

Ideological Representation of Unity and Peace through Contrast: A Critical Stylistic Analysis of Ambanasom's *Son of the Native Soil*

Evangeline Agwa Fomukong Seino
The University of Bamenda, Cameroon
Email: seinoeva2014@yahoo.com

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Abstract

Critical Stylistics is interested in uncovering and revealing hidden ideologies in texts and discourses. It analyses power relationships in society representing reality, which is based on the fact that there is a level at which texts organise the world we experience and that this is demonstrable in the words and structures of the texts themselves. Writers have different ways to portray power relations in society and this is exactly what Ambanasom does in *Son of the Native Soil*. This study examines the following questions; how does Ambanasom represent unity; what discursive choices does Ambanasom use to bring out his ideology and how does the story represent the Ngie society? In *Son of the Native Soil*, Shadrach A. Ambanasom portrays a power tussle in the Ngie clan contrasting the good and the bad. He contrasts through rhetorical questions, comparison, discourses, pre-modifiers and proverbs. This analysis assumes that the creation and interpretation of texts is ideological and that each text presents the world in a particular way. It also asserts that in fiction, texts can help expose society's dominant ideologies and allow readers to see them in operation.

Keywords: CS, CDA, Ideology, Discourse, Unity, Contrast

1. Introduction

Critical stylistics is concerned with bringing together the main general functions that a text has in representing reality, which is based on the fact that there is a level at which texts organise the world we experience and that this is demonstrable in the words and structures of the texts themselves. Critical stylistic analysis reveals ideologies and power relations in discourse. It argues that all texts are ideologically based, whether the ideologies are part of a conscious or unconscious process. It is interested in uncovering and revealing hidden ideologies in texts and discourses. Critical Stylistic analysis examines power relationships as expressed through practices in society. Writers have different ways to portray these power relations in society. In *Son of the Native Soil*, Shadrach Ateke Ambanasom portrays power tussle using contrast as a rhetorical device. Fomukong (2016) argues that contrast is identified with the concept of antonymy and opposition. Contrast, as the opposite of something, is a state of being different from another. In literaryterms.net/contrast/, it means difference especially what is noticeable. It usually shows up in pairs, for example heroes and villains. Literaryterms.net goes on to give types of contrasts that are visual contrast, social/cultural contrast, personal contrast and emotional contrast. In contrast, imagine two people with different skills, habits, or personalities. One personality can be messy while the other is clean. In twinkl.com.au, contrast is a rhetorical device used by a writer to emphasise the difference between two people, places or things. The argument is that contrast underlines ideas and writers use it to strengthen their argument. Contrast can be used in writing in many different ways such as in words,

phrases, clauses and sentences. Fomukong (2021, p.27) opines that adjectives and adverbs compare one person or thing with another to justify the extent of a particular quality. Nordquist (2020) argues that contrast is a rhetorical strategy and method of organisation in which a writer identifies the differences between two people, places, ideas or things. He goes on to assert that in paragraphs and essays, contrast is generally considered an aspect of comparison. He identifies words and phrases that signal contrast which include but, however, yet, in contrast, instead, unlike, nevertheless and on the contrary.

This analysis assumes that the creation and interpretation of texts are ideological and that each text presents the world in a particular way. It also asserts that in fiction, texts can help expose society's dominant ideologies and allow readers to see them in operation. This is exactly what Ambanasom does in *Son of the Native Soil*. This study examines how Ambanasom represents unity; what discursive choices he uses to expose his ideology and how the story represents the Ngie society.

2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is Jeffries' Critical Stylistic model, with categories that portray how people present the world through language and Teun Van Dijk's Discourse Structure model. This study makes use of contrast, naming and describing, and negation. The analysis examines the discourse linguistic strategy used by Ambanasom to present his ideology of unity. In the model, the conceptual part refers to the way the linguistic tools try to capture what the text is doing conceptually in presenting the world while the textual part refers to the way these resources are used to construct the conceptual meaning.

Textual Conceptual Functions (Linguistic toolbox) is divided into four:

1. How language works; Structures of language, Functions of language, Speaker identity, context of situation
2. How people present the world through language; collocation, equating and contrasting, hypothesising, implying and assuming, listing, metaphor and simile, naming and describing, negation, presenting speech and thought, prioritising, representing time, space and society
3. How people interact; Face, participation frameworks and production formats, politeness, speech acts
4. How language is studied; conversational analysis, corpus linguistics, Critical Discourse Analysis.

It provides a clear framework with text analytic tools that enable analysts to find out what the text is doing conceptually and the way readers perceive the world presented in the text. The tools of how people present the world through language and the focus will be on Naming and Describing, Equating and Contrasting, and Negation to portray how Ambanasom uses contrast to propagate his ideology of unity. Another theory used as a basis of this work is Teun Van Dijk's Discourse Structure Model, which consists of macrostructure, superstructure and microstructure (Widodo and Aini, 2018). The macrostructure is the global meaning of the text that can be analysed by seeing the theme as a representation of the main idea of the text. It is the combination of the text with the surrounding social conditions to give a coherent theme to the text. The superstructure is schematic. This structure constitutes the framework of the text presenting the coherent form of the text, from the introduction to the conclusion, creating interest in the reader. The microstructure examines the textual elements including the semantics, which analyses the meaning of clauses, sentences and paragraphs, syntactic that includes words, pronouns, prepositions and conjunctions, and the stylistic elements which include word choice, figure of speech, and other linguistic aspects, that is how the topic of the text unfolds.

