



A Digital Analysis of Sociolectal Transmutations in Abi Dare's *The Girl with A Louding Voice*

Kofoworola A. Adedeji

Department of English/Centre for Digital Humanities (CEDHUL)
University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos State Nigeria

Abstract

Abi Dare's debut novel transcends the mimicry of human experiences which literary texts conventionally represent to a record of the multiplicity of linguistic typologies in the form of sociolectal forms along linguistic continuums of the crude or polished, simple or complex, local or internationally intelligible, teenage or middle-aged, and educated or uneducated language usages. This study explores these social and geo-space expressions of sociolinguistic variation from the theoretical paradigm of the variationist wave theory and within the analytical framework of two digital humanities tools and methodologies. Analysis of selected data highlights the protagonist's movement between lectal dimensions, signaling character and linguistic dynamism. In addition, the application of digital tools to the analysis of these lectal expressions appears to be more efficient than conventional textual analysis as this analytic mode amplifies the central thematic concern, establishes collocational patterns as a transcendental feature of the lects, affirms synonymous repetitions as a significant thematic reinforcer of the central theme and sub-themes while semantic extensions involving honorific and humilific titles and names are also validated as legitimate expressions of socio-culturally inspired interpretations within the Nigerian linguistic ecosystem.

Keywords: digital analysis, sociolects, textual analysis, language variation

1.0 Introduction

Literary texts are most often a record of human experience as they mimic the incidents and vagaries of life of a protagonist. Language with its multiplicity of typology is the agency of expression of these humanistic adventures. Whether it has features of the crude or polished, simple or complex, local or international intelligibility, teenage or middle-aged, educated or uneducated, language transcends the function of expression to also being a tool which authors define their characters and explore their themes. In this way, literary texts display the extensive variation which characterise language along the dimensions of gender/sex, age, level of education and geographical space. Among these sociolinguistic variables, the two which are highly correlative to the level of English proficiency in Nigeria are education and geo-space. The

interconnectedness of educational level and English proficiency levels in Nigeria has been underscored in multiple theoretical and empirical studies but one which seems to best represent the linguistic realities in Nigeria is the 4-level proficiency classification in which Variety I is a basilectal variety used by those Nigerians with only elementary school or no education at all and characterized by a high transfer-rate of features from the mother-tongue; Variety II used by Nigerians who have had at least primary school education and is characterized by some transfer features from the mother tongue; Variety III which is associated with university education and is recommended as the model for Nigerian standard English; and Variety IV is an acrolect which is equal to British English. Geo-space defines national varieties which are associated with the geographical spaces of nation states within the world Englishes with inner circle, outer circle and expanding circle models representing the variations and functions of English. Colonial relations between Britain and Nigeria have led to the co-existence of English in an extensive multilingual situation of over 500 indigenous languages, placing Nigeria within the outer circle model. Though continuously evolving, a distinct Nigerian-flavoured English which is marked with features highly correlated with educational level is the most common linguistic agency of Nigerian writers.

2.0 Interrogating Sociolects in Abi Dare's *The Girl with a Louding Voice*

Published in 2021, Dare's novel captures the Nigerian synchronic sociolinguistic variation situation through its characters and dialogue. Present in the novel across the dimensions of language study are grammatical/syntactic, lexical, phonological and semantic features of:

- i. all the lects – basilectal, mesolectal and acrolectal Nigerian English
- ii. Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE)
- iii. international and native Englishes (UK, France)
- iv. African Englishes (Ghanaian English, North African English)
- v. Nigerian indigenous languages

The writer skillfully synchronises the protagonist's personal growth from a victimized domestic help and underage wife through to educated and financially independent young woman with the divergent lects that are employed from the beginning of the novel through the middle to the end. Each phase of the "coming of age" is marked with a distinct variety as she strives to achieve her life ambition of "my mama say education will give me a voice. I want more than just a voice, Ms. Tia. I want a louding voice." With grammatical/syntactic, lexical, phonological and semantic choices characterized by features such as lexico-semantic coinages, NPE blends, uniquely Nigerian syntactic patterns, semantic shifts and extensions and deletion of consonant endings, Aduuni's growth aligns with the five typologies of language and dialect variation listed above

thereby creating a heterogenous but composite literary piece. While traditional or conventional textual analysis can show some of the connections and implication of this creative linguistic heterogeneity, a digital analysis will reveal the significance of the varieties of languages and dialects of languages in the literary text, thereby demonstrating the associations between sociolinguistic variation and the central theme of 'coming of age'.

