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English in Brian Chikwava's *Harare North*: The blueprint of the ideal global English

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Abstract

Different studies on the fascinating language in Chikwava's Harare North have yielded inconsistent findings, implying shortcomings in the methodologies and the need to study the phenomenon further using more robust methodologies. Consequently, the present study employed an artificial intelligence application, iAsk.ai, to objectively analyse and synthesise diverging findings on the novel's language. The study finds that the author uses every linguistic resource at his disposal and is not bound to a specific setting. He mixes standard Englishes with native non-standard Englishes and non-native Englishes with pidgin Englishes. He Africanizes English and code mixes it with Zimbabwean languages and major African lingua francas. He uses Africanized names, colloquial English and slang. I baptise the style Globlish, which I define as a style of presentation that permits the user to exhaust his/her repertoire without care for standard English. The style helps the author to portray realism in characters and settings, exhibit polyglotism, resist English imperialism, and exhibit identity. Its use in fiction romanticises an ideal global English, valuing every speaker's culture, background, affiliation, and linguistic profile.

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Keywords: Artificial intelligence text analysis, Artificial intelligence in literature, Codemixing, Digression in literature, Global English, Globish

Introduction

The novel *Harare North*, by Brian Chikwava, a Zimbabwean writer and musician based in London, depicts the life of Zimbabwean immigrants in London − nicknamed "Harare North". While the stories in the novel are quite fascinating and entertaining for most readers, the language used therein is quite mesmerising and somewhat challenging to follow—akin to the language in Tutuola's novel *The Palm Wine Drinkard*. My interest in the nature of the language and its motivation led me to discover that previous scholars were equally compelled to study the language and arrived at divergent findings.

As a case in point, Fredua-Agyeman (2012) observed that the author uses pidgin and "ungrammatical English" to demonstrate identity and creativity and entertain the audience. For Okonkwo (2016), the language mirrors the rhythm and hybridisation of jazz and blues for aesthetic needs and poetic licence. Contrarily, Ndlovu (2016) notes that the author intentionally blends standard English with non-standard elements to attract Western readers by appealing to their prejudiced perceptions and expectations of non-native Englishes. On his part, Manase (2014) focuses on the colloquial expressions and codemixing of the languages of Zimbabwe, namely English, Shona and Ndebele in the novel. He attributes the style to the need to indicate realism and the struggle of a misplaced person to find a space to fit in far away from home. It also serves the purpose of denoting identity and culture and protesting against the colonisers. For Mangena and Nyambi (2013), it is English, often infused with expressions from local dialects, which they consider to be an abuse of standard English. They attribute the use to the need to portray broader societal issues such as

class disparities, educational inequalities, and the struggle for authenticity in a post-colonial context.

These divergent interpretations of the nature and rationale for such unique English imply gaps in knowledge that require additional academic inquiries. In this regard, incorporating artificial intelligence in the analysis promised more stout and objective findings than manual analysis, which was the sole method used in the previous studies on the novel. In this light, the current study employed an artificial intelligence application, iAsk.ai, to objectively analyse the English of the novel and synthesise the diverging explanations. Specifically, the objectives were to explore the nature and rationale for the unique language in Chikwava's *Harare North* using both manual and artificial intelligence analytics.

Methodology

Data analysis was done manually and with an artificial intelligence application. The manual identification involved several rounds of reading the novel critically to fully comprehend it and contemplate the author's language use in line with the sociolinguistic characterisation of the varieties of codes. The second manual stage involved identifying and underlying exotic phrases and expressions. The third step in the manual process involved listing the expressions and their page numbers in Word Format. The artificial intelligence identification was made with an artificial intelligence application called "iAsk.ai," available at https://iask.ai/. This particular artificial intelligence was chosen for its robustness in analysing texts compared to other software that were piloted before choosing it. The process involved using search phrases on the software, such as "*list phrases and their corresponding numbers demonstrating non-native varieties of English in Brian Chikwava's Harare North"*. A search with an expression like this would return a list of expressions diverging from the Standard British English in Brian Chikwava's *Harare North*, plus their corresponding page numbers. Figure 1

demonstrates a typical example of how the expression extraction was carried out by the application.

