

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN *WIND VERSUS POLYGAMY* BY OBI BENUE EGBUNA

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Abstract : This paper investigated on the use of figures of speech in *Wind Versus Polygamy* by Nigerian novelist Obi Benue Egbuna. The objective is to identify and analyze figurative language in the narrative. To achieve the study, data was collected thanks to the textual approach and analyzed with both the sociological and stylistic approaches. In total, 35 excerpts (containing figures of speech) from the novel were analyzed. After detailed analyses of the selected phrases, sentences and paragraphs, the results have clearly shown that the novel is full of figures of speech which make its reading very interesting. The most used figures of speech in the novel are *analogy, aphorism, hyperbole, irony, metaphor, metonymy, oxymoron, simile, synecdoche and paradox*. Without the use of figurative language in the narrative, *Wind Versus Polygamy* would not be as enjoyable to read as it is. The use of figurative language contributes largely to the vividness of certain situations and characters' experiences in the novel and makes the story easy to understand.

Key words: Figurative language, Obi Egbuna, analysis, excerpts, results

LANGAGE FIGURE DANS *WIND VERSUS POLYGAMY* DE OBI BENUE EGBUNA

Résumé : Cet article porte sur l'usage des figures de style dans le roman "*Wind Versus Polygamy*" du romancier Nigerian Obi Benue Egbuna. L'objectif de cette étude est d'identifier et d'analyser le langage figuré dans le roman en question. Pour atteindre cet objectif, nous avons utilisé l'approche textuelle, sociologique et stylistique. Au total, 35 extraits (contenant des figures de style) tirés de ce roman ont été analysés. Après une étude profonde des phrases et paragraphes sélectionnés, les résultats ont clairement démontré que ce roman est plein des figures de style qui rendent sa lecture très intéressantes. Les figures de style les plus utilisés dans le roman sont notamment *l'analogie, l'aphorisme, l'hyperbole, l'ironie, la métaphore, l'oxymore, la comparaison, la synecdoque, et le paradoxe*. *Wind Versus Polygamy* ne serait pas aussi agréable et captivant à lire sans l'usage du langage figuré dont il contient en abondance. Dans ce roman, l'usage du langage figuré contribue largement à la vivacité de certaines situations et expériences des personnages, ce qui rend l'histoire facile à comprendre.

Mots clés : Langage figuré, Obi Egbuna, analyse, extraits, résultats

Introduction

Wind versus polygamy is Obi Benue Egbuna's first novel published for the first time in 1964. It is set in an anonymous fictional village of "New Africa". In the story, Chief Ozuomba is a polygamist and already married to thirty wives. His greedy desire to accept a young girl's choice to marry him instead of two other young suitors triggers a historic trial. The Chief is accused of violating deliberately the new polygamy act thus he has to try hard to convince the court that polygamy is a better form of marriage than monogamy and hope to be set free. Elina's story and the unfolding of cross examinations in the court is told through the use of figures of speech that make the story so interesting to read.

The use of figures of speech in literary works has been a common trend for centuries. Figurative language is part and parcel of the beauty that is found in literature. People use figurative language all the time. Our conversations and writings are packed with it (Colston, H.L. 2015 : 3). Although hundreds of possible figures of speech have been described, most interest and research has focused on just a few of these (Katz, N.A. et alii. 1998: 3). Figurative or metaphorical language takes many forms. There are, for example, expressions such as *to be at a crossroads* and *to shake like a leaf*. There are also many words which can have both literal and metaphorical meanings: verbs such as *to blossom*, *to trickle* and *to wound*; adjectives such as *headache*, *recipe* and *roots*. There are proverbs like for e.g. *Birds of a feather flock together*, while they are now sometimes considered rather clichéd, they still form part of the natural repertoire of most native speakers of English (Lazar, G. 2003 : 1).

1. Literature review on figurative language

A figure of speech is an expression that departs from the accepted literal sense or from the normal order of words, or in which an emphasis is produced by patterns of sound (Baldick,C. 2001). Figurative language is a conspicuous departure from what competent users of a language apprehend as the standard meaning of words, or else the standard order of words, in order to achieve some special meaning or effect. Figures are sometimes described as primarily poetic, but they are integral to the functioning of language and indispensable to all modes of discourse (Abrams, M.H. & Harpham, G.G.2012: 130). Figurative language must be distinguished from literal language. 'He hared down the street' or 'He ran like a hare down the street' are figurative (metaphor and simile respectively). 'He ran very quickly down the street' is literal (Cuddon, J.A. 2013).

Since the time of the philosopher Aristotle, figures of speech have been divided into two different major categories: figures of thought or tropes and figures of speech or schemes or rhetorical figures (Abrams, M.H. & Harpham, G.G.2012: 130).

