

## Nigerian Pidgin as a Vehicle for Social Reconstruction in the Poetry of Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo

Odey Josephat Adoga, God'sgift Ogban Uwen & Patrick Odey Ogar

Department of English and Literary Studies  
University of Calabar, Calabar

### Abstract

The indebtedness of the African poets to oral tradition and its connectedness with the anxieties of contemporary realities cannot be overemphasized. This paper on “Nigerian Pidgin as a Vehicle for Social Reconstruction in the Poetry of Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo” interrogates the plights of the masses artistically weaved in poetic riddles, proverbs, and allusions to rehearse African oral tradition and its impact on the socio-political realities, particularly in Nigeria. This study re-echoes Isidore Okpewho's earlier stand that most African poets absolve themselves from the influence of the colonial experience on the African culture, although it is admitted in contemporary works of the shifted towards the re-rooting with Africanness for self-discovery towards the exposition of social realities. Adimora-Ezeigbo tows the latter's path and borrows from the myth and belief system of Africa to propagate her ideological and idolized disposition in written form. Her poems in Nigerian Pidgin re-echo orality as an unswerving source of literary exploitation in Nigerian post-colony. Relying on the conceptualizations of Marxism, the study concludes that spoken words preserved in written form directly communicates to our thoughts and emotions while yearning for change. In the selected poems from *Heart Songs* and *Dancing Masks*, Adimora-Ezeigbo efficiently appropriates the use of the classless linguistic form as a veritable tool to ignite the consciousness of the complacent driven people and the “I don't care” attitude of the leaders in the Nigerian society.

**Keywords:** Social Reconstruction, Marxism, Poetry, Nigerian Pidgin, Akachi Adimora- Ezeigbo

### Introduction

Literature is a traditional channel for self-expression, societal representation and the mirror that x-rays the ills of the society and succinctly suggests strategies for positive change. Writers of literary works have used the different genres to diagnose societal ills and advocate for positive behavioural readjustments as the panacea for a balanced clime where the sanctity of citizens' wellbeing is sustainably prioritised. Poetry, as a literary genre, exists through the rendition of words meant to be spoken and metrically arranged to entertain, educate, appraise, criticise, satirise, condemn and correct social (in)actions in targeted audiences. The aspect of poetry that suggests a reformatory society is captured by Ikideh that:

... poetry has an intrinsic quality, which commends it as a handmaid to revolutionary action. Its evocativeness in language and brevity of form make

it the ideal medium of the revolutionary artist in a hurry, first for communicating those impressions in the hope to elicit corresponding emotions from the audience (167).

It is the poetic genre that performs the task of creating vast images and evokes impactful moments that call for diverse actions against vices, ills, and challenges that envelop societies. Poetry is therefore an artistic response to contemporary issues. The thematic concerns of a poet should therefore correlate with the events of the time as the society hopes on the artist for the needed change. The poet is therefore a reactionist to the moment and issues of his or her time within the annals of the society the poet exists. Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo makes this commitment satisfactory in questioning the wrongs of the time in order to shape a comfortable future for the society.

The poetry of Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo

interrogates the appalling degeneration of once enviable situation in Nigeria. The degeneration in this context is on the debilitating moral standards and an increasing deviation from the norm which manifest in divergent ways in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Nigeria. The preponderance of this pathetic situation in the society has not only affected the already debilitating conditions of the working class and the indigent masses in the society, it has also thwarted the mentality of those in government who are important stakeholders in the business of governance, reconstruction and reformation of our society. This heightened immorality, unwholesome attitude by the political landlords and egocentrism displayed by the masses is what Ezeigbo interrogates in her poetry, particularly the selected poems from *Heart Songs* and *Dancing Masks* used for this study. To access the Nigerian (reading) audience and generate the desired comprehensibility of the issues she interrogates, the poet adopts Nigerian Pidgin (henceforth NP) as the symbolic linguistic code that bridges the communication gap in the Nigerian multilingual setting.