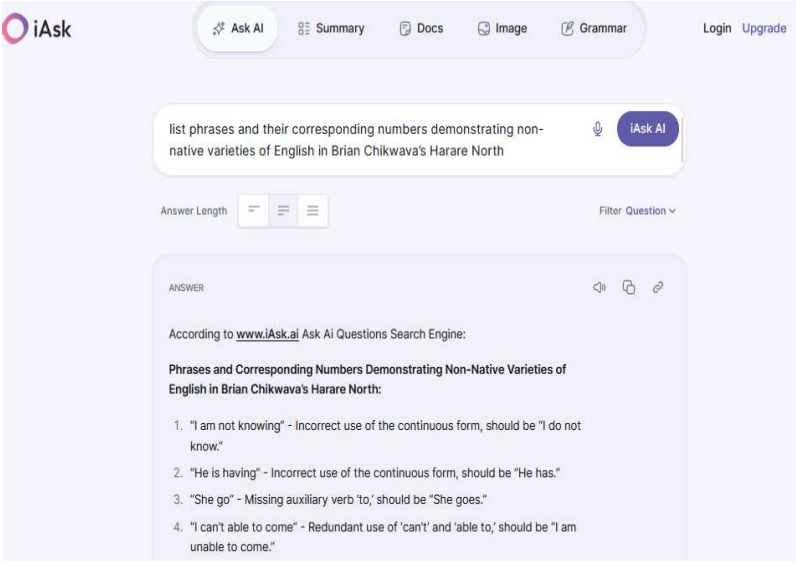

Figure 1: Search window of the artificial intelligence application "iAsk.ai"

The next step involved coding and theming expressions identified both manually and with the help of *iAsk.* The classification by themes was based on sociolinguistic categories of English. These consisted of standard dialect, non-standard dialect, sociolect, ethnolect, pidgin, creole, slang, colloquial, formal, informal, native, and non-native. Other sociolinguistic varieties that were applied included codemixing, lingua franca, inner circle English, outer circle, and expanding circle. The subvarieties included British Standard English, American English, Nigerian English, Zimbabwean English, non-Received Pronunciation English, non-native English, colloquialisms, pidgin/broken English, Africanisms/ebonics, and colloquial English, among others. The manual and artificial intelligence analyses were anchored on the basic features of the respective varieties. The next section details the categories and sample

extracts showcasing the varieties in Brian Chikwava's *Harare North*. The data were analysed in light of interpretations and commentaries made by other reviewers on the novel, linguistic and literary theories and scholarly discussions about English as a second or foreign language.

Results

The thematic analysis of the data collected from Brian Chikwawa's *Harare North*, using the procedures presented in the previous section, proved the existence of several varieties of English as described in the methodology section. These varieties (presented in this section as themes) included pidgin/ broken English, American English, non-Received Pronunciation Englishes, non-native varieties, Africanisms, and colloquial English. The details are presented in subsequent subsections.

Native non-standard Englishes, non-native Englishes and pidgin Englishes

This section discusses findings on native non-standard Englishes, non-native Englishes and pidgin Englishes. Native Non-Standard English (NSE) refers to varieties of English that deviate from Standard English (SE). These English varieties are often deeply rooted in their speakers' cultural and social contexts. They can include regional dialects, sociolects, and creole languages with unique grammatical structures, vocabulary, and pronunciation patterns distinct from Standard English. On the other hand, non-native varieties are Englishes that have developed in countries where English is used as a second or official language. The varieties demonstrate a strong influence from the first languages spoken in these areas. Moreover, pidgin English is a variety emanating from the contact between English speakers and non-English speakers, particularly in trade contexts. It has simplified grammar and vocabulary from English and other languages spoken by the groups involved. The details

of the varieties in Brian Chikwava's Harare North are presented in the next subsections.

Native non-standard Englishes

The use of non-standard varieties of English features predominantly in *Harare North*. These include non-standard American English, non-standard British English and non-standard Zimbabwean English. Table 1 provides evidence of such non-standard varieties of English in the novel.