1.2 Digital Humanities Tools and Methods: A More Productive Means of Textual Analysis

Digital Humanities (DH) is an interdisciplinary field that merges the traditional disciplines of the humanities with computational methods and digital technologies. According to Luhmann and Burghardt (2021) the definition of digital humanities has been debated for decades, and there is no scholarly consensus. However, it is defined as an umbrella term that, depending on who you are talking to, covers a huge territory – everything from applied text analysis and corpus stylistics to the more esoteric and theoretical realms of video game criticism. It is further expounded that DH is the utilization of computers and computational tools for the exploration, analysis and production of humanistic knowledge; while Ope-Davies, (2021) describes it as a combination of the digital and humanities, the intersection of computing, research, and teaching in the fields of the humanities. DH is multidisciplinary and encompasses activities within the fields of computing and the humanities.

The emergence of Digital Humanities is traceable to Father Roberto Busa, an Italian Jesuit priest who created a computer index of the works of Thomas Aquinas in the late 1940s. This project is considered one of the first instances of humanities computing. Between the 1960s and 1980s, the use of computers in humanities research expanded, particularly in textual analysis and linguistic studies. It expanded even more in the 1990s with the advent of the internet and the World Wide Web when digital archives and online databases became more prevalent, and the humanities community began to explore new possibilities for research and collaboration. In the 2000s, the term "Digital Humanities" completely replaced "Humanities Computing," as it became more widely adopted and the development of new digital tools and methodologies became accelerated.

Traditional approaches of text analyses and linguistic analyses still remain valid, crucial and applicable in research, but digital technologies are superior to conventional approaches and methodologies because of the effectiveness and efficiency of digital tools and methodologies. Because they are reliant on algorithms and statistical models, subjective bias is reduced while the utilization of computational methods has three benefits: (i) it ensures that vast amounts of text data and corpora can be quickly processed; (ii) analyses can be consistently replicated; and (iii) results are easily verifiable.

2.0 Related Literature

Despite its status as a relatively recent publication, Dare's novel has enjoyed critical attention, the latest of which is possibly Arshad and Salahuddin's (2024)

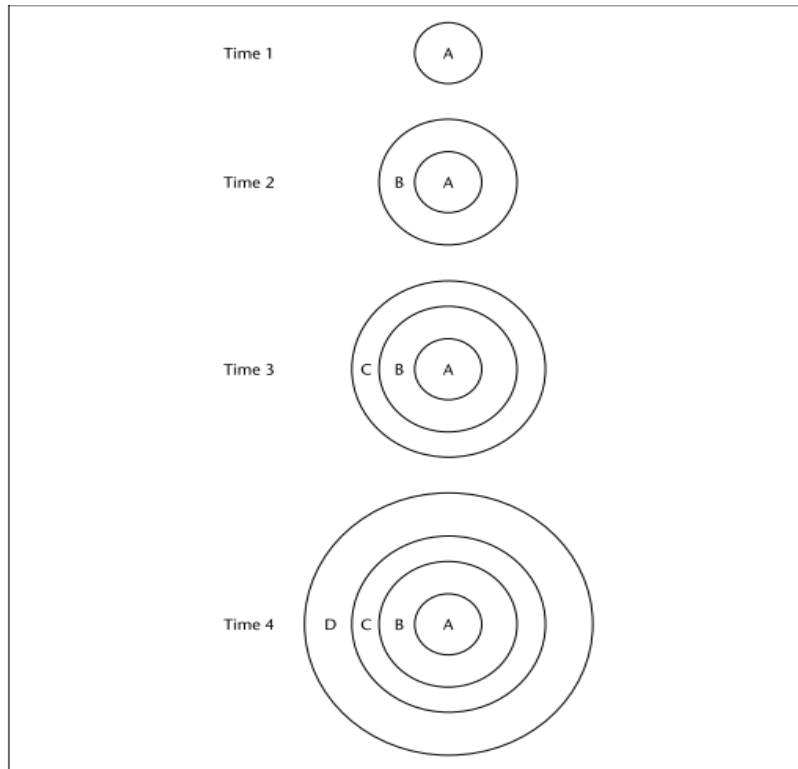
investigation of the representations gender in the novel. Based on the traumatic incidents and obstacles encountered by the protagonist within the Nigerian patriarchal context, the study follows her journey towards the attainment of autonomous social status from the literary theoretical framework of the theory of feminine consciousness. The major conclusion is that Dare demonstrates the capability of subjugated females to triumph over patriarchal dominance in its many forms including sexual harassment, rape, female child marriage and domestic abuse and it “illustrates how the normalization of the hardships faced by female characters in the novel can foster a sense of assurance in young women ... resulting in a reduced probability of encountering instances of sexual harassment and violence” (2024:288). Also informed by a literary perspective is Adewuyi and Oyediji’s (2022) interrogation of gender inequalities and its multiple dimensions in *The Girl with a Louding Voice*. The study is a comparative one which looks at the same theme in another work of fiction and in the same vein is informed by a feminist perspective, but it focuses on the discourses of gender stratification and how female writers unconsciously cooperate with their male oppressors to perpetuate the institution of patriarchy in the society. Others such as Saputri and Harianto (2020), Indriati (2022), Ardiasyah and Yudi (2022), Ashari (2022) have explored the same theme of gender inequity from literary and even psychological perspectives. However, it seems that the only research which has a language/linguistics viewpoint is Noviana (2022) which examines the function and categories of phatic language used in the novel. Twelve discrete functions were identified including initiating dialogue, maintaining conversational flow and exercising politeness. Exploring Dare’s writing through digital tools and methodologies is also a gap in the existing literature which this study will fill.

