

Figurative Language and Thematic Projection in Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*

Adeniyi Osunbade and Ade Adejumo

Abstract

*Studies on figurative language have been devoted to its conceptual explication and contextual consideration of how people use it in ordinary language, institutional settings, and literary texts, with the linguistic efforts on it having considered its stylistic and pragmatic imports, ignoring the semantics-motivated additional meaning of figurative language use in poetry, fiction, or other forms of creative writing. This study is therefore devoted to the description of the connotative implications of figurative language use in the war discourse of characters in Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* from the lexico-semantic perspective. It specifically identifies the types of figurative language engaged in the war discourse and determines their connotations-vis-a-vis the author's thematic projection, towards aiding a better understanding of the characters' domestic, ethnic, and socio-psychological experiences in the war-based text. For data, all the characters' figurative language usages in their discourses in the novel were purposively sampled and subjected to descriptive analysis with insights from the theory of connotation, which serves, in semantics and literary theory, to account for the non-literal/figurative meaning of a word or an expression. The findings demonstrate that figurative expressions, namely, euphemism, metaphor, and idiom serve to connotatively project the themes of*

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infidelity, tribalism and inhumanity in different discursive contexts - domestic, ethnic and social - in our data. Euphemism aids the connotative projection of the theme of infidelity within the domestic context; metaphor, those of tribalism and inhumanity in the discursive context of ethnicity; and idiomatic expression and euphemism serve to connotatively thematise the (corrupt) act of infidelity and inhumanity in social contexts. The study concludes that accounting for the non-literal/figurative meaning of a word or an expression demonstrates an awareness of the author's orientation to the connotations of figuration within the lexico-semantic description of language use in literary war discourse, which is significant for pedagogical advantage of aiding a better understanding of the characters' experiences in the war-based text.

Key Words: Figurative language, war discourse, connotation, lexico-semantics, thematic projection.

Introduction

Figurative language such as metaphors, idioms, and so on has been considered derivative from, and more complex than, literal language (Glucksberg 2001), but complementary to it. Essentially, literature abounds on the explication of the concept of figurative language, and contextual consideration of how people use and understand figurative language in ordinary language, that is, in expressions that are used in daily life, including conversations about everyday matters, and in literary texts (see Grindon 1879, Utah 1998, Abrams 1999, Glucksberg 2001, Giora 2003, Trim 2007, Vega Moreno 2007, Abrams and Harpham 2012, Adekunle 2012, Akinsete 2012, Ogunleye and Idowu-Faith 2012, Agboola and Oyeleye 2017, etc.). Linguistic studies of figurative language in literary texts have, however, considered the stylistic (e.g., Osoba 2014) and pragmatic (e.g., Osunbade 2010) imports of figuration, ignoring the semantics-motivated additional meaning of figurative language use in poetry, fiction, or other forms of creative writing. This study is therefore devoted to the description of the connotative implications of figurative language use in the war discourse of characters in Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* from the lexico-semantic perspective, based on the assumption that literary meaning is of complementary

importance to literal meaning, which is primary and central to language use and comprehension, in literary discourse. It specifically identifies the types of figurative language engaged in the war discourse and determines their connotations-vis-a-vis the author's thematic projection, towards aiding a better understanding of the characters' domestic, ethnic, and socio-psychological experiences in the war-based text. For data, all the characters' figurative language usages in their discourses in the novel were purposively sampled and subjected to descriptive analysis with insights from the theory of connotation, which serves, in semantics and literary theory, to account for the non-literal/figurative meaning of a word or an expression. The paper is therefore significant for having pedagogical implication for the lexico-semantic description of connotative figurative language use in literary war discourse.

Figurative Language in Literary Discourse

Figurative language refers to language which conveys meanings that are interpreted imaginatively rather than literally. It is a way of using description to create a special image and bring out one's emotions. Abrams and Harpham (2012:130) describe it as “a conspicuous departure from what users of a language apprehend as the standard meaning of words, or else the standard order of words, to achieve some special meaning or effect.” In other words, it is a creative departure from the normal run of linguistic expectation. Being integral to the functioning of language in literary discourse, they are indispensable to all genres /modes of literary outputs: poetry, drama, and prose. Figurative language serves in these genres to create layers of meaning which the reader accesses through the senses, symbolism, and sound devices and to enhance the reader's deeper understanding of the theme of the work, without the author having to explicitly point out the theme for the reader (cf. Roger, Richard and Roberts 1993, Adejumo 2011, Osoba 2014). Figurative language also facilitates the reader's refracted connections with the characters, the plot, and the message of a literary work (see Osunbade 2010, 2013; Yeibo 2011, etc.).

