

Abstract

This study presents a stylistic analysis of Oyinkan Braithwaite's novel, *My Sister the Serial Killer*. The analysis focuses on the linguistic and literary devices used by the author to convey the novel's central themes of family and loyalty. The study examines the use of narrative voice, characterisation, symbolism, imagery, and other literary techniques to create a distinct and engaging narrative. Additionally, the study explores the use of Nigerian English and dialect to create an authentic portrayal of Nigerian culture and society. The analysis shows that Braithwaite's use of first-person narration, character development, symbolism and imagery effectively conveys the novel's themes. The use of humor and irony further adds depth and nuance to the story, allowing the author to tackle serious subjects with a light touch. Moreover, the use of Nigerian English and dialects adds a unique cultural dimension to the novel. Hence, the study contributes to the critical scholarship on contemporary African literature by offering a detailed examination of the stylistic and linguistic elements that make Braithwaite's novel a unique and compelling work of fiction. The insights gained from this analysis can be used to broaden our understanding of contemporary African literature as well as to inform future studies of Braithwaite's work. The study highlights the importance of language and literary devices in shaping the meaning and message of a novel.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the Study

The personality of an individual maybe a vital quality of writing in a way that how s/he writes is peculiar. There are peculiar characteristics of writings when one engages in it. Therefore, a special arrangement of language qualities with a specific disposition can be referred as style. In this regard, one's natural and physical disposition are socially backed up by one's belief, innate characteristics or membership of a social organisation. One can have in possession a peculiar variations of language. Thus, the centrality of linguistic style is determined by varieties of linguistics. It is through linguistic variations that social meaning is determined. The realisation of this occurs in various linguistic levels such as phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, etc. Hence, style is determined by the concepts of linguistic level. The word 'style takes it root from the word 'Stylus' which literally means 'reed' in Latin language. The meaning of the word reed is stick used when engaging in writing. However, style is reasonably basic which distinguishes a writer from others writers.

Stylistics is one of the macro linguistic studies. While linguistics is a broader field of study, stylistics is part of it that enables readers to uncover the hidden clues about writing or language use in general. It serves as one of the general tools in dismantling body of whole text into a bit and understandable segments. Generally, stylistics has a great tendency in helping to interpret meaning of a particular literary text. Carter and Stockwell (2008:39) posits that stylistics gives readers a point of views, a system of viewing a particular text that enables readers to formulate a constant analysis thereby encouraging them to question the use of language in the text. Stylistics is a mechanism that tends to checkmate the wholesome ideas embedded in a text through examination of language use.

Nandi (2010:3) tries to categorise the concept of statistics into two which are linguistic stylistics and literary stylistics. The operation of the former is on "values and aesthetic". Literary stylistics is an operation of literary text with linguistic tools such as grammar, syntax and phonology. From this point, stylistics generally, is a scientific method of analysing language in use. It is systematic in nature which operates on a linguistic validity. It seeks to

investigate the peculiarities of language use. Stylistics attempts to create a mechanism that is used in unveiling reasons that support distinctive selection of language by writer when engaging in a language use. Stylistics tries to examine all sort of styles that are exhibited in literary and non-literary text and the conveyed meaning by the writer/speaker to the reader/hearer.

According to Verdonk (2002:4), stylistics is the “analysis of distinctive expression in language and the description of its purpose and effect”. Stylistics tries to ask questions about the textual purposes and meaning and how these purposes are conveyed through a unique use of language. It facilitates the understanding of language meaning in the reading of literary work. The concept of stylistics also reveals the interrelation between linguistic and language. Stylistics also aims to examine textual meaning. It is a scientific investigation of how style or distinctive use of language conveys messages or meanings in a text.

Oyinkan Braithwaite’s *My Sister, the Serial Killer* is the text under study which a stylistic analysis will be carried on. This is in a way of examining the undertone of how language is creatively employed in painting descriptions of the story and many characters, particularly in Nigerian society as well as important messages conveyed to a number of literary audience.

1.1 Background of the Author

Oyinkan Braithwaite was born in one of the early celebrated cities in Nigeria, Lagos in the south-western part of the country in 1988. Although, her childhood was shared between Nigeria and the United Kingdom when her family relocated to Southgate, a town in North London. Before returning to Lagos in 2001, she had had her primary school education in London. Braithwaite holds a degree in law and creative writing at Surrey University and Kingston University respectively prior her final return to Nigeria in 2012. It is no doubt that the typical setting of the novel, *My Sister, the Serial Killer* is Lagos as the novel, to some extent portrayed the real life experience which indeed is a substantial material to the novel. Upon her arrival in Lagos, Braithwaite worked in a publishing house, Kachifo as an editor and eventually, she also worked for an education and entertainment company, Ajana World as a production manager.

After her short labour in Lagos, Braithwaite has been working as a freelance writer and graphics designer in Lagos. She has written and published many short stories in various

anthologies in both Nigeria and the United Kingdom and also has self-published works. Braithwaite and Her works have received various awards, prizes and nominations. She was shortlisted as a top ten spoken word artist in the Eko Poetry Slam in 2014. Come 2016, she also earned been shortlisted for the Commonwealth Short Story Prize.

Braithwaite published her debut novel, *My Sister, the Serial Killer* in 2018 by Doubleday Books. Her Short Stories have been published in McSweeney, WePresent and Amazon Original Stories' Hush Collection. Her novel has won the LA Times Award for Best Crime Thriller in, Morning News Tournament of Books, the Amazon Publishing Reader's Award for Best Debut Novel, the Anthony Award for Best First Novel, all acclaimed by the novel in 2019.

Braithwaite's novel was also shortlisted for women's prize for fiction in 2019. In that same year, the novel was shortlisted for Goodreads Choice Award in the Mystery and Thriller as well as Debut Novel categories. Come 2020, the novel was shortlisted for the British Book Awards 2020 in two categories, shortlisted for the Cameo Awards 2020 in the Book to Audio category, shortlisted for Book Bloggers' Choice awards 2020. In that same 2019 and 2020, her novel was longlisted for Booker Prize and Dublin Literary Award respectively. Braithwaite's *My Sister, the Serial Killer* has been made available in thirty languages. The novel has also been optioned for film.

1.2 Background to the Novel

My Sister, the Serial Killer is the debut novel written by Oyinkan Braithwaite. The novel was published by Doubleday Books in 2018. The novel is categorised among top crime thrillers in the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Nigeria. The novel is concerned with various domestic related matters as well as women radicalism as it can be deduced from the title. The subject of the novel is about the some domestic and social matters such as, infidelity, sexual exploitation, family labouring and serious crime. *My Sister, the Serial Killer* is particularly a sardonic, sarcastic and incredibly smart book about human crime. It centres on brutal vengeance, provocation and true love exhibition between two siblings. The story is portrayed in a dramatic and hilarious crime filled ways which is set in Nigerian. Hence, it deals with various common domestic and family crime related issues in the country. It is quite interesting as the novel to some extent depicted how women's vulnerability and innocence transform to be a strategic means for vengeance and revenge.

Through her invisible characters, Braithwaite tends to paint unique story of radical exhibition of women which could be more fierce as women action could be undermined most of the time. Hence, the crime thriller by Braithwaite strives to portray means of response to men sexual assault and exploitation which to her, the instances of brutality and wild actions are simply women means of self defence. Braithwaite creatively gives an account on how women can repel the method of attack by patriarchy and detonate the men's land mine in the society. While the women response could be said to be filled of brutality and an apparent crime in a hilarious way, the novel tend to seek justice and total liberty for women from the patriarchal spell and doom. The novel is generally a scolding hand and a serious mind-poking communique to the patriarchy system in the society. It tries to caution the steps men take to oppress and meddle with women emotions. Indeed, the novel is a pack of satires which gazes severely at how some men tend to relate to women in the society.

Braithwaite's *My Sister, the Serial Killer* is a novel that serious frowns against women sexual exploitation even before it crosses the mind of any man. Thus, it tends to be a serious note of warning. The novel indeed, is tension-filled story with mind-boggling incidences which can leave readers glued to it.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Every writer has his/her own choice of language when indulging in the writing task and this is what makes their literary work unique. Hence, the artistic disposition through the use of language by a particular author is simply the process of aesthetic and creativity. In research parlance, providing solution to a particular problem is the significant goal of a research. The building up of a literary work entails chains of several sentences that are systematic in relaying of some specific information or ideas. Some of these sentences may appear difficult, ambiguous and serious attract special attention of the readers as they may be source of problem in the understanding of information embedded in the literary work. The purpose of this Study is to examine the employed language and style by Oyinkan Braithwaite in her debut novel, *My Sister, the Serial Killer*. This is due to the importance of language and style in the novel. However, it is through style exhibited in a literary work that one can distinguish some writers such as Chinua Achebe, William Shakespeare, Leopold Sedar Senghor and many others. Writer's choice when writing is what enable them to create and conduct an outstanding literary text. Also, there are some elements of the society such as cultural belief,

politics, religion and education that seriously impact the choice of style a writer makes when writing.

1.4 Aim and Objectives

The purpose of this research is to investigate into the method of language structure and construction in the novel, *My Sister, the Serial Killer* thereby bringing out analysis of various characteristics of the novel. Hence, the Study stands to achieve the following objectives:

- a. To examine elements of linguistics in the *My Sister, the Serial Killer* and their impacts on communication of meaning.
- a. To examine the stylistic and rhetorical devices deployed by the author in *My Sister, the Serial Killer* and their impact on meaning making in the text.

1.5 Research Questions

The Study addresses the following research questions.

- a. What are the linguistic elements deployed in *My Sister, the Serial Killer* and in what way do they impact meaning communication?
- a. What are the deployed stylistic and rhetorical devices by the author?

1.6 Significance of the Study

To a large extent, this research is valuable and essential as it strives to make an important contribution to stylistic study through the creation of an explicit analysis and evaluation of linguistic features in Oyinkan Braithwaite's *My Sister, the Serial Killer*. The value of a particular work of art relies on the better understanding of content it carries by its vast readers or audience. This is to enable the readers to contribute opinions in any way. Nevertheless, some difficulties are experienced by readers which are often traced to the use of language by the author. Therefore, it requires great attention to embark on a research in order to examine the choice of words, sentence patterning and use of language in general by the author, thus, strengthening better understanding of information or ideas in the literary work. Also, the research reinforces better understanding by dishing out various elements of tropes, rhetorical schemes and general stylistic features and the significant roles they play in Oyinkan Braithwaite's *My Sister, the Serial Killer*. The Study also explains in general, the thematic issues as seen in the novel and the vital contribution of the novel to the society. Finally, the Study serves the role of guidance which various upcoming researches will be guided.

1.7 The Scope of the Study

The primary focus of this Study is stylistic analysis of Oyinkan Braithwaite's *My Sister, the Serial Killer*. Therefore, the Study stands to describes some particular linguistic features that are employed by the author in the novel. The features of linguistics are phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. In the case of semantics, the Study will examine features such as metaphor, imagery, hyperbole, irony, oxymoron and many others. At the level of morphology and syntax, the Study will examines features such as use of words, sentence types and use of local expression. Moreover, themes and characterisation in the novel will be given a detailed explanation.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

This Chapter reviews existing relevant literature in the area of stylistics. This is on the ground that review of literature is also applicable to stylistics just like any other fields. In this

Chapter, considerable attention is given to some concepts in stylistics, various meanings of stylistics and other related content in the fields. Various questions have been raised as regards to various perspectives by scholars on stylistics. There have been several researches by scholars and researchers on concepts found in stylistics, notwithstanding, it is considered that some of these concepts are closely related. Therefore, this Study seeks to take steps laid down through several postulations therein publications by researchers to examine how messages are transmitted through style. However, it is important to note that the information voices may vary. Thus, this Chapter entails levels of stylistics and various theories of style that are essential to this Study.

