



## LANGUAGE AND STYLE IN NGUGI WA THIONGO'S *THE BLACK HERMIT*

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**ABSTRACT:** *Modern African writers employ language artistically to create lucid texts. Through the functional use of language, these writers are able to convey their thoughts vividly to capture the African culture and experience. This paper, therefore, examined the creative use of language in the play The Black Hermit. It explored Ngugi's language choice in the drama and the peculiar techniques he used in luring his readers to real African world. Through the Systematic Functional Linguistics, the researchers analysed the language based on the six process types of English transitivity. It was discovered that the writer innovatively used figurative language, adjusted expressions, transliteration and indigenous language to create an authentic African drama which portrayed the cultural heritage of his people. Also, the linguistic study portrayed the ideational meta-functional processes found in the text. It was discovered from the transitivity analysis that the material process was the most prevalent. The other processes discovered were in the forms of relational, mental and verbal processes. The paper concluded that Ngugi's use of language showed a lot of linguistic craftsmanship. His language portrayed the socio-cultural ideas and ideals in Marua tribe and also gave a lot of vigour and clarity to his work.*

**KEYWORDS:** Language, Style, transitivity, African, Writers Drama

## INTRODUCTION

It has been established in previous researches that language plays a vital role in shaping the cultural identity of a given speech community apart from the fundamental role of serving as a medium of communication and interaction. (Gumperz and Gumperz, 1982b, Halliday 1985, Fairclough, 1989). Hence language ensures the reality of the existence of culture and also its preservation. In this case, language must assume the social function of connecting the speech community with the others. Ngugi (1985: 287) states that language... takes us further from ourselves to other selves and from our world to other worlds. To achieve this, language is swayed towards exhibiting its naturalness as it blends with the social, cultural and political experience of a given society.

Language and style in literary texts are intrinsically linked. They are fundamental aspect of literary texts. Language use in literature is expressed through the use of style. Therefore, style illustrates the way language works in any text. Thornborrow and Wareing (1988) have stressed that style focuses on the systematic ways' language is used in creating texts which are similar or different from one another. Norquist (2019) asserts that language and style focus on the linguistic/rhetorical devices and figures used in providing variety and distinctiveness to someone's writing. Furthermore, Katie (1990) maintains that analysing style is not simply describing the formal features of a text for its own sake but showing the



functional significance for the interpretation of the text in order to relate literacy effects to linguistic *causes* where these are felt to be relevant.

Language, according to Adeseke, (2016: 50) is a very sensitive part of African literature and that it has generated more reactions than any issue. This is because the choice of language of the writer generally reflects every part of the text in the real world. Even though these languages used by most African writers are adopted from the colonial masters, Adeseke quoting Osofisan 1988:24 believes that the using foreign languages as vehicles of communication does not overshadow the essential African character of these literatures. Achebe believes they are assets to Africa. What these languages do is to serve as a stream in projecting the richness of the African existentialism. Ilo (2006:5) calls it linguistic, thematic and aesthetic hybridism in style of African literary identity.

For the purpose of this study, our interest is embedded in the language and style in Wa'thiongo Ngugi's drama *the Black Hermit* with the intent of carrying out a linguistic study on the literary text using Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as our theoretical framework. Furthermore, the study examines the creative use of language to explore African uniqueness and sensibilities.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Modern African writers who adopt foreign languages, which are mostly languages of colonialism to express themselves, exploit themes that are peculiar to the Africa's socio-cultural environment without altering the intended meaning. These foreign languages, especially the English language, are universal and that explains the reason for their adoption. However, modern African writers don't just use these languages, they interestingly carve the languages to suite the peculiarity of the African experience. In fact, Thornborrow and Wareing (1988) have observed that literary analysts are now more aware of the contextual factors which influence interpretation that makes it possible to extract several meanings from the same text.