2.1. Equating and Contrasting

Language users' perception of the world reflected in their use of language provides users with resources in words and grammar, which gives an array of choices to represent the world with what they see as equivalent, and what things, are contrasting. One of the grammatical ways in which language represents the world through equivalence is synonyms, and through contrast is antonyms. In English, there might be no true synonyms because there is a reason for the existence of a word. However, there are words that can be used to refer to the same things. Equating can also be expressed in ways other than synonyms. These ways are apposition, the use of the copular verb 'to be' and parallel structures. Jeffries (2010, pp. 56-57) discusses Intensive relational equivalence (X is Y, X seems Y, X appears Y...), Appositional equivalence and metaphorical equivalence. Contrast on its part is a concept of opposition. These opposition categories are realised through syntactic structures. These syntactic triggers as given by Jeffries include: negated opposition, x not y; transitional opposition, Turn X into Y; Comparative opposition, more X than Y; Replacive opposition, X instead of Y; Concessive opposition, Despite X, Y; Explicit opposition, X by contrast with Y; Parallelis, He liked X, She likes Y; Contrastives, X but Y. This study will focus only on contrast.

2.2. Naming and Describing

Linguistic Toolbox argues that naming and describing looks at ways in which the speakers and writers refer to particular referents, which can be concrete (cats, houses) or abstract concepts (remorse, linguistics, conflict). The choices are of considerable significance, as they can reveal the prejudices of a speaker/writer, and colour the hearer/reader's view of the people or things being referred to. The grammatical triggers to this effect can be nouns, noun phrases, pre-modifiers (adjectives) or post-modifiers (relative clauses). According to Jeffries (2010, p. 17), naming and describing explore the various ways in which English texts could be said to 'name' the world. These are found in a noun chosen out of available alternatives, other information included within the boundaries of the Noun Phrase and the way in which verbs may be converted into nouns through nominalisations with certain ideological consequences.

2.3. Negating

Jeffries (2010, p.108) argues that negating is used as a generic term to refer to a conceptual practice rather broader than the simple negating of a verb. It is more of a grammatical phenomenon in the addition of a negative particle to the verb phrase, which is an auxiliary or if there are no auxiliaries, then it will be the 'dummy' auxiliary verb, do. She goes on to say in addition to the negative particle, the following can be used to determine negation: Pronoun: none, no one, nobody, nothing; Nouns: lack, absence, death, scarcity; Verb: fail, omit, refuse; Adjective: absent, scarce; adverbs: seldom, rarely; and Morphological: in- (incomplete inflexible), anti-depressant asocial, un (uncompromising, undecided, unfinished). In analysing negation, the pragmatic context of negation is. This study focuses on naming and describing, equation and contrast, and negation and face-threatening acts.

3. Discussion of Rhetorical Devices

This section of the study examines the textual aspects Ambanasom uses to unveil his ideology of unity in Dudum. The devices that show contrast as a major means of fighting disunity are rhetorical questions, discourses, naming, pre-modifies and proverbs.

3.1. Rhetorical Questions in Discourse of Contrast

Rhetorical questions do not elicit a response but rather function to raise an argument or make a point. This section examines Ambanasom's use of contrast in rhetorical questions as a call for unity. Ambanasom uses contrast to portray the greed of the people of Akan and the gentle nature of the people of Anjong. The novel opens with Chief Akaya of Anjong, wondering about the war attitudes of the Akan people. Akaya agrees there is disagreement on the land and both villages are farming their parts, so why should Chief Umeitoh of Akan, start trouble?

How can Umeitoh suddenly stand up and lay claim to the entire area? Have our two villages not been farming Ukob for a long time now? Are we not all offsprings of Ngiekum? Yes, we disagreed over the land, but have we not tried to patch up differences like brothers? Was it not six years ago that the elders of both villages agreed to avoid useless quarrels by letting each village control the section of the controversial plot nearest to its own land? What then is this new talk that I hear about land? (Ambanasom,2009:13)

Ambanasom uses rhetorical questions to raise discourse on the disunity that exists amongst the Dudum people. These rhetorical questions are uttered by Chief Akaya so as to trigger empathy from the audience to side with him against Akan, the defaulter. The questions already make a point in the mind of the reader, carrying on with searching for reasons for Akaya's utterance. In contrasting the characters of Chief Akaya of Anjong and Chief Umeitoh of Akan, Ambanasom vividly develops the discourse of peace and war. Akaya opens with a wish for unity, peace, and understanding between the two villages but Umeitoh is presented wishing for war. Akaya, Chief of Anjong keeps wondering about the behaviour of Umeitoh Chief of Akan. From the above excerpt, the audience understands that both Anjong and Akan have been farming Ukob and are both offsprings of Ngiekum. They have tried to patch up their differences like brothers, and have agreed to avoid useless quarrels. The fact that the Akan people attack the Anjong women at Ukoh after both had agreed that both villages will farm their own side up to the stream, portrays Akan as troublesome. In response to this Abaago who is in total support of Akan asks "Haven't you heard that Ngiekum first settled in Akan from widikum?" (Ambanasom, 2009, p.13).

