, permanent and essential. Such a view is informed and largely drawn from the context of crisis in the *legitimization* of the system of values particular to an ethnic group which has punctured some representations that were hitherto thought unchangeable.

If this cultural axiom is considered presently, it, therefore, follows that different cultures convey different representations and identity is culturally determined. If it is assumed that identity is a cultural subject and we examine closely the relationship between language and culture, identity is not always coherent, and it is often unstable. The truth is that people demonstrate different identities at different occasions. However, these manifestations transform into a significant whole which individuals use to oppose other's identities. Identity becomes "a continuation, *reconstruction* and deconstruction" (Iglesias-Alvarez and Ramallo, 2003: 259, italics mine). Identity in this regard is a social construct that determines people's ways of relating with other people. Explicitly, people may naturally and freely interact with those they conceive as belonging to their group, and will be antagonistic to those they consider as outsiders.

The non-unified approach to the study of identity is connected to its fragmented nature. Identity itself is a disjointed concept "deriving from a conglomerate of social representations that are acquired – mostly in an unconscious manner – during the socialisation process and that are gradually altered in the course of our existence" (Iglesias-Alvarez and Ramallo, 2003: 259). If the views of Iglesias-Alvarez and Ramallo are followed closely, it implies that identity is constructed in discourse through certain lexical devices.

Eggins and Slade (2005) argue that people do not engage in casual conversations just to "kill time," but rather to negotiate social identities as well as to negotiate, clarify and extend interpersonal relations. They describe this as the central paradox of casual conversation. Casual conversation is the type of talk in which people feel most relaxed, most spontaneous and most themselves, but then, casual conversation is a critical site for the social construction of identity. Casual conversations do a number of things which are crucial to discussions of language and identity. They establish solidarity through the confirmation of similarities and they assert autonomy through the exploration of differences. The fact is

that identities are made and remade. This tenet is well summarised in the following remarks by Le Page:

> People create their linguistic system and we all have more than one so as to resemble those of the group with which from time to time they wish to identify. Both the groups and their linguistic attributes exist solely in the mind of each individual…We behave in the way that – unconsciously or consciously – we think appropriate to the group with which at moment we wish to identify (1986: 23).

Linguistic identity, Le Page's position suggests, is not an inescapable fate imposed on us, but to some extent at least, as social construct, a matter of choice. These identity constructions become particularly significant in a multilingual country like Nigeria with over 400 hundred languages. In the sampled novels, each novelist is found to draw cultural and linguistic insights from their respective languages as a way of showing their origin, and as a way of fostering their ethnic identities. The implication of such linguistic construction of identities is the erosion of a national identity and the formation of pluralistic identities along ethnic colourations, unstable political atmosphere and irresolvable national language problem.

Scholarship has emphasised that identity is a process which is always embedded in social practices within which discourse practices have a significant role. Both social and discourse practices frame, and in many ways define, the way individuals and groups present themselves. Taking the concept of practice as central to processes of identity formation and expression entails looking more closely at ways in which definitions of identity change and evolve in time and space, ways in which membership is established and negotiated within new boundaries and social locations, and ways in which activity systems impact on processes of identity construction (Bucholtz, 2001).

Language plays a crucial role in the construction of people's identity in three ways namely, by naming, through ways of speaking and through covert grammatical categories. The way things are named and the names people bear can link them to their origins. The way individuals speak and relate with other people does not only portray their culture, but goes a long way to express their identities and group affiliations. For instance, slangy expressions among undergraduates do not only serve as an in-group marker which members

of the group use in identifying with each other, it is also a means of constructing their identities as members of their respective institutions of learning (Poynton, 1989; Aboh and Ononye, 2010).

The foregoing directs attention to the fact that language is used to sustain as well as construct an individual's identity. The world over, language has remained a dividing as well as a unifying tool. It unifies in the sense that people who speak the same language easily co-habit. They often see each other as one and always rally round themselves when it comes to issues of national interest/politics. Language can also divide. This is simply seen in cases where people who speak different languages find it difficult to interrelate.

Displaying one's identity is not equally relevant in all situations, but in a majority/minority context with widespread bilingualism in the minority group, use of the minority language in many speech situations is taken as a manifestation of identity, no matter whether or not such manifestation is intended. For this reason and because of the utility "differential" between majority language and minority language, identity change from minority to "majority" is always easier. This is given that language is the key identity marker, rather than social class or religion (Coulmas, 2005).

Language plays a significant role in the formation of identity. Calvet (1997) affirms that to speak a language or a language form, to prefer the use of one form rather than another or to pretend to use one form rather than another, is always something more than simply using an instrument of communication. Such a line of reasoning implies that speaking a language always indicates something besides what one is saying in the language. When for instance, two lecturers in a department of English, speak English to each other, although they have the same mother tongue (such as Yoruba), it should not be taken for granted. They connote the desire to conform to a British model, they encode their difference from others, the fact that they have studied, that they have university degrees, that they identify with the system that educated them, and they desire that the training they received should form the operational foundation of the department. If in the same department, a lecturer with the same background as the others expresses himself in his mother tongue, the lecturer in question connotes rejection, both of the colonial language, and of belonging to it.

The issue of choice, i.e. the choice of one form of language over another is a conscious discourse strategy that has underlying ideological undertones. Preferring a

language to another shows acceptance of the ideologies of what the preferred language carries. It can be surmised that a major function of language is the expression of personal identity – the signalling of who one is and where one belongs. These signals find their way into the whole of "our linguistic behaviour" (Crystal, 1997: 113). This echoes the fact that language presents the beliefs, thoughts and norms of the people.

Nigerian creative writers have continually stressed, through their uses of language, the mystical bond between language and identity. It must, however, be noted that language closeness does not necessarily guarantee social or ideological closeness. Small differences can become hugely significant from an ideological angle. However, these ways of referring to language as markers of identity are felt to resist unwarranted and dangerous assumptions of ethnic purity. Once people stand in ideological opposition, it seems a difficult task for language to bring them together. The chances of socio-cultural groups who share the same ideology, in spite of linguistic similarities or sameness, to identify with each other are very slim.

What, then, is ideology? The term ideology has a wide scope of reference. It has a long and confusing etymological history. The concept of ideology is used in different ways, depending on the perspective from which one wishes to look at it. Also, ideology is a decidedly complicated term with different implications depending on the context in which it is used. In everyday language, it can be an insult to charge someone with being "ideological," since this labell suggests rigidity in the face of overwhelming evidence contradicting one's beliefs. When Marxists speak of ideology, they often mean belief systems that help justify the actions of those in power by distorting and misrepresenting reality. When ideology is talked about, then, there is need to be careful to specify what is meant by the term. It has a broader and more fundamental connotation if its context of use is not specified. For instance, every writer has an ideology and a set of objectives, which become the policy of their writings.

In the Marxist tradition, for instance, two major conceptions of ideology have been developed. "On the one hand, it can designate illusion, false consciousness or unreality; on the other, it is seen as that by which we become conscious of the conflict arising from conditions and changes of condition in economic production" (Williams, 1976: 62). In contemporary mass media, ideology refers "pejoratively to a system of political dogmas,

opposed to the moderate mainstream political system" (Yahya, 2003: 27). Yahya goes on to provide a broader view of ideology in the following words:

> It (ideology) designates a system of representations, perceptions and images internalized by individuals as a fundamental framework of assumptions that help them make sense of their social world as well as their place in it (i.e. their "lived relation to the real"). "Reality" here is arbitrary because ideology has a way of obscuring the real conditions of existence by smoothing over contradictions in its attempt to present a coherent picture of that world (2003: 27).

From the foregoing, the matrix of beliefs that is used to comprehend the world, the value systems by which people interact in the society describes their ideological orientations. In this study, attention is focused at ideology from a more neutral sense, generally accepted in current cultural studies as a system of values of a definite group or class, a set of shared assumptions, or a collective representation of ideas and experiences as opposed to material reality.

Embedded in Yahya's (2003) view is the idea that no linguistic expression is neutral in the real sense of it. The linguistic act is designed in a way that the text carries the ideology of the text producer. In the process of text formation, the writer uses language to hide their ideological inclination. Ideology therefore refers to the way in which a text mediates a set of particular ideological beliefs through character, narrator or author. This is why Brecht argues that:

> Good or bad, a play always includes an image of the world… There is no play and no theatrical performance which does not in some way affect the dispositions and conceptions of the audience. Art is never without consequences (1978: 150-1).

Implicated in the above notion is the notion that all texts are ultimately political. That is, they offer competing ideological significations of the way the world is or should be. A transformation of ideology is an integral part of linguistic discourse. A writer's ideological project is changed as it enters friction; what they want to say (this is the original intention prior to ideological encodings) is hemmed on all sides by ideology, by the conventions of

writing, by the inadequate language of fiction, by the logic of writing, etc. What results in a text is the exposition of hidden ideas for in order to say something there are other things that must be said or not said (Machery, 1978).

To understand the resulting ideological concerns imbued in language, then, the analyst has to move "critically" between the articulated and the unarticulated. In fact, it is in the silences that the presence of ideology is discovered by bringing to limelight all the things that were paradoxically absent in the text. It is in the text's absences and silences that ideology can be keenly felt. The role of the linguist takes on the critical path, critical in the sense that it shows the text's unspoken and suppressed 'voices'. This is because in texts, the language of ideology, momentarily hidden, is made eloquent by its very absence (Mecherey, 1978). The linguist working on identity construction has a tasking job to do. The analyst must go beyond the superficial level of the text and explain it, must say what it does not and could not say. Moreover, the ideological concern of a writer manifests in the way they manipulate language to present their identity. When people use language they explore their identities and identity is embedded in the way individuals use language. This is a matter of choice from several other available linguistic options. In fact, the selectional process is a form of identity construction in itself. It becomes important to see language as mediating identity and that the way identity is being formed and sustained, by and large, is connected to the ideological orientation of the user of language. This functional/relativist approach enables the analyst to know what language is saying or not saying.

The issues discussed above suggest a distinctively inseparable relationship among language, identity and ideology. Individual personal attributes do not predetermine one's destiny in life, but are intricately woven into a complex whole: one's language and ideology impact upon one's identity, causing it to be in a constant state of flux. The individual looks closely at what language offers at a particular time and responds to them by shifting, depending on the changing tide of things. Ideology is therefore a "material," though in a constant flux, which interactants deploy to express their views about social reality.

The process of identity construction is itself political and is an expression of power. But how are these concepts related?

1.2 Language, Politics and Power

Scholars hold the view that politics is one difficult concept to define. The reason for such difficulty is that politics has over the years been approached by different scholars with different scholarly backgrounds. Evidently, these scholars have approached the notion of politics with information obtained from their respective scholarly orientations. Arguing in favour of the above position, Chilton (2004) notes that politics varies according to the situation and purpose in which language is put to use.

Tsaaior describes politics as the "processes through which individuals appropriate and utilise power or exercise authority over others based on class, race, status, gender and other affiliations" (2009: 86). Tsaaior's position takes one beyond the politics of electioneering to the domain of political discourse. In political discourse, it is assumed that every facet of human existence is woven in and around politics. It looks at how people use language to achieve life goals. Since people "manipulate" language to achieve certain life's goals, it becomes a political apparatus that constitutes human negotiation of their existence.

Moreover, Tsaaior's definition makes a distinction between political discourse and politics. Politics is formal (dealing with electioneering, political debates, etc) whereas political discourse (which deals with the manipulation of language) is informal and discusses in general, human linguistic behaviour. Political discourse is interested in how language users use language to achieve life's goals. It basically studies the way language is centrally involved in individuals' negotiation of their daily existence as they interact with other people. If this position is sustained presently, the underlying implication is that every language user is a "politician" or is engaged in politics, better still the "politics" of language use.

Chilton (2004) sees politics as a struggle for power where those who are in it want to maintain it, and those who are out will want to come in. Dissecting these two orientations is another distinction, that is, between "micro" and "macro" levels. At the micro-level, there are conflicts of interests, struggles for dominance and efforts at operation between individuals, between gender, and social groups of various kinds. As Jones (1994: 5) puts it: "at the micro level we use a variety of techniques to get our own ways: persuasion, rational argument, irrational strategies, threats, entreaties, bribes, manipulation – anything we think will work."

In contrast, at the macro-level there is the political institution of the state, which is one of the views of politics which, put differently, serves to assert the power of the dominant individual (a tyrant) or a group. Such state institutions are enshrined in constitutions, in civil and criminal legal codes, and precedented practice. Associated with these state institutions, are parties and professional politicians with more or less stable social practices while other social formations such as interest groups and social movements may play upon the stage (Chilton, 2004). The above argument is summarised in the diagram below:

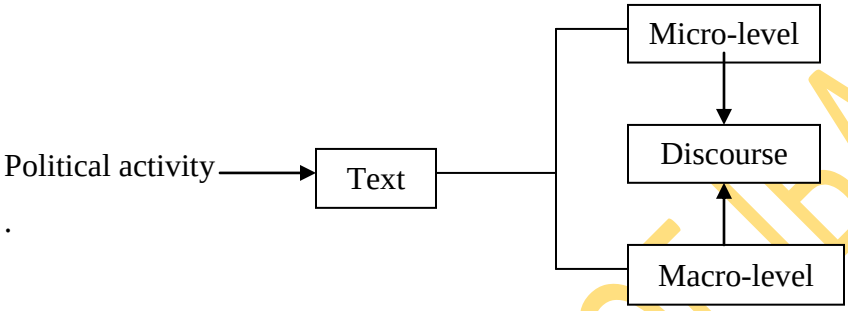


Fig. 1.1: Levels of Political Discourse

Chilton (2004) has also observed that what is strikingly absent from constitutional studies of politics is the neglect of the fact that micro-level behaviour are actually kinds of linguistic actions just as macro-level institutions are types of discourse with specific characteristics. Parliamentary debates, broadcast, interviews, etc are specific characteristics of macro-level discourse. In the process of defining human relation with institutions and the apparatus of power, language plays an integral role. Language and politics are closely related because politics is expressed through language. This line of reasoning instantiates the need to explain how the use of language can have the effects of authority, legitimacy, consensus, etc that are considered as being intrinsic to politics. The truth is that language partly consists in the disputes and struggles which occur in language and over language.

In recent times within linguistics, it is widely accepted that the human capacity is genetically based. This genetic base evolves from human social and political activities that see language as performing social functions. The clear-cut point here is that political activity does not exist without the use of language. This is because politics predominantly relies on language (Fairclough, 2001; Chilton, 2004).

Wilson (1990) observes that politically, language (words and sentences) is used in an emotive manner. The reason for such usage is to provoke a feeling of solidarity, to arouse emotions such as fear, hate or joy. It is evident that political language is designed to achieve specific political goals, to make people believe in certain things and to make other people identify with their ideological orientations. Be that as it may, the analyst of a political language must be conscious of the context in which the talk is situated. This is because as context of language use changes, the meaning as well alters with the changing context (A discussion of how context influences meaning is done in Section 1.4).

In establishing the relationship between language and politics, Wilson (1990) draws attention to the manipulative power of language. He maintains that non-political speech and writing are largely the defence of the indefensible, and that propaganda can be combated by rational analysis and argument which entails rephrasing propagandistic statements in different forms. Wilson also notes that in political statements, syntactic selections affect interpretation, but that it must be seen in relation to other contextual pressures and the impact of lexical choices made.

Buttressing this view, Joseph (2004) avers that it is not simply manipulation in the case of political language, but the goal of such manipulation. The implication is that a linguistic act becomes political only if the goal tallies with the linguistic choice. In the light of this, Wilson and Joseph see politicians as wanting to hide the negative within the particular formulations such that the people may not see the truth or the horror before them. Politicians are interested in using language to hide the truth, more especially before their electorates during electioneering periods. In campaign speeches, words are excessively emotionalised and completely devoid of objective formulation. The intention is to make the public believe that they hold the solutions to their problems.

The indication is that language mediates people view of the world in both the stages of texts production and interpretation. It is not that there is an underlying reality which we transform to suit our needs: it is rather that there are competing realities which become reflected in the various structures which we employ to *politicise* the world. This reminds one, once more, of the link between language and thought. Where such a relativistic view operates, the politician cannot be accused of being ignorant of the use of language in achieving their goals.

In this regard, rather than prescribe how language should be used, the discourse analyst's interest should be descriptive: describing what language is used to achieve. It therefore implies that in order to know what politicians do with language, it is important to understand what it is possible to do with language in general.

Nigerian novelists use language in a political manner. Their lexical choices and the way they manipulate syntactic structures to mean are largely influenced by their political inclinations. The assignment of Pidgin expressions to militant characters in Egbuson's *Love My Planet*, for instance, is a political strategy of down-playing its (Pidgin) ability to function as a national language. This points to the fact that language is fundamentally involved in the practice of human construction of their ideo-political inclination.

Jameson, in his book titled *The Political Unconscious* (1986), makes a pertinent point to the analysis of political discourse. He holds the view that politics is a "strategy of containment" which a society uses to suppress the contradictions of history so that it can make sense of itself. He calls this the political unconscious, the collective denial or repression of historical antecedents. Practically, people do politics to gain power, and in the Marxist perspective, to get access to economy. Politics and power are interrelated.

There is a plethora of approaches to the concept of power. Power is about "relations of difference, and particularly about the effects of differences in social structures" (Wodak, 2006: 4). The constant unity of language and other social matters ensures that language is roped in social power in a number of ways. Basically, power can be kept through coercion or consent. Wodak would stress that "language indexes power and expresses power; language is involved where there is contention over and a challenge to power" (2006: 4). Power, however, does not derive from language. But language can be used to interrogate power, to deny power, to uphold power and to determine who gets power. Language provides a neatly articulated vehicle for differences in power in hierarchical social structures.

The foregoing argumentation shows a significant and an ongoing turn in the way people use language. Globalisation, for example, entails that people exert control from a distance. Language is the medium through which such "globalised" exercise of power is expressed. It implies that social processes and social relations are stretched out across distances, affecting as well as altering social, political and cultural ways of using languages.

This reveals in a more subtle manner the problem associated with language and the construction of identity, which relates to politics and the exercise of power. The political environment has a strong influence on the use of language, and the way in which terms are deployed, often with far reaching consequences for large sections of the population. Even the meaning of terms can be conditioned by the political context in which they operate, so that the dictionary definition becomes overlaid with implicit constraints imposed by the political system. In states where there are several languages, the widely spoken language and its users do not only dominate the political and economic life of the state, users of minority languages strive to learn the "dominant" language of that state. Lamidi (2004: 37) observes that in multilingual societies "there often exists a national or official language which everyone aspires to master for effective social interaction." Lamidi's summation applies, at least, to the Bette language in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State. Besides dialectal variations, there are three distinct languages, namely Bette, Alege and Utwugwang in Obudu. But Bette is widely spoken because it has been used in writing books for primary education, and the Bible has also been translated in it. The politics of Obudu, owing to the fact that they are the most educated in the local government, is controlled by Bette speakers. These facts arrogate power and control to Bette. Bette is the lingua franca of not just Obudu, but also its neighbouring Obanlikwu Local Government Area, which is "enriched" with over three languages. Everyone in the region strives to speak Bette because it is the language through which one can be easily identified as an indigene of Obudu.

Power and politics are therefore inseparably intertwined and are both embedded in language. This makes politics powerful in the construction and maintenance of hegemonic norms. Power and politics are fundamental to the *legitimization* and *resistance* of people's perception of reality. There is a relation among language, power and politics, but the relationship is not transparent. Power is a weapon which individuals use to dominate; language is a crucial vehicle as well as site for determining social status. Section 1.3 examines the intertwined relationship among language, culture and society.

1.3 Language, Culture and Society

It is commonly known that language and culture are closely related. This is seen in the sense that a specific human communication is legitimately an inseparable part of a people's general ways of life in sociological and anthropological terms. The relationship between language and culture or society is an intriguing one, and has been so explored and with so much done on it, within linguistics and anthropology, that it appears there is nothing new to say on the subject (Ushie, 2009). Yet, it is an indispensable springboard to the discussion of any fresh insight on the subject.

Culture is inextricably linked to language. Without language, culture cannot be completely acquired nor can it be effectively expressed and transmitted. Without culture, language can hardly exist. Language and culture are so intertwined that it is difficult to delineate the parameters of language and culture, and whether language impacts culture or cultures impact language (Su Kim, 2003).

The significance and the relationship between language and culture have been explored by anthropologists such as Frantz Boaz (1918), Edward Sapir (1921), Benjamin Lee Whorf (1941), and Brownislaw Malinowski (1944). They emerged with various studies, which concretised the mutual relationship between language and culture, or language and society. Malinowski's student, J.R. Firth, later developed his mentor's findings to become one of the leading beacons in the area of sociolinguistics. Edward Sapir's findings were also developed by his student, Benjamin Lee Whorf, and their contributions became the popularly known Sapir-Whorf hypothesis of linguistic determinism and relativity or Whorfianism (Simpson, 1993). The outstanding difference between these earlier studies mainly by anthropologists and later ones by linguists such as William Labov (1972), Peter Trudgil (1974), R.A. Hudson (1980), Joshua Fishman (1974) and Uriel Weinreich (1953) is that the earlier studies emphasised the bond between language and society as wholes, while the subsequent ones stressed on the internal structure of language phenomena as replicating structure (Ushie, 2009).

In fact, the relationship among language, culture and society entered linguistic currency with a disturbing resonance following the emergence of Sapir-Whorf linguistic hypothesis. The underlying idea of linguistic determinism is that "linguistic differences determine differences in worldview; or, put differently, the way we 'see' the world is

constructed by the language we use" (Simpson, 1993: 163). It implies that linguistic systems shape our ideas, programme and guide our mental activity. Consequently, users of language are "very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for the society" (p. 163). This is the strong version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis.

Sapir's position suggests that the relationship between word and meaning is determined by the cultural context in which the word occurs. The language we speak, as it follows, influences the way we perceive the world. In other words, we are held "captives" by our own language because speakers of different languages code the world in different ways. This shall be returned to presently.

Williams (1983:87) notes that culture is "one of the two or most complicated words in the English language". This implies that culture has many definitions. But the study limits itself to the definitions it considers relevant. Banks (1988: 261) defines culture as "a cluster of attributes such as values, beliefs, behaviour patterns and symbols unique to a particular human group". Goodenough believes that culture "is made up of the concepts, beliefs, and principles of action and organization" (1976: 5).

Realistically, culture is not a static entity. It has the ability to acquire new characteristics and forms. It is dynamic: its permutations can take place from one generation to another or from one geographical area to another. To the anthropologist, however, culture is "still *composed* of socially shared elements, socially shared norms, codes of behaviour, values, and assumptions about the world that clearly distinguishes one socio-cultural group from another" (Trueba, 1993: 34). Anthropologists believe that sharing a culture of a group means being able to operate effectively in the particular group.

Britzman (1991) defines culture as that site where identities, desires and investments are mobilised, constructed, and reworked. If culture is such a dynamic negotiation site, then there is much in linguistics and cultural actions that need to be deconstructed and understood. Culture is a transactional process. It is during the cultural transmission from one generation to another that culture is recreated and redefined by the parties involved.

Learning the language and learning the culture are different things, but they are clearly interdependent. Since the linguistic system is part of the social system, neither can be learned without the other. As the expressive and symbolic aspects of human behaviour,

language and culture are twin offspring of society. It is therefore easy to think of culture as a means of accessing language and language as a way of accessing a culture. Similarly, Akindele and Adegbite (1999: 5) aver that language and culture are connected in three ways:

> First, it is an aspect of culture – one of the very many objects and institutions of culture. Second, language is an instrument of thought. It helps to concretise and also to explore, discover, extend and record the experiences in a culture. Third, language expresses culture. It is the only way by which the social experiences and values of a group of a people are perceived and understood.

Some studies have examined language as an instrument that can be manipulated by its users to realise certain political, economic and cultural ends. Sapir, for instance, notes that "language does not exist apart from culture, that is, from the socially inherited assemblage of practices and beliefs that determine the texture of our lives" (1949: 7). Language and culture, as already mentioned, go hand in hand. Language is an integral part of culture, just as culture cannot be expunged from language. One's language, therefore, depicts one's culture, and language gives insights to one's cultural background.

The foregoing argumentation indicates that writers' use of language, for instance, is, by and large, a manifestation of their culture. This is because their thoughts revolve on their belief and the way they go about these beliefs. The culture of a people finds reflection on the language they employ. Because they value certain things and do them in certain ways, they come to use their language in ways that reflect what they value and what they do. Writers' use of language, therefore, has the potential of revealing to readers a great deal about themselves, about regional origins, social backgrounds, etc.

Since individuals are part of the society, their existence is shaped and influenced by the language they use, and their language is constrained by the conventional and unconventional provisions of the society they live in. Part of the individual's approach to issues is conditioned by society, and society strives on language. Hence Cameron argues that:

> Our linguistic habits often reflect and perpetuate ideas about things which are no longer embodied in law, but which continue to have covert significance in the culture. This is one reason why feminists

> have often paid detailed attention to language and discourse: our ways of talking about things reveal attitudes and assumptions we might consciously disown, thus testifying to the deep-rootedness of sexism. (1990: 16)

Cameron's tone of argument reinforces the notion that sexist language is directly responsible for the way we see the world. Spender's book, *Man Made Language,* is based on the deterministic notion that language, rather than serving the expression of thoughts, shapes people's conceptual categories and the way they think. In her words, she notes that "it is language which determines the limits of our world, which constructs our reality" (Spender, 1980: 139). She buttresses her argument by noting that everyday words reflect a kind of "trapped" expression because their meanings have been "fixed" by society.

The extent of linguistic determinism which the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis espouses has remained a controversial issue and difficult to pinpoint. The deterministic form also known as the strong version embodies the idea that without language human beings cannot exist. There are many instances in the literature that have punctured this notion. The fact that translation is possible from one language to another has revealed the water-tight compartment of linguistic determinism. It is therefore difficult to sustain the strong form of the Sapir-Whorf linguistic hypothesis. But in its simplest form (the form that has so far been pursued in this study, the relativist form also known as the weaker version) words do not necessarily precede concepts. An "anteater", as Lakoff (1975: 46) points out, is not so named because of what it does; it is not some animal which eats ants in order to satisfy a lexical entry in the language–system. Similarly, in the Nigerian example, the lexical item "Area boy" has been coined to describe "street urchins and Motor Park touts" (Aboh, 2008: 49). This draws attention to the fact that Nigerians were only able to notice this phenomenon once equipped with the word. The word never existed in relation to the concept it addresses. Rather, the society, not language, provides room for the creation and entry of the word into Nigerian English.

Simpson (1993: 164) avers that "a more realistic alternative to "Whorfianism" is to propose that the language–system is shaped by the functions which it serves." If Simpson's assertion is to be followed closely, language reflects and, to some extent, reinforces the cultural and ideological practices which it describes. Concepts become "lexicalised" in language and the system expands and contracts in line with the concepts it needs to express.

It is through this process that lexical items such as "skyscraper", "Area boy", "flash" and several other lexical items entered the vocabulary of English. The standard counter-argument is that translation is possible. For if people's thoughts are determined by a specific language, how would they be able to say a translation to another language is correct or mistaken?

This stream of argument amplifies Saussure's earlier categorisation of language into "langue" and "parole." While "langue" describes the language–system of a community (linguistic determinism), "parole" is the individual's effort at "lexicalising" the events their society offer: linguistic relativity. The individual's conscious effort at using words, phrases and sentences in expressing daily events is not just a matter of style, but the individual's ability to use language to achieve life goals. This suggests that speakers, whatever their culture, enrich their language in order to cope with daily linguistic challenges. The fact-of-the-matter is that although people do not necessarily think before they speak, they are able to do so in principle.

Moreover, language is an open system not a dead closed-end. It allows us to make choices, including those concerning the avoidance of sexist, the construction of identity and offensive language; as each language, in most instances, reflects its speakers' value systems and world-views. It should, however, be noted that when speakers make choices or options, it is not to be interpreted as meaning that they make a conscious and deliberate choice from the total range of possibilities.

What has been gathered from the foregoing argument is that, to a large extent, society determines the way individuals use language. What happens is that people encode their identity and beliefs in language in a way that may promote and reinforce such beliefs. For example, language applied to ethnic minorities has derogatory terms, as tribalistic attitudes within groups are encoded in the language they use.

In all, language does not "shape" people's world, but society influences the way they use language. The underlying meaning is that language, society and culture are so inseparably connected that it seems that each cannot do without the other. The adoption and adaptation of cultural ideas in Nigerian novels, as shall be exposed in the course of the study, describe how language expresses a novelist's identity and serves as the "carrier" of the novelist's ideology. The next section focuses on language and context of situation.

1.4 Language and Context of Situation

In Section 1.0, attempts at describing language were made. Evidently, there are numerous descriptions of language in the literature and these descriptions/definitions correspond to what language means to a user, and what it is used to achieve and describe. For instance, Chomsky (1957: 13) sees language "as a set of (finite or infinite) sentences, each finite in length and constructed out of a finite set of elements." This definition that gave birth to a movement in linguistic study known as transformational generative grammar (TGG) is intended to cover natural languages.

Chomsky's understanding and postulations of language is considered seriously in this study in order to contrast it with a seemingly opposing theory of linguistics known as Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). Chomsky's definition, however, draws attention upon the purely structural properties of languages and suggests that these properties can be investigated from a mathematical point of view. These views tend to undermine the communicative function of either natural or non-natural languages, and the symbolic nature of languages. Be that as it may, Chomky's perception of language has contributed immensely in charting a new course in the growth of linguistics. It has given particular emphasis to what he describes as "structural-dependence" of the processes whereby sentences are constructed in natural languages; leading to the formulation of a general theory of grammar.

From the functional perspective, SFL defines language "as a system of network of meaning potential" (Morley, 1985: 42). That is, language is seen as being made up of systems, each having a set of features which are in contrast to one another. SFL relates the contextual description of genres to the semantic and grammatical organisation of language itself, as well as account for how genres can relate to and evolve into other genres, thus providing replicable accounts of different genres in a single culture and of similar genres across cultures. Basically, SFL demonstrates that the meaning of a text can only be understood in its context of use. Contrasting these seemingly opposing views of language by generative grammarians and functional linguists, is not aimed at exposing their weaknesses, as it is found in the literature on linguistic theories, but to show the interface and how these theories have respectively responded to the issue of context in the linguistic search of meaning.

The fact that language is seen as a text of meanings coded in structure points a direction to the concern of this section of the study. What is context? What is the connection between language and context of situation? Before these questions are answered, it is expedient to first understand the fact that the study of language is a search of meaning.

The concept, context of situation, is obviously no longer a new issue in language. But each time the search for meaning either within or outside the scope of grammar emerges, linguists readily return to context for a way out. Context of situation became a linguistic concept by its introduction to the study of meaning by the anthropologist, Malinowski in 1935. Since then, it has become an interesting area of exploration by linguists, who are inclined to uncover how people mean when they use language in peculiar circumstances. Malinowski relates the term context of situation (henceforth COS) to the linguistic attitudes in which language is used. The meaning of words, following his views, is not limited to sound utterances, but also include the contextual variables that influence the use of language. Context of situation places language within social circumstances of events, attitudes, culture, etc. This is important to students/scholars interested in the social nature of language because the interpretation of certain linguistic expressions, especially those that do not conform to grammatical rules, but indicate variations of language in use, depend on context.

By this stream of argument, context is connected to linguistic competence and performance. If Chomky's definition of language is returned to, one way of undertaking the analysis of context is to ask what kinds of knowledge a "fluent/native" speaker of a language must possess in order to produce and understand contextually appropriate and comprehensible utterances in a language. It is relevant for one to understand the grammatical structure of a language, and the way it works for one to realise how the "original/ordinary" grammatical meaning has been altered or influenced by context. The harmonisation of linguistic forms and contextual variables are significant pointers to how meaning is achieved in discourse. The fact is that one cannot interpret a text in its context of culture, as proposed by Malinowski's context of situation, without the involvement of the entire grammatical picture through which it is encoded. In doing discourse analysis (DA), it is not that easy to find a compact workable model of discourse that can be readily used for the exploration of meaning in texts. However, one principle that is common to many models

of DA is the understanding that all naturally occurring language takes place in a context of use. Following Simpson (2004: 35), one can divide up the notion of context in three basic categories:

- Physical context: This is the actual setting in which interaction takes place. Physical context may be constituted by the workplace, the home environment or by a public area. In face-to-face conversation, speaker and hearer share the same physical context, although in some forms of spoken interaction, such as broadcast or telephone talk, speaker and hearer are physically separated.
- Cognitive context: This refers to the shared and background knowledge held by participants. Cognitive context, which is susceptible to change as interaction progresses, also extends to a speaker's world view, cultural and past experiences.
- Personal context: This refers to the social and personal relationships of the interactants to one another. Personal contact also encompasses social networks and group membership, the social and institutional roles of speakers and hearers, and the relative status and social distance that hold between participants.

The place of context in meaning explication remains a valuable area in linguistic study. This is because, in the views of linguistic functionalism, all meaning is made by contextualisation; the meaning of a word or a phrase depends entirely on its contextualisation. The meaning of a text, therefore, cannot be understood by solely depending on the linguistic components. The reader is linguistically as well as discursively in a context in which are inscribed values, attitudes and beliefs which engender both reader and text.

The preceding views have socio-pragmatic hint. Entrenching this socio-pragmatic view in linguistics Mey (2001: 39) describes context "as a dynamic, not a static concept: it is to be understood as the continually changing surroundings, in the widest sense, that enable the participants in the communication process to interact, and in which the linguistic expression of their interaction becomes intelligible." Going further, Mey (2001) makes a distinction between "grammatical" and "user-oriented" view of language. On the former view the linguistic elements are described in isolation as syntactic structure or part of a grammatical paradigm, such as case, tense, etc; whereas on the latter, one asks how these

linguistic elements are used in the context of interaction. The point is that the language people use entirely depends on the COS in which such expressions are produced. This demands the appreciation of the language-system (grammar) and the function "grammar" is detailed to perform in respective contexts of language use.

Mey's views seem to support the claim that the concept of context is a pragmatic issue. This is based on the argument that pragmatic considerations were essential for the analysis of language. The emphasis on the relations between the linguistic and the social context is an important one because without immediate and direct relations to the social context, the forms and functions of language cannot be fully explicated. The concept of context has a sociolinguistic undertone. It implies that the analysts must look beyond the written words in a text and pay attention to all those extra-linguistic factors, which have some bearings on the text itself.

Aligning with this sociolinguistic perspective, Babajide advises that in understanding a text, the "knowledge of the context of text (co-text)…deserves serious attention in decoding a message" (2004: 100). Babajide's argument balances the argument between form and function. He sees the need to place the "form", i.e. the grammatical unit in a context in order to realise the actual meaning potential of a proposition. The notion of a context presupposes that there is background information which must be accessed to recover meaning in a text. Context, therefore, embodies linguistic and non-linguistic factors of language use. It follows that when a word occurs or is used in isolation, one needs to place it in a situational, linguistic or cultural context because no word can really be understood out of context.

This functional approach implies that each element or unit of language in any level is explained by reference to its function in the total linguistic system. In other words, the basic tenet of linguistic functionalism is the location of expressions in their context of use before holding claim to any meaning. These external factors which are best interpreted through the "semiotic constructs": field, tenor and mode of discourse are many and indirectly impinge upon the production of a text. The interplay of these three constructs invariably provides a better appreciation of language and meaning in any text. It is these sociological effects or pressure on language that interest the discourse analysts who pitch their analytical tent on the symbolic relationship between language and society or form and function.

The bond between language and its context is so intertwined that these principles and assumptions are not related to or determined by thought. Rather, these assumptions are embodied in language, learnt through language, and reinforced in the diverse ways people use language. In this way, language evolves in line with human communicative needs. Invariably, the structure of language in use or rather the structure of text is motivated and determined by the needs of the society in which the language is put to use (Alo, 2004, Odebunmi, 2006).

Along the semiotic constructs, there are three other levels of contextual inference that readers must draw from. These are:

(a) the immediate context;

(b) the context of the text tradition;

(c) the general sociological context in which the text may be identified

(Ekpa and Nta, 2006: 89)

Evidently, the concept of context in linguistic discourse is a fragmented, but indispensable model in the interpretation of texts. Linguistic communication relies on context for the achievement of meaning. Consider the following diagram taken from Leech and Short (1981: 210):

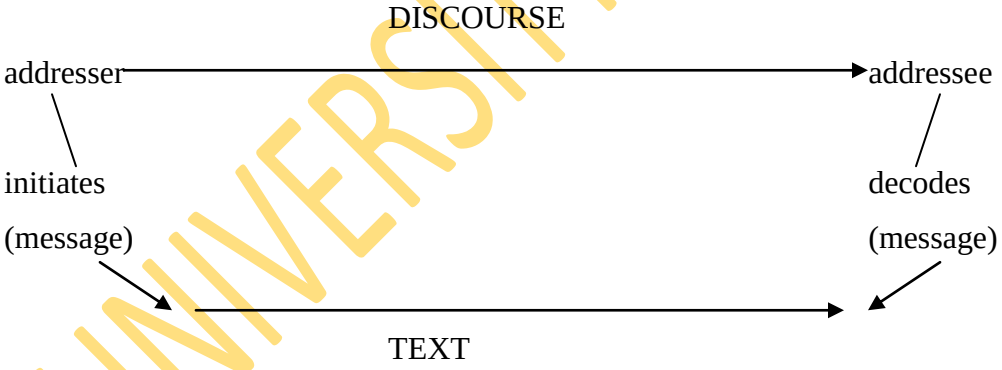


Fig. 1.2: Linguistic Communication

The diagram contains principal constituents of any linguistic communication process. Discourse is linguistic communication seen as a transaction between speaker and hearer. It is also an interpersonal activity which is affected, and at times determined by its social or cultural purpose. Text is the unit of communication, the words transmitted from addressor to addressee. For instance, various meanings and interpretations can be applied to the

expression: I need a drink. The first thing to do is to intuitively look at it as a combination of a first person pronoun, (I), a main verb (need), an indefinite article (a) and a common noun (drink). The linguistic (grammatical) aspect of the utterance has been examined. This is referred to as the context of text (co-text): it looks at the environment in which words occur. Once it is seen that the meaning of a word in a particular occurrence depends on its environment the interpretation of meaning-ranges can be replaced by an arrangement of the environing words. This implies that one has to look at the relationship that exists between words in order to make meaning out of the utterance.

Similarly, its meaning can change radically with its context – if it is known that the addresser is an alcoholic speaking to a friend over the telephone, even in a drinking inn. The meaning of the utterance will also change if the statement is made by the tall lanky Nigerian footballer, Kanu Nwankwo, after a match. The contextual circumstances will effectively determine the message of the text. Context, therefore, refers to an innumerable number of factors which could influence how individuals interpret language. Having discussed the way language and culture are roped into each other, it is necessary for the study to investigate African writers and their use of language.

1.5 Language and the African Writer

By the time the detailed critical history of African literature shall be written, it shall be revealed that Nigerian artists are products of the Nigerian environment. Questions such as: "Who is a Nigerian writer?" "What should be their medium of expression?" and "Who should be their audience?" have been a burden to both writers and critics of Nigerian literature. The first question, based on nationality shall be answered in Sections 1.5.1 and 1.7. But the last two still need to be revisited in the sense that in the 21st-century, several Nigerians, especially the young ones are acquiring literacy and have stamped their names on the world literary map.

The medium of expression issue for the Nigerian/African writer has remained a contentious one. The realisation that when one is given a language, one is given a new culture has continued to disturb African writers and intellectuals who are bent on breaking away from the strangling grip of European domination. Nigerian literary artists and linguists and their counterparts from other parts of Africa, have met at one time or the other, and

made suggestions on how to resolve this language problem. One major challenge the language war has posed for these intellectuals is that these writers/critics are constrained to document their experiences in the European languages of their erstwhile colonialists.

Whatever direction the war over language takes, the unsettled language issue of the great seminal debate on African literature at Makerere in 1963 will continue to raise its head whenever the issue of language of or for African literature is discussed. It was at the conference that Obi argued that "Any true African literature must be written in African languages" (1963: 149). Obi's views agree with the later views of Chinweizu (1980) that oral literature is a cogent component of the literature of Africa. In this regard, any work of art done for an African audience by an African and in African languages whether these works are oral or written constitutes the "indisputable" property of African literature. Theoretically, that is an excellent discernment. Practically, at least from the Nigerian experience, it is as actionable as holidaying in the moon. The economic, political and cultural antecedents of Nigeria are innumerable.

However, the battle for the language of African literature entered the 80s with a poignant as well as a disturbing resonance from Kenyan celebrated writer and critic, Ngugi wa Thiong'o. He laments a situation where European languages are imposed on Africans. Ngugi's position has to do with identity construction, and language is seen as the most potent universal tool that promotes identity. The political undertone is a quest for freedom from neo-colonialism, a new form of European hegemony. Arguing that it will not produce any result, Ngugi's views were rather hitched awkwardly to his Afro-Marxist orientation.

The truth of the matter is that African leaders, owing to political allegiance to their erstwhile colonial overlords, have not taken a conscious effort at developing a workable language programme that would lead to the eventual dislodgement of English hegemony, as the intellectuals would want. This is why in Nigeria the effort targeted at developing a national language from the three major ethnic groups namely, Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo is yet to yield any positive result. It was perceived by the minority groups as a kind of linguistic cannibalism. The minority ethnic groups felt it was another ploy to marginalise them from the economy and politics of the country, given that the economy and politics of the nation had already been dominated by the above-named majority ethnic groups.

To solve the above problem, Soyinka for example, at a point suggested the adoption of a pan-African language, Kiswahili, as the continental language. Achebe (1975) on the other side of the divide seems to see nothing wrong in using a foreign language to express a Nigerian (African) experience provided the sociolinguistic milieus as well as stylistic intention of the writer are borne in mind. Achebe's point lends credence to sociolinguistic implications. However, since this revolutionary statement was made, African writers have "bent" the English language in several ways in order to express their identity. The alteration of English to carry "the weight of African experience" creates two positions. One, it enables the writer to remain universally intelligible and two, it creates room for the promotion of the writer's culture and the propagation of a new language.

Critics of African literature have been disturbed by the language question. Irele (1981: 45), for instance, has not only drawn attention to the intimacy and complementarity of language as a concrete medium and the imaginative reality called literature which language embodies, but also "to the anomalies existing between these compliments in the African setting." Two problems seem to stem from "these anomalies". The first is that the concept of modern African written literature is not only new, but has marginalised the indigenous African oral literature. Second, and more importantly, language has placed a distance "between this literature and the generality of Africans…" who ordinarily should constitute the African writer's audience.

Specifically, the Nigerian artist has a serious problem to contend with in terms of language. The artist is faced with the problem of choosing their audience. This is because the realities they recreate concern their Nigerian audience. If they use their indigenous language, which may not have a natural flow, their writing will only reach a limited section of Nigeria. But if they turn to the English language, their message will reach a greater section of the literate Nigerian population. It will also reach a wide section of the universe. What then will happen to other Nigerians who do not understand English? Particularly, what will be the fate of the people whose oral myth has been drawn upon by the artist in evolving their art? This is exactly the dilemma that the Nigerian artist is faced with. Implicitly, the identity of the writer and the group they represent is threatened.

In a determined effort to bridge this gap: the need to identify and promote their language, and to maintain international relevance, in spite of their level of mastery of the English language, the 21st-century Nigerian writer has decided:

> [T]o explore new linguistic models which can combine elements of both the indigenous languages and the English language to reach a broader local audience without sacrificing their international listeners. Earlier writers had used similar experiments – local idioms, loan-words from local languages, transliterations, code-mixing and, especially, pidginized expressions but in a rather limited way to portray local colour, socio-economic class of certain characters or to produce humour. But these earlier writers did not use a non-standard English variety in a wide and consistent way as unique mode of expression to reach their chosen audience, till now (Uzoezie, 2009: 186).

Although the above assertion is rift with contradictory undertones, more especially in its use of the noun phrase "a non-standard variety", as the English language continues to evolve various varieties across the globe, one's attention is naturally drawn to the pragmatic inclusion of indigenous linguistic expressions in works of Nigerian literature. What is the rationale, if any, for such inclusion? The rationale for such linguistic inclusion is not merely the portrayal of local colour, but a deliberate act of allowing the local word/idiom to adequately express the intended idea. The mixing of local linguistic item is also an act of identity display. The argument is that indigenous languages are in special need of protection. This is because implicitly or explicitly, indigenous languages form the authentic products of indigenous cultures and identities.

Moreover, critics have continued to sustain the claim that the "forced integration" of the diverse ethnic groups by Britain into a Nigerian state is the cause of Nigeria's language problem. Be that as it may, critics of this persuasion need to be reminded that such seemingly common sense assumption requires substantial modification in the light of the complex sociolinguistic legacy of colonialism. In Nigeria, English is the official language. In the case of the Nigerian novelists, the need to be ethnic conscious and remain internationally intelligible has caused most of them to "blend" both languages (indigenous and English) in their artistic creation, producing bilingual novels and bicultural identities. Such constraints make them to possess two worlds.

That notwithstanding, the acceptability or rejection of foreign language (as is evident in the sampled Nigerian novels) should depend on both utility and not simply politics of implementation. While encouraging or promoting their own indigenous languages as internal conditions permit, Nigerian writers/intellectuals should also be looking at the foreign language through the selective prisms of language planning organs. In fact, writers such as Adelakun and Ndibe who have adopted several linguistic features from their respective languages into their novels as linguistic strategies of constructing ethnic identities need to know that for a true Nigerian identity to be created, they (writers) need to know that the overpoliticisation of their respective languages will neither project their languages nor solve Nigeria's language problem. These writers should use their novels to help in solving Nigeria's language problem by using expressions that have been regarded as Nigerian English in their novels. Since English is evidently the solution to Nigeria's language problem, it will go a long way in standardising Nigerian English if these writers use it consistently in telling their tales. What are the implications, if any, when a non-native speaker of English such as the Nigerian writer uses English to create their art?

1.5.1 The Nigerian Novelist: A Bilingual/Biculturalist

In Section 1.5, the Nigerian writer and the problem of language were discussed. Besides establishing the fact that the Nigerian novel is a hybrid of indigenous Nigerian languages and European languages (specifically English), it was also noted that Nigeria's historical repercussions have produced various types of bilinguals with different levels of competence. Unlike Canada and Belgium that are two "well-known examples of officially bilingual countries" (Lyons, 1981:281), Nigeria is not officially so.

However, most Nigerians speak more than one language. Therefore bilingualism is used to cover multilingualism, i.e., to refer to Nigerians who speak more than two languages. There are some Nigerians that speak, besides English, two or more Nigerian languages; and there are some, who because of education have acquired foreign languages. Out of these numbers it is few of them that speak as well as write these languages competently. The implication is that many Nigerians that are described as bilinguals can hardly read and write the indigenous language like they do English.