Theoretical Model and Analytical Framework

3.1 The Wave Model

Within the extensive field of variationist sociolinguistics is the wave model which was first suggested by Bailey et al. (1993) as an appropriate representation of spatial diffusion of language features which leads to the development of sociolects. Sometimes referred to as “contagion diffusion”, it suggests that features of a language, over time, radiate out from a central focal area from where it physically reaches locations that are nearby before it gets to those locations that are farther away. English features spread from native or mother tongue geographical environments to non-native second language geographical locations in a wave-like manner, leading to the development of varieties known as sociolects. The diagram below is a representation of the wave model with an iconic representation of diffusion that resembles ripples created by raindrops falling in a puddle of water.

Figure I: The Wave Model of Language Variation



Note: ABCD represent different regional groups
Adapted from Bailey et al. (1993)

Interaction between languages within former colonial relationships introduces further complexities into the wave model of language variation. Kachru's concentric circles typology of the spread of English provides an explanation for the variety of English in outer cycle countries such as Nigeria where English co-exists with indigenous languages, NPE as well as foreign languages. Britain (2004)¹ reiterates that "while distance plays some role, interaction between ... in urban societies is likely to be greater, and therefore a more frequent and effective conduit for accommodation and transmission of innovations." (2004:623)

3.2 Analytical Framework: Digital Humanities tools

The framework for the analysis of the literary text is digital or computational. Voyant and AntConc are the two digital tools employed for the analysis of the text.

3.2.1 Voyant

This is a web-based application that offers a suite of text analysis tools designed for linguistic analysis. It allows users to upload a text and interact with it in various ways, generating visualizations and quantitative data about word usage, frequency and patterns in the text. The techniques available within Voyant include word frequency analysis, word clouds, and trends. Word frequency analysis identifies the most frequently occurring words in the text and highlights the centrality of certain lexical items. Word clouds create a visual representation of word frequency where the size of each word corresponds to how often it appears in the text, while the trend tool is used to visualise how the frequency of specific terms cuts across different parts of the text.

3.2.2 AntConc

AntConc is a desktop-based concordance and text analysis software widely used in corpus linguistics. It provides tools for detailed examination of text, such as searching for specific words, analysing their surrounding context (concordance), and examining word collocations and frequency patterns. The technique for AntConc includes: key word in context (KWIC) tool, collocation and N-Gram. KWIC tool is used to analyse how specific words are used within the text and provides a list of occurrences of a selected word. Collocation analysis is used to identify words that commonly appear together in the text, revealing patterns that might suggest particular associations or meanings. N-Gram is used to identify occurring sequences of words; 'N' represents the number of words in the sequences.

4.0 Methodology

A combinatory-type methodology of quantitative and qualitative analysis is the means applied in this study. The qualitative analysis involves close reading of the text followed by manual text extraction, while the quantitative investigation is done with the Voyant and AntConc tools for text extraction and deeper level analysis. Excerpts were selected along the following dimensions of language variation.

