

Stylistic Analysis of Selected Comments on 2020 Lekki #EndSARS Protest on *X*

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Certification

This is to certify that Olufemi Isaiah IDOWU with matriculation number LCU/PG/ 003789 carried out this study titled Stylistic Analysis of Selected Comments on 2020 Lekki #EndSARS Protest on X, in the department of English and Literary Studies, Faculty of Arts, Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State for the award of Master’s Degree in English Language and it has not been previously submitted.

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to Almighty God, the Alpha and Omega, the architect of heaven and earth. He is my source of wisdom, knowledge and understanding. He has been the source of my strength throughout the course of my studies and His wings only I have soared. I also dedicate this to my late grandmother, my late father and my uncle in person Mr. Idowu Felix Olaleke, my lovely wife and daughter and my good friends and well wishers.

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Abstract

The 2020 Lekki EndSARS protest in Nigeria, particularly the events that unfolded at the Lekki Toll Gate, generated significant discourse on social media platforms, especially on X (formerly Twitter). This study conducts a stylistic analysis of selected comments from X, focusing on how users employed language to express their thoughts, emotions, and reactions on the protest. The study identified the stylistic features in the selected comments, categorize these comments based on their stylistic characteristics, discuss how these stylistic features contribute to meaning-making within the context of the protest, and examine how the identified stylistic features relate to other texts within the broader discourse on social justice and civil rights movements. The data for this analysis are sourced from a curated selection of comments made on X during and after the 2020 Lekki EndSARS protest. The study leverages these comments as a lens through which the relationship between language, style, and meaning in digital communication can be explored. The study revealed that the posts are in five categories -agitation, ideology, interest, type and period of the post. It showed further that the stylistic elements in the selected posts were similar with those found in other texts especially other social media handles, thereby situating the comments within a larger textual and socio-political framework. The study concludes that linguistic choices reflect and shape the collective consciousness surrounding the protest.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Study

Understanding human nature better has been made possible by linguistics. Any human relationship requires words to convey its thoughts, feelings, and goals. By closely examining these words, one can learn a great deal about the social and psychological traits and behaviors of these sentient creatures. The foundational element upon which communication systems are constructed is language. To comprehend the context and significance of the information being presented on any given subject, words are required. Language performs a major role in human existence, especially in sharing people's experiences and thoughts. Human beings cannot live without making use of language. It helps people to express their mind and views in such a way that other people will understand the message they are passing through. Language is an embodiment of culture and it leads to the depth of a person's reflection beyond the practical necessities of life to such aspects as the look for knowledge, education and collaboration among multi-ethnic societies¹.

It is easy to assume that language is the most influential way of communicating with each other because it performs a major role in human life, and we can therefore say language is life itself so far human being cannot do without communication. The major channel and processes of communication involve the use of language. It is posited that language is a great tool in

communication, and communication occurs among human beings. It is agreed that language is inevitable among people living in a geographical area, that share the same ideology, culture, norms and belief, and that is why sociolinguists so much believe in speech community².

Some of the earliest definitions of language by scholars assert that “language is a naturally human and non-instinctive ways to communicate ideas or passing information, emotions and desires by means of voluntarily produced sounds”³. In furtherance, it is stated that language is the place or institution whereby communication and interaction are carried out effectively by human beings⁴. This submission connotes that language is the main instrument of communication in human societies, and in fact, it defines what it means to be human. Man cannot live successfully in a society without communicating with one another.

Language (spoken or written) is inseparable from the individual or group of people that use it in a geographical area known as society. It has been observed that if one is interested in studying language, then he automatically studies people, and since people are as different as chalk from cheese, their language will definitely be different too⁵. The variation in the linguistic means employed by individuals as a result of their different choices is regarded as style. Style, however, is determined partly according to the situation of discourse because language, as part of human social behaviour works within a wide framework of human activity⁶.

An individual’s choice of language use (style) may be unnatural by factors such as his/her regional background, social status, level of education and technology. It is observed that the internet allows people to express their individuality in ways that were very difficult to do a few years ago⁶. It is now very easy for people to showcase their language competence and styles on the internet, especially on social media platforms. In fact, some writers prefer to publish their

studies or work on the internet. This happens because the confidence they repose on technology and their belief that computers and mobile devices are now closer to the people than before; every household now has access to computer, phones and the internet. Indeed, the Internet has changed our world in many ways as it is evident in the way we use language in both written and spoken form on social media platforms.

Social media has developed into a vast platform for interpersonal communication, which provides opportunities to gather and use data for research and other things. There is no denying the fact that informal features of the language use on social media platforms can now be analysed stylistically. The advent of the social media, in particular, has greatly influenced the way language is used by people, especially the youths in Nigeria. It has also given researchers access to linguistic data for their various studies. This is because human speech is influenced by linguistics as well as social conventions including the revolutionary trend on the social media platforms.

Language use on social media platforms has taken a peculiar form so that it is now often used by people of different groups in the country, and some have seen the informal way by which most of the social media speeches are written as language on its own. Research on social media language in the Nigerian socio-cultural context have concentrated on exploring its usage, decrying spelling irregularities, its effects on academic performance of the users (who are mainly school age youths) and language use; thereby neglecting the creative and innovative aspects of the spelling patterns and their impact on language change⁵. Most of the language use on social media deviates from the norms of writing and this is simply peculiar to style. One can simply say that language use on social media platforms has got its own register. Language is a system of symbols by means of which a social group cooperates⁶. Just like other specialised languages –

language of journalism, language of diplomacy, language of medicine, pedagogical language – language use on social media platforms is characterised by certain peculiarities that form its own register. This concept, for the purpose of clarity, shall be hereafter referred to as social media language. This trend (the use of the social media language) pervades all levels of human society. Even on social media platforms (such as X, Facebook, WhatsApp groups, Naira land pages, among others).

Traditionally, stylistics is the study of literary texts using formal linguistic tools. There is ongoing debate between linguists and critics as to whether style is a linguistic phenomenon or a literary peculiarity. Literary scholars feel dismissive of the utility of linguistic methods to literary interpretation, and linguists, on the other hand, are skeptical and hence reluctant to attach any values to literary criticism⁸. It is observed that, this basic disagreement can be attributed to the variation in their modes of operation. While linguists centre their analyses of literary texts on the language in terms of sounds, lexis and syntax, the literary critic emphasizes value, purpose and aesthetics. To the literary critic, an attempt to weigh literature on the scale of linguistics amounts to intruding on the threshold of literature. Descriptive linguists, on their part, do not see any need to apply linguistics to the appreciation of literature because linguistics need not go beyond the sentence level⁹.

Some linguists are of the opinion that literature and linguistics should be seen as mutual complements. Scholars quoting Sinclair, for example, state that “no systematic apparatus can claim to describe language if it does not embrace the literature also”¹⁰. As proposed in the 1958 Indiana Conference – as conference organised to bring this disengagement to terms – stylistics is only interdisciplinary in a way that it derives instrument and concepts from linguistics and literary theory. It therefore follows that stylistics, it would seem, rather than displacing the core

tenants of literary criticism, seeks to unify them with linguistic ones. The application of linguistic models to the analyses of literary texts has therefore boosted the critic's work rather than hamper it. This trend of thought has led to an alternative criticism that stylistics is concerned too much with language and not enough with literary concerns. In reaction to such criticism, a scholar posit that linguistics is not and will never be the whole of literary analysis, and only the literary analyst – not the linguist – can determine the place of linguistics in literary studies. But if a text is to be discussed and analysed at all, then it should be discussed and analysed very well; and this means by the theories and methods organized in linguistics, the subject whose task is precisely to show how language works.

Another scholar equally assert that in stylistics, attention of place is given to language because the various types, patterns and levels that constitute linguistic structure are a necessary index of the purpose of the text. He further observes that while linguistic features do not for themselves form a text's meaning, an account of linguistic features nonetheless serves to ground a stylistic interpretation and to help explain 'why' for the analyst, certain types of meaning are responsible¹¹. It is argued that stylistics has made up for some of the inadequacies of literary criticism; stylistics applies linguistics to literature in the hope of arriving at analyses which are broad, rigorous and objective. A scholar also put it this way: "stylistic tools help validate intuitions of literary critics to evaluate a piece of work and generate objectivity around the conclusions due to the consistent and precise nature of the linguistic arguments"¹².

Given the obvious significance of employing linguistic theories, models or tools in literature, stylistic analysis is considered a necessary complement to what many stylisticians regard as the impressionistic and implicit nature of much work within literary criticism¹². Arguments of this nature have helped to reconcile linguistics with literary studies in stylistics and, to some extent,

made the discipline well defined and established. Nowadays, it has become popular to simply define stylistics as the linguistic study of style in literature without generating much contention about the bringing together of language and literature¹³. Stylistics is a field of empirical inquiry in which the insights and techniques of linguistic theory are used to analyse literary texts¹⁴. Similarly, stylistics is defined as an intensive study of literary text on an advanced level¹⁴. However, as the above definitions show that there is a predilection, among some stylisticians, for the analysis of literary texts, and it shows that most of their definitions agree in one way or the other on how a literary text should be defined and analysed. Stylistics is a discipline on its own and it is broad in nature because it deals with the study of style. There are many ways by which a writer could employ in writing his literary and non-literary text in any work of art. Most writers enjoy the liberty of deviating from the acceptable norms of writing in their works and this could be mostly seen in poetry, and at times it occurs at other genres of literature. Stylistics at times deals with the writer's personal experience, way of life and exposure.

It often shows and serves as an indicator in writer's ways or patterns of writing. It is strongly believed that two writers cannot have same way of writing even if they graduated from the same institution of learning; this could be related to how twins born from the same mother behave or act. There are different ways by which styles are used by writers; some writers' styles are easy to predict and identify while some are unpredictable or unidentifiable. Stylistics as a concept works in hands with writer's attitude towards writing. A writer may choose any way or technique that suits him or her to write his or her text; he will only make sure that he or she is passing good message to the listeners or readers. Any text deals with style of the writer in totality and it cannot be underrated. Stylistics is a concept through which writers bring out the artistic features or skills they possess in writing a text.

X is an online microblogging service for distributing short messages among groups of recipients via personal computer or mobile telephone. *X* service was designed in the year 2006 by Evan Williams and Biz Stone, each of whom worked at Google before leaving for Launch, the podcasting venture Odeo¹⁵. *X* incorporates aspects of social networking websites, such as Myspace and Facebook with instant messaging technologies to create networks of users who can communicate throughout the day with brief messages or *tweets*. A user types a *tweet* through mobile phone keyboard or computer and send it to the *X* server, which relays it to a list of other users known as followers who have signed up to receive the sender's tweets by either text message or to their mobile phones or by instant message to their personal computers.

In addition, users can elect to track specific topics, creating a dialogue of sort and pushing the number of followers in a given *X* feed into millions. *Tweets* may be on any subject, ranging from jokes to news, to dinner plans, national issues or topics among others. But they cannot exceed 140 characters. *X* was build using Ruby on rails, a specialised web-application framework for the Ruby Computer programming language. *X* interface allows open adaptation and integration with other online services.

National Issues are known as related topics or subjects that are generally under discussion in a particular nation or country. The issues are pertinent to the people living in the geographical location of the country and it could be vary based on their events and period in which it occurs in a country. It could be centred on different topics such as politics, health, security, football and so on. It simply means the issue relating to the whole of a country or nation rather to the part of it or other nation. The research topic is related to national topics which occur in Nigeria, and it led to series of people's comments posted on *X* platform.

Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) was formed in Lagos State in the year 1992 at a time notorious armed robbers were disturbing the good and peace living people of the state. People could not sleep with their two eyes closed in the night for the fear of being robbed. The Special Anti-Robbery was formed as faceless police unit that fight against armed robbers. Within few years of establishment of the unit, it spread across the various states of the country. People feel that SARS is not properly structured and probably it was the cause of the lawless activities being carried out by few bad ones in the unit. The recent reports of police brutality using #EndSars on X, Facebook and other social media platforms has brought public attention to it. The online campaign about different police brutality in the country is not new discussion, however, Nigerian Pop stars, Comedians, Actors etc has over the years expressed their fears and worries on various incidents of police brutality. The Nigerian movie industry, Nollywood, has many times portrayed cases of brutality and corruption within Nigerian police force in their productions e.g “Bloody Night and Corrupt Officer”.

Nigerians who have been subjected to wantom arrests, extortion and extra judiciary killings started a social media campaign using hashtag #EndSars on X, Facebook and other social media platforms to put an end to police brutality in the country. The movement of #Endsars started with the publication of petition written by an activist known as SegunAwosanya. He was the convener of the #EndSars movement. He wrote a petition and it was signed by 10,195 Nigerians and submitted it to the Nigerian National Assembly to scrap the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) unit in the police force. But X campaign started on 2nd of December,2017, when a footage of police officers attached to a unit shot and killed a man surfaced on the internet. The campaign then became a trending topic on X with over 500,000 tweets within some hours. In October 2020, Nigerian changed the online campaign to a street protest, the protest started in Lekki area of

Lagos State and later spread across the state and other southern states of Nigeria. The street protest lasted for many days before it was disrupted, so it became a national issue that attracted international communities and foreign news agencies like BBC and CNN.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Many researchers have carried out stylistic analysis while some researchers approached it from literary angles others approached it from linguistic perspectives. For example, the stylistic analysis of poem titled “Bereft” the researcher analysed the poem from the stylistic point of view¹⁶. The analysis is made on graphological, grammatical, syntactic and phonological patterns. Another scholar worked on Stylistic Analysis of Two Selected Poems ¹⁷” In the researcher’s work he analysed poems of two well known poets of the English Literature namely; E.E Cummings and the Irish noble Laureate Seamus Heaney. In their poems titled “Maggie and Milly and Molly May” and “A kite for Aibhin”. He analysed the poems using the tools of linguistics with a view to make their meaning explicit.

Another researcher work centered on “Othering, Racism, and Stereotyping: A Postcolonial Analysis of Wole Soyinka’s Telephone Conversation”¹⁷; analysis of this was carried out to educate, explicate and expose to everybody that comes across the write up. The researcher analyses the selected poems stylistically and looked into the concept of lexico-syntactic patterns and choices, the phonological and graphological devices to proof his claims in the paper.

