

UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN



THE TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FORTH (254TH) INAUGURAL LECTURE

“COCOONS OF MEANINGS OF SIGNS AND
STYLES IN SEMIOTICS AND STYLISTICS”

By

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FACULTY OF ARTS,
UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN, NIGERIA**

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My Lords Spiritual and Temporal,
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Greatest Unilorites,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

Preamble

Vice Chancellor sir, I give all the glory to God Almighty and I thank you for giving me the opportunity to present the 254th Inaugural Lecture of this great University. It is the 5th lecture from the Department of English. The first was the 21st lecture delivered by Prof. David Cook on 30th January, 1986; the second was the 49th lecture delivered by Prof. Olu Obafemi on 30th July, 1997; the third was the 56th lecture delivered by Prof. Sam A. Adewoye on 16th May, 2002; and the fourth was the 215th lecture delivered by Prof. Sola Timothy Babatunde on 3rd February, 2022. I am grateful to God Almighty and the Administration for the privilege to deliver the 254th Inaugural

Lecture and it is the first by a female professor of the English Department, University of Ilorin.

Vice Chancellor sir, in March 1995 when I joined the services of the University of Ilorin as Lecturer I in the then Department of Modern European Languages (which became the Department of English in 2004), I was about to complete my PhD dissertation, “A Semiotic Interpretation of the Prison Setting in Selected South African Prose Writings” in the department. However, Semiotics was not highlighted in the teaching schedule of the department. At various times over the years, I taught stylistics and several courses related to stylistics. These courses included Use of English I/ II, Advanced English Composition I/ II, Introduction to Stylistics, Introduction to Semantics, Systemic Grammar, New Trends in Syntax, Multilingualism, English for Specific Purposes, Speech Writing, Stylistics, and English in a Bilingual Context at the undergraduate level. At the postgraduate level, I taught Research Methods, Stylistics, The History of the English Language, English for Academic Purposes, Principles of Pragmatics, and Advanced English Writing Skills. It was through teaching these courses, research as well as the solid foundation that had been laid by my MA stylistics teachers, Professor J. Kayode Omole and Mrs Adekunbi Ofuya, that the seed of stylistics germinated and took root turning me into a propagator of two intriguing fields of semiotics and stylistics.

Vice Chancellor sir, this lecture focuses on semiotics, the study and interpretation of signs on the one hand, and stylistics, the study and interpretation, in language studies, of the styles of written and spoken texts, visual and moving images, etc. on the other hand. Both semiotics and stylistics as cocoons are figuratively speaking, enveloping comfortably and surrounding myriads of meanings of signs and styles respectively. Some of the meanings of signs are presented in the lecture via the application of semiotic methods to some literary works and prose writings, highway codes, somatogenic texts (e.g., physical marks on the body, the skin texture, clothing, or

the total configuration of the body structure), as well as dreams. Some styles of literary and non-literary texts are also exhibited through linguistic stylistics, literary stylistics, and expressive stylistics in this lecture. I begin the lecture by explaining some concepts of semiotics and stylistics.

Foundation of Modern Semiotics and Semiotic Studies in Contemporary Times

‘Semiotics’, derived from the Greek word ‘*sēmēion*’, describes signs and their interpretation. Semiotics includes how meaning is created through words, objects, images, diagrams, pictures, symbols, metaphors, gestures, sounds, codes, connotations, sign systems and processes, etc. Semiotics was first conceived by the ancient Greek philosophers in Western scholarship (Kowzan 1968, Winner 1973, Paruolo 1981, and Clarke 1987). Starting with Hippocrates Parmenides in the fifth century B.C. through the works of Roman writers like Cicero and Quintilian, *semeion* (the sign) was used to mean “evidence, proof, or symptom of what was at least temporarily absent or hidden from view” (Clarke, 1987, p.12). Examples of their *semeion* included smoke as a sign of fire; clouds as a sign of an impending storm for the sailor at sea; and a flushed complexion as a sign for the physician of a fever. Clarke (1987, p.17), however, emphasises that *semeion* does not include words or sentences as linguistic signs but only natural objects.

By the Middle Ages, beginning with St. Augustine to the mediaeval logical tradition which followed him, the sign came to include both natural objects and linguistic expressions, distinguished as ‘natural’ and conventional signs. but attention was focused mainly on linguistic expressions.

Vice Chancellor sir, the two major modern founders of semiotics are Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Peirce. Ferdinand de Saussure, a French-speaking Swiss linguist and founder of modern linguistics proposed a science which he called ‘semiology’ in his *Cours de Linguistique Générale*, published posthumously in French in 1916 from the notes taken

by his students in the series of lectures he delivered at Geneva University between 1906 and 1911 (Saussure 1974).

Saussure's signification is based on the dichotomy of duality. A sign, therefore, consists of two focal inseparable elements, namely **signifier** (a set of speech sounds or marks on a page) and signified (the abstract concept or idea behind the sign). However, there is no inherent or natural connection between the signifier and the signified except onomatopoeia. The relationship between them is unmotivated, arbitrary, and conventional. Saussure's interest lies mainly in the signifier. Saussure's study of language is **synchronic** (the study of the system of language at a single given time) and not diachronic (the study of the changes in language over a span of time). He also distinguishes **langue** (the abstract linguistic system which pre-exists any individual use of it i.e., 'the collective memory of a culture') and parole (individual speech utterances). De Saussure focuses on the underlying system of language (langue) as compared to the use of language (parole or speech).

Charles Sanders Peirce, an American logician, mathematician, scientist, and philosopher also founded a study which he called 'semeiotic'. Peirce's triadic model was elaborated at a much greater length than de Saussure's. In the first of his two interlocking triads on which his 'semeiosis' is based, Peirce's signification involves all three subjects of *sign*, *object* and *interpretant* in a complex interaction. Each of the terms (as emphasised by the arrows below) can only be understood in relation to the others.

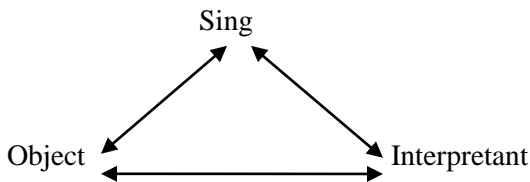


Fig. 1: C. S. Peirce's elements of 'semeiosis'

The three aspects of the triad, the sign-aspect, the object-aspect, and the interpretant-aspect can each be divided into three further elements. The sign-aspect is divided into the qualisign, the sinsign and the legisign. "A *qualisign* is a quality which is a sign" (Buchler, 1955, p. 101). "A *sinsign*... is an actual existent thing or event which is a sign" (Buchler, 1955, p.101). The prefix 'sin' according to Savan (1987-88, p.21), "is intended to suggest *single* or *singular* 'being only once'. But, Savan continues, it is "not any and every unique and experienced thing or event which is a sinsign". According to him, "A sinsign's singularity as an *encountered* thing or occurrence must be essential to it as a sign – must be that which makes it a sign". "A *legisign* is a law that is a sign (Buchler, 1955, p.102), "not in the form of a single object but as the abstract working of a set of rules or principles (Hawkes, 1977, p.127). Certain patterns of wind, air pressure, and cloud may be legisigns of rain. Grammar operates as a recurring *legisign* in language. Individual and social regularities of behaviour, conventions and customs are also legisigns (Savan, 1987-88, pp.22-23). A legisign exists through its replica. It is repeatable.