- i. Features of NE lexical forms
- ii. NE lexical forms
- iii. NE grammatical and syntactic structures
- iv. NE semantic patterns
- v. NE phonological forms
- vi. Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) lexical forms
- vii. International Englishes forms and expressions

5.0 Data Presentation

Excerpts from the text are selected to trace Adunni's English proficiency progression from one lect to another – basilectal grammatical, lexical, phonetic/phonological and semantic features – to a mesolectal degree of proficiency. Elements of non-standard English and NPE at the initial chapters are pervasive, revealing limited formal education.

Excerpt 1 (Page 3)

Papa has this way of looking me one kind. As if he wants to be flogging me for no reason, as if I am carrying shit inside my cheeks and when I open mouth to talk, the whole place be smelling of it.

Excerpt 2 (Page 7)

My head been stoning my mind with many questions since this morning, questions that are not having answers. What is it meaning, to be the wife of a man with two wives and four childrens? What is making Morufu to want another wife on top the already two? And Papa, why is he wanting to sell me to a old man with no any thinking of how I am feeling? Why didn't he keep the promise he made to Mama before she dead? (pg.7)

Excerpt 3 (Page 7)

When Mama was dead, a light off itself inside of me. (pg. 7)

Excerpt 4 (Page 8)

Before that devil sickness, Mama was always keeping busy. Always doing the -this and the- that for the everybody in the village.

Excerpt 5 (Page 8)

Papa is forgetting all the things he make promise to Mama. I am marrying Morufu because Papa is needing money for food and community rent and nonsense. (pg. 9)

Excerpt 6 (Page 8)

I didn't sleep all night with all the sorrowing and memorying. (pg. 10)

Excerpt 7 (Page 45)

You are now complete woman. (pg. 45)

Excerpt 8 (Page 27)

The well, it was belonging to my grandfather-father. But now, the well don carry bad omen. It don turn something else entirely. (pg.27)

Excerpt 9 (Page 75)

He mad? Why is he calling her aya mi, my wife?...‘She is my iya ile’. I say. ‘I marry Morufu after her’.

Excerpt 10 (Page 100)

‘Ma binu’, Iya is saying. ‘Don’t be angry. I sell the chair last week. What happen to you?’

Excerpt 11 (Page 100)

By seven-thirty, I am finishing all my housework.’ She wide her eyes. ‘You work from what time till seven?’ ‘I am waking up around four-thirty, five, in the morning,’ I say. ‘I am doing my work, cleaning. Sweeping, washing, everything, till seven, seven-thirty. But if Big Madam is in the house, then I am working till sometimes eleven or twelve in the midnight.’ (pg. 180)

Figure 2: Basilectal NE features in *The Girl with a Louding Voice*

NE basilectal feature	Excerpts
Subject-verb agreement error: The verb does not agree with the subject of the sentence	<i>Papa have a way of looking me one kind</i> <i>The cushion have spoil because our last born, Kayus, he have done too many piss inside it.</i> <i>Khadija have dead. And Bamidele have not come back.</i>
The wrong use of articles: Another error in the text is the unconventional use of articles in the text. Use of the wrong article, omission of article and wrong insertion of article.	<i>What is making Morufu to want another wife on top the already two? And Papa, why is he wanting to sell me to a old man with no any thinking of how I am feeling?</i> <i>Before that devil sickness, Mama was always keeping busy. Always doing the-this and the-that for the everybody in the village.</i> <i>You are now complete woman.</i>
Wrong use of phrasal verbs and dropping of lexical verbs.	<i>When Mama was dead, a light off itself inside of me.</i>

<p>Overuse of the continuous tense form: This error is a common one in the text, the protagonist tends to overuse the continuous tense forms in contexts where the context suggests habitual action, or another tense form.</p>	<p><i>'By seven-thirty, I am finishing all my housework.' She wide her eyes. 'You work from what time till seven?' 'I am waking up around four-thirty, five, in the morning,' I say. 'I am doing my work, cleaning. Sweeping, washing, everything, till seven, seven-thirty. But if Big Madam is in the house, then I am working till sometimes eleven or twelve in the midnight.'</i></p>
<p>Pronunciation and spelling: The author uses the wrong spellings to indicate wrong pronunciations in the dialogues. This is a deliberate choice to show basilectal phonetic/phonological errors to enhance the characterization.</p>	<p><i>'Brazes? That's what you call it?' Yes, braces,' she say. 'Madam Tee-ya?' 'Ms. Tia,' she say. 'Cham-pag-nay' 'Community rent is thirty thousan' naira,' Papa say. My wedding be like a movie inside the tee-vee. 'Baffroom?' 'After sickness have cut my father's leg, you know diabetis sickness? Is like nothing I ever see. Cars with shape like aeloplane and helikopta, like boat and bucket.</i></p>
<p>Faulty analogy involves drawing incorrect parallels between grammatical structures, leading to errors in usage and understanding. Grammatical rules and patterns of Yoruba, an indigenous language was imposed on English phrases and sentences based on an assumption that both languages have parallel syntactic rules and patterns. grammatically similar. They include incorrect pluralization analogy which includes the addition of the plural morpheme 's' to all nouns, some of which are irregular nouns.</p>	<p><i>Papa is forgetting all the things he make promise to Mama. I am marrying Morufu because Papa is needing money for food and community rent and nonsense. I didn't sleep all night with all the sorrowing and memorying. 'feets' (pg. 7), 'small childrens' (pg.17), 'wives' (pg. 5). 'mens' (pg. 6), 'teethsbrush' (pg. 142).</i></p>

