Lexico–Semantic and Pragmatic Stylistic Devices in Selected Tiv Novels
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Abstract

Previous studies on the select novels under study examined the linguistic roles of surrogate language, stylistic analysis of Tivism (local colours literary artists incorporated in their works from Tiv cosmology), among others. None of the studies specifically focused on lexico-semantic and pragmatic stylistic devices in these novels. This study investigates the relevance of lexico-semantic and pragmatic devices for meaning realisation in Shija's *Whispers of Distant Drums* (2005), Gar's *The Blood of the Ram* (2009), Kwaghchimin's *A Star of Hope* (2010), Tijah's *Slow Men at Work* (2012) and Norya's *The Luminous Flame* (2014), works possessing very rich graphological and phonological stylistic devices. It also explores the significance of lexico-semantic and pragmatic deviations in the select novels. This study has adopted Leech's (1969) model of foregrounding because it properly accounts for the use of parallelisms (repetitions) and deviations in the novels. This study uses the above five select novels as primary sources and textbooks, journal articles and theses as documentary sources. As for data presentation and analysis, the authors examined the select novels by reading between the lines, selecting lexes, picking semantic and pragmatic devices as well as grouping these under lexis, semantics and pragmatics and relating them to their stylistic uses. It was been discovered that lexical items used in the texts portray Tiv culture. It was also been learnt that both denotative and connotative meanings have been used in the novels. The effective use of linguistic stylistic features enhances meaning realisation and character depiction in the texts under study. For semantic and pragmatic reasons, characters in the select novels employed lexico-semantics and pragmatic devices such as: borrowing words and proverbs from Tiv, Hausa and French, as well as employing code-switching, code-mixing and pidgin. These devices add flavour to the characters' speeches and signal their group identity. The paper concludes that the lexico-semantic and pragmatic devices deployed have given different shades of meaning to the understanding of the novels.

Keywords: *Foregrounding, Lexico-semantics, Pragmatics, Stylistics, Tiv Novel, Tiv writers.*

Introduction

Stylistics – the study of style, language of literature, idiosyncrasies, deviations from the linguistic and literary norms – uses language that is replete with connotative and denotative meanings. Black (2006: 2) observes that "stylisticians seem to have felt that the language of a text perfectly reflects the textual world." The interpretation of the Whorfian hypothesis holds that people's worldview is at least partially conditioned by their language. A linguistic study would therefore reveal its meaning. That the meanings readers derive from a text are not sourced in the text alone; the text is not an icon or island, despite its linguistic boundness. This means that before readers derive accurate meaning from the texts, consideration of the role of intertextuality is significant. Therefore, the reader's recognition of the role of intertextuality can help in the reading and understanding of selected Tiv novels in this essay. Similarly, a reader's familiarity with different genres and their conventions and with literary history more generally will clearly affect their response and interpretation. The researcher embarks on this study to show the scholars who specialise in Nigerian or African literatures that a language-based approach has a decisive contribution to make to the understanding and appreciation of indigenous or Nigerian fiction.

This study explores linguistic-stylistic devices in Shija's *Whispers of Distant Drums* (2005), Gar's *The Blood of the Ram* (2009), Kwaghchimin's *A Star of Hope* (2010), Tijah's *Slow Men at Work* (2012) and Norya's *The Luminous Flame* (2014). The select novels were published by the authors of Tiv extraction who foreground the linguistic and cultural aspects of the Tiv people. Obviously, all linguistic communications within a linguistic community draw on that community's knowledge of linguistic forms, structures and effects as encountered in a host of situations. Since the literary texts are exceptionally designed and uses or exploits those forms, structures and effects, the researcher is justified in attending to them very closely in accounting for what those texts mean to readers.