Another researcher also works on Stylistic Analysis or the Short Story titled “The Last Word” ¹⁹. The scholar performed the formative elements of the story, such as characters, point of view and

allegorical elements are vividly discussed so as to give a clearer picture and better understanding of the story. The story is analysed stylistically in terms of figures of speech, grammatical, lexical and phonological schemes bare considered following the parameters of linguistic and stylistic levels proposed by Leech and Short features like repetition, parallelism, alliteration, assonance, consonance and rhyme are centered and focused.

More so another scholar did a graphological appraisal of the Social Media Language of Students of Selected Higher Institutions in Kwara State²⁰. This study examined the variability of linguistic choices on technology-based, interactive platform- the social media. The research showed the individual varying choices of linguistic usage at the level of graphology, morphology and syntax.

Another research has focused on Language, Style and Meaning in Selected Press Adverts on Chieftaincy Matters²¹, the paper attempt to probe into the media strategy at advertising issues on chieftaincy matters and unveil the working of language, meaning and style. The research exercises on stylistics which peruses the meaning in making strategies adopted by the press especially in making meaning to the end consumers, that is, the audience. It basically deals with the stylistic analysis of the texts under the phonological, graphological, lexical and semantic considerations such as opening (titles), pictorial representation of the individual, identification, information on installation programme and closing. Some research works are carried out on X; Stylistic variation on the Donald Trump's X account: a linguistic analysis on the tweets posted between 2009 and 2018²². The researcher presented the first detailed description of stylistic variation on the Trump X based on a multivariate analysis of grammatical co-occurrence patterns in tweets posted between 2009 and 2018. He identified four general patterns of stylistic variation, which he interpreted as representing the degree of conversational, campaigning, engaged, and advisory discourse²².

Many other studies have been carried out on the use of English language on social media. Such studies cover varieties of subjects such as spelling pattern on social media which was identified as a potential language change activity⁵. Specifically, linguistic studies carried out on tweeter are also available. The Effect of *X* on Developing Writing Skill in English as a Foreign Language ² where the scholar investigated the effect of *X* on EFL writing and whether *X* has an effect on: ideas and content, organization, voice and style. The study concluded that the use of tweeter enhances writing performance of the EFL learners. Protests and blood on the streets: repressive state, police brutality and #EndSARS protest in Nigeria is another effort in this regard. It investigates how the Nigerian state is implicated in police brutality and clampdown on the #EndSARS protesters and its implications for democracy, development and national security. This study concluded that the use of heavy firearms against unarmed protesters escalated the conflict from civil disobedience to a demand to a change of government. Thus, establishment of institutional mechanisms and disciplinary measures that control the excesses of security agents during civil protests is imperative to protect civil and human rights of protesters.

From the foregoing, not much has been done on stylistic analysis of #EndSARS protest on *X*, hence the need for this study on Stylistic Analysis of Some Selected Comments on 2020 #EndSARS protest on *X*.

1.3. Aim and Objectives

The aim of the study is to carry out stylistic analysis of selected comments on 2020 Lekki EndSARS protest on *X*. The specific objectives are to;

- i. identify the stylistic features in the selected comments on 2020 Lekki EndSARS protest on *X*;
- ii. categorize the selected comments on 2020 EndSARS protest on *X*; and
- iii. discuss the stylistic features in the selected comments on 2020 EndSARS protest on *X* in relation to meaning making.

1.4. Research Questions

- i. What are the stylistic features in the selected comments on 2020 Lekki End SARS protest on *X*?
- ii. What are the different categories of text in the selected comments on 2020 Lekki End SARS protest on *X*?
- iii. How do the stylistic features presented in the selected comments on 2020 Lekki End SARS protest on *X* generate meaning?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study served as a repertoire of knowledge to stylisticians in analysing the features of stylistic, and it served as an eye opener to the linguistic features that can be seen in speeches made by social media users on the internet. The study will also assist critics and those who area of interest are centered on stylistics to know the different categories that speeches made on social media platforms could be categorized into, and it will provide them with overwhelming sensitivity with the language use on social media.

The study revealed different categories of comments gathered on the 2020 Lekki EndSARS protest and its discussion on the ideological implications exposed people or students to the embedded meaning in writings or speeches on social media platforms, these speeches could be misinterpreted in another way round.

1.6. Scope of the Study

This study focused on stylistics analysis of selected comments on 2020 Lekki EndSARS protest on X and it is strictly limited to some selected comments gathered on X basically for the following reasons;

Firstly, the research did not consider other social media platforms because the #EndSar movement began on X and it was mostly used during the online campaign on EndSars, and

numerous comments could be accessed on X. Secondly, X is known as a social media platform that is mostly use for political and economical issues throughout the globe. X is very easy to access by both registered and non-registered users; registered users have access to post tweet, retweet and make comment on different trending topics while non-registered users had access to read comments, and retweet post on X platform. So it gives room for more access to data. X hashtag symbol # and tagging of people, organisations account create a good capacity of reaching large number of people globally. Lastly the research work is limited in scope because of the limited time the researcher have to conduct, analyse and present this research work and due to financial capability of the researcher. This could not allow the researcher to go very deep in the analysis of all the comments on 2020 LekkiEndSARS protest on X.

The research considers the levels of stylistic such as graphological, morphological, phonological, grammatical, syntactic and semantic levels. And the meaning of the words, phrases, clauses and sentences used by the commenters will be extensively discuss because it has great importance in the analysis of the selected comments linguistically.

1.7 Operational Definition of Terms

Style: This is the method a writer used in writing a text, the concept and the uniqueness a writer adopted in writing any literary or linguistic text.

Stylistics: It is the study of style in analyzing a linguistic or literary text.

Stylistics Analysis: Stylistic analysis is usually made for the purpose of commenting on quality and meaning in a text. In linguistics, stylistics analysis refers to the identification of patterns of usage in speech and writing.

Graphonology: It is the analogous study of language's writing system; the formalized rules of spellings

Phonology: It is the study of the sound systems of a given language; the formal rules of pronunciation.

Morphological: This is the study of morphemes, and process of word formation in language.

Lexical: It is the study of the way individual words and idioms tends to pattern in different linguistics context; on the semantic level in terms of stylistic.

Grammatical: This level analyzes the internal structure of sentences in a language and the way they functions in sequences.

Syntax: It is the study of how words are joined to form phrases, clauses and sentences.

Semantics: It is the study of meaning in language.

Lekki protest: This is the event or protest that occurred in Lekki area of Lagos State Nigeria, the protest lasted for weeks before it was disrupted by Nigerian military officers.

X Platform: X is an American microblogging and social networking service on which users post and interact with messages known as "tweets". Registered users can post, like and retweet tweets, but unregistered users can only read them.

Commenter: They are the different people who make comments on social media platforms during the protest across the X.

SARS: The Special Anti-Robbery Squad was a Nigerian Police Force unit created in the late 1992 to deal with crimes associated with robbery, motor vehicle theft, kidnapping, cattle rustling and firearms.

#ENDSARS: End SARS is a decentralized social movement, and series of mass protests against police brutality in Nigeria. The slogan calls for the disbanding of the Special Anti-Robbery

Squad, a notorious unit of the Nigerian Police with a long record of abuses.

Extra judicial killing: is the killing of a person by governmental authorities without the sanction of any judicial proceeding or legal process. They are often target political, trade union, dissident, religious and social figures.

Pre post –Tweets or retweets before the night of October 20, 2020

Post tweets or retweets - Post after the night of October 20, 2020

Alleged killing: The unconfirmed accusation against the Government and Nigerian Army on the killing of the protesters at the Lekki Toll gate the night of October 20, 2020

Agitation - This is the exact thing the post seeks to make demand(s)

Ideology – This is perspective form where the post is constructed or coming from.

Interest – The level of interest or commitment to the course to which the post is made

Nature of the post –This category is based on the origin of post whether it is a new post of a comment on an existing post.

Period of the post: This talks about whether the post is before or after October 20. The tweets before October 20 are classified as pre October 20 while tweet or retweets after October 20 are classified as post October 20.

Foregrounding: This is a term that describes drawing attention to certain linguistic features or patterns in a text, often through deviation from norms or expectations. Foregrounding can create emphasis, evoke emotion, or convey artistic effects.

Anaphoric Reference: Anaphoric reference in this study simply refers to a word in a post that refers back to another word.

Cataphoric Reference: This is when a word refers to another word that is introduced later in the text, while

Exophoric Reference: This refers to something outside the post.

Endophoric Reference: This refers to something within the text, it can either be cataphoric or anaphoric.

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CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

2.0. Introduction: This section is done under the following subheadings:

Conceptual Review -

Empirical Review and

Theoretical Review

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Stylistics

Stylistics is a sub-field of linguistics that studies style, which has to do with the selection and use of language for effective communication in literary and nonliterary texts¹ Stylistics, Stylistics pays particular attention to linguistic features of a text that are essentially fundamental from classical era to contemporary times. Stylistics is an objective intellectual indulgence that deploys approaches and insights from the literature in the analysis of texts. The study of language style using the theories and techniques of current linguistics is known as modern stylistics. Typically, it is divided into two categories: literary stylistics and general stylistics. While the former covers the examination of the qualities of various literary works, the latter concentrates on the analysis of stylistic elements in different styles². The study of a text's style falls under the applied linguistics field of stylistics. It also examines a text's formal elements³.

Stylistic efforts to provide guiding concepts, such as socialization, meaning creation and reception, critical discourse analysis, and literary criticism, that may account for the specific decisions made by individuals and social groups when using language. The study of language variants and how their characteristics place the language in context is known as stylistics. This implies that the language used at a given moment for a certain occasion will dictate the presentation style. A unique word called stylistics can be used to identify how form and effect relate to one another in a certain language context.

The primary goal of stylistics is to analyze language habits in order to distinguish between features that are common to all significant occasions and those that are specific to a particular type of social context. It also aims to explain, to the greatest extent feasible, why such features have been employed in light of their function within the social context. "Features" in this context refer to any segment of speech or writing that may be distinguished from the general vocabulary, as well as any word's portion, sequence, or manner of utterance. A characteristic can only be found in a certain set of social situations. These are referred to as stylistically notable or distinguishing features.

Language

Language is essential in the process of communication⁵; it is the exchange of ideas, thoughts, and messages. In this sense, advertising might be compared to a correspondence. Given the important role language plays in communication, its importance in advertising cannot be emphasized. Advertising is a form of communication that involves three key components: the advertiser (the sender), the message (the advertisement itself), and the recipient (the target

audience). The advertisement uses imaginative and compelling wording to grab the audience's attention.

The distribution of sentence lengths, the use of specific language registers, the use of lexical items, the use of rhetorical devices, semantic elements, graphological features, etc. are all examples of stylistics' characteristics. Furthermore, stylistics is a unique term that can be employed to ascertain how form and effect relate to one another in a certain language variety.

Most interpersonal problems stem from a breakdown in communication, which can occasionally be brought on by rude language, casual jokes, squibs, or anecdotes accidentally shared in inappropriate settings. Additionally, it has been suggested that the main contributor to a great deal of organizational conflict is polarizing positioning practices in corporate communication, such as the expression of marginalizing or negatively defining individuals in talks⁶. Similarly, persistently harmful constructions and (mis)representations of people and groups that are mistaken for hate speech or verbal hostility have frequently led to violent clashes in the long term.

Linguists have tried to explain these processes in terms of how language influences how conflict develops and intensifies or how it plays a role in the commencement of conflict.

Discourse is strongly interconnected with how conflict may develop and intensify⁷. Over time, as conflicts, wars, and political violence have escalated globally, so too has the study of language and conflict at the social and political levels. However, as scholar contends, discourse analytic research has not historically considered the study of conflict or radical disagreement to be a serious or even viable issue⁸.

Discourse approaches have been applied to violent protests, conflictual activisms and political conflicts^{9,10,11}.

2.1.2. Historical Overview of Stylistics

Stylistics, as a field of study, has its roots in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, emerging from the broader discipline of linguistics and literary criticism. Its development has been shaped by various linguistic, literary, and philosophical movements, as well as by advances in technology and methodology.

Early Influences (19th Century):

The groundwork for stylistics was laid by philologists and literary scholars who sought to analyze language and literature in a systematic way. Figures like Ferdinand de Saussure and Vladimir Propp made significant contributions to the study of language structure and narrative theory, respectively. Saussure's structuralist approach, outlined in his work "Course in General Linguistics" (published posthumously in 1916), emphasized the systematic analysis of language elements and their interrelations, laying the foundation for the structural analysis of literary texts.

Russian Formalism (Early 20th Century)

The Russian Formalist movement, which emerged in the early 20th century, had a profound influence on the development of stylistics. Scholars like Roman Jakobson, Viktor Shklovsky, and Boris Eikhenbaum focused on the formal properties of literature, exploring devices such as defamiliarization, parallelism, and deviation. Jakobson's essay "Linguistics and Poetics"

(published in 1960) is particularly notable for its exploration of the poetic function of language and the role of sound patterns, rhythm, and imagery in literary communication.

Prague School (1920s-1930s)

The Prague School of Linguistics, led by scholars such as Roman Jakobson, Nikolai Trubetzkoy, and Jan Mukařovský, made significant contributions to the study of language structure and literary style. Jakobson's concept of the "poetic function," Trubetzkoy's work on phonology, and Mukařovský's theories of literary structure and function laid the groundwork for the structural analysis of literary texts.

Structuralism and Semiotics (Mid-20th Century)

The rise of structuralism and semiotics in the mid-20th century further shaped the development of stylistics. Structuralist theorists like Roland Barthes and Claude Lévi-Strauss emphasized the systematic analysis of signs and sign systems in both language and culture. Barthes' work "Elements of Semiology" (1964) and "S/Z" (1970) introduced semiotic methods for analyzing literary texts, focusing on the interplay of codes, symbols, and narrative structures.

Functional Linguistics (Later 20th Century)

In the latter half of the 20th century, functional approaches to linguistics, inspired by the work of Michael Halliday and others, began to influence stylistic analysis. Functional linguists focused on the communicative functions of language and the social contexts of linguistic production. Halliday's systemic functional grammar, outlined in works such as "Language as Social

Semiotic" (1978), provided a framework for analyzing the stylistic features of texts in relation to their social and cultural contexts.

