Nigerianisms as Style: A PragmaStylistics Analysis of Frances Ogamba's "Ghana Boy" and "Reaching for Ijenu"

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Abstract
This paper evaluates the use of Nigerianisms as the main style of language use deployed in Frances Ogamba's short stories "Ghana Boy" and "Reaching for Ijenu." It deconstructs the author's use of the features of Nigerian English to contextually situate her text, present an average Nigerian's social reality and explore how her style of language use paints an image of the Nigerian physical and linguistic environment. Grounded in the framework of PragmaStylistics and the theory of cultural relativism by Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf which provides adequate parameters for analyzing the Nigerianisms in the aforementioned short stories, the study reveals that Nigerianisms are indeed linguistic expressions that perform various roles in literary texts. Seeing them as Nigerian context dependent expressions, which act as tools for figurative expressions or mirrors that reflects Nigeria's socio-economic and political realities, the paper regards Nigerianisms as tools for self-determination and individuality that export Nigeria's unique linguistic features such as naming, language variety and translanguaging. It calls for more studies to be done on Nigerianisms in literary texts in order to further ascertain the contextual authenticity of the messages that are communicated in them.
Keywords: Nigerianism, PragmaStylistics, Linguistic Environment, Translanguaging

Introduction

Nigerianism falls within the scope of Nigerian English and the quest by scholars to not only standardize it but also export it to compete equally with its contemporaries on the global scale as language may be referred to as a tool for economic and self-emancipation. The concept has been explored by a number of Nigerian scholars; some say that Nigerianisms refer to a sentiment to the Nigerian heritage reflected in the way Nigerians use English (Ejie & Ikupa, 2024), those elements that modify the RP to produce the Nigerian English (Babarinde & Ahamefula, 2020), or lexicosemantic markers of the English Language variety in Nigeria (Mahmud, 2015) . However, for the purpose of this study, Nigerianisms may be said to encompass all linguistic units and expressions whose contextual meanings are derived from the Nigerian socio-political environment which communicates the Nigerian social reality. Writers' use these Nigerianisms in writing as a way to express identity and style. It may also be considered as an example of such efforts by Nigerian scholars and writers in achieving the goal of nativising and exporting the Nigerian English. This study undertakes a PragmaStylistics analysis of Nigerianisms as a strategic stylistic element in selected short stories written by Frances Ogamba, specifically "Ghana Boy" and "Reaching for Ijenu." Nigerianisms are recognized as linguistic features emanating from the use of English in Nigeria (Akindele & Mayokun, 2025, p. 1), (Akindele, 2017) representing the unique ways in which Nigerians employ the language. They reflect the local colorations attached to English usage, often representing varieties of construction that incorporate the phonological, structural, and semantic properties of Nigerian languages. Crucially, scholars regard Nigerianisms not merely as errors, but as indices of acculturation and creative tendencies(Edem & Effiong, 2024) thus demonstrating how the English language is nativised or domesticated to reflect Nigerian experiences and cultural sensibilities.

Nigerianisms

The presence of Nigerianisms across various forms of popular culture and literature validates their linguistic significance as a distinct variety of World Englishes (Akindele, 2017, p. 58) they are defined by their deviation from non-standard British English forms, reflecting ethnolinguistic influences that arise when English, a second language in Nigeria, comes into contact with indigenous languages (Akindele 2017: 59) this linguistic hybridization leads to the creation of Nigerian English, which is designed to suit the Nigerian environment and culture, serving as an appropriate vehicle for transmitting Nigerian culture(Akindele & Mayokun, 2025, p. 12). Nigerianisms function to project social meaning, convey social experiences, and express unique local identities and their features are identifiable across linguistic levels. Studies analyzing Nigerian creative works and media, such as Nigerian hip-hop music and newspaper editorials, detail the lexico-semantic and morphological features which include the strategic use of coinages (new words reflecting Nigerian experience, e.g., "chop life" or "yahoo"), loan words from indigenous languages (e.g., "Alhaji," "Titi," "Danfo"), and semantic contrast, where English words are given new meanings based on the Nigerian context such as "toast" which means to woo a lady, or "market" which refers to the objectivization of the female body)(Akindele & Mayokun, 2025). There is also lexical reduplication (e.g., "today today"), and the use of abbreviations unique to the Nigerian context (e.g., NNPC, TETFUND) (Edem & Effiong, 2024, p. 382). Furthermore, the pragmatic and sociolinguistic features of Nigerianisms also manifest through sociolinguistically meaningful practices, such as the deployment

of slang ("who you epp," "kolo"), bilingual pragmatic markers borrowed from indigenous languages (e.g., "o," "sha," and "abi") used for emphasis or mitigation and local symbolism to reference culturally specific concepts (e.g., the pressure on Nigerian adults to marry, or the symbolism of Saturday weddings). Nigerian hip-hop artists, for instance, deliberately use these indigenized codes to create, recreate, and reflect social experiences and diversity in their music (Akindele & Mayokun, 2025).

