

An Analysis of Mood Structure in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half Of A Yellow Sun*

Ganiu Bamgbose

Department of English,

Lagos State University

ganibamgbose@gmail.com

ORCID iD: 0000-0002-8830-7896

Adebola Karamah Shogbuyi

School of Liberal Studies,

Yaba College of Technology

karamah.shogbuyi@yabatech.edu.ng

and

Ayando Fehintolu

Department of English,

Lagos State University

ayandofehintolu@gmail.com

Abstract

*This study investigates how mood is deployed in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*. The study examines the types of mood structures used in the text and explores how mood contributes to unveiling power relations, emotional state and ideological meaning with a view to accounting for the linguistic resources that reflect characters' attitudes, social roles, and psychological states which contribute significantly to the interpersonal metafunction of language in the text. Ten (10) excerpts randomly drawn from the novel were analysed using the lens of Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004) Systemic Functional Grammar framework for analysing mood. The study adopts a qualitative descriptive method. The findings reveal that Adichie deploys the use of declarative, interrogative and imperative mood, and in the text, mood is highly context-based. In domestic settings, mood choices function as instruments for shaping hierarchy, intellect, and identity negotiation among characters. In military and political contexts, mood becomes a vehicle of ideology, propaganda, and institutional authority. Overall, Adichie shapes interpersonal dynamics and projects ideological positions in the narrative. The study concludes that mood serves as a linguistic resource through which this construction of power and authority during the Biafran struggle is demonstrated in the text. This study contributes to the growing field of literary linguistics by offering a detailed, functional analysis of how mood encodes interpersonal meanings in an African literary context.*

Keywords: *Mood structure, Half of a Yellow Sun, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Civil War Literature*

Introduction

Literary works are not produced in a vacuum. At the centre of social depiction in texts is the use of language (Bamgbose and Ohwojevwe, 2018; Timehin, 2024). Language functions not merely as a means of communication but also as a crucial instrument for shaping human experience, identity, and ideology. Eggins (1994), as cited by Robert (2020), emphasises that language is

inherently functional, with its use oriented towards meaning-making that is contextually bound by social and cultural factors. This functional perspective highlights the significance of choice in the construction of meaning. Similarly, Herbele (2000) underscores that systemic functional linguistics (SFL) examines language within specific cultural and situational contexts, focusing on variables such as the participants involved, the communicative setting, and the medium employed. Within literary discourse, these contextual dynamics become particularly salient, as authors purposefully employ linguistic resources, especially mood, to construct and reflect characters' attitudes, social relationships, and psychological states. This linguistic choice is central to the interpersonal metafunction of language, as articulated by Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), which encapsulates the roles and relationships between interlocutors and the nature of the message exchanged. Olurotimi (2022) has submitted that meaning hardly makes sense outside the context of communication.

This is evident in *Half of a Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, a novel marked by rich dialogue and emotionally charged interactions within the context of the Nigerian-Biafran war making it suitable for examining how mood choices reveal characters' attitudes, power relations, and psychological states. Every text is a creative product of a writer's effort aimed at expressing a line of thought, revealing the events or experiences of what happens or had happened around him or her (Bamgbose and Gabriel 2017). *Half of a Yellow Sun* recounts the reality of the Nigerian Civil War from Adichie's authorial perspective.

Mood, as a central component of the interpersonal metafunction, plays a significant role in expressing the speaker's stance, intention, and level of engagement with the listener. It serves as a linguistic mechanism through which interpersonal relationships are negotiated and meaning is constructed in interaction. Osisanwo (2004) examines how the presence or absence of the Subject element in a clause influences the classification of clause types, particularly within the structural framework of English grammar. This structural variation directly impacts the realisation of speech functions. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) define mood in terms of grammatical configurations that correspond to specific speech functions, namely, declaratives (used to make statements), interrogatives (used to ask questions) and imperatives (used to issue commands). These mood types determine the nature of speech roles, especially whether the speaker is giving or demanding either information or goods and services. From a complementary perspective, Palmer (2001) offers a nuanced definition of mood, viewing it as a grammatical category that encodes the speaker's

