

A LINGUISTIC STYLISTIC STUDY OF VICTOR S. DUGGA'S *GIDAN JUJU*

Joseph Alagbe

Abstract

This study, a linguistic stylistic study of *Gidan Juju* by Victor S. Dugga, focuses primarily on the lexical category, lexical cohesion, graphological and syntactic features chosen by the playwright to develop the play. The content of the text forms the corpora for the study while integrative approach is used for analysis. The study finds out that the diction of the text is simple, familiar and characterized by registers of various domains of life; it encompasses language embellishments such as proverbs, adages, witty-sayings and figures of speech which are used to enhance the aesthetics and elevate the language of the text. Findings also show that repetition, synonymy, near-synonymy, antonymy as well as lexical cohesion are the lexical cohesive devices Dugga uses prominently in the play. It is also discovered at the graphological level that the dash (-) is deployed for expansion and clarification of thought while ellipsis is aptly utilized for unexpressed thought so as to entrench brevity of expression. The use of various forms of interrogative sentence as well as choppy sentence (to facilitate the flow of thought) reveals the linguistic prowess of the playwright. The study concludes that the linguistic choices made by the playwright are apt, they are indicative of his idiolect.

Key Words: *Gidan Juju*, diction, lexical cohesion, choppy sentence,

Introduction

A major concern of stylistics as a branch of Applied Linguistics is "... to explore creativity in language use." Noteworthy is the fact that a primary medium through which creativity in language use manifests is in literary texts. Hence, to understand and interpret a literary text

accurately, the language use of the writer needs to be studied. No wonder, Osundare (2003:11) notes that “language is ... indeed the main pillar of the literary edifice, a vital affective tool which aids the status of Literature as a transitive enterprise.” Thus, in using language to express their thoughts and transmit information, writers do not use language inadvertently; they carefully select lexemes, expressions, structures and linguistic devices that optimally express their intentions which will produce the intended effects on the readers.

It is noteworthy that no two individuals are perfectly the same. People differ from one another due to differences in background, worldview, experiences, personality, belief and ideology, among others. This also applies to the literary world. No two writers write exactly the same way, hence the variation in style, thematic pursuit and aesthetics of literary works. Variation, therefore, necessitates the study of stylistics. Stylistic description of a literary text helps one to understand the text better. It also aids the understanding of the features of language employed to develop the text. Stylistic features also enhance the aesthetics of the literary text. This study aims at doing a linguistic stylistic analysis of Victor S. Dugga's *Gidan Juju*, focusing on the choices of the playwright at the levels of diction, lexical cohesion, graphology and syntax.

Stylistics and Style in Brief

Stylistics has been said to be an offshoot of rhetoric, traceable to the ancient Greece (Bradford 1997, Missikova 2003). It is a branch of linguistics which replaces and expands rhetoric (Wales 1989, Missikova 2003), as well as intersects with and mediates between linguistics and literature (Widdowson 1976:5; Missikova 2003:24). Many scholars view stylistics as the linguistic study of literature or a linguistic approach to literature (Toolan 1996: viii; Syal & Jindal 2010:25; Norgaard, Montoro & Busse 2010:1). In the words of Kamalu (2003:2), stylistics “is concerned with the ways meaning is created through language in literature and in other non-fictional texts.” It is a

consensus among scholars that stylistics, among other things, is the study of some aspects of language variation (Crystal & Davy 1969: 9); it is also the study of style(s) (Chapman 1973: 11; Turner 1973:8; Leech & Short 1995:13). In a nutshell, stylistics is the scientific and systematic study of style, its features and the effects it produces.

Style has also attracted various definitions from scholars, ranging from “saying the right thing in the most effective way ... shell of thought ... alternative expressions ... a set of collective characteristics ... the relations among linguistic entities” (Enkvist 1964: 9); “a product of individual choices and pattern of choices among linguistic possibilities” (Chatman 1967:9); “... some or all the language habits of one person ... some or all the language shared by a group of people at one time, or over a period of time ... the effectiveness of a mode of expression ... literary language” (Crystal & Davy 1969: 9-10); to “variation in language use, whether literary or non-literary ... the set or sum of linguistic features that seem to be characteristic: whether of register, genre or period, etc. ... the choice of items, and their distribution and patterning ... a deviation from the norm ...” (Wales 1989: 435-437), and appropriateness of usages (Lawal 2003:27). From the above views on style, it can be summarized as the effective way of using language as defined by choice, individuality, group, situation, context, period, norm as well as deviation from the norm.