Regarding their connection to their objects, Peirce distinguishes two types of trichotomously subdivided objects. These are dynamic objects (possibles, occurrences, necessitants) and immediate (passive) objects (descriptive, designative, copulant). In addition, the relation between the sign itself and its dynamic object produces a further trichotomy. Peirce makes this last trichotomy into a triad of *icon*, *index*, and *symbol*. The trichotomy of object was most frequently used by Peirce, and it is also the best known to semiotic investigators. It is the second of his two interlocking triads which is usually represented thus:

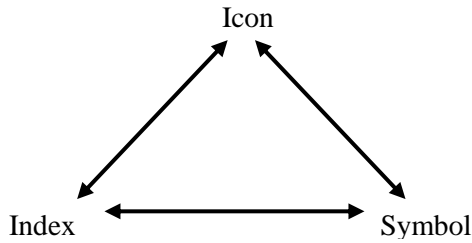


Fig. 2: C. S. Peirce’s trichotomy of the relation of sign to the dynamic object

Thus, for him, a sign is an *icon* when it resembles its object and partakes in the characters of the object to the extent that "we lose the consciousness that it is not the thing" (Hartshorne *et al.*, 1931-58, vol. 2, p. 363). For Wales (2001, p.357), an icon visually resembles what it represents e.g., holograms and photographs. For Peirce, the resemblance between the iconic sign and its object may be the extreme likeness of either the photograph or the likeness of a figurative painting to the person or place it depicts respectively or the similarity of a map to the geographical area it stands for. The resemblance may also be subtler than these. Peirce distinguishes three types of *icon*: the *image*, the *diagram*, and the *metaphor*.

An index sign is a sign of the existence or occurrence of some singularity external to the sign. For Hawkes (1977, p.127), it is "something which functions as a sign by virtue of some sort of factual or causal connection with its object". Unlike an icon, it need not bear any resemblance to its object. However, it must be causally connected with its object often physically or through contiguity. Thus, smoke is an index of fire; a knock on the door is an index of someone's presence at the door; symptoms are indices of diseases; the pointing (index) finger relates to the pointed-to object through physical contiguity; and verbal deixis (personal demonstrative pronouns such as 'I', 'you', 'this', 'that', and adverbs such as 'here' and 'now', etc.) are indices.

For Peirce, a sign is a *symbol* “if the sign is a general rule, related primarily through the interpretation which is placed upon the sign by its interpretant” (Savan, 1987-88, p.6). The relationship between the sign and its object is arbitrary, conventional, and unmotivated. No similitude or any physical connection exists between the two. They are related by virtue of a law, rule, or habit. According to Peirce, "A *symbol* is a sign which refers to the object it denotes by virtue of a law, usually an association of general ideas". (Hartshorne *et al.*, 1931-58, vol. 2, p. 249). The major examples of the symbol are the words that constitute a language. Other examples are the gesture of shaking hands in many cultures, which is a conventional sign of greeting and a red or green traffic-light which conventionally signifies 'stop or go!'

Peirce's 'symbol' or 'symbolic' is different from that used for example, for the relation of the kind that holds between an owl and wisdom when it would then be said that the owl is a symbol of or symbolises wisdom (see Lyons, 1977, p.105 and Elgar, 1979 especially pp. 16-19). In effect, an understanding of Peirce's *symbol* depends on a knowledge of 'general ideas'. Peirce's ready example of a symbol is the linguistic sign with its arbitrary nature.

Concerning its connections to its interpretant, Peirce's semiotics embraces three trichotomously divided types of interpretant. These are *immediate* (or *explicit*), *dynamic* (or *effective*) and *final* (see Fig. 3 (v), (vi)& (viii)). In addition, there are trichotomies of relations i.e., the relation between a sign and its dynamic interpretant, the relation of the sign to its final interpretant and the triadic relation of the sign to its dynamic object and its normal (i.e., final) interpretant. The *immediate* (or *explicit*) interpretant is the explicit content of the sign which "would enable a person to say whether or not the sign was applicable to anything concerning which that person had sufficient acquaintance". The *immediateinterpretant* may be *hypothetic* (hypothetical resemblance between an interpretant and the qualitative character of its sign); categorical (the

significant information carried by a sign that is applicable to some occurrence, or to some existent entity); or relative (a law or regularity).

The *dynamic (or effective) interpretant* is the actual and existing semiotic effect which a sign produces. A semiotic effect is a triadic result. It is an effect which stands for its object through its cause. Three types of dynamic interpretant are identifiable. These are *emotional*, *energetic*, and *logical*. The relation between a sign and its dynamic interpretant may be suggestive, imperative, or indicative.

The *final interpretant* is "the semiotic effect which would be produced by the sign if it could finally and fully satisfy the norm by which it is intended to be judged" (Savan, 1987-88, p.52). There are three types of purposes that a sign may fulfil. First, a type of purpose which will be the final interpretant of one type of sign is to produce qualities of feeling which are to some degree admirable or *kalos*. Signs whose final interpretants are aesthetic are called *gratific*. Second, there are final interpretants whose purpose is the direction (interpretation) of conduct. These are ethical final interpretants. Signs whose final interpretants are ethical may be called *practical*. According to Savan (1987-88, p.64), signals, some kinds of promise, releasers of animal behaviours, ceremonies, rituals, etc., are practical signs whose final interpretants are in a very broad sense of the word, ethical. Third, there is the production, by a cognitive or intellectual sign, of deliberate critical (or logical) control over habits and beliefs. A sign whose final interpretant is critical (logical), Peirce named *pragmatic*.

In the relation of the sign to its final interpretant, the *rheme* "indicates the understood possibility of an object to the interpretant, should he have occasion to activate or invoke it", the *dicent* "conveys information about its object, as opposed to a sign from which information may be derived" and the *argument* is a sign "whose object is ultimately not a single thing but a *law* (Hawkes, 1977, p.128). In the triadic relation of the sign to its dynamic object and to its normal (i.e., final) interpretant, assurances, could be by instinct, by experience or of form.

I represent Peirce's three fundamental classes which yielded ten trichotomies of signs as follows:

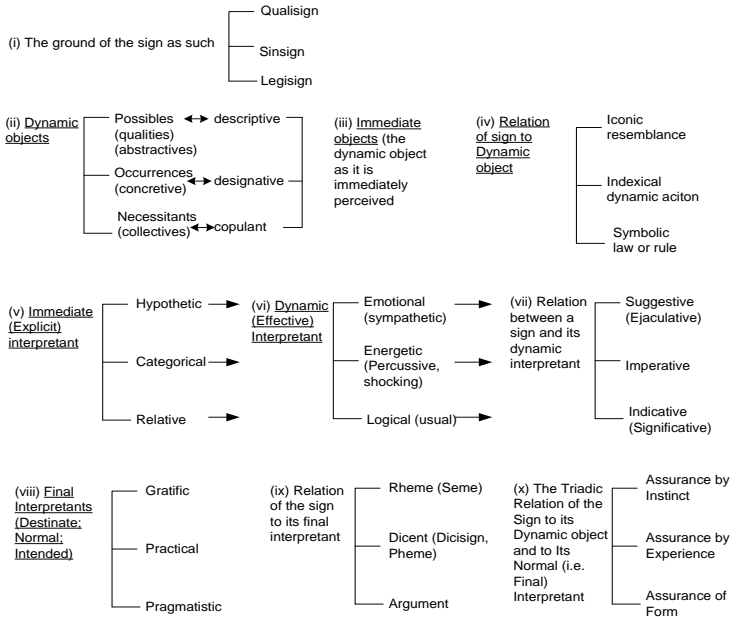


Fig. 3: Alabi's (1995) Interpretation of Peirce's Full 'Semeiotic' System and its ten trichotomies

