Interpersonal Meaning in *Half of a Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie through Some Extracts

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Abstract: *The present paper deals with the analysis of language use in the narration of Half of a Yellow Sun by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. The analysis is carried out from the perspective of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), especially the mood system. In other words, the study is about interpersonal meta-function in the narrative as used by Chimamanda to portray characters' attitudes and judgments towards what is being said. Two main objectives are to be reached in the study: describe the interpersonal meaning of the narrative through the extracts selected and describe how Master influences the relative audience through interpersonal meaning by looking onmodality. Of the 80 clauses of the two extracts, 43 are pronounced by Master, that is, 53.75%, of which 22 are declaratives, 10 interrogatives and only 04 imperatives. The analysis showed that Master mostly used declaratives. Master shares information with the general audience through Ugwu, his houseboy. The information shared is mostly about education and the necessity for Africans to go to school in order to understand exploitation and have the tools for resilience. In terms of modality, there are 13 modulations and 5modalizations. Three (03) inclinations by Master show his attitude toward schooling: helping the African youth to go to school.*

Keywords: *Interpersonal meaning, mood, modality, schooling, exploitation.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Communication is nowadays at the pic of its importance due to the nature of societal relations among people. It goes along with language as another important item that comes in support of communication. Human daily life is held by language, spoken or written. We use language in any kinds of context, condition and situation. Language is used to express our feelings, to describe the environment, or tell something about our life. Halliday (1994, 17) defines language as a system for making meanings, as a semantic system, with other systems for encoding the meanings language produces, in which we carry out communication, like delivering speeches in front of the audience or writing for it.

Furthermore, other scholars brought details about language like Bloomer et al. (2005, 79) who added that, meaning is conveyed through language and people use it to interact and establish relations. We cannot imagine how people can cooperate and get into touch one another without language. It is then understandable that language is very functional in communication.

Moreover, language is not only used for daily communication, it is also used for portraying the daily life through literary tools. People like novelists use language to communicate through pieces of fiction. Like any public speech presented on formal occasions, literary works are technically structured and presented to the audience for decoding on the basis of the systemic functional linguistics (SFL). SFL is a theory of language in which language function becomes the centre of discussion. The theory is by Halliday and its perspective is that language is viewed as a certain system for making meanings.

In the scope of systemic functional linguistics, there are fundamental components of meaning known as meta-functions. According to Halliday (1985, 13), the functional components are interpersonal, ideational and textual meta-functions. He added that the interpersonal meta-function helps people to establish, negotiate and assume their position in social relationship. Interpersonal meta-function is

concerned with clauses as exchange. It begins with basic speech roles like giving information, giving and demanding goods and services. These exchanges are made through statements, questions and commands (Halliday, 1994, 68).

The present study is about the interpersonal meta-function through some extracts from *Half of a Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda Ngoi Adichie. It aims todescribe the interpersonal meaning of the narrative through the extracts selected and describe how, the main character Odenigbo (alias Master) influences the relative audience through interpersonal realizations by looking on the mood system and modality. The study is an opportunity to appreciate the conviction of Chimamanda through her conception of Odenigbo in combination of Ugwu in the novel. The paper is organized in three main parts: theoretical framework, methodology, and, data analysis and discussion.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

M.A.K Halliday introduced the theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as a study of language with focus on language as a resource of meaning and with the help of discourse analysis. According to Halliday (1994, 15) SFL views language as a resource for exploring and understanding the meaning in discourse. Halliday (1985, 16-17) argued that SFL is different from any other theory of language because endowed with systematic and functional characteristics. SFL is a theory of meaning as choice and then a step stone from which language, and any other semiotic system, is interpreted as networks of intertwining options. The conceptual framework, as the basis of the theory, is functional rather than formal, that is, the theory is based on the conceptualization of language as a resource of meaning rather than on the conceptualization of language as a system of rules. The main components of meaning in language are functional components and Halliday (2002, 198) identified three modes of meanings of language in consideration of the semantic system: ideational, interpersonal and textual. The ideational has to do with the experience protagonists undergo. The interpersonal is the realisation of the relationships among them. The textual mode of meaning has to do with the practical organization of the text. In the present study, focus is on the interpersonal meaning. According to Gerot and Wignell (1994, 13) interpersonal meaning is meanings which express speakers' attitudes and judgements. They are in fact meanings for acting upon and with others: interaction. Meanings are realized in wordings through mood and modality and the tenor of discourse is the key element influencing such meanings. Some scholars brought further explanations about interpersonal meaning.