Nowadays, it is more fashionable to think that meaning is the result of interpretive processes. Tuncan (2010: 22) opines that "the meta-language provided by the discipline of stylistics is but the foundation of a methodology that becomes truly engaging only when it helps one gain a clearer view of the bigger picture," that is to say, "when linguistic descriptions can be coupled with broader interpretative conclusions." Scholars or readers have divergent interpretations of texts and that authors do not assume that all readers will come to share the same view of all aspects of a text's meaning. More importantly, readers understand texts differently according to what they are looking for in such texts: they cannot assume that it has a single, invariant meaning for all readers. Since pragmatics is the study of language in use, it is understandable that stylistics has become increasingly interested in using the insights it can offer. We are in a world of unstable meanings; the role of the reader is that of an interpreter, not a mere passive recipient. That is why the study of semantic and pragmatic components of language is significant in stylistics.

Chapman and Clark (2014: 2) affirm that the "motivating force behind the initial establishment and the subsequent development of modern pragmatics was to find a systematic explanation for observable differences between literal, linguistic meaning and the meanings that particular utterances can convey in context." Certainly, scholars working in pragmatics have pursued such an

explanation for a variety of reasons; they have variously been driven by philosophical, linguistic or sociological interests. The goals of semantico-pragmatic stylisticians are to establish the ways in which what words literally mean and what speakers may use them to mean may differ, to identify some principles of language use which might explain those differences and to offer some explanation as to why such differences typically occur in various communicative situations.

Lexico-semantic and pragmatic stylistic devices in Shija's *Whispers of Distant Drums* (2005), Gar's *The Blood of the Ram* (2009), Kwaghchimin's *A Star of Hope* (2010), Tijah's *Slow Men at Work* (2012) and Norya's *The Luminous Flame* (2014) aims at studying stylistically significant features with the purpose of relating them to their artistic use. From a close study of the select novels, it is evidently clear that meaning-related aspects of the texts are not given the scholarly attention they deserve. Dissertations, theses, journal articles, textbooks and Internet sources have proven that there is paucity of critical studies on the novels under study.

The select novels have linguistic and literary devices worth studying. However, the mere mentioning of proverbs, borrowed lexical items and few literary devices by some scholars about the select novels have not reflects the select authors' linguistic and literary dexterities. In order to address this lack of literature on the lexico-semantic and pragmatic stylistic devices in the select novels, the researcher investigates the relevance of lexico-semantic and pragmatic devices for meaning realisation in the select novels and explores the significance of lexico-semantic and pragmatic deviations in the select novels.

Previous Studies on the Novels

Aor and Iorember (2021[a]) researched on linguistic roles of surrogate language in the select literary texts. They identify surrogate language in Shija's (2005) *Whispers of Distant Drums,* Chia's *Adan-Wade Kohol Ga* and Gondo's *Atem-Tyo* and *Suswam the Legitimate Candidate* among creative works written by the authors of Tiv extraction. Aor and Iorember (2021[a]: 33) maintain that 'language has verbal and nonverbal components and both of them complement each other in our daily communication. The former exists in spoken form and the latter uses body movement, musical instruments and sign language to convey meaning.' In the Tiv cosmology, just like the Igbo's, talking drum announces the death of the old.

Aor and Iorember's (2021[a]: 39) study shows the 'supremacy of surrogate language over their verbal counterpart;' it also 'reveals that drummed language transmits information in ancient and contemporary literature.' Furthermore, their study links surrogate language with semiotics, cultural studies, ethnomusicology and psycholinguistics. Surrogate language serves as oral, aural and visual metaphors in the select texts.

Allusion is a prominent in all the select novels. Aor and Iorember (2021[b]: 17) define allusion as a "mere reference to cultural issues, historical events, literary works, religious works and political happenings." They maintain that most novels written by Tiv authors have reference to cultural issues such as anti-witchcraft movements, marriage systems, rituals, heroes and traditional attires.