attitude toward the proposition expressed in a sentence. He conceptualises mood as “grammaticalised modality,” thereby highlighting its role in systematically embedding speaker stance within grammatical structures. Greenbaum and Nelson (2002), as cited in Adejare (2014), affirm that mood is expressed through verb forms and reflects the speaker’s attitude toward the proposition. This view aligns with the broader systemic functional perspective that sees mood as central to the interpersonal metafunction of language, particularly in shaping interaction and expressing speaker stance. Hence, mood is pivotal in enacting social interaction because it allows speakers to adopt and assign speech roles such as giver or demander and thereby shape the interpersonal dynamics of discourse. Structurally, mood is realized through the interaction of the Subject and Finite elements, which together form what Halliday (1994) captures as the Mood element whereas Eggins (2004), and Opara (2005, cited in Nwabueze, 2018) refer to as Mood block, while the remainder of the clause constitutes the Residue. This Mood–Residue configuration is essential for identifying clause types and interpreting how interpersonal meanings are grammatically encoded. As such, mood is not merely a formal grammatical feature but a dynamic system of choices through which speakers adopt and assign roles, negotiate authority, and shape interactional meaning. Within the realm of literary discourse, mood serves as powerful linguistic tools that enable writers to construct layered meanings and to convey characters’ psychological orientations, social relationships, and degrees of power or vulnerability. Through strategic deployment of mood types, authors are able to encode not only what is said but also how it is said, thereby enriching narrative texture and character development. In *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie demonstrates a sophisticated command of this linguistic resource. She skillfully employs mood to portray the emotional complexity and evolving interpersonal dynamics among her characters, set against the backdrop of the Nigerian-Biafran War. Adichie’s use of this feature reveals how deeply intertwined language is with identity, resistance, and the socio-political realities her characters navigate. Therefore, mood not only functions as a grammatical element but also serves as key narrative strategy for articulating nuanced dimensions of human experience in conflict ridden contexts. For this reason, the present study adopts the mood system as a key analytical tool for examining how Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun* contributes to the construction of interpersonal relationships, the expression and contestation of authority, the negotiation of social and personal roles, and the portrayal of internal conflicts among characters. Such an approach demonstrates how language, operating within

Halliday's interpersonal metafunction, is used not only as a vehicle for narrative progression but also as a subtle means of shaping interpersonal meanings, reflecting ideological positions, and capturing the emotional complexity of human experience in a war-torn context.

Despite extensive scholarship on *Half of a Yellow Sun*, most studies emphasize its historical representation (Akpome, 2013), politeness phenomenon (Obasi & Okoro, 2022), feminist lenses (Feghabo, 2022; Bamgbose and Akhaiyea, 2026), perspective of war (Jacob and Uzomah, 2022) pervasive corruption and postcolonial themes, Ordu and Odukwu, 2022), with limited attention to the linguistic construction of interpersonal meaning. Notably, there is a gap in systematic application of Halliday's mood system to analyse how relationships, power, and emotions are encoded in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. This gap calls for a linguistically grounded approach that moves beyond thematic interpretation. Given the novel's dialogic nature and focus on conflict and identity, mood analysis provides an effective framework for examining how interpersonal relationships are negotiated. This study therefore applies the mood system within Halliday's interpersonal metafunction to show how language functions as a strategic resource for expressing social roles, power relations, and psychological tension.

Literature Review

The concept of mood has attracted considerable scholarly attention in linguistic and literary discourse, particularly for its role in encoding interpersonal meanings. Okafor & Issife (2017) explore a functionally oriented stylistic analysis of President Buhari's inaugural speech. By quantifying mood and modality and linking them to discourse purposes, information sharing, promise delegation, national unity, they underscore how linguistic form reflects leadership stance and rhetorical strategy in political contexts. With a declarative mood rate of 97%, imperatives account for only 2.54%, and there are no interrogatives or modulated interrogatives found in the speech, this reveals an informational tone with minimal direct exhortation. . The minimal imperative use (<3%) and absence of interrogatives signal distance from participatory discourse, affirming the speech's top-down orientation. In both studies, mood is central to revealing speakers' psychology and purpose. Nevertheless, Okafor & Issife (2017) analyse a formal political speech, a real-life communicative act intended for national/international audiences. Whereas this present study deals with a fictional narrative genre with imagined interactions, which allows for more emotive, psychological, and nuanced uses of mood. Okafor & Issife (2017) demonstrate how these linguistic elements operate in the context of political discourse using Halliday's

interpersonal metafunction as a key framework. The present study builds upon these earlier works by applying Halliday's interpersonal metafunction framework to literary narrative, offering a more nuanced interpretation of how mood reflects ideological tension and emotional depth in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. This positions the study as a meaningful contribution to the growing intersection of linguistics and literature.