Usobi tells Akan men that they are brothers with the Anjong people. He reminds them that they are first offsprings of Ngiekum before becoming Kamerun People's Party (KPP) or Cameroon United People (CUP):

How can brothers carry arms against brothers? Are there, not some of here who have married the daughters of Anjong? Are there, not some here who have given their daughters to Anjong?... When you see old men around with stumps instead of arms do you think that they happily gave up their clean limbs for those? (Ambanasom,2009 p. 31).

Usobi asks these questions because he does not support Akan fighting against Anjong. He has a contrary view from Abaago and Ubeno who ill-advised Chief Umeitoh.

Achamba is considered by those from Akan and Anjong as treading on risky ground because inspite of the war, Achamba still wants to get married to Echunjei. Achamba's father is against the marriage. On his part Achamba thinks it is going to be a way to achieve his mission to bring the two villages together. He justifies his decision by asking the following questions:

Why father?...Who has told you that she is bad?...Why? I'm not marrying to please them, am I? What has their pleasure or displeasure got to do with my marriage? Have Akan and Anjong people not been intermarrying for ages now? Are there not many Anjong daughters down here and those of Akan up there? Is it only my own marriage that will be an exception? (Ambanasom, 2009, p.138)

While Embuta thinks the marriage will intensify the problems between the two villages, Achamba sees the union as an opportunity in which their love might turn out to be a positive contribution to the problem. However, these questions show the depth of the problem between the warring villages. According to Embuta the two coming together is ill-timed. He says Dudum has never been threatened by so much disunity before and "the devil you call 'politics' did not exist in our time" (Ambanasom,2009,p.138) . Embuta has understood the rivalry going on in Akan, and between Akan and Anjong.

The politics Embuta talks about is seen through Abaago's use of rhetorical questions. Abaago being afraid of the influence Achamba might wield over the youths in Akan, calls for a meeting, in frustration and fear, he asks: "What is this I see and hear? Is this what you as the young torchbearers would be to Akan? Then why are we proud that you are the young suckers to replace

us tomorrow? Are you going to sell you birthright to Anjong as your traitorous brother Achamba has done?" He continues later in a confrontation with Achamba: "What do you call positive influence... Is it positive influence to indoctrinate young people against the wishes of their elders?" (Ambanasom, 2009, p. 174). Abaago here paints the wrong picture of Achamba to the youths because he wants to be the one that is seen and heard. He is doing this because as Ambanasom puts it, Abaago summons a meeting of the youths in the palace because he believes Achamba has palpable influence on so youths, so his aim is to caution the youths against Achamba.

Another instance in which rhetorical questions are used is when Achamba is killed. Akaya's questions the death of Achamba in the following questions:

Would Achamba have died the way he did had he remained in Mbamba? Would he have died the way he did had he come home a week earlier than later? Or vice versa? What would have happened had he not come home at all? Had he been lured outside by his assailants? Did Achamba know anything about his murderers? Had the attackers been trailing him all the way from Mbambe or were they people in Dudum? What was the object of the murder? Certainly not money or property because nothing in the house was touched. What then could it have been? Jealousy. Rivalry. Competition or what? Could Achamba's political enemies in Akan have been behind the homicide? Could Abaago's hand have been behind it? What about Eziaga, Echunjei's jilted fiancé? Was he part of the conspiracy? Could the traditional rivalry between Akan and Anjong, as key villages of Dudum, have been the source of Achamba's death? Might Achamba have created enemies at his workplace in Mbambe, who pursued him to settle their scores? If so why take the risk to follow him home? Why not eliminate him at the level of Mbambe? Why? Why this? Why that? What unpardonable crime had Echunjei committed to deserve the burden of early widowhood? What is this thing called life, anyway? Why the ill-luck? Why the misfortune? Why? Why?(Ambanasom, 2009, pp. 202-203).

From Akaya's questions, one can understand that the people know the possible causes of Achamba's death. Akaya wonders about the issue of politics and his relationship with Abaago. The question continues with mourners who ask:

Who has done this? Who has killed the hunter? Where is our son? Where is our hunter?... But who could have thought that it would be Achamba? What is the world coming to? What terrible thing has this child done to such a person to deserve this horrendous murder?... What does a killer intend to gain by murdering Achamba? (Ambanasom, 2009, p. 198).

Rhetorical questions make the listeners and the readers attentive to specific concerns and think critically. Beqiri (2018) argues that rhetorical questions are an effective tool in communication that possess a way of controlling the speech and thoughts of the audience, persuading the audience to agree with the speaker. Beqiri goes on to state that these questions evoke emotions, engage the audience, emphasize a point, show conflicting opinions and increase the impact of the speaker's argument. This is what Ambanasom does when he uses rhetorical questions. He raises his argument for unity through contrast in the questions. Through these questions, the audience understands his argument against disunity through characterisation.

3.2. *The use of Topoi to Unravel Ideology*

Comparison is one of the rhetorical devices speakers (writers) use to persuade their audience. In *Son of the Native Soil*, Ambanasom uses this device in contrast. He compares by contrasting pairs. He compares Akan to Anjong, Chief Akaya to Chief Umeitoh, and Achamba to Abaago by showing the contrast between them. This aspect is seen in the topoi of unity and disunity, and peace and war. Topos is a point of view or an ideology. Critical Stylistics looks at the ideology that is passed across in a text. According to Wodak (2015), as quoted by Hasan (2018), topoi can be regarded as a search for formulas which tell you how and where to look for arguments. This section looks at the strategies Ambanasom puts forward to persuade his readers of his search for unity and peace. Grue (2009) posits that topos may be used as an analytical tool in the exploration of the discourse employed by the rhetorical point of view, and the argumentative structures in a particular text or texts.