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in the theoretical premises of PragmaStylistics and the Sapir-Whorfian Theory of Cultural Relativism. There exists a long-recognized interconnection between language and literature. The two disciplines, though often viewed as distinct, are inseparable. Literature cannot exist without language, and linguistic analysis would be incomplete without the study of its literary use. As Todorov (1977) observes, literature "has language as both its point of departure and its destination," for language furnishes literature with its structure and material, acting as both mediator and medium. Consequently, stylistics emerged as a field dedicated to bridging the gap between literary and linguistic studies. Fakuade (1998) describes stylistics as "the confluence between the literary and linguistic rivers," emphasizing its integrative role, while Simpson (2004) posits that stylistic analysis explores the creativity of language use to deepen understanding of literary texts. Similarly, McArthur (1996, as cited in Mode, 2015) notes that linguistic stylistics enables scholars to investigate how writers weave meaning through language. Within this study, stylistics provides the basis for examining how Ogamba's linguistic choices particularly Nigerianisms create meaning and reflect Nigeria's sociolinguistic realities.

PragmaStylistics, is a hybrid discipline drawing from pragmatics and stylistics focuses on how language functions in its context of use within literary texts. It explores how linguistic choices contribute to meaning, characterization, and the portrayal of social power dynamics. Mey (2001) notes the growing interest in the pragmatics of literary texts, while Nørgaard et al. (2010) highlight its focus on contextual interpretation, interactional strategies, politeness principles, and multimodal communication. Central to PragmaStylistics is the understanding that language use is context-bound; interpretation must therefore consider physical, cultural, cognitive, social, and authorial contexts. Concepts from speech act theory, turn-taking, and the cooperative principle are employed to interpret how characters use language to perform illocutionary acts such as persuading, deceiving, or resisting authority. Through these, power relations and social hierarchies can be inferred. In this study, PragmaStylistics serves as the lens for examining how Ogamba's short stories employ pragmatic elements such as speech acts, implicatures, code-switching, and politeness strategies to mirror Nigerian communicative norms and social realities, revealing how her characters' linguistic choices construct identity, emotion, and power within Nigerian contexts.

The Sapir-Whorfian Theory of Cultural Relativism posits that language shapes human thought and the perception of social reality (Sapir, 1929; Whorf, 1956). Sapir proposed that language,

culture, and personality are interrelated, while Whorf advanced that linguistic structures influence the worldview of speakers. While PragmaStylistics shows how language functions contextually to generate meaning, the Sapir-Whorfian theory explains how linguistic forms influence cultural perception and identity. It moves beyond mere surface-level features to examine how these situated linguistic choices function pragmatically, leveraging shared cultural knowledge (SCK) and shared situational knowledge (SSK) to convey deep, context-dependent meaning, thereby shaping the distinctive literary style of an author's narratives(Adebayo, 2015). Together, the two theories enable a multidimensional analysis of Ogamba's short stories considering both the pragmatic functions of language and its cultural significance. These theoretical frameworks therefore guide the analysis of "Ghana Boy" and "Reaching for Ijenu" in this study by examining how Ogamba's diction, sentence structure, code-switching, and figurative language embody Nigerian socio-cultural realities.

PragmaStylistics Analysis of "Ghana Boy"

In Frances Ogamba's "Ghana Boy," several Nigerianisms are identifiable through the diction, sentence structure, and figurative language, which collectively contribute to the portrayal of Nigerian social realities. The themes explored in the story are of familial love, the impact of criminal life on a family and the brutal reality of extrajudicial actions by law enforcement which makes up the social reality of majority of young boys living in present day Nigeria. The homodiegetic narrative ends with the protagonist, Oslo grieving deeply, encountering a haunting vision of his brother, which portrays the profound loss and emotional turmoil he experiences. The story paints a vivid picture of the community, family dynamics, and the tragic fate of a young man caught in a life of crime.

1. **Diction**

The choice of words in "Ghana Boy" is a blend of Nigerian English and Nigerian Pidgin, which are evident in the characters' names, dialogue and narration; these linguistic choices reflect the socio-linguistic landscape of Nigeria and are expressed in the following expressions

a) Naming: Names of people and places may be classified as Nigerianisms because the type of names are cultural and their meanings and importance are specific to culture and context. The naming strategies and choice employed by Ogamba was derived from the Nigerian society

Firstly, why is Emeka from whose Nickname the Eponymous title was derived named "Ghana Boy"?

In the story, the character Emeka is nicknamed "Ghana Boy" in his neighborhood; he is the central character whose arrest propels the narrative. This nickname arises from a combination of factors related to his physical appearance and his actions which espouses stereotypes, and a cultural history between Nigeria and Ghana. The character Emeka has a distinct appearance that stands out among the other children. He is described as having a darker skin tone and a robust build, which is somewhat different from the local norm (Ogamba, 2019). This difference in physical appearance contributes to the perception that he is not originally from the local

community, thereby earning him the nickname "Ghana Boy" as a way to mark him as an outsider. His behavior also plays a significant role in his nickname. He exhibits a strong and assertive demeanor, often standing up for himself and his siblings in situations that require confrontation or defense. This assertiveness and strength in character are perceived as traits associated with someone who is resilient and capable of handling tough situations, qualities that the other children might stereotypically associate with Ghanaians, thus reinforcing the nickname "Ghana Boy."

Contextual Analysis

The nickname "Ghana Boy" highlights the themes of identity and belonging. Emeka's distinct appearance and behavior set him apart, making him both a subject of curiosity and a target for labeling. This reflects the Nigerian tendency to categorize and differentiate based on visible and behavioral traits. The use of such nicknames is also indicative of social dynamics in the community such as group hierarchy as seen in the nicknames of Emeka's friends such as Rat Poison, Uch-Man, Sule, and Tear Drop. It shows how children, and by extension the larger society, create cliques, often leading to the elevation or sometimes marginalization of those perceived as different. It reflects local naming conventions and it carries implicit stereotypes and may be seen as a form of prejudice or sense of belonging. While it might not always be intended as derogatory, it nonetheless perpetuates certain assumptions about people from Ghana or those who appear different from the local population. This analysis therefore shows how the Eponymous title used by Ogamba readily exposes one to one of the major themes of the short story which is the theme of Stereotypes which is also inherent in the Nigerian society.