Likewise, mood functions as an essential linguistic tool for constructing interpersonal meanings, revealing characters' psychological states, social relationships, and ideological positions. Scholars like Nweke 2024 and Madu et al 2022, investigate mood system within literary texts, emphasizing their significance in shaping thematic development and narrative voice. To start with, Nweke (2024) investigates how language, particularly through the Mood system is used to construct conflict, power relations, and emotional distance in marital discourse within selected Nigerian dramatic texts. Drawing on Halliday's interpersonal metafunction, the study shows how Nweke grammatical choices reflect interpersonal tensions in conversations between spouses. The findings show that mood choices in conflictual discourse are not neutral but rather serve as strategies of assertion, control, or negotiation. For example, male characters often deploy imperatives and declaratives to impose authority or assert traditional gender dominance, while female characters respond through interrogatives and counter-declaratives, reflecting resistance or negotiation. The key differences between the two studies lie in their scope of thematic focus. While Nweke's study centers on gender and marital conflict within the context of drama, the present study explores socio-political conflict and identity construction in a novelistic narrative. In the same vein, Madu et al's (2022) study is grounded in Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), using its ideational metafunction (transitivity system) and interpersonal metafunction (mood system) in two texts. The authors find that both novelists deploy appropriate actors, processes, and goal participants in transitivity structures that vividly portray societal issues. In *Waiting for an Angel*, processes foreground exploitation and corrupt governance; in *Forlorn Fate*, they depict environmental devastation and socioeconomic decline. They show that the declarative mood dominates, supporting a descriptive, testimonial style. Mood choices support character positioning and ideological viewpoints, reinforcing themes such as voicing the oppressed or exposing injustice. Their study and the present study contribute meaningfully to literary linguistics; however, the present research only accounts for mood in Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

Since its publication, *Half of a Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie has attracted extensive scholarly attention across multiple disciplines. Ordu and Odukwu (2022) explore the pervasive theme of corruption as represented in *Half of a Yellow Sun*, foregrounding how Adichie critiques institutional and individual moral decay within the narrative of the Nigerian-Biafran War. In terms of findings, Ordu and Odukwu reveal that *Half of a Yellow Sun* presents corruption in multiple dimensions: political, educational, military, and personal. The authors opine that Adichie portrays these acts of corruption not in isolation but as interconnected practices that degrade the moral fabric of society. Both studies analyse *Half of a Yellow Sun* and explore power and ideology, but while Ordu and Odukwu (2022) focus on corruption through a postcolonial thematic lens, the present study examines how power, attitude, and interpersonal meanings are linguistically constructed using Halliday's SFG. Conversely, Feghabo (2022) emphasises the valorisation of womanhood and the definition of female identity in Nigeria. Feghabo (2022) examines how *Half of a Yellow Sun* celebrates womanhood within the contexts of war, family, and national identity. His findings reveal that Adichie places women, particularly Olanna and Kainene, at the center of both domestic and national struggles, portraying them as emotionally resilient and intellectually strong. Rather than idealising them, Adichie presents complex female characters who balance vulnerability with strength. The study concludes that the novel valorises African womanhood, challenges stereotypical representations, and affirms women's vital role in social and national reconstruction. Both studies present Adichie's feminism as constructive and historically grounded. In contrast, the current study adopts a linguistic perspective, employing Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar to explore how mood encode interpersonal meanings. Despite their differing methodologies, all three studies highlight Adichie's engagement with power, agency, and socio-political critique.

The body of scholarly work on Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* reflects the novel's rich thematic complexity and its relevance to discourses on war, identity, gender, politics, and language. However, despite the breadth of these contributions, there remains a significant gap in understanding how language in *Half of a Yellow Sun* functions as a resource for enacting interpersonal meaning and negotiating power. This study addresses that gap by applying Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar specifically the interpersonal metafunction on mood, to examine how mood operates in the novel. In doing so, it offers a linguistically grounded perspective on how

Adichie's characters use language to perform social roles and express ideological positions within the socio-political context of war and identity.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted for this investigation is Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) on the interpersonal function of language, precisely the mood aspect. In SFL, the concept of mood is central to the interpersonal metafunction, which focuses on how language is deployed to enact social relationships, express attitudes, and negotiate roles between participants in a communicative event. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) emphasise that the interpersonal metafunction enables speakers and listeners to use language as a resource for giving or demanding a commodity, whether that commodity is information or goods and services. This orientation places mood at the very heart of interactive discourse, since it provides the grammatical foundation through which speech roles are established and exchanges are negotiated. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) define mood as agrammatical configurations that correspond to specific speech functions through giving and demanding information, giving and demanding goods and services. This definition highlights the fact that mood is not simply a syntactic arrangement of words, but a grammatical configuration that reflects the speaker's intended speech function, realised through systematic choices in clause structure. These choices are