Figures of thought, or tropes (meaning “turns,” “conversions”), are those in which words or phrases are used in a way that effects a conspicuous change in what we take to be their standard meaning. The standard meaning, as opposed to its meaning in the figurative use, is called the literal meaning. Figures of speech, or “rhetorical figures,” or schemes (from the Greek word for “form”), in which the departure from standard usage is not primarily in the meaning of the words, but in the order or syntactical pattern of the words. This distinction is not a sharp one, nor do all critics agree on its application. For convenience of exposition, however, the most commonly identified tropes are treated here, and the most commonly identified figures of speech are collected in the article rhetorical figures (Abrams, M.H. & Harpham, G.G.2012: 130).

1.1. *Analogy*

According to Cuddon, J.A (2013), analogy is the illustration of an idea by means of comparison to a recognizable parallel. Analogy is similar to a metaphor or a simile as Crimmon, M. J (1980:166) has put it:

It is a metaphor or a simile extended through one or more paragraphs to explain a difficult idea or to persuade a reader that because two things are alike, a conclusion drawn from one suggests a similar conclusion from the other.

1.2. *Aphorism*

An aphorism is defined by Cuddon, J.A (2013:46) as a terse of a statement of a truth or dogma, a pithy generalization, which may or may not be witty. The proverb is often aphoristic, so is the maxim. A successful aphorism exposes and condenses at any rate a part of truth and is an apercu of insight. For instance, the anonymous "*conscience is a cur that will let you get past it, but that you cannot keep from barking.*"

1.3. *Hyperbole*

Hyperbole is, according to Cuddon, J.A (1991: 435-436), a figure of speech which contains an exaggeration for emphasis. Baldick, C. (2001:119) has written that hyperbolic expressions are common in the inflated style of dramatic speech known as Bombast in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* when Cleopatra praises the dead Antony: "*his legs bestrid the ocean: his reared arm Crested the world.*" Another example of hyperbole can be found in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* where the tragic hero, feels the unbearable prick of his conscience after killing the king. He regrets his sin and believes that even the oceans of the greatest magnitude cannot wash the blood of the king off his hands. (<http://www.literary device.net / Hyperbole/>).

1.4. *Irony*

For the Roman rhetoricians (in particular Cicero and Quintilian), *ironia* denoted a rhetorical figure and manner of discourse, in which, for the most part, the meaning was contrary to the words (Cuddon, J.A. 1991: 458). In addition, Baldick, C. (2001:130) classifies types of irony and distinguishes verbal irony from dramatic irony also called tragic irony in *tragedies*. Verbal irony is the simplest form of irony. It involves a discrepancy between what is said and what is really meant, as its crude form sarcasm. A similar sense of detached superiority is achieved by dramatic irony, in which the audience knows more about a character's situation than the character does. Cuddon, J.A (2013) adds that situational irony occurs when, for instance, a man is laughing uproariously at the misfortune of another even while the same misfortune, unbeknownst, is happening to him.

1.5. *Metaphor and simile*

Crimmon, M.J. (1980:164) defines metaphor as a figure of speech which compares two things by identifying one with the other. It does not say that A is like B, but instead states that A is B. Baldick, C. (2001) states that modern analysis of metaphors and similes distinguishes the primary literal term (called the "*tenor*") from the secondary figurative term (the "*vehicle*") applied to it: in the metaphor *the road of life* , the tenor is life, and the vehicle is the road.

According to Weiss, A.L. (2006), in *The Poetics*, Aristotle explains how the metaphorical process works: Metaphor 'by analogy' is a case where the relation of *b* to *a* is the same as that of *d* to *c*: the poet will use *d* instead of *b*, or the reverse. Sometimes they add to the metaphor something to which it is related: for instance, the wine cup is to Dionysus what the shield is to Ares, so the poet will call the wine cup 'Dionysus' shield' and the shield 'Ares' wine cup'. Again, old age is to life what the evening is to the day: so the poet will call evening 'day's old age', or, like Empedocles, call old age 'the evening of life' or 'the dusk of life'.

1.6. *Metonymy and synecdoche*

Metonymy is a figure of speech in which the name of an attribute or a thing is substitute for the thing itself. Common examples are: "The stage for the theatrical profession", "The crown for the monarchy", "The bench for the judiciary" and Dante for his works (Cuddon, J.A. 1991:545). Other examples include "The pen is mightier than the sword", "the bottle" for alcoholic drink, "the press" for journalism, "the Oval Office" for the US presidency, the name of feeling or passion for a person, e.g. I can do it my love.