Who then is a bilingual? How is it meant when it is said that the Nigerian novelist is a bilingual/biculturalist? According to Lyon's (1981: 282), "We can admit, as a theoretical ideal, the possibility of perfect bilingualism, defined as the full range of competence in both languages that native monolingual speaker has in one." Lyons views buttress the notion that everyone is a native speaker, at least from the perspective of Chomskyan linguistics. Bloomfield (1933) describes bilingualism as the native-like control of two languages. Lyons' observations seem to discredit Bloomfield's view as he observes:

> Perfect bilingualism, if it exists at all, is extremely rare, because it is rare for individuals to be in a position to use each language in a full range of situations and thus to acquire the requisite competence. However, it is not uncommon for people to approximate to perfect bilingualism by equally being competent in both languages over a fairly wide range of situations.
>
> (Lyons, 1981: 282)

Lyons' views bifurcate into two contradictory positions. One is that there is no perfect bilingual. Two, there is a very low percentage of perfect bilinguals. The question that one may ask is "Is it that there is no perfect bilingual or is it that it exists at a very low percentage? However, there are very few Nigerian writers/intellectuals that can write and speak their indigenous languages the way they do English. If we subscribe to the view that it is a handful of Nigerian novelists that can write both in English and their indigenous languages, then Akindele and Adegbite's (1999: 28) definition of bilingualism "as the use of two languages by an individual or a community" hardly describes the Nigerian novelist. Nevertheless, the Nigerian novelist is a bilingual. Their novel shows the use of two languages: English and an indigenous language or languages; depending on the writer's linguistic affiliations.

While most scholars have seen code alternation and transliteration (features of a bilingual writer) as lack of facility in language A by a speaker/writer in discussing a topic in language B (Akindele and Adegbite, 1999; Lyons, 1981), it is important to stress here that it is not actually because of lack of facility, but because the writer is conscious of the fact that their language displays its identity. This position defines the link between biculturalism and bilingualism. As one learns a particular language, they learn the culture. This is because

language expresses and records culture (The relationship between language and culture was discussed in Section 1.2). The possession of a language invariably implies the acquisition of a culture. It follows that the extent of bilingualism can determine the extent of biculturalism. This, however, does not apply to every situation. A monolingual can be bicultural without necessarily learning the language. For instance, a Bette-Bendi student who studies at the University of Ibadan, an institution located in a Yoruba speaking state, southwestern Nigeria, may through their interaction with the society imbibe Yoruba culture without necessarily speaking or learning the language.

Explicitly, the Nigerian novel can be seen as a bilingual/bicultural novel. This is because as a contact literature they have several linguistic features and literary traditions, and "they provide the English language with extended context of situation within which such literatures may be read" (Akindele and Adegbite, 1999: 45). The act of nativising linguistic features by Nigerian writers in their creative works, as pointed out by Akindele and Adegbite, is done with certain intentions. Bakhtin argues that:

> The English language is more than just a language of communication in the British Empire *Nigeria inclusive*. It has great utility value as an instrument of propaganda to perpetuate imperial ideology and reinforces its hierarchical structure of power not by military might but through an army of metaphors deployed in a rhetoric of persuasion and democracy. It is through the textual structures of this rhetoric that conceptions of 'truth', 'order' and 'reality' are established and the Empires constructed (1981: 314, italics mine).

The "extended cultural awareness" one finds in Nigerian novels are deliberate designs rather than sociolinguistic concepts aimed at dislodging the dominance of English over indigenous languages as well as to bring down "the Empire". For instance, the author of *Love my Planet* utilises indigenous ideas and shifts to English. The rationale for such linguistic movement is to avoid giving himself up wholly to the English language. The language used by characters in the novel, and how they create dialogue is verbally and semantically taken to be the characters' autonomous speeches, possessing their own belief-system. However, (as the reader is meant to believe) the characters' use of language is not the exclusive possession of the characters', but of the author, the designer of those speech forms. It is also the

interaction between the speakers and of the whole complex social situation in which the utterance takes place.

Such linguistic choices/alternations are grounded in ideological conception of language and identity which conflate with individual and collective identity, linking both to loyalty. It is obvious that the bilingual novelist's recourse to the nativisation of the colonialist language is not just testimonies of politics, but also efforts aimed at expanding the colonial language to accommodate their indigenous identity. Thus, in the aspect of literary production and creative arts, there is the interaction of the different languages which has led to the production of bilingual-bicultural works. Prominent Nigerian writers like Soyinka, Achebe, Okara and Osundare, among others have given the Nigerian writing a new character by deliberately incorporating in their works elements of indigenous culture and languages to create new realities. By including indigenous languages in their novel, the Nigerian novelist is making a statement: a statement that their language should be appreciated for what it is. This is because "languages are closely related to the psyche of the people who use them; to marginalise any language is to deflate the psyche of its native speakers (Ogunsiji, 2001: 159). The following example taken from Ndibe's *Arrows of Rain* substantiates the preceding argument:

> She is an *ogbanje*. Only an *ogbanje* would smile at death. I am certain of that.
> *Ogbanje*. They can die and return to life over and over again. To them, death is a game, that's why they can laugh at it. Death only means a brief visit to the land of spirits. Then they return to life (*Arrow of Rains*, p. 8).

In the above example, Ndibe adopts "ogbanje" from his Igbo language to describe spirit-children who complete the circle of birth, death and rebirth by the same mother. In Yoruba cosmology, such children are referred to as "abiku." The above excerpt shows that the Nigerian novelist is a bilingual because they possess two worlds: their indigenous world and the foreign world. The adoption and adaptation of indigenous linguistic expressions are testimonies of the fact that the Nigerian novelist mediates between two worlds. This presents the novelist as someone with a bipolar identity. But, why do Nigerian novelists deliberately adopt indigenous ideas in their novels? Is this, in any way, connected to identity

construction? The lacuna which these questions create points a direction to the concern of the present study. The fulcrum of the next section is the investigation of the growth and the thematic constellation of the Nigerian novel.

1.6 Phases and "Faces" of Nigerian Prose Fiction

Every national literature can be viewed from two perspectives. It can be examined from its developmental stages, otherwise known as phases. It can also be examined from its thematic concern. South African literature, for example, from the thematic perspective, is regarded as protest literature. In this study, "faces" have been contextualised to mean the thematic concerns of the Nigerian prose fiction: the basic literary constellation one encounters as one picks a work of art that is typically Nigerian. Phases describe the developmental stages of Nigerian literature from its pioneering period to the twenty-first century. The concern of this section is to examine the developmental periods of Nigerian prose fiction (otherwise called Nigerian novel) and what characterises each of these periods.

Before the phases and "faces" of the Nigerian novel is examined, it is important to first look at the role of the writer vis-à-vis the environment they write from. According to Onukaogu and Oyerionwu (2009) one cannot convincingly discuss Nigerian literature without bringing into focus the Nigerian socio-cultural, politico-economic, historical and even religious environment. This probably stems from the idea that it is the environment that conditions the content of literature. Art in the African/Nigerian context is society based, that is, the society is the pond from which its writers fish for their ideas. This is why early Nigerian novels show a strong bond between the writer and their immediate society. This community spirit remains unbroken even with the onset of colonialism and neo-colonialism. The novel has not abandoned its collective duty even after the impact of western culture on African communal existence. The fact is that from pre-historic times art in the African traditions was collective, not individuated.

The work of literature, therefore, bears the uncompromised stamp of the environment that produced it. It gives insight into the social, religious, political, economic and cultural backgrounds that it emerges from. No meaningful or serious literary creation can ever achieve credibility and authenticity if it undermines the environment that gave rise to it (Onukaogu and Onyerionmi, 2009).The artist's role as the representative of their

society and time form the bedrock of the sociological theory of literature. In the African novel, art fulfills its social function through its realistic portrayal of experiences. But quite often, as it is with good novels, the artist creates new responses, which the society is yet to realise. They thus unconsciously, by their commitment to humanity, realise their primordial role of seer and teacher.

Before the functions as well as the significance of the writer to their society are examined, it is expedient at this point to ask the question: What is Nigerian Literature? In the attempt to answer this question, it is relevant to first ask the question: What is literature?

According to Nwahunanya (1998: 11), literature is an imaginative verbal construct "that emerges from the creative consciousness of literary artists." This implies that the role of the imagination in "constructing" is very important. These verbal constructs are summarised as compositions that tell stories, dramatise situations, express emotions, and analyse and advocate ideas. This definition of literature captures in totality the three genres of literature.

Nigerian literature is Nigerian because it is "a body of creative writing that has kept faith with the experiences, occurrences, events, fortunes and misfortunes, dreams and aspirations, feelings and emotions and ways of life of a geographical and political location known as Nigeria" (Onukaogu and Onyerionwu, 2009: 55-6). Nigerian literature has enjoyed a consistent and "camaraderie" of, and close tie with the Nigerian society, capturing socio-political and cultural experiences as religiously as possible. What makes Nigerian literature distinctly Nigerian is one's inability to separate it from the everyday experiences of Nigerians. These experiences are ingrained in Nigerians such that even in diaspora, as they write, this "Nigerianness" stems up like an un-pacified ghost hunting its killers.

Right from independence to the twenty-first century, the journey of the geo-political entity known as Nigeria has been a perilous one. It seems Nigeria's complex troubles are far from being over. First, was the pathetic and horrific realisation that Nigerian politicians lacked the pedigree needed to rudder their "ship" to its destination. On the heel of this came military and counter military coups that exposed the socio-political frailties of the young Nigerian State. This was remotely informed by religious bigotry, political disturbance, gross corruption, and other socio-political disturbances.

For about thirty years after the Civil War, the country was ruled by dictatorial heads of state. The horrendous military regimes were punctuated by scanty years of reckless and ideologically barren civilian interludes. Such gory experiences as the disappointing post-independence leadership, the carnage of the Civil War, military tyranny and the gradual degeneration into a totalitarian state can be said to have provided a definition of the Nigerian socio-political experience which has naturally birthed a national literature of the same colour.

The positions of the African/Nigerian society providing its writers with the raw materials to carve their art have over the years interested critics in different ways. Ekpa and Nta (2006) aver that literary production in Africa, as is obtained in other parts of the world, is witnessing writers' engagement with social transformations. African writers such as Soyinka and Ngugi have used their works to challenge racism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, military dictatorship, post-independence tyranny, etc. Consequently, writers are seen as invaluable change agents. In the absence of organised and sincere political opposition as with the case of Nigeria, writers serve the role of government watchdog. It implies that writers are actors in the process of governance. The Nigerian novel is constantly drawing from the realities of the country's social processes in the first tradition of protest art. It follows that the novelists must be well informed of the dynamic nature of their society; for them to ably represent the society in their art. This is because the artist draws on common and accessible myths and stories, and from these recreates new myths to meet contemporary needs (Ekpa and Nta, 2006).

This sociological dimension, which describes the relevance of writers, is located in their grasp and understanding of the interplay of social forces within their socio-political reality, and how they harness their talent in reaction to these forces seems to disturb Egya (2009: 2) who argues that:

> …the Nigerian novelist has continued to pay undue attention to socio-political theme (instead of balancing ideas with craft to avoid being seen as irrelevant to society.)

Egya's queries have raised several other questions. Amongst these are: (1) What should be the basic canon of the writer in the twenty-first century? (2) What are "ideas"? And what is

"craft"? (3) Can the two be separated from each other? These questions may direct attention to the problem of Africa's critical theory, and this might interest a later study.

The question is, if the writer does not address these social issues, in the absence of constructive political opposition, who would? Achebe (1975) argues that if the African writers do not present the events of their society in their works, their works are irrelevant.

Before Nigeria's independence, a good amount of writing which can be regarded as Nigerian literature had been going on. This was why the subject of colonialism and cultural nationalism were predominant in Nigerian novels set before independence. One of the tasks the Nigerian writer of the pre-independence period was saddled with was the need to discredit the derogatory remark of Africa painted by writers like Joseph Conrad in his *Heart of Darkness*. The effort to rediscover African cultural dignity by the Nigerian creative writer developed side by side with the nationalist movement for freedom from colonial domination.

Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is perhaps known for its poignant deconstructionist stance of colonial rule and the re-institutionalisation of African cultural identity. This literary cultural renaissance culminated in literary nationalism, and complemented political nationalism in the fight for political independence from Britain. The fight by politicians in public gathering was empowered by anti-colonial Nigerian literature. Arguably, notable Nigerian poets such as Nnamdi Azikiwe and Dennis Osadebay were also nationalists. Aluko's *One Man One Machete,* though published a couple of years after independence, betrays a sense of political nationalism (Obiechina, 1982, Ikiddeh, 2005).

Expectedly, Nigerian writers rose to the task of not just capturing the socio-political rot that had engulfed the nation, but also condemned the development. It should be noted that great novels such as Wole Soyinka's *Season of Anomy*, Festus Iyayi's *Heroes*, Isidore Okpewho's *The Last Duty*, Cyprain Ekwensi's *Sunset in Biafra,* Elechi Amadi's *Estrangement*, etc were products of the Nigerian civil war. This forges the link between the writers and the society they write from.

The next set of novels emanated from the individuals' self-examination within the new economic system of the late 60s. It marked a period when the civilian regime in Nigeria was at the brink of collapse, owing to ethnicity and gross political corruption which led to the military seizure of power. The post-independence period was characterised by

disillusionment due to the failure of institutions. It laid the foundation for protest as well as lamentation literature in the country.

The years immediately after the civil war experienced another worrying socio-political disturbance. After a bloody fratricidal war (1967-70), immediately followed by an ill-managed oil boom that in turn created social and political dislocations which the nation is yet to recover from, it was inevitable that Nigerian artists would fulfill the pre-colonial definition of the artist as "town crier." The novelists made the Nigerian novel, in its many forms, a social act against the wantonness of the new society.

Besides the sit-tight syndrome of the military, issues such as mismanagement of public funds, corruption in public offices, violence, etc resurfaced and polluted the fragile peace of the nation. As usual, Nigerian novelists were offered subject matters on which they exercised their creative ingenuity. Again, Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* questioned the continuous and incessant seizure of power by the military. Iyayi's *Violence* and Okri's *Flowers and Shadows* capture in their respective novels the socio-political fluxes that characterised the Nigerian state. These writers have proved that literature is not only part of the super-structure of society but should also be used to effect the fundamental changes necessary for the transformation of the society along the lines of a new socialist order.

The 80s and the early 90s did not experience significant literary production. The then Ibrahim Babagida and Sanni Abacha's military junta did not allow any form of criticism. It was a period that Nigerian literary production went completely into oblivion. The period was characterised by the assassination of political critics and writers who employed their art as critical tools. Those who dared to write used distancing linguistic devices and allusions that required in-between the lines interpretation. Those who could not countenance the political tension sought self-asylum in America and Europe. It was at the close of the 90s, which culminated in the end of military rule as well as rhymed with the re-institutionalisation of democratic principles that novelistic production in Nigeria resurrected. In fact, Aboh (2012: 2) argues that "While the demilitarization of Nigeria's politics and public life led to literary "explosion", the reinstitutionalization of democracy in the country gave birth to a literary tradition that is thematically and linguistically blatant in its approach to socio-political realities of the country." One is not amazed that since 1999 Nigeria has witnessed the highest chunk of novelistic production. Popularly referred to as 21st-century

Nigerian literature, writers such as Abimbola Adelakun and Helon Habila drew significant insights from such horrendous socio-political developments of the Nigerian nation. Section 1.6.1 of this study is devoted to this period and it shall be discussed presently.

Moreover, the womenfolk are not left out in the interplay between Nigerian literature and its socio-political developments. The increasing global agitation for gender equality has been widely received by Nigerian women. Like their male counterparts, the highest chunk of Africa's gender literature is produced by Nigerian women. Exploring the advantage of their western education, Nigerian women have written expressive as well as highly creative literature that asserts their womanhood. Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizens*, for instance, is an outright rejection of the view that women are second-class citizens. Zaynab Alkali's thematic constellation in *The Still Born* is that women are capable of providing for a home just as their male counterparts. Other writers include Flora Nwapa and Julie Okoh.

This trend, of the interrelatedness between the Nigerian novel and its socio-political antecedents, still exists to date. It therefore follows that the study of the Nigerian novel is not just the study of its linguistic problems and developments, but also its history. The sampled novels authenticate this claim. In *Under the Brown Rusted Roofs*, Adelakun, one of the sampled novelists, in a far reaching narrative captures General Buhari's military regime thus:

> It was Saturday morning and the *olobirin ile* in the *agboole* were observing WAI… "Both of you had better shut up your mouths". *Iyawo* said. "Can't you see that WAI man going? You want a decree to carry you?" (*Under the Brown Rusted Roofs*, p. 119)

WAI is an acronym for War Against Indiscipline. It was a household name that resonates a period in Nigeria's history when military tyranny was at its peak. The use of "observing" in the second line of the above excerpt is deliberate. It shows the helplessness of a people. How can a single lexical item such as "observing" show unequal power relations and hegemonic dominance? Such a critical linguistic interpretation is given due attention in the subsequent chapters of the study. However, the overall intention is to describe how the Nigerian populace was subjected to torture through draconian military decrees. Such historical reconstruction points a direction to the nature of Nigerian literature in general. This historical reconstruction does not reduce the Nigerian novel to history but shows that

the Nigerian novel can hardly be separated from the events of its society and time. Since the history and the developmental stages of the Nigerian novel have been discussed, it will be interesting to examine the Nigerian novel vis-à-vis socio-political development in the 21st-century.

1.6.1 The Twenty-First-Century Nigerian Novel

From the foregoing it might be agreed that the Nigerian novel has developed in strict fidelity to its historical processes. Before the 21st-century Nigerian novel is explored, it is relevant to ask the question: What is the 21st-century Nigerian novel?

Though the canonisation of Nigerian literature into generations has remained something of an enigma, in Nigerian literature, however, modern writers in English are grouped into three generations: namely the first, which is made of writers such as Wole Soyinka and Chinua Achebe; the second, which has writers such as Niyi Osundare and Ben Okri; and the third, which is composed of writers who were born after Nigeria's independence (Eyga, 2010). This group is also known as 21st-century Nigerian novelists (Onukaogu and Onyerionwu, 2009). Precisely, the focus is on writers who were born after Nigeria's independence and novels that were published from 2000 to 2008. These writers, however, straddle the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, as their works show visible influence from the preceding century.

Among the 21st-century Nigerian novelists are Helon Habila, Vincent Egbuson, Liwhu Betiang, Jude Dibia, Chris Abani, Sefi Atta, Chimamanda Adichie, Maik Nwosu, Toni Kan, Kaine Agary, Tanure Ojiade, Abimbola Adelakun, Camillus Ukah, Wale Okediran, Majovo Amarie, Gbenga Ajieyi, Bisi Ojediran, Akachi Adimora – Ezeibo, Biyi-Bandele Thomas, Emeka Uzoatu and Gloria Ernest Samuel. Though some of the above-named writers had written in the 20th century, they did not receive remarkable attention as they do now. Moreover, writers who were born during and after Nigeria's independence are considered 21st-century Nigeria novelists. These writers have received significant critical acceptance, especially as the majority of them have been nominated locally and internationally at various times for literary award of prizes.

According to Onukaogu and Oyerionwu (2009), the average 21st-century Nigerian novelist is a little bit more indifferent, a little bit more conscious of artistic restraint, a little

bit less angry and a little bit more detached from their subject matter. The above argument is in itself contradictory. The 21st-century Nigerian novelist is not "a little bit detached." Rather, (as has been illustrated in Sections 1.6. and 1.6.1) they are seriously involved in the socio-political issues of their country. Critics such as Nnolim (2006) hold the view that the 21st-century Nigerian novelist is not a committed writer. He has attributed it to the dearth of "big issues" in the 21st-century socio-political terrain.

Whatever may be Nnolim's position about the 21st-century Nigerian novel, it would be appropriate to draw his attention to the fact that the environment from which one writes forms a watershed over one's art. The truth is that to brand contemporary writers as "fleshy school" is doing them great injustice. Their novels, undoubtedly, have been able to capture the socio-political quagmire of their time. Since it has done this, one can surmise that it is a serious literature: literature that can hardly be separated from the contemporary issues that create it.

Besides being a "reflector" of their society, the 21st-century Nigerian writer does not lack thematic focus as Nnolim claims. The fact is that there are several issues begging for the writer's attention and it will be out of place for the "serious writer" to undermine these issues. So what they do is to endeavour to give issues such as political tyranny, fraud, corruption, sex, kidnapping, university teachers' labour actions, fuel deregulation/scarcity, etc a place in their novel. The above-named political irregularities, leadership short-comings and the socio-economic predicaments which Nigerians grapple with are certainly big enough issues that can generate literature with revolutionary temper. The new novelist understands euphemistic expressions better than their predecessors; hence the fire and brimstone of the first and second generations are dumped for subtle and pragmatic language. Such linguistic engineering tends to shield the incisive content of their novels, and it takes one who appreciates the imagery and euphemisms in which these writers code their art to grasp the revolutionary temper of their novels.

The absence of a uniform ideological stance in the 21st-century Nigerian novel, it must be noted, rhymes with the multiple and complex socio-political problems that have engulfed the nation in recent history. The 21st-century novelists may not also have an identical artistic vision, but their respective novels have undisputedly shown the intricate relationship between the artist, their work and their society. It follows that the society is the

pond from which the artist draws their ideas. The fact remains that the creative writer is not just a historian (Agbor, 2009), but also a social engineer that is interested in the study of human social behaviour. Twenty-first century Nigerian novelists have proved that they are good and dedicated social commentators.

It would be reiterated here that language has served as a smokescreen over the non-involvement in socio-political issues of 21st-century Nigerian novelists. If Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and Betiang's *Beneath the Rubble* are taken as examples, it would be agreed that they told their stories against the backdrop of their country's most memorable and definitive socio-political situations. The fact is that each writer could have actually written a complete "political novel", if not for their choice of distancing linguistic effects and methods of narration.

In the same light, Jude Dibia's *Unbridled*, which tells the story of a young Nigerian girl who falls for the love of the diaspora shows authorial constraints. The reason behind the girl's choice of the diaspora is connected to political instability and socio-economic decadence in the country. Helon Habila's *Measuring Time* is another of such Nigerian novels of the 21st-century that have made significant and provocative comments about Nigeria's socio-political experiences. The fact that the story centres on two non-identical twins draws attention to the myriad and complexity of the Nigerian political dilemma. A work of art needs to be measured against its background. In assessing the writers' responsiveness, it is necessary to weigh their art against the actual conditions of the society at the time when they composed.

The 21st-century Nigerian novelist has religiously captured every phase of Nigeria's historical process; an effort aimed at showing the novelist's deep involvement in the affairs of their country. Issues such as the Nigerian Civil War, Niger Delta crisis, pre-colonial and colonial times, military dictatorship, scam, democracy, etc, have continued to interest the 21st-century Nigerian novelist. The 21st-century Nigerian novel manifests the struggles of a people whose country is undergoing the painful process of transformation from colonial through neo-colonial to wholly self-determining nation. An example of such historical (re)construction of Nigeria is Habila's *Measuring Time*. It adequately summarises the Nigerian Civil War through the eyes of Uncles Iliya and Haruna. The Liberian Civil War, the proliferation of lethal arms across African borders and the rise of child-soldier are

brought to our awareness by Lamamo, the stronger of Lamang's twin. The general struggle for survival by the Nigerian youth in a corrupt and fame-seeking society is captured by Mamo, Habila's narrator.

In *House of Symbols*, Adimora-Ezeigbo discusses post-independence politicians and political developments in a nation characterised by internally generated political strife that has, in several ways, threatened the peaceful survival of the Nigerian nation. Most 21st-century Nigerian novelists have joined hands with Adimora-Ezeigbo in (re)telling Nigerian Civil War and its calamitous political developments. *Waiting for an Angel* and *Arrows of Rain,* for instance, recount the pitiable situation social critics (creative writers inclusive) faced during military regimes and Adelakun's *Under the Brown Rusted Roofs* chronicles the exposure of the masses to suffering by the military's draconian laws and policies.

One striking creative moment of the 21st-century novel is the Niger Delta and its crises. The region, besides attracting different comments from different walks of life, has generated great amount of creative works. One of such works that have adequately discussed the Niger Delta crisis is Vincent Egbosun's *Love my Planet* (in the novel Niger Delta is described as a rich oil region in the imaginary country of Daglobe). Egbosun narrates vividly the militant activities of Araba, the leader of a militant group, (whose stock-in-trade is blowing of oil pipelines and hostage-taking) through Egbosun's sincere and tender-hearted narrator, Toundi. Toundi (a young transparent girl, who never allowed her father's riches to get into her head) ably articulates the environmental hazards caused by the exploitation and exploration of oil, socio-economic-cum-political subjugation, and negligence of the region by successive Daglobian governments, commercialisation of sex, kidnapping and gun duel that have engulfed the Daglobian nation in recent history.

In terms of projecting urbanity and its "evils", Jude Dibia's *Walking with Shadows* and Agary's *Yellow Yellow* seem to have taken the centre-stage. These novels depict how the purity (as in the case of Zilayefa in *Yellow Yellow*) of village life is polluted by city vices. The novelists' barefaced depiction of sexuality directs attention to the growing trend of global liberty of (gay) sex rooting itself in Nigeria. Wale Okideran's *Dreams Die at Twilight* describes Leemy as an intelligent medical doctor, who finds himself in a seriously perilous sexual problem that leads him to have sex with a female cadaver in the bid of seeking a cure for his sex deranged-life.

An interesting aspect of 21st-century Nigerian novel is the enigmatic presence of diasporic writers. With the help of their publishers, Farafina and Cassava Republic the writers in diaspora have continually forged the link between home and abroad. Besides that, novelists in diaspora have immensely influenced the growth of Nigerian literature, and have given it a prime of place in world literary map. This is achieved by taking Nigeria beyond its national and continental boundaries.

Since it is the nexus of the study, it is not out of place to take a linguistic turn. The 21st- century Nigerian novel has demonstrated a great sense of stylistic and structural changes. While a handful of these novelists have kept faith with the style of the older generations, many others have evolved a new style and language. Osundare argues that the thematic preoccupation "remains the desperate situation of Africa, the stylistic hallmarks are clarity and directness of expression, formal experimentation, and a deliberate incorporation of African oral literary modes" (1996: 27).

The deliberate inclusion of proverbs in their works is one area of linguistic simplicity that is shared by Nigeria-based writers and their diasporic counterparts. Besides proverbial inclusion, there is the preponderance of Pidgin English, conscious introduction of loan words from indigenous languages and deliberate experimentation with syntactic structures (evident in code alternation). The return to indigenous languages is undoubtedly a search for identity. This has continued to surface in the Nigerian novel as Ushie (2005: 20) notes "…but they turned to their African roots in matters of style and language as a response to the trend in East Africa." Some examples drawn from recent Nigerian novels show the following linguistic features:

Table 1.1: Linguistic Identity in Some Nigerian Novels

Items	Meaning Equivalence	Source	Feature	Text	Page
Dust-devils	whirlwind	Hausa	transliteration	*Measuring Time*	18
Mama Bomboy	the mother of a baby boy	Pidgin	transfer	*Love my Planet*	176
Itisha	teacher	Bette-Bendi	phonological	*Beneath the Rubble*	12
Amala	starchy-food made from cassava or yam flour	Yoruba	lexical borrowing	*The Weaving Looms*	103
Go-slow	traffic-jam	Nigerian English	transfer	*Walking with Shadow*	178

The few examples shown above are what readers find in a typical Nigerian novel. Such a linguistic exploration can be seen as a tribute to linguistic nationalism, and a disciplined allegiance to their (novelists') roots. In the first example, Habila's *Measuring Time* shows an in-depth understanding of transliteration. He translates Hausa's perception of whirlwind into English. In Hausa, and in most Nigerian languages, because of the disturbing manner in which the whirlwind blows, it is often associated with the devil.

In the second example, Egbosun in *Love my Planet* uses a Pidgin expression to describe the mother of a baby boy. *Mama Bomboy* is used in Nigerian Pidgin as a name. It generally refers to the mother of a male child. Similarly, *Mama Baby* describes the mother of a baby girl. In the third example, Betiang in *Beneath the Rubble* experiments with sound. In his Bette-Bendi language, teacher is realised as *Itisha*, which literally means "in due course." The lexical item *amala* is an instance of lexical borrowing. Okediran, in *The Weaving Looms*, borrows the word from Yoruba. Debia, in *Walking with Shadows* uses *Go-slow*, a Nigerian English expression that describes traffic-jam to explain the act of traffic congestion. Naming in Nigerian English is mostly descriptive (Eka, 2000). This, in a subtle manner, forges the link between the novelist and their environment. In some of these novels, glossaries are not needed because English words and expressions and indigenous language equivalents are placed side by side or in apposition.

In spite of Nigeria's multilingual situation, the examples given above indicate that they are linguistic models which many Nigerians can relate to. Ushie, however, holds a different view, as he argues that:

> … much as one appreciates that there is often a loss of meaning through translation from one language to the other, affected inundation of mother tongue into *creative writing* in English may rather constitute unnecessary stumbling blocks to readers with a different linguistic background from that of the *writer* (Ushie, 2005: 11, italics mine).

To strengthen his argument, Ushie anchors his views on Banjo's observation that:

> It is necessary to note that the presence of locally derived metaphors does not necessarily guarantee accessibility to an African audience…partly because of the multilingual nature of Africa which makes it difficult for metaphors derived from one particular language to be comprehensive to the speakers of other languages. And to further confound the situation, accessibility is not guaranteed even to all the native speakers of that same language because of a general lack of any education in local language and cultures (Banjo cited in Ushie, 2005: 11).

Sincere as Ushie's and Banjo's views may sound, they are probably not oblivious of the fact that the frequency of language "A" in language "B" (as in lexical domestication) is often a deliberate search for a familiar lexical device that will adequately express the writer's world view. It is also an effort to refute the dominance of "B" over "A", given that language is power. Within these lexical acts, shaping identities become fundamentally political. While most literary scholars may look at linguistic transfer, lexical borrowing, transliteration, code alternation, etc as merely stylistic devices employed by creative writers in order to give aesthetic value to their works, it is pertinent to stress that in "linguistic wars" (Calvet, 1997), it is seen as a struggle against the supremacy of one language over another. Thus, the natural inclination to see a person's mother tongue survive, to grow and do things for them will be antagonistic if the language of another is imposed on them.

The Nigerian literary firmament demonstrates massive nativisation of English. The aim is to enable it to carry the weight of its Nigerian peculiar experience. This trend also demonstrates itself with Nigerian diasporic writers. Diasporic writers such as Helon Habila, Segun Afolabi, Ben Okri, Tanuri Ojaide, Chimamanda Adichie, to mention but a few, have

continually used their respective novels as tools for identifying with the country. Sometimes, the nativised English speaks to the Nigerian about their experiences, emotions, fears, aspirations and world views, the way their indigenous language does without losing much of its vital standard composition. It seems that most Nigerian novelists achieve novelistic feats because of their understanding of the fact that it is the maturity and sublimity of a language that makes a work of literature a serious one.

In a nutshell, it is interesting to note that in its few years of existence as an aspect of national literature, the Nigerian novel has developed rapidly in its entire ramification to the amazement of the world. The novel, which is not primordially Nigerian, has been nativised to the level that one can hardly separate its origin from its Nigerianisation, giving it a Nigerian identity. Its development has surpassed political and economic developments. Is it the "faces" (content) of Nigerian novel that has contributed to its rapid development? It is apparent that the facts (story) may be there to be told but if the medium of expression is absent, the story will certainly go untold. The question is: how has language contributed to the growth of the Nigerian novel?

1.7 The Novelists and Their Works

This section introduces the writers that have been sampled for analysis. The story-line of each of the novels shall also be discussed briefly but in-depth analysis shall be undermined. The aim of the brief introduction is to provide general background information about the novelists and their respective novels. It is expected that this will help to shed light on the nature of the novels in relation to language and identity construction.

Currently an associate professor of English at Simon's Rock College, Great Barrington, **Okey Ndibe** was born in Yola, Nigeria in 1960 where he lived and worked as a journalist before moving to the US. This gives his novel a real Nigerian touch. A writer with a penchant for "mixing local colour" (Okolo, 2008) in his art, Ndibe won the College's New Faculty Teaching award in 2002. He is the founding editor of *African Commentary*, a magazine published by Chinua Achebe. Besides serving as a member of the editorial board of *Hartford Courant*, Ndibe has contributed poems to *An Anthology of New West African Poets*, edited by the Gambian poet, Tijan Sallah. "Eyes to the Ground: The Perils of the Black Student", an article which he wrote in the *Courant* was adjudged the best opinion

piece by the Association of Opinion Page Editors in 2001. Another of his article titled "Unwarranted Graphic Authentication" was in 2001 named the best opinion piece by the Society of Professional Journalists, Connecticut Chapter. He was a visiting professor of English and Creative Writing at Connecticut College in New London, Connecticut. Ndibe has also been a columnist to *The Guardian*, one of Nigeria's widely read daily newspapers. His first novel, *Arrows of Rain* (2000) has been selected along some 21st-century Nigerian novels for the investigation of language and identity.

Arrows of Rain is set in the "utopian" city of Langa, Federal Republic of Madia. Though the novelist notes that the novel could be set in any African country because of the similarity in the growth of tyrannical dynasty across Africa, *Arrows of Rain* betrays the fact that the novel is set in Lagos (Langa) and the Federal Republic Nigeria (Madia). There are several political and social developments in the story-line that lead one to conclude that the story is set in Lagos. For instance, the story opens in B. Beach, obviously the Lagos Bar Beach. Politically, there are references made to the hanging of Ken Saro Wiwa (a Nigerian environmental activist), the incarceration of journalists and pro-democrats during the Late Sanni Abacha's military junta. Moreover, the central character hails from Amaobia, thirty-five minutes drive from "Onitsha, a commercial town five hundred miles east of Lagos" (*Arrows of Rain*, p. 88); pointing to the author's origin. Linguistically, there are expressions such as "ashawo" (a Nigerian Pidgin expression for a commercial sex worker) and "debia" (an Igbo word for a herbalist) in the novel. These expressions do not only point to the origin of the novelist or someone who has spent most of his life in the country, but also brings out both the "Nigerianness" of the novelist and the novel.

The story, woven around Bukuru, is written in a simple language replete with images of a nation struggling to break-free from military dictatorship and political duplicity. It captures a city plagued by night clubs, crude business men and women, drunken and hopeless workers, prostitutes and "the bawdy soldiers of the military regime that has suppressed the country more than twenty years" (Okolo 2008: 57). Bukuru, also known as Ogugua leaves the village to Langa in search of greener pasture. Since the city is a place where one could easily get lost in its crowd, it will enable him to shake-off his past and assume a new life from the awful circumstance that caused him to leave the village. Unfortunately, he gets involved in a murder case and the authorities are unwilling to believe

his own account of the murder story. Like Lomba, in *Waiting for an Angel*, Bukuru in his prison cell recounts the story of his life from the village to the moment he is imprisoned for saying the truth about the murder at B. Beach.

Helon Habila was born in Kaltungo, Gombe State in 1967 and studied at the University of Jos and the University of East Anglia, England. He lectured in Bauchi from 1997-99 and self-published his first collection, *Prison Stories*, in 2000. *Love Stories*, from the collection, won the 2001 Caine Prize, and grew into *Waiting for an Angel*, which won a Commonwealth Writers Prize in 2003. He taught creative writing at the University of East Anglia from 2002 and has edited, with Lavinia Greenlaw, the British Council anthology *New Writing* 14, and, with Khadija George, the African fiction anthology *Miracles, Dreams* and *Jazz*. He is a contributing editor to the *Virginia Quarterly Review*, and now teaches creative writing at George Mason University, Washington DC. His second novel, *Measuring Time* 2008, was published by Cassava Republic.

Waiting for an Angel tells the story of Lomba, a young Nigerian journalist who is imprisoned for covering a political demonstration against the continuous-stay in power by the then Nigerian military junta that ruled the country against popular will. In his prison cell, Lomba, with materials smuggled into the prison, captures the grim state of terror that pervades Nigeria's political atmosphere.

The novel is divided into seven interconnected parts. Part one narrates Lomba's prison experiences. He is caught writing poems on cigarette raps. The prison Superintendent deprives Lomba of the poems and hands them to a woman he (the Superintendent) is wooing. The Superintendent's lover asks for more poems; causing the Superintendent to enter a deal with Lomba where he exchanges his creative ingenuity for soap and cigarettes. It becomes easy for the Superintendent to meet his lover's demand. Interestingly, the poems become an outlet for Lomba's expression of his thoughts, and his subsequent release from detention.

Part two, *The Angel*, depicts death and man's hopelessness. Lomba and Bola, two friends driven by the urge to know what the future holds for them, are seen consulting a Buddha. The Buddha predicts imprisonment for Lomba and death for Bola. In part three, the predictions of the Buddha become a reality. Though Bola could not die as predicted by the

Buddha, his parents and a sister, Peju, passed-on on their way to Ibadan, having crashed into a military truck. Bola becomes mad and Lomba drops out of school.

Part four, *Alice*, describes Lomba's sexual adventure with Alice, his classmate and daughter of a top military officer. Unlike other students, Alice lives in a rented apartment off-campus and goes to school once in a fortnight. She is given to drinking, smoking and partying; a sharp contrast to Lomba. Part five captures Lomba's encounter with the real world. He describes the agonies of residing in 'face-me-I-face-you' accommodation (a Nigerian expression that describes rented apartments where rooms, separated by a passage, face each other). Lomba's life becomes a reflection of the lives of several other Nigerians who live in penury, pain and hopelessness.

Part six centres on Kela, a boy of fifteen years, who narrates the ways of life of the people of Poverty Street. On Poverty Street, there is Brother, a physically challenged tailor. His tailoring shop is the rendezvous where "ordinary Nigerians" converge to lament as well as dream of a better Nigeria that can only be experienced without the military. Owing to the junta's brutality, the need for a revolution becomes imminent as the military has surplus to eat and those on Poverty Street have nothing to live by. In part seven, the last part of the novel, terrorism reaches its climax. Woven around James, editor of "Dial" magazine and Lomba's employer, it vividly explains government's intolerance to criticism. Those who can no longer countenance government's persecutions seek self-asylum in America, but James prefers to take the fight to an end instead of washing dishes to make a living in America.

Vincent Egbuson was born in Rivers State where he teaches African literature in Rivers State University of Science and Technology. He is the author of *Moniseks Country* (2000), *A Poet is a Man* (2001), *Love is not Dead* (2002) and *Womandela* (2006). He won the ANA/NDDC Ken Saro-Wiwa Prize for Prose in 2006. *Love my Planet* (2008) is his second novel.

The novel, *Love my Planet*, that has been selected for analysis is made up of nine chapters. It is a political novel that describes people's disillusionment with political developments of the fourth republic. Set in a fictional country of Daglobe and narrated by Toundi, the novel focuses on the Niger Delta crises and its many troubles of armed-militancy, social injustice, environmental pollution (which is caused by oil exploration and gas flaring) and the inexplicable hand of fate upon human existence. In spite of the

distancing narrative effects employed by Egbuson, there are linguistic as well as historical landmarks that reveal that the story is set in Nigeria. In terms of language, for instance, the use of "Autonomous National Electoral Commission (ANEC)" (*Love my Planet* p.302) points a relation to Nigeria's Independent National Electoral Commision (INEC). Historically, besides the fact that the story traces the origin of the Niger Delta oil crises, the issue of resource control and the country's leadership problem, the novel vividly expresses a point in the country's history where armed robbers terrorisied her citizens and banks across the natio. This is seen in the following extract:

> He told the reporter that he was in the Daglobe Star Bank when the robbers came in and ordered everyone to lie face down. He did too but when he raised his head slightly and saw the thick scar on the cheek of the hulking armed robber in a flash, he saw his brother who was taken away by armed robbers who attacked his family many years ago in Nigeria. He and his brother were children then. He lost all fear of death, stood up, and approached the robber who was shouting at him to lie down because he did not want to kill him. The robber made little resistance when he reached for the gun in his hands and wrested it from him…As the robber shouted that he had been killed all the others ran out of the bank. Atakora added that the big keloid on the right cheek of the robber was the same as that on the right cheek of the leader of the armed gang who took his brother after robbing the family (*Love my Planet*, p. 303).

We can go on and on to show that the novel describes the socio-historical development of the country. Underneath the political novel, there is the projection of feminism. This is seen in the presentation of Toundi, a young lady, as a perfect leader.

Born in Ibadan, southwestern Nigeria, **Abimbola Adunni Adelakun** is a Nigerian female novelist of the 21st-century. She was educated at the University of Ibadan, where she graduated with both a Bachelor's degree and a Master of Arts Degree in Communication and Language Arts. She works with *The Punch Newspaper*, Lagos, Nigeria.

Under the Brown Rusted Roofs (henceforth *Rusted Roofs*) is set in Ibadan, the biggest city in Nigeria. The novel is divided into two parts. Part one describes family life and African communal system. Ideologically, the novel extols and propagates African communalism, and opposes the rise of capitalism and its correlate individualism in the novelists "agboole". Literally, "agboole" refers to a big family compound. The novelist

decries the erosion of her African culture to the twin-monster of westernisation and globalisation. Written in strict observance of her Yoruba ancestry, *Rusted Roofs* thematically sustains and promotes the novelist's cultural heritage. The novel alludes to a "pre-civilised" Yoruba society, and how it should be after the eclipse of colonial rule. This cultural revival and reclaiming of space is enhanced through her conscious adoption of cultural idioms and metaphors.

Part two centres on the rise of military dictatorship and how God helped in removing the "*oloribukurus* that made our life difficult, God will punish them forever" (p. 142). Politically, it is a story about the interaction between a "godfather" and a would-be political thug, who had come to tell the godfather he was willing to do anything to be one of his foot-soldiers. The novel depicts the culture, tradition, and beliefs of the people of Ibadan and by extension the Yoruba of western Nigeria. It addresses polygamy, circumcision, immorality, child upbringing, jealousy, back-biting, and social rank. In a rustic and rib-cracking language, *Rusted Roofs* takes its readers into the heart of wives, womanhood and the intense relationships that characterise traditional family life. It expresses the passion, fear and hopes of the people. It also touches on issues like corruption, tribalism, bad governance, the lack of basic social amenities; the horrors of military rule, shady party deals, and elections.

In all, the examination of these sampled novels does not just prove that every writer is a writer in politics; it also shows that the novel is a resourceful site for the construction of a people's identity. It also indicates that the novel is a historical artifact and language plays a major role in documenting a nation's historical antecedents. Can the Nigerian novelists be separated from their time and events? Does the novel retain a people's identity?

1.8 Statement of the Problem

There is a substantial amount of empirical and theoretical work on the "critical" relationship between language and society (van Dijk, 1991; Fairclough, 2001; McGregor, 2003; Kehinde, 2005; Taiwo, 2004), as well as some applications of CDA to literary texts (Aboh, 2010; Hunjo, 2010). However, there has been little CDA research on language and identity specifically on the 21st-century Nigerian novel, a generation that has produced the highest number of writers and novels. A critical-ethno-linguistic approach to the relationship between language and identity may reveal the intricacies of subjective and objective

processes and their interface in terms of creative activity (novelistic writing, to be specific). Such a perspective constitutes a fruitful point of departure, given the discipline's long tradition of studying both the micro and the macro levels of identity, including categorisation and identity processes, as well as intergroup processes. The present study offers such a perspective. Accordingly, it will reflect on the interchange of intrinsic structural processes said in terms of lexical and discursive strategies, and extrinsic socio-cultural factors such as nationhood, ethnic identity, religious affiliations and social stereotypes.

1.9 Research Questions

In order to provide focus and direct attention to the major issues in this study, the following research questions have been formulated:

1. Do writers' lexical switches to indigenous languages indicate a sense of ethnic identity construction?
2. How does writers' religious affiliation influence their discursive strategies in terms of identity construction? That is, does writers' use of language betray any relationship among language, identity and religion?
3. How well does "Nigerianism" play a role in the construction of a Nigerian identity?
4. Do discourse participants' ideological sentiments influence their construction of social identities?

1.10 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to investigate how identities are lexically and discursively constructed in selected twenty-first century Nigerian novels. And the objectives of the study include**:**

1. To examine how Nigerian novelists use lexical switches/innovations to construct identities.
2. To interrogate the claim that culture and ideology influence identity construction.
3. To investigate the relationship that holds between language and religion in terms of identity construction.

4. To ascertain the claim that Nigerian novelists use their novels as platforms for the construction of national, ethic and social identities.

1.11 Scope of the Study

This study explores language as an indispensable focal point in the construction of identity in a fast changing world, and identifies society as exerting powerful pressure on writers' linguistic choices and modes of expressions. In view of the complex nature of identity, the study is limited to the analysis of four novels that indcate how identities are lexically and discursively constructed. The novels were purposively selected to represent Nigeria-based and foreign-based novelists. Though not a comparative analysis, the aim of the study to investigate the lexical as well as the discursive strategies the sampled novelists deployed in the construction of identity in the 21st-century Nigerian novel.

1.12 Significance of the Study

A study such as this that examines the place of language in the construction of identity in the 21st-century Nigerian novel promises to be significant in the following ways:

It will reveal that, though language is not identity, it fundamentally enhances the expression of people's and groups' identities. That is, one's vocabulary choices can be connected to identity construction.

It will also be revealed that the use of language in the Nigerian novel does not only encode ideological differences, but also point to the fact that language is fundamentally involved in identity construction. The study will be an expose on how people's culture and ideology are materials which they rely upon to construct, negotiate and reproduce identities. That is, beyond establishing the intricate relationship between language and identity, the present study holds the view that writers' linguistic exhibition of their culture is contingent upon their awareness/appreciation of their identity.

1.13 Methodology

The study adopted aspects of Ruth Wodak's discourse-historical analysis to CDA, together with lexical semantics and Manuel Castells' identity theory. CDA is not a theory per se, but a method or programme developed within the general framework of discourse

analysis to enable discourse analysts to see language as a product of society. Grounded in the social sciences, CDA is developed to analyse how power relations and ideology, the macro-structures of society, are imbued in the way we use or are meant to use language, the micro-structure. A step ahead of conversational analysis, CDA provides insights on how one's use of language is linked to one's awareness of the power and ideology that are infused in the language of communication. Moreover, Castells' identity theory, borrowed from the social sciences, is a concept that illustrates how people's search for meaningfulness can trigger various forms of identity construction. It examines how people use language to affiliate with those they consider as members of their ingroup and how antagonistic linguistic items are used when referring to those they consider as members of the outgroup. Both theories account for how identity can be constructed in ideologically loaded and context-specific ways, a central tenet of critical language study. They are, however, supported by the linguistic concept of lexical semantics which accounts for the latent and salient meanings of words. (Detailed explanations of these concepts are provided in Chapter Two.)