#### **NP in the Nigerian Sociolinguistic Context**

The use of language for literary expressions is usually a task in multilingual societies especially in the choice of language to bridge the communication gap. This is even of more concern considering the multiethnic, diverse linguistic and literary level of the reading audience. On this, Uwen, Basse and Nta state that “the multiplicity of languages and the difficulty the situation poses in a supposedly seamless trans-ethnic communication within the Nigerian nation stimulated the quest for a linguistic bridge-builder” (339) which often times is the NP. So the choice of language in communicative exchanges should align with “the emerging sociolinguistic trend in Nigeria [which] has taken an attitudinal dimension specifically in relation to individual and collective use of language(s)” (399). Before now, Mafeni and Elugbe have established that NP is English-based with linguistic modification by the indigenous languages. That is, NP has massive elements of the English language with those Nigerian indigenous languages. This modification is evident at the various linguistic levels to bring a peculiar

linguistic realisation which creates a distinct variant. At the phonological level, Uwen describes this occurrence as “the insertion of vowels in certain positions of a word ... inserted between clusters and those that occur at the final position of some words ending with a consonant” (63). Such situations occur in Nigerian English usage and the NP expressions that ultimately capture the Nigerian sociolinguistic context.

The use of NP as major elixir of social reconstruction in the poetry of Adimora-Ezeigbo has shown that, though Nigeria is polarised into the rich and the poor, the weak and the strong, the complacent and the egocentric, but NP becomes the linguistic binding force that cements the communicative exchanges across social class. The choice of NP accounts for its classlessness, as Uwen and Nta rightly assert:

... in the Nigerian modern context, is not a marginalised or reduced language and not confined to speakers without a common language, or a particular class. It is rather prevalent with urbanisation, used as language of solidarity and social inclusiveness, and in creative writing and informal discourse against the original conception of its speakers as uneducated (59).

The use of NP as a linguistic code in this context, accommodates the speakers from the diverse ethnolinguistic backgrounds in Nigeria. In literary creativity, it is symbolic, stylistic and a pointer to the embracement of a code that permeates through the complex linguistic boundaries in Nigeria.

#### **Theoretical Underpinning**

The theoretical conception that is relevant to this study is the Marxist theory. Marxists make use of protest devices and constructions to enrage the masses against an established order that is not only fraudulent but immoral. The Marxist ideology invokes a revolutionary consciousness and the resolve to deploy tactics to reclaim the collective rights of the people in order to reconstruct history and foster a cause. Amuta captures this conception as the quest:

To seek to transcend the limitations of the various formations of bourgeois criticism of African literature is to quest for a politically engaged,

ideologically progressive and dialectical theory of that literature. In this quest, Marxism has been palpably and critically implicated not only because it represents the finest crystallization of dialectical thought into a social and political proposition but also because it encapsulates an ideological proposition in the context of which progressive forces in Africa are engaged in the struggle for negating the legacy of neo-colonialism and frustrating the designs of imperialism (504).

Marxism is a liberalising approach against class struggle to install classlessness and social equilibrium for the good of all. Its orientation is anchored on a unified society that grows collectively despite the gender, class, colour or race.

Critics of this struggle have argued that such ideology institutionalises disdainful consciousness. Oronge argues that:

Marxist critics have always insisted that in class societies, the contingent relationship of intellectual production and consciousness on material economic relationships is mediated by the class psychology. In class societies, culture, art and literature take on a class character. Literature in such circumstances is fully implicated in the class struggle. It can either evince a consciousness that seems to conserve the society on behalf of privilege interests or exude a revolutionary consciousness congruent with the objective interests of the oppressed class which is engaged in the struggle to change the social status quo (472).