Incorrect verb form: This is the title of the text and it involves the use of a noun phrase with a prepositional phrase. Here, the word 'louding' has been verbalized. 'Loud' is an adjective that describes a quality of sound volume.	<i>The girl with the <u>louding</u> voice</i>
---	---

5.1 Discussions of Excerpts 1 – 11 and Figures 2 and 3

A: Transition from basilectal to mesolectal English: (i) indicates character and linguistic dynamism; (ii) denotes thematic amplification

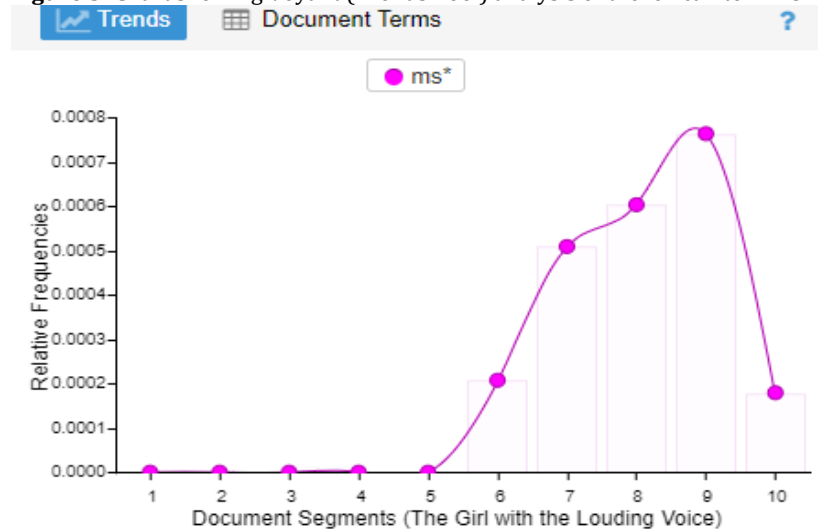
Subject-verb agreement errors, omission of the definite article, insertion of the definite article, misuse of phrasal and lexical verb, misuse of the continuous tense, wrong spellings indicative of wrong pronunciations, several forms of faulty analogies and wrong verb forms are basilectal features which are pervasive in Adunni's language in the initial chapters of the text. However, in the latter chapters, after exposure to English through Ms. Tia's classes, Adunni's English significantly improves, coinciding with the character transition that she undergoes. Her 'coming of age' includes multiple shifts in status: from physically and psychologically abused domestic help to independent young woman; from child-wife to emancipated single woman; from timid to outspoken; and from hopelessness to a future full of prospects.

Character dynamism is an aesthetic device employed by authors to portray observable personality change in a character. It is skillfully done in the text to portray Adunni as an interesting, re-formulated character that undergoes intellectual and moral development, a sharp contrast to the 14-year-old Adunni at the beginning of the story. This change in character is germane to the central focus of the 'coming of age' theme of the story in which Dare utilizes transition from basilectal to mesolectal language use to signal character growth and dynamism.

The movement between levels also provides strong support for the central theme of "coming of age." The protagonist's departure from the use of a socially-stigmatised sociolect, adoption of the more socially acceptable mesolect indicates her membership of an elitist group of Nigerians who use a national and internationally acceptable and intelligible variety of English, and are seen as socially mobile having acquired the instrumental values of proficiency in the English language. The economic advantages of having average-level skills in an official language with many functional domains include access to corporate and white-collar jobs as well as opportunities for social interactions with average or even high networth individuals in an acceptable form of social climbing. These economic prospects are the motivation that Adunni had for learning English as her mother had said before she died that education was the gateway to economic prosperity. However, instead of sponsoring her education to fulfill his

obligations as a father and even more importantly to honour Adunni's mother's wishes, her father chooses to marry her off for pecuniary gains, "Papa is forgetting all the things he make promise to Mama. I am marrying Morufu because Papa is needing money for food and community rent and nonsense. This strong motivation aligns with the theme of overcoming adversity.