2.1 Literature Review

This Segment of this research is concerned with review of related literature in stylistics. The segment is divided into two, one aspect deal with the review of related concepts and the second aspect deals with the review of empirical studies.

2.1.1 Review of Related Concepts

This aspect of the research reviews related literature that deals with various concepts of stylistics, style, language and advertisement as well as previous researches. The essence of this is to enable better understanding of the study in focus.

2.1.1.1 Style as a Concept

According to Leech (1969), style is to a large extent the method in which something is spoken or written. Style can be considered as the identification of an individual speaking or writing. It is refers to the unique method of utilising words, constructing sentence or use of figures of speech. Style can also refers to a Latin word “elocutio” which denotes a style that means lexis in Greek. Elocutil simply means diction and the style of a language.

Leech and Short (2007) states that style as word has a distinct meaning. It can be referred to the manner in which language is utilised in a given context, by a given person, for a given reason among others. Notwithstanding, they further assert that to be on the safest ground, it will do better to consider style as “the linguistic characteristics of a particular text”(Leech and Short, 2007:11). We can refer style as both spoken and written, literary and none-literary language variations, however, by its evolvement, it particularly concerns written literary text. It is further asserted by Leech and Short that style is as the “dress of thought”, amplifying the

idea that although stylistic metaphor as some way of 'adornment' or 'covering' of thoughts or meaning is no longer available as it becomes inferential (Leech and Short, 2007:15). Stylistic devices has been prevailing since the Renaissance period in that orator or essayist deemed it fit to frame thoughts during the epoch with varieties of figures that match modes of discourse.

Barel Lang (1979) posits that the stylistic theory and the study of the style do not solely rely on the outcome of discussion. This is because style has some particular features that relates with meanings. Therefore, the style of the text can not be similar. Texts differs in terms of their linguistic forms, but they are similar.

It is noted by Cudden that "style is the characteristic manner of expression in prose or verse: how a particular writer says things." (qtd in Zeru: 1996:7). The investigation and analysis of style involve test of the writer's linguistic selections regarding his/her choice of words, paragraphs, rhetorical devices as well as the method s/he utilises them.

Lehman (1996) posits the notion of the style can be explained based on the genres, language, period or individual. For instance, taking the Shakespeare writings by scholars, the writings are ascribed to him base on his distinctive style. We easily identify such writings base on the Renaissance period and some other for the age of Enlightenment. Regarding language, German is frequently said to be identified by obscurity while French is judged to convey clarity in style, therefore, considering this notion, style can have different modes of applications.

According to M.H Abrams (1999), style can be traditionally defined as the linguistic method of expression in verse or prose regarding writer or speaker who utilises the language. The analysis of a particular style for a specific writer can be conducted base on the aims, kind of sentential patterning, choice of words and the kind of the figurative language in use.

2.1.1.2 Stylistics as a Concept

Various scholars has defined stylistics differently, however, there has been sense of similarity in their definitions of the concept. According to Widdowson (1975), stylistics deals with literary text in a linguistic manner. Base on his view, stylistics as a concept is different from literary criticism and linguistic study. However, there is an existing mediation of stylistic between literary criticism and linguistics. The mediation of stylistics is essential and

functional in the two areas. It brings connection between the two domains thereby making it a functional interdisciplinary area. It is further asserted by Widdowson that “stylistics as an area of mediation between two disciplines”(Widdowson, 1975:3). This indicates that stylistics tries to mix the both school of literary criticism involving the reader’s subjective, intuitive judgement and linguistics which provides the descriptive methods that facilitate support for response of the readers.

According to Short (1969), stylistics tends to interpret the relationship between language and aesthetic functions. Hence, stylistic analysis strives to investigate or extract the artistic components established in writer use of language and choice so awareness for each text of the artistic effect of the whole and the method of details fitting into the whole should be evaluated.

In their publication entitled, *Exploring the Language of Drama*, Culpeper, Short and Verdonk (2002) asserts that stylistics analysis is “the toolkit” for poetic analysis and it is adequately designed to assist and evaluate the language of dramatic texts. Moreover, It exhibits the extent at which stylistic analysis of prose is distinctive from that of playtext or poetry, for instance, assessing foregrounding in poetry when analysing it. This works through manipulation of grammar, lexical aspect and phonology in syntactic parallelism through the linguistic organisation and this is considered as the linguistic essence. There is a significant role played by stylistic analysis in identifying linguistic features.

Simpson (2004) states that stylistics is an explanatory method of text in which language is bestowed priority. This is because language is of essence to styliticians base on the forms, patterns and levels that comprise linguistic structure are significant index of the textual function. The relevance of textual functions as a discourse acts in turn as a gateway to its interpretation. The meaning of text is not always enabled by linguistic components though sometimes it facilitates the discovery of special kinds of meaning. The most applicable form of stylistic analysis is literature which is widely known form of writing as high art, creativity and innovation in language utilisation in texts written by authors. The text is considered as non-canonical because it is wrong to think that dexterity in the language is mainly from canonical literature. The system of stylistic analysis enables better understanding of language structure as well as function.

Hardy (2007) argues the method of relation between stylistics and computation and how linguistic and stylistic theory can approach through the utilisation of linguistic and literary devices which indicates the connective nature in spirit and matter, the interface between “the grammatical voice and the physical bodies in her texts”. Computational literary statistics enables a very easy analysis, however, it is difficult to perform. The analysis provides a vision in an idealistic manner to grasp literary meaning partly at the formal level.

Leech and Short (2007), simply defines stylistics as the linguistic study of style, which implies the language utilisation. They further asserts that style is often studied to interpret something, but generally speaking, literary stylistics indicates the connection between language and artistic function whether covert or overt, which is the purpose of the interpretation.

According to Isidore (2010), the idea of linguistic stylistics heavily relies in its method of analysis which is on scientifically based principles. These principles include the grammatical, lexical, context and cohesion and figures of speech. However, literary stylistics is quite different from linguistic stylistics in the sense that the latter is concerned with components of language while the former deals with the external elements such as philosophy, history and conception of inspiration to explain a text with unusual leaps on components of language.

Burke (2017) in his publication entitled *The Routledge Handbook* gives some limits of the poetic formalism, functionalism, rhetoric and structuralism of the past to contain pragmatic, cognitive critical, gender, pedagogical, corpus and neuroscience approaches but, the system of stylistics operates as an interdisciplinary study which is the validity of how stylistics works.

Many studies conducted by researchers has shown that stylistics is relatively a new are and the discipline gained momentum in the 1960s. At the point of its conception, it has a close relationship with the New Criticism and Russian Formalism. However, literary critics have argued against stylistics that it is rather mechanical and dormant. These arguments may be acceptable in that the objective and scientific strategies are beneficial in the description of the formal elements of the texts making literary expression to be subjective. Those subjective feelings and thoughts can not at anytime be displaced by an objective approach. However, the

stylistic approach doesn't intend to make criticism completely scientific, rather its purpose is to put criticism in a systematic manner (Amare, 2002).

2.1.1.3 Relevance of Stylistics

All areas of life essentially have connections with use of language and style and the methods of usage determine the information or meaning to be passed in such areas. Hence, stylistics is relevant in all human endeavours. Stylistics tends to investigate the artistic methods in the utilisation of language. For instance, in teaching profession, we speak of language usage in academic discourse such as classroom discourse which involves teacher-student interaction. in medical line, there is doctor-patient interaction. We also have legal discourse involving lawyers, judges, plaintiff. By this, it is important to note that every human endeavours is constituted by different styles through the use of language. It enriches our manners of thinking about language and the way it is used. Therefore, the stylistic method which is concerned with the creative usage of language enhances our better understanding of literatures and discourses belonging to these areas. There may be a stylistic analysis of a legal discourse to ascertain the authorship of suicide text in the a law court. Political discourses can be subjected to analysis for the purpose of knowledge. Stylistics as a field is beneficial for all humans because stylistic analysis is not just a mere exercise. A stylistic analyst may be of help to a mental ailed person. Even in journalism, stylistic analysis may evaluate the effectiveness of news items.

2.1.1.4 Type of Stylistics

This section of this chapter discusses some types of stylistics.

1. Linguistic Stylistics

This type of stylistics involves the enquiry of element of language in a text. It majorly deals with the utilisation of language and it effects in a text. This type of stylistics deals with stylistic analysis that heavily banks on the scientific principles of language. Linguistic stylistics is a kind of stylistics that is very simple. This is because its practitioners attempts to deduce some clarification of language analysis and design from the study of stylistics and language variation, thereby enabling the development of language theory.

Ayeomoni (2003:175) states that linguistic stylistics recognises the ground that it is insufficient to study the language of literary texts by driving attention to some specific interest that may be accounted for in linguistic terms. Nevertheless, it is established that this does not suggest that linguistic stylistics dismisses the meanings conveyed by a text. Essentially, the meaning of a text is the focal aspect of such text. However, stylistician deemed it very essential the language system that is utilised which working is within the system of linguistic stylistics.

According to Crystal (1969:44), linguistic stylistics can be considered as a pack of language devices like rhetorical figures and syntactic patterns that are assumed to develop expressive or literary style. Linguistic stylistics is quite distinctive from literary criticism in the sense that while the latter relies wholly on the subjective textual interpretation, the former is concerned with the operation of the linguistic frameworks in the text.

0. Literary Stylistics

This is a form of stylistics deals with the system of utilising language concepts and varieties to bring literary language to analysis. The main aim of this type of stylistics is to give explanations of the way literary meaning is established through some particular selection and patterning of language (as in the prospects of language in a text). Literary stylistics also deals with the method of concentration on critical reading and practising of text. Though, the notion about the role of language in portraying literary reality has been challenged by the development of literary theories. However, this does not restrict the working of literary stylistics as it still have traditional qualities. The procedures of literary stylistics is similar to literary criticism. The exercise of literary criticism relies wholly on the interpretation of subject of the text.

Ayeomoni (2003:87) acknowledges that the literary stylistic analysts become clearly sensitive to language but they are not primarily concern with the way the writer's signals are restricted, but with the underlying message which an interpretation of the signals reveals.

Knowsley (2004:73) asserts that the foremost goal of literary stylistics is to give explanation about distinctive message of the author in terms in a way that makes its relevance understandable to readers. He further emphasises that the text of literary stylistics is to enable clarity of message encoded in an unfamiliar and communal terms and provide the private message with the public importance. There is a clear-cut sensitivity of literary stylistics to language.

0. Pedagogical Stylistics

This is a type of stylistics that places focus on the use of stylistic analysis in an educational setting. It seeks to facilitate teaching and enable students to be equipped with better knowledge of literature as well as enhancing their acquisition of language. Pedagogical stylistics can otherwise be called instructional stylistics as it also studies language and style in instructional texts.

0. Feminist Stylistics

Feminist Stylistics deals with the analysis of style in feminist and anti-feminist text. This type of stylistics is concerned with the method at which women issues are portrayed in a text whether in a negative or positive manner.