Table 1: Evidence of non-standard English varieties in *Harare North*

No.	Sample extract	Translation	Type	Page number
1	I've been meaning to call you	I meant to call you	Native Non-Standard American	12
2	Hapaux legomenon	Being said once	Native Non-Standard British	12
3	I be telling you	I tell you or I am telling you	Native Non-Standard American	25
4	I'm gonna go and see my mom	I will go and see my mother	Native Non-Standard American	37
5	You don't think so?	Dont' you think so?	Non-Standard Zimbabwean	65
6	You think I'm lying?	Do you think I am lying?	Non-Standard Zimbabwean	76

7	You all know what I mean	All of you know what I mean	Non-Standard Zimbabwean	89
8	I ain't gonna stand for this nonsense anymore	I am not going to take this nonsense	Native Non-Standard American	92
9	Ain't it strange?	Is it not strange	Native Non-Standard American	102

Table 1 presents various expressions and clauses showcasing non-standard varieties of English in the novel. They are evident through their distinctive features, such as the use of the present perfect continuous tense instead of the past simple tense for actions that started in the past and continued up to the present, the use of tag questions with do, the use of *-in*g forms as gerunds, double negatives, inversions, statements as tag questions. The characteristics are evident in expressions such as *y'all, gonna, chillin'*, and *fixin'* in American English and *hapax legomenon* in non-standard British English in the novel.

Non-native Englishes

Non-native variety is a code that exhibits systematic changes in its formal features at all linguistic levels from the parent language due to contact with other languages and the absence of native speakers (Kachru, 1981). In this study, non-native English refers to a variety that exhibits systematic grammatical, structural, phonological, and morphological differences from Standard British English. Six phrases/expressions representing non-native varieties of English were identified in Brian Chikwava's *Harare North,* as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Sample of expressions representing non-native varieties of English in *Harare North*

No.	Sample extract	Translation	Page number
1	I no get this thing	I don't get this	17
2	He don't know nothing about me	He doesn't know anything about me	23
3	She don't want to go there	She doesn't want to go there	56
4	Him come back from dead	He came back from the dead	62
5	They was waiting for us outside	They were waiting for us outside	102
6	The car needs washed	The car needs to be washed	178

Table 2 presents expressions showcasing features of non-native varieties of English. These include the lack of subject-verb agreement (*He don't know nothing about me, they is selfish*, p. 87), double negatives (*He don't know nothing about me*, p. 45), incorrect verb forms (*They was waiting for us outside*, p.13), non-abidance to the tense (*I have bring Paul and Sekai small bag of groundnuts from Zimbabwe*, p. 9), lack of articles (*Him come back from dead*, p. 62), resumptive pronoun structures (*Tryone, he always getting in trouble him*, p. 75; *Whatever reasons for detaining me, them immigration*, p. 1), and lack of possessives (*that is they style*, p. 86), to identify a few. Hence, there is evidence that Brian Chikwava employed non-native varieties from different areas of the globe (i.e. Nigeria, Cameroon, Jamaica, Ghana and so forth) in his novel.

Pidgin Englishes

Pidgin is a code which emerges when speakers from different intelligible languages stay in contact for a long time. It develops

as a medium of communication given the absence of a language common to such groups. Famous pidgin Englishes in Africa are Cameroonian pidgin, Ghanaian pidgin English, and Nigerian Pidgin. The analysis of the language used in Brian Chikwawa's *Harare North* shows that the author employed several pidgin Englishes in his novel. The following are sample extracts exhibiting pidgin English in Brian Chikwawa's *Harare North*.

Table 3: Samples of expressions representing pidgin English in Brian Chikwava's *Harare North*

No.	**Sample Extract**	**Translation**	**Page Number**
1	Dem come wif guns and dem start shootin'	They came with guns and started shooting	3
2	Make we go and see am?	Should we go and see it?	13
3	I no go lie	I am not going to lie	17
4	Eh! You no dey hear me so?	Hey! Can't you hear me?"	23
5	Na so e be?	Is that so?	27
6	dem come and take over our land	they came and took over our land	35
7	No dey carry last	Not to be left behind	45
8	Dis car belong to me now	This car is mine now	45
9	Wetin dey happen?	What's happening?	56
10	Wetin man no go do?	what wouldn't a man do?	62
11	Make I no vex o!	I must not get angry	88
12	He dey run like dem never see road before	He was running like he had never seen road before	92

13	I no sabi wetin you dey talk	I don't understand what you're saying	102
14	E no fit pass!	It will not work	133
15	Shebi I tell you say make you no do am? Translation:	Didn't I tell you not to do it?	135
16	Make we no rush am o!	Do not make us angry!	139
17	Make I no touch am o!	I must not touch it!	162
18	E go better pass dat!	It will get better than that!	165
19	E no fit finish for dis life o!	it cannot finish in this life'	220

As observed from the examples in Table 3, these expressions have few or no inflexions (*I no go lie*, p. 17), simplified phrase structures (*No dey carry last*, p. 45), and elements of non-English language (*I no **sabi** wetin you dey talk, p. 102*). Other features are simple syllables (*make I no vex o! p. 88*) and the exclusion of gender and number markings (E go better *pass dat! p. 165*).