Figure 3: Chart showing Voyant (Trends Tool) analysis of the lexical item 'Ms'



Source: Imported from Voyant (Trends tool)

This visualisation highlights the frequency of 'Ms. Tia' in the text. The peak of the graph indicates her meetings with Adunni and this is the point where Adunni's spoken English began to take a new turn in the novel. A strong correlation exists between Ms. Tia's meeting with Adunni and the improvement in Adunni's language use. This graph shows the link, as this marks the transition from basilectal to mesolectal English.

B. Nigerianisms as a Transcendental Feature of Lects

The pervasiveness of unique NE lexis in all the lectal forms is an indication of the local and national acceptance of Nigerianisms. Characters of both high and low social standing, elementary/no education and tertiary level education, and different language backgrounds used these coinages in their interactions.

Figure 4: Chart showing NE Lexical Items and Sociocultural References

Lexical item	NE Socio-cultural reference
<i>Trouser-leg</i> (page 22)	The leg of a pair of trousers.
<i>Eyepencil</i> (page 25)	A cosmetic tool used to define and shape the eyebrows.

<i>Fire-cracker bitters</i> (page 43)	This is an aphrodisiac used to increase sex drive
<i>Bride price</i> (page 29)	The traditional practice of paying price or offering gifts to the bride's family.
<i>Monthly visitor</i> (page 52)	A term for monthly menstrual cycle
<i>Born-boy</i> (page 11)	The name of a person
<i>The Collins</i> (page 153)	The dictionary Adunni uses to learn English words
<i>NairaBet</i> (page 154)	A Nigerian sports-betting platform
<i>Face-me-I-face-you house</i> (pg. 97)	A particular type of housing for low-income earners

The lexical items highlight the distinctiveness of Nigerian English as shaped by local culture, societal norms, and multilingual influences. Many of these expressions are coined and adapted from indigenous languages, reflecting the interaction between English and the Nigerian sociocultural environment. Terms like "trouser-leg", "eyespencil", "bride price" are not just linguistic innovations but also convey cultural nuances that may not be immediately understood by non-Nigerian audiences without contextual knowledge. This blending of languages showcases the creative and pragmatic ways Nigerians use English to reflect their realities, making it a truly localized variety of language.

The presence of both traditional and modern terms, such as "monthly visitor" and "NairaBet" demonstrates the dynamic nature of Nigerian English, which accommodates both age-old customs and contemporary practices. Through these unique lexical items, *The Girl with the Louding Voice* provides readers with a glimpse into Nigerian life, emphasizing how language functions as a vehicle for expressing identity, values, and socio-economic realities.

Payment of bride price is another traditional cultural practice that is given focal prominence in the text. The AntConc visualisation below highlights the multiple representations of the payment of bride price in the text. This traditional marriage practice symbolizes different things to the protagonist, her father, and her husband with these different representations reflected in the collocations suggested by Antcon as money, marriage, and education.

Adunni: The bride price symbolizes her commodification and an impediment to her educational aspirations. Adunni's perception of bride price is that it is a transactional process that is imposed on her by her father, reducing her to a commodity. Line 11 of the AntConc visualisation shows her shock on discovering that she is being forced into marriage in order that he may use the bride price to pay off his debts. The bride price is also a barrier to her educational goals aspirations as suggested in line 7 of the AntConc analysis.

Adunni's father: He views the bride price through the lens of an economic transaction. The AntConc visualisation shows collocations including poverty, debts and obligation in his conversations on the payment of the bride price. Marrying off his daughter is a way of alleviating his financial struggles.

Adunni's husband: The bride price is not merely a cultural practice but a means to exercise dominance and obtain more male children. He used the bride price to lure Adunni's father. Line 3 shows that he realizes the exploitative nature of this cultural practice as he plans to also profit from his daughters' marriages by extracting money from their future husbands.