Generations of theorists and interpreters of semiotics have been inspired by the founding concepts of Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Peirce. Among them are the following:

i.	Jakob von Uexküll (1864 -1944)	He studied the sign processes in animals and established biosemiotics.
ii.	Louis Hjelmslev (1899-1965)	In a collaborative effort, he developed a structuralist theory of language called glossematics, which was used to further develop

		Saussure's semiotic theory.
iii.	Charles Morris (1901-1979)	He described the sign process, which he termed 'semiosis' as a three-dimensional phenomenon consisting of semantics, syntactics, and pragmatics.
iv.	Roland Barthes (1915-1980)	He proposed and demonstrated exhaustively in <i>Mythologies</i> , that the category of connotation i.e., generating secondary meanings, is indispensable in semiotic analysis and explores five types of codes in <i>S/Z</i>].
v.	Thomas A. Sebeok (1920-2001)	He coined the term 'zoo semiotics'.
vi.	Juri Lotman (1922 -1993)	He developed semiotics of culture and 'semiosphere'.
vii.	Christian Metz (1931-1993)	He was a key figure in film semiotics.
viii.	Umberto Eco (1932-2016)	He proposed a general semiotic theory made up of a theory of signification i.e., a theory of codes and a theory of communication i.e., a theory of sign production.
ix.	Paul Bouissac (born 1934)	He developed a range of semiotic interpretations of circus performances.
x.	Keir Elam (born 1950)	In <i>The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama</i> , he analysed theatrical performance and presented a model of theatrical communication.

Table 1: Some Theorists and Interpreters of Semiotics that have been Inspired by the Founding concepts of F. de Saussure and C. S. Peirce

Vice Chancellor sir, semiotic studies in contemporary times have come to encompass huge semiotic subfields from which I identify ten (**Alabi**, forthcoming) in Table 2 below.

i.	Cultural and literary semiotics	the application of semiotic methods to literary works, the visual media, the mass media, advertising, etc.
ii.	Social semiotics	the interpretation of all cultural codes , such as those in highway codes, slang expressions, fashion, gestures, tattoos, somatogenic features (e.g., physical marks on the body, the skin texture, clothing, hair, or the total configuration of the body structure), and advertising
iii.	Semiotics of dreaming	the application of symbolisation being one of the mechanisms through which the work of dream construction occurs
iv.	Theatre semiotics	application of semiotic methods to theatre studies
v.	Film semiotics	application of semiotic methods to the study of film and moving images
vi.	Comics semiotics	the study of the various codes and signs of comics and their meanings
vii.	Ethnosemiotics	application of semiotics concepts to ethnography
viii.	Biosemitotics	the study in Biology of the production and interpretation of signs (such as sounds, objects, smells, movements and signs on molecular scales normally not perceived by an

		organism) in the physical and biologic realm
ix.	Zoo semiotics	a part of biosemiotics which studies animal communication
x.	Semiotics of Mathematics	the study of the structure, use and meaning of signs, symbols, and sign systems in mathematics

Table 2: Ten Examples of Semiotics Subfields

How Many Stylistics?

Vice Chancellor sir, stylistics is generally known as the study of the style of non-verbal and verbal discourses. It is a detailed linguistic analysis of literary and non-literary texts. According to Wales (2006, p. 213), stylistics characteristically deals with the interpretation of texts by focusing in detail on relevant distinctive linguistic features, patterns, structures, or levels and on their significance and effects on readers. It presupposes that every linguistic feature in a text has potential significance. It draws its terminology and models from various appropriate branches of linguistics...

Modern stylistic analysis started with the works of Charles Bally, a pupil of Ferdinand de Saussure (the semiotician and structuralist), who published a two-volume treatise on stylistics in 1909 entitled *Traité de stylistique française*, and Leo Spitzer who wrote *Stilstudien* (1928). From the 1900s, several names have been coined for stylistics and various types of stylistics have been identified thus, buttressing Wales' (2006 p. 217) viewpoint that Lecerle (1993) "is right to state, on the one hand, that no one has probably ever known exactly what the term stylistics comprises, yet on the other hand, that the discipline is forever being reborn". Among the many types of stylistics are formalist stylistics, literary stylistics, generative stylistics, computational stylistics, forensic stylistics, pedagogical stylistics, practical stylistics, expressive stylistics, affective stylistics, functional stylistics, linguistic stylistics, discourse (or

contextualised) stylistics, pragmatic stylistics, feminist stylistics, cognitive stylistics, critical stylistics, corpus stylistics, multimodal stylistics, film stylistics, and eco-stylistics. Other types of stylistics include historical stylistics, new historical stylistics, radical stylistics, relevance stylistics, translational stylistics, sociostylistics, evaluative stylistics, psychostylistics, contrastive stylistics, and media-mediated stylistics.

In Table 3 below, I identify in this lecture, the commencement periods and signposts of the first twenty types of stylistics among the thirty types listed above.

S/n	Types of stylistics	Commencement	Signposts
i.	Formalist stylistics	early 20th century (Russia), 1960s and early 1970s (Britain and the United States)	phonological, lexical & grammatical forms and structures that would make a text 'poetic'
ii.	Literary stylistics	early 20th century	close reading involving in-depth analysis of the details of a text, focusing on lexis, syntax, narrative structure and how the structure evinces meaning; analysis of figures of speech; analysis of phonetic and prosodic features e.g., rhyme, rhythm, sound patterns, etc.
iii.	Forensic stylistics	late 19th century to early 20 th century	grammar, sociolinguistics, and discourse analysis
iv.	Generative stylistics	1960s	rules of generative grammar
v.	Computational stylistics	late 1960s	statistics and use of computers to delineate linguistic patterns

vi.	Pedagogical stylistics	1970s	linguistic (phonology, syntax, lexis, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics) analysis of texts as teaching aids for literature and language teaching
vii.	Practical stylistics	from the 1970s	sole interest in the stylistic analysis of texts as “teaching aids for literature and language study by native and foreign speakers of English”
viii.	Expressive stylistics	1970s	reveals the personality or ‘soul’ of the writer or speaker
ix.	Affective stylistics (one of the types of reader-response approaches)	1970s	psychological processes involved in reading and the readers’ acts of interpretation
x.	Functional stylistics	late 1970s	Halliday’s ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions of language
xi.	Linguistic stylistics	early 20th century and 1970s	lexical, syntactic (especially Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) which includes the three aspects of context i.e., Field, Mode, and Tenor), semantic, and phonetic devices as well as paralinguistic, graphemics and graphology
xii.	Discourse	1980s to the	methods of discourse

	stylistics (or contextualised stylistics)	1990s	analysis including speech acts, presuppositions, the cooperative principle and conversational maxims, the politeness principle (particularly face-threatening acts), conversation analysis, cohesion and coherence
xiii.	Feminist stylistics	late 1970s to early 1980s	sexism, power, and ideology, agency and focalization, metaphor, transitivity, multimodal markers, etc.
xiv.	Pragmatic stylistics	1960s then late 1980s to early 1990s	language use in context and dedicated to linguistic models e.g., speech act theory, cooperative principle and conversational maxims, politeness principle, and relevance theory
xv.	Cognitive stylistics	1990s	metaphors, mental schemes, and frames of knowledge
xvi.	Critical stylistics	2000s	ideological aspects of the linguistic features in texts that exhibit the link between language, power, and ideology
xvii.	Corpus stylistics	2000s	idiosyncratic groups of words/regular linguistic patterns
xviii.	Multimodal stylistics	2000s	lexis and grammar and semiotic modes e.g., typography, colour,

			layout and visual images
xix.	Film stylistics	2000s	semiotic (use of signs namely icons, indexes, and symbols) and semantic (metaphorical use of images, scenes, words) analyses
xx.	Ecostylistics	2000s	nature, environment, ecological metaphors, and collocations

(See Burke, 2006; Fish, 1970; Fish, 1980; Goatly, 2017; Halliday, 1971; Halliday, 1985; Halliday, 2004; Jeffries, 2007; Jeffries, 2014; Mahlberg, 2014; Mills, 1995; Mills, 2006; Miššiková, 2003; Montoro, 2014; Nørgaard *et al.*, 2010; Semino and Short, 2004; Simpson and Hall, 2002; Stewart, 2006; Virdis, 2022; Wales, 2006; Wales, 2011; Yeates Sedelow and Sedelow Jr., 1964.)