Texts for the study were drawn from four novels. These are Okey Ndibe's *Arrows of Rain* (2000), Helon Habila's *Waiting for an Angel* (2002), Abimbola Adelakun's *Under the Brown Rusted Roofs* (2008) and Vincent Egbuson's *Love my Planet* (2008). The novels were selected using purposive random sampling technique. The selection of the novels was based on the fact that they account for how identities are lexically and discursively constructed. Also, the sampling technique is meant to represent two foreign-based novelists and two Nigeria-based novelists of Nigerian origin. Therefore, Habila's *Waiting for an Angel* and Ndibe's *Arrows of Rain* were selected to represent foreign-based Nigeria novelists, and Adelakun's *Under the Brown Rusted Roofs* Egbuson's *Love my Planet* were sampled to represent Nigeria-based novelists. Since the sampling procedure covers two home-based writers: Adelakun and Egbosun, and two diasporic writers: Ndibe and Habila, there is the need to find out if there are linguistic similarities/peculiarities among Nigerian writers, which the sampled writers represent, their locale notwithstanding. Specifically, though not a comparative analysis, the selection was motivated by the need to find out if the lexical items and the discursive features deployed in the construction of identity are similar.

If they are similar, one can talk of a literature that is typically Nigerian: a literature that has evolved in strict fidelity to the events of its society and time.

Egbosun and Habila have published more than a novel each. In the sampling process, however, those that have won prose fiction prizes were selected. Besides the fact that the novels have won prose fiction prizes, they were also selected because of their linguistic presentation of identity issues. Moreover, the writers were selected on the basis that they fall under the study's categorisation of 21st-century Nigerian novelists. (The notion of 21st-century writers has been discussed in Section 1.6.1).

Novels were preferred to poetry and play because studies on the lexical and discursive construction of identity have concentrated mostly on poetry and plays with inadequate attention on how contextualised vocabualary items and discursive strategies are exploited in the novels to construct forms of identity. In fact, Fowler notes that a novel "gives an interpretation of the world it represents" (1996:130). Moreover, the novel illustrates how non-native English writers use it as a deconstructing site, where they endeavour to dislodge the dominance of English over their indigenous languages. This political disempowerment has been upheld by the novelist, who believes that language is a component of ethnic identity, especially in instances where the novelist has a control of two languages: a borrowed language (usually a European language owing to colonial antecedents), and their indigenous language. By identifying English as the only "appropriate language" for Nigerian creative writing, for instance, the western critic is attempting to mandate a uniform identity (that of English speaking writer) while perpetuating the idea that other languages are incapable of expressing a writer's views. It is within the confines of the novel that the writer firmly *legitimises*, *resists* or *projects* their identity by either conscious or subconscious linguistic strategies, hence, its choice over the other genres of literature, namely drama and poetry.

In terms of data analysis, both qualitative (realised through lexical and textual analyses) and quantitative analyses are used. The quantitative analysis, not intended to replace lexical analysis, accounts for the frequency and percentage distribution of certain linguistic items, and the textual analysis deals with the interpretation of fragments taken from the data. The next chapter discusses previous study, literature review and the theoretical framework adopted by the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Previous Studies

A great number of sociolinguitic and discourse studies have been devoted to the study of the complex relationship between language and identity. The underlying meaning, from a dynamic point of view of the identity of individual speakers, speech communities and their language varieties, is to show how, and by what means speakers exploit the mechanisms of linguistic features to strategically display or construct their identities. Coulmas (2005: 178-9), arguing from this perspective, holds the view that "every speech act is an act of identity, and all utterances vary with respect to the relative importance of identity display." The present study is limited to the review of studies on language and the construction of identity. This helps the study to focus on previous studies that will enrich one's understanding of how identities are linguistically reproduced and constructed.

Cummins' (1986) work which uses the United States as its source of data shows a need to identify the bonds among language, culture and identity. It examines how undermining students' cultural identity can lead to underachievement and failure in schools. Cummins presents a theoretical foundation for analysing minorities' school failure and the relative lack of success of attempts at educational reform.

Cummins categorises society into two groups: the "dominant" and the "dominated". The "dominant" consists of those who control the institutions and reward systems within society. The "dominated" group is regarded as inherently inferior to the dominant group. It reveals how the dominated group is schemed out of political positions and denied access to high status positions within the institutional structure of society. The dominated status of minority group exposes them to conditions that predispose children to school failure even before they come to school. However, membership in these categories is not predetermined. Students, even if they are in the dominated group, who are empowered by their school experiences, will develop the ability, confidence and motivation to succeed academically. Most of the dominated minority school children participate competently as a result of having developed a strong cultural identity as well as appropriate school-based knowledge and interactional structures (Cummins, 1986). The study shows how political institutions are structured based on majority-minority variables but did not look at how these linguistic acts

of identity display are expressed in a people's literature. This is where the present study becomes expedient.

Trueba and Zou (1994) study the cultural identities of an ethnic group in China called the Miao. Their study of Miao undergraduates and their lives in the University, an institution dominated by the Han China, reveals that even when placed in a different learning environment, the strong cultural identity of the Miao students allowed them to draw on such affiliation for an increased motivation to succeed academically. Learning a second language and a new culture did not in any way distract them from their culture but, in fact, their pride in their identity and strong affiliation to their ethnic group was strengthened. The study suggests that the Miao subjects who came from a very impoverished background did not suffer any lack of self-esteem in terms of materialistic acquisition but drew strong emotional support from their own social identity. They were rather driven by the desire to succeed so that they could repay their family and village members for their sacrifices with the prestige attached to being university graduates and members of the educated elite. Trueba and Zou's study has significant implications because it shows that being empowered in a new learning environment does not necessitate forsaking one's own culture and language. Miao's empowerment, indeed, in a new environment depended on their being Miao and retaining their identification and affiliation with Miao traditions, culture and language. Like Cummins (1986), the study has not examined how literature retains and expresses forms of identity construction.

Gordon (2004) discusses how a family in the US uses language to create and socialise each other into a shared family political identity as Democrats, and supporters of Al Gore. They do this by the way they refer to Al Gore, using terms which express closeness and alignment such as "Al, our President" and "our guy and my friend." By contrast, they refer to Gore's opponent, George W. Bush, in ways which express social distance such as "Bush" and "that alcoholic car-driving man." Through their use of language, the family socialises their son into their political views at the same time as they create their family political identity, exposing how lexical devices can aid the formation of identity.

Davis (2004), in her study of girls' interactions in an online game called *Babyz*, a game which encourages girls to take on identities which express stereotyped mothering

values, found that the identities that online participants explore may be in conflict with off-line socially encouraged identities. She found that many of the girls in her study resisted the maternal child-rearing identity promoted by the game and developed multiple identities that were in conflict with the over-arching theme of the game. The girls in her study used the web as a place in which they could "explore identities, confide, confess and challenge social rules and identities" (Davis, 2004:44). They created their sense of community through the shared use of discourse strategies such as heavy punctuation (CUTE!), the use of text-messaging type language (LOL), colloquialisms (so sweet!), short-hand expressions (i.e.) and their own created *Babyz* jargon. This shared use of discourse style, Davis would argue, all contributes to the feeling of a discrete community with a shared (although sometimes contested) set of values and identities. Within this setting, the girls experimented "with voices and viewpoints which would be taboo elsewhere" (44). They, thus, were able to connect with each other, to role play a range of attitudes, stances and identities and to explore ideas in a free space that they may not have been able to do in many other places.

Rickford and Rickford (2004) examine identity assertion by choice of variety. In spite of long standing negative attitude towards African American Vernacular English, its users, the Black Americans in the United States of America do not discard it. They have not discarded the low prestige language for the "good" language even when "good" language is perceived as a means of social achievement. The most persuasive reason, Rickford and Rickford (2004: 224) argue, is that "it is a symbol of identity: local, social, ethnic and national." Although its grammatical and pronunciation features are used most by those with least education and smallest earning power, it is also endorsed and used by blacks who are well educated and hold good jobs or political offices. Rather than being a social indicator, it indexes African American ethnicity. Rickford and Rickford emphasise the significance of the variety to African Americans in the following words: "black adults of all ages talk the vernacular, and it functions to express their black identity, too" (2004: 224). The study indicates that identity assertion by choice of variety, especially by a disadvantaged group, is often an act of defiance which can be understood only against the background of its sociolinguistic context. Rickford and Rickford's (2004) work on identity assertion is fundamental to the appreciation of how resistance identity is constructed.

Using two examples of language choices involving the variable value of German for identity claims, Coulmas (2005) maintains that during the 1st World War, the use of German by German Americans was relegated to the background. This was because Germans faced public hostility and were left with virtually no option but to be assimilated. German was considered an "enemy language" and many German Americans felt vulnerable to officially endorsed antipathy to world minorities. They had to abandon their ancestral language at the same time their identity was put to question. Coulmas makes it clear that language is not just knitted to identity, but expresses the political inclination of a country. This line of argument implies that language embodies or expresses the identity of its users as well as help in retaining their ideology. Like the studies examined above, Coulmas' study has not shown how the novel forges the link between language and identity.

Aito (2004), in his investigation of graffiti as communicative expression of identity, holds the view that graffiti expresses "hidden or dark identity". Following Aito's tone of argument, graffiti is a sociolinguistic variable that demonstrates how ingroups make use of language to satisfy certain communicative needs. Aito argues that as a reference part of the language of post-independent Nigeria, graffiti is a "distinctive mode of communication that gives support to the "anti-languages" for obvious reasons" (p. 584). Such a position gives one the impression that graffiti is a linguistic identity of deviants. It is a deviant language because it does not conform to society's linguistic rules. While the use of graffiti is seen as an aberrant means of communication in Nigerian linguistic milieu, Aito argues that graffiti is not abnormal or anti-language but an expression of an individual identity. Arguing from a sociolinguistic background, Aito notes that the social communicative expression of a graffitist is largely conditioned by the cultural orientation of the society which the graffitist operates. In all, graffiti is a form of linguistic communication that borders on identity crisis.

There has been very – and in some cases no – critical work yet on the novels under study. However, Okolo's (2008) investigation of Ndibe's *Arrows of Rain* focuses on the explication of indigenous thoughts in African urban fiction. She argues that the writer's recourse to indigenous ideals help to give his work an African identity. This cultural identification is particularly expressed in the novelist's adoption of indigenous moral values as a gauge to "wild city vices"; an influence of western culture.

Okolo further notes that Ndibe's extensive use of flashbacks and the narrative technique of a-story-in-a-story help to make the novel a success. She also notes that the writer's use of language is "accessible" (2008: 103). In spite of Ndibe's level of education and linguistic "sophistication", his Africaness is still intact. This is because his work "in various ways are celebrations of Africa" (p. 104). The novel from every ramification forges a link between his "diasporic self" and his indigenous identity. This position, which rhymes with the concern of this study, establishes the fact that a writer's use of language, by and large, reveals his identity as well as ideological undertone.

Though Okolo mentions language, culture and identity several times in her study, a foundation for a study such as the one undertaken here, the study does not critically examine the connection that holds among these concepts. The present study, differing markedly from Okolo's, explores the intertwined relationship between lexico-discursive items and identity construction in selected 21st-century Nigerian novels.

Erritouni's (2010) study of Habila's *Waiting for an Angel* deals with the exposition of issues such as despotism and failure of public institutions which has preoccupied African fiction since the 60s and its effects on ordinary people and dissident intellectuals. Erritouni notes that Habila shares his predecessors' concern with the political conditions in postcolonial Africa but rejects the view, held most notably by Ngugi and Soyinka, that political oppression in the postcolony is, to a significant extent, a consequence of the continuing effects of colonialism and neo-neocolonial exploitation.

Thus, Habila contends that despotism in Nigeria is an expression of the will to power of the postcolonial rulers. Accounting neither for its colonial origins nor for its encounter with global capitalism, Erritouni argues that Habila "adopts a position that is strikingly at odds with that of first – and second – generation novelists" (p.146). Erritouni is of the opinion that Habila reveals the historical backdrop against which the plot of *Waiting for an Angel* unfolds and indicates his distinct approach to despotism. Erritouni stresses the fact that Habila explains that his novel seeks to capture the political conditions that obtained in Nigeria in the 90s, particularly during General Sanni Abacha's dictatorship which lasted from 1993 – 1998.

Though an illuminating insight into Habila's chronicle of Nigeria's socio-political dislocation, Erritouni's study could not, at any point, mention the fundamental role of

language in weaving Habila's historical novel neither did the study reflect on how Habila's use of language expresses identity. Erritouni's "negligence" of Habila's use of language marks the point of divergence between his study and the present one which seeks to investigate Habila's use of language in the construction of identity.

From the foregoing, a work that has examined how forms of identities are indexicated, with particular reference to the 21st-century Nigerian novel, is yet to be done. The present study is therefore meant to fill such a scholarly gap. The next section reviews some fundamental approaches to the study of discourse analysis.

2.1 Review of Relevant Literature

The term discourse is used with a wide range of meanings even within linguistics. Noting these disparities, Young (2001: 392) argues:

> The term is used in a wide variety of meanings even within linguistics; for example, sometimes discourse is employed to distinguish spoken from written language.

Linguists use the term "discourse" to describe different registers of language: the different modulations of the kind of language people use or process as they move from the family meal, to talking to a family member on the telephone, to a lecturer teaching his students in the classroom. Evidently, discourse analysis in linguistics is a varied field with a wide array of approaches: generally, it involves either a descriptive or critical textual analysis (the type this study is aligned to) according to methodology derived from linguistic theoretical framework.

The ways linguists use the term "discourse" are not incompatible with, but remain rather different from the ways in which it is used in sociology and political science, for example, by Althusser, Herbamas or Giddens (Young, 2001). In sociology and politics, it is not a question of detailed methodological analysis of the forms of syntax, higher-level organisation or interaction from a linguistic point of view; rather, discourse examines the function of language as a part of, or barrier to, social and political life of individuals.

Discourse, according to Schiffrin (1994: 20) "is often defined in two ways: a particular unit of language (above the sentence), and a particular focus (on language use)." These definitions reflect the differences between formalists and functionalists paradigm.

Dissecting these differences, Schiffrin (1994: 22) points out that functionalism is derived from two general assumptions: "(a) language has functions that are external to the organisation of the linguistic system itself and; (b) external functions influence the internal organisation of the linguistic system." These assumptions contrast functionalism with approaches that are not concerned with how external processes impinge on language use. Formalists, on the other hand, argue that although language has social and cognitive functions, these functions do not impinge upon the internal organisation of language.

From the formalist point of view, discourse is characterised by structural descriptions at several levels or dimensions of analysis and in terms of many different units, categories, schematic patterns, or relations. In this regard, discourse depends on structural analyses which in turn focus on the way different units of grammar function in relation to each other but they (structural units) undermine the functional relations with the context of which discourse is a part of. Since most discourse analysts emphasize the relationship between discourse and the context of which discourse is a part, it seems that the two approaches have something in common. A more conservative view of functionalism, which shows the interconnectedness between formalism and functionalism, is that there is interaction between form and function such that "external functions would work in tandem with the formal organization inherent in the linguistic system – influencing it at certain points in the system, but not fundamentally defining its basic categories" (Schiffrin, 1994: 23).

In several structural approaches, discourse is viewed as a level of structure higher than the sentence, or higher than another unit of text. In fact, Harris, the first linguist to use the term DA in 1951, claimed that discourse is the next level in a hierarchy of morphemes, clauses and sentences. His view of discourse is basically formal which is derived from structural methods of linguistic analysis. The distinctive claim about this view is that a methodology could break a text into relationships among its lower-level constituents. A central reason for Harris' dependence on structure is that what separates discourse from a random sequence of sentences is precisely the fact that it has structure: a pattern by which segments of the discourse occur and recur relative to each other. Central to structural paradigm is that discourse is composed of units.

The attempt thus far has been on locating DA as a unit above the sentence, and this has directed attention to a particular type of DA. In spite of the fact that this definition (as in showing how the formal properties of language can be analysed as units of discourse), is quite revealing; it is nevertheless fraught with some operational problems. Schiffrin (1994) has pointed out these problems. First, to view discourse as a unit above the sentence compels an analyst to focus more on how syntactic properties of clauses/sentences contribute to or are influenced by higher level structures of a text, for example, specific properties of sentences, such as word order. Another problem arising from the structural view of discourse is that it places discourse in a hierarchy of language structure, thereby fostering the view that language can be classified under the "units of grammar" (Blommaert, 2006). But grammar is an aspect of language: this is reductionist. It sees language in the apex of the units of grammar where the morpheme is the list.

However, Brown and Yule (1983: 1) argue that:

> …analysis of discourse, is necessarily, the analysis of language in use. As such, it cannot be restricted to the description of linguistic forms independent of the purpose or functions which these forms are designed to serve in human affairs.

These views make it clear that the analysis of language cannot be separated from the analysis of the purpose and functions of language in human affairs. Brown and Yule's (1983) categorisation of language functions into transactional and interactional levels reveals that defining discourse as language use depends on the relevance of language to systems outside itself. A corollary of this view is that functionally based approaches view discourse as a socially and culturally organised way of speaking.

This functional view reaches its extreme in the work of critical language study, i.e. the study of language, power and ideology. Fairclough (2001), for instance, advocates a dialectical conception of language and society whereby language is a part of society; linguistic phenomena are social phenomena of a special sort, and social phenomena are (in part) linguistic phenomena. To Fairclough, linguistic phenomena are social because whenever people speak, listen, write or read, they do so in ways which are determined by society and have social effects.

Fairclough's view that language and society partially constitute one another such that the analysis of language as an autonomous system would be a contradiction is actually

informed by Foucault's works, namely, *The Order of Things* and *Archaeology of Human Sciences*. The theory of discourse which Foucault elaborates locates language in materiality. He wants to consider each act of language, written or spoken, as an historical event, and to trace the ways in which it interacts and interrelates with material circumstance. Foucault further suggests that discourse is primarily the way in which knowledge is formed at the interface of language and the material world. In general, knowledge is not contained discursively, but exists at the edge between language and the rest of material reality. Young's (2001) description of discourse is in tune with Fairclough's social perspectives. Discourse is a broader concept, a transcultural practice that crosses intellectual and physical boundaries, both because in practical terms knowledge in discourse will be part of everyday practices and because material conditions will also operate on the conceptual formation of knowledge. Young's views are basically functional: where discourse is language used in making history. Language, in this regard, is a body of historical events, and historical events are realised through the strategic use of language.

Schiffrin (1994) had emphasised this perspective of discourse earlier. She holds the views that discourse as language in use is consistent with functionalism in general: discourse is viewed as a system (a socially and culturally organised way of speaking) through which particular functions are realised. It follows that although formal features may be identified, functionalist definition of discourse takes analysts away from the structural features of language to focus on the way patterns of language are put to use on particular contexts and for particular purposes.

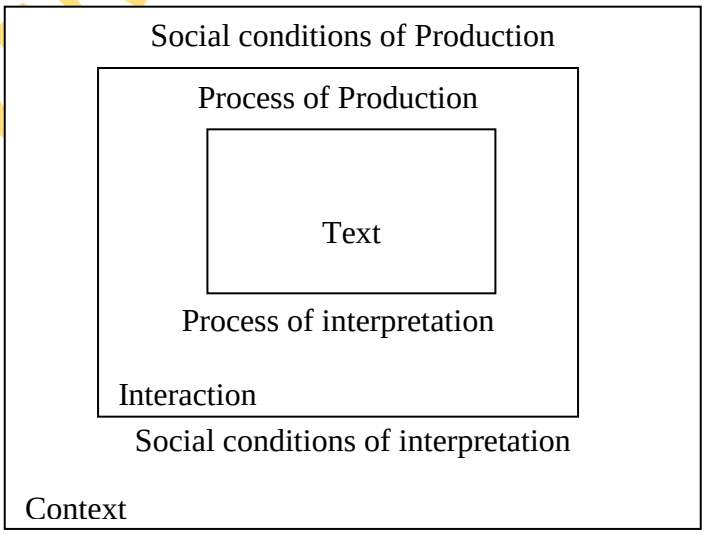
Functionally based approaches tend to draw upon a variety of methods drawn from social scientific approaches, but also more humanistically based interpretive efforts to replicate actors' own purposes or goals. This points to why functionalists such as Fairclough (1995, 2001) rely "less" on the grammatical features of utterances such as sentences but more on the way utterances are situated in contexts.

Throughout this argumentation, what is being emphasised is that linguistic theories are a set of categories, rules and principles devised by linguists in order to explain observations about language. The intention has been two-fold. One, to differentiate DA (a linguistic phenomenon) from "ordinary discourse": two, to examine how within linguistic scholarship the concept has been approached. None of these approaches (i.e. formalism or

functionalism) is self-sufficient. That, however, does not deter one from taking a stand. Owing to the social nature of literary texts, it seems appropriate for a study such as the one undertaken here to align itself with the functional (social) approach to DA.

Expanding this social perspective, Mey (2001: 190-1) stresses that discourse "comprises the hidden conditions that govern such situations of language use. It raises questions such as: how do people use their language in their respective social contexts?" Once again, we are confronted with the formalist and functionalist dichotomy. But such dichotomy will not be discussed because the earlier part of this section has been devoted to drawing such distinctions. The position here is to see discourse as an enterprise, a 'universe' in which language is an integral aspect. Discourse is all encompassing. It captures the "implicit and explicit values, norms, rules and laws, and with all its particular conditions of life: economic, social, political and cultural" (Mey, 2001: 190). Discourse is, therefore, the "fabric of society"; and this "fabric" is mostly expressed through language.

In tune with Mey's views, Fairclough (2001) argues that: discourse, then, involves social conditions, which can be specified as *social conditions of production*, and *social conditions of interpretation*. These social conditions, moreover, relate to three different "levels" of social organisation: the level of the social situation, or the immediate social environment in which the discourse occurs; the level of the social institution which constitutes a wider matrix for the discourse; and the level of the society as a whole. This is captured diagrammatically below:



(Fairclough 2001: 21)

Fig. 2.1: Discourse as text, interaction and context

The diagram shows that discourse is different from text: it is more than a collection of sentences. It is discourse that makes the text. The making process is what Fairclough, cited above, describes as the production stage. To see language as discourse and social practice is to analyse the relationship between texts, processes, and their social conditions, both the immediate conditions of the situational context and the remote conditions of institutional and social structures. This approach is what discourse analysts call critical discourse analysis (CDA).

A number of analytical frameworks for doing CDA are in existence (A discussion of these approaches is done in Section 2.3). All of the approaches stress that discourse analysis should take place at different levels. At the linguistic level (what is described by theorists of this persuasion as the micro-level), many practitioners of this theory have used Halliday's SFL to address ways that language is used to achieve various goals. This would involve paying attention to features like agency and nominalisation. The use of such features can sometimes reveal attempts by the speaker to represent certain social actors in biased ways (Baker, 2010). For instance, Fairclough (1989:123-4) examines a newspaper article that contains the following text "Quarry were still shedding problem. Unsheathed lorries from Middlebarrow Quarry were still shedding problem." Here agency is unclear, as an inanimate object (lorries), rather than a human being, is represented as being responsible for the problem. The suppression of a human agent is also achieved by using the nominalization "Quarry load shedding problem." This is written as a noun phrase, which means that the agent does not need to be present.

Other features that are examined by critical discourse analysts include lexical choice (whether authors use terms which contain evaluations, e.g. *pro-democrats* vs. *rebels*), hyperbole (attempts to emphasise or exaggerate), euphemisms (replacing an unpleasant or offensive word or concept with something more agreeable), implicature (what is suggested but not formally stated in an utterance), metaphor (describing one thing in terms of another), collocation (words that co-occur or words that are used together) and modality (verbs that describe the mood of the speaker) (Baker, 2010).

Additionally, critical discourse analysts consider how various argumentation strategies are made use of in texts. Such strategies could include topoi, i.e. "conclusion rules that connect the argument with the conclusion" (Reisigle and Wodak, 2001:74-6), or

fallacies, i.e. “components of arguments that are demonstrably flawed in their logic or form” (Baker, 2010: 122). However, most CDA researchers assert that the text and its contents must also be considered in relation to society itself. At a particular level, this could involve an analysis of the processes of production and reception. For example, an analyst could seek answers with regard to who created the text, under what circumstances and for what reasons. Moreover, the analyst would look at who the typical recipients of the text were, how it was received and what potential readings of the text could be made. One could also consider issues such as interdiscursivity and intertextuality: what other texts or discourses does the text under examination refer to?

Basically, the analyst would try to consider the text within its wider social, political, cultural and historical context. Such analysis is therefore complex and multifaceted (Wodak, 2001). This often leads to a kind of small-scale quantitative analysis, whereby either a single text or a small sample is investigated in detail or analysis goes beyond linguistic boarders (Baker, 2010). (This is called the macro-level). Obviously, CDA involves two levels of analysis: there are aspects that centre on linguistic properties and those that go beyond linguistic properties.

In dealing with literary texts as a form of social discourse, one should be interested in how language is able to describe the events in a society and how individuals’ uses of language are a reflection of such events. In doing so, there is a need to see literature as a symbolic stage where the political, cultural (identity and belief systems) and social lives of the people interact with language. A literary text is therefore a stage where language is used by writers to project their identities and the voices of others. These voices may become explicit and identifiable or not, but they have a mental representation in the discursive architecture of the participants. Literature, therefore, becomes an interface between language and society. Discourse plays a crucial role in creating and recreating society’s bonds. It transcends the individual user and enables the single individual to exist and co-exist with other individuals of the society in a communal way.

In all, discourse transcends the systems it emanates from and the societal structures it creates, allowing them to emerge and (be) continuously transformed. Linguistic discourse, therefore, at least from the critical perspective, centres on how language and society interact, and how this interaction shapes human existence. Evidently, the forces that interact in a

writer's "world", by and large, determine how they use language to capture those experiences. Implicitly, a one way approach to the interpretation of linguistic analysis might not yield the expected result. In the next section, therefore, some critical approaches to the analysis of language in literature, discourse and identity are examined.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Fictional texts, because they are characterised by diverse meanings, are difficult to deal with. The difficulty of dealing with literary texts is not unconnected to the nature of the literary text, a resource that permits linguistic manipulations of meanings. Besides that, identity is a slippery concept that requires the application of systematic and methodological approaches to its interpretation. Consequently, approaches and methods capable of grasping the full complexities of identity in literary texts are encouraged. The core of this is to adopt theories that recognise the place of context in data interpretation. Specifically, the study is anchored on Ruth Wodak's discourse-historical analysis, together with lexical semantics and Manuel Castells' identity theory. These theories respectively account for how identities are linguistically constructed in ideologically loaded and context-specific ways. The next section discusses critical discourse analysis.

2.2.1 CDA: Definitions, Aims and Goals

In the preceding sections a critical approach to discourse analysis was briefly mentioned. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a rapidly developing area of language study. What then is CDA? There are diverse views to CDA just as there are several scholars and contributors. But one seemingly unifying view is that CDA is mainly concerned "with analysing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in languages" (Wodak, 2001: 2). Indeed, Fairclough informs that:

> By 'critical' discourse analysis I mean discourse analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power; and to explore how the

> opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony. (1995:132-3)

CDA differs from other forms of DA and criticism because its 'criticality' enables it to make clear the 'opaque' relationships between discourse, power and ideology. Fairclough argues that our social practices are unclear because they are "bound up with causes and effects which may not be at all apparent" (Fairclough, 1995:133). CDA demystifies the mystery of text: It identifies how language helps in hiding as well as revealing socio-political inequalities that exist in society. The central concern of CDA is to show, through systematic linguistic analysis, how language reproduces "to a greater or lesser extent, the social and ideological structures in which the text is written and is read" (Thornborrow and Wareing, 1998: 215).

CDA is not a theory per se, but a programme that offers the potential for a systematic insight into how linguistic form is achieved in everyday life. CDA is a perspective on doing research which focuses on social problems and on the role of discourse in the production and reproduction of power abuse or domination. The basic tenet of CDA lies on the need for a broad, diverse, multidisciplinary and problem–oriented programme which will select its methods and areas of analysis on the basis of a theoretical analysis of social issues (van Djik, 2001). CDA is therefore interested in examining the fundamental relations that assign power to various groups in our society, and sees language (the text) as one particularly important instrument of exercising that power. CDA provides special guides for human action, enabling the analyst of text to transcend the micro (linguistic form) to study how the macro (non-linguistic form) implicitly affects the production of the former. It is aimed at producing enlightenment and emancipation. It seeks to describe and explain, but also to root out a particular kind of delusion. Employing critical techniques, CDA creates awareness to readers for their needs and interests. CDA might thus be defined as being "fundamentally interested in analysing opaque as well as transparent relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control when these are manifested in language" (Wodak, 2006: 4-5). Put differently, CDA aims to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, constituted, legitimised, and so on, by language use (or in discourse as it applies here).

A critical approach to discourse, therefore, seeks to link the (micro-level) with the underlying power structure (macro-socio-cultural practice level) through discourse practices upon which the text was drawn (meso-level) (McGregor, 2003). Consequently, a text, a description of something that is happening in a larger social context replete with a complex set of power relations is interpreted and acted upon by readers or listeners depending on their rules, norms and mental models of socially acceptable behaviour. Oppression, repression and marginalisation go unchallenged if the text is not critically examined to reveal power relations and dominance.

The foregoing indicates that CDA focuses on how social relations, identity, knowledge, and power are constructed through written and spoken text. From this critical perspective discourse always involves power and how ideologies are connected to the past and the current context are interpreted differently by different people given their different backgrounds. The fact is that discourse and language can be used to make unbalanced power relations and portrayals of social groups appear to be commonsense, normal, and natural when in reality they are not so. Using just words, those in power or wishing to be so, can influence the way we view things. It implies that the text is a record of an event where something is communicated. That is, it involves the presentation of facts and beliefs, the construction of identities of the participants discussed in the communication and strategies to frame the content of the message.

These strategies, what Fairclough (1995) calls "discourse practice", refer to the ways the dominant class manipulates language to present social issues as if they are beneficial to the consumers of text. They are the "unspoken spoken rules" (absences) and conventions that govern how individuals learn to think, act, and speak in all the social positions they occupy in life. Discursive practices involve ways of being in the world that signify specific and reasonable social identities.

The text, which is situated in a social context (classroom, family, market, conferences, campaign ground, etc), becomes more than just use of words; it discloses the conventions which guide the use of such words. The fact remains that even when people are most concerned of their own individuality and thinks themselves to be "most cut off from social influences", they still use language in ways which are subject to social conventions (Fairclough, 2001, Anthia, 2007).

Basically, CDA sees language as social practice and considers the context of language use to be crucial to the interpretation of the multilayered nature of texts. CDA is concerned with studying written texts and spoken words to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality and bias and how these sources are initiated, maintained, reproduced, and transformed within specific social, economic, political and historical contexts (McGregor, 2003). It tries to illuminate ways in which the dominant forces in a society construct versions of realities that favour their interests. By unmasking such practices, CDA scholars aim to clarify opaque relationships, support the victims of such oppression and encourage them to resist and transform their lives: the central tenet of critical theory and the critical science approach.

Drawing profusely from Habermas's (1973) critical theory, CDA aims to help the analyst understand social problems that are mediated by mainstream ideology and power relationships, all perpetrated by the use of written texts in people's daily interaction with the world. The goal of CDA is to uncover the ideological assumptions that are hidden in the words of written text or speech in order to resist and overcome various forms of power that have been used in oppressing us. It aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships between discursive practices, texts, and events and wider social and cultural structures, relations, and processes. It strives to explore how these non-transparent relationships are a factor in securing power and hegemony. CDA also draws attention to power imbalances, social inequities, non-democratic practices, and other injustices in hopes of spurring people to corrective actions.

Besides liberating people from the strictures of power, the role of the analyst takes a critical path, a critical path in the sense that it shows the text's unspoken and suppressed voices. This is given the fact that the speech of a book comes from a certain silence. Macherey (1978: 68) argues "at the edge of the text, the language of ideology is momentarily hidden, but is made eloquent by its very absence". Thus, the critical analyst must go beyond the work and explain it; they must say what it does not and could not say.

Obviously, CDA as a linguistic programme within DA, and unlike other critical methods of text analysis, demands the critic to unfold the line of the text so as to demystify the message inscribed there. To understand the process of linguistic meaning, it is critical to be aware that the "relationship between form and content of texts are not arbitrary or

conventional, but they are determined (and constrained) culturally, socially and ideologically by the power of institution/discursive formations" (Birch, 1989: 1). The linguistic intention is to unearth the hidden meaning of a text.

CDA is not concerned with judging the credibility of text and its worth against some ideal pre-given model. CDA analysis is not interpretative (i.e., not concerned with getting the ultimate meaning but strives at saying what is not obviously said) and not evaluative (i.e., not concerned with passing value – judgment on texts). The objective of CDA is to explain the text in all its complexities and contradictions, by the internal configuration of (linguistic properties) and the external linguistic properties (the socio-historical antecedents, the silences that exert pressure on the encoder of text). These factors, linguistic and non-linguistic, by and large, determine the meaning an analyst makes from a text. To do this, the text must be considered not as neutral object of consumption, but of knowledge that needs to be studied (Simpson, 1993).

The issue of how identity is constructed in the use of discourse is also an area of interest in CDA. CDA focuses on identity as a form of socially meaningful practice. CDA demonstrates how people organise repertoires of identities, through the use of language and spatial positioning – the position from which one speaks. Works in CDA have expressed "social exclusion, the revival of nationalism, chauvinism and racism, the double exploitation of many women as both women and workers" (Fairclough, 2001:203). Most discourse analysts have employed the methods of CDA to explore the issues of language and identity in on-line chat environments. There are diverse approaches to CDA and the next section addresses these approaches.

2.2.2 Approaches to CDA

In the preceding section, it was noted that CDA is a multidisciplinary discourse-analytical programme which explores the relation between discourse and social inequality. CDA is not a single school of thought or paradigm. Rather, it is an umbrella term covering a number of distinct, but related approaches to the analysis of text in socially and politically inclined situations. Five approaches have been identified, but attention will be drawn to three well developed and most popular approaches among scholars of CDA. These three approaches are closely related but they are also sharply distinct from one another. The fact is

that each of these theorists is influenced by their earlier linguistic affiliations. For instance, Ruth Wodak's discourse-historical approach is influenced by her sociolinguistics and pragmatics backgrounds. One may ask why these distinctions. According to Weiss and Wodak (2003: 12), "studies in CDA are multifarious, derived from quite different theoretical backgrounds and oriented towards very different data and methodologies." The truth is that CDA is "multifarious": it consists of a number of particular approaches which have their inherent methodologies. None of these approaches is better than the other. Their appropriateness is only determined by the nature of the data being analysed. These popular approaches are: socio-cognitive analysis, socio-cultural analysis and the discourse–historical approach or analysis. They are discussed in turns.

2.2.2.1 Socio-cognitive Analysis

One major contribution to CDA and its link to CL is van Dijk's approach. His CDA approach is broadly socio-cognitive. He focuses on the fundamental importance of society in the critical analysis of discourse. His focal triad is constructed between discourse, cognition and society. Owing to this reliance on cognition, his approach is "concerned with mental schemas that represent the society and give rise to stereotypes, that in turn give (sic) rise to various ideologies" (Chilton, 2005: 20-21). An important dimension in the socio-cognitive approach, developed by Teun van Dijk, is that of the human mind. For van Dijk, discourse and social structure are mediated by social cognition. Social cognition is defined as "the system of mental representations and process of group members" (van Dijk, 1995: 18). Social cognitions, then, are socially shared mental representations. In this sense, although social cognitions are embedded in the minds of individuals, they are social because they are shared and presupposed by group members (van Dijk, 1993).

Social cognitions can be characterised more abstractly as ideas, belief systems or ideologies. The central claim of the socio-cognitive approach is that the relation between discourse and social structure necessitate that the micro-level (discourse) and macro-level (social structure) is mediated by ideology and social cognition. van Dijk (2001) states that CDA can be easily integrated with any approach in the social sciences. Thus, van Dijk (2006) has adopted an integrated approach that covers a detailed and explicit study of

discourse structures with an analysis of their social and cognitive context as a basis for CDA. He believes that:

> [s]ocietal structures and discourse structures are of a very different nature…these should somehow be mediated by an interface that is able to act as a conceptual…bridge between social 'reality' and discourse.
>
> (2006: 165)

This interface is the cognitive and van Dijk labels this approach socio-cognitive. Specifically, van Dijk states that the focus on textual or conversational structure derives its framework from the cognitive, social, historical, cultural, or political contexts.

Some critical discourse analysts expressly disagree with cognition because researchers do not have access to people's states of mind. They argue that cognitive phenomenon cannot be dealt with directly. Moreover, the socio-cognitive analysis is interested in studying the actual processes of decoding interpretation, storage, and representation in memory and in the role of previous knowledge and beliefs of the readers in their process of understanding texts.

van Dijk's cognitive analysis also lays emphasis on the analysis of power. To him, ideology is "a form of social cognition, shared by the members of a group, class, or other social formation" (1997: 24). An ideology, according to this analysis, is a complex cognitive framework that controls the *formation*, *transformation* and *application* of other social cognitions such as opinions, attitudes and social representations. This ideological framework itself consists of socially relevant norms, values, goals, and principles which are selected and applied in a way that they favour "perception, interpretation and action in social practices that are in the overall interests of the group" (p. 24). Ideologies therefore, provide the "cognitive foundation" for the attitudes of various groups in societies as well as the furtherance of their own goals and interests.

van Dijk (1997) offers a schema of relations between ideology, society, cognition and discourse: within which social interaction takes place. This social interaction is presented in the form of text/discourse, which is then "cognized" according to a cognitive system/memory. This system/memory consists of short-term memory, in which strategic process or decoding and interpretation takes place. Long-term memory, however, serves as a holder of socio-cultural knowledge, which consists of knowledge of language, discourse,

communication, persons, groups and events, existing in the form of scripts. Social (group) attitudes also reside with long term memory and provide further decoding guides. Each of these group attitudes can represent an array of ideologies which combine to create one's own personal ideology. Such combination in turn conforms to one's identity, goals, social position, values and resources.

Applying this discourse method to the analysis of media discourse, van Dijk does not suggest that ideology is "essentially a false form of consciousness, as in the case of many traditional theories of ideology" (1997: 24). The possible discrepancy between group ideology and group interests implies that power relations in society can also be reproduced and legitimised at the ideological level. It means that to be able to control a people it is most effective to try to control their group ideology. van Dijk's approach, like Fairclough and Wodak's models, which shall be examined shortly, emphasizes the analysis of discourse in a way that "we capture both the properties and processes of text and talk, and the micromechanics of social interaction and social structure" (p. 31). Also, this level and scope of analysis allows a socio-cognitive assessment of knowledge, opinions, attitudes, ideologies, and other social representations that exercise the cognitive control of acting agents in such situations. Finally, these social microstructures (e.g. a classroom lecture or an interaction between a doctor and a patient) may in turn be related to relevant social macrostructures, such as institutions (for e.g., the school, the education system, and their ideologies) and overall social relations. In spite of the mental vibrancy of this approach, it shall not be used in this study because the mental model which the socio-cognitive analysis advocates is inadequate to handle literary texts that have socio-historical undertones. This is why the study opts for Wodak's discourse-historical analysis because of its historical angle. Moreover, unlike the over-dependence on mental modules, the discourse-historical approach provides a wider range of methods that can be used in the analysis of literary texts. Before the discourse-historical approach is discussed, Fairclough's contribution to CDA shall be examined.

2.2.2.2 Socio-cultural Analysis

Predominantly associated with Norman Fairclough, socio-cultural CDA maintains that discourse is a social practice, i.e. discourse and the social order are held to be in a dialectical relation with each other. Fairclough (1995: 131) notes that:

> Viewing language use as social practice implies, first, that it is made of action (Austin, 1962; Levinson, 1983) and, secondly, that it is always a socially and historically situated mode of action, in a dialectical relationship with other facets of 'the social' (its 'social context') – it is socially shaped, but it is also socially shaping, or *constitutive*.

Fairclough illustrates this conception with a three-dimensional model in which "the connection between text and social practice is seen as being mediated by discourse practice" (1995: 133), which are intercommunicated but analytically separable:

a. It is a spoken or written language text;
b. It is an instance of discourse practice involving the production and interpretation of text;
c. And it is a piece of social practice.

He captures the three-dimensional-approach in the diagram below:

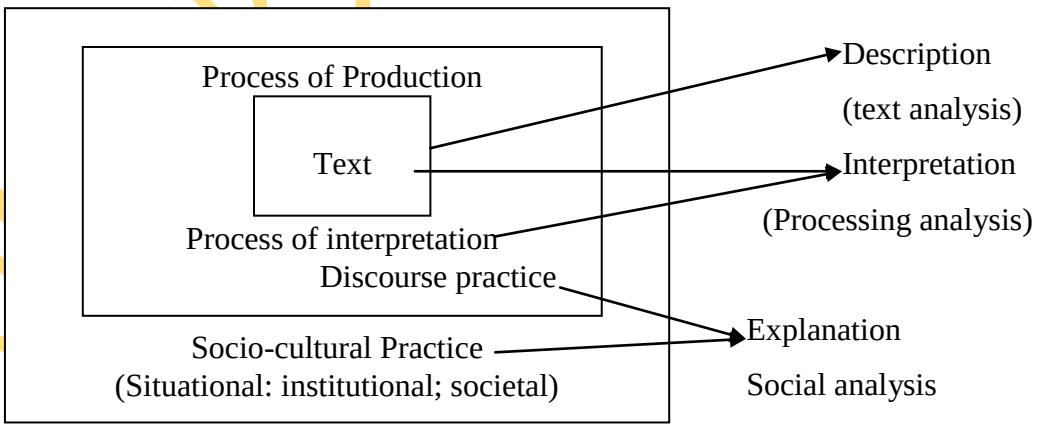


Fig. 2.2: Dimensions of Discourse

Fairclough (1995: 98)

The above diagram shows a linguistic *description* of the language text, an *interpretation* of the relationship between the (productive and interpretive) discursive processes and the text, and an *explanation* of the relationship between the discursive processes and the social processes. The diagram also describes the link between *socio-cultural practice* and how text is mediated by *discourse practice*. That is, how a text is produced or interpreted depends upon the nature of the *socio-cultural practice* which the discourse is part of. The *interpretation* of the text is influenced by, and leaves traces of both the discourse practice and the text.

Evidently, Fairclough's socio-cultural model is concerned with the detailed moment-by-moment explanation of how participants produce and interpret texts, focusing on the relationship of the discursive event to the order of discourse, and upon the question or which discourse practices are being drawn upon. The analysis of the discursive event as social practice may refer to the different levels of social organisation – the context of situation, the institutional context, and the wider societal context.

The societal contexts are also known as Members Resources (MRs). MRs are cues which people have in their heads and draw upon when they produce or interpret texts – including their knowledge of language, representations of the national and social worlds they inhabit, values, beliefs, assumptions, and so on (Fairclough, 2001). The fact is that no account of the processes of production and interpretation can be complete if they ignore the way in which they are socially determined. This connects the study of language to the study of social practices: i.e. language is conditioned by other non-linguistic parts of society. The MRs which people draw upon to both produce and interpret texts is cognitive. It is cognitive in the sense that they are in people's heads, but they are social in the sense that they have social origins. The implication is that MRs' nature is dependent on the social relations and struggles out of which they were generated as well as being socially transmitted and, in our society unequally distributed. People generally internalise what is socially produced and made available to them, and use this internalised MR to engage in their social practice.

Moreover, it is not only the nature of these cognitive resources that are socially determined, but also the conditions of their use. For instance, different cognitive strategies, just as in van Dijk's socio-cognitive model, are conventionally expected when one is reading a novel on the one hand, and a magazine advertisement on the other: it is essential to

take account of such differences when analysing discourse from a critical perspective. Evidently, there is no clear-cut difference between van Dijk's cognition or mental model and Fairclough's MRs.

However, Fairclough's research lies in social and cultural change. In his view, language is always constitutive of social identities, social relations and systems of knowledge and belief. Fairclough also relies on Hallidayan linguistics for his analysis of discursive events. Even when criticised for its over-dependence on Hallidayan linguistics, Fairclough's socio-cultural analysis points to some axiological biases to critical language study.

The dependence on a pre-defined method for CDA, however, limits the multi-dimensional approach to critical language study which CDA professes. It is obvious that Fairclough gives priority to Systemic Linguistics, especially the three meta-functions of language: the ideational, the interpersonal and the textual at the expense of other social theories of language that can be utilised in the social analysis of certain texts. This is despite his assertion that "texts are social spaces in which two fundamental social processes simultaneously occur: cognition and the representation of the world, social interaction" (Fairclough, 1995: 6). Such a microscopic approach will not cater for the complex nature of "literary language." Besides the fact that in literary production several linguistic strategies are deployed by writers in the presentation of their political ideologies, language study is not limited to systemic linguistics. It is not every linguistic item that can be examined using the three meta-functions of language mentioned above. In fact, the restriction of CDA to systemic methods is in itself reductionist. That is, the whole of linguistics is confined to systemic linguistics which is just an approach to linguistic study. Hence the need to adopt a cross disciplinary model that recognises other aspects of language in the study of meaning. The discourse-historical approach, which is discussed presently, provides a cross-disciplinary approach to discourse.

2.2.2.3 Discourse-historical Approach

Ruth Wodak's introduction to CDA provides another major account of the development of the field. What seems interesting about the discourse-historical approach is the question it raises about CDA as any kind of established or clear-cut method of analysing

texts or engaging in the typical politics that goes with the field. Wodak, unlike Fairclough's dependence on a single method, points to the "heterogeneity of methodological and theoretical approaches in this field (Wodak, 2001: 1) and argues that what is common to different approaches is at best "a shared perspective on doing linguistic, semiotic or discourse analysis" (p.2).

Moreover, Wodak is insistent on the anti-methodology stance. She argues that "ready-made methods" are incompatible with a critical attitude, amplifying van Dijk's views that CDA is not a "theory that can simply be applied to social problems", it is rather a perspective of doing research which "focuses on social problems" and "on the role of discourse in the production and the reproduction of power abuse or domination" (van Dijk, 2001: 96). Wodak's example of how to do CDA is distinctly different from the functional linguistic toolkits which Fairclough advocates.

Wodak (2007) prefers an integrative interdisciplinary theory as well as methodology that combines pragmatics, CDA, socio-cognition, history, socio-psychology, political science and so forth to a unified approach hinged on Hallidayan systemic linguistics, for instance. One of the salient features of the discourse-historical approach is its endeavour to work multi-methodologically, i.e. it borrows within and outside linguistics. Depending on the object of investigation, attempts to transcend "the pure linguistic dimension and to include more or less systematically the historical, political, sociological and/or psychological dimension in the analysis and interpretation of a specific discursive occasion" (Wodak, 2001: 201) should be encouraged. Expectedly, research in the field of language identity and politics has expanded enormously and a singular approach will hardly cater for some indirect verbal expressions coded in "obscure" language.

The exact description of individual texts and the analysis of larger corpora of data allow statements to be made at both micro and macro levels. The general principles of the discourse-historical approach may be summarised in the following ways. One, setting and context should be recorded as accurately as possible, since discourse can only be described, understood and interpreted in its specific context. Two, the content of an utterance must be confronted with historical events and facts. Three, texts must be described as precisely as possible at all linguistic levels. However, categories of analysis at the linguistic level highly depend on the research question (Wodak, 2001).