Cognitive Stylistics (Late 20th Century to Present)

Cognitive approaches to stylistics have gained prominence since the late 20th century, with scholars like Reuven Tsur, Gerard Steen, and Peter Stockwell exploring the cognitive processes involved in literary reading and interpretation. Cognitive stylistics examines how readers perceive and interpret stylistic features such as metaphor, irony, and narrative structure, drawing on insights from cognitive psychology and neuroscience.

Digital Stylistics (21st Century)

The advent of digital technologies has led to new approaches to stylistic analysis, including corpus linguistics, computational stylistics, and distant reading techniques. Scholars like Matthew Jockers and Franco Moretti have used computational methods to analyze large corpora of texts and identify stylistic patterns and trends. Digital stylistics also encompasses the analysis of language use in digital media, such as social media, blogs, and online forums, reflecting the evolving nature of communication in the digital age.

The historical development of stylistics has been shaped by a range of linguistic, literary, and technological influences, from early structuralist and formalist theories to more recent cognitive

and digital approaches. These diverse perspectives have contributed to the richness and complexity of stylistic analysis, making it a dynamic and interdisciplinary field of study.

2.1.3. Style

Style refers to a specific method or process used to accomplish anything. From a linguistics viewpoint, stylistics deals with the analysis, interpretation, and appraisal of texts of all kinds—literary or not—that are created using language's verbal machinery⁴.

“Style” is a vigorous term with a special meaning in a speech, a number of working with technical definitions and an implied association related to the academic field of stylistics. In this aspect, It is perhaps important that stylistics, the study of style has also attracted competing arguments and criticisms. A scholar saw the concept of style as totally vague, even when implicitly defined as literary style: A style is a method of writing – that is what the word means. And that is almost as much as one can say with assurance on the subject, which has been remarkably unencumbered by theoretical insights.⁸

He opines that a reader has a social feeling for the style of a text they read, differentiating that style from its original feeling for the quiddity of a writer's linguistic method, a sense of differences between stretches of literary discourse which are not different in content.

He cites the clarification of the concept of style “ as one of the tasks of present stylistics and as the way of developing more precise, inclusive, and objective ways of describing style than the impressionistic generalizations of modern criticism”.⁹

He has a different opinion about style, by defining style as follows: ¹⁰

- i. Style as good writing.
- ii. Style as individual manner.
- iii. Style as general property of writing.
- iv. Style as a manner of discourse or a tone of speaking.

According to another scholar style is defined as “The utterance in the same language which convey approximately the same information, but which are different in their linguistic structure can be said to differ in style”.¹¹

Style is understood as an emphasis (expressive, affective or aesthetic) added to the information conveyed by the linguistic structure, without alteration of meaning, in other words, language expresses and that style stresses.

A well known contributor to the definition of style dealt with the objectively verifiable definitions of style and groups them into six categories:¹²

- i. Style as a shell surrounding a pre-existing core of thought or expressions.
- ii. Style as the choice between alternative expressions.
- iii. Style as a set of individual characteristics.
- iv. Style as a deviation from norm.
- v. Style as a set of collective characteristics.
- vi. Style as those relations among linguistic entities that are stable in terms of wider spans of a text than the sentence

Meanwhile another scholar asserted the definitions of style in the following way.^{Thakur13}

- i. Style as a feature of our general behaviour.
- ii. Style as a feature of thought.
- iii. Style as distinguishing feature of every writer.
- iv. Style as a feature of both thought and language.
- v. Style defined in relation to the subject matter.
- vi. Style as ornament.
- vii. Style defined as inter-sentence link.
- viii. Style as choice. ix. Style as the deviation.
- ix. Style as the aggregate of contextual probabilities.

“Style may be defined in the context of language as purposeful language variation” He again quotes that “Style is the variation in language proceeding from the exercise of freedom while meeting the exigencies of the available resources of language and of the conveying of meaning”¹³.

The consideration of what constituted literary style and how it might be studied mostly traced back to ancient periods. In recent years, an important aspect in its ways of analysis was a 1958 conference was held at Indiana University in which many scholars of different disciplines came together in order to discuss the concept and how it might be studied and analyzed in a more scientific way. The speakers who were represented were categorized under psychology, linguistics and literary criticism;

Their submission focuses on an important question of how individual style could be identified, and how it could be known and related in any text, how writer make linguistic choices, and whether consideration should be given to poetic language so that it could deviate from some

assumed norms of language. The conference participants grapple with the problem of form and content, and to what extent these are separable. But the major problem of these papers is the different definitions of style propounded and offered by each speaker, both within and between disciplines. For example, A scholar in the field of psychology focuses on measurable features of style treating the phenomenon as a single deviation. Therefore, style is defined as: as a way individual deviate from some certain norms for the situations in which he is encoding, these deviations being in the statistical properties of those structural features for which there exists some degree of choice in his code.¹⁴

The conference that was held in 1958 also included Jakobson's paper on "Linguistics and Poetics" He work deals with poetic language as a matter of choice and including different functions of poetic language in his work. Traugott and Pratt that was collected by Carter and Stockwell (2008), discuss the concept of style as authorial choice. Their idea is developed in the area of the uses and application of generative grammar to literary a practice which is now known seldom pursued. The practically observed content as a concept that is separated to the form of a text, which will be conditioned by pragmatic circumstances in which it is applied, for example, to address a child. They identify choice to be applicable to both content and form and they finally submitted that choices an author makes may be regarded as deviation from grammatical norms, and this is the only choice that is available (and any other norm is not established but becomes in use by the text itself. Another view was propounded by Scholar: "in this view, style is seen as the making of conscious and unconscious choices of certain linguistic forms and structures in preference to others that could have been chosen but were not".¹⁵

These choices could be seen at different levels of language in the text ranging from graphology, and phonology through Lexis and syntax to semantics and pragmatic level. He regarded semantic

content and style of a particular text as essentially unified but the purpose of analysis was separated from his assertion and belief.

Style has been variously defined from a variety of perspectives. However, it is generally stated that the word “stylistics” is derived from the word “style”, though stylistics is not synonymous with style. Another scholar opined that “style is the effective use of language, especially in prose, whether to make statements or to arouse emotions”¹⁶. It involves first of all the power to put facts with clarity and brevity. A scholar refer to “style as the way in which language is used in a given context, by a given person for a given purpose”.⁶ This provides a distinction between the concept of “langue and parole” (as posited by Saussure) and it also helps to clarify their assertion that “langue is known as code system or general rules peculiar to speakers of a language and parole is the particular way of using the system or selections from the system that speakers or writers make on different occasions”.⁶ For example, related to the official way by which weather in our environment is forecasted e.g “bright interval”, “scattered showers” etc while expressions like “lovely day”, “a bit chilling”, is categorized as the style of discourse used everyday about the weather in our environment. Therefore, style is related to 'parole' in the total selection of linguistic repertoire. However this definition is very general; therefore we shall limit the scope of style to written discourse.

Some specialists in style discourse like Carter (1982), Leech and Short (1981) and Mills (1995) differ slightly and agree generally in their understanding of the subject. The attribute of style constitutes the source of controversy. Scholars agreed that “style can apply to both spoken and written (both literary and non-literary) varieties of language”.⁶Leech and Short But in most situations, style is associated with written literature. Style in written literature also submits itself to varying definitions and emphasis. Sometimes, style refers to the distinct habits of a particular writer and

it is from this perspective that one can refer to the style of Helon Habila, Chimamanda Adichie, and so on.

From another point of view, style can be said to apply to the act by which a language is used in a particular genre, period, school of writing or in combination of two of the listed elements. Thus, we have “epistolary style”, in early 18th century of style, “euphuistic style” and “Victorian age style” and so on. In the corpus of writing stated above, some characteristics by which language are capable of abstracting what is exist as style.

Style can also be seen in terms of relational context. Hence, one can talk about the style of “X” referring to characteristics of language use and correlating these with some extra linguistic factors which we may call the “stylistic domain”. Here, the writer might define some category of writings in which the characteristics of language use are to be found. However, if the corpus of writing is varied, mostly, it is difficult to identify a common set of linguistic habits. This can extended to authorial style; in literary history, there is a connection between style and an author’s personality. Very often, attempts are made to relate a piece of writing to one author or another on the evidence of the author’s style of writing. Also, certain linguistic habits are noticeable and this somewhat betrays him in all that he writes.

From the foregoing, they observe that, “Style is the linguistic characteristics of a particular text, since the way people use language give us information about their physical type, their geographical, ethnic and social background and the type of context in which they are communicating”.⁶ In whichever case, some distinctive features which make someone as belonging to a group, or performing a particular type of activity along with others seem to exist. Thus a person’s language use conveys information of a purely idiosyncratic kind.

The above ways of viewing style can be classified into two broad types: the evaluative and the descriptive. “Evaluative style is thought of in a critical way; the features that make someone or something stand out from and under distinguished background”.¹⁷ In this sense, style implies a desire or desired original ways of production, as when a particular person is complemented for “having style” or condemned for not adopting the use of style. The descriptive perspective lacks the core judgment but describes the set of distinctive characteristics that identify objects, persons, periods, or places. Both senses are applicable in language discourse. Evaluative approach is an essential part of aesthetic approach to language and is implicit in such areas as elocution, oratory and literary criticism.

On the one hand, descriptive approach is found more in scientific studies such as the various branches of linguistics, where there is a concern for objective identification without evaluation. However, a common trend runs through these various traditions. Style according to He always involves “an appreciation of contrast between alternative locations, period, appearance or “Shakespearean” from “non-Shakespearean”, “formal” from “informal”, “scientific” from “religious” and so on”¹⁷. Thus, style can be viewed as the set of language features that make people distinctive – the basis of their personal linguistic identity.

This follows that the concept of choice is central to stylistic study. This is because, to a large extent, style is seen as the (conscious or unconscious) selection of a set of linguistic features from all possibilities in a language. The effect these features convey can be understood only by intuitively sensing the choices that have been made (as when we listen to a poetic rhyme or a joke). But there are situations when the needs to develop a more analysed approach, like when we express our opinion about a particular use of language. For instance, when the need to explain our responses to others or even advise others on how to respond (as in the teaching of

literature), our intuition needs to be supplemented by a more objective account of style. It is this approach that is called stylistics (Crystal, 1982 cited in Muftah, 2003).

There are different existing perspectives to the study of style. Several scholars have expressed divergent viewpoints on stylistic analysis, but each of these is not adequate enough to describe the entirety of what style actually entails. Enkvist, Nils Erik, Spencer John, Gregory Michael J, (1978) and Azuike (1992) have identified six broad perspectives from which the concept of style has often been viewed in scholarly studies in the past. Some of these perspectives are reviewed below.

a. Style as Choice

While discussing the term 'Stylistics', it is also important to give more attention to the notion of choice. Choice is an essential instrument of style so far it deals with the variations and the options which are available to authors. Since language performs the functions of giving it users with more choices in a given situation, there are different kinds of choices that are available to a writer at any given text. This depends on the ways and the particular situation a writer wishes to use in expressing his thoughts and opinions in his work of art. They clarify the relationship between language and choice “as the characteristic choices that are adopted in a text by the writer, at times there is a reflection of writer’s ego and the social background condition of his environment”^{18,19}. In knowing the appropriate choice of linguistic elements there are two important choice of plans that are available to the writer and which are the pragmatic and the syntagmatic. The pragmatic angle is also known as vertical choice angle while the syntagmatic is known to be horizontal angle. The vertical angle created room for different choices between one item and the other items; the writer then make use of the most appropriate word. Thus, the

pragmatic angle is capable of giving account for the fillers that occupy a particular slot level, for example, a writer or speaker can choose between different categories of words like 'start', 'commence', 'go', and 'begin', 'kick' and 'proceed' which definitely mean the same thing but the writer is given room to choose any of these that is appropriate in his text while speaking or writing..

b. Style as the Man

This is regarded to man as a different person, that is twins born from the same woman cannot do things in the same way or manner. It simply focuses on individual differences. Character of a man cannot be measured to be the same. Individuals have their unique ways of speaking and writing, style as a man focuses on the writer personality and his way of thinking before writing a text in any art work. A opined that “there are always unique features that differentiate between writing of two great Nigeria linguistic scholars Soyinka and Achebe, based on their use of language i.e use of dictions among other things”²⁰. A person style may be shaped by his social and political background, religion belief, culture, levels of education and the geographical location that the writer was raised etc. In a simple form, style as a man sees style as an index of writer’s personality. For instance, a writer may exhibit different personalities in his style of writing and this may occur because of the writer different experiences about life and other necessary factors related to style as a man may be an important excuses.

c. Style as a Deviation from a Norm

When a message or writing style is not following some certain linguistics rules or norms then we can say that the manner of speaking or writing deviated from the norms. The concept of style as deviation is based on the notion that there are acceptable rules, conventions and regulations that guide different activities that must be done. But when these conventions are not strictly followed and obeyed then there is deviation. Deviation in stylistics was firstly expressed by a scholar and quoted by Garvin “ is majorly concentrated with the use of different styles from the expected norm of language use in particular genre of writing”⁴. It removal from what is known as common practices. Language deviation is also known as the intentional way adopted by writer in selecting his choice of language uses without conforming with the established rules or norms of language. Language is a system organized in an organic structure by certain rules and it provides all it rules such as phonetic, grammatical, lexical etc. Thus, any writing or work of art that is set to avoid these rules or norms is said to deviated from established norms of language. They believe that “ the idea of style as deviation is favored by the 'generative frame of reference’”^{18,19}.

It is an archaic concept which distances from the work of such scholars. Just like another scholar who see style to be foregrounding and opines that “the violation of the norm of the standard... is what makes possible the poetic utilization of language”^{22Mukarouvsky}.

