MEANING CONSTRUCTION IN SELECTED POLITICAL ESSAYS OF NIYI OSUNDARE AND RAY EKPU

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ABSTRACT

Essays published in the print media by Niyi Osundare and Ray Ekpu are known for addressing public concerns globally. However, in spite of the landmark contributions of these essays to Nigeria's sociopolitical development, not much systematic study has been done on them. The study was, therefore, designed to examine selected political essays of Osundare and Ekpu in order to determine their meaning constructions based on their stylo-linguistic choices, as well as their points of convergence and divergence.

M.A.K Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics, supported with relevant aspects of Aristotle's Rhetorical Model, served as framework. Thirty essays were purposively sampled, 15 each from Osundare'sand Ekpu's publications in *Newswatch* where they both published between the second and the fourth republics (1979 – 1999). These essays captured issues of Nigeria's political development in these eras, and were subjected to linguistic-stylistic analysis.

The essays exploited alliteration and assonance to reinforce meaning and provide information. Capitalisation and italicisation foregrounded discourse subjects in order to underscore their enormity. The predominant nominal groups in the selected essays were modifier, head and qualifier (mhq), head and qualifier (hq) and modifier and head (mh)types. They were employed for effective description and thematic projection of discourse themes such as misappropriation of nation's resources, increasing unemployment, monstrous inflation, grinding poverty, gross socio-economic inequality and wide-spread disillusionment. Declarative structures were for factual information, evaluation and elaboration in relation to the issues addressed in the essays. Interrogatives were used for elicitation, accentuation and petition. Whereas elicitation conveyed the essayists' inquisitive mood, accentuation made the issues addressed prominent. Through petition, the essayists challenged the cause of the issues accentuated in order to proffer solution to them. Imperatives such as "Let us talk this week about Nigeria", "Let us mount the horse of memory" and "Jail those journalists" were used for invitation, instruction and suggestion. The essays issued instruction and by implication requested some action by way of response from the reader. Parallelism provided a multidimensional representation of the issues addressed. Reiteration created lexical links between words in the discourse. While synonyms and antonyms amplified meaning, collocations were pressed into satirical function. Osundare's and Ekpu's essays employed biblical and historical allusions to situate issues within specific contexts. They utilised evidential clauses, reliable sources, self-inclusive pronouns and metaphors for persuasion. Osundare's essays used the mhq, hq and mh patterns for effective description and thematic projection and the mhpattern for discourse headlines. Conversely, Ekpu's essays employed the mhq and mh patterns for effective description and the hq and mhq patterns for thematic projection and discourse headlines. Osundare's essays deployed both the Yes/No and Wh-question types for elicitation, accentuation and petitioning, while Ekpu's essays used the Wh-question for elicitation and accentuation. Osundare employed the imperative mood for instruction, invitation and suggestion whereas Ekpu deployed it for instruction.

Niyi Osundare and Ray Ekpu largely deployed stylo-linguistic devices such as parallelism, evidential clauses, self-inclusive pronouns, metaphor and collocations to unveil and denounce sociopolitical ills in the country. They employed these devices to underscore their political stance.

Keywords: Stylo-linguistic devices, Print media, Niyi Osundare, Ray Ekpu

Word Count: 497

CERTIFICATION

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to God, the Ancient of days, for the grace, strength, sound health, resources, and favour, accorded me all through the period of this programme at the University of Ibadan. For me to have commenced and completed this piece of work successfully is by His mercy.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

9

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

'Essay' is derived from the French verb essayer, which denotes "attempt" (Hardison, 1988). Its root meaning can also be traced to the Latin word <u>exaguim,</u> which means "a weight" (Atwan, 2012). Michel de Montaigne was the first leading essayist to use the term for "sorts of exploratory, reflective and personal purposes that are implied by this verb" (Schwiebert, 2001: 150). 'Essay' is a general word encompassing a broad variety of writings. It refers to a literary genre different from other conventionalised or systematised forms of writing. Schwiebert (2001) sees the essay as a cohesive work of non-fiction prose that is comparatively short and often concerned with a particular subject. Abrams (2009) states that it is concise writing in prose that examines a topic, articulates an opinion and induces readers to acknowledge a theme on any composition. Diyanni (1997: 1711) asserts that it is a short literary discourse on a specific topic in prose and generally "analytic, speculative or interpretative". From these delineations, the essay comments on or investigates a particular issue or subject matter intending to elucidate it. The three critical features considered highly relevant concerning the essay are form, length, and purpose. The essay is generally written in prose with a short length, and its goal is to discuss a specific subject (Good, 2014). It is a highly flexible and personalized literary form.

The essay is a product of the Renaissance idea of discovery, which commenced in Europe in the late fourteenth century, arriving England in the late sixteenth century (Turco, 1999). During this time, as Abrams (2009: 309) says, England and other countries in Europe witnessed a great revolution and some significant discoveries, comprising the European "arts of painting, sculpture, architecture, and literature," which flourished rapidly, resulting in outstanding achievement in literary history. In Germany, for example, Johann Gutenberg invented the printing press in 1440; an innovation that promoted the development of literature and also led to the rapid production of literary texts (Pugh and Johnson, 2012). Other notable discoveries of the period were "the mariner's compass, the telescope, the new lands; Columbus' expedition of 1492, and the publication of Copernicus' theory in 1543. The effects of these events were noticed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Hall, 1989: 74).

The printing press, Columbus' expedition, and Copernicus' theory were innovations worth discussing then owing to their considerable impact on the sciences and arts and their direct nexus to the emergence

of the essay. The printing press facilitated the introduction and spread of ideas. For example, both old and contemporary literature (in the original language and translated form) was published to meet the needs of the increasingly educated public. Columbus' discovery of the American continent in 1492 paved the way for the production of new texts; it also motivated literary creativity in that it aided the growth of a dynamic academic and literary world. Also, the publication of Copernicus' theory in 1543 was a landmark achievement, in that the approach challenged and overthrew the Ptolemaic one that had long held sway (Abrams, 2009). The spirit of discovery influenced the fields of sciences and arts considerably; and then spanned to the end of the sixteenth and dawn of the seventeenth centuries where it manifested as "a new mode of thought and discourse" (Hall, 1989: 74).

At that point, essayists such as Michel de Montaigne, Francis Bacon, and some others began to investigate the traditional ideas of the time. A close scrutiny of the literature of Renaissance and the seventeenth century showed a growing sense of discovery as an "idea" influencing a wide range of Renaissance thought and expression: from Montaigne's *Essais* to Francis Bacon's scientific method, and to the emergence of the essay, a new genre written in a unique style of prose (Hall, 1989: 75). However, it is essential we mention here that the Greeks Theophrastus and Plutarch and the Romans Cicero and Seneca wrote essays long before it was conceived and used by Montaigne's *Essais* in 1580 (Monson, 2008; Agatha, 2009; Bressland, 2011). Immediately Montaigne had introduced this new mode of writing and Bacon had borrowed the concept for his research, many writers all through Europe replicated the form at a remarkable pace (Atwan, 2012).

Apart from Europe, in Africa, writers also used the essay mode for investigating ideas, received opinions and insights, including Niyi Osundare and Ray Ekpu whose essays address many human-angle themes. Niyi Osundare and Ray Ekpu are well acclaimed Nigerian essayists who commenced writing in the 1970s. Osundare is a prolific writer with over twelve volumes of poetry, four plays, numerous essays, and articles on African literature and culture. He is a believer in poetry as performance; and for many decades has been a provocative contributor to public discourse on religion, politics, and economy (Osundare, 2011). As one of Nigeria's revolutionary writers, Osundare's employs simple diction to effectively communicate to readers (Udoh, 2015) and also to achieve stylistic import (Dick, 2015). To this end, he consistently strives for a union between form and meaning because he believes that form drives meaning. In furtherance of social transformation, his works address corruption, poverty, lousy leadership, administrative mismanagement, oppression, inequality, dictatorship, and injustice. In this

regard, he is referred to as "one of the most outspoken of the new breed of writers whose style is messianic" (Nachafiya, 2008: 65).

Ray Ekpu, a renowned journalist, essayist, media columnist, social critic, is also a human rights activist, with numerous essays to his credit. As a social critic and human rights activist, Ekpu is displeased with so many things in his country. For example, he is dissatisfied with the failure of Nigeria and Nigerians, the poor leadership, misplaced chances and unexploited opportunities and as well as the inactive masses and their readiness to accept everything from governance. To this end, Ekpu discusses these issues and brings his journalistic intellect and creative skills to bear on his essays. He probes deeply into the heart of the nation's most important social and political travails. Like Osundare, Ekpu's preoccupation encompasses social, political, economic, and, religious themes. With his fearless pen, he resisted the successive military dictators and also did not spare the political bigwigs of the civilian era who significantly undermined Nigeria's socio-economic development. Ekpu is firmly on the side of the oppressed, the betrayed, and the emasculated. From the foregoing, both essayists have acquired satisfactory experience in the writing industry and have been unwavering in using their talents to create awareness in their society.

To account for the role of the literary artists, Adagbonyin (2006) observes that the principal task of the literary artist is to produce literature that mirrors the enormity of ills in a nation and also proffer solution to them. Moreso, he must be devoted to the crusade for social transformation and endeavor to remind leadership of its obligation to the laity and the laity the need to guide their "own rights and asserts their humanity" (Osundare, 2011: xvii). The onus above is what Niyi Osundare and Ray Ekpu have set for themselves as essayists who are mindful and disturbed about the sociopolitical situation in their country. Thus, both essayists use linguistic weapons to address many human-angle issues through the print media. Their essays capture both the military and civilian regimes as well as their impact on Nigeria's embryonic democracy. The foregoing is why the present study is designed to explore selected political essays of these essayists to determine their meaning constructions based on their stylo-linguistic choices, as well as their points of convergence and divergence. The purposeis not only to determine the "what" and "how" in their essay discourses, but also to complement their international reputation and appreciate their artistic contribution to this discourse genre.

1.1.1 Trends in the development of the essay

The essay has undergone different stages since its emergence. Trends in the development of the essay genre can be divided into four phases: the early period of the essay (late 16th and 17th centuries); the rise of the essay (18th and early 19th centuries); the decline of the essay (late 19th and early 20th centuries); and the resurgence of the essay (late 20th and early 21st centuries). (Atwan, 2012).

Among the Renaissance authors and philosophers in the sixteenth century, Montaigne was regarded as an exceptional figure owing to his *Essais* being one of the most prominent works that prepared the way for the appearance of the essay as a literary genre. Montaigne wrote many essays on the various discoveries in the Renaissance. Some of his essay collections, notably: "Of friendship"; "Of sadness"; "Of a monstrous child"; and "On some verses of vigil," comprised many personal reflections which centered on the late sixteenth century themes. While some of these works discussed issues relating to the Renaissance period, others focused on themes that border on humanity (Hall, 1989; Lopate, 1995). However, in the seventeenth century, Sir Francis Bacon introduced the English use of the word in his Essays in 1597. Most of the essays written by Bacon were short commentaries on various titles such as: "Of Praise"; "Of Vainglory"; "Of Honour and Reputation"; "Of Fame"; "Of Fortune" and "Of Ambition" used to address themes of social conduct (Hall, 1989: 85). Also, Bacon wrote extensively on philosophical and scientific methodology, and consequently, contributed immensely to the improvement of scientific research (Klaus and Stuckey-French, 2012). Therefore, judging by Montaigne's and Bacon's works, it can categorically be concluded that, despite the genre's relative newness, it came handy for discussing Renaissance and human life issues in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Hence, Montaigne, Bacon and many other essayists used the form to examine the traditional ideas of the time.

In the 18th century, the English essay attracted the attention of more scholars, poets, artists, and essayists owing to the wide readership it enjoyed, which elevated its status as one of the famous among the literary genres. Besides, it was introduced into the academic world where it served as a tool for teaching composition courses. Through its popularity and possibilities, the essay engendered the rapid development of the newspaper genre (Atwan, 2012). Also, polemicists in this period who aimed at convincing readers of their positions found the essay a useful tool for accomplishing this goal. Consequently, the 18th century was usually referred to as the era of the rise of the English essay–

having experienced a proliferation of publications and offered the likes of Joseph Addison, Richard Steel, Samuel Johnson, and many others the opportunity to explore the form.

The nineteenth century witnessed a large proliferation of great practitioners of this form. Essayists such as William Hazlitt, Thomas De Quincey, Charles Lamb and Robert Louis Stevenson gave motivation to writing of essays. The rise of the essay in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was linked to the growth of newspapers and magazines. Owing to this growth, the essay enjoyed wide readership, which led to increase in audience. For example, Addison and Steel were newspaper essayists who wrote essays for their middle-class readers. Writers introduced into the form new qualities in pursuance of the demands of increasing audience. Also, the quest to say everything in a limited space for a general audience dominated the essay which affected the form negatively. Thus, essayists could no longer pursue the naturalness and flexible qualities which characterised the essay as invented by Montaigne (Lopate, 1995).

However, novelists, dramatists, and poets augmented their works with essays and this developed into a normal practice in the latter part of the nineteenth century. Writers in this category were Henry James, Virginia Woolf, T.S. Elliot, George Orwell, George Elliot, and Aldous Huxley. These figures turned into the poet-essayists, novelist-essayists or dramatist-essayists and contributed in the literary traditions as creative writers and critical, as well as social analysts. Although the essay played a critical role in this era, it was marked by celebrated success in a "different major genre" (Good, 2014: 90). Owing to the negative influence of periodicals on the essay, its status declined in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Butrym (1989), Hardison (1989), Artkins (1990), and Atwan (2012) attribute this decline to historical, critical, and pedagogical factors. Atwan (2012) notes that the historical factor was linked to the genre's lack of explicit definition from its inauguration as Montaigne, its originator, had not ascribed any formal meaning to it. The kind of essay initiated by Montaigne was meant to be unmethodical and anti-rhetoric, which implies that the essay was to be independent of the prescribed traditions of classifications, division and logical progression and so on, which were features of the typical prose of his period. Unfortunately, most of the essays produced after Montaigne relegated these features to the background.

Artkins (1990: 2) opines that as a result of the genre's lack of formal definition, it was commonly grouped with "articles, columns, reviews, pieces and themes in composition courses"; therefore, it was

substituted with these terms. For instance, most of the essays written from the seventeenth century till date are different in terms of contents, language, and style. Besides, some which do not possess the features or qualities of the essay form as prescribed by its originator were branded essay.

Also, Atwan (2012) reaffirms that the essay received huge attention from different quarters though less critical in approach. Many scholars and practitioners explored the essay form but their approach was mainly biographical and impressionistic, which also contributed to its decline. Essays were taught for "content, relevant issues and rhetorical models and not for the appreciation and analysis of their literary form" (Atwan, 2012: 197). Many institutions which taught composition courses have turned the essay into a device for this purpose. As if this was not enough, students were instructed to concentrate on "clarity, coherence and rhetorical patterns", which was completely different from the form invented by Montaigne. In so doing, institutions have reduced the essay's status to that of an ordinary tool for use in composition courses, thereby obscuring the difference between the literary and the practical essay (Butrym, 1989: 4).

The essay witnessed a huge decline in the early 20th century because it was infiltrated by the liberty of traditional structures that dominated other forms of discourse, and which prevented the form from exercising its independence. In an attempt to combine the various forms of discourses, the essay was muddled with the article and its identity was almost lost in this period. In connection to the essay's identity, Atwan (2012: 198) posits, thus:

The literary identity of the essay was almost lost early in the 20th century as the term became a catch-all for any sort of nonfictional prose. A collection designed for a short story course, for instance, would not contain memoirsandcreative nonfiction, nor would a poetry anthology feature journalism and reportage. But an essay can be whatever anyone claims it is.

The above excerpt places emphasis on two important key elements, thus (a) it captures the branding of other kinds of non-fiction prose (which fall short of the features of the essay form) as essay; (b) and shows the outcome of this practice which nearly precipitated the essay's extermination during the 20th century. In the close of the twentieth and early 21st centuries, essayists from different parts of the world began to develop interest in the nature, form, quality, and significance of the essay with a view to exploring the genre and encouraging research that might improve its promotion. Consequently, the essay, which was once abandoned, began to make a literary return (Klaus, 2014). From the cessation of

the twentieth century to the present, many practitioners of the form have produced many essays on diverse subjects (Abrams, 2009).

1.1.2 Varieties of the essay

Essays can be classified according to their intentions, moods, and structures. Traditionally, the essay is classified into the formal (or impersonal) and the informal (or personal). The formal essays are identified by the significance of their objectives, formality, logical organisation and length and so on, with their procedure nearly similar to that of real prose writing. The personal or familiar essays, on the other hand, are a subclass of the informal essays which are characterized by the personal element of rambling structure, freshness of form, originality of theme, and incomplete or tentative treatment of topic (Lopate, 1995).

However, Diyanni (1997) categorises essays as: the speculative, argumentative, narrative, and expository. Speculative essays are less assertive or persistent in tone.They make their points explicit and purposeful with their loose structure and informal tone. This type of essay is a product of the movement of ideas in the mind of a writer who is less absorbed in promoting arguments than in examining them. Argumentative essays adopt different forms of organisation to make claims, after which they then provide proof to defend it–which may include similarities, realities, figures, narratives, and data. With their formal tone, the claims made are direct and explicit. Narrative essays relate stories which are part of the writer's knowledge, and they also record happenings. Whether real or imaginary, narratives are used to advance a point. Expository essays explain ideas and attitudes. They reveal some knowledge, provide details or experience so readers can better understand the subject matter being discussed.

Similarly, Schwiebert (2001) classifies essays into the argumentative, expository, personal, and literary types. Argumentative essays advance an explicit argument which is supported with data; while expository essays enlighten an audience or elucidate a specific subject. Personal and literary essays use figurative language and other literary elements, such as dialogue and narrative, together with indirect technique, to stress subjects which relate to an individual, and an academic or emotional stimulation. Schwiebert's classification of the essay is somewhat similar to that of Diyanni (1997), in that both identify and discuss the argumentative and expository essays. The point of divergence between their categorisations is that the personal and literary essays are not discussed in the Diyanni's perspective.

19

Good (2014) takes a new direction on the essay's taxonomy by distinguishing between four main types, namely: travel, moral, critical, and autobiographical. Whereas the travel essay focuses on a specific place, the autobiographical one emphasizes a particular vital aspect rather than the whole life of an individual. The moral essay treats major and minor subjects of human life and society, while the critical essay is characterised by its discussion of crucial issues.

The essays of Osundare and Ekpu can be classified as argumentative, narrative or expository. For example, the argumentative ones such as Osundare's "The Real Gains of SAP", "Where is your Tie" and "Nigeria Image Problem" and Ekpu's "A Hollow Ritual", "A Hangman is a Hangman" and "A Pin in a Hay Stack" etc., establish a point and provide evidence to support it. The support takes the form of examples, analogues, facts and statistics. However, the narrative essays such as "The Evil that Men Do", "Abominations" and "Truth of my Politics" etc., for Osundare and "Day after the Party", "A Time for Peace" and "Dreams, Shattered Dreams" etc., for Ekpu respectively serve to chronicle events in Nigeria's sociopolitical history. Also, Osundare's "The Unthinkable", "Murderers, be not proud" and "The Nigeria Image Problem" as well as Ekpu's "Shades of Rainbow", "We the Untitled" and "The Knock out Man" are expository essays which elucidate a specific subject matter with a view to enlightening an audience.

It's important we mention here that in some of these essays, Osundare and Ekpu mix modes, combining narration with exposition as in Osundare's "Parable from Koma", "Scars of the Season '1'", "Scars of the Season 11" and "Not Mess Transit" and as well as Ekpu's "A Dialogue with the Future", "We, the untitled", "Shades of Rainbow" and "The Knock out Man". In other occasions, they also fuse exposition and narration in the service of argument as in "The Real Gains of SAP", "Where is your Tie" and "Nigeria Image Problem" etc., for Osundare and "A Hollow Ritual", "A Hangman is a Hangman" and "A Pin in a Hay Stack" etc., for Ekpu respectively. All the analysed essays are persuasive in one aspects or another in that they attempt to convince readers about the point raised.

Osundare and Ekpu do not choose a form (i.e. a specific type of essay) from a menu (i.e. a list of types). Rather, each essayist designs his essay, discovers the form and also employs whatever strategies of organization which suit his various purposes, audience and occasion. To this end, both writers exploit the essay mode to formulate a thought, explore it, work out its implications and communicate them to readers (Diyanni, 1997). Finally, Osundare and Ekpu's essays can equally be grouped as personal,

literary and critical essays. They are personal and literary for using literary technique as communicative strategies; and as well critical on the other for dealing with grave sociopolitical issues.

1.1.3 Features of the essay

From its inception to its most current post-modern examples, certain features have distinguished the essay form from other literary genres. Woolridge (2007: 1) views the form as "spontaneous, brief, sceptical, ambulatory, tentative, exploratory, subjective, experiential, conversational, fragmentary, elastic and unmethodical". Similarly, Atwan (2012: 201) affirms that the essay mode is "experimental, experiential, exploratory, and open-ended". Woolridge (2007) adds that the openness of the essay form makes it much more conducive to engaging actively with the world in so many ways. However, Klaus (2014) reveals that the essay form is used for testing ideas, offering direct information and investigating issues, as well as being anti-methodical. The anti-methodical nature of the essay is what gives it freedom over the conventionalised structures that prevail in other forms of discourse (Good, 2014). In support of this view, Woolridge (2007) acknowledges that the essay is an active form with "the autonomy to observe, shape, pursue, affirm, ruminate, reflect, critique" any subject in the world. It is an academically act evidenced by individual action. Therefore, it is a discursive mode for engaging with the world; and by its discursive nature, it offers the essayist the opportunity to observe, experiment, explore, and scrutinise any subject.

Osundare's and Ekpu's essays meet the above mentioned features of the essay. The essays of these essayists are exploratory for probing into the sociopolitical and economic situation of Nigeria in order to unravel the factors that have contributed to the country's developmental setbacks. On their experiential status, they capture and chronicle real life actions and events that have influenced the sociopolitical formulation of Nigeria. Also, they are objective because the events and actions chronicled, subjects and argument raised, and as well as the findings presented are based on evidence, rather than mere personal opinions or feelings. Finally, whereas the conversational approach adopted in most of the essays gives room for interaction between these essayists and their audience; conversely, the openness of the essays offers them the opportunity to discuss a variety of subject matters.

1.1.4 Functions of the essay

The essay provides information, data, and facts, and its primary purpose is to instruct and persuade (Diyanni, 1997). Thus, it evaluates, explains and accentuates a set of circumstances and induces readers to view them in a particular way. Klaus (2014) observes that the general nature of the essayistic act is

rooted in the activity of informing, evaluating, confronting, accentuating and persuading. Essays perform these functions because they have a unique way of approaching a subject or viewing actions or events. This implies that the essay realises a point and then tries to establish it through a series of strategic rhetorical appeals deployed to win audience's approval. Most importantly, the essay is typically more direct and uses explicit language in the presentation of information or argument; consequently, the point to be proved or conveyed.

However, the essays of Osundare and Ekpu fit into the functions of the essay depicted above. They offer readers with detailed information about the disheartening era of Nigeria's socio-cultural and political history; back the information provided with evidence in order for readers to accept its authenticity. Also, through the essay mode, both writers assess the myriad of problems confronting the oppressed and the ordinary people in Nigeria; accentuate these problems and also confront their causes with a view to proffering solutions to them.

Essays can be evaluated from the viewpoints of their validity of ideas and aesthetic merit. The former considers the genre's accuracy of description, its persuasiveness as an argument, or its suggestiveness as an act of imaginative thinking with a view to determining how the essayists' social attitudes, moral convictions or cultural dispositions influence their argument. Conversely, the latter dwells on the success of the essay as a work of art. It explores its language or style, form or structure, and its power to instruct, induce, motivate or entertain the reader in order to determine how language is structured and employed effectively to create meaning (Diyanni, 1997). To this end, examining the aesthetic merit of the essay would help in the comprehension and appreciation of the essayist's artistic achievement (Leech and Short, 2007).

1.2 Statement of the problem

From the classical era, literature was viewed as an imitation of society. Classical philosophers noted that literary works do not exist in a vacuum, but that they rather express reality and what has been in existence. Literature adds value to the society and fills the young mind with the ways of life and how to exist in society. Thus, it is used as a medium for shaping society (Udoh, 2010). In Nigeria, for example, over the years, writers have used the various genres of literature to mirror the enormous problems responsible for their country's developmental setbacks. Commenting on Nigeria's sociopolitical history, Achebe (1983: 1) asserts that, since independence, Nigeria has been confronted by problems of underdevelopment, despotism, political instability, and ethnic and religious conflicts.

Nigeria, as mentioned above, is a country gifted with bountiful natural resources (Lawal and Atte, 2006). On the rich resources with which the country is endowed, Adebisi (2007: 20) notes that "Nigeria is truly great country in every respect, given its arsenals of materials and human resources". He goes further to mention the country's skilled man power, agriculture and mineral resources, moderate climate, the general hardworking labour force etc., factors capable of transforming the country into exalted position of a developed state. Instead, the reverse is the case as the country is perennially confronted by social, political and economic problems which have impeded its speedy development. To corroborate Adebisi's view, Osundare (2011) describes Nigeria as a gifted but recklessly wasted country; the world's number seven producer of oil, yet its citizens are ranked among the poorest on earth; a nation with many religious worship centers, but the second most corrupt in the world; blessed with abundant natural resources, yet unable to generate enough electric power for its own use even in the 21st century.

The contexts of the essays under analysis have been determined by the above social and political pointers. Thus, the essays of Osundare and Ekpu serve as their intervention on the issues of Nigeria. Also, they are a clarion call to Nigerians and are equally driven by a mission to ridicule the country out of its bad ways. Though the targeted audience of these essayists traverses the world of all humanity, their main focus of attraction is on their country, Nigeria. To this end, their essays confront Nigeria's countless run of backward leaderships, those Stone Age despots (military or civilian) whose ineptitude, dishonesty and visionlessness have reduced Nigeria to rubbles and thwarted her effort of attaining social, political and economic speedy development. Furthermore, while jolting the oppressed, betrayed and emasculated citizens out of their idleness; the essays remind the government of its responsibility to the governed and the governed the necessity to defend their own rights and insist on their own humanity (Osundare, 2011).

Apart from the relevance of Osundare and Ekpu's essays profiled above, the uniqueness of the essay as a discourse mode together with its independence in language use are among factors which distinguish the essay form from other forms of literature like poetry, prose and drama. Thus, in contrast to the artistic representations of reality that are portrayed in other forms and as well as the suggestiveness of language, Osundare's and Ekpu's essays are typically factual. They employ direct and explicit language to the exposition of ideas (Diyanni, 1997).

Considering the essay's potential for freedom and its uniqueness, many studies have focused on appreciating the essay as a form (Mellix, 1989; Gray, 1989; Sanders, 1989). These studies are interested in the personal nature of the essayist, the essayist's point of view, location, and commitment to the genre. Other earlier studies focused on the various moments in the history and criticism of the essay (Hall, 1989; Atwan, 1989). They investigate and evaluate the various trends in the development of the genre. For instance, Atwan (1989) provides a transition from theoretical to practical criticism and introduces the status of the essay as a literary form. Equally, Hall (1989) suggests ways in which the literary essay reflects cultural assumptions of their times, and the varying needs for information and meditation, and also describes the essay as a philosophical, psychological, and literary metaphor in the history of the idea of exploration. Also, Spellmeyer (1987) approaches the genre from the viewpoint of pedagogy, focusing on issues relating to the place of the essay in the modern humanities and curriculum.

Gornick (2001) examines the subject of persona and its role in the literary essay. She discusses the use of this feature as an essential device in the essay, distinguishes the essay mode from the academic article and concludes that persona creates illumination in essayistic discourse. Orlean's (2005) investigation of the structure of the essay centres on the essential parts which form the configuration of the essay form. She submits that organic structure is the best because it reveals the natural way an author's mind works through a topic, making connections and forming conclusions as they occur. Good (2014) examines the inner workings of the essay as a genre. He analyses the works of such essayists as Montaigne, Bacon, Virginia Wolf, T.S. Elliot and George Orwell, to explain how the essay mode constructs its objects in terms of ideas. He concludes that the mode allows the author to explore ideas and also discuss issues that have not been treated by others. Through Good's study, the essay is resituated as an intellectually challenging form of creative and critical thinking.

The present study is hinged on the assertion that despite the relatively robust literary scholarship on the essay showcasing its position in modern humanities and curriculum, not much systematic study has been done on the political essays of Niyi Osundare and Ray Ekpu indicating their literary contribution to this discourse genre. Though, Na'Allah's (2003) *The People's Poet: Emerging Perspectives on Niyi Osundare* is one of the most outstanding effortsby scholars around the world to explore Osundare's art from all perspectives,it only focused on Osundare's poetry, plays, autobiography, and interviews neglecting his essays published in the print media. The aforementioned position on the skewed

attention paid to Osundare's essays is corroborated by Raji (2009: 99) who observes that many critical works on Osundare's art have concentrated on his poetic works with none on his essays. This thesis, therefore, examines selected political essays of Osundare and Ekpu, which have been relatively underexplored, in order to determine their meaning constructions, based on their stylo-linguistic choices, as well as their points of convergence and divergence. It employs Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics, supported with relevant aspects of Aristotle's Rhetorical model for the investigation.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study focuses on how stylo-linguistic devices are employed to construct meaning in selected political essays of Niyi Osundare and Ray Ekpu. The specific objectives are:

i)   to identify the predominant stylo-linguistic devices in the selected essays of Osundare and Ekpu;

ii)   to examine the similarities and differences in the stylo-linguistic devices deployed by Osundare and Ekpu in their essays;

iii)   to reveal how meanings are constructed through the stylo-linguistic devicesin the essays.

1.4 Research questions

The attempt to explore how stylo-linguistic devices are employed to construct meaning in selected political essays of Osundare and Ekpu is guided by the following research questions:

i)   What types of stylo-linguistic devices are predominant in the selected essays of Osundare and Ekpu?

ii)   What are the similarities and differences in the deployment of stylo-linguistic devices by Osundare and Ekpu in their essays?

iii)   How are meanings constructed in the essays through the stylo-linguistic devices?

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study is set mainly to investigate the creative utilization of stylo-linguistic devices in the construction of meaning. The work is linguistic stylistic in orientation. It employs Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics, supported by Aristotle's Rhetorical model in examining thirty selected essays of Niyi Osundare and Ray Ekpu (15 from each writer). These essays were contributed to *Newswatch* and written between 1979 and the 1999. They were selected based on their wide readership, thematic

relevance and landmark contributions to sociopolitical formulation of Nigeria. Apart from offering a profound representation of recurrent themes in Nigeria's sociopolitical history, the essays are indicative of different political eras in Nigeria. Thus, they cover from the second to the fourth republics.

1.6 Justification for the study

Considerable research of this nature has been accomplished on Osundare's poetry in particular; but comparatively much less on his plays; and none on the political essays of both writers. Therefore, this study is necessitated by the need for a linguistic-stylistic investigation of the style of Niyi Osundare and Ray Ekpu from the ambit of the essay genre. The choice of the two writers is founded on their status as Nigerian columnists, social critics and human rights activists reputed for having stood with the oppressed, the betrayed, and emasculated in the society.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study is expected to be of relevance in the following ways. One, it demonstrates the potential application of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to an in-depth evaluation of essay discourses. Two, it shows how the social attitudes and moral convictions of the essayists influence their argument; and how they are expressed in discourse structures through linguistic means. Three, the study is significant as it will indicate the extent to which the SFL approach can be applied to arrive at a clearer appreciation and interpretation of the complexity of sociopolitical issues such as the type addressed in the selected essays of Niyi Osundare and Ray Ekpu. Also, it unravels the peculiarities and features of language use in such discourses, thereby enabling readers to comprehend and appreciate Niyi Osundare's and Ray Ekpu's artistic achievement. Finally, the study will advance knowledge on the essay genre, add to the existing literature on the linguistic-stylistics of the essay and also indicate the contribution of Niyi Osundare and Ray Ekpu to this discourse genre.

1.8 Contextualisation of the selected essays

The contextualisation of Osundare's and Ekpu's essays is guided by Halliday's framework which approaches a text in relation to three variables known as the field, tenor and mode (Halliday, 1978). As regards the selected essays, they are virtually the same regarding field, tenor, and mode. Concerning field, both data belong to the essay genre and as well are media pieces which address social, economic and political themes of grave concerns. The tenor of the essays establishes the communication as being between the writers (i.e., Niyi Osundare and Ray Ekpu) and their audiences (i.e., all literate Nigerians). Osundare and Ekpu speak against social, economic and political issues from the standpoint of ordinary

Nigerians. These writers exploit the print media as a means to express and as well advocate the course of the general public. They criticize the ills of government and also inform their readers with reasoned and brilliantly developed viewpoints. Mode refers to the channel of communication. In the case of the selected essays, the mode is written to be read silently. We review each of the essay pieces beginning with those of Osundare.

1.8.1 Osundare's essays contextualised

Osundare's first essay, "Parable from Koma" (1986) examines the grinding poverty and sub-human existence of rural Nigerian folks, for whom the phrase "the Koma people," is used as an apt metaphor (3). The text depicts the widespread famine and other areas of lack in Nigeria as a result of the squandering of its rich national resources. Rural Nigerians are described as "that teeming tribe of our forgotten people for whom life is forbidden and unenviable, whose roads are craggy footpaths, whose houses are leaking and squalid, whose folds folks are hungry, tired and retired" (4). Also, their "nights are lit by the moon, and their water comes from darksome ponds" (4). This description highlights the despicable condition of the rural people projected in the text. The government is blamed for the high level of poverty and lack of development among the people, as the government could pretend to be unaware of their existence. Although rural development in Nigeria has been abandoned by the powers that be, their agents ply the steep roads up the hills to some locations to collect tax.

The focus in "Scars of the Season I" (1986) is on the deteriorating state of Nigeria's economy, rendering many citizens skeptical about the country's future. The economy is diminishing, unemployment is increasing, and the naira is sinking because the Nigerian government has "subjected the naira to the most ruthless battering in its chequered history" (7). Further, with "the monstrous inflation which has driven the price of even the most essential commodity out of the reach of ordinary people" (7), government spokesmen claim that the economy is flourishing, while statisticians deny the current inflation. Above all, instead of government providing employment opportunities to solve these problems, they tell the masses that "self-employment is the best employment" (8) and that the masses should not wait for the government to do everything for them.

In "Scars of the Season II" (1986), the essayist's major concern is the deplorable condition of Nigerian hospitals and the poor attendant services. Although Nigeria boasts of some of the "most accomplished medical experts in Africa" (11), Nigerians go through multiple trauma regarding medical services. Patients are admitted in the hospital for long periods without attention; and often, "hospital pharmacies

are not well stock" (10); or because basics like, anesthetic gas, bed sheet, and even water are unavailable. However, the cost of medical services keeps increasing, making it extremely difficult for ordinary Nigerians to attend teaching hospitals. Consequently, many who seek life in hospitals meet death.

The essay titled "Not Mess Transit" (1988) portrays Nigeria's culture of replacement rather than maintenance, the multi-million contracts, and projects executed by the government; and how they fail soon after commissioning. Nigerian commuters experienced untold suffering and incessant embarrassment from public transport operators. Buses and taxis ply the roads without brakes; some risk the nights without functioning headlamps; while others mostly generate smoke. Despite these indicators of danger, Nigerians still patronised the public transportation system. To alleviate such suffering, the government provided Hino buses for commuters at a very high cost. The project was commissioned, to the great expectation of Nigerians who thought their lot had been improved. However, after a spell of operation, the buses were all grounded. The bus project collapsed due to "shoddy planning, incomplete execution and an expensive lack of foresight" (29). Instead of repairing them, the government launched another set of Hino buses–all because here was an avenue for sluicing the nation's treasury.

"The Real Gains of Sap" (1989) is on the Structural Adjustment Programme introduced by the government ostensibly for the economic relief of the citizenry. The text describes the policy as another avenue for mass enslavement and for the benefit of government officials who "looted the country's treasury and plunged Nigerians into debt peonage" (45). This view is corroborated by Orjiakor (2007) who observed that the initial goal of SAP was to improve the life of the Nigerian populace, but unfortunately, it ended up subjecting the masses to greater poverty and widened the gap between the rich and the poor. Osundare notes that, through SAP, government officials stack up their foreign accounts, ride in new exotic cars, and erect mind-boggling mansions, leaving the populace to die in poverty and starvation. Consequently, the negative effects of the programme, the nation witnessed many cases of deaths as most Nigerians could not afford the basic needs of humanity, food, housing, and clothing. Finally, when the masses complained, the government replied that "there were no better alternatives than what they had provided" (46). The essayist criticizes SAP, contending that, instead of favouring the Nigerian masses, the policy helped to enrich the minority in the society.

In "Where is your Tie?" (1987), Nigeria is described as a country which attaches great importance to appearance and titles. The leaders and the led are accustomed to falsehood and cutting corners,

allowing appearance to becloud their sense of reasoning and sound judgment. The problem of craving for outward appearance and title has so affected the country that people are easily deceived into accepting falsehood. Also, candidates are no longer assessed according to their level of competence but rather by their physical outlook. Thus, Osundare states that "armed robbers walk respectably in dainty pin-stripe suits into crowded banks, surprising cashiers with pistols straight from their inner pockets" (17); government officials in their cute-tailored suit, on the other hand, "shoot their pens at the nation's treasury" (17). The former who robbed with pistols and the latter who commit similar acts with the pen are the same.

"Nigeria Image Problem" (1995) unravels the high level of insincerity, and the vices perpetrated by the Nigerian government, and criticises the government over these ills. The essayist observes that the press is muzzled; journalists and conscientious citizens "who insist on freedom and justice" are harassed (67), and staff members of most newspaper firms are "deprived of their means of livelihood by government's brutal clampdown" (67). As if these were not enough, Nigerians were violently denied their right to information. The country's electoral process is fraught with irregularities, and traditional rulers fight with one another in their quest for presidential favour. Radicals who speak for the people against the government are detained. In spite of all these vices, and given Nigeria's image of socio-political instability, its representatives paint a good picture of the country before the international community.

"The Evil that Men Do" (1998) depicts the woes and trauma of Nigerians under military dictatorship, which introduced summary arrests and torture of suspects and even innocent Nigerians who confronted government officials over their misdeeds. Osundare also observes that those who survived the government's high-handedness were wrecked psychologically due to the horrors they had suffered. He speaks bitterly against these regimes, insisting that all officials responsible for such atrocities "be brought to book" (85).

In "The Untouchable" (1999), Osundare berates the powers that be for the magnitude of exploitation in Nigeria. He condemns government officials and all those who "instigate the giving and taking of bribes by commission and omission; by word or silence" (92). He notes that this is why the staff of most government agencies neglect their jobs until they are bribed. This dishonesty spreads across the universities, the airports, the barracks, and other sectors. However, the text describes how politicians, having placed themselves above the law, perpetrate heinous crimes. He calls looters of the nation's

wealth "the untouchables"; when arraigned before the court of law, they bribe their way through the system (92).

 "Abominations" (1996) captures the destruction of Nigeria and Nigerians. It describes Nigeria as one of the countries in Africa where "the person elected to lead is incarcerated by another who was never elected but who now decrees the lives of the citizens from the seat of power" (320). Here too, electoral fraudulence is featured, with the case of the 1993 elections which was annulled by the military regime for an ulterior reason. Ali (2013) observes that the outcome of the annulled election was the retention of military rule. While in other countries, "government values justice and maintain the sanctity of human life" (320), the reverse is the case with Nigeria, where "the act of violence" is promoted by the government (320). Above all, after the government perpetrates these vices, its representatives announce to the whole world that Nigeria is one of the countries that value justice.

"The Unthinkable" (1996) takes up the theme of the rule of law in Nigeria and equally laments how Nigeria's military or civilian leaders violate the country by breaching the law, and even appropriating leadership roles through such a channel. This essay also focuses on Nigerian universities which are supposed to be autonomous but are infringed upon by the government. He condemns this situation and concludes that "rulers who rule through violation cannot expect to reap a healthy nation" (324).

"Truth of my Politics" (2001) is concerned with the way and manner in which politics is played in Nigeria. It describes how politics in Nigeria has been battered by "tribalism and regionalism" (341). He laments these factors which have contributed to the developmental setbacks of the country.

"Murderers, be not Proud" (1986) reflects the precarious condition faced by human rights activists in Nigeria. Osundare criticizes the government for fabricating false charges against innocent Nigerians to justify its arraignment before kangaroo courts; unjust incarceration; or even extra-judicial execution. He cites the case of Dele Giwa, a seasoned journalist who upheld the course of the oppressed masses; he was wrongly accused of "gunrunning and attempting to import a socialist revolution into Nigeria" (348); hence, he was summarily murdered via a bomb package camouflaged as mail.

In the "Nigeria Errways" (2001), the focus is on the Nigerian Airways and its sudden disappearance. As at the end of 1979, Nigeria's national airline had about 28 aircraft in its fleet, but they have been grounded due to mismanagement and corrupt deals. The text unravels the mystery behind this sudden disappearance.

Lastly, "Tears for my Country" (2002) speaks bitterly of the various atrocities perpetrated by Nigerians and by the government. The text also recounts the barbaric incident in the 21st century Nigeria involving the stoning of one Amina Lawal. This incident compels the essayist to conclude that Nigeria is a dysfunctional state where no one is held accountable for anything. Owing to the disgrace arising from such situations, Nigerians outside the country tend to hide their identity; instead of being patriotic, they seek ways of getting foreign residence permits.

1.8.2 Ekpu's essays contextualised

As earlier mentioned, Ray Ekpu is one of the renowned social critics in Nigeria who have contended with the government over its failed obligation to the masses. His works are geared toward criticizing societal and government ills. For example, Ekpu's "A Dialogue with the Future" states that education in Nigeria is "in a crisis of survival" (15). The government spends huge sums on other concerns but never on education which prepares youths for the future. Youths thirsting for education are discouraged by the introduction of fees and levies by the same government that had promised scholarships. Some applicants who are able to meet these criteria are "deprived admission owing to a regional quota system or tribalism" (16). This condition has led to a high rate of unrest among youths and a perennially poor education standard.

In "We, the Untitled" (1985), Ekpu's attention is directed towards politics in Nigeria and the preparation for public offices. In other countries, political functionaries are held in high esteem; and prospective office holders prepare adequately for public offices. As part of the preparation process, those who are saddled with the task of appointing public office holders ensure that candidates meet all prerequisites. But in Nigeria, office holders are not judged on merit but by titles and certificates, which are, therefore, sought after by aspirants to public offices. The essayist laments this crave for titles and certificates.

"Shades of Rainbow" (1985) reports the unlawful treatment of ordinary Nigerians by law enforcement agencies (most especially the police). The text describes "the infringement on the rights of Nigerian citizens by the police who intimidate, oppress and exploit them" (13). Regrettably, the police who have the obligation of protecting lives and property have become the destroyers of such lives and property. Those among the masses who "resist such treatment are shoved, incarcerated, or eliminated" (14).

"The Knock out Man" (1986), "On Eve of Passover" (1993) and "Abiola, a Tragic Hero" (1995) capture politics in Nigeria. In the "The Knock out Man," Ekpu describes how politicians use rhetoric and fake commitments to confuse the masses, stating that, (unfortunately), esoteric language has never helped to proffer solutions to the myriad of problems impeding the nation's progress. "On Eve of the Passover" addresses some of the negative traits of Nigerian politics, which include election rigging; stealing of ballot papers and boxes, bribing of electoral officials, as well as the intimidation of the masses regarding their votes. Ekpu observes that during campaigns, political actors make promises which are never fulfilled and that "politics in Nigeria is a battle for power, and the battle for power is the battle for conflict" (22). He adds that each political party organises its forces to finding suitable words, the acceptable channel and appropriate forum for criticising each other with the use of language. It is on this note that in "Abiola, a Tragic Hero", the essayist recalls the atrocities perpetrated in the June 1993 election as a case in point, while highlighting the plight of M. K. O. Abiola, a victim of the brutalities of Nigerian politics. Abiola got into politics after serving as "an ally to military bigwigs in their inordinate power seizures and manipulations" (14). He then contested the June 1993 election and won, but the election was annulled by the then Head of State, General Ibrahim Babangida. However, he rejected the annulment and fought back. His quest to reverse the annulment of the election led to his incarceration. He "renounced bail and preferred to die in prison than to forego his victory" (15). Just like him, many other innocents and qualified candidates who could have successfully ruled the country were hindered. Some were threatened and others were murdered. The essayist laments the extent to which greed, manipulations, inordinate power seizures, murder, injustice, and election malpractice battered Nigerian politics noting that all these are factors that have impeded the progress of politics in Nigeria.

In "A Hollow Ritual" (1986) and "Corruption" (2001), Ray Ekpu focuses on the high rate of corruption among politicians and the miscarriage of justice by the judiciary in Nigeria. He reports what most officeholders do on assumption of office: enrich themselves from government's coffers; embezzle or mismanage public funds; and demand kickbacks for the award of contracts. Law enforcement agencies and the judiciary are not exempted; they are described as weak in discharging their duties. The texts further describe Nigeria as a country where corrupt public office holders are allowed to move freely after their tenure in office. Even when some of them are charged to court for gross misconduct and corrupt practices, the judiciary allows the cases to collapse. Above all, the essayist criticises the high level of public deceit displayed by the legislative, executive, and judicial arms of the government.

"A Hangman is a Hangman" (1986) recalls the brutalities of the Buhari administration, another "dark period of rights infringement, during which citizens were arrested, tortured, and imprisoned without due process" (12). The essayist decries the use of security agencies by the government to execute various atrocities. The press and activists became the target of security personnel. Similarly, in "A Pin in a Hay Stack" (1986), Ekpu comments on the inhuman treatment meted out to Nigerians and denounced law enforcement agents (most especially the police) who are always guilty of this offense. The text gives an incident that occurred in Nigeria on March 6, 1980, where fifty suspects lost their lives in the hands of the Nigeria Police Force, "due to the overloading and asphyxia of 68 suspects into prison vehicle (Black Maria) meant for 28 people to a magistrate court" (12). The occupants were then left in the scorching sun for three hours in the court premises. Since "the victims were mostly Nigeriens and Ghanaians, Nigeria's diplomatic tie with these countries was almost ruptured" (13), mainly because of the manner of their death. He condemns the law enforcement agents in Nigeria for the above despicable acts.

"Day after the Party" (1987) delves into Nigeria's past and recounts the occurrences after the country's attainment of independence. Nigeria is gifted with bountiful natural resources. Adebisi (2007: 20) asserts that "Nigeria has all it takes to make itself a great country in every respect, given its arsenals of material and human resources." Adebisi then enumerates the country's skilled workforce; agricultural and mineral resources; moderate climate; the generally hardworking labour force; all of which are factors capable of transforming the country into the exalted position of a developed nation. Though Nigerians and their leaders enjoyed a brief period of plenty, the whole country was plunged into poverty due to corruption, "the waywardness of politicians, and the inability of the leaders to manage the nation's resources" (21).

"A Time for Peace" (1994) reflects the various crises which Nigeria has witnessed and their effects on the country, the people, and the economy. The June 1993 election which cost numerous lives, jobs, and property, was caused by greed and the excessive ambition of politicians for power. Owing to the series of crises Nigeria has witnessed since independence, the country has been described as a place of unrest. As a result of insecurity and turmoil, the masses live in pandemonium and often have to relocate for safety. However, the press also contributed its share to the crises because it was deployed as a tool of propaganda, making its tone strident. After the election, there was a plethora of court cases which were

meddled with as a result of bribery and corruption, favouritism, tribalism, and regionalism. These were added to orders disobeyed by the so-called political actors.

The situation profiled above led to months of long strike actions by the various unions, which also crippled the nation's economy. The essay states that crises have never helped to build any country. Instead, they waste resources, destroy what the government has developed over the years, and finally lead to disintegration (23). According to the essayist, God-father syndrome, mercantile politics, and high-handedness have destroyed politics in Nigeria and impeded the growth of the nation's economy. As rightly stated by Ugwueye (2004), it was "a waste of time campaigning in recent times for the votes of the electorates which could not matter at the end of the day" (101). The essayist condemns those Nigerian political actors who contributed to the loss, unrest, and devastation witnessed by the country and calls for peace across the nation.

"Leadership: the Flock or Fleece" (2010) comments on the subject of leadership in Nigeria and why Nigerian leaders do not succeed in office. Ekpu observes that bad leadership is the cause of the country's failure. He describes two types of leaders in every state. There are those who have the interest of the flocks at heart and those who do not. Leaders who have the interest of the masses at heart are interested in their well-being whereas those who do not work for the welfare of their bellies. He notes that Nigerian leaders belong to the second category, which is why they are not interested in the well-being of the masses but somewhat in the welfare of their bellies. He notes that, in appointing leaders in other civilized countries, age is not put into cognizance. What is needed are people with a gift of the head and a gift of the heart; people who are brilliant and hardworking with a sense of compassion. The reverse is the case in Nigeria where ethnicity, geography, and age supersede merit. Nigeria's constitution provides for a school certificate education for aspirants to the office of president. Regrettably, no school certificate holder today can be the managing director of a bank or the manager of a high-grade restaurant in Nigeria or a driver at the National Agency for the Control of AIDS. If the entry qualification for the position of the president is this low, how can there be a high level of achievement from the occupant since higher education is part of the preparation for high office?

"A Nation's Question" (1992) examines the various systems of government Nigeria has adopted since independence. The text offers reasons why the country has not succeeded in spite of the adoption of these systems of government and posed some questions for Nigerians to answer. The essayist states that as a country, Nigeria has been in "perpetual search of self; true destiny, its identity, and its soul" (15).

The country practiced different methods of government: first, the British parliamentary system, since it worked for Britain; followed by the American presidential system. Having failed in both, the country is still in search of a workable system for such an independent nation. The country "needs men and women who will lead the nation to the Promise land" (17). But before then, some vital questions need to be asked as to the kind of education Nigerian children should receive and for what purpose, the type of leadership to which Nigerians can acquire, the measures that should be adapted to turn the economy around for high productivity and self-reliance, how democracy can be sustained and so on.