0. Discourse Stylistics

Discourse stylistics is concerned with the form and function of large scaled linguistic constructs above the sentence in a particular cultural, historical or social contexts, as examined in any given discourse. This means that, this form of stylistics deals with the analysis of style explore in a discourse.

According to Simpson and Hall (2002:136), discourse stylistics sees literary texts as illustrations of language occurring naturally that is used in a social context, where analysis of discourse reflects lots about the context as well as the texts. It is further expatiated that discourse stylistics at its best will necessarily be a thorough understanding interdisciplinary, even transdisciplinary field of study.

0. Social Stylistics

Social Stylistics is concerned with the style as it relates to different societies. Every human society such as Hausa, Igbo, Nupe, Gbagyi, Yoruba, etc has specific way of life which is reflected in the use of language and texts. Social stylistics tries to examine the incorporation of culture and other social embodiment into various texts existing and peculiar in a particular society.

0. Computational Stylistics

Computational stylistics is a form of stylistics that deals with the stylistic analysis of computational texts. It tends to examine the workings and distinctive style of computational linguistics specifically in texts such as FAQ, email, voice note, text messages, voice record, etc.

0. Functional Stylistics

This type of stylistics has to do with how language and style are utilised in enhancing meaning and function of a text. It tends to focus on the manner at which stylistic devices facilitates contextual function of a particular text or discourse.

0. Contextual Stylistics

Contextual stylistics is concerned with the manner in which literary style is selected and impacted by its context. It tends to focus on the importance of context in the choice of stylistic devices.

0. Expressive Stylistics

Expressive stylistics concerns the analysis of language and style in a bid to indicate the personality of the writer. This type of stylistics tends to focus on the use of language and style to reveal the writer's inner self.

0. Formalist Stylistics

This form of stylistics relates to the text linguistics. It tends to focus on the linguistic form of a text and focuses little on textual meaning and function.

0. Stylometry

This is a type of stylistics that has to do with the use of some statistical instruments in the analysis of a text. It tends to produce data or rate of usage of language and style with the use of pie chart, bar chart, etc in a particular text.

0. Historical Stylistics

This kind of stylistics is concerned with the employment or use of style in some historical text or document. It tends to emphasise on how history of a particular place, people or thing contributes to the use of style in some particular texts such as Nelson Mandela's *The Road to Freedom*, Barrack Obama's *The Dream of My Father*, Femi Osofisan's *Women of Owu*, etc.

0. Pragmatic Stylistics

Pragmatic stylistics is a form of stylistics that deals with how pragmatic matters determines style deployment in a text such as entailment, presupposition, implicature, etc.

0. Interpretative Stylistics

This type of stylistics is concerned with the analysis of linguistic data or items in a bid to unveil the meaning or artistic function of a particular text. It deals with the appreciation of language and style and the way they contribute to meaning making in a text.

0. Evaluating Stylistics

This is a variety of stylistics that deals with critical analysis of the appropriateness of language and style in a text. An evaluative stylistician may tend to focus on the reason

behind author's use of first narrative technique, character development, use of passive voice, etc.

0. General Stylistics

General stylist is a form of stylistics that is vast in its scope and operation. A general stylistician will analytically cover every aspects of language use such as linguistics, pragmatics, semantics, semiotics, phonology, etc.

2.1.1.5 How to Perform Stylistic Analysis

A stylistic analysis is an endeavour or task that is meant to be approached and done systematically. It is not just a mere task that an analyst indulges into but a serious assignment. Notwithstanding, there are some steps that demand a good stylistic analysis to intake. These steps are called the three Rs in stylistic analysis. They include: Rigorous, Retrievable and Replicable.

1. Rigorous

This is the first step a stylistic analysis must take. A stylistic analysis must be rigorous in that there must be a clear analytical model or framework that will guide the analysis. Stylistic analysis as an endeavour should rely on a particular structural model of the language instead of mere commentary to impress. There must be an indication of serious work done by the analyst.

0. Retrievable

A stylistic analysis demands a systematic procedure that must be followed. In the process of the endeavour, there must be a theoretical framework that will serve as a guide. A Stylistic analysis demands outlined criteria that will enable other analysts to retest them and discover the way conclusion is arrived at through the analysis.

0. Replicable

For a stylistic analysis to be reproducible, the method of analysis must be transparent. Stylistic analysis must be done in a way that knowledge must be transferred or adapted. The adopted techniques or methods must be documented transparently. This is to enable others to conduct analysis based on one's work.

2.1.1.6 Approaches to the Study of Style

There are many ways we can approach the analysis of style employed in a particular text. This is elaborated by Paul Simpson (2004:3) as he gives reasons why we do stylistics,

Doing stylistics is a method of language exploration and to be more precise, it is a systematic way of exploring the artistic disposition or creativeness in the use of language. Therefore, to do stylistics is a way of enriching our ways of thinking about language and as discovered: language exploration stimulates a significant purchase on our understanding of literary texts.

Stylistics as a discipline serves as an interface between language and literature. This is because the working of stylistics is based on the utilisation of language in both literary and non-literary texts. Moreover, stylistics is a descriptive area of study that deals with various disciplines such as psychology, literature, philosophy, sociology, linguistics among others. Therefore, stylistics examines style from the following perspectives.

1. Style as Choice from Variant Form

There are various provisions or opportunities offered by language to enable one to carry out same thing. This means that an author may select some specific words in the process of describing situations or characters. Poet for instance utilises some particular words or expressions to highlight the influx of his/her emotions. This implies that there are certain possible choices for each utilised word, and an author can select a relevant word that suits their job. For instance,

Shalom is bonny.

Shalom is tiny.

Shalom is skinny.

These words underlined above belong to the same semantic field of movement. At this juncture, connotations play a significant role in meaning. There may be choice in

terms of active and passive voices of sentences. Transitivity also matters in meaning determination. Synonyms also plays a considerable roles in this approach.

0. Style as Deviation from the Norm

This approach to stylistics concerns the way the author resist the formal or conventional way of writing. It involves the writer making use of some elements to deviates from established norms to sound stylistically significant. Some writers may decide not to conform to the conventional way of writing. This often happen at the lexical and syntactic areas which are most effective in communication. The writer's deviation is a matter of deliberate act and not out of ignorance or error. The rules of language are deliberately violated. For example, some poets often violate the canonical principles of language. The essence of that is to achieve flows and musicality.

0. Style as Situation

This approach deals with the context of writing a text. When stylistically approaching a text, situation need to be considered in that it may be social, cultural, political or pragmatic. Situation also involves medium of the text which may be formal or informal, oral or written. For instance, the use of a language in the classroom is quite distinctive from the use of language in the courtroom. Context often plays a vital rules in determining choice of language. There are some certain words that seem appropriate for some particular occasions while some may be regarded as inappropriate such as taboo, abomination or vulgar. For example, it will be inappropriate for a professor during a paper presentation in an academic gathering to use the expression "that theory is fucked up". Our language choice is often influenced by some certain situations and this is effective at all language levels. Moreover, this stylistic approach is backed by the concept of register. For instance, register deals with the some certain words category base on a particular field or situation of language utilisation (I.e legalese, Journalese, liturgese, the language of sport commentaries, Babytalk, criminal language like argot, courtroom and classroom language).

0. Style as the Temporal Phenomenon

In this approach to style, time plays a significant role. The concept is concerned with the period of era in which some literary piece were written. This means that style or the use of language changes base on time. For instance, the plays written by William Shakespeare conform with the language style relevant and peculiar to his period. His writings can be clearly distinguished from that of the modern playwrights. Hence, there is a huge demarcation between writings in Old English and those of Modern English. For example, poems written during the classical period such as Homer's *Iliad*, *Beowulf*, etc were more like narrative running on thousands of lines. This style is obsolete and peculiar to the classical period only.

0. Style as Man

This approach to style is concerned with an individual specific style of writing. It deals with an individual distinguished combination of language units expression which a writer is mainly known for that makes his/her work easily identified. It is the specific characteristic features associated with particular individuals. According to Leech and Short (1981:11) traditionally, there is an intimate connection existing between style and the personality of a writer.

2.1.1.7 Levels of Stylistics

The analysis of style is an endeavour that covers all the linguistic levels. These levels include phonological, lexical, morphological, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic level.

1. Phonological

The phonological level of stylistics has to do with the study of sound system of a language. Essentially, the phonology of a language pertains to the patterning of sound and the methods of combining sounds in spoken language. Lodge (2009:8) defines phonology as the study of linguistic systems, especially the method in which sound signifies meaning difference in a language. Crystal (2006:456) posits that the study of sound occur in isolation as well as in the company of other sounds. According to

Ofuya (2007:14), phonology gives descriptions of the organisation of speech sounds in English into a system.

It is quite interesting to note that the analysis of style at the phonological level does not only relies on spoken discourse but also regard any written text. This segment of stylistic analysis primarily deals with a language sound system. A stylistician when analysing considers the description of sound system such as resonance, rhyme elements, consonance, alliteration, etc. The utilisation of these sound patterning are primarily to achieve musicality in poetry or flows in communicating messages in the text.

0. Lexical

This level of stylistics deals with lexicology. Simpson (2004:5) defines lexicology as the study of the word we use in communication: the vocabulary of a language. Lexis has to do with the existing relations between words. In the aspect of stylistic analysis, it deals with exploration of choices of words as they pertain to style. For example, there are some authors that are known for selecting ordinary or common words such as Chinua Achebe, Abubakar Gimba, etc while some authors like Wole Soyinka, Tanure Ojaide, Niyi Osundare, Abdullahi Ismaila, etc are known with the utilisation of ambiguous words which are strange for some readers. Their reason may be based on the assumption that readers must be engaged through literature. There are some writers whose choice of words are obscene. Some uses words that are obsolete. All these are based on the writer's choice or style.

0. Morphological

This level of stylistics deals with morphology which is the study of words formation, their origination, their grammatical conformity as well as the function of affixes in the formation of words among others. Morphology can be said to be the linguistic subdivision that is concerned with the way words are formed in and across language.

According to Oz (2014:83), morphology studies the internal structure of words and rules that are governing the formation of words in a language. A stylistician analyses

text by focusing at the recurring pattern of morphological process and the way writers coins or creates words which may be done through affixation or neologism. There are some authors that tend to create some none-existing words. In that way, there may be violation of morphological limitation. There may also be instances of special borrowing or hyponymy in a text.

0. Syntactic

Syntactic level of stylistic analysis has to do with grammar, part of speech, phrases/groups and clauses in a text. In other words, syntax is concerned with the principles or conventions that govern the system in which words are combined to form phrases/groups, clauses and sentences. Moreover, it is utilised as a means to study the syntactic properties of a language.

0. Semantic

Semantics is concerned with the meaning of words, phrases/group and sentences. It deals the analysis of elements that contribute to the meaning. At this segment, words can be selected for their decorative, connotative and many other dimensions of meaning.

0. Pragmatic

Pragmatics is a linguistic study that is concerned with meaning in context. It deals with the way an individual can mean something much more than what is said. In stylistic parlance, there are many pragmatic strategies of discourse like face work through face threatening act and face saving act. Author can also include the use of indirect speech (adage). Pragmatic features like presupposition may also be used by author in the sense that s/he may mean more than what is said.