Style as Choice

An increase in the study of style has been responsible for the emergence of battery of approaches, methods and procedures in studying same (Lawal 2003: 27; Osundare 2003:13). Among the approaches are style as choice, style as individuality, style as situation/context, style as content and form, style as good writing, style as iteration, style as deviation from the norm (Azuike 1992:111-121; Lawal 2003:27-37). Our focus here is limited to style as choice.

It is incontestable that language affords the users an unlimited range of variants from which choices are made. Osundare (2003:14)

observes that style as choice from variant forms “is the most author-oriented of all the categories because it goes beyond the surface structure appearances of style down to the creative, deep structural dynamics and imperative stylistic option”. It enables the language users to opt for lexical items, structures, and other linguistic devices that conform to the message and situation, and that will produce the intended effects. Lawal (2003:28) adds that the choices made by the language user from a range of possibilities are meant to convey a particular attitude, mood and intention germane to the particular situation since stylistic variants are “expressions which share all their entailments but differ in acceptability or appropriateness to specific contexts”. Hence, the choice made is determined by the context and situation. “Water” and “H₂O”, for example, share the same entailment but H₂O is acceptable and appropriate in the science laboratory than water, while “water” is more appropriate for domestic domain. The choice made by the language user is not limited to the lexical category, it covers all levels of language description. This theory (style as choice) is germane to the present study as it considers the linguistic choices made by Victor S. Dugga to develop the play *Gidan Juju*.

Research Problem

Many studies have been done on the stylistic analysis of literary texts. For example, Dayo (2021) examines style and themes in *Sieged* by Adamu Kyuka Usman from the perspective of literary stylistics. Hussein, Majeed and Atu (2021) have studied the linguo-stylistic analysis of sarcasm in *American Granddaughter*. Anjum (2022) pays attention to the stylistic analysis of Dennis Brutus’ poem, *Remembering Leeuwkop*. Dadjo (2022) investigates a linguistic stylistic analysis of Wole Soyinka’s *The Lion and the Jewel*. These studies, notwithstanding, the researcher discovers that there is no known study on Victor S. Dugga’s *Gidan Juju*, let alone a linguistic stylistic analysis of the play. Thus, this study focuses on the linguistic stylistic analysis of the text, with

particular emphasis on diction, lexical cohesion, graphological and syntactic features.

Methodology

The corpora for this study are gleaned from *Gidan Juju* by Victor S. Dugga. The theoretical framework employed for analysis is integrative approach/method - a fusion of theories/linguistic tools. Halliday's field of discourse is germane to consider a component of the diction of the play - register - while rhetoric/language arts are useful to examine the language embellishments deployed by the playwright in the text. Halliday's cohesive devices are useful in explaining lexical cohesion used by the playwright while classical grammar is relevant to identify the prominent syntactic features in the text.

Data Presentation and Discussion

Gidan Juju is a narrative of the king of Gwangwalla, north central Nigeria, who, consequent upon his resistance against the colonial rule at the wake of the system, is dethroned and banished to the land of the colonizers - The Great Britain. After many years, his great grandson who is raised abroad is made king. He ascends the throne with western perspective and ideology and aims at using same to advance his domain. As such, the old traditional royal burial rites, royal marriage system of polygamy and appointment of Custodian are jettisoned and pave way for modernism. To this end, "modern processes are put in place to preserve the vibrant cultural heritage of the community" (Dugga 2021 - blurb).

In the play, among other things, Dugga establishes the theme of culture clash cum clash of tradition and modernism.

Lexical Category in *Gidan Juju*

Reading Victor S. Dugga's *Gidan Juju* carefully, it is evident that the playwright's choice of lexical category is simple in that the play is comprehensible to the average reader. This is noticeable through

familiar and everyday lexical items with which he builds the text. More so, the playwright deploys lexemes and expressions of various registers to develop the diction of the play. Notable among them are the ones mentioned below with a few examples of items associated with each register.