Wodak (2001) summarises the procedures of the discourse-historic approach to CDA:

- Gather information about the co- and context of the text (social, political, historical, psychological, and so on);
- Establish the genre and discourse to which the text belongs, then sample more ethnographic information; locate texts on similar topics, texts with similar arguments, macro-topics, field of action, and genres;
- Formulate precise research questions and explore neighbouring fields for explanatory theories and other aspects that need to be considered;
- Operationalise the research questions into researchable linguistic categories;
- Apply these categories sequentially to the text using theoretical approaches to interpret the findings that result from the research questions;
- Draw up the context diagram for the specific text and the fields of actions and
- Make an extensive interpretation of the data, returning to the original research questions and the problem under investigation.

The historical context is always analysed and integrated into the interpretation, although there exists no stringent procedure for this task.

The foregoing provisions of the model, and those that shall be discussed, have informed our preference. The present study deals with identity construction and it can be studied from a sociological perspective. Therefore, a model that has a sociolinguistic base should be able to account for the sociological intrusions in identity construction. Besides the fact that the discourse-historical analysis is based on sociolinguistics, the distinctive feature of this approach is its attempt to integrate systematically all available background information in the analysis and interpretation of the many layers of a written or spoken text (Wodak, 2006). The view held by theorists of this persuasion is that the context of the discourse has a significant impact on the structure, function and context of utterances; hence, the analytical method.

The discourse-historical analysis is designed to enable the analysis of indirect prejudiced utterances, as well as to identify and expose the codes and allusions contained in

prejudiced discourse. The distinctive feature of this approach is that it attempts to integrate systematically all available linguistic features in the analysis and interpretation of the many layers of written or spoken text. Looking more broadly at the implications of this line of thinking, it is apposite to note that the discourse-historical approach means taking an in-depth socio-historical study of social transformations as central to a work as the present study.

Wodak argues that "discursive 'realisations' can be more or less intensified or mitigated, more or less implicit or explicit, due to historical conventions" (2007: 206). She stresses the need for discourse to be "clarified and theorised" in an interdisciplinary framework combining and integrating CDA and pragmatics. Wodak argues that pragmatics has always clearly seen itself as complementary to semantics. Research in pragmatics has attempted to distinguish important features of the immediate context intentions, expectations, etc. These and other relevant dimensions have frequently been left vague and in most cases to the researcher's subjective intuition (Fairclough, 2001). On the other hand, much research on CDA has often neglected the subtle and intricate analysis of "latent" meanings and has left the interpretation of implicit, presupposed and inferred meanings to the intuition of the researcher.

Moreover, an integrative pragmatic and discourse-analytical approach has to be further "complemented with a range of other linguistic theoretical concepts as well as with theories from neighbouring discipline. Such a theoretical framework should not only exist as an ''abstract umbrella" or general framework; such a framework would rather be "necessary to be able to choose and justify the relevant categories for the analysis itself" (Wodak, 2007: 206). The linguistic analysis of literary texts would have to draw on a range of pragmatic and discourse devices, linking it to the socio-historical contexts in which the texts were produced. Such devices are embedded in discursive micro and macro-strategies. These strategies employ various other linguistic features such as lexical borrowing, slang, naming, as shall be seen in chapters three and four which deal with data analysis.

Recently, Wodak has applied her CDA model on sexism, and contemporary anti-semitism and trans-national identity politics, holding the view that the analysis of discourse should depend on specific historical traditions, norms, beliefs and socio-political contexts of the speakers and discourses because discourse may be similar, but the contents as well as the

settings in which certain linguistic realisations became possible differ (Wodak, 2006). Providing a framework for identity construction, Wodak (2010) examines:

1. how persons are named and referred to linguistically;
2. the traits, characteristics, qualities and features that are attributed to the negative other;
3. the arguments and argumentations scheme which specific persons or social groups try to justify and legitimise the exclusion of others or inclusion of some;
4. the perspectives or point of view that such labelling, attributions and arguments are expressed and
5. whether the respective utterances are articulated overall, or are they even intensified or mitigated.

The above items are further explained in the table below:

Table 2.1: Strategies of Identity Construction

Strategy	Objectives	Devices
Referential/nomination	Construction of in-groups and out-groups	Membership categorisation metaphors and metonymics synecdoches (pars pro toto, totum pro pars)
Predication	Lebelling social actors positively or negatively	Stereotypical, evaluative attributions of negative or positive traits implicit and explicate predicates
Argumentation	Justification of positive or negative attributions	Topoi, fallacies
Perspectivation framing or discourse representation	Expressing involvement positioning speaker's point of view	Reporting, description, narration or quotation of events and utterances
Intensification, mitigation	Modifying the expistemic status of a proposition	Intensifying or mitigating the illocutionary force or (discriminatory) utterances

(Wodak, 2010: 2)

This discourse-historical model, which provides insights on how language in context-specific ways aid identity construction, is considered appropriate for the analysis of language and identity in the Nigerian novel. Wodak's identity framework explores the phenomenon of the ingroup and the outgroup; and is based on the view that identities are constituted through a process of difference. This difference is defined in a relative or

flexible way depending on the activities in which one is engaged. Put differently, the ingroup is the one to which an individual belongs and the outgroup is treated as "outside" and different from the ingroup. Empirically, the categories of ingroup and outgroup are not constant variables, they only depend on who and at what time social identity is constructed. The fact is that people strive to maintain a positive social identity, partly by making favourable comparisons between the ingroup and the outgroup. Social identities are at the same time individual perceptions as well as socially shared and socially constructed conceptions of the defining features and boundaries of the group. This definition implies that, although social identities are represented in individual cognition, they are at the same time properties of the social group itself because they depend on some degree of agreement among those who subscribe to this identity. One reason for this consensual nature of social identity is that group membership carries with it the expectation of a common understanding. For group members, the social identity construct provides a common interpretive framework that defines the group in relation to other groups and is rooted in a common perspective of group history and/or a shared sense of future direction.

The process of categorising people along the parameter of social relationships is achieved cognitively by such operations as attribution and the application of existing background information (schemas) relating to the group, and see its operation serving particular social and psychological goals, such as boosting self-esteem (Brown, 2000). Another issue arising from identity construction is the idea that ingroups reductively categorise outgroups such that ingroup identification leads to stronger stereotyping and disaffiliation towards outgroups. In the process of promoting the self, we cannot fail to denigrate the other, even where the other is traditionally dominant and hegemonic. This is an argument faced, for instance, by radical feminists, black activists, minority ethnic groups, etc and in the form of backlash.

Linked to the above view, but with a shortly different emphasis, is the formulation that social identity is an inscription in discourse "and therefore of itself, prescriptive, limiting and unelective, rather than something politically empowering" (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006:29). All these views are poststructuralist in orientation, stressing the constructed and oppressive dimension of identity, and thus pose a serious challenge to identity politics. Without some form of politics of difference (The relation between identity

and politics has been discussed in Section 1.2), it might be argued that we face a toothless and irresponsible dismissal of discrimination. Moreover, a rejection of identity politics is a rejection of the often passionate identifications people make with existing collectivities, and the extent to which these identifications contribute to their subjective awareness of the self.

The adoption of this approach, in conjunction with Castells' identity theory, which shall be examined presently, creates opportunity for the study to apply critical approaches to the analysis of language and identity in selected 21st-century Nigerian novels. Besides the fact that novels are written in coded language, they are historically embedded and have repercussions on current and future discourse. In addition, the structure of literary discourse may be dissected into: discursive events and discursive contexts, discourse position, overall societal discourse and interwoven discourses; themes, history, present and future of discourse strands (Wodak, 2007). It is a systematic and all encompassing model such as the discourse-historical model that can account for the diverse nature of literary texts, hence, the choice of the model over and above other models of CDA. The reasons for the preference of CDA to other linguistic theories are attempted in the section that follows.

2.3 CDA: Questions and Answers

CDA, in spite of its inter-disciplinary claim still has its short-comings. Scholars are ready to point at the deficiency of the linguistic model that is primarily concerned with "changing the world" by claiming that language "has acquired new functions" (Stubbs, 1997: 2).

One of such ardent critics is Michael Stubbs. In his paper titled *Whorf's Children: Critical Comments on Critical Discourse Analysis (*CDA*)*, he notes that "some sharp criticisms have been around for a long time, but remain unanswered" (Stubbs, 1997: 2). CDA, like every other linguistic model, has its defects and scholars are ready to point to such defects without hesitation: the beauty of scholarship. Such criticisms do not only direct attention to the nature of scholarship, but also points to the modification that CDA has undergone as well as its rapid growth and acceptance within linguistics.

Advancing his criticism, Stubbs notes that the repeated criticism is that CDA is "politically rather than linguistically motivated, and that analysts find what they expect to find, whether absences or presences" (1997: 2). Stubbs is disturbed that critical analysts

have the proclivity of politicising language; claiming that no language use is value-free. Such an act makes CDA a political rather than a linguistic field. However, Stubbs seems to undermine the fact that the meanings critical discourse analysts make may well be in consonance with the high degree of effort they put into the analysis: whether the meanings they generate are politicised or not. Affirming this position, O'Halloran (2007: 159-60) notes that "there is little awareness that these meanings might not be replicated by the more casual reader who may be interested merely in the gist of the story and thus invest less effort." Its ability to say what other linguistic theories cannot say makes CDA critical.

While critics of CDA point to the politicised and therefore compromised stance of the "objective" analyst, CDA researchers argue that it is impossible to exclude the analyst's value from the research, and indeed there are often good political reasons for not doing so (Benwell and Stokoe, 2006). Cameron (2001) argues that a weakness in CD is its reliance on just the analyst's interpretation of the texts. She, however, suggests drawing more on recipients' interpretations in the analysis and interpretation of the discourse as a way of countering this. She suggests that CDA can be enriched, and the risk of making overly subjective or sweeping claims reduced, by going beyond the single text to examine other related texts and to explore the actual interpretations recipients make of them. As she points out, all discourse and all communication is interactive, and this needs to be accounted for in the analysis.

Fowler (1996) had earlier noted that a major problem with CDA remains with critical linguistics. He argues that CDA demonstrations tend to be 'fragmentary' and CDA takes too much for granted in the way of methods and context. He goes on to say that the interdisciplinary approach will lead to "uncontrolled methodologies drawn from a scatter of different models in the social sciences" (Fowler, 1996: 12).

Fowler's criticism expresses several fundamental criticisms that CDA's methods of data collection and text analysis are inexplicit, making it a disguised form of political discourse. These queries have, however, been responded to. Wodak's discourse-historical approach for instance, has responded to the issue of context as well as the method of data collection. She stresses that CDA sees language as social practice and considers the context of language use crucial. She goes on to note that such a framework should "be able to choose and justify the relevant categories for the analysis itself" (p. 206). Such trend of

argument nullifies the claim that CDA has no context on the one hand and recognises the contextualisation of texts for maximum meaning realisation on the other.

Another worrisome question is that "CDA never explicitly answers the question of what relation is claimed between formal features of texts and their interpretation" (Stubbs, 1997: 3). It implies that CDA's descriptive claims are often unclear. And the analyst is forced to bring into the text personal meanings that are not actually stated in the texts being analysed on the basis of the analyst's own unexplicated knowledge. To answer this question, Fairclough (1985: 100) and Fowler (1981: 20, 22) provide lists of formal linguistic features which are likely to be ideologically significant. To deal with the issue of "unexplicated knowledge", Sperber and Wilson's Relevance Theory (RT) which devices linguistic methods to cater for what is not obviously stated can be borrowed. According to Sperber and Wilson's pragmatic concept of RT, we are ready for something that will make sense and we will build our understanding around that assumption. The utterance we are hearing or reading is accessible as part of our mutually recognised, common cognitive environment or context; as such, the utterance is relevant. The purpose of communication, according to RT, is not "to duplicate thoughts" but to "enlarge mutual cognitive environment" (Sperber and Wilson, 1986: 193). So the explication we make from a text will be in line with what we consider to be relevant in the socio-historical context. RT, inadequate though, is thus useful in many ways because it can be used to access a text's omission and silences. This way, the problem that analysts of texts depend on their own unexplicated knowledge will be solved.

CDA is also accused of claiming to be quantitative in analysis without providing quantitative findings for individual texts and methods of calculating heterogeneity in texts. But (Fairclough, 1995) makes reference to the frequency of repeated phrasings in texts. Being democratic in approach, CDA does not pin the analyst to a particular method of quantitative analysis. This does not imply that CDA, as it is claimed by its critics, has no direction. The individual analyst, depending on the nature of the text and context, can develop a statistical analytical tool which they can use in the analysis of their data. More recently, Debbie Orpin in a paper titled *Corpus Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis*, has responded to Stubbs's queries that:

> CDA methodology be made more reliable through the use of random sampling, the analysis of large bodies of data (rather than merely short or fragmentary texts), and by comparing features found in text samples with language norms highlighted by use of a large corpus (2005: 40)

Orpin's inclusion of corpus linguistics is "to bolster critical linguistic analysis" (2005: 59). Using corpus methodology is crucial to CDA, because it answers the question of the absence of a statistical method and firmly espouses the view that the choice of one word rather than another can encode a speaker's ideological stance towards what the text is about. Orpin's use of corpus gives a new direction to CDA's quantitative method of text analysis. Recently, studies in CDA for example, Aboh (2008) has used the number of frequency of pronominal elements to access the ideologies of two Nigerian poets.

CDA is also accused of not providing enough data to support its claim that discourse is shaped by power and ideologies, and how discourse has an effect on social identities and systems of belief. It has however been noted that "texts (are) sensitive indicators of socio-cultural processes and change" (Fairclough, 1995: 8). In fact, we do not need to be given a number of data for us to know that a datum is encoded in power or it is ideologically shaped. For instance, the lexical item *agbada* as used in Egbuson's *Love my Planet* instantiates power and dominance. This singular lexical item shows that interpretations are not value-free. Writing about the politicisation of language is in itself politicised. Moreover, the knowledge of variational use of language as espoused in sociolinguistics indicates that linguistic choices are determined by societal institutions. CDA demonstrates how language use affects habitual thought.

Similarly, it has been argued that CDA does not differ from stylistic analysis. In fact, it is regarded as a brain child of stylistics. This is given that the linguists who started CL (from which CDA evolves) were stylisticians. These linguists were radically opposed to the formal features of text, and that the interpretation of literary texts should be done based on the intentions of the author within historical, professional and institutional contexts. But CDA differs from literary stylistics because it goes beyond the textual level of texts to examine the inter-textual circumstances that surround the production. These production circumstances (the macro-level) are woven into the linguistic (micro-level) production of text. Neither is CDA stylistics nor is it conversational analysis because it points to an

axiological tradition common with the social sciences. This axiological tradition drawn from Foucault shows how discursive practices neatly define human subjects. This is what is completely absent in other fields of linguistics even pragmatics. The implication, however, is that CDA can be used to advance literary theory.

In attempting to provide answers to the questions raised against CDA as well as work out a multidisciplinary approach to it, the study has employed both quantitative and qualitative methods of text analyses. The belief is that CDA methods of text analysis will improve and become easier to apply in dealing with social issues.

2.4 The Case for CDA

The choice of CDA as one of the theoretical foundations of the present study cannot be stressed enough. Since literature is a social discourse, it is expedient for a linguistic theory that is socially oriented to be applied to its analysis. To study language in its social form is to concentrate upon exploring how it is systematically patterned and structured toward incorporating important social goals. The implication is that such a theory must be a social theory (Poynton, 1989). Social theories such as sociolinguistics and pragmatics, which are examined below, have been explored in the explanation of how language relates with society.

One potential value of **sociolinguistic** theories for instance, is their strength in providing a platform for linguists to explore the use of language in relation to the events that take place in society. In fact, as early as the 80s, scholars have drawn readers' attention to the importance of sociological analysis of text. Fowler (1981) for example, describes sociolinguistics as a theory of social determination in which the actions of the individual, and communicative performances such as specific linguistic texts, are seen as practices enabled and necessitated by social and economic structure. Such an extreme view of sociolinguistics is prompted by the notion that sociolinguistics studies the effects of social issues on language, and that language forms the core of human existence. It has shown systematic relations between variations in linguistic form such as phonological, morphological, syntactic and social variables, the social strata to which speakers belong, social relationship between participants in a given speech community, differences in social setting or occasion (Baker, 2010).

However, sociolinguistics is "strong" on "what" but weak on "how" and "why" (Fairclough, 2001: 6). Put differently, sociolinguistics does not tell us why there are social relationships of power, i.e. how it is sustained and how it might be changed to the advantage of those who are dominated by it. Sociolinguistics focuses on the simple existence of facts without explaining the social conditions which made them. It does not provide clues for how these social conditions can be altered. This individualistic framework (because it accounts for only the micro structure) is less helpful. It is limited to the immediate speech situation, describing sociolinguistic "conventions in terms of what are the 'appropriate' linguistic forms for a given social situation" (Fairclough, 2001: 7); undermining how socio-historical events determine people's linguistic behaviour. Discourse should be seen from both micro and macro-sociolinguistic perspectives, as the product and expression (discourse practices) of broadly-based social facts. Such a social perspective is a theory of social action where individual communicative performances are seen as practices enabled and necessitated by social events. This does not imply that sociolinguistics concepts will be abandoned in the analysis. Rather, CDA can be made strong when blended with sociolinguistics.

Amongst the most imposing developments in linguistics is the emergence of **pragmatics**. An offshoot of sociolinguistic studies, pragmatics is primarily concerned with the relationship between language and its context of use. It studies the way of language used in human communication as a reflection of the conditions of society. In this light, pragmatics enables analysts of texts to see the interconnectedness between language and society, and how the interaction of language with society results in the production of multilayered meanings to text.

In spite of its broad approach to meaning interpretation, one of its theorists, Thomas (1995) has picked holes in the pragmatic approach to meaning realisation. She argues that pragmaticians who take the "social view" (i.e., speaker meaning) put the focus of attention firmly on the producer of the message, but at the same time obscures the fact that the process of interpreting what we hear involves moving between several levels of meaning. Like sociolinguists, those pragmaticians who take a broadly cognitive approach, focus too much on the receiver of the message, which means ignoring the social constraints on utterance production. The weakness of pragmatics is that it is atomistic in approach. It sees the meaning of text as emanating solely from the individual and it is often conceptualised in

terms of the 'strategies" adopted by the individual speaker to achieve their goals. This undermines, to a large extent, the way people "are caught up in, constrained by, and indeed derive their individual identities from social conventions" and leaves one with the impression that "conventionalized ways of speaking or writing are 'reinvented'…by the speaker generating a suitable strategy for her particular goals" (Fairclough 2001: 7-8).

The Grician Co-operative Principle (CP), for instance, points to the fact that individuals are generally assumed to be in co-operative interactions whose ground rules they have equal control over, and to which they are able to contribute equally. But this is not so: it is a stark contrast to the principles of critical language study (CLS), of social struggles and how language shows inequalities of power; which has been stressed in the preceding sections of this study.

While pragmatics has given linguists insights in investigating the interdependence of language and context by revealing that a single expression may carry with it a complex mixture of meaning (Simpson, 1993), social context is acknowledged but kept in its place, which does it less than justice (Fairclough, 2001: 8). Implicitly, a social theory that describes discourse and accounts for factors that determine the effects of conventions as well as the strategic creativity by individual users of language is needed.

Since it is the canon of literary text that is being considered, with its diverse linguistic resonance, varied exploration of linguistic artifacts; indicative of how society's superstructure determines literary production, it is apt to work with a programme that does not only incorporate all the aspects discussed above, but which is also critical. It is critical in the sense that it shows connections and causes that are hidden. It also implies intervention such as providing resources for those who may be disadvantaged through change. The exposure of hidden things is very important, as they are not obvious for the people involved and therefore cannot be fought against (these are the things sociolinguistics and pragmatics are unable to unravel). It does not, however, imply that the pragmatic and sociolinguistic views which have been discussed will not be expunged. They will be harnessed with CDA in order to achieve an in-depth and objective analysis of the data.

Buttressing the significance of unearthing hidden things, Osundare (2003: 35) notes that, our knowledge of "the *how* of a text can help us achieve a richer understanding of the *what* and pave the way of a more insightful and firmer judgment." CDA is a way of

providing for the 'silences' of a text. Specifically, and following Wodak (2006: 4-5), CDA preferred to other linguistic theories because of the following principles:

1. It is problem oriented, rather than focused on specific linguistic item. Social problems such as racism, linguistic cannibalisation, identity, politics, and social change are interesting areas of research which could be studied from manifold perspectives.
2. It is eclectic in nature, i.e., theories and methodologies which are adequate for an understanding and explanation of the object under investigation are integrated.
3. The approach is interdisciplinary. Problems in a fast changing world such as ours are too complex to be studied from a single perspective. This signals the need for multidimensional approach: the theories draw on neighbouring disciplines and tries to integrate these theories.
4. The theory usually incorporates fieldwork and ethnography to explore the object under investigation as a pre-condition for any further analysis. This approach that advocates an in-depth reading of texts will make it possible to avoid situations where data are forced on theories.
5. The approach is deductive. It allows a constant movement back and front between theory and empirical data. This is related to principle 4, which holds that there must be a relationship between data and theory.
6. Multiple genres and multiple public spaces are studied, and inter-textual and inter-discursive relationships are interrogated. Re-contextualizing text is one of the most important processes in connecting these genres as well as topics and arguments. In the 21st century, we are dealing with hybrid and innovative genres, as well as with new notions of "time", "identity" and "space". These notions have undergone magnificent changes; for example, "fragmented identities have replaced the notion of "holistic identities."
7. The historical context is analysed and integrated with the interpretation of discourses and texts. The notion of "change" as in 6 above has become constitutive for the study of text and discourse.
8. The categories and tools for the analysis are defined in accordance with all steps and procedures and also with the specific problem under investigation. This entails some levels of eclecticism, as well as pragmaticism. Different approaches in CDA use different grammatical theories; many apply SFL in some way or the other.

9. Theorists like Wodak prefer "Middle-Range" theories to "Grand theories" because the former serves the aim better and grand theories result in large gaps between structure, context and linguistic realisations.

10. The practice and application are aimed at producing results to experts in different fields and, as a second step, be applied with the goal of possibly changing certain discursive and social practices.

In spite of the criticisms levelled against CDA, scholars within linguistics have been able to blend CDA with other related theories as a way of catering for its inadequacies. The next section, therefore, examines how identity is produced in a socio-cognitive-based approach to group identity: Castells' identity framework. This theory of identity will be blended with CDA in the analysis of linguistic construction of identity in the 21st-century Nigerian novel.

2.5 Castells' Identity Construction Theory

There are many approaches to discourse and identity. There is, for instance, Le Page's acts of identity model which has been explored by linguists in the explication of how identity formation is a matter of linguistic choices. Le Page (1987) claims that our linguistic choices are made in order to conform to the behaviour of the social groups we wish to be identified with. In this regard, an individual is seen "as an actor who, within certain limits, chooses his or her affiliation and expresses them symbolically through language" (Auer, 2007:6). Evident in Le Page's view is that an individual "projects" an image of themselves when they wish to identify with a social reference group by the linguistic choices they make.

One fundamental problem with Le Page's model, Auer (2007: 5) argues, is that some of the linguistic choices which are made by speakers "by reference to the factual or imputed behaviour of a certain social reference are systematically non-affiliative, i.e. they are made not to be subsumed under the respective membership category." The fact is that the use of a particular feature which is associated with a certain social group is liable to affiliating as well as disaffiliating interpretation. The preestablished association between linguistic variants and social reference groups as such can be questioned. The stress is on "construction" not on selection or choices: constructions are those deliberate acts that bring

about those only seemingly reliable features which social actors ascribe to themselves and to others as features of the social world taken for granted.

Of course, Le Page's model has not remained the only approach to identity formation. There is Castells' identity construction model. This theory proposes alternative approaches which are more flexible than the traditional role theory and emphasise the negotiable nature of self and the other-positioning.

Manuel Castells is a Catalonian-Spanish sociologist, who, at the turn of the mellienium, came to be well-known in the academic world and the general public for his trilogy *The Information Age: Economy and Culture* written in the late 90s. The "network society", the term that was coined by Castells, is the main concept and focus of his framework. Castells defines "network" as a set of interconnected nodes and argues that the prospect of change and domination indicates how people's search for meaningfulness can trigger various forms of identity construction. The term "identity" is defined by Castells as "the construction of meaning on the basis of a cultural attribute, or related set of cultural attributes, that is/are given over other sources of meaning" (1997: 6). Among these preferable cultural attributes, Castells points out religious values and religious fundamentalism that obtain exclusive significance for certain backgrounds and in certain circumstances. Castells cites two remarkable cases: that of Islamic fundamentalism and the American Christian fundamentalist movement.

Castells acknowledges the general important role of religious values for human being and maintains that it is an attribute of human nature "to find solace and refuge in religion…for the fear of death and pain of life" (1997:12). Besides, the chief component of the present-day social organisation is information, i.e. "data that have been organised and communicated" (p. 17). And its role is displayed in the powerful flows of messages and images between networks that have transformed into the major thread of the present-day structure.

Network has developed into "a paradigm of new social morphology of the contemporary society, around which the dominant functions and processes are organized" (Novikova, 2005: 371). The process of formation, or in Castells' terms, the construction of identity appears to be a fundamental issue in our world. Castells (1997) believes that society is in a constant flux and individuals are unable to continue their lives in a constant vacuum

of meaning and they will have to acquire the experience of meaningfulness by organising the cultural materials that happen to be available to them.

The term "identity" is defined by Castells as "the construction of meaning on the basis of cultural attribute, or related set of cultural attributes, that is/are given over other sources of meaning" (1997: 6). Castells argues that the historical and cultural context has to be carefully taken into account when analysing anything in any particular country or region. Given that for Castells the information age is characterised by a dominance of social structure over the human agent, it is apposite to note that the social and the system colonising the life-word are being updated to the era of global information. Castells' vision of the social agency, as an analytic counterpart for the social structure in the age of information can be expressed with the words *identity*, *identity policy* and *new social movements*. The new social movement primacy is given to a different kind of category of social agency – identity and identity based movements. Identification as such, is, of course, a –historical and a universal socio-psychological phenomenon but rises to the centre of social change and change-making. This, argues Castells, is the true meaning of the primacy of identity politics in the network society. The search for meaningfulness, according to Castells, triggers specific kinds of identity-formation processes.

Castells (1997: 8) considers three ways of constructing identities:

a. Legitimising identity: introduced by the dominant institutions of society to extend and rationalise vis-à-vis social actors;
b. Resistance identity: generated by those actors who are in positions/conditions devalued and/or stigmatised by the logic of domination, thus building trenches of resistance and survival on the basis of principles different from, or opposed to those permeating the institutions of society;
c. Project identity: when social actors, on the basis of whichever cultural materials are available to them, build a new identity that redefines their positions in society and, by so doing, seek the transformation of overall social structure.

Legitimising identity is a strategy employed by the dominant class to sustain its hegemony over the dominated. In Castells' views, there are people that struggle for, and use, the power of the state for various goals, both democratic and progressive, and identify themselves as

agents of civil society. This category of identity supports the institution with the legitimisation that it requires. It is often integrated into social institutions as a way of maintaining a status quo. For instance, the recognition of Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa as Nigeria's national languages is a form of legitimizing the identity of the three major ethnic groups.

Resistance identity is a mechanism devised by the minority to question the dominance of legitimizing identity. This level of identity-formation has the imprints of grass roots at the level of collective identity formation that does not mobilise itself within the civil society, but is materilised as community-building. These communes bring together the excluded, the stigmatised and the anguished to gain a collective experience that gathering around a common meaning can offer. What is characteristic to the commune-building is resistance against the surrounding society and against other communes. This gives it the name resistance identity. This kind of identity construction is the core for the formation of social identities. The resistance identity seems to be the most influential identity category of our times because our societies would not stop and stay in their fragmentation. Hence, Blackledge argues that subordinated groups "may not always accept the symbolic power of the dominant group, but may symbolically resist the power by adopting linguistic practices which are counter to those of the dominant groups" (2000: 29). Besides the fact that both legitimising and resistance identities are a conscious linguistic acts, it shows that society is in a constant flux.

The last type, project identity, is a step further in terms of resistance identity, as it involves evolving from the passivity of resistance to action which calls for a change of society. This kind of identity construction emanates as a result of the communes' (resistance identity) reconstruction of legitimising identity. So, project identity is the consequence of resistant /defensive identity. Castells holds the view that these will be the identity construction of the future. The resulting conception of these forms of identity construction sees language as one of several dimensions which are exploited in the constructions of identities, being in variable degrees subject to deliberate modification.

Yahya (2003) calls for resistant reading because resistant reading offers a more equitable relationship between text and reader. The reader should not be at the mercy of the text. That is, the reader should not be passively taking in all hidden values and messages in

the text. Rather, the reader should be making meaning and significance through active engagement with text.

Castells' identity theory is consistent with the postulations of CDA which is couched in resistant/critical text interpretation. Since Castells' identity theory will account for some missing links in CDA, a combination of the analytical models in the analysis of language and identity in selected early 21st-century Nigerian novels will proffer useful insights to dynamic and multi-dimensional nature of identity construction.

2.6 Lexical Semantics

Wodak (2001, 2006 and 2007) has emphasised the need to rely on other linguistic concepts in analysing discourse. The linguistic concept relied on should, however, depend on the nature of the data under study. Lexical semantics is an aspect of linguistics that deals with the study of word meaning. It is concerned with the identification and representation of lexical items (Cruse, 1986). In practice, however, it is often more specifically concerned with the study of lexical (i.e. content) word meaning, as opposed to the meanings of grammatical (or function) words (Murphy, 2008). This means that lexical semanticists are most interested in the open classes of noun, verb and adjective and with more "contentful" members of the adverb and preposition classes. Lexical semantics is thus mostly exempt from considering issues that arise from the use of grammatical words, such as definiteness and modality.

But while lexical semantics focuses on content words, such words cannot be studied in an agrammatical vacuum. Some lexical properties (lexical aspect) have effects throughout the sentence. A difference, for example, between the verbs "spot" and "see" can be described in terms of aspectual properties of the verbs: "spot" describes a punctual event, while "see" does not. This in turn affects which tense and aspect markers can be present in the same clause and how such markers are interpreted. Thus the expression "I saw the bird all day long." can describe a continuous seeing event, while "I spotted the bird all day long." must be interpreted as repeated instances of spotting events (Murphy, 2008). Lexical semantics, therefore, is not just the meaning of an individual word, but how a word also

means in relation to other words. This broad-like approach makes it possible for a better understanding of the semantics of words.

Several theories have been associated with lexical semantics. Murphy (2008:5) divides these theories into five major groups, their features and major theorists:

Table 2.2 Some Theories of (Lexical) Semantics

Theory	Characteristics	Starting point references
Cognitive Semantics	• family of theoretical approaches • schematic	• Evans and Green 2006 **T** • Croft and Cruse 2004 **T**
Conceptual Semantics	• Componential • not strictly lexical • strong on argument structure and other interfaces between semantics and grammar	• Jackendoff 1983, 2002
Frame Semantics	• Schematic • links to lexicographical and machine translation projects	• FrameNet website (no real overview text)
Generative Lexicon	• componential; qualia structure • strong on meaning variation in context; argument structure	• Pustejovsky 1995
Natural Semantic Metalanguage	• componential; universal primes; non-formal structure • strong on names of abstract entities; cross-cultural comparison	• Goddard 1998 **T** • Wierzbicka 1996

Murphy (2008: 5)

The first column lists the semantic theories, the second their respective postulations and the third, the proponents of these theories. The letter "T" in bold beside the theorists indicates the texts where these semantic theories can be found. Generally, these theories can be summed into two types: componential and schematic. Componential approaches rely on a

language-like system of meaning representation involving a limited number of primitive symbols in some kind of grammar. Schematic approaches take the position that word meaning must be approached within more complex conceptual structures, often relying on a more image-driven representational form, such as the 'image schemas' of Lakoff (1987). Componential approaches are more generally associated with the goals of generative linguistics, and schematic ones with cognitive linguistics, although there is a wide range of variation among all these approaches (Murphy, 2003, 2008). A closer look of these theories will reveal that lexical semantics transcends the frontiers of individual words.

Moreover, lexical semantics has been approached within a range of other disciplinary and cross-disciplinary fields. Other sub-disciplines, including the following, have been used in the study of lexical semantics:

Morphology – Just as there are many interfaces between syntax and sentential semantics, so there are between morphology and lexical semantics. One is the question of whether word class is semantically determined. The semantics of derivational morphemes, word formation and derived words also provide fertile thinking ground for the explanations that are attached to lexical items. The fact is that syntax offers a powerful semantic validation tool. Theories of grammar have become much more lexically-driven, necessitating much deeper attention to issues of lexical meaning (Hofmann, 1993). Morphosyntax, for example, describes the borderline between grammar and meaning.

Psycholinguistics – Most lexical semantic issues are addressed from a psycholinguistic perspective, and psycholinguistic methods offer evidence concerning how words and meanings are organised in the mind. Psycholinguistics outlines some experimental methods that are used in investigating the mental lexicon, how the meaning of a lexical item is connected to the working of the mind.

Language acquisition – Unlike grammar, vocabulary is acquired throughout life, so some of the issues in lexical acquisition can be addressed from an adult first- or second-language angle. An appreciation for some basic issues in semantics—such as the arbtrariness of the sign and how we discern the meanings of words in context can be gained through consideration of how one initially discovers that bits of sound have meaning. Most child language textbooks include sections on lexical acquisition. Carter's (1998)

introduction of lexical teaching/learning strategies provides another point of engagement with the lexicon.

Pragmatics – No semantics course can help but to tread on the toes of pragmatics, and some theoretical approaches (particularly Cognitive Linguistics) have done away with the distinction between semantic and pragmatic competence. Still, one of the first challenges in learning about lexical semantics is to be able to make the distinction between a word's contribution to the meaning of an utterance and the contributions of context (pragmatics) and co-text (the phrasal context). Pragmatic accounts have been proposed for many lexical semantic issues, such as polysemy (Nunberg, 1979; Blutner, 1998) and semantic relations (Murphy, 2003).

The foregoing suggests that the nature of lexical semantics has changed strikingly in the twenty-to-thirty years since classic texts like Lyons (1977) and Cruse (1986) texts on semantics were published. Such texts were written at a time when Structuralist lexical semantics essentially carried on separately from major- Generative- theories of grammar. During and since the 1980s, however, theories of grammar have become much more lexically-driven, calling for much deeper attention to issues of lexical meaning. Lexical semantics is therefore the study of what individual lexical items mean, why they mean what they do, how we can represent all this, and where the combined interpretation for an utterance comes from (Aitchison, 2002).

As noted earlier, a purely "generative" approach to lexical meaning might only account for the denotations of words. There is a need to toe an inter-disciplinary approach to lexical meaning. In fact, a context-driven approach to the semantics of words offers inexplicable glimpses to the elusive nature of meaning. Such a context-driven approach will account for both the denotative meaning and the contextual (connotative) meaning of lexical items. The context in which a lexical unit is used has the capacity to influence its meaning. In fact, Lyons (1981: 143) avers that… "both what is said and the way it is said are determined, most obviously in everyday conversation, but in any context in which language is used, by the social relations obtaining among the participants and their social purposes."

Social meaning is an integral part of lexical semantics. Social meaning has to do with the use of language to establish and maintain social roles (Jackson, 1988). Much of everyday discourse has social meaning as its principal purpose. Social meaning also covers

expressive meaning. Expressive meaning relates to everything that falls within the scope of "self-expression." One cannon of expressive meaning to which both literary criticism and moral philosophers have paid particular attention is emotive or affective meaning (Lyons, 1981). Affective/emotive meaning derives from an individual's disposition to the item being discussed or described. Looked at from one point of view, social meaning might be correctly identified as the most basic function of language. Some words carry strong connotations, and those connotations are generally agreed on by users of the language. Such words are often described as "loaded". Loaded words have negative or positive connotations, and can have a powerful emotional impact. The "positiveness" or the "negativeness" of a word or an expression depends on a wide range of contextual pressures.

In discourse, therefore, it must be noted that words that are highly specialised and are restricted to a particular area of meaning are less likely to be loaded. For instance, "I ate the food", is less likely to be loaded. The fact is that to "eat" is a normal human characteristics. So, the meaning of "ate" is restricted and may hardly carry any emotional loading. Words that are highly general are also less likely to be loaded. There are a lot of words that have a classification function, in that they are general terms that encompass more specific terms (e.g. teach).

Furthermore, grammatical words such as articles and auxiliary verbs are less likely to carry connotations, as their meaning is grammatical rather than lexical. But the lexical unit "devour" in the example "Jega devoured the food", being a content word, has the tendency of carrying emotional loading. This is not an invariable rule, though. To "devour", however, in this context has a strong negative connotation. In discourse, context of use can help us to determine whether a word or an expression is connotative or denotative in meaning (Ogunsiji and Aboh, 2011).

In most discourse domains, many authors would include within the social context of an utterance not only the more obvious (denotation), but also the author's feelings and communicative intentions. The meanings discourse participants as well as authors attach to expressions are the projection of an individual's socially interpretable image of those items, exploiting or transcending the social constraints associated with the use of particular language system. The meaning of words in discourse situations, therefore, requires a progression from the peripheral meaning and a focus at the focal meaning, the intended

meaning of lexical items. As far as identity construction is concerned, the focal meaning of words can be ascertained by contextual variables. The core of this position is that words derive the meaning they have by virtue of their correlation with functional distinctions in the culture or subculture, in which the words are used. Lyons (1981:323) argues that "much of the meaning of expressions, including their descriptive as well as their social expressive meaning, is non-universal and culture-dependent." The contention is that the meaning/use of particular words can offer insight into cultural differences. An understanding of the social nature of lexical semantics is quite useful to this study. The analysis of lexical items in this study is based on the relation between a lexical item and extra-linguistic contexts. Invariably, the meaning of a word can only become significant by the study's reliance on the wider socio-historical context of use.

Moreover, words are often "re-lexicalised" in discourse situation. "Re-lexicalisations," according to Wales (2011:386) are processes "which are characteristically very informal, and designed, like a 'secret language' to be unintelligible to the uninitiated." This is an influential view of meaning in relation to individual words. This approach locates meaning in the abstract space between hearers, speakers and texts, implying that meaning is "socially constructed," or "jointly produced." This view of meaning underlies attempts to understand communication that are based on "negotiated meaning" (Johnson, 2008). This is the approach that will be pursued in this study. In the texts under the consideration of this study, words are "re-lexicalised" to bring in extra-textual information.

2.7 Analytical Framework

This study seems to have taken a different approach from what one finds in the literature on language and identity analysis. The basic aim, perhaps, is to examine identity construction across a wide range of possibilities or discourse contexts. Instead of streamlining the study to a specific form of identity construction, the study is divided into two chapters of analysing identity from different contexts of constructions, i.e. different discursive environments in which identity is constructed. The motive is to demonstrate how identity could be identified in literary texts. Therefore, a strong practical approach of data analysis has been adopted in this study. Below, a range of discursive and interaction analytic methods as they are put to use in the study of identity, i.e. CDA (the micro and macro

approaches), quantitative and textual analysis are being applied. Moreover, CDA has never attempted to be or provide one single or specific theory. It is not confined to a specific theory or methodology; it relies on variety of appropriate approaches. Because identity is in a state of constant flux, a singular approach will not be enough for its analysis.

Micro-level analysis deals with the properties of language. It looks at the meaning of formal linguistic features such as morphology, lexis, syntax, semantics and so on, and functional ones such as sociolinguistics, pragmatics, etc. Scholars of CDA hold the view that there are strong and pervasive connections between linguistic structure and social structure, claiming that discourse cannot exist without social meanings (Wodak, 2006). It implies that the investigation of lexical and discursive construction of identity in 21st-century Nigerian novels shall be based on first, the identification of the formal linguistic features that are deployed by the sampled novelists, and second, by the social contextual meanings they are imbued with.

At the micro-level analysis, therefore, lexical devices namely, lexical borrowing, lexical innovation and abbreviations and discursive devices namely, naming, slang, euphemisms, NP and religious expressions shall be x-rayed in relation to their construction of identity. It is hoped that these lexico-discursive features will account for the formal and functional axis of linguistic studies; invariably accounting for the micro and macro levels of critical discourse analysis. The overall aim is to describe and interpret the sampled novelists' linguistic articulation of their views about identity. If these linguistic features are investigated, they would reveal, in an explicit manner, the crucial involvement of language in the construction of identity in 21st-century Nigerian novels and discourse as an outcome of society's events.

Working against the backdrop of linguists' claim that "linguistic structure is not arbitrary, but is determined by, or motivated by the functions it performs" (Fowler, 1981:28), the analysis of these lexico-discursive features will rely on the social and personal needs they are detailed to perform by the discourse participants. In relation to the context in which a word or sentence is used, it can have some significance assigned to it. The novel is a linguistically constructed system of beliefs, identities, ideologies and so on, which bears some interesting usually critical relationship between the text producer and the historical conditions that determine the production of the text (Yayha, 2003). The critical analyst,

therefore, must bear in mind that the lexical choices that are made carry socially interpretable meanings, and the analysis of language should rely on the historical contexts of the text composer at production stage with the understanding of the socio-cultural nature of meaning. It is axiomatic that writers produce their texts from a particularly determined ideological perspective, as no text is completely neutral (Simpson, 1993). Writers' universe is manifested in their discourse practices through concepts, discourse strategies and lexical clues which allow them to reconstruct their personal ideological viewpoints in relation to particular events in the society. In the recreation of experiences, a complex interplay of personal, social and cultural identities is at work, woven with the writer's political affiliations, which are constructed on the lines of the historical experiences that are recreated.

The macro-level-analysis emphasizes historical, contextual and interpretive analysis. It advocates innovative and evaluative analysis of texts beyond the horizons of linguistics. The analysis of language from a social perspective works in harmony with Wodak's position that a critical analysis of a text should depend on "specific historical traditions and socio-political contexts of the speakers and discourse" (2006:15). The application of this sociological approach to text analysis enables analysts to identify the innovative way language is used to construct users' ideological positions, power interplay and, identity; thereby accounting for the "silences" that are hidden in texts.

The macro-level-analysis reveals an intertwined bond among formal linguistic features, the intended meaning, the communicative goal and the society (Joseph, 2004). The data under consideration reveals the ascription that discourse is a social process and social practice that can be used to accomplish interesting social goals. Through the application of macro-level analysis to lexical innovations, lexical borrowing, abbreviations and other discourse items that shall be examined in the course of this study, it shall be revealed that new words and new expressions have been created by some novelists, thereby extending the meaning of words to heave with their specific forms of identities.

Also, at the macro-level, the linguistic items shall be discussed in line with the overall deconstruction canons of CDA. Though CDA is described as a political form of discourse i.e. it is subjective in its analysis, when rooted in grammar and discursive startegies, it becomes an appropriate tool for the analysis of identity in 21st-century

Nigerian novels. Nevertheless, in an effort to arrive at an objective interpretation of lexical and discursive construction of identity in 21st-century Nigerian novels, qualitative and quantitative analysis shall be explored.

According to Ojo (2003), qualitative researchers are concerned in their research with attempting to accurately describe, decode, and interpret the meanings of phenomena occurring in their normal social contexts. The researchers operating within the framework of the interpretative paradigm are focused on investigating the complexity, authenticity, contextualisation, shared subjectivity of the researcher and the researched, and minimisation of illusion. From a qualitative perspective, the study focalises on the lexical production of novelists who write from a particular situation and social contexts.

But a qualitative approach alone will not be enough. Quantitative analysis is extremely powerful in providing objective angle to interpretation. It can therefore be used to bolster qualitative research.

Quantitative research involves counting and measuring of events and performing the statistical analysis of a body of data. This quantitative research works in line with the positivist paradigm. The assumption behind the positivist paradigm is that there is an objective truth existing in the world that can be measured and explained scientifically (Ojo, 2003). The underlying paradigm that guides the quantitative mode of linguistic analysis is based on the assumption that social reality has an objective ontological structure and that individuals are responding agents to this objective environment. Since subjective preferences have no place in the quantitative approach, its involvement, not intended to replace qualitative analysis, in CDA will help to solve the problem of subjectivity which CDA has been accused of.

The quantitative angle to lexical and discursive construction of identity in the 21st–century Nigerian novel depends on how frequent certain lexical items occur over and above others and the rationale for such occurrences. The simple percentage statistical method is preferred to other statistical tools because it is the appropriate statistical tool in terms of accounting for the frequency of occurrence of linguistic items/features in the data. While the quantitative analysis will apply to every section of Chapter Three, it shall only apply to the first, the second and the last sections of Chapter Four. From the percentage of the linguistic items examined, the possibility of an objective analysis can be guaranteed. In blending a

critical analysis with a quantitative analysis, the analyst will be able to work out a statistical inventory of the lexical items the novelists deploy to construct identity.

