

STYLISTICS AND THE TEACHING OF LITERARY TEXTS IN AN EFL CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to present stylistics as a reliable method which can facilitate the teaching of literary texts in an English as a Foreign Language (henceforth, EFL) context. Before demonstrating this view by examining some texts (two poems entitled “The First Shot” and “Were You There” respectively by Chinua Achebe and Ken Saro-Wiwa, and an extract from a novel entitled *Weep Not, Child* by Ngugi wa Thiong’o), it first recalls how this method has been diligently applied in a Francophone university (Université André Salifou, Republic of Niger). While the analysis of the poems proves how the poets deploy language to produce stylistic effects; i.e. how they exploit resources from the five levels of language (phonology, graphology, morphology, syntax and semantics) to encode meaning, that of the extract illustrates how the narrator uses language (transitivity features, to be precise) to depict the characters and encode a given point of view therein. The study actually provides two stylistic analysis worksheets (one for the levels of language and one for transitivity) which guide the EFL learner on how to conduct his/her stylistic analysis and interpretation. It concludes with an outline of some pedagogical implications of the use of stylistics in an EFL setting.

Keywords: EFL Context, Language, Stylistics, Teaching of Literary Texts, Text-oriented.

1. INTRODUCTION

Literary appreciation is one of the key skills that English as a foreign language (henceforth, EFL) learners enrolled in an English Department (located anywhere on the globe) are expected to painstakingly develop and master over time. This is to say, these learners are expected, at the end of the day, to come to grips with the language of literature; i.e. they are expected to know how language works or is structured for use in literary texts (including poetry) or how it serves to realize such aspects as plot, theme, setting, style, characterization, point of view, etc. However, it has been noticed that there is an increasing number of EFL learners who are dissatisfied with literature in general and with literary criticism in particular. As observed, there are two major reasons for this. The first reason is that most (not to say all) literature teachers employ a teacher-centered approach in their classrooms. That is, in their course delivery or rendition, these teachers tend to position themselves as the only source of knowledge and the learners as “empty vessels” who need to be spoon-fed with knowledge. Secondly, most (not to say all) literature teachers use traditional approaches in their literature classes. In point of fact, traditional approaches to the reading and interpretation of literary texts have been seriously criticized recently. These approaches are said to provide little (not to say no) help to the EFL learner or/and literature student as they pay a greater

attention to such external factors as the author's biography, historical context and philosophical moral ideas than to the texts themselves. They are also claimed to lack scientific rigor and objectivity.

Unlike traditional approaches, stylistics (the science which studies style in texts) is not only reader-centered but it is also text-oriented (Verdonk in Short, 1988). It is equally marked by scientific rigor and objectivity in that it studies style in texts from a linguistic perspective (Verdonk, 2002, Simpson, 2004; Leech and Short, 2007; Short, 2013). This is to say, it draws its toolkits (theories, models, tenets, etc.) from linguistics (the science which studies language for its own sake), and this helps it objectively account for how texts project meaning, how readers construct meaning and why readers respond to texts in the way that they do (Jeffries and McIntyre, 2010). As it appears in the foregoing, stylistics places the reader at the centre of the reading and interpretation process. By so doing, it empowers the reader, making him/her an active agent in the meaning-making process. In fact, the reader, as I perceive it here, is the person who breathes life into a text in that s/he construes the text, formulating an intuition on it and relating it to his/her socio-cultural experience. Again, unlike traditional approaches, stylistics emphasizes both critical language awareness and the development of critical thinking (Tahiri and Muhaxheri, 2020). Simpson (2004, p. 3) is actually of this view when he states that "To do stylistics is to explore language, and, more specifically, to explore creativity in language use. Doing stylistics thereby enriches our ways of thinking about language and, as observed, exploring language offers a substantial purchase on our understanding of (literary) texts". It follows from this to argue that, as readers (EFL learners, to be precise) continuously work with texts by means of stylistics, they (will) gradually develop a deep understanding of how language works in texts and *how* texts do what they do and *why* they are valued as they are.