According to Cuddon, J.A. (2013:704), the word synecdoche comes originally from Greek and means 'taking up together'. It is a figure of speech in which the part stands for the whole, and thus something else is understood within the thing mentioned. For example: in 'Give us this day our daily bread', 'bread' stands for the meals taken each day. In these lines from Thomas Campbell's *Ye Mariners of England*, 'oak' represents the warships as well as the material from which they are made:

*With thunders from her native oak,
She quells the flood below.*

According to Metonymy is related to synecdoche in that both tropes exploit the relationship of larger entities and lesser ones. Synecdoche substitutes the part for the whole as in "*They're taking on new hands down at the factory*", where the term *hands* stands for men. Metonymy also substitutes the token for the type or a specific instance, property, or characteristic for the general principle or function. For instance, in *they prefer the bullet to the ballot box*, where the term *bullet* represents armed conflict, while *ballot box* refers to peaceful democratic processes.

1.7. Oxymoron

The term oxymoron derives from Greek 'pointedly foolish'. It is a figure of speech which combines incongruous and apparently contradictory words of meanings for a special effect (Cuddon, J.A. 2013:504). For example, I like a smuggler. He is the only honest thief. (John Milton's darkness visible or lamb's), here the phrase "honest chief" is an oxymoron. e.g. "O! Brawling love, O! Loving hate, O! Anything of nothing, first create! O! Heavy lightness, serious vanity, misshapen chaos of well- seeming forms, feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health, still walking sleep, that is not what it is, this love feel I, that feel no love in it" (Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" 1,1,170-176).

1.8. Paradox

Abrams, M.H.& Harpham, G.G. (2012) define paradox as a statement which seems on its face to be logically contradictory or absurd, yet turns out to be interpretable in a way that makes sense. In an almost similar way, Cuddon, J.A. (1991: 677) writes that a paradox is an apparently self-contradictory (even absurd) statement which, on closer inspection, is found to contain a truth reconciling the conflicting opposites. For example: Milton's description of God: "*Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear*", Sir Thomas Browne's magnificent image: "*The sun itself is the dark simulacrum and light is the shadow of God*" ...

2. Research methodology

To achieve this study, I used the textual approach to collect data and the sociological plus the stylistic approaches to analyze excerpts, of the novel, that contain figurative language. The textual approach consisted of reading the novel sentence after sentence in order to identify figures of speech in the texts. This approach included the intrinsic approach (quoting excerpts from *Wind Versus Polygamy*, the main source) and the extrinsic approach (quoting materials from sources other than the novel). The sociological approach was used to understand the social context under which the novel was written. The stylistic approach was used to analyze the most dominant figures of speech identified in the novel.

3. Analysis of figures of speech in Obi. B. Egbuna's *Wind versus Polygamy*

3.1. Analogy

In *Wind versus Polygamy* a case of analogy can be found in the following:

- "My friend Professor Bronowski, I think it was, once told me about magnets. *For marriage to be a success, the partners must be like the poles of magnets. When the north and the south poles are brought together, they are bound to attract*, you can never make two north poles attract, no matter how beautiful to the eye the shapes are or how physically close to each other you place them. (*Wind Versus Polygamy*, page 95)

The above paragraph contains an example of analogy. In fact, Chief Ozuomba believes that the physical phenomenon called magnetism is analogous to marriage. He uses this analogy to explain his personal opinion about marriage by comparing it to the way the north and the south pole of magnets attract and stuck to each other. Two magnets can never attract each other if both poles are the same. Similarly to marriage, if a man is attracted to a woman and vice-versa, it is because the two match, thus their marriage will last longer. This means that a man is kind of positive and the woman is negative or vice-versa so they attract each other like a magnet and iron. For example, no matter how a woman is beautiful, no matter how close she is with a man, no matter how wealthy she is, if there is no connection between her and the man, no marriage can happen. For this to happen, the man (positive or negative) must find his matching woman (negative or positive) to live with.

- "Jerome chuckled and said: "I supposed that is why you've dubbed him *the Black Salomon*". It was not I who first called him the Black Salomon..." (*Wind Versus Polygamy*, page 33)

The example above is an analogy to the biblical King of Israel. Father Joseph nicknames Chief Ozuomba "Black Salomon" because he considers him as a wise person. Also, Father Joseph believes that he will use his wisdom to decide who will marry Elina. In fact, Councillor Ogidi and Okosisi Ojukwu are the two contenders who are fighting to

get married to beautiful Elina. Chief Ozuomba is consulted to make a judgment. This case is similar to the biblical story of Salomon who was asked to make a judgment about the case of two women who were fighting about a baby.