Africanized English

Africanism refers to the introduction of characteristic features of an African language into a non-African language (Collins Dictionary, 2024). It refers to elements drawn from African languages and incorporated into English constructions for different reasons. The analysis of the language in *Harare North* reveals several phrases exhibiting Africanism at morphological, phonological, syntactical, semantic, or pragmatic levels. These categorisations of Africanisms are further discussed below.

Codemixed with Zimbabwean languages

The analysis of phrases extracted from the novel reveals several instances where constructions contain phrases or clauses from African languages. In some cases, phrases are weaved with English expressions (codemixing, defined as the act of combining c elements from two or more languages or language varieties within a single utterance or sentence). However, there is sometimes a complete switch from English to these Zimbabwean languages (code switching). The analysis shows that the mostly codemixed elements are derived from the dominant Zimbabwean languages: Shona, Ndebele, and Chewa. There is also codemixing of English with the major African lingua francas such as Swahili and Hausa. Table 4 exhibits the codemixed constructions in the novel (the italicised elements are from African languages).

Table 4: Examples of expressions portraying codemixing with Zimbabwean languages in Brian Chikwava's *Harare North*

No.	Sample Extract	Translation	Page Number
Code mixing			
1	*Iwe,* what's your problem?	You, what is your problem?	23
2	She was *kufumura*ing about how she had been waiting for me for over an hour."	She was narrating how she had been waiting for me for over an hour	23
3	ndakambozviona zvakawanda zvinhu izvi muno *mu*London	I have seen many things here in London	27
Codeswitching			
1	*Sibongile* (Zulu and Ndebele, South Africa)	Gob bless you	3

2	*ndakarohwa nemota yemunhu* (Shona, Zimbabwe)	He was hit by a person's donkey.	17
3	*Ndini ndakutsvaga* (Shona, Zimbabwe)	I am looking for you	42
4	*Ngikufela uMama* (Zulu, South Africa)	I love my mother	45
5	*Ina kwana?* (Hausa, Nigeria and Niger)	How are you?"	73
6	*Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (Nguni, South Africa)	A person is a person through other people	78
7	*Nguwe uyabona* (isiXhosa, South Africa)	We cannot see it	102
8	*Sizwe sokudla* (Zulu, South Africa)	The nation is rising	136

Table 4 shows codemixing and codeswitching between English and Shona, Ndebele and Chewa in the novel. In codemixing, a pronoun, such as *iwe* ('you' in shona language), is integrated into an English question (*Iwe*, what's your problem? p. 23). There is also codemixing at the morphological level, for example, in *kufumurar*ing, where the base of the word is Shona, but the suffix is English to constitute 'revealing a secret' or in *mu*London, where the prefix is Bantu locative, and the base is English. In codemixing, there is a complete switch from English to a saying or Zimbabwean proverb, for example, *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (p. 78).

Codemixed with African lingua francas

In *Harare North*, codemixing and codeswitching English with major African lingua francas are abundant. The analysis of the novel shows several instances of codeswitching with Hausa and Yoruba, the lingua francas of West Africa, and Swahili, the lingua

franca of East and Central Africa. Samples of these instances are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Codemixing with African lingua francas

No.	Sample Extract	Translation	Page Number
Codemixing with Hausa			
1	*Kasuwanan Baban Dabino*	The calabash of a madman	48
2	*Gidan Miji*	Sanctuary	56
3	*Soro soke*	Voice your opinion	102
4	*Baba Ijebu*	A lottery game in Nigeria	158
5	*Mai Tunga*	A respected elder in Nigeria	196
Codemixing with Swahili			
1	*Kwani* you are not seeing me?	Don't you see me?	5
2	*Habari zenu?*	How are you?	13
3	*Hakuna matata*	No worries/ no chaos	78
4	*Jina langu ni Muzorewa*	My name is Muzorewa	102
5	*Ni kubwa sana*	It is very big	147
6	*Pole pole*	Slowly	198
7	*Hakuna shule basi*	There is no school then	234
8	*Ni wapi?*	Where is it?	234
Codemixing with Yoruba			
1	Omitutu	Cool water	23
2	Bawoni?	How are you?	28
3	E kuise	Well-done	30

