

Stylistic Devices in Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen*

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Abstract: *There are lots of works especially, literary assessments on the creative works of Buchi Emecheta, especially, *Second Class Citizen* (Odukumaiya, Porter, (1988); Leke, (2011); Emem, (2013); but very few have been devoted to exclusive linguistic analysis. Most of the works done are on how the work reflects the realities of the society, its thematic preoccupations and the theories they adopted.*

It is therefore important to study how the writer has used various stylistic devices to pass her messages across and bring the text closer to the readers through meaningful interpretations.

This is the crux of this research. We shall carry out a close textual analysis of the novel, using both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

1. INTRODUCTION

The unique characteristics of Nigerian English constitute the style of Nigerian Literature written in English. The style also consists of how each writer manipulates the language to suit his or her specific thematic concern. Ajeigbe (2007:306) rightly says that, "language is the dress of thought, and style is the particular cut and fashion of the dress".

The concept of style was first used in connection with the Rhetoric of ancient Greece (Missikova, 2003:10; Ajeigbe, 2007). It was regarded as part of the technique of persuasion and was therefore studied under oratory. Ajeigbe (p.307) explains that although Rhetoric has developed and aspects of it have become expanded, there are other legacies of the old rhetoric concept of style that are still very relevant. He states that "it was basic in traditional rhetoric and criticism to distinguish between manner and matter, that is, what was said and how it was said". Similarly, in relation to Nigerian English literature, what a writer has written and how he or she has presented it makes up his or her style.

To understand the style of an author, one needs to take time to study it, and the study of style is referred to as stylistics. Stylistics is the study and interpretation of texts from both literary and linguistic perspectives. It developed from Rhetoric and serves as a bridge between literary criticism and linguistics. Ajeigbe (p.8) opines that a stylistician knows that sentences are motivated, that one cannot only describe a sentence but explain why it was chosen over other possibilities. Stylistics is used to elicit worthwhile information about works of literature and so has aided in the interpretation of texts. It makes readers aware of aspects of text that simple reading cannot do, thereby helping readers to appreciate an author's artistic creation better.

In view of the above, this work sets out to study the stylistic devices of Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen*.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

There are lots of works especially, literary assessments on the creative works of Buchi Emecheta, especially, *Second Class Citizen*; but very few have been devoted to exclusive linguistic analysis. Most of the works done are on how the work reflects the realities of the society, its thematic preoccupations and the theories they adopted.

It is therefore important to study how the writer has used various stylistic devices to pass her messages across and bring the text closer to the readers through meaningful interpretations.

2. STYLISTICS

The word "stylistics" is a fusion of two words, style and linguistics. According to Leech and Short (1981:13), "the linguistic study of style is called stylistics". Crystal (2008:460) maintains that

stylistics is “a branch of linguistics which studies the features of situationally distinctive uses (varieties) of language, and tries to establish principles capable of accounting for the particular choices made...” Abubakre (2012:262) says that “stylistics is a branch of applied linguistics, the scientific study of language”.

Stylistics spans the borders of two disciplines: literature and linguistics. According to Niazi (2013), “literary stylistics refers to the study of style used in literary language. It can be regarded as a fusion of form with content”. Lawal (2003:26) draws an analogical statement of what the position of style is in stylistics. He says, “style is to stylistics what language is to linguistics”. In the light of these definitions, it is evident that style and stylistics are closely related. This is because style serves as the bedrock of stylistics. “Without stylistics, style will not be appreciated and without style, stylistics will not be possible” (Jide, 2011).

Stylistics does not stop at describing the features of a text, but also enhance the interpretation of the text. It is “the aspect of linguistics which deals with occasions of distinctive language use objectively by providing both the literary and functional interpretation of such usage in literary and non-literary discourse” (Abubakre, 2012:263). By identifying the features of texts and their functions, stylistics gives opportunity for a better appreciation of texts.

2.1. A Brief Review

In a paper titled, “Inequality of the Sexes in the Nigerian Novel: A Study of Buchi Emecheta's *Second-Class Citizen* and Ngozi Adichie Chimamanda's *Purple Hibiscus*”, Odukomaiya discusses the evils that come with inequality of the sexes. According to her, gender stereotype is a cultural rather than a biological issue. She illustrates, using the texts, the suffering of the female in such societies.