3.2.1. *Topoi of Unity and Disunity*

Both the Akan and the Anjong people are 'bound in blood; they were all descendants of Ngiekum, They used to speak one language; draw life from a common source, and drink from the same water from River Fek. Before being Akan people they are first of all Dudum people with a common ancestor, culture, and destiny. Usobi makes it clear that: *We are first offsprings of Ngiekum before we are KPP or CUP*. The two villages represent either unity (Anjong) or disunity (Akan), even though Achamba who hails from Akan stands for unity. Akan people prefer that the capital, the hospital, the school and all aspects of development be put in Akan while Achamba who stands for unity together with the Anjong people believe that the most appropriate place be chosen. Here Ambanasom raises an argument for unity. He brings out the natural reasons why Akan and Anjong are supposed to live together and peacefully. The parties that come for campaigns in the different villages help to aggravate disunity amongst the people. Two parties, Cameroon United People (CUP) and the Kamerun People's Party (KPP) come to campaign for partisan and are received differently in the different villages. The Kamerun People's Party thrives in Anjong while Cameroon United People finds its stronghold in Akan. Through the parties, the audience is exposed to the disunity and contrasting views between Akan and Anjong. Akan receives the CUP with more warmth than Anjong receives the KPP. Ambanasom says:

CUP is even more warmly received by Umeitoh than Akaya had been received by the KPP. The warmth of the reception was not out of recognition of any attractive principle of the CUP party platforms. Whether the party had promises for them or not, Umeitoh was ready to welcome the CUP, if only because their arch-enemy had welcomed

the KPP. It was thus out of the traditional rivalry between Akan and Anjong that Umietoh gave the CUP group more than just a simple welcome. (Ambanasom, 2009, pp. 38-39)

The chief of Akan, Umeitoh, unlike Chief Akaya of Anjong promotes division. Ambanasom makes use of contrast here to fight against disunity. Achamba is not comfortable with this diunity. He tells his friend, Neba about disunity in Dudum: "You aren't as divided as we in Dudum are... You see there is a big difference. In Dudum you belong to either of two geographical zones. And this natural division has helped to nurture political difference" (Ambanasom, 2009, p. 167).

Both Abaago and Achamba are from Akan but Achamba stands for a united Dudum while Abaago stands for Akan, which is a village in Dudum. Achamba says: "I'm a son of Akan, but first I am a son of Dudum" (Ambanasom, 2009, p. 20). While he (Achamba) favours every small part of Dudum development, he opposes any that carries out its own development to the detriment of the whole clan. Achamba's wish is that Akan and Anjong bury our individual differences and be united as our grandparents were" (Ambanasom, 2009, p.61). While Achambe is praying that his marriage to Echunjei from Anjong be a happy coincidence, in which our love might turn out to be a positive contribution to the situation back at home and the beauty of our marrying to heal the wounds of the quarrelling villages?" (Ambanasom, 2009, p.149). Abaago sees Achamba as an ungrateful child that has bitten the finger that fed him and also stabbed in the back the foster mother to whom he owes his very existence, and has sold his own people for the sake of a woman. With this, the people of Akan led by Umeitoh and Abaago declare Achambe unwanted if he does not give up his intentions of marrying Echunjei. The description of events and characters show how contrasting their ideologies are. Ambanasom stands against greed and egoism which are monsters against unity.

3.2.2. Topoi of Peace and War

The seizing of the hoes of the Anjong women is a flagrant act of war. When the Anjong people are to go and get back the hoes of their women from the Akan people, Chief Akaya decides that Angang should be one of the emissaries because Angang is peaceful. Ambanasom writes that:

They were cautioned not to provoke the people of Akan into a War. That was why Angang was among them.

Without him, there was no guarantee of a peaceful mission. His presence was a moderating force to keep in check the uncertain tempers of his kinsmen. (Ambanasom, 2009, p. 21)

The use of peaceful, moderating and uncertain are pre-modifiers that add meaning to the nouns and give a vivid picture of the situation on ground. The pre-modifiers in this case show what Ambanasom expects of the Dudum people. It becomes a glaring contrast when he presents the people of Akan with contrary qualities. This peaceful nature of Angang is seen in the following excerpt in which Angang from Anjong is responding to Chief Umeitoh of Akan. This is justified when they get to Akan and Chief Unietoh starts questioning him about the people in Anjong:

They're well, Mbe, 'replied Angang...

Good,' said Umeitoh. 'What is the object of your visit? Is it war you bring? Tell us.'

Angang smiled broadly and said that they were not messengers of war but peace.

We haven't brought war, Mbe. We don't have any weapons on us. We bring peace from our chief and people.

(Ambanasom, 2009, p. 31).