Motivated by tenor, the relationship between participants, and reflect how language functions as a resource for making meaning rather than as a static set of syntactic rules. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) identify several major clause types based on mood: declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamative, each associated with particular speech roles and functions. Declarative clauses are typically used to make statements and are structured by the sequence Subject + Finite. For instance, the girl has carried the load to the room. Interrogative clauses, on the other hand, are used to ask questions and may be subdivided into yes/no interrogatives (e.g., Have you eaten?) and WH interrogatives (e.g., Who took the book?). Their structure typically involves either Subject–Finite inversion or the presence of a WH-element. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) further categorise declaratives and interrogatives as clauses of exchange, since they involve the giving and demanding of information. Exclamative clauses, such as What a good boy you are!, share structural similarities with WH-interrogatives but are distinguished by their expressive and affective functions. Imperative clauses are used to issue commands, requests, or offers. They often omit the Subject or include it as a vocative or implicit pronoun (e.g., Go out of the class!). The verbal group

in imperative clauses typically appears in the base form, uninflected for tense, while the Subject if expressed, is usually you, me, or us (e.g., Let's go). Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) observe that the imperative mood is primarily associated with the exchange of goods and services, and therefore operates with a distinct system of person. Examples include: Go out of the class! (Command) Please, pass the cup on the table. (Request) Shall I carry your bag for you? (Offer) In each of these cases, the speaker adopts a speech role that requires a complementary role from the addressee, thereby facilitating a negotiated interaction. Beyond clause type, mood also reflects the speaker's stance or attitude toward the proposition. Palmer (2001) defines mood as a grammatical category that expresses the speaker's attitude toward the likelihood, necessity, or desirability of the proposition. Following Palmer, Osisanwo (2004), classifies mood into two broad categories: the indicative mood, which conveys factual statements or beliefs, and the imperative mood, which is employed for issuing commands, offers, or requests.

Overall, the theory guides the analysis by segmenting excerpts from *Half of a Yellow Sun* into clauses and identifying their Mood structure (Subject and Finite). It also provides the basis for interpreting how mood choices encode speech roles, power relations, and characters' attitudes in the text.

Methodology

The data for this study consists of ten (10) excerpts selected from *Half of a Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. The novel was divided into its four structural parts, from which excerpts were randomly sampled to ensure representativeness across different stages of the narrative. The choice of ten excerpts is considered adequate for this study, as it adopts a qualitative descriptive approach that prioritizes in-depth linguistic analysis over large data quantity. The selected excerpts are sufficiently rich in dialogue and narrative interaction to reveal patterns in the use of mood for interpersonal meaning. The study employs a qualitative descriptive research design, grounded in Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG), with particular focus on the interpersonal metafunction and the mood system. The data are primary, as they are drawn directly from the novel. The selected excerpts were segmented into clauses classified into declarative, interrogative, exclamative and imperative types based on their structural patterns. Finally, the mood types were interpreted in terms of their interpersonal functions.

Data Analysis

The analysis highlights how characters express attitudes and negotiate relationships through mood choices. Through a close analysis of selected excerpts, the study uncovers how linguistic choices such as mood, through its types, contribute to the novel's thematic depth, character development, emotional resonance and evolving interpersonal dynamics among her characters, set against the backdrop of the Nigerian-Biafra war. The following Excerpts from Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* exemplified the mood types.

Declarative

Declarative is the category of clause that expresses statements that give information and is realised by subject followed by finite.

Excerpt 1

Olanna: "Your mother made a scene."

Odenigbo: "You're angry" "Nkem, I didn't know you'd take this so seriously. You can see that my mother doesn't know what she's doing. She's just a village woman."

Olanna: "You never talk about your mother; you've never asked me to come to Abba with you to visit her."

Odenigbo: "Oh, stop it, Nkem. It's not as if I go that often to see her and I did ask you the last time but you were going to Lagos." (pg 130)

Interrogative

Interrogative clauses are used to ask questions. Interrogative clauses are subdivided into yes/no interrogatives (polar questions) and WH-interrogatives. Their structure typically involves either Subject-Finite inversion or the presence of a WH-element. Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* contains interrogative clauses that explore tension as depicted below.

Excerpt 2

Nigerian officer: "Why do you still have Biafran number plates? Are you a supporter of the defeated rebels?" (pg 500)

Imperative

Imperative clauses are used to issue commands, requests, or offers. They often omit the Subject or include it as a vocative or implicit pronoun. The excerpt below justified this.

Excerpt 3

Mohammed: “Stay here” Muhammed said, as he stopped the car outside Uncle Mbaezi’s compound.” (pg 183)

Mohammed pushed her (Olanna) into the car and then went around and got in “Keep your head down!”