"Dreams, Shattered Dreams" (1993) reviews the independence era and then reminds the reader of Nigeria's dream while critically unravelling the factors that have impeded the realisation of that dream. This essay argues that Nigeria is endowed with enough human and natural resources to realise its vision, pointing to agriculture as the nation's economic mainstay, as 80% of its population once engaged it for feeding and export market. Ekpu laments that Nigeria's oil boom overshadowed agriculture. The nation's treasury was filled with dollars generated from oil, which encouraged government agencies and officials to squander national wealth on elephant projects as well as phantom ones. Widespread misappropriation set in while the nation's wealth found its way into coded accounts abroad. As a result, the country went bankrupt in the 1980s. Those who foresaw this disastrous condition warned the government and the masses but instead of heeding them, the powers that be preferred to deceive the entire country by painting a positive picture of the situation. Since then, different administrations have initiated many policies and measures to curb the nation's protracted problems.

As the foregoing contextualisation has shown, these essayists address human-angle issues through the print media. Osundare and Ekpu do not only offer the reader candid accounts of the disheartening era of Nigeria's sociocultural and political history, but they also reflect the predominant attitude of her would-be leaders to this situation. The Nigerians deemed to be in the position to speak up against the widespread societal abuses glossed over the atrocities perpetrated by the ruling class. The few who dared to stand for the truth were hunted, imprisoned, maimed or killed.

Finally, the essayists factually project the societal ills and vices with the aim of building a better Nigerian society. Their seriousness of purpose and faithful depiction of the menacing sociopolitical, cultural, economic and moral realities of Nigeria are among the driving factors for this study which explores their deployment of stylo-linguistic devices in constructing meaning.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on literature review and the theoretical framework adopted for this study. The review of literature is divided into four parts. In the first, the concepts of language, meaning, context, and register are considered. The second part probes into the concepts of style and stylistics, the purpose being to provide a detail appraisal of them. In the third part, previous linguistic stylistics studies on Niyi Osundare and Ray Ekpu's art are evaluated. The fourth part discusses Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics complemented with Aristotle's rhetorical model, which served as the theoretical model adopted for the study.

2.2 Language and meaning

Any discussion of the nexus between language and meaning or the numerous uses of language in the world, should commence with a delineation of each of these terms (Wardhaugh, 2006). Language is a mode of interaction among human beings. The anthropologist views it as a manner of social conduct; the sociologist, as a communication between participants of society; the literary critic, as an imaginative apparatus; and the philosopher, as a means of interpretation (Syal and Jindal, 2007). On the specific or individual level of scholars, the term has been defined in different manners. For example, to Bradford, it is an "enabling device which allows us to articulate the sequence of choices, decisions, responses, acts and consequences that make up our lives" (1997: xi). Ogunsiji (2013: 24) cites the definition of language by Sapir (1963: 8) as "a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols". Also, Kreidler (1998: 21) sees it as "a complex system of symbols, or signs, that are shared by members of a community". Finally, Lyons (1970) defines the term as the major mode of communication used by a group of human beings residing within a linguistic community. All the afore-stated definitions and claims point to the fact that language is undeniably a means by which human beings communicate with one another in the world. It forms the bedrock on which most of the social practices (e.g. business, government, education, the law, etc.) in our contemporary society operate (Bloor and Bloor, 2007).

Many scholars have commented on the functions of language in the social world. These, among others, are Leech (1974); Halliday (1994); and Brown (2007). To begin with, Leech (1974) identifies the following functions: (i) the aesthetic, (ii) phatic (iii) informational (iv) expressive and (v) the directive. The aesthetic function of language is mostly used for the goal of linguistic artifact. This function of language aids in appreciating the beauty of literature. The phatic function of language aids in keeping communication lines open. It also ensures the preservation of social relationship among social groups. The informational function of language communicates facts or knowledge. This can be between two individuals or from one source to a group. The expressive function of language is used to express the individual's feelings and attitude. For instance, a speaker or writer (most especially poets) makes good use of this opportunity to express their feelings about a particular situation. This feeling (whether positive or negative) is usually observed in the attitude of the speaker which gives a clear image of the speaker or writer. The directive function of language (which influences the behaviour or attitudes of people) is used to give explicit guidance or instructions.

Halliday (1994) observes that language performs three major functions, namely: the ideational, the interpersonal, and textual. Its ideational function enables language users in a society to represent their ideas or experiences through the medium of language. The interpersonal function establishes and sustains relationships among member of a society; and the textual function enables speakers or writers to construct a cohesive message whether through spoken or written discourse. These three meta-functions of language are discussed in detail in a subsequent section, under the systemic functional linguistics theory.

Brown (2007) states that language performs instrumental, regulatory, representational, interactional, heuristic, personal, and imaginative functions. The first one implies that language can be used to manipulate the environment, thereby triggering off either a positive or negative action. Through the regulatory function of language, a speaker can endorse or disapprove an action. The representational function of language is used to make and convey statements of fact or knowledge. The interactional function enables the free flow of communication between two speakers or a group of speakers, which in turn, helps to create social contact and keep communication open. The personal function of language enables a speaker to express his/her feelings. The heuristic function of language enables language users to ask questions and elicit response; and finally, the imaginative function of language enables language users, most especially literary artists to demonstrate their creative potential.

That language is used to convey a broad sense of meanings and the meanings that are conveyed with language are molded by our immediate social, political, and historical conditions is a safe assumption about the efficacy of language. We use language to construct and maintain our interpersonal relations and the social order that lies between them; and in doing so we interpret and represent the world for one another and for ourselves. Language, hence, is a natural part of the process of living; it is also used to store experience built up in the course of that process, both personal and collective. It is a tool for representing knowledge or to look at these terms of language itself, for constructing meaning (Halliday and Matthiessen, 1997). An aspect of language that has been described as interesting is its applicability to learn about social meanings and stereotypes through communication (Bell, 1991).

'Meanings', as used above, is a very abstract, broad and complex term. It is the focus of semantics and has been approached from many disciplines, three among which are, psychology, philosophy and linguistics. Though these disciplines have divergent interests in and approaches to the systematic study of meaning, nonetheless a mutual relationship exists among them. In their study of meaning, the psychologists explore how individual humans learn, how they retain, recall, or lose information; how they classify, make judgement and solve problems—in other words, how the human mind seeks meanings and works with them. For the Philosophers of language, their study of meaning involves how humans know, how any particular fact that they know or accept as true is connected to other possible facts and the probable result. The linguists, in their study of meaning, look at how language works, the common knowledge two people possess that enable them to offer and receive information, to show emotion and intents, and to be comprehended with a reasonable degree of success (Kreidler, 1997).

Meaning covers all shades of expression, indicating or intending to express something using such processes as denotation, connotation, inference, implication and logic, all of which are conveyed in language. It may also be expressed as the message that a sign or an utterance conveys (Ogbulogo, 2005). The concept of meaning in this thesis will be examined from the angles of its approaches and types. The five approaches to the study of meaning are the traditional, behavioural, structural and generative approaches. The traditional approach focuses on the connection between form and meaning and ascribes the meaning of a word to what it refers to. Here, the meaning of a word is deciphered from its shape or sound (Ogbulogo, 2005). The meaning of an expression, from the behavioural perspective, is linked to the stimulus created on the side of the speaker and the response that ensues from the hearer (Crystal 1987). Thus, meaning interpretation depends greatly on observables and records of utterances

and as well as the connection of these features with the immediate circumstances from which they emanate. The structural stance on meaning considers it as an enunciation of the ordering of semantic associations a given word keeps with other expressions in a given language. Here, the meaning of a word is equated with the sense of the word. The sense of a word as used here implies the complete set of paradigmatic and syntagmatic sense relations that the word enters into a specific language. And finally, meaning from the generative view is produced from the mind (Ogbulogo, 2005).

On the types of meaning, Leech (1983) identify seven different types of meaning, thematic meaning, conceptual meaning, associative meaning, connotative meaning, and collocative meaning, affective meaning, reflected meaning and stylistic meaning. Thematic meaning relates to the configuration of the message given in a language. It is the ordering of the constituents of communication which may take the form of passivisation, topicalisation or focus. Conceptual meaning implies the conventional meaning (i.e. not influenced by the context or emotional overtones associated with the act of communication) registered in the dictionaries. Conceptual meaning is synonymous with denotative meaning. It is the conventional or main sense of a word. Ogbulogo (2005) opines that associative meaning is flexible, open-ended and non-static. It can be influenced by the context, the time, the backgrounds of speakers or hearers and the general cultural realities of the communication milieu. In associative meaning, speakers (just like Osundare and Ekpu in the selected essay texts) employ certain words, structures and styles to stimulate emotional reactions in the hearers or readers. These different reactions are derived from the associations which the words produce in the minds of hearers. According to Leech (1983), connotative meaning is a blend of the conceptual meaning of a word and the individual's personal construal of what is communicated. Thus, the interpretation here is founded on the personal experience of the hearer. Collocative meaning is the meaning of a lexical item stemming from other lexical items it is connected with in a longer structure. Affective meaning refers to the feelings and attitude of the speaker towards the subject or audience. This type of meaning is realized by the choice of words. Reflected meaning has more than one meaning; and stylistic meaning is connected with a specific social context. In stylistic meaning, the speaker's choice of words and structures exposes his or her social, regional, geographical or even economic background.

As the foregoing has shown, language cannot be disconnected from meaning as it is the force which drives meaning. We witness this at play in our daily exchanges as the rules of sentence construction and those of word meaning interact to explicate the complete meaning conveyed. To interpret the meanings

made by language, language has to be related to the contexts and situations of its use as these factors have been found to be relevant to interpretation. Also, for the symbols employed in language to be meaningful, they must be patterned in a systematic way (Ogbulogo, 2005).

As part of the relationship mentioned above, literature informs the society through the medium of language by pointing out its negative aspects so as to pave way for reformation. To this end, writers use literary works to criticise societal ills or to reconstruct society for the benefit of the populace, a role which does not preclude essayists. In this light, Diyanni (1997) distinguishes the essay from the other literary genres. He notes that whereas genres like the poetry, drama, and prose fiction are characterised by the artistic portrayals of realism, the 'suggestiveness' of language as well as the usage of 'symbolic' forms, the essay is characteristically real, more straight to the point, and unambiguous in the use of language. He, therefore, points out that "reading essays only for ideas and information while ignoring language and style is to miss much of the pleasure they afford" (Diyanni, 1997: 1711).

This thesis supports Diyanni's viewpoint coupled with the fact that language performs an array of functions in written and spoken discourses, leading to the interrogation of what essayists do when they manipulate the resources of language at their disposal. The rationale here is to appreciate their artistic achievement. The next section deals with the concept of 'context' as it relates to this study.

2.3. Context in linguistic analysis

'Context' is a wide-ranging concept which consists of linguistic and non-linguistic features of the language in use (Alo, 2004). The term has been defined by diverse scholars, as follows: Widdowson defines it as "those aspects of the circumstance of actual language use which are taken relevant to meaning" (2000: 126). Also, Yule states that it is "the physical environment in which a word is used" (2000: 128); while Crystal (2008: 108) uses the notion to mean the "specific parts of an utterance or text adjacent to the unit which is the focus of attention." Yule (2000) notes that the meaning of a word or an utterance is either somewhat or completely established by its context, which is indicated concerning the other structures with which it merges as a whole; and that such words or utterance has meaning only when viewed in context. As these definitions suggest, context is an indispensable element in linguistic study, considering its vital role in processing meaning. With the foregoing definitions, it has also been observed that words are normally embedded in specific linguistic structures such as collocation, phrase, clause, and sentence; and that "no word can be fully understood independent of other words in the same context" (Alo 2004: 74).

The systemic approaches to the study of context emerged from the work of the Polish anthropologist, Malinowski (1923, 1935), who asserts that to comprehend meanings in texts, the context of situation (Henceforth COS) and context of culture (Henceforth COC) surrounding such texts should be considered. He formed the notion of COS due to the difficulties witnessed in construing the meanings of texts in their specific contexts but unfortunately could not develop the concept due to his demise. Firth, his student, continued from where he stopped by promoting the idea. Firth views context as one of the planes of analysis (together with grammar, morphology, lexis, phonology, and phonetics) which are obligatory in linguistics to construe meanings in texts. His framework for examining context involves the participants in the situation; the action of the participants; other pertinent features; and verbal action. He defines 'participants in the situation' as the persons, personalities, as well as the functions performed. This is followed by the 'action of the participants'–which means the activities in which the individuals or characters are engaged, whether verbal or non-verbal. Next is 'features of the situation,' which include the surrounding, objects, and events. These features are said to correlate with the activities in which the individuals are engaged. The final matter is the effects of the verbal action which implies the transformation that ensues as a result of the role of the individual (Martin, 1992: 497).

Finch (2002: 212) lends credence to the afore-stated point in observing that context is an essential element in linguistic study. He notes that for any linguistic inquirer to correctly interpret utterance in a discourse event, the context in which the discourse event occurs needs to be considered. He identifies two types of contexts: the linguistic context (Henceforth LC) and the situational context (Henceforth SC). The former is that in which the 'linguistic system' provides the circumstance for construing any utterance. That is, "systems like the sounds, words or phrases" which encircle a spoken or written utterance supply the context for its interpretation. To account for the appropriate meaning of an utterance, the words and SC of usage are put into cognizance.

On the other hand, the SC denotes the exact location of an utterance. Finch (2002) further notes that in discourse setting, most times, different contexts are likely to emerge. These new contexts are referred to as micro- and macro- contexts. While the micro context denotes the 'immediate' location in "which an utterance" is made and consists of features such as setting (the place where the utterance is made) and occasion (the situations which leads to it), the macro-context relates to a full location in which the statement occurs, and consists of features such as 'geography, social and cultural' (Finch, 2002: 213).

The identification and distinguishing of all the afore-stated elements help to account for the influence of context on linguistics.

Whereas Finch (2002) in his classification of context identifies LC and SC, Bloor and Bloor (2007: 27) expounded on Firth's models of COC and COS. They note that the latter comprises "traditions, the institutions, the discourse communities, the historical context, and the knowledge base of the participants." Like situations, culture according to them is under constant change. Culture and situational features are so carefully intertwined that it is tremendously difficult to see them apart. COS, centers on the different elements involved in the direct production of meanings as a particular instance of communicating meanings.

Halliday (1978: 10) defines the COS as "a theoretical construct for explaining how a text relates to the social processes within which it is located" and comprise three components which are: the main social activity in motion; the individuals involved in it; and the roles and functions of the text within this social activity known in SFL as field; tenor, as well as mode. The concepts of field, tenor, and mode are fully discussed under register in the next section. According to him, COC consists of social processes mediated by language. To this end, Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) view language as a stratified semiotic system embedded in context. They note that it should be construed as tri-strata in systemic theory as illustrated below.
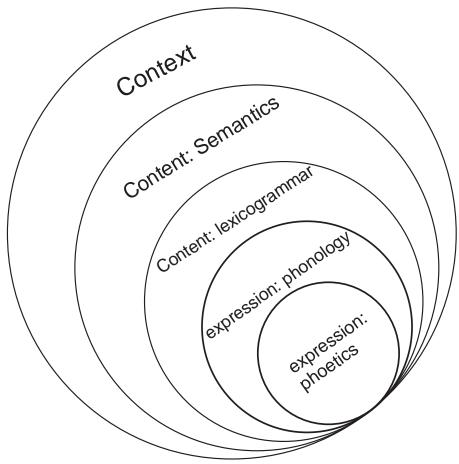
Figure 1.The stratification of language
Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004: 25

In elaborating on the relationship between language and context, Halliday notes that the former can only be comprehended with its environment of use, and consequently, all discourses (whether spoken or written) should not be construed in separation from their contexts of creation and circulation. As the diagram above indicates, COS is manifested in language by semantics, which assumes a shape in the lexicogrammar, which in turn expressed phonology. Both the COS and content of strata of language represent different systems of meaning. While semantics and lexicogrammar produce the content level of language, phonetics, and phonology on the other form the plane of expression.

Conventionally, in the study of language use in society, context is considered with regard to the "independent social variables, such as gender, class, ethnicity, age or identity, or social conditions of text and talk" (Van Dijk, 2008: iv). On the premise that meaning constitutes location of the incident, the participants involved, their conduct, and the discourse event of a COS, primacy is accorded to context in this thesis due to its crucial role in processing meaning. 'Context' as used in this study refers to the

Nigerian social situation which has already been discussed under the contextualisation of Osundare's and Ekpu's essays in the previous chapter. The use of language in the essays under study can best be understood and interpreted with the context in which they were produced. Above all, as the discussion on the concept of context has shown, to effectively interpret the roles of language in the society, the context in which language is used needs to be considered. The next section discusses the concept of 'register.'

2.4 The concept of register

'Register,' a broadly recognised and much deliberated term in linguistics, is used to denote a multiplicity of language use according to the situation. First introduced in the 1950s, it proposes the differences of degrees of formality, appropriate to different social uses of language (Wales, 2011: 361). Tracing 'register' back to its origin, Reid (1956) is the first to use it to signify the notion of text variety; Firth (1957) relates it to a restricted language; whereas Pike (1967) uses it to mean the universe of discourse (Lukin, Moore, Herke, Wegener and Wu, 2011). 'Register' refers to "a socially, or situationally defined style of language" (Finch, 2002: 233). It falls under the subject of language variation, which is segmented into two main types, i.e., variation based on the user of language, and variation based on the use of language. While the former comprises idiolects, sociolects, and genderlects, the latter consists of the language of science and technology, legal English, the language of buying and selling, as well as the language of classroom interaction. Over the years, 'register' has been used by linguists to denote variation according to the use of language or functional varieties (Ghadessy, 1993).

The systematisation of the significant linguistic features which define the overall style of 'register' was given prominence and wide acceptance in the 1960s, particularly through the works of Michael Halliday and later, some other systemic linguists (Wales, 2011). 'Register' is central to Halliday's model of language. In addition to the three overarching functions (ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions) performed by language, Halliday classes its other functions as functional varieties or register. For Halliday, register is the term employed to delineate the meanings that are produced in a context of situation. It is the arrangement of probabilities in systems involving the content plane. These probabilities accrue with field, mode, and tenor, which collectively comprise a text's context of the situation. In commenting on these three components of the context of situation, Halliday postulates, thus:

> Field refers to the social action or that which is 'going on'; tenor denotes
> the role of structure or the cluster of socially meaningful participants and
> while mode represents the symbolic organisation or the particular state
> that is assigned to the text within the situation (Halliday, 1978a: 142-143).

From the foregoing extract, the three main variables which are significant for the choice of situational features are the field, tenor and mode. These three components collectively function to influence the degree of formality in a discourse (Wales, 2011). Different linguists have discussed them. For example, Wales (2011) opines that the field of discourse is one of the distinctive criteria by which certain textual features can be correlated with COS. It refers mostly to subject matter or type of activity: e.g., the field of newspapers and advertising, as well as influences the choice of lexis, as individual words or phrases, is mainly associated with certain activities. The mode of discourse is a distinguishing situational factor that helps to determine the linguistic and textual features characteristic of different varieties. It covers the medium of communication (e.g., speech or writing), and the degree of preparedness and feedback. The tenor of discourse involves the relationship between participants in the situation, their roles, and status. This will affect the kind of language chosen, particularly concerning the degree of formality.

Martin (1992) treats the field of discourse as the use of language in a social activity which involves what is happening, the nature of the social action that is taking place, and what the participants are engaged in. The tenor of discourse refers to the participants taking part in social activity, the nature of the participants, and their statuses and roles. The mode of discourse implies the role performed by language. It concerns the participants' anticipation as to what they want the language to do for them in the social situation.

However, it is essential to state that 'register' is part of the communicative ability of all speakers; therefore, he or she will continuously shift usages of, for example, sound, grammar, and lexis in situations such as a domestic chat, a business letter, a telephone conversation, or any other everyday life situation. All these manipulations of language perform or index diverse social roles. The gaining of a repertory of registers is itself a social process (Wales, 2011).

To become communicatively proficient requires being able to change registers (style-shift) when the event calls for it. The informal style of expression usable in a seminar discussion, for example, would not be apt in a conversational essay which calls for tighter control of grammatical form and word choice. Register-borrowing and register-mixing are also recurrent in more complex language forms.

Register borrowing can be experienced in several contemporary novels, which integrate non-literary selections–such as newspapers, articles, or letters within the text. Adverts also frequently borrow the registers of other forms of discourse. As for register-mixing, some types of comedy intentionally blend formal and informal styles for amusing effect (Finch, 2002).

The analysis of the selected essays reflects register from the ideational, interpersonal, and textual components of language. This helps to indicate the stylo-linguistic choices deployed by Niyi Osundare and Ray Ekpu as part of their styles in relaying their message. The foregoing discussion indicate that language, meaning, context, and register are intertwined, i.e. they work together to produce meaning and also aid meaning interpretation in written or spoken discourse. The next section, which begins with the second part of the review, delves into the concepts of style and stylistics.

2.5 Style in focus

Historically 'style', was derived from Latin stylus, a kind of pen or tool for scripting. Subsequently, it grew to mean the manner of writing. The word incorporates all facets of life and culture, and it is used in numerous, extensive, and yet interlinked areas (Wales, 2011: 397). For instance, daily communicative activities involve different styles of language to negotiate to mean. Style is a controversial term that has proved difficult to interpret. To Fowler (1996: 185), it is "extraordinarily slippery" because of its usage in a variety of literary contexts. For example, style can be applied to language within and outside the confines of literature and also to non-verbal arts. Within literature, one could refer to Milton's grand style; or the prose style of Henry James; classic style; everyday style; ballad style; or seventeenth-century style.

Outside the boundaries of literature, references are made to 'advertising style'; 'lecture style'; 'Textbook style'. In non-linguistic communication, one hears of a relaxed style of driving; casual style; authorial style; and so on. In the non-verbal arts, one encounters the following examples: "pointillist style"; "Picasso's later style"; "fugal style"; and "the style of the Gregorian chant" (Fowler, 1996: 185).

To further complicate the semantic interpretation of style, stylistics–its study–consists of several branches and is also connected to various disciplines which attribute different senses to style. For example, socio-pragmatists relate style to the medium and degree of textual formality in particular. Sociolinguists define it as a social variable linked with gender or class; while psychologists regard style as a form of behaviour; while anthropologists view it differently because of their contextual use of the

term (Norgaard, Montoro and Busse, 2010). The foregoing illustrates the point that style is not readily amenable to definition or even to interpretation. The different explanations given by different disciplines to style and by extension, stylistics confirm that "in practice, writers on style have differed a great deal in their understanding of the subject" (Leech and Short, 2007: 10).

Equally, in the fields of linguistics and literary criticism, attempts have been made to elucidate the concept of style. Fowler (1966: 15) says "Style–a property of all texts, not just literary–may be said to reside in the manipulation of variables in the structure of a language, or in the selection of optional or latent features". He adds that: "the word has an inevitable blurring effect because the kinds of regularities referred to are so diverse in their nature" (1996: 186). He, therefore, redefines it as "a recognizable and characteristic way of doing something" and further notes that it is a generalisation about regular conduct, mainly linguistic conduct.

Spencer and Gregory (1964: 54), in the same manner, acknowledge the elusiveness of style as a term, and agree that it eludes precision; but suggest that it should not be discarded for that reason. They also observe that style is an upshot of abstraction because it is one quality out of several that are possessed by literary works. Many senses of style bear the idea of individuality. Crystal and Davy (1969: 9) characterise style as having at least four commonly occurring senses, namely: (a) style as some or all of the language habits of one person; (b) style as some or all of the language habits employed by a class of people at one time or over a period of time; (c) style as the effectiveness of a mode of expression; (d) and style as referring solely to literary language. While the first two senses relate to the meaning of style, the last two concern the authors' creative deployment of language in literature. However, Ullman (1971: 133) views style as (a) a matter, not of technique, but of a highly personal mode of vision; (b) the product of conscious or unconscious choices; (c) a deviation from a 'contextually related norm', where some of the critics would merely note and interpret deviations, others would try to state this in statistical terms; (d) and as 'expressiveness' as distinct from linguistic meaning.

Furthermore, Enkvist (1964) categorises the numerous definitions of style into three: (a) those based on the writer's point of view; (b) those that deal with the characteristics of the text itself; (c) and those based on the impressions of the reader. These are summed up as style as a shell surrounding a pre-existing core of thought or expression; as the choice between alternative expressions; as a set of individual characteristics; as deviations from a norm; as a set of collective characteristics; and as those reactions among linguistic entities that can be stated in terms of more extensive spans of texts than the

sentence. The conclusion is that style has proved notoriously resistant to stringent definition (Enkvist, 1964). Nonetheless, to Lawal (2003: 27), the term means "some or all of the language habits of one person or a group of persons." He notes that there are unusual uses of language associated with particular individuals.

Style is also viewed as the manner in which a person employs language in a particular setting for a given purpose (Leech and Short, 2007). This agrees with Ferdinand de Saussure's distinction between langue and parole–the former being the code or system of rules common to speakers; and the latter the particular uses of the system. Leech and Short highlight some of the general interpretations of style as follows: (a) style as a way in which language is used; (b) style as choices made from the repertoire of the language; (c) style as choices made by a particular author, in a specific genre, or for a specific text; (d) literary stylistics as concerned with explaining the relation between style and literary or aesthetic function; (e) style as paraphrasability (transparency) or non-paraphrasability (opaqueness); (f) and stylistic choice as limited to those aspects of linguistic choice which concern alternative ways of rendering the same subject matter.

Style, like many semi-technical terms, has suffered from over-definition (Leech and Short, 2007: 31). However, Ohmann (1971: 133) argues that, generally, definitions of style "all assume the existence of some feature or features which are peculiar to style and distinguish it from language".

Instead of discarding or evading the subject as some scholars like Ellis (1970: 20) have advised, Adagbonyin (1999: 49) suggests that "the best response to the problem is first to appreciate that it exists, and then seek a means of disentangling oneself from the maze of definitions." Definitions are no longer useful when they do not encapsulate a particular viewpoint or theory of the phenomenon under inquiry. Rather, they ought to broaden or narrow, illuminate or inhibit the understanding of verbal artistry. For this reason, the best approach is to work through them "towards a richer appreciation of what literary style is and how best it can be analysed" (Leech and Short, 2007: 9). This advice undergirds the orientation of this inquiry on the utilisation of language, and the other creative resources availed Osundare and Ekpu by their period, their genre, and their purpose.

2.5.1 Perspectives on style

The study of style can be approached from different perspectives, which include style as choice, as the man, as deviation, as conformity, and style as situation. These perspectives of styles are reviewed in this section.

2.5.1.1 Style as choice

This is one of the broad perspectives from which style can be explored. Diverse scholars have defined the notion of style as choice. Enkvist (1964: 15), for instance, describes it as "the selection and ordering of materials." Lawal (2003: 28) states that the concept of style as choice offers the language user opportunity to make choices from the repertory of language; hence, the language user either makes choices or allows such choices to be made for him/her. Wales (2011: 55) uses the notion of style to mean words that have a more or less similar meaning, but which may be slightly divergent in "semantic nuances or connotation, or degree of formality". This implies that two literary artifacts can be related regarding subject matter, but differ in their diction. Osundare (2003) splits "style" into "pre-verbal choice" and "verbal choice" noting that the former is "speculative" and made before the latter; while the latter is observable, and occurs last.

As the above comments suggest, choice is exceptionally instrumental in stylistics because it accommodates the modifications and options accessible to a writer. Since language offers its users more than one opportunity in a given situation, there are a variety of choices available to a writer in any given text (Wales, 2011). The creative writer (as in the case of Ekpu and Osundare) chooses features from all the resources provided by language to communicate.

2.5.1.2 Style as the man

This notion is hinged on the idea that every writer is peculiar, in that every writer has a unique way of using language to achieve his/her intentions. Galperin (1977) sees the notion of style as the distinctive arrangement of language components, communicative means, and stylistic strategies peculiar to a given author, which distinguishes one work from others. Thus, to Galperin (1977:17), the author's style may be moulded by social and political backgrounds, religious predisposition, culture, education, and geographical location. The problem associated with this perspective of style is that, although every writer or author has a unique thumbprint, it is also possible for different writers to exhibit similar styles. For instance, Ekpu and Osundare have individual choices regarding diction, but sometimes they display identical styles. This forms the ground for the study of the stylistic similarities and differences in their works.

2.5.1.3 Style as deviation

The concept of deviation originated from the Russian formalists in the 1960s, with Jan Mukarovsky featuring as its chief proponent (Jefferies and Mclntyre, 2010). As an attribute of the language of literature, it has gained currency in stylistic and linguistic criticism. According to Wales (2011: 11), the term refers to "divergence in frequency from a norm or the statistical average." "Divergence" here implies either the breaking of normal rules of linguistic structure (whether phonological, grammatical, lexical, or semantic) or the overuse of normal rules of usage, that may result in marked abnormality or infrequency (Wales, 2011). For Jeffries and Mclntyre (2010: 31) it is "the occurrence of unexpected irregularity in language that results in foregrounding" thereby creating surprises for the reader. Cater and Nash (1990: 3) define "divergence" as an easily identified textual feature because of a quality that sets it apart from standard or normal ways of doing something. The concept of "style as deviation" infers that there are rules, conventions, and regulations that guide the different activities that must be executed. Deviation results when these rules are not observed.

From the foregoing, it is acknowledged that a literary artefact displays some features of "linguistic nuances realised through creative manipulation of the verbal resources in a manner that affronts the normal pattern of the language code" (Julius, 2003: 1). In other words, unlike ordinary language, literary language has evidence of stretching its possibilities in the process of attracting attention to itself (Julius, 2003). Deviation in stylistics, thus, entails the use of a variety of styles from the standard norm of language use in a given genre–the departure from what is taken or accepted as a common practice. The selected essays of Niyi Osundare and Ray Ekpu demonstrate the above attributes of literature. Their manipulation of the linguistic codes offered them by language produced stylistic dexterity, which arrests the reader's attention.

2.5.1.4 Style as conformity

In stylistics, conformity refers to the constitutive rules, conventions, and regulations that guide the different activities that must be executed (Cater and Nash, 1990: 10). This definition shows conventional regularities in the use of language in many contexts and situations. Style as conformity is the first available option for a writer's self-expression. Although the writer has the choice of meaning, and is generally expected to comply with the codes and conventions of language as required by the norm, the decision to conform to, or deviate from, the established style is his/hers. Nonetheless, the writer does not always enjoy the flexibility of breaking the standard rules of linguistic structures.

2.5.1.5 Style as situation

Situation is usually conjured in linguistics and is recurrently identical with context. The perspective of "style as situation" argues that context influences the language choice of a speaker or writer in any given situation (Finch, 2002). Here, context is defined as "the non-linguistics locale or setting surrounding language use, and which can impact [on] linguistic behaviour" (Wales, 2011: 385). It is the situation, circumstance, or environment from which a text is produced. This could be physical, socio-cultural, or pragmatic. Thus, a writer's style can largely be influenced by location or state. In everyday life, writers are confronted by an array of social situations, and it is part of their communicative competence that they can accordingly modify their language and degree of formality (Wales, 2011). Some of these situations are generally connected to a regular set of features so that a distinctive variety of language emerges–namely, 'registers.' In essence, a given situation can largely influence a writer's choice at every level of language description.

2.5.2 Stylistics

The foundation of stylistics as an academic discipline dates back to the formalist tradition that emerged in Russian literary criticism in the twentieth century. The growth and development of the discipline was influenced by the Russian formalist Roman Jakobson, a member of the Moscow Linguistic Circle and also one of the prime exponents of Russian formalism (Norgaard, Montoro and Busse, 2010). Jakobson's diverse academic profession offered him the prospect of manipulating the resourceful ideas he acquired from it. He devoted his research solely to literature–poetry in particular–because his goal was to identify the features of poetic language. He observes that "the poetic function of language is realized in those communicative acts where the focus is on message for its own sake" (McIntyre and Busse, 2010: 6).

In 1920, Jakobson relocated to Czechoslovakia where he fraternised with other Czech literary scholars (Jan Mukarovsky, in particular). As a result, the Prague Linguistic Circle (where structuralism originated) was established in 1926. Mukarovsky was also absorbed in determining the formal and functional dissimilarities between literary and non-literary texts. While Mukarovsky (1964) observes that "literary texts deviate from the standard language" and further argues that deviation is one of the features of literature owing to the defamilarising result it produces in the reader, Jakobson claims that defamiliarisation also results from structural patterning (that is parallelism) in texts. As a result of the

contributions of these scholars, the notions of deviation, parallelism, and foregrounding became the fundamentals of modern stylistics (McIntyre and Busse, 2010).

However, the Second World War disrupted the progress of Jakobson's research with the Prague structuralists. This necessitated his relocation from Czech to Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, where he lived some years before his relocation to the United State in 1941. Jakobson's relocation and the spread of his ideas in the U.S to other European scholars led to the beginning of the New Criticism, in America, and Practical Criticism, in Britain. While the work of the formalists and structuralists was ongoing, other European scholars developed the linguistic study of literature. One notable example was Leo Spitzer, whose research introduced the concept of interpreting a literary text and the application of linguistic analysis to authenticate or nullify the text. Leo Spitzer as cited in McIntyre and Busse (2010: 7), discards "impressionistic criticism and embraced the scientific notion of objectivity in analysis."

Other eminent scholars working in this tradition included Auerbach (1951), and Guiraud (1954); and Spitzer (1909) whose research influenced the development of French stylistics. Among these scholars, Jakobson owing to his contribution–regarding Russian formalism on the New Criticism and Practical Criticism– is considered to be the scholar who impacted most directly on the development of modern stylistics. Although the formalists and structuralists were criticised for their shortcomings (for example, excessive emphasis on linguistic form to the detriment of its function, and disregard for the importance of contextual factors); they were also acclaimed for their insights, such as the notion of deviation, parallelism, and foregrounding, which motivated later studies in stylistics (McIntyre and Busse, 2010). Foregrounding has been heavily criticized. Nonetheless, scholars like Leech 1969; Van Peer (1986) and Simpson (1998) have persuasively established the fact that it is an inherent and crucial feature of literary construal. Noam Chomsky is another scholar whose works in linguistics have contributed mainly to the growth and development of stylistics. For example, Ohmann (1964) and Halle and Keyser (1966) are early researchers in stylistics who drew inspiration from Chomskyan linguistics.

Stylistics has been disparaged for (a) its undue application of linguistic tools to explain literary texts; (b) its eclectic nature; (c) its lack of methodology and theoretical foundation; (d) and its assumed domination of literary criticism. Some of the criticisms against the discipline were addressed in the 1960s and the early 1970s through the research of Crystal and Davy (1969) and Enkvist (1964, 1973). In addition to these works, the movement of stylistics into the field of language teaching and learning practicalised research in stylistics, resulting in the establishment of pedagogical stylistics. Of

significance here is Halliday's Systemic Functional Theory (1971; 1978) which relates form to function within the context of the language system as a whole. Insights from Halliday's work can be seen in Fowler (1977; and Leech and Short (2007).

In the 1970s and 80s, research in stylistics was extended to the new fields of pragmatics where the center of attention was Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and how context affects meanings. The works of Burton (1980); Short (1981); Carter and Simpson (1989); and Carter and Nash (1990) are useful examples of research in pragmatics; whereas Jefferies' (2007; 2009; 2010a) stand out in CDA. The increasing need for research on the cognitive elements involved in understanding and processing texts in the 1990s led to the birth of cognitive poetics (also known as cognitive stylistics). For example, Emmott (1997), Stockwell, (2002), Semino and Culpeper, (2002); and Gavins and Steen (2003) researched this sub-field of stylistics.

In recent years, the need to support the traditional qualitative research method in stylistics has led to the establishment of corpus stylistics, a sub-branch of stylistics which uses computer technology for textual analysis. With the advent of corpus stylistics, quantitative research in stylistics has become possible (Norgaard, Montoro, and Busse, 2010; Busse and McIntyre, 2010). As the preceding overview has shown, the academic discipline of stylistics has travelled a long way since its inception; and its definition has been ambiguous due to the controversial issues that have stemmed from the field.

Crystal and Davy (1969: 18) define stylistics as the subdivision of linguistics which examines the features of literary language as used in a specific context and attempts to create codes that can explain the specific language that is used. Crystal and Davy's definition places emphasis on two critical elements, thus: (a) it establishes the primary concerns of stylistics, which uses the technique of linguistics to study the subject of style in language (Finch, 2002); (b) it shows the connection between language and social situation as the latter cannot be divorced from the former (Ayeomoni, 2004). It is evident that language provides its users with more than one choice in a given situation. Hence, stylistics aims to unearth from the list of available options, the decision made by the individual in any discourse situation; justify such a choice; and demonstrate how it has been used creatively for communicative purposes (Crystal and Davy, 1969).

McIntyre and Busse (2010: 6) define stylistics as "the study of style in language and how this results from the intra-linguistic features of a text with non-linguistic factors, such as author, genre, historical period, and so on." This conception of stylistics is corroborated by Osisanwo (2013) who holds that

stylistics focuses on an author's uniqueness by exploring the features of language which distinguish the individual, field, or profession from other authors and also identify what the author has to say and how it is said. Simpson (2004: 2) defines stylistics as a "method of textual interpretation in which the primacy of place is assigned to language," and opines that language is significant to stylistics since its forms, patterns, and levels that comprise linguistic framework are vital to textual function. To Norgaard, Montoro and Busse (2010: 1) it is "the study of how meaning is created through language in literature as well as in other types of texts." Stylisticians use linguistic models, theories, and frameworks as tools for analysing the dynamics of texts and how they render meaning. This implies that stylistics is a method of literary exposition which relies exclusively on the insights provided by linguistics, whose preferred object of study is literature.

The above definitions of stylistics underscore the concept of style. They also describe and explain the varieties of literary and non-literary language, applying principles that guide individual choice in the use of language. It is evident that stylistics is interdisciplinary in nature and multidimensional in approach. It merges linguistics and literary studies; while borrowing perceptions from philosophy, cultural theory, sociology, pragmatics, history, and psychology (Simpson, 2004). Stylistics provides significant tools and approaches with which its specialists analyse language with the goal of establishing how meaning is fashioned by linguistic means (Norgaard, Montoro and Busse, 2010).

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2.5.2.1 Linguistic stylistics

The two major types of stylistic approaches used by stylisticians in the analysis of literary or non-literary texts are literary stylistics and linguistic stylistics. Their divergence comes from their objectives. The advent of linguistic stylistics dates back to the 1960s. It is an objective and verifiable method of analysing or construing literary and non-literary texts. According to Otemuyiwa and Akinyosoye (2015), linguistic stylistics complements literary criticism. One of the primary reasons for

the value of this approach to stylistics is that it facilitates the reader's discovery of creativity in works of literature they have to study (Awonuga, 1988). Linguistic stylistics examines the linguistic features of a text; and one of its aims is to "test or refine a linguistic model, in effect, to contribute to linguistic theory" (Jeffries and McIntyre, 2010: 2). However, Enkvist (1964: 4) notes that it as "an investigation of style, which is essentially a scientific description of certain types and sets of linguistic structures that occur in a given set, and of their distribution." Furthermore, linguistic stylistics "studies the language in literary texts utilising the concepts and methods of modern linguistics" (Fowler, 1996: 3).

This branch of knowledge is mainly concerned with the use of language and its effects in texts. This point goes along with the prevailing view of stylisticians that meaning is occasioned by a writer's linguistic choices (Jefferies and McIntyre, 2010). Linguistic stylistics explores the concept of style by uncovering the linguistic options used in a particular text and the effects of the choices. This justifies the statement of Halliday (1994: 217) that "in talking therefore of the linguistic study of literary texts we mean not merely the study of the language, but rather the study of such texts by the methods of linguistics."

2.5.2.2 Literary stylistics

Having considered the concept of linguistic stylistics, we now turn to literary stylistics which is concerned with the interpretation and appreciation of literary texts. It begins with exploring language organisation to pursuing intuitively significant stylistics features and their role; and how these influence and contribute to our understanding of the texts (Hasan, 1987: 49). However, Leech and Short (2007) aver that the goal of this stylistic approach is to establish the link between language and artistic function. According to them, literary stylistics relates the two essential and complementary factors, that is, the literary aesthetics of the critic, and the linguistic description of the linguist, which is done by the concern with the 'what,' 'why,' and 'how' of stylistics devices and effects. Neither of these "two constituent components of interpretation and appreciation of literary texts can be sufficient by itself to achieve that" (Hasan, 1987: 50). The literary stylisticians are sensitive to language; hence their attention is directed towards the underlying message conveyed by a literary text. Also, they are interested in exploring the figurative and evocative employment of language which characterizes the message being interpreted.

In contrasting linguistic stylistics with literary stylistics, Halliday argues that, theoretically, the former is superior, because it is precise, systematic, and all-inclusive. The present study is linguistic stylistic in orientation. It combines the plane of expression/form with that of meaning /content to adequately account for the stylo-linguistic choices made in selected essays of Niyi Osundare and Ray Ekpu.

2.5.3 Linguistic patterns

In order to determine the linguistic features which contribute to meaning construction in the selected essays of Niyi Osundare and Ray Ekpu, we examine the following linguistic patterns: graphology, phonology, syntax and lexico-semantic because they provide us a very systematic means of elucidating the patterns Osundare and Ekpu build from the material of language to construct meaning. Osundare's and Ekpu's meanings are underpinned at these levels. Each level is an inter-level strengthening and complementing other levels and confirming the selected essay texts as discourse. Also, the analysis focuses on both the formal and functional dimensions of language use in the selected essays because they do not exist in isolation. In this regard, the emphasis is on the communicative function as the guiding principle, because Osundare and Ekpu's texts are not independent objects, detached from their roots in language, culture, and personality by the act of essayistic creation. They are deeply engrained in the language, culture and character of the writers. Not to acknowledge this fact is not to value the deep social concerns of the essays. It is to deal with the texts meaninglessly and mechanically and, thereby, seriously undermine Osundare and Ekpu's essays.

The study of linguistic form is the investigation of the means through which languages convey contrast in meaning through their internal structures. Hence, in describing the form of any particular language, we are, in effect, describing the meaningful internal patterns of that language, the separation of those places in the language where there are possibilities of choice which contribute to meaning. This undoubtedly is a stylistic description which, according to Fowler (1996: 25), "…is the description of pattern formed by the arrangement of linguistic variables". Osundare's and Ekpu's essays exhibit the phonic potential of language. Hence, these writers make a conscious effort to echo the rhythms of the speech of their people, and even borrow indigenous words. The attention given to sound devices such as alliteration, in this study, is meant to lay bare the phonic potential of the selected essays. Because the selected essays exist in the written forms, Osundare's and Ekpu's texts are also graphologically significant. Graphology is an alternative system of realization of language to phonology. For that

reason, it cannot be ignored in the analysis of the writers' essays, as it complements the phonic aspects of their texts.

Syntax mediates between the levels of sound and meaning. It comprises lexical choice -choices of words from the vocabulary of the language- and the grammatical choices involved in combining words into sentence (Adagbonyin, 1999: 17). At the syntactic level, focus is on some stylistically motivated clause patterns. These include the nominal group, mood system, modality, transitivity and parallelism/pattern repetition, which are deployed for meaning construction. The nature of the lexical items Osundare and Ekpu use in their essays and the meanings they make with them are examined. The writers' lexical choices such as lexical incorporations, lexical relations, figurative language, and idiomatic expressions are highly motivated. Generally, the study examines all the potential meaning levels of linguistic patterning in the selected essays and takes full cognizance of the meaning the texts make.

2.6A review of some relevant previous works

This section examines some of the earlier linguistic stylistics studies on the essays of Niyi Osundare and Ray Ekpu. A cursory glance reveals that no linguistic stylistics study has been accomplished on the essays of these writers. However, most of the efforts at exploring Osundare's art have paid undue attention to his poetry. To corroborate this assertion, Na'Allah's (2003) The People's Poet: Emerging Perspectives on Niyi Osundare is one among several efforts made at exploring Osundare's art from all perspectives. The work, which comprises thirty-eight essays by renowned scholars around the world, only focused on Osundare's poetry, plays, autobiography, and interviews. The skewed attention paid to the essays of Osundare and Ekpu by scholars might be attributed to genre status as succinctly captured by Good (2014: 1) that the essay is one of the minor literary genres; or, an "invisible genre" in the sense that it is commonly used but hardly researched into. This is why studies on Osundare's works (as none on Ekpu) reviewed here are predominantly those in his poetry where critical works on linguistic stylistics abound. The present study, thus, explores the essays of these writers from the linguistic stylistics perspective. No work, none that we know of, has considered the stylo-linguistic features of Niyi Osundare and Ray Ekpu or compares the linguistic idiolect of these writers from the ambit of the essay genre.

Dare (1998) focuses on the linguistic reiteration in Niyi Osundare's poetry. He argues that any discussion of poetry that hopes to be productive must first begin with the inspection of its language (1).

In this regard, he examines Osundare's poetic style through a linguistic stylistic analysis. Using the systemic functional model and the speech acts theory as a framework, he explores the language used in Osundare's poetry from the level of syntax, lexis, semantics and morphology, the purpose being to unravel Osundare's creativity in language use as well as demonstrate the communicative accessibility of his poetry. He submits that Osundare deploys reiterative strategies from the levels mentioned above extensively to express his feelings, thoughts and his message.

Adagbonyin (1999) examines Osundare's eight published poetry collections, viz: Songs of the Marketplace; Village Voices; A Nib in the Pond; The Eye of the Earth; Moonsongs; Waiting Laughters; Songs of the Season; and Midlife. The study, which pays particular attention to Osundare's linguistic creativity, combines stylistics and the neo-Firthian systemic model. Adagbonyin's thesis is, that at the graphological level devices such as patterns of lineation, stanzaic arrangements, and the use of punctuation, the unconventional use of upper and lower case letters, boldface forms, lexical cramping/truncation, and pictographs all serve as vehicles for the various poetic themes. It also notes Osundare's "willingness to regularly break the monotony of visual patterning which helps to sustain the interest of the reader" (12). At the phonological level of analysis, the research demonstrates how the poet utilises alliteration and assonance, as well as repetition to construct musical appeal which aids meaning. Osundare mostly "writes free verse, a tradition of versification which shuns regular metrical patterning, among other features, an indication of the great appeal music has for him" (Adagbonyin, 1999: 12). The syntactic analysis reveals the use of declarative, imperative, and interrogative patterns, alongside the nominal group, verbal group, parallel patterns, to achieve variation in syntactic patterning; enhance communicative value, and convey the poet's vision. Finally, the lexico-semantic aspect of the study discusses devices such as neologism, collocation for the construction of mental pictures and to raise real meanings in the volumes. Adagbonyin's work makes it glaring that Osundare's achievement in poetry is a product of an alliance between the why and how of literary communication, with none taking precedence over the other.

Osoba (2008) analyses Niyi Osundare's Songs of the Marketplace from a linguistic stylistic point of view. The purpose is to inform the reader of some artistic and message-enhancing phonological features which are essential for comprehending the poetic text. The study, which focuses on two significant sound patterns, alliteration, and assonance, demonstrates how these sounds have been used for aesthetic and communicative purposes. The alliterative sounds, like the voiceless bilabial plosive; voiced bilabial

plosive; voiceless velar plosive; glottal fricative; the sibilants; and assonance–such as the repetition of long and short vowels–are all used to project and reinforce the messages of oppression, suffering, poverty, brutality, and fraud conveyed in the poems. He stresses that the linguistic features and message of a poem cannot be fully reckoned with without a reasonable explication of its phonology.

Nachafiya (2008) makes conscious effort to examine Osundare's poetic style from both literary and linguistic angles. The study, which focuses on the language and style in Osundare's oeuvre, evaluates the following volumes: Songs of the Marketplace, Village Voices, A Nib in the Pond, The Eye of the Earth, Moonsongs, and Waiting Laughters in order to explicate how stylistic strategies have been used effectively to communicate Osundare's poetic vision to the world. The study reveals that in Songs of the Marketplace, imagery is deployed to portray Osundare's "concern with the socio-economic problems in modern-day Nigeria society" (69). Apart from demonstrating his commitment to the plight of ordinary Nigerians, the use of imagery shows his expressiveness coupled with the simplicity in language use which makes his poetry accessible to readers. Also, he employs descriptive metaphors in Village Voices and Moonsongs to comment on the social malaise in society; these enable readers to have a vivid representation of the message being conveyed.

Apart from the stylistic exploitation of descriptive metaphors and intense imagery, direct address and dramatic dialogue are extensively deployed in Songs of the Marketplace, The Eye of the Earth, Moonsongs, and Waiting Laughters for communicative purposes. The lyrical tone in each volume is reinforced with "repetition of phrases, lines, and structures" (74) which enhances meaning. Rhetorical questions are deployed in Waiting Laughters and Moonsongs to produce rhythm and also project the egocentric attitude of African leaders. Other stylistic features used in the analysed volumes are proverbs, praise names, and idiomatic expressions. With the employment of these devices, what results is the uniqueness and expressiveness of Osundare's poetry which underlines his poetic style.

Okunowo (2012) investigates the patterns of parallelism as tropes of meanings in "What the Earth Said," "Waiting Laughters," and "Moon Songs," extracted from The Eye of the Earth. In this selection, Okunowo recognises the efficacy of parallelism as a stylistic feature. He points to the deployment of clauses recurrently employed to discuss the themes of hard labour without reward, inequality between the rich and poor, as well as truth and patience– the path to overcoming the socio-political plight of Nigeria. According to him, these clauses are in a parallel semantic relationship and help to project the mood of sadness in the poems.