The stylistics, I have in mind here, is the one influenced by the body of research carried out in Britain (from the 1960s onwards) in the neo-Firthian or Hallidayan School of linguistics (Verdonk in Short 1988, pp. 241-242), and which has approximated linguistics and literary criticism (Widdowson, 1975). Widdowson (1975, pp. 5-6) clearly states its purpose in these terms:

The purpose of stylistics is to link the two approaches [linguistics and literary criticism] by extending the linguist's literary intuitions and the critic's linguistic observations and making their relationship explicit. The linguist, then, directs his [or her] attention primarily to how a piece of literature exemplifies the language system. [...]. The literary critic searches for underlying significance, for the essential artistic vision that the poem [or any literary text] embodies and we will say that he [or she] treats literary works as messages. Between these two is an approach to literature which attempts to show specifically how elements of a linguistic text combine to create messages, how, in other words, pieces of literary writing function as a form of communication.

This paper is set against the background of the above-mentioned theoretical assumptions. It seeks to present stylistics as a reliable method which can facilitate the teaching of literary texts in an ELF context. It demonstrates this view by examining some texts (two poems entitled "The First Shot" and "Were You There" respectively by Chinua Achebe and Ken Saro-Wiwa, and an extract from a novel entitled *Weep Not, Child* by Ngugi wa Thiong'o). While the analysis of the poems proves how the poets deploy language to produce stylistic effects; i.e. how they exploit resources from the five levels of language (phonology, graphology, morphology, syntax and semantics) to

encode meaning, that of the extract illustrates how the narrator uses language (transitivity features, to be precise) to depict the characters and encode a given point of view therein.

2. METHODOLOGY

Before illustrating how stylistics can be used to facilitate the teaching of literary texts, I wish to give some factual details about how I have deployed stylistics to teach literary texts in a Francophone university (Université André Salifou, Republic of Niger). In this university, I have used stylistics, as a method, to teach third-year English Major Students literary texts for four consecutive years (2021-2025). The student population in this period ranges from 80 to 120. I have noticed that student engagement and performance in literary appreciation have considerably increased over time. How do I proceed to obtain this positive outcome?

At the very beginning of the course, I often introduce the syllabus to the students, highlighting the course objectives (general and specific). This is very important as learners will get to know from the onset what they will be doing and what they should be able to do at the end of the course. In addition, they will know how they will be evaluated. I often tell the learners that they will be assessed twice: a mid-test and an exam. For the mid-test, I often employ a project approach. I give the students a literary text (it could be a poem or an extract from a novel or a play), asking them to conduct a stylistic analysis on it in order to figure out the linguistic choices the poet or narrator employs to produce stylistic effects. I often give them a sufficient time to do this exercise. However, the students sit for the final exam in a normal examination circumstance.

The course generally starts with an introduction to stylistics where concepts like style, stylistics, linguistics, literature (and its branches), etc., are duly clarified. It also discusses the theoretical foundations of stylistics and enumerates some of the linguistic theories (e.g. levels of language, transitivity, modality, etc.) and methodologies deployed in stylistics. For every theory I use in my class, I often design a worksheet. This helps, as observed, learners to grasp what is expected at every stage of the stylistic analysis and how to reproduce it with ease. In this course, learners are not only encouraged to formulate an intuition on literary texts, substantiating it with textual evidence, but they are also given the opportunity to relate their analysis to their socio-cultural experience.

3. ANALYSIS OF THE LITERARY TEXTS

After the brief details provided above, I wish to demonstrate how I have used stylistics, as a method, to teach literary texts in an EFL context. Here, my stylistic analysis revolves around two linguistic theories: levels of language and transitivity. While I apply the levels of language to two poems, I examine the transitivity features in an extract culled from a novel. Let us start the stylistic analysis with the poems.

3.1 Analysis of the Poems

Before the analysis proper, below is the stylistic analysis worksheet I have designed for the levels of language. There are five levels in total (phonological, graphological, morphological, syntactic and semantic levels). As it appears, each level comprises a certain number of questions meant to guide EFL learners through their stylistic analysis and interpretation.