Nwabueze (2016) asserts that African writers have given unique identity to African literature through their ingenious, pragmatic, innovative and skilful blending of the English language to complement the African environment and by creating characters whose language, attitudes and feelings reflect the African traditional background. He calls it, employing *English Language in African Style*. In the bid to achieve their goal of capturing and conveying African culture and experience, the writers use language in a way which may not be mutually intelligible to some of their readers who are not acquainted with the culture. In this case, though they are able to express their thoughts and ideas to reflect the African peculiarities and complexities, the value of English language as a medium of international exchange may be lost. However, Patil (2013) insists that literature which is manifested through language can only be understood and circumscribed by bringing it into a theoretical relationship with cultural and societal phenomenon.

Furthermore, Oladipo and Odebiyi (2018) also observe that the writers' creative use English in various ways to put across their message can lead to the formation of a variety of English language usage. Ojaide (1987) acknowledges the peculiarity of the English use in African literature when he writes:



The English I write is neither British nor American and I cherish this uniqueness. In addition, I express African sensibility in my writing. This sensibility is different from western and Asian. Knowing my audience and deliberately not aiming at British or American cultural traditions, I emphasise contextual meaning... My writing though in English, has its roots in Africa, not in England or North America.

Therefore, the English language is modified and adopted to complement the African society and her uniqueness. In line with Ojaide's statement, Patil (2013) stresses that all users of a language are creative in the sense that they draw on linguistic resources to express different perceptions of reality and the English language is required to carry the weight of all kinds of experiences, many of which are quite remote from the experiences of the users of the native variety.

Ngugi (1985) explains it all in his statement about the choice and use of language as being central to people's definition of itself in relation to its natural and social environment as well as in relation to the entire universe.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Systemic Functional Linguistics was first introduced by MAK Halliday in 1961, and was later expanded in 1985. The earlier works in SFL aims to connect the grammar used in a text to meaning.

The interest of the functional linguists is in the linguistic devices used by the writer. Trask and Staockwell (2007), for instance, have asserted that the research questions which the functionalists intend to answer include what the writer/speaker tries to do; what linguistic devices are available to help him do it and what basis he employs to make relevant choices.

Also, Chapelle (1988) asserts that in SFL theory, particular aspects of a given text define the meaning likely to be expressed and the language is likely to be employed in expressing those meanings. Hence, language is a systematic resource for expressing meanings in context and it is the study of how people exchange meanings through the use of language (Chapelle, 1988).

SFL combines purely structural information with overtly social factors in a single integrated description (Norquist, 2019). Eggins (2005) maintains that in Systemic Functional Linguistics, language is functional, semantic, contextual, semiotics and the writer see the systemic approach as a functional semantic approach to language.

In SFL, language is seen as a resource people use to achieve their intents by expressing meaning in context (Wattles and Radić-Bojanić, 2007). So, there is need for people to organise their speech in order to clearly attract the attention of their target audience and to transfer their speech to them. Halliday highlights the importance of accommodating the functions of language so as to express the appropriate meaning.



Bushra (2018) explains the three meta- functions of language as identified by Halliday which are ideational function, interpersonal function and textual function. Ideational function of language is concerned with how the experience of the writer/speaker's internal world is related to the outside world. In this case, language encodes both the cultural experience of the writer and his individual experience as a representative of the projected culture (Halliday 1978, Downing and Locke 1992, Thompson 2007, Shanon and Tammy 2017, Bushra, 2018).

Thompson (2007) quoted in Bushra (2018) states that ideational meta-function is concerned with showing *who is doing what to whom*. As a result, Halliday proposes transitivity system as the key to understanding the ideational function. Therefore, for this study the researchers will adopt Halliday's concept of transitivity. The reason is based on the findings that transitivity can recognise and encode experiences that are expressed in any text (Bustam, 2011). Hence, transitivity system is expected to analyse the language choice of the writer and relate them to the actual situation. Considering this system, the researchers are going to base their analysis on six types of processes which are material, mental, relational, verbal, existential and behavioural processes.

Furthermore, the interpersonal meta-function according to Thompson (2014) is aimed at discovering how language is used in negotiating social relationships in order to show power, and establish solidarity. This is achieved by the use of interpersonal resources such as mood, modality and personal pronoun.

The textual meta-function examines *cohesion* in text (Collerson, 1994). In turn, these can be used to show case significance of repeated references to a single theme or item. This type of analysis is done by creating lexical chains (semantically related words in a text) such as repetitions of a word or phrase, its pronouns, the use of synonyms, hyponyms, metonyms, and collocations throughout the text.