Notably, figurative language covers a wide range of literary devices, some of which include: simile, metaphor, personification, symbolism, hyperbole, imagery, oxymoron, paradox, apostrophe,

onomatopoeia, alliteration, assonance, etc. Figurative language uses these figures of speech to achieve a more effective, persuasive and impactful effect. While figures of speech such as metaphors, similes, personification, etc. convey meanings beyond the literal meanings of the words or expressions (i.e. standard meanings, as opposed to their meanings in the figurative use) to achieve aesthetics and simultaneously give readers insights into the author's thematic foci, figurative devices such as alliteration, onomatopoeia and assonance appeal to the senses of sound of the readers for rhythmical effects.

Out of the tropes mentioned above, however, the most commonly identified ones are treated here. Simile involves an explicitly indicated comparison between two distinctly different things by the engagement of the word "like" or "as." Metaphor means applying a word or expression that denotes one kind of thing in literal usage to a distinctly different kind of thing, without asserting a comparison. It is a direct transposition of the quality of an object onto another. In metonymy, the literal term for an object is applied to another with which it has become closely associated with a recurrent relationship in common experience. It is sometimes an example of an object being associated with the subject that uses it. In synecdoche, a part of something is used as a signifier for the whole, or (more rarely) the whole is used as a signifier for a part. Personification and euphemism are other commonly used tropes. While personification involves speaking of either an inanimate object or an abstract concept as though it were endowed with life or with human attributes, euphemism refers to a way of expressing an unpleasant thing or opinion in a pleasant way (see Abrams 1999, Abrams and Harpham 2012); "it is an inoffensive expression used in place of a blunt one that is felt to be disagreeable or embarrassing" (Abrams and Harpham 2012:115). It is figuratively masking the dreaded face of an unpleasant reality.

Ultimately, exploring figurative language aids an explanation of how people understand utterances that combine creativity and convention, given that "successful communication depends on the ability to strike a good balance between creativity and convention" (Vega Moreno 2007:217), concerning figurative language usage. The use of language as a creative act, therefore, relies heavily on

figurative language engagement for the author's discursive refraction of societal experiences in literary texts. Thus, figurative language draws largely from formulaic expressions and creatively deploys them for expressions of different shades of connotative meanings in literary discourse. Interestingly, formulaic or conventionalised expressions (such as similes (e.g. *as white as a sheet*, compounds (*spick and span*), proverbs (*a stitch in time saves nine*) or idiom strings (*break the ice*) arise naturally in every language and in every culture, and their deployments indicate that literary communication involves both creativity and convention (see Vega Moreno 2007: 219). In this study, we, therefore, aver that efficient communication in literary discourse relies on a good balance between creativity and convention in figurative language.

Studies on Nigerian Biafra War Novels

Extant studies on novels refracting the experience of Nigerians in the civil war tagged “the Biafran war” have shuttled between literary and linguistic features of language usage in the war-based literary texts. While the literary studies are devoted to the analytic discussion of thematisation and historicism in different war novels (see Mey 2011, Iheka 2011, Akingbe 2012, Makokha 2014, etc.), the linguistic ones concentrate on different stylistic and pragmatic features which aid the interpretation of issues central to the understanding of the characters' war experiences in different texts (see Osunbade 2010, Nnadi 2010, Anidi 2013, Osunbade 2013, Robert 2014, etc.).

Mey's (2011) literary exploration concentrates on the nexus of trauma and history in literature, drawing discursive illustrations from Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Drawing insights from Caruth's trauma theory, Mey discusses the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which is, relatively differently, suffered by characters such as Olanna, Richard, and Ugwu. The study inferentially concludes that refracted narration of the war-caused traumatic experiences of characters in the text has a positive implication for healing the trauma.

However, Iheka's (2011) study is an ecological literature study, which analyses the environmental consequences of the civil war in Isidore Okpewho's *The Last Duty*, Festus Iyayi's *Heroes*, and Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*. The study's findings

indicate four environmental consequences of the civil war in the texts: the incidents of air raids which turn places into a wasteland; the bunkers and trenches which cause flooding, erosion, pests and diseases; the smoking planes and gunfires which emit toxic gases into the atmosphere, leading to global warming, heat waves, heavy rains, draught and rise in sea. The study thus submits that the environment is the greatest casualty of war, though this observation is usually underplayed in literary analysis of war novels.