STYLISTIC ANALYSIS WORKSHEET FOR THE LEVELS OF LANGUAGE	
Graphological Level	What is the stanzaic structure of the poem? Or how many stanza(s) does it contain? How many lines are there in each stanza? Is there any use of punctuation or/and capitalization in the poem? What type(s) of punctuation is/are deployed in the poem? Which words are capitalized and where are they located in each line? If there is no use of punctuation or capitalization in the poem, what does this imply? How do these graphological features contribute to the poet's style?
Phonological Level	What are the phonological schemes (alliteration, assonance and consonance) the poet deploys in his/her poem? Does the poet employ end rhymes or internal rhymes? How do these phonological patterns contribute to the poet's style?
Morphological Level	What is/are the grammatical class(es) of the words in the poem? Which grammatical class is predominant, and what does this imply? How are the words in the poem formed? Are they mono-morphemic, bi-morphemic or poly-morphemic? What word-formation process(es) does the poet deploy? Which of the word-formation processes is predominant, and what does this imply? Are there any invented words or <i>neologisms</i> in the poem? If yes/no, what does this imply? How do these morphological features contribute to the poet's style?
Syntactic Level	How are phrases, clauses and sentences structured in the poem, and what is their function? Are there structural boundaries in the poem? Do they coincide with line breaks? If yes/no, what does this imply? Which structural features are foregrounded in the poem, and what is their function?
Semantic Level	Which words form a lexical field? Or Which lexical features encode the theme of the poem? Are there relationships of antonymy, synonymy and meronymy in the poem, and what do these imply? Is there any semantic oddity or deviation in the poem, what does this imply? What is the point of view of the poem?

Bearing the stylistic analysis worksheet in mind, I examine the two poems. I begin with Chinua Achebe's "The First Shot".

3.1.1 Analysis of Chinua Achebe's "The First Shot"

The First Shot

That lone rifle-shot anonymous (1)
in the dark striding chest-high (2)
through a nervous suburb at the break (3)

of our season of thunders will yet (4)
steep its flight and lodge (5)
more firmly than the greater noises (6)
ahead in the forehead of memory. (7)

(*Collected Poems* by Chinua Achebe, 2004)

In my analysis, I intend to answer the following questions:

1. What is the poem all about?
2. How does the poet structure language to produce stylistic effects?

The poem is about war or an armed conflict and its effects on individuals. The poet structures language in the following ways to produce stylistic effects:

1. Graphological level

I notice that the poem contains one stanza including seven lines. The stanza begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop. The absence of punctuation marks like a comma (,), etc., in the poem indicates an uninterrupted flow of message therein. In other words, this poem is marked by the use of run-on lines (1-6), and none of these lines has a regular syntactic boundary. Apart from a full stop (.), the poem includes a hyphen (-) deployed twice (**rifle-shot** in Line 1 and **chest-high** in Line 2). As it appears, this punctuation mark is used to link parts of **compound words**. Surprisingly, only the first line begins with a capital letter. In other words, the first word in Lines (2-6) is not capitalized.

I also notice that the stanza is made up of a single sentence. The theme of war or an armed conflict and its effects on individuals is encoded in the very first line “That lone rifle-shot anonymous” of the poem. This is further buttressed with enjambment, with Lines (1-6) flowing uninterrupted. This suggests the swiftness and aggression of the rifle-shot. It also evinces a sense of fear and tension.

2. Phonological level

As stated earlier, this poem comprises one stanza. I notice that the stanza does not contain end rhymes. However, it includes internal rhymes. For instance, the final syllable in ‘**ahead**’ and ‘**forehead**’ from Line 7 confirms this. Note that both words comprise two syllables. While ‘**ahead**’ is stressed on the second syllable, ‘**forehead**’ is stressed on the first syllable. I also notice that the poem is marked by the use of alliteration, assonance and consonance:

- i. Alliteration (‘**than**’ and ‘**the**’ in Line 6).
- ii. Assonance (‘**of**’ and ‘**of**’ in Line 4; ‘**ahead**’ and ‘**forehead**’ in Line 7).
- iii. Consonance (‘**That**’ and ‘**rifle-shot**’ in Line 1; ‘**suburb**’ and ‘**break**’ in Line 3; ‘**of**’ and ‘**of**’ in Line 4 and ‘**than**’ and ‘**the**’ in Line 6).

As it appears, the poet deploys the above-mentioned phonological features to produce rhythmical or musical effects in his poem. However, the rhythmical or musical effects these phonological features produce are not akin to the ones commonly produced by a love song or poem, for example. In point of fact, they project the violence a single gunshot effects on human memory.