In Osundare's The World is an Egg, Adagbonyin, and Dada (2012) undertake a linguistic examination of phonological and syntactic configurations. They focus on the phonological and grammatical repetitions in the collection which help to advance the poet's themes apart from transmitting his values, feelings, and thoughts. At the phonological level, the study points to how sound patterning is used to form meaning. Phonological devices predominantly featured in the poems are assonance, alliteration, and refrain. Similarly, the occurrence of refrain boosts the musical and resonant beauty of the poems– a style that appears to echo the poet's thematic preoccupation (2012: 98). The collection also contains grammatical devices like lexical and syntactic repetition. The occurrence of lexical items call for attention and emphasis and point to the predicament presented in the poems. According to Adagbonyin and Dada, there is the predominant usage of the syntactic pattern SPCA. The use of syntactic and grammatical repetitions contributes to the rhetorical force in the poems which create clarity for proper understanding of the subject matter.

Otemuyiwa and Akinyosoye (2015) look at Osundare's "Let Earth's Pain be Soothed", "First Rain," and "Meet me at Okeruku," to identify the grammatical and lexico-semantic features as well as the cohesion and tropes deployed in these poems. At the grammatical level, the analysis revealed the types and functions of clauses and sentences utilised. For example, in "Let Earth's Pain be Soothed", there is the predominant usage of simple declarative sentences with the SPC (Subject, Predicator, and Complement) pattern, which projects the "eagerness of the poet" for the long-anticipated rain. In "First Rain," there is a deliberate changeover from SPC to ASP (Adverb, Subject, and Predicate). In this poem, the ASP structure is used to describe the aftermath of the rain and its likely positive effect, such as pleasure, since it has been expected for too long. In "Meet me at Okeruku", the poet adopts the AS (Adverb and Subject) pattern. He uses it to describe the characteristics of 'Okeruku', a place in the Western part of Nigeria. Otemuyiwa and Akinyosoye (2015) state that the poet tells of the impact the first rain would have on the city (like helping to wash down the dust off most roof. These examples show that the poet adopts three different patterns for his stream of thoughts. At the semantic level, attention is drawn to words, phrases, clauses, and their classes, The connection between the sentence patterns, diction, and tropes is realised through the aid of cohesive devices such as pronoun reference and some lexical items, which all characterise Osundare's style. Otemuyiwa and Akinyosoye (2015) work is relevant to this thesis. The reason is that it exposes what a linguist does to literature to measure the quality of language used. It also reveals the efficacy of the linguistic, stylistic approach in proving the manipulation of linguistic creativity in literary texts.

The pattern of deviation adopted in Osundare's poetry is the focus of Dick (2015). The poems analysed are "Waiting Laughters", "Days", "Midlife", "Tender Moments", "The Eye of the Earth", "Songs of the Season" and "Songs of the Marketplace". According to Dick's investigation, parallel and syntactic structures, as well as graphic patterns like graphic elongation, italicisation, and capitalisation, are used principally to reinforce and re-emphasize the various ideas relayed in the poems. The study reveals that the splendour and distinctiveness of Osundare's poems stem from his manipulation of familiar, everyday language.

To underscore the satirical role of language in poetic discourse, Jimoh and Odetade (2016) explores Osundare's "Blues for the New Senate King." They analysed the syntactic, graphological, phonological and morphological choices made by Osundare and also highlight the various ways through which he communicates to the audience. It is observed that Osundare employs adjectives, compound words, simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, foregrounding and collocation to vividly portray the Nigerian political elite's unquenchable lust for power and material things. These linguistic items contribute meaningfully to the overall theme of the text, and their creative use enables Osundare to fashion a distinct style through which he reaches out to his audience.

The above review validates the assertion in Chapter One that, no stylistic or linguistic consideration has been given to Osundare's and Ekpu's essays. This is also in line with Raji's (2009: 99) claim that "many people do not consider it worthwhile to explore other aspects of Osundare's intellectual and literary efforts".

2.7Theoretical Framework

The main theoretical framework for this study isHalliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics, supported with relevant aspects of Aristotle's Rhetorical theory. The next sub-section begins discussion onAristotle's rhetorical model and then examines the systemic functional model.

2.7.1 Rhetorical theory

Rhetoric is derived from the Greek *techne rhetorike,*which meansthe art of speech (Bradford, 1997; Turco, 1999; Wales, 2011). Aristotle (1991) defines it as a means of persuasion. Many other scholars have expanded on this definition. For example, Keith and Lundberg (2004: 9) say rhetoric creates "discourses, interprets how, when and why discourses are persuasive and as well how discourse gets things done in our social world". Kennedy (2002) opines that rhetoric tackles pressing public issues by

engaging deliberate persuasive strategies before public viewers at a particular occasion in order to proffer solution to a difficult situation by encouraging new forms of thought and action. As these definitions suggest, rhetoric involves the study of language in its applied usage, concentrating on the persuasive and other effects of language, and on the means by which one can achieve those effects on readers (Leech and Short, 2007; Abrams, 2009).

Classical rhetoric can be traced back to the times of ancient scholars such as Plato, Aristotle, Socrates and Cicero who believed that the means to persuade lies in the aptitude to reason logically, understand human character, emotions and goodness in their various forms (Robert, 2003: 9). Among these rhetoricians, Socrates was the first to extend and promote the moral and ethical benefits of the art of speech. The most significant moment in the early history of rhetoric was ascribed to Plato who delineated the scope of rhetoric according to his negative opinions of the art. He criticized the Sophists for employing rhetoric as a means of dishonesty instead of discovering truth. Rhetoric, to Plato, is an art of the persuasion of ignorant masses within the courts and assemblies. In his estimation, rhetoric was simply a form of sycophancy which conceals the truth. Therefore, any speech of extensive prose designed for flattery was considered by Plato within the scope of rhetoric (Bradford, 1997).

Aristotle redeemed the image of rhetoric from Plato. He narrowed its focus by defining three genres of rhetoric—deliberative, forensic or judicial, and epideictic (Bradford, 1997). He interrogateda number of predominant assumptions about what composed an effective presentation, modifiedthe existing rhetorical theories and extended the delineation of rhetoric, calling it the ability to identify the appropriate means of persuasion in a given situation. To Aristotle, effective public speakers must be audience-centered and must utilize a number of proofs in their presentations (Chandler, 2002, West and Turner, 2004).

To compose a persuasive speech that will impact on the audience, Aristotle established three modes of persuasionwhich speakers must employ during speech preparation. These modes are logos, ethos and pathos. Logos or the appeal to reason relies on logic or reason. It is the logical proof that speakers employ; their arguments, rationalizations, and discourse. Ethos or the ethical appeal is based on the perceived character, credibility, or reliability of the speaker as revealed through his or speech. It is the mutual influence that speakers and listeners have on each other. In this case, the speaker uses only credible and reliable sources to build up his argument; cite those sources properly, respect the audience by stating the opposing position accurately, and in all, establish a common ground with listeners.Pathos

pertains to the emotions that are drawn out of listeners. A good persuasive discourse appeals to logic, demonstrate the writer's credibility and appeal to the audience's emotions (Skinner, 1996; Vico, 2001; West and Turner, 2004).

Apart from the modes of persuasion provided by Aristotle, classical rhetoricians identifiedfive canons of rhetoric, which trace the traditional tasks in designing a persuasive speech. These are:invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery. Three of the canons, invention, disposition and style relate to the composition and the remaining two, memory and delivery are concerned with performance. *Invention,* or *heuresis,* refers to the search for discovery of argument and proofs; *disposition,* or *taxis,* involves the way in which such materials were arranged and presented; *style*, or *elocution,* relates to the manner in which the argument was conducted; *memory*, or *mneme,* is the mental retention of subject matter, words, and arrangement; and *delivery*, or *hypocrisis,* is the art of graceful and forceful public delivery (Turco, 1999; Abrams, 2009).

Following the lead of classical rhetoricians, an effective rhetorical discourse was examined using insights from rhetorical theory. Also, it should be stated that as a discipline, rhetoric has advanced from its classical approach into the modern. Whereas classical rhetoric trains speakers to be effective persuaders in public forums and institutions such as courtrooms and assemblies, modern rhetoric, on the other, examineS human discourse and as well, address a wide variety of domains, including the natural and social sciences, fine art, religion, journalism, digital media, fiction, history, cartography, and architecture, with the more traditional domains of politics and the law (Nelson, Megill and McCloskey, 1987).

Moreso, the distinction between the classical and modern rhetorical approach lies in the fact that whereas the former has presented conventional rules that are simply enunciations of contemporary attitudes toward certain kinds of prose and has also tended to be identified with orations in which the specific intent to persuade is most obvious, the latter provides the means for textual analysis and explication, a perspective for discovering the suffusion of text and content within any discourse, and as well as a methodology for studying discourse. Also, it offers a means for the uncovering of those strategies whereby the interest, values, or emotions of an audience are engaged by any speaker or writer through discourse (Nelson, Megill and McCloskey, 1987; Chandler, 2005).

Rhetoric has contributed immensely to the study of the essay discourse since the era of Michel de Montaigne and Francis Bacon whose essayistic works were largely rhetorical in orientation. For application of rhetorical model in essay discourse, see (Korshin, 1987; Cunningham, 1989; Monson, 2008; Good, 2014).

Aristotle's rhetorical model is useful in this thesis which investigates the essay genre for how linguistic features are used to construct meaning. The essay, as Diyanni (1997) says, offers information, data, and facts, and its primary aim is to instruct and persuade. Thus, it evaluates, explains and accentuates a set of circumstances and induces readers to view them in a particular way. To explore the essays of Osundare and Ekpu for their power to tackle pressing public issues by engaging deliberate persuasive strategies in order for readers to accept their argument;we employ Aristotle's model to evaluatethe essay texts from the viewpoints of their validity of ideas and aesthetic merit. Whereas the former considers Osundare's and Ekpu's accuracy of description and the persuasiveness of their argument, the latter explores how these essayists employ language to instruct, induce or motivate readers to accept their argument (Diyanni, 1997).

The aspect of the Aristotle's model relevant to this study is the three modes of persuasion, namely, logos, ethos and pathos. In logos, the essays of Osundare and Ekpu are evaluated for the logical proof employed in their argument. Analysis of ethos focuses on their credibility as essayists and as well the reliability of the sources employed to build up their argument. It also considers how Osundare and Ekpu have been able to establish a common ground with listeners/readers. In all, the study also examines the selected essays of Osundare and Ekpu for how they have been able to appeal to the emotions of Nigerians which form the crux of pathos. From the foregoing, it is obvious that the rhetorical model is relevant to our study. It enables us to determine how well Osundare and Ekpu employ words to create meaning and how well they structure and dramatize ideas. Also, through the model, we are able to determine the aspects of Osundare's and Ekpu's language, selection of detail, and organization which make their message more than mere statements of facts or more than simple descriptions of events.

2.7.2 Systemic functional linguistics

One of the functionalist approaches to language study is systemic functional linguistics by M.A.K Halliday (Halliday, 1961; 1971; 1973; 1994; 2004; Berry, 1975; 1977; Kress, 1976 and Butler, 1985). Halliday's immediate linguistic environment was that created by Firth in the 1930s through 1950s. One important theme was text in context, a way into language emphasized by the anthropologist Malinowski, who influenced Firth and later systemic linguists. Halliday, in turn, was influenced by the Prague School linguists, namely, Helmsley and Whorf (Matthiessen and Bateman, 1991: 3). As opposed to Chomsky's formalist theory, Halliday is functionalist in his thinking. He views language as subsisting to perform certain human needs, which include understanding or making sense of the world, and communicating such conceptions to others. He argues that the formal categories of language originate as much from these as from any pre-programming. Halliday's focal point is the importance of the world and how mankind relates to it in the formation of the linguistic system. The three principal functions which he identifies and uses as the basis of his grammar are the ideational, interpersonal, and textual components, which are called the 'metafunctions' of language. In many respects, his thinking is that language is a symbolic signalling system; or, a social semiotic. Halliday sees language as a social and cultural phenomenon, as opposed to a biological one (Finch, 2002: 12-13).

2.7.2.1 The metafunctions of language

The systemic functional model views language as a resource for making meaning. This resource is organised functionally according to a small number of simultaneous, highly generalised functions known as metafunctions (Matthiessen and Bateman, 1991). Halliday notes that metafunctions relate to three central purposes which govern the form taken by clauses. Clauses act as a representation (the ideational component); an exchange (interpersonal component); and a message (textual component) (Finch, 2002: 94).

2.7.2.1.1 The ideational component

The ideational meaning (also known as experiential meaning) is the use of language to conceptualise or represent the world (Norgaard, Montoro and Busse, 2010). Language performs a variety of functions which include: to express content and convey information, message, ideas, concepts, processes, and experience of the worlds (Halliday and Matthiessen, 1999). This is achieved by means of processes, participants, and circumstances in the linguistic system known as transitivity (Norgaard, Montoro and Busse, 2010). Halliday (1978) makes reference to the relationship of field, tenor, and mode to the

metafunctions and the grammatical systems. He establishes a link between field and transitivity, tenor, and mood/modality; and between mood and theme.

2.7.2.1.2 The interpersonal component

The interpersonal component of the metafunction is connected to the relation created between interlocutors in discourse situations. In other words, in using language to communicate with one another, interlocutors establish a social relationship (Norgaard, Montoro and Busse, 2010). Leech and Short (2007) state that the process involves the connection between language and its users; and how it relates the speaker's attitude; and it influences the behaviour and attitude of the hearer. According to Halliday and Matthiessen, (1999), all examples of communication in discourse involving two or more interlocutors are within this context. Halliday (1994) observes that language users undertake different roles during speech events. He identifies these roles as "giving and demanding", and notes that these users do not select which speech role to use; neither do they select the information to exchange when giving or demanding–which results in the choice between exchanging and giving information.

2.7.2.1.3 The textual component

The textual component of the metafunction concerns the structuring of text, and the two core resources for the formation of textual meaning are 'Theme structures' and 'cohesion' (Finch, 2002; Norgaard, Busse and Montoro, 2010). An analysis of Theme structures centers on the configuration of elements within the sentence with specific prominence given to the first constituent, Theme, which is a textually prominent position. The rest of the sentence is called Rheme (Norgaard, Busse and Montoro, 2010). To create textual meaning, English clauses and groups are organized in such a way as to highlight the first position, that is, the speaker's viewpoint on the experience being created and last position, which is hearer oriented, and features fresh information. The system of Theme structures can therefore be seen as allocating prominence to the beginning and end of the English clause. It is this "textual patterning which assigns a periodic texture to English discourse as it unfolds" (Martin, 1992: 11).

2.7.2.2 Organisation of Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG)

The systemic functional model is made up of a network of systems which offers the language user choices at different levels of language description from which linguistic events or texts are accounted for. The primary levels are 'form', 'substance' and 'context'. Substance is the material of language comprising phonic (audible noises) or graphic (visible marks). The phonic and the graphic materials of

language organise the substance achieved by phonology and graphology, while context connects form to nonlinguistic features of the situation in which language functions to produce extra-textual features (Halliday, 1961: 243).

Halliday's framework is expounded and corroborated by Tomori (1977: 44) who affirms that "the phonic substance is made up of sounds and is studied in phonology while the graphic substance is made up of visual symbols which are studied in orthography or graphology". He notes that form is the organisation of the phonic or graphic substance into patterns that convey message, and is made up of two levels: grammar and lexis. Grammar is the level of form at which a finite set of rules operates to produce sentences that are well formed in any language; while lexis is the level of form at which open set patterns operate in a language. The open set patterns are those features of a language which are not covered by the rules of grammar. Context, in Tomori's (1977) view is the relation of a particular linguistic feature to another.

The foregoing discussion shows that context connects grammar, lexis, and situation. The systemic functional model acknowledges the formal and situational dimensions of language description. While the formal dimension accounts for meaningful patterning at the phonological, graphological, grammatical, and lexical levels, other situational variables of language events are accounted for at the situational dimension (Ogunsiji, 2001). Language structure is analysed along semantic, phonological, lexical, and grammatical lines, and language function from three angles, viz: ideational, interpersonal, and textual (Leech and Short, 2007).

2.7.2.3 Categories of the theory of grammar

Systemic functional linguistics recognizes four major theoretical categories of grammar which function as a framework for the description of all natural languages. These are unit, structure, class, and system. They are referred to as the "categories of the highest order of abstraction" and they account for the structural patterns in language (Halliday, 1961).

2.7.2.3.1 Units

Unit accounts for structures of different shapes that carry recurrent grammatical status. Thus, each of the following items constitutes a unit on the grammatical rank-scale in systemic grammar, namely: the morpheme, words, the group (phrase), clause, and sentence (Tomori, 1977). These units form a hierarchy. The scale of abstraction that binds them is that of rank. The sentence is the highest rank of

abstraction on the scale, followed by the clause, the group, the word, and the morpheme. A sentence is "identified by its terminal punctuation that comes at the end of the stretch of an utterance" (Tomori, 1977: 50) ; a clause is a grammatically coherent linguistic text that has a verb" (Tomori, 1977: 19) ; the group (phrase) is "any well-ordered linguistic form of two or more words that have no grammatical coherence" (Tomori, 1977: 18-19); the morpheme is "the minimal linguistic element that carries a grammatical and or semantic meaning" (Tomori, 1977: 16) ; and the word is "an abstraction that refers to the meaningful unit of language" (Tomori, 1977: 17). The phenomenon of rank-shifting is attainable in the rank-scale because a unit of a higher rank may move down the scale to function in the next lower unit (Tomori, 1977).

2.7.2.3.2 Structure

Structure is the category that accounts for the nature of patterns that the units carry. Tomori (1977), citing Halliday (1961), defines structure as the class that accounts for the various ways in which an occurrence of one unit may be made up of occurrences of the next unit below (including, sometimes, rank-shifted occurrences of a unit higher than the one next below it). The four elements of the English clause structure given by Halliday are S, P, C, A, representing Subject, Predicator, Complement, and Adjunct, respectively. All clause structures in English combine all or some of these elements in the various places allowed by the grammar of the language. This point is illustrated in the following clause structures: (a) *Man/ is/ a social animal* (SPC); (b) *The president/ gave /a speech /yesterday* (SPCA); (c) *After 1959, /Nigeria/ was /independent* (ASPC).

2.7.2.3.3 Class

In class, items in a language are often arranged according to the pattern they take in structure. Thus, words with an identical pattern are seen to belong to a class. Tomori posits that a class then is "any set of items having the same possibilities of operation in structure" (Tomori, 1977: 49). Class similarly refers to members of the same unit, which means that there are separate classes for nouns, verbs, adjectives. The three main classes of groups in English are the nominal, verbal and adverbial. These are discussed in detail in subsequent section under the group analysis.

2.7.2.3.4 System

System is seen to be a network of relationships. According to Ogunsiji (2001: 13), as a grammatical category, "system accounts for a finite set of alternant from which a choice must be made". It involves

the choice of one item from among a number of similar events. In English, for example, a choice has to be made at the place of the element 'P' in clause structure within the following systems: voice, tense, aspects, polarity, and phase (Tomori, 1977: 50). Within the system of voice, there is choice between active and passive verbs. The system of tense offers a choice between present and past. The system of aspects offers a choice between progressive and perfective aspects; whereas the system of mood presents the choice between declarative, interrogative, and imperative (Downing and Locke, 1992).

2.7.2.4 Group analysis

In systemic theory, a group is defined as an "expansion of a word" (Halliday, 2004: 362). The four major classes of the groups are nominal group, verbal group, adverbial group, and prepositional group. These are discussed below.

2.7.2.4.1. Nominal group

The nominal group is a group of words which represents or describes an entity. It can operate as subject and complement in a clause and as well the complement of a preposition in a prepositional phrase (Downing and Locke, 1992). The systemic functional linguistic theory recognizes three operational components or meta-functions that are realised in language. These are ideational, interpersonal and textual components. A blend of three different systems evolves from the three different operational parts in the grammar of the English clause (Martin, 1992). However, on the grammar of the group, Halliday (2004) avers that similar components are depicted as a partial contribution to a single structural line.

Consequently, group structure is construed with the ideation component which within this structure is split into two: experiential and logical. The logical part interprets the logical-semantic connection in the group which is that of modification. The elements of the nominal group structure are modifier, head and qualifier (m, h, q). Whereas h is a required element, m and q are elective and dependent. The main elements of the structure of the nominal groups may be registered as

$$\longrightarrow$$

(m), h, (q)

Figure 2. The Nominal group structure

Where the arrow indicates that sequence is variable, the brackets indicate optional elements and the commas suggest that the list is that of the element of structure and not a structure. The component

introducing the *head* is called the *premodifier* and that which appears after it is the *postmodifier* (Wright and Hope, 1996). The four structural types of nominal group are: the *h-type* (head only), *mh-type* (head with premodifier), *hq-type* (head with qualifier) and the *mhq-type* (full structure of premodification and postmodification).

However, Halliday (2004: 320) identifies six experiential functions in a nominal group namely, Deictic, Numerative, Epithet, Classifier, Thing and Qualifier. The functional elements which constitute the premodifier are deictic, numerative, epithet and classifier. The Deictic element serves to identify a specific entity. Nouns, pronouns or determiners form the deictic element. Numerative function can be realised by the word class *numeral* which includes cardinal and ordinal numbers. Epithet indicates the features of the modified item and is typically realized by adjective. Classifier serves to sub-classify the qualified object into a subclass of such object. Whereas thing conflates with the head and is usually realised by a noun or pronoun, a qualifier (the element which follows the thing) conflates with premodifier and is generally realized by prepositional phrases and embedded clauses.

2.7.2.4.2 Verbal group

The verbal group is the component that operates as Finite plus Predicator (Halliday, 2004). It comprises a main verb as head and in many instances concomitant with auxiliaries, which aid to articulate differences of voice, aspect, and negation. The logical systems of verb group change correspondingly, a fundamental distinction being between the finite and non-finite forms (Wales, 2011). In the expression, the children have been eating their lunch the verbal group is has been eating the verbal group can be interpreted as the extension of a verb, and it comprises a group of words within the class of a verb (Halliday, 2004).

2.7.2.4.3 The adverbial group

Adverbial is frequently used to accommodate a large group of configurations such as prepositional phrases, finite and non-finite clauses, which operate in the same way as adverbs (Wales, 2011). Adverbial group functions as the adjunct in the modal structure of the clause either as a circumstantial adjunct or modal adjunct. The *Head* of an adverb group is an adverb which may or may not be modified. Adverbial groups which function as circumstantial adjunct indicate a circumstance as *Head* while those operating as modal adjunct have an adverb signifying an assessment as *Head* (Halliday, 2004).

2.7.2.4.4 The prepositional group

Prepositions are connected to verbs. They form groups by modification. The Prepositional Group comprises a three-element structure in which the first element (modifier) is optional and usually realized by an adverb. The central element is the preposition (head) and is followed by a nominal unit (completive) which is needed to complete the structure (Downing and Locke, 1992). A Prepositional Group is different from a Prepositional Phrase in that whereas the Prepositional Group is a modifier-head structure expanded from and functionally equivalent to a preposition, a Prepositional Phrase is a clause structure in which a preposition performs the predicate function (Halliday, 2004).

2.8.2.5 Clause analysis

In systemic functional linguistics, the clause is seen as a unit in which the three different kinds of meaning are combined. The three distinct grammatical constructions that give the clause its meaning are transitivity, mood, and theme structures. Each of these expresses one kind of semantic organisation and is mapped onto another to produce the complete meaning of the clause (Halliday, 2004: 83).

2.8.2.5.1 Transitivity

Transitivity implies the "way meanings are encoded in the clause, and the way different types of process are represented in language" (Simpson, 2004: 22). In SFL, transitivity performs a crucial role, in that it accounts for the ideational component of language; that is, the content of what is said or written and the writer's experience embodied by that content. A clause is essentially a basic unit of syntax that determines the position and sequence of elements. Meanings are encoded in clauses because of the way processes are represented in language (Clark, 2007: 147). There are three components of processes: (a) the process itself, which is typically realised grammatically as the verb phrase; for example, "hit", "sees", "broke"; (b) the participant–this is associated with the process, and typically, is realised grammatically by noun phrases; for example, "John", "she", "the vase"; (c) and the circumstance–this is associated with the process, and typically is realised grammatically by the prepositional and adverbial phrases; for example, "in the room"; "at breakfast"; "over the wall" (Clark, 2007).

Table 1: Components of Process

Configuration of process	Typically realised by
Process	Verbal group
Participant	Nominal group

Circumstance	Adverbial group or prepositional phrase
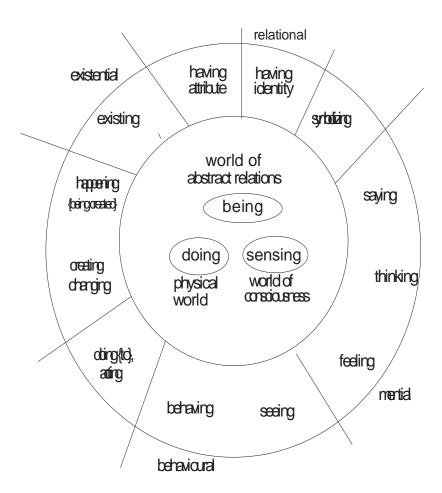
Figure 3. The grammar of experience: types of process in English
Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004: 172

As shown in Figure 3, Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 172) identify six types of processes: material, mental, behavioural, verbal, relational, and existential.

2.8.2.5.1.1 Material Process

The material process refers to the doings or happening in the physical world, and consists of Actor (a mandatory feature) and Goal (an optional feature). For example, *The President of Nigeria delivered a speech*, illustrates material process. Here, 'The President' is (Actor); '*delivered'* is (Process); and "*a speech"* (Goal).

2.8.2.5.1.2 Mental Process

The mental process involves sensing. The two participant roles related to the mental processes are the Sensor (i.e. the conscious being that does the sensing); and the Phenomenon (that is, the entity which is sensed, felt, thought, or seen). These sentences illustrate this (a) *Nigerians understood the story.* (b) *The journalists noted the mistakes.* (c) *The masses detest corruption and oppression.* The above sentences illustrate the mental process. The first, consisting of "Nigerians" (the Sensor); "understood" (the Process); and "the story" (Phenomenon) illustrates cognition. The second– "The journalists" (Sensor); "noted" (Process); and "the mistakes" (Phenomenon) demonstrates perception. The third– "The masses" (Sensor); "detest" (Process) and "corruption and oppression" (Phenomenon) portrays reaction.

2.8.2.5.1.3 Behavioural Process

The behavioural processes are midway between the material and mental processes. They exemplify physiological actions like 'breathe' or 'cough', although they sometimes depict these processes as states of consciousness such as 'sigh', 'cry', or 'laugh'. They also represent processes of consciousness by way of forms of behaviour, such as 'stare', 'dream', or 'worry'. This is illustrated in the following sentence, *The student* (Behaver), *cheated* (Process) *again in the exam* (Circumstance).

2.8.2.5.1.4 Verbal Process

The verbal processes are concerned with utterance or speech in the plain sense. The participant roles associated with this process are 'Sayer' (i.e. the speech producer), the Receiver (i.e. the recipient) and the Verbiage (i.e. message). For example, *The President* (Sayer) *declared* (Process) *his intention* (Verbiage) *to the senate* (Receiver), points up the verbal process.

2.8.2.5.1.5 Relational Process

The relational process focuses on the state of being that establishes relationships between two entities. It can be expressed in a number ways, but the three main types are: (a) Intensive Relational Process– which places a relationship of equivalence between two entities, as in this structure: *The President's presentation was lively*; (b) Possessive Relational Process–which plots a type of connection between two entities, for example*The robbers were armed;* (c) Circumstantial Relational Process, which shows where the circumstantial elements become upgraded. With the aid of prepositional elements such as 'at', 'is in', 'is with', the relationship created is a broad configuration, realised in constructions like: (i)

The Vice chancellor is in the senate chamber,(ii) *The documents are on the table,*(iii) *The journalist was at the accident scene*.

2.8.2.5.1.6 Existential Process

The existential process indicates that something exists or happens. Typically, they include the word, 'there', as a dummy subject, such as*There has been theft* or *Has there been a fight?* It normally contains one participant role, realised in examples such as 'theft' and 'fight'. Existential processes are similar to material ones, in that both types can answer a question–for instance, *What happened?* In a material process, an actor and a goal are identified, with the participant role replaced by a process. Thus, *There has been a theft* would be replaced by a construction like *John stole.* In the existential version, the actor and goal disappear, to be replaced by the existent, which is nominalised. As shown above, transitivity deals with how linguistic structures encode the ideation function.

2.8.2.5.2 Mood and modality

Mood and modality are the two primary resources for the creation of interpersonal meaning. They help in the understanding of how meanings are encoded at the interpersonal level, which is one of the three metafunctional lines of meaning. Mood is defined as "the mode or method by which a verb is used to express a particular action" (Murthy, 2012: 94). It enables one to identify the different choices available to the speaker and hearer in the use of language (Osisanwo, 2003). These choices are between declarative, interrogative, and imperative moods. Murthy (2012) identifies three classes of mood: indicative, imperative, and subjunctive. The indicative mood expresses a statement of fact, question, or supposition. This is illustrated in the following sentences: (i) *The President delivered a speech* (Statement), (ii) *Did the President deliver a speech?*(Question), (iii) *If you are Nigerian, you could be elected President* (Supposition). The imperative mood gives a command, or advice, or expresses an entreaty–as illustrated in these expressions: (i) *Get me the speech* (A command), (ii) *Try to be honest* (Advice), (iii) *Could you deliver the message?*(An entreaty or request). The subjunctive mood expresses a wish, hope, desire, intention, or resolution in the noun clause, and improbability in the past. The two forms of the subjunctive mood are the present and past subjunctive moods (Murthy, 2012).

In the interpersonal metafunction, a clause is classified into mood and residue, with the mood component further segmented into subject and finite (Halliday, 1994). The subject operates as a nominal group which constitutes what is necessary to form a proposition. The finite expresses tense,

modality, and consequence. It can have temporal operators (past, present, and future). Finiteness is expressed by the simple present and past tense forms of the verbs. However, the residue consists of the predicator, the complement, and the adjunct of the clause. The structure of the declarative, interrogative, and imperative moods is shown by the presence or absence of subject, and the order in which the subject and the finite occurs in relation to each other. The structures of the various mood systems are presented below.

Table 2. Structure of a Declarative Clause

The President	*Has*	*Delivered*	*the speech*
Subject	Finite	Predicator	Complement
Mood		Residue	

Table 3. Structure of an Interrogative Clause

Has	*the President*	*Delivered*	*the speech?*
Finite	Subject	Predicator	Complement
Mood		Residue	

Table 4. Structure of an Imperative Clause

delivered	*the speech*
Predicate	Complement
Residue	

From the above, it is glaring that mood accounts for the choices speakers or writers make at the interpersonal level of language use.

Modality, the next grammatical resource after mood, accounts for the "attitudes and values speakers or writers hold towards their subject matter" (Alo, 2013: 127). It refers to "the potential of language to project the speaker's attitude about the proposition expressed"; again, according to Alo (2013: 127). The term "attitude" refers to a variety of speaker responses ranging from desire to obligation and duty; certainty, and uncertainty as to the likelihood of the propositional content of the utterance (Norgaard, Montoro and Busse, 2010). In the same way, Clark (2007) opines that modality concerns the way in which speakers and writers use language to comment or express attitudes and beliefs, and to present their points of view. It is a grammar of explicit comment that shows the varying degrees of certainty about what is said or written, and the sort or degree of commitment and obligation expressed. Grammatically, it is most commonly realised through modal auxiliary verbs; but lexical verbs, adverbs, adjectives, intonation and permission can be modal (Clark, 2007).

Linguistic modality is firmly rooted in the interpersonal and interactional use of language. SFL claims that language performs simultaneously ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions. Modality is a conspicuous part of interpersonal function (Halliday, 1994). In the interpersonal use of language, Alo (2013) notes that the speaker or writer uses language to express comments, attitudes, evaluations, and the relationship set up between self and listener. Halliday (1985: 14) defines "modality" as "the speaker's judgment of the possibilities or the duties inherent in his proposition. A proposition may become debateable as being likely or unlikely desirable–that is, its relevance in modal terms.

Halliday (2004) categorises modality into modalisation and modulation. "Modalisation" refers to validity, probability, and/or certainty that a speaker attaches to his propositions or observations; while "modulation" indicates the degree of willingness, readiness, and/or inclination of proposals as well as offers or willingness to do or give. Modalisation and modulation enable speakers to make propositions as regards probability, usualness, obligation, or inclination. These propositions are 'probability' signals, that which is certain, probable, or possible; 'usualness' refers to that which is usual, constant or always; or sometimes; 'obligation' points to what is required, supposed, or allowed; and inclination indicates determination, keenness, or willingness (Finch, 2002: 359). Modality is demonstrated in the table below.

Table 5. The System of Modality

Probability	Certain	Probable	Possible
Usualness	Always	Usual	Sometimes
Obligation	Required	Supposed	Allowed
Inclination	Determination	Keenness	Willingness

There are other types of modality identified by linguists such as Simpson (1993), Fowler (1996), and Adejare (2014). According to Simpson (1993), the four types of modality are namely, deontic modality (for expressing permission, obligation and requirement); boulomaic modality (for expressing desires and wishes); epistemic modality (indicates speakers' confidence or lack of it, in the truth of the proposition) and finally, perception modality, a sub-system of epistemic modality which makes reference to human perception.

Fowler (1996) identifies the four aspects of modality as: truth, obligation, desirability, and permission. "Truth" implies a commitment to the fact or certainty of any proposition uttered; or a prediction of the

likelihood of a particular occurrence. Modality appears when the speaker or writer expresses an opinion on what will, might, could, or should happen. Truth modality ranges from absolute confidence, signalled by "will", to uncertainty, or introduced by "could". It could likewise be indicated by adverbs such as "certainly" and modal adjectives such as "likely" and "unlikely". "Obligation" is where speakers and writers express an opinion on what ought to or should happen; while "desirability" refers to where the speaker or writer shows approval of the state of affairs being communicated; "permission" is about speaker or writer giving permission for a certain action; and is signalled by "may", or "shall". Here an auxiliary may indicate a degree of cautiousness or hedging, as opposed to "shall", which is more definite or even mandatory.

Citing Palmer (1987; 1990), Adejare (2014) classifies modality into epistemic, deontic, and dynamic. Epistemic modality expresses the speaker's attitude to the factuality of the proposition. Deontic modality refers to the speaker or writer's attitude and his/her active involvement in events; while dynamic modality concerns the participant's roles. Epistemic and deontic modality are the true modality because they have illocutionary force.

To analyse the degrees and scales of modality, Halliday (1994) identifies three basic values which are attached to modal judgment. These are high value (expressed by "must", "ought to", "need", "has to" or "is to"); medium value (by "will", "would", "shall", or "should") and low value (by "may", "might", "can", or "could"). Also, he further adds that the orientation of modality which is either objective or subjective determines how explicitly speakers want to commit themselves to the proposition or proposal. The term *subjective* represents the speaker's active involvement in the action or event while *objective* indicates the absence of such involvement. To modalize a message, speakers make selections in the modality system. These selections include the type of modality to employ; the kind of value to set to the message and the orientation of modality. These choices add to the usefulness of the statement or plan.

"Mood" and "Modality" are the two primary resources for the creation of interpersonal meaning. They help in the understanding of how meanings are encoded at the interpersonal level, which is one of the three metafunctional lines of meaning.

2.8.2.5.3 Theme structure and cohesion

Textual meaning is realised by theme and cohesion. Halliday (2004: 66) defines 'theme' as "the first group or phrase that has some function in the experiential structure of the clause". The word, 'Rheme', is the second constituent which accompanies theme and it constitutes "the part of clause in which the theme is developed" (Halliday, 2004: 64). In other words, Rheme refers to every other part of the clause apart from the theme, and contains the real message of the clause. For example, in the sentence, *Nigerians detest corruption and oppression*, 'Nigerians' is theme; and 'detest corruption and oppression' is Rheme. As illustrated in this sentence, theme is the starting point of the clause, while the Rheme is used to expand the theme and provide more information. A clause can have multiple themes, which can be realised by a combination of the ideational theme, interpersonal theme, and textual theme. The ideational themes are clauses conveying meaning in an experiential sense; the interpersonal theme includes vocatives, mood, and adjuncts; while the textual theme embraces discourse markers and conjunctives. For example, in the sentence–*But* (Textual) *certainly* (Interpersonal) *Sunday* (Ideational) *would be better*–the three themes present (Bloor and Bloor, 2007).

Theme and Rheme overlap with another pair of terms called 'given' and 'new' which relate specifically to the information structure of the clause. The information structure concerns how speakers organise the content of their message. Normally, shared messages (also known as the Given Information) come before the unknown message to the hearer and are usually found at the beginning of the clause. The other information which is the focus of the speaker's message is referred to as New Information(Halliday, 2004: 87).

There are also marked and unmarked themes. In a clause, themes are usually known as grammatical subjects, as in the sentence, *The President fell down,* where'the president'is the grammatical subject. However, there are cases where another element (i.e. complement) may be promoted to theme (i.e. placed in the first position) and given extra prominence. In the sentence, *Down fell the President,* such an element is referred to as 'marked theme'. We can see here that the clause is unusual, in that the given element–'the President'–appears in final position. Just as clauses have themes, they have focus. The focus is the new information conveyed by the clause. In unmarked clauses, the information, therefore, appears at the end–which is referred to as 'end-focus' (Finch, 2002: 98).

Cohesion, the next grammatical resource for creating textual meaning, refers to "the linguistic means of tying sentences together to form text" (Norgaard, Busse and Montoro, 2010: 162). According to Wales

(2011: 66), it denotes "the means (phonological, grammatical, lexical and semantic) of linking sentences into larger units and making them stick together". Following Wales' view, Halliday and Hassan (1976: 4) observe that "cohesion occurs when the interpretation of some elements in the discourse is dependent on that of another". The foregoing indicate that cohesion is an important part of what constitutes a text. Halliday and Hassan (1976) identify five main types of cohesive ties in English-four grammatical and one lexical. Grammatical ties are realized by means of reference, conjunction, ellipsis, substitution and lexical cohesion.

Reference is a grammatical device which create cohesion by creating links between elements of meaning through the employment of personal pronouns like *she, he* and *it,* and demonstrative pronouns like *this* and *that.*This can only be comprehended by referring to a previously mentioned element. The two types of reference are, namely, cataphoric implies forward referencing whereas anaphoric refers to backward referencing. In all, reference focuses on how speakers establish various types of linkage in their utterances (Clark, 2007).

Closely related to the cohesive resources of reference is substitution. This, according to Halliday and Hassan (1976), is the replacement of a linguistic item, be it a word or sentence, by another in a text that conveys similar message. The verbal substitute *do* and the nominal substitution *one* in the example below set up a cohesive link because they can be identified only by referring to a previous verb or noun as exemplified thus: (i) *My notes are not complete*; *I need to get an up to date <u>one</u>* (ii) *You don't seem to like cheese but I <u>do</u>.*

Ellipsis, as Halliday and Hassan (1976: 89) says, is the omission of a part of an expression or grammatical structure that can be presumed as 'substitution by zero'. This is illustrated in the sentence: *All trains go to the station, at least most do* wherethe verb *go* and noun *the station* in the first sentence have been omitted in the second to avoid unnecessary repetition. To this end, Clark (2007) observes that ellipsis enables readers to focus on new information; and they are often used when economy of words is needed. The three types of ellipsis include: nominal, verbal and clausal ellipsis. Nominal ellipsis represents that omission which occurs within a nominal group as in *He came in quickly, had his bath*, and *rushed out*. Here, the pronoun *he* is omitted in the second and third clauses; yet, it is understood that all three clauses refer to the same subject. Verbal ellipsis occurs when a verbal group is omitted in a clause as illustrated in *He may* or *may not come*, where the verb *come* is omitted in the first clause. Finally, the clausal ellipsis refers to the omission of the whole clause or at least a considerable

portion of the clause as captured in the following dialogue: (i) *What are the children doing Joy?* (ii) *Playing*. In this dialogue, a considerable part of the clause is omitted but meaning is still retained.

Conjunction, in turn, indicates a relationship between segments of clause or phrase (Clark, 2007). Halliday and Hassan (1976: 226) identify four major types of conjunction which link sentences together. They are additive, adversative, causal and temporal. Additive conjunction introduces an addition into a clause through the aids of additive indicators like *and, as, so, also, in addition*, *furthermore, besides* and *similarly*. In adversative conjunction, the proposition expressed in the succeeding clause is the opposite of what is indicated in the preceding clause. It uses the following adversative pointers like *but, however, instead* and *nevertheless*etc., to achieve the above purpose. Clausal conjunction signals result by employing such indicators like *so, consequently, because, for this reason* etc., to indicate that an event transpired as a result of another. Finally, temporal conjunction shows the relationship between two consecutive sentences in a time sequence. This obtains in the use of then, *next* and *then*, *simultaneously* and *at the same time*, *earlier* and *previously*, *immediately* and *immediacy*.

Lexical cohesion involves the employment of lexical resources to link and unite a text, the outcome of which is known as lexical chain. A lexical chain refers to an arrangement of words connected in a text. In lexical cohesion, lexical items are accurately selected in a way that indicates their relation to previous textual items (Clark, 2007). Lexical cohesion falls into four subcategories: repetition, synonym, antonym, hyponym and collocation. Repetition and synonym are examples of reiteration. Whereas the former occurs when a lexical item is either repeated, the latter indicates a lexical association of close affinity in word meaning. Hyponym indicates a relationship from specific to general whereas collocation creates cohesion by means of words that have a tendency to co-occur (Norgaard, Busse and Montoro, 2010).

As the foregoing has shown, cohesion is an important device in the linguistic description of literary texts (Halliday and Hassan, 1970).We employ it in combination with other devices of linguistic description. Osundare's and Ekpu's essays display a high number of cohesive ties which make their essays relatively easy to decode.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the instruments and procedures used in conducting this study. It examines the research design, source of data, procedure of data selection and method of data analysis.

3.2 Research design

Working towards offering an in-depth account of how stylo-linguistic devices are used to construct meaning in essay discourses, the current research design is qualitative and descriptive in nature. This method is adopted because it encourages richness and detail scrutiny of data, thus providing room to extensively engage our data in terms of the way they deal with complex social situations. However, the method enables us to choose a representative data and also to rely on our insights and intuition in interpreting them. Then, it opens up the possibility of more than one explanation being valid thereby allowing for the possibility that different researchers might reach different conclusions, despite using broadly the same methods (Denscombe, 2010). The study employs the linguistic-stylistic approach, which is subsumed under the qualitative method, for the investigation. This is because it provides room for the data to be interrogated for how they create meaning, contain hidden messages, reflect, generate and reinforce the messages. Also, while involving the reader as an active interpreter of the message content, it allows us to establish a firm grounding of conclusion within the data after scrutiny.

3.3Source of the data

The data for this study were selected political essays of Niyi Osundare and Ray Ekpu, both of whom are Nigerian columnists and social critics. The essays were contributed by each of these writers to *Newswatch,* a Nigerian weekly news magazine, published by Newswatch Nigerian Communications Limited. Newswatch Nigerian Communications Limited was established as a news publishing firm in 1983 by Nigerian journalists Dele Giwa, Ray Ekpu, Dan Agbase and Yakubu Muhammad. While Ekpu's essays were extracted directly from several issues of *Newswatch*, those of Osundare were sourced from *Dialogue with my country*, an independently published compendium of the essays he contributed to the magazine.

Osundare's essays selected for this study are "Parable from Koma" (PFK), "Scars of the Seasons I" (SOTS 1), "Scars of the Seasons II" (SOT 2), "Where is your Tie" (WIYT), "The Real Gains of SAP" (TRGOS), "Nigeria Errways" ("NE"), "New Year's Gift" (TRGOS), "Nigeria's Image Problem" (NIP), "The Untouchable" (TU), "The Evil that Men Do" (TETMD), "Truth of my politics" (TOMP),

"Abomination" (A), and "Murderers be not proud" (MBNP), "Tears for my country" (TFMC), and "The Unthinkable" (TU) (Osundare, 2012).

The selected essays from Ekpu's essays are: "A Hollow Ritual" (AHR), "A Hang Man is a Hang Man" (AHMIAHM), "Day after the Party" (DATP), "A Dialogue with the Future" (ADWTF), "Shades of Rainbow" (SOR), "Corruption" (C), "On Eve of Passover" (OEOPO), "The Knock Out Man" (TKOM), "We, the Untitled" (WTU), "Dreams, shattered dream" (DSD), "A Time for Peace" (ATFP), "Abiola a Tragic Hero" (AATH), and "Leadership" the flock or fleece" (LTFOTF), "A pin in a Hay Stack" (APIAHS", and "A nation's questions" (ANQ).

The above essays share some textual properties in common. As earlier observed in (sec. 1.1.1) of this thesis, the essays are narrative, descriptive, argumentative and instructive. They are not just a bunch of isolated sentences that have no relationship with one another but rather are made up of a linear progression of texts which creates context of meaning at the level of words, sentence and paragraphs. Thus, each line in the essay texts is linked to the previous line. Also, the essays are recognized to belong to the same genre with their field, tenor and mode easily identified. Other textual features which make the essays communicative include: intentionality, acceptability, informationality, instructionality and intertextuality. The essays are intentional because they have similar purpose; acceptable for containing useful and relevant information; informative for being instructive; situational for sharing similar situation of occurrence and intertextual for possessing factors which make their utilization dependent upon knowledge of one or more previously encountered text.

3.4 Procedure for data selection

Problems in Nigeria were too vast for the scope of a research like the present one. Therefore, the purposive sampling technique was used. Purposive sampling technique enabled us to conduct a safe and systematic selection from a vast collection of data and select articles relevant to the topic of the investigation which answer our research questions. Also, it saved a lot of time and resources. Eighty essays (forty from each writer) with focus on the malaise of problems in Nigeria were gathered and read. After the collection, the essays were manually checked to exclude anyone not directly related to social, political and economic issues in Nigeria. Out of the eighty items sampled, thirty were purposively selected for the analysis. The heading of each of the essays was written out and abbreviated for easy recognition and reference during the analysis. The dates of publication were also marked out.

In all, a total of thirty essays were so identified (fifteen from each writer) with three hundred and seventy excerpts used for the analysis.

The data selection is guided by thematic concerns, relevance, and genre. The first criterion for data selection is informed by the fact that the selected essays offer profound representations of human-angle themes and are equally reputable for landmark contributions to Nigeria's sociopolitical development. The present study investigates the stylo-linguistic devices deployed in constructing meaning in the selected political essays. Secondly, the choice is necessitated by the fact that these essays are indicative of different political eras in Nigeria history. Written between 1985 and 2010, they cover the periods from the second to the fourth republics. Since these periods indicate significant change in the political development of the country, our study also will be examining, in descriptive terms, how the identified predominant stylo-linguistic features have been used to depict the recurring themes in the selected essays. Regarding genre, our preference of essays as data over the better known literary genres like poetry, drama, and prose-fiction is necessitated by the established gross deficiency of critical works on both writers from the ambit of the essay, most especially from the linguistic perspective. Thus, the essay form is under focus here, the intention being to perhaps promote the genre by featuring the linguistic creativity of the selected writers at the doctorate research level.

3.5 Methods of data analysis

The study employs Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics, supported with relevant aspects of Aristotle's rhetorical model as framework for the analysis of the essays. The choice of the former model hinges on the fact that it is flexible and very embracing; it relates language form to function and provides for how language is used in social contexts to achieve particular goals. Conversely, the latter helps to define the aspects of Osundare's and Ekpu's language, selection of detail, and organization which make their message more than mere statements of facts or more than simple descriptions of events. To carry out the investigation, data were isolated for analysis. Different layers of description, explanation and interpretation were carried out in the analysis at the different levels of the Systemic Functional Linguistics. Halliday (2004) and Leech and Short (2007) identify four levels of language description: syntax, semantics, phonology and graphology etc., in which linguistic events can be accounted for. Syntax and phonology constitute the level of expression which interrelates to create meaning which is the pre-occupation of semantics. Graphology is another system of realization to

phonology. We rely solely on these linguistic parameters in our analysis which is linguistic-stylistic in orientation.

The three stages that have been applied in the data analysis are as follows: First, selected parts of the texts are studied and analysed along the following linguistic parameters: phonology, graphology, syntax and lexico-semantics lines so as to identify the predominant and relevant stylo-linguistic devices deployed in the selected essays. This process further explores the nature of phonological features such as alliterative structures, assonantal patterns and the elision of vowels; graphological devices such as punctuations, capitalisation and italicisation; syntactic features such as the nominal group, mood system, modal elements, transitive and parallel structures, and syntactic aberration; as well as lexico-semantic devices such as lexical incorporations, lexical relations, figurative and idiomatic expressions were also explained.

However, language can be seen to perform a multitude of functions or communicative roles: for naming, quarrelling, persuading, expressing feelings, giving orders, providing information; for creating novels, poems and plays (Wales, 2011). Therefore, to determine how meanings are constructed in the selected essays, the identified features are brought to the fore, related to their contexts and then examined from the three determinants of register (field, mode and tenor), and their metafunction correlates (ideational, interpersonal, and textual). Also, the features are analysed along the three modes of persuasion: logos (the use of logical proof or evidential clauses to corroborate argument), ethos (the use of credible and reliable sources to build up argument) and pathos (the utilization of emotive language to appeal to emotion). In doing this, sound elements, graphic devices, syntactic structures and lexico-semantic features as mentioned above, are not only related to their phonological, graphological, grammatical and lexico-semantic function respectively, but more importantly of their function in relation to the meaning of the essays, their contribution to the overall theme and structure.

Lastly, the identified features are critically examined for the second time from the various levels of phonology, graphology, syntax and semantics in order to determine the points of convergence and divergence in the deployment of stylo-linguistic devices. The importance of the whole exercise arises from the fact that apart from identifying the stylo-linguistic devices, highlighting their points of convergence and divergence and how they have been used to construct meaning, it helps to establish Niyi Osundare's and Ray Ekpu's linguistic idiolect.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS ONE

4.1 Introduction

This chapter centres on data analysis one. It provides answers to the first and second research questions in this thesis.