Table 3: Commencement Periods and Signposts of Twenty Types of Stylistics

Some of my Modest Contributions to the Study and Interpretation of Signs and Styles in Semiotics and Stylistics

Vice Chancellor sir, I have been involved in teaching, research and community service and I have made modest contributions, some of which are explicated below.

1. **Cultural and Literary Semiotics:** Application of Semiotic Methods to Some Literary Works and Prose Writings

Alabi (2004b) is entitled “Mother is supreme: A semiotic reading of motherhood and womanhood in three of Achebe’s novels”. Following C. S. Peirce’s interactionist theory of metaphor as developed by his followers notable among whom is Parmegiani, the work provides a new insight into the place of the female gender in the male-dominated mores of traditional

African aesthetics. The work explores a simultaneous activation of the associated implications of the principal metaphorical subject “frame” “motherhood” or “womanhood” and the subsidiary metaphorical subject “focus” of “supremacy” in three novels of Achebe namely *Things fall apart*, *No longer at ease*, and *Arrow of God*. As a result of this activation, *Agadi-nwayi*, *Ani*, the old women at Umuike, Okperi, and Umuru markets, the mother of twins, Ojiugo, the daughter of Umuofia, Okonkwo’s mother, Hannah, Clara, and the daughters of Okperi collectively become the movers and ‘shapers’ of men and the society. The women or their metaphorical expressions provide this new insight into the place of the female gender in the male-dominated mores of traditional African aesthetics by being supreme in war, being the source of fertility and the ultimate judge of morality and conduct, also being supreme in commerce, in taking a step against the grievous suffering of mothers and twins and wastage of children’s lives. They are also supreme in the lives of Okonkwo (via his several offences against mother earth), Obi Okonkwo (metaphorically wedged between his mother and Clara), the men of Umuaro, Akukalia, and Ezeulu.

Alabi (1996b), “A semiotical and historical discourse of two novels of Achebe”, is a semiotic digging out of the communicative structures inherent in Achebe’s cultural setting and his creative process through metaphors, diagrams and signs in *Things fall apart* and *Arrow of God*. The gods, goddesses, spirits, ancestors, and other cosmological elements metaphorically, are the principal subjects in the passage of historical time, and it is their interplay and projection on man, the subsidiary subject, that strengthens the psychological existence of the society and helps the preservation and conservation of historical moments. For example, the central communal god, *Ulu* in *Arrow of God*, is an iconic metaphor of the communal harmony and functionalism of the six villages while the powerful deity, *Nwanyieke* is another metaphor of African magic which sustains the psychological well-being of the society in Eke market. In *Things fall apart*, *Ani*, the goddess

of the earth is a metaphorical apparatus for measuring standards, norms, ethics, and mores that sustain the social structures and history. Agbala, a clan god is an iconic metaphor of magic which also sustains the psychological existence of society in the movement of history while *agadi-nwayi*, an old woman with one leg is metaphorical of Umuofia's most potent war medicine. The diagrams of Ezeulu's obi; Ulu's shrine and the spirit house are concrete markers of time and space. They codify time and place into historical documents. Among Achebe's metaphysical and natural sinsigns that serve as tiny modules that aggregate into the movement of time are the half or full moon, cockcrow, overhead sun and sunset, eating of the sacred yams, market days, etc.

"The seven-shaped beasts of prey: A logico-semiotic reading of Obafemi's plays" (Alabi, 2000c), is a logico-semiotic exploration of five plays by Obafemi. The metaphoric icon of man as a predator on the one hand, and man as a prey on the other hand in the plays is approached in the work via the materialist philosophy of contradiction of opposites (thesis and antithesis) and their continual resolution (synthesis). The research uncovers the thesis and antithesis of mystification in the plays. Mystifying qualities (qualisigns) and mystifying existent individuals, things or events (sinsigns) through which certain human beings identified in seven clusters in the plays (see figure 4) as beasts of prey, that is, predators, prey on other human beings. Their mystifying qualities (qualisigns) include injustice, greed, corruption, burying chiefs or kings with "worthy heads", human trafficking, harassment, enabling war casualties by supplying guns, jet fighters, bombs, money, etc. They plunder and are riders of long and many cars and owners of cozy gleaming mansions built on the bleeding skins of the downtrodden. Negation of the thesis of oppression and the inevitability of synthesis via law, principles, or types (legisigns) are further espoused in the work. The plays are *Nights of a mystical beast* (abbreviated as *NMB*), *The new dawn* (abbreviated as *ND*), *Suicide syndrome* (abbreviated as *SS*) [The three plays are in *Collected plays of Olu Obafemi (1993a)*], *Naira has no gender* abbreviated as *NNG*), and *Scapegoats and sacred cows* (abbreviated as *SSC*).

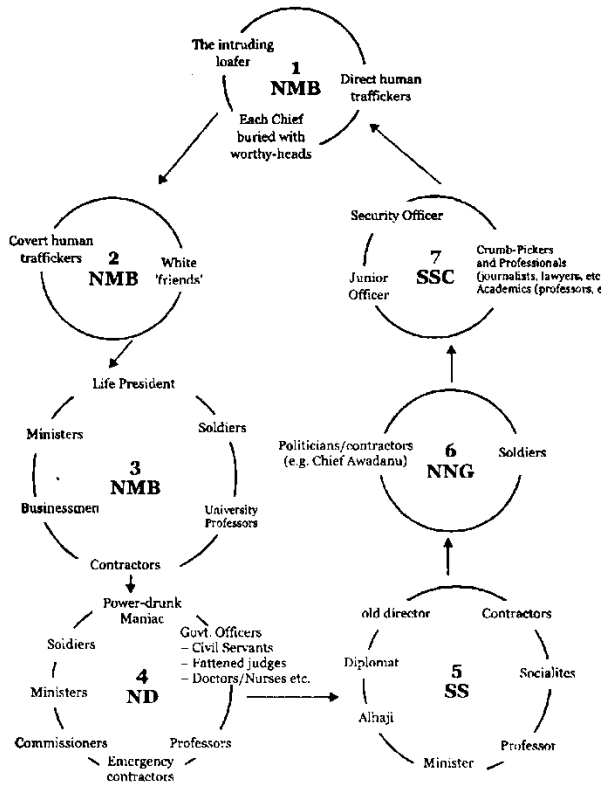


Fig. 4: Alabi's (2000) Seven Successive Clusters of Metaphorical Beasts of Prey in Five Plays by Obafemi

Alabi (1999a) in “The word and the world: Sinsigns in the apartheid South African Literature” espouses the contortion of the sinsigns ‘word’ and the ‘world’ and their negation in the poetics of South African liberation of the oppressed people in five South African Prose writings namely, Zwelonke’s *Robben island* (1973), Mphahlele’s *The wanderers* (1973), Wood’s *Biko* (1979), Sachs’ *Island in chains* (1982), and Breytenbach’s *The true confessions of an albino terrorist*(1984). The words “let there be ...” and “Let the ...” stipulated by the ceremony or ritual of Creation and

uttered in circumstances of their actual occurrence are vital sinsigns. It is through these prime sinsigns that formlessness and void become a space, a world which is another encountered occurrence thus, a sinsign, a container of vegetation, plant yielding seed, and fruit trees, water creatures, animals, etc. The cosmic interaction between the ‘word’ sinsigns and the sinsign ‘world’ is significant. Whatever affects one touches the other.