3. Morphological level

I notice at this level that the poet employs more **open-class words** (nouns, adjectives, verbs, etc.) than **closed class words** (pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, etc.) in his poem. I can classify the

open-class words into two groups: **mono-morphemic** ('That' and 'lone' in Line 1, 'in'; 'the' and 'dark' in Line 2, for instance) and **bi-morphemic** ('anonymous' in Line 1 and 'striding' in Line 2, for example) As the analysis clearly indicates, mono-morphemic words are highly predominant in the poem.

I further notice that the poet draws on three word-formation processes: **inflection**; **derivation** and **compounding**. As the analysis below suggests, he employs derivation more than the other types.

1. **Inflection**: (**thunders** [thunder + s] in Line 4); **greater** [great + er] in Line 6 and **noises** [noise + s] in Line 6).

2. **Derivation**: (**anonymous** [anonym + ous] in Line 1; **striding** [stride + ing] in Line 2; **nervous** [nerve + ous] in Line 3; **firmly** [firm + ly] in Line 6 and **ahead** [a + head] in Line 7).

3. **Compounding**: (**rifle-shot** [rifle + shot] in Line 1; **chest-high** [chest + high] in Line 2 and **forehead** [fore + head] in Line 7). As it is obvious, while the first two compounds are linked with a hyphen, the last one has no hyphen.

As it appears in the foregoing, all the above-mentioned morphological features suggest a theme of war or armed conflict and its impact on human life.

4. Syntactic level

As stated earlier, this poem contains only one (01) stanza. This stanza in turn involves seven lines. Surprisingly, the seven lines all form a sentence. In fact, the sentence contains two clauses and is structured as follows: 1. **Subject + Verb + Object** + 2. **Conjunction + Verb + Adjunct**. This denotes syntactic variation.

The main striking feature here is the length and grammatical intricacy of the nominal group that functions as the subject of the sentence. This nominal group actually spans four lines (Lines 1-4), and it is structured this way: **Determiner (That) + Modifier (lone) + Thing (rifle-shot) + Qualifier (anonymous in the dark striding chest-high through a nervous suburb at the break of our season of thunders)**. Again, the adjunct in the poem spans two lines (Lines 6-7): **'more firmly than the greater noises ahead in the forehead of memory'**. In this adjunct, I notice the use of the periphrastic form **'more than'**. This form is deployed in the poetic text to encode comparison; a comparison of two entities ("That lone rifle-shot anonymous" in [Line 1] and "the greater noises ahead in the fore of memory" in [Lines 6-7]).

As mentioned above, this poem involves two clauses, and each clause has a finite verb. The finite verbs are **'will yet steep'** and **'lodge'**. While the former is transitive, the latter is intransitive. Surprisingly, both verbs are dynamic verbs and have "That lone rifle-shot anonymous" as a subject. Another remarkable feature in the poem is the poet's use of the distal demonstrative 'That' in the very beginning of the poem and the definite article 'the' (used four times). While the poet uses 'That' to denote that what he is referring to is relatively far from him, he deploys the definite article 'the' to imply that the identity of the entities he is presenting ("**the** dark striding chest-high..." (Line 2); "**the** break of our season of thunders" (Lines 2-3); "**the** greater noises ahead in **the** forehead of memory" (Lines 6-7) is already known to the reader.

As observed above, the poet employs enjambment in his poem, where syntactic boundaries do not coincide with line breaks. This evinces once more the swiftness and aggression of the rifle-shot.

5. *Semantic level*

I notice that the poet encodes the theme of war or armed conflict and its impact on individuals in lexical features like ‘That lone rifle-shot anonymous in the dark striding chest-high’ in Lines (1-2), ‘through a nervous suburb at the break of our season of thunders will yet steep its flight and lodge’ in Lines (3-5) and ‘more firmly than the greater noises ahead in the forehead of memory’ in Lines (6-7).

A cursory look at these lexical choices further reveals semantic oddity or deviation. For example, “That lone rifle-shot anonymous in the dark striding chest-high” is semantically odd in that “That lone rifle-shot” is ascribed the animate quality of “striding chest-high”. Likewise, the expression “through a nervous suburb at the break of our season of thunders will yet steep its flight and lodge” is semantically odd because the noun “suburb” is said to be “nervous”. If the word “suburb” is construed as meaning “community”; a community of people, then “through a nervous suburb” will be considered as semantically normal. This group of words connotes, in this sense, a sense of fear and tension experienced by the community. In the same token, the group of words “at the break of our season of thunders ...” further enhances that sense of fear and tension.