The prominent allusion is that of anti-witchcraft movements where the colonial master demanded that witchcraft objects be surrendered to them. These movements are known as *Ijôv, Nyambuan* and *Haakaa* in the novels. The study relates to the present

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project because it considers the selected texts. Its point of departure is that it links surrogate language with semiotics, cultural studies, ethnomusicology and psycholinguistics. Surrogate language serves as oral, aural and visual metaphors in the select texts. The study fails to examine lexico-semantic and pragmatic devices in the select novels.

Aor (2022) researched on stylistic analysis of Tivism (a term for local colours Tiv literary artists incorporated in their works from cosmology) in select Nigerian novels. The study investigates the significance of semantic devices in the select novels using style as a manner of expression mode. He maintains that the culture of a given people as reflected in their literature and language is a medium through which such a culture is expressed. Using Tange's *The Legitimate Candidate*, Shija's *Whispers of Distant Drums*, Gar's *The Blood of the Ram*, Kwaghchimin's *A Star of Hope*, Tijah's *Slow Men at Work* and Norya's *The Luminous Flame*, Aor (2022: 1) affirms that the select novels resonate with "unique expressions which express Tivness." The language used in the select novels expresses Tiv ways of speaking and writing. Proverbs, loanwords, translations, figures of speech that express Tiv worldview are laced in the novels under study. These features which are very significant in conveying meaning are too conspicuous to be ignored. Writers of Tiv extraction have produced a lot of literatures such as prose-fictions, dramatic and poetic texts. In most of these works, a careful reader or scholar will notice how Tiv language is domesticated to add flavour to them.

Aor (2022) concludes that semantic stylistic devices used in *Whispers of Distant Drums, The Legitimate Candidate, The Blood of the Ram, A Star of Hope, Slow Men at Work* and *The Luminous Flame* characterised what Tiv people express in oral and written discourses.

These semantic devices have cultural relevance in understanding of the novels under review. Tiv loanwords spice the narrative structures of the select novels thus foregrounding the significance of these lexical items. Most of the semantic devices discussed in Aor's (2022) study contribute to vernacular and colloquial styles and the glossing of words and expressions enhance understanding of the novels under study. The study relates to the present study because it considers some of the select novels and considers some semantic devices. The present study however goes beyond the scope of the previous study and considers lexico-semantic and pragmatic devices used in the novels.

Similarly, Aor and Alyebo (2022) researched on Tivism as semantic stylistic devices in the select novels. They examine the effectiveness of semantic devices in the select novels using denotative and connotative meanings. They present their data under two broad headings: denotative theory of meaning which covers proverbs, figures of speech and translations and connotative theory of meaning that covers Tiv loanwords, glossaries, translations, code-mixing and code-switching. All that the authors investigated has bearing on the Tiv language and culture. Aor (2022) and Aor and Alyebo (2022) only dwell on the semantic features of the select novels without treating other levels of language analysis such as lexico-semantic and pragmatic analysis hence the need for the present study.

Theory of Foregrounding
The Prague scholar, Jan Mukarovsky (1891–1975), shaped the notion of foregrounding into a scholarly literary concept. In his words, Mukarovsky (1932: 20) states that in the 'literary texts, foregrounding is structured: it tends to be both systematic and hierarchical.' He establishes that 'similar features may recur, such as pattern of assonance or related group of metaphors, and one set of features

will dominate the others'. Mukarovsky introduces two types of languages: standard language and the poetic language. The standard language to Mukarovsky is the language of everyday communication so it is a rule bound, practical and automatised poetic language deviates from the norm. Mukarovsky (1932) extends Havranek's inference that foregrounded usages attract attention to themselves by arguing that this special, 'poetic' language does not communicate in a way which is comparable with the normative, standard language. In fact, its main function is to be self-referring and to communicate about itself.