Mohammed said, “Don’t raise your face!” (pg 184)

Analysis

Excerpts 1 to 3 examine discourses on tension from the text. In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Chimamanda Adichie masterfully crafts discourses of tension through the interplay of emotional states, narrative shifts and the backdrop of the Nigerian Biafra War. Chimamanda uses subtle hints and ominous events to build tension, depicting the impending doom of the war. In excerpt 1, all the seven mood clauses in the dialogue between Olanna and Odenigbo are declaratives conveying feelings of unease, caused by Mama (Odenigbo’s mother). In Olanna’s utterances, the Mood elements consist of the Subject “Your mother” and the Finite “made,” “You + do” (implicit Finite) and “you + have,” respectively, forming declarative clauses that serve as an accusation, criticism and complaint. Similarly, Odenigbo’s responses contain the Subjects “You, I, you, my mother, she, and Finite “are, did, would, can, is” accordingly. They are statements that give information about the speakers’ emotional stance, generating discourses on tension. The clause ‘Your mother made a scene’ is a declarative but interpersonally an indirect accusation whose tone implies Olanna’s hurt. The calm form hides emotional strain, which intensifies mood tension. Again, the clause “You never talk about your mother.” “You’ve never asked me to come to Abba with you” are declaratives that expresses emotional exclusion. The repetition of ‘never’ reinforces grievance and disappointment. Olanna’s use of declarative statements shows controlled anger. Her assertive propositions indicate a mood choice that reflects contained emotion, which heightens the tension. For Odenigbo, the clause “You’re angry” is a statement that functions as an observation. “I didn’t know you’d take this so seriously.” / “You can see that my mother doesn’t know what she’s doing.” / “She’s just a village woman.” These are defensive declaratives. Odenigbo uses these statements to justify rather than empathise with Olanna, subtly invalidating her feelings. This exchange exemplifies mood of tension through declarative conflict. Both characters use declarative clauses, not confrontation, but their declaratives function as emotional weapons, revealing a symmetrical

relationship of equal power through a rational, intellectual exchange between lovers. Both Olanna and Odenigbo speak in statements;

The declarative mood becomes a vehicle of emotional conflict, revealing the fragility beneath their intellectualised love.

However, in excerpt 2, the mood types of the two clauses are interrogative, and the function is demanding information while challenging Odenigbo. In the Nigerian officer's speech, the Mood element consists of the Subject "you" and the Finite "do," with the WH-element "Why" preceding the Finite, marking it as a WH-interrogative. Again, in the second clause, the Mood element is composed of the Subject "you" and the Finite "are," The Finite "are" precedes the Subject "you," indicating Subject–Finite inversion typical of yes/no interrogatives. The Nigerian officer's use of interrogative mood shows power assertion that creates intense political tension. The use of "Why" implies fault-finding, and the label "defeated rebels" carries derogatory and politically charged meanings, heightening the emotional and ideological tension. The officer's tone is confrontational and authoritative, thereby generating anxiety in the listeners. Hence, the power relation between the Nigerian officer and Odenigbo is asymmetrical; the officer is in control. Through these interrogative clauses, Chimamanda portrays how language becomes a tool for dominance and humiliation, reflecting the imbalance of power between victors and vanquished. Excerpt 3 carries imperative clauses that illustrate protective situational control that enacts temporary power asymmetry. Mohammed's commands signal a protective directive to ensure Olanna's safety. His action of pushing her into the car depicts urgency and protection; however, it suppresses Olanna's agency, making her a passive recipient of commands. Mohammed's negative imperative 'don't raise your face ' serves as a command as well as a prohibition, portraying a stronger warning that forbids an action that could expose her to danger, which generates more tension. The interpersonal function is temporarily asymmetrical. Mohammed's dominance emerges from a desire to protect Olanna rather than to control her socially. Olanna's silence and passivity reflect shock and compliance, portraying her as traumatised and dependent. Chimamanda demonstrates how imperatives express authority, urgency, and protection under tense circumstances.

Declarative

Excerpt 4

Chief Okonji: "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 wherever you want" (pg 48)

Chief Okonji “I love you, believe me. I really love you.” (pg 49)

Interrogative

Excerpt 5

Ojukwu: “What shall we do? Shall we keep silent and let them force us back into Nigeria? Shall we ignore the thousands of our brothers and sisters killed in the North?” Are you prepared? Are you prepared?” (pg 211)

Imperative

Excerpt 6

Crowd:” Ojukwu, nyeanyiegbe! Give us gun! Iwe di anyi n’ obi! There is anger in our hearts! Ojukwu, give us guns! Ojukwu, nyeanyiegbe!”. (pg 211)