Finally, the poet’s use of the pronoun ‘our’ in (Line 4) is highly significant here. In point of fact, **the pronoun is inclusive in nature (i.e. it includes the poet (Chinua Achebe) and his people (the Igbo people), victims of the war)**. The use of this pronoun suggests that the poem is written from the **first-person perspective**. That is, **the poet represents his personal (or people’s) experience of the Biafran war in the poem**.

After examining the first poem, let us move on to the second poem.

3.1.2 Analysis of Ken Saro-Wiwa’s “Were You There”

Were You There

Were you there to see the white balls of fire (1)

Ascend the sky at dusk (2)

Then fall into the thick corpses (3)

Where the youthful enemy lay, (4)

Were you there to see the stump (5)

Of the sergeant’s leg borne dutifully (6)

Into the young doctor’s room, (7)

Were you there to see sticking out (8)

Of the shallow sandy grave (9)

As though in supplication (10)

The bony palms of the bombed soldier, (11)

You would not smile at the radio account (12)

Of victories and smashed battalions. (13)

(*Songs in A Time of War* by Ken Saro-Wiwa, 1985, p. 22)

Just like in the previous analysis, I intend to answer the following questions here:

1. What is the poem all about?
2. How does the poet structure language to produce stylistic effects?

The poem is about war and its negative impact on human life. The poet structures language in the following ways to produce stylistic effects:

1. *Graphological level*

I notice that the poem contains four (04) stanzas with varying numbers of lines. The first stanza, for instance, comprises four (04) lines. Likewise, the third stanza has the same number of lines as the first one. But the second stanza counts three (03) lines and the fourth stanza only two (02) lines. The first stanza begins with a capital letter and ends with a comma. In the same token, the second and third stanzas begin with a capital letter and end with a comma. On the contrary, only the fourth stanza begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop. As it clearly appears above, Stanzas 1, 2 and 3 are structured and punctuated the same way. Given the syntactic structure of these stanzas, the reader might think that the poet breaches the rule of punctuation. But this is not the case here. **The poet simply omits ‘If’ in the stanzas and inverts the auxiliary and the subject therein for a specific purpose.** The poet’s intention is to bring the reader to contemplate the impact of war on human life.

2. *Phonological level*

As stated earlier, this poem comprises four stanzas. Note that none of the stanzas involves end rhymes. However, the poem is marked by the use of alliteration, assonance and consonance:

- i. Alliteration (‘**Were**’ and ‘**white**’ in Line 1; ‘**see**’ and ‘**stump**’ in Line 5; ‘**see**’ and ‘**sticking**’ in Line 8; ‘**bony**’ and ‘**bombed**’ in Line 11).
- ii. Assonance (‘**Were**’ and ‘**there**’ in Lines 1; 5 and 8).
- iii. Consonance (**Ascend** and **sky** in Line 2).

As it is obvious, the poet deploys the above-mentioned phonological features to produce rhythmical or musical effects in his poem. The rhythmical or musical effects actually evoke in the reader strong emotions related to the pain, trauma and sense of loss that war brings about.

3. *Morphological level*

I notice that the poet employs more **open-class words** (nouns, adjectives, verbs, etc.) than **closed class words** (pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, etc.) in his poem. I can classify the open-class words into three groups: **mono-morphemic** (‘you’; ‘there’ in Line 1, for instance); **bi-morphemic** (‘**Were**’ in Line 1; ‘**balls**’ in Line 1; ‘**corpses**’ in Line 3, for example) and **poly-morphemic** (‘**dutifully**’ in Line 6). As the analysis indicates, bi-morphemic words are highly predominant in the poem.

I also notice that the poet draws on two word-formation processes: **inflection** and **derivation**. As the analysis below exudes, he exploits inflection more than derivation.

1. **Inflection:** (**Were** [be + d] in Lines 1; 5 and 8); **balls** [ball + s] in Line 1; **corpses** [corpse + s] in Line 3; **borne** [bear + ed] in Line 6; **sticking** [stick + ing] in Line 8; **palms** [palm + s] in Line 11; **bombed** [bomb + ed] in Line 11; **would** [will + ed] in Line 12; **victories** [victory + s] in Line 13; **smashed** [smash + ed] in Line 13; **battalions** [battalion + s] in Line 13).