Therefore, by using SFL in analysing our choice text, we aim at investigating how African play-writers have used language to construct a particular reality (the experiential or ideational), and reflect the particular mode of communication being used (the textual). This study is therefore directly relevant to the theory because it has examined the contextual, cultural and figurative use of language in presenting succinct ideas, ideals and ideologies.

### **Synopsis of the Wa'Thiongi Ngugi's *The Black Hermit***

Remi, the protagonist in the drama proceeds to the city for his studies still in love with a girl named Thoni. He lacks the courage to declare his love for Thoni. When he finally makes up his mind to express his love to Thoni, he discovers that Thoni is already married to his elder brother. Six months after the marriage, Remi loses his elder brother in an accident. His father also falls ill and dies after the brother's death. According to Marua custom, Remi should take over his brother's wife. Initially, he rejects the idea but accepts the marriage due to the pressure on him.

Remi is confused and sees Thoni as his dead brother's wife. Therefore, he escapes to the city to live a life of a Hermit. In the city, Remi starts a love relationship with Jane and covers his past relations with Thoni. Remi takes up a job as a clerk in an oil company in the city. He still refuses to disclose his past to Jane and Omange his friend. After consultations in the village, the elders and the pastor decide to go bring Remi back to the village. The elders want him to return to the tribe for political leadership while the pastor wants him to become an



ecclesiastical leader. He succumbs to their pressure and abandons Jane in the city. When he returns home with Omenge his friend, he rejects Thoni as his wife and rebukes the elders for preaching tribalism and misleading the people. For him, the salvation of the people lies in the national party.

Thoni commits suicide as a result of Remi's rejection and leaves a note for Remi. When Remi eventually reads the note and discovers that Thoni loves him, he searches for Thoni. It is too late. He finds her corpse. Kneeling beside her body in grief, he painfully remarks that he came to break the tribe and custom but end up breaking his love and relationship.

### Methodology

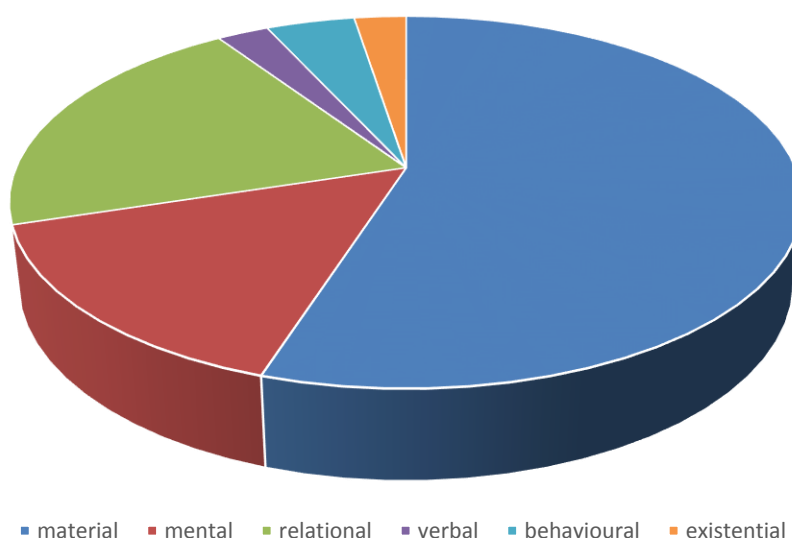
The data used for this research was collected from Ngugi Wa Thiongo's play 'The Black Hermit'. The study examined the language choice in the play and how it played the role of enhancing the readers' understanding of the reality of the writer's world.

The researchers employed the quantitative and qualitative descriptions for the linguistic study. In the quantitative analysis, frequency count and percentages were used. Tables and a pie chart were also employed as analytic tools. The qualitative analysis described the creative and unique language use by Ngugi Wa Thiongo.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### The Linguistic Study of the Black Hermit

The researchers employed the ideational meta-functional processes for the study.