4.2 Research question one

What types of stylo-linguistic devices are predominant in the selected essays of Osundare and Ekpu? The types of stylo-linguistic devices dominant in the essays of both writers are discussed below under the following levels of linguistic description: phonology, graphology, syntax, and lexico-semantics.

4.2.1 Phonological elements in Osundare's and Ekpu's essays

Literature is identified by what can be referred to as patterns. All literary texts are characterised by choices as well as how items are organised in them, such that they contribute to the overall effect of literary creativity (Chapman, 1973: 13-14). According to Douglas (2004), phonology is part of this patterning; and it describes the systems of speech sounds in a language (Yule, 1996). Clark, Yallop, and Fletcher (2007) define it as "the study of this higher level of speech organization." It involves the arrangement of the systems and patterns of speech contained in a particular language. To Crystal and Davy (1969: 18), the notion means the sound patterns of a given language. From the foregoing, phonology is the study of how speech sounds are arranged, along with their functions in language.

At the phonological level, stylisticians are concerned with the speech sounds of language. They exploit a variety of means to "encode and disseminate their artistic vision, message, and also to achieve formal beauty in their texts" (Yeibo and Akerele, 2014: 9). The idea underlying this position is that the trademark of a good writer depends on the socio-political content and intention of his art (Yeibo and Akerele, 2014). According to Simpson (2004: 168), "the sound system of language offers numerous resources for linguistic creativity in style."

The phonological analysis indicates that Osundare and Ekpu pay value-rendering attention to sound in their essay texts. Both essayists make copious use of some aspects of sound like alliteration, assonance, and elision of vowels to appeal to our senses of sights and hearing. Apart from helping to make their texts sound, sound is also exploited to raise the tone and mood of the essays. The stylistic exploitation

of alliteration, assonance, and elision of vowels heighten the atmosphere of the essays and also appeal to our auditory senses.

4.2.2 Graphological devices in Osundare's and Ekpu's essays

Graphology is "the characteristic line-by-line arrangement of poetry on the printed page" (Leech, 1969: 47). Graphological patterns play significant and sometimes astounding roles in the reinforcement of subject and theme in literature (Adagbonyin, 1999). The predominant graphic devices employed for meaning construction in the essays of Osundare and Ekpu are capitalisation, italicisation, and punctuations. That Osundare and Ekpu are, graphologically speaking, conscious artists is obvious from the graphological layout of their essays. The artistic exploitation of capitalisation, italicisation, and punctuations reveal that both essayists do more than appeal to our imagination: they also engage us in some play, while attempting to break the monotony of visual patterning. This serves significant tenor relations, as we are drawn consistently into the world of the essays, and we, in fact, become part of the essays. That Osundare and Ekpu communicate effectively even when they experiment frequently is because of this fact.

4.2.3 Syntactic structures in Osundare's and Ekpu's essays

One significant level of linguistic analysis is the syntactic level. Here, as with any other level of language description, important statements of meaning can be made, based on the observation of a creative writer's choices and the peculiarities of literary genre. The syntactic analysis shows that Osundare and Ekpu isolate specific syntactic structures to convey their meanings. This is why a close study of the relationship between structure and content becomes imperative. The syntactic features which relay meanings in the essays are nominal group structure, mood and modality, transitivity, parallel constructions, and syntactic aberration. These features, apart from showing the basic selections that Osundare and Ekpu make from the material of language to convey their unique vision; they are designed to aid the ideational contents of their essays. In sum, with the employment of these features, what result is the integration of language form and function. In this regard, language becomes a system of meanings and grammar is then construed as a study of how meanings are realised through linguistic forms. While revealing the essayists' attitudes, the syntactic selections made by Osundare and Ekpu are meant to suit their purpose and overall artistic intentions.

4.2.4 Lexico-semantic features in Osundare's and Ekpu's essays

'Lexis' refers to diction and 'semantics' to meaning (Yeibo, 2011). Lexical words are part of the content strata of language (Matthiessen, 1993). According to Wales (2011: 248), lexico-semantics is one of "the most important means [writers] possess for expressing or encoding their ideas and experience". Osundare and Ekpu exploit lexico-semantic features from the vast resources of language to crystallize their views, express their feelings and construct images all of which give their essays its artistic beauty. At the lexico-semantic level, our analysis reveals that lexical incorporations, lexical relations, figurative and idiomatic expressions, etc., are utilized to convey meanings. Considering that this level of linguistic description cannot ignore the meaning(s) derived from lexical items and their combinations, the emphasis is placed on the experiential, relational and expressive values of the lexical words deployed. The analysis of lexico-semantic patterning in the essay texts shows the much effort Osundare and Ekpu makes to expand their semantic range and, therefore, heighten the communicative impact.

4.3 Research question two

What are the similarities and differences in the deployment of stylo-linguistic devices by Osundare and Ekpu in their essays? The similarities and differences in the selected essays by both writers are discussed below.

4.3.1 Similarities and differences at the phonological level

At the phonological level of language description, Osundare and Ekpu make choices from a host of alliterative structures, assonantal patterns, and elision of vowels from the repertoire of language to negotiate meanings. The stylistic exploitation of these choices foregrounds their style alongside highlighting the similarities and differences in their deployment of linguistic features. For example, both writers exploit the following alliterative structures, voiceless labial-velar approximant, /w/, voiceless velar plosive, /k/, voiced alveolar plosive, /t/ and voiced alveolar fricative, /s/, to reinforce the thematic concerns in their essays, retain the message conveyed to the reader and also evoke the reader's emotion. However, while Osundare deploys the voiced palatal approximant /j/, voiced bilabial plosive, /b/ and voiced bilabial nasal /m/ to project his concern for the masses whose cause he advocates, Ekpu on the other uses the voiced alveolar plosive /d/, voiced palatal approximant /j/, voiceless velar nasal, /ŋ/ and voiceless glottal fricative, /h/ and voiceless palate alveolar fricative /ʃ/ to underscore enormity of the issues addressed.

On the use of assonantal patterns, both essayists employ the front short vowel /i/ to illuminate meaning and capture discourse themes. Whereas Osundare uses the back short vowel /ɔ/, and short front vowel, /a/, to project the high level of inequality in Nigeria, Ekpu on the other deploys the central vowel, /ʌ/, front long vowel, /i: /, and /i/, and diphthong, /ai/, to ridicule Nigerians crave for titles. Also, the back short vowel /ɔ/, front short vowel /i/ and short front vowel, /a/, are elided in the essays of both writers and used to fuse words. The manipulation of phonological features at this level of language description indicates that though every writer or author has a unique thumbprint, it is possible for two writers to exhibit the same style.

4.3.2 Similarities and differences at the graphological level

Graphological features constitute a significant stylistic feature of the selected essays of Osundare and Ekpu. Both writers exploit capitalisation for highlighting, emphasis, and to command attention. Whereas the bulk of lexical expressions underscored in Osundare's data are single and compound words, those of Ekpu are purely phrases and relative clauses. Osundare's and Ekpu's preference for this style is based on their objective of deliberately foregrounding lexical items to enhance communicative impact. However, italics provide an effective avenue for Osundare and Ekpu to graphologically acknowledge non–English expressions. Also, Nigerian Pidgin English and indigenous Yoruba and Hausa words and phrases reinforce the essayists' discourse on Nigeria's social and political travails since the 1960s. In all, the use of punctuations, such the comma, and hyphenation, not only ensures the free flow of reading in the essays of both writers but also lends some emphasis to textual meaning.

4.3.3 Similarities and differences at the Syntactic level

Osundare and Ekpu employ nominal group structures for useful description, thematic projection and discourse headlines. Osundare uses the *mhq, hq* and *mh* patterns for effective description and thematic projection and the use of *mh* for discourse headlines; Ekpu shows a preference for the *mhq* and *mh* patterns for effective description and employs the *mh* and *mhq* patterns for thematic projection and *mh, mhq* and *h* for discourse headlines.

As regards the mood system, Osundare and Ekpu use declarative mood to offer information, evaluate issues and elaborate discourse themes. This is to persuade readers to accept the argument raised. The declarative used for evaluation in both sets of essays constitute complex sentences configured with multiple adjectives and metaphors. However, while the bulk of subordinate clauses in Osundare's data

constitute relative clauses which form a set of structural patterns repeatedly deployed to achieve foregrounding effect; in Ekpu's data, such clauses are a combination of noun and relative clauses. On elaboration of discourse themes, Osundare and Ekpu employ simple and complex declaratives designed with real, detailed and relevant materials to create mental images for readers to easily comprehend their message. While Ekpu's elaboration of details is further reinforced by his choice of compound declaratives, Osundare, on the other, employs the linguistic tools of listing and contrast alongside sequences of repeated nominal phrases for a similar purpose. To effectively convince readers, both essayists appeal to logos, ethos, and pathos alongside the use of repetitive structures, evidential clauses and the self-inclusive pronoun to address the varied problems discussed. Whereas the bulk of sentence structures used for persuasion in Osundare's data are formed with complex declaratives; Ekpu shows a preference for simple, compound and complex declaratives. The interrogative mood is deployed for elicitation, accentuation, and summoning. Osundare and Ekpu employ the interrogative mood to elicit response respectively. Whereas both questions type, i.e., yes/no and Wh-questions featured in Osundare's essays and used for accentuation and summoning; Ekpu used the Wh-question for elicitation and accentuation. The imperative mood was deployed by Osundare for instruction, invitation, and suggestions and by Ekpu for only instruction.

However, Osundare and Ekpu employ modal elements as rhetorical tools to express their volition, desire, commitment, confidence, and obligation. Whereas Osundare exploits the deontic modal markers for necessity and compulsion, Ekpu on the other uses a similar modal system for obligation, compulsion, and promise. As for the buolomaic modal system, it is used by both essayists to express their desire for the masses whose cause they advocate. The epistemic modality is employed by Osundare to indicate certainty and possibility whereas to Ekpu, it indicates only certainty. By showing that modal auxiliaries have an integral relationship as well as social phenomenon and functions, the analysis demonstrates that the modal auxiliaries, lexical verbs, and adverbs are strategic to the rhetoric and language of essayistic discourse.

On transitivity analysis, Osundare and Ekpu employ the material, mental, verbal and relational clauses to represent the world. Both writers deploy material clauses to label the Nigerian government and as well form an alliance with the masses. The operative material clause structures in the essays of both writers are configured with Actor + Process + Goal. In addition to this structure, Osundare uses Actor + Goal structure whereas Ekpu, on the other uses Circumstance +Actor +Process + Goal structure. In all,

the use of receptive material clauses for labelling of government was only deployed by Osundare. As regards the mental process, they are employed as useful tools for representing psychological actions and events. Whereas the mental processes of cognition, perception and desiderative feature in Osundare's data and used to describe psychological activities and as well the process of cognition to embody psychological events; Ekpu on the other employs the mental processes of cognition and perception to represent psychological actions and psychological events. For both writers, the verbal processes are significant in stressing the shortcomings of the different participants in the discourses. In Osundare's data, the verbal processes are shown by saying, complaining, talking and interrogating; whereas in Ekpu's, they are indicated by reporting, explaining, criticizing, arguing, and deciding. Also, while verbal processes in the essays of Osundare focus exclusively on the participant represented by the executive arm of the government; they are used in the essays of Ekpu to capture the executive and judicial arms of the government and as well the Nigerian press. In all, these essayists draw on the resources of relational clauses for characterization and identification. They utilize both types of relational clauses to identify and as well assign a quality to the subject being discussed. However, whereas Ekpu shows a preference for attributive relational clauses, Osundare uses more of the identifying relational clauses.

Parallel structures form the bulk of Osundare and Ekpu's literary style. Osundare and Ekpu deploy the SPC structural pattern for specification. While Osundare exploits SPO and SPA structural patterns for multidimensional representation and rhetorical emphasis, Ekpu, on the other, shows preference for the OA and PO structural patterns for multidimensional representation and rhetorical emphasis. The repetitive patterns deployed by these writers in advancing their themes in the selected essay texts are useful stylistic devices which help make their messages clearer and interesting.

Finally, Osundare and Ekpu exploit ungrammaticality and hyperbaton for defamiliarization. Both writers violate the standard rules and by going beyond the principles, create a different language. They use this linguistic facility to create emphasis and intriguing, complex structures. In the essays of Osundare, the complement and adverbial elements are deployed for emphasis and for building fascinating, complex structures, while in Ekpu's, only the adverbial elements are used to achieve similar purpose.

4.3.4 Similarities and differences at the Lexico-semantic level

Osundare and Ekpu share certain similarities and differences in the deployment of semantic features. On their use of lexical incorporations, both essayists draw significantly from the knowledge of religion and history to range universally. They allude to history to encode their ideas and experience of the real world. About religion, Osundare employs lexical items from the Holy Bible to stimulate senses and associations and as well evoke mental images of the discourse subject in the reader's mind; while Ekpu on the other, draws from both the Holy Bible and Koran for a similar purpose.

As regards lexical relations, Osundare and Ekpu employ repetition for emphasis; to create lexical links; heighten emotion, underscore an argument and to redirect the attention of the reader to the discussed subject. However, synonyms provide an effective avenue for both essayists to expand their thematic range and also to create cohesion in their discourses. In Osundare's discourse, such synonymous lexical items, apart from creating semantic unity, serve to elaborate and amplify his message; while in Ekpu's, they function to clarify such messages. Also, antonyms for both writers serve as a resource for semantic complementarity and contrast. While Osundare shows a preference for non-gradable anonyms; Ekpu expands his semantic range by exploiting gradable, non-gradable and relational antonymous items. Also, Osundare and Ekpu exploit hyponyms as semantic resource for inclusive meaning. Whereas such hyponymous lexemes serve for reinforcement of discourse subjects in Osundare's essays; in Ekpu's, they are deployed for an elaboration of discourse subjects. Collocational expressions in Osundare's and Ekpu's discourses function to crystallize their views, express their feelings and as well construct mental images all of which give their essays its artistic beauty. Both writers employ collocations to render prominence to discourse subjects and to draw attention to cohesive effect and meaning. While collocational patterns in Osundare's discourse, are pressed into a satirical function and also used to express resentment as well as a disappointment; in Ekpu's, they help to achieve sound effects, stimulate emotion and capture discourse subjects.

However, Osundare and Ekpu, among a host of figurative tropes, employ simile, metaphor, and personification in constructing meaning. For both writers, similes serve as a semantic device to derive explicitness in discourses and also to broaden cognitive range. While in Osundare's texts, similes function to achieve specificity and to facilitate the processing of conceptual content; in Ekpu's, they are deployed to heighten the significance of discourse subjects. In all, through similes, both writers can clarify and enrich the experience they present as well as achieve precision. Also, Osundare and Ekpu

exploit metaphors to build significant mental pictures and illuminate their experience. Both writers exploit synaesthetic, concretive and extended metaphors to decorate and keep their texts alive. With the employment of synaesthetic metaphors, what results is the transferring of meaning from one metaphorical domain to another. Whereas extended metaphors in the essays of both writers are deployed for semantic extension and clarification of meanings; concretive metaphors function to aid ideational focus and conceptual content. Finally, the motivation behind the use of personification by Osundare and Ekpu is to raise essences, heighten emotional impact and also to draw attention to the message being conveyed. While in Osundare's texts, inanimate objects and abstract concepts are personified; in Ekpu's, personification is strictly confined to abstract concepts.

Idiomatic expressions constitute a significant stylistic feature of the selected essays of Osundare and Ekpu. They are a part of the beauty of the language of the selected essays and are Standard English expressions. With the employment of idiomatic expressions, what results is the semantic unity and structural stability achieved in the essays. Their rhetorical manipulations make the essayistic works of both writers colourful, persuasive and thought-provoking alongside adding beauty and charm to their linguistic idiolect.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA ANALYSIS TWO

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on data analysis two. It addresses research question three in this thesis which seeks to reveal how meanings are constructed in the selected essays by Osundare and Ekpu.

5.2 Research question three

How are meanings constructed in the essays through stylo-linguistic devices? Meanings in the essays by both writers are constructed through phonological elements, graphological devices, syntactic structures, and lexico-semantic features. This is discussed below.

5.2.1 Phonological elements as devices for meaning construction

The stylo-linguistic devices under phonological features deployed by Osundare and Ekpu in the construction of meaning are alliteration, assonance, and elision of vowels.

5.2.1.1 Alliterative structures

Of all the phonological features in the data under study, alliteration is the most dominant. Jeffries and McIntyre (2010: 36) describe it as a "pattern based on consonant sounds." Hardly any of the passages chosen for analysis has been crafted without alliteration. Alliterative structures in the essays, among other discourse functions, are deployed by Niyi Osundare and Ray Ekpu for reinforcement of meaning, retention of information, and evoking of emotion.

5.2.1.1.1 Reinforcement of meaning

Osundare and Ekpu exploit alliteration for reinforcement of meanings. For example, in extract 1), Osundare berates the strong forces in Abacha's administration that soak their hands in the blood of innocents. He thus asks in the following lines:

Extract 1
Who inhis right senses did not know in the **d**ark **d**ays
    of the Abacha's dictatorship that the fear of hit men like
        Major Al-Mustapha was the beginning of wisdom?
Abacha's Death **S**quads and **S**trike Force Commandos
justly dealt with (TETMD, 85).
The writer uses the phonemes /d/, /ð/ and /s/ to convey a sense of repugnance and consternation associated with a period marked by large-scale murder of innocent citizens, including politicians and

journalists of high repute. Hence, the words, 'dark' and 'days', 'that' and 'the', and 'squad' and 'strike'are alliterations connected by the voiced alveolar plosive, /d/, the voiced dental fricative /ð/ and the voiced alveolar fricative, /s/ in this discourse. Having exposed the perpetrators of such evil, Osundare vehemently proposes that, for justice to have its full course, those responsible for such evil practices during this regime must be prosecuted. These, of course, are alliterations in which the highlighted phonemes create a reinforcing connection (chiming) between the words which in turn help to underscore the writer's message.

Osundare speaks on his country's huge resources generated from oil; the multi-million contracts and projects executed by government; and how they fail soon after commissioning. This collapse of government's venture is what the writer tries to explicate in the text below:

Extract 2
Nigeria, if you need reminding, has a **r**eplacement **r**ather
    maintenance culture, a madness nurtured and promoted in
the **d**izzy **d**ays of the oil boom when our rulers confessed to
the astounded world **th**at **th**e country's problem was not how
to find money but how to spend it! (NMT, 31).

The alliteration used as discourse element in the above text unveils Nigeria's replacement culture as one of government's avenue for mismanaging the nation's hard earned resources. The writer's style is revealed in his choice of perfect bonding of the voiced alveolar plosive, /d/, in 'dizzy' and 'days'; voiced dental fricative, /ð/, in 'that' and 'the' and as well as the voiced dental fricative, /r/, in 'replacement' and 'rather'. These phonemes vividly capture the period of abundant resources in his country and government's lack of prudence on how to manage the resources. The chiming in the alliterative phonemes in this discourse reinforces the theme of misappropriation of fund by the government.

Ray Ekpu also deploys alliteration to project and reinforce the meaning of political exploitation, oppression, suffering, miscarriage of justice and so on. To Ekpu, alliteration is a discourse tool for binding his phrases and thoughts together. It lends completeness to his texts, as captured in the following examples:

Extract 3
The waywardness of the politicians led to public disenchantment
        with them and when the soldiers came January 15, 1966, and drove
        them away, many Nigerians **d**anced and **d**rank. But the **d**ancing and

drinking was not to **l**ast **l**ong as the soldier armed with their own
            ambitions, **m**ade a bigger **m**ess of the legacy they had acquired
            (DATP, 22).

In the above text, Ekpu reflects on Nigeria's merriment after independence and the events which followed using alliteration. Here, there are three forms of alliterations. The first is derived from the voiced alveolar plosive, /d/, in the words 'danced', 'drank', 'dancing' and 'drinking'. The second is in the voiced alveolar lateral, /l/, in 'last' and 'long'. The third is from the voiced bilabial nasal /m/ in 'made' and 'mess'. These instances set up three phonological patterns of equivalence in the text. The phonemes [d, l, m] ensure 'chiming' in the words–an effect which, according to Leech (1969: 95), links "two words by similarity of sound", thereby, making the reader think of their possible connections. The linkage that comes to mind here is phonological and grammatical. It is phonological in the sense that each set of words shares similarity in sound. It is grammatical in that some of them (for example, the first two voiced alveolar plosive /d/ are in the simple past tense, whereas the last two are in continuous tense. This illustrates how the alliterative structures reinforce the bond between the words as earlier noted.One purpose achieved by alliterative patterning is that it makes the text "sound". Also prominent in this text is the repetition of the phoneme /d/, which gives it a poetic effect, a spoken flavour, and reinforces meaning. Significantly, the sounds created by these alliterative structures project the negligence of the leaders, the attendant misappropriation of the nation's resources and the economic crisis which followed.

In extract 4), Ekpu writes of the Nigerian political crisis as one of the factors that have perennially impeded her development,

            Extract 4
The Biafran **w**ar is the only **w**ar in   which Nigerians were **b**uried
beneath the ashes of that **w**ar but the human **c**ost must be **c**olossal.
 the **s**cars **s**till remain till this day. Those who've experienced war in
            all its**g**ory, **g**rievous dimensions, with its utter **d**isregard for **d**ecency
            and compassion and its utter lack of respect for the human person
know that **w**ar is death, **w**ar is hell, **w**ar is everything objectionable
            (ATFP, 11).

There are six alliterative patterns in the above text. The first is found in the recurrence of the voiceless labio-dental approximant, /w/, in "war". The second is the voiced alveolar plosive, /b/, in "buried" and "beneath". The third is initiated by the voiceless velar plosive, /k/, in "cost" and "colossal". The fourth is in the voiced alveolar fricative, /s/, in "scar" and "still". The fifth is more complex, and occurs in the

adjectival phrase, "gory" and "grievous"; and the sixth is the voiced alveolar plosive, /d/, which is found in "disregard" and "decency". There is the reduplication of the phoneme, /w/, in "war", which highlights the theme of political crisis and its devastating effects. Ekpu's lamentation is as a result of the devastating effects of the political crisis portrayed above. This effect is conveyed with the phonemes /k/, /g/, /d/ and /w/ which reinforce the message conveyed in this text.

5.2.1.1.2 Retention of information

By retention of information is meant the use of alliteration to achieve a strong rhythm which helps to make the message easily remembered by the reader. Osundare and Ekpu exploit alliterative structures for this purpose. For example, Osundare captures government's muzzling of the press in extract 5). He remarks thus:

Extract 5
Jail those **j**ournalists if you can. If you can't seize their
publications, then send your minister of information to
regale the **w**hole **w**ide **w**orld **w**ith tales about the freedom
of the Nigerian press (A, 321).

In the text above, the writer uses the voiced palatal approximant, /j/ and the voiceless labio-velar approximant, /w/, to establish an alliterative bond in the words 'jail' and 'journalist' and 'whole', 'wide', 'world', and 'with'. They create a reinforcing connection with what he tries to establish in his discourse. Here, Osundare assumes the role of an activist, criticizes government over suppressing the press. While the use of the phoneme /j/ represents the silencing of the press, the use of the phoneme /w/ exposes the distorted image of the Nigerian press presented by government's aide before the international community. The use of by alliteration makes the text sound, thereby helping the reader to retain the message conveyed.

In extract 6), sounding is also the prime motivation for Osundare's use of alliteration. He condemns the magnitude of corruption that characterizes the regime of Nigeria's former Head of State, Major General Sani Abacha. This is captured in this extract:

Extract 6
General Sani Abacha expanded the expedition by adding
corruption to the battery of foes. A man who was himself
corruption personified **c**laimed he was God-chosen to lead a
moral war. The **c**ountry is **c**urrently **s**wimming in the **s**ea of
his **s**uccess (TU, 92).

There are two forms of alliteration here; the voiceless velar plosive, /k/ and voiced alveolar fricative, /s/. Whereas the phoneme /k/ projects the decadence in government, the phoneme /s/ highlights the extent to which it has eaten deep into the polity. The employment of the phoneme /k/ and /s/ enable the reader retains the message conveyed in the discourse. This is achieved by the projection of words like 'corruption', 'claimed', 'country', and 'currently' introduced by the phoneme /k/ and 'swimming', 'sea' and 'success' introduced by the phoneme /s/ which stand out prominently in the reader's mind due to the alliterative effect created.

The next sets of examples are Ekpu's exploitation of alliterative structures for retention of information. Ekpu employs a complex network of alliterations to lampoon the legislative arm of government, as shown below:

Extract 7
Then Jamare would step out again to**t**ell the **t**ribunal that
although many things **w**ere going the **w**rong **w**ay the executive
president of Nigeria **d**idn't know anyth**ing**, **d**idn't see anyth**ing**,
didn't hear anyth**ing**, **d**idn't smell anyth**ing**, for as soon as he
            became president he lost **h**is **s**ense of intuition, **h**is **s**ense of **s**ight,
his **s**ense of **h**earing and **h**is **s**ense of **s**mell (AHR, 10).

Here, the essayist speaks of the high level of hypocrisy displayed by the legislature and judiciary. He notes that, when politicians and government officials are accused of embezzling public funds, the legislature feigns ignorance of this gross misconduct and the judiciary handles such cases with levity. Alliterative connections exist in "tell" and "tribunal"; "were", "wrong" and "way"; "didn't" and "didn't"; "his" and "hearing". Whereas the voiced alveolar plosive, /t/; voiceless labio-velar approximant, /w/; voiced alveolar plosive, /d/; voiceless velar nasal, /ŋ/ and voiceless glottal fricative, /h/ in the preceding words are deployed to highlight the miscarriage of justice which Ekpu refers, the recurrence of the sibilants /s/ in 'sense', 'sight', and 'smell' furnishes the textual discourse with some level of density and adds to the text's musicality thereby helping the reader to retain the message conveyed. In all, the phonemes highlighted above set up four patterns of phonological equivalence in the text, while also serving as phonological parallelism. This contributes to the 'chiming' impact observed in the quoted piece.

In extract 8), Ekpu reports on the sudden, violent, and illegal seizure of power during the military regime in Nigeria. This is captured below:

Extract 8
For him the way out of the **c**urrency **c**runch was oil swap otherwise
called **c**ounter trade. **B**ut   **B**uhari didn't sit around long enough for
   the **f**ull **f**ruits of this measure to be realised before he was chucked
   out by Ibrahim Babangida (DSD, 19).

In the above discourse, the writer uses alliterative structures for specific ends. He uses the voiceless velar plosive /k/ in words like 'currency' and 'crunch' and 'called' and 'counter' to project the precarious economic situation in the country at that period. However, other alliterations which also help to achieve a strong rhythm in the text are the voiced bilabial plosive /b/ in 'but' and 'Buhari' and as well the voiceless labiodental fricative /f/ in 'full' and 'fruits'. These phonemes project the theme of political coup in Nigeria. Through these sounds, the writer unveils the then Head of state, General Buhari as one whose presence would have sanitized the country, enhanced high morality among the people and as well savaged the country from its economic malaise. Unfortunately, he didn't stay long before he was unseated from the office. In all, the recurrent exploitation of the voiceless velar plosive /k/ makes the information in this discourse easily remembered by the reader.

5.2.1.1.3 Evoking of emotion

Here, alliterative structures are deployed to convey the feelings of the writer to the reader. This helps the reader to understand the writer's mood toward the discourse subject. The following sample texts demonstrate Osundare and Ekpu's exploitation of alliterative structures for this purpose. In the following discourse, Osundare reflects on the aftermath of the 1993 general election thus:

   Extract 9
We **w**ere beginning to witness the birth of a new Nigeria when
General Babangida and his **c**lique **c**rushed the dream. Since that
foul annulment of 1993, Nigeria has **b**een **b**ehaving like a giant
   in a stupor, plodding from one monstrosity to another" (NIP, 67).

Osundare comments on the public ecstasy of Nigerians over Chief M.K.O. Abiola's electoral victory, which had given the populace a new lease of life. Unfortunately, the hope for a new dawn was short-lived. He uses alliteration not only to project a picture of the peaceful election but also to convey to the reader his dissatisfaction with the electoral annulment which eventually plunged the entire country into political crisis. The use of voiceless labio-velar approximant, /w/; the voiceless velar plosive, /k/; and the voiced bilabial plosive, /b/ vividly represent the electoral situation. While Osundare deploys the phoneme /b/ with its deep sound to describe the effect of the annulment on Nigerians, the harshness of the phoneme /k/ describes how Nigeria's new hope was smashed by the strong hammer. Hence, the

efficacy of the phrase, 'clique crushed', an aural innuendo deployed to lament the annulment. Osundare's choice of phoneme /w/ at the beginning of the text suggests the mood of hope as a result of the peaceful election. But however, with the choice of the phonemes /k/ and /b/ at the end of the text, the writer's mood changes to that of despondency and disillusionment.

In extract 10), Osundare criticizes the Federal Government's Structural Adjustment Programme, contending that instead of favouring the citizenry, the policy helped to enrich the minority in the society, leaving the masses to languish in poverty, since it failed to provide their basic needs. The essayist says:

Extract 10
Tell me, how you **c**an **c**arry out a successful oral rehydration therapy
when there is no **w**ater? How **m**any **m**illions can government hope to
        spend on the **t**reatment of **t**yphoid fever, diarrhoea, and guinea-worm
when the rural **w**ater **s**ource remain**s** a **s**eedy puddle? (TRGOS,45).

Various observations arise from the patterning of sound in these lines. Firstly, Osundare creates alliteration with 'can' and 'carry'–which are articulated with the voiceless velar plosive, /k/. Similarly, the voiceless labio-velar approximant, /w/, is common to 'when' and 'water'. In the case of 'many' and 'millions', the voiceless bilabial nasal /m/ is the linking effect. 'Treatment' and 'typhoid' have the voiced alveolar plosive, /t/, in common. 'Source' and 'seedy' have the voiced alveolar fricative, /s/, in common. The use of the alliteration exposes Osundare's mood as that which is characterized by anger, venting it on government over its exploitation of the masses through the introduction of unfavourable economic policy. The chiming in the words above explicitly shows Osundare's dissatisfaction with the situation he speaks about. It also creates textual bonding.

Ekpu's focus in extract 11) is on the unlawful maltreatment and harassment of innocent citizens by law enforcement officials in Nigeria. On this subject, Ekpu remarks thus:

Extract 11
One understands **th**at where **th**ere's no law, the police creates it.
Where he does not create it, because **h**e **h**as no power to create it,
harassment becomes the law (SOR, 14).

In the text above, the essayist uses alliterative structures to project the infringement on the rights of ordinary citizens by the police who intimidate, oppress and exploit them. The phonemes /k/, /h/ and /ð/ convey the essayist's dissatisfaction with this situation because the police who are entrusted with the

obligation of protecting lives and property have turned round to become the destroyers of such lives and property. The dominant alliterative structure in the text is the voiceless velar plosive, /k/, as captured in the recurrence of 'create', which projects the avenue through which the police harasses innocent citizens.

In extract 12), Ekpu speaks on politics in his country and dwells on how the system has been battered by political actors as a result of their quest for power and fame. This is captured in the lines below:

Extract 12

Politics is a battle for power and the battle for power is conflict.
Each party mobilises its forces for **sh**ootouts or **sh**owdowns, finding
the appropriate words, the appropriate vehicle and appropriate forum
for blasting each other with **v**erbal **v**olley (OEOP, 23).

In this text, the voiceless alveo-palatal fricative, /ʃ/, and voiced labiodental fricative, /v/, express greatly some features of the Nigeria political system. The alliterative patterning here creates a reinforcing connection between the words 'shootouts and showdowns' and as well 'verbal and volley'. Ekpu's mood in this discourse is that of despondency and disillusionment due to the height of political rascality, political chauvinism and electoral malpractice in the Nigeria political system.

5.2.1.2 Assonantal patterns

Assonance is the "visual effect of two or more words with the same vowel in their spelling" (Jefferies and McIntyre, 2010: 38). This is a faulty definition because it is incomplete in terms of what constitutes 'assonance'; it does not recognise sound effect, which is the main function of assonance. However, Wales (2011: 35) sees it as "all kinds of phonological recurrences or juxtaposition" that result from the combination of the same vowel sounds. That means that it is the sound effect of two syllables in contiguous words. Further, Wales states that, strictly considered, assonance is a poetic device for sound patterning, musicality, and cohesion. The art of Niyi Osundare and Ray Ekpu in the selected essays demonstrate strong inclination towards assonance. Two functions to which these writers put assonance into use are for illumination of meaning and capturing of discourse situation.

5.2.1.2.1 Illuminate meaning

Osundare and Ekpu exploit assonance as discourse element to illuminate the message they try to convey to the reader. One instance is given below:

Extract 13

The man himself was th**e e**pitome of anguish, one who had been
through the l**o**ng c**o**rridors of Nigerian hospitals but had not
found a cure for his ailments (SOTS (11), 9).

In the above text, Osundare dwells substantially on the despicable condition of Nigerian hospitals and their expectedly poor services. He describes the trauma suffered by Nigerians on account of the contemptible state of their hospitals. He uses the front short vowel, /i/, in 'the' and 'epitome' and the back short vowel, /ɔ/, in 'long' and 'corridors' to create an assonance, which equally illuminates meaning. Cases of assonances are observable in the following portion:

Extract 14
Pale, m**a**lnourished **a**nd h**a**ggard, this man who had plodd**e**d the
deathl**y** roads from th**e** h**i**nterlands to see the magic touch of an
urban hospital, found death, not curative essence, at the venue of
his last hope" (SOTS (11), 9).

There are two instances of assonance here: the front short vowel, /a/, in 'malnourished', 'and', as well as 'haggard'; and the front short vowel, /i/, in 'plodded', 'the', 'deathly', and 'hinterlands'. A close study of the text reveals that the effect of the whole context is in the words 'm**a**lnourished', 'h**a**ggard', 'deathl**y**', 'plodd**e**d' and 'h**i**nterlands'. The assonance effectively describes the subject being discussed and relate the idea expressed which in turn illuminate the message of starvation which the writer intends to convey.

Assonantal patterns are equally evident in Ekpu's essays and are used for similar purpose. For example, in extract 15), Ekpu comments on the moral deterioration of Nigeria which has not excluded even religious leaders and their doctrines, thus:

Extract 15
In a situation where the morality of the nation has gone
topsy-turvy, r**e**ligious **i**nstructions and Sunday Schools are
out the window, church leaders embezzle f**u**nds and cons**ul**t
babalawo in their fight for positions, a renewal of faith in
some basic moral virtues is necessary (ADWTF, 15).

Ekpu focuses on the loss of sanctity by most religious institutions and its effect on their would-be leaders who end up in the same cesspit of dishonesty and decadence as the politicians and government officials. In this piece, the words 'religious' and 'instruction', as well as 'funds' and 'consult' produce assonance derived from the short front vowel /i/ and the central vowel /ʌ/, respectively. It is remarkable

that these words have an assonance bond because of their semantic value in the context of the extract. The phoneme /i/ in 'religious' and 'instruction' and /ʌ/ in 'funds' and 'consult' represent the moral sanctity that evaporated from Nigeria's religious circles. In addition to the communicative value, the vowels add to the thematic content which illuminates the subject of discourse.

In extract 16), Ekpu addresses the subject of leadership and followership. He differentiates between leaders who are committed to the flock and those who are merely interested in the fleece. He notes that most Nigerian leaders fall under the second category, which is why the country has remained static:

Extract 16
And many N**i**gerians f**ee**l that th**erea**son N**i**geria has failed
to reach its manifest destin**y i**s l**ea**dership or more appropriately,
the lack of it, the abuse of it, th**emi**suse of it (LTFOTF, 10).

Here, two assonance patterns are formed. The first is the recurrence of the two front vowels, /i: /, and /i/, derived from 'feel', 'reach', and 'leadership'; and 'its', 'manifest', 'destiny', 'is', and 'misused'. The second is the diphthong, /ai/, found in 'Nigeria' and 'Nigerians'. According to Leech (1969: 39), these vowels produce an assonance bond between the words which, in turn, create euphony in the text and as well illuminate the theme of leadership problem in Nigeria which Ekpu refers.

5.2.1.2.2 Capture discourse theme
Assonantal features are used for capturing discourse themes and as well directing the attention of reader to such themes. For example, in extract 17), Osundare contrasts the shocking breed of rural Nigerians with their craggy roads, squalid, leaking houses, and hungry stomachs; with the elite who are well fed and inhabit well-furnished apartments:

Extract 17
For, stood side by side with the over-nourished urbanites
of Victoria Island, Adamawa's 'forgotten tribe' has parad**e**d
th**e** nak**e**d h**y**pocrisy of our just and egalitarian country (PFK,
3).

In the above text, the writer uses sound to project the high level of inequality in Nigeria where the huge part of nation's resources are concentrated in the hands of the few while the general masses are left to languish in penury. Here, the short front vowel, /i/, is repeated in 'parad**e**d', 'th**e**', 'nak**e**d', and 'h**y**pocrisy'–which results in assonantal connection between the words. An insight into this text shows that the recurrence of the phoneme /i/ highlights the theme of uneven distribution of resources which Osundare refers. Also, it helps the reader captures the entire discourse situation. The exploitation of

assonantal patterns for similar purpose is equally evident in Ekpu's essays. For example, in extract 18), Ekpu comments on the mad rush for titles in Nigeria and condemns their indiscriminate conferment, in this manner:

Extract 18
And it was easy to know that the craze for t**i**tles, t**i**tlemania, a h**ar**mless p**as**time before, had suddenl**y** b**e**come a dangerous
            crusade for the backward of the c**o**untry's c**u**ltural values
(WTU, 11).

In order to capture the entire discourse subject, Ekpu uses the diphthong, /ai/, arising from 'title' and 'titlemania'; the back long vowel, /a:/, found in 'harmless' and 'pastime'; and the central short vowel, /ʌ/, in 'country' and 'culture' to establish an assonantal bond. Semantically, while 'title' represents the names, position, or portfolio for which Nigerians crave, Ekpu opts for the coinage, 'titlemania', a plain juxtaposition of 'title' and 'mania', apparently with the intention to ridicule public officers who have this tendency.

The foregoing discussion indicates that all the sounds exploited by Niyi Osundare and Ray Ekpu depict assonance patterns of various kinds. They all produce various specific sound combinations that trigger auditory and literary associations in the reader. The patterns provide clues for literary symbolism. Assonance helps in the communicative process of essayistic discourse.

5.2.1.3 Sound elision as discourse element

An elision is the "omission of a phoneme in speech" (Finch, 2002: 46). According to Wales (2011: 129), the word is used to mean the "striking out" of initial syllables. An elision is the elimination of unstressed syllables, consonants, or letters from a word or phrase–that is, the reduction of the number of letters and syllables, for the purpose of fusing words. This phonological device is very well exploited by both Ray Ekpu and Niyi Osundare. Some instances of it in Osundare's essays are shown below:

Extract 19
"I haven't tasted food for three days…" ('SOTS' (I), 8).

Extract 20
"…didn't know what just to do with the new audacious king
     of the road ('NMT', 29).

Extract 21
         "…haven't I always wrestled with that complex phenomenon?"
('TETMD', 13).

Extract 22
"You ain't seen nothing yet" ('TETMD', 84).

Extract 23
"And what's more…" ('NIP', 67).

Extract 24
"What's the problem?" ('TU', 92).

Extract 25
"When I grow up I'm going to be a journalist"
('MBNP', 349).

In extracts 19-22) instances, Osundare omits the phoneme, /ɔ/, in the words 'haven't' (in No. 19 and 21); 'dIdn't' (in 20); 'ain't' in 22). Equally, in 23 and 24), the phoneme /i/, is elided in the words 'what's' and 'what's'. In 25), the phoneme / a/, is omitted. Sound elision is equally evident in Ekpu's essay as seen below.

Extract 26
"He doesn't have…" ('ADWTF', 17)

Extract 27
"She wasn't alone in this charade" ('SOR', 14)

Extract 28
"The executive president didn't know…, didn't
                    see,…didn't hear…, didn't smell…" (AHR, 10).

Extract 29
"By the way, what's your name?" ('AHMIAHM', 10)

Extract 30
"Be short, and say what you're talking about ('TKOM', 15).

Extract 31
"They'd be happy… provided he'd amputate his political
                    ambition…" ('AATH', 16).

In the texts above, the elision of /ɔ/ runs through in 'doesn't' in extract 26) and 'wasn't' in 27). Extract 28) above is remarkable due to the recurrence of the word 'didn't', where the phoneme, /i/, is elided; in 29), the phoneme /i/, is omitted in 'what's'; while in 30, /a/, is omitted from 'you're'. Finally, in 31, the phonemes /h/ and /a/ are elided in 'he'd'.

106

A particularly pertinent feature of the examples quoted from Osundare and Ekpu is the abundance of vowel omission, unlike the consonant, of which there was just one case of elision. Evidently, the essayists deliberately exploit this phonological device for word economy (Ogunsiji, 2007: 272) and also to create a smooth flow of writing and reading alike.

On the similarities and differences in the deployment of stylo-linguistic features at the phonological level of language description, Osundare and Ekpu make choices from a host of alliterative structures, assonantal patterns and elision of sounds from the repertoire of language to negotiate meanings. The stylistic exploitation of these choices foregrounds their style alongside highlighting the similarities and differences in their deployment of linguistic features. For example, both writers exploit the following alliterative structures, voiceless labial velar approximant, /w/, voiceless velar plosive, /k/, voiced alveolar plosive, /t/ and voiced alveolar fricative, /s/, to reinforce the thematic concerns in their essays, retain the message conveyed to the reader and also evoke the writers' emotion. However, while Osundare deploys the voiced palatal approximant /j/, voiced bilabial plosive, /b/ and voiced bilabial nasal /m/ to project his concern for the masses whose cause he advocates, Ekpu on the other uses the voiced alveolar plosive /d/, voiced palatal approximant /j/, voiceless velar nasal, /ŋ/ and voiceless glottal fricative, /h/ and voiceless palate alveolar fricative /ʃ/ to underscore enormity of the issues addressed.

On the use of assonantal patterns, both essayists employ the front short vowel /i/ to illuminate meaning and capture discourse themes. Whereas Osundare uses the back short vowel /ɔ/, and front short vowel, /a/, to project the high level of inequality in Nigeria, Ekpu on the other deploys the central vowel, /ʌ/, front long vowel, /i: /, and /i/, and diphthong, /ai/, to ridicule Nigerians crave for titles. Also, the back short vowel /ɔ/, front short vowel /i/ and front short vowel, /a/, are elided in the essays of both writers and used for the purpose of fusing words. The manipulation of phonological features at this level of language description indicate that though every writer or author has a unique thumb print, it is possible for two writers to exhibit identical style.

In all, it is obvious that Osundare and Ekpu attach considerable value to the aural impression of their literary craft. This accounts for the multiple presences of alliterative structures, assonantal patterns, and elision of vowels used to account for meaning in their essays. Aside of the resultant musical flow, this style heightens the tone and mood of the texts, while honing the reader's attention to the semantic

import of the lexical items employed. The next sub-section takes up the graphological assessment of the selected data.

5.2.2 Graphological symbols as devices for meaning construction

The visual symbols deployed in the construction of meaning in Osundare and Ekpu's essays are capitalisation, italicisation and punctuations (the hyphen and comma). The next sub-section contains an analysis of the unconventional use of capitalisation in the data being analysed.

5.2.2.1 Capitalisation

The essays under study commonly evince a deviant use of capital and small letters to communicate social, political and economic themes. As can be seen in extracts 32-36, certain words, phrases, or even clauses are highlighted through non-conventional use of higher-case letters, or capitalisation, thus:

Extract 32
Amina Lawal has been sentenced to death by STONING
('TFMC', 366).

> **Extract 33**
> Nigeria is NOT a country; it is an insufferable embarrassment
> ('TFMC', 366).

> **Extract 34**
> Now the world is almost sure who murdered Michael; but in
> this unhappy country, the question WHO KILLED DELE
> GIWA? still haunts us like an inscrutable mystery" (MBNP,

347).

> **Extract 35**
> But I have never really cared whose TRIBAL ox is gored as
> long as the issue at stake concerns our country, our continent,
> and our common humanity (TOMP, 341).

> **Extract 36**
> New Tarzans in pinstripe suits, teeth, red with blood, their
> large briefcases pregnant with ESTACODE dollars..." (A, 320).

A careful examination of the texts above shows that particular aspects are given prominence. In extracts 32) and 33), for example, Osundare exposes Nigeria's blatant human rights abuse. The unusual capitalisation of 'stoning' in 32) and 'not' in 33) serves as a shouting voice which draws attention to the

abomination perpetrated by religious fanatics right under the government's watch. Consequently, the essayist concludes that Nigeria is in a state of socio-political breakdown.

In 34), Osundare decries the high rate at which journalists are murdered in Nigeria; hence, the capitalisation of the rhetorical question, "Who killed Dele Giwa?" Capitalisation of this nature, according to Ibhawaegbele (2006: 48), commands the reader's interest and attention regarding the writer's motive for this extraordinary style. As for 35), the capitalisation of "TRIBAL" gives Osundare the opportunity to highlight the ways in which politics in Nigeria has been battered by tribalism. This technique enables the author to emphasize the subject under discussion. In 36), Osundare laments the depreciation, depression, and desecration to which Nigeria and Nigerians have been subjected. The essay focuses on the atrocities committed by politicians and public officers. The seemingly offensive word, 'estacode', is rendered in higher case letters in order to show that these abominations are executed by the use of Nigeria's scarce resources in the form of travel allowances.

Capitalisation also occurs in Ekpu's essays. The following are instances of the use of capitalization in his selected essays:

> **Extract 37**
> WHEN HAROLD MACMILLAN'S WIND OF change
blew across Nigeria on October 1, 1960, we were elated
('LTFOTF', 10).

> **Extract 38**
> NIGERIA IS IN THE EVENING OF ITS PASSOVER,
> Passover from an era in which we're ruled with weapons
into one in which we'll be ruled with words (OEOP, 21).

> **Extract 39**
> THE NIGERIANPOLITICAL CRISIS IS BECOMING
> something like a festering sore which didn't receive
> treatment in time when it was just little wound (ATFP, 8).

> **Extract 40**
> IN THE CLOSING DAYS OF THE INDEPENDENCE
> campaign, Nigeria leaders must have looked forward to
> a great future for the country (DSD, 15).

Ekpu reviews Nigeria's independence from British colonialism, and the widespread joy occasioned by it. The far-reaching historical significance of this occurrence is reflected in the capitalisation of the adverbial phrase, WHEN HAROLD MACMILAN's wind of... in extract 37) which functions to give

prominence to the capitalised expression. Similarly, in extract 38), Ekpu delves into Nigeria's past to enable the reader reminisce on the country's subaltern humiliation under colonialism. He then turns to the future, for the imminent freedom which would end all forms of colonial subjugation. Here again, capitalisation of the entire structure, NIGERIA IS IN THE EVENING OF ITS PASSOVER acts as a strident announcement for the reader's benefit, in the sense of fully grasping the content and intention of the passage. This objective underlies Ekpu's application of the same mode in extract 39) and 40). Whereas the former focuses on the appalling state of politics in Nigeria which is why the writer capitalises the entire structure, 'THE NIGERIAN POLITICAL CRISIS IS BECOMING…, the latter reports on the independence days hence the capitalization of the theme IN THE CLOSING DAYS OF THE INDEPENDENCE.

As the analysis above has shown, capitalisation constitutes a significant stylistic feature of the selected essays of Ekpu and Osundare. Both essayists exploit this graphic feature for highlighting and emphasis. Osundare's and Ekpu's preference for this style is based on their objective of deliberately foregrounding lexical items in order to enhance communicative impact. According to Adagbonyin (1999: 132), the thinking behind this style is the "awareness that the use of normal type (forms) in such circumstances would achieve a lesser impact."

5.2.2.2 Italicisation

Italicisation refers to "printing on paper for the artistic effect of highlighting" (Edokpayi, 2006: 66). According to Adagbonyin (1999: 149), its uses include:

- marking off lexical items, idioms, expressions, or refrains that are "foreign" to texts rendered in English;

- emphasising or stressing particular words (or parts thereof); or to highlight neologism;

- signalling subtitles, epigraphs, or dedications;

- as marker for the different sections of a text;

- to indicate stage performance or stage directions; and

- for introducing some form of narrative comment.

In the essays under study, Osundare and Ekpu utilise italicization for aesthetics and to present linguistic usages that are not in the English language. The following texts illustrate the use of italics in both data:

Extract 41
"*Aburo*, please, give me money", he pleaded in a voice which quaked like a broken record' ('SOTS (I), 8).
Extract 42
"If you wan die quick quick, make you go Nigerian hospital"
('SOTS (II), 9).

Extract 43
After all the powerful ones who shoot their pens at the nation's treasury also do in cute-tailored suits, *agbada* and *babanriga*
(WIYT, 17).

Extract 44
"*Danfos, molues, boolekajas* just didn't know what to do with the new audacious king of the road" ('NMT', 29).

Extract 45
That English word shares the same border with its Yoruba counterpart *eewo*… (TU, 322).

Extract 46
The Abacha regime has carried the violation of *aakii* to a most dangerous level (TU, 323).

Extract 47
How do I tell them that I am more pained than they are at this act of utter barbarism committed in the name of religion by faceless *mullahs* who have put Nigeria's engine in reverse gear to the dark ages?" ('TFMC', 366).

Extract 48
Eeh hen, what do you want?"/ "Who, which office be dat?
('TU, 90).

Extract 49
Ah, my boss, he go meeting, long long meeting."/ "Where I go get am?"/ You no hear say austerity dey?"/ "No paper o."/
"What of stamp?"/ Abi, if you go post office you no go buy?"
(TU, 91).

In extract 41) above, Osundare uses the native Yoruba word, "aburo" (younger brother) to underscore the purported closeness of the cash supplicant and the person being solicited. The deplorable state of

Nigerian hospitals is presented in extract 42). As if to display his competence in speech other than English, Osundare switches code from Standard English to Pidgin English –a sort of linguistic condescension to tally with the degradation of Nigeria's medical institutions and facilities.