Angang's response to Chief Umeitoh's question justifies Achamba calling Anjong people a *peace-loving people*. This peace-loving nature of the Anjong people is further seen when Akaya, in a meeting, acknowledges the behaviours of his Anjong subjects, Ndifon and Ubeno, for their peaceful nature:

And this is what Ndifon and Ubeno have done. I thank them very sincerely for their advice against war. Some will term this cowardice or weakness. But it is not so. It takes courage to arrive at such decision. For it's easier to start a war than end it. Akan has slapped us in the face once. Let us not retort yet. Let us, like the adder, allow them to slap us six more times, bringing our venom to a deadly point (Ambanasom, 2009, p. 21).

Akaya decries open war in the true sense of the word but is firm in his decisions against the Akan people. He tells the Anjong people, there are effective ways other than war through which they can force the Akan people to their knees. Akaya exhibits good qualities in avoiding war, disunity and insulting language as against chief Umeitoh of Akan who supports Abaago when he calls the Akan people to attack the Anjong people. Akaya uses the image of a serpent to emphasize patience and wisdom in his people. He uses comparison in comparing the ease of starting a war than ending it. However, in Akan, Achamba does not want war because he thinks the whole of Ngiekum's descendants should be one. Achamba's father and a few others do not want war also because they have experienced it and are still leaving the negative effects of war. Achamba makes his intention clear to Chief Umeitoh, "Excuse me, Mbe, Anjong's reaction came as a consequence, and not the cause, of the action of our people. You'll recall that when I was here last holidays I appealed to our people for peace, but today see where their action has taken us" (Ambanasom, 2009, p. 76).

Even as Achamba returns from Mbambe and wants to quench his thirst by buying a drink from Anjong, the man refuses to sell to him because he is from Akan but he does not fight back. Chief Umeitoh retorts to Achamba's story:

And what did you do? When I was like you I should have given that man a dirty slap.

But I didn't, Mbe. I didn't judge the moment appropriate. I would have only worsened the present situation. That would have defeated the purpose of my present mission: that of preaching peace. I would like our two villages to live in peace. (Ambanasom, 2009, p. 76)

Chief Umeitoh compares himself to Achamba. It shows the different reactions to the same situations. Umeitoh shows aggressiveness in the same situation in which Achambe is calm and not controlled by external reactions; Achamba thinks that an angry reaction will make a presently bad situation worse. Contrary to Chief Umeitoh's behaviour, after the decision to

boycott the Akan market with their foodstuffs, Chief Akaya of Anjong still warns his people by calling for calm and asking that no one should commit any outrage against an Akan man nor take the law into his hands. The Anjong people are considered better and well-behaved. This is evident in the instructions from their chief, Akaya. He says, "All Upper Dudum people should desist from any insulting comments or cynical remarks made at the expense of the Akan people" (Ambanasom, 2009, p. 22).

While the Anjong chief and the people are trying to solve problems caused by the Akan people in a peaceful manner, the Akan people are planning to inflict more pain and wait for the reaction from Anjong. Two days after the Anjong women plant their crops, as Ambanasom describes them, "hefty Akan men fully armed with machetes, spears, clubs and even dane guns invaded Abang, that part of Anjong nearest to Akan" (Ambanasom, 2009, p. 63). Ambanasom gives a vivid picture of the actions of the Akan people who are angry with Anjong's boycott of selling to Akan people:

The raiders came like a swarm of locusts, destroying everything in their way, slashing down plantain stems, and butchering animals...old men tried to hide from their fury. The attackers got the men and children badly beaten. An old man managed to scramble...was brutally beaten up. They seized the playing sticks and flung them... After butting the miserable man, they dragged him roughly on the ground before leaving him helpless. They broke into houses and ransacked them, breaking utensils and making off with portable valuables. While some hacked goats and pigs and fled with chunks of meat...in the face of such an overwhelming invasion. The Akan men fired their guns at no one in particular, only intending to scare anyone who hoped to stand in their way (Ambanasom, 2009, p. 63).

The verbs used to describe the actions of the Akan people destroying, slashing, butchering, badly beaten, brutally beaten, seized, flung, butting, dragged him roughly, broke, ransacked, breaking, making off, hacked, fled with, fired, and scare are verbs that portray violence. The adverbs, badly, brutally and roughly further modify the verbs. These verbs and adverbs indicate a swift violent action by the Akan people. It confirms the naming of the Akan people as raiders and violent. In contrast to the Akan people, when the Anjong people go to take the hoes that are seized by the Akan, Ambanasom presents the entrance of the Anjong emissaries in Chief Umeitoh's palace as follows: "The three entered in a stooping posture and instinctively chose a corner for themselves...They sat down and then, very courteously greeted him. All of them humbly clapped their hands...". The use of the adjectives and adverbs of manner (stooping, instinctively, courteously, humbly) in this extract has a positive picture of the Anjong people and a negative picture of Akan. This is further confirmed in the extract:

As a result of Akan attacking Anjong, they do not regret the act and think their act is to the best interest of the Akan people. For them to go and appeal to Akaya to end the boycott would be an admission of inferiority. That could not be. Abaago and his people were too proud to sue for peace in such a humble manner. (Ambanasom, 2009, p. 67)

Contrarily, Akaya tells the Anjong people that "For the moment let us seek a peaceful solution to the problem. Should not react to war though Akan people are assaulting them" (Ambanasom, 2009, p. 67).