Foregrounding can be realised through parallelisms (repetitions) and linguistic deviations into texts. Similarly, Leech (1969) opines that foregrounding is realized by linguistic deviations and linguistic parallelism. Willie and Aikterini (2007: 82) contend that foregrounding is achieved by deviating from the routine and the habitual, by undermining perceptual habits and entrenched categories, and by making forms difficult, so that the process of perception and comprehension are slowed down. The realisation of foregrounding is captured thus:

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            FOREGROUN
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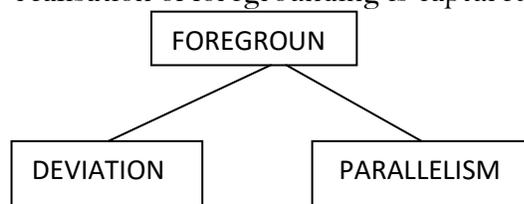
Figure 1: Realisation of Foregrounding

Leech (1969) states that linguistic deviations can be classified into: graphological deviation, phonological deviation, lexical deviation, grammatical deviation, semantic deviation, dialectal deviation, deviation of register and deviation of historical period. Linguistic parallelism can operate at the levels of graphology, phonology, syntax, lexis or morphology and semantics. The Theory of Foregrounding has been adopted employed in this study to indicate the specific linguistic effects that lexico-semantics and pragmatics have on the readers. In addition, this theory is the basic principle of aesthetic communication and it is a creative method of highlighting linguistic features which the select authors want to make noticeable in their novels. The study, therefore, adopts Leech's (1969) conception of foregrounding.

Research Methodology
This study selects five novels written by authors of Tiv extraction – Shija's (2005) *Whispers of Distant Drums*, Gar's (2009) *The Blood of the Ram*, Kwaghchimin's (2010) *A Star of Hope*, Tijah's (2012) *Slow Men at Work* and Norya's (2014) *The Luminous Flame*. The aforementioned novels have been selected using non-probability sampling method with specific reference to purposive. These novels have been selected because they are fictional texts and they have rich graphological and phonological stylistic devices.

The data of this study are sourced through primary and documentary sources. The primary data used in this study were Shija's (2005) *Whispers of Distant Drums*, Gar's (2009) *The Blood of the Ram*, Kwaghchimin's (2010) *A Star of Hope*, Tijah's (2012) *Slow Men at Work* and Norya's (2014) *The Luminous Flame*. Documentary sources were elicited from journal articles, textbooks, dissertations, theses, dictionaries and encyclopedias. These secondary sources have boosted the literature review of this study.

In this study, the author read the select novels, jotted down lexico-semantic and pragmatic devices, then categorized them into lexical borrowing, archaic words, semantic parallelisms, idiomatic expressions, Nigerian Pidgins, proverbs, translations and lexico-semantic and pragmatic deviations before analyzing them. These devices provide different sheds of meaning in the select novels.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The data for this study has been analysed under four sub-headings: Lexical Stylistic Devices in the select novels; semantic stylistic devices in the select novels; pragmatic stylistics devices in the select novels; and lexico-semantic and pragmatic deviations in the select novels.

Lexical Stylistic Devices in the Select Novels

According to McArthur (1992), the word *lexis* was coined in 1960 from the Greek *lexis* which means speech. He maintains that lexis is the vocabulary of a language or sub-language, consisting especially of its stock of lexemes. Aarts, Chalker, and Weiner (2014: 233) define lexis as the stock of words in a language; the level of language consisting of vocabulary. The study of the lexis is called lexicology, with the branch of linguistic stylistics devoted to vocabulary or lexical items being lexical stylistics. Lexical borrowing, archaic words, synonyms and antonyms have been discussed.

Lexical Borrowing is taking a word or phrase from one language into another, or from one variety of a language into another. Lexical items are borrowed because of the contact in especially multilingual situations, making the mixing of elements from different languages more or less common place. There is prestige associated with using words from another language. Authors may use an exotic expression because it seems to them to be the most suitable term available, the only possible term (with no equivalent in any other language), or the most impressive term. Some borrowed words bring about local colour in the conversation.