0. Sentence

According to Ogungbe and Bossan (2019:64), sentence is a language unit that expresses a complete thought. It Involves the words combination which begins with a

capital letter and ends with a full stop. Awolola (2005:44) states that sentence could mean a word or a group of words which creates or expresses a complete thought.

The largest unit of grammar of any language is sentence. Generally, we can define sentence as a single word or group of words syntagmatically chained to express a thorough idea through giving statement, asking of question or making exclamation.

2.1.2 Empirical Review

This Study closely models after the research work conducted by Aisha Kinbokun entitled *A Stylistic Analysis of Dul Johnson's Shadow and Ashes*. It also models after various researches conducted on literary texts through stylistic analysis thereby utilising a qualitative stylistic analysis.

Idrisu A.J. (2017), conducted a stylistic analysis of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *The Thing Around Your Neck*. In his research, he utilises the primary text, the elements of stylistics such as phonology, morphology, graphology, syntax and lexicon-semantic elements were identified and examined.

Li and Shi (2015) conducted a profound research where they utilises the stylistic approach to analyse E.E Cummings' poetry which is regarded as the pioneering experimental poetry. The works by Cummings has attracted the attention of many linguists and stylistician who have attempt to analyse the stylistic features and creativity in his poems. In this research, analysis is also done to figuring out the foregrounding patterns and kinds of deviation in the novel.

Udofia C.E (2011) conducted a research entitled *A Stylistic Analysis of Bank Advertisement in Nigerian Newspapers*. In his research, he reveals the way language is utilised in advertisement of bank for relaying messages to the public and the effectiveness of the language choice. The stylistic elements applied in the analysis of bank adverts include phonology, graphology, lexis and syntax as well as cohesion. The research is able to find the use of capitalisation for the purpose of emphasis, phonemes, repetition of words, etc. The research is concluded with the use of stylistic devices which are essential because they enable attractions of the service and products being advertised to the customers.

Diribu (2012) conducted a doctoral thesis where he stylistically analyse four short stories by Edgar Allan Poe which include "The Shadow", "The Black Cat", "A Tale of Jerusalem" and

Three Sundays in a Week”. There is an application of foregrounding in his analysis as a theoretical framework.

Mohammed B. (2017) carried out a research titled *A Stylistic Analysis of Some Selected Political Posters/Stickers at Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Lapai*. In his analysis, there is an examination of graphological, lexical and syntactic elements of the campaign posters/stickers in IBB University campus to their communicative implications. There is also an highlight of the methods at which political posters/stickers functions as the instruments for winning the electorate votes during the electoral process.

Adane (2012) conducted a research where he chose to carry out analysis of three selected chapters (1,7 & 16) which are considered as stylistically head chapters in the novel, *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bear* by Dinaw Mengestu despite that the novel has sixteen chapters. The researcher utilises the lexical categories and figures of speech as theoretical undertone for the analysis. This research shares same qualities in that they both utilise the same stylistic approach and also use of figures of speech on their analyses.

Haruna A.A. (2014) conducted a stylistic analysis titled *A Stylistic Analysis of E.E. Sule's Sterile Sky*. The researcher places focus on lexical and syntactic stylistic elements, diction, the form of sentence, the use of local expressions, proverbs and rhetorical expression as well as tropes.

Akile (2015) carried out a stylistic analysis of selected short stories which include, “The Last Leaf”, “The Decorated Room” and “The Tragedy of Hamlem by Henry. O. The researcher analyses style of the literary works with the use of rhetorical figures, cohesion and context. The examined elements are divided into grammatical categories.

Amare (2002) conducted an interpretation of some selected English poems of Tsegaye .G Meehan, Solomon Deressa and Evasu Gorfu. With the stylistic analysis as framework. The researcher contends that the primary objective of her research is the exploration of language utilisation by the poets and discovers the method at which language communicates meanings in each of the poem. It is also revealed by the research the way themes are repeated by the poets in their performance. Amare further asserts that other objectives is to indicate the cogency of the approach of stylistic analysis in unveiling the meaning of the poems in order to arrive at a reliable conclusion of the literary pieces.

Obikobe (2016) conducted a stylistic analysis of classroom discourse. The researcher focus on some selected secondary schools in Minna, Niger State. The focus of the analysis is based on communication, classroom discourse, style and stylistics. In the research however, there is highlight of the effects stylistic elements have on the nature of discourse existing between the teachers and the students.

Ejamaka (2017) conducted a stylistic analysis entitled *A Stylistic Analysis of Abubakar Gimba's Sacred Apples*. The researcher's analysis is based on the use of language and linguistic devices deployed in the novel by the writer. The researchers also highlights the rhetorical devices, sentence types themes and characterisation.

Olufemi (2002) carried out a stylistic analysis of selected advertisement from mobile communication operators. The researcher tries to examine the uniqueness of telecommunication advertising in print media, specifically for the conviction of target audience.

Alabi (2007) conducted a research where he studies the stylistic characteristics of legal discourse thereby placing emphasis on the lexical and syntactic characteristics of legal discourse. The researcher also examines the phonetic, vocabulary, glyph, syntactic and semantic levels of stylistics. It is revealed in the research the way metaphors are used and the frequent repetition of the nouns and the use of auxiliary verbs.

This research in one way or the other shares common characteristics with the previous researches base on stylistic approach. It also models after some of the researches base on the use of literary criticism in facilitating textual interpretation. However, the research is distinctive base on the limitation of the study to some particular aspects regarding stylistics devices that are examined in the analysis. Notwithstanding, research still relates to the previous studies in conveying suggested meaning and enhancing the aesthetic value.

2.1.3 Theoretical Framework

Identifying a particular form of theoretical framework is very essential in a bid to enable work accordingly. Base on this research, it is important to note that there are personal and literary qualities which are distinctive as regard style. Therefore, when one is indulging in analysis of style, there should be suitable technique that can applies to the analysis of styles employed by authors in any texts. Leech and Short (2007) states that stylistics can be refers

as the artistic principles that are best represented as underlined in choice of language by writers.

Stylistic analysis is an endeavour that thrives to identify the artistic principles that guide the choice made by writer in the use of language. Hence, the analysis of style has to do with a wide range language characteristics, diction, sentence pattern, characterisation repetition, themes and many other stylistic devices. According to Crystal (1968:44), linguistic stylistics can be referred as the devices in language such as rhetorical figures and syntactic patterns that are considered to generate expressive or literary style. Stylistic analysis as an endeavour is different from literary criticism in the sense that literary criticism relies mainly on the subjective interpretation of texts. On the other hand, linguistic stylistics deals with the undertone of linguistic framework in the text.

The structure of writing by a writer also relies on the choice of language. Stylistics does not only rely on the meaning imbibed in literary text but also the method of language use to propel the meaning in the text. Linguistic stylistics also deals with the scientific study of a text, linguistic methods employed in a text and strives to present the advantages and disadvantages of a text and explores the linguistic elements of a particular text.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This Chapter of the Study deals with the summary of the employed methodology by the researcher for data cumulation and analysis of the data. Here in the Chapter, there is outline of procedure undergone for the research design, sampling technique, method of data collection and method of data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

The research design for this Study is based on the analysis of content of Oyinkan Braithwaite's *My Sister the Serial Killer*. Analysis of content involves the documentary material and that is frequently a quantitative analysis of documentary materials or texts which include; Journals, magazines, newspapers, books and content of all written and unwritten materials: the text could be oral or contents chained on pages regarding the differences that can be identified and reckoned. The researcher gains access to materials to be utilised through the text in carrying out the analysis in each chapters.

3.2 Method of Data Collection

The data to analyse for this Study were collected from Oyinkan Braithwaite's *My Sister, the Serial Killer* and these data were obtained for the purpose of analysis. The story is brought to the subject of stylistic analysis thereby highlighting out the stylistic features that enable the text to be unique and distinctive.

3.3 Sampling Technique

The data for this research were obtained from Oyinkan Braithwaite's *My Sister, the Serial Killer*. The novel does have specific division, however has seventy-five chapters with each chapter having its own title. It is seen that there is recurrence of some titles of some chapters in the novel. Each chapter has a distinctive narration or just presentation of scene but the

chapters collectively narrate a unique story. The story contains a variety of literary styles. The adopted sampling technique for this Study is called panel sampling technique. This sampling technique is best suitable for research of this nature. However, the adoption of the sampling technique is in a bid to enable the researcher place adequate focus on the rhetoric and stylistic devices that are deployed by the author of the novel.

3.4 Method of Data Analysis

Specifically, this research utilises linguistic-stylistics and rhetorical analysis as the method of data analysis. The analysis is established on the foundation of stylistic framework and the reason for this that stylistics is often considered to mean the particular way language is utilised in a specific situation or context. Thus, the analysis would be conducted in a bid to investigate the phonological, lexical, morphological, syntactic, semantic semiotic features and figures of speech deployed in the novel.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the stylistic devices presented in Oyinkan Braithwaite's *My Sister the Serial Killer* are analysed. The researcher tends to focus on the stylistic elements that are lexical, syntactic, semantic, morphological, and phonological in the text. Further in the chapter, the presentation of various characters, subject matters as well as the use of language are also explored.

4.1 Data Analysis

4.1.1 Analysis of Linguistic Features

A feature in linguistics is any attribute that is utilised to categorise a word. The following language elements can be found in Oyinkan Braithwaite's *My Sister the Serial Killer*:

1. **Epithet:** this is used to draw attention to the purpose and logical significance. It enables a writer to imply some worry about the subject being conveyed. In the text, such examples include:

“a black smiley face”(p.8)

This phrase is used to describe the state of the shower mat in Femi's house when Korede happens to be scrubbing Femi's blood in a bid to clear Ayoola's mess of stabbing him to death.

“her big brown eyes”(p.9)

This phrase is used to describe Ayoola facial look after been guilty of killing her boyfriend, Femi. Hence, the look on her to Korede as Ayoola is afraid that she will get angry.

“onion-stained breath”(p.13)

This phrase is utilised to describe the breath coming of Femi when he was arguing with Ayoola. It is at the moment of the argument Ayoola stabs him to death in defense of herself.

“her small frame, long eyelashes and rosy, full lips”(p.14)

These terms are used to describe Ayoola at the moment she stabs her boyfriend, Femi. She intends to warn and keep him off abusing her with the knife with her before she stabs him. .

“talkative people”(p.23)

This terms is used to describe patients who come for medical consultations with doctors as they seems to take much time with the doctors explaining their travail or medical condition.

“angelic face.”(p.26)

This phrase is used to describe Ayoola when she was in Korede bedroom after they have successfully cleared off the mess of Femi's death.

“shiny look” (p.100)

This phrase is utilised by Korede to describe Ayoola's car after the case of Femi's death resurface as the police officers further their investigation, thereby taking with them Korede's car for examination.

“trim figure”(p.108)

This phrase is used by Korede to describe Gboyega's wife body figure as she admires and wonders how she maintain her body shape despite after giving birth to three male children.

0. **Dialectal Words:** this describes the speaker's geographic origins and locale. It lends flavor to Oyinka Braithwaite writing. She employs native vocabulary from Yoruba dialects.. Examples include:

“Osa”(p.27)

This is a popular river in Lagos State, known in English as Lagoon. The term is used to refer to the the situation when a bus conveying passengers dives in the water.

“ẹf ọ”(p.52)

This is one of the species of vegetables. It's otherwise or popular referred to have green leaf in English. The term is used when Korede is having her meal while at work.