On naming, It may be said that the author's use of mostly names of Igbo origin, communicate context which include setting, culture, and identity. Below is a table showing this

Fig 1 Names

S/N	NAME/CHARACTER	CATEGORY	MEANING	CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS
1	OSONWA ELOKA	PERSON	Igbo origin, meaning "The Journey/ race of a child."	The naming of this character in the text signifies a personal journey or development, highlighting the character's transformation from innocence to a more hardened individual due to peer pressure and experiences.
2	EMEKA ELOKA	PERSON	"Emeka" is a male name	This reflects the family's cultural

			common among the Igbo people and means "God has done so much." Usually a short form of Chukwuemeka	background and perhaps hints at a sense of pride or gratitude within the family dynamic. It denotes religion that the family is Christian.
3	NGOZI	PERSON	"Ngozi" is an Igbo name meaning "Blessing."	Ngozi is the mother of Osonwa and Emeka. The name meaning blessing is supposed to influence the character's motherly role as a nurturing and protective figure within the family, emphasizing her emotional strength and resilience.
4	ABUM	PERSON	"Abum" is an Igbo name meaning "I am"	
5	UZO	PERSON	"Uzo" means "First, Fore, way"	
6	UNOAKU	PERSON	"Unoaku" means Home / House of wealth / riches.	
7	MAMA CHIKA	PERSON	"Chika" means God is greater and "Mama" is a title for mothers.	
8	ISU	PLACE	A place in south Eastern Nigeria	To indicate setting, culture and situate the story in a physical environment to give it an element of realism.
9	UDALA	FRUIT	Some call it local apple.	It is called Udala in South Eastern the spelling variation is specific to a central Anambra dialect/variety.

10	NCHO	GAME/THING	A game popular amongst the older generation of Nigerians that is made up of a board and pebbles	To furnish the text with elements of the Nigerian Social reality.
11	EBII	PLACE	A place in south Eastern Nigeria	To indicate setting, culture and situate the story in a physical environment to give it an element of realism
12	UBE	FRUIT	A local pear.	It is called Ube in south eastern Nigerian the use of this lexical item by Ogamba was to also further situate the story within a contextual environment.
13	ONITSHA	PLACE	A place in south Eastern Nigeria	Onitsha is a commercial city in Anambra State, Nigeria, known for its large market. It represents economic activity, trade, and cultural convergence. Mentioning Onitsha might highlight the economic aspirations and struggles of the characters.
14	AWKA	PLACE	Capital of Anambra, a State in South Eastern Nigeria	Situate context within south eastern Nigeria
15	UGWUOBA	PLACE	A place in south Eastern Nigeria	To indicate setting, culture and situate the story in a physical environment to give it an element of realism
16	PAPA	TITLE	A common title for fathers in Nigeria	Papa in this story refers to the father of Osonwa and Emeka. The use of "Papa" is a common

				term for father in many Nigerian cultures, indicating respect and the patriarchal structure of the family.
17	SERGEANT	TITLE	The title "Sergeant" denotes a position of authority and power in law enforcement	The Sergeant is the police officer involved in Ghana Boy's arrest. The absence of a personal name emphasizes the impersonal and often oppressive nature of law enforcement in the story.
18	BINGO	ANIMAL	The name "Bingo" is a common name for dogs in Nigeria	Bingo is the family's dog. Symbolizing familiarity and domesticity. Bingo's actions and presence in the story can reflect loyalty and the protective nature of the family unit.
19	NIGERIA	PLACE/COUNTRY	The country where the story is set.	The setting in Nigeria provides a backdrop of socio-political issues, cultural diversity, and the struggles of everyday life. It situates the narrative within a specific geographical and cultural context, highlighting local challenges.

The table above presents a tabulation of the names of characters and places in the short story and a brief contextual analysis. Names like "Osonwa" and "Emeka" reflect the characters' Igbo heritage, situating them within the Igbo ethnic and cultural framework. This enhances the authenticity of the narrative and provides insight into the social identity of the characters that are reflections of real life Igbo youths. The names of people, animals, and places in Frances

Ogamba's "Ghana Boy" are not mere identifiers but carry significant cultural, social, and contextual meanings. They enhance the narrative by providing insights into the characters' identities, the socio-political environment, and the cultural landscape of Nigeria. This naming convention not only enriches the reader's understanding of the story, but also provides a vivid reflection of Nigerian life and experiences.