Extract 43) depicts how politicians and government officials loot the public purse. The words, "*agbada*", (Yoruba for a traditional gown for men) and "*babanriga*" (Hausa for same) are foregrounded through italicisation. However, extracts 44-46), respectively, carry these italicized terms: "*Danfos*", "*molues*", "*boolekajas*" (Yoruba expression for "second-handed vehicles"); "*eewo*" (Yoruba for "taboo"); "*aakii*" (Yoruba word for a moral regulator); and "*mullahs*" (Hausa for "miscreant").

Concerning his usage of Pidgin English, Osundare does not merely switch code with the mind of a one-off alignment of content with mode of language, as observed in extracts 47-49). His essays are noticeably interlaced with doses of Pidgin discourse, dialogue, and other forms of expression, as can be found in these texts. Osundare achieves a high level of linguistic dexterity here through his deployment of Pidgin English. The use of italicisation is equally pronounced in Ekpu's essays.

Extract 50
…Church leaders embezzle funds and consult *babalawo*
in their fight for positions, a renewal of faith in some basic
        moral virtues is necessary (ADWTF, 15).

Extract 51
She thought to herself that this must be one of those routine
police checks during which they ask you, *Whey your*
        particulars?'/ 'Wetin you carry?' (SOR, 13).

Extract 52
They make a phone call or send a plain-clothes man around
        to tell you their *Oga* wanted to meet you (AHIAG, 11).

Extract 53
We haven't seen an Aminu Kano working up the *talakawas*
with his earthly, inspirational rhetorical (OEOP, 23).

Extract 54
NEC, of course, in churning out rules, and rules may have been
trying to ensure that the *wuruwuru* and *magomago* that
accompanied the botched primaries are not repeated (OEOP, 22).

In extract 50), the Yoruba word "*babalawo*" which means traditional herbal medicine man, is loudly and visibly projected by being italicised. The following (italicised) Pidgin English expressions *'Whey your particulars?'/ 'Wetin you carry?'* are observed in extract 51). These questions are the stock-in-trade of Nigerian "stop-and-search" police personnel particularly. The essayist italicises them with the intention of pointing to the seriousness of the matter being communicated. Of course, its content and tone have a satiric note on corruption in the polity.

The non-English word "*Oga*" shows up in extract 52) where Ekpu describes the murder of innocent Nigerians by agents of government. "*Oga*" means 'boss'– one who sits in the office, issuing instructions for others to execute. The writer in extract 53) comments on the onset of Nigeria's flag independence, features native idioms like "*talakawa*" and "*wuruwuru*" as well as *"magomago"* in extract 54). The former is a Hausa word for "the less privileged", while the latter, a derivative of Pidgin English, means "dubious or shady".

As demonstrated above, italics provide an effective avenue for Osundare and Ekpu to graphologically acknowledge non–English expressions. Also, Nigerian Pidgin English and Yoruba and Hausa words and phrases reinforce the essayists' discourses on Nigeria's social and political travails since the 1960s. The analysis above corresponds with the joint opinion that "foregrounding depends on a sense that the particular feature that you have noticed is doing something noticeably different from the previous co-text or from what you might ordinarily have expected in that context" (Mullany and Stockwell, 2010: 45). This viewpoint is a fitting summation of the essayists' deployment of native words as well as Pidgin English to boost their expression of disillusionment and bitterness over Nigeria's grave plight.

5.2.2.3 Punctuations

Punctuations are "marks used as guides to pauses and changes in the rhythm and intonation in sentences, and they have rules guiding their usage" (Ibhawaegbele, 2006: 42). In the context of writing, "punctuation" is used to provide the same signals (as pause, voice pitch, or stress) that operate in speech, in the declension of a word (or a group of words), in order to facilitate the reader's understanding (Dukiya, 1991). According to Edokpayi (2006: 64), the notion refers to "the act of dividing sentences by points or marks". She adds that in spoken and written discussion, speakers and writers often pause, break off sentences or even stop completely; punctuation marks are used to reflect these features. Further, as posited by Adagbonyin (1999: 116), it is commonly established that

punctuation "constitutes a veritable means of encoding the unspoken aspects of a linguistic performance."

Different punctuation marks are put to good use in the essays under study. However, where some of them are applied in manners that defy the norm, the deviant is still worthwhile, because it is meant to achieve artistic effect. The next section features the discussion of sample instances of the essayists' usage of the above-named punctuation marks.

5.2.2.3.1 The comma

The comma "separates or sets off the words and group of words within sentences. It also encloses expressions appearing within a sentence" (Ibhawaegbele, 2006: 44). In the standpoint of Edokpayi (2006: 64), this device is used to "convey varieties of meanings in a text"; and that it creates pauses in sentences; separate the components of a sentence; and help the reader to grasp the message communicated. The following examples buttress the foregoing explanation:

> **Extract 55**
> The truth, however, is that since the amalgamation of the
Northern and Southern protectorates in1914, Nigeria has
> been in perpetual search of self, in search of its true destiny,
> its identity and its soul (ANQ, 15).

> **Extract 56**
> Nigerians, encouraged by their government, had developed
a strong appetite for imported rice, imported macaroni,
imported fish, imported apples, imported clothes,imported
> toothpicks (DATP, 21).

> **Extract 57**
> And in this regard, the Koma are only an unmistakably apt
> metaphor for rural Nigerians, that teeming tribe of our
forgotten people for whom life is forbidden and unenviable;
> whose roads are craggy footpaths; whose houses are leaking
and squalid; whose folds are hungry, tired and retired (PFK,
4).

> **Extract 58**
> Here is a country of 120 million human beings, Number 7
    producer of oil in the entire world, the country of Wole
> Soyinka and Chinua Achebe, a country with more than 40
> universities and countless colleges, a land of vociferous
nationals and enterprising citizens… here is Nigeria, the

"most populous Black nation on earth" without reason,
                without order, without management (NE, 361-362).

In extract 55), Ekpu attributes Nigeria's myriad of problems to the amalgamation of its northern and southern protectorates. Here, there is Ekpu's deft deployment of five commas, performing two distinct functions. The first two create pauses in the flow of speech, while the remaining three are used to show a series of parallel clauses of equal importance. This function also applies to extract 56), which queries Nigeria's attitude to imported goods, which seem indispensable to a huge percentage of Nigerians– hence, an aspect of the national dilemma. In this passage of just four lines, six commas are employed for a strong linguistic impact. The first comma is a break between one part of the information and the others. The second and third are used to introduce two parallel clauses of equal importance, whereas the others are used in listing the imported items.

In extract 57), Osundare depicts the prevailing famine and other lack in Nigeria. This thematic preoccupation is also evident in extract 58), a dramatic description of Nigeria and its vast and variegated wealth. Six commas are skilfully marshalled for this objective. They not only ensure the free flow of reading, but also lend some emphasis to textual meaning.

5.2.2.3.2 Hyphenation

Ekpu and Osundare deliberately use hyphenation in their essays for aesthetic value. Osundare's uses it to form simple and complex words, as in these cases: Extract 59) "Over-nourished", "Right-headed", "image-making" and "image-mending" (PFK, 3); extract 60) "ill-health" and "days-fear" (SOTS 1, 6); extract 61) "multi-storey"and "seven-month" (SOST II', 9 and 10), respectively); extract 62) "well-endowed", "goodness-knows-where" and "keen-cut suits" (WIYT, 15-16); extract 63) "multi-millionaire", "after-sale" and "long-distance" (NMT, 29-30); extract 64) "pot-bellied", "middle-aged" and "so-called" (TRGOS, 46); extract 65) "media-related", "stone-age", "corruption-ridden" and "ill-stocked" (NIP, 67-68); extract 66) "he-goat" and "one-tenth" ('TFMC, 364-366); extract 67) "well-travelled" and "well-read" (TETMD, 80).

In Ekpu's case, here are several instances of hyphenation: Extract 68) "Nation-wide" (ADWTF, 15); extract 69) "Highly-placed" ('WTU, 11); extract 70) "Trade-mark" (SOR, 14); extract 71) "High-sounding", "gun-point" and "Mouth-filling" (TKM, 14 and 15,); extract 72) "Isale-Eko" and "Sack-of-naira" (AHR', 8); extract 73) "Terror-machine", "Bloody-eyed", "Plain-clothes", and Self-interest" (AHIAH, 12) and extract 74) "Water-pots" ('DATP', 23). It is apparent that the double-barrelled make-

up of these expressions are aimed at adding fillip to the essayist's account of the embattled socio-political space of his country. The foregoing exposition on the varied graphic devices at play in the selected essays proves that a text with multilateral meaning is better appreciated within the ambit of form and language function.

5.2.3 Syntactic structures as devices for meaning construction

The syntactic features deployed in the construction of meaning in the essays of Osundare and Ekpu are nominal group structure, mood system, modality, transitivity, parallel structures and syntactic aberration.

5.2.3.1 The nominal group

The nominal group refers to a linguistic unit "which has a noun or pronoun as head with or without modifiers" (Wales, 2011: 290). It can operate as subject and complement in a clause and as well the complement of a preposition in a prepositional phrase (Downing and Locke, 1992). The selected essays of Osundare and Ekpu are examined on the basis of the four structural types of nominal group: the *h-type* (head only), *mh-type (head with premodifier)*, *hq-type* (head with qualifier) and the *mhq-type* (full structure of premodification and postmodification). In addition to the logical sub-function this thesis also examines the experiential function in the nominal group. Creative writers make choices from this list in order to increase the structural complexity of the nominal group in their texts. This praxis contributes to the general meaning they try to convey. The nominal groups in our data function as subject, object and compliment in the group structure to effectively describe the writers' message. Apart from being used for effective description, they also function as themes and news headlines. Our discussion of these functions begins with that of the subject.

5.2.3.1.1 Nominal group as subject

Nominal group functions as subject to provide effective description of the thematic concerns projected in the essay texts. By effective description is meant the use of sufficient and varied elaboration of details to communicate a sense of the subject being described. An instance of this use is provided below with the group enclose in a slant line, prepositional phrase demarcated in single square bracket and a clause in double square bracket.

Excerpts

        m   **m**   **h**   **q**
75. | A |shocking| breed [of such Nigerians] | (PFK, 3).

```
         m      m         m         h
```
76. | Our |ill-stocked| medieval [hospital] | (SOTS 11, 3).

```
        m  m   m    h       q
```
77. | A |tall| wiry| man [in his late forties] | (SOTS 1, 7).

```
        m       h           q
```
78. | The |government [[brutal clampdown]] | (NIP, 67).

```
        m           m            h      q
```
79. | The| champagne-drenched| party [of the rich] | (TRGOS, 46).

```
        m       m       h     m     m        h
```
80. | The |Nigerian | press | the |honourable | minister | (NIP, 67).

```
        m       h     m     m               h
```
81. | This |colleague |a | single-minded | professor of literature | (TFMC, 365).

```
        m       h        q
```
82. | The | number [of aircrafts [in the national fleets]] | (NE, 362).

```
        m     h   m   h          q
```
83. |This| time |a | man [in his mid-thirties [[looking as pale as wax statute]]] | (SOTS 1, 8).

```
        m       h               q
```
84. | New| buildings [in different stages [of completion [[with their ambitious structures and
        futuristic designs]]]] | (A, 328).

```
        m    h               q
```
85. | This | man [[who had plodded the deathly roads [from the hinterlands [[to see the magic
        touch [of an urban hospital]]]]]] | (SOST 11, 9).

```
m      m       m        h
```
86. | Our | once | bustling | markets | (SOTS 1, 7).

```
        m       m       h      q
```
87. |That | teeming | tribe [of our forgotten people] | (SOTS 11, 3).

```
        h    q        m        h       m     m           h
```
88. | One [of them] Walter | Ofonagoro | our| honourable| minister of information | (NIP, 67).

```
m      h           q
```
89. | The| omens [of biblical proportions [[witnessed in this country]]] | (NE, 362).

A close observation of the sample texts will reveal some remarkable premodificatory and postmodificatory items deployed by Osundare. First, clusters of descriptive adjectives feature in examples 76), 77) and 84). In such structures, the adjectives perform experiential function. In 76), the attributive adjective *medieval* functions as an epithet to modify *hospital* and it projects the decrepit structures used as hospital in Nigeria. Also, *tall* and *wiry* in 77) equally operate as an epithet to add some quality to *man.* Theysuggest adverse effect of hardship. The use of compound words as premodifiers also enhance the effectiveness and vividness of description. Such compound words are shown in 76) and 79). For example, *ill-stocked* in 76) modifies *hospital* and *champagne-drenched* in 79) gives some meaning to *party*. While *ill-stocked* indicates inadequate healthcare equipment in Nigerian hospitals, *champagne-drenched* on the other refers to the extravagant spending of nation's resources by government officials.

Apart from the exploitation of compound words, the participles *shocking* as captured in 75), *bustling* in 86) and *teeming* in 87) respectively are modifiers which aid meaning. In these configurations, *shocking* modifies *breed*, *bustling* describes *market,* and *teeming* add some quality to *tribe. Shocking* suggests contemptibility of the entity which is being referred, *bustling* captures the setting of commerce in Nigeria, and *teeming* on the other point to ordinary Nigerians in the rural locale. Osundare's choice of *our once bustling market* in 86) shows his interest in relating the qualities of the entity being describe to those of another. Thus, he compares the present inactivity in the Nigeria market as a result of inflation to when it was active.

However, the following deictic elements: determiners in examples 77), 78), 79), 80) and 82), possessive pronouns in 76) and 78) and as well demonstratives in 81), 83), 85) and 86) etc., are deployed for identification. Whereas the non-specific determiner *a* introduces *breed* in 75) and *man* in 77) respectively, the specific determiner *the* on the othertracks the following referents *government* in 78), *party* in 79), *press* in 80), *number* in 82) and *omens* in 89). These determiners, in conjunction with previously highlighted premodificatory items, function to supply additional information to the headword in the group structure which, in turn, enables it convey experiential meaning.

Finally on premodification, examples 80), 81) and 83) are cases of two nominal groups in apposition. In these structures, the nominal group functions as a modifier inside the structure of another nominal group. For example, in 81) where *this colleague a single-minded professor of literature* is the nominal group, *a single-minded professor of literature* defines which colleague is being referred to. Similarly, in

one of them, Water Ofonagoro, our honourable minister of information as captured in83), *Water Ofonagoro, our honourable minister of information* defines which of them is being referred to.
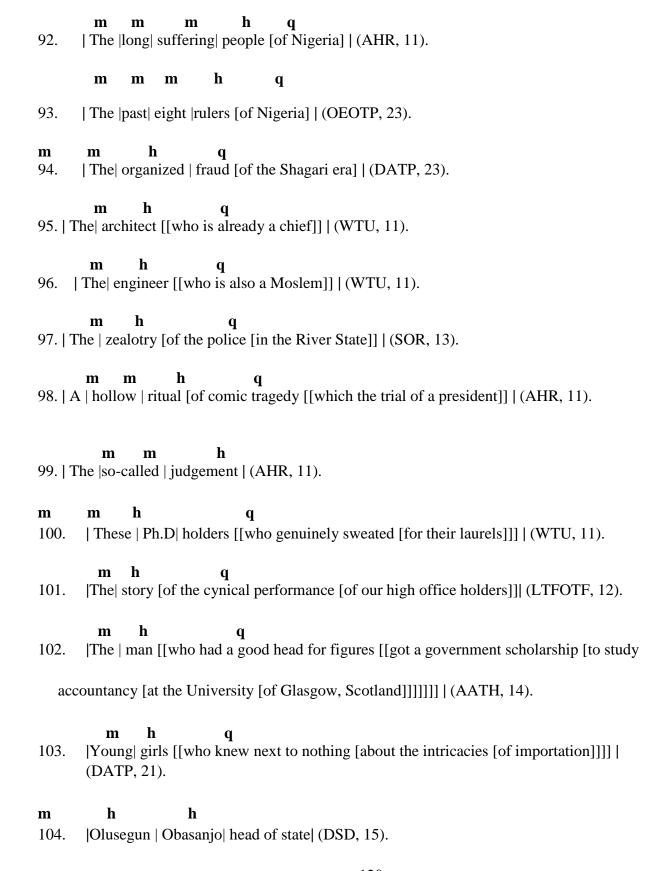
Regarding postmodification in Osundare's data, it should be said that noun phrases, prepositional phrases, series of rank-shifted groups, and as well as a blend of such groups and clauses function as qualifiers. They perform adjectival and adverb functions, adding to the effectiveness and vividness of description at the subject level. The following rank-shifted prepositional phrases, *of such Nigerians* in 75), *in his late forties* in 77) and *of the rich* in 79) etc., demonstrate the syntactic process of embedding. For example in 75), the preposition phrase provides extra information to the headword *breed.* In 77), 82) and 84), it functions as a locative complement in the group structure. The expression *brutal clampdown* in 78) is a bare-infinitive clause complementing the group structure. Also, *of aircraft in the national fleet* in 82) illustrates series of rank-shifted groups at qualifier. Apart from this occurrence, the choice of rank-shifted groups alongside a participle clause featurein 84). Here, the blend is exploited to vividly capture the subject of discourse. A similar blend is observable in 85) where series of rank-shifted groups and clauses are deployed to effectively describe the contemptible life which unemployment and inflation have plunged Nigerians into. In this structure, the qualifiers fulfill complementary role. Whereas the relative and to-infinitive clauses function to describe the nominal group heads, the prepositional phrases on the other operate to locate them. Also, by introducing the relative clause *who had plodded the deathly roads* before the prepositional phrase *from the hinterlands* in 85), the relative clause is downranked or downgraded inside the nominal group.

With the stylistic exploitation of rank-shifted groups, Osundare attempts to build up much information at the subject level in the nominal group. In all, the effective description at the subject position in Osundare's data is realised through the exploitation of adjectives, compound words, participles, determiners, demonstratives, possessive pronouns, appositive nominal groups, noun phrases, prepositional phrases, series of prepositional phrases and as well a blend of rank-shifted groups and clauses. The examples below illustrate Ekpu's use of nominal group for effective description at the subject position:

Extracts

       m   **m**   **h**   **q**
90. | A |mind-boggling| story [of how Nigeria's money] | (AHR, 10).

       m   **m**   **m**   **h**   **q**
91. | The |most| vicious |cankerworm [in the country's body politic] | (DATP, 23).

```
        m     m     m      h      q
```
92. | The |long| suffering| people [of Nigeria] | (AHR, 11).

```
          m     m    m     h         q
```
93. | The |past| eight |rulers [of Nigeria] | (OEOTP, 23).

```
m       m      h        q
```
94. | The| organized | fraud [of the Shagari era] | (DATP, 23).

```
          m      h          q
```
95. | The| architect [[who is already a chief]] | (WTU, 11).

```
          m      h          q
```
96. | The| engineer [[who is also a Moslem]] | (WTU, 11).

```
          m      h              q
```
97. | The | zealotry [of the police [in the River State]] | (SOR, 13).

```
          m     m      h          q
```
98. | A | hollow | ritual [of comic tragedy [[which the trial of a president]] | (AHR, 11).

```
           m     m           h
```
99. | The |so-called | judgement | (AHR, 11).

```
m       m      h                    q
```
100. | These | Ph.D| holders [[who genuinely sweated [for their laurels]]] | (WTU, 11).

```
          m      h          q
```
101. |The| story [of the cynical performance [of our high office holders]]| (LTFOTF, 12).

```
          m      h              q
```
102. |The | man [[who had a good head for figures [[got a government scholarship [to study

accountancy [at the University [of Glasgow, Scotland]]]]]]] | (AATH, 14).

```
          m      h          q
```
103. |Young| girls [[who knew next to nothing [about the intricacies [of importation]]]] |
        (DATP, 21).

```
m          h             h
```
104. |Olusegun | Obasanjo| head of state| (DSD, 15).

m   h   m   m   h

105. | Muhammadu |Buhari |the |new| head of state | (DSD, 15).

Premodification and postmodification are also the hallmarks of Ekpu's essays and they are deployed for effective description at the subject position in the group. For example, in 91), the deictic element, *the* establishes the relevance of *cankerworm*, the descriptive adjectives *most* and *vicious* function as epithet to indicate some of its quality and finally *in the country's body politic* is a rank-shifted prepositional phrase functioning as a locative complement. This modification helps to vividly portray the subject of degeneracy which Ekpu refers. Also, it should be noted that apart from the descriptive adjective *most* signaling description, it also function to indicate Ekpu's interest in viewing things in terms of extremes.

However, in example 90), whereas the compound word *mind-boggling* adds some meaning to *story*, *of how Nigeria's money* is a prepositional phrase in the same structure functioning as a qualifier to complement the modification. Ekpu's choice of *mind-boggling* here suggests astonishment due to the huge amount of nation's resources embezzled by government officials. Also, the participial adjective *suffering* in 92) operates as epithet to modify *people* in the nominal group. Through this modification, the travails of the general masses are captured and projected. Similarly, the headword *fraud* in example 94) is modified by the adjective *organized* and it indicates that most illicit practices in the government are properly planned before being executed. More so, *young* in extract 103) which is descriptive in nature and ought to operate as an epithet has been deployed here as a deictic element for identification. Hence, it introduces *girls* in the nominal group expression *young girls*…. The case of nominal groups in apposition feature in 104) and 105) where the nominal groups are being qualified by other nominal groups in similar structure. In all, *eight* in example 93) is a numerative element indicating some numerical feature of the particular subject of the head being described.

In relation to the nominal group with qualifiers (that is, with post head-word modifications) in Ekpu's essays, group, clause, series of groups and clauses and as well as their blend etc., function as qualifiers and equally perform adjectival and adverbial functions. The following nominal expressions *of how Nigeria's money* in example 90), *in the country's body politic* in 91), *of Nigeria* in 92) and 93) and *of the Shagari era* in 94) etc., are all rank-shifted prepositional phrases which demonstrate the syntactic process of embedding. Whereas the prepositional phrases in 90), 92), 93), and 94) are used for specification and description of the headwords in these structures, the qualifying element in 91) functions as an adverb of place to locate where the corruption is situated. Also, the rank-shifted relative

121

clauses in 95) and 96) have the greater potential as news due to the detailed information they carry. Other qualifiers in Ekpu's discourse include the exploitation of series of rank-shifted preposition phrases in example 97), a blend of rank-shifted prepositional phrases and a single clause in 98) and 99) and as well as a blend of series of prepositional phrases and clauses in 102). The effective description in Ekpu's data is realised through the exploitation of adjectives, numeral, compound words, determiners, demonstratives, prepositional phrases, clauses, a blend of groups and clauses.

In all, the deployment of compounds in Osundare and Ekpu's texts contributes to the degree of description and particles of meaning realised at the nominal group level. This observation is corroborated by Ogunsiji (2001: 101) who notes that the use of compound words or expressions as modifiers adds to the effectiveness and vividness of description.

5.2.3.1.2 Nominal group as object

On the use of nominal groups as object, it is noticeable that Osundare and Ekpu fully exploit the object position in the group structure to effectively relay their message. Consider, for example, the following sample texts below:

Extracts

                               m   **m**   **h**   **q**
106.   Those who killed | the| national |airline [[must be exposed and made [to face the law]]] | (NE, 363).

m   **h**   **q**
107.   We were beginning to witness | the | birth [of a new Nigeria [[when General Babangida and his clique crushed the dream]]] | (NIP, 67).

m h   **q**
108.   The Koma people have thrown |a |pebble [in our pool [of complacency and placid Hypocrisy]] | (PKF, 5).

                        m   **m**   **h**   **q**
109.   The telephone broke |this| solemn| joy [with its metallic siren] |(MBNP, 345).

m   **h**   **m**   **h**   **q**
110.   The Obasanjo administration owes |the |country |the| answers [to these questions] | (NE, 363).

| | h | | q |
| 111. | We found\|oil [under our feet [[which made the story even sweeter and our future even more rosy]]] \| (DSD, 15). |

| | m | h | | q |
| 112. | The government and its agencies imported \|all \|sorts [of fancy machines [[which were abandoned [in various offices]]]] / (DATP, 22). |

m h m h   q

113.   We have not seen \|a \| Zik \|a \|baby [[nestling in his arms [[regaling us with stories [about health care [for the Nigerian child]]]]]] \| (OEOP, 23).

m   h   q

114.   He reminded\|all \|parents [of the duty [[that they owe to the society]]] \| (ADWTF, 15).

m   h   q

115.   The child passes \|the \|examination [into the Plateau state Polytechnic [at Barkin Ladi]] \| (ADWTF, 16).

In examples 106-109) extracted from Osundare's essays, the nominal groups function as object of information in the group structure. In each of these configurations, the writer exploits a variety of deictic elements ranging from determiners (specific and non-specific), demonstrative and as well as descriptive adjectives. These premodificatory items are complemented with postmodificatory items, the purpose being to provide the reader with comprehensive information at this position in the group. For example in 106), the expression the national airline must be exposed and made to face the law is a nominal group where structurally, the national airline, functions as a direct object. The premodificatory items consist of the determiner the, a deictic element operating to modify airline and the adjective national, an epithet functioning to describe its quality. This premodification is immediately accompanied by series of rank-shifted clauses which equally act as qualifiers to complement the modification. The bare-infinitive clause must be exposed and made as well as the to-infinitive clause to face the law are qualifiers serving as stance adjunct semantically deployed to express the writer's attitude or evaluation of the content of the group. By so doing, the reader's attention is shifted to the object position where the message is concentrated.

Similarly in 107), the nominal group as the object begins with *the birth*where the writer wants his reader to focus on. He introduces series of rank-shifted qualifiers consisting of the prepositional phrase *of a new Nigeria* and as well as the relative clause *when General Babangida and his click crushed the dream* to draw the reader's attention to this position. Though both qualifiers supply important information that adds to our understanding of the birth which the writer refers, the relative adjective further serves as connective adjunct linking the relative clause to the nominal group head in order to provide the group with sufficient details. Also, the use of series of rank-shifted groups feature in 108) as captured in a pebble in our pool of complacency and placid Hypocrisy. Semantically, the nominal group object a pebble encodes the main entity in the situation represented by the group. It is introduced by a non-specific determiner and complemented with two prepositional phrases functioning as a locative adjunct.

However, Ekpu exploits appositive nominal groups and determiners as premodificatory items and uses a group and series of rank-shifted groups and clauses as postmodificatory items in similar position. For example, the expressions *the country the answers* in 110) and *a Zik a baby* in 113) are appositive nominal groups constructions functioning as object in the group structure. At the premodificatory slot, the first appositive is introduced with a specific determiner *the* functioning as a deictic element to characterize the following heads *country* and *answers.* At the postmodificatory slot, it is accompanied with a to-infinitive phrase which functions as a connective adjunct linking the appositive nominal groups with the to-infinitive phrase. In example 111), the linguistic unit *head* representing the nominal group as object is not pre-modified. However, it is qualified by a rank-shifted group and clause. The first qualifier, a prepositional phrase, functions as a locative complement to locate the headword. The second, which is a relative clause, provide additional information to the head and as well functions as a connective adjunct to signal the semantic relation holding the group.

5.2.3.1.3 Nominal group as complement

'Complement' is an element that has the potential of being subject but is not. It is typically realised by a nominal group (Halliday, 2004: 122-123). Nominal group as complement aids meaning in the essay texts by the complementary role they perform and they are largely exploited by Osundare and Ekpu. An instance of this use is provided below:

Extracts

```
                m     m       h      q
```
116.   These are | the| veritable| roost **[**of those [[whose hands are too short [[to reach an
        economy now jerked up [to the second tier]]]]]] | (SOTS 1, 7).


```
m   m    h         q
```
117.   This is |the| new| club [of beggars [[who share little affinity with the millions of destitute
        [[who swarm Nigeria's expansive land]]]]] | (SOTS 1, 8).


```
m     m        h          q
```
118.   These are |the| so-called |leaders [of tomorrow [[for whose sake the present regime has
        instituted its severe economic programme]]] | (TRGOS, 46).


```
h       q
```
119.   There are |gains [in SAP [for those [[who looted the country's treasury and plunged the
        rest of us [into debt peonage]]]]]] | (TRGOS, 45).


```
              m     m       h
```
120.   It is |an |illegal| operation (SOR, 14).


```
m     m        m        h          q
```
121.   It was |a |sickening |grotesque |display [of ill-gotten wealth] | (DATP, 23).

```
m   m     h           q
```
122.   There has been|a |surging |wave [of unexpected migration [from the place of regular
        abode [to the place [of permanent residence]]]] | (ATFP, 10).


```
m   m       h              q
```
123.   That is |the |voter's |prerogative [[which he is called upon to exercise June 12]] | (ATFP,
        9).

The nominal group as complements in the above examples is conferred interpersonal elevated status of modal responsibility, and therefore carries the nub of the message. To effectively relay the

propositional content in each structure, they are modified and qualified. The interpersonal role played by the complements is realised through the combination of premodificatory and postmodificatory elements. The effective description at the complement position in Osundare's essays is realised through the employment of specific determiner, predicative adjective, participial adjective, compound words, series of relative clauses and a blend of groups and clauses. For example, in extract 116), Osundare's *the veritable roost* is a nominal group operating as complement in the group structure. It is premodified by a deictic element and an epithet. The specific determiner *the* functions as a deictic element to characterize the headword *roost* and the predicative adjective *veritable* on the other functions as epithet to describe it. The following prepositional phrases *of those* and *to the second tier* as well as the relative clause *whose hands are too short* and the to-infinitive clause *to reached an economy now jerkedup* are series of rank-shifted groups deployed by Osundare for complementation. Similarly, the headword *leaders* in extract 119) is modified by the deictic element and a compound word and as well qualified by a relative clause and a prepositional phrase. The preposition phrase and the relative clause supply addition information to the nominal group head at the complement level.

The effective description in Ekpu's discourse at the complement level is realised through the use of pronouns, demonstratives, rank-shifted prepositional phrases and clauses. For example, in extract 121), Ekpu ridicules the public display of ill-gotten wealth by Nigeria political office holders with the use of nominal group at the complement position. Here, the writer uses two modificatory items, the participial *sickening* and the predicative *grotesques* to modify the headword *display*. This is followed immediately with the prepositional phrase *of ill-gotten wealth* which functions to complement the group structure. However, extract 122) shows his use of series of rank-shifted preposition phrases in order to vividly project the message of illicit accretion of wealth by the few in Nigeria. In fact, four rank-shifted prepositional phrases are deployed for this purpose.

5.2.3.1.4 Nominal group as discourse theme

Apart from the nominal groups functioning as subject, object and complement in the selected essays to effectively relay Osundare and Ekpu's message, they also function as discourse themes. Theme is the element which serves as a starting point of a message. It locates and orients the clause within its context and also functions to organize and carry forward the discourse (Halliday, 2004: 64-65). Consider the following examples:

Extracts

Theme   Rheme

h   **q**

124. |Two [of such beggars] **/** materialised the other week (SOST 1, 8).

Theme   Rheme

m   m   h   q

125. |A |shocking| breed [of such Nigerians] /was discovered in the craggy nooks of
     Adamawa hills (PFK, 3).

Theme   Rheme

m   h   q

126. |The |root [of Nigeria's current woes] **/** is a juggernaut called June 12 (NIP, 67).

Theme   Rheme

      m   h

127. |Nigeria| today /looks very much like an extensive psychiatric asylum (MT, 300).

Theme   Rheme

    m   m   m   h

128. |The |1964 |general| elections /were tainted with charges of rigging (DATP, 23).

Theme   Rheme

m   h   q

129. |The| propaganda [in the press] /has taken on a sharp edge (ATTP, 9).

Theme   Rheme

m   m   m   h

130.   The| Nigerian |political| crisis /is becoming something like a festering sore (ATFP, 10).

Theme   Rheme

```
        m      m       h
```
131. |The |Great |Scramble   / is over (DATP, 25).

As clearly pointed out from these examples, the *Theme* always start from the beginning of the clause. It consists of one structural element, and that element is represented by just one unit, which in this case is the nominal group. In example 124), the expression *two of such beggars*, culled from Osundare's data has as its *Theme* the nominal group configured with a numerical feature functioning as the headword and a prepositional phrase as the qualifier. In 125), the Theme *a shocking breed of such Nigerians* consists of a deictic element, an epithet and as well prepositional phrase. Other *Themes* in Osundare's essays are *the root of Nigeria's current woes* in 126) and *Nigeria today* in 127). However, Ekpu's *the 1964 general elections* in 128), *the propaganda in the press* in 129), *the Nigeria political crisis* in 130) and *the great scramble* in 131) are nominal groups serving thematic purpose. These nominal group structures are what set the scene for the clause and positions it in relation to the unfolding text. In each structure, they play a crucial role in focusing and organizing the message alongside contributing to its coherence and success from the reader's perspective. In so doing, the reader is invited to notice and appreciate the topic that is being discussed.

5.2.3.1.5 Nominal group as news headlines

Headline is a form of discourse specific to the written press (Crystal, 1987). It is absolutely one of the most creative areas of journalistic writing with a structurally clear function which is to summarize the news, express the semantic content, inform and as well persuade the reader (Van Dijk, 1988). Discourse headline, as Gattani (2005) notes may be informative, indicative and eye-catchy. The informative discourse headline gives a good idea about the topic of the news story, the indicative addresses what happened in the news story and finally, while the eye-catchy discourse headline captures readers' attention. The following examples are instances of nominal group structures in Osundare's and Ekpu's essays used for discourse headlines:

Extracts
```
          m        m        h
```
132.   The |monstrous| inflation (SOTS 1, 7).

```
m      m   h
```
133.   The |grinding | poverty (PFK, 3).

        m   **m**   **h**
134.   Nigeria |image | problem (NIP, 45).

       m **h**   **q**
135.   The |trial| of a president (AHR, 10).

       m   **h**
136.   The |corruption (DATP, 22).

       m   **m**   **m**   **h**
137.   The |structural | adjustment | problem (DATP, 23).

       h
138.   Uncertainty (OEOP, 23).

For example, Osundare's *the monstrous inflation* in 132), *the grinding poverty* in 133) and *Nigeria image problem* in 134) are nominal group structures from the above examples deployed to express the semantic content in his essays. Also, these structures are informative and persuasive. While the informative and eye-catchy discourse headlines in Osundare's essays are configured using the *mh* nominal group type, Ekpu shows preference for a variety of nominal group structures such as, *mh, mhq* and *h types.* For instance, the noun phrases, *the corruption* in 136), *the structural adjustment programme* in 137) and *uncertainty* in 138) are configured with the *mh, mhq* and *h* nominal group types. These structures are informative in that they supply reader with the main information contained in the essays. Finally, the nominal group items used for discourse headlines by these writers is short, punchy and witty and also, summarizes a complete message. In all, Osundare and Ekpu's ability to effectively convey their message through headlines make them creative reporters.

5.2.3.2 The mood system

Mood is a class of grammar that refers to the divergence in the morphology of the verb (Adejare, 2014: 19). Greenbaum and Nelson (2002: 5) define it as the "speaker's attitude towards the proposition which is reflected in the form of a verb". Mood is concerned with a speaker's roles of questioning, stating, or commanding; and is related to the mood system. The mood system is one of the compositions of the interpersonal function of language which helps to account for the numerous choices available to the speaker in the use of language (Osisanwo, 2003). These choices are declarative, interrogative, and imperative moods. For example, a sentence may be deployed to achieve any of the following functions: approving or disapproving, expressing doubt, asking a question; or giving answers; greeting or

instructing; and commanding others; and including or excluding participants from a social group (Alo, 1998: 55). As essayists, Osundare and Ekpu employ this system to encode their experience of the social, economic and political situations in Nigeria. This is the basis for exploring the choices of mood structures in the selected essay texts in order to identify the nature of their propositions and how Osundare and Ekpu have used language to configure meanings.

5.2.3.2.1 Declarative mood

Making statement is the basic function of the declarative mood. Statement describes a state of affairs in the world and has a truth value which can be confirmed, questioned or denied (Downing and Locke, 1992). The declarative mood is an epistemic mood that indicates that the proposition conveyed by a speaker's utterance is offered as an absolute statement of fact. The structure of a declarative clause consists of the mood element comprising a subject and finite operator, followed by a residue, which consists of predicator, complement, and sometimes adjunct. It is the mood element in any declarative that embodies the proposition of the clause (Halliday, 2004). The discourse functions of the declarative structures in the selected essay texts are for information, evaluation and elaboration.

5.2.3.2.1.1 Declarative mood for information

Osundare and Ekpu exploit the declarative mood in offering information. To achieve this goal, both essayists select for themselves the role of speaker and for the reader the role of listener. In this way, the speaker's observations, viewpoints, feelings and thoughts and so on, find meaningful expression in the declaratives (Downing and Locke, 1992). The consistent exploitation of the declarative form by Osundare and Ekpu is basically for communicative purposes. An instance of the use of declaratives for offering information is provided below with the mood element marked in italics and the residue unmarked.

Extract 139
This fact is borne out by the monstrous inflation *which has* driven the price of even the most essential commodity
out of the reach of ordinary people *at a time when wages are* pegged and unemployment thrives without reproach
(SOTS 1, 7).

Extract 140
There are gains in SAP for those who looted the country's treasury, and plunged the rest of us into debt peonage. *There are* gains in SAP for those whose brainchild SAP was in the first place. *There are* gains in SAP for those who

130

stacked up their foreign accounts when naira stood one-to-
-one with the pound… (TRGOS, 45).

Osundare undertakes an examination of some socio-economic issues in the first text. The issues highlighted here are inflation and unemployment affecting the quality of life for the general public. Structurally, the declaratives consist of three clauses, with each having the syntactic structure of Mood + Residue. The mood elements introduce the topic of the discourse and also perform a semantic function by carrying the burden of the clause as an interactive event. The residues, on the other, expand more on this topic. This is realised by the following additional information *borne out by monstrous inflation*, *driven the price of even the most essential commodity*… and …*unemployment thrives without reproach*, and so on supplied to enhance the message communicated by the mood element. To make this message convincing to the reader, Osundare exploits the modes of persuasion. He begins with the simple declarative *this fact is borne out* and then connects it to the issues being addressed. The expression *this fact* refers to the adverse effect of inflation and unemployment on the general public. Also, he employs only credible and reliable sources to build up his message. This is captured in …*the monstrous inflation...* and …*unemployment thrives without reproach*, which serves as evidence to corroborate his argument. By addressing pressing public issues, the essayist here establishes common ground with the masses and as well as appeal to their emotional sensibilities.

In the second text, Osundare examines the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) introduced by the government ostensibly for the economic relief of the citizens and describes the policy as another avenue for mass enslavement and the benefits of government officials. In this discourse, the mood element *There are gains in SAP*… functions as the discourse subject while the residues … *for those who looted the country's treasure*…, on the other provide more information about the discourse subject. The writer employs rhetorical strategies to get the endorsement of his readers. First, he appeals to the reader's sense of reasoning by developing his ideas with appropriate details. However, to make the reader accepts the argument projected in the discourse, he draws on ethos and pathos by presenting some evidence or proof for his knowledge or opinions which are repeatedly deployed alongside the use of the first-person inclusive pronoun. The evidential proposition, *there are real gains in SAP* is frequently exploited in the first, third and fifth clauses respectively. The evidentiality here hinges on the fact that the propositions offered are factual and verifiable.

Similarly, *for those who*… is repeatedly exploited in the second and sixth clauses. The self-inclusive pronoun *us* in the second declarative clause evokes a sense of commonality and rapport between the essayist and ordinary Nigerians who are victims of government's exploitation. In both discourses, Osundare exploits the three rhetorical appeals to express his resentment over these national issues, shares in the masses' frustration, create an emotion of self-pity in them and also provoke their sympathetic reaction. From this analysis, it is noteworthy that Osundare's declarative structures do not only state facts and provide information about the issues addressed, but also they affirm his concern for positive change in the sociopolitical spheres of life.

The sample texts which follow are instances of Ekpu's use of declarative mood in offering information.

Extract 141
Education is the key to the future. *With it the future is* assured.
Without it, *the future is in* mortgaged. *Right now, education*
in Nigeria is in a crisis of survival (ADWTF, 15).
Extract 142
There were projects and projects springing up in various parts
            of the country. *There were* causes to be championed-worthy
            and unworthy. *There were* contracts to be awarded complete
            with mobilization fee. *The government was*having a ball.
It was like an endless party, the kind which there is a lot of
            good food, good wine, good company and good conversation
(DATP, 22).

In offering his view about the current state of education in Nigeria, Ekpu, in extract 141) canvasses for education because it provides citizens with the capabilities required to develop sustainable livelihoods as well as enhances their well-being to become economically productive to contribute to a peaceful and democratic society. Four simple declarative structures are used in this discourse. The mood elements play a specific and meaningful role in the propositional structure of the declaratives in that they introduce the subject of the discussion. The residues, on the other hand, supply the following additional information *the key to the future,assured,mortgaged* and *in a crisis of survival*, etc., to enhance the message communicated by the mood elements. Whereas the first two propositions *education is the key to the future* and *with it, the future is assured* indicate the value the essayist attaches to education, the last proposition …*education in Nigeria is in a crisis of survival* expresses his concern over the degeneration of its standard in Nigeria.

In extract 142), Ekpu delves into Nigeria's past and ascribes the nation's long period of lack after its attainment of independence due to the inroad of corruption, the waywardness of our leaders and

mismanagement of the nation's resources. Just like Osundare, Ekpu employs the rhetorical strategy to effectively convince the reader to believe and accept the view expressed in the propositions put forward. To actualize this goal, he uses repetition as a rhetorical tool. This is captured in the expression *there were* repeatedly exploited in the first, second and third clauses. Similarly, the repetition of *good food, good wine, good company* and *good conversation* in the sixth declarative clause suggest the extravagant spending by the government and its officials. The repetitive structures are meant to accentuate the issues being addressed. Also, the propositions *there were projects* and *projects springing up… there were causes to be championed* and *there were contracts to be awarded* are all evidential clauses deployed to describe avenues through which the nation's resources are embezzled and mismanaged. These evidential clauses serve as general truths to support his argument. By the above descriptions, what Ekpu seeks primarily is to pass information.

5.2.3.2.1.2 Declarative mood for evaluation

Evaluation refers to the use of value-laden language in expressing an opinion or point of view. Here, the speaker uses emotive language that shows judgment or emotional attachment to the issues addressed. This is realised through declarative structures configured with metaphorisation and adjectivisation. Such metaphorical and adjectival expressions allow the speaker to represent his attitude about the subject evaluated in either a positive or negative light. The excerpts below illustrate this point with the mood element italicized and residue underline:

 Extract 143
The Koma people are only an unmistakably apt metaphor for
rural Nigeria, *that teeming tribe of our forgotten people for
whom life is* forbidden and unenviable, *whoseroads are* foot
paths, *whose houses are*leakingand *squalid; whose folds are*
hungry, tired and retired (PFK, 4).

Extract 144
         We have been lied to, cheated, swindled, denied our rights,
hanged and dehumanized in countless ways by those who
         have imposed themselves on us (A, 320).

Describing the grinding poverty and sub-human existence of average Nigerians in extract 143) above, Osundare uses declaratives to evaluate the widespread famine and other areas of lack in Nigeria due to the squandering of its abundant resources by the government. The propositions *The Koma are only an unmistakably apt metaphor for rural Nigerians* and *that teeming tribe of our forgotten people for whom life is forbidden and unenviable,* are statements of facts about the problems of poverty, hunger, and lack

of essential amenities which are not being addressed appropriately by the government. Also, the assumption that the statements of facts which he presents are not to be disputed is present. From a humanitarian point of view, the essayist expresses dismay over these issues because they affect the quality of life of citizens. The evaluation here has been observed to be made on the people and their locality. The writer achieves this through rhetorical strategies such as metaphors and adjectives. The noun phrases *Koma people* in the first clause and *teeming tribe* in the second respectively are metaphors for ordinary Nigerians. The descriptive adjectives *forgotten, forbidden* and *unenviable, hungry, tired* and *retired* etc., in the second declarative clause, project the contemptible life of these rural Nigerians, while *craggy, leaking, squalid,* etc., on the other assess their locality and equally suggest that the issue of underdevelopment in the rural region is a critical one. The expression *our forgotten people* indicates the essayist's emotional attachment to the people as a result of their pathetic plight. This is realised with the use of the personal pronoun *our*.

Unlike in the preceding declarative text where both metaphors and adjectives are deployed for evaluative purposes, extract 144) bears Osundare's use of evidential clause and self-inclusive pronoun for a similar purpose. In this text, he comments on some of the means by which the government has unjustly treated Nigeria citizens. The evaluation is realised through the evidential clause *We have been lied to, cheated, swindled, denied our rights…* and the self-inclusive *we* as seen in *we have…* and *us* as seen in *…on us*. Whereas Osundare uses the self-inclusive pronouns to identify with the general public to appeal to their emotions, the evidential clause provides a wealth of resources from which he draws upon to construct a message that is complex and powerful. Rhetorically, the writer draws on insight from logos in extracts 143) and 144) by employing logic to appeal to his readers. He achieves this by addressing discourse subjects that affect the generality of Nigerians. Also, he applies ethos by demonstrating his knowledge about the issues being addressed. This is observed in the manner in which he vividly describe the pitiable condition of Nigerians and the various ways in which they have been unjustly treated by the government supporting his argument with valid proofs. Finally, he appeals to pathos by drawing on the emotion and interests of the readers through expressions such as *our forgotten people* in the first text and,*We have been…* in the second. From this analysis, Osundare's attitude concerning the issues addressed is represented in a negative light. It is noteworthy that in offering his view as the sole informer in these discourses, the writer does not give the reader the opportunity to respond. The essayist does not expect his views to be disputed, because he believes them to be

statements of facts. The next sets of examples which follow are Ekpu's use of declaratives for evaluation.

Extract 145

It was a pathetic scene, *one that was* capable of inducing nausea.
*The investigating police officer would s*tep forward and tell the
tribunal *themind-boggling story of how Nigeria's money was*
shared by a few fat catsin the residence of the president. *And the*
president, the innocent Jesus of Nigeria, instead of calling *the*
police to arrest the bastard…decided to step out at that time for
prayers(AHR, 10).

Extract 146

*But we have*not seen an Awo…trying to prove to us with
pedagogical dedication through formidable statistics that free
education is a fiscal possibility. *We have*not seen a Zik…
regaling us with stories about health care for the Nigerian
child. *We have* not seen an Aminu Kano working up the
talakawas with his earthy, inspirational rhetoric. *There have*
been no great speeches, no dramatic moments and even no
memorable insults or fireworks (OEOPO, 23).

The exploitation of metaphors, adjectives, evidential clauses, and self-inclusive pronouns for evaluative purposes is equally evident in Ekpu's essays as captured above. In extract 145), the essayist appraises the moral degeneration in government and miscarriage of justice by the judiciary in Nigeria. Whereas the descriptive adjective *pathetic* in the first declarative assesses the act of degeneration in the country, *mind-boggling* in the third evokes a sense of astonishment concerning the huge amount of nation's resources embezzled by government officials. Equally, the metaphor *fat cat* in the third declarative refers to the government and its officials who loot the nation's treasury and *innocent Jesus* in the fifth clause is also metaphorical in that it represents the president. Finally, the last clause *instead of calling the police to arrest the bastard* suggests judgment for the looters.

As for extract 146), the focus is on the great speeches, the insults, and mouthful of election promises typifying the campaign speeches of Nigeria political actors. To convince the reader into accepting his viewpoint, Ekpu presents some evidence or proof for his knowledge with the following propositions *we have not seen an Awo…trying to prove to us... that free education is a fiscal possibility,we have not seen a Zik...regaling us with stories about health care for the Nigerian child.* This is further complemented with the repetition of *we have not seen…* in the first, third and fourth clauses to make the message clearer and more convincing. Also, the inclusive *we,* which projects the essayist's unity or

135

agreement with the masses and as well show that he speaks on behalf of them, is recurrently deployed in the first, second and fourth clauses. By the above discussion, Ekpu appeals to logos, ethos, and pathos. From the preceding, what Ekpu primarily seeks to coax the reader into accepting the view projected in the discourse.

5.2.3.2.1.3 Declarative mood for elaboration

By elaboration is meant employing the specific material required to develop a discourse subject. Creative writers (like Osundare and Ekpu) employ concrete, specific and relevant material to construct mental images in their texts in order for readers to grasp the message. Elaboration in discourse is achieved through sufficiency and relatedness. Sufficiency, as used here, relates to the amount of details supplied by the writer, and relatedness on the other implies the quality of details supplied and their relevance to the discourse subject. We here illustrate some of the examples of the elaboration of material in Osundare's essays:

Extract 147
Here is a country of 120 million human beings, number seven
        producer of oil in the entire world, the country of Wole Soyinka
        and Achebe, a country with more than 40 universities and countless
        colleges, a land of vociferous nationals and enterprising citizens…
Here is Nigeria, the most populous Black nation on earth without
        rhyme, without reason, without order, without management (NE,
362).

Extract 148
Nigerians wholive at home are daily drowned in the miasma of that
  stink: hunger and deprivation in the midst of plenty, *a medieval*
  *communication system that is*also one of the most unconscionably
  expensive in the world, *an education system that* prides illiteracy
  as its prime achievement, *a dysfunctional social and political order*
which sees accountability as an insufferable aberration and
transparency as the mirror image of weakness (TFMC, 364).

Extract 147) presents two conflicting realities about Nigeria. This is realised through the use of two simple declarative clauses and five nominal phrases which are a set of repeated structural patterns. The mood elements of these clauses are italicized and the residue emboldened. To vividly project these realities, Osundare engages the linguistic technique of listing for elaboration. This is captured in the following nominal phrases, *number seven producer of oil in the entire world, the country of Wole Soyinka and Chinua Achebe, a country with more than 40 universities and many colleges, a land of vociferous nationals and enterprising citizens…* and … *without rhyme, without reason, without order,*

without management. These nominal expressions serve as proofs for the realities which he presents. Whereas the first set is indicative of the abundant resources which he speaks about, the second foreground the degenerate state of the country amidst the vast resources. The writer's choice of exploiting series of nominal phrases here is part of his effort to foreground the message for easy comprehension. The linguistic technique of listing employed here indicates the magnitude of Osundare's knowledge about the discourse subject, and as well emphasizes the subject being discussed. The distinctive arrangement of language components (that is, the blend of simple declarative clauses and nominal phrases) observed showcases Osundare's style and as well register his linguistic idiolect.