For Lock (1996, 9) interpersonal meaning has to do with the way in which we act upon one another through language: giving/requesting information, getting people to do things and offering to do things ourselves for others and the way in which we express our attitudes and judgement about such things as possibility, necessity and desirability. In the same vein, Martin et al. (1997, 5) wrote that interpersonal meaning involves treating the text, that is, dividing it into things one can argue with. Interpersonal meaning views language from the perspective of its function in the process of social interactions.

According to Butt (2001, 86) interpersonal meaning is one of the most basic interactive distinction between using language to exchange information and using language to exchange goods and services. As said above, those meanings are much more influenced by the tenor of discourse (who/what kind of person produced the text? For whom?). Interpersonal meanings focus on the interactivity of the language, and concern the ways in which we act upon one another through language. In either spoken or written texts, an interlocutor expects to tell listeners/readers through text. It means that each individual text has a relationship between providers and recipients of information. Interpersonal meta-function also deals with three components, notably mood element, residue element, and mood system. According to Eggins (1994, 154-169), mood element includes subject, finite, and sometimes mood adjunct. The residue consists of predicator, complement, and some adjuncts like mood, polarity, comment, vocative or circumstantial adjunct.

In interpersonal meta-function, sentence is taken as a piece of interaction between the speaker and the listener (Halliday and Hassan, 1985, 8). Language is considered as a way of reflecting. According to Butt et al. (1995, 13) "the interpersonal meta-function uses language to encode interaction and to show how defensible or binding we find our proposition or proposal." In interpersonal analysis, meaning is considered from the point of view of its function in the process of social interaction. In the

interpersonal meaning, a clause is analysed into mood and residue, with the mood element further analysed into subject and finite. The subject and complement are typically realized by nominal groups. The finite is realized by the tensed element of the verb. The predicator is realized by the non-tensed (or non-finite) element or elements of the verbal group. The mood of a clause can be identified from its grammatical structure: statement is realized by declarative mood, question is realized by interrogative mood, command is realized by imperative mood. However, the speech function of a move can be identified by interpreting the move in its context. Butt, et al(1995, 13) explains that" the relation between lexico-grammar and interpersonal meanings is not always straightforward-information can be sought using imperative and declarative moods as well the interrogative…" Modality refers to the degree of certainty and truth of statements about the world. It is the general term for all signs of speakers' opinion. Modality is realised by modal verbs such as may, will, should and must. It consists of modalisation and modulation. Modalisation is concerned with the certainty and frequency of the interaction realized through modifiers and modulation has to do with the change of tone through the choices of modal verbs. Obligations and inclinations are expressed through them. This study is expected to examine how attitudes are expressed along with the relative judgement of what is being said.

3. METHODOLOGY

The present work used quantitative and qualitative description. It is an attempt to describe the meaning of Chimamanda's language use through the two extract from *Half of a Yellow Sun* with focus on Odenigbo and Ugwu, the main characters. It consisted in collecting data from the extracts, organizing the data on the basis of the interpersonal meaning variables, analysing them and finally drawing conclusion as pronouncements by the researcher. Here, the basis of the description is the mood patterns identified after a multiple reading of the extracts in order to understand them in the two slots. The following key is used in the labelling of the mood patterns in the texts: dec = declarative mood, int = interrogative mood, imp = imperative mood, excl = exclamative mood, minor = minor clause, fmdu = modulated finite, fmda = modalized finite.

4. DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The section is about the presentation of the data collected from the extracts and synthetized followed with their interpretation and the pronouncements by the researcher coupled with their discussion.

4.1. Data Presentation

The labelled data in the extracts are presented in the following tables respectively about mood types, mood type distribution and modality.

Table1. *Mood types in the extracts*

Mood types	Extract 1		Extract 2		Total of the exxtracts	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Declaratives	24	44%	12	46%	36	45%
Interrogatives	10	19%	06	23%	16	20%
Imperatives	4	7%	1	4%	5	6.25%
Exclamatives	3	6%	2	8%	5	6.25%
Minors	13	24%	5	19%	18	22.5%
Total	**54**	**100%**	**26**	**100%**	**80**	**100%**

From the two extracts, 80 clauses have been considered as they are the centre of the interactions. The narratized clauses are not taken into account. The first extract comes with 24 declarative mood, 10 interrogative moods, 4 imperative moods, 3 exclamative moods and 13 minor clauses. The second extract comes then with 12 declarative moods, 6 interrogative moods, only 1 imperative mood, 2 exclamative ones and 5 minor clauses. On the final scale, declarative moods rank the first with 36 types (45%), followed by minor clauses with 18 cases (22.5%) and the third rank by the interrogative moods with 16 cases (20%). Imperative moods and exclamative moods come with aneual score of 5 cases. Those mood types are not equally distributed among the protagonists.