Religion: deity (15), gods (18), anointed (29), forgive (62), cleansing rites (73), ritual (75), sacred grove (76), God of heaven (76), heathen (76), Christian (77), vigil (77), Muslim (80), Islamic rites (80), conversion (80), prayer house (82), praying (82), memorial service (80), heathen ritual (81).

Military: command (17), warriors to stand guard (39), troop (39), forces, army (39), battle (40).

Government, Politics and Administration: subject (16), reigned (18), throne (18), crown Prince (18), delegation (19), kingmaker (19), reign (20), enthronement (20), palace (22), governance (23), province (30), government officials (23), province (30), empire (39), citizen of her Majesty's government (44), local administration (45), sovereign (63), kingdom (63).

Health: suffered from many years ... ailment (18), sickness (18), health (18), a headache (39), veins (39), genes (42), medicine (56), bones (67), arthritis, high blood pressure (81), hospital (83), doctor (84), DNA (89).

Science and Technology: computer Software Company (19), laptop (25), live streaming (88), social media handles (88).

Law and Order: law (23), charged for dissent, insubordination (29), arbiter (36), arrest (45), judgement (75).

Education: school (18), university education (18), exams (28), Riverside Polytechnic (52).

Kinship Terms: aunt (17), grandfather (18), father (18), brother (19), elders (22), daughter (24), father in-law (25), great grandfather (61).

All the lexemes exemplified above are not alien to the reader, as such, they can be easily understood by them. More so, these lexical items, among others, are utilized to develop the thematic pre-occupations of the play.

(ii). Language Embellishments

Language embellishments are the devices used to add to the aesthetics of the diction of a work and to deepen the understanding of the text. Notable among them are proverbs, witty-sayings, adages, riddles, idioms, anecdotes and figures of speech. Proverbs and adages are culture-bound philosophical sayings while witty sayings are universal philosophical expressions. Anecdotes are short stories laden with moral lessons and values, while riddles are culture-bound philosophical questions and statements with hidden signification. In *Gidan Juju*, Dugga floods the diction of the play with proverbs, adages, witty-sayings and figures of speech. Exemplified below are cases of each one.

Proverbs

All the proverbs found in the play are uttered by adult characters such as Ezhim, Custodian, Akpeshko and Old Kingmaker 1. Examples are the following:

Custodian: ... An egg never sits on a hen (p.22).

Akpeshko: The yam has no secret that the knife will not know (p.30).

Ezhim: Yes, but one does not sacrifice sleep because of the prospect of having nightmares (p.33).

Old Kingmaker 1: ... The venom of a viper does nothing to the back of a tortoise (p.39).

The axiom: "an egg never sits on a hen" is uttered by Custodian to caution Akpeshko who says he will explain the process of having a harem to the newly coronate. Custodian uses the proverb to restrict Akpeshko not to do so in that the explanation is to be given by him (Custodian) or other chiefs and not the royal bard. Custodian adds that: "You are to be seen, not heard" (p.39). By using the proverb, Custodian warns and forbids the bard not to usurp authority and arrogate to himself the responsibility of the Custodian or other chiefs. The second proverb, "the yam has no secret that the knife will not know" is uttered by Akpeshko as a reply to Shezi (one of the young ladies who comes to be chosen as a queen) who is so eager to meet Aren. The force of the proverb is that the king is aware that the ladies want to see him, hence, their eagerness is not unknown to him. The third proverb by Ezhim is used to allay the fears of Kingmaker 1 and Kingmaker 2 on incurring the wrath of the ancestors on the emergence of the new Aren.

Adages

Exemplified below are three cases of adage in the play.

Old Kingmaker 1: ... The sound of rain does not scare the farmer (p.38).

Custodian: ... The elephant is never tired of carrying its tusks (p.75).

Ezhim: ... Our fathers usually say it; ten kings do generate ten unique reigns ... (p.93)

"The sound of rain does not scare the farmer" is uttered by Old Kingmaker 1 to banish the fears of Aren Awasku who perceives a looming doom against him. The axiom corroborates that the old King has no reason to be afraid. Custodian uses the proverb "the elephant is never tired of carrying its tusks" to reiterate his readiness and willingness to discharge his duty as the custodian of the kingdom, as required by their tradition. "Ten kings do generate ten unique reigns" is used by Ezhim to emphasize dynamism of situations and seasons of life. The implication of the proverb is that life is not static, it keeps changing.