How micro and macro-levels analyses conflate in a text to make meaning comprehensible becomes possible when related theories are combined. Such systematic analysis of text allows the analyst to reflect and reveal permutations in the construction of meanings and beliefs that are "hidden" in the operative part of identity formation. The non-transparent canonical idea that underlies identity construction echoes Yayah's (2003) views that identity construction is not transparent what we must challenge are ideological concerns which are hidden in the text. The following figure summarises the analytical procedures discussed above:

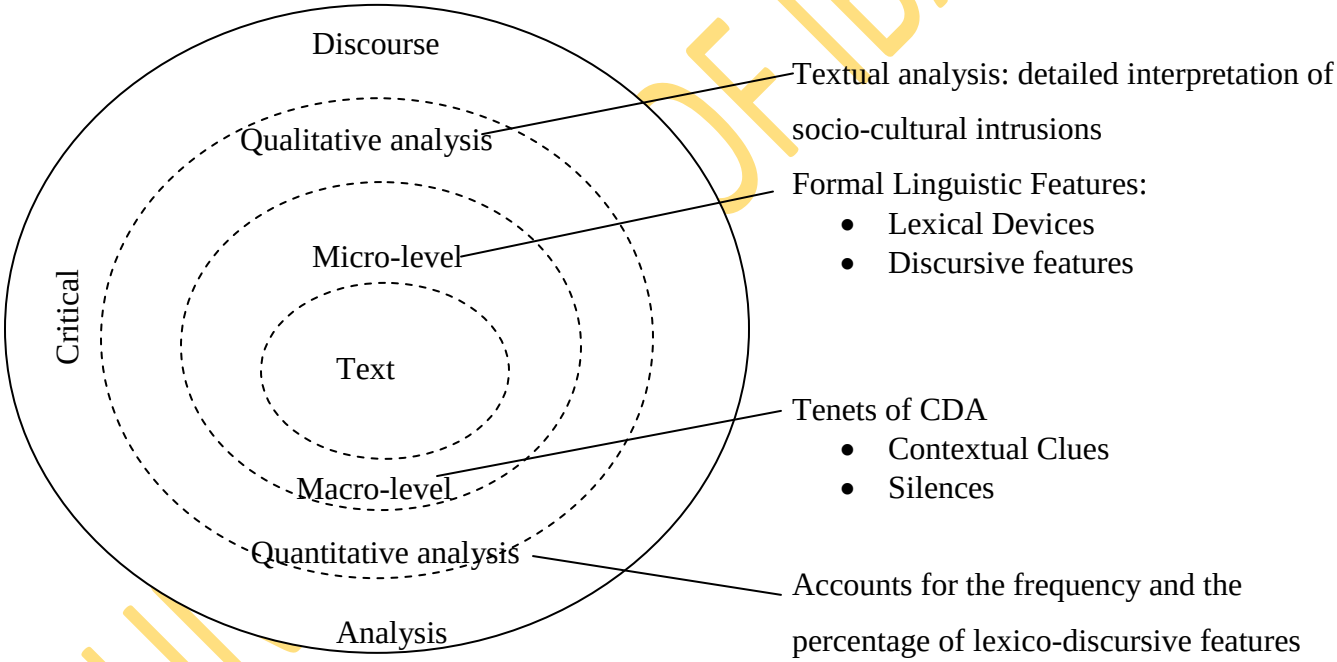


Fig. 2.3: A Framework for the Analysis of Language and Identity in the Data

The above figure shows a process of blending. Blending occurs when structures from two different domains are integrated into a single structure with emergent properties in a third and separate domain. Such an integrative approach gives an analyst the multiplicity

of options to unearth (demystify) hitherto hidden/suppressed meanings coded in taken-for-granted "everyday" lexical expressions. A wide range of approaches to actually go to the root of texts and find out what the text is saying or not saying is needed. Given the range of approaches in text analysis, applicable and practical approaches, the pragmatic approach and the more general approach, using extra-textual information (sociological, cultural and thematic) in affiliation with the particular linguistic deconstructionist tenets of CDA will be considered. A multi-dimensional approach to the analysis of language and identity in literary texts in relation to the meso-level (the level at which social reality is directly experienced) is considered potentially rewarding. It is hoped that the blending of linguistic domains will solve the micro/macro problem both theoretically and methodologically as well as provide a mechanistic approach that will enhance a layer for layer interpretation of texts within the ambit of CDA.

CHAPTER THREE
LEXICAL DEVICES OF IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

In tune with the theoretical provisions of the study, this chapter examines how words are created to carry peculiar meanings and how existing words are imbued with connotative associations. The analysis is divided into three parts. Part 1 (3.1) centres on lexical borrowing, part 2 (3.2) examines lexical innovation, part 3 (3.3) discusses abbreviations. The titles of the novels have been abridged for the purpose of this study. *Waiting for an Angel* shall be known as *Angel*. *Arrows of Rain* shall be known as *Arrows*. *Love my Planet* is henceforth known as *Planet* and *Under the Brown Rusted Roofs* shall be called *Rusted Roofs*. This is the pattern with which the novels shall be addressed throughout the rest of this study. The sections involve both quantitative and textual analyses. The quantitative discussion comes first, and it is followed by textual interpretation. While the quantitative analysis deals entirely with figures and their significance to the study, the textual analysis deals with the interpretation of fragments taken from the sampled novels. These excerpts indicate where a word is located in the novel and contextual clues influence their interpretation. This is the pattern that will be followed in this chapter. The next section examines the critical conjunction between lexical borrowing and identity construction.

3.1. Lexical Borrowing

Borrowing from one language to another is not particularly a feature of Nigerian English; rather, it is a general language behaviour. For instance, in English, lexical items such as “resume”, “Adieu” (French) and “elite” (Latin) are borrowed into the language. In the Nigerian context, individual languages borrow from each other. For example, “haba” is a Hausa exclamation mark that is frequently used by Nigerians of different ethnic backgrounds. Borrowing is therefore “the occasional use of words from one language in utterance of another language” (Akindele and Adegbite, 1999: 44). The data indicate instances of borrowing across indigenous and non-indigenous languages.

Quantitative Discussion

The table below presents the distribution (number and percentage of occurrence) of lexical borrowings from some Nigerian languages in the novels under study. The borrowings which are not adopted from Nigerian languages are identified as "Others." The categorisation processes point some directions to the novelists' linguistic influences, their construction of identity and their ideological persuasions.

Table 3.1: Frequency of Lexical Borrowing

Sources	***Angels***	***Arrows***	***Planet***	***Rusted Roofs***	**Frequency**	**%**
Hausa	2	4	5	3	14	15.6
Igbo	1	4	2	0	7	7.8
Izon	0	0	3	0	3	3.3
Pidgin	2	2	5	2	11	12.2
Yoruba	11	5	4	20	40	44.4
Others	4	2	5	4	15	16.7

Table 3.1 shows that a total of 71.1% represents words that are drawn from indigenous languages. They include words that refer to local customs (e.g., ogbanje, *Arrows, p.8*), names of food/dishes (e. g., garri, *Angel* p. 105), clothing and artifacts (e.g., agbada, *Planet*, p.168). Only single switches or tag switches known as lexical borrowing (henceforth LB) are represented in this study. Switches that clearly indicate a syntactic switch into other languages are very few and have not been included in this analysis. It does not imply that they are insignificant. They could rather interest a later study.

One statistically striking finding from the above data is the fairly high number of LBs, 44.4%, belonging to Yoruba. The high frequency of Yoruba words is not surprising as three out of the sampled novels are set in south-west Nigeria where Yoruba is widely spoken. Specifically, *Angel* and *Arrows* are set in Lagos and *Rusted Roofs* is set in Ibadan. While *Planet* is not set in Lagos or in any of the Yoruba speaking States, it shows a fair degree of borrowing from Yoruba. Such a borrowing trend is not unconnected to, perhaps, the wide-spread influence and use of Yoruba in Nigerian English. Similarly, Habila and

Ndibe are not Yoruba, but their novels are set in Lagos. The novelists' LB is an authentication of the sociolinguistic truism that language is sensitive to its environment.

Next to Yoruba, in terms of borrowing from indigenous languages, is Hausa. It has 15.6% of LBs. For over fifty years of Nigeria's political independence, the North, which has Hausa as its lingua franca, has ruled Nigeria for about thirty years both in the military and democratic eras. The limited projection of Hausa identity in the Nigerian novel is however connected to the setting of the sampled novels, none of the novels is set in the north.

Pidgin has 12.2%. *Planet*, set in the Niger Delta, has the highest frequency of LBs from Pidgin. The high frequency of pidgin reveals the sociolinguistic nature of the region. The Niger Delta, "enriched" with several languages, has Pidgin as its lingua franca. In some parts of Warri Pidgin functions as the mother tongue of the people. Moreover, the relatively high percentage of Pidgin shows that it is next to English in terms of usage. Igbo, a language spoken in southeastern states of Nigeria, has 7.8%. Most of the LBs from Igbo are drawn from Ndibe's *Arrows*. Table 3.1 illustrates that non-Igbo novelists borrow less from Igbo. The reason for such minimal borrowing could be connected to the setting and people's unfamiliarity with the language.

Table 3.1 also shows that Izon has 3.3%, the least in the table of distribution. Izon is one of the minority languages spoken in south-south Nigeria and the language of Egbuson, the author of *Planet*. Even Egbuson makes very sparse use of Izon words. This is very much connected to the multilingual nature of the region. However, the novelist's inclusion of Izon words is a testimony of identity. It is also an effort to give "voice" to his minority language in a country with over 400 languages, where each language is contesting for significance. "Others", a term used to categorise non-indigenous Nigerian languages, has 16.7% higher than other indigenous languages. Most of the LBs in this category are European languages, such as Latin, Spanish and French and a non-European language, Arabic. (English is excluded from this categorisation because the writers compose basically in English). The novelists' borrowing from European and non-European languages as a form of social identity construction is discussed in Section 3.1.3.

As noted earlier, about 90% of the LBs have denotative English equivalent forms and they can be replaced by their English equivalents either by translation or circumlocution (a linguistic feature of bilinguals). If majority of these words have denotative equivalents,

why are they preferred to English forms? To attempt this question, the borrowed items have been categorised according to the various roles they perform in the construction of identities. Some of these lexical items include *ole, jeje, udala, debia, iyan, kachifo* and *tufia*. They are discussed presently.

3.1.1. The Construction of National Identity

The table below represents some words that are commonly used and shared by Nigerians. These lexical items are used to construct a collective Nigerian operative identity. These items are found across the novels that have been sampled for analysis:

Table 3.2: Cross-ethnic Borrowing

Borrowed Item	Meaning Equivalence	Source	Novel
Aso-ebi	Identical clothes worn by a family, extended family and well-wishers to mark an occasion.	Yoruba	*Angel*(p.98)
Garri	Flour made from cassava	Pidgin	*Angel*(p.105)
Oyibo/oyinbo	White(s)	Igbo/Yoruba	*Arrows/Rusted Roofs*(pp.5,)
Ogbanje/abiku	Spirit child	Igbo/Yoruba	*Arrows/Rusted Roofs* (p.8)
Ogogoro	Locally brewed alcohol	Pidgin/Yoruba	*Planet*(p.157)
Suya	Barbeque	Hausa	*Planet*(p.157)
Iyan	Pounded yam	Yoruba	*Planet*(p.130)
Wahala	Trouble/problem	Hausa	*Rusted Roofs*(p.70)
Jeje	Gently/quietly	Yoruba	*Rusted Roofs*(p.154)

Table 3.2 indicates that there is a trend of cross-ethnic borrowing that is common among Nigerian languages. These words, when used by Nigerians, do not need extra interpretation because they have been used over time by Nigerians such that they have become the lexicon of NE. Their adoption into Nigerian novels is basically to legitimise a collective Nigerian identity. In spite of the slight cultural diversity and linguistic heterogeneity, the Nigerian proselytes have always seen themselves as one, as Nigerians, and they have always sustained this idea in their creative project. The writers' cross-ethnic borrowing and overt reference to indigenous items are testimonies of identity display.

In *Planet*, for instance, there is the strong desire to legitimise a collective Nigerian identity in:

> Her father answered on her behalf. 'What is tea or coffee?' he asked with a frown. 'My daughter likes pounded yam. Give her *iyan* – pounded yam – from Ekiti. Me, I like starch. Give me Ijaw starch – and *banga* soup' (*Planet*, p. 130).

The above excerpt exemplifies an inclination for cross-ethnic borrowing in Nigerian novels. The rationale for such lexical inclusion is to legitimise a collective Nigerian identity on the one hand and a formation of resistance to English on the other. Wenni and Toundi, his daughter, are offered tea and coffee. But Wenni rejects them because neither he nor his daughter is white. Rather, he prefers something that is Nigerian. First, he recommends *iyan*, pounded yam, from Ekiti for his daughter. In Nigeria, the Ekiti people of southwestern Nigeria are known for their love for pounded yam. They as well grow a lot of yams. The choice of *iyan*, a Yoruba word for pounded yam, by Wenni is to persuade his listeners to not just give his daughter what she likes, but also to create an awareness that once they prefer something alien (as in tea and coffee) their "Nigerianess" will be eroded. In this light, the motivation for the use of *iyan* is to project a Nigerian identity (in terms of love for good and solid food) and to encourage others to do the same. This is a clear celebration of the diversity, complexity, richness, hybridity and contingency of Nigerian identities and cultural life, mounted to challenge the totalising dominance of western imperialism.

As much as these writers construct a Nigerian identity, they also show a sense of belonging to their ethnic-identities. There are instances where borrowings from the novelists' languages are meant to project their languages, thereby promoting their ethnic affiliations. Such ethnic borrowing underscores a desire to give "voice" to their respective indigenous languages in a country with multiple languages. The motivation for the adaptation of indigenous lexical items therefore becomes political. Embedded in the politicisation of borrowing from the novelists' languages is the idea that their respective indigenous languages can perform the function of a national language. This is evident in the above example. Wenni will prefer *starch* and *banga* soup to *iyan* because he is Ijaw. Wenni, therefore, presupposes that starch with *banga* soup is as good as *iyan* from Ekiti. However,

there is a drift in identity construction. As he recommends *iyan* for his daughter, Wenni unknowingly "obliterates" his daughter's Ijaw identity and confers on her an Ekiti identity. This drift in identity construction, i.e. from national identity to ethnic identity indicates that identity can be constructed along ideological spectrums. Symbolically, Egbosun demonstrates an ethnolinguistic identity. This emerges at the confluence of a sense of belonging to a language community and a sense of belonging to an ethnic community.

Yet, the same cannot be said of *abiku*, a Yoruba word for spirit-children who complete the circle of birth, death and rebirth by the same mother. In Ndibe's *Arrows*, it appears as *ogbanje*. Obviously, the choice of *ogbanje*/*abiku* is deliberate. The intention of the novelists is to legitimise their cultural values. The effort is that of identity display but not of semantics. The writers deliberately use the words (*ogbanje* and *abiku*) to encode their identities and cultural affinity to the mystery that surrounds the *abiku/ogbanje* phenomenon.

For example, Lanky and an old man, who are both characters in Ndibe's *Arrows*, explain:

> 'She is an *ogbanje*. Only an ogbanje would smile at death. I am certain of that.'
> 'What is an og…og…o-g?' asked a man in husky American accent.
> '*Ogbanje*. They can die and return to life over and over again. To them, death is a game, that's why they can laugh at it. Death only means a brief visit to the land of spirits. Then they return to this life.'
> 'How does a dead person return to life?' asked the American.
> 'It is a secret known only to *ogbanje*,' asserted the old man (*Arrows*, p.8).

Such a vivid description of the *ogbanje* phenomenon is a celebration of the mystery that surrounds the cyclic nature of *ogbanje* children. Lanky's certainty *I am certain of that* (p. 8) is a display of his spiritual knowledge of *ogbanje* children. The American stutter suggests that the *ogbanje* phenomenon is alien to his culture. The American's ideological difference with the *ogbanje* concept causes him to wonder how a dead person could return to life. Writers such as Soyinka, Clark and Okri of the older generation have used the *ogbanje/abiku* phenomenon in their works to explore diverse thematic concerns. However, the novelists' cultural identification becomes symbolic as one finds it recurring in the 21st-century Nigerian novel. The novelist's inclusion of the Igbo lexical item is strategically aimed at reconstructing the American's perception of Nigerians' spiritual values. Such a

lexical choice is explicit and identifiable on the mental representation of Nigerians, causing them to promote their cultural heritage, i.e. by adopting words and ideas that will promote their cultural practices.

In the same manner, in Habila's *Angel*, a Yoruba lexical item is adopted to uphold the communal sentiment of the Nigerian people:

'…All of us go wear *aso-ebi*, fine lace…' (*Angel*, p. 98)

Aso-ebi is a Yoruba word for identical clothes worn by a family, extended family and well-wishers to mark an occasion. Beyond the adoption of the lexical unit by Habila, a non-Yoruba, is a premeditated inclusion targeted at the legitimisation of a cultural practice akin to the Nigerian people where they demonstrate a propensity to be involved in other people's life whether it is good (as in marriages) or in times of grief (as in death). *Aso ebi*, which also makes an occasion colourful, reenacts the communal ideology of the Nigerian people where communal imperatives take preeminence over individual ambitions. *Aso ebi* dramatises numerous charitable acts that Nigerians do for each other without expectation of financial or material reward. The only reward expected is that when it is their turn, people will do same for them. The adjective "deliberate" has recurred several times in this study because these Nigerian authors are effective bilinguals and their preference for indigenous lexical items with English equivalents is obviously a testament of identity legitimisation.

Conversely, the use of words such as *yeye* (*Angel*, p.98), a Yoruba word for a useless or meaningless thing or talk, *udala* (*Arrows*, p. 147), the Igbo equivalent of cherry and *akara (Rusted Roofs*,p.21), a kind of cake made from beans by frying, etc across the sampled novels are interesting instances of identity display. The fact that the above words have been woven into NE is a strong indication of efforts directed at nativising the Standard English to bear the cultural demands of the writers' indigenous languages. Thus, the novelists' adoption of indigenous lexical items is culturally associated with Nigerian collective identity: love for good life and leisure, resilience, amity, adherence to and respect for traditions.

Moreover, the appearances of *abi*, *ogogoro*, *oya*, *yeye*, *oyinbo* (Yoruba) and *oyibo* (Igbo), etc across the sampled novels are indications of cross-ethnic borrowing among indigenous languages. This act of cross-ethnic borrowing that exists among Nigerian

languages could be a take-off point for the codification of NE because the borrowing processes recognise the diversity as well as the multilinguality of Nigeria. In all, the LBs are definitive. They show that in Nigeria there has been a conscientious effort targeted at creating a new form of language that embodies the cultural identity of its people. The linguistic act of borrowing across indigenous languages is to create a Nigerian language that will unify its people as well as resist linguistic imperialism. Though the projection or prescription of a singular Nigerian identity is often made ill by the multiplicity of languages, the multiplicity of Nigerian languages itself is seen by nationalists as the very bane of Nigerian unity. This is evident in the ways many Nigerians crave to speak as many as possible Nigerian languages. As upheld by nationalists, linguistic diversity, in itself, like ethnic diversity, need not be a problem. It, however, becomes problematic under specific conditions, such as federal character policy and resource control. The next section examines how LBs can be put to use in the negative presentation of the "other."

3.1.2 Lexical Borrowing and "Othering"

The LBs in the data indicate a trend where indigenous items are utilised by the oppressed to resist the oppressor. In resistance identity construction, LB is one of the lexical items that are used by the oppressed to register their difference with the activities of the oppressors. Indigenous items such as *oloribukurus*, *agbada*, *ole*, etc in the context of the sampled novels, have strong connotative overtones. The table below represents some of the borrowed items that express the dominated group's dissonance with the dominating group.

Table 3.3: Lexical Borrowing Expressing Resistance Identity

Lexical Item	Meaning Equivalence	Source	Novel
Ole	Thieves	Yoruba	*Angel* (p.35)
Oloribukurus	Unfortunate people	Yoruba	*Rusted Roofs*(p.142)
Agbada	Flowing gown worn by men	Yoruba	*Planet* (p.168)
Magun	A kind of charm	Yoruba	*RustedRoof*(p.84)
Banza	Useless/worthless person/object	Hausa	*Arrows* (p.182)
Juju	Charm	Hausa	*Planet* (p. 18)

Their pragmatic implications are essentially the motivation for their use. In Adelakun's *Rusted Roofs*, for example, there is the use of *oloribukurus* in:

> "WAI *ke*? Those ones are no longer existing. God has removed them like *jiga*. All those *oloribukurus* that made our life difficult, God will punish them forever" (*Rusted Roofs*, p.142).

The word *oloribukurus* is used as a political instrument. Evidently, the Yoruba word does not undergo the morphological process of suffixation to realise its plural form. In this regard, the word has been anglicized to enable it to express the meaning it is loaded with. The borrowed word translates as unfortunate people or people with bad fortune/luck. It indexes a group of people who by some political miscalculations ventured into Nigerian politics. It also points to a historical situation in Nigeria where the military is compared to a plague which afflicted Nigerians in several infuriating ways. The suffixation process, therefore, functions significantly to capture the number of military despots and their civilian cronies who made life miserable for a segment of Nigerians. However, for meaning realisation, the novelist depends on the encyclopaedic knowledge of her readers. The assumption is that the use of *oloribukurus* will easily remind most Nigerians of military dictatorship. In this light, the relevance of the word, *oloribukurus*, with the "s" suffix does not only relive Nigerians of military tyranny and the number of military dictators, it also admonishes Nigerians not to identify with the military who threatened their lives in the latest military dictatorship. The above interpretation, in a way, underscores the importance of Wodak's discourse-historical approach to CDA. This historical reconstruction (*oloribukurus*) is symptomatic of the fact that language expresses the political ideology of its users.

The use of *agbada* taken from Egbuson's *Planet* in the example below performs a similar role with *oloribukurus:*

> On their way a man in flowing Nigerian *agbada* stopped Olivia and they greeted. 'Who is this your friend? Is she a student too?' (*Planet*, p. 168)

In the example above, Egbuson draws his readers' attention to the clandestine activities of some rich Nigerian men who wear flowing gown, *agbada*. The word, *agbada*, goes beyond its generic meaning for clothes worn by men, to create an unusual awareness; explicating, in CDA terms, the silences. The novelist opens Nigerians' eyes to the connections and causes which are hidden in the *agbada* that some men wear. In this way, the devastating act of men who wear *agbada*, and how destructive they could be is communicated to Nigerians. *Agbada* functions as a lexical tool with which the novelist expresses his resistance to men who "devour" female students. In other words, *agbada* symbolises terrorisation and misplacement of values. It also shows that language is an instrument people draw upon for socio-cultural identification.

Related to the above example is the adoption of *magun* by Adelakun in the example below:

> "Save me o! Save me o! It is *magun*!"
> It took some moments before it dawned on them what it could be… The noise was coming from Lamidi's house… The men, who got there first, ran into the room… they saw Lamidi's wife, Iyabo, sitting on the bed, naked…. (*Rusted Roofs* p. 84)

Magun is a Yoruba expression for a kind of charm that is used to check-mate a wife's or a female lover's sexual infidelity. It is usually used by men against their wife's or woman's lover when the man fears that his woman is engaged in sexual affairs with other men. Lamidi, Iyabo's husband, confirms this as he notes that "…*I don't always meet her the way I leave her* (p.86). The potency and the effect of *magun* on the culprit vary from one user to another. However, the end result, if something is not done on time to salvage the situation, is death for the man. The woman could also die if she fails to confess. In the context of the novel, it describes Iyabo's illicit sexual relationship with her husband's younger brother, Rashidi. In terms of identity construction, *magun* is a charm that is used to resist the *other*, men who sleep with other people's women. Critically, it exposes men's dominance over women, as women do not have charms that detect their men's sexual escapades. While men are at liberty to *express* their sexual identity, the womenfolk are constrained from doing so. The control of men over women is endemic to all types of interaction, and as language is central to the way society is organised, *magun* epitomises a male-centred worldview

wherein male activities have positive evaluations, and female activities, negative ones. This is a symbolic order, a system in which men simply exert control over women.

There is also the use of *ole* in Habila's *Angel* to present the negative "other." This is seen in:

> 'Thieves!'
> 'Ole!'
> 'Give them their brother, government boy-boy!' (*Angel*, P. 57)

Ole is a Yoruba word for a thief. When Bola is being taken away by security agents for protesting against the military government, the crowd called the security officers thieves. Calling the security personnel thieves is a form of resistance: the crowd's dissent with the people who are taking Bola away. The underlying resistance emanates from the crowd's experiences of situations where government's critics are often arrested. The word, *ole*, is therefore inflated to cover every security operative who worked for the military junta to suppress the popular will of Nigerians. In demonstrating their dissent with the security operatives, the crowd resorts to name calling, *ole*. Naming assigns words of identity. *Ole* fixes a negative identity for those who arrested members of the dominated group, the crowd and Nigerians who were dehumanised during the country's recent military despotism. Names can thus be forced on recipients against their will, but the name has the capacity of resonating with the bearer's behaviour (A discussion of naming as a strategy of indicating negative social types is done in Section 4.1.3).

Furthermore, *banza*, a Hausa expression for useless or worthless person/object, is used by Violet, Emilia's friend:

> 'No. The *banza* man stab the pikin, but him no die. Child Welfare take the pikin go hospital. Na me police ask to identify Emilia's dead body….' (*Arrows*, p. 182)

Violet goes to tell Ogugua about Emilia's murder and she uses *banza* to describe the actions of a man who cares less about humanity, such that he could stab a suckling. Although *banza* is used within Pidgin English, it still betrays a sense of borrowing. (In section 4.5, the use of pidgin expression in the construction of identity shall be discussed). There is, however, a semantic correlation between *banza* and the referent, Major Isa. Besides the fact that the

referent is Hausa, *banza* seems to, in a far reaching manner, describe Major Isa's killing of Emilia and the stabbing of her baby. The exploitation of *banza* presupposes that it is only worthless men who are capable of indulging in inhuman acts.

Exposed in the use of *banza* is the idea that in the categorisation of members of the outgroup words are drawn from the emotive as well as the evaluative positions of the ingroup. Violet's choice of *banza* expresses her antagonism with men who kill other people. The absence of hedging and mitigation exhibited by Violet when referring to Major Isa (the *banza* man) reveals her disdain for the dominant group on the one hand and indicates how language is a site of struggle between the dominated group and the dominant group.

In Egbuson's *Planet*, *juju* is used to castigate the inefficiency of the police:

> '…Whenever the bullet is sent, until the operation is over the police has not been able to come. People should alert the police immediately, they see the bullet – it is a juju bullet.' (*Planet* pp. 17-18)

Juju, a Nigerian expression that generally describes charms, functions as an adjective to bullet. In the context of the novel, it is used to castigate the inefficiency of the police. A government residential area is attacked by armed bandits and the residents report to the police only to be *advised* by the police that the victims should call when operation is over. While the police attribute its inability to withstand armed robbers to the fact that armed robbers use *juju* bullets, the novelist makes it clear that no bullet has *juju* attached to it. The word *juju*, in this context, functions as a resource which the novelist utilises to resist the *other*, the police force.

The words that have been examined in this section carry the weight of differentiating mainstream selves and their boundaries of identification: the dominated mass majority and the dominant power. LB, as has been discussed here, can function as a powerful linguistic resource for group identification. The meanings of the lexical items are, however, drawn from the language they are adopted from and the context in which they are used.

3.1.3 Professional Identity Construction

People have peculiar ways of constructing social status for themselves through language. They do so by creating their linguistic systems so as to rhyme with those of the

groups with which from time to time they wish to identify. Writers have the propensity of recreating their social identity by drawing on linguistic materials adopted from various groups and languages in order to delineate their group from other social groups as well as signify their membership with a group. So rooted, the notion addresses the "we-ness" of a group, stressing the similarities or shared attributes around which group members unite. Lexical switches reflect this kind of argument and they can be employed as resource for constructing social meanings.

The sampled authors write basically in English, but there are instances of lexical switches to some European and Arabic languages. As noted earlier, these words have English equivalents. What then is the raison d'être for such borrowing? The lacuna which this question creates constitutes the concern of this section. Some of the non-English (borrowed) items are presented in the table below:

Table 3.4: Non-English Switches

Lexical item	Meaning Equivalence	Source	Novel
Déjà vu	An illusion that one has experienced something before.	French	*Planet* (p.76)
Fidau	Prayers for the dead	Arabic	*Rusted Roofs*(p.57)
Danse macabre	Dance of death	French	*Angel* (p.37)
Ménage a trios	An arrangement of three lovers	French	*Arrows* (p.128)
Suna	Naming ceremony	Arabic	*RustedRoofs*(p.187)
A priori	Something that can be verified by the use of previous knowledge.	Latin	*Arrows* (p.75)
Bolero	A Spanish dance	Spanish	*Angel* (p. 51)

The above examples indicate that most of the borrowings, 3.5% are taken from French. This is connected to the fact that, in terms of internationality, French is also Nigeria's second official language. Except for Adelakun, the writers show a fair degree of borrowing from Latin, French and Spanish. Besides borrowing extensively from Yoruba, Adelakun's lexical switches are largely sunk in Arabic. This is an expression of her Islamic identity.

The deployment of the word *fidau*, an Arabic expression that is couched in the Islamic ideology of praying for the dead, exemplifies this kind of identity construction. *Fidau* is an expression for the eighth day prayer for the dead. The use of the Arabic form is necessitated by the fact that the act of praying for the dead is of particular reference to Islam. Besides the fact that the Islamic form conveys the exact meaning of the word and expresses the novelist's religious affinity as well as encodes the ideology of praying for the dead, the novelist's displays her knowledge of knowing and using the right word for the right expression.

Closely related to the above example is the use of *suna* in:

> …she was a small and healthy girl and people congratulated Alhaji on her birth. He named her Ayisatu and on the seventh day, threw her a party for the *Suna*, naming of the baby (*Rusted Roofs*, p. 187)

Suna is derived from Adelakun's Islamic knowledge of the act of christening babies. Since most cultures of the world have naming ceremonies, why does the novelist prefer *suna* to naming ceremony? The novelist's adoption of *suna* offers inexplicable glimpses on how language indexes the ideological sentiment of its users. People's linguistic habit quite often reflects and perpetuates ideas about the things they are strongly attached to. The adoption of the Arabic expression, *suna*, is clearly a promotion of the novelist's Islamic identity.

In the next example, there is a purposeful display of linguistic sophistication:

> That girl in front of him, about to ask a question, it seemed he had met her before – he felt a sense of déjà vu … (*Planet*, p. 76)

The expression *déjà vu*, which means an illusion that one has experienced something before, also appears in Habila's *Angel*. Obviously, the addition of *déjà vu* in the structure of the sentence is not useful because the expression …*had met her before* is a semantic equivalent of *déjà vu*, functioning as an appositive relation; where for specificity, extra explicatory information is provided. The novelist's inclusion of *déjà vu* is to display the fact that he understands French and can use it to express himself whenever he wishes. The inclusion of *déjà vu* is an example of linguistic exclusionism: it strategically excludes those who do not understand French from the discourse. Implicitly, it will only take those who understand

French to be involved in the discourse activity. And those who do not understand French may have to look up the meaning in a dictionary.

The adoption of a non-English expression as a strategy of linguistic exclusionism is also seen in:

> '…It is the same everywhere: Europe, the United States. In your case Justice Kayode must go through the necessary motions even if he has reached a verdict *a priori…'* (*Arrows*, p. 75)

A priori is a Latin expression for something that can be verified by the use of previous knowledge. The novelist's inclusion of the Latin expression demonstrates how social belonging is encoded in language. It also indicates how linguistic patterns tend to re-enforce and naturalise class divisions in society. The aim, therefore, is to construct an intelligible culture, to establish and to sustain a social class for the "learned." The ideological implication of such borrowing is clear. It is aimed at arrogating power to himself and members of his group, as well as excluding non-members.

The switch to a non-English expression to display class identity is also seen in:

> 'I will wait for an hour', I say to myself. Perhaps this is not the appointed. But I felt so sure watching the thief doing his *danse macabre* (*Angel*, p. 37).

In the context of the novel, Lomba narrowly escapes from a mob that sets a thief ablaze: a common trend in Lagos where *Angel* is set. So he sits in a bar and watches the thief struggle between life and death, as the flame rages over him. It is the struggle between death and life that Habila uses the Latin item to capture. Is it that the Latin expression better explicates the situation? To answer this question, one may have to rely on Oha's (2004: 282) views that:

> …apart from the fact that ethnic groups in Nigeria do generally construct and defend their identities through the language they believe to be their own, there are other levels of language-identity construction which impact on the politics of group relationship in the country. These include class identity construction and majority-minority construction.

The switch to Latin is an example of class identity construction. The switch to European languages as an outlet for the construction of class identity is also used in Ndibe's *Arrows*:

> Then she rubbed the wrestler's shaved head. Her jocularity aroused a dark resentment within me. I couldn't help imagining her in a *ménage a trios* with the three men,… (*Arrows*, p. 128)

Ogugua goes to Good Life to see Iyese but he finds her in the midst of three men. He wonders if she is involved in a sexual affair with the three men. *Ménage a trios* is a French expression for sexual relationship that involves a lady with three men. The inclusion of *ménage a trios* shields the meaning of the act in which Ogugua fears that Iyese is involved. Though *ménage a trios* seems to be the exact expression for such a sexual act, a non-French speaker will have to look up the meaning of the expression in order to follow the discourse trend.

Furthermore, in Habila's *Angels* a Spanish item is used to differentiate groups:

> 'To dance the bolero – it is a Spanish dance.'
> 'Can you dance it?'
> 'No, but I'll learn it.' (*Angels*, p. 51)

Habila uses *bolero*, a Spanish dance, as the appositive relation informs, to perform two crucial functions. First, it is employed to educate his readers on a kind of Spanish dance that is performed with a particular kind of dress. This is no doubt informative. Second, but critically, the Spanish lexical item demonstrates a significant part of belonging to a social group. It also *expresses* people's endless quest for identities. This kind of identity formation creates an uncertainty between an authentic identity (as a Nigerian) and promotional identity (as a Spaniard).

The novelists' act of borrowing from European languages is an *expression* of their educational background. However, the novelists' uses of the above expressions is to register the fact that they do not only know an alternative way of saying things, but that they know how these experiences are captured in other languages, and are happy to use them. Moreover, the important point is that while constructing and projecting their own identities, the novelists also work toward the construction of a social identity for the intelligentsia. In this way, the novel is presented not just as a creative project, but also as a site for the *legitimization*, in the sense of Castells, of a writers' identity.

The underlying intention is persuasive, i.e. to achieve any creative sophistication, there is need to borrow appropriate expressions from European languages into Nigerian narratives. This is because the construction of personal identity (as an individual writer) is closely intertwined with the process of social identity construction. In fact, the writers' proclivity to adopt non-English (European and Arabic languages) in their creative project is directed at positioning themselves as experts as well as distance themselves from non-expert "other." The borrowing is precisely based on associations between lexical features and socially constructed identities, revealing, in subtle ways, the dialectical relationship between micro and macro levels of CDA.

However, the novelists' construction of a professional identity is inhibited by the exigent demand of intelligibility, as only 16.7% out of the total number of frequency distribution represents European and non-European switches. The writers are hemmed on all sides to make their works readable to the Nigerian audience who they primarily compose for. In corollary, there is a criss-cross of lexical switches between indigenous languages and the non-English languages the writers associate with which ends in puncturing the professional identity the novelists construct for themselves.

Generally, the indigenous words are preferred to English equivalents because of the local, cultural and political information inherent in them. The indigenous words, with 71.1% - the highest on the table of lexical borrowing – have information that is important in the construction of meaning and ideas, and are much more forceful than English forms in the contexts of use. The indigenous words contain vital information and indicate that the novelists are in tune with the socio-historical developments of their country.

The trend in the use of indigenous items in Nigerian novels is different from conventional lexical borrowing. Lexical borrowing in certain instances is to resolve the clash of homonyms and in other instances; it is to cater for the absence of a word that can adequately express an experience. Linguists such as Lamidi (2003: 10) argue that borrowing in a bilingual situation "is a normal phenomenon." The reverse is the case with the selected novelists' borrowings. Since ninety per cent of the LBs have equivalent English forms, the novelists' processes of lexical borrowing define a deliberate objective of identifying with their Nigerian people. The borrowed items are deployed to express the ideas intended, but most importantly, they are to enable the novelists give a force to their languages in a world

where several languages are contesting for attention. In the light of this, two important issues need to be addressed.

The trend in borrowing transcends conventions because it blurs the distinctions between conventional borrowing and code-switching. This is quite true with the case of the Nigerian novelists that have been examined in this study. It is noticed that indigenous Nigerian words that have English equivalents are often borrowed temporarily. This act of language use demonstrates a linguistic phenomenon characteristic of bilingual/multilingual communities who code-switch for various communicative and social reasons. Obviously, code-switching (CS) is different from conventional linguistic borrowing because CS is a communicative tool while LB is a natural process in the development of a language to account for newer concepts which the language lacks.

Besides blurring the distinction between CS and LB, the act of using indigenous items also pushes the boundaries of what is conventionally accepted as borrowing. The reasons for borrowing, as seen above, mediates from a genuine reason to fill a lexical gap to the novelists' deliberate choice to use indigenous forms in place of English forms, as a means of breaking or pulling down the hegemonic dominance of English over the novelists' languages. This is, to a large extent, ideological. The proclivity to borrow even when there is no need for it gives the novelists room to resist the dominance of English and to project their Nigerian identity. The adoption and adaptation of indigenous items enable the novelists to express their socio-cultural affiliations in a far reaching language that is in communion with their historical experiences.

Moreover, the borrowing processes have some undertones. The LBs, as seen in the novels, point to the origin of their users. For instance, if the characters are Hausas, the LBs reflect the characters' "Hausaness" and so on. The settings of the novels also influence the processes of LB. This is evident in the statistics, 44.4%, represents items taken from Yoruba. Out of the four sampled novels, three are set in Yoruba speaking cities, Lagos and Ibadan. In all, besides the fact that language is sensitive to its environment, it is inseparable from the way people express their beliefs and social ideas. In the next section, the correlation between lexical innovation and identity is investigated.

3.2 Lexical Innovation

Lexical innovation represents a major way in which the English lexicon can be expanded for greater semantic effects in both the first and the second language situations. They are occasioned by lack of adequate items that can satisfactorily explicate current ideas or events in a society. The aim is to find the degree to which the innovation is motivated by the need to construct identity. This is because a close look at some of the innovated words reveals that they do not conform to the grammatical rules of word formation. Besides that, the meanings of some of the words that conform to the rules of word formation do not denote what they stand for. Rather, they connote peculiar Nigerian life and culture.

This section argues strongly that the semantic distinctions drawn by these terms are difficult to translate and to convey succinctly outside Nigeria, though an understanding of the fundamental conceptual structure underlying the innovated terms is vital for accurate interpretation of Nigeria's socio-cultural thoughts. While the section focuses primarily on the formation of words to express identity in Nigeria, it is also concerned with broader issues of the way in which people represent what is indigenous and what is unfamiliar when describing a group to which they do not belong. The innovated words and their meanings are discussed presently.

Quantitative Discussion

The table below presents the frequency (in number and percentage) of the lexically innovated words from the data according to their sources.

Table 3.5: Percentage Distribution of Lexical Innovations

Domain	***Angel***	***Arrows***	***Planet***	***Rusted Roofs***	**Number**	**%**
Nigerian	7	13	9	13	42	61.7
Writers'	4	3	4	4	15	22.0
Others	4	6	1	0	11	16.1

Statistically, Table 3.5 shows that the items which do not belong to the "Nigerian" and the "Writers" domains, categorised as "Others," takes 16.7%. They include words that have derived additional meanings from their context of use. For instance, the word

monopoly (*Angel*) is used to describe the monopolisation of oil exploration in the Niger Delta by multinational oil companies and their Nigerian collaborators.

Table 3.5 also indicates that the total percentage, 61.7%, that belongs to the domain of "Nigerian" are words that mirror the peculiar way of life of the Nigerian people. Words such as *asking*, for example, display the peculiar feature of Nigerian English translation to cater for the cultural meanings of Nigerians. The word *asking* (taken from *Rusted Roofs*, p. 74) describes the traditional Nigerian practice where an intending groom formally meets his bride-to-be family, extended family and well-wishers. Some of the words are emotive, as well as evaluative presentation of the political disturbances that rocked the country both in the military and civilian eras. The high percentage of lexically innovated words with Nigerian ancestry is a demonstration of the writers' linguistic allegiance to their indigenous languages, as well as a National identity.

Also, Table 3.5 signifies that 22.0% represents the writers' creative utilisation of the resource of language to describe peculiar Nigerian socio-historical resonances. For example, the innovation *sinator* (*Planet*, p.232) is a play on the word *senator*. And *Komanism* (*Arrows*, p.83) is a phonological realisation of *communism*. It also satirises the fact that communism, which Marxism upholds, is unrealisable in a capitalist world. Some of the lexical innovation processes in this category correspond with the English morphological rules of word formation. For example, the word *chicken-hearted* (*Angel*, p.83) conforms to the English morphological rule of compounding. This does not strike one as interesting.

Moreover, most of the innovations are nouns (e.g., sugar daddy, *Arrows*, p. 160). Others are adjectives (e.g., young young, *Rusted Roofs*, p. 194) and a handful function as noun phrases (e.g., knocking on the door, *Arrows*, p. 141). Expectedly, reading the denotative meanings of these expressions will not bring out the contextual meanings they are imbued with. Therefore, the analysis of these words will look at the words from their connotative meanings. Such an approach will bring out their salient meanings.

3.2.1 Innovations Expressing Resistance

Words are powerful instruments which individuals use to express their feelings. Words can be created to show a people's contempt with the situation they find themselves. They can also be created as symbols of struggle for the liberation of people. Though with

just 22.0%, the novelists demonstrate a strong desire to invent words that empower them to deconstruct hegemonic norms. Some of these innovated words, their lexical processes and the novels they are taken from are presented in the table below.

Table 3.6: Lexical Innovation and the Expression of Resistance Identity

Innovation	Meaning Equivalence	Lexical Processes	Novel
Glasses-wearing figures	Government assassins	Sarcasm/compounding	*Angel* (p. 51)
Soja	Soldiers	Phonological	*Angel* (p.100)
Sugar daddy	A married man who sleeps with unmarried ladies and spoils them with money and material things.	Compounding	*Arrows* (p.160)
Sapped breasts	Flabby breasts	Compounding	*Arrows* (p.191)
Sinator	Senator	Phonological sarcasm	*Planet* (p.232)
Opina po	Opinion Pool	Phonological	*Rusted Roofs* (208)

All the words in Table 3.6 are nouns that name people, describe places, ideas and concepts. They are used to perform peculiar social functions. For example, the innovation *government boy boy* (*Angel*, p. 57), a process of lexical duplication widely used in Nigeria, is Habila's derogatory reference to those the government of Late Sanni Abacha used to hunt down critics of his military government, as well as for self-succession bid. The noun phrase *glasses-wearing figures* (Table 3.6), a morphological process of compounding, has historical connotation. It refers perversely to certain people who were perceived as subservient and seemed to follow orders impetuously. Those *glass-wearing figures* were government stooges whom the then Abacha military government engaged to unleash terror on those who dared to oppose his draconian decrees. The novel captures the situation succinctly:

> As they appeared, the back door opened and another black-clad, glasses-wearing figure stepped out and dragged Bola into the car, shutting the door after him. Now the two men turned and faced us; there was a crowd behind us (*Angel*, p. 57).

If the denotative meaning of the word *glasses-wearing figures* is relied on, the actual meaning will be lost. The lexical item has a powerful political meaning. Glasses-wearing figures could have positive meaning if it refers to a movie star, for example. But in the context of the novel, it has a negative connotation. It serves as smokescreen behind which evil-doers hide to perpetrate evil on the down-trodden Nigerian masses.

Next to the above example is the use of *sinator* in Egbuson's *Planet*, a phonological realisation as well as sarcasm on the English word senator. While in English senator refers to "a member of Senate" (*Chambers 21st Century Dictionary* 2004); in Egbuson's *Planet*, it describes the sinful attributes of the Nigerian senator. Again, the meaning of the word is drawn from the readers' encyclopaedic knowledge of Nigeria's political context. The outlandish behaviour of the country's lawmakers earns them such a derogatory description. Since Nigeria's return to democracy in May 29, 1999, the theme of corruption has dominated literary discourse. The novelist creates such a word to arouse negative feelings towards corrupt leaders and to see the need why such politicians should not be voted into elective offices. In a country like Nigeria that has undergone stress, several years of social tribulations and strenuous economic situation, what most novelists do is to invent words that appropriately represent their ideological dispositions. Drawing significantly from the "silences" of language and the ultimate influence of society on language, the word *sinator*, which is a blend of *sinner* and *senator*, describes how the events in a society influence a writer's creative utilisation of the resource of language. It also supports the claim that language is a powerful instrument which people rely upon for the construction of their identity.

The creation *soja* (Table 3.6), a derogatory word for soldier, (though not derogatory in ordinary life) is a furtherance of the assertion that language is an indispensable hub of identity formation. The word captures Habila's disenchantment with military's involvement in Nigeria's politics. Again, attention is drawn to the significance of the discourse-historical approach to CDA. The word is a historical conduit that connects the micro-sociolinguistic

level to the macro-discourse level. *Soja* succinctly adumbrates a history of political uncertainties and ruthless assassination of anti-military crusaders. For one to appreciate the meaning of *soja*, one has to locate the innovation within its historical context. The writer presupposes that *soja* will capture the depth of military tyranny. So the distorted spelling of soldier is contemptuous: an expression of resistance (a construction of a negative identity) against those who wielded power and subjugated Nigerians.

Interestingly, Ndibe's creation of *sapped breasts*, a morphological process of compounding, shows another way lexical innovation is involved in the identity construction of a people. He writes:

> Such blatant untruths provoked a bizarre reaction: laughter. Women laughed suckling their babies on sapped breasts. The vanquished and famished who craved the comforts of the grave laughed. Medians laughed in groups gathered round their radio sets; …. (*Arrows*, p. 191-2).

The word *sapped* is a derivative of SAP which is an acronym for former military president, Ibrahim Babangida's economic policy of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). It is believed to be the genealogy of Nigeria's crippling economy. In the context of the novel, Ndibe creates the word to express his dissonance with an economic programme that impoverished Nigerians. Metaphorically, *sapped* connotes a dehydrating and osmotic programme which has impoverished Nigerians such that it has *sapped* the breasts of nursing mothers, leaving them with nothing to breastfeed their sucklings. The expression encodes the height of poverty that accompanied military dictatorship. Ideologically, the innovation indicates the novelist's strategic detachment from an economic programme that impoverished the people. The innovation *sapped-breast*, therefore, contests the adoption of an economic programme that is incompatible with the economic realities of the Nigerian people. During such moments of crisis, identity construction becomes more explicit not only on the personal level, but also at the national.

Another fascinating example of resistance identity construction is the lexical innovation *opina po*. *Opina po*, a phonological equivalence of opinion poll, is Adelakun's castigation of corrupt electioneering processes in her country. Baba (a Yoruba word for father) alludes to an illiterate politician who dominates the politics of Ibadan. However, Baba's use of *opina po* exemplifies his disregard for free and fair election and perchant for

imposing candidates on the people, a feature of 21st-century Nigerian politics. Underpinning Adelakun's creation of *opina po* is the resistance of defeatism. *Opina po* carries the message of awareness, anticipating a qualitatively better Nigeria only if the people's votes count, and public office holders are not imposed on the people. *Opina po* becomes a critically symbolic lexicalization, as it reveals one of the insidious strategies employed by a "political godfather" in Nigeria to promote the culture of defeatism. The idea of "godfatherism" undermines the mass majority political interest and compels them to accept whatever votes and whichever candidate is imposed on them.

Although with just 22% of lexical items representing the novelists' innovations, it can be surmised that the novelists' dissonance with the dominant identity is characterised by aggressive lexical innovations. The items also show that the missing words have to be coined whenever the available stock (English) is insufficient in expressing the ideas that exist in the peculiar experiences which the novelists relate. From our point of view the goal attained by the novelists are clarity of expression and greatest efficacy of vocabulary.

3.2.2 "Innovating" Nigeria's Cultural Identity

In the previous section, LB from indigenous languages as a means of constructing a collective Nigerian identity was discussed. Lexical innovation or word creation also performs such a function. The writers under the consideration of this study have demonstrated a perchant of either adopting some words as they are used in indigenous languages or expanding/shifting the meaning of the existing words to cater for the new idea they intend to explicate.