Table 5 shows that the novel's codemixing of English with African lingua francas such as Swahili, Hausa, and Yoruba is commonplace. African multiword expressions codeswitched in this work include the Shona proverb (*ndakarohwa nemota yemunhu*, p. 17), the Hausa idiom (*Kasuwanan Baban Dabino,* p. 48) and the Swahili slogan (*Hakuna Matata*, p. 78). Moreover, there are a few codeswitching with Arabic, seemingly through intermediary languages such as Swahili, Yoruba, or Hausa. Examples of such are *Alhamdulillah* ('Praise Be to God', p. 1370), *jama'a* ('communal group', p. 213), and *inshaAllah* ('God willing', p. 244).

African names and pseudowords

Brian Chikwava used many African nouns in his novel. A sample of these include *mukoma* (p. 12), *kumusha* (p. 25), *kombi* (p. 3), *chimurenga* (p. 15), *zvakanaka* (p. 42), *Mazoe Orange Crush* (p. 58), *chibuku* (p. 1), *makorokoza* (p. 3), *Zvichapera* (p. 5), and *musika* (p. 9). *Mukoma* means a member of a violent ruling party militia). *Makorokoza* refers to artisanal miners risking their lives to make ends meet in Zimbabwe. The name *Mazoe Orange Crush* isa brand name for sweet and refreshing juice that has been enjoyed by generations of Zimbabweans and has become an integral part of the Zimbabwean culture. *Chibuku* is also used in many African contexts to refer to local beers (in Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa and other places). Moreover, *kombi* refers to small buses that can carry about ten people and are mostly used in African cities. Moreover, there is also evidence of pseudo-terminologies in the novel. For example, the job is often referred to as "graft" in the novel, pay/ paycheck as "termites", tolerance as "ginger", and the female genitalia as "front bum". The term "*Green Bomber*, (p. 19)" is another pseudo term referring to a member of the National Youth Service (NYS) in Zimbabwe, particularly those associated with the ruling party, ZANU-PF. The Africanization demonstrates the unique cultural context of the characters of the novel *Harare North*.

African pragmatics

In this study, the term 'African pragmatics' is used to refer to expressions reflecting African culture, worldview, logic, philosophy, or patterns of reasoning. They are expressions often tied to African local history, traditions, and social structures. African pragmatics occurs when African proverbs, sayings, metaphors, idioms, collocational items, and slogans are translated into exotic languages with different cultural settings. Despite being in English, the phrases are still based on their African antecedents and thus are reminiscent of African culture, worldview, logic and philosophy. Examples of such expressions in Chikwava's *Harare North* are provided in Table 6.

Table 6: Examples of English multiword expressions mirroring African antecedents

No.	Sample Extract	Translation	Page Number
1	Me I only have Z$1,000,000 in my bag, which, even if I exchange, will come to something like £4.,	I am left with only Z$1,000,000 on me, which is equivalent to about £4	5
2	You think you can just rock up here and start telling me what to do?	Do you think you can show up here and start instructing me	17
3	I was beaten up by someone's car	I was hit by a car	19
4	I have seen many things here in London	I have experienced a lot here in London	29
5	You better watch your step, my friend	Be careful, my friend	45

6	Don't go acting the big man with me, I know your type.	Do not pretend to be rich and famous when with me, I know your class	68
7	The visa is where everyone hit the wall	Obtaining a visa is a great challenge for everyone	107

As shown in Table 6, the expressions mirror their African models in form and meaning. This suggests that they are the product of coinage along the model in the donor language, normally by translation or rendition process (Danchev, 1986, p. 16). The verbalisation of English nouns, such as "I mouth the magic word – asylum, p. 1", replicates the model of expressions of some African languages, where the word 'mouth' can be both a verb and a noun. Additionally, the sentence "*We grow up in the same township only some dozen streets from each each so it's not like we is strangers*, p. 1" represents an African language's fashion of saying "each other". In "*Sekai and Paul start to think that I am real big load on them*, p. 6", the useless person is equally considered a load in languages such as Swahili. Moreover, the word "sit" featured in the expression "*Paul doesn't sit still with me in the lounge*, p. 7" mirrors the term used to refer to having small talk in languages such as Luo. "*I have seen many things here in London*" represents the conceptualisation of "experience" in many African languages (i.e. experience is normally 'seen' in most African languages but 'experienced' in English). Meanwhile, a car 'tramples on' people in languages such as Swahili but 'hits' in English.