The beauty of the select novels is foregrounding of borrowed words and expressions. Shija (2005) uses *Damkor* (127) foreigners, *Atem Tyio* [sic] (166) breaking of

head and *burukutu* (188) local brew or liquor to avoid stating the obvious. Gar (2009) employs '*ogogoro, belanda, Seta*' (71) for a local gin, association of traders and ginger. He also uses Tiv loanwords such as '*Orya*' (74) family head, '*kulayol*' (101) protection, '*ruam*' (103) food; *kempe* (103) pants; '*Yesu Kristu, Aondo* (103) Jesus Christ and God,'*Iyou Adua, Ortese* (104) church and pastor. Kwaghchimin (2010) uses traditional ritual borrowed words such as '*igbe, veghkombo, akombo-adam* (2), *tugudu* (5) and *anger* (38) traditional clothes, *imburivyungu* and *ayu* (35) witchcraft objects; Norya (2014) has '*tar buter*' white man's country (14) *agbada* robe (28), *agbajen* locally constructed raffia chair (20) and *ate* gazebo (67). Most of the lexical borrowed words do not have English equivalents and they add vernacular style to the select novels. Black (2006) avers that loanwords showcase identity of the character and contribute to characterisation in the select novels. Yu (2017) maintains that in fiction, loanwords differentiate between the standard and non-standard languages. Aor and Alyebo (2022: 374) posit that loanwords suggest cultural context relevant to the interpretation of the select novels. The use of loanwords adds local colour to the texts under discussion.

Archaic words are equally used in the select novels. According to Campbell and Mixco (2007: 15), archaism is a 'form or construction characteristic of a past form of a language, a vestige, that survives chiefly in specialized uses.' Crystal (2008: 33) defines archaism as a term used in relation to 'any domain of language structure for an old word or phrase no longer in general spoken or written use.' The select texts have indigenous and foreign archaic words as seen in '*yamshe*' (Gar, 2009: 21) exchange marriage, '*ingyôr*' female relation and '*bashi*' brass as a unit of money (Gar, 2009: 21), *tsum* is gazebo (Gar 150), *Mbagbendav* road constructors. For the time immemorial, '*yamshe*' exchange marriage was a kind of marriage that was practised in the

Tiv land where one's '*ingyôr*' female relation was exchanged with another man's female relation but it is no more practised. After the abolition of exchange marriage, *bashi*, brass, was used as a legal tender in the Tiv land. In addition, the English 'hither and thither' (Kwaghchimin, 129) and 'whys and the wherefore' (Tijah (3) have become archaic phrases. 'Hither and thither' means in different many directions and 'whys and the wherefore' means the reason for something.

Lexical Parallelism is also found in the use of synonyms and antonyms. Wales (2011) asserts that there is usually some obvious connection in meaning between the repeated units which reinforce the equivalence. Antonyms are words that are opposite in meaning. The parallelism which shows contrast or antonymy is known as antithesis. The select novels have these antonyms: '…advantage of receiving both *internal* and *external* customers warmly' (Shija, 2005: 189); '…sifting *friend* from *foe*…' (Gar, 2009: 140); '…whispers *here* and *there*' (Gar, 2009: 98); '…both the *maternal* and *paternal* relatives have similar roles' (Kwaghchimin, 2010: 13) and '…for every *disadvantage* there is an *advantage* (Kwaghchimin, 2010: 62). Other examples of antonyms are: 'Money for them was a harbinger of *good things*, well, *bad things* too' (Tijah, 2012: 6); '…his tenure of office would be based on *dialogue* rather than *confrontation*' (Tijah, 2012: 12). 'It is with *joy* and *sadness*' (Norya, 2014: 71) and 'The trailing memories of the *past* and his *present* …' (Norya, 2014: 106). The antithetical words in the above excerpts are: *internal–external*, *friend–foe*, *here–there*, *disadvantage–advantage*, *good–bad*, *dialogue–confrontation*, *joy–sadness* and *past–present*.