Even the description of Akan is not friendly. Geographically, Akan does not work in favour of being a headquarter:

While there, you had the impression that you were in a pit threatening to close in on you and choke you to death, a feeling that you were dangerously cut off from the rest of the outside world. That was the feeling inspired by the surrounding hills that nearly hemmed in Akan from the rest of Dudum. But as you got to Anjong from Akan, the opposite impression was uppermost in your mind. Places cleared up and the horizon appeared in the distance, an inviting openness that was all the more attractive for its sharp contrast with the bottle-neck aspects of Akan. (Ambanasom, 2009, p. 66)

In addition to the hostile nature of the Akan people, their geographical location is isolated and aggressive. It is a contrast to the admirable description of Anjong.

3.3. Naming and Pre-Modifiers Showing Contrast

The news Achamba hears is terrible. How could his people have done such a thing? He wonders why the Akan people carry out such irresponsible acts of vandalism. He returns from home three weeks earlier and has barely settled down for the second term's work in his school when he hears that his people have plundered part of Anjong. The ringleaders of the raid are at the Gendarmerie headquarters in Mbambe, chafing under the restrictions of detention. Here is how Ambanasom describes the raid:

The atmosphere in Dudum following the arrest of the Akan invaders was very tense. Hardliners from Anjong who failed to have war declared against the aggressors were not satisfied with their detention. They thought it was not enough punishment, indeed, only a slight knock on the head of an unruly and provocative neighbor who deserved a harder blow to drive the madness out of his head. So they lobbied for tougher and more effective measures to be taken against the belligerents. Their appeal eventually won general support among the Anjong people, and a meeting to that effect was held in Chief Akaya's palace (Ambanasom, 2009, p. 66).

Their act is considered a raid, and they are unruly and provocative neighbours, who need harder blows, tougher and more effective measures as punishment for being aggressive. They are called invaders, aggressors and belligerents. This is a vivid description of Akan. Atropen calls on the Anjong people to leave the matter in the hands of the government 'who are already treating the invaders.' He goes on to assert that it is already clear that the 'Akan people are aggressors' and the government is not blind to the fact that "we are a peaceful people". Akan's atrocities, narrow-mindedness and selfishness, qualify them as troublesome.

The Anjong and the Akan people are two different people even though all of them are from Ngiekum. Their characteristics are different and contrasting. The Anjong people focus on the peaceful Dudum while the Akan people focus on the development

of Akan. While the Anjong people are holding meetings with their Chief for peace to reign, the Akan people are planning to attack. In the following excerpt, Ambanasom describes this using names and pre-modifiers that define the Akan people:

Meanwhile, the air in Akan was heavy with war phrases and incendiary threats. Being the aggressors, the Akan people had planned the act in advance. They knew that Anjong would not take the assault on their women lying down. They were therefore on their guard and had preserved the tools seized from Anjong women in their chief's palace... Umeitoh, by nature, was a proud chief. But recently his pride and arrogance had tasted new potent wine through some of his advisers who took it as their responsibility to shape the affairs of Akan. Umeitoh was acting partly on the investigation of these war-hungry councillors and partly from his own sense of wounded pride, of being generally regarded as a distant second to Chief Akaya in Dudum (Ambanasom, 2009, p. 16).

The pre-modifiers used to describe the Akan people are negative. They are as follows: war phrases, incendiary threats, aggressors, proud chief, hungry councillors, wounded pride. Everything about Akan (except Achamba) is negative. Even the decision for the two warring villages (Akan and Anjong) to seek a solution by catching the squirrel is received in Akan with cynicism.

After the government gives Ukob to Buja the Anjong people believe Achamba's presence in Mbambe has influenced the authorities to favour his *headstrong people* against the general peace-loving people of Anjong. On the contrary, Achamba condemns his people's (Akan's) recent poor conduct and is baffled by the irresponsible acts of vandalism by his people. Achamba considers the action of invasion as an ill-advised action of the Akan people. Ambanasom refers to the invasion as an overwhelming invasion. Ambanasom says the Dudum people are selfish and narrow-minded, particularly the Akan people. Achamba goes to the palace and tried to persuade the chief and his councillors to be *less hostile*. Pre-modifiers used to describe Akan people highlight the negation. Achamba tells Chief Umeitoh that the administration in Mbamba decry our quarrelsome attitude. A further description of the Akan people qualifies them as headstrong, quarrelsome, ill-advised, irresponsible, hostile, selfish and narrow-minded. On the other hand, the Anjong people are generally peace-loving.

Achamba is introduced as 'A real son of the soil' whose father is lucky and proud of. He is praised for building a magnificent building in his father's compound. Additionally, though he is working out of Dudum he does not forget his parents and his village. Achamba does not only do good work he is also a presentable gentleman. Ambanasom describes him as a young man who is tall, slightly slender, and handsome; chocolate coloured complexion and rich thick hair, and he moves with fashion. When it is 'afro' style he keeps the 'afro' but when it is no longer afro fashion, he brings discipline to bear on his hair, cutting to reasonably low enough. He is a dashing gentleman with a romantic air, a dandy always smartly dressed. He wears a white shirt with a stiff collar and his wardrobe has well-tailored suits. Achamba is a voracious reader of English Literature and also loves and had subscribed to the Time and Newsweek magazines. He has a booming voice that is soft-spoken and very articulate. He is a man of emotional stability and is often unflappable even in moments of crisis. Achamba is conscious of his cultural roots. His Western influences do not influence his traditional beliefs. This portrays Achamba as possessing good and upright qualities in all aspects – professional, dressing, emotional and socio-cultural. Contrarily, Abaago is introduced as one who has a major weakness, extremely partisan, very uncompromising and decidedly vocal as far as the cause of his village is concerned. To an opponent he is a formidable and stubborn adversary; to a friend, a wonderful, protective bulwark; and both, a man of charisma and forcefulness. In response to Abaago's arguments to read the address at the general come together, Ubeno tells him "If you want to read the address in your usual selfish manner, say so" (Ambanasom, 2009, p. 35).