The theory is relevant in the context of this study because it re-invents the Marxist's stance in the interrogation of the subconscious minds of women who have legalised nudity in the society. This underscores the position of the poet as a visionary prophet and one of the forerunners in the agitation for societal reformation. In addressing this social degeneration in the society within the ideologies of Marxism, Adimora-Ezeigbo detonates the practice

of being half naked to the world as a subversive fashion that is a blow to the pride of womanhood. The poet is one person that imbues in womanhood the courage and determination to dismantle the patriarchal structure that places a man and woman along binary opposites such as cultured/unrefined, master/servant, strong/weak, superior/inferior, vocal/silence, independent/dependent, powerful/powerless, active/passive, and assertive/docile. Uwen and Ekpe also condemn the Nigerian patriarchal orientation "immersed in this sociocultural environment of a superior male status and a subordinate female one" (71). Uwen and Ekpe query the culture that "commoditizes the female gender, ridicules her anatomy and presents women as invisible and passive entities" (72). Adimora-Ezeigbo's poetry thrives to dismantle these patriarchal ideologies.

#### **Social Reconstruction in Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Heart Songs and Dancing Masks***

Adimora-Ezeigbo interrogates the appalling degeneration and social disintegration in Nigeria. In interrogating social problems and decadence in the society, Mathew Christensen expatriates that "...the language of inequality continues to revolve around the metaphor of eating and, by extension, cannibalistic corruption. The trope of cannibalism as a symbol of economic exploitation, material accumulation and violent coercion caused by post-colonial elites has in fact come to dominate African political discourse" (3). The degeneration in this context is on the debilitating moral standard and deviation from the norm which manifest in divergent ways in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Nigeria. It is this same decadence that Achebe interrogates:

Look at our collapsing public utilities, our inefficient and wasteful parastatals and state-owned companies. If you want electricity, you buy your own generator; if you want water, you sink your own bore-hole; if you want to travel, you set up your own airline. One day soon, said a friend of mine, you will have to build your own post office to send your letters! (38-39).

The decadence in this context is multifaceted. The poet persona condemns in strong terms the activities of students in our institutions of higher

learning in Adimora-Ezeigbo's "Cultism" in the collection of poems in the excerpt below:

But dis secret cult no be mistake  
Na real crime, proper murder  
As dem cultist just dey butcher people  
Like dem be Fulani, abi Bamenda goat  
(*Heart Songs*, 38)

The wanton destruction of lives and properties as a result of cult activities is what informs Adimora-Ezeigbo's distastes and disgust. In castigating the failed society, Adimora-Ezeigbo is also inculcating in the youth the need for a change of attitude. The poet deploys the use of pidgin to interrogate the subconscious minds of our beleaguered youths, parents and variant categories of people in the society. The persona quips:

Like joke, like joke, de pickin dey drug  
Dem smoke grass-Igbo, wee wee  
Kaikai dem drink like water sef  
School dem no wan go again  
Lecturers dey chop money for nothing  
De youths no wan stay for classroom  
(*Heart Songs*, 38)

A situation in which youths in the society indulge in taking "drug", smoking "grass", drinking "kaikai" and womanizing underscores the tenet of a debilitating society. This is why the poet employs the use of pidgin to fervidly satirize this malaise and sensitize the masses on the need for change of attitude. The poet also deploys the use of humour to provide alternative platform to nip the social ills in the bud. Humour as enunciated by Ezenwa Ohaeto "enables the writer in pidgin to explore social reality insightfully and interestingly, because it is achieved through the use of hilarious allusions, ironic perceptions, succinct imagery and the tribulation of incongruities and human behaviour" (49). The use of humour unravels the heightened nature of cultism in the society. This is evident in the use of "drugs", "wee wee", "kaikai" and "truancy" in schools. In defiance and despair of these practices, the poet persona hopes to steer the ship of the country by becoming the president of this country. Her ambition is predicated on her desire to right this inconsistency in the society, thus:

...If I be president of dis country  
I go prosecute every cultist and papa  
If him kill somebody, him and him papa go die

If na manslaughter, na life sentence den go get  
Yes, *ke*. If bird dey fly, dey fly without perching  
Na so hunter go the shoot without aiming  
(*Heart Songs*, 39)

The role of an artist as a revolutionary, a non-conformist and a bastion of restructuring the society is inherent in the poem. The poet is of the opinion that capital punishment awaits cultists and their parents who kill and engage in manslaughter. The appropriation of the position of the hangs man accentuates the position of the poet as a Marxist on a corrective mission. In interrogating this prevailing situation, the poet hopes that they will be reformation in the society.