Among several ways shown in the prose writings to incarcerate the ‘word’ and the ‘world’, a few instances are cited here. An informal teaching of the ‘word’ by any white person to any black child is illegal. A white employer who teaches her African maidservant’s toddler the alphabet breaks the law. Many Africans are forbidden to make speeches, to speak with more than one person at a time or to be quoted. Telephones of non-whites are shadowed and tapped to gag and distort their words and world. The therapeutic effect of the ‘word’ is negated in South African prisons when music is taped at the wrong speed. On Robben Island, political prisoners have to endure words on the same record being played for weeks. Embargo is put on the written word when postal agencies are closed down to punish the blacks anytime they displease the white masters. In Pretoria Maximum, words contained in letters — both incoming and outgoing must be bland. Incoming letters to the prison could only be five hundred words long. The writer is cut off mid-air with a pair of scissors or words are blacked over. A prisoner during interrogation is not told what to write about. The security police read the pages written and tear them up. The prisoner keeps on writing in order to lose grips on his psyche. However, the oppressed people also employ the ‘word’ and their ‘world’ in revolutionary songs, plays, the written word in newspapers from the rubbish dump and those used by the guards at sentry posts for relieving their bowels, etc. as objects of psychological demystification.

“Icons of oppression and resistance in apartheid South African literature”, (**Alabi**, 2004a), unravels iconic images, diagrams, and metaphors of spatial forms, shapes and structures represented by the landscape, houses, fences, cages, leg irons, chains, heavy rings of iron, handcuffs, prison walls and

mathematical shapes and equations and their resemblance to oppression and alienation in the context of apartheid South Africa. A few examples are cited in this lecture. Whereas rural Africans occupy an average of six diagrammatically imprisoning acres each, rural white South Africans own an average of three hundred and seventy-five acres per person (*Let my people go*, p. 53). Land for the blacks is 'arid', 'dry', 'blistered', 'scalded', 'rusted', and 'rutted'. The picture of the land is an iconic image of suffocation and alienation. Mtshali says in "An abandoned bundle" (1975) that houses for Africans are small. Houses in Bantustans are "mud huts, thatch, wattle and daub" (*Let my people go*, p.181). The diagram and image of small-sized houses of mud, clay, straw, and reed illustrate qualities of cheap and worthless living.

The walls of the Kukuludu (little cells for spare-diet and solitary confinement) loom as if they would tumble on its inhabitant. The diagrammatic narrowness of the cell suffocates and presses on its victim. The squares in the various prison settings instantiate signs of disorientation and oppression. In prisons are square barred windows, double square doors, and square mats, or beds. Joseph Morolong is put in a hut and restricted to an area of one square mile in which he is the only human being. The oppressed in South Africa are caged within the mathematical diagram of squares. The work further explores how these icons of oppression are negated by iconic diagrams of tattoos and photographs. These signs of resistance are part of the systematic negation of oppression which resulted in the emancipation of Africans in South Africa. The fourteen Apartheid South African prose and poetry writings and a special magazine issue on South Africa used in the exposition are Paton's *Cry, the beloved country* (1948), Mandela's *Noeasy walk to freedom* (1965), Luthuli's *Let my people go*(1968), La Guma's *The stone country* (1967), La Guma's *A walk in the night* (1968), Themba's *The will to die*(1972), Zwelonke's *Robben island* (1973), Mphahlele's *The wanderers* (1973), Brutus's *A simple lust* (1973), Mtshali's "An abandoned bundle." (1975), Abrahams'

Mine boy (1975), Wood's *Biko* (1979), Sachs' *Island in chains* (1982), Breytenbach's *The true confessions of an albino terrorist* (1984), and Bennet's *Ebony* (1994).

In the work "Deductive semiotics of the demonic and the apocalyptic theses in selected South African prose writings", **Alabi** (2005) employs the ground, object, and interpretant of Peirce's deductive semiotics to analyse seven South African Apartheid Prose Writings. The ground, that is, the major premise of deductive semiotics, is a legisign which is the law and replica of occurrence. The object, that is, the logic, formal truth condition, or reality, is contained in the symbol whose relationship to the sign is arbitrary, conventional, and unmotivated. The interpretant which is immediate, dynamic, and final is relative, logical and pragmatistic. The replicas of occurrence in the selected Apartheid texts are considered via Frye's archetypal demonic and apocalyptic worlds. The archetypal demonic world of bondage, pain, and the hell the human being creates on earth is inhabited by the devil archetype made up of ruthless bodies, groups, and individuals who employ engines of torture and mutilation.

This world, its inhabitants and instruments are identified in the prose writings through (a) Symbolic settings of hell in the collectivism of the oppressors in parliament where 'obscene' laws and 'crazed' edicts are issued and in the courts. The judiciary of South Africa, in the selected texts, symbolises another demonic consortium of lawyers, judges and others who administer the machinery of demonism. (b) Symbols of satanic forces and actions via certain organisations, the police, warders and "boss-boys" whose instruments of torture in town, in the townships and prison cells, include batons, sten guns, rifles, tanks that spat fire, sticks, and wire-whips. On the other hand, the archetypal apocalyptic world for the non-whites in the selected works which is that of rejection and crucifixion is discussed via symbols of the crucifix. Woods' *Biko* opens in memory of forty-five heroes crucified in detention by the Security Police. Albert Luthuli is also crucified. Many more Africans are

crucified on the 'cross' of apartheid in the Soweto, Nyanga and Sharpeville uprisings. Timi and twenty-five other nationalists are captured and are fed to crocodiles. Many Africans die daily in detention, in jails, in mines, and in white farms. For two days, Bekimpi hangs upside down on his 'cross'. By the morning of the third day, he hangs still and cold in death. Logically, since the law or regulation of recurring conventions of crucifixion has always been redemptive, the cause for which non-whites in the prose works are crucified has also triumphed in South Africa. The prose works are Luthuli's *Let my people go* (1968), La Guma's *The stone country* (1967), Zwelonke's *Robben island* (1973), Mphahlele's *The wanderers* (1973), Wood's *Biko* (1979), Sachs' *Island in chains* (1982), and Breytenbach's *The true confessions of an albino terrorist* (1984).