Where words that can be replaced by English equivalents are created or maintained in the syntax of English, the writers' desire is to imprint their identity, as well as independence on the vocabulary. More importantly, the intention behind linguistic neologism is that of linguistic loyalty and a desire to express the cultural identity of the Nigerian people. Some of the indigenised lexical items that express a Nigerian identity are presented below:

Table 3.7: Lexical Innovation and the Expression Cultural Practices

Innovation	Meaning Equivalence	Lexical Processes	Novel
Knocking on the door	To make a relationship between a man and a woman formal by involving the woman's family, extended family and well-wishers.	Translation equivalence	*Arrows* (p.141)
Fine fine	Very well	Duplication	*Arrows*(p.5)
Face-me-I-face-you	Rented apartments where rooms, separated by a passage, face each other.	Sarcasm/compounding	*Angel* (p.85)
Flashed	To beep one's phone so that the person will call back, among other reasons.	Semantic shift	*Planet* (p.197)
Bend down Boutique	A sales spot where fairly used clothes are heaped on the ground for sale.	Compounding	*Planet* (p.277)
I-pass-my-neighbour	700-volt power generator	Compounding	*Planet*(p.165)
Free	The end of one's apprenticeship	Semantic extension	*Rusted Roofs* (p. 73)
Go-between	Negotiator	Compounding	*Rusted Roofs* (p.20)

The items in the culture domain describe the general ways of life of Nigerians. As noted earlier, words have both evaluative and emotive ways of expressing our feelings about people and situations. This emotive way of using language is seen in Habila's creation of *face-me-I-face-you*. This is a Nigerian expression for rented apartments, separated by a passage, facing each other. It depicts in a vivid manner how poverty subjects one to reside in an environment where one would not ordinarily reside, as most inhabitants of this kind of residential formation are poor. However, the innovation points to a trend where rural dwellers, in search of better life opportunities, have left rural areas to the cities. *Face-me-I-face-you* is a linguistic consequent of rural-urban migration which has caused most cities to

be densely populated. Invariably, such kind of residential formations are found in cities where there is a wide margin between the poor and the rich. Significantly, the innovation depicts language as the centrifugal pivot which events in the society rotate.

Related to the above example is *I-pass-my-neighbour*: it describes a 700-volt power generator. A recent Nigerian lexical innovation, it denounces the Sapir-Whorf's linguistic determinism and upholds the relativist hypothesis that language does not precede thought. Rather, language reflects and, to some extent, reinforces the cultural, technological and ideological practices which it describes. The invention is not unconnected to the Nigerian government's inability to provide electricity to its teeming population. Critically, the full meaning of the innovation emerges as it is used to grade the level of poverty among the poor. Roughly translated, *I-pass-my-neighbour* means "I am better than my poor neighbour." Empirically, it depicts a capitalist ideology where the rich get richer at the expense of the poor. In the context of the novel, *I-pass-my-neighbour* summarises social decadence and moral degeneration in the Niger Delta region. The poverty level and negligence of the region is so bad that Niger Delta girls have to indulge in clandestine sexual activities in order to make a living. Ereki explains the situation to Toundi, his cousin:

> Ereki, wearing a new short sleeve shirt, new jeans and new sneakers, patiently explained again. 'That house where the I-pass-my-neighbour is belongs to Susan's father. When she comes from Oil City in Ogazza or Balazza she stays there too' (*Planet*, p. 165).

Oil City is where multinational oil corporation staff reside. The girls of Ogazza village go to Oil City to commercialise sex so as to enable them to take care of themselves and their families. The novelist's lexical process is an obvious reflection of the decadent moral level of some girls in Oil City, and also a graphic presentation of government's failure in providing social infrastructure for its people.

Knocking on the door is another innovation that depicts the ways of life of Nigerians. A synonym of *asking*, discussed in the earlier part of this section, explains how marriages are conducted among the Igbo people of Nigeria. Ndibe writes:

> Three months later Dr Maximus Jaja, escorted by seven of his relatives, arrived in Iyese's village to see her family and formally express his intention to take her, with their approval, as his wife. The short ceremony was called 'knocking on the door' (*Arrows*, p. 141).

Before the marriage or wedding proper, the intending couple have to make the union official by involving both the groom's and bride's families. Iyese and Dr Jaja have agreed to marry each other, but the tradition requires that Dr Jaja must seek Iyese's family's approval. The underlying message is that before marriages are conducted in southeastern Nigeria, the bride-to-be must have her family's backing and blessing. This cultural practice has become very popular in Nigeria in recent times. So the use of *knocking on the door* is to promote as well as sustain the traditional rites of marriages among Igbo of southeastern Nigeria. It sustains the sociolinguistic truism that language and culture are intricately interfaced. That is, some linguistic expressions are inseparable from the cultural practices of its users.

Closely related to the above example is Adalakun's use of *go-between* in:

> "…If I want to marry a new wife now, you will be the first to know. You will also be the one I will entrust the work of 'go-between' to. You are that precious to me…" (*Rusted Roofs*, p. 20)

When Motara, Alhaji's first wife, voices her displeasure about Alhaji's unconcealed attention on Afusa than her, Alhaji assures Motara that she is still his first wife. He tells her that she will be his "go-between" if the need for him to take another wife arises: in most Nigerian cultures, if not all, when a man is about to be married neither he nor his father would negotiate directly with the prospective in-law. The expression, *go-between*, is an example of lexical innovation that describes marriage procedures in most Nigerian cultures. It describes a mediator, a representative that speaks on behalf of a husband–to–be. The work of a *go-between* is always assigned to a trusted person. In terms of identity construction, Alhaji uses the expression to pacify Motara and to assure her of her exalted position among his three wives. Alhaji's use of "go-between" is typical of ingroup identity formation (with Motara as the first wife who should naturally enjoy more attention than her husband's other wives), but most importantly, it is an instance of the political nature of identity. This is given that Alhaji uses the expression to not just reorganise his first wife's feeling of him, but to also maintain peace in his already volatile family.

One interesting aspect of the English language is its permissiveness. It affords its users the opportunity to "bend" it in several ways to explore as well as represent their

worldview. However, if one places these innovative ways of using language against the backdrop of globalisation, where English has revived its strength, pushing and occupying newer spaces, the purposeful "bending" of English might strike one as fascinating. This can be seen in:

> Her phone rang.
> 'Dad!'
> 'You flashed'
> 'What?'
> 'I thought you flashed!
> 'Me flash? I didn't' (*Planet*, p. 197).

Wenni thought Toundi wants him to call her when he saw her *flash*. The *Chambers 21st Century Dictionary* (2004) defines flash "as a sudden brief blaze of light." In the Nigerian sociolinguistic context, it means to alert someone by beeping the person's phone in a brief but intense manner. The lexical item, *flash* is, therefore, semantically extended to refer to a situation where a person beeps another person's phone to cause the person whose phone was beeped to call, or to remind the person of an agreement, among several other reasons. Importantly, there is communicative flow because when Wenni saw his daughter's *flash*, he called her. However, there is an asymmetrical difference between those who *flash* and those who are capable of calling when *flashed*.

As used in *Planet*, *flashed*, illustrates how words formation in a non-native English situation relates a people's way of life. Interestingly, the word has entered Nigerian linguistic space because of technological development. Though an English word, the word remains only meaningful to Nigerians and non-Nigerians who have lived in Nigeria in recent times. Evidently, the word carries a Nigerian identity. This kind of innovation seems justified by Bradford in his observation that: "the social or local associations of particular words or locutionary habits can be carried into a work of *art* but their familiar content will be transformed by their new structural framework" (1997: 30 italics mine).

If the meaning of the above innovation is fleshed out from the macro-level discourse and in the light of linguistic hegemony or cannibalism achieved by English due to colonialism and commerce, it presents a "tension between the value of one's local language as a repository of cultural forms of representation" (Joseph, 2004:23). Nigeria, a British colony, has a history of having English as the "superior language." It is not uncommon to

find Nigerian novelists resorting to English words or phrases when expressing cultural ideals. This is where *spirit-voice* (*Arrows*) which translates as 'instincts' and *father's mother* (*Rusted Roofs*) to mean grandmother work as responses of Nigerian users of English to the current local and global situation on one hand and the novelists' claim for a Nigerian identity on the other. In fact, Table 3.5, the table of frequency, demonstrates that 61.7% of lexical innovations with Nigerian bias are indications of how the English language has been "bent" to express a Nigerian identity. Moreover, in using English to express indigenous thoughts in Nigerian novels, the 21st-century Nigerian novel becomes a site of context between two countries: Nigeria and Britain contesting for linguistic space. Should the Nigerian novelist abandon English and write in indigenous Nigerian languages? This question has remained a crucial and recurring decimal in the discourses of the language for Nigerian literature. It may, however, interest a later study.

The writers' innovations are "arguments", in the discursive sense, putting forward the idea that, though they will continue to write in English, their indigenous ideas must be expressed in the English words they use for their creative projects. In doing this, the writers demonstrate a strong desire not to cast their language away. It is a manifestation of solidarity and empathy to their languages which were threatened by colonialism and recently by globalisation that is obliterating the cultural identity of the writers and their Nigerian people. This is evident in the frequency, 16.1%, the least on the table of innovations, which are not Nigerian. It is an expression of resistance: an upsurging power of the Nigerian culture offering resistance to the centrifugal force of English dominance. Such an identity formation echoes Castells' views that the primary opposition to the domineering power lies in "the widespread surge of powerful expressions of collective identity that challenges globalization…on behalf of cultural singularity and people's control over their lives and environment" (1997:2).

The novelists' innovations of indigenous thoughts are crystallised indications of resistance to the imposition of "cultural singularity" (as in the English culture) and the projection of a collective Nigerian identity. This lexical construction of identity is not in fact merely some fragile communal practice, but a deliberate effort to "locate" one's self in a diverse and complex world. Of course, this is not to deny the fact that nation-states are undermined by other powerful nations, but the writers' adoption of culturally innovated

lexical items demonstrates an operative consciousness – the conscientious reinforcement and continuous portrayal of a Nigerian belonging. Clearly, Nigerian identity and all its constitutive elements, principally language, are in their construction. The invented words, though English, heave with the cultural ways of life of the Nigerian people. Suffice it to say that these invented words search for a primordial and pristine Nigerian life-style, an authentic Nigerian culture self-awaiting retrieval and renewal beneath the contamination of foreign cultural invasion.

3.3. Deployment of Abbreviations

An abbreviation is a shortened version of a word or a phrase. Though there are about four ways in which abbreviations can be formed, alphabetism and acronym shall be concentrated on because they are more prominent in the sampled texts. Alphabetism, also known as initialism, (*Encounter Dictionary* 2009) is a group of letters, each pronounced separately, used as an abbreviation for a name or an expression; examples of alphabetism include UN, AU, EU, IBB, DPO, etc. Acronym, as a form of abbreviation, is formed by using the initial parts or first letters of a name, word, institution, etc, for example, OPEC and NEPA are acronyms that take the first letter each from each word to form a new word. It implies that acronyms, when formed, can function as words. It is from this perspective that abbreviations are approached in the framing of identity in the sampled novels.

Quantitative Discussion

The table below represents the distribution (according to number and percentage) of abbreviations. The distributional process shows the frequency as well as percentage of abbreviations that are Nigerian (indigenous) and those that are not indigenous to Nigeria (universal). So the abbreviations are categorised under two broad headings, namely, indigenous and universal.

Table 3.8: Percentage Distribution of Abbreviations

Domain	*Angel*	*Arrow*	*Planet*	*Rusted Roofs*	Number	%
Indigenous	3	3	21	5	32	82
Universal	3	2	2	0	7	18

The above table of distribution of abbreviations according to socio-cultural domains indicates that abbreviations which are indigenous to Nigeria have 82% and those that are not indigenous to Nigeria take 18%. The indigenous abbreviations can further be categorised into two: those that are the novelists' creation and those that define Nigeria's socio-historical developments. The table also shows that Egbuson's *Planet* has the highest number of abbreviations, followed by Habila's *Angel*. Adelakun's *Rusted Roofs* and Ndibe's *Arrows* have the least number of abbreviations: each of the novels has five abbreviations. Moreover, Adelakun's *Rusted Roofs* does not indicate the use of non-indigenous abbreviations. It may not be unconnected to the scope of her thematic explorations. It is a story that has a complete local, i.e. typical Nigerian setting. Unlike other novels under the consideration of this study that address local and international issues, *Rusted Roof* deals primarily with local issues.

The high number of indigenous abbreviations, 82%, in the novels points axiologically to identity construction. It is a demonstration of the novelists' reaction to the socio-political pond from which they fish their stories. Those that are created by the writers are manifestations of what the cultural exigencies of the Nigerian society offers. A major innovation in the Nigerian novel of the 21st-century, though the innovative use of abbreviations may have taken place in other generations, is the alteration of standard abbreviations into fresh utterances. These altered abbreviations express astute perception of everyday socio-political developments in Nigeria. While some of the abbreviations are created to fill linguistic gaps (such abbreviations shall not be treated because they are not important to the present study), others are recreated in relation to specific cultural, economic, political and social changes in Nigeria. Abbreviations are also lexical devices that

are deployed in the construction of identities. The next section discusses the role of abbreviations in the construction of identity.

3.3.1 Abbreviations and the Expression of Resistance

In treating abbreviations as lexical resources for the expression of resistance identity, Castells' postulations of how the dominated (resistance identity) explores language to reorganise society, invariably exposing the confrontational nature of identity reconstruction, is relied on. There are some abbreviations in the data that point to resistance identity formation. Some of these abbreviations are presented in the table below:

Table 3.9: Peculiar Nigerian Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning	Lexical Feature	Novel
NEPA	National Electrical Power Authority.	Acronym	*Rusted Roofs* (p.160)
GRA	Government Reserved Area	Initialism	*Planet* (p.95)
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme.	Acronym	*Rusted Roofs* (p.160)
SUG	Student Union Government.	Initialism	*Angels* (p.340)
NADS	National Association of Daglobe Students.	Acronym	*Planet* (p.220)
JAMB	Joint Admission and Matriculation Board.	Acronym	*Angel* (p.113)

The acronym NEPA, which means National Electric Power Authority, appears both in Habila's *Angel* and Adelakun's *Rusted Roofs*. NEPA is presented in the following ways:

> NEPA has taken light, in the dark glow of the candle flame the shadows looked even more shadowy, indistinct, merging into each other and into the wall behind them (*Angel*, p. 121).
>
> Darkness was falling fast because NEPA had not brought power supply to *Labiran* and its environs for a while (*Rusted Roofs*, p. 27).

NEPA is government's sole electric power generating and distributing agency. In the context of the novels cited above, NEPA is synonymous with darkness. To Nigerians, NEPA means "never expect power always." Troubled by the fact that NEPA is noted for its epileptic power supply, the novelists use the acronym to satirise the inability of NEPA to supply electricity in 21st-century Nigeria, where in other countries of the world power supply is no longer an issue. Evidently, the novelists assign meaning to their abbreviations based on Nigeria's energy dilemma. By using "darkness" as a synonym of NEPA, the novelists separate themselves from the production process of the texts. Such distancing effect functions as avoidance strategy of escaping censure, a common trend at the time the novelists composed on one hand, and to incite the masses to actions that would liberate them from "darkness" on the other.

Similarly, the alphabetism GRA, which stands for Government Reserved Area, is typically a Nigerian lexical creation. A GRA is a developed estate in the parts of most Nigerian cities reserved exclusively for the political class and the rich. In *Planet*, it is used to describe the place a school principal resides:

> 'Eguleh! Eguleh! We are going to GRA now!" Wenni went to his room, changed his clothes and came back to the living room. "My daughter, come. We are going to your principal. Let her see how he roughened your blazer and your shirt' (*Planet* p. 95).

In the above instance, a father takes his daughter to her school principal to complain to the school principal about a teacher's attempt to rape his daughter. However, GRA is re-lexicalised in the novel to bring out the depth of corruption. In this sense, the novelist projects the idea that a GRA is a symbol of domination and intimidation of the mass majority who barely have roofs over their heads by the extremely rich and immensely powerful few. Put differently, the use of GRA exposes, in a vivid manner, the behavioural pattern of many who dwell in GRAs. That is, they are morally decadent. The novelist's presentation of GRA residents is resistant; he dissociates from the actions of GRA men who use their position to dominate. In this sense, language functions as a battle ground for the tendentious activity of making the unknown correspond with the known. This underscores the central tenet of CDA: accounting for the "unsaid said."

It was noted in the beginning of this section that some of the abbreviations in the sampled novels, presuppose certain stock of knowledge and anybody who is not familiar with the field of socio-political references may encounter difficulties in decoding the messages imbued in them. It takes one who has been following the economic situation in Nigeria and the revolutionary attitude of Nigerians towards the institutionalisation of SAP to understand the meaning imbued in the acronym. Adelakun succinctly captures the people's dissonance with SAP in the following words:

> "They are demonstrating against SAP – Structural Adjustment Programme" he replied, and then thought he should explain it to his illiterate father. "It is a kind of programme Babangida is bringing into the country from abroad." (*Rusted Roofs* p. 160)

Jimoh, Alhaji's son, tries to explain to his illiterate father the enormity of an economic programme which Babangida is introducing into the country, and the people's rejection of the programme. Though the people reject SAP, Babangida goes ahead to "bring the programme from abroad." One of the processes of adopting SAP requires the country to borrow from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the conditions of borrowing from IMF are heavy-handed. One of such conditions is the devaluation of a nation's currency. Jimoh foresees that SAP will impoverish the people and he tells his father that "SAP will even send us to a worse slave farm" (p. 161). Analysts of Nigeria's economy have attributed Nigeria's economic underdevelopment to the implementation of SAP by the then Babangida military junta.

Writers who draw their inspiration from their societies are sensitive to structures that infringe on their fundamental human rights. SAP remains a politico-economic enigma that enriched a selected few at the expense of the mass majority. By such mechanistic use of language (the use of SAP), the novelists create an effusive discourse which becomes a converging point for the deconstruction of politico-economic programmes that mar the people's development.

SUG, an alphabetism for Student Union Government, is a student body that operates in each higher institution of learning in the country which is known for its formidable and ferocious approach in pressing its demands both from the school authority and the government. During Nigeria's military era, it was one of the weapons that were employed

by anti-military crusaders to question the military's continuous stay in power. This can be inferred from Habila's *Angel*:

> '…I say we are tired of being tired!'
> 'Yes!" Tell them Sanke!'
> 'Great Nigerian Students!'
> 'G–R–E–A–T!' (*Angel*, p. 40)

It is Sankara, the SUG president that is addressing his fellow students. In the next page, Habila tells us why the students are gathered:

> His strong voice carried easily to where I stood: 'We are tired of phantom transition programmes that are nothing but grand designs to embezzle our money!'
> 'Down with the Junta.' (p. 41)

"His" in the above example anaphorically refers to Sankara, the SUG president of an unnamed university. The students express their unconcealed dissent to Babangida's failure to transit the country from military rule to civilian rule. The speaker's recourse to the possessive pronoun, *our*, shows the students' conscientious and collective will to oust a government that has embezzled *our money*. Moreover, the use of the pronoun *them*, a known discourse referent, shows a high degree of division between the dominated, *our*, and the dominant group, *them*, whose continued stay in power infuriates the dominated. Interestingly, the use of *them* functions as a derisive linguistic marker which the dominated deploy to distance themselves from the dominant group. Ironically, the emergence of democratic rule in 1999 saw the paralysis of students' unions across higher institutions in the country. Working from his background knowledge of military rule and the power student unions wielded, the first president of the country's Fourth Republic did all he could to clip the wings of student unions. Student unions are no longer forces to reckon with in the country's political firmament.

However, in *Planet*, the reference to SUG is to show the students' revolt against an increase in school fees:

> The National Association of Daglobe Students (NADS) had requested activist and human rights group to join them in their public protest against the increase in school fees…(*Planet*, p. 220)

It is a common practice in most Nigerian higher institutions for students to protest any increase in school fees. At times, such protest does not only compel the school authority to revert to the old school fees, it can also lead to the death of many, as most of the time the protests become violent. In some cases, the volatility of the protest often leads to the closure of the University for several months. The abbreviation, NADS, therefore reveals the worrisome power tussle that exists between the school authority (the legitimising identity) and the students (the resistance identity).

JAMB, an acronym for Joint Admission and Matriculation Board, and a distinct Nigerian acronym, is an agency that administers university entrance examinations to Nigerian universities. In the context of Habila's *Angel*, Kela leaves the north for Lagos where he is certain of making good grades that will guarantee his entrance into the university. The nightmarish posture of JAMB is revealed in the novel as many Nigerian university candidates' hopes of gaining admissions to the University are dissuaded by JAMB's handling of its examinations. Most have argued that JAMB has rather strayed from an examination body that facilitates university entrance examination to a business venture that is interested in milking unsuspecting Nigerians. There have been calls by the Nigerian people to scrap JAMB because they no longer have confidence in its practices.

The meanings of these abbreviations are proffered based on how they are used in the novels. Suffice it to say that the meanings of these abbreviations may alter with their altering contexts. An interesting indication is how language and society are ultimately bond up together. These abbreviations represent, mirror and evaluate what society is going through; the people's existence becomes meaningfully expressed through the facility of language. However, these abbreviations do not only reveal Nigerian's social predicament, they also function as the people's rejection of situations that put their existence as Nigerians in question. The next section exploits the deployment of abbreviations in the reconstruction of history.

3.3.2 Abbreviations and Political Identity

In Section 3.3 it was noted that there are some abbreviations that relive peculiar Nigerian socio-cultural experiences. The table below presents some of the abbreviations in the data that are employed in the reconstruction of Nigeria's socio-historical experiences.

Table 3.10: 'Abbreviating History'

Abbreviation	Meaning	Lexical Feature	Novel
WAI	War Against Indiscipline	Acronym	*Rusted Roofs* (p.113)
IBB	Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida	Alphabetism	*Angel* (p.41)
AFRRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary and Redemptive Council	Alphabetism	*Arrows* (p.197)

In framing Nigeria's political development for instance, Adelakun, in a novel way, captures Nigeria's horrendous military experience thus:

> "WAI! WAI! WAI!" Someone shouted and pandemonium struck in the market. An army truck had parked and soldiers jumped out of it. They began to kick wares, upturn trays and whip traders. People ran to and fro as they tried to protect their goods, some leaving their children behind in the process. *(Rusted Roofs*, p. 113)

Such was the gory experience of Nigerians during Buhari/Idiabon's military dictatorship. WAI, an acronym for War Against Indiscipline, points to a historical context where the existence of Nigerians was characterised by pandemonium and cries of anguish. WAI strategically decries as well as relives how the masses came under suffocating stranglehold of some military dictatorship.

From the foregoing, it could be deduced that these abbreviations construct Nigeria's socio-political dislocations. The recreation of IBB in Habila's *Angel* explicitly narrates the military dynasty of Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida whose military rule truncated several democratic processes. Popularly known as IBB, Babangida ruled Nigeria for about a decade. During Babangida's military dictatorship, several political and economic programmes targeted at keeping him in power were initiated by his cronies and him. Sankara, a student

union leader, in Habila's *Angel* captures the people's disenchantment with IBB's regime in the following ways:

> 'Can't you see what is happening? The military have turned the country into one huge barracks, into a prison. Every street out there is crawling with them; the people lock their doors, scared to come out. They play with us, as if we are puppets. Yesterday they changed the transition date again. IBB is deceiving us, he has no intention of leaving….' (*Angel*, p. 41)

The Nigerian populace was wearied by a military leader that deployed several antics to hold on to power against popular will. The reference to IBB in the novel is in relation to the cataclysmic political dislocation of Nigeria's democratisation and of a military ruler who failed to transit the country from military dictatorship to a democratically elected government.

The incessant interruption of Nigeria's democratic process is also expressed in the abbreviation AFRRC. In a mind gripping manner, Ndibe laments the ceaseless interruption of Nigeria's democratic process thus:

> 'Mr. Prime Minister, Sir, I have instructions to effect your arrest.'
> 'Who in this country has issued such instructions?'
> 'The AFRRC.'
> 'The AF what?' he enquired with fierce impatience. (*Arrows*, p. 197)

The alphabetism AFRRC, which means Armed Forces Revolutionary and Redemptive Council, like Nigeria's Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) is used to express the people's contempt with the military's incessant disruption of Nigeria's democratic process. The Prime Minister's question buttresses the ruthless manner with which democratic governments were truncated in the country. The noun phrase, *The AFRRC*, with a definite article indicates that the military has been known to be trenchantly involved in truncating democratic processes in the country.

The framing of IBB, WAI and AFRRC demonstrate the interface between the micro-linguistic level and the macro-sociological level. The abbreviations remind one, in a critical manner, of some historical atrocities that made Nigerians prisoners in their own country.

The micro-level construction (abbreviations), therefore, likens the military to a cancer that devoured Nigeria's body polity. It can be surmised, from the foregoing, that these are peculiar Nigerian abbreviations that depict socio-political changes in the country.

Though it will be futile and difficult to discuss all the abbreviations found in the novels, the analysis has, however, demonstrated that abbreviations are dynamic NE features which Nigerian novelists deploy to recount the country's historical development. The analysis of abbreviations shows the mediation between two levels of discourse: the micro-level and the macro-level. These levels of analysis draw significantly from the discourse-historical contexts that informed their productions. Basically, the interpretations of abbreviations were situated in their socio-cultural contexts such that the lexical items relate to peculiar Nigeria's historical circumstances. The table of frequency distribution of abbreviations illustrates that 82% are typically Nigerian. The novelists demonstrate a strong desire to keep their Nigerian identity intact. This is seen as the abbreviations, in subtle ways, recount not just the socio-cultural changes in the country, but also the novelists' emotional involvement in those changes. Invariably, placed in different sociolinguistic milieus, the abbreviations could generate different interpretations from those given in this study. The next chapter examines discursive features of identity construction.

CHAPTER FOUR
DISCURSIVE FEATURES OF IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

This chapter investigates the dynamic and productive ways in which discursive features such as naming, slang, euphemisms, religious expressions and Nigerian Pidgin expressions are put to use in specific contexts in the construction of identities. Basically, the chapter provides illuminating insights on the multi-layered nature of identity construction and the mosaic of meanings that are embedded in the above-named discursive features. The chapter is divided into five parts. The first part (4.1) addresses naming strategies, the second (4.2) deals with slangy expressions, the third (4.3) examines religious indexes, part four (4.3) explores euphemistic expressions and part five investigates Nigeria Pidgin expressions. Quantitative discussion is applied to sections one, two and five because the extent of recurrence proffer illuminating insights to their calculated discourse functions.

4.1 Naming as Strategies for Identity Construction

Name, according to the *Encarta Encyclopaedia* (2005), signifies something "special and tangible." The concern of this section is to investigate names in relation to their construction of identity in the data. The section starts with a quantitative analysis that would demonstrate the frequency of assigning names in the novels. This requires the examination of the distribution of names according to certain forms of categorisations. Most of the names are categorised according to the languages they are taken from. After such a quantitative categorisation, the textual analysis will examine the names according to how they are deployed in the construction of identity.

Quantitative Discussion

The table below presents the distribution (in frequency and percentage) of names according to their linguistic sources.

Table 4.1: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Names

Languages	*Angel*	*Arrows*	*Planet*	*Rusted Roofs*	Frequency	%
English	10	17	7	1	25	10.3
Hausa	2	4	7	3	16	6.6
Igbo	2	13	1	0	16	6.6
Izon	0	0	23	0	23	9.5
Pidgin	0	1	1	0	2	0.8
Yoruba	9	10	4	59	82	34.0
Others	9	17	33	28	77	31.9

Except for Habila's *Angel*, each of the novelists under the consideration of this study use more names from their respective languages. Table 4.1 shows the preponderance of indigenous names, 88.7%. The table indicates names taken from Hausa, Igbo, Izon and Yoruba. These are the languages spoken by the sampled novelists. The novelists use more of Yoruba names in their novels, making Yoruba to have 34.0%, the highest in the table of distribution. The reasons for the use of more Yoruba names are related to the reasons proffered under lexical borrowing, where there is also a high frequency of lexical borrowing from Yoruba (as discussed in Section 3.1.1). Pidgin with 0.8% has the lowest deployment of names. Pidgin is used to describe the name of a bar, "Mama Joe." Mama Joe means Joe's mother (*Angel*, p. 101). In *Planet*, there is the use of 'Mama Bomboy' which means the mother of a baby boy. Hausa and Igbo, two major Nigerian languages, have 6.6% each. The table also reveals that the novelists use more of Hausa than Igbo names. Izon has 9.5% with no usage from other novelists except Egbuson.

The domain of "Others", though with just 19.3% of names, is quite revealing. "Others" reveals two important dimensions to the investigation of naming as identity in 21st-Century Nigerian novels. First, it includes names that have Nigerian ancestry, but which cannot be traced to any particular ethnic nationality. Names such as Lomba (*Angel*), Iyese (*Arrows*), Keke (*Planet*) among others are commonly shared by Nigerians. Except one goes down the respective ethnic groups that form the Nigerian nation to investigate the phonological and semantic variations (if they exist and since the spelling in most instances

are the same), one may find it quite tasking to tell which name represents which ethnic identity. The similarity in names as well as the difficulty in linking some of the names under the category of "Others" to specific ethnic nationalities demonstrates, in engrossing ways, a unified Nigerian identity. Second and closely related to the perspective discussed above, Nigerian novelists use names from various ethnic groups to uphold their Nigerianess.

Another striking issue arising from the table of distribution is the relatively fewer use of European names. English has 10.3% in spite of the fact that English is Nigeria's official language and these novelists document their experiences in English. They seem to have a negative attitude towards English. The rationale for such negative attitude towards English is examined in Section 4.1.2.

Having undertaken a quantitative analysis of names in the sampled novels, it is expedient to investigate what these names represent in the texts. What the names in the sampled texts represent is categorised into three sub-sections. Section 4.1.1 addresses names and the expression of cultural identity, Section 4.1.2 deals with names as the expression of resistance and Section 4.1.3 investigates how names form the basis for group differentiation.

4.1.1 Naming as Cultural Identity

Peoples and cultures all over the world have the meaning of their names matrixed in their mores, belief systems and general world views. There is so much to a name that every name (at least in the African/Nigerian context) heaves with ideo-political and socio-cultural significance. In this section, the subtle cultural politics of naming is examined. The table below is a sampled presentation of names across the data.

Table 4.2: Nigerian Names and their Cultural Undertones

Names	Meaning Equivalent	Source	Novel
Akinyele	The brave fits the home	Yoruba	*Angel* (p. 43)
Iyese	Mother of children	Edo	*Arrows* (p. 132)
Nkeiruka	The future is vaster and greater than the past	Igbo	*Arrows* (p.171)
Oguguamakwa	Wiper of my tears	Igbo	*Arrows* (p.185)
Tarinumu	Understand love	Izon	*Planet* (p.170)
Akponumu	Understand the world	Izon	*Planet* (p.210)
Iyabo	Mother has reincarnated	Yoruba	*Planet* (p.55)
Ekunsumi	I am tired of crying	Yoruba	*Rusted Roofs*(p.192)
Iya Agba	The eldest matriarch	Yoruba	*Rusted Roofs*(p.18)

The names in Table 4.2 have their meanings matrixed in the cultural realities of the Nigerian people. Most writers would prefer to use Nigerian names for their characters as a way of keeping their Nigerian identity intact. On the other hand, it is a way of compensating themselves since they have to write in English for them to be nationally and internationally intelligible.

The cultural meanings which indigenous names have are transferred to the characters in the fictional world and the fictional characters are made to act these names. For instance, the Igbo name Nkeiruka, which translates as "the future is vaster and greater than the past," is usually given to female children. It is a name filled with hope and great expectation of good things to come in the future. Thinking about Iyese, Oguguamakwa, in his internal monologue, wonders: *Perhaps she imagined that I could be that sun. Perhaps I was her faith (Arrows*, p. 171). In the context of the novel, it is used to describe the confidence Iyese reposes in Oguguamakwa. Oguguamakwa is her hope and faith, the one that will liberate her from the manacles of Isa Bello and prostitution.

Similarly, the name Akponumu which means "understand the world" is given to Wenni's long awaited male child. Wenni had started to treat his wife badly because of her inability to give birth to a male child. When Larami, Wenni's wife, finally gives birth to a male child at an old age, the name that best suits the child is Akponumu. The cultural

politics in the Izon name is that all should be patient and understand that the world is deeper than one can ever imagine. Moreover, Wenni's attitude towards his wife's inability to give birth to a male child substantiates the premium most Nigerians still place on male children over female ones.

The name Akinyele is an indication that the society appreciates valour. Only male children bear this name since the males are known for strength and bravery, especially during wars. The fragment below:

> 'See what they have done to him! God will pay them back!' Auntie Rosa cried. Uncle Bode got up and walked out to pace the veranda. (*Angel*, p. 62)

justifies Uncle Bode, who is also known as Mr Akinyele, behaviour. While Auntie Rosa ferociously laments the ill-treatment meted on Bola by security agents, Mr Akinyele, being a brave man, (as in acting his name) restrains himself from crying and shouting like Auntie Rosa.

Though there are situations where the linguistic repertoire alone could not mean what the names signify, they can be exploited together with other semiotic resources to contextualise socio-symbolic meanings which are relevant for identity construction. For example, the Yoruba name, Ekunsumi (*Rusted Roofs)* upholds the belief that names in the Nigerian context are loaded with semantic values. Ekunsumi, which translates as "I am tired of crying," is the name given to *abiku* children. A woman reports the circumstance that informs such a name:

> "They are terrible children. They never stay," another woman joined. "My brother's wife was plagued by *abiku* for a long time. The boy kept coming and going for a long time. What name didn't she give him:… Ekunsunmi…"
> "She was just wasting good names. She should have given him a name that will shame him." (*Rusted Roofs*, p. 192)

Ekunsumi is, therefore, a mother's empathic appeal to her *abiku* child to stay. The mother's appeal is informed by the love for children that is characteristic of Nigerians, which is, in absorbing ways, not detached from the ideological sentiment that a woman's wealth can be

measured by the number of "mouths she feeds." Other related forms of Yoruba names given to *abiku* children are Duroorike, which means "wait and see how caring we are," and Durosinme which roughly translates as "wait and bury me." These are names which name-givers employ to persuade the *abiku* child to stay. But, that is not the case with the name Kosoko which translates as "there is no hoe to bury you." The name rather serves as a threat to the *abiku* child that it will not be buried. Such a name usually comes after all the endearing names have failed to persuade the *abiku* child to stay. These names serve as the identity of *abiku* children. Once these names are mentioned, a Yoruba person does not need to be told that the mother of that child has been plagued by *abiku*.

The names people bear can link them to their spirituality. The relationship between a name and its spiritual resonance is captured in Egbuson's *Planet*:

> 'Everybody calls him Tarinumu, because of his healing power which depends on the love in the patient's heart. Before he gives you his herbs he would warn you that if there is hatred or anger in your heart for anyone you won't be healed. And it has been found to be true. That is why everybody in Oggazza calls him Tarinumu, love song.' (*Planet*, p. 170)

The name, Tarinumu, describes a herbalist whose ability to heal draws from the love that resides in the patient's heart. The healer, Tarinumu, is so named because of the positive spiritual aura that emanates from his personality. It is an Izon name which translates as "understand love." The pragmatic motivation for the choice of the name is that love is the only way to peace. Egbuson's adoption of Tarinumu suggests that it is only love that can bring peace to the troubled Niger Delta region. Arguably, the name enables the novelist to identify with his Niger Delta people whose longing for peace has been shattered by oil exploration and criminality.

Similarly, the Igbo name Oguguamakwa, which means "wiper of my tears," illustrates the semantic potential of Nigerian names and the connection that exists between names and circumstances. Empirically, Oguguamakwa, Ndibe's protagonist, is expected to comfort his suffering people. The name, Oguguamakwa, typifies the fact that names in the Igbo cultural practice are in several ways connected to the circumstance that surrounds the child's birth. It is usually a name that is given to the children whose parents had had

difficulty in having children or those who have lost valuable things: this includes human beings. The name, therefore, resonates with the ideology of the Igbo of southeastern Nigeria that children are synonymous to joy, comfort, wealth and power.

However, these writers' use of names from their ethnic groups is a display of ethnic identity**.** Ndibe's and Adelakun's extensive selections of names from Igbo and Yoruba, for example, are to legitimise their Igbo and Yoruba respective identities.

It is also observed that Nigerian authors do cross-ethnic borrowing of names. The basis for cross-ethnic borrowing is to promote a unified cultural identity for the Nigerian people. For instance, in Egbuson's *Planet*, there is the use of Iyabo. Iyabo is a Yoruba name which means "mother has returned/reincarnated" (*Planet*, p.55). *Iya* means "mother" and *bo* translates as "return." It is usually given to female children, more especially, if the child was delivered immediately after the child's grandmother passed on. It is believed that it is either of the newly born baby's paternal or maternal mother who has come back to life. The employment of the name Iyabo defines the African ideology of reincarnation: an explication of the cyclic nature of life which validates the African belief of a mysterious bond between the dead and the living. The fact remains that our names form the core of our identity. Throughout human history, people have often used names to meet certain demands. Names are windows to one's self and the name becomes the prism through which the cultural ethos of the people can be accessed.

The fact is that most educated Nigerians think of themselves as Nigerians. This may not be their primary allegiance when the chips are down, but it is an everyday operative identity secured by Nigerian proselytes. Moreover, this pan-ethnic, cross-regional Nigerian identity is one that the novelists themselves promote. Griswold (2000:12) would argue that:

> …most novelists avoid ethnic or regional parochialism, using: techniques such as populating their novels with a heterogeneous (and sometimes unlikely) cast of Nigerian characters, having their characters use slang expressions from several local languages, or setting their novels in some generic African country …That mixes features from different Nigerian places and people.

In these ways, Nigerian novelists always claim to write novels for all Nigerians. The Nigerian reading population also eschews parochialism for the same reason. They do not

favour writers of their own ethnicity or books about their home regions. Rather, they are curious about how the novel portrays a Nigerian identity and how it addresses the country's socio-political developments. Evidently, at least from the foregoing argumentation, the utilisation of names from several Nigerian languages in Nigerian novels is to legitimise the novelists' Nigerian identity. The high statistics of names, 88.7%, belonging to indigenous names is a testimony of the position that the novelists' use of names is aimed at legitimising their Nigerian identity.

An interesting observation arising from this section is the evidence that names in the Nigerian context are matrixed in the cultural moorings of the people and anchored on prevailing circumstances. The names are culturally motivated, exposing in variable degrees, the cultural resonances of the giver as well as the bearer of the name. In this sense, Nigerian names are loaded with socio-cultural meanings that go beyond their linguistic construction to encompass the act (politics) that informs the giving of the name. In a corollary, names do not only tell us about the identity of the holder of a name, but also about the culture and the values that the name-givers hold. A name, therefore, symbolically links people to their past and provides them with a sense of self-identification.

4.1.2 Tagging the "Other"

In this section, the definitive role of names in group categorisation is examined. The analysis will show that identity is not only built up in sequences of reported dialogues, but they also become interactively significant by projecting characters as representatives of negative social types. The sample of European names in the data echoes a form of identity construction where negative information about the "other" is emphasized and positive ones are suppressed by ingroup categorisation. Some of the European names, their ordinary meaning and contextualised meaning are presented in the table below.

Table 4.3: Non-indigenous Names and their Contextual Meanings

Names	Original/Ordinary Meaning	Contextual Meaning	Novel
Alice	Of noble kind	Unserious Student	*Angel*(p.65)
Hagar	Abraham's maid turned wife	Sex worker	*Angel*(p.118)
Emilia	To rival, to emulate, to excel	Sex worker	*Arrows*(p.133)
Violet	A bluish-purple colour	Sex worker	*Arrows*(p.167)
Sally	Princess	Sex worker	*Planet* (p.160)

The writers' deployment of English and non-English names demonstrates a process of "tagging the other." As can be inferred from Table 4.3, the ordinary meanings of the non-indigenous names have been altered to rhyme with the identity constructive goals of the novelists. The contextual meanings are the pejorative meanings the authors have assigned to these names. These names are therefore discussed based on the identity display of these fictional characters. In all the sampled novels, except for *Rusted Roofs* where no sex worker is discussed, all the characters who are sex workers are tagged with English names and non-indigenous names. It seems to suggest that, by the writers' processes of characterisation, prostitution or the commercialisation of sex is alien to Africans.

In *Planet*, Amama, Ereki's mother, describes Sally's prurient sexual behaviour in the following way:

> '…Leave Sally alone in Oil City. Sally's face that men's eyes cannot pull away from, her legs that were carved by Tamara's best carver… Sally's voice is like a new song in the village square that makes the blood in men boil - ah, my son Ereki, can Sally be for you alone?' (*Planet*, p. 160)

Sally is Ereki's girl friend but she leaves Ereki for Oil City where she commercialises sex. Amama admonishes her son to distance himself from a girl who sleeps around with everyone. A village square is a playground for everybody. Implicitly, Sally's sexual adventure has no boundary and anyone, just as with the playground, can have sex with her anywhere and anytime. So Amama admonishes Ereki to dissociate himself with such a lady whose sexual identity is questionable. The question is why Sally (whose name means a princess and her behaviour is expected to resonate with her name) and not any other Ijaw name? It axiomatically points to how naming is central to marking social types. Amama's

views of Sally is contrastive, she delineates herself from ladies whose legs "were carved by Tamara's best carver." Arguably, Sally is a name that one can identify with prostitutes.

Such naming practices could be connected to the deconstruction of colonial dominance. During colonialism, the colonialists christened both people and places in their own way, not minding whether these people already had names, with the colonial ideology appearing in the names themselves. And after the eclipse of colonialism, there is the rechristening of places as well as people with names of traditional value to indigenes as we saw in the preceding section and names with negative attributes to colonialists as they gave Africans diminutive names. In spite of the fact that English is Nigeria's widely used official language, the low percentage of names with English origin, 10.3%, demonstrates the novelists' conscientious effort at upholding as well as preserving the socio-cultural meanings that are imbued in these names. Furthermore, such a low frequency in the use of English names or names with English origin shows the novelists' antipathy to the English language.

Emilia, one of the sex workers in *Arrows*, explains this position in a more intriguing manner:

> 'As for Emilia, it's like a label on a loaf of bread… Emilia is the name with which I return all the fake smiles that greet me at night. It's the name with which I utter whispers into men's ears…It is the name with which I throw my thighs apart for a stranger's erection and afterwards take his money… It is the name with which I am connected to the night and nothing else…
> 'Because Iyese is not a prostitute. Emilia is.' (*Arrows*, p. 132-3)

If one asks the question "what is in a name?" the answer to that question is "identity." Names, at least from Iyese's point of view, describe who people are and what they do. Since names are linguistic windows to who people are and what they do, the resonances of this reality of naming can better be appreciated if measured against the backdrop of the colonisation and domination of Africans by Europe. The novelists' efforts are, therefore, to dismantle English domination by characterising English/European names with negative meanings. Commercialisation of sex, if not universal, at least in the African cosmology, is regarded as a social vice. In this regard, naming becomes a political institution that expresses the political ideology of individuals.

In another instance, when Kela goes to get *pure water* (A discussion of *pure water* as slang for alcohol is done in Section 4.2) for Auntie Rachael, he meets Hagar at MayFair Hotel. Hagar is Joshua's secret obsession. So when she meets Kela, she takes him to her room, and Kela narrates what follows:

> …She lit another cigarette. I watched her smoke in silence… When I told her I was going, she stood up. 'Let me walk you out. Oh I've something for you.' She opened the drawer again and rummaged inside, throwing out packets of condoms….
> I looked down embarrassed. 'Take them away. They might come in handy,' she said with a wicked laugh. She thrusts a pack into my breast pocket before returning to the drawer. (*Angel*, p. 118)

There are two outstanding issues in the above example. The first is that Hagar smokes. Kela watches with trepidation because in his Nigerian cultural mores, though some ladies smoke, it is abominable for women to smoke. Most ladies who smoke are city residents who are in touch with Western ways of life. Even at that, they do it secretly. Even Hagar admits that smoking is a "bad habit" (p. 115), but she still indulges in it. However, Kela's judgment of Hagar is an instance of excessive Puritanism, as the reason he was sent to his aunt at Lagos was because he was caught smoking marijuana in his father's garage. In the second instance, the gift she has for a 15-year-old boy is packets of condoms. Hagar's act exposes moral degradation. The noun phrase – a wicked laugh – is semantically loaded. She gives *a wicked laugh* because she knows that what she is doing is inappropriate. Her giving Kela packet of condoms has the tendency of triggering a promiscuous behaviour in Kela. Hagar's acts, in many ways, resonate with her promiscuous personality. By exophoric reference (biblical account of Hagar sleeping with her master, Abraham) the name fits Hagar, a sex worker. In fact, in the novel, Hagar's step-father makes sexual overtures at Hagar. The name, Hager, resonates with infidelity, something that is not properly done. The ideological potential of assigning a name relates to the politics of naming. The naming strategy illustrates how names can be organised to espouse identity construction.

From the foregoing, it is apposite to note that the assignment of non-Nigerian names to characters with negative dispositions is to disaffiliate with the antagonistic other. Such identity delineation is a resistance strategy to indicate what "they" (people who own those

names do) and what "we" (the giver of those names) do not do. The impetus is to dismantle the dominance of the west and any other language that is considered antithetical to their existence. Beyond the use of names in marking boundaries, names can also perform ideo-political functions. The following section examines how names perform such functions.

4.1.3 Names with Ideo-political Functions

Just as words can be used to do things, names are also used to perform certain actions. Equally significant in the data is the novelists' portrayal of the power to impose names with social and political identity upon their characters. Such names are examined below.

Table 4.4: Names with Ideo-political Functions

Names	Ordinary Meaning	Contextual Meaning	Novel
Brother	A boy or man with the same natural parents as another person or people.	One who identifies with the grief of his people.	*Angel*(p.97)
Joshua	An Israeli leader who succeeded Moses and led the Israelis to the Promised Land (according to biblical account).	Revolutionist	*Angel* (p.124)
Moses	Drawn out of water.	Revolutionist	*Planet* (p.223)

The name, Joshua, has a Hebrew origin. Habila's use of Joshua rhymes with the biblical Joshua who led the Israelites to the Promised Land. The revolutionary trait of biblical Joshua is also found in Joshua Amusa of Habila's *Angel* who led the revolution that questions the despotism and continuous stay in power of the military. When Auntie Rachael admonishes Joshua to stay aloof of the planned demonstration, he tells her:

> 'I understand what you mean, Madam Goodwill. But it is too late to go back… I assure you it'll be simple and peaceful. That's part of the reason I am joining them, to make sure it doesn't get violent.' (*Angel*, p. 124)

Joshua clarifies that his involvement in the demonstration is not just to lead it, but to make it peaceful and to bring it to a logical end. Obviously, Habila's use of Joshua is connected to his understanding of the role the biblical Joshua played in taking the Israelites to the Promised Land. The fact is that any character could have played that role but the contextual deployment of the name becomes semantically symbolic as there is a correlation between the Joshua in the novel and another Joshua that exists in the mental architecture of the reader.