In Adimora-Ezeigbo's "Nudity", the poet persona frowns at the obscenity and exposure of the woman's body through the wearing of skimpy and seductive dresses. The poet also bemoans the dearth of African traditional values where initiating foreign culture is viewed as insane and demonic. The poet persona laments:

Chei, which kind madness  
Catch women for present time?  
Abi na my eyes only the see am?  
De ting dey ground since new millinium  
But, every year na him dey ting get worse  
Like fire wey catch dry forest for  
Harmattan (*Heart Songs*, 40)

The devaluation of womanhood is evident in expressions like "Topless show belly", "Tits as tempters" "Stip tease" and "Show bobby". In doing this, the poet is exposing the debased part of African culture that needs restructuring. Even mothers who are supposed to cushion the effect of nudity are not spared by Adimora-Ezeigbo in this dance of ignominy as captured in the excerpt below:

De one wey vex me be the one where old woman  
de do  
Some go oyinbo country for lift up dem boobs  
I wan make government arrest woman  
Wey commot for house naked or half naked  
...Even so, enough be enough. Dis nakedness  
... I don talk my own  
If daughter the drown, mama the drown  
(*Heart Songs*, 40-41)

This is why Adimora-Ezeigbo vehemently abhors nudity because therein lies the pride of



womanhood. The poet is advocating decency and civility among women as a veritable tool of reformation within the conception of the Marxists. Adimora-Ezeigbo deploys rhetorical question in the last stanza to conscientise an otherwise flaccid and passive members of the society in what she describes as “into the most active gravitation towards the intended objective, such as a revolution” (*A Companion to the Novel*, 110).

In “Monkey dey work, baboon dey chop”, Adimora-Ezeigbo exposes the contradiction and tension in the the society. The poem graphically shows a loss of hope and confidence in the government at different levels. The rich swim in affluence while the poor wallows in abject penury. Minimum wage that is supposed to be reviewed yearly is no longer feasible. This has broadened the gap between the rich and the poor. A case in point is the recent imbroglio between the Nigeria Labour Congress and the Federal government over the new minimum wage. The money of the common man in the society can longer “cover food, housing and school fees”. The poet persona explains that:

Minimum wage dem get year by year, no increment  
But oga him money de grow like tree for bank

Na so I work for slippers factory for ten years  
My body tire, come old: khaki no be leather

Na proper victim we be, men and women  
Money no cover food, housing and school fees  
(*Heart Songs*, 44)

It shows the division between the rich and the poor, powerful and powerless and the haves and have-not. The factory worker as used in the poem is indicative of the massive corruption and intense insensitivity of our employers of labour. A job without adequate security is viewed as a job of doom. The poet persona continues:

Small ting you do, dem fire you  
I no fit count the number of people dem sack

Na so so risk we dey take; life no safe at all  
Why because de owner lock him door-  
...Na him one day God save me; I no go work  
We factory catch fire, kill plenty workers  
(*Heart Songs*, 45)

In these lines, menial jobs given to Nigerians are debasing and inhuman. The poem reminds us of factory work in Lagos and other big cities in

Nigeria.

Most times, people die in the line of duty and are made to suffer unjustly because of our failed economic policies. The families of these victims remain in pains and without compensation. Hence, Adimora-Ezeigbo is calling on the relevant authorities to beam her searchlight on these repressive industries. The title of the poem “Monkey de work, baboon the chop” is a metaphor of the poor working while the rich are swimming in affluence. To restructure the society, institutions must be fortified and modalities put in place to check the malaise. According to Kofi Agyekum “The Marxist critics see how literature can be sued to promote some social and economic revolution, consciousness and a radical transformation of the society to bring social equilibrium and bridge the gaps in social class systems” (129).