Analysis

Furthermore, excerpts 4 to 6 portray discourses on persuasion and reassurance in the text. Linguistically, persuasion and reassurance often manifest through declaratives, interrogatives, and imperatives. In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Chimamanda uses the interplay of mood, persuasion, and reassurance to capture the emotional and political tensions of the Biafra War. Through her characters’ speech and thoughts, she explores how language functions both as a tool of power and a means of comfort. She uses the interpersonal metafunction of language to reveal how her characters navigate authority, belief, love, and fear. Again, how they persuade, console, and reassure one another while confronting loss and chaos is illustrated by these excerpts. The mood type in excerpt 4, Chief Okonji’s speech, is declarative. In “you don’t have to work at the ministry, “the Subject you and Finite do (realised as “don’t”) form the Mood element (you+do) that offers reassurance. The statement is giving information and making offers. Chief Okonji uses inducement in an attempt to persuade Olanna. The subject finite structure “I can appoint...”, “I will furnish...” are declarative clauses that indicate ability and power to provide opportunities and certainty that gives reassurance, respectively. The modal verbs “can” and “will” function persuasively; they tempt Olanna by offering material benefits and comfort, in the second speech “, I love you.” Believe me, I really love you.”. the Subject “I” combines with an implicit Finite “do” to form (I + do), indicating declaratives that express emotional persuasion. “Believe me” functions persuasively, urging emotional acceptance.

Chimamanda uses declarative mood as a reassuring persuasion to reveal social power through the character of Chief Okonji. In contrast, the four clauses in excerpt 5, Ojukwu's speech, are interrogatives. His rhetorical questions are not just requests for information, instead, they are persuasive appeals used to stir emotion and evoke moral reasoning. The Subject "we" and Finite "shall" form the Mood element (we + shall), marking a WH-interrogative that demands reasoning. The subject -finite inversion "shall we" and "are you" form the Mood elements (we + shall) and (you + are), function as yes/no interrogatives. Ojukwu uses the repeated Interrogatives "Shall we...?" to emotionally persuade the crowd to resist oppression. His interrogative clauses reflect powerful persuasion. Similarly, Ojukwu repeated the interrogative "Are you prepared?" functions as persuasion. He challenges the crowd to internalise responsibility and provokes a call for action. Adichie uses language to dramatize the power of leadership and conviction during the Biafra struggle. Next, the dominant type of mood in excerpt 6, the speech of the crowd is imperative. The implicit subject (you) and the Finite (give) form (you+give). The imperative chant from the crowd, "Give us guns!", functions as a demand for weapons and an expression of urgency, desperation, and persuasion. The crowd's language is persuading Ojukwu by emotional pressure and collective unity, appealing to his leadership response. The declarative "There is anger in our hearts!" is informative. It gives justification for their demand through emotional reasoning. In Chimamanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*, she uses this scene to reflect the voice of the masses in the Biafran struggle. The crowd demonstrates collective emotional power, showing agency rather than passivity.

Declarative

Excerpt 7

Nnaemeka's father: "We waited for him to return from the North and he did not return, so we had a funeral. We buried an empty coffin." (pg 204)

Excerpt 8

Narrator: "It was Okeoma's appearance, back at the home, that brought Ugwu out of his imagined world. Okeoma looked nothing like Ugwu remembered: the untidy hair and rumpled shirt of the poet were gone. His smart- fitting army uniform made him look straighter, leaner and the sleeve had a skull-and- bone image next to the half of a yellow sun.... Ugwu wanted to hug him too, because Okeoma's laughing face brought back the past with such force that for a moment,

Ugwu felt as if the room blurred with the rain-holder's smoke was the living room on Odim Street.” (pg 247).

Interrogative

Excerpt 9

Richard: “Can I have some of Kainene's photographs? The album on the shelf in the study?” (pg 512)

Excerpt 10

Olanna: “Why don't we talk any more, Kainene?” “I just want to know why we don't talk anymore.” (pg 136)

Analysis

In addition, excerpts 7 to 10 reflect discourses on melancholy and nostalgia. In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie constructs a pervasive mood of melancholy and nostalgia that mostly depicts the psychological and emotional aftermath of war, loss, and disillusionment. The melancholy and nostalgia in the text are both personal and collective as portrayed through characters like Olanna, Kainene, Richard, and Nnemeka's father. These excerpts justified discourses on melancholy and nostalgia. In excerpt 7, there are four declarative clauses from Nnaemeka's father's speech, each with a subject and finite structure. The Subject “we” and Finite “did” (past tense realised in “waited”) form the Mood element (we + did). In “he did not return,” the Subject “he” and Finite “did” (realised as negative “did not”) form (he + did). Similarly, in “we had a funeral,” the Subject “we” and Finite “did” (past tense in “had”) form (we + did), while in “We buried an empty coffin,” the Subject “we” and Finite “did” (past tense in “buried”) form (we + did). The function is to give information about the tragic event of Nnaemeka's death. His father's statements convey a sequence of grief, loss, unfulfilled hope and resignation, which intensifies the melancholy. Chimamanda uses the repetition of “we” which represents collective community grief, to reveal how language enacts social relationships and “empty coffin” deploys the finality of their resignation, thus, heightens the melancholy. She also uses his statements to reflect the pain of absence and the unfulfilled expectation of the return of loved ones in a chaos situation like the

Biafra War, which resulted in powerlessness, replacing the authority of a father's voice with the quiet dignity of sorrow.