Synonyms are words, phrases or sentences that have similar meanings. The select texts have synonymous words and expressions. "She could not approach the *tomb*, because women were forbidden to look into *graves*…

(Shija, 2005: 204); '…men who cannot bear public *shame* and *disgrace*… (Gar, 2009: 164); '…but to *embrace* and *cuddle*… (Tijah, 2012, p. 27); '…*repugnant* and *repulsive*… (Tijah, 2012: 64) and '…he *liked* or *preferred*…(Tijah, 2012: 36).Synonyms are realised through the use of translations, appositions, explanations and tautology. Aor (2021) asserts that parallelism 'results in clarity, economy, equality, emphasis and balance.' Aor and Tsevenda (2022a: 289) maintain that parallelism strengthens writing style, enhances readability, facilitates sentence formation and creates memorability.'

Semantic Stylistic Devices
Stylistics of meaning is called semantic stylistics. Semantic stylistic devices that are discussed here include: idioms, proverbs, pidgins and select figures of speech. The first semantic device is the employment of **idiomatic expressions** in the select texts. Trask (1999:79) defines an idiom as 'an expression whose meaning cannot be worked out from the meanings of its constituent words'. Some of these idioms are:

nooks and corners (Shija, 2005: 151)
— every part of a place
to catch a glimpse (Shija, 2005: 162)
— see something for a brief time
arm's length (Gar, 2009: 84)
— to avoid somebody
beat about the bush (Gar, 2009: 108)
— to evade or dodge the issue
swallowed the bitter pill (Tijah, 2012: 20)
— something that is unpleasant but must be accepted
Old habits die hard (Tijah, 2012: 85)
— it is hard to stop doing what one is used to
nip problems in the buds (Tijah, 2012: 91)
— to stop something at the initial state
take the bull by the horns (Norya, 66)
— deal with a difficult situation directly
from grass to grace (Norya, 91)
— from lowly to exalted position

Idioms 'help to make graphic presentations by being clearly associated with vividness of description. Aor (2019) affirms that idioms add colour, force, and emphasis to a given discourse. They serve as marks of identity to the authors that use them.

Nigerian Pidgin features prominently as a semantic device in the select novels. Wardhaugh (2006: 61) describes pidgin as 'a language with no native speakers: it is no one's language but is contact language'. Pidgin is the product of a multilingual situation in which those who wish to communicate must find or improvise a simple language system that will enable them to do so. It is obvious that her educated characters use Standard English while her not-so-educated characters use Pidgin English or mix them. Examples of pidginised expressions are discussed thus: Washima uses pidgin because Alice does not understand Standard English. Their discussion goes thus: 'Make I help you, Ankwa-dam' Na your hands wey doti you wan use pour drinking water? I don tell you say you be bushman before' (Gar, 2009: 76).

Mnena converses with the security officer in Nigerian Pidgin because he not educated – 'Who be that?" the security man asked. "Wetin you want?" *"Him no sey you dey come?"* *"Okay, stand here I de come"* (Kwaghchimin, 2010: 124). Students also use pidgin as a phatic communion as in: "The guy go win hands down." Tijah (, 2012: 10); "E go do am." "Yes, e go do am" (Tijah, 2012: 15). "Nna, you don grub?" "Nna, man no grub yet." "Make we go Ref now." "That Ref sef" (Tijah, 2012: 15). "No problem madam, na one man wey I dey look for oga." The man de wait outside gate" (Norya, 2014: 78). Pidgin brings about colloquial and informal style in the select novels.