Also, Porter (1988) has discussed *Second-Class Citizen* as a novel of personal development and as a powerful example of the bildungsroman in Africa. He believes that the success of *Second-Class Citizen* as a literary work rests largely on Emecheta's “evocation of childhood and its concomitant problems”. He however suggests that the novel loses some of its strength because of the way it is inadequately structured. Some characters who play very important roles are not developed as they should have been. Porter concludes his work by agreeing with Katherine Frank's assertion that “the best place to approach Emecheta's fiction is with neither her first nor her last book, but with *Second-Class Citizen*”.

Leke (2011) carried out a comparative analysis of Emecheta's *Second-Class Citizen* and Nwapa's *Efuru*. In his work, he looked at feminism from a liberal perspective because it relates to women's suffering. He discussed the settings, themes, characterization, author's portrayal of feminism and their achievement as female novelists. Olamide posits that Emecheta and Nwapa extensively explore the role of contemporary African women, and they are advocates of equal right among the sexes.

Emem (2013) is centred on migration, using Emecheta's *Second-Class Citizen* and Ezeigbo's *Trafficked* as case studies, Emem tries to investigate various reasons that cause women to migrate out of Nigeria to other parts of the world, especially Europe and America and how they are affected by the migration. She explains that one of the reasons is the quest for a better life, however, these immigrants discover that life is not as easy in these foreign countries as they had thought.

These are only a few among the several works that have been done on Buchi Emecheta's *Second-Class Citizen*. Although scholars have touched different aspects of the novel, little work has been done on the linguistic analysis of the text and this is the focus of this study.

2.2. Methodology

Stylistics is a combination of linguistic analysis and literary criticism. The study will adopt an intensive study of related materials and close textual analysis of the novel, *Second-Class Citizen* using both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

3. ANALYSIS

3.1. Quantitative Analysis

This is a presentation of some stylistic devices identified in *Second Class Citizen*.

Table1. Showing the frequency of selected lexical and rhetorical devices in the novel

SIMILE	METAPHOR	IRONY	EUPHEMISM	HYPERBOLE	COINAGE	IDIOM	ANALOGY	COLLOCATION	PROVERB/SAYING	PERSONIFICATION	ALLUSION	ONOMATOPOEIA
85	21	5	13	6	14	26	5	10	10	7	20	11

From the table above, thirteen rhetorical devices with a total of 233 occurrences are analysed in the text. The 85 occurrences of simile equal 36.4% of the overall occurrences of rhetorical devices. Metaphor equals 9.01%, irony and analogy equal 2.1% each, euphemism equals 5.57%, hyperbole equals 2.57%, coinages equal 6%, idioms equal 11.15%, collocation and proverbs equal 4.3% each, personification equals 3%, allusions equal 8.6% and onomatopoeia equals 4.72%.

Simile takes the highest percentage and idioms follow. This shows that the author prefers to use these forms of expressions to the other ones. Although both simile and metaphor are employed, the author has used more of simile; this is because the direct nature of simile makes the comparison straight forward and easy to be identified. Her preference for simile reflects her choice of simple, comprehensible language.

3.2. Qualitative Analysis

3.2.1. Lexical Analysis

- **Collocation**

A number of collocations have been used to achieve cohesion in the text. The numbers in parenthesis are the pages in the text from which excerpts are taken.

Examples:

“They dyed their hair and straightened it with hot combs...” (2)

“...Adah had to be there to get him his odds and ends” (13)

“Things were bound to change, for better or for worse” (30)

“She belonged to the nation of people who had introduced law and order” (66)

“After all, there were black and white Americans” (75)

“...did she not know that black was beautiful?” (161)

- **Reiteration**

Some words in the text are repeated exactly the same way or with similar forms as exemplified below:

a. “It had all begun like a dream...until it became a presence” (1)

b. “It lived with her, just like a presence” (11)

c. “Adah heard the presence telling her.” (15)

d. “She wished the presence was still with her...in England. Was the presence her instinct?” (54)

e. “Then her old dream came popping up” (172)

Here, the word ‘presence’ is used to refer to her ‘dream’ –something she hoped for (1), and her ‘instinct’ (54). The repetitions have been used to connect different parts of the text and to unify its meaning. The protagonist, Adah had a dream, ‘a presence’ that guided her from her childhood, through the hard times until the end of the novel.

- “...it was all written in the *Word of God*” (103)

“He was going to get the book called *The Truth Shall Make You Free*” (103)

“...Francis forgot the Word...” (104)

“He bent down double now, looking furiously for *The Truth Shall Make You Free...*” (103)

“...he had found the Book...he was telling her that she was being punished for not waiting to read *The Truth Shall Make You Free.*” (104).