In furtherance, the three clauses in excerpt 8 are declaratives with Mood elements consistently realised through Subject–Finite structures. They give information that express inner emotion. Through the narrating voice, the clause “Okeoma looked nothing like Ugwu remembered.” The Subject “Okeoma” and Finite “did” (in “looked”) form (Okeoma + did), while “Ugwu remembered” contains (Ugwu + did) showcase Ugwu’s nostalgic feeling manifested through the contrast between past and present Okeoma. In the clause “Ugwu wanted to hug him”, the Subject “Ugwu” and Finite “did” (in “wanted”) form (Ugwu + did), and “wanted” expresses a longing for lost intimacy in Ugwu’s heart. Lastly, Okeoma’s laughter brought back past social memories that made Ugwu reminisce their living room at Odim5 Street, Nsukka. All these reminiscences are the basis for a nostalgic mood. Chimamanda Adichie illustrates how the war has transformed individuals and ideals. Okeoma, a poet, has become a soldier, technically from intellectuals into instruments of war. Conversely, for excerpt 9, the clause is in interrogative mood. The speech function is a request. It carries emotional and interpersonal meanings that reflect melancholy and loss. The question “Can I have some of Kainene’s photographs?” contains the Subject “I” and Finite “can” form the Mood element (I + can), with Finite preceding the Subject, marking a yes/no interrogative which indicates Richard seeking permission to keep memories of Kainene. The question is filled with grief and emotional paralysis. Chimamanda through Richard’s speech reflects emotional emptiness following the disappearance of characters during the Biafran War. Likewise, in excerpt 10, the clause is interrogative. The Subject “we” and Finite “do” (realised in the negative form “don’t”) form the Mood element (we + do), with the WH-element “Why” marking it as a WH-interrogative. The clause is not only seeking information but is also emotionally charged, expressing nostalgia and a longing for reconnection. Olanna expresses yearning for the lost sisterly bond with Kainene. Chimamanda portrays nostalgia as an emotional negotiation of reconciliation and love in fractured human relationships.

Analysis and Discussion

Findings from this study reveal that mood in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Half of a Yellow Sun* is highly context based and functions as a key resource for enacting interpersonal meanings. In domestic settings, language functions as an instrument for shaping hierarchy, intellect, and identity negotiation. Odenigbo’s declarative assertion that his mother “does not know what she is doing” demonstrates the use of mood to encode emotional authority and dominance over Olanna positioning himself as a moral and intellectual superior. In contrast, Ugwu’s responses, often

realised through compliant declaratives and minimal interrogatives, reflect submission and gradual socialization into elite discourse. This aligns with Halliday's view that mood choices encode role relation, here marking unequal power distribution and class distinction within the household. Findings also reveal that within family interactions, mood operates as a tool for enacting social bonding, reprimand and familiarity. Exchanges among Olanna, Kainene, and Auntie Ifeke demonstrate how conversational questioning creates interpersonal closeness, guidance, and shared emotional space. Next, in intimate and emotional contexts, the finding shows that mood expresses emotional conviction, comfort and personal agency. Odenigbo's reassurance to Olanna, "You are safe now", illustrates the interpersonal function of declarative mood as an act of giving emotional support, reinforcing Halliday's notion that language enact social relationships, thereby restoring psychological stability and reaffirm trust. Similarly, Olanna's assertive declaratives signal independence and agency, demonstrating how mood choices can reflect shifts in interpersonal roles, particularly in the construction of female autonomy and self-definition.

Furthermore, in intimate interactions, mood expresses protective authority and emotional urgency rather than domination. Mohammed's imperative speeches convey protective authority and emotional urgency rather than domination, underscoring the context sensitive realization of interpersonal meanings. In contrast, in military and political contexts, mood becomes a vehicle of ideology, coercion, intimidation, and institutional authority. Interrogatives and imperatives are deployed to intimidate and enforce compliance, reflecting the asymmetrical power relations and aligning with Halliday's perspective of mood as a carrier of role relations. Finally, in wartime context, declaratives convey grief, fear, identity preservation and loss of agency illustrating how language reflects disrupted interpersonal relations under condition of trauma. Statements made Characters like Nnemeke's father reflect quiet sorrow and emotional paralysis amid war's devastation.