Colloquial English

Colloquial phrases are expressions that reflect everyday speech patterns. A good grammar checker usually flashes such expressions as informal writing. In this regard, pidgin English

is a prototype of colloquial English. Colloquial also refers to standard English expressions that are strictly used in the spoken medium rather than written. In this study, the analysis of Brian Chikwava's *Harare North* revealed the use of several colloquial phrases as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Examples of native and non-native colloquial expressions

No.	Sample Extract	Translation	Page Number
1	BUT that is how all them people from home	But that is how they all behave	6
2	I'm not a dog, man. I'm a human being	I am not a dog, sir. I am a human being.	7
3	Chill out, man	Relax pal	15
4	You think you're clever, huh?	You think you are intelligent, don't you?	23
5	y'all	All of you	25
6	fixin	planning to	25
7	I ain't got time for this nonsense	I do not have time for this nonsense	45
8	Hang tight, I'll be there soon	Be patient	45
9	He ain't got no money and he don't want none	He doesn't have any money, and he doesn't want any	58
10	Don't mess with me, I know my rights	Don't provoke me, I know my rights	61
11	What's up with that?	Clarify	73
12	She's always on my case, man	She is constantly nagging, criticising and bothering me	78

13	I'm all ears, spill the beans	I am listening, reveal the secret	91
14	What's good?	How are you	112
15	chillin'	Relaxing	112
16	Let's hit the road	Let us leave	118

The identification of colloquial expressions from native and non-native varieties of English provides evidence of the author's use of language hybridisation. This technique marks the identity and authenticity of the characters − especially by capturing a sense of realism in their dialogue.

Discussion

The fascination of Chikwava's *Harare North* has been the nature of its language. While analysts unanimously agreed on the blend, they differed on the constituents and motivation for the blend. Musanga (2017), for instance, calls the language of Brian Chikwava's *Harare North* "Shonglish," a combination of Shona and English languages primarily associated with the less educated people in Zimbabwe. Similarly, Manase (2014) considers the language of the novel vernacularised Zimbabwean English and loan expressions from Shona. The two thus limit the borrowing to Zimbabwean languages, disregarding many other elements evident in the novel. Contrarily, Primorac (2010) notes that the author combines standard English syntax and vocabulary with grammatical and lexical elements borrowed from Caribbean pidgin, Shona, Ndebele and Southern African pidgin known as *Chilapalapa*. He also notes that the author combines stylistics to convey his protagonist's peculiar combination of ignorance, street smarts and menace. According to Gunning (2015), the author writes a "'hopelessly diaspora-ized mix of elements of Caribbean patois, London English, and traces of Zimbabwean speech" (p. 127).

This study hypothesised finding more ingredients constituting the language given that past studies only relied on manual analysis. Using artificial intelligence-assisted analysis, the study uncovered more shades of constituents than previous studies. The analysis shows that the author mixes standard Englishes with native non-standard Englishes and non-native Englishes with pidgin Englishes. He Africanizes English at the level of semantics and pragmatics and code mixes English with Zimbabwean languages and major African lingua francas at the level of syntax and morphology. He dominantly uses Africanized nouns and employs colloquial English and slang to constitute what I call 'Globlish'—a composition of diverse varieties of English and several other (globalized) languages. Eventually, the present study provides a comprehensive status of the language used in Chikwava's *Harare North* compared to previous studies.