b. FIG II Lexemes/ words

S/N	LEXEMES/CLAUSE	ACTS	MEANING	CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS
1	"Wetin happen?"	Interrogative	This phrase translates to "What happened?"	"Wetin" is a common Nigerian Pidgin term for "what" and "happen" retains its English form but used colloquially. The usage of Pidgin English here situates the dialogue in a distinctly Nigerian context, reflecting informal speech among friends and peers.
2	"Police come today Them carry Ghana Boy"	Statement	They arrested Ghana Boy	In this sentence, "Them" is used as a subject pronoun in Pidgin English, which is unconventional in Standard English where "They" would be used. "Carry" in this context means "arrested" or "taken away," which is a common Pidgin English usage.
3	"No be ordinary Police carry Ghana Boy!"	Exclamation	"It wasn't the ordinary police that took Ghana Boy,"	The use of "No be" instead of "It is not" exemplifies Pidgin English. The sentence structure and choice of words create a sense of immediacy and relatability for Nigerian readers. Any Nigerian who reads this will relate to the concept of SARS.
4	"But nothing go happen. Them go release am."	Reassurance	"But nothing will happen. They will release him."	The phrase "nothing go happen" means "nothing will happen," indicating

				reassurance. "Them go release am" translates to "they will release him," where "am" is used as an object pronoun for "him." This structure shows how future tense is often constructed with "go" in Pidgin.
5	"No be ordinary Police carry Ghana Boy, na SARS."	Clarification	"It wasn't the ordinary police that took Ghana Boy, it was SARS."	No be" is used for "it wasn't," and "na" serves as a copula (is/was). This highlights how Pidgin employs simple and direct grammatical structures, making the language accessible and straightforward.
6	"Oslo, no be ordinary Police carry Ghana Boy, na SARS."	Exclamation	"Oslo, it wasn't the regular police who took Ghana Boy, it was SARS."	"No be" (it wasn't) and "na" (it was) are used to emphasize the seriousness of the situation. This foregrounds the distinctiveness of Nigerian Pidgin in emphasizing and clarifying critical information. (SARS-Special Anti-Robbery Squad)
7	"No soul go carry Emeka comot from this house. You don flog am. E never do?"	Assertion/ Rhetorical Question	"No one will take Emeka out of this house. You've already beaten him. Isn't that enough?"	"Go" is used for future tense, "will" and "comot" means "take out." The phrase "E never do?" translates to "Isn't that enough?" showing how Pidgin often uses rhetorical questions for emphasis.
8	"No vex about your brother, Oslo."	Placation	"Don't be angry about your brother, Oslo."	"No vex" is a common Pidgin phrase for "don't be angry." This phrase shows the casual and empathetic tone often used in everyday conversations.

9	"We fit talk this thing between us?"	Question	"Can we discuss this matter between us?"	"Fit" means "can" or "able to," demonstrating how Pidgin reduces the forms of modal verbs.
10	"How e go?"	Interrogative	"How did it go?"	"E" is used for "it," and "go" here implies the outcome. This shows how Pidgin is economical in the use of words and letters to convey meaning efficiently.
11	"For wetin?"	Interrogative	"For what?"	"Wetin" is a versatile term in Pidgin used in various contexts to mean "what." This highlights the flexibility, multifunctionalty and adaptability of Pidgin vocabulary.
12	"Your own go be worstest"	Assertion	"Yours will be the worst."	The phrase "worstest" is a hyperbolic and non-standard comparative form, showing how Pidgin can playfully manipulate English grammar for emphasis.
13	"Make you dey go school."	Directive	"Make sure you go to school."	"Make" is used as a directive, and "dey go" implies a continuous action, highlighting Pidgin's unique way of giving instructions and emphasizing habitual actions.

The table above analyses several Nigerian Pidgin English constructs used by the author which reflect the way Nigerians use language. There are some forms of Acrolect and Basilect situations that exist in Nigeria where the Formal Nigerian English is higher in status than the Nigerian Pidgin English. The character's use of pidgin in most of their communication speaks to their social status, which is reflective of the Nigerian society. This is an essential part of the story's realism and cultural context because these conversation patterns are a direct reflection of the Nigerian linguistic environment. These Pidgin constructs in "Ghana Boy" may be said to serve several purposes of authenticity as it adds realism to the narrative, by reflecting the actual speech

patterns of the characters. It reveals their backgrounds, social status, and relationships. Also, the informal and direct nature of Pidgin enhances the emotional intensity of dialogues. It also makes the story relatable to Nigerian readers, thus educating non-Nigerian readers about local expressions and social norms in Nigeria. Through these constructs, the author effectively communicates the unique social realities, linguistic environment, and cultural contexts of Nigerian society.

2. Sentence Structure

Ogamba's style of structuring sentences vary within the text to enhance the narrative and reflect the characters' emotions and societal context, it mirrors the linguistic patterns found in the Nigerian linguistic environment; in Pidgin, Nigerian English, and local dialects. This includes but not limited to the use of repetitive phrasing, direct speech, and colloquialisms. The writing style highlights a continuous alternation between colloquial forms and formal forms of the Nigerian English.

The author shows a mastery of the Nigerian English in the use of short, abrupt colloquial sentences which are used to convey urgency and tension, e.g., *"Police come today. Them carry Ghana Boy"*, and long, figurative formal sentences which provide imagery of the setting and the characters' thoughts, e.g., *"A patch of darkness has swallowed our home, making the two-room bungalow seem ominous."* Evident in the text is the use of code switching which is a natural consequence of the author being a bilingual who lives in multilingual Nigeria;

"I walk out of the house before my mother begins her usual yelps of chi m egbuo m o." "Chi m egbuo m! Emeka egbuo m!" my mother's wails echo through the room."