Conclusion

This research contributes to the growing field of literary linguistics by investigating how mood encodes interpersonal meanings in an African literary context. It depicts how Adichie uses subtle grammatical features to reflect psychological tension, power negotiations, and ideological conflict among characters in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. In addition, the study develops a replicable analytical framework for examining interpersonal meaning in postcolonial narratives, highlighting the role of language in shaping character relationships and ideological perspective. Hence, the research

contributes to existing knowledge by deepening the application of Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar to African literary texts through the analysis of mood operation in *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

References

- Adejare, R. A. (2014). The manifestation of mood and morality in texts. *English Linguistics Research*. Volume 3 (1) 18-27.
- Adichie, C. N. (2006). *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Kachifo Limited (Farafina).
- Akpome, A. (2013). Narrating a new nationalism: Rehistoricization and political apologia in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*. *English Academy Review*, 30 (1) 22-38. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10131752.2013.783387>
- Bamgbose, G. and Gabriel, T. (2017). A critical stylistic reading of Remi Raji's *A Harvest of Laughter*. *Ibadan Journal of Humanistic Studies* Vol. 7, 141-158.
- Bamgbose, G.A. and Ohwojevwe, E.G. (2018). Political realities in Akintunde Akinkunmi's *Best Served Cold*: an exercise in critical stylistic analysis. *UNIUYO Journal of Humanities (UUJH)* Vol. 22, (1). 101-113.
- Bamgbose, G. and Akhaiyea, P.O (2026). Moaning and murmuring: An exploration of sexual imagery in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*. *Veritas Journal of Humanities*. Vol 7 (1) 1-22.
- Eggins, S. (2004). *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics* (2nd ed.). Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Feghabo, C. (2022). Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* and the valorisation of womanhood. *International Journal of English and Literary Studies*, 3(2). 43-54.
- Greenbaum, S & Nelson G. (2002). *An Introduction to English Grammar*. Longman.
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (2014). *Halliday's Introduction to Functional Grammar* (4th ed.). Routledge.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1994). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (2nd ed.). Edward Arnold.
- Madu, B. N., Njoku, I. K., Udoeye, I., & Akabike, I. (2022). Transitivity and mood in Helon Habila's *Waiting for an Angel* and Ngózi Chuma-Udech's *Forlorn Fate*. *Integrity Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 3(2) 44-52, <https://doi.org/10.31248/IJAH2022.049>
- Nwabueze, O. I. A. (2018). Meaning modals: An inquiry into the semantic content of some English modals. *Ghana Journal of Linguistics*, 8 (1) 81-108. <https://doi.org/10.4314/gjl.v8i1.5>.
- Nweke, L. C. (2024). Interpersonal metafunctional analysis of marital conflictual discourse in Sofola's *The Sweet Trap* and Soyinka's *Trials of Brother Jero*. *European Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*, 12(1) 40-51. <https://doi.org/10.37745/ejells.2013/vol12n14051>
- Obasi, C. E., & Ikoro, O. S. (2022). *Politeness phenomenon in Adichie's Half of a Yellow Sun*. *International Journal of Arts, Languages, Linguistics and Literary Studies (JOLLS)*, 11(4) 1-13. <http://www.jolls.com.ng/v2/>
- Okafor, V., & Issife, G. (2017). Mood and modality in Buhari's inaugural speech. *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature*, Vol 6, 27-40.
- Olurotimi, T. S. (2022). Semiotics: A transdisciplinary quest for meaning. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation*, 5(8), 117–124. <https://doi.org/10.32996/ijllt.2022.5.8.14>

- Ordu, S., & Odukwu, B. (2022). Post-colonialism: Corruption and representation in Ngozi Adichie's Half of a Yellow Sun. *Journal of Languages, Linguistics and Literary Studies*, 2(2) 38-44.
<https://journals.jozacpublishers.com/jllls>
- Opara S. C. (2005) Mood Structures in Selected Clauses in Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen*. Obafemi Awolowo University Press Ltd.
- Osisanwo, W. (1999). *An Introductory Analytical Grammar of English: A Systemic Approach*. Femolus-Fetop Publishers.
- Palmer, F. R. (2001). *Mood and Modality* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Robert, E. (2020). Language use in selected newspaper headlines. *Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 9(1) 91-103.
- Timehin, S.O. (2024). Ethical themes in the Arabic poetry of Muslim scholars in Lagos State of Nigeria: A preliminary discourse in Nigeria. *Asante Journal of African Studies*. Vol 3 (2) 122-140.
- Uzomah, J. S. C. (2022). The folly and scourge of war in Chimamanda Adichie's Half of a Yellow Sun. *Albertine Journal of Philosophy*, 6. 72-82