In all, Africanisation is the linguistic hallmark of this novel. This involves retaining African elements, such as proper and common African nouns and modifying the language at all levels to retain an African identity. Desai (2005) observes that non-English authors recast English to resonate with their cultural specificities and to carry the heavy burden of the African experience. Gold (1995) confirms this by indicating that digressions serve the purpose of providing deeper insights into the motivations and complexities of characters. Igboanusi (2006), in particular, reports that Igbo writers in English tend to transfer lexical items and calque expressions from their mother tongues into English to fill lexical gaps and to represent the worldview that English words may not effectively represent (direct loan). He adds that this mode of writing transfers the oral style into the written tradition and, this way, captures the Igbo worldview in English. Okonkwo (2016) agrees that the African author "disarticulates and rearranges English language's logic and mandates on grammar, syntax, spelling, idiom, pitch, rhythm, and affect. He disrupts long-standing subject-verb

alliances and misapplies pronouns and plurals" (p. 160). This is evident in Brian Chikwava's novel in that the author replicates several African idioms, metaphors, proverbs, sayings, slogans, phonology, syntax, and names. Examples are the *Baba Ijebu idiom* for a lottery game (documented in literature as originating from Hausa) and *Hakuna Matata* (No worry), which is said to originate from Swahili. As Gunning (2015) observes, "The novel rarely travels far from Brixton, but an African present, or very recent past, is never far from the text" (p. 127).

There is also a debate about the inspiration for the blending, which is the main characteristic of this novel. Ndlovu (2009) attributes the mixing to the need to reflect the complexities of urban life in Harare and to provide insight into the protagonist's psyche and the broader societal issues affecting Zimbabweans—a function Wells (2011) considers as the philosophical function of digression. Okonkwo (2016) considers it an artistic effort to reflect the actuality of the setting and themes of the novel. In other words, scholars of this view attribute the mixing to the Theory of Realism, which is the need to reflect the multiplicity and complexities of issues in the study settings, the same position held by Cahil (2012). Cahil (2012), in a different context, concurs that literary authors digress to make readers engage with texts and unhealthy multilayers of their meanings anchored on contradictions and complexities in life. Other scholars (Ofuani, 1988; Gold, 1995) attribute digression to the author's need to enhance the characterisation and enrich readers' thoughts and emotions. The scholars in this perspective attribute digression to the need to zoom in on a theme and inspire reflection and interpretation. I contend that whereas these observations on the motivations for the style are convincing, they remain speculative, for even the analysis carried out in the present study only exposes the constituents of the language but not the rationale for the use. Only intertextual references provide insights into the motivations for digression in literature, which, in my view, fits the description of Chikwava's *Harare North*.

In interpreting the study's findings in light of intertextuality, I am of the view that the author blends codes to resonate with audiences from diverse sociolinguistic backgrounds: from Hausa to South African pidgin, Jamaican pidgin, street language, and formal and informal English. This stance is also supported by Ndlovu's (2016) observation that English in Chikwava's *Harare North* reflects the prejudiced perceptions and expectations of the novel to attract Western readers. As Ofuani (1988) maintains, authors of literary texts digress from the normal discourse, among other things, to maintain audience interest, provoke thought and make their works more impactful.

Moreover, I am of the view that the extensive linguistic modification in Chikwava's *Harare North* is an act of rebellion against the insistence on abiding by Standard British English, a norm in most countries colonised by Britain. This resonates with the social commentary function of literature. Gold (1995), in particular, attributes digression to rebellion against societal norms to illustrate characters' inner conflicts and desires for freedom. I make this an argument in the context that native speakers of English always stigmatise non-native varieties as an imperfect code. Therefore, blending non-standard elements appears to be a protest against the rejection of stigmatised varieties and the denial of resources contributed by speakers of such groups to the globalised world. The author seems to be advocating for equity and additive bilingualism in the context of linguistic and cultural imperialism, which needs to be proved by a separate study. Manase (2014) agrees that the language and style of the novel indicate "the struggle to fit in and the marking of an aggressive presence of the indigenous and the discourses from the once colonised" (p. 73, quoted in Rushdie, 1995). Brian Chikwava strives to create his own space in the context of linguistic imperialism of the powerful codes to powerless codes. He demonstrates that degraded codes, such as non-native varieties and pidgin English, can complement the

adored standard English even in print. Mangena and Nyambi (2013), who analysed the same novel, equally noted the tension between colonial languages and indigenous identities, revealing how language can be both empowering and oppressive. They noted several instances where characters manipulated English to assert their agency or resist colonial legacies.

I argue that the author chose this controversial style to demonstrate his centredness. His style demonstrates that he controls his content, thoughts, and identity. In so doing, he prompts readers of his work to go the extra mile to discern his own meanings and pragmatics. He forces interested readers to practice intertextuality to discern the meanings of expressions such as *Mazoe Orange Crush, mamhepo,* or *Makorokoza*.