- I have not only provided her with a deliverer, but a husband as well. All combined in myself. In doing all of you this favour, I am running the risk of fighting single-handed heinous miscalculation of a juvenile but rather ruthless government. Surely, being a man of the Church, you ought to appreciate *the Good Samaritan* spirit behind my action. (*Wind Versus Polygamy*, page 52)

This is a second biblically analogical reference mentioned in the novel. It refers to the story of a good Samaritan (= Chief Ozuomba), who takes the risk of accepting a girl's choice to marry him after rejecting the proposals of two young men (The hunter and Councillor Ogidi) who have been fighting for her. Chief's acceptance is a way of protecting Elina from the mouths of two lions involved in a contention to devour her. Chief Ozuomba is compared to a good Samaritan because he accepts Elina's choice to choose him as a husband rather than selecting either the hunter or Councillor Ogidi. For him, this is a way of helping Elina avoid falling in the arms of the two suitors that she hates more than the devil anybody else. Chief Ozuomba is portrayed as a Samaritan who comes to help Elina as she is stuck between two dangerous fires (The hunter and Councillor Ogidi) that are spreading very fast.

3.2. *Aphorism*

There are two examples of aphorism from *Wind versus Polygamy* illustrated in the excerpts below:

- "My people are hungry not because those hills are not tapped. *The real trouble is that in world where there is abundance, it is only man's stupidity that creates scarcity.*" (*Wind Versus Polygamy*, page 40)

In a discussion between Father Joseph and Chief Ozuomba about his people being poor in spite of the natural resources present in the village, he argues with an aphoristic sentence: "*in a world where there is abundance; it is only man's stupidity that creates scarcity*". To defend himself, Chief Ozuomba shows Father Joseph that his people are not poor because they lack resources but it is because they do not exploit what they have. For him, a society may have wealth in abundance but not all its people will have access to it because the distribution is unequal. This situation of injustice which exists in all societies around the world, is justified by the fact that among the people of each society, there is always a group of people, usually a smaller group, who would like to get more than others or to keep on enriching themselves while others are starving.

- "There is an old saying, you know: *Like father, like son*. That probably explains Jerome's weakness for beauty." (*Wind versus Polygamy* ; p 42)

The aphorism: "like father like son", is a universal one though not correct in all cases. A son always resembles his father on some aspects of his life. A son may become so involved in loving women simply because he has followed his father's ways of chasing out other women. Jerome is such a character and the above aphorism fits for him. Jerome is said to have copied some of his father's habits, that is, he is also deeply involved in love relationships with girls when being very young. This behavior characterizes his father since he is a polygamist married to more than 30 wives.

3.3. *Hyperbole*

In *Wind versus Polygamy* hyperbole is found in the following statements where only the most striking cases have been selected:

- "I will make our *wedding the talk of the continent*. I will *bathe her in champagne thrice daily* all through our honey-moon. And *clean her teeth with gold -paste*." (*Wind Versus Polygamy*, page 19).

The context through which hyperbole is used in the above quotation is that, through the discussion with Elina's uncle, Councillor Ogidi is trying to convince and impress Elina to marry him. So, he uses hyperbolic or exaggerated expressions like "*bathe in champagne*", "*clear teeth with gold-paste*", "*wedding of the continent*" for that purpose. It is impossible to wash somebody with champagne or to clean one's teeth with golden paste or for a simple village marriage to be the talk in the whole continent. To impress Elina, Councillor Ogidi, knowing that she is dealing with a poor girl, he uses seductive and honeyed words in order to win her heart. For this purpose, he promises to organize an extravagant marriage ceremony that will be known all over the continent and to buy her champagne daily. These are exaggerated words to entice Elina to accept him as a husband instead of choosing others.

- "Even an empty gun makes him *sweat blood*". (page 24) "I'll *swim through blood* to get her if I must". (page 25) "With my bare hands, I will *pull your stupid tongue till you vomit every single penny* you took from me" (page 48)..... "The crowd was so vast and tight that if you threw a pin into the air, it was sure to hang. The police were *uncountable* and rained *sweat with overwork*" (page 55) ... "His *voice* was sharp and drilled through you to the *bones*" (page 55)

In the above quotations, hyperbolic expressions are used to warn, to intimidate, to show determination to marry Elina, to express the importance of an event and to illustrate the high calibre of a judge with his voice. Hunter Okosisi wants to show Councillor Ogidi that he does not deserve to marry Elina and he is stronger than him.

In addition, Hunter uses hyperbole by saying *he'll swim through blood.....* to mean he will do everything even what is impossible in order to marry Elina. The narrator also exaggerates when he says that the police *rained sweat*, which is not true actually. In fact, he wants to show that the police sweated a lot with overwork on the day of that historical trial.