Deviation is defined and interpreted in modern-day stylistic scholarship, (Traugott and Pratt, 1980, for example,) levels of language such as phonological, graphological, Syntactic, lexico-semantic etc. At the level of graphological for instance, the capitalization may be seen where they are not suppose to appear in sentence, at the level of syntactic, subject and verb may disagree within the conform of the established rules in terms of number, or the order which elements of clauses need to follow may not be strictly observed e.g adjunct may proceed the

subject. At the lexico-semantic level, words that should not be used together may deliberately brought together just to achieve some uniqueness in writer choice e.g “dangerous safety”, “open secret” etc.

d. Style as Situation

“Language is usually used in different environment and according to the circumstances which they are meant to be used for in a particular period. It is the text that mostly determine choices used in speaking or writing”²³. Some particular choice of words are appropriate for certain occasions and periods while some are considered to be vulgar, taboo, or abominable words. For instance statement like “that theory is fucking up” could not be use by a professor in an academic environment. Consequently, a particular situation has great influence on the choice made at any level of language entry to describe, and the concept of register further discuss this particular concept of style as situation because the field of discourse, mode of discourse and base of tenor in register gives specific language or style to be adopted by different professions such as language of medicine, language of sport commentaries, the language of criminals-agot, the language used in courtroom, classroom etc. The here analyze how these different facets are brought to bear in Itabila's creativity in the selected of two novels.

2.1. 4. Level of Stylistic Analysis

1. Graphology

Writing systems are referred to as graphologies. It addresses a variety of punctuation issues, such as bolding, italicizing, semicolons, apostrophes, commas, full stops, dashes, paragraphing, spacing, omission marks, question marks, exclamation marks, and brackets. But examining the text's graphology needs to be related to other linguistic levels¹². This is due to the fact that the "utilization of these features in the texts under consideration has some semantic and stylistic implications," as confirmed by another study¹³.

2. Lexico-semantic Level

At the level of morphology, writers (especially on social media) employ different linguistic techniques to make their write-ups captivating. They employ basic formal and informal language, or a combination of the two, in addition to slang, Pidgin, and local dialects. They also purposefully misspell words or add prefixes and suffixes to common terms. The commercial is made more intriguing by these freshly generated words, which maintain their original meaning while standing out owing to their unique spelling. To convey a product's exotic quality, loan words are also used. In commercials for the beauty industry, verbs are important. Action verbs and phrasal verbs are frequently employed. When describing characteristics of a product, like its size, color, nature, and quality, adjectives are required¹⁴.

Foregrounding

Literature is “a kind of writing which ... represents an organized violence committed on ordinary speech”. Literature transforms and intensifies ordinary language, deviates systematically from every day speech”.⁴ This deliberate deviation or violation grammatical rules of the language is known as foregrounding. It is a key term in stylistics translated by Garvin (1964) from the Czech term “acutalisace” meaning “actualization” coined by Jan Mukarovsky (Wales, 1989:181-2 and Leech, 2007).

Literature is a de-automatization of language, while language is an automatization. In other words, language is the background, while literature is the foreground as literature thrives in deviation which “brings the message to the forecourt of the reader’s attention”.²

It is the creative use of language and the creativity is equated with the use of unorthodox or deviant forms of language for stylistic effects and meaning (Leech.2007). Linguistic deviation is a key feature or characteristic of literary language as literature always wrestles with words, breaks or bends language, making it to obey a will.

Foregrounding makes linguistic features stand out for a second look. This make Cyril Connolly to define literature as “the art of writing something that is read twice”²⁴. Literature is a fine or beautiful writing derived from the French expression “belles lettres” meaning fine or beautiful writing”. (Eagleton, 2008:9). Hence it is the beautiful rendition of imagination in word and action (Ogum, 2002:15). Foregrounding cuts across every level of linguistics—syntax, phonology, semantics, morphology as well as graphology and the style of a literary text is a totality of all foregrounded elements.

Helon Habila's works are characterized by foregrounded linguistic devices. His style of writing is unusual and is considered conspicuous because it catches the attention of the readers. The pattern in which he has presented his works captures certain deviations from the norm. This is made obvious by the choice of his style of writing. The success of both novels is determined by the conscious linguistic choices that Habila has made. These choices range from the organization of the subject matter, to the structure of the works and the grammatical variations. The choice of language use is referred to as the style. A scholar states that "it is of course important to pay attention to what the novelist has to say; but it is equally important to pay attention to the way in which he says it".²⁵ Eustace Palmer The uniqueness of Habila's style provides the need for the linguistic stylistic analysis of his novels WFA&MT which are typical of his style and contain some striking irregularities of form in comparison to "traditional" prose.

Foregrounding is one of the features of stylistic analysis, when we speak or write we often refer to things that were mentioned earlier, haven't been mentioned yet, or were mentioned in another context or at another time.

Endophoric - Endophoric reference enhances coherence and cohesion by linking different ideas and sections of a text together. It prevents repetition, makes the text easier to follow, and helps to create a smooth and logical flow in the discourse⁴². Endophoric Reference is a linguistic tool that helps to make texts more intelligible and engaging, serving as a means to establish a strong thread weaving the entire text into a coherent narrative. The primary function of Endophoric Reference is to maintain textual cohesion and coherence, linking various parts of a text, and preventing abrupt or disconnected statements. It also helps to avoid unnecessary repetition in a text.

Exophoric -Exophoric Reference refers to something that lies outside the text, unlike Endophoric Reference which refers to an item within the text. Both types of references play vital roles in enhancing communication but are used in different situations and serve various purposes.

Anaphoric reference occurs when a word or phrase refers to something mentioned **earlier** in the discourse. An anaphoric reference happens when a pronoun, word or phrase refers to a noun mentioned earlier in the conversation or writing. Sometimes it occurs within the same sentence, meaning the noun appears sooner in the sentence before the reference word for the noun is applied. Sometimes an anaphoric reference alludes to a noun mentioned a few sentences back or at the beginning of the conversation (TEFL A-Z 13 October, 2023). Anaphoric reference is a linguistic term that refers to the phenomenon where a word or phrase in a sentence refers back to another word or phrase that was previously mentioned in the text or discourse. This reference creates cohesion and coherence in a text by linking different parts of the discourse together. Anaphoric reference is a common feature in natural language and is used extensively in both spoken and written communication. There are several types of anaphoric reference, including pronouns, definite and indefinite noun phrases, and zero anaphora. Pronouns are perhaps the most common form of anaphoric reference. They include words like "he," "she," "it," "they," "this," "that," etc. Pronouns refer back to a previously mentioned noun (or noun phrase) called the antecedent. For example:

"John lost his wallet." (Here, "his" refers back to "John."). Definite and indefinite noun phrases can also serve as anaphors, referring back to a previously mentioned noun phrase. Definite noun phrases use definite articles like "the," while indefinite noun phrases use indefinite articles like "a" or "an." For example: "I saw a dog. The dog was running in the park." (Here, "the dog" refers back to "a dog.")

Zero Anaphora: In some languages, including certain contexts in English, anaphoric reference can be achieved without using an overt word or phrase. This is known as zero anaphora. It relies on context to establish the reference. For example: "Have you seen the new car? Yes, I have." (Here, "I have" implies "I have seen the new car.")

Anaphoric reference is crucial for maintaining coherence and reducing redundancy in discourse. Without it, texts would be disjointed and difficult to follow. It allows speakers and writers to avoid repetition by referring back to previously mentioned entities. Additionally, anaphoric reference helps convey relationships between different elements in a text, contributing to the overall flow and clarity of communication. However, effective anaphoric reference requires careful attention to context and clarity. Ambiguous or unclear references can confuse readers or listeners, leading to misunderstandings. Therefore, writers and speakers must ensure that their use of anaphoric reference is precise and unambiguous.

Cataphoric reference occurs when a word or phrase refers to something mentioned **later** in the discourse. Cataphoric reference is a linguistic phenomenon where a pronoun or phrase refers to something mentioned later in the discourse rather than earlier. In contrast to anaphoric reference, where a pronoun or phrase refers to something mentioned earlier, cataphoric reference occurs when the reference precedes the antecedent it refers to.

Here's a simple example to illustrate cataphoric reference:

John wanted to eat cake, so he went to the bakery.

In this sentence, "he" is the pronoun that refers to "John," which appears later in the sentence. The pronoun "he" precedes its antecedent "John," making it a cataphoric reference.

Cataphoric references are often used for rhetorical or stylistic effect. They can create suspense or anticipation by prompting the reader or listener to anticipate the upcoming information. They can also be used for cohesion in longer texts, by signaling what will be discussed next.

Here are a few more examples:

Before she knew it, Jane had eaten the entire cake.

In this example, "she" refers to "Jane," which comes later in the sentence.

If you need help, ask your teacher. He is always willing to assist.

Here, "he" refers to "your teacher," which is introduced later in the sentence.

Cataphoric references are common in literature, academic writing, and everyday communication. They play a crucial role in maintaining coherence and guiding the reader or listener through a text or conversation.

3. Syntactic Level

The second category is syntax, which focuses on the structure of sentences. Short sentence, phrases and clauses as well as interrogative sentences serve as a quick and effective way to engage readers and elicit their responses. Imperative sentences convey claims, calls, and orders, aligning with the purpose of use¹⁵.

Rhetorical Devices

The third group of rhetorical devices seeks to enhance the impact and persuasiveness of posts and tweets. Rhetoric, as the study of language, is useful in advertising since it uses persuasive

strategies. This category makes use of poetic devices and figurative language. In order to create unique effects, metaphorical language employs word choices that depart from their usual meanings or word orders. Figurative language is an essential part of language and is used in all kinds of discourse. Examples include personification, similes, metaphors, metonymy, synecdoche, and hyperbole. Advertising also makes use of poetic tropes including alliteration, rhyme, repetition, and puns.

4. Phonological Level

Important stylistic elements in spoken language include stress and intonation, which are conveyed by the speaker directly. They are implied in written language by the use of graphics and unique utterance syntactical arrangements (such as inversion, dissociation, and parallel constructions). While grammatical and lexical schemes contain formal and structural repetition (such as anaphora and parallelism) and mirror-image patterns (chaisms), phonological schemes contain phonological patterns of rhyme, alliteration, and assonance. Traditional poetic figures of speech and their unique interpretations can also be found in tropes.

2.2. History of Endsars

In order to combat violent crimes of all kinds, including armed robberies, kidnappings, banditry, etc., the NPF established the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) in 1992¹⁷. It was established

as a result of the growing number of robberies and theft which constituted the largest category of crimes in the early 1990s¹⁸.

EndSARS got its start in 2017 when activists Segun Awosanya and others started requesting on X that the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) be disbanded. According to a 2016 report by Amnesty International, SARS is to blame for widespread torture, abuse of human rights, cruelty, and inhumane treatment of Nigerians detained by them. Additionally, Amnesty International (2020) recorded roughly 82 instances of SARS abuses and arbitrary deaths. At best, this estimate is probably conservative. The campaign's goal was to incite widespread opposition to the Nigeria Police Force's (NPF) Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), a division created to combat violent crimes and armed robberies. The campaign, known on social media as #EndSARS, used a combination of offline and online tactics¹⁹.

On October 3, 2020, footage of purported SARS agents shooting and leaving in the young Nigerian's automobile surfaced on social media²⁰. This gave rise to a national movement and an international phenomenon. As a result, countrywide protests spearheaded by youthful Nigerians had begun in a number of locations by October 7, 2020. Although the demonstrations were nonviolent, the Nigerian Police Force started firing and using tear gas on unarmed protestors. As a result, numerous protestors in various American towns suffered severe injuries and even passed away²¹. The main demands of the protest were the dissolution of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), which had a long history of abuses and extrajudicial killings, as well as the desire for good and accountable administration in the nation²².

The people's short-term economic effects grew worse as the protest continued. One of the most obvious indicators of its effects was a decline in consumer expenditure on non-essential items²³. The largest airport in Nigeria was forced to suspend operations, major highways were closed, and business as usual was suspended due to the protest.

Many instances of police brutality in Nigeria have been documented, including extrajudicial killings, organ harvesting, torture, rape, physical assaults, harassment, extortion, excessive use of force, abductions, unlawful arrests, unauthorized detentions, and violations of all human rights^{24,25,26}.

In the first week of the protest, there were almost 28 million posts on X alone with the hashtag #EndSARS²⁷.

2.3 Social Media Language

Scholars have identified some elements of conflict in social media discourse such as direct agreements, contrastive repetitions, personalization of an argument and sarcasm among others²⁸.

The study of language and conflict at the social and political levels has increased over the years as conflicts, wars and political violence have also heightened around the world. the investigation of conflict or radical disagreement' has not been regarded as a serious, or even legitimate, topic for discourse analytic research in the social media have applied discourse approaches to violent protests, conflictual activisms and political conflicts²⁹.

Language use has the potential to the study of conflict and peace discourse is anchored on the recognition of the power of discourse not only in instigating conflicts but also in resolving them.

While some scholars concentrated on the negative effects of social media such as Social media addiction is identified by the emergence of problems in adolescents: the increased symptoms of depression, bullying, cyberbullying, self-esteem, salivary measures of stress³⁰. Another drawback of social media for English Language Learners was the absence of genuine human connection on computer displays. Also, the writing skills of online networking users have been negatively impacted by the new communication style³¹ Other scholars identified its positive effects such as creativity, information dissemination and potential for language change³²; it helps to fight the menace of COVID 19³³.

The Internet is accessible to people especially the youths because they only need their phones to access the Internet³⁴ and become 'netizens'. Digital literacy was established from the history of computer and information literacy³⁵. Cyber society received hoax news every day and it was more than one. The most widely used media in spreading hoaxes is social media³⁵. Social media work environments are typically thought of as being close to communication, trading, sharing, common relationships, and similar groups³⁶. Certain researchers have chosen to intentionally arrange these long-distance informal communication destinations according to their typical capacities, despite the fact that the internet networking instruments or stages are questionable, adaptable, and diverse³⁷. Considering that this analysis is correct, Iraqis need to contribute significantly by reading through a variety of channels, such as social media, where English is widely used³⁸.

2.2 Empirical Review

This aspect of review looked at researches others have carried out related to the subject of study with view to situating the study into the body of knowledge. The Impact of Social Media in English Language learning has been studied in Northern Iraq. Written interview was used to elicit responses from secondary school learners, language educators, and teachers in both private and non-public schools and colleges using Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities- Threats (SWOT) matrix. The study showed that social media possess several strengths or opportunities in English language learning at large. Be that as it may, their couple of traps and dangers have likewise become possibly the most important factor and caused obstruction in language learning. The concluded that socail media is useful for English language learning.