Another interesting question is whether the observed hybridisation is a hurdle to understanding the novel. For example, the author appears to disregard the reader in code-mixing and code-switching English with expressions such as *Kasuwanan Baban Dabino* (the calabash of a madman, p. 48) or *Jina langu ni Muzorewa* (my name is Muzorowa, p. 102). He even used urban slang such as *Hapaux legomenon* (said once, p. 12). These pragmatics make it difficult for the outsider of the Zimbabwean context to understand. Indeed, Fredua-Agyeman (2012) comments that this stylistic choice enhances authenticity but also poses challenges for readers unfamiliar with such vernacular. Igboanusi (2006), who studied Africanization in Igbo English novels, long established that Africanization poses a challenge of intelligibility arising from the lack of knowledge of African culture and worldview. However, in my experience of reading the novel, the context provided the meaning for most of the unfamiliar expressions and did not impede understanding of the interesting stories therein. As Primorac (2010) points out, the novel can still be understood with careful reading despite its complicated language. This is because context reveals many covert meanings portrayed by the novel. In this regard, Globlish has more to offer in inspiring the exchange of linguistic features and influences across borders.

Limitations

The sociolinguistic varieties used in the present study have a continuum, which makes their boundaries debatable. For example, Pidgin basically qualifies as a non-native variety, and Africanism is basically a non-native variety of English. Moreover, the varieties, such as Nigerian Pidgin English, are more of a perspective than actuality, considering that Standard British English is used as a benchmark instead of treating all codes as autonomous in their own right. Moreover, varieties were used based on different criteria. For example, colloquial English is based on the medium, pidgin categorisation is based on language origin, and non-native English is based on the spread of English in the world, whereas standard English is based on Received Pronunciation (the standard form of British English pronunciation, based on educated speech in southern England, widely accepted as a standard in areas where English is a second language). Be that as it may, these same categories are widely used in sociolinguistic studies to provide a broader picture of codes used by the speaker in the community. For example, Kouega (1999) used the framework to identify and describe five major varieties of Cameroon English: Pidginized, Mainstream, Near-RP (Received Pronunciation), Americanized, and Frenchized CamE. They have thus shed some light and clarified the fascinating language employed by Brian Chikwava in his *Harare North* as a protest and struggle for space in the global lingua franca, which English is today.

Conclusion

This research reveals more shades of registers in the novel, owing to its robust and modern text analysis methodology. It finds that the hallmark of Chikwava's *Harare North* is the codemixing and hybridisation of every code available at his disposal. The author is not confined to a language of specific settings, considering that he mixes Standard British English with Standard American English and Standard English with non-standard varieties. He

mixes Nigerian pidgin with Cameroonian English, Swahili and Arabic. Furthermore, he incorporates non-native varieties and pidgin English into standard English and uses colloquial expressions and slang in his communication, making his language a hybrid English I term Globlish. It is the kind of English that cannot be confined to regions such as Zimbabwe or London, as other scholars argue in previous studies. By incorporating non-standard varieties, non-native, Africanized English, Africanized nouns and colloquial language into Standard English, the author challenges the status quo of standard and formal English in book writing in the diversified world. Brian Chikwava's *Harare North* speaks against the alienation of the linguistic and artistic resources of marginalised people in relation to the global use of English. He demonstrates how non-native users can incorporate their identity and authenticity into English, the lingua franca of the globalised world. His model is speaker-centred English, valuing the speaker's identity, authenticity and wealth of communicative repertoire. His English, which I call Globlish, is a blueprint for the ideal use of English in the globalised world. Considering that his work is fiction, he romances the attainment of global English, where every user can use all linguistic resources in their inventory to exercise their freedom of expression while maintaining identity. The approach inspires users to explore the tongues of others with whom they share the global English Heritage. It is thus an ideal English for Millennials and Gen Zs, who are exposed to many cultures and codes through the internet and mass media. Methodologically, the study exhibits that artificial intelligence is a powerful software for analysing the form of literature. Nonetheless, it has a weakness in analysing thematic contents in literature. A case in point is that the motivation for using the unique language in Chikwava's *Harare North* remains speculative despite using this robust software. On style, the study finds that intertextuality still stands out as the best technique to explain phenomena in literary analysis.

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