Table2. *Mood type distribution among characters*

Mood types	Master	Ugwu	Olanna	Special Julius	One of the armed people	Total mood types
Declaratives	22	7	7	-	-	**36**
Interrogatives	10	1	2	3	-	**16**
Imperatives	4	-	1	-	-	**5**
Exclamatives	2	1	-	-	2	**5**
Minors	5	11	-	-	2	**18**
Total individual interventions	**43**	**20**	**10**	**3**	**4**	**80**

Out of the 80 mood types identified in the two extracts, a maximum of 43 has been uttered by Master or Odenigbo, of which 22 declarative moods, 10 interrogative moods, 4 imperatives, 2 exclamatives and 5 minor clauses. The maximum of Ugwu's utterances are through minor clauses (11 out of 18). He uttered 7 declarative moods and 1 interrogative mood. Olanna followed with 7 declarative moods, 2 interrogative ones and only 1 imperative one. The last 2 exclamatives and 2 minor clauses are uttered by one of the armed people. The third table is about modality in the extracts.

Table3. *Modality in the extracts*

Modality	Extract 1		Extract 2		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Modalization	03	20%	02	67%	05	28%
Modulation	12	80%	01	33%	13	72%
Total	15	100%	03	100%	18	100%

A thoroughly study of the extracts helped to identify 18 modality cases, of which 13 are modulations and only 5 are modalizations. Out of the 13 modulation cases, there are 3 clear-cut inclinations.

Table4. *Statistics of personal pronouns used in the extracts*

Pronouns	Extract 1		Extract 2		Total	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
First person singular	12	29%	05	25%	17	28%
Second person singular	22	54%	04	20%	26	43%
Third person sing	00	00%	09	45%	09	15%
First person plural	05	12%	02	10%	07	11%
Third person plural	02	05%	00	00%	02	03%
Total	41	100%	20	100%	61	100%

Table 4 shows the regularity of the personal pronouns used in the extracts. The second person singular [you] and relative forms rank the first place with 43% of the total used in the texts. The first person singular, irrespective of who are behind, follows with 28% and the third place is occupied by the third person singular with 15%. The first person plural and the third person plural close the series with respectively 11% and 03%. The analysis leads to some pronouncements coupled with their discussion.

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The mood pattern statistics show that the declarative mood types rank the first place. This predominance accounts for the amount of information shared by the protagonists engaged in the extracts. Out of the 36 declaratives, Master alone utters 22, that is, 61% of the information shared. At the same time, he utters 10 out of the 16 interrogative mood types, that is, 62.5%. As for the imperatives, only 5 are registered in the extracts, of which 4 are uttered by Master, that is, 80%. The three types of mood, in which Master's utterances dominates, present the character in several roles. He informs, requests, and gives orders.

Declarative mood (information): *There are two answers to the things they will teach you about our land*

Structural analysis:

1- *There are two answers to the things*

There	are	Two answers	To the things
Cir. Adjunct	**Finite**	**Subject**	**Complement**
Residue	*Mood*		*Residue*

2- *they will teach you about our land*

they	will	teach	you	about our land
Subject	**Finite**	**Predicator**	**Complement**	**Cir. Adjunct**
Mood		**Residue**		

In the mood structure above, it can be seen that there are two clauses in the sentence. Each clause is a statement. The first statement can be identified by the position of the subject (two answers) which is after the finite (are), and just before the complement (to the things). (There) is at the very beginning of the statement as a circumstantial adjunct. As for the second statement of the same sentence, it has a normal structure SFPCA. Hence, the two clauses of the same declarative mood are in a symmetrical position for which the reader must go farther to have explanation. But, before the explanation, Odenigbo warns Ugwu through a modalized, apparently modulated statement: "*You must read books and learn both answers*". Obligation is clearly perceptible in the statement, but, in the semantic slot, it is an expression of certainty. That injunction is followed by a cooler for Ugwwu to feel at ease and ready to start: "*I will give you books, excellent books*". It is an inclination by Odenigbo to convince Ugwu in the former's decision to send the second at school, irrespective of his advanced age. The explanation then comes: "*They will teach you that a white man called Mungo Park discovered River Niger. ... Our people fished in the Niger long before Mungo Park's grandfather was born*". Once again, Odenigbo warns Ugwu: "*But in your exam, write that it was Mungo Park*". It is then that the reader could understand Odenigbo's position through that symmetrical development. Africans must go to school and need truth at school. Though the one they attend gives some "rubbish" information about Africa, Africans should accept it until they create their own standards of education. It is the only way to struggle exploitation.