Another related work in this area is Stylistic Analysis of Some Selected Nigerian Newspaper Readers' Facebook Comments. The study conducts a stylistic analysis of a few Facebook comments made by readers of Nigerian newspapers. Utilizing a few of the most popular news items from their Facebook pages, the websites of two national newspapers were specifically chosen to create a corpus for the research. The study examined rhetorical and graphological elements in the reader comments. The results indicate that, on the graphological side, there is a preponderance of coinages, acronyms, mixed capitalization, and small letters; on the rhetorical side, there are rhetorical inquiries and repetition. The study comes to the conclusion that readers' comments on Facebook about newspapers differ from those in hardcopy copies in terms of quantity and quality. Facebook comments from readers prefer to be unorthodox when speaking English usage of language. The research suggests that remarks made by newspaper readers on social media be exposed to further stylistic examination.

This paper focused on a stylistic analysis of political comments on the Edo 2020 Gubernatorial election that was conducted on September 19, 2020. In her selection, the researcher identified six

political news article analysis: News commentary/reports from two online newspapers (Independent and Daily Post). The subject matter of this research was to analyze the collected data according to the purposes of the study which are syntactic, Phonological and graphological features as identified from the highlighted political commentaries. Analysis was based on the theory of Systemic Functional Grammar by Michael Halliday. The research analysis breakdown method was qualitative research analysis. Nevertheless, the descriptive survey method was used to process the gathered information and data, as well as the research identified in the carriers. The findings revealed simple and non-simple, their attributes and declarative and imperative sentences as well, pairing elements, the use of vowels and consonants, phonetic repetitions, and phonetic reversals are some of the various methods of phonological, called figures of sound. Therein lies repetition, alliteration, assonance and even consonance could be found. Items like abbreviations, compacted words, symbols, and small letters where it is appropriate. Use of capital letters to start sentences are evident in some of the comments. Predominantly use deviational and non-deviational foregrounding to grab the attention of the readers. On this note, the scholars therefore concluded that all these stylistic features make this study original, they asserted that this particular analysis was unique in comparison to all other stylistic analyses.

Effect of the EndSars Protest on the Nigerian Economy is another study that examined the Effect of the EndSars Protest on the Nigerian economy ³⁹; with specific set objectives to find out the causes of the EndSars protest in Nigeria; ascertain the effect of the EndSars protest in Nigeria and proffer possible solutions to the causes of the EndSars protest in Nigeria. Given the scope of the work, the study employed the survey research method and embraced the structural-functional theory. Thus, a qualitative research methodology was used. Secondary sources, such as news articles, journal articles, and other internet sites, provided the data. However, a

survey of the literature reveals that SARS is infamous for its violence, violations of human rights, and lack of responsibility for its acts. In addition, the protest caused the Nigerian economy to incur enormous losses of billions of naira. The 1943 adoption of the Police Act gave police personnel considerable discretionary powers, which allowed for the abuse of power. According to the study's conclusion, the EndSars protest has raised awareness of police brutality in Nigeria among the international community as well as within Nigerians and their country's economy. Accordingly, the study suggests that state governments work with security agencies, other stakeholders (such as traditional/religious institutions and Civil Society Organizations) to open channels of communication with the public and pay attention to the millions of voices demanding police reform; there should be significant changes made to the way the police and the community interact; additionally, the federal and state governments should invest in youth employment to give young people in the nation access to stable employment opportunities and help the economy grow.

Discourse Analysis in Social Media is another effort in the right direction in linguistic analysis on social media⁴⁰. This study explores discourse analysis on social media and submits that it is crucial to regard texts, language, or communication as individuals in a specific social situation. passively observe and narrate reality but they create meaning, socially construct the world and name the world The general sense that is given by the interaction of the text and the ideology of both the author and the reader is have changed due to the possibilities of public communication that are freed due to social media applications including the X, Facebook, and blogging. Is also clear that new methods are required for data collection as content goes through transformations and becomes design, images or data that requires integration. more language used in online than to offline in,As a definition, the term 'social media' encompasses 'Internet-based applications

that are premised on the principles and architecture of Web 2. None means that social content and applications are no longer written and released by people, but rather are in an ongoing process of being created and reshaped by all users in a co-active and co-creative manner” (Kaplan & Haenlein, The purpose of our investigative work is to discuss various approaches to the study of discourse. they are facing in this new online environment. Despite the currently large variety of platforms, some attributes can partly be generalized Even though objects and relations of the public are potentials to undergo transformations and effective structures in the public the forms in. It could be that one of the areas of convergence of postmodern discourse may be join points. Thus, while the view of the system aspect is one of the key notions, the other thing that is also important is the view of the users who generate the content. So, the three steps of the discourse As a result, the three steps of the discourse have to be considered: production, formation and reception. We attempt to look for new models which are wanted to address how technology influences the form and content of these technologies in the distribution of content and discourse.

The Impact of Social Media in English Language Learning is another qualitative research conducted as a case study to investigate the effects of social media in English. Language acquisition as practiced here in Northern Iraq. 10 subjects were purposively selected, This sample involved secondary school learners, language teachers, and teachers from both private and non-private sectors. colleges, ESL teachers, and a teacher of Teaching English to Students of Other Languages. the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats information gathered from the participants from the results of written interviews conducted with the help of SWOT matrix. Some strengths have been identified in relation to social media in this research; information on this research has revealed the following: However, their couple of tricks and threats have also

become possibly the most significant factor and, therefore, contributed to the blockage of language acquisition. As will have seen in this literature, these internet-based Social media sites could be good interfaces that offer current information, a good command of language and more. input, interaction with native language speakers and observing the primary learning processes. In any case, these social media could redirect language learners towards falsehoods, non-academic and informal content, vulgarities and generic. This research also recalled some useful uses of social media in learning the English language. The researcher also provided further research ideas concerning this subject as well.

Another study on social media and language use explored Social Media as a Gateway to Information: Digital Literacy on Current Issues in Social Media. It submits that the world has moved from era of offline to the era of online. The study states further that with advances in information technology, internet users not only can receive information but also send information in the form of comments and share information. The study discusses information dissemination on current issues in social media drawing its data from social media texts and online questionnaire. The result findings reveal that many people access information through social media especially Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, X and Tiktok.

COVID-19 has been an epidemic to humanity hence a lot of awareness is being developed in order to win. the global threat and this sensitisation is done through language. Stylistic analysis is an area that has been given attention in previous studies and more research on lexico-stylistics is accessible while the most related study to the present study is the stylistic analysis of a selected election campaign speech of President Goodluck Jonathan. The study focused upon the utterance-level analysis of words within the speech and the impact they create in the lexical, figure of speech and the cohesion and context category levels. The current study is different from

the previous study because this current study is not a campaign speech during the elections; instead, it focuses on language in combating COVID-19 by analyzing Facebook postings using a lexico-stylistic perspective. The proposed study is underpinned by the Linguistic and Stylistic Categories as classified by Leech and Short. The survey design was employed in the study and data for the study was gathered by screenshotting COVID-19 related discuss on the Facebook and this was done on selected June and July 2021 Facebook posts due to time and financial restraints. From the study, it was revealed that COVID-19 postings on the Facebook are predominantly expressed using simple words or words without prefixes or suffixes. They also prove that medical registers, figures of speech and collocations are used in the Facebook postings on COVID-19.

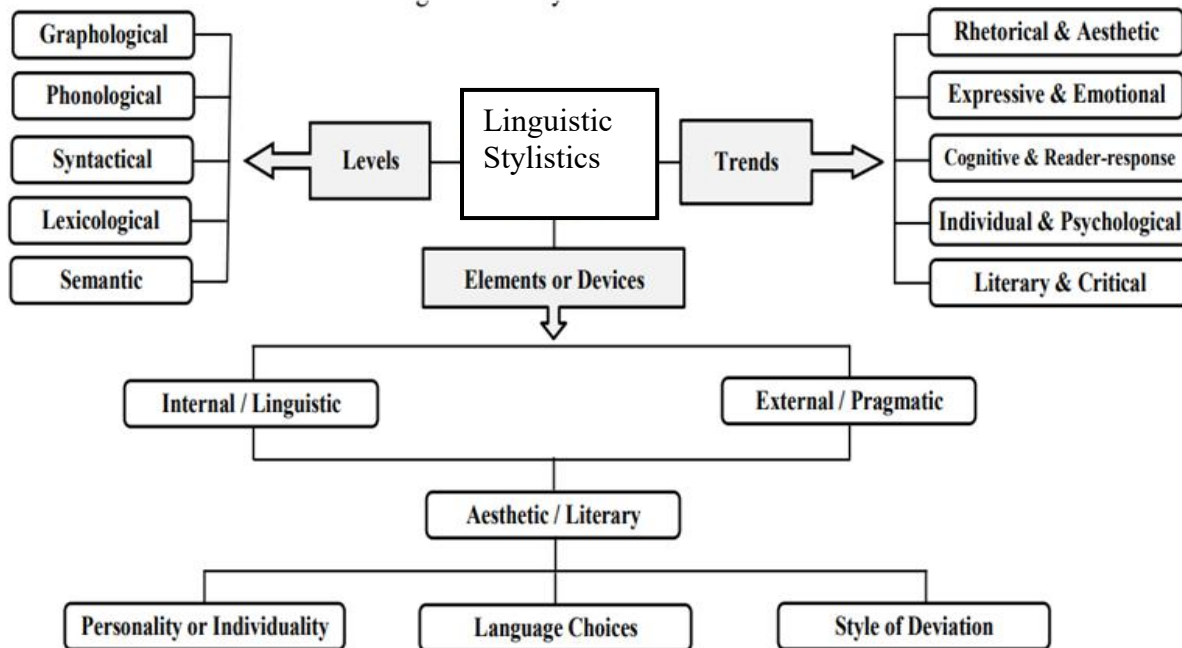
There are also studies on #EndSARS protest in Nigeria each of them focusing different aspect of the protest. For example, a study was carried out on 'Protests and Blood on the Streets: Repressive State, Police Brutality and #EndSARS Protest in Nigeria'. The study looks into the implications for democracy, development, and national security of the Nigerian state's use of force against protesters during the #EndSARS campaign and the resulting police brutality. The study draws its data from posts and comments on Facebook and X. According to the study, the use of force against unarmed protestors elevated the conflict from calls for civil disobedience to demands for a regime change. It advises that in order to safeguard protestors' civil and human rights, institutional frameworks and disciplinary actions that rein in security personnel's abuses during civic demonstrations must be put in place.

Benefits and challenges of Social Media Used In Language Learning was the concern of another study. As the use of technology and social media is on the increase, there is need to investigate its benefits and challenges to the learning of language. The study's findings demonstrate the

positive and varied effects of using social media for language learning, including improved vocabulary, writing, and reading comprehension that boosts students' motivation. The text goes into great detail about the advantages of social media for language learning. Two of the difficulties are assigning homework while studying and integrating social media into the educational process. The study's findings show that technology is being used in education more and more. Thus, this study offers a chance to advance social media's application in language learning in the future.

It is crucial to remember that language style efficacy in social media ads is arbitrary and contingent on a number of variables, such as the intended demographic, the cultural setting, and prevailing consumer trends. Therefore, in order for Dior Beauty to remain current and connect with their ever changing audience, they must constantly review and adjust their language style methods. This study clarifies the importance of linguistic style in Dior Beauty's social media ads, in conclusion. Combining morphological, rhetorical, emotional, and aspirational language approaches, Dior Beauty effectively engages the target audience, delivers its brand message, and upholds its status as a high-end beauty brand. The study's conclusions offer insightful information to marketers and advertisers in the beauty sector, highlighting the significance of deliberate language and style selections in successfully connecting with and enthralling today's digital customers.

Stylistics has over the years gone through different stages of developments. Scholars have identified four stages of such stylistics development⁴¹; the first stage focused on the author, the second stages focused on the text while the third stage concentrated on the reader. The final stage emphasis on the context as indicated by the Speech Act theory. The development and stages of Stylistics discussed above have formed different types or trends of Stylistics.



Source: Riyad and Yahya (2021)

2.3. Theoretical Review

The theoretical approach employed for this study is taken mainly from the model of language use set out in the work of Michael Halliday, *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (Halliday, 1985, 1994; Halliday; Halliday & Hasan, 1985 and Matthiessen, 2004). Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is a theory of language that was developed by Michael Halliday in the 1960s and has since been expanded and refined by him and his colleagues.

2.3.1. Tenets of Systemic Functional Linguistics

The Tenets of Systemic Functional Linguistics that make it relevant to this study include.

Language is functional: This means that the meanings language conveys shape it in the manner that it does. Semantic, grammatical, and lexical resources are employed in certain ways to produce particular meanings.

Language is Contextual: Language is what it is because of the meanings it conveys. Semantic, grammatical, and vocabulary systems make use of resources in particular ways to create meanings.

Semiotic Process: The process of using language is a semiotic process, a process of making meanings by choosing.

The language of the text is the main focus of SFL. Any connected linguistic segment functioning within a social environment is referred to as a text. Thus, written and spoken language segments are referred to as texts. Text can range in length from a single word, like "EXIT," to a book, like "Training Manual." This theory is distinct from the majority of other methods of language study, which only offer sentence-level systematic analyses of language and offer minimal assistance to LSP learners, who must understand the organization, development, and structure of linked oral discourse as well as written texts in context.

Language Use in Different Context: The study of Systemic Functional Linguistics aims to comprehend how language is utilized in various circumstances and for various purposes, and how these factors influence the way language is structured. The main contention is that we must recognize an item's function within its structural context in order to comprehend linguistic meaning.

Metafunctions: SFL deals with the ways in which human beings use language - the meanings that we can make with language are classified into three broad categories or metafunctions^{43, 44}.

Metafunctions are the three fundamental functions or purposes of language use, according to SFL. These metafunctions work simultaneously and are present in all instances of language use.