2. **Social Semiotics:** Highway Codes and Somatogenic Features (e.g., Physical Marks on the Body, the Skin Texture, Clothing, Hair, or The Total Configuration of the Body Structure)

I proffered in **Alabi** (1996a), "Semiotics at the wheel: Drivers' signs on Nigeria's trunk roads" that the systematisation of kinaesthetic or kinetic, sound, and lightning signs in motoring has been so highly developed among professional drivers on Nigeria's very busy trunk non-dual carriage that one could talk of codification. I classified the semiological art at the wheel on Nigeria trunk roads into five basic macro signs of monitor tactics, value addition, booty, hazard, and salutation. Drivers employ monitor tactics to enquire about the presence of law enforcement agents on trunk roads. Headlights, horn sounds, slightly turned palms are employed as icons of inquiry from oncoming colleagues. The answer to the slightly turned palm or two flashes of light or two horn sounds for example comes in the form of kinaesthetic code: a wave of the hand indicates "the road is clear", one finger pointing upwards indicates for some drivers that "the road safety men are on the road and are far away", one finger pointing downwards indicates that "the road

safety men are on the road and are close by”. The V signs pointing upwards or downwards, or level/flat palms are also signifiers. Signs are also given kinaesthetically to oncoming colleagues on the value of the bribe they would be expected to give to law enforcement agents. The oscillating finger symbolises “no pleading” while five fingers or a fist indicates the amount of the bribe to be given. Booty signs are employed by professional drivers at the end of a journey on a trunk road and the likelihood of a return journey to inquire from another driver who has just begun a journey through their headlights or by sounding their horns or through slightly turned hands about the number of passengers and fares at rush hours. Answers to economic boosts are given through kinaesthetic signs. Kinaesthetic, lightning and sound are also used as hazard signs. Headlights switched on in full in the daytime symbolises a serious or dangerous condition. An intermittent sound of the horn, sometimes an improvised siren, also connotes danger. A flash of the headlight or a wave of the hand or showing the fist accompanied by a bow to a superior can be indexical of greeting.

In “The Highway Code in Nigeria: Examples of domestic strategies” (Alabi, 2010a), I investigated the domestic strategies of highway codes in Nigeria and discovered that these strategies are products of the ingenuity and cultural bent of the Nigerian citizens on the one hand and the Nigerian Government through its agent, The Federal Road Safety Commission on the other hand. Out of the sixteen groups of domesticated codes encountered in the research, only two groups are government-designed while the remaining fourteen are attributable to the citizens. Two examples will suffice here. First, the specially fitted lights and or sirens on emergency vehicles are substituted by some Nigerians in two different ways. They are substituted with leaves or palm fronds placed in front of any type of vehicle especially when such a vehicle is conveying the dead. The leaves or palm fronds are believed to clear the way and forestall the driver from seeing the dead being conveyed. Sirens on emergency vehicles are also substituted with long honking of the

horn. Second, linguistic codes of naming are also frequently substituted in Nigeria. Indeed, the substituted codes are more widely known and used than the proper names. Examples are:

‘luxurious buses’ for **45 or 60-seater buses**

‘tipper’/ ‘trailers’ / ‘tankers’ for **articulated / container vehicles**

‘traffic warden’/ ‘traffic warder’ for **traffic officer**

‘jump the queue’ for **overtaking vehicles waiting in front**

‘bumps’ for **speed-breakers**

Significantly, the employment of almost half of the identified groups of citizens’-designed highway codes has effectively become part and parcel of the Nigerian culture. Not only would these domestic strategies of highway coding be both informative and educative to the outside world, but some of them would also seem viable candidates for incorporation into a future highway code of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Alabi, Adeyemi, and Ojeniyi (2013) examine the semiosis (i.e., sign activity) of some bodily marks, textures of skins, and the body structure of traditional artisans which included alloy pot makers, cobblers, traditional farmers and game hunters, palm oil millers, head potters, truck pushers, traditional butchers, drummers, and *asooke* (traditional attire) dry cleaners in Nigeria. Our analysis was carried out, using semiotic postulates such as Ouzman’s (1998) notion of “mindscape”, Vogt’s (1998) notion of “physiognomy”, William’s (2002) postulate of “semasiology” and the semiosis (i.e., sign activities) of Peirce’s (1958) “triadic relation of thought”. From the analysis it was established that certain somatic signs are self-referent and recursive signs whose hermeneutics can only be generated through a metalevel meaning construct. Some bodily marks -- skin textures and body structures can therefore be described as semiotic materialities of visual indexes which are helpful in revealing the occupational engagements of the bearers exemplified in figures 5 - 9.



Fig: 5.



Fig: 6.

Fig. 5: A palm oil miller at work. **Fig. 6:** A palm oil miller's hand.

Figure 5 is the picture of a traditional palm oil miller at work while figure 6 is the picture of the miller's hand. Figure 6 reveals the lustrous appearance and smooth texture of the hands. The entire body of a palm oil miller; most especially the hands and legs are always smooth and lustrous. In most cases, palm oil millers do not need to rub their bodies with ointment or body cream (except for medication purposes) yet their bodies remain ever oily. There is also a traditional belief that not only do their bodies always appear oily but also their clothes (no matter how much they wash them).



Fig: 7.

Fig. 7: Picture of a porter's bald head.

Figure 7 is the picture of a porter who has taken to carrying items on his head from the age of ten. He is just 35 years old, and he has already developed a bald head with white hair sprouting all over the remaining part of the head. The man is considerably young, but he has been masked with the features associated with old age because of a long period of carrying goods on his head.

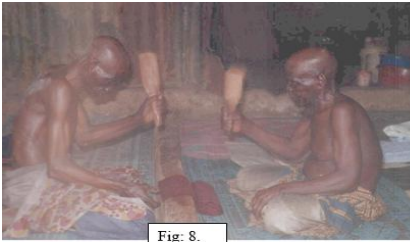


Fig: 8.



Fig: 9.

Fig. 8: Sitting posture of *aso oke* (traditional attire) dry cleaners at work.

Fig. 9: Sitting posture of *aso oke* (traditional attire) dry cleaner at work.

The old men in figures 8 and 9 are *asooke* (traditional attire) dry cleaners. They use local tools such as the timber log and clubs for the job. The dry cleaning is usually done in the posture they maintain in the picture. This constant sitting posture has made their back permanently bent from the waist. This physiognomic structure can be visually perceived while they walk.

3. Semiotics of Dreaming

Semiotics of dreaming is the application of symbolisation being one of the mechanisms through which the work of dream construction occurs. **Alabi V. A.** and Alabi V. T. (2019) explore dream symbolization and prevalent dream personae in the best and worst dreams of thirty male and thirty female English major Christian students at the University of

Ilorin, Nigeria. The overall attempt in the work was the juxtaposition of science and psychoanalysis (through dreams) with Christian religion via the sixty Christian students used as samples to exemplify and particularise, from a novel angle, the nexus in the Science and Religion Dialogue and the analysis of dream symbols of Nigerian University students would seem a specialised and an exclusive contribution to the dream literature. It has been shown, among others, that the symbolisation in their good and bad dreams, which would be remembered more than any other dream, is not based on their academic work or other campus experiences.

Symbolization in their best and worst dreams inhered mostly in words. These verbal symbols (i.e., words) standing for referents in the outside world are higher than those standing for referents in the world of imagination. Moreover, symbolization relating to the past featured least in the dreams while the present featured most. The dreams were thus, realistic more than imaginative and it implies that the students live more in the present through their dreams. The major visual symbols in the good dreams, high mountain, big new well-furnished house/mansion, new/many cars, are pointers to the waking desires of the students. It was also discovered that the dreamers were the predominant personae in a little above thirty-three per cent of the dreams. They did not dream of other persons alone in positive dreams but only in negative ones, the entire dreamers had no negative dream about their fiancées or fiancés.

