

**A CRITICAL STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF SELECTED POEMS IN SEGUN
ADEKOYA'S *GUINEA BITES AND SAHEL BLUES***

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**M.A. (ENGLISH LANGUAGE)
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LISTS OF ABBREVIATIONS AND TABLES**Abbreviations**

MAI	-	Material Action Intentional	97
MAS	-	Material Action Supervention	97
MAE	-	Material Action Event	97
VP	-	Verbalization Process	97
MC	-	Mental Cognition	97
MR	-	Mental Reaction	97
MP	-	Mental Perception	97
RI	-	Relational Intensive	97
RP	-	Relational Possessive	97
RC	-	Relational Circumstantial	97

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ABSTRACT

This study identified and described the critical stylistic features in Segun Adekoya's *Guinea Bites and Sahel Blues*. It also analysed and categorised the identified features in the poems. Finally, it related the features to their socio-political contexts of the poems with a view to explicating the critical stylistic approach in unraveling Segun Adekoya's ideology in the selected poems.

The study employed both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data comprised ten poems drawn from Segun Adekoya's *Guinea Bites and Sahel Blues*. The poems were read closely and analysed using simple statistical method of frequencies and percentages to determine the rates of occurrences of the transitivity devices for representing actions, events and states in them. Then the overall percentages of the transitivity devices were calculated, and the results were related to the contexts of the poems. The secondary source of data included textbooks, journals articles and the Internet. The poems were analysed using the critical stylistic approach of Lesley Jeffries.

The results showed that the feature of Naming and Describing used nominal groups that revealed the ideology of the poet. It was also discovered that the choice of Head-Nouns and the pre-and post-modifiers in the nominal groups found in the poem aided the location and description of the setting. Also, the feature of Representing Actions, Events and States has a preponderance of Material Action Intentional (MAI) of 18.7%, Material Action Events (MAE) of 42.4%, and Relational Intensive (RI) of 18.7%; these transitivity devices portrayed the multifaceted challenges of most Africans and Nigerians. The poet equally employed action verbs

and linking verbs to communicate occurrences of poor governance, paucity of resources and to express a dire need for change by common men in Nigeria and Africa in general. Thus, showing that Adekoya's poetry manifested these two critical stylistic features.

This study concluded that poetry is a veritable data for explicating the features of Critical Stylistics of Naming and Describing and Representing Actions, Events and States.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a background to the study of selected poems in Segun Adekoya's *Guinea Bites and Sahel Blues*. The chapter states the background to the study, linguistic framework, Critical Stylistics, aims and objectives of the study, statement of research problem, research questions, scope of the study, significance of study, research methodology, and organisation of the study.

1.1 Background to the Study

1.1.1 Biography of Segun Adekoya

Segun Adekoya was born in 1953. He attended Saint John's Anglican primary school, Odosimadegun, now in Ijebu North East, Ogun State. He furthered his secondary school education at Modakeke High School, Modakeke, Ile-Ife. At that time he was a chorister in the church. He took his first degree, M.A, and Ph.D in Literature-in-English at University of Ife, now Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. He took up teaching appointment in 1982, former department of Literature-in-English, (Literature-in-English department was merged with English and Linguistics Departments) Obafemi Awolowo University. He is a Professor of Literature at the Department of English, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife in Nigeria. Segun Adekoya is a home grown literary artist. Segun Adekoya is happily married and the union is blessed with two children.

He is the author of *The inner Eye: An Oriel in Wole Soyinka's poetry, Here and There, Chameleon and Chimeras, Homage to Paradox, Literature and Nationalism,* and

Language, Literature and Culture. His third collection of Poems, *Guinea Bites and Sahel Blues* was published by Kraft Books, in 2004. Adekoya's areas of interest are Wole Soyinka Studies, Poetry, Oral Literature in Africa, African Literature, Caribbean Literature, Commonwealth Literature, African-American Literature, and Literary Theory. His literary works most times centre on African politics, national issues, religion, and promotion of humanity which extends to nature, culture and societal values. Likewise, the recurrent themes in Segun Adekoya's literary works centre on contemporary issues. Such issues include; devaluation of African societies by Europeans at the expense of the Africans, the inter-connectedness between Africans, nature and God. Similar to this, his writings are often Satires that ridicule the sluggish pace of development of the African Continent.

1.1.2 Adekoya's Poetry

The poetry of Adekoya addresses a wide range of thematic preoccupations that centre on the society, culture and politics. He uses language with a stylistic embellishment that makes it clear what message his poems are passing across to the public. In some of the lines of his poem in *Guinea Bites and Sahel Blues*, titled 'Koko', he reveals this:

*The cesspit for the whole of Europe
The garbage heap of the glowing globe
The bole without a robe to hide its lobe
The rope by which our spirit-hope hangs
Before its body is lowered into a hole
Not for burial rites but exhibition rare
Lesson for doddering lotophagi who dream
And forget that red is the eye that breeds
The money that makes and mars the market
You're the dump for the waste of the world-
Nuclear or collective, for the nonce or recycled.*

The poet portrays Africa as dumping ground for the whole of Europe by using Nigeria as a context. The nominal group in line 2 "the garbage heap" means Nigeria is the dumping ground

for the waste of the world while “the glowing globe” refers to the developed world, the first world countries. Cocoa being the centre of Nigeria economy then was neglected with the discovery of another source of national income which is crude oil, notable cash crops in Nigeria were abandoned. This poem depicts the state of economic dependence of Africa, specifically, Nigeria on Europe. The Koko (Cocoa) being the centre of Nigeria economy was neglected for oil. The Blacks are now at the mercies of the whites. The leaders ruin their earlier resources, the cash crops which they once depended on. The discovery of oil and her adventure to the petrol chemical sector has resulted to environmental degradation.

This study attempts a critical stylistic analysis of selected poems in Segun Adekoya’s *Guinea Bites and Sahel Blues*. The poems are; ‘Seng’, ‘The urchin’, ‘Yellow fever’, ‘911’, ‘Koko’, ‘The prosopis’, ‘The troll’, ‘To my holy student who wants it easy’, ‘The flying bus’ and ‘The pantheon farts’. The focus of this study is therefore to specifically analyse the critical stylistic features in the selected poems and relates the features to the contexts of the selected poems using Critical Stylistic theoretical framework.

1.2 Linguistic Approach : Critical Stylistics

The relationship between language and society is so conspicuous and its importance cannot be underestimated in the educational life of a nation and the development of any society. According to Akindele and Adegbite (2005:1) “The study of the relationship between language and the society is what we refer to as Sociolinguistics”. Sociolinguistics is the study of the relationship between language and the social structure. This means that it seeks to unravel how certain variables such as, age, sex, social status or background correlate with language. According to Awolaja and Awolaja (2012:60);

Sociolinguistics is divided into two branches: micro Sociolinguistics (which handles language components, paralinguistics, speech styles,

linguistic variation, stylistics, discourse analysis etc) and macro sociolinguistics (which handles language planning and language standardization, language attitude, language distribution, diagnosis and the like).

For more information, please contact ir-help@oauife.edu.ng

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