The words in italics are near synonyms used to describe the ‘*Word of God*’ (the Bible). The writer has used these different words to minimize repetition.

- “So, since she was such a disappointment to her parents, to her immediate family, to her tribe, nobody thought of recording her birth”. (1)

Emecheta has repeated the phrase ‘to her’ to justify the ‘bitter’ feeling of the character. The words emphasize that it was her people not just any group of people that did not see her birth as an event worth recording.

- “If only she had had a home, she would not have married so early. If only Pa had not died when he did. If only her people in Lagos had been civilised...” (127).

“If only” has been repeated to show the character’s regret for her circumstance.

From examples (a) and (b) above, reiteration has been used to connect parts of the text together, as well as minimize repetition by using synonyms of words. This device as used in (c) and (d) appeals to the senses and stirs the emotion of the reader to sympathise with the character. It strengthens cohesion and also adds to the realism of the narrative.

Reiteration is also used as a device to reveal the themes of the novel. We have statements like, “only a girl”, “just a girl”, “was she not only a woman?” “She is just a woman”, occurring different times. They depict the degradation of women, an important issue in the text. There is also the reoccurrence of words like: “second-class”, “sub-standard”, “inferior” and “black”, which are often contrasted with words like “first-class”, “male” and “white”. These reflect racism, another theme of the novel. By repeating these words, the author reminds the reader of the themes of the novel.

• **Coinages and Neologism**

The coined or invented words in the text take two forms. Some words are formed from the existing lexical stock in English. Examples from the text are:

“*lappas*” (2) – from ‘wrapper’.

“*pilizon*” (7) –from ‘prison’

“made man” (19) –refers to a successful man.

“Touch Not” (22) –being very sensitive to touch.

“been-to” –“a Lagos phrase for those who had been to England” at that time (24).

“Jesus’ fashion” (42) –refers to style of growing one’s hair to the shoulder level.

It is believed to be the hair style of Jesus.

“go slow” (98) –traffic congestion.

Other coined words have their roots in the existing lexical stock in mother tongue, (Nigerian languages). These words include:

“Yoruba-Ngbati accent”. (2) – (Yoruba). Used to describe when a person speaks English with the tonal effect of Yoruba language.

“craw-craw” (5) – (Pidgin). This refers to rashes.

“boli” (6) – (Yoruba) refers to roasted plantain.

“koboko” (17) –Pidgin word for a long cane.

Coining new words from already existing forms is typical of Nigerian English because, the language is in continuous contact with other Nigerian languages.

• **Use of Indigenous Language**

There are instances where the writer has used indigenous languages, as shown in the following examples:

“*Ezidiji ji de ogoli, ome oba*” – (Igbo) meaning, “When a good man holds a woman, she becomes like the queen” (9)

“Iyawo” (92) – Yoruba word for a young wife.

“opoho” (103) – Igbo word for woman

“Okei” (103) – Igbo word for young man

“odo” (154) – Igbo word for mortar.

The author is from the Igbo tribe of Nigeria and she was brought up in Lagos, a Yoruba society. Apparently, she has been exposed to these two languages. By using Nigerian languages, although sparingly, she is identifying with them.

3.2.2. *Structure of Vocabulary*

➤ **Allusion**

In the text, the allusions used can be grouped into three. The groups and textual illustrations are stated below.

● **Literary allusions**

a. Speaking of the goddess of river Oboshi, Adah says:

“Oil was discovered near her, and she allowed the oilmen dig into her, without cursing them with leprosy... If not redundant, then she must have been in a Rip Van Winkle sleep, for she allowed the Hausa soldiers to massacre her sons...” (11)

Rip Van Winkle (1819) is a short story written by Washington Irving. The protagonist Rip Van Winkle falls into a deep sleep from which he awakes twenty years later. Emecheta has used this comparison because the river goddess seems to be asleep since she has remained dormant from the time of the first oilmen to the killing of her sons many years later.

b. “All his sisters were like Alice in Lewis Carroll’s fantasy, weeping like mad”. (27)

Alice is the central character in Lewis Carroll’s novel, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865). Just like Alice, Francis’ sisters seemed to be lost in the world of sorrow, “weeping like mad”.

c. “With this heaviness which was like the heavy load of Christian in *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, she got up reluctantly” (54).