2. **Derivation:** (**youthful** [youth + ful] in Line 4; **dutifully** [duty + ful + ly] in Line 6; **young** [youth + ful] in Line 7; **sandy** [sand + y] in Line 9; **supplication** [supplicate + ion] in Line 10; **bony** [bone + y] in Line 11).

As it appears in the foregoing, all the above-mentioned morphological features suggest a war-torn society.

4. *Syntactic level*

As stated earlier, this poem contains four (04) stanzas. These stanzas are of varying length and grammatical intricacy. Significantly, all the stanzas include ideas which span more than one line. This denotes **enjambment**. In fact, while the first and third stanzas include ideas which span four (04) lines, the second and fourth stanzas respectively contain ideas which span three (03) lines and two (02) lines. The first three stanzas are actually subordinate clauses with an omitted '**If**'. That's why they comprise the structure below:

V + S + A ...'

This exudes **linguistic parallelism**. It also suggests an internal norm. By contrast, the fourth stanza has the following structure:

S + V + O.

This evinces **deviation**. It also shows that the poem is marked by **syntactic variation**.

In point of fact, the four stanzas in the poem have the generic pronoun 'you' as a subject. While this subject refers to the (implied) reader, it positions him/her in an unreal action which can only be realized if a certain condition is met. This indicates *irrealis*. This *irrealis*, as observed, truly captures the difference between being an active participant and not being an active participant in warfare.

5. *Semantic level*

I remark that the poet encodes the theme of war and its negative impact on human life in lexical items like 'the white balls of fire Ascend the sky at dusk' in Lines (1-2); 'Then fall into the thick corpses Where the youthful enemy lay' in Lines (3-4); 'Of the stump of the sergeant's leg borne dutifully Into the young doctor's room' Lines (6-7); 'Of the shallow sandy grave As through in supplication' in Lines (9-10); 'The bony palms of the bombed soldier' in Line (11), etc. These lexical choices, as observed, clearly show that the poet brings together ideas from three (03) conceptual domains: **military domain, war domain and health domain**, to form a strong image that further suggests that war has a negative impact on human life.

As it appears, 'the white balls of fire' seems semantically odd as the word "balls" is placed in a contextual pattern that confers a meaning different from the referential one a dictionary provides. The lexical item 'ball' means, in a dictionary, "a solid hollow spherical or egg-shaped object that is kicked, thrown, or hit in a game". However, this referential meaning is ruled out here by the contextual features the poet employs: "balls" is placed side by side with "fire". In fact, in Lines (2-4), he tells the reader that 'the white *balls* of fire' 'Ascend the sky at dusk Then fall into the thick corpses Where the youthful enemy lay'. From this, one can infer that the group of words 'the white balls of fire' denotes "bombs".

Finally, the poet deploys the generic pronoun 'you' throughout the poem (Lines 1; 5; 8 and 12). Surprisingly, this pronoun is used both in the title of the poem and in the first line of each stanza. This evinces that the poem is written from the **second-person perspective**. Recall I said, in the preceding section, that this pronoun refers to the (implied) reader, and is deployed as a subject in all the clauses with the following structure: **V + S + A....** This implies that the poet positions the reader (who is not an active participant in the war experience depicted in the text) in an unreal action that can only be realized if a certain condition is met. **This encodes the poet's mockery of the reader's ignorance of war, especially his/her inability to see, feel and experience the damages and tragedies incurred by war.** In effect, in the poet's opinion, what

the reader knows about war comes from “the radio account of victories and smashed battalions” (Lines 12-13).

Having finished the analysis of the second poem, it is now time to investigate the extract. I use transitivity to do so.

3.2 Analysis of the Extract

Before displaying the transitivity features in the selected extract, consider the stylistic analysis worksheet I have designed for transitivity. There are three clausal constituents: process, participant and circumstance. Given this, transitivity analysis answers the following question: “**who/what does what to whom/what where, when, how, etc.?**” The preceding question is in effect broken down into pieces in the worksheet below. The questions are meant to guide EFL learners through their stylistic analysis and interpretation.