Figure 5 AntConc tool highlighting the use of 'bride price' in different contexts

The screenshot shows the AntConc tool interface with the search term 'bride price' entered. The results are displayed in a table with columns for File, Left Context, Hit, and Right Context. The search results are as follows:

File	Left Context	Hit	Right Context
1 _OceanofPDF.c...	girls will marry and the mama and papa will collect	bride- price and use to eat, but the childrens don'	
2 _OceanofPDF.c...	from that Morufu. I will pay back all his foolish	bride- price and we will build our own house and	
3 _OceanofPDF.c...	money to send me for training. He will use my	bride- price to fix up the other taxi-car." She	
4 _OceanofPDF.c...	have already find Kike a husband. I will use her	bride- price to repair my car window, maybe buy more	
5 _OceanofPDF.c...	and not mistaking me in his answer. "Papa, is this	bride- price for me or for another person?" And my	
6 _OceanofPDF.c...	opening wide of my mouth, as he is saying: "The	bride- price is for you, Adunni. You will be marrying	
7 _OceanofPDF.c...	football. He don't ever worry about no marriage or	bride- price money. He don't even worry about schooling	
8 _OceanofPDF.c...	now he was paying thousands and thousands of naira for	bride- price until we pass the junction beside Ikati bakery,	
9 _OceanofPDF.c...	inside it. A breeze is blowing my face, and another	bride- a happy bride, will be full of smiles now,	
10 _OceanofPDF.c...	ten years. He tell me yesterday that he collect my	bride- price. Tomorrow, I go to my husband's house." "	
11 _OceanofPDF.c...	among your owo-ori." "My owo-ori? You mean my	bride- price?" My heart is starting to break because I	

Source: Imported from AntConc

C. Word Frequency as Thematic Enhancer

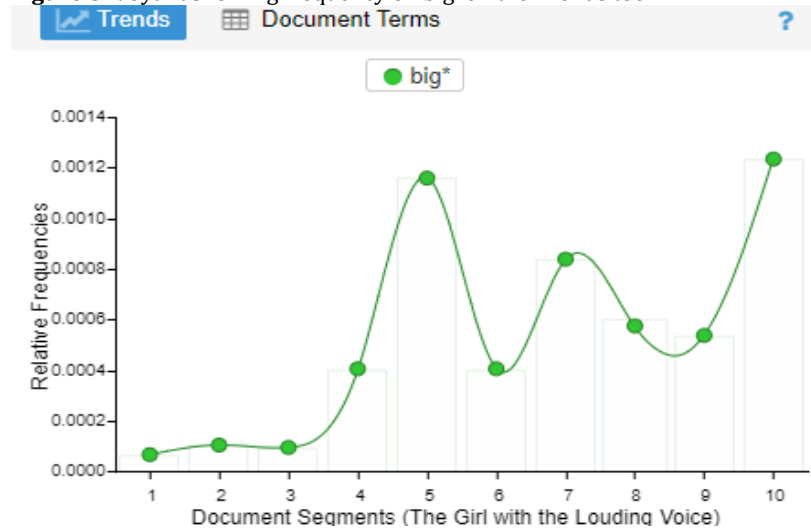
High frequency of 'say' has the effect of reinforcing the sub-theme of vocality as it reflects Adunni's focus on education as an enabler of increasing reach, power and influence. Several high frequent words were exported into Voyant to determine the most recurrent lexical item in the text. The word 'say' emerged as the most frequent with further analysis of both synonyms and antonyms

The high frequency of “say” which is 1137 times compared to antonyms such as ‘quiet’ which occurs 24 times and ‘hush’ which has zero frequency highlights the insistence of the protagonist towards achieving emancipation through speaking up against oppression.

D. Semantic Extensions for Foregrounding Nigerian Socio-Cultural Norms

Respect to elders and those in authority through the use of honorifics and humilifics is a ubiquitous cultural norm within Nigerian ethnic groups. Extension of meanings of standard English lexical items to show or confer honour is prominently demonstrated in the text through the term ‘big’. Partial prefixation of ‘madam’ and ‘daddy’ with ‘big’ yielding ‘big mummy’ and ‘big daddy’ makes this semantically extended coinage a device for highlighting the high priority given to respect in Nigerian and African sociocultural communities. Such coinages are frequently used to address individuals to avoid the use of their given names as addressing them with their given names or without honorifics and humilifics is deemed to be disrespectful. Semantic extensions in *The Girl with the Louding Voice* reflect how words evolve to convey meanings which align with the Nigerian cultural context. These terms extend beyond their literal meanings to convey authority, power and influence. ‘Big Madam’ reflects more than the physical stature of the referee, symbolizing a domineering presence and control over Adunni’s life, while ‘Big Daddy’ is not just a familial term but it connotes patriarchal dominance and power within the household. Through these expressions, Dare captures how standard English words have acquired new meanings in non-native speaker settings. The visualisation of ‘big’ shows the spike when partially prefixed to *mummy* or *daddy*, conveying importance, seniority, or high social status to the referents.