The problem of who owns Ukob gets to the stage of justifying by catching the squirrel. According to the descendants of Ngeikum, the squirrel does not lie. But to the Akan people, the message sparks spirited discussions in several homes. Arrogant fellows like Abaago speak with contempt of the idea of a squirrel and still belittled the matter. Throughout the novel one reads descriptions of Abaago such as Abaago's instigation, Abaago's machinations, Abaago was inflexible, and narrowminded but persuasive and eloquent. Fellows like him have brainwashed Chief Umeitoh and others. With no hesitation, Umeitoh designates Abaago who already distinguishes himself through his articulateness, infectious joviality, and handsomeness to co-ordinate CUP activities. Achamba and Abaago do not agree on the development strategies for either Dudum or Akan. According to Abaago, Akan comes first conversely Dudum comes first for Achamba. They both dispute the issue of Akan becoming the headquarters of Dudum. Achamba, despite the bias for his village of origin, "would not selfishly advocate Akan as headquarters". This justifies Achamba as the true son of the soil.

Achamba shows extraordinary selflessness. Readers hear about Achamba from others at his funeral through Echunjei, Akaya. Neba says "he was a kind and generous man, and a great friend. He qualifies Achamba as one who loved his people. He was an exceptional son, dedicated and committed to the unity and well-being of his people. He was a rare son, A brilliant icon and beacon, a star has faded from the Dudum sky" (Ambanasom, 2009, p. 222). Chief Akaya describes him as unique and magnificent. He says, "Achamaba was unique in a different way...was selfless and very devoted... a believer in truth and justice, generous to a fault... he had the capacity to bring people together, to assemble enemies. Echunjei describes him as a wonderful, caring and sensitive husband" (Ambanasom, 2009, p. 220). Achamba is not just the son of the soil but a real son of the soil, a genuine son of the soil, an appeaser in Dudum.

3.4. Contrast in Proverbs

In all his wanderings and search for a wife, and of the pictures fleeting through his mind, the picture that lingers longest in his mind is that of Echunjei. Achamba finally settles in Anjong, the enemy of his village Akan. Though she is betrothed to Eziaga and from Anjong, her shape and education have a magnetic appeal for Achamba. This is why Ambanasom says a good plum is often located on a risky branch. The risky reason is that she comes from Anjong, an enemy to Akan. The marriage

between Achambe and Echunjei is considered as “another piece of faggot added to the bonfire to keep the flame alive” (Ambanasom, 2009, p. 142). According to Ambanasom, Achamba’s projected marriage is to serve as a unifying factor in Dudum but it instead threatens the unity of the clan. While Achamba is looking at this marriage as might turn out to be a positive contribution to the division back home, Abaago compares him “to the ungrateful child in the fable, who has bitten the finger that fed and also stabbed in the back the foster mother to whom he owes his very existence” (Ambanasom, 2009, p. 152). According to Abaago therefore, Achamba has disregarded his own people, therefore the people of Akan declare him (Achamba) and his family unwanted persons unless he gives up the marriage proposal to Echunjei from Anjong. However, back in Mbambe, the people think the marriage of Achamba and Echunjei has ‘embematized the unity of Dudum.

After the visit of the D.O., it is not just the issue of Achamba’s marriage to Echunjei that is causing a feeling of betrayal, it is also the proposed sub-division for Dudum that is neither given to Akan nor Anjong, but to Buja. Ambanasom presents this in the following proverb: “But as the people’s smouldering tempers were gradually fanned, behold a bigger and a more inflammable log of wood was thrown into the fire” (Ambanasom, 2009, p. 142). The image used in the proverb is the comparison of the size of logs put in the fire. Giving Ukob to Buja is a more serious issue.

Not all Anjong people are patient. Ekunidi calls on Chief Akaya and the Anjong people to go to war with Akan. He calls it a war of righteous vengeance against Akan. Atropen kicks against this bid saying “No loving father would put a glowing coal into the palm of his child. But what I see now is an attempt by fathers to put an ember into the palms of their children” (Ambanasom, 2009, p. 66). Atropen is saying this as one who has experienced war and believes that those Anjong children who are for war do not care about what happens to their children. He goes on to say “war is not cocoyam” (p. 66), meaning war is not as easy to manage or win as they think. He warns them, “You had better know the type of game that has disappeared into a ‘liar before you begin to dig the hole’” (Ambanasom, 2009, p. 67). According to Atropen war is filled with uncertainty and tells the people some of the negative effects of war. Maybe it is not worth it to go to war. He ends by saying he “is warding off the rain while the weather is still bright” (Ambanasom, 2009, p. 66), meaning his advice should be taken because comparing them to Akan at this moment the Anjong people have high morale while the Akan have proven themselves to be the aggressors. Warding away rain is his advice against war.