The three metafunctions are:

Ideational

Interpersonal and

Textual

The Ideational Metafunction: SFL posits that language is a system for making meaning, and it emphasizes the functional aspects of language, meaning that it focuses on how language is used in different contexts to achieve various social purposes. One way in which SFL analyzes language is through the concept of metafunctions. The ideational metafunction concerns how language is used to construct and convey our understanding of the world around us, including our experiences, perceptions, and beliefs. It involves the expression of propositions, events, states, and relationships between entities. This metafunction is about representing reality and involves the construction of meaning through the creation of various types of clauses and their structures. It encompasses processes (such as doing, being, sensing) and participants (the entities involved in these processes). It is often associated with the transitivity system, which is concerned with how clauses represent actions and participants.

Interpersonal Metafunction: The interpersonal metafunction focuses on how language is used to enact social relationships, roles, and identities between speakers and listeners. It involves the

negotiation of meaning, the expression of attitudes, judgments, and the establishment of interpersonal relations. This metafunction is concerned with how speakers express their attitudes, feelings, intentions, and how they interact with others through language. It includes mood, modality, and deixis (the linguistic elements that indicate the position of the speaker and the listener in relation to each other and to the context).

Textual Metafunction: The textual metafunction deals with how language is organized into coherent texts, including how information is structured and connected to create meaning. It involves the cohesion of texts, the organization of information, and the creation of coherence through various linguistic devices. This metafunction focuses on how language is used to create cohesive and coherent texts, including features such as theme and rheme, cohesion devices like conjunctions and referencing, and the organization of information through textual structures.

Each of these metafunctions plays a crucial role in the functioning of language and contributes to the overall communicative purpose of a text or discourse. By analyzing language through the lens of these metafunctions, SFL provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how language is used to construct meaning and enact social interactions in different contexts. The method used for this analysis and description is called Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). It would appear that only Systemic Functional Linguistics can explain how the situational variables of the social context (such as commerce, engineering, or education) in which the language is used relate to the structure of English. Functional grammar has a special ability to comprehend how language is structured grammatically to accomplish goals in a range of social contexts, such as academic, professional, or occupational ones.

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CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter explains the design adopted to accomplish the study population, sample size and data collection method.

3.1 Research Design

The design of the study is a descriptive survey and mixed methods of both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed. Quantitative method allowed the researcher to categorise the comments into groups and present them in tables and simple percentage. Qualitative design on the other hand allowed the researcher to carry out an in depth interpretive analysis of the selected tweets and retweets. In view of this, data was generated from primary source and secondary source. The choice of this research design was informed by the nature of qualitative research that emphasises words, rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data. Furthermore, it predominantly emphasises a deductive approach to the relationship between theory and research. The method used was a descriptive-analytical beginning with an outline of the thoughts and issues to be studied, without using a basic assumption or proposition¹

3.2 Population of the Study

All comments of 2020 #ENDSARS on on Tweeter, before, during and after October 20, constituted the population of the study. The comments which are over 40,000 comments are from different Nigerian celebrities and youths across the globe.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques

The study employed a purposive sampling technique to select 80 comments on Tweeter. X platform was chosen because it was mostly used by people to express their feelings during the 2020 #ENDSARS. In fact, it was believed that the protest started on the Tweeter in 2017 before it was moved to the street in 2020. Also, no account is required before reading tweets on X and lastly X hashtag symbol # has a good capacity of reaching large number of people. The comments were drafted out of X platform and grouped into four (4) according to their date i.e 1000 comments for each group and purposive technique will be employed to select 100 comments from each group while random sampling techniques will be adopted to select ten (10) comments from each group. Why? For the purpose of correlation and to avoid repetition while analyzing the texts for the course of study. Justification of Choice of X -Ease of access and source of information dissemination with responses of readers. More importantly, #EndSARS protests were mainly organised and coordinated via social media².

3.4 Research Instrument

The research collected its primary data from comments of people on 2020 #ENDSARS on X platform using, mobile phone, laptop and the Internet. Forty (40) comments were selected from X for analysis. The study draws its theoretical insight from systemic functional linguistics.

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

The method of analysing the comments for this study was procedural. The comments were selected specifically on 2020 Lekki killing on X Platform to identify the needed stylistic feature, read the selected comments carefully in order to identify the stated objectives as well as the research questions of the study. Analyze the selected comments and bring out the stylistic features as stated in the objectives, connecting the results of the study with the analyses showing certain distinctions and providing necessary recommendations.

Endnotes

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CHAPTER FOUR

Data Analysis, Results and Discussion of Findings

Introduction:

4.1.1. Stylistic Features Deployed in the selected comments on 2020 Lekki #EndSARS protest on X

In answering the first research question, What are the stylistics features in the selected comments on 2020 Lekki EndSARS protest on X? the features are based on the five main levels of stylistic analysis.

Graphological features –The general outlook of the selected comments are different one from another. Some are fairly long while others are short. Special and creative use of punctuations were observed. The use of colour to foreground a phenomenon was also seen. Hash tag symbol was employed to indicate the point of view of the authors.

Phonological features –Although the selected comments were written texts where much of phonological features were not expected, the use of foregrounding with bold, italics, colour, capitalization all translated to prominence which is a phonological feature. Also, the use of ear-catching devices like alliteration, assonance, repletion, rhyming words were also found in the selected post.

Lexico-semantics features –The choice of words and the suggestive meanings were special and deliberate to express frustration, anger, unity, hope, hopelessness, interest and many more in the selected comments on 2020 Lekki #EndSars Protest on X. Also, coinages, figures of speech point of view and mood were identified as meaning making feature.

Grammatical features –From the selected comments on 2020 Lekki #EndSars Protest on X, the sentence structures were slightly different from other texts. There are sentence fragments,

verbless sentences; short and long, simple, compound and complex sentences were observed. Also, Hypotactic, Parataxis, Foregrounding and code mixing are used in the selected Comments on 2020 Lekki #EndSars Protest on X.

4.1.2. Different Categories of Text in the Selected Comments on 2020 Lekki #EndSars Protest on X

Research question 2: What are the different categories of text in the selected comments on 2020 Lekki End SARS protest on X? The study classified the posts into five broad categories based on what each comment portrays. These are agitations, ideology, interest and nature.

- a. Agitation - This is the exact thing the post seeks to make demand(s)
- b. Ideology – This is perspective form where the post is constructed or coming from.
- c. Interest – The level of interest or commitment to the course to which the post is made
- d. Nature –This category is based on the origin of post whether it is a new post of a comment on an existing post.
- e. Period of the post –pre October 20 and post October 20

Table 4.1 Classification by Agitation

S/No	Item	Frequency	%
1	#EndSARS	16	40
2	#End badgovernance	5	12.5
3	#End corruption	1	2.5
4	#End police brutality	2	5
	Combination of more than one		
5	#ReconstructNigeria/ #ReformNigeria	1	2.5
6	#EndSARS/ #End badgovernance	3	7.5
7	#Itisnotfinished	1	2.5
8	#EndSARS/#EndPoliceBrutality	4	10
9	#EndSARS/#SWAT	1	2.5
10	Unspecified	6	15
	Total	40	100

Agitation is the purpose of the protest as far as the tweet or retweet is concern. It started with #EndSARS but later extended to other areas. Table 4.1 above showed that #EndSARS has 40%,

#EndSARS/#EndBadGovernance 7.5%, #EndSARS/#EndPoliceBrutality is 10% while #EndSARS/#SWAT is 2.5% in total #EndSARS covers 70% of the total agitation. The implication of this is that #EndSARS dominated the agitation

Table 4.2 Classification by Ideology

S/No	Item	Frequency	%
1	Politics	7	17.5
2	Religion	5	12.5
3	Emancipation	13	32.5
4	Movement	8	20
5	Lamentation	4	10
6	Unspecified	3	7.5
	Total	40	100

The Ideology behind the post or the perspective form where the post is constructed or coming from are categorized into six. Emancipation with 32.5% is the highest, this was followed by movement with 20%, politics 17.5%, religion with 12.5%, lamentation with 10% and 7.5% were not specified. This showed that the point of view or ideology that dominates the selected posts is emancipation. The protest aims at achieving freedom from police brutality. As the protest

continued, the idea of making it a movement that will continue long after the protest was birthed from different post.

Table 4.3 Classification by point of view

S/No	Item	Frequency	%
1	Support	28	70
2	Oppose	5	12.5
3	Indifferent	3	7.5
4	Unspecified	4	10
	Total	40	100

Table 4.3 showed that the points of view of the selected post four; 70% of the posts were written from point of view of Support, 12.5% were written from point of view of opposition, 10% were not specified while the last 7.5% were written from indifference point of view. The table 4.3 summarises the point of view from where the writers of the selected posts wrote from. It also revealed that most of the selected comments (70%) supported the protest.

Table 4.4 Classification by Nature

S/No	Item	Frequency	%
1	Tweet	21	52.5
2	Retweet	19	47.5
	Total	40	100

The last form of categorization is on the nature of the posts. The dichotomy is based on whether the post is a new post or a comment on an existing post. Table 4.4 showed that 52.5% were Tweets that presented new opinion and ideas while 47.5% were Retweet. This categorization showed that there is interpersonal relationship as the systemic functional linguistics used as theory for this study identified.

Table 5 Classification by Nature

S/No	Item	Frequency	%
1	Pre October 20	21	52.5
2	Post October 20	19	47.5
	Total	40	100

In the history of #EndSARS protest, there were three particular periods. The period before the October 20, 2020 which was the peak of the protest. October 20, 2020 was a day in the protest

that could not be forgotten because it was believed to the day many innocent protesters were killed at Lekki toll gate. The last period is post October 20, 2020 posts.

4.1.3 Stylistic Features and Meaning-Making in the Comments

Research Question 3: How are the stylistic features presented in the selected comments on 2020 Lekki End SARS protest on X to generate meaning?

The analysis here is done based on the three metafunctions of systemic functional linguistic –

Textual metafunction

Ideational metafunction

Interpersonal metafunctions



Figure 1

Figure 1 above is a retweet performing the interpersonal metafunction and it falls in the category of before October 20 comments. Textually, from the point of view, it is an agitation to #EndPolicebrutality as seen by the use of hashtag. It is a very short post which is one of the natures of social media post especially X. Graphologically, the post begins with small letter which is an unusual way to start. The use of first person plural pronoun 'we' shows the involvement of the write in the struggle. This involvement and attachment culminated to a strong, vibrant and united group of youths. There is an indiscriminate use of exclamation marks; four '!' were used at the end of the short comment. This is to add emphasis to the demand for justice as the youths are tired of police brutality.

Figure 2 is a tweet and does not specify the period, however the content is suggestive of before October 20. The use of red heart symbol or emoji is a testament of the love the writer for the course to which he is associated as seen in the use of first person plural pronoun. This is also textual metafunction. The post agitated for two things as seen in the hashtag words -#EndSAWT and #EndSARS, this is ideational metafunction. The use of adverbs 'aggressively' quite suggests psychosocial features or elements, this is an example of lexico-semantic features. There is use of abbronmy (a kind of social media spelling patterns) is also observed in the post -ASAP -'as soon as possible. The ideology express in the post is emancipation. There is equally an cataphoric reference in the tweet. 'this' in line 1 is referring to 'protest' in line 2. The tweet is poetic in outlook because it was written in short calculated lines where each sentence forms a line; this makes the lines paratactical.



Figure 2

Figure 3 is agitating for #EndSARS, from ideological perspective of movement whose voice must be heard all across the globe. Graphologically, there is use of ellipsis to indicate that there is more to the protest. The post which is a retweet shows the involvement of the write in the struggle and it is a post before the October20. The vibe of a team that seems to be winning could be felt. Phonologically, prominence was placed on 'moveeee' to foreground it and attach special importance to it. The reference of both 'our' and 'we' in lines 1 and 2 respectively was not known in the post, hence there is exophoric reference.



Figure 3

Figure 4 is a retweet and a post October 2020, it pleads for unity among the youths. The importance of unity was expressed in the way it was written in capital letters and exclamation mark –‘UNIFIED!’. Ideologically, religion was displayed as prayer was offered. Emojis of folded fist representing unity and that of praying hands were used at the end of the post. Emojis are believed to be an integral part of social media writing.



Figure 4

In figure 5, there are two agitations, the first to end bad governance in Nigeria and the second to end SARS. It is post before October 20, it employed weeping emojis to lament the death of innocent souls that have been killed by SARS. There is the use of pidgin English in the post *Abeg no...* The use of capital letter is also noticed to expressed the importance and sense of urgency of the message. RETWEET AGGRESSIVELY.



Figure 5

The post in figure 6 is an agitation to #EndSARS, it was done by repeating the same line 9 times. The repetition brings out its ear-catching potential and its aesthetic value out, this makes it rhythmic and therefore a phonological feature. Semantically, the repetition presupposes that the government is recalcitrant and will not do the right thing in good time. It retweet comes from ideological perspective of emancipation. The post stresses that no other language could be understood but #endSARS. The symbol of Nigerian flag preceded a rhetorical question which the writer quickly answer –What do we want? #EndSARS. The flag stands for Nigerians, hence the post will read: Nigerians what do we want? #EndSARS.



Figure 6

Figure 7 is a tweet dedicated to agitate for #EndSARS an #EndBadGovernance in Nigeria. It is a pre October 20 post and code mixing was observed in it U will have to 'soro soke'. There are rhetorical questions and the ideological perspective is to expose how government is employ politics to discredit the protest. The interest expressed in the post is that of support to the ongoing protest. There are many instances of social media spelling such: as sound spelling, Letter and number homophones, abbronmy and alphanumeric expression.

Examples:

2 for to

Pple for people

U for you

D for the

5for5



Figure 7

The agitation of figure 8 was not specified, however, the ideology is lamentation. It is a post October 20 retweet. The pain of the death of the innocent youths on the night of October 20 forms the background for the post. The use of vulgar language like 'selfish and greedy leaders'

are expression of anger for what is believed to have been unjust killings of the protesters. There is use of alphanumeric spelling associated with social media –b4 for before. There is a case of anaphoric reference, ‘this’ at the beginning of the second sentence refers to the concept of unity expressed in the first sentence.