Unlike in extract 147), where listing as a linguistic device is exploited by Osundare for elaboration, in 148), he uses contrast as a linguistic tool in achieving his intentions about the essay thematic thrust. Here, he employs one complex and three simple declarative clauses to regrettably exposes Nigeria's hunger and lack in the midst of plenty; decrepit, and, therefore, costly-to-maintain communications system and the poor dysfunctional educational system. Through contrast, two aspects of the discourse subject are presented above. The writer's choice of comparison strengthens each aspect of the text by showing up the different sides in the issue raised and also to emphasizing a change or difference of idea. Ekpu's essays equally reveal a systematic structuring of detailed and relevant material to construct mental images for readers. We provide examples below.

Extract 149
A man lives and works in Plateau state. *He doesn't* come from
there but *his child was* born there. *The child* passes the examination
in to the Plateau state polytechnic at Barkin Ladi and *he is* told that
for a certificate course, he has to pay N 699 *although his friend, a*
true son of the soil, will pay just N 66 (ADWTF, 23).

Extract 150
*The title industry has*defied the recession. *It is* the only area of
consistent growth in Nigeria.*There is*no shortage of supply or
demand. It is the only commodity *that no one is* hoarding. *It will be*
sold to you if the price is right. *Its warehouses are* full. *The stockists*
are open for business all day. *No one will* tell you the *auctioneer*
is not on seat (WTU, 11).

The structural patterns established in extract 149) and 150) show that, to a considerable extent, there is a network of simple, compound and complex declarative clauses at play. Ekpu's depiction of tribalism in extract 149) is done principally through the use of two compounds and one complex declaratives. The first two compound clauses, *a man lives and works in Plateau state,* and *He doesn't come from*

there, but his child was born there, are used to broaden the spectrum of information provided before the complex clause, *The child passes the examination into the Plateau state polytechnic at Barkin Ladi and he is told that for a certificate course, he has to pay N 699 although his friend, a true son of the soil, will pay just N 66*, which helps to provide the most significant piece of detail about the discourse subject. The complex declarative clause refers anaphorically to the information focus in the preceding clauses. This shows that the compound and complex clauses are integrated in such a way that the complex clause serves for an elaboration of details.

However, extract 150) has eight declarative clauses on the whole. Six of them are simple clauses while the remaining two are complex. The simple and complex clauses provide elaborate details which mainly serve to illustrate a basic fact. The fact here is the mad rush for titles in Nigeria and their indiscriminate award. All the details supplied at the residue are used to illustrate this mad rush which the writer refers.

Remarkably, the discourse functions of the declarative structures in Osundare's and Ekpu's texts suggest that they seek more than just informing. Their attitudes, emotion, views, and concerns all point towards the desire to inform, evaluate and elaborate. This is to convince readers to accept their standpoints. Thus, the declarative structures provide for them an avenue for registering their essayistic vision. It is this which imbues the message they project with a high degree of authoritativeness which lends them their credibility. Although the patterns do not elicit responses from the reader, both essayists still strive with them to maintain a relationship with the reader

5.2.3.2.2 Interrogative mood

The unique function of an interrogative clause is to ask a question (Halliday, 2004: 75). Asking questions from the viewpoint of the speaker means that he wants a reply from the question raised (Yeibo, 2014: 75). Another pattern in the mood system of the clause from which Osundare and Ekpu freely select and which they put to stylistic use is the interrogative or question form. The eliciting for information is conveyed by an interrogative clause which could either be Yes/No or Wh-interrogatives. In the interrogative mood, the order of the mood element is structured as thus: the subject precedes the finite element in Yes/No question, whereas, in the Wh-question, the Wh- element precedes the finite operator (Halliday, 2004). A speaker who communicates through the interrogative mood of a clause has chosen for himself the role of informed and for his hearer the role of the informant. The interrogative mood in the selected essays is used for elicitation, petition, and accentuation.

5.2.3.2.2.1 Interrogative mood for elicitation

Elicitation is primarily used to express lack of information on a specific point and usually to request the listener or the reader to supply this information. Osundare and Ekpu use this feature to convey their inquisitive mood. The following sample texts illustrate this use the mood element in italics and residue emboldened.

Extract 151

Who says there are no gains in SAP? **Observe the new exotic cars**
      gliding through our streets, mind-boggling mansions springing up
        in the choicest parts of the town, the champagne-drenched parties
        of the rich and randy, their vulgar jokes, their callousness, their
        cynicism (TRGOS, 45).

 Extract 152

What killed the national airline? **The Obasanjo administration owes**
      the country the answers to these questions (NE, 363).

The subject of political exploitation is neatly captured in extract 151) above by Osundare. Here, he condemns government's economic policies arguing that instead of favouring the majority, it has only helped to enrich the minority in the society. Also, in the following extract, he hammers on the various kickbacks, unauthorized sell-offs, and the large private enrichments by government officials which led to the disappearance of the country's national airline. The interrogative structures in these discourses have the syntactic pattern of Wh- element + Finite operator. Hence, the questions here are Wh- questions type meant to register the essayist's disapproval of government's policy and as well as dishonest practices the country's aviation sector. This can be appreciated in the propositions, *who says there are no gains in SAP* and *what killed the national airline* puts forward. The questions are configured in such a way that they convey the impression that what the writer seeks is to be informed. However, the remaining parts of the discourse show that the writer is the one who does much of the informing. The next example captures Ekpu's use of interrogative structures for elicitation.

Extract 153

What fruit can we pluck from the chaos of having an
        unknowledgeable leader? The fruit will be chaos (LTFOTF, 12).

Extract 154

What   can we call the current practice of, as they call it,
"sorting out" lecturers? Sorting out lecturers means you pay in
cash or   kind   or   both for your project to be approved, for

your scores to be improved, for the exam questions to be
shown to you and for your answer sheets to be replaced (C, 41)

The interrogative structures in the above excerpts have the syntactic structure of Wh- element + Finite operator. In the preceding text, Ekpu speaks on the subject of leadership in Nigeria and identifies wisdom and knowledge as crucial qualities which any leader must possess to be able to lead effectively. However, in the ensuing text, he lampoons the various means by which university lecturers extort their students. The interrogative clause,*what fruit can we pluck from the chaos of having an unknowledgeable leader* in extract 153) and *what can we call the current practice…* in extract 154) are meant to elicit a response from the reader concerning the questions asked. Although it seems by the very fact that Ekpu asks questions that he needs answers and wants to be informed, he is the one who gives much of the information just like Osundare.

5.2.3.2.2 Interrogative mood for petition
'Petition', as used here, is a discourse strategy deployed by writers/speakersin confronting or challenging the cause of the problems affecting the citizenry.Through this strategy, they appeal to governmentand respective authorities in respect of a particular causeor issues in order to proffer solutions to them. The use of interrogative structures for petition only manifests in Osundare's data. An example is given below:

> **Extract 155**
> *Can past government, military or civilian,* claim a lack of
awareness of their existence? (PFK, 4).

Extract 156
Is it true that government's tax collectors know the craggy
road up the hills? (PFK, 4).

Unlike in the preceding interrogatives where the Wh-questions were deployed, the discourses above use the Yes/No interrogative with the mood structure of Finite + Subject. Osundare petitions the government and its officials. The interrogatives as used above require two answers from the reader which could either be an affirmation to or rejection of the proposition put forward. Whereas *claim a lack of awareness* in the first clause suggests government's nonchalant attitude, the noun phrase *tax collectors,* in the second clause, exposes government's extortion of money in the form of tax collection from the masses. Obviously, the issues of underdevelopment in the rural locality and exploitation of rural Nigerians prompted the petitioning of government here. The writer's goal is to draw government's

attention to these issues with a view to getting them solved. What we find striking in these questions is that besides being used to petition the government, they convey Osundare's inquisitive mood and also register his proposition. Furthermore, Osundare gives the reader the opportunity to answer these questions and uses them to censure government over these shortcomings.

5.2.3.2.2.3 Interrogative mood for accentuation

On the use of interrogative for accentuation, speakers emphasize a particular subject of the discourse with a view to making it prominent for the listener to see and grasp and in return respond to the speaker's request. This can be realised through the reiteration of interrogative structures, as illustrated in the examples below with the mood element in italics and residue unmarked.

Extract 157
How free is the Punch? *How free is* the Guardian? *How free is*
*the Concord? What about*the 10, 000 media-related workers
deprived of their means of livelihood by the government's
brutal clampdown? *What about*us, the people of Nigeria, so
violently denied our right to choice of source of information?
(NIP, 67).

Extract 158
Where are those who sold or cannibalised the country's aircraft
for their private profit? *Who killed*the national airline?
(NE, 363).

Extract 159
You are expected to graduate from our high institutions if you
have been found worthy in both learning and conduct. *Where is*
the learning? *Where is* the conduct? (C, 42).

The general norm established in the above discourses shows that there is a network of Wh-interrogatives in relatively regular pattern. Osundare's uses of Wh-question with the syntactic structure of Wh- element + Finite operator for accentuation in extracts 157 –159). For example, in extract 157), there is a stretch of interrogative structures. The interrogatives are configured in such a way that they convey the impression that what Osundare seeks is to be informed. Also, the writer uses them to foreground the ills perpetrated by the government. Whereas the interrogatives *how free is the Punch, how free is the Guardian* and *how free is the Concord* suggest muzzling of the press by government, *what about* as used in the second and third structures establishes the writer's proposition in relation to journalist being deprived of their means of livelihood and the masses being denied of their right to

choice of information. Also, the repetition of these structures is meant to emphasize what the writer wants to know. Similarly, in the following text, Osundare uses the interrogatives with similar structural patterns to emphasize the unauthorized sell-off of the nation's airline. The propositions in these discourses contain irrefutable facts. Besides being used for accentuation, they further help to develop and advance the course of Osundare's argument while also seeking response from the reader.

However, in extract 159), Ekpu uses the Wh-interrogative with the syntactic structure of wh-element plus finite operator to relate the decline in our high institution where learning and conduct have been replaced with the naira language. Whereas Osundare employs the simple and complex interrogative structures to express his feelings, thoughts and message, Ekpu on the other use the simple interrogative structures for similar purpose.There is no doubt that Osundare's and Ekpu's questions generally serve communicative functions. They are intended to reinforce their meanings. That they use them in these essay texts is not only to achieve variation in syntactic patterning, but also to show their preference for specific syntactic types over the others while aiming for specific meanings.

5.2.3.2.3   Imperative mood

Imperatives typically encode directive, which include orders to encouragement, urgent request, invitation and instruction (Downing and Locke, 1992). They issue command or make requests (Okesipe and Okolo, 2013), may be used to give advice (Ogunsiji, 2001), and also demand some action by way of response (Adagbonyin, 1999). The foregoing indicates that imperative clauses have a range of semantic functions. The discourse function of imperative mood in Osundare's essays is for invitation/request, instruction/order and suggestion/advice. We explore each of these functions beginning with that of invitation.

5.2.3.2.3.1 Imperative mood for invitation

An invitation is a request, solicitation, or an attempt from a speaker to get the listener involved in an action. An instance of the use of imperative for invitation or request is provided below.

> **Extract 160**
> *Let us* talk this week about Nigerians who never felt the tremor
> of Ronald Reagan's recent blitz on Tripoli… *Let us* talk about
> Nigerians who could not have heard about Fela Anikulapo's
> monumental triumph…*Let us* talk about Nigerians who may not
> even know that we are talking about them (PFK, 3).

> **Extract 161**

Let us mount the horse of memory and take a few gallops back
            into those equally dark days (A, 319).

The imperative clauses in the above discourses have the syntactic structure of Mood + Residue as in *let us + talk* in extract 160) and *let us + mount* in 161) respectively. The speaker (Osundare) uses *let us* to form a 1st person imperative with implicit subject 'we'. The imperative features here perform two functions: they suggest or urge a collaborative action that includes both the speaker and the reader. Also, they are further deployed as a disguised order by speaker in authority and used to make request. Osundare's addressees in these discourses are animate entities whose participation he solicits. In the preceding discourse, the speaker requests the reader's involvement in the discussion of social, political and economic issues of national importance. Osundare simply devises these imperatives to give attention to the concerns of the general masses whose cause he advocates. However, in the succeeding discourse, the reference made to history necessitate the writer's choice of the imperative expression, *let us mount the horse of memory and takes a few gallops back into those equally dark days*, which requests that the reader takes reminiscence of the events of that period. In all, the speaker's attitude is one of unhappiness and anger. He is sad recalling the brutalization and violation which Nigerians were subjected during that period.

5.2.3.2.3.2   Imperative mood for instruction

An instruction is a direction, advice or an order issued by a speaker to a listener. The example below illustrates the use of imperative for instruction.

Extract 162
            Don't wait for government to do everything for you
(SOTS I, 8).

Extract 163
Jail those journalists if you can. If you can't, seize their
publication. Then send your minister of information to
 regale the whole wide with tales about the freedom of the
Nigerian press! Or get your expired warlord to gloat over
the carnage and berate the civilised world for not showing
enough understanding (A, 321).

Extract 164
Compare that to the N200 that the full-blooded Plateau
            boys pay (ADWTF, 16).

In extract 162), the imperative has the syntactic structure of Mood + Residue as seen in *don't wait.* Osundare uses the feature to expresses worry over the masses' over-dependence on government. Thus, as a piece of advice, he counsels the general public never to rely or wait for such promises. Unlike in the preceding discourse where the imperative is used to offer advice, in the succeeding discourse, it is used to issue order to the addressee. Osundare contends with the government over issues that border on freedom of the press. He is saddened that the Nigeria press, which ought to have been the representative of the common people, has been silenced by the government. Hence, in extract 163), he vents his rage on the government and its aides, ordering them to confine journalists and as well confiscate their materials. This is a way of satirizing the government since that is the highest injustice it could inflict on the press. Other discourse functions performed by the imperative in this discourse include exposing government's infringement on the freedom of press before the public and as well ridiculing their unlawful act. Extract 164) is an instance of Ekpu's use of imperatives to issue instruction. The imperative structures are configured with the syntactic structure of Mood + Residue.

5.2.3.2.3.3 Imperative mood for suggestion
By suggestion is meant an idea or a plan put forward for consideration. We illustrate some of the examples of imperative structures for suggestion in Osundare's texts as follows:

Extract 165
I think you should make a report… discipline him!
(TU, 91).

Extract 166
Already there is a call to turn Koma hills into a tourist
center (PFK, 5).

The imperatives in extracts 165) and 166) are used to put an idea forward for consideration. The first discourse focuses on dishonest practices in civil service. It is a conversation exchange between Osundare and a friend who is a director in one of the government ministries. Here, a junior colleague, the front desk officer in the same ministry, had just demanded bribe from Osundare who had come visiting his friend. This dishonest practice demonstrated by the front desk officer prompted the imperative structure *I think you should make a report...* employed by the speaker (Osundare) to suggest that a disciplinary action be taken against the front desk officer. Unlike in the preceding discourse where the idea put forward is that of Osundare, the idea projected in the succeeding text is a reported speech and as well a suggestion raised by some government aides regarding the undeveloped areas in

rural Nigeria. Here, Osundare criticizes these government officials for suggesting that rural areas be turned into tourist center. The writer believes that those who uphold this view do not have the welfare of rural dwellers at heart. Certainly, Osundare's imperative structures are devices used to further his meanings. The commands he issues enliven the texts. They are to also keep the reader busy. The reader finds himself involved in the many instructions, and in this way, he gives the writer the necessary rapport.

5.2.3.3 Modality

Modality, as Simpson (1993) explains it, refers "largely to the speaker's attitude towards, or view about, the certainty of the assertion conveyed by a sentence. It is the position or stance that a speaker assumes towards what he is saying. The three major types of modality deployed for meaning construction in our data are deontic, boulomaic and epistemic modals.

5.2.3.3.1 Deontic modality

Hardly any of Osundare's and Ekpu's essays selected for study is crafted without deontic markers. Two functions to which the deontic modal system is put into use are for obligation and promise. We provide examples below.

> **Extract 167**
> In pursuing these goals the university *requires* enough
independence to carry out its functions without undue
> interference from the world beyond its walls (TU, 323).

> **Extract 168**
> He *must*send a certain huge sum and two gold
> wristwatches to the authors of this scam so as
to smooth the traffic of the operation (TFMC, 366).
> **Extract 169**
> We *cannot*leave the Koma people alone (PFK, 4).

In extract 167) above, Osundare comments on the interference of Nigerian government in university administration and stresses on the need for the system to be accorded full autonomy to operate. However, his focus in the second extract is on the advance-fee scam (i.e. the 419 fraud) where innocent Nigerians are required to fulfill certain requirements and then rewarded handsomely. Finally, he speaks up for the Koma people whose welfare have been neglected by the government in extract 169). The lexical verb *requires* in the first text and the modal auxiliary *must* in the second text are of deontic meanings, expressing obligation. The obligation in the former refers to the duty which the university

owes the society and world at large as captured in the deontic expression *"In pursuing these goals the university requires enough independence to carry out its functions…"*. This duty is further reinforced by the use of the lexical items *carry out* which functions primarily to underscore the onus vested on the university. In the second text, the duty denotes the task which the victim of the advance-fee scam must perform as seen in *"… he must send a certain huge sum and two gold wristwatches to the authors of this scam…"*. In this case, the deontic modal *must* is reinforced by the lexical verb *send* in order to underscore the duty required of the victim by the scammer.

In extract 169), Osundare believes that it is the duty of every socialist to advocate the cause of the masses, hence his choice of the deontic expression *"We cannot leave the Koma people alone"*. In this example, the choice of *cannot* is of a high deontic modal with negative polarity indicating obligation and a sense of solidarity with common Nigerians who have been abandoned by the government. The obligation here is self-imposed by the writer. Osundare's employment of deontic modals and the high value he attaches to these discourses gives the reader an idea of the degree of his involvement in the action projected in these texts. This is clearly seen in his commitment to advocate the cause of the oppressed. The next examples are instances of Ekpu's use of deontic modality.

> **Extract 170**
> For you to get favourable bail terms, someone *must*talk to the magistrate in the language he understands, the naira language (C, 35).

> **Extract 171**
> In the closing days of the independence campaign, Nigerian leaders *must* have looked forward to a great future for the country (DSD, 35).

> **Extract 172**
> We *will* give maximum support to all youth activities which are
are   designed to prepare them for responsible leadership"
(ADWTF, 1).

In extract 170) above, the modal auxiliary *must* as captured in *Someone must talk to the magistrate...* is of high deontic meaning expressing obligation. The obligation relates to a sense of duty which the guarantor must fulfilled for the defendant to be granted bail. Observe that the lexical verb *talk* is used immediately after the modal *must* to reinforce the duty which the writer refers. The duty here denotes

the communication and payment of money which must be made to the margistrate in a typical Nigerian court before a bail is granted.

Similarly, in the ensuing text, the writer reviews the indepndence era, reminds the reader of the great expectancy with which Nigerian leaders approached the future and then proceed to critically unravelling the factors that impeded the realisation of that prospect. The modal *must* as seen in *…Nigerian leaders must have looked forward...* is of deontic meaning expressing obligation. The verbal group *have looked* used along side the modal auxiliary function to reinforced the duty which the writer refers.

The choice of *will* in extract 172), a case of reported speech by the government, is an act of promise to execute an action in the future. This is illustrated in *We will give maximum support....* Hence, the modal *will* is used to highlight obligation and commitment. In all, a close examination of the discourses above shows Osundare and Ekpu's active involvement in the events and actions described. As socialists, both writers believe that they owe the society this duty. This is the motivation behind their commitment towards the cause of ordinary Nigerians.

5.2.3.3.2 Buolomaic modality

Osundare and Ekpu deploy the buolomaic modals as linguistic facility to express their desire for the masses whose cause they advocate. This is achieved through the employment of modal auxiliaries and verbs that suggest hopes, wishes, and desires. Let us examine the texts that follow:

Extract 173
We *want* to see whether the Nigerian government *will* leave
the education of the Koma children to mission schools
(PFK, 5).

Extract 174
Which is why thousands of them have quit what to many
 is Nigeria's sinking ship and even why thousands more are
yearning for an exit(TFMC, 364).

The lexical items indicating the modal meanings are italicized in the above texts. The modal verb *want* and modal auxiliary *will* in extract 173) are of buolomaic meaning showing desire and expectation respectively. In this text, Osundare censures Nigerian government over its negligence towards the education of children residing in rural locale. Hence, the choice of the buolomaic expression *"We want to see..."* deployed to indicate his desire of quality education for the Koma children. Also, the modal

will in the expression *…whether the Nigerian government will leave…* is deployed to show the essayist's expectation from the government. The expectation here relates to quality education which government should provide for children dwelling in rural area. However, in the succeeding text, Osundare focuses on the deluge of problems in Nigeria and as well the citizens' lack of faith in a future whose foundation appears to be a straw-work of trial and error which is the reason for their quest for greener pasture outside the country. The lexical verb *yearning* in this text is equally of buolomaic meaning indicating desire. It is meant to show the strong cravings which Nigerians have for emigration. The buolomaic modal system is equally exploited by Ekpu in the following texts:

> **Extract 175**
> And even when the child has scaled the hurdles that officialdom has put on his way to primary education, and he *wants* to go further, he meets with a different set of problems that he did not anticipate (ADWTF, 2).

> **Extract 176**
> The meaning of a nightmare is no money, no petrol, no kerosene, no light, no water, no food, no transportation, it meant a compulsory monastic and Spartan life for many Nigerians, a life that they *wish* they didn't have to live, a life they *hope will* not come their way again (ATFP, 22).

In extract 175), Ekpu speaks on the impediments which most Nigerian youths encounter in their quest for formal education. The choice of the verb *wants* is of boulomaic meaning, indicating desire. The verb is meant to express the strong yearnings which Nigerian youths have for formal education. However, in extract 176) where the essayist dwells more on the theme of hardship and as well its adverse effects on the masses, the verbs *wish* as seen in *…they wish they didn't have to live…* and as well *hope* in *…they hope will not come their way again* are of buolomaic interpretations. Their usage in this context indicates request and desire. This relates to the request and desire of the masses never to leave or witness a life of austerity anymore.

As the above analyses have shown, the vanguard for revolutionary change is one which these writers are involved. They raise awareness about the malaise and as well the ills in their society and equip the mass of the people with the necessary ingredients to stand up for their rights. This is part of their desire for the common Nigerians whose cause they advocate.

5.2.3.3.3 Epistemic modality

As vanguards for positive reformation, Osundare and Ekpu exploit epistemic markers to indicate the certainty of the problems and as well their possible effects on the masses. We consider the following examples:

Extract 177
But when we *learnt* that the new buses were all grounded
due to lack of spare parts, we *couldn't* help asking how so
many buses *could* have been purchased from a foreign
manufacturer a fall-proof guarantee of parts for a reasonable
after-sale period (NMT, 29).

Extract 178
You *will notice* a sea of preternaturally grey heads and faces
prematurely wrinkled like a crumpled paper. You *will*
encounter a desert of frowns punctuated by an oasis of
ephemeral grins. You *will* go back home feeling that what
commodity prices say out there is miles apart from what
government statistics proclaim in their alchemy of lying
figures (SOTS 1, 7).

Extract 179
Government spokesmen *say* the naira is floating, but
majority of Nigerians who bear the brunt of a shrunken naira
know for sure that our national currency is, indeed sinking
(SOTS I, 7).

Themes of misappropriation, suffering, insensitivity and naira devaluation reinforced by deception from Nigerian leadership echo throughout the above discourses, hence the choice of epistemic modal markers by Osundare to indicate certitude and possibility. For example, in extract 177), the modal auxiliaries *couldn't, could* and as well the lexical verb *learnt* are of epistemic modality, denoting certainty and possibility. The choice of *learnt* denotes that the speaker (Osundare) judges the utterance conveyed by the clause to be essentially accurate or at the minimum to have a great probability of been true. Therefore, Osundare in this context bases his confidence on the knowledge of the proposition expressed by the clause. However, *Couldn't* is also of a high epistemic modality with negative polarity indicating that the essayist's stance towards the proposition expressed is that of certainty. The epistemic expression *We couldn't help asking how so many buses...* shows that indeed the new buses, a representation of government's project, were grounded. Finally, the modal *could* as used in the text highlights the possibility of the proposition becoming true. In this sense, it questions the likelihood of

149

government purchasing so many new buses from a foreign manufacturer without a fall-proof guarantee of parts.

In all, Osundare in the discourses above dwells on Nigeria's replacement rather than maintenance culture. He uses this avenue to criticize the Nigerian government over its failed projects as a result of shoddy planning, incompetent execution and an expensive lack of foresight. In extract 178), the writer speaks on inflation in Nigeria and its adverse effects on Nigerians, hence the choice of the epistemic modal *will* to underscore the certainty of the issue being discussed. In this discourse, Osundare relates the life of hardship which inflation had turned ordinary Nigerians into. Finally, modality in extract 179) is related to the theme of naira devaluation. The combination of the lexical verbs *says* and *know* and the adverb *for sure* in this text highlight epistemic certainty. It expresses Osundare's commitment to the truth of his proposition. The next sets of texts illustrate the use of epistemic modality in Ekpu's essays.

Extract 180
When the youths grow up, they will *certainly* grow up in
the image of the elders and that image if you look at it
in the mirror, is ugly, very, very ugly (ADWTF, 2).

Extract 181
When you look for the reasons for this harassment and
intimidation of the press, you *cannot* find any for all things
considered (AHIAH, 13).

Extract 182
The federal accountant-general, *said* that Nigeria loses
N475 million yearly from the federal government's
recurrent budget to stealing, wastage and misappropriation.
He *said* despite the control mechanism, the entire economic
management has been characterised by fraud, extravagance,
waste and embezzlement (DATP, 18).

In extract 180), Ekpu highlights the consequence of parents' and government's actions of neglect towards the youths. The epistemic certainty in this text is realized through the adverb *certainly,* which relates to his absolute confidence on the truth of the proposition expressed by the clause. However, extract 181) dwells on government's intimidation of the press. Similarly, the choice of *cannot* in this text is of a high epistemic modal though with negative polarity indicating certainty. The certainty here relates to Ekpu's absolute confidence on the fact that there are no moral justifications for government's muzzling of the press. In extract 182), where the subjects of corruption and mismanagement of nation's

resources are projected, the lexical verbs *said* recurrently deployed are also of a high epistemic modality denoting certainty.

Apart from Osundare's and Ekpu's use of linguistic modality to express obligation, promise, hopes, desires and certainty, both writers exploit the modes of persuasion to communicate social meanings. This helps to validate the truth of the proposition expressed in their essay texts. For example, in extract 177), Osundare portrays the multi-million projects executed by the government and how they fail soon. To make his argument more convincing, he appeals to our sense of reasoning by providing apparent proof to support it. This is captured in the expression *But when we learnt that the new busses were all grounded due to lack of spareparts...* The epistemic verb *learnt* as used here indicates the certainty of his proposition which implies that the breakdown of the new buses was real. This proposition serves as a valid proof for the audience or readers. However, the self-inclusive pronoun we as seen in *But when welearnt…* and …*we couldn't' help asking*… aids to establish a solidarity between the writer and all Nigerians who are directly or indirectly affected by this breakdown. Also, it shows that the writer and masses are aware of the collapse of government's venture. By providing readers with valid proof to support his argument and as well forming an alliance with them, Osundare in this discourse appeals to their emotional sensibilities.

Similarly, Ekpu in extract 180) draws on the modes of persuasion in order to induce readers into accepting his proposition which dwells on the impediments encountered by most Nigerian youths in their quest for formal education. This is reflected in the expression … *when the child has scaled the hurdles that officialdom has put on his way to primary education* … While the nominals *the hurdles* signify the impediments being referred to, *officialdom* on the other refers to government and school administrators who create or contribute to some of the problems. Moreso, the lexical verb *scaled* as used in the proposition indicates that some youths triumph over these problems. In this discourse, Ekpu appeals to logic or reason by offering credible evidence to support his argument. He employs facts that are not debatable and circumstances which the audience or reader can relate to life to buttress his viewpoint. The lexical items *the child* as used above connote all Nigerian youths. Thus, it serves as pathos employed by the writer to form an agreement with all Nigerian youths and also to engage their emotional sensibilities. From the analysis above, it is glaring that Osundare and Ekpu employ linguistic modality as rhetorical tools to express their volition, desire, commitment, confidence and obligation.

5.2.3.4   Transitivity system

Transitivity is the foundation of the semantic organization of experience. It incorporates all participants and experiential functions germane to the syntax of the clause (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Transitivity is an effective linguistic tool that "reveals speakers and writers' point of view" (Clark, 2007: 147). Osundare and Ekpu employ material process, mental process, verbal process and relational process to construct meaning in their essays.

5.2.3.4.1 Material processes

Material processes are "concerned with our experiences of the material world" (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004: 197). The transitivity analysis of material processes focuses on Actors, Verbal group, Goals and Circumstance. The actors are capitalized, verbal group marked with bold face and the goal underlined when present. The other circumstances have not been marked so as to keep the text compilation as legible as possible. The material processes are used for labelling the government and for forming alliance with the masses.

5.2.3.4.1.1 Labelling the government

Extract 183
    THEY **have murdered**Dele Giwa but THEY **cannot**
murderthe truth (MBNP, 349).

Extract 184
That murder**was perpetrated** on 12 June 1993 by
GENERAL IBRAHIM BABANGIDA (A, 319).

    Extract 185
    NIGERIAN RULERS, MILITARY OR CIVILIAN **have**
always violatedthe country with THEIR **breech** of
the aakii principle(TU, 323).

    Extract 186
    THE GOVERNMENT **cannot afford**it although IT **can**
affordmany things which, on a rational scale of priorities
may just **come** way, way, down (DWTF, 2).

Extract 187
    And before the end of the first half of that decade, THEY
had been daunted and have in fact, **corrupted** by their
    newly acquired power (DATP, 15).

Extract 183) is an operative material clause representing a configuration of Actor + Process + Goal. The actors are the pronouns *they* in both clauses which represent the government. Also, as animate actors, they are responsible for the action in the clauses. The actors are immediately followed by the verbal groups *have murdered* and *cannot murder* to show what they have done. The verbal groups are realised by active verbs. Whereas the first verbal group *have murdered* denote an action in the past, the second *cannot murder* embody an action in the present. However, the verbal groups have a strong emotional connotation that equates to destruction hence linking the actors, that is, the government to destructors of *Dele Giwa* which represents the goal in the first clause. Whereas *Dele Giwa* is destructively affected by the verbal group *have murdered,* the second goal *the truth* is equally linked to the verbal group *cannot murder*. Through the material processes, Osundare portrays a negative image of government for the assassination of Dele Giwa, the Nigerian journalist.

Unlike in 183), where an operative material clause was deployed, 184) is a receptive material clause with process realised by passive verbal group. The clause is configured with Goal + Circumstance + Actor. To unearth some of the atrocities committed by the Nigerian government, Osundare uses the material process realised by the verbal group *was perpetrated* to negatively label them. Here, *that murder* represents the Goal; *General Ibrahim Babangida* functions as the Actor with Circumstance, the prepositional phrase *on June 12, 1993.* The choice of passive voice as clearly observed in this text creates a different effect; the actor/agent becomes less important and the person or thing affected by the action becomes the focus as illustrated above where the focus is on *that murder* which project the unlawful termination of human lives.

As for 185), Osundare uses a material clause with the process realised by active verbs. The clause configuration is Actor + Process + Goal. However, *Nigerian rulers,military or civilian* and the pronoun *their* represent the actors; *the country* and *the aakii principle* function as the goals with the processes been realised by the verbal groups *have always violated* and *breech*. The verbal groups are connected to both actors as they are deployed to indicate the material actions of the actors. Whereas the first goal *the country* represents Nigerians; the second *the aakii principle* denotes the Nigerian law. These goals are negatively affected by the action performed by the actors. Apart from the verbal groups been deployed to project the doings of the actors, they are also meant to sensitize readers about government disregard for its own laws.

Material processes are equally evident in Ekpu's discourse and they are deployed to negatively label the government. For example, in extract 186), Ekpu uses an operative material clause representing two configurations, Actor + Process + Goal in the first clause and Actor + Process + Goal + Circumstance in the second. The nominal group *the government* and the pronoun *it* function as the actors; the goals are represented by the pronoun *it* and the nominal group *many things*. The processes are realised by active verbal groups *cannot afford* and *can afford.* Both verbal groups are linked to the actors in the text. Whereas the verbal group *cannot afford* is meant to project government's inability; *can afford* on the other shows its ability. Moreso, the first goal *it* captures the interest of the masses whereas the second *many things* signify the other things which government accord priority to. The additional verbal group *may* and *come* alongside the circumstantial element *way, way, down* are deployed to indicate that the second goal is less important. Also, they show that instead of prioritizing the masses' interest, government give priority to the things which are less important.

The material process in 187) is realised by active verbal groups. The clause structure is configured with Circumstance + Actor + Process + Goal. The actor is the pronoun *they* and it represents the government. The processes are realised by the verbal groups *daunted* and *corrupted*. They are deployed to indicate the deeds of the actor. Also, the verbal groups carry strong meanings which are associated with dishonest practices. Hence, they indicate what Nigerian leaders did with the legacy they acquired from the British after independence. The pronoun *their* functions as the goal which has a co-referential relationship with the actor. The expression *and before the end of the first half of that decade* operates as circumstance of time. It is configured with the adverbial element *and before the end* and the prepositional phrase *of the first half of that decade* deployed to describe the short period Nigerian leaders had exercised the authority acquired from the British before they became tainted. As the foregoing has shown, Osundare and Ekpu deploy material clauses to label the Nigerian government.

5.2.3.4.1.2 Forming alliance with the masses

Extract 188
 A SHOCKING BREED OF SUCH NIGERIANS **was discovered**in the craggy nooks of Adamawa hills in
Gongola State (PFK, 3).

 Extract 189
 WE **have been lied** to, **cheated**, swindled**, denied** our
rights, **hanged** and **dehumanised** in countless of ways
by THOSE WHO **impose** THEMSELVES on <u>us</u>
(A, 320).

Extract 190
WE **were beginning**to **witness**<u>the birth</u>of a new
Nigeria when GENERAL IBRAHIM BABANGIDA
AND HIS CLIQUE **crushed**<u>the dream</u> (NIP, 67).

  Extract 191
   To reconstruct the future of our dream for the youths,
WE **must**start by **reconstructing**<u>that image</u>
(DWTF, 2).

Extract 192
HER VEHICLE DOCUMENTS **were seized** and A
FEMALE TRAFIC WARDEN **was detailed** to **escort**
<u>her</u> to the police station where THE GUARDIAN OF
LAW AND ORDER **would**sort<u>her</u> out appropriately
(SOR, 6).

The material clause in extract 188) is determined by the passive verbal group. The clause configuration is Actor + Process + Circumstance. The actor is signified by *a shocking breed ofsuch Nigerians*; the process is realised by the verbal group *was discovered* with a location type of Circumstance, the prepositional phrase *in the craggy nooks of Adamawa hills in Gongola State*. Whereas theprocess suggests that these Nigerians have been concealed from the glare of the public, the circumstance on the other indicates the location where they have been domiciled and as well the contemptible condition of their residence. Osundare, in this discourse, focuses on rural Nigerians whose development has been abandoned by the government. Hence, he deploys the material process to relate the situation of the neglected people. And by so doing, forms an alliance with them.

As for 189), the actors are the pronoun *we* and the nominal group *those who*. Whereas *we* represent the masses*, those who* signify the government. These actors are immediately followed by a long list of verbal groups, *lied, cheated, swindled, denied, hanged, dehumanised* and *imposed* to show the various ways in which government have been unjust to the masses. The pronoun *us* is the Goal. It has a co-referential relationship with the first actor *we*. The prepositional phrase *in countless of ways* function as circumstance to indicate the degree and magnitude of the various injustices committed against the masses by the government. The pronoun *us* denotes Nigerians who suffers these actions directly or indirectly. In all, Osundare uses the pronouns *we* and *us* in this discourse to identify with the Nigerian masses whose cause he advocates.

155

Extract 190) is shown by the actors *we* representing Nigerians and *General Ibrahim Babangida* and *his clique*. These actors are followed immediately by the verbal groups *were beginning to witness* and *crushed* deployed to show the acts of the powers that be. The first verbal group is a continuous tense while the second is in the past tense. The verbal groups are connected to the goals *the birth* and *the dream*. While *were beginningto witness* is meant to sensitize the reader about *the birth* which signifies the new lease of life which the oppressed masses had now gotten owing to the peace and success of the 1993 general election in Nigeria; the second verbal group *crushed* on the other indicate the termination of *the dream* which denotes freedom from all forms of oppression and exploitation which had eluded the masses for decades. Osundare's choice of the pronoun *we* shows solidarity with the helpless masses whose dream for a new Nigeria was truncated by the government.

The use of material clauses to form alliance with the masses is equally noticeable in Ekpu's data. For example, in extract 191), he uses a transitive material clause representing the configuration of Circumstance + Actor + Process + Goal. The material process is shown by the actor *we* meant to represent the government, parents and teachers. It is immediately followed by the verbal groups *must, start* and *reconstructing* to indicate the obligation of the actors. The goal is the noun phrase *that image* deployed to represent the Nigerian youths who must be given quality education. The prepositional phrase *to reconstruct the future of our dream for the youths* is a circumstantial element which function to augment the material clause. By fronting the circumstantial element in this text, the writer attempts to project his interest in the affairs of the Nigerian youths. The pronoun *we* and the noun phrase *our dream* are equally meant to indicate his alliance with the Nigerian masses whose children must be accorded quality education by the government.

To highlight the maltreatment of the masses by law enforcement agents in Nigeria, Ekpu in 192) above uses the material processes determined by the verbal groups *were seized, was detailed toescort* and *would sort* to form alliance with the Nigerian masses who are often intimidated by the police. Here, *her* is the Goal; *her, a female trafficwarden* and *the guardian of law and order* function as the Actors with the Circumstance, the prepositional phrase *to the police station* and *out appropriately*. The firstActor *her* which begins the clause represents the road user whose vehicle documents were confiscated; the second Actor *a female traffic warden* and *the guardian of law and order* denote the police, which also can be referred to as the powers that be. The verbal groups *were seized, was detailed toescort* and

would sort appropriately are transitive verbs deployed to express the action taken against the road user by the law enforcement agent.

5.2.3.4.2 Mental processes

Mental processes typically expresses mental reactions such as perception, cognition, affection and desire; and also gives insight into people's consciousness and how they sense the experience of reality (Norgaard, Busse and Montoro, 2010). The transitivity analysis of mental processes focuses on Senser, Verbal group and Phenomenon. The senser is capitalized; verbal group marked with bold face with the phenomenon unmarked. The mental processes in the selected essays are used for representing psychological actions and events.

5.2.3.4.2.1 Representation of psychological actions

Extract 193
Now WE **know** it was they who, in broad day light on
June 4, 1996, murdered Kudirat Abiola (TETMD, 85).

Extract 194
WE **want to see** whether the Nigerian government will
leave the education of Koma children to mission schools
(PFK, 3).

Extract 195
If THE SENDERS of that murderous bomb **thought** they
could intimidate the press and sentence the country once
again to a chilly silence, they must have erred in their
gory judgement (MBNP, 348).

Extract 196
ONE **understands** that where there is no law, the police
creates it (SOR, 7).

Extract 197
But as WE **noticed** in 1978, the Nigerian's preparation for
public office consisted almost only in the acquisition of
titles (WTU, 3).

Extract 198
Now YOU **know** you may be asked to pay money in order
to be able to pay money into government treasury (C, 30).

The mental clause in extract 193) shows the process of cognition. It is identified by the verbal group *know* because it indicates the process of understanding. The senser is *We* which refers to Nigerians. The

157

phenomenon relates to *the brutal murder of Kudirat Abiola* which occurred on June 4, 1996. The image created by the choice of the verbal group *know* indicates that Nigerians are conscious of those (represented by the pronoun *they*) behind the assassination of Kudirat Abiola. As for 194), the mental processes are realised by the verbal groups *want* and *see* with the pronoun *we* as the senser which represents Nigerians.Whereas *want* expresses desiderative, *see* on the otherindicates perception. The phenomenon centers *on the education of the Koma children*. However, while the verbal group *want* indicates the writer's craving for quality education for the Koma children, *see* on the other highlight his expectation from the government. Finally, the clause in 195) demonstrates the mental process of cognition. It is determined by the verbal group *thought* which represents the process of thinking. The senser has been presented as *the senders of that murderous bomb* and the pronoun *they*. The focus here is on the senser which Osundare uses to highlight the aim the government supposed they had achieved by their atrocious acts. The reader can cognitively refer the senser to the government. Therefore, the mental process represents the government as the senser of the phenomenon *of intimidating the press and sentencing the country once again to chilly silence.* As shown above, Osundare uses the mental processes of cognition, perception and desiderative to represents psychological action.

However, Ekpu's data also evince the manipulation of mental clauses for such purposes. For example, in 196), the mental process is realised by the verbal group *understands* which denotes cognition. The sensor is *one* and it represents any Nigerian with the phenomenon of *where there is no law, the police creates it.* The mental process *understands* as used here indicates Nigerians recognition of one of the numerous means by which the police harasses innocent Nigerians. Similarly 197) demonstrates the mental process of perception. It is determined by the verbal group *noticed* because it indicates the process of observing. The sensor is *We* which refers to Nigerians. The phenomenon in the clause is *in 1978, the Nigerian's preparation for public office consisted almost only in the acquisition of titles.* The image created by this representation is that Nigeria has become a country where the capability of prospective political office holders are judged by their acquisition of titles. Thus, Nigeria is embodied damagingly as a country which allow achievements to supplant competence. As for 198) above, the pronoun *you* is the senser. It is followed by the verbal group *know* which denotes cognition and the phenomenon of *may be asked to pay money in order to be able to pay money into government treasury.* The senserrepresents Nigerians who are conscious of the habit of greasing people's palm before getting what they want.

5.2.3.4.2.2 Representation of psychological events

Extract 199
Do OUR RULERS for any moment **realize** that
                we, the people of this country are thinking and
                feeling human beings (A, 321).

              Extract 200
Can ANYONE **imagine**a country populated by
                a hapless tribe of mentally handicapped patriots?
                (TRGOS, 46).

              Extract 201
Many NIGERIANS **feel** that the reason Nigeria
                has failed to reach its manifest destiny is leader-
                -ship or more appropriately, the lack of it, the
                abuse of it, the misuse of it (LTFOTF, 30).

            Extract 202
Then WE **thought** we could try another political
                formula, one that has served the Americans well
                and we concluded that if it served America well,
                it could serve Nigeria well (ANQ, 24).

The clauses in extracts 199 and 200) indicate mental processes in cognition deployed by Osundare to represent psychological events. For example, in 199), it is identified by the verbal group *realize* because it presents the process of recognition. The senser is *our rulers* which refers to the Nigerian government. Here, the phenomenon is *that we, the people of this country are thinking and feeling human beings.* The choice of the mental process *realize* in this discourse underscores the Nigeria government's lack of sympathy for the masses. As for 200), the mental process of cognition is achieved by the verbal group *imagine* which denotes the process of envisioning. On the one hand, it is preceded by the senser *anyone* signifying Nigerians; and on the other, succeeded by the phenomenon *a country populated by a hapless tribe of mentally handicapped patriots.* The mental clause reflects the disreputable condition of the Nigerian masses.

However, mental clauses are equally deployed in Ekpu's discourse to represent psychological events. In fact, Ekpu uses the mental processes of perception and cognition for this purpose. In 201) for example, the mental process of perception is realised by the verbal group *feel* because it illustrates the process of reflection. Whereas the senser in the clause has been presented as *Nigerians*, the

phenomenon is *that the reason Nigeria has failed to reach its manifest destiny...* Through the mental process, Ekpu projects the view held by majority of Nigerians about the country's lack of developmental progress. As for 202), the pronoun *we* serves as the senser while *we could try another political formula...* on the other functions as the phenomenon in the clause. The mental process of cognition is identified by the verbal group *thought* and it is deployed to indicate the various systems of government which Nigeria has adopted since independence. From the analysis above, Osundare and Ekpu employ mental processes as effective tools for representing psychological actions and events.

5.2.3.4.3 Verbal processes

Verbal process comprises a communication between a Sayer and an Addressee, where some message, the verbiage, is communicated. The deployment of verbal processes is another way through which Osundare and Ekpu present what they consider as activities relating to information. Both writers employ different types of verbal processes in reporting the different participants in the actions and events portrayed in the discourse. The transitivity analysis of verbal process focuses on Sayer, Process, Receiver and Verbiage. The Sayer is capitalized; Process marked with bold face, Receiver underlined and the Verbiage unmarked. The following excerpts provide important illustrations of the nature of verbal processes largely exploited in the selected essays:

Extract 203
GOVERNMENT SPOKESMEN **say** the naira is
     floating but the majority of Nigerians who bear
     the brunt of a shrunken naira know for sure that
     our national currency is indeed sinking (SOTS 1,7).

     Extract 204
And when the PEOPLE **complain**, THEY **are**
told there are no alternatives to the present
     arrangement, no other way out of the death
     inflicting scourge (TRGOS, 46).

     Extract 205
THEY **interrogate** hallowed customs, transgress
     conventional boundaries, and rupture all ritual
     of stasis (TU, 323).

     Extract 206
In brief, WE are **talking** about a country which
     has every reason for being declared a failed state
     (TFMC, 364).

Extract 207

GOWON was **reported**as having **said** that
Nigeria's problem really was not money, but how
                    to manage it (DATP, 16).

Extract 208

The GOVERNMENT, long accustomed to
contract awards, began to **talk**about doing
some public works by direct labour (DATP, 16).

Extract 209

THE JUDGE may **argue** that HE **decided**
                    the case based on the facts placed before him
                    (AHR, 11).

Extract 210

These could **explain** why the press, anytime, it
criticisedthe president, looked like the man
                    who decided to hit his friend with a loaf of
                    bread (AHIAH, 13).

The choice of the verbalised process options *say, complain, told, interrogate* and *talking* in extracts 203 - 206), respectively, indicts the Nigerian government and its aides. They are extracted from Osundare's data. The verbal process in 203) is indicated by the verb *say* which tells the process of saying. The Sayer is *Government spokesmen,* whileverbiage is *the naira is floating but the majority of Nigerians who bear the brunt of a shrunken naira know for sure that our national currency is indeed sinking*. The clause highlights the deception of government spokesmen who deceive the hapless Nigerian masses. As for 204), the verbal processes have been represented by the Sayer *People* or *they* with the verbs *complain* and *told.* The Sayer underscores the hopeless condition of the Nigerian masses and as well government's response to their grievances; hence the choice of the verbs *complain* and *told.* Also,the pronoun *they* in 205) is indicated as the Sayer, while the verbiage is *hallowed customs, transgress conventional boundaries, and rupture all ritual of stasis*. The verb *interrogate* suggests *oppose* and *undermine*. Hence, Osundare represents the desecration of the Nigerian laws by the executive arm of government. In 206), the verbal process is identified by the verb *talking*. The clause is a declarative sentence describing the outcome of anarchy in the country. The Sayer of the clause can be cognitively identified to be the writer and Nigerians represented by the pronoun *we,* while the verbiage is *about a country which has every reason for being declared a failed state.*

However, Ekpu's data also demonstrate the use of verbal processes represented by the verbs *reported, said, talk, argue, decided, explain* and *criticised.* For example, in 207), the verbal processes *reported* and *said* are used to indict the executive arm of the government. The Sayer of this clause is *Gowon* who was once Nigeria's military Head of State; while *Nigeria's problem really was not money, but how to manage it* is the verbiage. Through these verbal processes, Ekpu depicts the mismanagement of fund during the military administration in Nigeria. Similarly, the subject of resources mismanagement is accredited to 208) with the executive arm of government representing the Sayer. Here, the verbal process *talk* is used to portray the culture of judicious spending assumed by the government after a long period of mismanagement of nation's resources.

Furthermore, in 209), the verbal process is identified by the verbs *argue* and *decided* with the nominal group *the judge* denoting the Sayer. The verbal group in this clause underlines the prejudice of the judicial arm of government. In 210), the verbal processes have been represented by the Sayer *the press* and the verbs *explain* and *criticised.* The receiver of the clause is *the president* to whom the saying is directed; and the verbiage is *looked like the man who decided to hit his friend with a loaf of bread.* Here, the verbal processes have been deployed to query the Nigerian press for been sold to silence by the government.From the foregoing, the verbal processes are significant in stressing the shortcomings of the different participants in the discourses.

5.2.3.4.4 Relational processes

Relational processes are processes of being. They serve to characterize and to identify (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). What this implies is that they can be classified according to whether they are being used to identify an entity or to assign quality to such entity. The transitivity analysis of relational processes focuses on the process type according to the Verbal groups, which are marked in boldface; categorization of the roles of Carrier or Identified/Token which are capitalized; and the noting of the roles of Attribute or Identifier/Value, which are underlined. An instance of the use of relational process is provided below.

        Extract 211
OUR ONCE BUSTLING MARKETS **are**now a wailing
obituary of lean stalls and empty seats(SOST 1, 7).
        Extract 212
THESE BEGGARS **are**neither from chad or Niger
           (SOST1, 8).

Extract 213

THE SOCIAL CRITIC AND ACTIVIST **has become** the scapegoat of cynical, self-preserving, other dispensing Nigerians (TOMP, 340).

Extract 214

NIGERIA **is**not a country, IT **is**an insufferable embarrassment (TFMC, 367).

Extract 215

THE ABACHA REGIME **has carried**the violation of aakii to a most dangerous level (TU, 323).

Extract 216

THE ROOT OF NIFERIA CURRENT WOES **is**a juggernaut called June 12 (NIP, 67).

Extract 217

Today, THE ECONOMY **is**in a pathetic shape (DSD, 16).