In a bitter and sarcastic tone, Adimora-Ezeigbo’s “Suffer-head Immigrant” illuminates the conditions of Nigerians, Africans and people who leave their countries for other countries in search of greener pastures. The poet berates the political situation of the country and the mass exodus of professionals, graduates, doctors, experts, professors and people with array of certificates. The poet persona describes thus:

Plenty plenty exploitation  
Spite of dem big qualification  
Upon the fact many be graduate  
Dem get small money pass  
Son-of-de soil wey no go school  
(*Heart Songs*, 50)

The poet did not only pour scorn on the government and their intense insensitivity but also the attitude of those travelling to other countries. She sees this as debasing humanity:

Black man and woman dey plenty  
Some get big certificate, big degree:  
Masters, doctor, professor sef  
Plenty get employment far below  
Dem skill level. My mouth open like cave  
As shock catch me; I see one accountant  
Wey be cleaner for hospital  
One doctor be waiter for restaurant  
Professor dey wash Tube Station  
Another be security guard for one office  
(*Heart Songs*, 51)

This goes to underscore Donald Trump’s speech

that “corruption in the west is a big abomination but in Africa, it is so huge that it is slowly becoming an acceptable way of life. They sing and rejoice to their political leaders. They worship their scandal-ridden religious leaders like their gods. Lest you forget, these so called African are praising, dancing and praying for the people that have impoverished them and who come to hide their loot here”(1). The corruption, dreadful terrorism, poverty, unemployment, diseases and inequality has put the society in a dismal state and on the threshold of collapse.

As a Marxist, Adimora-Ezeigbo is cursing the leaders that have made the country a symbol of incompetence, poverty, docility, and mental inferiority. The persona expatriates:

I dey curse African dem

Wey spoil country, make people runaway  
To oyinbo country where need no dey for dem  
Dem do de kain work oyinbo man no gree do  
De kain work dem no fit do for Africa!

(*Heart Songs*, 51)

The abuse of the blacks in European countries is akin to capitalist’s exploitation of the working class. Adimora-Ezeigbo makes us to understand that exposing this entrenched prejudice and crudity that greet Nigerians that travel abroad will instigate reformation in the society.

In “Make you no min’am”, Adimora-Ezeigbo graphically portrays the indifference of the masses towards brutality, torture, rigging in election and killing in the society. The repetition of ‘No min’am’ authenticates Trump’s assestion that “the worst tragedy in Africa is that if you dare stand up and speak for what’s right, you may end up regretting. The few wise and open minded Africans who have tried to educate these fools about civilization have met their worst. They have been pushed hard on the wall, they have been silenced and others have been killed” (1). The uninspiring attitude among the masses has led to breakdown of institutions. The poet persona explains that:

Na so dem dabaru election  
Spoil constitution  
Dat one no do, dem arrest people  
Still una do notin, *ba*?  
...People dey disappear  
Some sef die for strange way

Una close eye like notin happen  
Still dey say: “soldier-man go tire”  
Small time power go change hand,  
Reach civilian hand (*Dancing Masks*, 94)

The military turned civilian president syndrome is a clog in the wheel of reformation. The militarization of the country is pathetic and uncalled for. People are arrested and tortured for no reason. The poet says:

Plenty arrest  
Prison full well well  
Plenty person de disappear  
People die too much  
Oga soldier man wan be

Civilian president (*Dancing Masks*, 95)

The poem invites a close reading of corruption, oppression and exploitation of Nigerians by military turned civilian rulers, which is fittingly situated against the backdrop of postcolonial African political struggles. Adimora-Ezeigbo is situating her poem in relation to class struggle. She sees the commitment of the people as a tool of reformation. According to her, if the masses strip themselves of complacency and indifference the society will experience positive change.