Interrogative mood (request): *How can we resist exploitation if we don't have the tools to understand exploitation?*

Structural analysis:

3) *How can we resist exploitation*

How	can	we	resist	exploitation
WH	*finite*	*subject*	*predicator*	*complement*
Mood			**Residue**	

4) *if we don't have the tools to understand exploitation?*

if	we	Don't	have	The tools	To understand exploitation
Cir.adjunct	*subject*	*finite*	*predicator*	*complement*	*Cir. adjunct*
Residue	**Mood**		**Residue**		

Like his answer, Odenigbo's question contains two clauses with different structures. The difference here is understandable since the question embeds a conditional statement. The quotations analysed above in declarative mood constitute, in fact, the answer to the question. In an interaction, when the speaker asks a question, he or she is supposed to have an addressee in charge to answer. In the present case, Odenigbo asks and answers the question. This shows that the field of the discourse is a global issue for which Odenigbo and by the way Chimamanda is part and parcel of the solving process. Of course,in a linear consideration, the narrator presents Ugwu as the addressee, but the nature of Ugwu's answer does not match the request: "*Yes, sah*!" Hence, Master answers his own request: "*I will enroll you in the staff primary school*".It is an inclination by Odenigbo to achieve concrete actions. The enrollment of Ugwu by Odenigboin the staff school marks the expression of the will Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie suggests to African elite. It is a strong symbol to Africans in the process of sustainable development.

In such a process, giving orders is not the solution. The very little use of imperative mood in the extracts is evocative of that. The high position occupied by Odenigboin the narration confers him the

right to give orders, but, no real injunction from him. The imperatives he utters are about whether to assure Ugwuthat he is at home("*Sing me a song*") or to suggest him palliative or necessary actions to prepare resilience: "*Our people fished in the Niger long before Mungo Park's grandfather was born. But in your exam, write that it was Mungo Park*".

As for minor clauses ranking the second place, their importance in the extracts show the double level interpersonal relationship in which Odenigbo and Ugwu are engaged. In fact, Ugwu utters 11 out of the 18 labelled minor clauses in most of which there is "*yes sah*" or "*sah*?" His answers, most of the time not matching the question, evoke embarrassment: what can I say in such a matter? As a child, he has no understanding of what schooling is. But, Odenigbo, in a philosophical tone, wants justification from his addressee. The second level, still philosophical, brings Ugwu in the same perspective by his Master with concepts like exploitation and resilience. That philosophical consideration of the present analysis is also expressed by Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie through the use of personal pronouns in the interactions.

The personal pronouns are used in an unbalanced proportion. In fact, the pronouns are in a triangulation with the angles kept by the pronouns [I], [you] and [they]. On the sides of the triangle there is the first person plural [we]. In fact, in the deep structure of the extracts, Chimamanda, though evoking the white man through the figurative character Mungo Park in connection with schooling, sets the debate at the African level. Of course the narration presents Odenigbo and Ugwu his houseboy as the main protagonists, but the semantic value of the pronouns presents the real concern of the author. The use of [they] in the following paragraph is ironic and, by the way, swaying.

> There are two answers to the things **they** will teach you about our land: the real answer and the answer you give in school to pass. You must read books and learn both answers. I will give you books, excellent books. **They** will teach you that a white man called Mungo Park discovered River Niger. That is rubbish. Our people fished in the Niger long before Mungo Park's grandfather was born. But in your exam, write that it was Mungo Park.(p.10)

In fact, the personal pronoun [they] is used to designate teachers who are no more Europeans, but who follow a lasting routine about the contents of their teaching. For the narrator, it is high time that Africans had adapted schooling to their realities and not be repeating what Europeans said, irrespective of the notion of truth sometimes. However, the narrator brings the reader to understand that the solution is not individual through irony where Odenigbo seems to blame Ugwu's father. He uses several times "your father" when addressing Ugwu: "Why didn't your father find somebody to lend him your school fees? Your father should have borrowed!" (p.10) Odenigbo indicates the path to follow; he decides to send Ugwu to school, despite his old age. This means that the many Ugwu existing in Nigeria and then in Africa must go to school through what exploitation could have an end.Thus, the triangulation of the personal pronouns used in the extracts is a symbol that African problems should be solved by Africans in a collective will supported by individual effort.