Fig

ure 8

Figure 9 is one of the few tweet or retweet that do not support #EndSARS protest or movement. It is post October 20 post; it employs rhetorical question; the use of capital letter for both ‘PEACEFUL’ and ‘PROTEST’ are to foreground the words and make them attract attention. The opening question, ‘Please, how do you describe “Very Peaceful Protest”?’ is exophorically referring to something that is present in the text.



Figure 9

Figure 10 is another post October 20 retweet, it is also a lamentation about the killing of the protesters at Lekki toll gate. 'This' in the first sentence is making a cataphoric reference to 'beautiful scenes' in line 2. The post is an agitation to #EndSARS from ideological point of view of a movement. There is the use of vulgar language against the government for their alleged role in the killing - 'the shameless government'



Figure 10

Figure 11 expresses a religious ideology with insinuation that the government has proved to be greater than the protesters but God is greater than them. It is a lamentation to mourn the youths that died on the night of October 20, at Lekki toll gate. Semantically, the 'weak' in the last sentence is exophirically referring to the youths who are the protesters while 'evil men' in sentence 2 refers to the government.

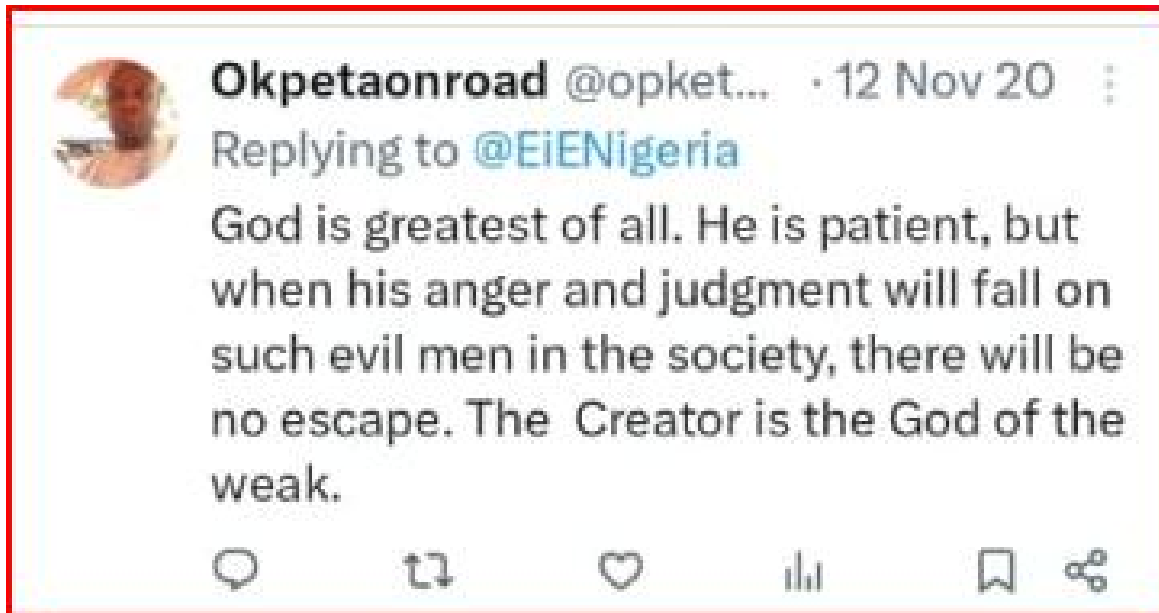


Figure 11

Figure 12 is a retweet and a post October 20 post. It employs social media spellings like - syncopation -NGR, NG HQ. 'jidesanwolu' and 'tinubu' were graphologically written in lower letters, this is deliberate because all other names were written properly. This is because the duo are accused of playing negative roles in the Lekki killings. "hoodlums" in third to the last line is foregrounded with double quotation marks. Cataphoric reference is employed in line 2 'it was hoodlums' The post ends with ellipsis, this is to show that though the government had stopped the protest, they have not stopped the movement, the #EndsSARS movement continues.

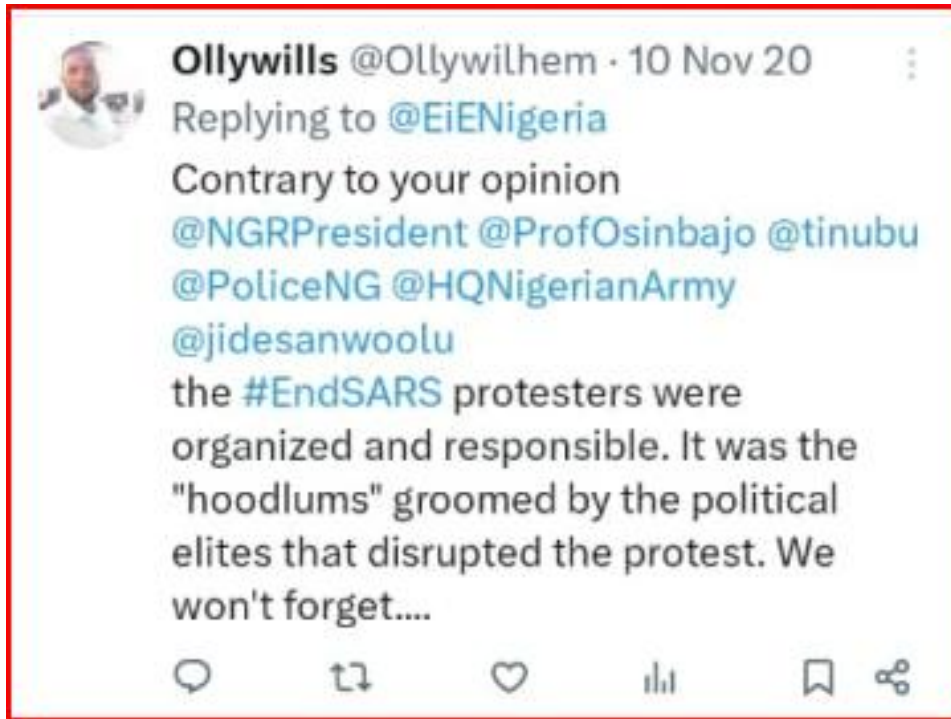


Figure 12

In figure 13, the agitation was not specifies with hashtag at the end, it is a post October 20 retweet. It open with rhetorical question function cataphorically ‘Isn’t this just beautiful!’ This refers to the display of religious tolerance and love by the youths as stated in the second sentence. It is written from supportive interest to the #EndSARS movement. Vulgar language was used borne from the grief of the pains of the killing at the Lekki toll gate on October 20. Anaphoric and cataphoric references and rhetorical question were employed to foreground certain aspect of the messages in the text. ‘Love’ started with capital after a comma, this is an unconventional way except to convey special meaning or to attract attention to the word.

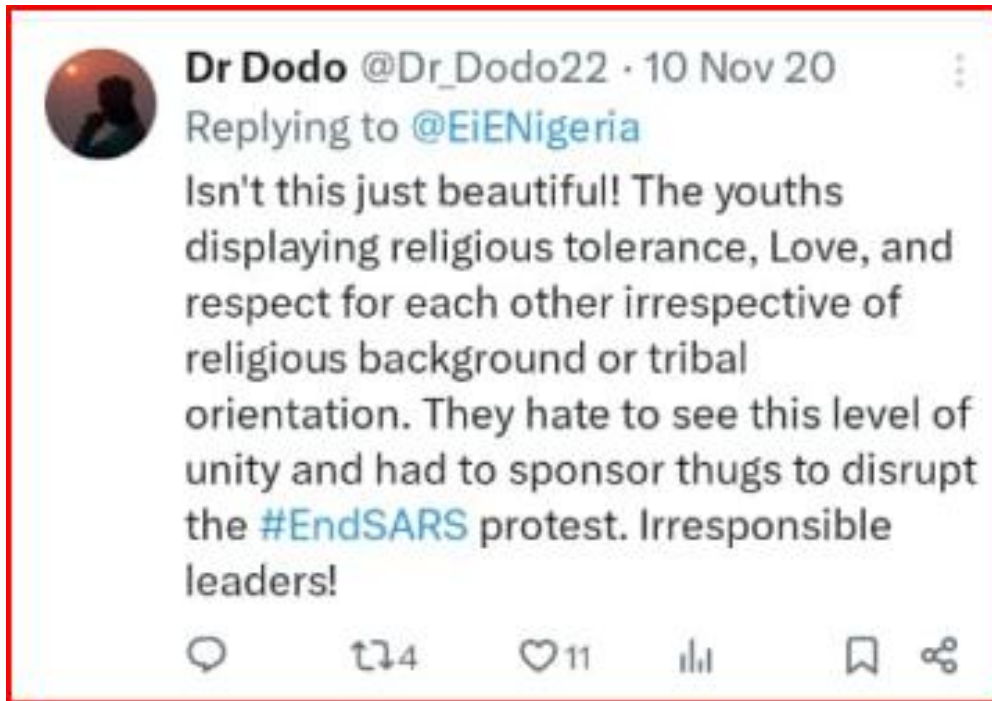


Figure 13

Figure 14 is an example of a retweet of retweet, it is exophorically referring directly to religious and tribal tolerance stated in the preceding tweet, though not writing by the same person it was a continuation of it. This shows intertextuality that exists in X rather than the intatextuality known in other textual analysis. #EndSARS is the main agitation of the post; being a post October 20 retweet, its decries the killing at Lekki toll gate. 'This' and 'what' in the first sentence 'This is what made them jittery' are cataphorically referring to 'the unity' in the second sentence. 'Our oppressors' is an exophoric reference to the government. Nigerian Army was foregrounded by spotlighting it with @ that makes it appear in blue colour attracting a special attention.



Figure 14

Figure 15 is a one-sentence tweet but was loaded with meaning. Being a post October 20 post, it laments the effect of the October 20 at Lekki toll gate on the loudness and success of the #EndSARS movement. The post is constructed in pidgin with obvious lexical duplication 'small small'. The emoji of a red broken heart speaks volume of the sorrowful state of the heart f the protesters after the Lekki incidents and inability to continue the protest to a logical conclusion.



Figure 15

Figure 16 is a tweet came three days after the Nigerian Army believed to have dispersed the protesters at Lekki toll gate on the night of October 20 and the protesters have all ran for their dear lives. The post of is short sentence of five words, 'EVERYBODY get your PVC READY', graphologically, everybody, PVC and ready were written in capital letters to foreground hem and make them stand out in order to generate special meaning of importance and seriousness. He is saying they will use their vote to speak. The post if from movement ideological perspective with 'It is not finished being hashtagged' '#ItIsNotFinished'. This is exorphically and cataphorically rerring to 2023 general election. Semantically, it means if protest cannot win this time, election will win next time.





Figure 16

Figure 17 is a post October 20 tweet from one of the prominent celebrities in #EndSARS movement. The post becomes necessary for him to encourage the rest protesters and cheer them on. It opens with a courageous statement with exclamation mark; this was followed by another personal resolve with another exclamation mark; the word of hope followed with multiple exclamation marks. The rest youths were called upon to join the movement for a better Nigeria. The post is from movement the ideological point of view. The post is divided into two parts, the first part contains three statements that are parataxis while the second aspect was a very long sentence of 30 words that ends with exclamation mark



Figure 17

Figure 18 is an indirect protest against the Nigerian government. The killing of the youths on the night of October 20 was satirized and sarcastically presented to be more deadly than COVID-19. Semantically, the period of COVID-19 is safer. The bullet is killing more protesters than the COVID. Inverted comma was used to foreground certain expressions 'stay safe', 'wear a mask' and 'avoid bullet' because of the special meaning the writer intended them to carry.



Figure 18

Figure 19 is a pre October 20 tweet agitating to #EndBadGovernance In Nigeria. The post is like a peep into the future of the ‘big trouble’ that awaits Nigerian youths if they fail to win the fight. This post is divided into two parts, the first part is hypotaxis while the second part is parataxis. The use of contracted form –can’t for cannot is observed to give the post flow of social media post.



Figure 19

Another indirect protest against alleged Lekki killing is seen in figure 20. It was an illustration that was presented in a very long sentence though the use of comma was employed to ensure clarity. The agitation is #EndSARS and the nature is a tweet. The post semantically expressed how Nigeria has become unsafe for Nigerian youths and it makes an indirect reference to the

alleged Lekki toll gate killing ‘Segun is 20 and may not be able to celebrate his 20th birthday, not because of sickness or terminal disease but because he is a Nigerian and lives in Nigeria.



Figure 20

4.1.4 Research Question 4: How do the stylistic features in the comments on 2020 Lekki EndSARS protest on X similar or differ from other text?

The stylistic features in the comments on 2020 Lekki #EndSARS protest on X are similar to other texts because it has the same features of analysis such as graphological features, Phonological features, Morphological features, Lexical features, Grammatical features, Syntactic features, Semantics features, Hypotactic, Parataxis, Foregrounding and Code mixing as seen in 4.1 above.

However, it is different from other texts such as prose fiction, poem, news paper, sermon and so on because of the nature of social media writings, there are unconventional spelling, syncopation, acopocopation, alphanumeric etc.

The analysis of typography and formatting in tweets reveals diverse stylistic choices made by users. Variations in font size, style, and formatting (e.g., bold, italics) may serve to emphasize key points, convey intensity, or mimic spoken intonation. For instance, tweets featuring all-capital letters or excessive punctuation marks may signify heightened emotions such as anger, urgency, or emphasis (Smith & Patel, 2021).

Emoji Usage: Emojis play a crucial role in graphonological analysis, as they contribute visual cues and emotional context to textual messages. The selection and arrangement of emojis alongside text can influence the interpretation and tone of tweets. Studies have shown that specific emojis are associated with certain emotions or themes, and their strategic placement within tweets can enhance engagement and convey nuanced meanings. This agrees with previous study (Garcia & Lee, 2020).

Hashtag Visualizations: Hashtags serve as prominent graphonological features in X discourse, visually demarcating topics, movements, and conversations. The size, color, and placement of hashtags within tweets can signify their importance and relevance. Analyzing hashtag visualizations provides insights into the prominence of specific themes or slogans within the discourse and the extent of community engagement around particular hashtags (Nguyen et al., 2021).