**Fig 1: A Pie Chart Showing the Occurrence of Process Types in the Data**



The distribution above represents the ideational, meta-functional processes discovered in the drama 'The Black Hermit' Using transitivity analysis, the results showed that different process types were present in the drama. As shown in the pie chart, the material process is the most common with the percentage of 48.98% followed by relational process with 18.28%.

The Mental process and Verbal process are 13.54% and 13.09% respectively. Then behavioural and existential record the least processes with 3.84% and 2.25% respectively.

### Material Process

The presence of material process reveals that the level of action and activity that goes on in the data is high. This is in line with Halliday's classification of material process to action and events. Some of the examples of material process are:

Thoni kneels on the floor near the hearth, sorting out beans spread in the basin. (1)

Note there are two clauses in this statement and Thoni is the actor in the two. Thus,

1. Thoni kneels on the floor near the hearth.
2. (Thoni is) sorting out beans spread in the basin.

**Table 1: Material Process Showing Two Clauses in a Sentence**

ACTOR	MATERIAL	GOAL
Thoni	Kneels	On the floor near the hearth
Thoni	(is) sorting out	beans spread in the basin

Other examples found in the text are:

1. Yet Christ rid me of this thing. (5)
2. They are going to fetch him. (12)
3. They came to me for blessings (13)
4. You may mock me (29)
5. Your silence touches my heart (36)
6. She gave you milk. (42)
7. They carry branches (59)
8. I never gave you a chance (76)
9. I have broken you and me (76)
10. She is gone now (76)



**Table 2: Material Process Showing a Single Clause in a Sentence**

ACTOR	MATERIAL	GOAL
Yet Christ	rid of	Me (or things)
They	are going to fetch	Him
They	came	to me (for blessings)
You	may mock	Me
Your silence	Touches	My heart
She	Gave	You milk
They	Carry	Branches
I	Never gave	you a chance
She	is gone	Now
I	Have broken	You and me

From the investigation, there is all indication that the protagonist in the play does the acting in each process type more than any other participant in the data. For instance, out of 217 material processes in the data, Remi is the actor/ goal 97 times more than the other participants. Some examples are:

He should have formed a political party (8)

Remi's mind was spoilt by the evil eyes of our neighbours. (13)

When he went to this university-(18)

**Table 3: Material Process Indicating the Protagonist as the Actor**

ACTOR	MATERIAL	GOAL
<b>He (Remi)</b>	should have formed	A political party (goods and services)
The evil eyes of our neighbours	Spoilt	<b>Remi</b>
(when) <b>He (Remi)</b>	went	to this university(event)

*Note that the pronoun in the above statement is referred to Remi.*

### Relational Process

Relational process is widely used more than the behavioural process to show the attributes of the participants in the data. Relational process is used to play the role of exposition of characters in the text. Examples:

1. was once a God-fearing child (6)
2. My heart is still heavy with grief (7)
3. She is old (25)
4. I was a dumb sufferer (32)
5. Remi is not the only tree

**Table 4: A Table Showing Relational Process**

<b>CARRIER</b>	<b>RELATIONAL</b>	<b>ATTRIBUTE</b>
Remi	was once	A God-fearing child
My heart	is still	Heavy with grief
She	is	Old
I	Was	a dumb sufferer
Remi	is not	the only tree

Relational process is also used to portray the state of situation when the experience is set in other world. This helps to bring the reader to the situation of things in the real world of the writer. Example: This world is really bad

**Table 5: Relational Process Showing the State of Situation**

<b>Carrier</b>	<b>Relational</b>	<b>Attribute</b>
This world	is	Bad

### **Mental Process**

Mental process also helps the reader to appreciate the characters better through appreciating what the characters think or believe about the real-world situation. Examples of mental process in the text are:

1. I long ago feared that someone had put a curse on this. (p 7)
2. I know Christo hates our medicine (p 12)
3. I want him back (19)
4. I fear for our country (p 28)
5. All my life, I believe in the creation of a nation (p 47)

**Table 6: A Table Showing Mental Process**

<b>SENER</b>	<b>MENTAL</b>	<b>PHENOMENON</b>
I long ago	Feared	that someone had put a curse on this
I	Know	Christo hates our medicine
I	want	him back
I	Fear	for our country
All my life I	believe	In the creation of a nation