“a sọ ẹ”(p.76)

This is a Yoruba term meaning dress or wears in English. The term is used when Ayoola is getting ready for a date with Tade.

“Maga”(p.105)

This terms means gullibility or ignorance in English. The term is used when Korede finds out Ayoola has been lying to her on paying her bills to register for a fashion course or training online.

“Ẹ jọ o”.(p.105)

The Equivalent of this Yoruba term in English is “please “. This is used by Gboyega to plead with Korede not to spit in his requested tea as she discovers he is married yet still flirting with her sister Ayoola.

Oko mi”(p.109)

This terms meanin ‘my husband’ in English. The term is used in a social media post by Gboyega's wife as she is celebrating their wedding anniversary. The text is

uncovered when Korede is reading through Gboyega's wife post on a particular Social Medium, Instagram.

"Juju"(p.173)

This term refers to fetish substances used to enchant someone. The term use by Muhkar's wife who alleged that Korede has enchant her husband.

0. Alliteration: this is the use of the same consonant twice in a single sentence. It is applied to give a text a musical impression. In the text, such examples include:

"**Then there's the** shower mat".(p. 8)

The expression above has the dental fricative voiced repeated in the line. The expression is used to refer to the Femi's shower mat.

"they **wanted what they wanted when they wanted it.**".(p.13)

The emboldened area is represented by the labio-velar approximant /w/. The expression is used in regards to their choice with women anytime they wish.

"He shifts **from foot to foot**"(p.22).

The labio-dental fricative voiceless is repeated in the above expression. The expression is used to describe the situation when Korede is questioning Mohammed in the hospital.

"In **her hands** is **his** phone"(p.66)

In this expression, the glotta fricative voiceless is repeated. The expression refers to when Ayoola is with Tade and inviting Korede to come along for a lunch while at work in the hospital.

"**He hugs her** tight, burying **his head** in **her hair.**"(p.120)

Again the glotta fricative voiceless is repeated in the expression. This refers to when Gboyega gives a surprise visit to Ayoola as both of them hug.

"I think of Tade downstairs, **smiling his signature smile and staring at Ayoola** "(p.122)

The alveolar fricative voiceless/s/ is repeated in the above expression. The expression is used by Korede describing Tade feeling while being with Ayoola.

"I head back to the center of the **party** and start **picking up paper plates** again."(p.128)

In this expression, the bilabial plosive voiceless is repeated. The expression is used to describe the Korede situation when she tries to snub Tade at a party while he is hugging Ayoola.

"**He has** recently **had his hair** cut"(p.157).

The glotta fricative voiceless is repeated again in this expression. The expression is used to describe Tade look when he and Korede are having conversations.

“After I tire of **tossing and turning**”(p.167)

The alveolar plosive voiceless/t/ is repeated here. This expression describes Korede inefficiency to rest well, hence moving into Ayoola’s room to relax.

0. **Synonym:** this is a word that means the same thing or nearest in meaning. Examples from the text are:

“ I want to **shout and scream**”(p.106)

This expression is used to convey the extent at which Korede is angry at Ayoola for blindly dating a man that is married. The emboldened phrase is to show the level of intense at which she wish to let her Ayoola know that she will deal with her situation if she gets into another one.

“Muhtar, you are there acting all **high and mighty**”(p.174)

Emboldened phrase used to show the level Mukhtar’s wife alleged her husband for refusing to allow his son marriage. The expression conveys her dissatisfaction over Mukhtar’s decision.

0. **Antonym:** this means words that are opposite in meaning. Examples from the text include:

“life, and death.”(p.8).

This phrase is used by Korede to indicate her satisfaction in cleaning off the mess caused by her sister who stabs her boyfriend, Femi over arguments and out of purported self-defense.

“better or worse”(p.46)

This phrase is used to describe the health condition Mukhtar who is in coma. The phrase demonstrates stagnant health status.

“on and off”(p.77)

This phrase is used to describe the action by Korede as she controls the air conditioner due to her inability to sleep.

“inside out.”(p.128)

This phrase is used by the narrator, Korede to describe her state of jealousy over Ayoola and Tade's relationships as she does not wish them together due to her interest in Tade.

“alive or dead.”(p.196)

This phrase is used to refer to patients in the hospital that they do not come to permanently stay in the hospital. They must leave whether alive or dead. By the phrase Korede is referring to Mukhtar who happens to be set to leave the hospital after recovery.

0. Jargon: these are terms that are recognised and utilised by some particular group of people bound by different professions. All Instances of jargon in the text are in common or associated with medical professions as some portion of the novel is set in hospital. These include:

“nurses”(p.20)

This terms is used when Korede who happens to be among the nurses in the hospital talks about the change of uniforms which she refuses to change.

“Hospital”(p.20)

This term is used when Korede refers to the new rules or decisions by the hospital administration where she works, to change the nurses outfit colour from white to pale pink.

“diabetes—type 2”(p.21)

This terms refers to a medical or health condition that Mrs Rotimi is suffering from as she seeks consultation with the doctor in the hospital.

“Comatose”(p.24)

This is also a medical or health condition that Mukhtar suffers for five months while he is in the hospital.

“blood sugar test”(p.35)

This terms refers to a test or check up of the level of sugar in human body system. The test is recommended for a patient who seeks consultation but ends up disagreeing over price to pay to carry out the test.

“Patient”(p. 46)

This is refers to someone taking treatment in the hospital. The term is used to refer Mukhtar who happens to be Tade's patient.

“Paralyzed”(p.99)

The term refers to a state when one can no longer have control to move one's body. Korede uses the term to describe her state when the police officers want check her car in a bid to further investigation on Femi's death and disappearance.

“PET scan.”(p.131)

The PET is an abbreviation for Positron Emission Tomography. The terms are used when Korede is trying to give excuses as she feels trapped in a discussion with Dr. Akigbe.

“Head nurse”(p.131)

This term is used when Dr. Akigbe announces the promotion of Korede from nurse to Head Nurse in the hospital.

“Neurological”(p.133)

This term is used by Dr.Akigbe when he having a discussion with Korede over one of their patients, Mukhtar who happens to be in coma.

“Physiotherapy”(p.144)

This is a medical process for examination or assessments. The term is used by Korede to refer to Mukhtar when the being awake from coma news comes around.

“Radiology”(p.177)

This is also a medical process or checkup. The term is used by Korede to talk about the absence of Tade who takes a patient to under go the process.

“ECG”(p.178)

This abbreviation refers to ‘Electrocardiography’. It also a medical process or checkup. The term is used when Tade's office is ransacked when he takes a patient for the checkup.

“Stethoscope”(p.196)

This term refers to a medical instrument in the hospital. Korede use the term to refer to Mukhtar who is bound to leave the hospital as he is not an instrument there.

0. **Euphemism:** this implies that offensive terms are being swapped out for their less offensive equivalents. Throughout the text, euphemisms like these are used:

“It takes a whole lot longer to dispose of a body than to dispose of a soul”.(p.16)

This expression is used in place of talking about disposing human corpse. The expression is used when Korede and Ayoola are trying to dispose Femi's corpse into the Lagoon to clean up the mess Ayoola causes.

“he will waste away”(p.24).

The expression is used to talk about death. This is used when Korede is referring to Mukhtar’s health condition as his coma condition seems to get worse as he becomes thinner.

“shutting off his life support is best for everyone”(p.25)

This expression is used in place of killing. This is used by Korede to alleged that Mukhtar’s children may be fed of his health condition and may wish to kill him by shutting his life support.

“she has sent another man to his grave prematurely”(p.34)

This is used to mean killing of someone that is still young. The expression is used by Korede with the impression that Ayoola has gone to kill another man as she receives her call on phone.

“Femi is probably swelling to three times his size”(p.132)

This expression is used in place someone’s corpse getting decayed. The expression is thought by Korede as she worries about Tade hanging out with Ayoola because he may end up just like Femi who she kills.

“Assibi and Gimpe locked together”(p.135).

This expression is to describe a fighting situation between two people. This is used when Assibi and Gimpe engage in a physical fight in the hospital.

“Not the inanimate Femi.”(p. 152)

This sentence is use in place of someone’s corpse which has decayed. The expression is used by Korede who talks about having a dream about Femi but not the Femi murder by Ayoola.

0. **Syntactic Parallelism:** This is often referred to as parallel structure or parallel construction. It is a concern with the harmony of similar clauses or phrases with similar grammatical patterns inside one or more sentences. Syntactic parallelism examples include:

“Her leg is dangling off one end, her arm dangling off the other.”(p.26)

The two sentences in this structure as the same grammatical structure of SVA (subject+verb+adjunct). The expression is used by Korede to describe Ayoola’s posture while she is in her room.

“Hers is the body of **a music video vixen, a scarlet woman, a succubus**”(p.26)

The emboldened phrases that embedded in the sentence have similar phrasal structure. The expression is used to refer to the body posture and figure of Ayoola.

“Osa straight! Osa straight!”.(p.27)

This exclamatory sentence have similar sentential structure of SV (subject +verb). The expression is used to refer to the situation when a bus conveying passengers dives in the water.

“the tears I have no right to burn **my nose, my cheeks, my lips.**”(p.30)

The noun phrases emboldened have similar phrasal pattern of DN (determiner +noun). The expression is used when Femi’s mother call Ayoola to enquire about her son which she murders. Hence, Ayoola and Korede get emotional as Femi’s mother breaks into weeping.

“I know, I know”.(p.46)

The two sentences have similar simple sentence structure of SV. The expression is used by Tade to clarify that he is aware Mukhtar is alive but with his coma situation, his fate maybe to die soon.

“She doesn’t notice as I approach her with the needle. She doesn’t budge as I wipe her thigh with an alcohol swab”(p.49)

The two sentences have some complex sentence structure. The expression is used when Korede wants to a young patient an injection.

“we share **the same mouth, the same eyes**”.(p.53)

This emboldened phrases have some NP patterning. The expression is generally use to refer to the slight resemblance between Korede and her sister, Ayoola.

“no rent and no mortgage”(p. 60)

The compound sentence has two sentences of similar syntactic structure. The expression is used by Korede to talk about their freedom of residence after the death of her father.

“It is the smell **of sweat, of unwashed hair, of cleaning products, of decomposed bodies under a bridge**”(p.65)

The above structure has embedded prepositional phrases with similar structure of P+NP. The expression is used by Korede to refer Mohammed when he is flirting Gimpe in the Hospital.

“She doesn’t return till 1 a.m. I don’t sleep till 1 a.m.”(p.106).

The two sentences have similar syntactic pattern of S+V+A. The expression is used to talk about when Ayoola decides to go on a date with Gboyega and she returns by 1am.

“Burning on our backs;
on our scalps,

on our minds—”(p.126)

The emboldened phrases have some phrasal patterning of preposition + noun phrase. The expression is used metaphorically to talk about the nature of African nature. The expression is extracted from the poem published on Femi’s website.

“You stand over there, you stand over there.”(p.136)

The two sentences perfectly match in terms of syntactic structure of S+V+A. The expression is used by Korede when she was issuing warning to Assibi and Gimbe when they engage in a fight.

“I divorce you. I divorce you. I divorce you.”(p.197).

The three sentences share exactly same syntactic structure of SVO. The expression is used by Mukhtar to refer to his wife over her utterance which can not be retrieval once spoken.