Also, Akingbe (2012) is a literary evaluation of the narrative of the historic Nigerian civil war in Buchi Emecheta's *Destination Biafra*. The study criticises the greed, corruption, and sadism of many of the protagonists, whose actions are responsible for the trauma and scars borne mostly by women and children during the war. It ultimately condemns the war as a senseless fight over resources and territory, presupposing the conclusion that its brutality leaves its victims counting their losses. And Makokha (2014) is an examination of the portrayal of women in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, to accounting for how the place of women characters in the Nigerian society is articulated. The study indicates that the Nigerian women in the novel's patriarchal political setting experience double colonisation: the first by the British colonialists, and the second by the Nigerian men, who colonise their minds to accept placing the men on a position socially higher than theirs (women's). The study concludes by calling for the decolonisation of the colonised mindsets of the women against patriarchal subjugation.

Within the linguistic orientation, on the other hand, Osunbade (2010) carries out a pragmatic investigation of explicatures and implicatures of conversations in the selected texts of Adichie: *Purple Hibiscus* and the Nigerian civil war-based *Half of a Yellow Sun*, to determine how explicit and implicit meanings relate to the discourse types in the texts and facilitate access to her thematic concerns. The study adopts the Relevance and Gricean Pragmatic theories, which account for context-driven meanings. Four discourse types manifest in the transactions in the novels: domestic discourse (DD), religious discourse (RD), political discourse (PD), and social discourse (SD). These serve as contextual backgrounds for the projection of the themes of corruption, inhumanity, ethnicity, tribalism, inhumanity, love and inequality recoverable through explicatural features of

reference assignment, gap-filling, bridging and disambiguation as well as through the implicatural dimensions of figurative expressions with additional meaning and non-figurative expressions with additional meaning, which flout the maxims of manner, quantity and quality. It conclusively asserts that the interaction between discourse types and meaning levels in Adichie's novels, facilitates access to a context-driven understanding of the social, religious, domestic and political issues in both novels, in addition to political-cum war-related issues in *Half of a Yellow Sun* in particular.

Nnadi (2010) attempts a stylolinguistic investigation of lexical choices and expressions in Chukwuemeka Ike's *Sunset at Dawn*, which chronicles the sufferings and experiences of the people in the Nigeria/Biafra war. The paper adopts Enkvist's stylolinguistic approach, with specific consideration for the style markers in the work, and shows that morphologically deviant formations, neologisms, and uncomplicated expressions are marked stylistic features for effective description of the prevailing tensions and hardships associated with war.

Anidi (2013) also carries out a stylistic-linguistic analysis of selected Nigeria-Biafra War novels, with insights from Leech and Short's model. The findings reveal three broad stylistic features of language use in the novels: satirical, historical and storytelling elements; military register and formulaic usages; and objective and more creative language styles of the more contemporary war texts, relative to the earlier war texts. This study concludes by affirming the usefulness of the linguistic-stylistics tool in the identification of war narrative styles, and in the overall interpretation of war novels.

In another study on *Half of a Yellow Sun* alone, Osunbade (2013) adopts Sperber and Wilson's relevance theoretic concept of explicature to carry out a pragmatic investigation of how gap-filling is used to generate explicit meanings concerning Adichie's thematic foci vis-à-vis discourse types in conversations in the novel. The findings manifest the recovery of the themes of inhumanity and ethnic conflict in Political Discourse (PD); corruption, especially infidelity and domestic strife in Domestic Discourse (DD); and inhumanity and corruption in Social Discourse (SD) as part of the explicatures of characters' utterances in the text. The paper concludes that this relevance-driven cognitive exploration of explicit

information communicated by characters in conversations in Adichie's *HYS* facilitates access to a context-driven espousal of political, social and domestic issues in the text.

Robert (2014) is another stylistic study of language use in war novels, exemplifying with Okpewho's *The Last Duty (TLD)* and Nwapa's *Never Again (NA)*, which both centre on the Nigerian civil war experiences of 1966 – 1970. The study analyses the syntactic features of the language used in the texts by adopting the systemic functional grammar. It reveals the engagements of both structural and functional sentence types for insulting-cum abusive purposes in both texts, with Okpewho's preference for hypotactic sentence style which in feminists' stylistics is interpreted as a male phenomenon of patriarchy and dominance, but Nwapa's choice of paratactic sentence styles, intended to show equality. The study demonstrates that syntactic features are significant stylistic features that aid the authors' communication of the gory message of the Nigerian civil war.