3.4. Irony

Two examples of situational irony are presented here below:

- "Elina was poor..... She wore *an old* convent-school uniform.... It had been *patched several times... .. (p7)* It is very kind of you to ask me to be your wife. But my answer is "no". I'm sorry, sir. ... *Do you realize who I am?* The one and only Councillor Ogidi in the entire world." (*Wind Versus Polygamy*, page 20).

In fact, Councillor Ogidi, a rich man, proposes to marry Elina, a poor girl who lost her father. She is the only one to support his family. In the situation here no one expected Elina to reject a marriage proposal of a man said to be a millionaire. Being poor, the reader expects Elina to accept Councillor Ogidi's hand to become his wife but what happens all of a sudden is the contrary. The situational irony is expressed through Elina's refusal to marry a wealthy man who could help her family get out of poverty, something the reader was not prepared for.

- In the name of tradition, and with the authority of this court, I command you, Elina, to name the man you wish to marry. Elina bowed her head. "I answer the Great Chief's question with much humility. The man I wish to marry is *none other than the Great Chief Ozuomba, himself*". (*Wind Versus Polygamy*, page 47)

What everyone is expecting is for Elina to choose either Okosisi Ojukwu or Councillor Ogidi. However, she chooses Chief Ozuomba who is conducting the trial. There is a clear possibility offered to Elina but she surprises everyone by making Chief Ozuomba her last choice. The latter is not even expecting to be chosen either but he accepts Elina choice.

In the next paragraph, a case of dramatic irony is presented through Chief Ozuomba's discussion with the Judge:

- "Thank you, Mr Judge, said the chief. "*Your lord*" the judge corrected him. "*Your Lord*", echoed the chief "*No*" countered the judge. "*My Lord*". "But that was what I said. "Your Lord" All this time the entire court was quaking with laughter. The clerk came to the rescue. What you should say, Chief Ozuomba, he explained patiently, is: "Thank you", my Lord. "(*Wind Versus Polygamy*, page 89)

The above quotation contains a *dramatic irony*. The reader and the people who have come to attend the trial notice something that the character (Chief Ozuomba) is unaware of. In fact, the judge asks Chief Ozuomba to say "his Lord", that means the has to say "my lord" but the chief not being an educated man he repeats exactly what the judge tells him to say, which is a mistake. Chief Ozuomba has not yet discovered the mistake he is committing. It takes several minutes to the judge and the clerk to make him understand.

- "It was already time for them to hurry back to the palace if they were not to be missed. They rose, held hands and walked away silently,.... "*Before they were out of sight Okosisi Ojukwu, the hunter, jumped down from the tree where, in hiding, he had been a witness to all that had happened.*"(*Wind Versus Polygamy*, page 86)

In this passage, there is a case of dramatic irony. The reader knows that Ojukwu had been watching Elina and Jerome since they arrived in the bush. However, Jerome and Elina spend time there without noticing the presence of the hunter. Ojukwu, the hunter saw everything that Elina and Jerome were doing but the couple did not know it. In the end, they leave and they do not suspect anything but both the readers and the narrator know it.

3.5. *Metaphor*

- The first example of metaphor is found in the title of the novel itself "*Wind versus Polygamy*". This title is metaphorical because the wind is "*the wind of change*". In this society, the parliament has just enacted a new law that imposes to ban polygamy in the country. The pressure that was put on the people involved in polygamy and the national mobilization over the matter came like strong winds moving at the speed of 500 kilometers per hour. Polygamy has been a form of marriage for many years and approved by most people. To put an end to this trend, the court had to use a lot of pressure so that the long time trend could finally end.

- "...Everyone of those hills has been sunbaked into a monument of beauty. It is a temple of serenity sculptured for immortality by *the greatest artist* of all." (*Wind Versus Polygamy*, page 39)

In this statement Chief Ozuomba uses an implied metaphor to compare the characteristics of God to an artist's. To praise and show the beauty of his land, he uses the word "sunbaked" to mean that hills of his land have been beautifully made by God like an artist makes breathtaking paintings.

- "Even Chief Ozuomba has been reported admitting in private that he never anticipated at the outset a *volcano so hot and overflowing with so much lava of public opinion* " (*Wind Versus Polygamy*, page 54)

The "lava" mentioned in this sentence here does not stand for the hot melted rock that comes out of a volcano when it erupts. It rather means a "large number" of public opinion. The writer compares the sound of a volcano erupting and its lava flowing at high speed to the overwhelming impact Elina's case had on people of that area.

- "I will tell them your hair is shampooed by nature, your eyes naturally serene, *your skin smooth-mahogany*." (*Wind Versus Polygamy*, page 84)

The expression "your skin smooth-mahogany" is a metaphor used to show that the features of Elina's skin is like the outer part of a mahogany that is used to make furniture. The aim in using such a metaphorical comparison is to express love and desire that Jerome has for Elina. To show his love, Jerome uses beautiful words to describe Elina's body parts.