Figure 8: Voyant showing frequency of ‘big’ on the Trends tool



Source: Imported from the Voyant tool Trends

Conclusion

While conventional analysis has demonstrated their functional relevance within the field of textual analysis, this research reiterates the efficiency of digital tools and methodologies as a more expedient means of research. Voyant's advanced concordance analysis tracked key words and their contextual references and implications, highlighting the protagonist's transition from basilectal to mesolectal English and indicating character and linguistic dynamism as well as amplifying the central theme of the text. The AntConc tool identified collocational patterns and significant phrasal combinations, thus revealing that Nigerianisms are a transcendental feature of the texts and also contributing to the enhancement of the central theme of the text. Voyant's extensive frequency analysis affirms synonymous repetitions as a significant thematic reinforcer of the sub-theme of vocality in the text, thereby highlighting Adunni's focus on education as an amplifier of power and influence. The Trends tool identification of semantic extensions involving honorific and humilific titles and names validated socio-culturally inspired meaning interpretations as a legitimate expression of respect within the Nigerian socio-cultural ecosystem.

WORKS CITED

- Adeyuyi, Roseline, and Oyedeji, Wale. "Narratives of Stratification: Complications of Girl Child in Lola Akande's What it Takes and Abi Dare's The Girl with the Louding Voice". *International Journal of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences (IJAHSS)*, vol. 3, no. 7, 2022, pp. 40-49.
- Ardiasyah, Muhammad Yudi. "The Main Character's Oppression in Abi Dare's The Girl with the Louding Voice". *LILICS: Journal of Literature, Linguistics, and Cultural studies*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2022, pp. 289-304.
- Arshad, Fatima. & Salahuddin Ambreen. "The Development of Female Consciousness in The Girl with the Louding Voice". *Tanzur*, vol. 5, no. 3, 2024, pp. 287-304.
- Ashari, Soffi Nurafni. *An Analysis on The Needs of Adunni in The Girl with The Louding Voice*. UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, 2022.
- Bailey, Guy, Wike Tom. Tillery Jan. & Sand, Lori. "Some Patterns of Linguistic Diffusion". *Language Variation and Change*, vol. 5, 1993, pp. 359-90.
- Britain, David. "Space and Spatial Diffusion". *The Handbook of Language Variation and Change*, edited by J. K. Chambers, P. Trudgill, and N. Schilling-Estes, Blackwell, 2004, pp. 603-637.
- Dare, Abimbola. *The Girl with the Louding Voice*. Dutton, 2021.
- Dehghani, Morteza, Boghrati Reihane, Man Kingson, Hoover Joe, Gimbel Sarah., Vaswani Ashish. Zevin Jason, Immordino-Yang Helen, Andrew Gordon, Damasio Antonio, & Kaplan Jonas. "Decoding the Neural Representation of Story

Meanings Across Languages". *Human Brain Mapping*, vol. 38, no. 12, 2017, pp. 6096-6106.

Indriati, Dewi. "The Struggle of Women in a Patriarchal Society: Gender-based Subordination in Abi Dare's *The Girl with the Louding Voice*". *Proceedings of the International Conference on Gender Studies*, vol. 19, no. 2, 2022, pp. 205-220.

Luhmann, Jan and Burghardt, Manuel. *Digital Humanities – "A Discipline in its own Right? An Analysis of the Role and Position of Digital Humanities in the Academic Landscape"*. *Journal of the Association of Information Science and Technology*, 73 (1), 2021, pp. 148-171

Noviana, Annisa Zhafira. (2022). *The Function and Categories of Phatic Language in a Conversation Between Characters in The Girl with the Louding Voice*. Skripsi Thesis, 2022.

Ope-Davies, Tunde. "Digital humanities and The Future of Scholarship in The HumanSciences: Reframing The Discourse of its Relevance". *Critical Discourse Analysis and the Linguistics of Social Media Interaction*, 2021, pp. 13-36.

Róbert, Peter. *What is Digital Humanities*. University of Szeged, 2022.