Witty Sayings

Ezhim: ... When the sun rises in the morning, no one needs to be told about it. If you do not see it, the heat will make you sweat. If you pretend not to notice the heat, very soon you will thirst for water (pp.60-61).

Custodian: ... It is true that whoever walks with unworthy people becomes unworthy (p.79).

Proverbs, adages and witty sayings are part of language embellishments used for the elevation of the diction of *Gidan Juju*. They add to the linguistic aesthetics of the play as well as deepen the understanding of the arguments they substantiate. Also, these ornaments further help to establish *Gidan Juju* as an African writing in that African writings are known for proverbial language (Osundare 2003: 30).

(iii). Figures of Speech

Another feature that Dugga uses to adorn the diction of *Gidan Juju* is figures of speech such as metaphor, euphemism, synecdoche, imagery, personification and allusion. These devices make the text more appealing and fascinating to the reader. Instance of these devices are presented thus:

Metaphor

Akpeshko: ... He is a man with the heart of steel (p.17).

Ezhim: ... A woman is a flower in the garden; her husband is the fence around it (p.23).

King Awasku: ... You shall be the glue to bind our kingdom with the Gold Coast (p.42).

Kingmakers: ... You are the bridge between the past and the present (p.61).

Euphemism

Aren: ... When it was his time to join his forebears ... (p.19)).

Custodian: ... They have all joined our ancestors one after the other (p.81).

Synecdoche

Aren: ... When has wisdom deserted the grey hairs and left them with empty skulls (p. 85).

Personification

Aren: ... Money has become a universal culture. It has no loyalty to ancestors and it adopts new followers everyday (p.86).

Rhetorical Question

Akpushko: ... What is a town without a noble king? What is a tree without fruits? (p.15)

Aren Awasku: ... Should I halt and wait for a thunderbolt from beyond the sea? (p.38)

Aren: ... When has wisdom deserted the grey hairs and left them with empty skulls? (p.85)

A common feature found in the figures of speech above is that all of them are deployed by adult characters. This reiterates that language ornaments are generally associated with linguistic adults, whose language use has become elevated.

From the foregoing on diction, it is obvious that Dugga's diction in *Gidan Juju* is simple, it is characterized by registers of different disciplines and language embellishments.

Lexical Cohesion in the Play

Cohesion examines how a part of a text is linked to another. In the words of Halliday and Hasan (2001:14), "cohesion refers to relations of meaning that exists within the text, and that define it as a text. Cohesion occurs where the (interpretation) of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another". Toolan (2013:23-24) adds that cohesion is "all the linguistic ways in which the words of a passage, across sentences, cross-refer or link up ... Cohesive devices therefore are the linguistic tools that are used to achieve cohesion. Cohesion connects sentences to each other." Types of cohesive devices that have been identified are reference cohesion, ellipsis, substitution,

conjunction and lexical cohesion (Halliday and Hasan 2001:1; Toolan 2013:25-31). Our concern in this paper is limited to lexical cohesion. Lexical cohesion is “the cohesive effect [that is] achieved by the selection of vocabulary” (Halliday and Hasan 2001: 274). It is the “recurrent use of the same content word, or of related words, conveying a sense of integratedness of a text” (Toolan 2013: 30). Types of lexical cohesion in English are repetition of a particular lexical item, synonymy or near-synonymy, use of subordinate or general term for a given entity at a later time, antonymy, and collocation - the regular co-occurrence of lexical items (Halliday & Hasan 2001:284; Toolan (2013: 31). A careful reading of *Gidan Juju* shows that Dugga aptly deploys lexical cohesion to weave events together in the play. A few cases are presented below.

(i). Repetition

Throughout the play, the expressions “Gbaaga Iduu” and “Your highness” are repeated. The expressions are a sort of royal accolade showered on the king by all and sundry in the domain to show their loyalty, honour, submission and respect for him. Every African culture has such expressions for whoever sits on the throne. For example, among the Yoruba people of western Nigeria, the expression “Kabiyesi o!” or “Kabiesi o!” is used in the place of *Gbaaga Iduu!* Dugga floods the text with the term “Gbaaga Iduu” to reiterate how the royal father is praised in his culture. All and sundry, irrespective of age, position, status and wealth addresses the king in this manner to indicate their reverence for him since he (the king) has unlimited power and final saying in all matters in his domain. Some instances of the use of the expressions are exemplified thus:

Towns People: Gbaaga Iduu! The Great Lion! (p.16).