STYLISTIC ANALYSIS WORKSHEET FOR TRANSITIVITY	
Process	How many clauses are there in the text? How many clauses are ranking? How many clauses are minor? What type(s) of process is/are deployed in the text? Which process-type is predominant, and what does this imply?
Participant	Which participant plays the Actor, Senser, Sayer, Behaver, etc. role? Which participant plays the Goal, Phenomenon, Receiver, Behavior, etc. role?
Circumstance	What type(s) of circumstance is/are employed in the text? Which type of circumstance is predominant, and what does this imply?

Following Eggins (2004) and Fontaine (2013), the transitivity analysis of the extract is carried out based on the key below.

Key:

Transitivity: P=Process (**in bold**), Pm=material, Pme=mental, Pb=behavioural, Pv=verbal, Pe=existential, Pi=intensive, Pcc=circumstantial, Pp=possessive, Pc=causative. A=Actor, G=Goal, B=Beneficiary, R=Range S=Senser, Ph=Phenomenon. Sy=Sayer, Rv=Receiver, Vb=Verbiage. Be=Behaver, Bh=Behavior. X=Existent. T=Token, V=Value, Cr=Carrier, At=Attribute. Pr=Possessor, Pd=Possessed. C=Circumstance, Cl=location, Cx=extent, Cm=manner, Cc=cause, Ca=accompagnement, Ct=matter, Co=role. Ag=Agent.

1. At school (Cl) Njoroge (Cr) **proved (Pi)** good at reading (At). 2. He (S) always (Cx) **remembered (Pme)** his first lesson (Ph). 3. The teacher (A) **had stood (Pm)** in front (Cl). 4. He (T) **was (Pi)** a short man with a small moustache (V) 5. which he (Cr) **was (Pi)** fond of touching and fondling (At). 6. They (Sy) **called (Pv)** him (Rv) Isaka (Vb). 7. This (Cr) **was (Pi)** his Christian name, a corruption of Isaac (At). 8. Many stories (A) **went around (Pm)** about Isaka (Ct). 9. Some (Sy) **said (Pv)** [10. that he (T) **was (Pi)** not a good Christian (V)] (Vb). 11. This (Cr) **meant (Pi)** 12. that he (A) **drank (Pm)** 13. and **smoked (Pm)** 14. and **went about (Pm)** with women (Cm), 15. a thing which no teacher in their school (Ph) **was expected (Pme)** 16. **to do (Pm)**.

(*Weep Not Child* by Ngugi wa Thiong'o, 1964, p. 33)

In my analysis, I intend to answer the following questions:

1. What transitivity features does the narrator deploy in the text?

2. To what extent do these features contribute to the understanding of character representation and point of view in the text?

As it appears, this extract contains in total sixteen ranking clauses. These clauses are distributed across four types of process: **six (37.5%)** relational processes (1; 4; 5; 7; 10 and 11), **six (37.5%)** material processes (3; 8; 12; 13; 14 and 16), **two (12.5%)** mental processes (2 and 15) and **two (12.5%)** verbal processes (6 and 9). The equal proportion of relational and material processes in this extract shows that it is concerned both with identifying or defining participants and encoding their actions. In other words, the narrator describes Njoroge and his teacher as well as their actions. But, as observed, the text is more concerned with the teacher than with Njoroge. For instance, the narrator ascribes more relational processes to the teacher than to Njoroge. In fact, while he ascribes three relational processes (**was** in [4; 5 and 10]) to the teacher, he assigns only one (**proved** in [1]) to Njoroge. In the same token, while the narrator assigns four material processes to the teacher (**had stood** in [3]; **drank** in [12]; **smoked** in [13] and **went about** in [15]), he assigns no single material process to Njoroge. This means that he depicts Njoroge as someone who does not act or does not act upon something or someone in the text.

As stated earlier, this extract counts **two (12.5%)** mental processes (2 and 15) and **two (12.5%)** verbal processes (6 and 9). The equal number of these two process-types in the text indicates that it is equally concerned with the acts of *sensing* and *saying*. In fact, one of the mental processes (**remembered** in [2]) has the token 'He' (anaphorically referring to Njoroge) as Senser. The second mental process (**was expected** in [15]) has 'which no teacher in their school' as Phenomenon. The two verbal processes (**called** in [6] and **said** in [9]) in the extract have something to do with the teacher too. In (6), while the Receiver of 'called' is 'him', in (9), the Verbiage of 'said' is a clause '10. that he (T) **was (Pi)** not a good Christian (V)', containing 'he'. Both refer to the teacher.