- The men are here for the case, Father, "he said". And the girl" asked the chief. She's all right..... "Don't overdo it, Jerome, said Chief Ozuomba, Don't forget *that she is a bone of contention*. (*Wind Versus Polygamy*, page 36)

The image brought by the bone here is that of two animals (carnivores) involved in a contention over something that each one would like to get without sharing. To get it, they have to fight to death until only one of them wins the battle. Elina's situation is compared to the case of a bone that two animals are fighting for. She is caught between the proposal of the hunter and Councillor Ogidi. Everyone would like to have her as a wife. To show their determination, both came to Elina's house and tried to fight for her since they consider her a precious woman.

- *Love is a hollow dream* given an aura of reality by publicity". (*Wind Versus Polygamy*, page 91)

"*Love is a hollow dream*", is a metaphor. Love is compared to an empty dream, a dream that can never be true; and for old chief Ozuomba love does not exist actually as young people tend to think. They confuse love with desire. There is no such a feeling called love between two persons of opposite sex. What they think is love, actually it is a false idea of it. That is why chief Ozuomba likens love to an empty dream (people's imagination).

- "I will tell them your hair is shampooed by nature, your eyes naturally serene, *your skin smooth-mahogany*." (*Wind Versus Polygamy*, page 84)

The expression "*your skin smooth-mahogany*" is a metaphor because actually the skin of a girl is not a mahogany (hard reddish-brown wood of a tropical tree used for making furniture). Jerome compares Elina's skin to the smoothness of a piece of furniture made from mahogany.

- What would you answer then, Chief Ozuomba, if these young people were to ask why it is that, to decent, civilized, morally groomed people, love means much more than

desire?" . "I would ask them why it is that people fall in love only during the sexually active years of life. That would silence them, don't you agree? *Puberty is the cradle of love, senility is its crematorium*. I will tell them that mine is the voice experience." (*Wind Versus Polygamy*, page 26).

The above metaphor "*Puberty is the cradle of love, senility is its crematorium*" is used by Chief Ozuomba to explain his easy-to-understand idea that what people call "love" does not exist actually. For him, love is just an imagination of something that is 100 % desire. To explain this Chief Ozuomba makes the comparison above for more clarity. "*Cradle*" and "*crematorium*" are used respectively to mean "when people are still young and beautiful to love and to be loved" and "when people stop being attractive to love or to be loved". People fall in love during sexually active time that is from pubescent age to the time before they become old. It is rare to see people falling in love with other people who are much older than they are. Most of the time people fall in love during their young age.

3.6. Metonymy

- " You don't need a wife, Councillor. You need a husband." You mean there is really no bullet in that thing?" Councillor Ogidi asked. The hunter explained. "I guessed you might upset me with *that foul tongue of yours*". (*Wind Versus Polygamy*, page 24)

The phrase "...that foul tongue" is a metonymy. In the context here, the word tongue does not stand for the soft part in the mouth that moves around and used for tasting, swallowing and speaking. "Tongue" refers to something it is associated with: "the language: what somebody says". "Foul tongue" means an utterance produced by the tongue (organ used to speak) and which is very unpleasant and may upset. The metonymy used here suggests a thing (tongue to refer to somebody it is associated with (a speech or what somebody says)).

- " You are right there, Mazi," agreed the Councillor gratefully, "come on, we can beat him to it. He is walking but we have a car. *Good night, Dog-collar*. Good night, Honey. Remember December is the wedding. (*Wind Versus Polygamy*, page 26).

In this passage "*dog collar*" is a metonymy. A dog-collar is a stiff white collar fastened at the back and worn by some Christian priests. In the above passage the term dog-collar is used to refer to the priest who wears it. This is a type of metonymy where an object (a dog-collar) is used to refer to the person who wears it (a priest). When Councillor Ogidi says: "Good night Dog-collar", he is saying goodbye to Father Joseph, the priest who wears it.

Also, the use of metonymy here is a good way to enrich the vocabulary in the narrative. Instead of simply saying "good night dear priest", the writer chooses to add the word "dog collar" so as the readers know words related to the priest.

- "Good. We now know where we stand. It is the decision of *this court*, unrefuted by rival parties concerned, that Elina names the man she wishes to marry." (*Wind Versus Polygamy*, page 46)

The "court" in the aforementioned passage is used as a metonymy. The court is a building but in this context, it refers to people or a person who are responsible for taking decisions in a court. The court here stands for chief Ozuomba who is resolving the contention between the hunter, Okosisi Ojukwu and Councillor Ogidi.