0. **Acronym**

“LASTMA”(p.32)

This acronym means Lagos State Traffic Management Authority. This is used to refer to the officer of the traffic officer who draws Korede attention while she is driving to dump Femi’s remains in the Lagoon.

“TV”(p.35)

The meaning of this acronym is Television. This is used as Korede notices a television set at the reception of the hospital.

“PET”(p.131)

Positron Emission Tomography is referred to as PET. As Korede is trying to make an excuse because she feels uncomfortable in a conversation with Dr. Akigbe, the expression is used.

“ECG”(p.178)

This acronym stands for "Electrocardiography." It is a medical procedure or examination. The term is used when Tade takes a patient in for a checkup, and upon his return Tade's office has been looted.

“NTA”(p.195)

This means Nigeria Television Authority. This is used to refer to Korede’s father who decides to settle to watch NTA channel on the TV.

0. **Asyndeton:** This is the practice of omitting conjunctions and connectives from writings when they are necessary since the phrase flows more naturally without them. Examples are:

“I was tempted **to pray, to beg** that no door be opened as we journeyed from door to lift”(p.17).

The emboldened area in this sentence requires conjunction or a connective. The expression is used when Korede and Ayoola are about to step out of Femi’s apartment with his corpse.

“Her leg is dangling off **one end, her arm** dangling off the other.”(p.26)

The area emboldened requires a connective or conjunction to join the sentences together. The expression is used to describe Ayoola’s posture in Korede room.

It is the smell of sweat, of unwashed hair, of cleaning **products, of decomposed** bodies under a bridge”(p.65)

A connective or conjunction would perfectly suits the area embolden. Korede uses the expression to refer how Gimbe smells while she was addressing her after noticing her being flirtatious with Mohammed.

0. **Reduplication:** this is concerned with the repetition of words with a slight change. Instances from the text includes:

“Ayoola **huffed and puffed**”.(p.16)

This expression describes a reaction from Ayoola when she and Korede are packing up Femi’s corpse after she stabs him to death.

“pitter-patters”(p.27)

This phrase is utilised to describe the reaction or sound effect when Ayoola is urinating in a ceramic bowl in the toilet.

“they oohed and aahed.(p.41)

This expression describes the reaction derived by the guest from cross-examination of knife own by Korede’s father.

0. **Compounding:** This is a word made up of parts that are themselves words. For example:

“never-been-used”(p.8)

This compound terms above is used to describe Femi’s room by Korede. This is when she is cleaning up Femi’s room in order to clear the mess Ayoola has caused by killing Femi.

“pitch-black”(p.10)

This term is used by Korede to describe the nature around third mainland bridge when she and Ayoola are about to dispose Femi's corpse.

“cross-legged”(p.11)

This term is used by Korede to describe the posture by Ayoola when they are discussing after successfully clearing off Femi's corpse.

“make-believe”(p.17)

This term is used by Korede to describe any witness that may come across her and Ayoola when they are taking off Femi's corpse from his apartment to the lagoon.

“history-rich”(p.60)

This term is used by Korede to describe the state of their house in terms of economic value and appearance state.

0. **Allusion:** This has to do with making reference specifically to a famous historical or religious text. There are several allusions throughout the text, including:

”He looked like a man who could survive a couple of flesh wounds, but then so had Achilles and Caesar”(p.16).

In the above expression, special reference is made to the classical Greek characters. The expression is used by Korede as she compares Femi to the Greek characters in that he could survive multiple wounds on his body.

“Mary Had a Little Lamb.”(p.48)

This expression is a special reference to the character of Mary in Biblical scriptures. The expression is used when Tade is attending to a patient as he needs to make fun with the patient daughter, hence the need to sing a song with the title “Mary Had a Little Lamb” base on his character as a person.

“She was Medusa and they were statues before her.”(p.107).

This expression is made to give special reference to one of the Ancient Greek goddesses called Medusa. The expression is used to describe Korede's mother fierce reaction to her father over infidelity.

4.1.2 Analysis of Stylistic and Rhetorical Devices

A technique used by writers to achieve a certain purpose—conveying meaning to the reader—is known as a rhetorical or stylistic device. Through the use of language, it causes

the readers to feel something. These are some of the devices employed in *Shadows and Ashes*:

1. **Oxymoron**: combines features that are in conflict. Textual illustrations are:

“I have first scrubbed the bathroom of all traces of **life, and death.**”(p.8)

This phrase is used by Korede to indicate her satisfaction in cleaning off the mess caused by her sister who stabs her boyfriend, Femi over arguments and out of purported self-defense.

“a **black** smiley face on a yellow rectangle in an otherwise **white** room.”(p.8) .

This phrase is used to describe the state of the shower mat in Femi’s house when Korede happens to be scrubbing Femi’s blood in a bid to clear Ayo OLA’s mess of stabbing him to death.

“the fork was to **the left** of the plate, the knife to **the right.**”(p.9).

This expression is used to describe the Korede state of about to have her meal when she gets a distress call from Ayoola over the death of Femi who she stabbed.

“He hasn’t gotten **better or worse**”.(p.46).

This expression is used when Tade is going through Mukhtar’s document to see whether his health condition has improve or not.

“my anger and self-pity”(p.70)

The phrase is used by Korede when she is trying to convince Ayoola out of jealousy and safety for Tade that he is not the kind of man she needs. The expression describes Korede’s state as she is angry at Ayoola and pitying Tade over what Ayoola may end up doing to her.

“That’s null and void now”(p.132)

This expression is used by Korede to describe when her hope for dinner with Tade is dashed as Tade begins to pick interest in her sister, Ayoola.

“eyes closed, mouth open.”(p.137)

This expression is used to describe one of the nurses in the hospital, Yinka’s state when she is sleeping while at work.

0. **Epizeuxis**: is the use of a word or phrase immediately after another. The text provides the following examples:

“But **I don’t know. I don’t know** what she is referring to.”.(p.11)

This expression is used by Korede in response to Ayoola claim that it is not her fault for killing Femi. Korede’s thought is a way of wondering what exactly takes place at the scene.

“I know, **I told him, I told him** all the time it was not safe.”.(p.30)

The expression is utilised by Femi’s mother to lament the death and disappearance of Femi. She uses the expression to indicate that she warns Femi from night jogging.

“with a message begging **anyone, anyone**, to come forward”.(p.29)

This sentence is utilised to indicate Ayoola hypocritical concern over the death and disappearance of Femi. She indicates her concern by making a post on the instagram.

“**Excellent, excellent.** I wasn’t here then.”.(p.130)

This statement is utilised when Dr. Akigbe is addressing Korede and in the process narrating the history of St. Peter’s Hospital to her. He intends to talk about how the hospital has been doing excellent.

“Do these things and he will put a ring on your finger, **fast fast.**”(p.81)

This expression is used by Korede’s Aunt when she is educating both Korede and Ayoola about how to attract men. The essence of the discussion to inform them about the need to find a man to marry.

0. Polypoton: this is the use of words with the same root many times. The text presents the following examples:

“It is **small, smaller** than the palm of my hand.”(p.11)

This expression is used by Korede to describe the note book she used in documenting her daily experiences especially notable experiences.

“He was **thin** when he got here, but has gotten **thinner** still”.(p.24)

This expression is used to describe the state or condition of Mukhtar when he gets in the hospital and after spending some days in the hospital while in coma.

“She **cries** for her lost youth, her missed opportunities and her limited options. She does not **cry** for me, she **cries** for herself.”(p.195)

This expression is a dialogue by Mukhtar when he is explaining to Korede about his wife who misses opportunities in life when she visits him in the hospital to lament why he is insubordinate to their son’s marriage.

“I **blink, blink** again and swallow.”(p.196)

This expression is used to describe Korede's position and state when she is with Mukhtar on the day he is to be discharged. The expression indicates her guiltiness over the her and Ayoola's secret that is expose to Mukhtar by her when she thought been in coma would completely shut the patient out of the physical world.

0. **Symploce:** this entails starting a series of sentences with a specific set of words. In the text, such examples include:

"I am not angry. If I am anything, I am tired".(p.9)

This expression is used to describe the state at which Korede is when she is trying to clean the scene where Ayoola stabs Femi in a bid to cover up the murder case for her sister.

"I want to believe her. I want to believe it was self-defense..."(p.87)

The statements is used by Korede to reestablish her conviction that all the murders committed by Ayoola are all done out of self-defense.

"I was furious. I was convinced Somto deserved it."(p.87)

This statement is also used to illustrate her conviction that Ayoola murdering Somto is justifiable as he deserves the death because she kills him out of self-defense.

"I cleaned that car. I cleaned it within an inch of its life".(p.100)

This statement is used by Korede to reiterate to herself that she cleans her car which is used to convey Femi's corpse to Lagoon where they dump the corpse. This expression is to assure herself that she has done a perfect job to avoid any suspicion.

"He was offered drinks and snacks. He was coaxed into talking about himself. He was even shown the knife."(p.168).

This expression is used when Korede's father has a visitor who is interested in marrying Ayoola. He is welcome by Korede's father warmly.

"She can't be dead. She can't be"(p.184)

This statement is made by Korede when she quickly rush to Tade's house after receiving a distress call from her. She thinks that Ayoola can not be dead as she has been stabbed by Tade.

0. **Assonance:** this is the repetition of some vowel sounds to achieve melody. Examples from the text include:

"Is it in the blood? But his blood is my blood and my blood is hers."(101).

In the above expression, the vowel sound / **ʌ** / appears multiple times. This expression is used by Korede to describe her father who she believes he is so much like Ayoola who feels guiltless after committing an offense.

“I can’t **bake save** my life,”(p.142)

The emboldened area has the diphthong, /ei/ as the sound is repeated in the sentence. The expression is used by Ayoola to inform her inability to cook to Tade who has the belief that she is a good cook.

0. Personification: this entails endowing inanimate objects with human or animal trait. To make an item act like a human, in other words. In the text, such examples include:

“The lift dinged just in time and opened its mouth for us”(p.17).

This expression is used when Korede and Ayoola are conveying Femi’s corpse to the Lagoon as they make use of the lift instead of the staircase in a bid to clear the mess or murder case that Ayoola causes.

“Google is your friend”(p.20).

This statement is used when Tade and Korede are having a conversation while Tade is attending to a patient, Mrs Rotimi.

“Her dreadlocks shield her face”(p.68)

This statement is used when Korede bursts into Ayoola room. The expression is used to describe Ayoola’s posture while in the room.

“it invades my dream”(p.77)

This statement is used when Korede’s mother is complaining about the destruction of the rose Tade gifts Ayoola. Korede destroys the rose out of insecurity as she is jealous of Tade’s closeness to Ayoola.

“a white T-shirt that hugs his body”(p.127)

This expression is used to describe Tade’s appearance and his outfit when he comes to visit Ayoola and to take her out for dinner.

“The case screams “high profile.”(p.203)

This statement is used to describe the attempting murdering case between Tade and Ayoola when Tade stabs her in his house.

“fire licks the tips of my fingers.”(p.208)

This expression is used to describe the situation when Korede swing into action in burning Mukhtar’s contact after been discharged from the hospital.

0. **Metaphor:** this has to with expression that describes someone or something by making reference to something that is thought to share traits with that person or thing. Instances in the text include:

“we gave a man to the sea”.(p.37)

This expression is used by the Korede when comes across Ayoola in a room dancing to a song. She then thinks of the them disposing Femi’s corpse into the Lagoon.