4. **Linguistic Stylistics and Literary Stylistics**

Vice Chancellor sir, I have made a significant contribution to research in linguistic stylistics and literary stylistics, which have been beneficial to and cited by stylistics scholars over the years. **Alabi** (1997a) describes the basic characteristics of the Hallidayan-based scale and category approach in systemic linguistics and illustrates the infinite value of this type of grammar for analysing and interpreting both literary and non-literary texts with respect to the categories of

unit, structure, class, and system and three scales of rank, exponents, and delicacy. **Alabi** (1997b) explores the lexical, the syntactic and the graphological stylistic peculiarities of the legal language. Marked lexical, syntactic, semantic, and phonetic patterns, figures of speech, and prosodic features as well as graphological devices exemplified with literary and non-literary texts for stylistic effects is the focus in **Alabi** (1999b). **Alabi** (2000a) unravels forms of semantic re-investment of occupational lexical items in Nigerian English. Three categories and two sub-categories of re-investment are identified: shift, generalisation, narrowing (subcategories of 'shift'), re-assignment, and analogy. They are exemplified below.

Shift - The meaning of a 'panel beater' is shifted in Nigeria from one who beats panels to one who also beats non-panel parts of a vehicle, gardening tools, etc.

Generalisation - The general term 'driver' is used instead of 'chauffeur'.

Narrowing - The use of 'mechanic' is narrowed to only motor mechanic where as there are other types of mechanics e.g., bicycle, sewing machine, and printing machine. 'Vendor' is narrowed to only newspaper vendors where as there are other types of vendors e.g., fruit and food. 'A vulcanizer', i.e., "especially an apparatus or a person who treats crude-India rubber with Sulphur at high temperature to improve its strength", has had its meaning narrowed to one who inflates and patches tyres.

Re-assignment - The meanings of 'rewire', 'trailer' and 'fashion designer' are re-assigned. 'Rewire', a verb i.e., to provide with new wires especially for conducting electricity is reassigned an action process of a human specific occupation. 'Trailer, which is a vehicle pulled by another vehicle is reassigned to 'a container lorry' or 'a tanker'. 'Fashion designer' is re-assigned to seamstress, a woman whose job is sewing.

Analogy - Lexico-semantic analogy based on agreement in form with existing words in English pervades re-investment of Nigerian

occupational lexemes. Examples of re-invested lexemes are ‘lesson teacher’, ‘watch repairer’, ‘battery charger’, ‘shoemaker’, ‘pot mender’, and ‘shoe shiner’.

Alabi (2000b) considers the recurrent use of agentive nominals and metonymy, for textual and thematic concerns, in Armah’s *The beautiful ones are not yet born*. The research shows agentive nominals and metonymy not only as two primary means by which Armah achieves depth and distinctiveness in characterisation and plot, but also as rhetorical devices employed to have intellectual and emotional effect on the readers. The three aspects of context i.e., Field, Mode, and Tenor in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) are explored in **Alabi** (2001) and **Alabi** (2003b). In **Alabi** (2001), they are used to transcend a mere intuitive interpretation of Swift’s direct satire of a modest proposal for preventing the children of poor people in Ireland from being a burden to their parents or country and for making them beneficial to the public through cannibalism. The field, mode, and tenor showcase a vital means of defining distinctions in stylistic analysis. **Alabi** (2003b) shows that the distinctions in the use of register in Medicine and Christian Religion are not absolute especially when examined using some aspects of field, mode, and tenor.

Vice Chancellor sir, the study of stylistics in many departments of English in Nigeria was new in the late 1990s. **Alabi** (2003a), thus, presented via citations, explanations, and exemplifications, one hundred terminologies in stylistics studies aimed at assisting learners and practitioners in understanding, analysing and producing discourses. **Alabi** (2006) discovers and highlights fourteen commonly abused particles in Nigerian English that should be consciously and repeatedly (re)taught and (re)learnt in Nigeria. One example of each of the fourteen particles is listed below from the publication.

S/N	British English	Nigerian English
1.	back and forth / backward(s) and forward(s)	forth and back / forward and backward
2.	kith and kin	kin and kith
3.	knife and fork	fork and knife
4.	ladies and gentlemen	gentlemen and ladies
5.	nook and cranny	nook and corner
6.	wine and dine	dine and wine

To **Alabi's** (2009b) knowledge, no systematic attempt had been made to use purely features of language such as stylistic and pragmatic features to clearly and vividly account for the serpent's trickery as well as the woman's weakness in a discourse in the Garden of Eden.

This is the gap this research has filled. Stylistic and pragmatic 'triggers' of syntactic restructuring, hyperbole, blending and hybridization in lexicology as well as intention, world knowledge, ambiguity, implicature and infringing conversational maxims in pragmatics were used to analyse the discourse between the serpent and the woman in the biblical Garden of Eden. By functionally relating linguistic and social correlates, the work accentuates the craft of the serpent through syntactic restructuring, deep world knowledge and deliberate ambiguity while the predicament of the woman can be accounted for by communicative incompetence, shallow world knowledge and hyperbole. The analysis significantly places the encounter beyond intuitive religious interpretations. **Alabi** (2009c) unearths how Chinua Achebe and Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo both dexterously and skilfully employ syntactic and lexico-semantic structures of eleven groups of similar proverbs used in their respective trilogies.

A looming warfare on effective writing by the GSM technology in Nigeria is examined in **Alabi** (2010b). The research identified an emerging 'written language of the GSM' via the

lexemes, morphemes, syntax, and mechanics of punctuation, capitalisation and spacing and use of symbols in sampled messages written in English on the Short Message Service (SMS). Lurking in this language, however, are many problems among which are its serious aftermath for correct spelling, arbitrary use of affixation, consequent difficulties with well-formed sentences as well as with mechanics. Most important is the overall chaotic effect of this language on formal teaching and learning in English in an ESL (English as a Second Language) situation. The paper calls on writers using the English medium to strive to keep 'the written language of the GSM' out of good or formal writing so that it will not be one of its death knells.

However, **Alabi** (2010c) breaks new ground on stylistic inspiration in text messaging by Nigerians by unveiling the value-laden creativity inherent in some SMS text messages. Thirteen artistically and ingeniously used recurrent formal devices among schemes (parallelism, anaphora, epistrophe, climax and ellipsis), tropes (simile, personification, reification, and hyperbole), lexical cohesion, and adjectives in fifty-two (52) text messages written and sent by Nigerian university graduates in the Ilorin-Ibadan-Lagos axis of Nigeria between 2005 and mid-2008 were examined. It is intriguing that this emergent and distinctive genre of writing among other things, are consciously or unconsciously, reinforcing information, producing emotional effect, creating emphasis or melody, and generating dramatic means of persuasion or surprise. The stylistic devices are also artful and arresting means of securing brevity, giving vivid description, producing humour, creating cohesion, and enlivening communication. This research also significantly indicates that beyond looming warfare on effective writing by the GSM technology in Nigeria (**Alabi**, 2010b, p. 35), the value-laden creativity inherent in some SMS text messages is a consideration of the other side of the coin. Five examples of the text messages are cited below.

- i. Blessings inconceivable, Grace indescribable, Favor incomprehensible, peace unimaginable and joy unspeakable wilbursndur family's.
(parallelism and hyperbole to reinforce information and produce humour)
- ii. New day! New wk! New month! New life! New Mercy! New Grace! New Hope! New strength! New Joy! New song! God'll make all things New & Joyful 4u dis Sept. (anaphora for emotional effect)
- iii. Wake up, stand up, jump up, rise up, hook up, seat up, look up, run up, go up, shop up, walk up, grow up, just make sure u are UP coz its time 4 upliftment. Happy New Year.
(epistrophe (or epiphora) to create emphasis and melody)
- iv. Troubles as light as Air
Love as deep as the Ocean
Friends as solid as Diamond &
Success as bright as Gold;
These are all my wishes 4 u dis month.
(similefor explicit comparison)
- v. Feelinu're down 2 notin? den know dat God is up 2 somtin! Though it seems over ur head, its still under God's feet. God cares about U.
(antonymyto emphasise contrast)

Alabi and Salawdeen (2015) analyse Ahmed Yerima's *Heart of Stone*, using linguistic and literary stylistics to evolve a deeper understanding of the play. Devices such as parallelism, parenthesis, asyndeton, lexical and syntactic repetition, figures of speech, etc. are employed as effective tools in communicating ideas through his characters to depict the gory security situation in the play.