Adimora-Ezeigbo berates the vanity of human existence: riches, beauty, knowledge and wisdom are all vanity. In “Death dey for corner”, the poet sarcastically mocks the political class as she depicts the uncaring attitude of the leaders who remain undeterred in their loots. The poet broods over the pathetic situation which she sees as vanity in the following lines:

Death siddon for every corner  
de whole world be im territory  
for dis corner, I dey  
for dat corner, I dey  
mercy no dey im heart  
Im heart strong kakaraka, like iron  
Na kill, kill kill him sabi  
Kill and go (*Dancing Masks*, 96)

The poet sees “death” as an executioner. The poet persona is amplifying “death” as playing the role of the revolutionary out to fight the oppressors and sensitizing all and sundry to be conscious of the consequences that go with corruption. In such a situation the poet muses:

Look ‘ere, put your ear down  
listen, with full attention:

even if you get property  
from Lagos to Sokoto  
Port Harcourt to Maiduguri  
Death go kill you (*Dancing Masks*, 97)

The derisive tone of the poem shows the poet's hatred of capitalism and shows the vanity in accumulation of wealth, especially ill-gotten wealth. The poem is more or less a mockery of the leaders: the rich and the proud. The poet persona queries:

so why make nyanga?  
make I tell you  
nyanga no dey pay  
make person just dey do good work  
dey live better life  
give im neighbor peace  
give am joy (*Dancing Masks*, 97)

The poet is advocating for good work, better life and peace of the mind as a driving force of reformation in the society. This is inherent in her doggedness and determination in handling the prevailing ills in the society. Adimora-Ezeigbo's poems show a messiah trying to paint a picture of utopian paradise where the workers and peasants will be kings and queens.

Adimora-Ezeigbo is advocating armed self defence as a legitimate means of liberation in "I no fear boko haram". The name Boko Haram is usually translated as western education is forbidden. It has also been translated as "western influence is sin" and westernization is a sacrilege. This terrorist group in the northern part of Nigeria is noted for its crudity and destruction of lives and properties. The insurgency has put fear in all categories of people. Governors, Emirs, Small and Bigmen, Police men, Soldiers and President are all scared of terrorism and insurgency in the country, and as such:

...Everybody fear Boko Haram, no be small  
Governor fear Boko Haram  
Emir fear Boko Haram  
Small man, bigman run for Boko Haram  
Police man nko? Abi soldier man ndem  
Even sef, Mr President fear Boko Haram  
Na only me no fear Boko Haram, lai lai  
(*Dancing Masks*, 99)

Moving fluidly, with insightful wit and commitment, Adimora-Ezeigbo has bestowed a profound legacy in African ingenuity in curbing

this insurgence. According to Adimora-Ezeigbo, the subsequent campaign of violence by Boko Haram culminated in strings of bombing across the country. The poet laments:

Which kain wahala be dis  
Kaka ... gbim gbim gbim! Na bomb be dat  
Dum Dum Dum-Gbudum Gbudum  
People die like chicken for Boko Haram hand  
(*Dancing Masks*, 99)

The poet uses a repetitive phrase in incremental degree to illuminate the calamity caused by Boko Haram.

The poet deploys the use of onomatopoeia and alliteration to show the heightened nature of terrorism in Northern Nigeria. She notes that Kano, Mubi, Kaduna, Damaturu and Abuja have become an eyesore because of the activities Boko Haram. The persona asserts:

Now Boko Haram come join hand  
Boko Haram no dey tire. Walahi!  
Kano don become ghost city  
Mubi lie flat for ground  
Kaduna the riggle like earthworm  
Damaturu sef dey for coma  
Na wetin be dis? Wetin kontri go do?  
Na so everybody dey wonder  
(*Dancing Masks*, 100)

The use of negative imagery like "ghost city", "flat for ground", "earthworm" and "coma" graphically portrays the havoc caused by Boko Haram. Her deployment of rhetorical questions is to awaken the consciousness of the masses against Boko Haram. Boko Haram is Nigeria's contemporary challenge, and as Odey and Ogar capture it, "the poetry of various generations is a direct reaction to the social upheavals of the time" (167). The people in the north are daily slain like game on the rich Nigerian soil. They weep in pain and fear because the masses are denied freedom. That is, the basic fundamental human rights. Boko Haram has systematically raped and enslaved many people like the abduction of innocent 276 Chibok girls in April 2014 and most recently the abduction of Dapchi girls in Borno state among others. It is predicated on this gruesome practice that the poet persona is challenging the sect as seen in the lines below:

You see me, I no fear Boko Haram  
If I see dem with my korokoro eye sef

I no fit run, I no fit enter bush for them. Mba nu!  
I go challenge dem for proper fight...