The Pilgrim’s Progress was written by John Bunyan in 1678. Christian is the central character in the novel, who carries a very heavy load.

d. “She must come back, he (Francis) commanded, because he had not finished having his say. To Adah, he sounded like Nero in *Quo Vadis* who accused his courtiers of dying without his permission”. (105)

According to Reed and Widge (2008), *Quo Vadis* is a historical novel about a Roman emperor, Nero, written in Polish by Henryk Sienkiewicz in 1895 and translated by Jeremiah Curtin. Nero was a tyrant and to Emecheta’s Adah, Francis sounded just like one.

The comparisons to other literary texts reflect the author’s status as an educated and well-read woman.

➤ **Biblical allusions**

a. “It was alright for Mary to have hers in the stable in Bethlehem...” (88).

This refers to the Biblical Mary, the mother of Jesus and the birth of her son, Jesus in the manger.

b. “...listening to her husband preaching to her about the diligence of the virtuous woman whose price was above rubies” (102).

This refers to the biblical description of a virtuous woman in Proverbs 31:10.

➤ **Socio-political allusions**

“...for she allowed the Hausa soldiers to come and massacre her sons”. (11)

Here, the writer alludes the killing of Ibos in Northern Nigeria that led to the civil war, (1967-1970).

Allusions imply a knowledge that is shared by the writer and intended readers. All the allusions mentioned above are popular events or literary works that the writer believes her readers should be aware of.

3.2.3. *Use of Proverbs and Sayings*

In the text, there are occurrences of proverbs and popular sayings. We are told of Mr. Noble, a character in the novel, who when he came to England as a wealthy man had friends all around, but now he has spent all he has, he is left friendless because "...his friends of the happier days took to their heels." (47). Mr. Noble's dream of becoming very successful in England is shattered because of frustration in his new environment. "He stopped being a man respected in his own right and became a clown for men young enough to be his sons." (84). In this regard, the writer asks, "Who said that society makes us? Was it Durkheim?" (84). Society has made Mr. Noble a shadow of what he used to be. He is now among the many people who arrived in England very early but were never able to fulfil their goals for going there. So the writer states a popular biblical saying: "Many people are usually called but few were chosen" (82). This statement is found in Matthew 22:14.

There is also Francis who adapts to the standards of his neighbours so they would accept him, not knowing that they are jealous of him.

"He was forgetting the Yoruba saying that goes, 'a hungry dog does not play with one with an empty stomach'. Francis forgot that, to most of his neighbours, he had what they did not have." (70)

After the birth of Bubu, Adah, the protagonist has to remain in the hospital for a while. She sees how other women show off their gifts and decides she must do the same when Francis buys her nightdress. "Well she was learning. When in Rome, do as Rome does." (123)

Adah's marriage to Francis is not a pleasant experience at all. She meets Mr. Okpara, who goes home with her. When he discovers the challenge Adah faces with her husband, he asks about her relatives. Adah knows they will not help for they will say: "Did she not make her own bed? Well, let her sleep in it!" (168). This is from the English proverb, 'as you make your bed, so you must lie in it'. This means that Adah has to bear the consequences of her choice in marriage.

Proverbs and sayings are often used to express a truth or give advice and consolation. The author uses them to add force to a point being made. They also add colour to the narrative.

3.2.4. *Idiomatic Expressions*

A wide range of idiomatic expressions run through the entire novel. These idioms are used to make expressions brief and more vivid. For example, Adah is allowed to stay in school after her father's death because, being educated would fetch more bride price that would "tide Boy over" (12). This idiom has been used instead of saying 'the extra money would support Boy for a certain length of time'.

When Francis writes his first letter to Adah from England, he accuses her of being happy at his departure because, she did not cry. Adah wonders whether she should narrate her entire experience when he was leaving and how the tears came after he left, but she decides otherwise because: "He would think she was mad...(so) She simply let sleeping dogs lie." (29). That is, she left the matter as it was. The day Adah arrives in England, Francis attempts to slap her but restrains himself. We are told that this is something he would never do in the presence of his parents because, "to them, Adah was like the goose that laid the golden eggs" (36). It was Adah's salary that supported Francis and his family.

To get a job, Adah has to make a fool of (40) the old doctor who is checking her up. She needs the job so she distracts him from noticing her pregnancy, for she believes that "this was just one of those cases where honesty would not have been the best policy." (40). At her new work place, Adah finds some of her colleagues absorbed in their discussion about marriage. She does not join them because she might sound bitter. "She would have told them that marriage was not a bed of roses but a tunnel of thorns, fire and hot nails." (42). Adah's hurtful experiences as a married woman is summarised in the idiom, an adaptation of the original form, 'life is not a bed of roses'.