5. Expressive Stylistics

Some of the research engaged in reveal the personalities or ‘souls’ of the writers. **Alabi** and Adedimeji (2009) through the stylistic levels of graphology, phonology/phonetics, lexis, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics with illustrative analysis of selected texts, navigate the profundity of the stylistic variables in African poetry thereby revealing the personality or ‘soul’ of each writer. **Alabi V. A.** and Alabi V. T. (2010) is an interpretative stylistic study of selected poems, which exhibit man’s contact with oppression and its organs, in Obafemi’s *Illuminations* in order to reach the deep recess of the poet’s imagination. The study was carried out by the identification of the 12 most prominent linguistic features of phonology, graphology, lexis, syntax, and semantics in the poems, which were related to the artistic motivation of the poet. It was discovered that careful attention to Obafemi’s marked employment of these devices would clearly illuminate his inventive and deft treatment of the theme of repression and domination in *Illuminations*. Olaleye and **Alabi** (2017) is a stylistic analysis of how Remi Raji and Ademola Dasyuva exploit their linguistic dexterity at the morphological and lexical levels to invent lexical items that aptly capture their intended messages. The work identifies the devices common to both poets and those that uniquely give each poet an authorial fingerprint. **Alabi** and Osinubi (2018) is a stylistic comparison of J. Pepper Clark’s and Niyi Osundare’s poems on Lagos via graphology, syntax, lexico-semantics, and cohesion. The prevalence of punctuation marks, syntactic repetition, and conjunctions in Clark’s selected poems on Lagos versus the stylistic devices of personification, simile, and adjectives in Osundare’s poems on Lagos, vividly underscores and accentuates the poets’ separate perceptions of Lagos.

Some of my Modest Contributions to Teaching and Students' Supervision

Vice Chancellor sir, in my teaching career, I have introduced stylistics to many sandwich, undergraduate, and postgraduate students. Several of my Master of Arts supervisees have employed semiotics and stylistics for their theses. Examples are: semiotics (“Language as Missiles: A Pragma-Semiotic Study of the Press Fireworks against Military Rule in Nigeria 1989-1999” by Adedimeji, Mahfouz Adebola in 2002 and “A Pragma-Semiotic Analysis of Consumer Advertisements in the Print Media” by Ojeniyi, Sola Adetunji in 2002); feminist stylistics (“Comparative Feminist Stylistic Analysis of Lola Shoneyin’s *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi’s Wives* and Jude Dibia’s *Blackbird*” by Oladoye, Oladayo in 2017); multimodal stylistics (“A Multimodal Stylistic Analysis of Selected Salon Shop Signs” by Adebayo, John Temitope in 2021 and “A Multimodal Stylistic Analysis of Online Beauty Cosmetics Advertisements” by Adeleke, Bukola Adedotun in 2023), and forensic stylistics (“A Forensic Linguistic Analysis of Six Criminal Courtroom Proceedings at the High Court of Justice in Ilorin” by Adeofun, Oluwaseun Omoyemi in 2023). A PhD dissertation was on discourse stylistics i.e., “A Discourse Stylistic Analysis of Selected Nigerian Plays on Kingship and Power Tussle” by Sajo, Mohammad Aliyu in 2019.

Vice Chancellor sir, I wish to place on record the award for the National Universities Commission (NUC) Nigerian Universities Doctoral Theses Award Scheme for my supervising the thesis entitled “Text and Ideology in Contemporary Nigerian Poetry in English: A Stylistic Analysis” by Dr Alabi Taofik Adedayo adjudged the best PhD in the discipline of Arts within the Nigerian University System during 2009 (the award was received on 24/5/2012) and another for the National Universities Commission (NUC) Nigerian Universities Doctoral Theses Award Scheme for my supervising the thesis entitled “A Semiotic Study of the Ideological Tenets of Protest in Ten

Nigerian Plays” by Dr Ojeniyi Sola Adetunji adjudged the best PhD in the discipline of Arts within the Nigerian University System during 2012 (the award was received on 11/12/2013). They were for stylistics and semiotics respectively.

Contributions to State and National Communities

Instances of my contributions to state and national communities will be mentioned here. In September 2005, December 2005, and June 2006, I was one of the facilitators for Teacher Training in English Language to revitalize Secondary School Education in Kwara State (RSSEK). Modules for the training were produced by Obafemi O., **Alabi, V. A.** & Lawal, M. B. (2005). On Wednesday 19th February 2014, I delivered a lecture, “Effective and Functional Communication Skills”, to the participants of Senior Executive Course No. 36 at the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, Kuru, Jos.

Conclusion

Vice Chancellor sir, in this lecture, both semiotics and stylistics have been shown as cocoons enveloping comfortably and surrounding meanings of signs and styles. The application of semiotic tools such as words, objects, images, diagrams, pictures, symbols, metaphor, gestures, sounds, codes, connotations, sign systems and processes, etc. to some literary works and prose writings, highway codes, somatogenic texts and dreams have yielded several meanings. The world is full of signs and their meanings, so, everyone should be sensitive to semiotics apparatuses and the meanings that can be generated from them in written and spoken texts as well as in dreams. Linguistic, literary, and expressive stylistics have also been used to exhibit various styles, to be embraced or avoided, in literary and non-literary texts.

Recommendations

1. Semiotics, because of its tremendous signification value, should not be allowed to go into extinction. Greater attention should be paid to the existence and importance of semiotics in all disciplines especially Performing Arts, Biology, Zoology, Mathematics, Law, Medicine, Nursing, Business, etc.
2. The impunity with which some fresh Nigerian online news reporters abuse elements of stylistics in reports written in English is increasing by the day. The Faculty of Arts in conjunction with the Faculty of Mass Communication and the Department of English should consider short-term programmes in stylistics for them and editors in media houses.
3. Short-term programmes in stylistics could also be encouraged for other workers in society who write or edit letters, memos, reports, etc., in English for effective communication with native and educated second language or foreign language users of English.
4. In particular, administrative members of staff in higher institutions who write letters, memos, reports, etc., in English should, on a regular basis, be exposed to semiotics and stylistics.
5. Attention should be paid to imparting stylistics right from 100 level to the students in all the departments in the Faculty of Arts.
6. Teaching stylistics must be *sine qua non* in creative writing classes.
7. Semiotics underscores the fact that the world is suffused with many signs in culture, literature, ethnography, biology, zoo, law, mathematics, dreaming, etc. Attention should be paid to this, and we should always take note of

different signs in whatever we do and wherever we find ourselves to explore and savour the rich underlying meanings of discourse.

8. It has been shown in this lecture that the ground that could be covered in semiotics and stylistics is vast. However, the 'labourers' are too few. More lecturers and students should be encouraged to venture into the interesting fields of semiotics and stylistics.
9. Students employ language in various written and spoken discourse contexts and it is noteworthy that language can make or mar students' academic prospects. Thus, topics on semiotics and stylistics should be added to the GNS curriculum at the University of Ilorin.
10. Finally, annual workshops or seminars should be organised on campus to promote language use on stylistics and semiotics for effective communication for teaching and non-teaching staff.

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