This Igbo sentence translates to "My God has killed me, Emeka has killed me." The repetition emphasizes the emotional weight of the statement, reflecting the intense personal and cultural resonance of invoking God and familial ties in times of distress. It demonstrates how characters and Nigerians switch between languages to express strong emotions

There is also the presence of the rhetorical style of writing present in the text; *"Osonwa, I offend God born you and your brother? I offend God born you and Emeka?"* The repetition of "I offend God" and the structure of the questions reflect a common Nigerian rhetorical style, emphasizing the speaker's frustration and sense of helplessness.

b. FIG III Sentence Structure Breakdown

S/N	SENTENCE	ACTS	COMPONENTS	ANALYSIS
1	"Wetin happen?"	Interrogative	"Wetin" (What) + "happen" (happened)	This simple interrogative sentence consists of a question word ("Wetin") followed by a verb ("happen"). The structure is direct and concise, typical of Pidgin, which often omits auxiliary verbs and relies on context for tense

2	"Police come today. Them carry Ghana Boy."	Declarative + Declarative	"Police" (subject) + "come" (verb) + "today" (time adverb); "Them" (subject) + "carry" (verb) + "Ghana Boy" (object)	Two short declarative sentences. The first sentence establishes the event with a subject-verb-time adverb structure. The second sentence uses "Them" for "they" and "carry" for "took," reflecting Pidgin's straightforward and economical use of language.
3	"But nothing go happen. Them go release am."	Declarative + Declarative	"But" (conjunction) + "nothing" (subject) + "go" (future marker) + "happen" (verb); "Them" (subject) + "go" (future marker) + "release" (verb) + "am" (object pronoun)	The future tense is marked by "go" before the main verb. The pronoun "am" stands for "him," showing how Pidgin often simplifies pronouns and future tense formation
4	"No be ordinary Police carry Ghana Boy, na SARS."	Negative Declarative + Declarative	"No be" (It wasn't) + "ordinary Police" (subject) + "carry" (verb) + "Ghana Boy" (object); "na" (it was) + "SARS" (subject)	The negative declarative uses "No be" for "it wasn't," and "na" for "it was," illustrating Pidgin's unique copula usage. It emphasizes the subject through simple juxtaposition.
5	"Oslo, no be ordinary Police carry Ghana Boy, na SARS."	Vocative + Negative Declarative + Declarative	"Oslo" (vocative) + "no be" (It wasn't) + "ordinary Police" (subject) + "carry" (verb) + "Ghana Boy" (object); "na" (it was) + "SARS" (subject)	The sentence begins with a vocative ("Oslo"), directly addressing a person, and follows the same structure as in the previous example, emphasizing the serious nature of the situation.
6	"No soul go carry Emeka comot from this house. You don flog am. E never do?"	Negative Declarative + Declarative + Interrogative	"No soul" (subject) + "go" (future marker) + "carry" (verb) + "Emeka" (object) + "comot" (verb phrase) + "from this house"	The first sentence is a strong negation of a future action. The second uses "don" to mark the present perfect tense, and the third is a rhetorical question using "E" for "it" and "do" for "enough."

			(prepositional phrase); "You" (subject) + "don" (present perfect marker) + "flog" (verb) + "am" (object pronoun); "E" (subject pronoun) + "never" (negative adverb) + "do" (verb)	
7	"Chi m egbuo m, Emeka egbuo m!"	Exclamatory (Igbo language)	"Chi m" (My God) + "egbuo m" (has killed me); "Emeka" (subject) + "egbuo m" (has killed me)	These exclamations in Igbo express strong emotion and emphasize personal anguish, showing code-switching between languages for emotional impact.
8	"No vex about your brother, Oslo."	Negative Imperative	"No" (don't) + "vex" (be angry) + "about your brother" (prepositional phrase) + "Oslo" (vocative)	This negative imperative uses "no" to mean "don't" and directly addresses Oslo, typical of the informal and empathetic tone in Pidgin.
9	"You know that robber killed a man?"	Interrogative (Standard English)	"You" (subject) + "know" (verb) + "that robber" (subject) + "killed" (verb) + "a man" (object)	The sentence is in standard English, contrasting with the surrounding Pidgin and highlighting a shift in formality or context.
10	"We fit talk this thing between us."	Interrogative	"We" (subject) + "fit" (can) + "talk" (verb) + "this thing" (object) + "between us" (prepositional phrase)	The modal "fit" for "can" and straightforward verb-object structure exemplify Pidgin's simplicity and clarity in expressing potential actions.
11	"How e go?"	Interrogative	How" (question word) + "e" (it) + "go" (verb)	This brief question uses "e" for "it" and "go" to imply movement or progress, showing how Pidgin often relies on context for full meaning.
12	"For wetin?"	Interrogative	"For" (preposition) + "wetin" (what)	A concise question using "for" to ask about reason or

				purpose, typical of Pidgin's economical language use.
13	"Your own go be worstest"	Declarative	"Your own" (subject) + "go be" (future marker + verb) + "worstest" (superlative adjective)	The use of "worstest" as an exaggerated superlative is a playful and emphatic form common in informal speech, highlighting Pidgin's flexibility and creativity.
14	"Make you dey go school."	Imperative	"Make" (directive) + "you" (subject) + "dey" (be) + "go" (verb) + "school" (object)	The directive "Make" instructs action, with "dey go" indicating a continuous or habitual action, characteristic of Pidgin's unique verb constructions.

The sentence structure of the Pidgin English constructs in "Ghana Boy" when analysed, reveals distinct patterns and linguistic features characteristic of Nigerian Pidgin and they are characterized by:

i. Simplicity and Directness: short, straightforward sentences with minimal use of auxiliary verbs.
ii. Unique Tense Markers: Use of "go" for future tense and "don" for present perfect.
iii. Pronoun Simplification: Use of "am" for him/her/it and "e" for it/he/she.
iv. Cultural and Emotional Expression: Use of indigenous languages (like Igbo) and Pidgin for strong emotional impact and cultural authenticity.
v. Flexibility and Creativity: Adaptation and playful manipulation of English grammar for emphasis and expressiveness.