(*Dancing Masks*, 100)

Although, corruption in the security services and human right abuses have hampered efforts to counter the unrest in the society; Adimora-Ezeigbo deploys insightful comments to incense the masses towards a revolutionary action against Boko Haram. In doing this, the poet wittingly the hybridised form that Nigerian postcolonial authors deploy to relate with their (linguistic) roots.

Postcolonial Nigerian literary writers have reinvented their hybridised linguistic backgrounds into their works. On this, Ellah, Uwen and Aboh assert that:

An ethnographic survey will readily show that both the intellectual class and the non-intellectual segment of the Nigerian society are in the full business of demonstrating their hybridized identities as they blend [Nigerian Pidgin] English with indigenous (expressions) .... While this is a colonial feature of many, if not all colonized nations, it tells us of how people are linguistically conscious of their environment (185).

Therefore, as Ellah, Uwen and Aboh opine, the indigenous linguistic elements in Adimora-Ezeigbo's poems such as: "kaikai", "oga", "oyinbo", "dabaru", "nyanga", "korokoro", "lai lai" among others, and their blend with NP and the English language confesses the multilingual representation of the poet and the Nigerian sociolinguistic milieu. This postcolonial linguistic creativity tie writers to their roots before their contact with the English language which they adopt as the medium for literary expressions. Commenting further on this practice, Ellah and Uwen note that "aside from the linguistic configuration devised by [the poet who through] ... the explicational strategies of reference assignment, bridging and [linguistic] gap filling accounts for the fleshing out of contextual meaning" (130). It is the shared diverse experiences of Nigerians that could decrypt the contextual meanings of the blended linguistic

forms adopted by the poet. It is this linguistic creativity in the blending of diverse forms interpretable by Nigerians that qualifies the poetry as Nigerian in the first place. The use of NP by the poet with hilarious insights but shared experience, removes communication among the Nigerian reading audience to comprehend and confront the reoccurring unpleasant event in their nation. This agrees with Ezenwa Ohaeto's postulation that NP as a linguistic code enables the writer to "explore social reality insightfully and interestingly, because it is achieved through the use of hilarious allusions, ironic perceptions, succinct imagery and the tabulations of incongruities in human behavior" (49). These, the NP has concisely performed in the selected poems.

### Conclusion

Eight poems written in NP were used for this study, five: "Cultism", "Nudity", "Monkey dey work baboon dey chop" and "Suffer head immigrant" extracted from *Heart Songs* while three: "Make you no min' am", "Death dey for corner" and "I no fear boko haram" from *Dancing Masks*, to interrogate the seemingly complacent passivity of the people who bear the brunt of these problems. The economic statistic in Nigeria is still backward because of this unbridled decadence. The air of ambivalence and gloomy ambience which characterised the Nigerian society is seen in the diverse voices epitomised by the poet persona in the poetry of Adimora-Ezeigbo. The vision of the poets for social reformation is best appreciated in the poet's maneuvering of diverse voices in her poems to interrogate the society coupled with the wittingly appropriation of her Igbo cosmology into artistry. Adimora-Ezeigbo's vision for social reconstruction is akin to the popular saying of "seeing light at the end of the tunnel" to end the nightmare of post-independence rottenness. The poems are preoccupied with the dilemma of a nation and thoroughly examine the myriad of challenges ranging from political and moral corruption, the degrading value and sanctity of human lives, devalued sociocultural ethos to the society-induced apprehension of the citizenry.

### WORKS CITED

Achebe, Chinua. *Morning Yet on Creation Day*. London: Heinemann, 1979. Print.