- "Take it easy, Councillor, counseled the hunter We must use *our heads* now and watch the enemy like a hawk." (*Wind Versus Polygamy*, page 49)

In this statement the word "heads" is used metonymically. By saying we must use our heads, "heads" here does not refer to the body physical part but it is used to refer to intelligence or thinking, "head" is associated with intelligence embodied in a person. The hunter tells Councillor that now as Elina has chosen Chief Ozuomba, they must sit down and use their intelligence to think about new strategies to take him to the court.

- " and I have seen you, Baby," the Councillor joined in, smiling from ear to ear, " judged you, and even undressed you with my eyes. The result is that I think *you are the dream* I've been looking for"" (*Wind Versus Polygamy*, Page 20)

In the above passage, the sentence "*you are my dream*" is a metonymy that refers to Elina whom Councillor Ogidi compares to the woman he has always dreamt of. Councillor Ogidi's wish or dream is an abstract representation of a concrete creature that is an image of how physically Elina is.

- "Thanks *heavens* you escaped unhurt." (*Wind Versus Polygamy*, page 113)

The word "heavens" here is used metonymically for God who is believed to be in the heavens. By thanking heavens, father Joseph is not addressing the place where God lives but God himself because the place heavens is associated with him. The belief that there exists a powerful creature who dwells in a mysterious place called heavens is widespread in all African traditional customs. As a priest, Father Joseph believes in that and he is grateful for God (representing heavens).

3.7. Oxymoron

- When Father Joseph sped past them, they stopped working and waved to him with a sort of *aggressive friendliness*. But the old man did not wave back. (*Wind Versus Polygamy*, page 29)

In the above extract taken from *Wind Versus polygamy*, the phrase "*aggressive friendliness*" is an oxymoron used by the narrator to show how people in the village were happy to greet the priest every time he passed by their farms. The combination of the idea of aggressiveness and friendship sounds contradictory but it produces a positive meaning. This idea is typically African since it correlates with the African way

of living in community or solidarity and being close to each other. To express attachment, love or closeness with a warm and positive aggressiveness is something that Africans are very good at.

3.8. *Simile*

Here below are the different examples where simile is used in the novel:

- "At the very bottom of the valleys, you can see palms and *coconut trees reside like men and women praying side by side in solemn silence*". Ah – they now swaying in the breeze like real actually genuflecting before a shrine. (*Wind Versus Polygamy*, pages 39-40)

In this simile, the position men and women who are praying in silence is compared to the way palm are standing in the valley. This expresses the beauty of African nature. Women and men who are praying stand up and rise their hands up. Branches of the trees are spread in the air like hands of people praying. The writer ants to show that palm trees and coconut trees are side by side and not moving or making sounds as men women are also standing up praying without speaking. Artistically, different people see different images of different things when they look at the nature, especially when it is glaring at big trees and mountains or hills. The palm and coconut trees appear like people who are in a position of praying.

- "Two rival schools of thought sprang *like mushrooms*, the "Ozuombists" and the "Progressives." (*Wind Versus Polygamy*, page 53)

The simile here explains a sudden development of two rival schools of thought supporting or not chief Ozuomba's fight against monogamy. This situation is compared to the way mushrooms grow up and develop quickly. After Chief Ozuomba's arrest, groups of people to back his cause (or not) were born in different places of the village. These groups were born rapidly without being influenced the way mushrooms grow naturally and uncontrollably in any place. Here the writer shows that the rapid growth of mushrooms is similar to the quick emergence of the two rival schools of thought.

- The battle raged, from house to house, from town to town and from region to region. It spread fast and far *like bush fire at peak harmattan* ". (*Wind Versus Polygamy*, page 54).

In the novel, the writer uses simile to compare the speed with which the Chief Ozuomba's battle against monogamy spread to the way bush fire move when harmattan is at its peak. The writer uses simile here to show how the battle moves from place to place very rapidly. This is the reason why it is likened to the rapid pace of bushfire when strong winds are blowing.

- "A sigh of relief escaped him Elina had arrived. *Jerome's anxiety dissolved like mist in magic of her smile.*" (*Wind Versus Polygamy*, page 75)

In the above lines, the writer uses simile to compare how Jerome's fear disappears as soon as he sees Elina to the way mist vanishes once, for example, the sun rises. The disappearance of Jerome's anxiety is similar to the gradual disappearance of mist in the face of the of sun's rays.

- "but then, your being here has transformed every eternity in fraction of a second: *Elina chuckled like a child*" (*Wind Versus Polygamy*, page 76)

Here, the use of simile compares Elina's way of laughing to a child's. Elina is happy to meet her lover at last, that is, why she laughs quietly to express her joy. In addition, an image of beauty is also seen behind this. In order to emphasize Elina's good looking face, the writer brings in the image of a baby whose laughter is soft and breathtaking and so is Elina when he chuckles.