These features make Nigerian Pidgin a vibrant and expressive medium that captures the essence of everyday communication in Nigeria.

3. Figurative Language

The author employs various forms of figurative language that reflect the Nigerian context:

"The trees shrivel into the young dusk and the sky retreats beneath the thick clouds sliding across it": This vivid imagery uses natural elements to create a rich, atmospheric setting that is familiar to Nigerian readers.

"He's like the harmattan wind, the pin-sized bullet, the blazing charcoal": This simile link the character to powerful and familiar elements of Nigerian life, underscoring his elusive and intense nature.

Personification:

The trees and the sky are given human-like qualities, enhancing the immersive quality of the setting.

Cultural References:

Terms and phrases specific to Nigerian culture, such as "ube tree" and "Ncho game," root the story in its Nigerian setting.

4. Contextual Meanings, Norms, and Social Realities

The linguistic choices in "Ghana Boy" are context-specific, reflecting the socio-cultural norms of Nigerian society. The dialogue and narration provide insights into the characters' lives and the societal dynamics they navigate;

"Odeshi! Nothing dey happen!": "Odeshi" is a term from Igbo culture meaning "it does not break" or "invincible." It signifies resilience and defiance. The phrase "Nothing dey happen" translates to "Nothing will happen" or "Everything is under control," reflecting cultural bravado and resilience.

Furthermore, the use of Nigerian English and Pidgin reveals several social norms and realities like community and kinship; the narrative highlights the importance of family and community in Nigerian society. The concern and involvement of neighbors and the collective grief when something happens to a member of the community indicate strong communal bonds. The Informality and Directness in Speech from the frequent use of Pidgin English and direct, sometimes confrontational language reflects the informality and directness characterizing many interactions in Nigerian society.

The authority and power dynamics were explored in the interactions with SARS to reflect the power dynamics and the adverse relationship between authorities and the ordinary citizens. The fear and helplessness experienced by the protagonist's family mirrors the helplessness an average Nigerian youth experiences whenever they encounter similar brutality in the society. This is a broader societal issue related to policing in the Nigerian society and which led to the ENDSARS protests of 2020 which spread out throughout the country, but unfortunately ended in a government led massacre.

The way characters speak to each other reveals their social positions and relationships. For instance, the authoritative tone of the police officers, contrasts sharply with the respectful yet desperate tone of the protagonist's parents. There were non-verbal communication cues inherent in the story in actions such as the mother wringing the police officer's collar or the father's silent compliance reflect underlying power struggles and the desperation of the oppressed.

5. Sapir-Whorfian Hypothesis and Cultural Relativity

The Sapir-Whorfian hypothesis posits that language shapes our perception of reality. In "Ghana Boy," the use of Nigerian English and Nigerianisms does more than add authenticity; it shapes the reader's understanding of the cultural and social context. Terms like "Odeshi" carry cultural significance that shapes how characters perceive and respond to their world. These linguistic elements convey cultural attitudes towards strength, resilience, and fate. Also, the language used by characters helps construct their social identities as evidenced by the protagonist's transition

from "Osonwa" to "Oslo" reflects a shift in self-identity influenced by social interactions and the expectations of his peer group.

PragmaStylistics Analysis of "Reaching for Ijenu"

The Language of the text is Nigerian English, with the use of Nigerian names and linguistic / environmental features to strike a vivid imagery in the mind of the readers of the social reality of most Nigerian women, both in the country and the diaspora. Many may think that when one leaves the country to another country, they are at least free from the damaging entanglements of the Nigerian culture but it has been shown to not be true in the text and like opium, the addict is still tethered to it.

In the story, Ogamba employs a number of Nigerian English expressions and cultural references that convey the social reality of her characters. In "Reaching for Ijenu", the writing style evokes intense feelings of sadness and relatability in most Nigerian women who may come across the story. Features of the diction of the text include: Naming; as seen in the use of names and endearments like "*Ijenu"*, which is the the short form of "Ijenuwa"- the journey earthly life. There are other phrases such as "*Ije nwa*," which means "the travails, journeys, struggles associated with childbirth or a child" in Igbo and condolence messages and kola nuts, below are examples:

"Maria, a woman from my age grade, takes the condolence messages on my behalf, and makes sure that everyone eats kola and has something chilled to drink."

The mention of "condolence messages" and the serving of "kola" (kola nuts) are culturally significant. In Nigerian culture, kola nuts are often presented as a sign of respect and hospitality during significant events, including funerals. The use of these terms situates the narrative within a Nigerian social setting and underscores the communal aspects of mourning and respect for the dead like the use of "*Ndo*" in this sentence *"Mama Nurse, ndo. So sorry, they chorus."* "*Ndo*" is an Igbo word meaning "sorry" or "take heart." Its inclusion in the dialogue emphasizes the cultural context and is classified as the linguistic phenomena of code-switching and code-mixing which refers to the mix/ alternation between English with Nigerian languages, primarily Igbo in this context, this mixing of languages signifies the bilingual nature of interlocutors in the Nigerian society and emphasizes the informality and familiarity of the characters.