“she has a big laugh”(p.66)

This expression is used by Korede to describe the manner at which Ayoola laughs when she is with Tade in his office when she visits Korede in the hospital.

“She was Medusa and they were statues before her.”(p.107).

The expression is used to describe Korede’s mother fierce reaction to her father over infidelity issues in the family.

“no amount of cleaning will remove the memory of them.”(p.111)

This expression is used when the police officers return Korede’s car after examining the car for investigative purpose over the death and disappearance of Femi.

“But her eyes are on fire”(p. 119)

This expression is used to refer the reaction of Gboyega at the point of death when he visits Dubai with Ayoola. It is assumed that he is poisoned by Ayoola but the news carry it that he dies as result of drugs overdose.

“His two sons stand rod straight”(p.134).

This expression is used to describe Mukhtar’s sons when they visit him in the hospital after hearing about his resuscitation to live from coma.

0. **Hyperbole:** this means an exaggeration. The statements are not usually true but serve as an aim of conveying the author s message. Examples from the text are:

“It belies her angelic face.”(p.26).

This state is used by Korede to describe Ayoola’s appearance in her room while complaining about the heat period. The essence of the description is in admiration of Ayoola’s beautiful appearance.

“I Believe I Can Fly”(p.101).

This expression is a reference to a popular music as Korede accuses Ayoola singing the song. The point of the expression is to question Ayoola’s guilty conscience over the murders she commits.

“ I have heard a thousand times before.”(p.130)

This statement is used by Korede in response to Dr. Akigbe who is discussing with her the history of St. Peter's Hospital as he is about pronounce her promotion to head nurse.

“Muhtar, you are there acting all high and mighty”(p.174)

This expression is used to show the level at which Mukhtar's wife alleged her husband for refusing to allow their son's marriage. The expression conveys her dissatisfaction over Mukhtar's decision.

0. **Quaestio:** this involves the use of question after question after question. For example:

“How many bedsheets do we need? How many does he have?”.(p.15)

The series of questions are asked by Korede when she and Ayoola are trying to wrap Femi's corpse in a bid to cover up the murder committed by Ayoola.

“What? Why? Why are you being so”(p.54)

These questions are asked by Ayoola when she came to visit Korede in the hospital where she works. She questions Korede on when she is demanding her urgent vacation of the hospital premises.

“What would you like? Cake? Biscuits? Wine? Tea?”(p.82).

These questions are asked by Korede when Tade visits. She questions Tade in a bid to know his choice of what he would like to have while waiting for Ayoola to go out on a dinner date with.

“What is wrong with you? When are you going to stop?!” Stop what?”(p.106).

These questions are directed to Ayoola by Korede. This is when she discovers that she is going out with Gboyega, another man aside Tade.

“Awake? Who? Yinka?”(p.133)

Korede asks these series of questions when the news of Mukhtar who has been in coma being awake to her. The news is conveyed to her by her colleague Yinka.

“what Tade is doing, what he is thinking and what his next move will be.”(p.190)

These questions are used to refer to Tade after the incidence of stabbing Ayoola while they are together in his house.

0. **Rhetorical Question:** The question that are asked which an answer is not require from the audience or reader. For example:

“why was she carrying the knife?”.(p.13)

This is a question asked by Korede in a bid to examine Ayoola actions and to find a justifiable excuse if eventual they are caught after murdering Femi.

“What is wrong with you?”(p.18).

This question is asked by Korede to caution or warn Ayoola of her impulsiveness when they are carrying Femi’s corpse to dump in the Lagoon.

“What a waste of time this all was.”(p.160).

This very question is asked by Tade after Korede dashes his hope that the ring he intends to propose to Ayoola is not worthy as he has no idea who she is. He feels completely wasting his own time.

0. **Irony;** This is about using ironic words or comments to insult or make fun of someone. Some passages in the text use condescending:

”Lagos police are not even half that efficient”.(p.33)

This statement is made to ridicule and undermine the investigative capacity of the police officers. The expression is used when Korede and Ayoola are still carrying Femi’s remains to dump in the Lagoon.

“He could do a bad thing and behave like a model citizen right after.”(p.101).

The expression is used by Korede to ridicule or mock her father who poses himself over every other person in the family as he is mostly not guilty of any of his bad behavior or action in the family.

“You know these police. Always working hard.”(p.112)

This is another expression made by Korede to mock the efficiency of the police officers. This statement is made when Yinka is trying to know the reason why the police to her car to the station for cross-examination over the death and disappearance of Femi.

4.1.3 Sentence

Sentences are the fundamental building block of language that convey a full notion. Combining several sentence structures ensures a quality write up. The following sentence structures can be found in Oyinka Braithwaite’s *My Sister the Serial Killer*.

1. Simple Sentence

“I killed him.”(p.7)

This statement is made by Ayoola. This is when she reach out to Korede as she murders Femi in his apartment by stabbing him with a knife.

“Google is your friend”(p.20).

This statement is used when Tade and Korede are having a conversation while Tade is attending to a patient, Mrs Rotimi.

“I’m paralyzed”(p.99)

This expression is made by Korede. This is when the police officers seeks to further investigate on the death and disappearance of Femi, hence demanding that her car will be taken for cross-examination. This comes as a surprise to her as she senses her car is not thoroughly cleaned yet.

“I love cake”(p.105)

This statement is made by Gboyega as his request when he visits Ayoola in her home and to take her on a dinner date.

0. Compound Sentence

“I get out of bed and leave my room.”(p.77)

This expression is used by Korede to refer how she unconsciously makes her way to the living room where roses Tade sends to Ayoola are kept as she destroys the flowers.

“You people are getting old o and the competition is tight.”(p.80)

This statement is used by Korede’s aunt when she visits them thereby informing both Korede and Ayoola of the need to get married as soon as possible.

“He raises his head and looks at me.”(p.114)

This expression is used to describe Tade’s response when Korede makes a surprising statement when they are discussing in his office in the hospital.

0. Complex Sentence

“She told me that you treat her like she is a monster,”(p.114).

This statement is made by Tade when he is confronting Korede over the way Ayoola tells him Korede treats her when both Korede and Tade are discussing in the hospital.

“she comes close to the color black that we are all labeled with.”(p.165).

This expression is used by Korede to describe the girl Mukhtar’s son brings to the hospital to show his dad that he wants to marry.

0. Interrogative Sentence

“Who was he?”(p.11)

This question is asked by Korede when she gets a distress call from Ayoola. The question is driving at Ayoola, asking who she has murdered again which is Femi.

“Madam, do you want two husbands?”(p.50).

This question is driven at a patient, Mrs Rotimi by Tade when he is offering a doctoral consultation to her in his office.

0. Exclamatory Sentence

“Your best friend is awake!”(p.133).

This expression is made when nurse Yinka breaks the news to Korede about the resuscitation of Mukhtar after he has been in coma for sometime.

4.2 Themes

Any form of literary work whether play, short story, poem, and novel’s major themes or motifs are expressed directly or indirectly in topics. The author's information and goals are revealed through the themes s/he is presenting in their works. Hence, the radical text, *My Sister the Serial Killer* by Oyinkan Braithwaite is organised around some major themes which include family, loyalty, and the corrupting influence of power. One of the central themes is the bond between siblings, and how that bond can be both a source of strength and a burden. The novel also examines the power dynamics between men and women, particularly in the workplace. The following themes will be examined in the novel:

1. Theme of Family
2. Theme of Loyalty
3. Theme of Corrupting Influence of Power
4. Theme of Death

1. Theme of Family

The relationship between siblings Korede and Ayoola, the expectations of parents, and the influence of family dynamics on personal identity and behavior are all explored in Oyinkan Braithwaite's *My Sister the Serial Killer*. The theme of family is intricate and diverse throughout the novel. The bond between Korede and Ayoola, the two sisters, is at the center of the story. Although having a close affinity, Ayoola's propensity for killing her romantic partners and Korede's involvement in covering up the crimes complicate their relationship. Questions regarding responsibility, loyalty, and the scope of familial duty are raised by this interaction. The novel also examines how

parents affect their children's lives and how that affects them. While Korede and Ayoola's father's abusive behavior has left a lasting impression on their family, their mother, who is mainly absent from their lives, is a source of both admiration and hate for Korede. Family relationships are a major factor in determining the characters' identities and behaviors throughout the entire book. Ayoola's actions are motivated by a need for attention and validation as well as a deep-seated anger against the males in her life, whereas Korede's sense of duty and obligation towards her sister is guided by her upbringing and her role as the older sibling. In general, Braithwaite's *My Sister the Serial Killer* employs the theme of family to examine difficult and subtle issues pertaining to loyalty, responsibility, identity, and the influence of upbringing on personal behavior.

0. **Theme of Loyalty**

In Oyinkan Braithwaite's novel *My Sister the Serial Killer*, the issue of loyalty is addressed through the complicated bond between the two sisters, Korede and Ayoola, as well as their varying allegiances to one another, their families, and their own goals and reasons. The novel's main theme is Korede's devotion to Ayoola. Despite her sister's troubling behavior, Korede is still intensely protective of her and will stop at nothing to hide her transgressions. Her younger sister is the source of this loyalty, and the two of them share a strong emotional connection as well as a sense of duty and obligation. In addition, Korede's devotion to her family plays a big part in how she behaves. She is willing to put her own life and reputation at danger in order to protect her sister and uphold the family's honor because she is well aware of the embarrassment and scandal that would ensue from Ayoola's actions coming to light. The idea of loyalty is also examined throughout the book in connection to the characters' conflicting goals and ambitions. Ayoola frequently chooses recklessly and dangerously because her loyalty to Korede and their family often clashes with her loyalty to her own needs and ambitions. Similar to this, Korede frequently feels caught between her feeling of responsibility and her own happiness since her commitment to her sister and family conflicts with her own desires and objectives. The novel's theme of loyalty is an intricate and nuanced examination of the competing loyalties that can develop within families and relationships, as well as how these loyalties can influence our behavior and determine our identities.

0. **Theme of Corrupting Influence of Power**

In Oyinkan Braithwaite's novel *My Sister the Serial Killer*, the issue of the corrupting impact of power is explored through the characters' connections with power and how their quest of power can take them down a perilous path. Ayoola's use of her charm and beauty to sway and influence the men in her life is one of the main ways that this issue is portrayed. Ayoola gets more and more reckless in her pursuit of the power she has over men as she grows more conscious of it, which causes her to commit a number of murders with no apparent repercussions. This quest for power ultimately corrupts Ayoola, turning her into a cold-blooded killer who would stop at nothing to achieve her goals. In a same spirit, Korede's own quest for power is investigated through her work as a nurse, in which she has considerable control over her patients. In order to keep things in order and under control in her life, Korede frequently exercises control over her patients and coworkers. Nevertheless, as the story goes on, Korede's need for control and power starts to have darker undertones, which pushes her to act in more extreme ways to defend her sister and keep her own power. The theme of the corrupting influence of power in the book is a subtle investigation of how humans can be shaped and changed by authority, leading them to a road of violence and corruption. The book emphasizes the perilous temptation of power and the devastating effects that can come from pursuing it through the characters of Ayoola and Korede.