Proverbs as a semantic device contribute to the understanding of the select novels. Mikics (2007: 246) affirms that proverb 'represent the common coin of literary experience' and they 'give poetic speech to trivial, casual, and telling moments of social encounter.' Shija (2005: 4) uses '…the blindness does not allow two successful frying pans of groundnuts to get burnt on the heart' to warn people to be cautious in whatever they do. Again, Shija (2005: 26) injects 'Our people say, when the whirlwind starts it starts with *Igbe*' to inform people that everything has its root cause. Gar (2009: 9) says that '*Mba ker or sha kwagh u a doo nan yô, man i lu bee kwagh,*' then he translates as 'You trap a man using something he likes, and it is usually minor thing.' The import of this proverb is that we should not underrate anything or body. 'When banana stem grows old it gives way for the young shoot to take over' (Kwaghchimin, 2010: 44) means the perpetuation of one's family. This proverb stresses the importance of everything in 'our people say 'the *yiase* tree' that is twisted by the wind is the tree that is eventually used to carve a state drum (Kwaghchimin, 2010: 47). 'Our people say *zer gbem hemba kpaagh* (Kwaghchimin, 2010: 56) means persistence often brings success.

The Use of Translations in Nigerian novels is an age-long tradition that portrays the linguistic dexterity of the chosen novelists to explain or gloss non-English loanwords and expressions. Translation is therefore a linguistic tool that explains the meaning of words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs and discourses. Instances of translations in the novels are:

> "*Jiaba* is the potent medicine that ensures success for Tiv musicians" (Gar, 2009: 92).
> "*Assalamu Alaikum* – peace be unto you" (Kwaghchimin, 2010: 55).
> "*Wa'alaikumussalamu* – and also with you" (Kwaghchimin, 2010: 55).

"Ayoo! Iortim! *Or nan too ve nan nemga la ikpongo tswar i nan neoo*" (That the person who does not pour it out for me to drink has ballooned arse!) (Shija, 2009: 158).
"Terungwa my son, *msugh u za van*, welcome home!" (Norya, 2014: 8).

The translations of the above word, phrases and sentences aid the readers to understand the texts under study.

Pragmatic Stylistic Devices
Bublitz, Jucker, Klaus and Schneider (2011) define pragmatics as the systematic investigation of what and how people mean when they use language as a vehicle of action in a particular context and with a particular goal in mind. Pragmatics simply means contextual use of meaning.

Euphemisms have pragmatic meaning in the select novels. Aor and Tsevenda (2022b: 45) affirm that "the beauty of Tiv language and literature is achieved when communication or discourse is laced with euphemistic expressions." They emphasise that 'euphemisms aid in turning impolite utterances into polite ones.' Without mincing words, Aor and Tsevenda (2022: 45-6) maintain that "there is no spoken (and/or written) discourse in Tiv that is not couched in euphemisms and the beauty of euphemisms in linguistics and literary texts cannot be gainsaid." Shija (2005: 206) says that "Kuleve *had gone on a long journey* in the land of Damkors." The question in Norya (2014: 35), "Is it how you will abandon your siblings when I *pass on*?" is euphemistically clothed. The word 'die' has been ignored. Kwaghchimin (2010: 142) avoids saying armed robbers but euphemistically refers to them as "…the gentlemen of the highways off the road." A character in Tijah's (2012: 142) says, "I missed my *period about two months ago…*" to mean she has been pregnant for two months.

Transliteration is one of the dominant pragmatic devices that is used in the select Tiv novels. Though written in the English language, the select novels express speech mannerism of the Tiv people. These examples are:

"…including buying up some people" (Shija, 2005: 28).
"…the gurgling water in the cow's gullet…" (Shija, 2005: 66).
"At last I have not eaten anybody's thing" (Shija, 2005: 102).
'I salute my paternal people/The paternal people salute a worthy….'(Shija, 2005: 106).
"Wan Daba tells Dakor, 'Go and bring me my wife, let me see her and die!'" (Gar 2009: 25).
"Well, I have found myself on a knife's edge" (Kwaghchimin 2010: 106).