In addition, this text is written from the **third-person point of view**. The use of the pronouns 'He' and its variants 'him' and 'his' in (2; 4; 5; 6; 7; 10 and 12) and 'They' and its variant 'their' in (6 and 15) confirms this. As the transitivity analysis further reveals, the narrator provides varying insights into the two characters' inner thoughts, feelings and actions. While he provides an insight into Njoroge's thought (**remembered** in [2]), he does not tell the reader what really goes on in the teacher's mind. Likewise, while the narrator depicts the teacher's actions (**had stood** in [3]; **drank** in [12]; **smoked** in [13] and **went about** in [15]), he does not project Njoroge in any action. As it clearly appears in (12; 13 and 15), the teacher is represented negatively in the extract; i.e. he is depicted as someone who is not or cannot be a good role-model for his learners. Surprisingly, only five circumstances are deployed in the text, and these circumstances are distributed across four types of circumstance: two circumstances of location ("At school" in [1] and "in front" in [3]), one circumstance of extent ("always" in [2]), one circumstance of manner ("with women" in [14]); and one circumstance of matter ("about Isaka" in [8]). As it appears, circumstances of location predominate over other types. This indicates that the text contains a spatial setting.

4. CONCLUSION

It is obvious in the preceding analyses that stylistics is a reliable method that can facilitate the teaching of literary texts in an EFL context. The stylistic analyses displayed above have not actually covered the full potential of this method. For instance, the application of such linguistic theories as mood (mood, modality and adjunct), theme (theme and rheme), taxis (parataxis and

hypotaxis), logico-semantics, cohesion, register, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, to name but a few, to literary texts in an EFL context can provide very useful insights into how language works in literature. Recent works (Koussouhon and Allagbé, 2013; Koussouhon and Allagbé, 2015; Koussouhon, Akogbéto and Allagbé, 2015a; Akogbéto, Allagbé and Koussouhon, 2015; Allagbé and Alou, 2020; Allagbé, Alou and Amoussou, 2020; Allagbé, Alou and Ouaro-dima, 2020; Allagbé and Amoussou, 2020b; Allagbé, Amoussou and Tchada, 2020; Allagbé, Guézohouèzon and Tchibozo-Lainé, 2021; Amoussou, Djimet and Allagbé, 2022; Amoussou, Allagbé and Ahoutinou, 2020; Amoussou, Allagbé and Tchada, 2020a & b; Guézohouèzon, Tchibozo-Lainé and Allagbé, 2021; Tchada, Allagbé and Amoussou, 2020; Yokossi, and Allagbé, 2021; Yokossi, Allagbé and Koussouhon, 2021, etc.) on literary texts have confirmed this.

At this level, there is a need to map out some pedagogical implications of my use of stylistics, as a method, to teach literary texts in an EFL setting. The first implication is student engagement or motivation. When I used stylistics, as a method, to teach literary texts in my EFL class, I noticed that my students with time became highly motivated as they obviously increasingly understood better how to approach literary texts. It is not an exaggeration to state here that many students (including EFL students) truly like literature (and by extension literary criticism) but the way it is dished out to them tends to discourage them. In other words, these learners cannot really grasp what they are (being) taught and how to reproduce it. And this creates a deep feeling of frustration, anxiety and negative attitude in most of them. In fact, the reader-centered and text-oriented approaches, and the scientific rigor and objectivity that stylistics embodies naturally buttressed my learners' understanding of language and creativity in language use.

The second implication is student attitude. My students showed a positive attitude in the class. As mentioned above, they were highly motivated and proved this through their readiness to learn and gain new knowledge. The third implication is learner autonomy and performance. As I studied literary texts with my students by means of stylistics, I noticed they progressively became aware of how language works, and the worksheets that I provided them with too helped them to apply their (new) knowledge by conducting their own stylistic analysis. In addition, the atmosphere created in the classroom aimed at encouraging the students to formulate an intuition on literary texts and substantiate it with textual evidence, relating it to their socio-cultural experience, not only developed critical language awareness and critical thinking in learners but also reinforced their autonomy and performance. Again, the project approach that I employed for my mid-test enhanced both student attitude and autonomy. With this approach, the students really felt they were in control of their learning process. In conclusion, future research would measure EFL students' perception of the use of stylistics to teach literary texts.

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