0. **Theme of Death**

My Sister the Serial Killer by Oyinkan Braithwaite centers on the concept of death and explores the causes, effects, and effects of death on the characters and their relationships. The central theme of the book is Ayoola's propensity to murder her romantic partners. Her pattern of murders informs many of the stories and influences the behavior and motivations of the characters. The book explores, through Ayoola's actions, the many emotional and psychological elements that might cause someone to commit suicide as well as the terrible repercussions that follow. The characters' experiences with mortality and the certainty of death are used to further explore the issue of death. Being a nurse, Korede is often faced with the specter of death, which

haunts her. Her encounters with death and dying influence her worldview and add to her feelings of despondency and solitude. The concept of death is also used in the book to explore the fragility and transience of life, emphasizing how brief human existence is and how death may change and define us. The book's fatalities emphasize the subject of loss, regret, and sadness by being not only brutal and shocking but also tragic and moving. The theme of death is a complex and varied investigation of the causes, effects, and ways that mortality shapes and transforms our lives and relationships

4.3 Characterisation

This focuses on the presentation, description, performance, and analysis of the novel's various characters. The role can either be primary or secondary, depending on the author's preference. Oyinkan Braithwaite's *My Sister the Serial Killer* is a character-driven novel that features complex and compelling characters who drive the plot and themes of the story. The personalities possess complexities of human emotion and behaviour, knowledge, tension, conflicting mind and critical thought. The majority of the characters in the novel appear to be realized in order to tell the story, rather than just being depicted as characters.

Korede

The protagonist and narrator of Oyinkan Braithwaite's novel *My Sister the Serial Killer* is Korede. She is a dedicated nurse who is sensible and responsible, but she also harbors a sinister secret: her younger sister Ayoola is a serial killer, and Korede has been aiding her in disguising her crimes. Korede is a complicated person who struggles to balance her sense of morality and her allegiance to Ayoola. As she jealously guards her sister, she also struggles with morally questioning Ayoola's deeds. Korede tries to balance her lover's love for her sister with her own moral principles throughout the book, which makes her wonder what loyalty really is and what the effects of her choices will be. As the narrative progresses, we learn more about Korede's past and the causes of her ferocious sister-protectiveness. While the authorities look into Ayoola's streak of murders, we also witness her battle to keep her composure in the face of increasing pressure and suspicion. The plot is bleak, yet Korede is a realistic and likable figure. She is an engaging protagonist thanks to her intelligence, resourcefulness, and determination as well as her sense of duty and accountability. Those who struggle with their own moral difficulties will identify with her inner conflict and battle to do what is right. The plot is advanced by the complex and well-drawn character of Korede,

who offers a subtle examination of ideas like loyalty, morality, and family ties. She is a memorable and engaging heroine because of the compelling and thought-provoking nature of her journey throughout the book.

Ayoola

One of the main characters in Oyinkan Braithwaite's novel *My Sister the Serial Killer* is Ayoola, Korede's younger sister. She is a stunning and alluring young lady who exudes charm and seems to command the interest of men. She has, however, also killed three of her previous boyfriends, making her a serial killer. Ayoola is a multifaceted character that inspires sympathy and dread in the reader despite her unsettling behavior. She is incredibly tormented, struggling to connect with people on a deeper level and being haunted by memories of her violent father. Despite her continued use of violence, she is also extremely protective of her sister. As she exploits her charm and beauty to obtain what she wants, Ayoola's manipulative character is on display throughout the entire book. She is not scared to take use of the influence she has over guys since she is aware of it. But, while she looks for approval and love from everyone around her, we also witness her vulnerable side. Ayoola's personality is a study in contrasts since she is both seductive and deadly, sly and charming, weak and merciless. She has a complicated relationship with Korede, which makes her relationship with her in the book very fascinating. Ultimately, Ayoola is an intriguing and well-drawn character who gives the book depth and complexity. She is a fascinating and nuanced character due to her internal conflict, cunning personality, and fragility, and her interactions with the other characters allow for a profound study of topics like family, loyalty, and power.

Tade

In Oyinkan Braithwaite's novel *My Sister the Serial Killer*, Tade is Korede's love interest and a doctor. He is compared to the aggressive and cunning individuals in Ayoola's life as being kind, thoughtful, and empathetic. Tade is drawn to Korede's wit and practicality the instant they meet. Her commitment to her work as a nurse and her feeling of duty to her family impresses him. He is also fascinated by her enigmatic and mysterious sister Ayoola, and the sibling rivalry between the two women causes conflict in their developing relationship. Tade functions as Korede's moral compass throughout the entire book. He urges her to reflect on her allegiance to Ayoola and the ramifications of her choices. Also, he gives Korede a sense of security and support as she navigates the challenging and perilous world of her sister's

misdeeds. Tade is a good man with compassion, but he has his faults. His love for Korede blinds him to the depth of her complicity in Ayoola's misdeeds, and he can be unduly innocent and optimistic. He is also partially unaware of the threat Ayoola poses, which puts him in risk. In general, Tade is a likable and well-drawn character who offers a contrast to the brutality and deceit that dominate the book. His relationship with Korede gives the narrative additional depth and complexity, and his moral leadership and support act as a ray of hope in the gloom.

4.4 Diction

The use of words and phrases in speech or writing is known as diction. A writer's or speaker's distinctive language selections and manner of expression in a story or poetry are the essence of diction. But diction describes the language decisions a writer takes in order to clearly communicate a thought, a point of view, or convey a story. The words an author chooses can assist establish a clear voice and style in literature. There is no a single word an author can use. S/he chooses from a variety of words with similar denotative meanings but differing connotative meanings. The words an author chooses to use reflect his or her diction. In linguistics, the decision must be deliberate and based on the reader or writer.

Depending on the type of audience they are writing for, some writers favor simple terms while others prefer high-sounding and sophisticated phrases. Wole Soyinka, for example, sets himself apart from other authors by using terms with high-sounding connotations. In contrast to Chinua Achebe, Zainab Alkali, and Abubakar Gimba, who employ straightforward language to make their points,

My Sister the Serial Killer by Oyinkan Braithwaite is written in a straightforward, approachable tone with precise language that mirrors the no-nonsense demeanor of the protagonist, Korede. The language of the book emphasizes the urgency and immediacy of the issue by using short, declarative words. The book is written in the first person, from Korede's point of view. Similar to the writing, the language is brief and simple, with the characters speaking in a straightforward manner.

The novel's language is also characterized by a dry, sardonic sense of humor, which ups the suspense and makes the darker parts of the plot more tolerable. When Korede considers the nature of her sister's misdeeds and the toll they are having on her own psyche, for example,

this comedy is frequently utilized to offset the more somber passages. The incorporation of Nigerian vernacular and cultural references in Braithwaite's writing is especially noteworthy since it gives the narrative a sense of authenticity and depth. The story is more firmly rooted in a particular cultural setting because to the use of Nigerian English and Yoruba vocabulary, which also allows the author to address themes of tradition, modernisation and identity.

Overall, *My Sister the Serial Killer's* language is straightforward, approachable, and distinguished by a dry sense of humor and a rich cultural texture. This writing style reflects the novel's emphasis on the psychological and emotional costs of violence as well as its examination of subjects like power, family, and loyalty.

4.5 Discussion

This chapter deals with the analysis of Oyinkan Braithwaite's *My Sister the Serial Killer's* language strategies. It has demonstrated how the elements are used for stylistic purposes. It provides a breakdown of the components under each level of analysis that Braithwaite used to set her work apart from other analyses. Yet, each of the cited components has a distinct application in various contexts. In a literary work, the author employs stylistic features that combine literal and linguistic aspects.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the summary of the research, conclusion and recommendations. The research reveals the use of style in Oyinkan Braithwaite's *My Sister the Serial Killer* and this is accomplished through context analysis of the text.

5.1 Summary

This research work entitle "A Stylistic Analysis of Oyinkan Braithwaite's *My Sister the Serial Killer*" is a thorough analysis of the linguistic and literary style used in the Nigerian author's book "*My Sister the Serial Killer*." No doubt a lot of researches might have been carried out on the text. Hence, there is a necessity for more researches to be conducted on the text. The study focuses on how the novel's main themes of family, loyalty, and the effects of one's actions are expressed using language and literary strategies. The focus of this research work is to give better understanding of the text by identifying and analysing the linguistic features and stylistic or rhetorical devices used in the text. The study adopts Crystal (1968)'s linguistic stylistic theory which involves the devices in language such as the rhetorical figures and syntactic patterns that produce expressive style in the text. In order to develop a unique and compelling tale, the research entails evaluating how narrative voice, characterization,

symbolism, imagery, and other linguistic and literary devices are used. The study also looks at how the novel uses language and accent to accurately depict Nigerian culture and society. The goal of this effort is to provide readers a thorough knowledge of Braithwaite's aesthetic decisions as well as how they affected the story's ultimate message and significance. The research reveals the elements of stylistics used to analyse the novel, Oyinkan's Braithwaite's *My Sister the Serial Killer* which include: epithet, dialectal words, alliteration, synonym, antonym, jargon, euphemism, syntactic parallelism, acronym, asyndeton, reduplication, compounding, allusion, oxymoron, epizeuxis, polyptoton, symploce, assonance, personification, metaphor, hyperbole, quaestio, rhetorical question and irony. It also identifies the sentence types, themes, characterisation and diction. Ultimately, by providing a thorough analysis of the aesthetic and linguistic components that distinguish and compel Braithwaite's novel as a work of fiction, this research seeks to further the critical scholarship on current African literature.

5.2 Conclusions

My Sister the Serial Killer by Oyinkan Braithwaite is a complex and multi-layered narrative that is full of literary and linguistic tricks base on the stylistic analysis of the text. The novel's major themes of family and loyalty are well communicated through the use of first-person narration, character development, symbolism, and imagery, among other literary devices. The research gains a distinctive cultural dimension from Braithwaite's usage of Nigerian English and dialect, which also gives Nigerian culture and its inhabitants a true representation. The author is able to approach weighty issues with levity because to the use of comedy and sarcasm, which also gives the story depth and insight. The stylistic analysis of the novel as a whole reveals Braithwaite to be a gifted author with a distinctive voice and a deep appreciation for the expressive potential of language and literary devices. Braithwaite masterfully employs these strategies to craft an intriguing and captivating narrative that deftly and subtly examines difficult themes and problems. The learnings from this analysis can be applied to future research on Braithwaite's work as well as to enhance our comprehension of modern African literature. It is obvious that "My Sister the Serial Killer" makes a substantial literary contribution and demonstrates Braithwaite's skills and writing prowess.

5.3 Research Recommendations

Stylistic forms can be a personal trait or characteristic. The findings of the stylistic analysis of *My Sister the Serial Killer* by Oyinkan Braithwaite allow for the following study's recommendations:

1. Comparative analysis: Comparing Braithwaite's writing to other contemporary African literature may shed more light on the author's distinctive subjects and writing style.
2. Linguistic analysis: A more thorough examination of the novel's usage of Nigerian English and dialect could help readers gain a better grasp of how language is employed in African literature to convey cultural identity and meaning.
3. Gender analysis: A more thorough comprehension of how Braithwaite's work addresses topics of femininity, sisterhood, and gender roles in Nigerian society could result from a gender analysis of the novel.
4. Analysis of reader reactions to the book could reveal how different audiences respond to Braithwaite's issues and writing style as well as how her work fits into the current literary scene.

These recommendations could contribute to a deeper understanding of the stylistic and thematic elements of Braithwaite's work and its significance in the contemporary literary landscape.

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