- . *The Trouble with Nigeria*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishing, 1998. Print.
- Adimora-Ezeigbo, Akachi. *A Companion to the Novel*. Lagos: Vista Books, 1998. Print.
- . *Heart Songs*. Ibadan: Kraft Books, 2009. Print.
- . *Waiting for Dawn*. Ibadan: Kraft Books, 2010. Print.
- . *Dancing Masks*. Ibadan: Kraft Books, 2013. Print.
- Agyekum, Kofi. *Introduction to Literature*. Accra: Media Design, 2007. Print.
- Armah, Ayei Kwei. *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. London: Heinemann, 1969. Print.
- Amuta, C. 2007. "Marxist Aesthetics: An Open-ended Legacy. In T. Olaiyan & Q. Ato (Eds.), *African literature: An anthology of criticism and theory*. USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Barksdale, Richard and Kenneth, Kinnamon. *Black American Writers: A Comprehensive Anthology*. New York: Random House, 1975. Print.
- Christenson, Mathew. "Cannibals in the Postcolony: Sierra-Leones' Intersecting Hegemonies in Charlie Haffner's Slave Revolt Drama *Amistad Kata-Kata*" *Research in African Literature*, 36,1(2005):3-10. Print.
- Ellah, Stephen O., Uwen, God'sgift O. and Ogar, Aboh, Romanus. "Not Even the Akudndukud Foresaw": A Postcolonial Pragmatics Reading of Eno Grace Nta's Poetry". *Language and Literary Studies in Society: A Festschrift for Professor Eno Grace Nta at 60*. Ed. Godwin Ushie, Tom Inyabri and Mathew Ebim. Lagos: Unilag Press, 2021: 166-187. Print.
- Ellah, Stephen O. and Uwen, God'sgift O. "Explicatural Strategies in the Language of Medical Case Notes in Nigeria". *NDUNODE: Calabar Journal of the Humanities*, 17.1 (2020): 118-132. Print.
- Egudu, Romanus. *Modern African Poetry and the African Predicament*. London: Macmillian, 2002 Print.
- Ikideh, I. "Poetry in the Cause of National Liberation: The Example of Agostinho Neto and the Angolan Struggle". *Nigeria Journals of Humanities* 5.6 (1982): 155-171. Print.
- Odey, Josephat A. and Ogar, Patrick O. "Evolution of Nigerian Poetry: From the Pre-colonial to the Post-colonial Era". *LWATI: A Journal of Contemporary Research*. 18.4(2021): 156-168. Print.
- Ohaeto, Ezenwa. "Pidgin Literature, Criticism & Communication". *African Literature Today* 9 (1994): 30-49. Print.
- Onoge, Omafune. "Towards a Marxist Sociology of African Literature". In T. Olaniyan and Q. Ato (Eds.), *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*. USA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. Print.
- Onwudinjo, Peter. *Songs of Wazobia*. Calabar: University of Calabar Press, 2006. Print.
- . *De Wahala for Wazobia*. Calabar: University of Calabar Press, 2007. Print.
- Uwen, God'sgift O. and Ekpe, Stella I. "De-echoing Feminine Identity in the Language of Three Nigerian Paramilitary Agencies". *Abuja Journal of Gender Studies and Youth Advancement*. 1. 1 and 2 (2018): 55-74. Print.
- Uwen, God'sgift O. "English Loanwords as Lexical Enrichment to Erei Language". *Journal of the Nigerian Language Project*. 1.1 (2019): 54-66. Print.
- Uwen, God'sgift O., Bassey, Victor O. and Nta, Eno G. "Emerging Sociolinguistic Teaching Trends of English as a First Language in Nigeria". *International Journal of Language Education*. 4.3 (2020): 398-407. Print.
- Uwen, God'sgift O. and Nta, Eno G. "Nigerian English Usage in Literature: A Sociolinguistic Study of Wole Soyinka's *The beatification of area boy*. *English Linguistic Research*. 10.1 (2021): 56-69. Print.