The mother's memories and dreams of Ije, intertwined with her present reality, illustrate her deep sorrow and denial. The story dives into the mother's regret and guilt over her advice to Ije to endure the marriage, hoping for societal approval and stability. The narrative also touches on the issue of domestic violence and the isolation and helplessness felt by victims and their families. In the end, the mother grapples with the irreversible loss and the painful realization that she could not protect her daughter. The story captures the profound impact of such a tragedy on a family and community, highlighting the enduring bonds of love and the devastating consequences of violence. Furthermore, the mention of local foods (e.g., "*uziza"* and "*uda*"), local customs (e.g., eating kola nuts during condolences), and Nigerian social realities (e.g., marrying 'janded' men,

which means men who live abroad) provide a cultural context; the use of terms like "Janded" in *"Her two older daughters married 'janded' men."* "Janded" is a colloquial term in Nigerian English referring to someone who has lived abroad or *"Japad."* They have similar meanings but used by different generations and popularized by different tribes, especially in European and Western countries. This reflects the societal prestige associated with having family members who have 'made it' overseas, highlighting the socio-economic aspirations and global connections within Nigerian communities. It also foregrounds the stagnant and retrogressing state of the Nigerian society that generation after generation, the Nigerian dream has remained to migrate to a western country and love Nigeria from there.

Similarly, the sentence structures vary from complex, multi-clause sentences to short, impactful statements. This variance serves several purposes like reflecting emotional states; the protagonist's grief and confusion are mirrored in fragmented and disjointed sentences, such as, *"The barrenness I feel is exhausting." "My body feels parched, yet water does not put a footing to the raging fire."* This stylistic choice reflects her inner turmoil. This is also depicted in the use of repetitive structures and direct speech reflects the cultural speech patterns and oral storytelling tradition prevalent in Nigerian culture. For instance, the repetition of *"What are you saying?"* and *"Where is Ije?"* during a phone call emphasizes the panic and desperation of the moment.
The dialogues may also be described as authentic in that it captures the natural flow of conversation among Nigerians, with a mix of English and indigenous languages, questions that are culturally inappropriate being shushed, and the pragmatic pauses in conversations that indicate deep emotional undercurrents also, the sentence structures and the interactions between characters also reveal deep-seated patriarchal norms and societal expectations. Furthermore, Ogamba creatively employs a range of figurative language to deepen the narrative and evoke strong emotions and imagery. She uses metaphors and similes in form of comparisons to illustrate the protagonist's emotions and experiences. For example, *"My heart had been squeezed out of my chest like lotion in a tube,"* vividly conveys the pain and helplessness felt by the protagonist also, the use of personification and symbolism in elements like the "*walnut tree"*, "*owl"*, and "*eagle"* are personified or symbolically used to represent various facets of the protagonist's life and emotional state. The walnut tree, for example, symbolizes a connection to her daughter and past memories. Also, vivid descriptions such as *"the air stealing in through my window tempers the uziza and uda scents coming from the kitchen,*" create vivid sensory experiences for the reader in form of imagery, immersing them in the protagonist's world. As evidenced in this line *"I trail Ije in the twilight as she leaps to the walnut tree, her favourite play spot when she was a child."* This imagery evokes nostalgia and the innocence of childhood, juxtaposed against the harsh reality of Ije's death. The walnut tree symbolizes a place of safety and happiness, which stands in stark contrast to the present situation of loss and grief. This use of figurative language is reflective of the lyricality and figurativeness of the languages and language use inherent among the interlocutors in the Nigerian speech community.

Contextual Meanings, Norms, and Social Realities

In "Reaching for Ijenu", Ogamba intricately weaves Nigerian social norms and realities into the story where the following theses which are central to the Nigerian society are explored:

Family and Community: The importance of family ties and community support is evident in the way people come together during times of mourning. The social expectation to share in each other's grief is a central theme, reflected in the communal activities around the condolence visits. *"My late husband's kinsmen hold a meeting on how to contact our in-laws."* This excerpt on the involvement of male relatives in discussing family matters underscores the patriarchal structure where men hold decision-making power, often excluding women from important conversations. *"Crying frees up your chest. You still have Simdi."* This advice to cry and move on reflects the cultural tendency to encourage silent endurance rather than addressing the root causes of grief and trauma. It suggests that emotional release is the only recourse, rather than seeking justice or change. It also shows how Nigerian parents selfishly place their source of happiness on their children expecting them to be puppets/ molds of their making instead of individuals deserving of living their own lives.

Patriarchal Norms, Gender Roles and Marital Expectations: The story also explores traditional gender roles and the expectations placed on women within Nigerian society. The story "Reaching for Ijenu" illustrates how patriarchal norms engender domestic violence and the silencing of victims. This is evident in several aspects of the narrative for example *"You know, some of our daughters go there and forget how to be under a man"* (Ogamba, 2022) This reflects the patriarchal expectation that women should be submissive to their husbands, reinforcing gender hierarchies and justifying control and dominance over women which further espouses the misogynistic notion that women are not fully autonomous beings and were created to be beneath men. A line in the story acts as a rebuttal to the heteronormative gender roles *"It doesn't matter if a man does house chores. Didn't we all do laundry and bathe babies as growing children? Why does it become a woman's job once a man marries one*?" This rhetorical question challenges the gendered division of labor but also highlights how these norms are questioned but rarely changed.

Domestic Violence: *"Ije, he beats you?" "Mummy, don't worry. I'm fine"* This exchange demonstrates the normalization of domestic violence and the culture of silence that surrounds it. The daughter's dismissal of her mother's concern shows how victims often downplay abuse due to societal pressure, fear, or no hope for change and the mother further espouses these notions with her advice to her daughter to *"clothe up her marriage."* Then manage until you have a child highlights societal pressures on women to endure in marriages, even in the face of physical and mental abuse. This line *"Because I brought you here. You cannot give me your salary because you are supporting your mother."* Portrays Uzoma's entitlement to Ije's earnings and his

justification for violence reflects deep-seated patriarchal beliefs that women's financial contributions are secondary and subject to male control.