Extract 218

SUCH AN OPEN CORRUPTION OF PUBLIC MORALITY **poses** a grave danger to our embryonic democracy (C, 41).

Extract 219

THE 1964 GENERAL ELECITONS **were tainted** with charges of rigging…(DATP, 23).

Extract 220

NIGERIA POLITICAL CRISIS **is becoming**something like a festering sore (ATFP, 8).

Extract 221

NIGERIA **is**in a state of transition (ANQ, 15).

Extract 222

POLITICS **is** a battle for power and THE BATLE FOR POWER **is**conflict (OEOPO, 23).

In extract 211), the identifying relational clause represents a configuration of Identified + Process + Identifier. It is realised by the Verbal group *are* which indicates Circumstance as process. The Identified entity, *our once bustling markets*, denotes commerce in Nigeria. The Circumstantial prepositional phrase *now a wailing obituary of lean stalls and empty seats* functions as the Identifier

and it serves to assign an identity to the identified. The identity assigned here refers to the inactivity in Nigeria markets owing to inflation and unemployment. Extract 212) is an attributive relational clause with the formation of Carrier + Process + Attribute. It is realised by the Verbal group *are* which operates to indicate Circumstance as process of being. The nominal group *these beggars* operates as the Carrier and also represents hapless Nigerians who are out of employment. The Circumstantial prepositional phrase *Neither from Chad orNiger* functions as an Attribute to characterize the Carrier in this clause. The representation of the ill-treatment meted out on Nigerian human right activists is the focus in 213). The clause is actualized by the Verbal group *has become* which shows an identifying relational process in intensive. The first nominal group *the social critic and activist* servesas the identified participant in the clause while the second *the scapegoat of cynical, self-preserving, other dispensing Nigerians* functions as the identifying element.

Similarly, extract 214) employs both an identifying and attributive relational clauses to describe Nigeria as a dysfunctional state owing to lawlessness. The identifying clause is introduced by *Nigeria* which serves as the Token with the circumstantial prepositional phrase *not a country* operating as the Value. The relational clause in this discourse is realised by the Verbal group *is* which shows an identifying process in circumstance. Conversely, the attributive relational clause in the second is introduced by the pronoun *it* which functions as the Carrier in the clause. The attribute is an *insufferable embarrassment.* It is realized by the Verbal group *is* which indicates an attributive process in intensive. In 215), the concept placed in the subject position is *the Abacharegime* and it is the identified participant of the relational process. The identifying element is *the violation of aakii to a most dangerous level* which signifies the Nigerian constitution. Therepresentation in this discourse captures the desecration of the Nigerian constitution by the government. Finally, Osundare's employment of relational clauses in extract 216) articulates the cause of the Nigeria crisis, more precisely its political dimension. The identifying element is *the juggernaut called June 12* whereas the identified entity is *the root of Nigeria current woes*.

Relational clauses are also the hallmarks of Ekpu's essays. For example, in extract 217), the relational attributive process is configured with Carrier + Process + Attribute. It is realised by the verbal group *is* and it shows an attributive process in circumstance. The carrier in the clause is the nominal group *the economy* while the attribute which ascribes a quality to the carrier is the circumstantial prepositional phrase *in a pathetic shape.* The relational clause describes the deplorable condition of Nigeria's

economy. In 218), the carrier is represented by *such an open corruption of public morality* while the attribute is *a grave danger to our embryonic democracy.* This depiction is aided by the verbal group *poses,* an attributive intensive process which describes corruption as a great threat to the country's developing democracy. As for 219), the relational attributive process is achieved by the verbal group *were tainted.* It ascribes a quality of contamination to *the 1964 general elections* representing the carrier through the circumstantial prepositional phrase *with charges of rigging* serving as the attribute in the relational clause.

The theme of political crisis is captured in extract 220). The relational clause is realized by the verbal group *is becoming* which refers to an attributive process of being. Here*,* the *Nigeria political crisis* is being identified by *something like a festering sore.* Whereas the *Nigeria politicalcrisis* serves as the identifier, something like a festering sore functions as the identifier which assigns a quality to the identified. In 221), the verbal group is used to refer Nigeria to as a developing country. Hence the choice of the nominal groups*Nigeria* as the identified and the circumstantial prepositional phrase *in a state oftransition* as the identifier. The clause configuration in 222) is Identified +Process + Identifier. It is a compound clause with two subjects and complements. The nominal expressions *politics* and *the battle for power* placed in the subject position function as the identified while *a battle for power* and *conflict* occupying the position of the complement are the identifier which serves to define the identity of the identified. The identification in the relational clause is realised by the verbal group *is* which shows an identifying process in intensive.

Thetransitivity analysisofthe selected essay texts indicates that the most frequently used processes arematerial,verbal, relational and mental. The material processes revealamore physicalnature of actions and events which the actors undergo and carryout. The mental processes project psychological revelationsand consciousunravelling.Furthermore,theverbal processesrepresenttheoralinteractionanddialogue thatisconductedbetweentheSayerand recipient. Also, they describe the action of the actors and as well their state of being. Finally,therelationalactionscreatelinksbetweentheactions as wellas the actors alongwith certain attributes that areassociated with them. Thus, the analysis of transitivity carried out here corroborates Halliday's (1971: 327) assertion that "language serves for the expression of content". It performs a representational function allowing speakers or writers (as in the case of Osundare and Ekpu) to represent their knowledge of the phenomena of the real world through language.

5.2.3.5   Syntactic parallelism

'Syntactic parallelism' is the repetition of same grammatical constructions expressing propositions or same ideas with the same structure of paradigmatic choice and syntagmatic arrangements (Adagbonyin and Dada, 2012). A noticeable feature of Osundare and Ekpu's syntactic organisation is the much concern they have for creating parallel structures and building up repetitive patterns. These features, as manifestation of syntactic foregrounding, in fact constitute such important devices for the essayists that it is no over-generalization saying that the very artifice of these writers' essays reduces themselves to the principle of parallelism (Leech, 1969). Osundare and Ekpu strive, through their syntactic patterning, to heighten the intensity and immediacy of their messages. The parallel structures exist at the level of sentence. They show, as Widdowson (1972) has observed, that there is always a struggle by the creative writer to device language patterns that will convey his individual personal vision. Parallel structures in the selected essays are deployed for rhetorical emphasis, multidimensional representation and specification. Consider for example, the following sample texts below.

> **Extract 223**
> What all this boils down to is that more and more
> Nigeria are becoming hungry, ill, dehumanised
> (SOST 1, 8).

> **Extract 224**
> What I saw were faces tense with indignation,
> what I heard were songs energised by questions,
> what I witnessed was a multitude which had come
> out not just to mourn but to indict Nigeria's culture
> of mayhem (MBNP, 349).

> **Extract 225**
> First, the patient was turned back due to lack of
>   anaesthetic gas, when that became available there
>   was no bed sheet and when all these essentials were
> ready there was no water (SOTS 11, 10).

> **Extract 226**
> Even when the parents have paid the fees, they are
> also asked to show evidence that they have paid
> their tax (ADWTF, 2).

> **Extract 227**
> They would wear gold in their teeth, gold in their
>   nose, gold in their ears, gold in their neck, gold on

their wrist, gold on their ankles, and gold on their
waist (ADATP, 18).

Extract 228
Then Jamare would step out again to tell the
tribunal that although many things were going on
the wrong way, the executive president of Nigeria
didn't know anything, didn't see anything, didn't'
hear anything, didn't smell anything…(AHR, 10).

Extract 229
There has been a multitude of court cases, which is
all very well, and there has been a multitude of
unobeyed court orders, which is all very bad for the
judiciary, the government, the nation and its image
(ATFP, 22).

Osundare makes use of parallel structures as devices to reinforce and re-emphasizes his ideas in extract 223). The parallel structures are the noun phrases in the final sentence as shown below.

<div align="center">

hungry

Nigerians are becoming +   ill

dehumanised

</div>

The three noun phrases are syntagmatically related to the verb *are becoming* and also in a paradigmatic relationship with each other. The fact that they occur in the same paradigm suggests that they have a relationship of equivalence. Each noun phrase represents one of a number of precarious situations which unemployment has plunged Nigerians into. In other words, the parallel structures are channels through which Osundare provides a multidimensional perspective of the contemptible plight of Nigerians.

The recurrent structures in extract 224) are configured with SPO syntactic pattern. The item realising the subject functions are repeated while those realising the predicate and object functions in the construction are varied. The interest in the repetition is not, however, in the lexical items but in the structures. For this reason, the parallelism involved is represented thus:

S   P   O
What I   + saw were + faces tense with indignation,
S   P   O
What I + heard were + songs energised by questions,

```
S            P            O
         What I + witnessed was + a multitude…
```

All the constructions realizing the object function are objects of the same subject *what I* and different verbs, *saw were, heard were* and *witnessed was* and represent the full extent of the gory happening in Nigeria which Osundare has quoted in this piece, about the murder of Nigeria veteran journalist Dele Giwa. Apart from aiding the depiction of a multidimensional representation of the moods of Nigerians, the repetition of the structure also creates rhetorical emphasis. Furthermore, the patterns of repetition are significant for the effects of variety and elaboration which they create. For example, the subject *what I* is repeated three times. In each case, there is a variation of the predicate and objects. This creates variety and the consequent supply of different bits of information which produces amplification.

In extract 225), there is the recurrence of parallel structures which run through all the clauses, and which in turn bring to fore the beauty of language. The text consists of five clauses; of which, the first is the main clause while the others are subordinate clauses. Unlike in the preceding discourse where the SPO syntactic pattern was deployed, here, Osundare exploits a variety of syntactic patterns. The first main clause is configured using the SPA pattern whereas the remaining clauses adopt the SPC pattern as shown below.

```
S              P                 A
    First, the patient + was turned + back due to lack of anesthesia gas,

S              P            C
    When that   +      became   +    available,

S        P              C
    there    +   was    +    no bed sheet,

S              P      C
    and when all these essentials   + are +   ready
S        P      C
             there   +   was + no water!
```

The subordinate clauses in the above discourse are linked to the main clause and they are deployed by Osundare to effectively project his concern for the deteriorating condition of our health system. Apart from the fact that the repeated structures are used for specification, they serve as rhetorical emphasis which also enforces the writer's message. Parallel structures are also deployed by Ekpu for communicative purpose.

For example, extract 226) is a complex sentence made up of three clauses, one main and two subordinate clauses. In this discourse, Ekpu repeats the SPC syntactic pattern with unique arrangement in order to arrest not just the attention and interest of the reader, but also to achieve aesthetic value as captured thus:

S   P   C
      Even when the parents + have paid + the fees,

S   P   C
      they + are also asked to show + evidence,

S   P   C
      that they + have paid + their tax

The parallel structures in this text are deployed for specification. The repetition intensifies the ideas being explained by Ekpu and allows the reader much room for understanding the message of over-emphasis of fees and levies which he refers.

A pattern of parallel construction most noticeable in extract 227) is "listing". It is generally typified by two or three lines in which a central theme is provided and other ideas in the units that are juxtaposed are made to affirm it. For illustration, the efficacy of parallelism in this text lies in the repetition of OA structure realised by the noun group in the final sentence. This is projected below.

S   P   O   A

      They + would wear + gold   + in their teeth,
                    gold   + in their noses,
                    gold   + in their ears,
                    gold   + in their necks,
                    gold   + in their wrists,
                    gold   + on their ankles,
                         and
                    gold   + on their waist.

There is the inundating repetition of the OA structural pattern. Also, all the lines which form this structure have similar structural composition of nominal group but however, are only divergent in terms of the final set of words in each line. The repetitive parallel is drawn across and within the lines in the discourse. The seven nominal groups are syntagmatically related to the verb *would wear* and are also in a paradigmatic relationship with each other. The parallel structures are deployed for multidimensional

representation of the different ways in which Nigerians flaunt their loot. The arrangement of this structural pattern in the collection calls for attention as the writer epitomizes the situation being revealed through structural beauty of the lines. Each line captures an effect that is aesthetically blended to touch emotions and realize the amplification of the subject matter, which is presented. Also, the structural equivalence of OA patterns in the clause provides the rending of the discourse a certain rhythm by creating word patterns for readers to follow easily.

Similarly, the style of listing of items is equally noticeable in extract 228) where Ekpu reports on the indifference of the judicial arm of government in matters relating to dishonest practices perpetrated by the government and its top officials. This is captured thus:

S   **P**   **O**

         The executive president of Nigeria + didn't know + anything

                               didn't see + anything

                               didn't hear + anything

                               didn't smell + anything

Here, the expressions *didn't know anything*, *didn't see anything*, *didn't hear anything* and *didn't smell anything* are all instance of pattern repetition which are paradigmatically related. Apart from indicating the nonchalance of the judiciary, the patterns are also deployed to ridicule the judicial arm of government. The repetition of PO structural pattern is deployed for rhetorical emphasis.

The syntactic parallelism in extract 229) is foregrounded by the graphological arrangement of protrusion of the subject/predicate ("There has been") and ("Which is") constituents of the clauses in the text. Basically, whereas the first and third clauses have the SPC structural pattern, the second and fourth are configured with SPA structural pattern. Observe that the fourth clause is further complemented with an object element which is qualified in different structural make-ups as displayed thus.

S   **P**   **C**

           There + has been + a multitude of court cases

S   **P**   **A**

           Which + is + all very well, and

S   **P**   **C**

           There + has been + a multitude of unobeyed court orders,

S   **P**   **A**

<div align="center">Which + is + all very bad</div>

O   **O**   **O**

<div align="center">for the judiciary, the government, the nation and its image</div>

Here, there is a juxtaposition of the first and third and as well the second and the fourth clauses. All the clauses in parallel relationship have the same thematic orientation which border on a breach of the judicial arm of government. The parallelistic formulaic of repetition and structural equivalence provides the rendering of the text a certain rhythmic power that produces the mood of sadness as a result of the subject matter presented by the writer which can lead to societal dislocation.

From the analysis carried out, parallel structures form the bulk of Osundare and Ekpu's literary style. It brings into the selected essays an unending pleasure that increases our interest to appreciate the message of the writers. Also, it contribute to the structure of the essays and creates room for giving emphasis to certain ideas or concepts being dealt with in the essays. In all, it creates room for clarity and bring in explicitness.

5.2.3.6 Syntactic aberration

Another important feature which is equally worth mentioning under syntactic organisation in Osundare and Ekpu's essays is syntactic aberration. 'Syntactic aberration or deviation' refers to any linguistic usage which does not conform to the rules of the language (Wales, 2011). Leech (1969: 45) sees it as "bad or incorrect grammar", hence, it is the violation of or deviation from the rules of syntax. Ungrammaticality and hyperbaton, among others, are forms of syntactic deviation studied in the selected essay texts.

5.2.3.6.1 Ungrammaticality

'Sentence' is a "grammatical unit that forms a meaningful whole by expressing a single utterance" (Okesipe and Okolo, 2013). An utterance is grammatical if it conforms to the rules of a language's grammar and ungrammatical or incomplete if it does not (Wales, 2011). It is a general rule in the English language that for a sentence or an utterance to be grammatical, it must possess the verb element. The deployment of ungrammatical expressions, that is, verb-less sentences, in the discourses under investigation indicate the conscious attempt of Osundare and Ekpu to foreground the thematic concerns in their essays. Consider, for example, the following sample texts.

Extract 230
Untouchable! (TU, 92).

Extract 231
Abomination! (A, 320).

Extract 232
In eight short years! (TRA, 53).

Extract 233
Health for all by the year 2001!
(SOTS 11, 11).

Extract 234
Thumps up for private enterprise! (NMT, 29).

Extract 235
Two thousand naira! (ADWTF, 2).

Extract 236
Sawdust! (DATP, 18).

All instances of the texts above are ungrammatical because they are verb-less. In all of them, we notice the deliberate effort Osundare and Ekpu make to draw attention to particular words and phrases which are important to the meanings they want to make. For example, in extract 230), Osundare alludes to top government officials and politicians who stink in stolen affluence and describes them as *untouchable* owing to the fact that they are above the law. Similarly in 231), he uses the nominal group *Abomination* as a sentence to capture the devaluation and desecration which Nigerians were subjected to by the then military dictator, General Ibrahim Babangida.

However, extracts 232-234) are instances of Osundare's use of phrases as grammatical sentences. In 232), he evaluates government's economic policy arguing that instead of profiting the masses, it only succeeded in devaluing the nation's currency and making life more miserable for the citizens. Hence, his choice of the prepositional phrase *in eight short years* deployed for specification, that is, to indicate time frame. Moreso, the unavailability of medical facilities and the poor health services offered in most Nigeria teaching hospitals prompted the verb-less expression *Health for all by the year 2001* in 233) deployed to encourage Nigerians not to lose hope on the country's medical system. As for 234), he compares government's and private's enterprises arguing that most government ventures falter and fail

due to incompetent execution. Therefore, he uses the nominal group *thumps up for private enterprise* as an approval for private enterprise.

Ungrammatical expressions in Ekpu's data are captured in extracts 235 - 236). The disparity in fees paid by students who are indigenes and the non-indigenes in most State Universities in Nigeria is the central theme in 235). Hence, in this text, Ekpu employs the nominal expression *Two thousand naira* to express disbelief over the exorbitant fees required from the non-indigenes. As for extract 236), the nominal item *sawdust* relates to shady deeds in Nigeria where some companies exploit the loop holes in the import licensing system to rob nation off its hard earned resources. This is achieved through massive over-invoicing. The writer's choice of *Sawdust* refers to the item some companies supply in disguise instead of the real goods they have been paid for.

As the foregoing has shown, ungrammaticality or verb-less clauses form part of Osundare and Ekpu's literary style; and both writers strive to foreground the meanings in their essays through this linguistic device.

5.2.3.6.2   Hyperbaton

Apart from the deployment of ungrammatical or verb-less expressions, Osundare and Ekpu exploit hyperbaton for communicative purpose. 'Hyperbaton' refers to inversion in the organisation of common words. It is a linguistic device in "which normal word order is transposed by inversion or fronting" (Wales, 2011: 202). Leech (1996: 45) describes the term as "syntactic rearrangement". Osundare and Ekpu manipulate the normal order of clauses to create emphasis and intriguing complex structures. The discussion of the use of hyperbaton in both essays is illustrated with extracts (237 - 242).

> **Extract 237**
> Time there was when the Nigeria day was 24 hours
(SOTS 1, 7).

Extract 238
> Once again, evil forces had hurled the night on the
noon of the country's rejoicing (MBNP, 348).

Extract 239
> From the labour ward, up went the visitor to another
> block (SOST 11, 11).

173

Extract 240
Within a few fleeting years, Nigeria swung from
prosperity to poverty (DATP, 29).

Extract 241
In Nigeria you must make an allowance for surprise
(SOR, 6).

Extract 242
At present, it is on the back burner (ADWTF, 2).

Sentence inversion in the discourses above is realised through the fronting of syntactic elements. For example, extract 237) is a complex clause configured with a main and subordinate clause. The main clause structure is of the pattern C+S+P – *Time / there / was* while the subordinate clause is configured with S+P+C structure – *When the Nigeria day /was / 24 hours*. The unusual clause configuration here is realised through inversion where the object element *Time* in the main clause is front-shifted, thereby giving it prominence over the subject and predicate. This arrangement, according to Chapman (1973) and Carter (2003a) deviates from the normal rules of usage. Therefore, in this case, the main clause should be rephrased or rearranged as "There was time" in order to observe the rules of linguistic usage. The effect of front-shifting in this text is to accord special emphasis to the object element *Time* deployed by Osundare to allude to past events.

As for extract 238), Osundare uses a simple sentence to create an intriguing complex structure. He opts for A+S+P+O+A structural pattern as captured in *Once again /evil forces /had hurled/ the night/ on the country's rejoicing"* instead of the normal S+P+O+A structural pattern. Observe that the inversion here is realised through the fronting of the adverbial element *once again.* By fronting the adverbial element, the writer gives prominence to the front-shifted phrase *once gain* and as well strives to draw the reader's attention to this front-shifted element denoting the recurrence of the unlawful assassination of innocents Nigeria.

Similarly, the syntactic pattern of A+P+S+O in extract 239) instead of S+P+O+C pattern captures the trauma of Nigerians in most teaching hospitals. The front-shifted adverbial element *from the labour ward* is given prominence over the subject and predicate in this text. This is owing to the writer's intention to relay the harrowing experiences of Nigerians in these hospitals.

Cases of sentence inversion in Ekpu's data are captured in extracts 240 – 242). In these texts, the writer transposes the adverbial element from its rare position to the initial where the subject occupies as a result of the meanings which he intends to convey. For example, extract 240) is a simple sentence structure configured with A+S+P+A pattern -*within a few fleeting years,/ Nigeria /moves /from prosperity to poverty* instead of the normal S+P+A pattern -*Nigeria /moves /from prosperity to poverty within a few fleeting of years.* The sentence inversion is achieved through fronting the adverbial element *within a few fleeting years* which isdeployed for specification. Here, Ekpu comments on the extravagant spending of nation's resources during independence and uses the front-shifted adverbial element to project time frame.

As for 241), he employs a simple sentence configured with A+S+P+O+A structural pattern as captured in *In Nigeria you must make an allowance for surprise* instead of the normal S+P+O+A structure. Here, emphasis is conferred on the adverbial element *in Nigeria* which function to specify the location been referred by Ekpu. Also, the fronting of the adverbial element enables the writer creates an intriguing complex sentence structure. However, in extract 242), Ekpu speaks on the deterioration of education in Nigeria. He opts for A+S+P+A structural pattern as captured in *At present, it is on the back burner.* By fronting the adverbial element, the writer gives prominence to the front-shifted phrase *At present,* an adverb of time deployed to project the current state of education in Nigeria. As part of their literary style, Osundare and Ekpu exploit ungrammaticality and hyperbaton for defamiliarization. In so doing, they violate the conventional rules and by going beyond the principles, create a different language.

A consideration of Osundare's and Ekpu's syntactic patterning shows that these essayists isolate specific syntactic structures to convey their meaning. The nominal group structures, mood system, modal structures, transitivity patterns, parallel constructions and syntactic aberration employed among other host of linguistic resources aid the communicative value of the essay texts. More so, the insights drawn from rhetorical appeals or modes of persuasion (logos, ethos and pathos) enable these writers to appeal to the emotions of the general masses and as well gain their support. The linguistic and persuasive resources deployed by Osundare and Ekpu in the selected essays demonstrate the position of Adagbonyin (1999: 198) that syntax undeniably establishes "the groundwork of the writer's art. This view, according to Halliday (1971: 346) is because syntax interweaves "into a single fabric the different threads of meaning that derive from the variety of linguistic functions".

5.2.4 Lexico-semantic features as devices for meaning construction

The lexico-semantic features deployed by Osundare and Ekpu in constructing meaning are lexical incorporation, lexical relations, figurative and idiomatic expressions. These semantic features serve as important means through which Osundare and Ekpu express or encode their ideas and experience. Both writers select features from the vast resources of language to crystalize their views, express their feelings and construct images all of which give their essays its expressive beauty.

5.2.4.1 Lexical incorporations

Osundare and Ekpu make allusions to religion and history for their imaginative creations. Theydependon imported lexemes from these sources and theirconnotative implications,toconveytheirintendedmeanings. The stylistic exploitation of lexical words from religion and history demonstrate the richness in their usage of vocabulary and meaning construction.

5.2.4.1.1 Incorporations from religion

Two religions from which Osundare and Ekpu easily draw from are Christianity and Islam. Both writers allude to actions and events from either of these religions or from the both. Also, they exploit extracts and draw from knowledge of the Bible and Koran all of which make their works picturesque. An instance of this use in the essays is presented below.

> **Extract 243**
> The abiding parallels between our *self-righteous*
> Nigeria and the apartheid *hell* popped up again with
> invidious insistence (MBNP, 349).

> **Extract 244**
> Its closest cognate in the Bible is "Thou shalt not*"*,
> a clause which resonates with awesome gravity in
> the *TenCommandment* (TU, 322).

> **Extract 245**
> If the bookseller blinds you with high prices, hurry
> out of his shop; afterall, has the *Good Book* not
> said that *too much reading is a weariness to the soul*?
> ... Ifthe food seller hikes the price, get back home
> with patriotic hunger in your stomach. *Man shall not*
> *leave by bread alone*(TSR, 14).

> **Extract 246**
> *Sodom and Gomorrah* must have done better (TU, 92).

Extract 247

Her vehicle documents were seized and a female traffic warden was detailed to escort her to a police station where the guardian *angels* of law and order would sort her out appropriately (SOR, 13).

Extract 248

And what are Nigerians expected to say to all these? To simply sigh and say that it is one of those things, a typical Nigerian expression for nonchalance, and then take their *Bibles* and *Korans* and go to the *churches* and *mosques* and *pray to God and Allah to bless* the souls of all those who turned the country into Dante's inferno, 1979-83? (AHR, 12).

Extract 249

If the *Holy Spirit* helps us and do decide, eventually to elevate the present police action against blue, into a full scale war against colours, there are two colours that would not be in our interest to exclude: green and red (SOR, 15).

Extract 250

And the president, the innocent *"Jesus"* of Nigeria, instead of calling the police to arrest the bastard just as the other *Jesus* did when some crooks invaded the temple*,* decided to step out at that time for *prayers* (AHR, 8).

In extract 243), Osundare makes reference to two related events; one in Nigeria and the other in South Africa. The lexical expression *self-righteous* and *hell* are meant to be symbolic. *Self-righteous* epitomizes Nigeria as a country which appears to be sanctimonious despite the magnitude of atrocities committed by its leaders; and *hell* on the other, denotes the mayhem witnessed during apartheid in South Africa. In all this instance, the writer's main aim is to enrich his frame of reference, while also criticising present-day political figures for the gruesome murder of Dele Giwa of Nigeria and Samora Michael of South Africa respectively.

As for 244), he alludes to the Ten Commandments of the Holy Bible in (Exodus Chapter 10) to launch an attack on Nigerian rulers for violating the country through their breach of the law. The pivotal nominal here is *Thou shalt not* which he deliberately enclosed in inverted commas to heighten its significance. The lexical expression *Thou shalt not* conveys a thing prohibited, forbidden and

unacceptable. Likewise, it underscores the don'ts in the Nigerian laws which government and its aides often breach to perpetrate their ills.

The focus in 245) is on grumblings about sky-high prices resulting to essential commodities being out of reach for the impoverished majority in the country. Here, Osundare draws from Solomon's wise saying and the Temptation of Jesus both from the Holy Bible respectively. The biblical aphorisms *too much reading is a weariness to the soul* extracted from (Ecclesiastes chapter 12 verse 12) and *Man shall not live by bread alone* from (Matthew chapter 4 verse 4) are deployed to encourage Nigerians affected by the monstrous inflation. The choice of these biblical maxims serves as solace for these hapless Nigerians.

To effectively capture the moral decay in every facet of the country in 246), Osundare refers to *Sodom and Gomorrah* from the Holy Bible in (Genesis 18 and 19). These cities were exterminated owing to the inhabitants' moral decadence, lust, greed, violence and persistent rebellion against God. Thus, the imagery of *Sodomand Gomorrah* connotes moral decadence; and their employment in this discourse construct a mental picture of Nigeria's moral degeneracy in the reader's mind, which in turn helps to comprehend the discourse subject.

However, instances of Ekpu's deployment of religious register are evident in extracts 247 – 250). For example, in 247), he hammers at Nigeria's law enforcement agents using *angels* as a symbolic term to represent the Nigerian police. Angels, apart from being spiritual beings who act as an attendant or messenger of God, refer to persons of exemplary conduct or virtue. However, the word, as used in this context,connotes a devil, demon or fiend. In order to ridicule the moral rot which has pervaded the entire Nigerian police force; Ekpu employsthe word in its negative sense to address the Nigerian police.

The blend of lexical expressions from Christianity and Islam is noticeable in 248) where the essayist criticizes Nigerians' attitude of nonchalance towards the ills of their leaders. The following lexemes *bibles, Koran, churches, mosques, pray, God, Allah,* and *bless* are drawn from the register of religion. Whereas *bibles, churches, bless* and *God* are extracted from the Christian religion; *Koran, mosques* and *Allah* on the other, are drawn from Islam. By coalescing lexical items from both religions, the writer attempts to show that both Christians and Moslems in Nigeria are guilty of this offence.

As for 249), Ekpu derides the Nigerian police over its harassment of innocent citizens through the promulgation of illegal laws. He refers to the restricting of the use of blue by the Nigerian police arguing that where there is no law, the police create it; where he does not create it, because he has no power to create it, harassment becomes the law. The writer's use of the lexical item *Holy Spirit* as drawn from the bible is for satirical purpose. Similarly, in 250), he refers to Jesus's cleansing of the temple as recorded in (Matthew 21: 12). The biblical allusion in this discourse is deployed for comparative purposes. The comparison here is between Jesus in the Holy Bible and the president of Nigeria. The writer's aim of contrast here is to hammer at the weaknesses of Nigerian rulers, who have failed woefully to implement drastic measures against all sorts of social, political and economic vices in the country just like Jesus in the bible.

5.2.4.1.2 Incorporations from history

On lexical incorporations from history, we note that part of Osundare's and Ekpu's talent as essayists is their ability to situate issues within specific contexts. The essay texts under investigation reveal the writers' hunger for words/ideas drawn from history, a point which indicates that Osundare and Ekpu sometimes strive to range universally. The following examples provide instances of such use from the texts.

Extract 251
So what exactly is responsible for my new contemplations?
Could it be *the pogroms in Rwanda or Kosovo*, those dastardly
bombings in Kenya and Tanzania and *the American reprisals*
which came fast in their wake? Could it be a reaction to the
revelations at South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation commi-
-ssion, detailing the murderous degeneracy of the authors and
perpetrators of *apartheid*? Or is it simple my own *post Abacha
blues*? (TETMD, 83).

Extract 252
How do I tell them that I am more pained than they are at this
act of utter barbarism committed in the name of religion by
faceless mullahs who have put Nigeria's engine in reverse
gear to the *dark ages*? (TFMC, 366).

Extract 253
But I kept on wrestling with the veracity of this explosive news.
No, it can be true, not in the Nigeria of a human rights era. Or
was this paper reporting *the gory happenings in apartheid South
Africa*? Was it trying to recapture *the cannibal maiming* and

murders in Angola and Mozambique, under Portuguese fascism?
          (MBNP, 347).

Extract 254
          Whoever invented *Second-tier Foreign Exchange Market deserves* Nothing less than a national award (TSR, 12).

Extract 255
          In many states, primary school pupils have to pay fees in order to learn the traditional three RS- Reading, Writing and Arithmetic, something that the venerable Obafemi Awolowo gave to the kids in 1955 free of charge, something that the Eastern Nigeria government did with delight in the 60s, something that Yakubu Gowon introduced nation-wide in 1974 (ADWTF, 15).

Extract 256
          Uwaifo even has the temerity to tell Nigerians who lived in Nigeria in the years of *the Holocaust, 1979-1983*, the years when the great slaughter of Nigeria took place that the price of rice was brought down from N100 per bag to N45 (AHR, 12).

Extract 257
          In *the Buhari era*, Jeep-loads of bloody-eyed policemen or
 soldiers would rumble through the streets in a whiff of dust,
          pick up their prey, bundle him into the Jeep and roar off (AHIAHM, 10).

Extract 258
          It's been serious enough since last year when the *June 12* elections were scratched off. For the last one year the country has done nothing much except nurse a crisis, a crisis that has refused to go away (ATFP, 8).

Extract 251) reminds us of *the pogroms in Rwanda*, those *dastardly bombings in Kenya and Tanzania*, *the America reprisals*, *apartheid in South Africa* and *the Abacha blues*. It also urges us to remember the great crisis witnessed in countries where these events occurred. The pogrom in Rwanda refers to the ethnic tension and territorial dispute which occurred in Kosovo, Rwanda in 17th March 2004. Equally, the dastardly bombings in Kenya and Tanzania takes us to the scene of the 1998 United States Embassy bombings in two East African cities, one at the United State Embassy in Dar es Salaam, the other at the United States Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya. In a similar vein, the America reprisals recalls the Dachau liberation revenge where a series of German detainees of war were executed by American armed

forcesat the Dachau concentration camp in Germany in 1945 during World War 11. Finally, apartheid in South Africa and the Abacha blues equally bring back the memories of those dark periods in Nigeria and South Africa where the sanctity of human lives were violated. Osundare's aim of employing historical allusion is to extensively ponder about the phenomenon called humanity; and as well as its surprising capacity for depravity and evil. The significance of all these references is that they all mark very sordid aspects of world history.

In 252), the writer takes the reader back to the era of the *Dark ages*. 'Dark Ages' refers to a time of intellectual backwardness and as well a period of darkness between the fall of Rome and the Renaissance. The negative connotation of this lexical item is deployed here to refer to the activities of some religious extremists which have made Nigeria an uncivilized country. Osundare's aim is to create an alert and as well warn Nigerians that though the Dark Age is long gone, some of the events which typify the period are beginning to make a return to 21st century Nigeria.

Extract 253) is another discourse where historical references abound. This also has something to contribute to the broad thematic canvass. It enables the writer builds on a variety of ideas, issues, events and incidents as they impinge upon his senses. Osundare relishes his ability to remember and recalls history in his reference to *the cannibal maiming* and *murders in Angola* and *Mozambique under Portuguese fascism*. He draws from these events to refer to Dele Giwa, who was brutally assassinated by the powers that be. The writer's ability to recall as well his knowledge of the human rights law made it extremely difficult to accept the authenticity of the news on the demise of the journalist. In this discourse, the writer recalls history, raises figures (tyrants) of the past – Daniel Francois Malan, Fidel Castro, General Sani Abacha, etc. They are credited with their individual characteristics and criminal acts. While ruminating over the atrocities of these tyrants, Osundare is wary. This is because he believes that although these tyrants are gone, new despots often take over to unleash even worse atrocities.

Osundarecomments on the *Second-tier Foreign Exchange Market* introduced in September 1986 in extract 254). He notes that instead of favoring the majority among impoverish Nigerians, the policy was created to favour those Nigerians who have looted the country and reserved their loots in their innumerable foreign accounts. The writer recalls the great havoc done to Nigerians by the inventors of this economic policy and also denounces them.

Historical allusions also abound in Ekpu's discourse. For example, in extract 255), he expresses dissatisfaction over the mandatory payment of fees by primary school pupils as condition for teaching them reading, writing and arithmetic. Through reference to history, he reminds the reader of 1955, 1960 and 1974 where these three basic subjects- reading, writing and arithmetic were provided free of charge by the western, eastern and northern government of Nigeria respectively. He, therefore, urges the reader to remember those periods using the knowledge drawn from history to stimulate ideas, associations, and extra information in the reader's mind.

The reference in 256) is to the Nigerian Civil War. Here, Ekpu's choice of *the Holocaust, 1979-1983* is directed at Justice Samson Uwaifo who claimed that foodstuff was low-priced in those years. The significance of allusion in this discourse is that it evokes an image of the devastation of human lives witnessed during the war which calls on the reader to evaluate the sordid events of those years. This will enable him validate the veracity or mendacity of the justice's claim. As for 257), the essayist, through historical allusion, evokes an image of the brutalities of the Buhari regime which enable the reader to have a better comprehension of the message communicated. Similarly, in 258) where Ekpu reports on the annulment of the June 12 1993 general elections and the crisis which followed after, the reference enables the reader to create a mental picture by visualizing the events of those years.

From the foregoing, Osundare and Ekpu draw considerably from the knowledge of religion and history to make their literary craft artistic. In all the instances where such allusions are made, they suggest a degree of seriousness of the subject matter being discussed and as wellthe significance of their context. These references demonstrate that there is a well of special meaning to be drawn upon on the writers' subject of discourse. As the analysis has shown, lexical items from religion and history constitute important means by which these essayists encode their ideas and experience of the real world.

5.2.4.2 Lexical relations

Lexical relations imply the "relationships which words maintain with other words in a language"; which may be that of similarity, oppositeness or nearness of meaning (Ogbulogo, 2005: 54). According to Joseph (2015: 51), the term refers to the "relationship of meaning that exists between words in a language". He notes that in daily conversation exchanges, we often provide meaning of words or lexical items with reference to their relationship with other lexemes. Ogunsiji (2001) says that it is the kind of connections that exist within discourses. From these definitions, it is obvious that lexical relations perform significant role in discourse structure (Martin, 1992). The linguistic resources for creating

lexical relations in discourse are repetition, synonymy, hyponym, antonym and collocation. Thus, in the essays under study, Osundare and Ekpu employ repetition, synonymy, hyponym, antonym and collocation to configure meaning.

5.2.4.2.1 Repetition

Repetition refers to the reiteration of similar "lexical item in two or more sentences thereby showing that the sentences are related in meaning" (Joseph, 2015: 118). To Wales (2011: 366), it is a "powerful resource of interpersonal involvement and rapport"; and Tannen (1989) and Carter (2004) observe that it may be deployed for emphasis or out of intensity of feeling. Citing Halliday and Hasan (1976), Carter (1998: 81) notes that repetition is not only restricted to the reiteration of the same lexical item but also the occurrence of a related item. In all, lexical repetition according to Halliday (2004), is the "most direct form of creating lexical links in discourse. Repetition in the selected essays function as devices to create emphasis and lexical links, heighten emotion, underscore an argument and capture attention. For Osundare and Ekpu, consider the following selected texts as samples depicting the use of repetition.

> **Extract 259**
> Their entreaties are *more* quite, *more* refined, *more*
harrowing, for they are carried right to the portals
of the ears (SOTS 1, 8).

> **Extract 260**
> Yes, indeed, that *crazy*letter is the *crazy* product of
a *crazy* country (TFMC, 366).

> **Extract 261**
> Theyhave *murdered*Dele Giwa but theycannot
murder the truth (MBNP, 345).

> **Extract 262**
The person we *elected* to lead us is imprisoned by
> another who we never *elected* but who now decrees
> our lives from the seat of power (A, 320).

 Extract 263
When the youths *grow up*, they will certainly *grow up*
> in the *image* of the elders and that *image*, if you look
> at   it   in   the   mirror, is *ugly*, *very, very, ugly*
(ADWTF, 17).

Extract 264
The Biafra *war* is the only *war* that Nigerians were

183

buried beneath the ashes of that *war* but the human
cost must be colossal (ATFP, 10).

Extract 265
Those *interested* in the *flockwork* for the *well-being* of
their *flock*, while those who are *interested* in the fleece
work for the *well-being* of their belly (LTFOTF, 10).

Extract 266
That, of course, is the stock-in-trade of politicians, to
make *promises* they may *fulfil*, *promises* they will not
fulfil and *promises* they cannot *fulfil* (OEOPO, 22).

In extract 259), the lexical item *more* performs descriptive role in that it describes the pleas of hapless Nigerians who have been turned into mendicants due to government's harsh economic policy. Observe that *entreaties* being magnified by the reoccurrence of *more* are in a harmonious relationship with the reference item *they* in the second part of the discourse. This connection between the recurrent lexical item and reference helps to track the flow of the writer's message. Apart from tracking the message; the repetition creates lexical link and as well heightens our emotion considering the pathetic situation being referred to by the writer.

As for 260), Osundare refers to the breakdown of law and order in Nigeria; hammers at Nigerian leaders due to their inability to restore orderliness to the country. The writer expresses anger and embarrassment over this situation. Hence, the reiteration of *crazy* deployed out of intensity of feeling to describe Nigeria as failed state. In this instance, the second and third occurrences of *crazy* hark back to the first. This interrelation aids to link the two parts of the discourse.

Similarly, the focus in 261) is on the unlawful assassination of journalists in Nigeria. The second appearance of *murder* refers back to the first. Though *murdered* and *murder* have different morphological shape, they are still regarded as the same lexical item as one is derived from the other. Repetition of the two lexical items create cohesive links and highlights the writer's discourse subject which help to evoke an emotion of pity considering the brutal assassination of Nigerian journalist.

In all, the second appearance of *elected* in 262)harks back to the first. Here, Osundare focuses on politics in Nigeria alongside unravelling the inordinate quest for power among Nigerian rulers. Whereas the first *elected* refers to the people's mandate, that is, the candidate chosen by the general

public to lead; the second denotes the enforcing of government's will on the masses. The repetition here results to a cohesive flow in the discourse.

Extract 263) is culled from Ekpu's discourse. Here, the writer speaks on the consequence of parents' negligence towards the education and moral upbringing of their children and government's failure to equip our schools with modern facilities that would help to provide them quality education. The four lexical items repeatedly deployed are *grow up, image, very* and *ugly*. Observe that there is an interrelation between these lexical items and reference items in the text. For instance, the second occurrence of *grow-up* harks back to first; it is harmoniously related to the reference item *they* and the lexical item *image* succeeding it. The choice of the repeated items serve to emphasize what youths' future would become if neglected thereby drawing our attention to the significance of the writer's message.

Also, the use of repetition for emphasis is the writer's objective in 264) where *war* is recurrently deployed. The third appearance of *war* is harmoniously related to the first and second in the text. Here, Ekpu draws the reader's attention to the devastating effect which political, religious and economic crisis has caused Nigeria.

The focus in 265) is on the different types of leaders and their qualities. Observe that *interested, flock, work* and *well-being* are four lexical items repeatedly deployed in this text. They serve as qualities used by the writer to demarcate the two types of leaders highlighted. In 266), *promises* and *fulfil* are lexical words recurrently deployed to describe one of the attributes of Nigerian politicians.

A remarkable point to be made on Osundare's and Ekpu's deployment of repetition is that they aim for emphasis while also expanding their thematic range. That these essayists consistently exploit this semantic device to reveal their desire to semantically foreground the lexical items deployed which help to heighten communicative impact.

5.2.4.2.2 Synonyms

Synonym involves a "lexical relationship of close relatedness in the meaning of words" (Ogbulogo, 2005: 29). To Wales (2011: 412), the concept is defined as the "expression of the same meaning by different words within a language". According to Joseph (2015: 51), it refers to proximity or similarity in meaning which some lexical items display. There is the occurrence of partial and complete

synonyms in the essays under study. Osundare and Ekpu, among others, employ synonymous lexical items for semantic unity, cohesion and amplification of meaning. The following sample texts from the essay texts illustrate the application of this semantic device by both writers.

Extract 267
In brief, we are talking about a *country*, which has
every   reason for being declared a failed *state*
(TFMC, 364).

Extract 268
The number of aircrafts in the national fleet was
already *dwindling*, and personal morale was *ebbing*
(NE, 362).

Extract 269
That English word shares the same border with its
Yoruba counterpart 'eewo' which translates roughly
                as *taboo*, *anathema*, *a thing prohibited*, *forbidden,*
unacceptable,   *unmentionable*, even *unthinkable*
(TU, 322).

Extract 270
For the next few minutes, we went sour-faced by over
the chilling contents of that programme, the various
gadgets and *devices*that *tyrants*, *dictators*, and other
psychopath in power have invented over the years for
                inflicting pain on human beings (TETMD, 84).

Extract 271
In some way, it has not been a *great* or *grand* campaign
                (OEOP, 21).

Extract 272
All of a sudden, the nation began to walk backwards like
                disco dancer, introducing *fees* and *levies*, calling them by
                all sorts of names (ADWTF, 15).

Extract 273
But we the *untitled*, we who have *no title*, and seek no
                 titles, we who believe that people ought to be judged on
                merit rather than by medals, particularly where such
medals are acquired by means that are less pure, we must
                commiserate with the Guardian in its hour of grief
                (WTU, 11).

In extract 267) for instance, *country* and *state* illustrate the lexico-semantic operation of partial synonyms. In this text, while Osundare refers to the ruthless murder of a Nigerian woman for having a baby out of marriage on the one hand, on the other, he cites the assassination of Victor Nwankwo, one of Africa's most famous publishers. In both instances, he denounces these barbaric acts in 21st century Nigeria using the synonymous items *country* and *state* tocapture the location of such ugly incidents. The significant point here is that the related items aid in elaborating and as well intensifying the writer's message.

Also, in 268), where Osundare speaks on the sudden disappearance of aircrafts in the Nigeria airways owing to reports of kickbacks and unauthorized sell-offs, the following synonymous lexical items *dwindling* and *ebbing* suggest diminution or decreasing in the number of aircrafts in the Nigeria airline. They exhibit semantic unity which serves in creating lexical connection in the discourse. Through these lexical items, Osundare is able to project the theme of breakdown of Nigeria airline.

As for 269), he captures the essence of the devaluation and desecration which Nigerian citizens have been subjected to by the government. The words *taboo,anathema,a thingprohibited, forbidden, unacceptable, unmentionable* and even *unthinkable* are synonymously related. They are used to expand the writer's thematic range and also serve in clarifying the message of the text.

The following synonymous lexical items *tyrants, dictator, gadgets, and devices* exhibit thematic unity in 270). The first two lexemes *tyrants* and *dictator* and the second two *gadgets* and *devices* show uniformity in meaning. Whereas the first two refer to an oppressor; the second two indicate equipment. The discourse describes the violence from some Nigeria's notorious leaders; the implements used for such acts and equally define this precarious situation as a terrible. In all, they serve to achieve cohesion in the discourse.

However, Ekpu's discourses equally evince the use of synonymous lexical items. For instance, in extract 271), the discourse displays thematic harmony. The following lexical items *great* or *grand* share a similar relationship in that both denote large, admired, good or impressive. These are qualities deployed by the writer to describe the turnout or outcome of most political campaigns in the country. The choice of these words shows the writer's effort to expand his ideas. Also, the context in which they are deployed suggest that the campaign being referred to by the writer was marked with a huge failure.

The relationship maintained by the lexical items *fees* and *levies* in 272) is that nearness of meaning. They both denote charges and indicate the various means by which most of our schools extort money from students. The significance here as Carter and McCarthy (1988) have observed is that, synonyms of this nature function as cohesive ties which help the reader to make sense of the message in a discourse. The occurrence of synonyms equally manifest in 273) where Ekpu ridicules Nigerians mad rush for title. The lexical items *untitled* and *no titles* are synonymous in that they are identical both in denotation or basic conceptual meaning, and their connotations, which can be interchange in all contexts. Here, they are deployed to create semantic unity and cohesion in the text.

As demonstrated above, synonyms provide an effective avenue for Osundare and Ekpu to expand their semantic range. The related lexical items exploited are paradigmatically related. Apart from elaborating the writers' discourse subject; they serve as device for semantic unity and cohesion.

5.2.4.2.3 Antonyms

Antonyms simply describea lexical relationship that "exists between words that are opposites" (Ogbulogo, 2005: 30). To Wales (2011: 26), the concept is defined as the "contrast of word meaning"; and for Joseph (2015: 54) as a "semantic relation between two lexical items that are opposite in meaning". The term *opposite* as mentioned above is of different kinds. Lyons (1977) has distinguished between three types of oppositeness namely, gradable antonyms, non-gradable/ungraded antonyms, and relational antonyms. These all feature in our data and they serve as device for semantic complementarity, contrast and cohesion.

Extract 274
Contrary to the conventional legal expectation, the Nigerian
         traveller is presumed *guilty* until she/he can prove his/her
innocence… (TFMC, 365).

Extract 275
He accepted *death* as a premature conclusion in the country
        where even *life* has to be purchased with unavailable cash
        (SOST 11, 9).

Extract 276
This fear is fuelled by *doubt* concerning the present and a
        lack of *faith* in a future whose foundations appears to be
        a straw-work of trial and error (SOST 1, 7).

Extract 277
In any setting, there must be *leaders* and *followers*

(LTFOTF, 10).

Extract 278

Oldquestions still arise, begging for *newanswers* and they
                    beg for new answers because the old answers are grossly
                    inadequate (ANQ, 15).

Extract 279

He was able to make his country migrate from *poverty* to
prosperity within three decades because of his brilliance,
                    outstanding vision and courage not necessarily his age
                    (LTFOTF, 11).

Extract 274) focuses on the frequent physical search, delays and rigorous interrogation Nigerians are subjected to at the airports owing to the negative image the country has painted before the world. It is this traumatic and humiliating experience Osundare tries to relate in this discourse using the complementary opposites *guilty* and *innocence*. The first implies accountable for a crime or an offence; and the second, on the other, denotes the opposite. The characteristic of these lexical items is that denial of the one implies the assertion of the other and the assertion of the one implies the denial of the other. Here, the assertion of *guilty* indicates that the nationals of Nigeria are alleging suspects on arrival at any airport. The antonymous relationship between both words aid the writer in achieving the humorous effect he wants the message to produce in the reader and also to create cohesion in the text.

   The lexical items employed in 275) are non-gradable antonyms. They are deployed in describing the ordeal of Nigerians owing to the poor services offered in most of the country's teaching hospitals. To vividly capture the phenomena being related, Osundare employs two antonymous pair *death* and *life* as a semantic device for converseness. Hence, the word *death* is the converse of *life*. The converseness help to create a contrast between both words; also it indicates the hapless masses' preference for *death* owing to their unbearable anguish and the inability to afford the basic essentials of *life* which could have qualified them to be alive. They, therefore, prefer *death* as this is the only alternative for them to be relieved of their burden.

   Similarly, the occurrence of non-gradable antonyms manifests in 276) where Osundare relates the economic woes in the country which has heighten the apprehension of Nigerians. The lexical items *doubt* and *faith* exhibit complementary distribution and are deployed to effectively capture the writer's message. Whereas *doubt* expresses the masses' feeling of uncertainty, *faith* on the other indicates their

189

lack of confidence in the country's future. Also, the occurrence of *faith* in the second part of the discourse harks back to *doubt* in the first which in turn enable the text achieve cohesion.

However, Ekpu expands his semantic range by exploiting gradable, non-gradable and relational antonyms in his discourses. For instance, in extract 277), the lexical items *leaders* and *followers* are relational opposites. Thistype of antonyms, according to Ogbulogo (2005: 30) exhibits "reciprocal, social or bilateral relationships" which implies that there is usually an interdependence of meaning such that membership of one of the pairs presupposes the other.