### **Verbal Process**

Observations from the data indicate that the verbal process is used when quoting or reporting what someone said. For instance:





1. He would meet me  
and running to me would say,  
“Pastor, Pastor, who died on the cross? (18)
2. He asked us to choose three elders who would go to the city and using the medicine  
he gave us to seduce Remi back to the tribe. (p 14)

**Table 7: A Table Showing Verbal Process**

Sayer	Verbal	Verbiage
He (Remi)	Would say	‘Pastor,pastor who died on the cross?’
He (diviner)	asked us	To choose three elders who would go to the city...

### Metaphorical Expressions

Ngugi clearly uses metaphorical expressions vividly to portray other domestic themes and ideas in the text. Nyobi complains about Remi deserting Thoni in the village. She is totally worried and hopeful that Thoni will give Remi children who will be a blessing to all. Therefore, she asserts:

She is a seedling

Whose eventual fruit

Will be a blessing to us all

But a seedling needs a gardener (19)

The metaphors are used by Ngugi to explore the themes of love and marriage.

The themes are further captured in the drama when Remi tells Omenge the story of a woman whom he secretly loved and adored but he could not express his love to her. He remarks:

There was a girl in my village

Whom I secretly adored

But I was a dumb sufferer. (32)

Thus, Remi lacks the courage to declare his love to Thoni and he suffers in silence. When he eventually returns home with Omenge, he states clearly that he is wrong to marry another man's wife, a woman who does not love him while addressing the Marua tribe. Thoni is humiliated and totally rejects going back to her matrimonial home. She remarks:

Can't go back to a house of shame and humiliation

To be laughed at, to be flouted,

To be driven out and by him (67)



Thoni feels abandoned by her husband and calls her matrimonial home a *house*. This depicts how uncomfortable and unwelcome she has felt as a wife whose husband has not yet touched her.

After Thoni's disappearance, one of the village women referred to her as being kind, true and tender and sees her as one surrounded by tribulations. Hence, the following statement:

She who was kind

She who was true

A tender sapling growing straight

Though surrounded with weeds (71)

Remi is also called a saviour who will give Marua tribe the emancipation they need. Also, the pastor sees Remi as a chosen vessel of God who will give Marua tribe the spiritual freedom and emancipation she needs.

Remi is a chosen vessel of God

I knew this one long ago. (57)

### **Simile**

Ngugi further highlights the theme of unrequited love through the use of simile as portrayed in the drama. Nyobi desires to see her son come back to take care of his young wife and remarks:

I want him back pastor

Remi left a young wife

And she, like a sapling in a

Drought-stricken land

Will also dry up in the heat

Of desolation (19)

Nyobi likens Thoni to a sapling languishing of care and love of a husband. Also, when Thoni discovers that she has no place in her husband's heart, she deserts her matrimonial home. All efforts to bring her back prove abortive. She laments:

I can't stay here in this place

To be like an unwanted maize plant

That has been pulled out and

Flung in the bare path... (66)



Earlier, Nyobi has advised Thoni to get another husband since the world will not wait for her at least to get a child. Nyobi regards Thoni as a deserted woman being traumatised because of her husband's absence. She states:

I hate to see your youth wearing away

Falling into bits like a cloth long

Hung in the sun (2)

When pastor comes for nyobi's blessings to fetch Remi from the city, Nyobi complains of remi getting involved in politics and becoming lost in civilisation.

...He became lost to us

Like a seed

Which falling on the wayside

Lacked the nourishment of the new earth (19)

### **Personification**

Ngugi's use of personification gives vigour and clarity to his characters speeches.

Anxiously watching the sun, the wind and the rain,

That no malicious weather should

Come and harm him (2)

The hut's gloom and loneliness

Has started eating into me. (5)

I have no fitting words

To clothe my thought.

Hence Awa (2016) asserts that personification is sometimes used in portraying how some societies, cultures and individuals feel about reality and also depicting a writer's ideology, standpoint and his opinion of his society.