- "Mr Azodo, his face fat with arrogance and an undistinguished determination to annihilate the prisoner , rose to his full height ; took a deep breath and approached the dock *like a bullfighter stepping into an arena.*"(*Wind Versus Polygamy*, page 87).

In this simile, Mr Azodo's manner of conducting the trial, his way of speaking, is likened to the way a bullfighter steps into an arena full of confidence and ready to kill a bull. As a prosecutor, Mr Azodo has to prove, by all means, that chief Ozuomba is guilty. He therefore approaches the dock, with courage and determination in order to defeat his adversary.

3.9. Synecdoche

Cases of synecdoche in *Wind versus Polygamy* are found in the following examples:

- We must use our heads now and watch the enemy like a hawk. The moment he lays his finger on Elina, we will see to it that the city high court knows of it." (*Wind Versus Polygamy*, page 49)

In this statement "finger" is a synecdoche. Chief Ozuomba's finger (a part of his whole body) in this context is used to designate the whole body or the whole person. Here, Councillor Ogidi and Hunter Okosisi warns Chief Ozuomba that if he dares touch, marry or live with Elina, they will take him to court and accuse him of violating the new law against polygamy.

- "Love is to a *thousand hearts* a thousand different things."(*Wind Versus Polygamy*, page 90),

"Hearts", in this sentence is a synecdoche. A heart is a part of a person and it is used to refer to a person who has it. When Councillor speaks of "a thousand hearts"; he is talking about one thousand persons who are in love. People perceive love in different ways.

- "What you call it is immaterial. After all, I have proved that to read and write does not constitute knowledge in itself". "Only because you can afford to hire *other eyes and hands* to do your reading and writing for you". (*Wind Versus Polygamy*, page 39)

In the above quotation, eyes and hands (parts of the body) are used as synecdoche to refer to people that Chief Ozuomba hire respectively to read books and write for him. As an illiterate, Chief Ozuomba does neither read nor write. He asks people to do this job for him. Also, as an African chief and traditional ruler, he is bound to the customs whereby people have to be there to help the chief as he cannot do everything himself.

3.10. Paradox

In *Wind versus Polygamy*, we find cases of paradox in the following:

- "If you call that low, how do you call the comparison between the humility of the founder of Christianity and *the luxury of her priests in this parish*? Those who preach the gospel live by the eggs we contribute while the contributors *live on hunger line*. Stop it, uncle Ofodile, exploded Elina angrily." (*Wind Versus Polygamy*, page 45).

In the above statement Mazi Ofodile presents two cases of paradox. First, he shows how it is paradoxical to see the luxurious life which priests in his parish live for example buying expensive cars and other things such as residential houses for members of their families despite the fact that Jesus, the founder of Christianity, did not live such an extravagant life. On the contrary Jesus was so humble and knowing his mission, he did not care about material stuff.

Second, Mazi Ofodile introduces another case of paradox concerning priests. The two paradoxical ideas presented by Mazi are that; we have priests who are asking Christians to give them eggs while those Christians are starving after having given food to priests. The paradoxical point here according to Mazi is that Christians are poor and the very little they have for their survival, instead of keeping it, they give it to priests.

Conclusion

Figures of speech are for literature what salt and oil are for food. Actually, their use makes the story enjoyable since it adds a tasty flavor to the reading. Obi. B. Egbuna's *Wind versus Polygamy* is a perfect illustration of this. This narrative would not be as captivating to read as it is without the multitude of figurative language that are omnipresent in the story. The metaphorical, metonymic, analogic, hyperbolic, ironic, etc. use of the language in the novel makes it so breathtaking a novel to read.

To exemplify the discussion, when the narrator uses the phrase "*other eyes and hands*" (page 16) instead of "*other people to see and to write*", it gives to the narration a clearer

understanding of what he intends to convey as a message. This is to emphasize that it is the eyes and hands, isolated from the person, that see and work.

The narrator writes “*Two rival groups sprang up like mushrooms*” (page 15) instead of for example “*Two rival groups appeared suddenly*”. The first version is more vivid than the second. It pushes the reader to go back to their imagination and think about how mushrooms come out of the blue and grow rapidly. The idea of “*jumping*” brought by the phrasal verb “*to spring up*” is more practical and intensifies the understanding of the event.

No one will ever deny to *Wind versus Polygamy* the fragrance of its beautiful text with the metaphorical language it contains. In the novel, figures of speech are used for various purposes including: advocating polygamy or monogamy as a better form of marriage, showing one’s willingness and determination to marry a girl, making discussions more interesting and amusing, threatening his enemies, expressing love feelings, boasting about his qualities to impress and valuing African traditional customs, etc.

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