As for 278), there is the combination of gradable antonyms as captured in the lexical items *old* and *new* and non-gradable antonyms as found in *questions* and *answers*. The gradable and non-gradable lexical items serve comparative and complementary purposes respectively. The relationship maintained by the lexical items *poverty* and *prosperity* in 279) is complementary. In the above discourses, Ekpu uses a variety of antonyms to discuss subjects that border on politics owing to his desire for political reformation in the country. These antonyms, apart from serving complementary and comparative roles, enable his discourses achieve cohesion.

5.2.4.2.4 Hyponyms

Hyponyms is a "relationship between the senses of lexical items of inclusion involving specific items or and more general items" (Wales, 2011: 204). In the words of Ogunsiji (2001), it is a "lexical relationship of meaning inclusion which also serves the purpose of lexical cohesion". This idea is equally expressed by Joseph (2015) who says that hyponyms is a connection where the meaning of a lexeme is incorporated in the meaning of another lexeme. Several instances of hyponyms are observed in the essays under study. They serve as device for inclusive meaning and lexical cohesion. Some of these are analysed below.

Extract 280
For the past several months, our *eyes* and *ears* have been
assaulted by another round of gory details about the
plight of a national *airline* without a functioning *plane*
(NE, 363).

Extract 281
How many millions can government hope to spend on the
treatment of *typhoid fever*, *diarrhoea*, and *guinea-worm*
when the rural water source remain a seedy puddle?
(TRGOS, 45).

Extract 282

There are gains in SAP for those who staked up their foreign
　　　　accounts when the *naira* stood one-to-one with *pound*, and
　　　　are repatriating their fortunes piecemeal, now that the *naira*
　　　　has sunk to a scandalous fraction of the all-powerful *sterling*
　　　　(TRGOS, 44).

Extract 283

Apparently, the government did reliable that it was a war
　　　　that didn't quite make sense, and that since there are only
　　　　three primary pigmentary colours- *red, yellow* and *blue-*
　　　　these would not have been enough colours to go round
　　　　(SOR, 14).

Extract 284

The *seed* must be right; the *soil* must be *fertile*, the farmer
　　　　must be diligent (ANQ, 15).

Extract 285

When Transparency International named Nigeria as the
　　　　leader in the pantheon of corruption nations, Yes, some of
　　　　us thought, *Nigeria* is corrupt, very corrupt but no, it
　　　　couldn't possibly breast the tape before *Pakistan*, *India*
or *Russia* (C, 41).

Osundare refers to the sudden disappearance of the country's aircraft in extract 280). The lexical items *eyes* and *ears*, which help to knit the text together, serve toreinforce the idea about the breakdown of the national airline being referred to. Here, the words *eyes* and *ears* are co-hyponyms connected by their common inclusion under a superordinate *parts of the human body* where they belong. Also, *typhoid fever, diarrhea* and *guinea-worm* in 281) are co-hyponyms of disease deployed as semantic device for amplification. Osundare, in this discourse, identifies some infections in the country and as well censures government's inability to take drastic measures towards eradicating them. In 282) where he hammers at government's economic policy; *naira, pound* and *sterling* are co-hyponyms of currency and equally serve to amplify his discourse theme.

Ekpu's deployment of lexical items illustrating hyponyms feature in extracts 283 – 285). In 283), he alludes to an operation in Rivers State where a law which prohibits the use of certain colours by citizens was issued by the police. The lexical items *yellow, blue* and *red* in this discourse are co-hyponyms of colour. The relationship between *red, yellow* and *blue* (specific item) and colour (general item) serves for elaboration of the discourse subject. As for 284) where he explores the various political

theories espoused by the Nigerian government since independence; the hyponymous lexemes *seed*, *soil*, *fertile* and *farmer* are symbolic. *Seed* signifies political theory; *soil* symbolizes country, *farmer* connotes government or rulers and lastly, *fertile* represents accuracy of political formular. These lexical items are in hyponymous relationship with farming. They serve as semantic device for cohesion. In 285), *Nigeria*, *Pakistan,India* or *Russia* are lexical items in hyponymous relationship with country. By capturing the countries blacklisted by the Transparency International; the writer attempts to illuminate his discourse subject. As the foregoing has shown, hyponymous lexemes are deployed by Osundare and Ekpu as semantic resource for meaning inclusion and lexical cohesion.

5.2.4.2.4 Collocation

Collocation "accountsforthe tendencyofcertain itemsinalanguagetooccurclosetogether" (Adagbonyin, 1999: 312).Simply put,itisthecompany' lexicalitems keep. To Wales (2011: 68), the term denotes the "habitual or expected co-occurrence of words, a characteristic feature of lexical behaviour in language…". Sinclair (2004: 14) defines it as the "co-occurrence of words with no more than four intervening words". In all, Hoey (2005: 5) sees collocation as the "psychological association between words…". From the foregoing, it is obvious that a lexical item derives its meaning from other lexical items it is associated with in a longer structures (Ogbulogo, 2005). Osundare's and Ekpu's essays show a great freedom of choice in collocational patterning. The following samples of collocation in the essay texts under scrutiny reflect the creativity and diversity of their lexico-semantic structuring.

Cases of collocation in Osundare's essays include: Extract 286) "The Koma people" (PFK, 4); extract 287) "the monstrous inflation" (SOTS 1, 7); extract 288) "our once bustling markets" (SOTS 1, 7); extract 289) "a sea of preternaturally grey heads" (SOTS 1, 8); extract 290) "faces prematurely wrinkled" (SOTS 1, 7); extract 291) "a tall wiry man" (SOTS 1, 8); extract 292) "the hapless population" (SOTS 11, 11); extract 293) "the Nigerian plagues" (NMT, 29); extract 294) "new exotic cars" (TRGOS, 45); extract 295) "mind-boggling mansions" (TRGOS, 45); extract 296) "champagne-drenched parties" (TRGOS, 45); extract 297) "this death-inflicting scourge" (TRGOS, 46); extract 298) "The discredited second republic" (NIP, 68); extract 299) "Nigeria's image problem" (NIP, 68); extract 300) "a corruption-ridden, disorganized, unstable and shamelessly pretentious country" (NIP, 68); extract 301) "a military sole administrator" (TU, 323); extract 302) "ant-infested firewood" (TU, 324); extract 303) "those myth making, ill-investigated, misreported sensationalism" (MBNP, 348); extract 304) "that murderous bomb" (MBNP, 349); extract 305) "powerful interest" (MBNP, 349); extract

306) "the most populous black nation" (NE, 362); extract 307) "reports of kickbacks, unauthorized sell-offs and huge private enrichments" (NE, 363).

In Ekpu's data, here are several instances of collocation: Extract 308) "morality of the nation" (ADWTF, 15); extract 309) "forged certificates" (ADWTF, 15); extract 310) "public funds" (ADWTF, 15); extract 311) "back burner" (ADWTF, 15); extract 312) "a ready-made excuse" (ADWTF, 16); extract 313) "strange epidemic" (WTU, 10); extract 314) "very important prisoners" (WTU, 11); extract 315) "jumbo jail terms" (WTU, 11); extract 316) "illegal operation" (SOR, 13); extract 317) "charade of public deceit" (AHR, 8); extract 318) "long-suffering people of Nigeria" (AHR, 9); extract 319) "national assignment" (AHR, 9); extract 320) "tenuous conclusion" (AHMIAH, 10); extract 321) "terror-machine of the Buhari government" (AHMIAH, 10); extract 322) "bloody-eyed policemen" (AHMIAH, 10); extract 323) "corrupt stench" (TKOM, 14); extract 324) "Kirikiri graduates" (TKOM, 14); extract 325) "political heavyweights" (TKOM, 14); extract 326) "finger print expert" (DATP, 10); extract 327) "money shower" (DATP, 10); extract 328) "rice racket" (DATP, 12); extract 329) "fraudulent fellows" (DATP, 12); extract 330) "memorable insult" (OEOP, 21); extract 331) "memorable fireworks" (OEOP, 21).

Collocations, in the sample texts above, can be identified for content words (like adjective, adverbs and nouns) and functional words (like articles, demonstratives and pronouns) alike. A close scrutiny of Osundare's and Ekpu's discourses indicate that semantic expressions indicating collocation are a combination of nominal and verbal phrases. To begin, Osundare, for example in 290), uses the lexical expression "powerful interest" resulting in a seeming collocational clash as "powerful" will not usually be expected to collocate with "interest". The writer employs the collocation to connote those military and civilian bigwigs who violate the rights of the masses. The unexpectedness of the collocation, "Powerful interest" creates surprise and therefore becomes semantically marked within the context of the essay.

Collocation is also often used to render prominence to discourse subjects in Osundare's essays, as the nominal expressions "The Koma people" in 286), "The hapless population" in 292), "The Nigerian plagues" in 293), "this death-inflicting scourge" in 297), "the discredited second republic" in 298) and "the most populous black nation" in 306) clearly demonstrate. For example, in 286), the lexical item "Koma" collocates with "people" to produce "The Koma people". It refers to those rural Nigerians who have been neglected by the government. Also, "hapless" collocates with "population" to create "hapless

population" in 292) representing the down trodden in the society. In "The Nigerian plagues" in 293) and "this death-inflicting scourge" in 297); "Nigerian" and "plagues" collocate in the former, while "death-inflicting" and "scourge" collocates in the latter respectively. Osundare uses these collocational pattern to signify the diverse kinds of epidemics which increase mortality rate in Nigeria. The writer's descriptive prowess is equally depicted in 298) as in "The discredited second republic" and 306) as in "The most populous black nation". In these nominal structures, content words like adjective are recurrently deployed for vivid description of discourse subjects. For example, the adjectives "discredited" and "second" are collocates of the noun "republic" in 298). Also, "most", "populous" and "black" are adjectives which collocate with the noun "nation" in 306). Whereas the collocational expression in 298) suggests the failure of Nigeria's second republic; in 306), it symbolizes Nigeria as a country. Within the context of the above texts, collocations help to effectively carve out the image of what is being discussed.

However, lexical items collocate in Osundare's essays to express resentment and disappointment as in extracts 303), 300) and 307). For example, in 303), the lexical items "myth making", "ill-investigated" and "misreported" collocate with "sensationalism" to describe how government and its aides fabricate tales in order to entrap journalists for unearthing their ills. This necessitates Osundare's resentment against government in this text. Also, the words, "corruption-ridden", "disorganized", "unstable", "shamelessly" "pretentious" are collocates of "country" in 300) used to capture the depth of Nigeria's moral decline. In all, "kickbacks", "unauthorized sell-offs" and "huge private investment" collocate with "report" in 307) to mark the different dimensions to the problem of corruption in Nigeria. In these discourses, the writer expresses regret over Nigeria which has all it takes to be a great country in every respect but has been dampened by myriads of problems.

Finally on collocation in Osundare's data, lexical items are also pressed into a satirical function, as have been clearly demonstrated in the expressions "our once bustling markets" in 288), "a sea of preternaturally grey heads" in 289) and "faces prematurely wrinkled" in 290). Osundare ridicules government's severe economic programme which has made the once busy Nigeria's markets to be inactive in 288). Thus, in this nominal phrase structure, the words "once" and "bustling" collocate with "markets" to effectively portray the market situation been referred to. Similarly, whereas the lexical items "preternaturally" and "grey" collocates with "heads" in 293); "prematurely" and "wrinkled" are collocates of "faces" in 290). Thus, examples 291) and 292) are cases of collocational expressions

deployed to highlight the adverse effect of government's harsh economic policy on the Nigerian masses.

Collocational expressions are also the hallmarks of Ekpu's discourse. On such use in Ekpu's data, it should be said that nominal and verbal like expressions function to crystalize his views, express his feelings and as well construct mental images all of which give his essays their expressive beauty. For example, some collocations in Ekpu's discourse are used to achieve sound effects. Such as the case with "Jumbo jail terms" in 315), "rice racket" in 328) and "fraudulent fellows" in 329). In these nominal structures, "jumbo" collocates with "jail", "rice" with "racket" and "fraudulent" with "fellows". These collocations are examples of poetic echoes which often punctuate Ekpu's non-poetry writings and contribute to the multi-semiotic of his essay collections.

Also, there is an occurrence of unusual collocation resulting to a collocational clash in 323). Here, the lexical item "corrupt" will not usually be expected to collocate with "stench". The writer employs the collocation to symbolize moral decadence in his country. The unusualness in "corrupt stench", while indicating how really innovative Ekpu is in his collocational patterning, specifically reveals his desire to broaden semantic range. Also, it creates astonishment thereby helping to strike attention.

Ekpu's use of special collocations, just like Osundare, often renders prominence to discourse subjects. Instances of such collocations are captured in "forged certificate" in 309), "public fund" in 310), "back burner" in 311) and "illegal operation" in 316). For example, in 309), the lexical item "forged" collocates with "certificate" to produce "forged certificate" used by Ekpu to refer to the counterfeit certificates used by some Nigerian politicians. Also, "public" collocates with "fund" to create "public fund" which suggests nation's resources. Whereas "back" collocates with "burner" to indicate the scant attention given to Agriculture by the Nigerian government; "illegal" and "operation" on the other are collocates signifying some of the unlawful acts the Nigerian police indulged in. In these nominal expressions, the collocations help to vividly capture the subject that is been discussed.

Collocation is also often used to stimulate emotion in Ekpu's texts, as the expressions "long-suffering people of Nigeria" in 318), "terror-machine of the Buhari government" in 321) and "bloody-eyed policemen" in 322) clearly demonstrates. In 318), Ekpu comments on the prevalence of hardship in Nigeria. Hence, his choice of the collocational structure "long-suffering people of Nigeria" to describe the masses' capacity to cope with such hardship. Similarly, the collocational expression "terror-machine of the Buhari's government" indicate the ingenious gadgets and devices which tyrants, dictators and

other psychopaths in the Buhari regime invented for inflicting pain on human beings. Finally, the verbal phrase "bloody-eyed policemen" refers to those agents in the police force who illegally harass innocent Nigerians. In each of these contexts, the subjects raised evoke an emotion of pity as they vividly capture the pathetic plight of the helpless masses in the Buhari regime being referred to by the writer.

As the foregoing analysis on collocation has shown, Osundare and Ekpu are prepared to combine lexical items notwithstanding their grammatical classes and /or functions to construct meaning. They are also ready to violate the normal restrictions on their use. Both writers often achieve some of their effects through the interaction between usual and unusual collocations. On the use of unusual collocations, these essayists often go beyond the normal range of choices available to them in the language code in order to establish for their own purpose their own unique paradigms.

5.2.4.3 Figurative language

As an aspect of communication, literature articulates meaning. The language of literature is configured in an artistic way, employing figurative language (Ogbulogo, 2005). 'Figurative language' is widely and efficiently deployed in literary discourses to "express ideas and feelings in an impressive manner" (Murthy, 2007: 539). To Wales (2011:160), the term "describes a very common type of extension of meaning for a word resulting to polysemy or multiple meaning". Following Platt (1977) as cited in Ogbulogo (2005: 74), the meaning conveyed by figurative language "departs from the linguistic norms of everyday language in some ways either semantically or syntactically". The figurative tropes, among a host of others, deployed in constructing meaning in the essays of Osundare and Ekpu are simile, metaphor and personification.

5.2.4.3.1 Simile

Simile involves a comparison between two events which may not be related (Ogbulogo, 2005). Murthy (2007) sees it as a figure of analogy employed in contrasting two different entities with a common quality. Wales (2011: 383) says it is a situation in which "two concepts are imaginatively and descriptively compared". Adagbonyin (1999: 332) has observed that it is anexplicitcontrast, which indicates theassociation betweentheentities "thatis beingtalkedabout(tenor)andthattowhichwearecomparing it(vehicle),withtheuseof suchpointersas"like"or"as"". In the selected essay texts, similes serve as a semantic device to derive explicitness, broaden cognitive range and heighten significance. Also, through similes, Osundare and Ekpu are able to clarify and enrich the experience they present as well as achieve precision. That they

pay close attention to them in their literary craft is a mark of their creativity as essayists. The following texts illustrate the use of similes in the essay texts.

Extract 332
There aretimes in a nation history when its abuse
past springs up like a monster and clings to its
negligent dream like an inscrutable leech
(PFK, 5).

Extract 333
Since that foul annulment of 1993, Nigeria has
been behaving like a giant in a stupor, plodding
from one monstrosity to another (NIP, 67).

Extract 334
Isn't this a situation we have come to know as
intimately as we know the lines of our palms?
(TRGOS, 45).

Extract 335
The Nigeria stink is as stubborn as the he-goat
which harbours its nuisance (TFMC, 365).

Extract 336
I hope Nigeria doesn't turn out to be like one of
                those Third tourist outpostwhere foreigners live
                like princess while the natives starve on crumbs
from their tables (TRA, 53

Extract 337
Knowing the genuine doctors from the phoney
one was something like finding a pin in a hay
                stack (WTU, 10).

Extract 338
We are like a false pregnancy: every symptom is
there but no baby (LTFOTF, 10).

Extract 339
The Nigerian political crisis is becoming something
like a festering sore which didn't receive treatment
                in time when it was just a little wound (ATFP, 8).

Extract 340
A survey done a few years ago showed that projects
                executed for Nigerian governments cost as much as

197

thrice what they cost in other African countries
(C, 42).

Extract 341

The weather is generally good just as the land is a
lush, green velvet carpet in most parts of the country
                    and all of these would generate a rich harvest
(DSD, 15).

In the extracts above, the following pairs of lexical/syntactic structures supply the similes present: 332) "…abuse past springs up like a monster" and "negligent dream like an inscrutable leech…", 333) "…Nigeria has been behaving like a giant in a stupor…", 334) "…as intimately as we know the lines of our palms", 335) "…as stubborn as the he-goat…", 346) "…be like one of those third tourist outpost where foreigners live like princess…", 337) … "something like finding a pin in a hay stack", 338) "We are like a false pregnancy", 339) "The Nigeria political crisis is becoming something like a festering sore…", 340) … "projects executed for the Nigerian government cost as much as thrice what they cost in other African countries" and 341) "… just as the land is a lush…". The relationship existing between each of the pairs can easily be noticed. This relationship provides the basis for the comparison.

In extract 332), Osundare likens the abuse past of a nation to a monster and its negligent dream to an inscrutable leech respectively. These comparisons achieve specificity in that a definite image is created; it facilitates the processing of the conceptual content and helps to broaden the writer's cognitive range. Extract 333) presents a similar situation in terms of specification of reference, though differences exist in terms of discourse subject. Here, Nigeria has been compared with "a giant in a stupor". Osundare makes no effort to offer any explanation for "a giant in a stupor": he leaves it to our imagination. However, the context in which the expression is deployed serves as a clue for the reader to decipher the writer's idea of the kind of giant being alluded to.

As for 334), the discourse shows a relationship between abstractions –"…a situation" which we have come to know as intimately as we know "the lines of our palms". The focus centres on the drastic increase of poverty as one of the principal sources of health problems in Nigeria. Therefore, Osundare compares *a situation* with *the lines of our palms* in order to clarify the experience which he presents. The lexical expression *a situation* signifies poverty and *the lines of our palms* on the other denote familiarity. Through this comparison, the writer shows that the subject of poverty in Nigeria is conversant to all Nigerians.

Osundare expresses concern over the Nigeria myriads of problems in 335). The imageries of *stink* and *he-goat* are deployed to explicitly capture the ideas being presented. The implication of the word *stink,* is Nigeria problems and that of *he-goat*, obstinacy and odor. In comparing the *Nigeria stink* with *the he-goat*, the writer attempts to amplify his image of the Nigeria problems which stink badly. The semantic extension achieved by the use of similes in this text enriches the mental range to which the writer seeks in foisting his images.

Finally on the use of similes in Osundare's data, 336) is a reported speech made by a foreigner who had visited Nigeria for a conference and is about to return to his country. During the foreigner's stay, he found that non-nationals are given better treatment than nationals in Nigeria. This necessitates the comparisons in this discourse between *Nigeria* and *Third tourist outpost* and as well as *foreigners* and *natives.* The idea painted by this foreigner is comical and pathetic considering the better treatment accorded to non-nationals at the detriment of nationals.

The application of similes equally abound in Ray Ekpu's discourses; they serve as semantic devices in which he expresses concerns over the country's pathetic plight while also satirizing its ills. For instance, in 337), he compares the *genuine doctors* with the *phoney one* in order to heighten the significance of his discourse subject. The aim here is to hammer at Nigeria where certificates are awarded to the undeserved; thus, making it extremely difficult to recognize those who labored diligently to get such certificates.

In 338), Ekpu expresses regret over Nigeria's inability to achieve its dream fifty years after independence. The lexical item *we* signifies *Nigeria's dream* and *false pregnancy* on the other refers to *unrealized dream*. Therefore, the writer compares *we*, that is, the *Nigeria's dream* during independence with *false pregnancy*; thus, indicating the non-realization of the dream being alluded to. The extended comparison here enable him intensify the significance of the discourse subject.

As for 339), the focus is on the political crisis in Nigeria. Here, Ekpu compares *the Nigeria political crisis* with *a festeringsore.* The image of *a festering sore* connotes the deteriorating state of the crisis. Through this comparison, the writer shows that the crisis being alluded to has aggravated owing to nonchalance of the Nigerian leaders; thus, making it difficult for them to fix.

Similarly, in 340), a contrast is made between the *projects executed for Nigerian government* and those of *other African countries.* The writer's aim of contrast is to uncover the moral decadence which

has corroded the Nigerian government with a view to amplifying his message. Finally in 341), the use of analogy provides Ekpu the opportunity to appreciate Nigeria's natural resources. Therefore, in this discourse, he uses the descriptive adjective *good* to liken *weather* with *land* in order to convey his depiction of the rich natural resources in Nigeria.

From the analysis above, it is glaring that similes serve as a semantic device for Osundare and Ekpu to broaden their cognitive range and derive explicitness in their discourses.

5.2.4.3.2Metaphor

Metaphor expresses "an explicit comparison of literally unlike things" (Douglas, 2004: 293). Put differently, it is an implied simile in which the two entities compared are treated as one (Murthy, 2011). Also, Wales (2011: 265) notes that metaphor "makes sense of relatively complex, abstract or unfamiliar experiences in terms of more familiar ones". Norgaard, Busse and Montoro (2010: 107) regard metaphor as "a kind of linguistic embellishment" and a contrast between two dissimilar entities where the quality or meaning of one entity is transferred or mapped unto the other. As I.A Richards has observed, metaphor consist of two parts: the tenor and the vehicle. "Tenor" refers to the subject to which attributes are ascribed while "vehicle" denotes the object whose attributes are borrowed. Equally, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) employ the terms "target" and "source" domains in their description of metaphorical structures. Where the "target" domain signifies the concept area from which the metaphor is drawn and the "source domain" the concept area to which the metaphor is applied. From the foregoing, tenor (target) and vehicle (source) must have some "similarity in order for the metaphorical analogy to seem appropriate" (Wales, 2011: 266). In creating relevant mental pictures, metaphor provides Osundare and Ekpu the opportunity to clarify their experience apart from helping them decorate their texts.

Extract 342
Nigeria is not a country, it is an insufferable
            embarrassment (TFMC, 364).

            Extract 343
Government job is nobody's job (NMT, 29).

            Extract 344
All of the world, the image of Nigeria is that
            of a corruption-ridden, disorganised, unstable,
            and shamelessly pretentious country (NIP, 68).

Extract 345
The man is a law unto himself (TU, 91).

Extract 346
Politics is a battle for power… (OEOPO, 22).

Extract 347
War is death, war is hell, war is everything
objectionable (ATFP, 10).

Extract 348
Youths are the future… (ADWTF, 15).

Extract 349
The magic paper is a clearance
certificate (ADWTF, 16).

The sample texts above illustrate prototypical metaphors, which no doubt constitutes, important facility in Osundare's and Ekpu's lexico-semantic structuring. Osundare employs synaesthetic metaphor in extract 342). This type of metaphor according to Leech (1969: 158) "transfers meaning from one domain of sensory perception to another". We are at once struck by the strangeness of the propositions Osundare offers here. This strangeness results from the incompatibility between what the reader has always recognised or understood "Nigeria" to be, i.e. "a country" and what he is now being forced to accept that Nigeria is- an insufferable embarrassment. The new proposition offered by the essayist, however, constitute the figurative level of consideration, while the literal is that which the reader has always held as the meaning of Nigeria. Despite the clash between the literal and the figurative which Osundare brings to bear on the perception of Nigeria, it is obvious that a ground still exists between tenor and vehicle, tenor being Nigeria (that which is being talked about) and vehicle being the proposition the essayist makes to describes it. The ground can be explained this way: Nigeria is anything and, therefore, can be ascribed a range of descriptive qualities. One of such qualities is what is actually presented: it is an insufferable embarrassment. When the myriad of problems coupled with the atrocities committed in Nigeria are considered generally, we see that it fits squarely into what Osundare here states that it is- only that he has portrayed it from his perspective and from how he views it thereby transferring meaning from one domain of metaphorical structure to another.

Also, 343) opens with Osundare's engaging in linguistic fabrications intended to achieve metaphorical ends. Here, we observe similar use of synaesthetic metaphor. This time he speaks about government's

development contracts and projects and how they often breakdown immediately after commissioning. The semantic aberration created by the metaphorical proposition *Government job is nobody's job* arises from the reader's literal understanding of what "government job" is against the background of the new proposition being offered by Osundare. "Government jobs" are development projects such as road construction and building contracts awarded by the government. This explanation certainly clashes with the position contained in the text that *government job is nobody's job*. For government job to be said to be nobody's job (not just compared with projects mentioned above), indeed presents some kind of oddity. Yet, the ground is clear, especially when we consider the semantic properties associated with "government job" in the context of the text. These include:

+ Shoddy planning

+ Incompetent execution

+ Lack of foresight

+ Frequent collapse

Those belonging to "nobody" include:

+ Unimportant

+ Insignificant

Now, when all these features are considered together, we see that they are share a common characteristic of + Negative, hence the ground of the metaphor. Seeing the frequent breakdown of development projects executed by the government, the essayist is not only irked by the wasteful spending of nation's resources, but also feels sympathetic to this condition. He sees the situation as a testimony to the fact that all is not well in Nigeria where majority of the citizens languish in deprivation and penury amidst its variegated resources being wasted by the government.

Other metaphorical structures in Osundare's texts are basically built into similar patterns as above. The essayist, in making his direct comparisons and yoking incompatible ideas together, neutralizes whatever semantic oppositions may have tended to exist. Semantic range is extended and ideas being projected are made to achieve greater force. This is what happens in extracts 348 and 349) where he employs extended and concretive metaphors respectively. In extended metaphor, "a number of

figurative expressions are developed" whereas in concretive metaphor, "concreteness or physical existence is attributed to abstraction" (Leech, 1969: 158-159).

In 344) for example, Osundare makes the following propositions about Nigeria: it is "corruption ridden", it is "disorganized", it is "unstable", it is "shamelessly" and it is "pretentious". Obviously, these propositions negate the meaning of Nigeria provided in the dictionary. The essayist, here, then merely distorts in his attempts to describe Nigeria. He uses a variety of descriptive features in order to intensify Nigeria's contemptible state and also to extend his meaning. This he achieves by providing attributes that it does not literary share.

Similar liberties are exercised in text 345) where, in literally creating the impression that tenor and vehicle are the same, Osundare also foists "incompatibles" and "impossibilities" upon the reader. To convey his unique vision, "the man" which represents the tenor of the metaphorical expression *the man is a law unto himself*, to Osundare is compared to "a law" denoting the vehicle. From our literal understanding, a man is certainly not a law. In fact, it refers to an adult male human. But what Osundare has done here is merely to provide semantic extensions for his idea of "the man", as one who is influential, authoritative, unchallenged and uncontrolled. Through this metaphorical proposition, we are reminded of past military dictators and past and present political bigwigs of the civilian era who greatly undermined Nigeria's socio-economic development.

Extracts 346 - 349) are occurrences of Ekpu's deployment of metaphors. In 346) for example, we are introduced to the synaesthetic metaphorical expression *Politics is a battle for power,* where meaning is transferred or mapped from one field or domain to another. The collocational breach in this metaphorical proposition arises from directly comparing the abstract feature "politics" (tenor) with another abstract feature "battle" (vehicle), which the essayist tells us it is. The semantic oddity is immediately striking because "politics" is not given the literal interpretation as contained in the dictionary. The semantic properties for "politics" include:

> + Government
>
> + Legislation
>
> + Power

Those belonging to "battle" include:

+ Struggle

+ Fight

+ Assassination

A close observation of the aforementioned features indicates that the lexical items "politics" and "battle" have different semantic properties. Whereas the first has the characteristic of + Positive, the second on the other is + Negative. To this end, Ekpu uses the negative features of "battle" to present his view about the way and manner in which politics is practiced in Nigeria.

As for 347), he employs extended metaphor to relate to the reader his view about the concept of war. Here, "War"isthe tenor (target) of the metaphor which is being discussed, whereas "death", "hell" and "everything objectionable" are the vehicle (source), what Leech (1969: 151) calls the "purported definition". Clearly, the meaning that is being conveyed here is that "War"has the qualities we associate with "death", "hell" and "everything objectionable", which in a general sense is disgusting and undesirable. Thus, meaning is transferred from the metaphorical terms, "hell", "death" and "everything objectionable" to the tenor, "War" thereby providing Ekpu the opportunity to clarify his thought about the devastating effects of the discourse subject.

To stress the great attention that should be accorded to the development of youths in the country, Ekpu employs concretive metaphor which attributes concreteness or physical existence to an abstraction in 348). The lexical item "Youths" which represents physical existence and as well the tenor of the metaphorical expression *youths are the future* is mapped or transferred to the "future" denoting an abstraction as well the vehicle of the metaphor. At a face value, this purports to be a definition or interpretation of "youths" given by the writer; but it is plainly not the definition for the concept we would expect to find in a dictionary. We therefore realize that the writer's proposition in this context is to be taken in a figurative sense. Through the metaphorical proposition, Ekpu uses the metaphor of future to symbolize leaders of tomorrow.

In all, extract 349) is equally notable for its metaphoric structuring. It provides not just a conventional explanation of what clearance certificate means to Ekpu, but also sets the tone for what to expect in terms of linguistic fabrications designed to achieve communicative impact. Here, the writer alludes to most schools in Nigeria where students are required to tender clearance certificate before they can be admitted into classes. Clearance certificate in this context is a piece of document that serves as evidence

that the student has met the financial requirement vested on him by the school. However, to project the moral decline in our schools, Ekpu employs the concretive metaphorical proposition *the magic paper is the clearance certificate* to show that in present time, such certificates are not enough to grant students entrance into classes. In notional terms, "clearance certificate" is the tenor of the metaphor – that which is actually under discussion while "magic paper" on the other is the vehicle. From this metaphorical configuration, the figurative meaning of "magic paper" is derived from the literal meaning of "clearance certificate". From the foregoing, the essayist uses the lexical item "magic paper" to represent currency notes which students must tender alongside their clearance certificate in order to granted entrance into the school.

From the foregoing, metaphor no doubt constitutes an important facility in Osundare's and Ekpu's lexico-semantic configuration. Judging from the deliberate manner both writers exploit it, it is obvious that they see it as a means of animating their texts, apart from aiding ideational focus and conceptual content.

5.2.4.3.3 Personification

Personification is another aspect of figurative language completely utilised in the essays of Osundare and Ekpu as part of their lexico-semantic structuring. It is "the attribution of qualities of life to inanimate things and abstract ideas (Ogbulogo, 2005: 86). To Adagbonyin (1999: 340), the term involves the "endowing of inanimate objects and abstract concepts with life or with human attributes or feeling". The motivation behind the use of personification by Osundare and Ekpu is to raise essences and also to draw attention to the message being conveyed as illustrated below:

Extract 350
Without doubt, it must be clear to those who still have
        eyes to see, and a conscience which is alive, that the
        greatest killer in our country today is hunger, with
        malnutrition as its faithful handmaiden (TRGOS, 45).

Extract 351
An angry dust rose from the Chaos completely oblite-
        -rating the sun (A, 321).

Extract 352
In a country which boasts of   some of the most
        accomplished medical experts in Africa, nothing can be
        more harrowing than watching helplessly as avoidable
        death makes a short work of the hapless population
        (SOTS 11, 11).

Extract 353
The parcel bomb has made its triumphant entry into
            Nigeria at last! (MBNP, 349).

Extract 354
By 1978 when the lid on political activities was lifted
            in Nigeria, a strange epidemic had gripped the land
            (WTU, 10).

Extract 355
Each time a good idea is killed the nation walks back-
            -wards (ADWTF, 16).

Extract 356
Corruption stuck to Nigeria like a mistletoe. It sank its
            claws into the flesh of the polity (DATP, 16).

Extract 357
The promises have come flowing in torrents (OEOP, 21).

The personification in extract 350) derives specifically from the expression …*that the greatest killer in our country today is hunger, with malnutrition as its faithful handmaiden.* The text reflects the adverse effect of starvation and malnourishment among hapless Nigerians. Osundare animates the abstract concepts *hunger* and *malnutrition* in such that they are made to have life to perform human like attributes. The result is that these nominals convey a vivid image.

We have earlier noted that the essential force motivating Osundare's use of personification is to raise the essence of his objects, so that greater sympathy can be shown to them. Extract 351) particularly exemplifies this. The essayist here speaks sympathetically of innocent Nigerians whose new buildings, in different stages of completion with their ambitious structures and futuristic designs, were demolished by agents of the government. While doing this, however, Osundare takes time to note that such atrocious acts by leadership on the led are inhuman. We see the *dust* through Osundare's portrait, as a human being who is capable of expressing anger. Osundare's direct address to the dust has an affective tone; it creates greater rapport between the essayist and the object and heighten emotional impact.

Abstract phenomena are largely personified in 352) as Osundare attempts to paint a picture similar to the one in extract 350). Here, the lexical item *death* is given animate potentials to help the essayist captures the overwhelming mood of fear owing to the termination of human lives by this phenomenon.

The fear, he states, exists in… *makes a short work of hapless population* in the text. Osundare gives death the power to truncate (like human beings) performing the role of an executioner.

Lastly in 353), we notice the endowing of inanimate object with life or with human attributes. The *parcel bomb* is viewed here as an invader who intrudes into a place or territory. The animation of the parcel bomb, when judged in its own terms, readily frustrates our appreciation of the standard meaning of words. For one thing, it has no life of its own; for another, it is incapable of walking, let alone of making a successful entry into Nigeria. Nevertheless, what Osundare aims at is symbolism. The parcel bomb represents an advanced or sophisticated weapon for mass destruction. This interpretation comes out readily because the actions Osundare ascribes to the parcel bomb are actually those the parcel bomb is incapable of performing literally; only a human being is able to carry them out.

The use of personification to raise essence and also to draw attention to the message being communicated is equally evident in Ekpu's discourse. For example, in 354), he refers to political activities in Nigeria's first republic. What he aims at in this discourse is representation. To this end, the abstract concept *strange epidemic* is conferred animate abilities to capture the negative politics which permeated the country in that period. As for 355), the writer depicts ugly but frequent occurrences in his country where brilliant thoughts are either jettisoned, opposed or thwarted. Hence, the lexical items *good idea* is personified to vividly capture his discourse theme. The motivation behind the personification here is to draw closer attention to the message.

In 356), the personification creates a picture of Nigeria's moral decline. The absurdity Ekpu creates in this text is better felt when we carry out a componential analysis of the features involved in this proposition:

Corruption   =   -ANIMATE, -HUMAN, -LIVE

Stuck   =   +HUMAN ACT, + ANIMATE, +LIVE

Sank   =   +HUMAN ACT, +ANIMATE, + LIVE

Claws   =   +ANIMATE, + LIVE

 What makes the above proposition "unacceptable" when the standard meaning of words is considered is that *corruption* does not have the capacity to *stick* or *sank* and does not also have claws because it is neither human, animate nor live. The verbal items *Stuck* and *sank* are property or attribute of living things. There is, therefore, a clash in attributing human or animate values to non-living or non-human

207

things. In all, 361) reflects the making of promises by political actors as a typical feature of politics in the country. Ekpu animates the nominal promises in such that is made to perform human like attributes.

As the above analysis has clearly shown, Osundare's and Ekpu's use of personification indicate that there is the limitless possibilities to which language and meaning can be extended.

5.2.4.4 Idiomatic expressions
Idioms are a "group of words established by usage and having a meaning not deducible from those of the individual words" (Douglas, 2004: 293). The term according to Okesipe and Okolo (2013: 142) denotes "expressions whose meanings are different from the sum total of the meaning of their constituent words". Idioms constitute an integral part of the lexico-semantic structuring of the essays by Osundare and Ekpu. The following are examples from Osundare's and Ekpu's data:

Extract 358
Abacha's "Death Squad and Strike Commandos" and their
          collaborators must be *brought to book* and justly dealt with
          (TETMD, 85).

Extract 359
Contrary to the opportunistic prevarications and blatant lies
          which our present economic fiasco has always inspired in
          our ruling elite and their well-preserved towncriers, Lambo
          reached straight for the hammer and *hit the nail on the head*
          (TRGOS, 44).

Extract 360
Now we know it was they who, *in broad daylight*, on June 4,
          1996, murdered Kudirat Abiola, that paragon of brain and
          beauty, who said no to compromise and insisted on the
          actualisation of the electoral mandate freely given her
          husband by the Nigerian people (TETMD, 85).

Extract 361
The playwright's immediate concern was, of course, Tanzanian
           politics and its politicians, but the satirical cap of this intense
           play would fit the head of any country in Africa where the art
           of pretence is a national obligation and problems are solved by
sweeping them under the carpet (NIP, 66).

Extract 362
In a situation where the morality of the nation has gone
*topsy-turvy,*religious instructions and Sunday schools
             are out of the window, church leaders embezzle funds

208

and consult babalawo in their fight for positions
(ADWTF, 15).

Extract 363
It's either that the judge was living on the moon at that
time or he has just returned from the Island of Bliss
or he had *something up his sleeves* (AHR, 12).

Extract 364
This is why we are a*down-in-the dump* nation
(LTFOTF, 10).

Extract 365
They may have *put the cart before the horse*or woken
up too late in the day to articulate their proposal of how
we can conduct the search for the mythical Nigeria dream
(ANQ, 15).

Extract 358) captures one of the atrocities of the Abacha regime. Osundare, in this discourse, stresses the fact that unresolved or unpunished crimes are a tacit invitation to further crimes. To this end, the idiomatic expression *brought to book* is employed to indicate that the ex-military head of state and his collaborators have violated the sanctity of human lives and hence must be punished and made to explain their behaviour publicly. Stylistically, the essayist achieves alliterative effect through the expression which in turn add rhetorical colour to his linguistic idiolect. In 359), Osundare speaks on government propaganda. He refers to Professor Adeoye Lambo, one time deputy director of the World Health Organization who exposed the principal source of health problems which government has concealed from the masses over the years. Therefore, the expression *hit the nail on the head* serves to identify poverty and starvation as the cause of health problems in the country.

As for extract 360), Osundare reports on the murder of Kudirat Abiola using the idiomatic expression *broad daylight* to specify the time in which the crime transpired. The nature of the crime as well as its timings instigated the shock expressed by the writer owing to the fact that such atrocious acts are known to be perpetrated in dark. To this end, the idioms highlight the disgusting nature of the act as well emphasizes the degree of moral deterioration in the country. However, idiomatic expression in 361) is pressed to a satirical function. The writer's focus, in this discourse, are politicians, who conceal, suppress, keep in secret or ignore Nigeria's myriad of problems instead of dealing with or solving them. While commenting on the play of one Tanzanian playwright which satirizes politicians in Africa; Osundare uses this medium to extend such criticism to Nigeria where the government is fond of

concealing embarrassing acts that they do not want Nigerians to know about. Thus, he uses the expression, *sweeping them under thecarpet* to vividly capture his discourse subject.

Idiomatic expressions are largely deployed in the essays of Ekpu. For example, in 362), they are employed to achieve alliterative effects where the essayist highlights the activities of religious clerics. The idiomatic expression *topsy-turvy* projects the state of moral disintegration in which the country has been plunged into owing to the dishonesty of religious clerics. In 363), the idiomatic expression, *something up his sleeve* mirrors the perversion of the judicial system in Nigeria where justice is bought with money and judges fail to uphold the truth owing to their . As for 364), the idiomatic expression *…down in the dump…* is deployed to achieve sound effects. The writer, in this discourse, describes Nigeria as a sad, depressed and very miserable country owing to the failure of its leaders to proffer solution to the country's myriad problems. In all, the expression *put the cart before the horse* in extract 365) captures the Nigeria scene where things are done contrary to a conventional or culturally expected order. Here, a cart is a vehicle which ordinarily is towed by a horse. This expression is an analogy deployed by Ekpu to make caricature of Nigerian leaders who place or prioritize the insignificant as more important than the significant.

Finally, a reflection on the lexico-semantic structuring in the selected essays reveals the broadness of Osundare's and Ekpu's canvas. This broadness derives from their artistic vision. Both writers exploit language's expressive means to achieve a dialogue. They thus exploit a host of lexico sematic resources to communicate their message. These are the marks of creativity which, despite the consciousness in their execution, enable Osundare and Ekpu to capture and project their unique artistic vision.

CHAPTER SIX
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The systemic functional linguistic framework complemented with Aristotle's rhetorical model adopted for this study made it possible for us to examine selected political essays of Niyi Osundare and Ray Ekpu to determine their meaning constructions, based on their stylo-linguistic choices, as well as their points of convergence and divergence. The answers to the questions raised in chapter one of this thesis have been addressed in chapter four and five. In this chapter, we provide a few remarks on our study by way of a general conclusion.

Numerous critical works on Niyi Osundare and Ray Ekpu exist, as we noted in chapter one of this thesis, but none, to the best of our knowledge, exists that has examined the political essays of both writers from a linguistic perspective and as well used linguistic approaches, as we have done here, to focus on the levels of linguistic patterning and complementing its linguistic descriptions with literary sensitivity. An investigation of this sort has enabled us to see the useful interaction between language form and function and how the complementary levels of graphology / phonology, syntax and lexico-semantics constitute the material substance from which both writers select, organises and translates their meanings.

The study indicates Niyi Osundare and Ray Ekpu's deployment of the textual form/function to combine the three determinants of registers (field, mode, and tenor) and their metafunctions correlates (ideational, textual and interpersonal) to achieve meaning in the essays. Ideationally, the essays conceptualise the real world of experience; interpersonally, they are linked to the relations that are created between interlocutors in communication; and then textually, each forms a structure, configured into a cohesive and coherent part hanging together to form a meaningful pattern. As essayists, Osundare and Ekpu view language as a sensitive tool which, when artistically manipulated, can open new paths of communication. To project their unique artistic vision, both writers are ever searching for means that would enable them to relay their thematic thrusts to convey their unique artistic stamp. The essayists' essays reveal themselves as instances of language in use and experience.

In providing an awareness of how language functions in the essays, our study has also revealed that Osundare's and Ekpu's artistic success is the result of a wholesome alliance between the what, the why and the how of literary production, with none taking precedence over the others. To put differently, "just as the container is important, so also is the content" (Adagbonyin, 1999: 325), a point that has

dramatically validated our choice of the Systemic functional linguistic model. The model has enabled us to see the wide ranges of linguistic usage in the essays, as well as their contextual implications.

For instance, findings from our study on phonology indicate the use of alliterative structures to reinforce meaning, retain information and evoke emotion. Assonantal patterns serve to illuminate meaning and capture discourse themes. Osundare and Ekpu exploit sound elision for word economy. As regards the graphological features, both writers evince a deviant use of capital and small letters to highlight and emphasize the thematic thrusts in the essays. However, italicisation provides an effective avenue for Osundare and Ekpu to present linguistic usages that are not in the English language. Apart from punctuations helping to achieve free flow of reading; they also lend some emphasis to textual meaning. The amalgamation of phono-graphic features in the essays appeal to the reader's literary aesthetics and soothes his/her visual and auditory senses.

Osundare and Ekpu also choose syntactic features to communicate. Through our exploration of the syntactic patterns of the essays, we have been able to see the range of choices the essayists make from the structure of language and how these help them to build their meanings. Indeed, a significant relationship exists between structure and semantic content. Our examination of the different syntactic features indicates that the essayists have a preference for specific structures because they serve as an aid to specific ideational contents. For example, with the employment of nominal group structures, what results is the effective description of the social issues projected in the discourse. As regards the mood system, declaratives are used for information, evaluation, and elaboration. Interrogatives elicit information from the reader; accentuate the issues addressed in the discourses and also confront their cause to proffer solutions to them. Imperatives are used for instruction, invitation, and suggestion. Osundare and Ekpu exploit deontic, buolomaic and epistemic modal markers as rhetorical tools to express their volition, desire, commitment, and obligation. Transitivity performs a representational function by allowing both writers to represent their knowledge of the phenomena of the real world through language. However, while syntactic parallelism serves to heighten the intensity and immediacy of Osundare's and Ekpu's messages, syntactic aberration on the other indicates the conscious attempt of these essayists to foreground the thematic concerns in their essays.

At the lexico-semantic level, Osundare and Ekpu exploit historical and biblical allusions for imaginative creations. The stylistic exploitation of lexical words from religion and history demonstrate the richness in their usage of vocabulary and meaning construction. Also, the lexico items replicate a

vocabulary that is vast and broad-based which indicate that Osundare and Ekpu are not satisfied with the state of the English language as it is and so must continuously manipulate it to meet new communication demands. The tension between what is to be said and how it is to be said and the essayists' full utilisation of the cultural and linguistic opportunities open to them account for their wide variety of lexemes. However, lexical relations in the essays are achieved through semantic resources such as repetition, synonyms, antonyms, hyponyms, and collocation. A remarkable point to be made on the use of lexical relations is the collocational breaches. For Osundare and Ekpu, there appear to be no inhibitions at all as to the "company" their lexical items "keep." The instances of collocational breaches in the essay texts reveal that both writers are continually seeking for ways to shock their readers, capture their attention and interest and elicit their participation. Figurative tropes such as simile, metaphor, and personification are widely and efficiently employed by Osundare and Ekpu to express their ideas and feelings impressively. As for the idiomatic expressions, they constitute a significant stylo-linguistic feature of the selected essays of Osundare and Ekpu.

Apart from the immense contribution of systemic functional linguistics to this study, relevant aspects of Aristotle's rhetorical model have also helped to drive this work. First, the model indicates how Osundare and Ekpu have engaged stylo-linguistic features to transform the way readers think, feel and act. As agents of social change, both writers employ rhetorical features (rhetorical questions, parallelism, anaphora, etc.,) coupled with deliberate persuasive strategies to tackle issues of Nigeria's sociopolitical development. This is to suggest a path out of the nation's current predicament or a solution to her current problem. However, the model aids to determine the validity of ideas presented by both essayists, the accuracy of their description of Nigeria's sociopolitical issues, the clear proofs supplied to construct their argument, the persuasiveness of such argument, as well as their ability to appeal to readers' emotional sensibilities. Thus, in relaying their personal experience, Osundare and Ekpu employ strong words that carry appropriate connotations. Both writers exploit factual events which the audience or readers can relate to their lives and as well employ precedents to argue their points. Moreso, the insights drawn from logos, ethos, and pathos enable us to see how logic and facts can be employed to construct a valid argument and as well how writers can form an alliance with the masses. In all, Osundare's and Ekpu's appeal to the modes of persuasion make their essays colourful, persuasive and thought-provoking alongside adding beauty and charm to their linguistic idiolect.

The overall analysis reveals that the configurations of Osundare's and Ekpu's language appeal to a wide audience. The dexterity derived in the manipulation of language form and function as well these linguistic resources symbolize Osundare's and Ekpu's style. Their style creates aesthetics that sustains the readers' interest and reflect social, political and economic messages. All contribute to portraying their essays as an artistic whole. The systemic functional linguistic framework supported by Aristotle's rhetorical model enabled us to derive much meaning from the essay texts and to see how meanings are revealed through the various patterns in language.

In conclusion, Osundare's and Ekpu's viewpoints, feelings and thoughts find meaningful expression in their use of sound elements, graphic symbols, syntactic and lexico-semantic features. These linguistic features no doubt serve communicative functions, which help to reinforce meaning in the selected essays. Niyi Osundare's and Ray Ekpu's essays show a tradition of outrage against the Nigerian environment of degeneracy. This is captured through the stylo-linguistic devices which form the architectonics of meanings in the selected essays.

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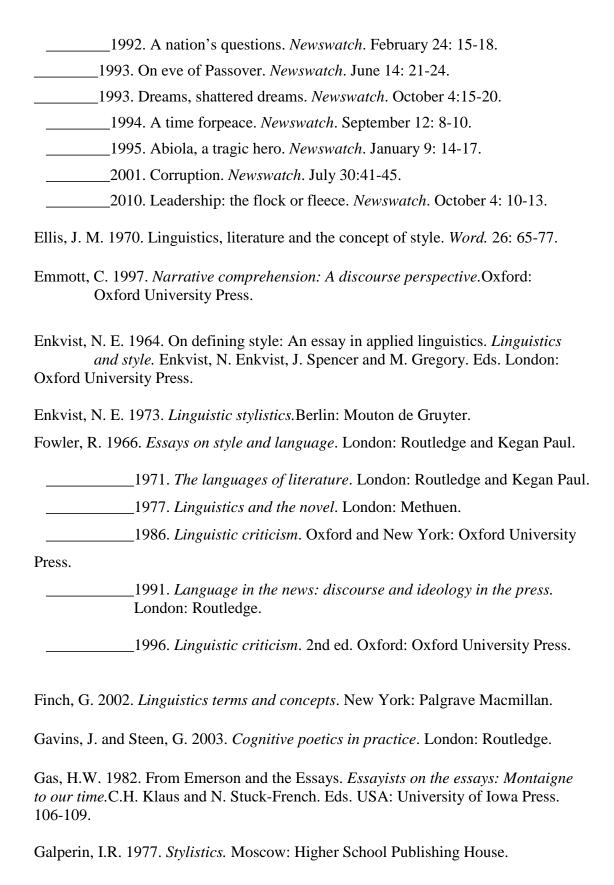
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