In sum, the narrator patterns the communication between Odenigbo and the listeners under the cover of Ugwu as the addressee with the main character being seeker and provider of information about how to resist exploitation. That has been probed by 22 out of 36 declaratives and 10 out of 16 requests uttered by Odenigbo. The requests and the declaratives are all about schooling as the condition to resist exploitation.

6. CONCLUSION

Taking into account the findings and the discussion following the study of two extracts from *Half of a Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda, the meaning of the piece of fiction about Odenigbo and Ugwu on the basis of interpersonal meta-function is expressed through a specific patterning where Odenigbo is positioned at two levels: requesting and giving information. The main information the text is concerned with is related to schooling. For the informer, schooling is the tool to resist exploitation. His attitude indicates the necessity to be concrete in that will. In case we do not work to that, there will all the time be exploitation even through war strategies. The second extract of the book gives some hints about that. Further studies may take the aspect of war in account.

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APPENDIX

Extract 1 (pp. 10-12)

Did you go to school? (int1) Stansard two. (minor1) But I learn everything fast. (dec1) Standard two? (minor2) How long ago? (int2) Many years now, sah. (dec2) But I learn everything very fast! (excl1) Why did you stop school? (int3) My father's crops failed,sah. (dec3) Why didn't your father find somebody to lend him your school fees? (int4) Sah? (minor 3) Master: Your father should (Fmda1) have borrowed! (excl2) Education is a priority! (excl3) How can (Fmdu1) we resist exploitation if we don't have the tools to understand exploitation? (int5) Yes, sah! (minor 4) I will (Fmdu2) enroll you in the staff primary school. (dec4) Yes, sah. (minor5) Thank,sah. (minor6) I suppose (dec5) you will (Fmdu3) be the oldest in class, starting in standard three at your age. (dec6) And the only way you can (Fmdu4) get their respect is to be the best. (dec7) Do you understand? (int6) Yes, sah. (minor 7) Sit down, my good man. (imp1) There are two answers to the things they will (Fmdu5) teach you about our land: (dec8) the real answer and the answer you give in school to pass. (dec9) You must (Fmda2) read books and learn both answers. (dec10) I will (Fmdu6) give you books, excellent books. (dec11) They will (Fmdu7) teach you that a white man called Mungo Park discovered River Niger. (dec12) That is rubbish. (dec13) Our people fished in the Niger long before Mungo Park's grandfather was born. (dec14) But in your exam, write (imp2) that it was Mungo Park. (dec15) Yes, sah. (minor8) Can't (Fmdu8) you say anything else? (int7) Sah? (minor9) Sing me a song. (imp3) What songs do you know? (int8) Nzogbonzogbuenyimba, enyi… Louder! (minor10)… Louder! (minor11) … Good, good. (minor12) Can (Fmdu9)you make tea? (int9) No, sah. (dec16) But I learn fast. (dec17) I eat mostly at the staff club. (dec18) I suppose (dec19) I shall (Fmda3) have to bring more food home now (dec20) that you are here. (dec21) Sah, I can (Fmdu10) cook. (dec22) You cook? (int10) Well, you can (Fmdu11) cook your own food then. (dec23) Write a list of (imp4) what you'll (Fmdu12) need. (dec24) Yes, sah. (minor13)

Dec= 24; int = 10; imp = 4; excl = 3; minors = 13 (54 clauses)

Extract 2 (pp. 300-301)

My madam told me (dec1) what happened, sah. (dec2) Ndo. (minor1) Sorry. (minor2) Yes, yes. (minor3) Certainly one must (Fmda1) expect casualties.(dec3) Death is the price of our liberty. (dec4) You just can't (Fmda2) cross to Biafra-Two, Odenigbo. (dec5) He said (dec6) he has to go (dec7) and burry her. (dec8) But the roads are occupied. (dec9) The roads are occupied. (dec10) Teacher!

(minor4) Well done! (minor5) We are going combing! (excl1) We are going to root out the infiltrators! (excl2) Please look out for my husband in a blue Opel. (imp1) He's not back? (int1) You didn't see him. (dec11) But who told Odenigbo that he can make it past occupied roads? (int2) Who told him? (int3) Do you want some water, mah? (int4) What am I going to do? (int5) What am I going to do? (int6) Master will (Fmdu1) come back, mah. (dec12)

Dec= 12; int = 06; imp = 1; excl = 2; minors = 05 (26 clauses)