PragmaStylistics Elements

Speech Acts: The condolence conversations, inquiries about the protagonist's well-being, and discussions about Ije's marriage all serve as speech acts that reveal underlying social hierarchies and cultural expectations.

Short Analysis: *"Ije, I will always love you. I will always protect you. So help me God."*

Act: A wedding vow (Performative/ commissive)

Status: Unhappy/ Failed because Uzoma didn't fulfil his commitment. This wedding vow reflects cultural expectations of marital commitment and protection, yet the tragic irony lies in the failure to uphold these promises. The vow's breakdown underlines the discrepancy between cultural ideals and harsh realities.

Politeness Strategies: Characters employ various politeness strategies to navigate social interactions. For instance, the shushing of Ngozi's question about the details of Ije's death reflects the cultural sensitivity around discussing death directly.

Implicatures and Presuppositions: The story is embedded with implicatures (implied meanings) and presuppositions (assumptions taken for granted). For example, the protagonist's belief that Ije's call from abroad would always bring good news is shattered, highlighting her presupposition about the safety and success associated with living abroad.

Sapir-Whorfian Hypothesis and Cultural Relativity

The Sapir-Whorfian hypothesis which suggests that language shapes thought and perception is evident in how the narrative constructs and conveys cultural and linguistic relativity. In "Reaching for Ijenu," the use of Nigerian English and cultural references shapes the reader's understanding of the characters' experiences and societal norms; the use of Nigerianisms in the narrative situates the story within the Nigerian cultural and linguistic context. The unique social realities of Nigerian society are expressed through the language, influencing how characters perceive and interact with their world.

"Most Nigerian men living overseas were seeking nurses as wives. Ije had just completed her nursing degree."

This statement highlights a pragmatic view within Nigerian communities about marriage and socio-economic advancement. The preference for nurses among Nigerian men abroad reflects societal values that prioritize financial stability and care giving roles, which are often associated with women.

Language and Identity: The protagonist's identity and sense of reality are deeply intertwined with her linguistic environment. The use of Igbo and Nigerian Pidgin English reflects her cultural heritage and shapes her worldview, emphasizing the role of language in constructing social reality.

Language and Thought: The Sapir-Whorfian hypothesis posits that language shapes thought and cultural perception. In "Reaching for Ijenu" the use of Nigerian English and cultural references shapes the reader's understanding of the characters' experiences and societal norms:

"Their voices get lost in the din that, only recently, has built up in my head."

The description of voices as a "din" illustrates the overwhelming and chaotic nature of grief. The choice of words reflects the cultural context where emotional turmoil is often internalized and unvoiced.

Findings

As evidenced by the in-depth analysis carried out on the two short stories so far,, one may say that firstly, Frances Ogamba's works vividly capture the complexities of Nigerian life, including family dynamics, gender roles, and the Diaspora experience; making them powerful representations of Nigerian social reality. Secondly, since it has been said that Nigerianisms act as a mirror which reflects Nigeria's social reality, therefore, one can rightly say that the Nigerianisms inherent in the two short stories are also tools for the documentation of the physical state of things in Nigeria within a period of time. Below are some points to illustrate this:

1. "Ghana boy" was published in 2019 when police brutality (SARS) was most prevalent in Nigeria and this is documented in the story.
2. "Reaching for Ijenu" was published in 2022 and it also reflects the Migration culture that is dominant in the Nigerian social reality and the continued practice of domestic abuse and intimate partner violence. An example is Osinachi Nwachukwu, a popular gospel singer who died in April 2022 and her husband, Peter Nwachukwu was lately convicted of abusing her to death.

Nigerianisms are indeed linguistic expressions that perform various roles in literary texts. They are Nigerian context dependent expressions which act as tools for figurative expressions. As fillers, they act as a mirror into Nigeria's socio-political reality, a tool for self-determination and individuality, and they export Nigeria's unique linguistic features.

Conclusion

Frances Ogamba's "Ghana Boy" and "Reaching for Ijenu" vividly reflect the unique social realities and cultural contexts of Nigerian society through their linguistic features. The use of Nigerianisms not only contribute to character development and narrative structure but also situate the stories within the Nigerian cultural and linguistic environment. The framework of PragmaStylistics employed in the study espouses that, Ogamba effectively highlights power dynamics, social interactions, and the impact of cultural relativism. The Sapir-Whorfian hypothesis further helps us understand how language shapes cultural and social perceptions in these narratives. In "Reaching for Ijenu", Ogamba uses Nigerianisms to provide authenticity and highlight patriarchal norms that perpetuate domestic violence and the silencing of victims. The story underscores how cultural and linguistic contexts shape characters' experiences and societal interactions, making the linguistic features integral to conveying the depth and complexity of

Nigerian life. Similarly, Ogamba in "Ghana Boy" employs Nigerianisms to reflect social realities, using local expressions to enhance character development and narrative depth. By situating the story within a specific cultural and linguistic context, Ogamba not only captures the complexities of Nigerian life, including family dynamics, gender roles, and the Diaspora experience, but also makes powerful representations of Nigerian social reality. In summary, she uses linguistic elements not merely as stylistic choices but as essential tools to convey the intricate social reality of the Nigerian life and identity.

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