Trudy, the minder of Adah's children neglects them. When she is queried, she denies sternly Adah's accusation and from then on, Adah "took everything Trudy said with a pinch of salt" (52). This means that she doubted the accuracy of any information coming from Trudy.

Francis and Adah have problems with their landlord and co-tenants because their children live with them also, because Adah has a “white man’s job”. To them “she was having her cake and eating it” (69). One day a letter arrives, Francis reads it but is not forthcoming in relaying its content, so Adah “threw caution to the wind” (69), walks to him and snatches the letter. To throw caution to wind means to take a risk. knowing the kind of man Francis is, Adah still snatches the letter, a risk that could have earned her a beating.

Adah’s presence and progress continuously annoys Francis and to her knowledge, “she was a thorn in his flesh.” (175)

The context in which these idiomatic expressions are used reflect the issues of the novel. For example, in the use of these expressions, “tide Boy over” and “goose that laid the golden egg”, Adah is allowed to be in school and is treated well in Francis’ family not for her own sake, but because of what the people involved stand to gain. Also, the issue of Adah’s being maltreated and left with all the responsibilities of the home is reflected in the idiom. “Marriage is not a bed of roses”.

Some of the idioms descriptively explain a thought, while others give images of actions in order to produce a more thought provoking image of what was said or done in a particular situation. Generally, the use of idioms makes flowery the language of the narrative.

3.2.5. *Analogy*

Some expressions used in the text are derived from similar existing forms. Examples are shown below.

- a. “...but a small bit of slate was better than no slate at all” (4).

The above is an analogy with the idiom ‘half a loaf is better than none’, which means it is better to accept less than one wants than to have nothing at all.

- b. “The concept of ‘whiteness’ could cover a multitude of sins.” (44)

This is drawn from the biblical saying, “love covers a multitude of sins” (1Peter 4:8).

- c. “She left...crying quietly to herself. It was a cry of relief.” (67)

“Cry of relief” is an analogy with the saying that goes, ‘a sigh of relief’.

By using analogies, the author conveys a new meaning by adapting the original form of an expression. The reader is able to grasp the meaning of the statement by linking it to its initial form. This makes the reader mentally involved in deducing the meaning of the text.

3.2.6. *Figures of Speech*

Figurative expressions create images in the mind of the reader. Emecheta uses various figures of speech including: simile, metaphor, irony and euphemism to add beauty and rhythm to the text. These figures of speech and textual examples are explained below.

● **Simile**

There is a profuse use of similes in the text. In fact, this figure of speech is used more than any other in the text, the following are adequate examples:

- a. “Adah, from the day of her registry marriage, had seen the romantic side of her life being shattered like broken glass, about her”. (25)

Here, Adah’s ‘romantic life’ is compared with ‘broken glass’. This statement portrays the sad and joyless life of shattered dreams the protagonist faces in her marriage.

- b. “Her mouth started to water like that of a starving dog, so she turned away” (57).

The above comparison depicts hunger and consequently, poverty. This also shows the state of life of the protagonist, Adah.

The writer also uses biblical characters and events to draw comparison. Examples:

“...Adah’s father said it in hushed tones, wearing such a respectful expression as if he were speaking of God’s Holiest of Holies”. (2)

“...the Bible...said that one could be as clever as the serpent but as harmless as the dove”. (16)

“Sometimes the houses had their roofs ripped off, leaving the walls as naked as Eve with no fig leaf for cover.” (77)

“...with the voice of the vicar droning from the distant pulpit, crying like the voice of John the Baptist lost in the wilderness.” (158)

“She felt like Jesus, who amazed His dumbfounded disciples...” (159)

The writer has used biblical references because they are handy as a result of her exposure to the Bible early in life. Other examples of similes used in the text include the following:

“She started to trot like a lame horse. (p.5)

“His blackness shown like polished black leather”. (p.5)

“A woman who came with a baby as red as new carrots, nudged her to go in.” (106)

“The young woman had a face as round as a perfect O.” (109)

“He was not only big and hairy like a baby gorilla, but hungry like a wolf.” (113)

“...and she got tired of admiring this baby with thick brown hair which stood out angrily like electric wires.” (116)

These similes have been used in a descriptive way to accentuate qualities. Their recurrence in the novel adds humour and colour to the text and this helps to sustain the interest of the reader.