Multimedia Integration: The integration of multimedia elements such as images, videos, and memes enriches the graphonological landscape of tweets. Visual content adds layers of meaning, evokes emotional responses, and enhances the accessibility and shareability of tweets. Research has shown that tweets with multimedia elements receive higher levels of engagement and are

more likely to go viral, underscoring the importance of visual communication in X discourse (Martinez & Brown, 2020).

4.2. Discussion of Findings

The Ideational Metafunction of SFL, which concerns how language is used to construct and convey our understanding of the world around us, including our experiences, perceptions, and beliefs, served a guide to categorize the posts.

The textual metafunction deals with how language is organized into coherent texts, including how information is structured and connected to create meaning. All the levels of stylistic analysis depend on textual metafunction of SFL and were adequately deployed in the posts.

The interpersonal metafunction focuses on how language is used to enact social relationships, roles, and identities between speakers and listeners. It involves the negotiation of meaning, the expression of attitudes, judgments, and the establishment of interpersonal relations. This revealed the level of relationship, unity cooperation that existed among Nigeria youths during EndSars 2020 protest.

All the post October 20 posts in support of #EndSARS employed vulgar language of varying degrees to vent their anger of the government as they mourn the death of the youths that died on the night of October 20 at Lekki toll gate. The 2020 Lekki #EndSARS protest in Nigeria against police brutality, especially focusing on the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), gained significant attention on social media platforms, particularly X (now known as X). The platform became a crucial space for expression, mobilization, and, ultimately, global awareness. The

study provides insight into how language, tone, emoji, foregrounding and rhetorical devices were used to shape discourse, express sentiments, ideology, agitation, and mobilize public opinion during the protest.

1. Lexical Choices and Tone

The lexical choices in comments surrounding the #EndSARS protest reflect a mixture of anger, solidarity, and calls for justice. Many users employed emotionally charged words like *oppression*, *freedom*, *brutality*, and *change*, emphasizing the severe grievances against SARS and the Nigerian government. The tone of these comments often ranged from assertive and defiant to somber and reflective, particularly in posts responding to the Lekki Toll Gate incident. This tone demonstrated both the gravity of the protesters' demands and the widespread disillusionment with the status quo.

The use of colloquial Nigerian Pidgin and indigenous phrases was another stylistic feature observed, reinforcing the protest's grassroots nature and local relevance. Words such as *wahala* (meaning trouble or problems) and *naija* (a colloquial term for Nigeria) contributed to a sense of unity among Nigerians. Additionally, these lexical choices made the comments more accessible to local audiences, creating a shared linguistic code that strengthened the collective identity of protestors.

2. Rhetorical Devices

Rhetorical devices like repetition, parallelism, and rhetorical questions were frequently employed in these comments to underscore frustration and rally support. For instance, phrases such as "*How many more lives?*" or "*When will this end?*" were repeated across posts, emphasizing the

urgency and gravity of the situation. Such repetition also helped to anchor the protest in the collective consciousness, keeping the message vivid and difficult to ignore.

Hyperbole was also common, with users describing SARS as *monsters* or *executioners*, which underscored the extreme experiences people had with the police unit. This type of exaggeration served to convey the severity of the issue and paint SARS officers in a distinctly negative light, enhancing the emotional impact of the comments.

3. Use of Hashtags and Symbolic Language

Hashtags like #EndSARS, #LekkiMassacre, and #EndPoliceBrutalityInNigeria served as rallying points and added a symbolic layer to the comments. These hashtags unified the discourse, helping users and readers to easily identify and connect with others' posts related to the protests. They also fostered a sense of continuity, as the same hashtags were used repeatedly, making the protest not only an event but a movement.

Moreover, symbolic language, such as references to *fallen heroes* (for those who lost their lives during the protests), conveyed a sense of martyrdom and sacrifice. This elevated the discourse beyond individual complaints, framing the protest as part of a larger struggle for justice and reform. Such symbolism also inspired emotional responses, particularly sympathy and a sense of duty among observers to support the movement.

4. Emotional Appeals and Persuasive Strategies

The comments heavily relied on emotional appeals, particularly pathos, to stir empathy and indignation among readers. Heartfelt narratives from those who had personally encountered

police brutality were widespread, painting vivid pictures of the suffering endured by victims. These personal stories not only engaged readers but also authenticated the protest's grievances by providing real-life examples. They fostered a sense of empathy among viewers and amplified the call for change.

Persuasive strategies like direct address were also common, with users frequently urging their followers to "*stand with us*," "*speak up*," or "*be the voice of the voiceless*." Such direct appeals fostered a sense of personal responsibility, urging readers to take action by sharing posts, attending protests, or calling for reform.

5. Multimodal Elements

Many comments incorporated images, videos, and memes, adding a multimodal layer to the discourse. Images of the protest and videos documenting police violence gave authenticity to the comments and bolstered the urgency of the situation. Memes, often portraying government officials or SARS officers, served as a form of satire, allowing users to critique the government's response through humor. The use of memes also made the protest discourse more accessible and shareable, particularly among younger users who tend to engage more with visual content.

6. Cohesion and Collective Identity

Through shared language, hashtags, and repeated themes, the #EndSARS discourse on X developed a cohesive and collective identity among protesters. The stylistic choices observed in the comments revealed a strong sense of solidarity and purpose, as users reinforced each other's sentiments and demonstrated unwavering support for the movement. This cohesive identity was

not only instrumental in sustaining the protest but also in signaling to international observers that the movement had wide-reaching support among Nigerians.

The 2020 Lekki #EndSARS protest on X (formerly X) generated an unprecedented volume of discourse, revealing not only public sentiment but also a diverse range of stylistic choices used to articulate outrage, solidarity, and calls for reform. This stylistic analysis of selected comments reveals that users utilized features such as metaphor, repetition, emotive language, and code-switching to convey the gravity of the event and resonate with broader social concerns.

The analysis of comments reveals several stylistic choices that contribute to a powerful digital rhetoric, which aligns with findings in prior stylistic studies and the broader field of social media discourse.

1. **Metaphor and Symbolism:** Many users employed metaphors to liken the protest to a battle for freedom or describe the government as oppressive forces. This use of metaphor aligns with studies on protest language on social media, where metaphor serves to create solidarity among users and imbue the discussion with a sense of purpose and gravity (see Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). These metaphors are essential in expressing complex political and social realities in a way that resonates emotionally and intellectually with the audience.
2. **Repetition and Parallelism:** Repetition of phrases like "EndSARS," "justice," and "we demand" was common. Such repetition works to emphasize key messages, mirroring a pattern observed in traditional protest language, where repeated phrases reinforce a sense of unity and urgency (Fairclough, 2003). This stylistic choice reflects users' desire to amplify their voices collectively and leave a lasting impression, an approach that aligns with findings in both stylistics and studies of online activism (Tagg & Sargeant, 2017).

3. **Code-Switching and Hybrid Language:** The use of code-switching between English and Nigerian Pidgin or other indigenous languages served to engage a broader Nigerian audience, fostering inclusivity. Studies on social media discourse have shown that code-switching is often used to engage with multiple demographics and to build identity within a cultural movement (Androutsopoulos, 2015). Here, code-switching is both a stylistic choice and a tool for cultural solidarity, reflecting a uniquely Nigerian protest style that resonates across social boundaries.
4. **Emotive and Hyperbolic Language:** Strong emotional language, including hyperbole and exclamatory statements, was a staple of the comments analyzed. Words such as "murdered," "suffering," and "sacrifice" conveyed intense emotion, reflecting a stylistic inclination to dramatize the situation and evoke empathy. This tendency aligns with findings in digital discourse studies, where emotional appeals are seen as critical in engaging readers and fostering a sense of immediacy (Papacharissi, 2015). In the case of the #EndSARS protest, these emotive choices helped users articulate collective grief and anger.

Comparison to Other Works in Stylistics and Social Media Discourse

The stylistic elements identified in the #EndSARS discourse resonate with stylistic features observed in other social media discourse studies, particularly those analyzing protests and social movements. Studies on Black Lives Matter (BLM) discourse, for instance, have similarly highlighted the role of emotive language, repetition, and symbolic metaphors as tools for expressing collective identities and calls for justice (Crawford, 2018). These parallels suggest that certain stylistic elements transcend cultural boundaries, reflecting universal strategies in digital activism that foster solidarity and collective voice.

Additionally, the employment of code-switching and hybrid language mirrors findings in stylistic studies focused on multilingual discourse in global social movements. Androutsopoulos (2015) suggests that the strategic use of multiple languages on social media enables activists to strengthen cultural identity while increasing message reach. In this way, #EndSARS discourse not only resonates with stylistic patterns found in other global movements but also illustrates the adaptation of these patterns within a specifically Nigerian context, enriching the protest narrative and broadening its appeal.

Theoretical Implications

This analysis underscores the role of stylistics in shaping digital protest discourse and reveals how social media can amplify marginalized voices. The blending of emotive language, repetition, and code-switching contributes to a rhetorical style that not only addresses political issues but also fosters community and solidarity. As observed in the works of Papacharissi (2015) and others, stylistics in social media discourse contributes to a digital public sphere where individuals can collectively contest hegemonic narratives.

The findings also support Fairclough's (2003) theory that language is a tool for power and resistance. The stylistic choices made by #EndSARS participants show how digital spaces allow everyday language users to challenge authority and demand change. Through metaphor, repetition, and emotive language, users were able to construct a narrative of resistance that resonated locally and internationally, underscoring the power of stylistics in constructing and maintaining social movements.

The stylistic analysis of comments on the 2020 Lekki #EndSARS protest highlights a unique fusion of rhetorical devices that shape a distinct protest language on social media. In line with existing literature, this study illustrates how stylistic choices on digital platforms serve as powerful tools for amplifying messages, expressing solidarity, and creating a collective identity. Through these findings, we observe that stylistics is not only central to understanding social media discourse but is also integral to examining the dynamics of modern social movements. The #EndSARS discourse thus stands as a testament to how language, when strategically deployed, can drive sociopolitical change in the digital age.

The stylistic analysis of selected comments on the 2020 Lekki #EndSARS protest reveals how language, tone, and rhetorical devices played a critical role in mobilizing public opinion and sustaining the momentum of the movement. Lexical choices, symbolic language, emotional appeals, and multimodal elements contributed to a unified discourse that effectively communicated the protesters' demands and grievances. This stylistic approach amplified the voice of the oppressed and brought global attention to police brutality in Nigeria, demonstrating how online platforms like X can be harnessed as powerful tools for social change. Through stylistic choices, the comments on the #EndSARS protest painted a vivid picture of a society grappling with a crucial issue, rallying support, and forging a path toward justice and reform.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Summary of Findings

The stylistic analysis of selected comments on the 2020 Lekki #EndSARS protest on X (formerly X) reveals a wide range of expressive strategies that users employed to convey their emotions, mobilize support, and advocate for change.

The study found among other things that many stylistic features were employed in the selected comments on 2020 Lekki End SARS protest on X; these include: Graphological features, Phonological features, Morphological features, Lexical features, Grammatical features, Syntactic features, Semantics features, Hypotactic, Parataxis, Foregrounding, Code mixing etc.

The study categorised the selected comments on 2020 Lekki End SARS protest on X into:

- i. Agitation - This is the exact thing the post seeks to make demand for
- ii. Ideology – This is perspective form where the post is constructed or coming from.
- iii. Interest – The level of interest or commitment to the course to which the post is made
- iv. Nature – This category is based on the origin of post whether it is a new post of a comment on an existing post.
- v. Period of the post – pre October 20 and post October 20

The stylistic features found in the selected posts include

The different stylistic features were employed in tweets and retweets to convey different inherent meaning such as harsh tag, punctuations, capital letter, emojis abbreviations, coinages repetition,

foregrounding, acronym, alphanumeric expression, letter and number homophones, direct and indirect protest.

The study revealed that the language of the selected posts on ENDSARS protest reflect the cryptic and laconic nature of social media language.

Other key findings include:

1. **Lexical Choices and Tone:** Comments frequently used emotionally charged words and colloquial expressions to reflect anger, unity, and the call for justice. The tone ranged from defiant to somber, underscoring the gravity of the issues and solidarity among Nigerians.
2. **Rhetorical Devices:** Repetition, rhetorical questions, and hyperbole were commonly used to emphasize grievances and rally support. These devices helped to maintain the protest's prominence in public discourse and to make the issues more memorable and impactful.
3. **Hashtags and Symbolic Language:** Hashtags like #EndSARS and #LekkiMassacre served as rallying points, creating a shared online identity. Symbolic language, such as references to "fallen heroes," emphasized the protest's cause and inspired emotional responses from readers.
4. **Emotional Appeals:** Personal stories and direct appeals were used extensively to engage readers emotionally, fostering empathy and encouraging active support for the movement.

5. **Multimodal Elements:** The inclusion of images, videos, and memes added authenticity and reach to the posts. Visual content, especially, allowed for a broader and more immediate impact, particularly among younger users.
6. **Cohesion and Collective Identity:** The shared use of language, hashtags, and consistent themes created a strong collective identity among users, showing unity and resilience that sustained the protest's momentum and drew international attention.

5.2. Conclusion

The stylistic choices used in comments on the #EndSARS protest played a crucial role in mobilizing public opinion and sustaining the movement. Language choices, rhetorical devices, and multimodal elements created a unified, emotionally compelling discourse that effectively communicated the protesters' grievances and aspirations for justice. The cohesive online identity that emerged showed the power of social media in amplifying local issues to a global audience, fostering solidarity, and influencing perceptions and discussions about systemic reform.

1.2. Recommendations

1. **Encourage Responsible Social Media Discourse:** Social media users and activists can be educated on using language that not only conveys emotion but also promotes constructive discourse, ensuring messages resonate while remaining respectful and effective.

2. **Use of Visual Content for Advocacy:** Given the significant impact of visual content, activists and advocates should continue incorporating images and videos to make their messages more accessible and engaging, especially for younger audiences.
3. **Support for Digital Literacy and Media Training:** Providing training on effective online advocacy can empower individuals to communicate persuasively and responsibly, amplifying their voices and impact while fostering a positive online environment.
4. **Collaboration with Global Media:** Partnering with international media organizations can help local movements amplify their message and attract wider support, leveraging global attention to pressure for systemic change.

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