The select novels are written in English but the meanings of phrases and sentences have been *tivised*, given Tiv connotations or interpretations. The *tivisation*, the transliteration, of the above examples shows that novelists of Tiv extraction have common linguistic experience at their disposal. Example one means bribing or hiring people; in example two, "cow's throat" is a transliterated phrase for a culvert. Example three is a refusal to collect kickbacks or bribes; example four expresses how Tiv people greet their kinsmen, example five suggests that Dakor should pay bride price on Wan Gyegwe and bring her (daughter-in-law) to Wan Daba and example six means to have a serious problem. Transliteration of sentences foregrounds the significance of Tivisms in the select novels. Pragmatically, the employment of euphemisms and transliterations heavily reflect how Tiv people express themselves in spoken and written discourses. Their choice is deliberate hence they are vitally important semantic and pragmatic devices.

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Lexico-semantic and Pragmatic Deviations

According to Wales (2011: 110), deviation refers to divergence in frequency from a norm, or the statistical average. Such divergence may depend on: (a) the breaking of normal rules of linguistic structure (whether phonological, grammatical, lexical or semantic) and so be statistically unusual/infrequent; or (b) upon the overuse of normal rules of usage, and so be statistically unusual in the sense of over frequent. Lexical, semantic and pragmatic deviations set in when there are neologisms, affixations, compounding, functional conversion, ambiguity, collocational clash, transference of meaning, tautology and absurdity. The phrase "SSCE Examination" (Gar, 2009: 97) has tautology. 'SSCE' stands for Senior School Certificate Examination and the inclusion of another examination makes it tautological. Another tautology is the use of 'orphanage home' (Norya, 2014: 130) instead of orphanage or orphans' home. The inclusion of 'back' in "Tery while *returning* the attendance register *back* to the man" (Norya, 2014: 95) contains an instance of tautology which should be expunged. It can be recast as: 'Tery while *returning* the attendance register to the man' or 'Tery while *bringing* the attendance register *back* to the man.'

There is a semantic anomaly in "…he became a complete orphan at the age of 16 years." There is nothing like a complete orphan. Any person that lost one or both parents is an orphan. There are also collocational clashes in "…*with* flying colours' (Kwaghchimin, 2010: 50) instead of '*in* flying colours." Also, the use "…birds of same feather that did not flock together" (Tijah (2012: 4) breaks the collocational structure of the above quotation. 'Birds of a feather' must flock together. Semantic restriction is also found in 'For three times, he had killed *cows*… (Shija, 2005: 59). Cow may include bulls as well, thus

restricting the use of an umbrella plural term – cattle.

There are few instances of neologisms, 'the invention of new words', (Leech, 1969: 42) that are of more obvious ways in which writers may exceed the normal resource of language. The new words formed or coined are called nonce-formation. There are nonce-formations such as *implementology* and *vanitism* in: "*Implementology* would have to deal with the possibility or otherwise of the workability of our thoughts while *vanitism* as a school of thought would have to deal with the study of nothingness of materialism to the mastery of life" (Tijah, 2012: 75).

Conclusion

The lexico-semantic and pragmatic devices have given different shades of meaning to the understanding of the select novels. The goals of semantico-pragmatic devices establish the ways various interpretations that the select texts have. The effective use of linguistic stylistic features enhances meaning realisation and character depiction in the texts under review. For semantic and pragmatic reasons, characters in the select novels employed borrowing of Tiv, Hausa, French words, proverbs, code-switching, code-mixing and pidgin to flavour or add variety to their speeches, to emphasise group identity and to measure the linguistic and social statuses of the characters used. Meaning is highly rated because the essence of reading is for comprehension of the messages conveyed. That is why Tan (2002: 170) avers that "It is the detailed analysis of the text in relation to meaning and effect that is the *modus vivendi* of stylistic analysis". The essay brings to the fore the richness of literary texts as enhanced through the use of contextual meaning via the application of the theory of foregrounding.

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