• **Metaphor**

The writer has also used metaphoric language in the text. Examples are below.

“These women were so proud of this new lawyer, because to them it meant the arrival of their very own Messiah.” (2)

Here, the new lawyer is compared to a Messiah.

“...with what type of soap was Adah to wash herself clean of dirty accusation?” (28)

In the above, a comparison is drawn between ‘soap’ and absolution. Apparently, soap cannot be used to cleanse one of an accusation because, accusations are not tangible.

“...but Francis’s mind was a fertile ground in which such attitudes could grow and thrive” (57)

Here, Francis’s mind is described as a fertile ground.

“You’ll be telling the world soon that you’re carrying another Jesus.” (79)

In this statement, Adah’s unborn child is compared to Jesus.

“To the other women in the ward, she was Caesar... To the night nurses, she was the mother of Mohammed Ali” (118)

In the above metaphor, Adah is compared to Caesar and her child is described as Mohammed Ali.

“Then she said to Francis...’Bill called that story my brainchild.” (181)

Here, the protagonist’s story is described as her brainchild.

Metaphors have been used in the text as a way of developing meaning. This is done by drawing comparison with items that are familiar to the reader. The metaphors give the reader a better understanding of the concept or character being described. Also, they sometimes add humour to the story.

• **Irony**

“...Adah scribbled away, enjoying the smell of crawl-crawl and dried sweat.” (6)

The smell of ‘crawl-crawl’ (rashes) and ‘dried sweat’ obviously are not appealing, so they cannot be enjoyed.

“It was going to be all right, the silent passengers seemed to be saying to her with their eyes, not their mouths.” (75)

Irony, as used in the text stimulates the mind of the reader to think deeper, since the meanings of the statements are not got from the literal meaning of the words. Also, because ironies are dryly humorous, they add a kind of hilarity to the text.

● **Euphemism**

Emecheta has discreetly handled sexual activities in the text as she uses different euphemisms to express them. Below are some examples.

“As soon as her husband touches her, she gets a swollen tummy...” (22).

By ‘touch’ here, the writer means ‘have sex’ and by ‘swollen tummy’ is meant pregnancy.

“All Adah had to do was to...be waited on hand and foot and in the evening be made love to.” (22)

“Is it too much for a man to want his wife?” (88). Here, ‘want’ refers to sexual urge.

The author has used euphemism to cover the harshness of sexual activity with more pleasant expressions.

4. FINDINGS

After our analysis, it was discovered that Emecheta used language expressly to achieve a stylistic effect. The language of the narrative is generally simple and comprehensible, this ensures a smooth reading. One does not need to keep referring to a dictionary in order to understand the words.

The lexico-semantic analysis of this work entailed the use of collocates for cohesion, simile and metaphor for comparison, irony for humour, hyperbole for exaggeration, and onomatopoeia to give sense to the reader through the sounds. The use of indigenous words, idioms, proverbs and sayings were also explored.

It was also discovered that Emecheta used more of simile than any other figure of speech in the text. There are about eighty-five occurrences of simile in the text. Emecheta draws comparison from the Bible, social events, literary texts and from her imagination.

She uses a lot of biblical references because of her exposure to Christianity from childhood, literary texts because she is well-read and social events to show the context in which the events in the novel take place.

Idiomatic expressions come next in the order of frequency. There are twenty-six idiomatic expressions in the text. Emecheta tapped from the wide varieties of English idioms to enrich the narrative. Her sense of humour is reflected in her ironic statements and in her use of simile and metaphor.

It was also discovered that words like “second-class”, “sub-standard”, “female child”, “inferior” and “black” are scattered in the text. These words are often contrasted with words like “first-class”, “male” and “white”. The use of these contrasting words echo the central ideas of the novel which are the female child is seen as a second-class human being (degradation of the female), and the blacks in England are seen as second-class citizens (racism).

5. CONCLUSION

From the analysis carried out and the findings, we can say that the use of language is a significant part of the meaning of the novel as it reveals the setting and themes. The language is straightforward and this makes for a smooth reading of the text.

Emecheta's *Second-Class Citizen* is characterised by figurative, idiomatic and proverbial expressions. Her sense of humour is contagious and this relaxes the reader and aids the enjoyment of the novel.

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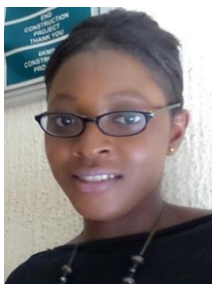
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