The foregoing studies thus reveal that a study of the figurative language use in the fictionalised narration of characters' experiences of war has, however, been neglected both in the literary and linguistic scholarship on Nigerian Biafra war novels despite the complementary input of troupes in the projection of literary meaning. The present study, therefore, plugs in this hole from a lexico-semantic perspective.

Theoretical Consideration: Theory of Connotation

In semantics and literary theory, connotation is the non-literal/figurative meaning of a word. The connotation of a word or term adds elements of emotion, attitude, or colour. A connotation is thus best understood as a subjective cultural and/or emotional colouration in addition to the explicit or denotative meaning of any specific word or phrase in a language. In a widespread literary usage, the denotation of a word is what it primarily signifies or refers to while its connotation is the range of associated significations and feelings which it commonly suggests or implies based on the socio-cultural and 'personal' implications (ideological, emotional, etc.) of the signs (Barthes ([1964] 1967). Barthes ([1957] 1987) explicates connotation as the second “order of signification” of signs. The first order of signification is that of denotation in which there is a sign

consisting of a signifier and a signified. Connotation, being a second-order of signification, however, uses the denotative sign (signifier and signified) as its signifier and attaches to it an additional signified (Barthes 1987). This view is simply put by Ayodabo (2017:52) that “connotation is concerned with the 'real world' experience which an individual associates with both the conceptual meaning of an expression and the individual’s personal experiences which he brings to bear upon what he communicates or expresses”, thereby espousing Leech's (1981:12) idea that connotation gives meaning which “an expression has by virtue of what it refers to, over and above its purely conceptual content”.

Ayodabo (2017:52-53) further submits that variation in human experiences evokes unstable connotative implications of words and expressions, as it is based on association made to the concept which may change over time relative to certain additional non-criteria semantic features employable in specifying its meaning. The fact is that connotative meaning is non-determinate and open-ended; it varies from individual to individual, society to society, one historical period to another, or from culture to culture. It is thus a slippery literary/linguistic tool with no fixed interpretative boundary. So, not all speakers of a language share all the connotative meanings associated with certain expressions, and this makes communication difficult among people if they have to speak all the time figuratively, as connotation involves the figurative use of language. Insights will, therefore, be drawn from the theory of connotation as advanced in semantics and literary theory in our interpretation of figurative language in Adichie's war-refracted novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun* since figurative language is significantly open to interpretation connotatively.

Figurative Language and Thematic Projection in *Half of a Yellow Sun*

Figurative expressions, namely, euphemism, metaphor, and idiom serve to project the themes of infidelity, tribalism and inhumanity in different discursive contexts - domestic, ethnic and social - in our data. Euphemism aids the connotative projection of the theme of infidelity within the domestic context; metaphor, those of tribalism and inhumanity in the discursive context of ethnicity; and idiomatic

expression and euphemism serve to connotatively thematise the (corrupt) act of infidelity and inhumanity in social contexts.

Euphemism as a figurative language that enhances the connotative thematisation of infidelity within the domestic context features in some instances in the data. This theme, which has become endemic in human societies, is depicted in example 1 below:

Example 1: (Background: Odenigbo had an illicit affair with Amala, and this act pushed Olanna too to have an affair with Richard. Surprisingly, Olanna confessed to him, driven by the flagrant way Odenigbo continued to sidestep responsibility and blame his mother for his own misconduct).

Odenigbo: Let's get married. Mama will leave us then.

Olanna: *Islept with Richard.*

Odenigbo: (painfully) No.

Olanna: Yes.

Odenigbo: Do you have feelings for him?

Olanna: No.

(HYS, p.250)

Odenigbo involves in sexual intercourse with Amala, the house help his mother brings from the village, and this act poses threats to his relationship with Olanna. He then proposes marriage as a way out of the problem of insecurity posed by his infidelity, but Olanna surprises him with the shocking news of her retaliatory infidel act with Richard. This is communicated in her T₁ using a figurative expression (euphemism) to veil the act:

Islept with Richard.