Chief Akaya praises Ndifon and Ubeno for advising the youths against war with Akan. According to him, they are curbing the excesses of the young and is thanking them for guiding Anjong youths since “The stream went astray because it was alone” (Ambanasom, 2009, p. 20). Akaya makes the people of Anjong understand that some will term it cowardice or weakness so they allow the Akan people to continue attacking Anjong. But he cautions that starting a war is easier than ending it. He goes on to say Akan has slapped Anjong in the face but they will not retort yet. Like the adder, they will allow Akan to slap them six more times bringing their venom to a deadly point. He compares the Akan people to “fast blazing wood that soon burns itself out, but the slow smouldering log retains its fire much longer” (Ambanasom, 2009, p. 22). According to the proverb the Akan people are violent and fast to take action against Anjong. Despite that Chief Akaya promises the Anjong people that they will stay calm and seek a peaceful solution to the problem. The violent nature of Akan is contrasted with the peace-loving and gentle-natured people of the Anjong.

The aggressiveness of the Akan people can be seen from their chief through his advisers right down to the common man. Akobata acknowledges that he does not have anything to add to what Abaago and Mbe have said. However, he asks “Are you prepared to defend your legitimate rights ... Or are you prepared to sit like women watching Anjong, bit by bit, edge you out of your houses” (Ambanasom, 2009, p. 36). After his speech, there is even more commotion than before. Some people disapprove of it because they know they are not the rightful owners of the land. He compares those who do not want to fight Anjong, to women who according to them are helpless, and cannot fight even for what is theirs. While Akaya compares the Anjong people to the slow smouldering log that retains fire much longer and prays they remain so, Akobata, supported by Abaago and Chief Umeitoh, instigates the Akan people to go out and fight and not sit like helpless women. This shows the glaring contrast between the Akan and Anjong people. Most of the proverbs referring to the war, violence, tension and anger between Akan and Anjong is represented through the image of fire.

4. Practical Implication

Practically, Ambanasom is sending a message to the people of Ngie to be united and work towards the development of the whole clan. In a concluding address during the meeting, Achamba tells the people, “Ngiekum is incessantly reminding us ..., that our strength lies in unity” (Ambanasom, 2009, p. 169). After the meeting, on a tabloid in Nkoman Town, Achamba sees this written, “meeting to talk about development and unity and to bury, once and for all, their internal difference, petty jealousies, pointless political squabbles, and sub-group loyalties” (Ambanasom, 2009, p. 170). Achamba tells Abaago in a meeting at the palace, “We ought to forge ahead, cultivating the spirit of reconciliation rather than nurturing confrontation.” Ambanasom’s plea was echoed after a recent event that happened on the 21st of May 2023, that is. after the 20th May (National Day) celebration in Ngie. A frontline politician was kidnapped. This brought about accusations and counter-accusations amongst some of the Ngie people. The President of the Ngie Cultural and Development Association (NCADA), made a speech with respect to this. To begin his speech, he sang the famous song sung in Cameroon as greetings:

Hold ya neighbour tellam say, a love you well well,
God bless ya soul oh, I love you well well. (personal communication)

It is a song that is supposed to express brotherly love, this song when translated, calls on the listener to embrace his or her neighbour telling them, 'I love you and may God bless you'. He said 'Let Love Lead' calling on the Ngie people to understand that:

all the insults and exchanges of hatred will not help us...Let us dialogue on what is going to develop us and not on what is going to separate us...The pressing issue here is that of our brothers in captivity...All the hate speeches, hard words and insults will not help the situation...Let us learn to speak love (personal communication).

These are the words of Chief Akaya of Anjong, who says he would like "Dudum people to come home and join hands to construct a better Dudum to see in what ways we can solve the various problems plaguing us, to bury our difference." These are the words of Angang, and the words of Achamba who encouraged the Akan people when he said "We ought to cultivate the spirit of reconciliation rather than nurture confrontation" (Ambanasom, 2009, p. 77). As Ayugho Edward puts it in Ambanasom (2009, p.vii), Achamba is the author's expression of the new wisdom which Dudum badly needs to forge ahead. In other words, he is chiselled out as an approximation of Ambanasom's vision for the prosperity of Dudum.

5. Conclusion

Achamba calls the general meeting so that Dudum the people can come together and find ways to develop their area, bury all their differences and forever remain united. In his attempt to achieve this purpose, Ambanasom takes Achamba and the readers through rhetorical devices that register his call for peace and unity in the Ngie clan. Ambanasom uses the technique of contrast through rhetorical questions, the topoi of unity and disunity, the topoi of peace and war, the contrast in adjectives and pre-modifiers and with proverbs. These techniques bring out the polarity in the characters and villages in the novel. Anjong, Akaya, Achamba, and Angang are on the good side, what Ambanasom is asking of the Ngie people in particular, meanwhile he projects Umeitoh, Abaago, and Akan on the negative, castigating their actions and calling on the society not to be like such. Using Jeffries' Critical Stylistics and Van Dijk's Discourse Structure Model, this study has effectively brought to the surface some of the hidden ideologies in *Son of the Native Soil*. The effective use of contrast portrays Ambanasom's ideology for peace and unity.

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