Another striking feature of the name Joshua Amusa is the blend of a Christian name with a Muslim name. The name, Amusa, is a Yoruba version of Hamzah. Hamzah is a disciple of Prophet Mohammed, who fought gallantly and was killed in one of the battles he fought alongside with the Prophet. Habila's blend of both Christian and Islamic revolutionists is symptomatic of his ideological persuasion that both Christians and Muslims can unite to fight a common cause.

In *Planet*, Moses belongs to Simple Justice, a militant organisation that blows oil terminals and kidnaps oil workers as a way of demonstrating its dissonance with the manner in which oil is exploited in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Moses of *Planet* like Joshua of *Angel* is saddled with the task of liberating his people from the bondage of oil exploration in the Niger Delta. Moses tells Toundi why he joined Simple Justice:

> 'Yes we are the fighters. I was telling Uncle how we killed the ATF soldiers on the river recently.'…Son of bitches, we finished them that morning. SJ – the quest for justice! (*Planet*, p. 233)

Moses describes his membership of SJ as an opportunity to resist the activities of oil companies in his home town, and to protect his environment from oil pollution. Thus, the name he bears is connected to the role he performs: a revolutionist. The semantic content of Moses in *Planet* is indexed in the role of the biblical Moses' role who led Israelites out of Egypt. In biblical times, Egypt was regarded as a place of bondage and Moses of biblical times led his people out of Egypt. There is a reincarnation of biblical Moses in that of *Planet*. So like biblical Moses, Moses of *Planet* is expected to lead his Niger Delta people

from the bondage of oil exploration. This naming strategy is quite significant because the assignment of names is rallied on the pragmatic relations of the names.

Similarly, though Brother (see Table 4.4) is an English word, it has a Nigerian cultural connotation: it connotes oneness and describes a people of similar social dilemma. Brother is a tailor and his shop serves as a converging point for residents of Poverty Street. Most residents of Poverty Street gather at Brother's tailoring shop each passing night to agonize over their hardship. It is also one of the places they meet to plan the revolution which Joshua later led. Some occupants of Poverty Streets (in Pidgin) tell Brother:

> 'Ah, Brother. You be good man', they murmured.
> '…Who I get pass una?...You be my family.' (*Angel*, p. 97)

In the above fragment, Brother is told that he is a good man and he responds that he has no one except them, they are his family. Brother, whose real name is Mohammed, gains a new name because of the brotherly role he plays in Poverty Street. Moreover, unlike those in power, Brother accommodates everyone that comes to his shop. The change of name from Mohammed to Brother does not change the behaviour of the bearer; it only amplifies and reincarnates the leadership potential imbued in the Islamic prophet, Mohammed. Brother, therefore, serves as the rallying point for the actualisation of the people's dreams of a better nation. They spend long hours into the night smoking marijuana and hoping for a free country that can only be realised through a concerted revolution against the dominant identity. In the name, Brother, is the recreation of the community spirit the Nigerian people are known for and which has been eroded by the quest for riches. In the primordial community spirit, which the novelist tries to recreate, a person's life is not individuated from that of the other members of the community. It is such that what affects a single person concerns everyone. Thus, in Nigeria, as in elsewhere in the world, assigning names to people owing to behavioural expectations are interwoven and interactive in complex ways, producing multiple identities.

The names in this category include those taken from English, Islam, Christianity and other world languages. A striking feature about names in this category is that they, in salient ways, represent the ideological affiliations of the sampled novelists. For instance, Adelakun's preponderant use of Arabic names, none from Christianity and a single name

from English (Mike), by and large, is a presentation of her Islamic identity. The name Mike has a pejorative undertone: it is the name of an interpreter to a Hausa politician whose political ideology the people of Kudeti do not like. Similarly, Habila's, Ndibe's, and Egbuson's utilisation of Christian names portray their affiliations with Christianity.

Generally, it can be surmised that the names people choose for their children and other people reflect the relationship between name and identity. This is particularly true of the names that have been discussed in this section. The analysis reveals that names are political conduits which novelists use to depict their country's socio-political dislocations. The sense of personal identity and distinctiveness that a name gives is the core of why names interest people and why they are important to them as individuals and to society as a whole.

Another interesting angle in the exploitation of non-indigenous names is that they point a direction to the novelists' level of exposure, and how their educational development underscores the way names are utilised in their novels. Moreover, the category of non-indigenous names is dominated by names with English origin, 10.3%. Explicitly, the dominance of English names is connected to Britain's colonisation of Nigeria and the universality of English.

The use of names also substantiates the claim that identity is a fragmented concept that is subject to change. As the novelists take names from other languages, 31.9%, - which indicates a trend of borrowing names across various ethnic nationalities and cultures – their identities shift from one identity construction to the other. However, for these novelists, the use of indigenous names, 88.7%, is a way of retaining the values of their traditional cultures in a fast changing world of globalisation. Beyond the uses of names in the expression of identity, writers also employ discursive items such as slang to delineate identities: the next section pays attention to the exploration of slang as discursive strategies in the construction and reproduction of identities.

4.2 Slang and the Construction of Identity

Slang is a richly semiotic component of discourse in which linguistic practices and ideologies collaborate to produce distinctive identities. In discourse situations, slang is a resource which language users employ to lay claim to a variety of identities based on age,

region, race and ethnicity, and sub-cultural participation, as well as to achieve particular goals in interaction. And it is within discourse that the meaning of slang emerges, both at the semantic level of sense and at the discourse level of speakers' construction of identities. This section of the study, therefore, considers the multiple uses of slang as a resource for the discursive production of identity.

Slang expressions are considered under two themes covering people's communicative behaviour. These themes are slang of sexual identities and those that are used as construction materials for resistance. First, the slang is presented according to its frequency of distribution and later, the discussion of the identified themes.

Quantitative Discussion

The percentage distribution breakdown of slang expressions in the data according to the sub-identity acts are presented in the table below:

Table 4.5: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Slang

Slang	***Angel***	***Arrows***	***Planet***	***Rusted Roofs***	**Frequency**	**%**
Sex	1	6	2	2	11	44
Drinks	1	1	0	0	2	8
Substance	3	1	0	0	4	16
Others	2	1	2	3	8	32

Table 4.5 statistically accounts for how slang constructs meaning hence identity. For instance, the high percentage of sexual slang, 44%, suggests that sexual discourse thrives in secrecy and informality. Looked another way, discourse in several other domains can freely be discussed in everyday language. The secrecy associated with sex implies that sex slang targets mainly the mature minds. The least number of slang, 16%, goes to the category of drinks. It also suggests that drinking does not thrive in secrecy. The category of "Others" with 32% has more slang that function at the level of resistance identity. They include

names that discourse participants use to categorise the negative "Other." The table also indicates that *Arrows* has the highest number of slang. Next to *Arrows* is *Angels*, with a high number of slang referring to substance. *Rusted Roofs* has the least number of slang; this is followed by *Planet*. Besides the predominant use of Yoruba in *Rusted Roofs* that accounts for the relatively low use of slang, women are generally mindful of their lexical choices. In the case of *Planet*, there is the use of Pidgin, which allows direct references to discourse items. Hence, there are limited innovative ways of referring to drinks and drinking habits. These categories of slang and how they are used to construct identities are discussed in turn.

4.2.1 "Slanging" Sexual Identities

Table 4.5 illustrates that 44% of slang expressions belong to the category of sexual identities. The table below presents the slang in this category, their meaning, source and the novels they are taken from.

Table 4.6: Sexual Slang

S/N	Slang	Contextual Meaning	Source	Novels
1.	A gun	A functional penis	War	*Angels* (p.162)
2.	Favoured customer	Sexual partner	Style	*Angels* (p.85)
3.	Power Platoon	Girls that are reserved for sex	Military	*Arrows* (p.115)
4.	Disvirgin	To uncork a drink	Style	*Arrows*(p.116)
5.	Standby	Concubine	Military	*Arrows* (p.160)
6.	Bush meat	Ladies used as flings	Nigerian English	*Arrows* (p.217)
7.	Major Penis	Perfect love maker	Military	*Arrows* (p.158)
8.	Service	To have sex	Technology	*Planet* (p.274)
9.	Servicing	To have sex	Technology	*Rusted Roofs* (p.42)
10.	Bearded snail	Vagina	Culture	*Rusted Roofs*(p.194)

As discussed earlier, *Arrows* has the highest number of slang and majority of the slang are connected to military dictatorship in Nigeria. Critically, it captures the people's odium for military dictatorship and the military's promiscuous identity. The slang expressions in this category are used to describe male and female reproductive parts, the act of sex, the instruments of sex and females. Except for *disvigin*, *service* and *servicing* which

are used as main verbs in the context of use, all the slang in this category are noun phrases in both their simple and compound forms. While the verbs describe sexual acts, the nominal slang function as names which the discourse participants use to identify sexual organs in specific contexts. (This explicates, in a way, the linguistic features of slang; they are only meaningful to members of a speech community.)

Majority of the slang are euphemistic ways of describing the act of sex. For instance, *service* (taken from *Planet* p. 274) and *servicing* (taken from *Rusted Roofs* p. 42) are euphemistic descriptions of sex. The euphemisms incarnate people's employment of indirect ways to refer to sex. In Nigeria, as in most cultures of the world, sex is upheld as a sacred activity exclusively reserved for married people. This is why, Sikira, Alhaji's third wife, tells Alake:

> "…Look, if she wants to pay for the way he is 'servicing' her, it is her problem. You don't stop a young girl from growing large vagina, so far she can grow enough hair to cover it. If you tell those young girls not to fuck now, they grow restless." (*Rusted Roofs*, p. 42)

Servicing, as used by Sikira, indicates the proliferation of terms available to denote the same referent by the women's evaluation of the various alternative ways, both positive and negative. The slang, in its progressive tense form, has a metapragmatic undertone. As a metapragmatic discourse, the exchange between Alake and Sikira invokes familiar characteristics of slang as a generation-specific lexicon associated with taboo topics that are creative and rapidly changing. But the interaction is also an act in the construction of identity. When Sikira used the innovative term *servicing*, she constitutes a layer of identity construction. By drawing on the ideology of sex as a reserve for the married, Sikira and Alake are able to position themselves as adults in contrast to teenagers, Rafiu and Mulika, and particularly as adults who are familiar with the lexicon of sexual acts. The identity formation is to differentiate themselves from teenagers who are not knowledgeable enough to participate in sexual activities. The question is: does one have to be knowledgeable about sex? From the cultural background of the discourse participants, if one is not knowledgeable about sexual acts, it will result in unwanted pregnancy. This position is inferred from Sikira's reply that: "Doesn't she (Mulika) know she can get pregnant?" (p. 42). The adverb

"now" clarifies that sex requires time, and "those young girls" are admonished to stay off sex until they are married. Critically, the ideology of sex is suggested beyond just the slang *servicing* to include Sikira's dislike for Rafiu who has been considered the "bad boy of the family." It is from such background knowledge that Sikira's identity construction becomes meaningful.

In the next example, however, Iyese uses a slang to redefine the penetration of her sexual identity. She tells Ogugua:

> 'He raped me twice that night. When I threatened to report his unfaithfulness to his wife he laughed and said that his religion entitled him to four wives and any number of concubines. I became his standby: whenever his wife went away he called me to warm his bed….' (*Arrows*, p. 160)

Standby is a noun that describes a state of readiness to act. In the context of the novel, however, the lexical item is used as slang and its meaning has been extended to include a sexual partner who is only needed to warm Major Isa's bed when his wife is away. The time frame captured in the adverbial, *when*, and the noun clause, *whenever his wife went away*, brings out the depth of the meaning of *standby*: it is a sexual act that happens at calculated intervals, reducing Iyese to a mere object that is used to satisfy a man's sexual urge. The slang, which is a Nigerian military term, is used in the discourse situation because the person that performs the sexual act, Major Isa, is a military officer. In other words, there is a symbolic conjunction between the act and the actor: the slang expresses the social identity of the referent. Moreover, when Iyese uses the expression, Ogugua understands because they both belong to the same sub-culture. The slang as used by Iyese entails two discursive manoeuvres. First, it is resistant; in the sense that she expresses a willingness to reconstruct her identity. Second, a corollary of the first, her epiphanic self-identification triggers her questioning of Major Isa's transgression of her sexuality. Interestingly, Iyese understands the derogatory depth of the slang and her rejection of being a *standby*, someone who is only needed to satisfy a man's sexual urge, informs her rejection of such a dehumanising social identity. The use of *standby* is a criticism of military promiscuity as well as Iyese's dissonance with the way some military officers rape hapless sex workers.

Culturally, except when used by adults, the act of sex is an unmentionable thing: it is

a taboo to speak of sex in its real sense. It is the ideology of "unmentionability" which is embedded in the cultural ethos of most cultures that triggers Lomba's discursive strategy when a sex worker asks him for sex. He says:

> He shakes his head. The news has left him confused. 'I like you…but I am impotent,' he says at last, 'I don't have a gun.' (*Angel*, p.162)

Lomba and his boss, James Fiki, were trying to escape from Abacha's killer-squad when they met Gladys in a bar. When the sex worker, Gladys, demonstrates desperation to have sex with Lomba, he first tells her that he is impotent. Lomba's impotence is not in the denotative sense (as in inability to sleep with a woman) but its meaning can be fleshed out by an exophoric reference to the prevailing circumstance of military oppression which the expression is anchored. Lomba's inability to exercise his manliness is informed by the fact that his identity as a man has been infringed upon by the dominant members of the military junta who threaten his life. Therefore, Lomba's sexual impotency correlates with his powerlessness. The discourse progresses in a calculating manner and later, Lomba tells Gladys that he has no *gun*. *Gun* refers to the male organ. The identification of sex as a fierce battleground for the exercise of caution is imbued in the slang *gun*. It presupposes that the male organ works in the same manner as the gun, i.e. it can load a bullet and shoot at its target. In Lomba's case, he has the bullet (his male organ) but not the gun (a penis that has been rendered impotent by the prevailing circumstance of military hegemony). The pragmatic signification can be extrapolated from the fact that if one goes to a war without a gun, one stands the chance of being killed. Thus even when Lomba admits that he likes Gladys, he would not go to a *war* with her without *a gun*. Consequently, Lomba's linguistic construction of sex as war is a derivative of the military's use of gun in hunting down its antagonists. Invariably, Lomba would not have run away from those who were after him if he had had a *gun*.

However, in *Rusted Roofs, bearded snail*, an idiom that functions in a euphemistic way to refer to the vagina, is used to conceal the meaning of the referent. The slang is capable of differentiating social belonging, as it is an expression that is only known to adults. This is why after listening to this song:

It was in Lagos that I learnt to eat bearded snail.
With my banana, I eat bearded snail.

A boy who does not know the meaning of *bearded snail* is forced to ask his mother:

> "*Moomi*," a boy tugged at his mother's cloth, "What is bearded snail?" (*Rusted Roof*s, p. 194)

By not knowing the meaning of *bearded snail,* the boy is strategically removed from the discourse process. His lack of knowledge demonstrated in his inability to interpret *bearded snail* excludes him from what is being discussed. Implicitly, the use of *bearded snail* categorises the discourse participants into two groups: the older generation who are familiar with the lexicon of sex and sexual organs and the younger generation who are "inexperienced" with the lexicon of sex and sexual organs.

Similarly, the slang *disvirgin (Arrows,* p. 116), even when it is used to mean to uncork a drink, explains, in a far reaching way, how human activities are given feminine identity. To *disvirgin* a drink, perhaps, is like having sexual intercourse with a virgin. Critically, the slang describes male construction of females as manipulative objects. Moreover, it opens a linguistic window onto the identity of the user, Reuben, a promiscuous top government functionary who has a reserve of *power platoon*. Power platoon (*Arrows,* p. 115) describes a group of girls who are exclusively kept for sex. The expression *power platoon* captures in disturbing ways the social reality of modern day sex trade (slavery), where many ladies are forced into providing sexual satisfaction to men. It should, however, be noted that it is not only women that get disvirgined. The interpretation proffered here is in line with the context in which the expression is used.

The slang *favoured customer* shows Lomba's sympathetic gesture at a woman who is compelled by harsh economic realities to indulge in the commercialisation of sex:

> …Sometimes a favoured customer would stay behind after the others had left, and deep into the night when I sat down to write, her exaggerated moans and the creaking of the bed beneath them were sore trials to me. (*Angel*, p. 85)

Hidden in the slang is Lomba's identification with a nameless woman who because of unavoidable circumstances keeps *favoured customers* in order to earn a living. By not

naming the woman, the effect of her promiscuous behaviour is weakened. In other words, the use of *favoured customer* is semantically loaded: it is neither condemnatory nor chauvinistic as in the preceding example. Rather, it expresses Lomba's solidarity, as the slang has an associative move of involvement and understanding of the woman's predicament. Invariably, the woman is encouraged to keep as many as possible *favoured customers*; as Lomba also became a *favoured coustomer*.

Evident in the foregoing discussion is the exposition of slang as complex discourse strategies that articulate the emotions of the users. The slang are laden with pronominal features (she, he, her him and I), weak modal verbs (would, etc) and definite articles (the); which all collaborate to indicate discourse participants involvement and associative moves to the people addressed. They are therefore cultural, symbolic and discursive formations that structure and are equally structured by the communicative needs of speech communities. The next sets of examples examine the re-lexicalisation of slang in the contestation of identities.

4.2.2 Slang and "Othering"

In the data, slang function as discourse strategies which discourse participants work upon to resist people and situations they consider inimical to their existence. The slang in this category are presented in the table below:

Table 4.7: Slang Describing Resistance

S/N	Slang	Contextual Meaning	Source	Text
1.	Settlement matter	To give a bribe	Corruption	*Angel(p.84)*
2.	Money mis road	Well-to-do people who mis use their riches	Nigerian pidgin	*Planet*
3.	Obtain	To forcefully collect money from someone.	Thuggery	*Rusted Roofs*
4.	Bust the lecture	Forgo the lecture	Education	*Angels(p.65)*
5.	Press boys	Derogatory reference for journalists.	Journalism	*Arrows(p. 113)*
6.	I don't send anybody	I don't care/have no regard For anyone	Nigerian Pidgin	*Rusted Roofs(p.92)*
7.	A decree	Hegemonic dominance	Military	*Rusted Roofs(p.119)*
8.	Weed	Marijuana	Metaphor	*Angel (109)*
9.	Different high	A high form/level of intoxication derived from taking marijuana.	Metaphor	*Angel (p. 109)*
10.	Pure water	Spirits/alcohol	Metaphor	*Angel(p.108)*

Grammatically, all the items in this category, except for *bust the lecture* which functions as an imperative, *obtain* a verb, and *I don't send anybody* which is used as a declarative, are noun phrases. Two out of these items function as names (*press boy and money mis road*). Some of the slang, more especially those taken from *Angel*, refer basically to drinks and substances. Beyond their uses as slang for substances, they are used to represent people's points of view. The items under this category are drawn from education, journalism, military dictatorship and Nigerian pidgin expressions. They explain identity

categories that range from group identification through group differentiation to the expression of delinquent behaviour.

In *Angel*, for example, the expression *pure water* is slang for alcohol with a metaphoric signification. Nancy tells Kela:

> 'She makes enough from the restaurant. More than enough, but she spends most of it on drink. She calls it "pure water", Nancy said grudgingly, as if I was forcing the words out of her mouth. She was that way: she hated to dwell on anything that threw a bad light on my auntie. (*Angel*, p. 108)

Nancy explains to Kela that his auntie, Auntie Rachael, makes a lot of money from her restaurant, but she spends most of the money on *pure water*. In the above example, Nancy's attitude distances her from Auntie Rachael. She says "she calls it pure water". It is what Auntie Rachael calls it but not her, Nancy. The syntactic inclusion of the agent *she* creates a discourse of the antagonistic *other*. The direct reference to the agent expresses Nancy's identity construction in resistance to those who spend their earnings on *pure water*. Two things are noteworthy up to this point. First, Nancy uses the slang to "dismember" herself from Auntie Rachael's group who spend their earnings on *pure water*. Second, she uses the slang to sensitise Kela to Auntie Rachael's spending as well as her alcoholic habit. The expression achieves Nancy's aim as she persuades Kela to see the reason Auntie Rachael has to give up her *pure water*.

Similarly, *weed*, slang for marijuana, is used by Kela to describe his father's outdatedness. He reports:

> 'I caught him smoking weed, in my car. Weed, at is age. He failed his exams, now he is smoking weed!' I wondered in a detached, clinical way why my father kept referring to it as 'weed'. It sounded so old-fashioned. My friend had over ten names for it, all so new, so creative. (*Angel*, p.109)

Again, one sees how slang functions as an ingroup communication code, aimed at excluding non-members or non-initiates of a group. While Kela's father uses *weed,* an old and familiar name for marijuana that most know, Kela with his younger generation of friends has several "creative" ways of referring to *weed*. Whatever Kela and his friends call *weed*, it is a secret language. And thus, it is more or less the reason different groups at different times and

periods have constructed their own slang as a language only the ingroup can identify with. Kela's amazement at his father's inability to create names for marijuana is an act of "othering": indicating the differences that exist between two distinct groups. It is a rejection of the old other. Kela rebuffs his father's generation's inability to create newer names for existing things, and so he projects that idea that linguistic creativity and fluidity are common with his own generation. Invariably, Kela's resistance to the use of *weed* expresses his affiliation with his generation, and disaffiliation with the *other* (his father's) group whose linguistic repertoire is insufficient in naming things. In the end, Kela succeeds in projecting the linguistic identity of his group who has *over ten names for weed*.

Also, there is the use of *bust the lecture* to express distance from the negative other. Taken from *Angel*, it is used by a university student, Alice. To *bust a lecture* means to deliberately forgo a lecture. In the context of the novel, Lomba tells Alice that he cannot take her round as Dr Kazeem would have him do because he has a lecture to attend. But Alice asks him to *bust the lecture*. Alice's use of the slang is polemical and has an empathy-establishing tactic: it is aimed at making Lomba to see the need why he has to forgo his lecture. Though the slang projects Alice as an unserious student, as Lomba later reveals, the expression shows that slang is, as it is with students of other cultures, a part and parcel of Nigerian university students' communicative behaviour. *Bust the lecture* shows a correlation between what the slang connotes and the actual theme or aspect of the students' lives on campus. *Bust the lecture*, a linguistic feature of semantic shift characteristic of most slang expressions, works effectively as an ingroup communicative code which is meaningful to Alice and Lomba because they share the same identity as students of the same university. It significantly leaves a representation in the mental architecture of Lomba that lectures, at the university level, are not compulsory. Alice therefore demonstrates an inkling to live her life the way it suits her rather than have the University, represented by Dr Kazeem, dictate her life.

This kind of resistance to perceived domination is also seen in Rafiu's use of *I don't send anybody*. He angrily tells his father:

> "Look, Alhaji", he said, rising up to his father, "you don't want me to look you in your eyes?"
> "You will abuse me?"
> "I can! I don't send anybody!" So saying, he pushed Alhaji aside and left the house… (*Rusted Roofs*, p. 92)

I Don't send anybody translates as "not to have regard for anyone, irrespective of the person's age or status." The slang is basically used by the younger generation of Nigerians to show disagreements with other people's opinions. However, in *Rusted Roofs*, Rafiu uses the slang to imply that he does not care what neither his father nor his uncle, Lamidi, thinks about his being a political thug. When he uses the expression with his friends, they understand because, like in the use of *bust the lecture* in the preceding example, *I don't send anybody* functions as an ingroup communicative code. Moreover, the slang exposes Rafiu's conscientious effort targeted at dislodging himself from the control of his family.

Similarly, the expression *money mis road*, which describes well-to-do people who do not know what to do with their riches, shows the process of slang formation. Some of the slang in the data are formed from Nigerian pidgin expressions. In *Planet*, *money mis road* is used to describe Chief Agga, an over eighty-year-old man, who married a seventeen-year-old girl. The people feel it is because Chief Agga does not know what to do with his money that he marries at over eighty-years of age. The pidginised slang is widely understood by Nigerians. It presupposes a tacit agreement among users of Nigerian pidgin, as it may not be accessible to non-Nigerians or those who have not lived in Nigeria for some time. The slang, therefore, expresses a Nigerian identity. However, it is used to resist the idea of marrying at the age of eighty.

Furthermore, slang functions as a sociolect: a linguistic creation that meets the communicative needs of a social group. When Ogugua attends one of Reuben's parties, Reuben introduces him to his fellow ministers, one of them calls Ogugua a rat:

> …The other ministers murmured and grumbled that they did not want press boys at their parties. (*Arrows*, p. 113)

Press boys, as used in this context, has a derogatory intent. Most politicians can hardly hide their disdain for a journalist because of the latter's exposure of their heinous activities. The use of *press boys* reiterates an earlier position that slang mirrors social

conflict. The ministers are angry that Ogugua, who is a journalist, has written an article about a minister's corrupt actions. So the use of *press boys* creates a confrontational discourse, a battle ground of *we* against *them*. It is a strategic *legitimization* of the ministers' ideological value and a demonstration of resistance aimed at disregarding the identity of journalists. It shows the ideological divide that holds between politicians and journalists. In activating the slang, the ministers create distance to the antagonistic *other (*the journalist) and establish their membership of their ingroup (the political group). *Press boys*, therefore, functions as an antagonistic discourse move which the ministers use to resist the proliferation of their group. In resisting Ogugua, the ministers legitimise the ideological positioning of their group.

Moreover, *a decree* which generally refers to military laws has been recontextualised to refer to the antagonistic *other*, the military:

> "Both of you had better shut up your mouths." *Iyawo* said. "Can't you see that WAI man going? You want a decree to carry you?" (*Rusted Roofs*, p. 119)

that oppress ordinary Nigerians. By and large, the expression captures the people's dissonance with military laws that made them prisoners in their own country. The term, *decree*, is re-lexicalised to go beyond a term for military laws to capture policies and programmes that dehumanised Nigerians. This discursive strategy draws attention to the neatly intertwined interface between the micro and macro levels of discourse. *A decree* in the context of this novel does not only refer to military laws, but also a set of people who use the instrument of power to inflict hardship on the Nigerian people. The situation is so bad that even children are constrained from playing. However, the slang narrates the people's resistance to situations that are inimical to their existence. The slang has a disaffiliating strategy, as it indicates that *a decree* has a sinister undertone. The slang is given a human figure, thereby making condemnation of military hegemonic dominance more visible and resentful. The interpretation of slang in this unit shows the dynamic ways in which slang can be put to use in the demonstration of dissent and the polemic contestation of identities.

The uses of slang have been examined in this section. To unpack the linguistic

functions of slang, it was split, as seen in the data, into two distinct categories of identity construction: sexual identities, and slang of othering. The next section examines lexical items with religious significations and how they construct identity.

4.3 Religious Indexications

The items discussed here are basically drawn from the pool of religious discourse. The religious items are taken from Islam, Christianity and Traditional African Religion. The religious expressions in the data are mostly composed of noun phrases; examples of these noun phrases include *burnt offering* (*Angels*, p. 153), *the white building* (*Planet*, p. 134) and *a den of thieves* (*Arrows*, p. 120). There is just an instance of a prepositional phrase, *in vain* (*Arrows*, p. 38). Both the noun phrases and the prepositional phrase are used to construct legitimising identity as well as resistance identity. The use of abstract pronominal elements such as *they*, *him* and *them* (*Angel*, p. 62) and *them*, *us*, *we* and *Him* (*Rusted Roofs*, p. 171), which abound in the texts, are used strategically to delineate identities and indicate powerlessness. There is also the use of an imperative sentence, *Be still (Rusted Roofs*, p. 83*)* to exert control. Some of the religious expressions are deployed along with discourse indexicals such as *those* (p. 120) and *this* (p. 126), all in *Rusted Roofs*. These indexical markers are used by discourse participants to indicate a point of dissension and conflictual moves towards the antagonistic "Other." These linguistic items woven into the religious expressions provide illuminating insights on how identity, language and religion are neatly intertwined.

A significant discourse strategy identified in the data is the use of religious beliefs to define and redefine discourse participants' communal behaviour. Religious expressions are found in the sampled novels as discourse devices that are deployed to frame self in positive light, resist as well as to represent the views of the powerless group. The section, therefore, considers the myriad of uses to which religious indexicals, as resources for the discursive construction of identity, can be put.

4.3.1. Religious Indexicals and Positive Self-framing

In legitimising identity, the dominant class relies on supposedly known religious beliefs to perpetuate its control over the dominated. Religion in this type of identity

construction is aimed to enlighten the understanding, reorganise the imagination, move the passion and influence the religious will of the dominated. This is exemplified in:

> '…It is a blatant and willful show of disrespect to the person and office of His Excellency, the Life President of the sovereign Republic of Madia. Let me sound a strong warning, once and for all: this court will not sit idly by and allow you to use the name of His Excellency in vain!' (*Arrows*, p. 38)

The above warning is issued in a court of law where Bukuru, the alleged murderer of Tay Tay, a sex worker, is reminded of the supremacy of Madia's president. Bukuru tries to convince the court that the President, Isa Bello, is a murderer, but the court does not believe his claims. The judge uses a biblical expression which is drawn from the seventh Commandment (Exodus 20:1-17) to dispel Bukuru's claim, as well as equate the President with the almighty God.

The pragmatism of the judge's biblical reference and the irrational comparison between God and the President is to compel Bukuru to cease accusing the President of the murder. The judge, who is a member of the dominant class, derives the strength of his argument from the Madia culture with its deep religiosity to frame the interest of his group not only in a domineering way, but also in a positive light. Religious values are a very powerful source for constructing the specific identity of the dominant class. In reminding Bukuru of the President's godly status (as can be inferred from the use of the adjective "life", giving the President an immortal attribute), language functions as the battle ground for the tendentious activity of making the known explicitly obvious, as a means of achieving the communicative intent of the language user. The pronoun *it*, for instance, is strategically placed in the sense that the judge presupposes that at its mention Bukuru's verbal behaviour will be reorganised to a subservient level. The pronoun's strategic use evaluates Bukuru's verbal agitation as inappropriate. The judge's exploitation of biblical allusion is also speculative, i.e., he believes that Bukuru is oblivious of the grave consequences of using the president's *name in vain*. The strategic goal of the judge's biblical expression is to transform Bukuru's reasoning, to inform him of his inability to confront the esteemed identity of the President who equals God. This fulfills the discourse function of establishing an implicit comparison and building a contrast between two apparently incompatible identities: one a

God and the other a "mere" murderer.

In the next example religious expressions are utilised to project the interest of a man:

> …Baba n'sale asked if she was undressed and she quickly loosened her wrapper. He came on top of her and she did her best to stay in one place despite the bed which kept making her buttocks enter into that large hole where the springs were loose.
> "Be still!" he commanded in a loud whisper.
> "It's not my fault," she whimpered." It is the bed." (*Rusted Roofs*, p. 83)

Adelakun's adaptation above of a biblical passage fits perfectly into the context in which the sexual activity takes place. The imperative, *Be still*!, is commonly associated with Jesus (Mark 4:39) who used it to calm a turbulent wave that threatened to capsize His boat. Baba n'sale adopts it in this situation to command Risi to maintain a favoured sexual posture. Again, one sees how a religious expression is deployed by the dominant class to manipulate the dominated. Moreover, Baba n'sale exploits his Yoruba cultural (Yoruba has a strong culture of respect, which distributes social labels on the basis of greater or lesser) status of a husband as a logical anchor to construct a dominant identity for himself. This ideological conjunction i.e. a combination of religious values and extant traditional values, in a far reaching manner, exposes the very nature of identity construction. In furthering the hegemonic ideology of an individual or a group, language users exploit every available material to institutionalise their control over others.

Besides the fact that Baba n'sale is Risi's husband and given the operative cultural background, Baba n'sale's use of language (an imperative) suggests the capacity of language to affect, as well as determine non-linguistic behaviour. The sexual encounter also reveals how language is entrenched in the activity of exerting control over the dominated. The ideology of control which Baba n'sale demonstrates is rooted in the religious matrix that a man has conjugal rights over his wife. Though the biblical context differs from that of *Rusted Roofs*, the ideological significance of control and authority are made explicit. The imperative *Be still* is both epistemic and interactional: it is interactional because it indexes the social role of a husband over his wife and it is epistemic because it carries the power of the almighty and systematically Baba n'sale assumes the divine posture of the creator such that at uttering the imperative, Risi capitulates until the end of the sexual act.

A similar reference to the Bible is seen in the following passage from Egbosun's *Planet*:

> …She hugged her dearest friend who had given up road sweeping for her father's promise of money. Oh! Her father would be so happy, he would be so grateful to her for persuading Maureen to accept the offering, his sin-offering, even though he said it was for the love of God! (*Planet*, p. 253)

It happens that Toundi leaves Araba's house on the grounds that she caught him sleeping with her friend, Yiba. On her way home, Toundi meets a woman who helps to pay her fare to her parents, to whom she had lied that she was spending the holiday at Yiba's. Unknown to Toundi, the woman, Maureen, who paid her transportation, had been raped by Toundi's father several years ago. Maureen got pregnant as a result of the rape but never saw Wenni, Toundi's father, again until Toundi came into the picture. Moved by Maureen's poverty, Toundi persuades her father to give Maureen some money so as to relieve her of the road sweeping job.

Wenni gives Maureen the money Toundi proposed not because she said so, but as a *sin offering* (see Leviticus 5:7), an atonement for the sin he committed some years ago. Wenni succeeds in dominating his daughter's reasoning by displaying his identity as a father who does what his children require of him. Oblivious of her father's display of such magnanimity, Toundi is quite happy that her father did what she said. On his part, Wenni makes it appear as if all he does is to live for his family. When Toundi knows later, she is disappointed in her father.

Closely related to the above example is Habila's description of the event that led to the burning of the office of *The Dial*:

> They see the fire about two blocks away. The smoke rises thickly in a stiff, steady stream, like an obelisk – as if conveying the essence of a *burnt offering* to the heavens. *The Dial* has a whole building to itself, the building was once a house, a duplex, before it was bought and converted to an office. (*Angel*, p. 153)

In the above example, Habila's use of the noun phrase captures the actual process of a burnt offering. The animal that is to be offered is reduced to ashes, and as the smoke streams to heaven, it implies that the offering has been accepted. Though the pro-Abacha agents who burnt *The Dial* consider their act as a punishment and the end of the editor's, James', career

for his critical comments of Abacha's government, James sees the burning of *The Dial* as a *burnt offering*, as a sacrifice that will pave the way for the institutionalisation of democracy as well as the freedom of the press, to which he, the press and other pro-democracy activists have given their lives. The underlining identity meaning is that God is supreme and exerts control over every human activity. Contextually, the biblical expression is anchored to the historical framework of military dictatorship and the price some Nigerians paid for the democratisation of Nigeria. James' indifferent attitude as seen in: '*The office is gone', Lomba shouts, unable to understand James' calm indifference* (p.153) performs two functions. One, it is to persuade Lomba to understand the risk involved in resisting a dominant ideology. Two, it is to control Lomba's reaction. However, the religious expression, *burnt offering*, illustrates how identity projection can become very violent. The pro-Abacha agents who burnt *The Dial* are agents of the dominant class who strive to maintain the identity of their bosses. Since they benefit from such services, they will do anything to maintain the status quo.

In the following fragment taken from *Arrows*, a man tells in his lawyer that:

> 'My wife is a whore. She sleeps with every man who asks. I want to cut her loose. Now!' (*Arrows*, p.155)

The above example demonstrates a man's dissension with his wife's adulterous behaviour and he tells his lawyer that he wants *to cut his wife loose*, an indirect reference to divorce, implying that the wife is involved in extra-marital sex. The declarative *cut loose* draws from the biblical account where Jesus sets an adulterous woman "loose" (i.e. free) from being stoned to death by a mob. The speaker's religious description of divorce derives from the ideological persuasion that it is unholy, unbiblical and unacceptable for a woman to commit adultery. For the man *to cut his wife loose* is not to give her the freedom to continue to have sex with as many men as she can. Rather, *to cut her loose* implies that the woman's marital status constraints her sexual escapades. Critically, the man assumes (as demonstrated by the possessive adjective "my"), like in the example drawn from *Rusted Roofs*, a Jesus figure, where he demonstrates the authority of setting someone free from sins. The identity construction belongs to a matrix of Christian fundamentalism in which an individual's behaviour must be consistent with God's law. The next section examines the use of religious indexes in the expression of "powerlessness."

4.3.2 Religious Indexication of "Powerlessness"

Another interesting aspect of the data on religion is how religion works as a material power of differential. Many, as expounded in the novels under consideration, believe that God controls everything in the universe and He reprimands everyone who does evil. In *Angel* for example, when Bola becomes mentally retarded owing to his family's sudden and shocking death coupled with the torture he gets from security agents, Auntie Rosa submits:

> 'See what they have done to him! God will pay them back!' Auntie Rosa cried. Uncle Bode got up and walked out to pace the veranda. (*Angel*, p. 62)

Auntie Rosa's submission of Bola's dehumanisation to God demonstrates an escapist attitude. Her inability to confront the powerful security agents who are responsible for the calamity that befalls her family makes her hide in the ability of a more powerful being, God. Castells acknowledges the general important role of religious values for human beings and maintains that it is a human attribute "to find solace and refuge in religion…for the fear of death and the pain of life" (1997:12). Auntie Rosa's argumentative paradigm and the syntactic selection are worthy of note in this fragment. The expression *See what they have done to him!* - the agentless feature has an unspecified pronoun: *they* - as Auntie Rosa does not indicate who had threatened Bola to death. The agent is recovered from the country's context of military dictatorship. The suppression of a human agent is a discourse frame which invokes a background knowledge that Auntie Rosa presupposes is shared with Lomba: this linguistic strategy brings to mind the life threat from the groups who held power against those with a different ideology during Abacha's military dictatorship. The relative strength of condemnation renders the discourse as primarily evaluative, as Auntie Rosa clearly renders the molestation of Bola as an unspeakably evil act. However, the relative weakness is worth mentioning. That is, there is nothing said about the horrible injuries Bola sustained and, by extension, of the lost lives that accompanied such a historical moment. Importantly, Auntie Rosa's submission to the will of God is that God fights on behalf of His people. Hypothetically, the domination of the dominated by the dominating group is the latter's awareness that the former's responses to public issues are largely sunk in their religious ideology of submission.

The seeking of solace under the auspices of religion is also demonstrated in:

> "Alhaji', the chief *alfa* said. "Hand them over to God's court, that is it. You have no might to fight them. Let God do that for you. It is His will that the boy will be killed so early in life, let us not question Him. Who are we to question Him anyway?" (*Rusted Roofs*, p. 171)

Jimoh, Alhaji's son, is shot by some soldiers at the University when they are protesting against SAP, Babangida's economic programme. The chief *alfa*, a Muslim priest, admonishes Alhaji to handover the killer of Jimoh to God. The *alfa* clarifies, through persuasion and rational argumentation, that there is a court where everyone will appear before God to give account of their activities on earth. The *alfa's* reconstruction of Islamic identity is on the basis that God has control over the universe and its inhabitants. Anchoring his argument on the principles of Islam, the *alfa* explicitly reorganises Alhaji's thinking that the only "safe haven" in such a malicious world is *God's court*. The rhetorical question strategically silences Alhaji as well as reminds him that no mortal has the right to question God's authority. The alfa draws this from the Holy Qur'an "7.126" and also "16.87" where Allah commands ultimate submission to His will over man because He is wiser than man. Through reference to Allah, therefore, the *alfa* makes Alhaji to see that his ferocious emotional display is inappropriate. Evidently, a known religious expression has had a great control over Alhaji's symbolic understanding of God's vengeance. Another significant feature of the extract is the absence of specific references. The focus is on Alhaji's behaviour and the solace people should find in Allah's ultimate will in times of trouble. This abstract focus on Alhaji's behaviour and the consoling power of the Almighty rather than on those who killed Jimoh suggests a high sense of self-discipline, which is an attribute of religious nobility. This has led to the deployment of abstract pronominal *them* (referring to the military) and the neutral term, *the boy* (referring to Jimoh) instead of specific nominal references. Moreover, there is the careful pronominal selection. The pronoun, "we" is used to refer to human beings who, as Allah's creation, do not have the right to question the almighty, represented by the pronoun "Him." The pronominal selection strategically draws a demarcation between two incompartible identities: ordinary motals and the almighty Allah. These are, however, targeted at invoking solidarity and cooperation.

The above examples reveal that both Muslims and Christians do not have the

tendency to fight back against provocations but instead hand over their provocateurs to God. But many scholars have argued that rather than liberate people, religion enslaves them. These scholars argue that religion does not provide a practical platform for the enslaved to question the enslaver.

Fukuyama, a scholar of such persuasion, in his book *The End of History and the Last Man* argues that:

> The problem with *religion*, however, is that it remains just another slave ideology, that is, it is untrue in certain crucial respects. *Religion* posits the realization of human freedom not here on earth but only in the kingdom of Heaven. *Religion*, in other words, had the right concept of freedom, but ended up reconciling real-world slaves to their lack of freedom by telling them not to expect liberation in this life (Fukuyama, 1992:198, italics mine).

Explicit in Fukuyama's argument is that religion represses the individual's will to fight for their right, to question as well as rise against dominant structures. Therefore, at least from Fukuyama's point of view, submission to the will of God is escapist: a smoke-mirror by which the powerless shield their inability to stand up to those who enslave them.

There is also an escapist attitude in the following context:

> "Rashidi, why did you do this to your own brother?" the men asked him.
> "It is not me, please; it is the work of *Esu."* (*Rusted Roofs,* p. 85)

The above example suggests that it is also a human feature to shift blame to the devil for one's mischief. In Yoruba religious belief system, *Esu* is the god of mischief. Instead of taking responsibility for sleeping with his elder brother's wife, Rashidi resorts to throwing the blame on Esu, the master-mischief-maker. While the use of the emphatic adjective "own" makes Rashidi's transgression of his brother's conjugal right visible and an an unexpected behaviour capable of breaking blood ties, Rashidi's argumentative tactic, aimed at placating his aggrieved father and family members, is drawn from his encyclopaedic knowledge of Esu's impish capabilities. Therefore, he works out his argument by activating the macro religious background knowledge his listeners and he share: that Esu has the power to make decent men engage in morally decadent behaviour. The adoption of the Yoruba expression enables Rashidi to "self-categorise" himself, through positive

associations, as a hapless being in the all-powerful hands of Esu. The examination of religious expressions in this section exposes individuals' use of religion to excuse their inactions.

In concluding this segment of religious expressions and the construction of "powerless" identity, it is important to stress that this escapist religious attitude, which is found in the data, may not apply to every situation. There are instances where religious ideals have inspired agency: a platform for the contestation of interests between the dominant and dominated groups. Martin Luther's revolutionary movement in the United States and the current Arab Awakening are clear-cut examples of how religion can inspire social actions.

4.3.3 Religious Indexicals and Resistance Identity

As the last examples have shown, religious expressions can be involved in constructing a powerless identity for one who seeks solace and refuge in God's "haven". The last examples in the analysis investigate the use of religious metaphors in the expression of resistance. In *Planet*, for instance, Egbuson uses a religious expression to describe Wenni's attitude:

> Wenni was relieved to be out of the white building which had turned eerie to him like a sepulcher. One of Dr Odussa's drivers took him and his daughter… (*Planet*, p. 134)

A Sepulcher is mostly used in the Bible to refer to a tomb. Also, Jesus speaking to the Pharisees said: "Woe to you! You whited sepulchers"… (Matt. 23:27) to describe the Pharisees who looked beautiful outwardly but inwardly filled with unclean thoughts. The noun phrase, the white building, which contextually rhymes with *sepulcher*, describes Wenni's disillusionment with Dr Odussa's business. As Wenni visits Odussa's hospital, he is impressed by the massive building and the number of people he sees. So he asks his friend what he does. But Wenni is disappointed when Odussa tells him that he specialises in dictating the sex of the unborn baby, and that if the pregnant mother does not like the sex of the unborn baby, he cremates the fetus. Wenni comes to see Odussa's hospital as a graveyard hence his adoption of *sepulcher*. In terms of identity construction, the expression,

sepulcher, is loaded with negative associations, and functions as a means through which Wenni expresses his dissonance with a medical doctor who plays God. Besides the contextual appropriateness and the negative association of the biblical item, it ideologically mirrors the social difference that holds between those who "kill" and those who do not. This is why when Odussa fails to join Wenni for dinner, Wenni remarks that: *How will he come when he is busy killing human beings God created*? (p. 134) The use of *sepulcher* to describe Odussa's hospital reflects what he does in the hospital: it is a tomb where unborn babies are buried. Evidently, the religious formula connotes negative associations as well as a reproach to what Odussa does, given that no one has the right to terminate another's life. The hospital is replaced with the noun phrase, *the white building*, because rather than being a hospital where people are to be cured of their diseases, it is a *sepulcher* where children are killed.

Similarly, in *Arrows* a noun phrase functions as a strategy to distance one's self from *others*. Ogugua visits his friend, Reuben Ata, the Honourable Minister for Social Issues, and Reuben introduces Ogugua to his father, Pa Ata. After they have dinner, Pa Ata tells Ogugua:

> 'Reuben told me you 're writing something on corruption.'
> 'Yes. And I hear you are an expert.'
> He shook with laughter. 'Well, I hope he told you my expertise is in the theory, not the practice. But I once attended Reuben's party and shook hands with some of the most corrupt people in this country. It was like being in a den of thieves. (*Arrows*, p. 120)

There are always parties in Reuben's house and the parties are usually meant for top government functionaries, top military brass, business tycoons and expatriates. Being in the midst of this group of people to Pa Ata is like being in the *den of thieves*. Drawing from his biblical knowledge of Matthew 21:13 where Jesus cursed those who sold and bought in the temple, Pa Ata does not only liken his son's house to *a den of thieves*, but also draws a divide between himself and a set of people who pilfer the nation's treasury. Pa Ata's verbal duel, which relies on his religious knowledge, functions metapragmatically as a reproachful technique which sets him aside from the "thieving ministers". Though Pa Ata does not mention the ministers, the ministers as the discourse referents are recovered from the discourse participants' background knowledge of corruption in public offices.

According to the *Cambridge International Dictionary of English* (1995), to curse is "to say a word or sentence asking a magical power to cause something unpleasant to happen to someone or something." In *Rusted Roofs*, Sikira uses the name of God to curse:

> "If this WAI people should catch you," she warned.
> "WAI *ke*? Those ones are no longer existing. God has removed them like *jiga*. All those *Oloribukurus* that made our life difficult, God will punish them forever (*Rusted Roofs*, p. 142).

Sikira, who suffered untold dehumanisation during the Buhari/Idiabon military regime, tells Afusa that the regime has been overthrown. Sikira's discourse tactic is argumentative as well as assuring. The identity display is resistant and distancing, she uses the distal indexical marker *those* to differentiate herself from the opposition. She describes the opposition by alluding to existent discourses which she challenges and rebuffs emphatically (as evident in the interrogative *WAI ke?*) and she resorts to name calling *Oloribukurus* (a Yoruba expression for unfortunate people). Sikira's anger and irritation cause her to invoke the wrath of God on the people who made life painfully miserable for her and the members of her group. Sikira's vituperation is sunk in her religious beliefs that if someone deals unjustly with people, they can invoke the wrath of God on their offenders. The reliance on God to punish one's enemies strikes one as interesting because, as a feature of micro-discursive practice, an individual can employ irrational linguistic strategies to achieve an end.