The euphemistic expression “to sleep with someone” implies to have sexual intercourse with someone.” Euphemism seems employed here to make the ugly act sound pleasant. The confession of “love-making” with Richard, which is communicated, ultimately connotes that she (Olanna) is an infidel just like him (Odenigbo) and the marriage being proposed might not work. This, consequently, has implication for pointing out the effect of infidelity on marital challenges in the larger society as refracted in the domestic context of the war narrative. Even as the civil war eats up the nation, the different characters, being archetypes of the Nigerians, are helpless about their condemnable emotional involvements with each other despite the

lack of feelings for the sexual partners. Sexual intimacy bereft of emotional involvement, therefore, foregrounds the dearth of feeling in a war situation

Metaphoric figurative expressions are also employed to communicate the subject of tribalism in the discursive context of ethnicity in *HYS*. An instance will suffice:

Example 2: (Background: Olanna was in Mohammed's house in Kano when ethnic riot started)

Mohammed: They're rioting.

Olanna: It's the students, isn't it?

Mohammed: I think it's religious or ethnic. You must leave right away.

Olanna: Mohammed, calm down.

Mohammed: Sule said they are blocking the roads and *searching for infidels*. Come, come

(He went into the room and came out with a long scarf)
wear this, so you can

blend in.

Olanna: (Jokingly) I look like a proper Hausa Muslim woman now. (*HYS*, pp. 149-150)

The narrative that produces the discussion between the two characters above gives off the knowledge that Weeks after the second coup in the country which leads to the death of many Igbo soldiers, the Northern Nigeria becomes highly volatile. Riots leaving some Igbo dead are staged, causing serious unrest. The interaction above between Olanna and Mohammed, her ex-Hausa boyfriend, is, therefore, an indictment on the condemnable tribal sentiment that orchestrates the ethnic riot that eventually blows into a full-fledge war in the country. This idea is communicated, using a metaphor, in Mohammed's third turn:

Sule said they are blocking the roads and *searching for infidels*.

The figurative expression engaged here is "*searching for infidels*." With the advantage of the knowledge of the situation necessitating the use, Olanna understands that by "infidels" the Igbo are the connotative referents in the present context. She, therefore, agrees to disguise as a Hausa Muslim to escape from being a victim of

tribal/ethnic sentiment being played out. By metaphorically condemning the Igbo as infidels, tribalism, therefore, becomes connotatively portrayed as a barrier to ethnic unity in the country. The metaphorisation of non-Hausas as infidels is a robust extended metaphor hewn from religious context to underscore the depth of interethnic animosity at play during the civil war period in Nigeria.

Metaphor further plays a significant role in the thematisation of inhumanity within the context of ethnicity, which has a serious implication for the refraction of ethnic-violence induced pains, in the war narrative used as our data base, *HYS*. This is illustrated using the instance that follows:

Example 3: (Background: As the Biafran war became more serious, two American journalists came to Biafra, visited a refugee camp and one of them, Charles, the redhead, interviewed a refugee)

Charles: Are you hungry?

The refugee: Of course, we are all hungry.

Charles: Do you understand the cause of the war?

The refugee: *Yes. The Hausa vandals wanted to kill all of us, but God was not asleep.*

(*HYS*, p. 380)

The discourse in example 3 reveals that rather than relying on the propaganda from the media, some American journalists visited Biafra to gather first-hand information about the Biafran war. This endeavour takes Charles, the redhead, one of the journalists, to a refugee camp to interview the refugees. In an interview with a woman with one arm (suggesting that she is a real casualty of the war), he elicits information about the cause of the war, and the woman answers, enthusiastically, with ethnic-biased orientation to metaphoric usage:

Yes. The Hausa vandals wanted to kill all of us, but God was not asleep.

Obviously, the woman's contribution here connotes indicting the Hausa ethnic group of inhumane behaviour. Engaging metaphor, she gives information accusing the Hausa of the holocaust, which is believed to have catalysed the war. Assisted by inference, it would be apparent to Charles that "the Hausa are inhumane." Hence,

inhumanity becomes connotatively thematised with the advantage of figurative expression.

Idiomatic figurative expressions and euphemistic expressions are also used in *HYS* to thematise corrupt act of infidelity and inhumanity respectively, in social contexts, indicating that the two vices play a role in the refracted narration of pains in characters' interactions. Let us examine examples 4 and 5:

Example 4: (Background: Chief Okonji, the minister of finance, is Olanna's father's friend. Notwithstanding, he wants to have an affair with Olanna) respectively.