### **Repetition**

The dramatist employs repetition to heighten the impact of his message. Ngugi equally uses repetition in several scenes to emphasis the central message of his drama while exploring the theme of love and marriage. His characters are made to emphasise this message that runs through the drama. After waiting for Remi to return to her, Thoni exclaims in desperation:

Yet I can't do without a husband

Without a man to warm my bed



a man to ask me for a meal in the evening

A man to make me wash his clothes

And a child of my own

A child to call me mother (3)

Here, Thoni yearns for the return of her husband and emphasises the need for a husband to make her feel like a woman. When Nyobi her mother-in law advises her to take a third husband or get a child from another man but she declines and remarks:

I cannot now go to the third husband

I cannot roll from hand to hand

A public ball or a common whore (3)

Here, Thoni's declination to take another husband is emphasised through the use of repetition.

Nyobi also complains of her son's abandonment from home for a long period of time and states:

Why has my son kept silent for so many years?

What are my tears to him?

What are my prayer? (4)

It is not you he hates

It is my flesh and blood (4)

I'll go and seek companions

In the trees on the hills

I'll watch little birds (5)

Repetition is also used during the invocatory ritual. The elders have resolved to go and bring Remi back from the city. They have sought his mother's blessing to do so and have prepared a medicine that will lure Remi back to his tribe. In order to make the medicine powerful, the elders have to make some incantations invoking their **great Creator** to make the medicine potent. During this invocation, the leader repeats the word *Creator* in almost all his utterance while the elders reply repeatedly with the phrase *so be it*:

Still on repetition, the elders while in the city use repetition to emphasise to Remi how significant he is to the Marua tribe as they believe in him to save them in their political struggle:



*You must lead us*

*You must save us*

*You must save us (39)*

Remi in his own part, stresses that he will not come home. Thus

Then, all of you, go home

I will **never never** come back (40)

In an ironic twist, Remi decides to come back home to his people but with different mission. He advocates for nationalist party and rebukes the people for preaching tribalism. Thus, Remi tries to detribalise the people. He advises them to help themselves by building more schools and turning hearts and mind to create a nation. His belief being that freedom comes when everyone sees no difference in their tribes and race. Remi also admonishes the pastor and other Christians to mingle with the others and advocates for unity irrespective of tribe, race or religion. In his admonition, he scolds his mother for playing on his father's weakness and for making him marry another man's wife and stresses on how wrong it was for him to heed to his parents' advice.

On hearing this, Thoni leaves to an undisclosed destination feeling disappointed and humiliated. Even when a village woman tries to retrain her from leaving, she replies:

I can't go to a house of shame and humiliation

To be laughed at, to be flouted

To be driven out (67)

She commits suicide. Then the village woman in despair portrays her as a peculiar character using words in repetition:

*She who was kind*

*She who was true (75)*

In desperation, Remi kneels beside her corpse and laments the demise of thoni:

And she is gone now

Gone from me and my heart (76)

With the word of love still ringing in his heart, Remi laments;

Oh, what have I done?

Thoni, what have I done?

I came back to break the tribe and custom

Instead I have broken you and me.



Thus, through the use of repetition, Ngugi is able to reiterate his ideas in a perceptible manner.

The creative language use in the Black Hermit

### **The Creative Use of Language in The Black Hermit**

#### **Adjusted Expressions**

The weight of Ngugi's style lies in the way he adjusts the English language into the peculiarity and complexity of his world. To achieve this, he Africanises the English language. However, in the text, we observe that he uses Africanised English to portray his characters who have not received western education. Some of the examples found in the text include:

When Nyobi observes that Thoni was crying, she says:

You have been crying

Letting the bitter water

Tear and wear your cheeks

To acquire a face like mine (1)

Also, when one of the elders comes to seek approval from Nyobi to enable them bring home Remi, he says:

Thank you, wife, of Ngome

May God guard his spirit

He was a man, oh yes, your husband was,

Before the white-man stole his heart. (7)

Also, in this statement:

He acceded to our wishes

and married this woman

a daughter of the tribe,

instead of going to a white-skinned woman.<sup>9</sup>

It is noted that the context gives the clue of the meaning. Hence, Ngugi makes his character consistently describe the European by using the colour of their skin. Another example is when one of the elders says:

Do you still believe in what the white man said?