Related to the above example is when *Iya* Mufuli uses a known religious concept as a construction material to resist Alake's economic behaviour. *Iya* Mufuli warns:

> "*Iya* Mufuli, please, give me some time."
> "Alake, you don't want me to use this mouth that has been fasting since morning to curse you? If not, go and look for my money right now. I am tired of you asking to keep coming tomorrow. There's always one tomorrow to follow tomorrow." (*Rusted Roofs*, P. 126)

Both *Iya* Mufuli and Alake share a common Islamic knowledge that at the period of fast one is expected to be meeker and holier. An important linguistic item worthy of mention is the proximal indexical "this." It indicates that both discourse participants are conversant with what is being described. However, *Iya* Mufuli uses the Islamic ideology of fasting to manipulate Alake's understanding. The Holy Qur'an in "2.183" guides against evil thoughts and actions during the period of fasting. However, *Iya* Mufuli's identity reformulation relies

on an individualistic ability to manipulate meaning out of her Islamic identity. And her verbal strategy has a maximum effect on Alake as she hurries to pay the debt. Alake paid the debt not because she wants to but because she fears the consequence of what will befall her if Sikira uses that *mouth that has been fasting since morning to curse* her. Aware of the spiritual aura of the period, Alake herself stresses this position thus: *"Iya Mufuli, how come it is during this most honourable month/that you come to collect a debt?"* The indexical marker *this*, as in the excerpt above, which functions principally as a demonstrative adjective, does not only index resistance to an economic behaviour, it also exponentially markoff boundaries between those who hold onto people's money and those whose interaction with other people is largely informed by their religious beliefs.

The effort so far has been the examination of how religious expressions function as construction material which discussants relies upon in the construction of identities. The analysed religious expressions function as *resistance identity*; they operate to establish the points of disruption and dissent by establishing distance from the *other*, to criticise other people's social activity and to invoke the wrath of God on their offenders. Religious expressions are also deployed to persuade *others* to believe in their views and to exert control over other people's behaviour. In the construction of identities with religious expressions, discourse participants work on the assumption that interractants in the discourse situation uphold the beliefs that are inferred. In the next section, the analytical search light is beamed onto euphemism and how it used to construct identity.

4.4 Euphemisms and the Construction of Identities

Euphemisms are described as words which mask as reality by giving it a better face. In discourse situations, euphemisms are deployed to construct identities along the lines of sexuality, generation, social class and professional groups. Most of the euphemisms that describe sex and sexual acts – sexual euphemisms being prominent in the data – are used as food items *(*"yam", *Rusted Roofs*, p. 85 and "fruit" *Angel*, p. 22) and as movement from one point to another ("go", *Rusted Roofs*, p. 143 and "making our son a man", *Arrows*, p. 136).

The uses of euphemisms in the sampled novels in subtle ways reflect the daily cultural existence of the discourse participants. Some of the euphemisms from the sampled novels, in relation to the identity forms constructed, are examined below.

4.4.1. Euphemisms as Subversive Form of Self-empowerment

Some euphemisms in the data point toward the subversive discourse strategy of empowering self. Such euphemistic expressions require the involvement of the discourse participants' witticism and interpretive acumen in order to achieve meaning. For instance, during a gossip, Sikira laments to Alake that:

> "Yet she will go into Alhaji. Instead of leaving those of us that can give birth alone to him," Sikira said and hissed.
> "She still goes in to Alhaji?" Alake asked but Sikira was not ready to start a fresh topic. (*Rusted Roofs*, P.143-4)

In sexual acts verbs such as *go* and *come* are used to describe movements. A journey can be defined as "a process of travelling from one place to another" (*Chambers 21st Century Dictionary*, 2004). The euphemism, *go* (an active verb) calls up the image of movement from one point to another and captures the actual experience of sexual intercourse. However, the meaning of the expression relies on the socio-cultural knowledge that is shared by the discourse participants. In the context of the novel, Sikira laments to Alake that in spite of Afusa's age, she still *goes* (has sexual intercourse) into Alhaji. The conjunction "yet" explicitely ties the meaning of Sikira's verbal choice together with her sexual identity reproduction. It makes the meaning of "go" coordinate Afusa's sexual engagement with Alhaji. So the expression *go* signifies the experience of love making. In terms of identity construction, Sikira distances herself from women, who in spite of their age, still have sexual intercourse with their husbands. Sikira and Afusa are both married to Alhaji and Sikira is the youngest of Alhaji's three wives. Alake, Sikira's friend, whom she laments to, is also the youngest wife of a polygamous marriage. So they are younger members of polygamous marriages and the polygamous milieu in which they operate provides materials for social identification as younger wives (self-empowered) who are entitled to sex with their husbands. Critically, Sikira's identity construction is informed by the exogenous ideology that the essentiality of sex between couples in most traditional African cultures is not for sexual pleasure but for procreation. According to this ideological sentiment, it is therefore out of place for Afusa to *go* into Alhaji since she has reached her menopause.

In the example that follows, Akidi is involved in extra-marital sex and when her husband confronts her, she tells her husband that her involvement in adulterous sex is because *the husband is not a man* (*Planet*, p. 170). The above euphemism, *not a man,* does not denote or refer to the componential meaning of a man. Rather, it is loaded with various conceptual and disassociative meanings which can only be understood on the wider matrix of the discourse participant's dissatisfaction with her husband's inability to satisfy her sexually. Akidi presupposes that her husband will infer that her involvement in extra-marital sex is prompted by the desire to derive sexual contentment, not for money or material things as her husband hitherto purports. Akidi's euphemistic choice has a pragmatic force of appealing to her listeners to hear the reason she indulges in extra-marital sex. Akidi's argumentation lies in the fact that her sexual act is not immoral. The deictic reference *that* has a mental reference: it refers to something both discourse participants are aware of, and it forms a platform for Akidi's defence of her sexual identity. The defensive mechanism is imbued in the sense that *to be a man* is to be able to meet the sexual needs of a woman. On the whole, Akidi's euphemistic choice is deconstructionist: it deconstructs the absolute autonomy of men over women, and also the fact that her husband is *not a man.* In the light of this, Akidi projects the idea that women whose husbands are *not men enough* are free to seek sexual satisfaction elsewhere. This act of reorganising social roles is what Castells (1997:9) describes as project identity, "the exclusion of the excluders by the excluded."

In *Rusted Roofs*, a euphemistic expression is used to question Rashidi's sexual exploit:

> "Rashidi, did I hear right", he asked between hard breaths, "that you have been using knife to eat your brother's yam behind his back?" (*Rusted Roofs*, p. 85)

The example above is a direct translation of a Yoruba expression. Baba n'sale uses *yam* to refer to the female genital. The comparison of the female organ to a yam, a food item, is derived from the pleasure and satisfaction associated with sex. The euphemism, drawn from Yoruba agrarian society, presupposes that it is abominable for Rashidi to *eat* his brother's *yam*. The weight of the euphemism is hinged on the fact that "…a person does not exist all by himself: he exists because of the existence of the other people" (Mbiti, 1975:102). Mbiti's assertion demonstrates the African cultural belief of one being a brother's keeper.

Thus, it is culturally expected of Rashidi to protect his brother's *yam* but not to *eat* it with a knife. The nominal item, *knife*, in the context of the euphemistic expression, is described as an acerbic instrument that is capable of destroying family bonds. Euphemisms in specific contexts are thus always interpretive and expressive of a distance from referenced opinions or attitudes that are diametrically opposed to ingroup norms. In this sense, the word *knife* is a euphemistic echo of Rashidi's despicable sexual behaviour.

Similarly, the noun phrase, *itchy fingers*, is an example of euphemism which is used to express a defensive identity as well as expose the corrupt engagements of top government officials. When Ogugua attends one of Reuben Ata's parties, he meets Pa Ata, who decrying the spate of corruption in public offices, laments thus:

> 'I've often asked myself that. I wish I knew a simple answer.'
> 'But do you not sometimes think it be the nature of our people? That we are born with itchy fingers?' Pa Ata's gaze was penetrating, daring me to lie. (*Arrows*, p. 120)

To have *itchy fingers* is to be a thief. Pa Ata wonders if stealing is engraved in the people's genetic make-up such that the country's ministers can hardly do without stealing. Pa Ata's euphemisation of Madia ministers' larcenous misuse of the nation's funds is a social construction of identities which necessarily involves differentiating one's self or one's group from the *other* (in this case, the political class). Such identity formation entails the need of distancing one's self from the political class who luxuriates in the grandeur of looting the treasury of his country. Critically embedded in Pa Ata's identity construction is the logic of persuading Ogugua not to pilfer the nation's treasury if he becomes a minister someday.

In the following example from *Rusted Roofs*, Rafiu's male organ is described as a manipulative object:

> "She will know that madness passes madness. It is *Iyale* Agba that will answer for it eventually. I believe she knows that her son has been exercising his 'thing' on his sister's friend every day." (*Rusted Roofs*, p. 42)

The item *thing* refers to the male genital organ. Sikira uses *thing* to intimate Alake with the illicit sexual affair that has been going on between Rafiu and Mulika. So, *thing* refers to Rafiu's manhood, a manipulative object, which he *exercises* on Mulika. Though Sikira's use

of *thing* works in tune with the Yoruba moral culture of using indirect expressions to point to sex organs and sexual acts, the lexical item has an implicit resistant identity construction. Sikira's euphemistic description of Rafiu's illicit sexual exploit is anchored on the premises that sex, at least from the cultural practices of the Yoruba people, just as in most sub-cultures of the world, is essentially reserved for the married. Rafiu and Mulika's sexual engagement is therefore a penetration of a circle which they do not legally belong. On Rafiu and Mulika's part, they express a willingness to do what members of their social class (adolescents) are forbidden to. Consequently, they demonstrate a collective resistance against otherwise "unbearable" oppression which results in reversing the ideology that sex is a prerogative of the married. This systematic identity reformulation tacitly illustrates the unstable nature of identity construction. Interestingly, Sikira's subversive description of Rafiu's male organ as a *thing* (giving it the meaning of an ordinary object) is resistant, a resistance to the penetration of her ingroup as married women. Sikira's strategic act is to redefine their identity as married women, as well as stage boundaries for sexual activities.

This discussion of euphemisms as subversive forms of self-empowerment reveals that most of the euphemisms are sunk in sexual discourse. This is because sex, as noted in Section 4.1, thrives in secrecy.

4.4.2: Euphemisms as Ingroup Signifiers

Members of a group employ diverse discursive strategies to signifier their membership of a group. There are linguistic items that are deployed to maintain the communal practices of a group. Euphemisms perform such ingroup marking strategies. In the example from *Angels*, a Superintendent tries to construct a positive identity for himself in the following words:

> 'I love you, Janice. Very much. I know you think I am not seriousThat I only want to suck. The juice and throw away the peel. No.' (*Angel*, p. 22)

The female genitals, including the breasts, are equated with fruit. The verbal activity *suck* calls up the image of an orange or any other fruit that can be sucked, the juice squeezed out and *the peel* thrown away. The euphemism works as a persuasive strategy in the context of the novel. The Superintendent assures Janice, the woman he is wooing, that he wants her as

a permanent companion, not for sexual pleasure. Throwing away *the peel* means abandonment. Most probably, the Superintendent and Janice share the same background knowledge of men who *suck* women and abandon them. The euphemism achieves a communicative goal because it expresses the Superintendent's intention: the intention to stay even after he *sucks* the *juice*. It exonerates him from other men who throw the *peel* (walk away) after *sucking* the *juice* (sleeping with a woman), and *self-categorises* himself in a positive light. By this act of self-positive categorisation, the Superintendent successfully stamps his identity in the class of gentlemen who do not woo women for the sake of *sucking* and throwing away the *peel*. Or at least that is what he claims.

There is also the signification of sex as a prerogative of the married in Ndibe's *Arrows*:

> On the first night Iyese had been worried that her lover's ecstatic cries might scandalise the villagers, but the next day she met the village chief, an old hunched man with a mischievous twinkle in his eye. Smirking, he asked her, 'Daughter, are you the one making our son a man?'
> Embarassed, she asked, 'What do you mean, elder?'
> 'Every child cries when it is born,' explained the chief. 'It cries to announce its arrival. It also cries because of all the evil it sees in the world. But every child has another cry waiting in the future, the cry of love. It is the cry that makes a boy a man, a girl a woman…. (*Arrows*, p. 135-6)

The euphemistic expression captures the pivotal role sex plays in transforming boys into men. Contextually, sex is regarded as a biological process that transports "boys" into "men," "girls" to "women." The Chief of Utonke uses the expression to ask Iyese if she is the one who is accountable for their son's, Dr Jaja's, transformation from childhood to adulthood. The chief's comment is encapsulated in the ideological construct that sex in most Nigerian cultures is solely meant for adults. Ideologically, it emphasises the fundamental and complimentary involvement of sex in changing people's status. Also, embedded in the euphemism is the idea that one is only counted as a man if one has sexual knowledge of a woman.

It is the ideology of the exclusiveness of sex that prompts the chief to explain further that:

> ‘Last night, we heard our son crying the cry of manhood. It put much happiness in our breast.’ (p. 136).

The chief’s comments are strategic signifiers or pointers of what members of his group do or are entitled to. Invariably, *the cry* which is probably associated with orgasm is that of manhood but not of childhood or when one is hurt. It is a *cry* that accompanies sexual pleasure and contentment. From the chief’s perspective, Iyese’s sexual adventure with Dr Jaja is biological: it transports Dr Jaja into the circle of “men” hence identity. In a nutshell, the chief’s euphemisation of sex presupposes that sex signifies a man’s maturity. Moreover, sex is seen as a transformational process; a process that confers manly responsibilities.

Beyond the projection of the moral ideology of sex as a reserve for married couples and adults is the explicit construction of identities. As discussed in the preceding examples, the euphemisation of sex is to clarify to the *other*, children, and by extension the unmarried – in some Nigerian cultures, as elsewhere, sex is seen as the prerogative of the married – that it is immoral to engage in sexual intercourse when one is not a member of the group that has the legal right to do so. These euphemistic expressions are spectacularly political as they reveal ways of orchestrating belonging and barring the proliferation of the circle of the married by the unmarried generation. Such identity construction (the signification of the married prerogative to sex) presupposes that the chief who used the expression may take offense if a child is heard *crying the cry of men.*

In another example taken from *Arrows*, though the meaning of being a man differs, an interesting example of orchestrating belonging is demonstrated:

> ‘What do you wish to drink?’
> ‘Orange juice, please.’
> ‘What? Come on, be a man!’ (*Arrows*, p. 115)

Reuben Ata tells Ogugua to *be a man* (an imperative) when the latter prefers orange juice to cognac. Implicitly, to *be a man* is to be able to take cognac, and to be a woman is to take orange juice. The meaning of the euphemism is summarized in the idea of male chauvinism. The ideological projection is the portrayal of women as the weaker sex who can hardly countenance the alcoholic content of cognac. Though this may not apply to women outside the clime of Nigeria, the logic of the euphemism lies in the fact that many Nigerian women

are not given to alcoholic drinks. The pragmatism of Reuben's effort is to remind Ogugua that he is a member of a group that does not take orange juice. Rueben therefore expects Ogugua's behaviour to reflect that of men, but not that of women.

Moreover, in the example below, euphemism is used to shield the corrupt practices of a group:

> 'They say my import duty waiver is for unbagged cement so they want to impound the bags of cement. But the controller said I should see him privately today. I think he wants to help me….'
> (*Planet*, p. 179)

Wenni is a rich businessman who deals in cement. In Daglobe, the utopian country in which *Planet* is set, there is a regulation that bagged cement should not be imported into the country. But Wenni does. When this is discovered, the Controller of Customs asks Wenni to give him a bribe. Wenni has an upright daughter in whom he confides, but he finds it difficult to tell her that his going to the Controller's house is to give a bribe. Because of the relational affinity that holds between Wenni and his daughter, Wenni uses the euphemism *see him privately* to blur the fact that he is going to give a bribe. In a mild and evasive way, Wenni protects his identity before his daughter, as a good father who does not involve himself in corrupt activities. On the other hand, Wenni's euphemism achieves a communicative goal of concealing what he and members of his group do. Such an act, according to Castells (1997), is to maintain communal practices. From the foregoing, it is evident that besides the ability of euphemisms to avoid unpleasant ideas, they can have sinister motivation too: to blur reality, not so much to avoid offence, but to deceive. These sets of euphemistic expressions are explored when sinister ideas are to be discussed.

In all, these forms of identity construction indicate that identity is not always coherent, and it is often unstable. People demonstrate different identities at different times. These manifestations transform into a significant whole which individuals use to oppose the identities of other people. The categorisation of euphemisms into functional units has helped to broaden the perceptual and functional uses of euphemisms in the context of the novel.

4.5 Nigerian Pidgin Expressions

Nigerian Pidgin (henceforth NP) is another discourse strategy that is deployed in the

construction of identity in the Nigerian novel. Some Nigerians demonstrate a negative attitude to NP. They regarded it as the language of illiterates and semi-literates. Such attitude confines NP to the status of a utility language: a language created to cater for certain communication demands. Nigerian novelists are in this group: the group that sees pidgin as a "limited language." Except for Adelakun's *Rusted Roofs*, where there is no single pidgin expression, the other novels sampled for analysis use NP in the construction of different identities. In the sections that follow the uses of NP have been categorised according to the identity types they represent.

4.5.1 NP as the Language of the "Powerless"

Though power does not always derive from language – as the analysis undertaken so far in this study suggests – language can be used to interrogate power, to deny power, to uphold power and to determine who gets power. In the light of the preceding argument, language strengthens these differences of power. In the data, NP is portrayed as the language of the powerless, the language of the common people.

In *Arrows*, an exchange occurs between a medical doctor and Joshua, a prison warden. When the doctor says he wants to see Bukuru, Joshua warns:

> 'Go in?' asked Joshua incredulously. 'Go in Mister doctor, nobody fit enter that cell. The man be crazy man. You can't fit to enter the cell. God forbid bad thing!'

Translation

> You mean go into that cell? No one can go in there. The inmate is completely mad. You cannot entre the cell. God forbids bad thing!

The doctor argues that:

> 'I'm the only one who can determine that the suspect is crazy. Not you, I'm afraid.'(p. 68)

And Joshua responds:

> 'Don't fear, mister doctor. I no do your job. But I get two eyes. I done look the man well, well. I swear, he be proper crazy man. Allah!' (*Arrows*, p. 68)

Translation

> Don't be scared. (Joshua misinterprets the doctor's use of "I'm afraid.") I am not trying to do your job, but I am not blind. I know that this man (the suspect) is completely crazy.

The doctor wants to examine Ogugua's mental state, the alleged murderer of TayTay - a sex worker. Joshua, owing to his linguistic ineptness, misinterprets the doctor's comment to mean one who is scared of meeting Ogugua. But the doctor's use of *I am afraid* draws an asymmetrical boundary between their respective identities. The underlying meaning of the linguistic exchange, it must be stressed, is all about class differentiation: while the doctor speaks Standard English (an act of identity legitimisation as a member of the higher class), Joshua is made to use NP, a language that is meant for the people of his social status. Another item worthy of note is Joshua's adoption of "Allah." Besides drawing attention to the swearing habit of some Nigerians, it also points to the nature of NP. It is environment sensitive, i.e. it borrows from indigenous expressions as well as demonstrates the pragmatism that goes with its use. In all, the critical situation of an individual is reduced to humour by the employment of NP.

In the example below, Egbuson employs NP to describe the powerlessness of the common people:

> 'No', the driver sharply said. 'That long route, plus many police patrol, who go pay for de extra cost?' (*Planet* p. 139)

Translation

> No. I won't take that route. Besides the fact that it is too far, there are several policemen on that route. If I take the route, who will pay for the extra cost (i.e. bribe)?

In the extract above, the boatman captures in a painful way the menace of police intimidation and extortion on sea routes, an activity that replicates itself on Nigerian roads. The boatman's use of NP is emblematic of his powerless identity. The boatman's low social status, his inability to question those who impinge on his right compels him to abandon a safer route for a turbulent one. The rhetorical question – who go pay for de extra cost? (Who will take responsibility for the extra expenses?) – typifies the powerlessness of the boatman. By abandoning the safer route for the one characterised by disturbing and dangerous waves,

the boatman endangers his life, a pregnant woman's life with that of her daughter and maid, and the boatman's assistant. If the boatman were powerful, he would not abandon the safer route for fear of police patrols. Obviously, the boatman's intention to "express" his identity is nullified by his linguistic ineptitude and inability to pay *extra cost*. The euphemism, *extra cost*, in a subtle but resistant manner, exposes the corrupt practices of men and women of the Nigerian Police.

Also, in Habila's *Angel*, NP is presented as the language of the downtrodden:

> When the driver saw the blood, he shook his head. 'No. I no wan trouble O!' (*Angel*, p. 135)

Translation

> No, I don't want trouble.

The driver's perception of himself as someone who cannot survive the intrigues of police questioning causes him to decline to take the badly injured Hagar, one of the protesters who is shot by the police, to the hospital. The driver's refusal is informed by his knowledge of how witnesses are manhandled by the police. Even when the driver "shook his head", an act disapproving the excesses of the police, he has nothing to do but avoid trouble. Moreover, the intimidation and the extortion the driver faces each day on the road are construction materials that inform his refusal to be involved with anything that connects with the police. The driver's language problem, his inability to speak Standard English and his social status predispose him to exploitation by the police. This does not negate the fact that those who speak Standard English are not exploited by the police. The fact is that the exploitation is minimal.

Entrenching the notion that NP is the language of the powerless in the mental architecture of his readers, Ndibe presents Violet, a sex worker, as a mismatch to the all-powerful military men. She tells Ogugua:

> 'They ask whether me know who killed Emilia. I tell them I no fit to talk. Thas why I say make I come ask you first' (*Arrows*, p. 183).

Translation

> They asked if I knew who killed Emilia. I told them I couldn't talk, but I felt I should seek your advice.

Even when Violet knows that Major Isa Bello killed Emilia, she will not tell the police because she is afraid of the consequence of being involved with the police and that of a military officer. This is the reason for the omission of the agent, and the use of the indefinite pronoun, "they." She chooses to tell Ogugua, Emilia's boyfriend who is a journalist. She presupposes that being educated and a journalist, Ogugua can stand up to the police. Ogugua, the educated journalist, is therefore a perfect match to the police and its intrigues. Hidden in Violet's dependence on Ogugua to confront Emilia's killer is the canonical notion that intellectuals, given their training, are better equipped than non-intellectuals to question those in power. The intellectual, Ogugua, is therefore expected by Violet to express that which she is unable to (I no fit talk). Violet's refusal to reveal Emilia's murderer is not because she does not want to but because she is incapacitated by language. Consequently, her social ranking puts her in a disadvantaged position to contest her identity.

In all, at least from the foregoing, the novelist's assignment of pidgin expressions to illiterate characters has a pragmatic undertone. It is a language one can identify with the lower class of the society. This shall be returned to in the concluding part of the section on NP expressions.

4.5.2 NP as the Language of Protest

One of the functions assigned to NP in the data under consideration is that of protest. To protest for one's right is not a peculiar feature of those in the lower ladder of the society. But it strikes one as interesting because the people (characters) who are made by the novelists to protest are those in the lower ladder of the society; and the language they use is NP. In Egbuson's *Planet*, for instance, a middle-aged man narrates:

> 'Dem say na de white people responsible for that fire wey dey burn there.' He pointed to the gas flare in the distance. 'For plenty year now de fire dey burn. Is good weyting our boy dem dey do dem. Make dem quench de fire and go to dem own country' (*Planet*, P. 243).

Translation

> It is said that the whites are responsible for that gas flare which has been flaring for several years now. I support what our boys are doing to them, whites. They should stop the gas flare and leave for their respective countries.

The middle-aged man, a nameless man, voices the displeasure of the people of Yenge with the activities of oil exploration by some multinational oil companies. Obviously, at least from the man's reference to *Is good weyting our boy dem dey do dem*, the Niger Delta people have not been passively accepting the intolerable oppressive acts committed against them both directly and indirectly through poisoning of the environment. The middle-aged man openly endorses militant activity in the region: *Is good weyting our boy dem dey do dem*. By endorsing the boys' action, it appears, the man sees violence as a way out of the crisis in the region. Nigerian Pidgin is presented in the novel as a language that is used by those who promote violence.

The middle-aged man goes on with his protest:

> 'Dat place, you no fit go near am oh – at all at all. Even dis place wey hot so, na because of that fire, wey no dey quench. Yam, cocoyam and vegetable no dey grow well for our area like places wey no dey near the fire….' (*Planet*, p. 243)

Translation

> You cannot go close to that place at all (where the gas flares). Even this place is so hot because of the gas flare. Unlike other communities that are far from the gas flare, our crops do badly because of that gas flare.

The middle-aged narrator describes how multinational companies drill oil without measures to save the dying ecosystem of the region. It is such an issue that Egbuson, the author of *Planet*, assigns to a language that is not understood by the multinationals that are responsible for polluting the Niger Delta environment. In assigning such an important issue to a language that is not internationally intelligible, the author depicts the powerlessness of the people through the use of pidgin by the inhabitants. The irrelevance attached to NP is synonymous to disregarding the existence of the people. Ogunsiji (2001:159) argues that "languages are closely related to the psyche of the people who use them; to marginalise any language is to deflate the psyche of its native speakers." In some parts of the Niger Delta

region, NP is their mother tongue, and presenting their language as a language of unnecessary protest does not only deflect their psyche, it also constructs a negative identity for the people of the region.

In Ndibe's *Arrows*, the same syndrome of NP usage is exhibited. Violet uses NP to reject being described as a rude person. Ogugua reports:

> In the background I heard somebody cursing. 'Na your mama be quite rude! Na you be rude, you hear!' I recognised Violet's voice (*Arrows*, p. 181).

Translation

> It is your mother that is quite rude. You are the rude one.

When Violet goes to tell Ogugua about Emilia's death, a quarrel ensues between a receptionist and her. The receptionist tells Ogugua that his visitor, Violet, is rude but Violet denies being rude. Her linguistic tactic is resistant: her rejection of being described as a rude person conflates with a determined effort to construct a positive identity for herself. In the real sense, the novelist succeeds in presenting Violet as an unrefined person. Hence, the language that befits her status is NP.

Similarly, Habila's *Angel* projects NP as the language of protest:

> 'Thieves!'
> 'Ole!'
> 'Give them their brother, government boy-boy' (*Arrows*, P. 57).

Translation

> You thieves (*Ole* is a Yoruba word for a thief.) Hand them their brother. You government stooges.

Bola is seen calling for the ousting of the military government at a transportation parking lot when security agents pull him away. The crowd shouts at the security agents to hand Bola to his friend, Lomba and Bola's cousins, Peter and Paul, who have noticed that all is not well with Bola. When the security agents insist on taking Bola with them, the crowd reacts by throwing stones at the security men.

The above language, NP, befits the crowd as Habila describes the crowd as

composed of *loafers: park touts, out-of-work bus conductors, Area Boys* (p.56). The language that fits such a category of people, as presented in the text, is NP. Those who did not participate in throwing stones at the security agents are described as *the respectable part of the crowd, civil servants…* (p.56). Implicitly stated in Habila's description of the stone-throwing crowd is that they are unrespectable and impetuous people. This position tends to undermine the people's struggle for a better Nigeria, free of humiliation and intimidation. The novelist's deployment of NP, therefore, assumes awareness on the part of the reader that NP is a language of chaos, turmoil and disrespect.

Unlike Violet in *Arrows* who depends on Ogugua, the intellectual, unknown to Habila, he exposes the fact that *the respectable part of the crowd, civil servants* are too scared to stand up against the security forces, or are complicit with them. But the less respectable people are more desperate and thus more willing to speak up against military oppression.

The uses, users and percentage distribution of NP are summarised in the table below:

Table 4.8: Users, Uses, Frequency and Percentage Distribution of NP

Identity of Users	Uses/Functions	Novels	Frequency	%
Prison wardens	Protest	*Angel*	33	26.8
Sex workers	Verbal duel	*Arrows*	28	22.7
Security guards	Information/instruction	*Planet*	62	50.4
Armed robbers/thieves		*Rusted Roofs*	0	0
Tailors				
Militants				
Loafers				
Rural dwellers				

As noted earlier, there are no uses of NP in *Rusted Roofs*. Adelakun's NP's exclusionism projects the idea that NP should not be recognised in Nigeria's linguistic space. Beyond the idea of linguistic exclusionism, there is, however, the need to consider the absence of pidgin expressions in *Rusted Roofs* vis-à-vis the sociolinguistic locale of the novel. In a typical Yoruba land where the novel is set, the people hardly speak pidgin. Most are compelled to speak pidgin only when they come in contact with non-Yoruba speakers, especially in trade

situations. Besides that, the story is woven around two Yoruba families who have a common means of interpersonal communication, Yoruba. So the environment from which the novelist draws her art has no occasion for the use of pidgin.

Table 4.8 also illustrates that *Planet* has the highest number of NP, 50.4%. The high number of NP in *Planet* does not seem to go against the norm, as the Niger Delta region where the novel is set has several distinct ethnic languages. NP functions as the lingua franca of the region. In fact, in some parts, Warri to be specific, NP serves as the people's mother tongue. The multilingual situation provides a fertile ground for the propagation of pidgin.

The relatively high percentage of NP, 26.8%, in *Angels*, seems not to go against linguistic expectation because the novel is set in Lagos, the hub of Nigeria's business life. It is a commercial city where every ethnic group in Nigeria can be found. NP is popularly favoured because it is "no man's language" and it works as a conduit that connects Nigerians of different ethnic nationalities. *Arrows*, also set in Lagos, has 22.7% of NP uses. Subsumed in the use of NP across the novels is the idea that NP is every Nigerian's language and has helped to unite Nigerians who are of diverse linguistic, ethnic, and social affiliations.

But NP, as Table 4.8 indicates, is assigned to sex workers, militants, bus drivers, etc. Table 4.8 also reveals that NP is used for power instantiation, verbal duel, protest, etc. Such representation by the novelists undermines scholars' claims that NP is the most widely spoken language in Nigeria (Egbokhare, 2001; Mowarin, 2009). Unlike English, Pidgin is informally acquired in the streets, in the neighbourhood and at home. NP is spoken across the linguistic boundaries of the indigenous languages. Understandably, there are many varieties of NP but they are mutually intelligible. It is the language of trade. In most Nigerian homes, it is the language of couples who come from different ethnic groups.

Evidently, while the WAZOBIA linguistic project, aimed at developing a national language for Nigeria, has failed and local languages are gradually receding to oblivion, NP has taken the centre stage. Despite the popularity of NP, it has been socially stigmatised as the language of the poor, the illiterate class of the society. It has been branded as a distorted (Broken) form of English which cannot therefore countenance the profundity of intellectual discourse. In some elite homes, it is a taboo language. But these *haters* of NP often resort to

it in times when Standard English hinders their ability to interact.

Consequently, NP is not a language for "low" people and "low" communication as projected by the intelligentsia (the novelists) but a language which Nigerians resort to in the demonstration of their collective Nigerian identity. To undermine NP, by assigning it to the above-named characters and functions, the intellectual class legitimises its group identity, making it crystal clear that NP can be associated with "lowly" discourses and people. The way NP is used in the texts degrades its capacity to function as a national language. Its denial is explicitly political. Faraclas (1996) argues that despite the fact that NP is the most logical choice for a national language it has received little recognition from those responsible for language policy in Nigeria. It is not recognised in the National Policy of Education. It is not used as a medium of instruction; neither is it taught as a subject. In this regard, Egbokhare argues that:

> There are 1 million or more for whom NP is a mother tongue or L2. Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo are accorded privileged position in the NPE and the constitution of Nigeria and they are taught as subjects in the school curriculum. They are recognised as national languages on account of the population of their speakers. NP has about 40 million speakers more than the population of Hausa and Yoruba speakers put together…it is a clear violation of the linguistic rights of the speakers of the language; their right to literacy, information, freedom of expression, as well as their right to participate in the process of governance (Egbokhare 2001: 111-12).

Though it is difficult to substantiate Egbokhare's position in relation to the number of NP speakers, his position suggests that over half of the Nigerian population speaks NP. It is functioning as a language, performing the functions that other languages are performing. Obviously stated in Egbokhare's position is the idea that NP should be given the same right as other languages with equal credentials, taking into consideration the population of its speakers and the function it performs.

Above all, NP can function as an act of collective identity construction when speakers need to stress their Nigerianess, as opposed to their ethnic-group identity. In other words, NP can express a belonging to Nigeria, which English does not. This is very similar to other multi-ethnic postcolonial situations (Calvet, 1997). It has helped, in spite of the negative functions attached to it, to integrate Nigerians who have about four hundred languages.

CHAPTER FIVE
FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Findings and Conclusion

This study focused on the lexical and discursive features of identity construction in selected 21st-century Nigerian novels. The study depended on the discourse-historical approach to CDA, Castells' identity construction theory and lexical semantics. This eclectic approach has helped to reveal certain facts about the complex nature of identity construction in selected 21st-century Nigerian novels, justifying their adoption to the analysis of the interface between language and identity. The analysis revealed the constitutive role of language in the construction of identity. Language is not identity, but it is a component part of identity. This is evident in all the sections and levels of analyses that have been explored.

The use of lexical borrowing, lexical innovation and names by Nigerian novelists to encode their Nigerian identity, and as counter-hegemonic devices to English are undermined by the universality of English. As a corollary, the historical reverberations of English and the multiplicity of languages imped the construction of a collective Nigerian identity. However, these lexical switches and innovations explain the novelists' efforts to keep their Nigerian identity intact. These lexical processes are also employed to express resistant identity, as some of the lexical processes are borrowed and innovated to express the novelists' as well as discourse participants' dissonance with the antagonistic *other*.

It is revealed that when constructing ingroup identity, the novelists adopt as well as create words that support a particular line of argumentation, and provide evidence to back up their argument. The novels are explicit, with detailed information about characters, time, places provided by referential mechanisms – names, abbreviations, indexicals and pronominal selections.

Couched in the analysis is the novel way in which abbreviations, particularly alphabetism and acronyms, are deployed in encoding ideological differences hence identity. While some of the abbreviations in the data serve as resource for the presentation of resistance to the opposed group, others are effectively deployed to legitimise a Nigerian identity. The use of names indicates three dimensions of identity construction. These dimensions are Nigerian names which are matrixed in the cultural semantics of the Nigerian

people, and those that describe characters with positive categorisation. Most of the female English names and non-indigenous names in the data are assigned to commercial sex workers, a strategy of expressing dissent to English and non-indigenous characters. Names are also used to perform ideo-political functions, with an underlining construction of a Nigerian identity.

Exposed in the novelists' use of language is the sensitivity of language to its environment. In other words, the analysis of the lexical processes shows that there is a strong bond between language and culture, exposing, in variable ways, the watertight compartment of Sapir-Whorf's linguistic determinism. This, in a way, has answered the research questions that were raised in Section 1.9, as well as defined the objectives of the study.

The discussion of slang indicates that society is compartmentalised along the lines of speech communities. Put differently, slang can be used to indicate how society is "chunked-up" into groups: each community/group striving to evolve a language that will meet its daily communicative needs. Slangy expressions are constructed in line with resistance and legitimising identities. As hitherto purported, it is noticed that slang is not constitutively a deviant language. Rather, it serves as the weapon of social protest and expresses a group's desire to create a new social space or even social identities for itself. That is, slang is a functional language that is created to satisfy the communication needs of an ingroup. It is also revealed that some slang demonstrate the euphemisation of language by speech communities of vices or taboo expressions by tagging those taboo expressions with less offensive or more pleasant expressions. In this way, the conservative tendencies in human behaviour are exposed. Many slang words are not "dirty," as was thought, for indecent ideas; many are semantically neutral, value-free expressions that provide more specific reference to their referents. Slang illustrates the innovative ways users of language capture their experiences in line with developments in the society. Some of the slang expressions are drawn from Nigerian Pidgin and indigenous languages.

The interpretation of euphemistic expressions discloses that euphemism is motivated not only by the desire not to offend, but also by the need to display ingroup identity, upgrade whatever the people connote, and even to display wit. Evident in the analysis is that euphemisms often do more than cover up for something people dislike or things individuals

consider morally wrong. These euphemisms invoke points of view; for example, sex as food, as journey to somewhere through life, etc.

Moreover, the study indicates a point of convergence between religious values and people's linguistic choices. In various degrees, Nigerians' religious ideals impinge upon the way they use language to represent, construct and negotiate their social identities. Such a finding authenticates the sociolinguistic truism that language rests on society for meaning; entrenching the notion that the meaning of linguistic expressions are better interpreted when connected to the context of use. In the constructions of identities with religious expressions, discourse participants work on the assumption that interractants in the discourse situation uphold the beliefs that are inferred. Discourse participants, especially those in the category of legitimising identity, rely on religious beliefs to dominate the dominated. Those in the category of resistance identity draw on religious references to perform pragmatic acts of blame shifting; maneuvering others' religious reasoning. This is despite sharing the same religious reasons for their existence.

The discussion of NP has proven that in literary creation there is an insistent effort to "strangle" NP. Unfortunately, the Nigerian literary firmament has not helped NP. It is the language that is either used by the uneducated or spoken to the less educated, the language of sex workers, militants, loafers and never-do-wells. Indeed, NP is a "reduced" language for the reduced class. The implication is that Nigerians who can speak only NP have been denied access to power and the economy.

In a broad sense, the choice of Wodak's discourse-historical model to CDA, the adoption of Castells' identity theory, and the dependence on lexical semantics have helped in solving the micro/macro level problem of CDA, as well as helped to arrive at, if not an objective, a near objective interpretation of selected 21st-century Nigerian novelists' use of language and identity construction. Inherent in the adoption of multiple approaches to the analysis of language and identity construction is the rejection of the dependence on a singular linguistic theory to text analysis. It is also a furtherance of the idea that CDA researches should be multi-disciplinary.

Having undertaken the kind of analysis done here, it will be misleading for the study to generalise its findings to other contexts or situations. The fact remains that some of the interpretations that have been made here may vary if placed in a different context.

Invariably, context, in its myriad of ways, determines the meaning analysts make from texts. That, however, does not deter the study from exposing certain realities about the use of language in the 21st-century Nigerian novel. Accordingly, it may be concluded that lexical processes such as lexical borrowing, lexical innovations and abbreviations are veritable resources that Nigerian novelists use to construct a Nigerian identity, to resist the dominance of English and to describe various forms of social identities. These, by and large, expose the intricate bond among language, identity and literature.

While the novel remains a resource for the documentation of historical events and the negotiation of identity, the study indicates that language plays a dominant role in constructing people's identity. It also enables the novelists to express their affiliations with ingroups and disaffiliations with outgroups. Owing to Nigeria's colonial experience and linguistic diversity, the Nigerian novelist is left with no option but to stay with English. Evidently, the use of English will not only allow Nigerian novelists to reach the entire world, but also their Nigerian neighbours who neither speak nor understand the novelists' language. In colonial times, indigenous languages were treated with contempt. This has given English an unhappy resonance in the minds of many. With such colonial memories, it is not difficult to see how antagonism to English has grown. Lexical acts of borrowing from indigenous languages into English where English equivalents exist, and the extension of the semanticity of English words (lexical innovation) are the novelists' forms of resistance to a language which has undermined their own languages.

Moreover, the Nigerian intelligentsia is aware of the importance of reducing their investment in English. So the adoption and adaptation of indigenous lexical units into English, and the continuous expansion of the meanings of English words are efforts geared at promoting their indigenous language and culture. In expanding the semantic frontiers of English lexicons, the Nigerian novelists perform two functions: one, they create an international variety of English with a Nigerian identity. Two, they remain locally and internationally intelligible, that is, their works can be read within and outside the country.

It seems fair to conclude that as effective speakers of English, the novelists' intentional use of indigenous expressions, the creation of new words from English and the nativisation or "Nigerianisation" of English expressions are instances of identity display. While they generally use the standard form of English, in terms of structure and grammar,

the inclination to use Nigerian terms/expressions in place of English must be motivated by reasons that transcend semantic borders. It then follows that the use of language in the novels is an evidence of "us": Nigerians. Therefore, as the novelists continue to use the English language, they personalise or customise English to suit their Nigerian experiences. These customisations are effective in constructing meaning and invariably identity.

Historically, the Nigerian artist is left with no option but to use the English language as a medium of expression. But then, the artist has come to the realisation that their continuous enrichment of the English culture at the expense of their language is not just an act of political imperialism, but must cease. The use of lexical borrowing, innovations and naming strategies do not only describe the contest for linguistic space between indigenous languages and English, but also shows their deployment in the expressions of resistance identity. As the novelists borrow from their respective indigenous languages, they unconsciously encode their ethnic identities against a national identity. In all, cross-ethnic borrowings and the dependence on English in recounting the novelists' experiences buttress the fact that identity is not a unified whole but a concept that is in a constant flux.

It is also observed that abbreviations are linguistic strategies which novelists deploy in expressing resistance and legitimising identity. Abbreviations such as alphabetisms and acronyms, which have been investigated in this study, have unique ways of constructing a people's dissonance with the outgroup. Invariably, abbreviations can be used in analysing power, identity and as an entry point to the ideological undertones of their users. Moreover, the use of universal abbreviations to construct localist ideas is a manifestation of how English has been "bent" to carry the cultural identity of its users. The use of abbreviations just as in the use of names shows the emotional involvement of the novelists to the ideas they frame. By so doing, the novelists are creating a language that is Nigerian, a language that will enable their creative project as well as retain their Nigerian identity.

In the Nigerian novel, practices of slang established identity categories of various kinds. Slang could be assigned different social meanings by different social groups. The variability of slang as a discourse practice is unanticipated by scholarship that extracts this system from its context. Such a method cannot capture the fundamentally social nature of slang. Thus discontextualised methods are less useful than the context-specific analysis that has been undertaken. The study of slang, therefore, requires multiple nature of

interpretation. This is given that neither the social nor the linguistic meaning of slang is fixed and determinate, and what counts as slang, or even as a discourse strategy, can only be negotiated in discourse. As noted elsewhere, the meaning of these slangy expressions may vary if placed in another context. This, in a way, points to the variable nature of identity: it can only be negotiated in discourse.

The use of euphemisms, the analysis suggests, is all about mouthing the right-sounding words for situations that deal with constructing groups' identity. In this way, the political nature of people is expressed. This conception is particularly true of the examples under the category of euphemisms as subversive forms of self-empowerment. There is also the use of religious euphemisms. These are motivated by the belief discourse participants hold: that some ideas are holy such that some words are spiritually harmful. The analysis of euphemisms answers the question that was raised in Section 1.9 of whether the use of language betrays any relationship between language and cultural patterns of existence. Implicitly, there is a strong bond between euphemistic expressions and people's peculiar cultural ways of using language.

In terms of religious indexicals, as examples of discursive features, it is noticed that discourse participants' response to social issues are embedded as well as informed by the religious beliefs they uphold. They believe in the existence of a supreme being who controls their existence. Hence, their linguistic behaviour relates to their religious beliefs. The dynamics highlighted in the analysis provide new ways of understanding how Nigerians use religion to negotiate identities. Even more broadly, they reveal how religion can enhance or impede collaboration across social status and religious divides. Besides the fact that the novels seem to work as transparent windows onto Nigerian society, the novelist's reflection on religion does not necessarily mirror many Nigerians religious persuasions. The study also shows that there is cross-religious reference amongst Nigerians, i.e. Muslims use Christian expressions to achieve their communicative goals just as Christians use Islamic expressions to realise their political ends. In this light, the construction of religious identity is not constant. As the novelists use either Islamic or Christian metaphors to express their views, they indirectly imbibe and project, in Castells' terms, the ideological ideals of the religion they borrow from. Closely related to the above point is the assumption that most of the crises which have been regarded as religious crises are not actually religious in nature.

Rather, the crises are politically motivated.

Nigerian Pidgin should also be elevated to the status of a national language. Virtually every true Nigerian speaks NP, even when deliberating on serious national issues. Recently, an ex-Nigerian president was seen using NP to address a very delicate issue of national interest. The professors of English in Nigerian universities speak NP likewise market women. It is not the language of "ordinary Nigerians." In the real sense, it is a language of the Nigerian people: both high and low. Although *Planet* and *Angels* borrow extensively across indigenous languages to legitimise a national identity, there are no significant differences in the novelists' choices of lexico-discursive features.

As linguists continue to refine theories and methods for the study of identity, one thing needs to be made clear: that identity as an anthropological concept is inconsistent hence a singular and direct linguistic method of analysis cannot account for its complex nature. In fact, the complexity of language in use as a resource for the production of social subjectivities is becoming ever more intriguing. Indeed, answers to the thorny nature of identity must come from new kinds of data, and new kinds of analysis of areas of language hitherto thought to have been exhausted or have nothing to offer in terms of linguistic, social and cultural meanings. The focus on lexico-discursive features in this study points to the contrary, as it is one area in linguistic study that is thought to have been exhausted. The study has proven that lexico-discursive interpretation is one such place that researchers may gain grounds on the multidimensionality of identity, discourse and language.

In all, the blend of CDA and Castells' identity theory and the dependence on lexical semantics has proved to be useful in the interpretation of the thorny nature of identity. Moreover, the critical approach to the study of the social nature of language which required the study to transcend the formal linguistic frontiers of language to its social context has revealed how language is bound up with social events. By examining the "ordinary" meaning of words and their social meanings, attempts have been made to resolve the micro/macro level dilemma of critical language analysis. Furthermore, the quantitative angle taken by the study has not only answered the question of the lack of statistical approach to CDA, solved the problem of subjectivity, but has also helped to "bolster" the methods of CDA.

Needless to say, the ideological sentiment held by some linguistic "purists" that

literary texts should not be considered veritable data for linguistic analysis seems to have been faulted by the analysis done here. A literary work is a composition of linguistic artifacts hence it remains an interesting data for linguists who are interested in the social and cultural meaning of language in use.

5.2 Suggestions for Further Study

This study, on identity construction in selected 21st-century Nigerian novels, has discussed several aspects of its sampled novelists' uses of lexical and discursive elements in terms of functions and forms of identities. Specifically, it divided lexico-discursive items into two broad categories: lexical devices and discursive features. In chapters one and two, it was mentioned that grammar can be used to investigate people's identity and that grammar can be involved in solving the subjective slant of CDA. The study did not deeply account for this. It is however hoped that a future study will look at these areas.

Also, in the analysis and in the concluding parts of the study, the role of Nigerian novelists in the standardisation of NE was mentioned but the study did not say how it can be realised given that it is not the central concern of the present study. This might as well interest a future study. It is hoped that such a broader perspective will further unravel the intricate bonds that hold among language, identity, discourse and literary language.

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