Chief Okonji: *I can't keep you out of my mind.*

Olanna: I'm not interested, Chief.

Chief Okonji: *I just can't keep you out of my mind.* Look, you don't have to work at the ministry. I can appoint you to a board, any board you want, and I will furnish a flat for you.

Olanna: Stop it, Chief.
(*HYS*, p. 34)

To illustrate the metaphoric engagement of figurative language, example 4 shows that Chief Okonji tries to woo Olanna without success, irrespective of his friendly relationship with her father. In reiterating his interest in her, the expression “I just cannot keep you out of my mind” is idiomatically engaged in his first and second turns of conversational contribution. Given the idiomatic meaning of “keep out of one's mind” as “not become concerned with,” the social impact of Chief Okonji's engagement of the figurative expression in the social context of use is to convince Olanna that he is serious with his proposal to have a relationship with her. The expression suggests that “it is difficult for him to forget his romantic advances towards her.” It thus connotes an amatorial way of appealing to her to accede to his proposal, apparently, for the selfish intention of committing adultery with her. The amatorial advance is, therefore, connotatively for co-opting Olanna into a corrupt act of infidelity with him, being a married man.

The thematisation of inhumanity also hinges on euphemism as figurative use of language in the social context of interactions

between characters in *HYS* to depict certain gory images of war and the attendant pains in the text. This point is illustrated in the following instance:

Example 5: (Background: Ugwu and Nnesinachi, his childhood friend, were discussing and the discussion touched on Anulikas's ugly experience in the hand of unknown soldiers during the war)

Nnesinachi: I knew you did not die. I knew your *chi* was wide awake.

Ugwu: (Touching her baby's cheek) you married during the war?

Nnesinachi: I did not marry. I lived with a Hausa soldier. They were living in our town and he was good to me, a very kind man. If I had been here at the time, what happened to Anulika would not have happened at all. But I had travelled to

Enugu with him to buy some things.

Ugwu: What happened to Anulika?

Nnesinachi: You did not know?

Ugwu: What?

Nnesinachi: *They forced themselves on her. Five of them.*

Ugwu: Where did it happen?

Nnesinachi: Near the stream.

Ugwu: Outside?

Nnesinachi: Yes.

(*HYS*, p.434)

In example 5, Ugwu and Nnesinachi, his childhood friend, are revealed in a social interaction that touches on a notable social vice associated with Biafran war that just ends. Some unknown soldiers raped Anulika, Ugwu's sister, during the war. So, to capture the traumatic experience of inhumanity lent to thematic projection in this discourse, Nnesinachi resorts to the use of euphemism to veil the ugliness of the act perpetrated by these soldiers. By saying "they forced themselves on her," Nnesinachi connotatively conveys the information that "she (Anulika) was raped." The occurrence of the word "force" in the expression here also helps to underline the kind of

violence that is visited on war victims while the war lasts. The understanding of this communicative intention makes Ugwu ask where the ugly incidence takes place. The idea of rape fictionally portrayed euphemistically here, ultimately, connotes Adichie's thematic focus on inhumanity; the fact is that for five people to rape a young girl in the open is not only ridiculous, but certainly inhumane.

Conclusion

This study has been devoted to the description of the connotative implications of figurative language use in the war discourse of characters in Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* from the lexico-semantic perspective, with a view to identifying the types of figurative language engaged in the war discourse and determining their connotations-vis-a-vis the author's thematic projection.

Aligning with the assumption that literary meaning is of complementary importance to literal meaning, which is primary and central to language use and comprehension, in literary discourse, the findings demonstrate that figurative expressions, namely, euphemism, metaphor, and idiom serve to connotatively project the themes of infidelity, tribalism and inhumanity in different discursive contexts - domestic, ethnic and social - in our data. Euphemism aids the connotative projection of the theme of infidelity within the domestic context; metaphor, those of tribalism and inhumanity in the discursive context of ethnicity; and idiomatic expression and euphemism serve to connotatively thematise the (corrupt) act of infidelity and inhumanity in social contexts.

The study concludes that accounting for the non-literal/figurative meaning of a word or an expression demonstrates an awareness of the author's orientation to the connotations of figuration within the lexico-semantic description of language use in literary war discourse. It is therefore significant for the pedagogical advantage of aiding a better understanding of the characters' domestic, ethnic and socio-psychological experiences in the war-based text.

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