He said our medicine was bad, bad!



Also, when the pastor describes Remi's childhood experience. He quotes Remi saying:

'I know,' he would presently say,

'Christ died on the tree' (18\_)

From the context again the reader understands that tree in this context means *cross*

Furthermore, Ngugi, uses other adjusted expressions to portray African peculiarity and language use in the African context. This is seen in the following expressions:

Remi was also the new husband to the tribe. (8)

This is a man from Njobe tribe. He is my brother and yours, you should have been there. (62)

Thus, the expression 'new husband' in this African cultural context is extended to include a leader who will help the tribe to get freedom and emancipation. So, semantically the word is used to depict a saviour in Marua tribe. In the same vein, the use of the word 'Brother' extends beyond one's siblings in the African world and usage to include other relations or people that share similar interests. Ngugi remarks that a man from Njobe tribe is a 'brother' to other men from Marua tribe. This portrays African peculiar use of language.

### **Direct Translation/Transliteration**

Ngugi also employs transliteration to portray African uniqueness. Some words have been given direct translation so that their meaning will not be lost.

Christ save my son

make ineffective the bad medicine

that turns away his mind from home (9)

I know Christo hates our medicine

suppose God punished me. (12)

The sun shall not be hotter than our medicine (15)

The wind shall not resist our medicine (15)

The mountain shall be moved by our medicine (15)

Through his big education

He would have bound us together

He shall have formed political party (8)

Ngugi carefully gives the direct translation of the word charm as 'medicine' and university education as 'big education' in these contexts. Thus, through the use of adjusted expressions and transliteration, Ngugi has blended the English language to suit the African environment. Furthermore, Ngugi (1985) asserts that the choice of language and the use to which language





is put are central to a people's definition of itself in relation to its natural and social environment and indeed in relation to the entire universe.

### **Indigenous Language**

The Black Hermit employs the indigenous language use in presentation of salient ideas. Ngugi uses this style to present basic ideas of the people of Marua tribe that must not lose their meaning in the English language.

The following excerpts depict the use of indigenous language. Our tribe waits under a government composed of other tribes. What has Uhuru brought us? (13)

My day's end is near. And now that Uhuru has come.

When we all stood solidly behind the Africanist Party, we thought that once Uhuru was gained taxation for the poor would stop. (14)

Ngugi uses the word 'Uhuru' to portray 'independence'. The people of Marua tribe are totally disgusted because they believe that once Uhuru/independence was gained, taxation for the poor would stop. Also, Ngugi captures the African uniqueness by presenting the African anthem in the indigenous language.

Mungu Ibariki Africa

Pate kuanka,

Maombiyetuyazikize

Uje

Utubariki

Ujeroho

Ujeroho

T aka tifu

Ujeleo

Utubariki (63)

The lexical items portray the socio-cultural Marua setting in the drama and many African writers make their character to speak in the original language in which actions take place. The peculiar style has been used by Ngugi in the 'Black Hermit'.

### **CONCLUSION**

This research explored Ngugi's language choice in his play, the Black Hermit. The research examined how the writer employed language to lure his reader to his real world. To achieve this, the researchers adopted the theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics. We analysed the



language based on the six process types of English transitivity. This explains the experiential or ideational meta-function of language. We also analysed the figurative and creative use of language employed in the text. We then conclude that NgugiWa 'Thiong' has creatively used the English language to capture African realities and unique experience. His use of language has shown a lot of linguistic craftsmanship. He uses adjusted expressions and figurative language, to portray socio-cultural ideas in Marua Tribe. Also, his language and style have given a lot of vigour and clarity to his work. Thus, Nwabueze (2016) asserts that the ability of African creative writers to adapt and blend English to African environment- their pragmatic, innovative, skilful and imaginative use of English gives unique identity to African literature. Also, the African writers use different styles that enable their characters to speak in ways that denote the original language in which actions take place. Therefore, through the use of language, writers are able to explore succinct ideas and ideals in African socio-cultural context.

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