A LINGUISTIC STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF GBEMISOLA ADEOTI'S *NAKED SOLES*

BY

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to God almighty the giver of wisdom, knowledge and understanding for guiding and protecting me throughout my Master's programme.

It is also dedicated to my beloved husband MR SAMSON AKOMIRE and my understanding mother MRS. GRACE IPIGBE for their love and also their spiritual and financial support throughout the period of this programme.

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ABSTRACT

The study identified and described the lexico-semantic features of the poems in Adeoti's *Naked Soles*. It described the prominent phono-syntactic features of the poem and related the features to the content and context of the poems. This was with a view to describing the linguistic style in the poems.

The study employed both primary and secondary sources of data collection. Primary sources included 25 poems, (five from each section) which were purposively selected from Gbemisola Adeoti's *Naked Soles*. The poems were read and the lexico-semantic and phono-syntactic elements were identified. Secondary sources included books, journal articles and the Internet. Data were analysed using Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar.

The results showed that at the lexico-semantic level such lexemes as ''vision'' / ''fiction'', ''peace''/ ''chaos'', ''denied'' /"affirmed'', were used to project the themes of deceit, and political corruption. Also lexical contradictions like: ''blooming thorns'', ''muffled shrill'', "glass chips'' and ''puzzling smiles'' asserted the opposite of what they meant which revealed falsehood in the administration of Nigeria's political leaders. Many of the poems were cultural, for they contained lexical borrowings whose meanings were rooted in the Yoruba

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culture. Such lexical borrowings were: “gelede”, “,lroko”, “ogunpa”, “laalu”, “ogun lakaaye”, “olu igbo”, “olumo” and “owuye”. These lexical items served in contextualizing the poems and in generalizing cognitive responses in the reader. At the phono-syntactic level sound repetition enhanced the lyricism of the poems and helped to emphasise the themes. The dominance of unstressed syllables and irregular rhythmic pattern which ran through the poems enabled the poet to express his anger at government deceit and misrule. The sentence structure revealed that there were ample uses of nominal group structures like: “the market of vengeance/unripe hour of harvest” foregrounded in the poems. The use of adjectives and the definite article “the” to modify the noun headwords and their qualifiers call for particular attention. These adjectives and the definite article, to a large extent intensified the meanings of the noun headwords and through this; the poet was able to declare his anger against misrule, political slavery and injustice. The poet relied more on declarative sentences than interrogative sentences for enhancing the validity of his claims. This was so because he found the declarative sentences more suitable for the expression of his feelings on the issue at hand. Interrogative sentences like: ‘who would sneak and meander/like serpent behind this palace…/to steal the royal trumpet…?’ were used by the poet to probe the rationale for our political leaders’ actions thereby exposing the evil machinations behind them for the public to see and judge.

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The study concluded that the linguistic style in Gbemisola Adeoti's poems engaged

lexico-semantic resources and styles that captured his mood on the state of the nation.

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Simply put, style is the manner of expressing one's thoughts. Just as there are various ways of doing things, there are stylistic variations in language use. Style is also distinctive in the sense that the language used in some way is significant for the thematic design of any genre. This distinctive aspect of style is predicated upon the fact that from a variety of items of language, the writer chooses and arranges them, depending on the genre, form, theme, author's general disposition, etc. A style can be good or bad, plain or unmarked. A style is said to be unmarked when the writing is of *zero degree* – "degree zero" being a term first used by Barthes (1967) to denote "absence of style" in the classical French writing by Camus. The appropriateness of the term has come under attack by scholars (notably Wales: 484) since no writing can exhibit "zero style"or"neutral style" or "transparent style". In fact, the very "absence" of a marked style can itself be seen to be syntactically significant.

On style, Holman (1980) says it is the arrangement of words in a manner which at once best expresses the individuality of the author and the idea and the intent in the author's mind. The best style, for any given purpose, is that which

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most clearly approximates a perfect adaptation of one's language to one's ideas. Style is a combination of two elements: the idea to be expressed and the individuality of the author.Verdonk opines that ,stylistics, the linguistic/scientific study of style can be defined as the analysis of distinctive expression in language and the description of its purpose and effect. How such analysis and description should be conducted, and how the relationship between them is to be established are matters on which different scholars of stylistics, or stylisticians, disagree…." He further recognizes that style does not arise out of a vacuum but that its production, purpose, and effect are deeply embedded in the particular context in which both the writer and the reader… play their distinctive roles… we should distinguish between two types of context: linguistic and non-linguistic context.

Linguistic context refers to the surrounding features of language inside a text, like the typography, sounds, words, phrases, and sentences, which are relevant to the interpretation of other such linguistic elements. The non-linguistic context is a much more complex notion since it may include any number of text-external features influencing the language and style of a text. These we here refer to as linguo-literary features. Stylistics is the scientific study of style. Analysis in stylistics therefore involves a range of general language qualities, which include diction, sentence patterns, structure and variety, paragraph structure, imagery, repetition, emphasis, arrangement of ideas and other cohesive devices.

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Stylistics, Literary Criticism and Practical Criticism have certain things in common. Stylistics studies describe the formal features of the text, that is, the levels of expression vis-à-vis the content, thus bringing out their functional significance for the interpretation of the work. The stylistician may rely on his intuition and interpretative skills just as the literary critic, but the former tries to keep at bay, vague and impressionistic judgment. To achieve this, stylistics draws on relevant and influential models of linguistics – the scientific study of language. Thus, as K. Wales observes, in later 1960s, Generative Grammar was influential; in the 1970s and 1980s, it was Discourse Analysis and Pragmatics. In the 1980s, there was a shift from the text to the reader and his responses to the text – with the birth of Affective Stylistics and Reception Theory.

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1.2 Culture and Language

There is a symbiotic relationship between language, culture and literature as each reinforces, projects and distils the other (Adedimeji, 2005). Language is an integral part of culture, and is a means of propagating and transmitting

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culture.Culture supplies the experience which finds expression in language. The need for the projection of African culture has thus informed the development of modern African literature which serves to enlighten, educate and showcase the African world-view, practices and problems.

Culture is a dynamic phenomenon encompassing the totality of attitudes, behaviours, beliefs and world-views. It is an integral part of every human society and all social groups are characterized by it, in other words, it is the "complex pattern of behaviour and material achievement which are produced, learned and shared by members of a community" (Ameh, 2002). Basic to the meaning of culture is a sense of refinement that being "cultured" suggests. Every human community has its distinctive cultural patterns through which the totality of what, how, where and when of being in a context is known.

1.3 Statement of the Research Problem

Existing works on GbemisolaAdeoti's*Naked So*les are newspaper essays and critical commentaries which paid little attention to the linguistic features of the poems. Majekodunmi (2008) did a lexico-semantic analysis of Adeoti's poems, Balogun (2007) provided a newspaper commentary, Olofinlua (2011) made a critical commentary. Little attention was paid to the lexico-semantic and phono-

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syntactic features of Adeoti's poems. The lexico-semantic and phono-syntactic features employed by the poet will aid the understanding of his poetic style. The present study sets out to fill this gap.

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