Ezhim: Gbaaga Iduu! No matter how high a stone is thrown up in the sky, it answers the force of gravity and returns to the earth (p.20).

Old Kingmaker 1: Gbaaga Iduu! The venom of a viper does nothing to the back of a tortoise (p.39).

Akpesko: Gbaaga Iduu! Greetings, my King (p.47).

Custodian: Gbaaga Iduu! I am but the custodian of the people's rites. ... (p.49).

Kingmakers: Gbaaga Iduu! May you live long, your highness! (p.60).

Imam: Gbaaga Iduu! (p.79).

Shezi: Please, your highness, do not be offended ... (p.56).

Ekeangbo: Yes, your highness. That would be a wonderful coup de grass (p.59).

Ezhim: Your royal highness, we are lost here ... (p.62).

Pepe: Your highness ... (p.63).

Youth Leader: Your royal highness, the youths are also adherents of the two religions ... (p.81).

Kingmakers: Yes, your royal highness (p.92).

Kingmaker 1: Your royal highness, may I offer a suggestion? (p.93).

Ashe Ekpo: Your royal highness, the head with the crown is the owner of our collective wisdom ... (p.94).

(ii). Synonymy

Synonymy is a situation whereby propositions, terms or concepts express sameness or similarity in signification. Dugga dexterously dots the play with synonymy as demonstrated below.

a. Aren: I never planned to be king. Fate and destiny thrust the kingship at me (p.18).

b. Aren: When it was his time to join his forebears... (p.19)

Aren: ... You sent the regent to ... persuade me to return home to the throne of my forefathers ... (p.19).

Ezhim: ... You have answered ... to return to the land of your forefathers ... (p.20).

c. Custodian: ... My forebears, custodians that have gone before me, told of how long ago a ceremony of this same kind was disrupted ... (p.37).

In excerpt (a), the lexemes "fate" and "destiny" are synonymous - they express similarity in meaning. In extract (b), the lexical items "forebears", "my forefathers" and "your forefathers" are synonymous -

they refer to the ancestors of the new Aren of Gwagwalla. On the other hand, "my forebears" and "custodians that have gone before me" in excerpt (c) refer to the same set of people - the progenitors of Custodian.

(iii.). Near-synonymy

Near-synonymy refers to a situation where two or more words means the same thing in a context without being synonymous. Instances of some in the play include the underlined in the excerpts below.

- a. Ezhim: Your highness, we are gathered to welcome you from the land of our ancestors, from the grove of royal consecration ... (p.16).

"The land of our ancestors" and "the grove of royal consecrations" are near-synonyms based on the context - they mean the same thing but denotatively, they are not synonyms. "The grove of royal consecration" is an exclusive preserve of the new kings, it is a place of "transformation" for a king to-be. In the words of Akpeshko, "[he] went in a man but he comes out a royal deity. (p.15). "The grove of royal consecration" is a place where rituals are made for the new king and where he is "fortified" to take charge of his domain. Notwithstanding, "the land of our ancestors" can mean the land of nativity of a people - all and sundry has access to it. However, in this context, the two expressions refer to a place where a king is "made".

- b. Kingmaker 1: It is not a corpse ... (p.89)

Ezhim: What does it matter? It is the remains of the late king (p.90)

In some context, "a corpse" and "remains" can be synonyms but in this context, they are not - they are near-synonyms. The reason is not far-fetched. What is repatriated to Gwagwalla is the bones of their former king bereft of other vital organs, hence, the conclusion of Kingmaker 1 that what they have with them is the "the remains" of the deposed King. If it were his corpse, all the body organs and parts would

have been intact, but since it is not like that, they have the remains (bones) with them.

c. (i) Ekeangbo: It was ... he was ... brandishing a machete ... (*Enters Custodian in masquerade costumes with a long whip in one hand and a machete in the other ... (p.70)*).

(ii) Ekeangbo: The monster was pursuing me ... I ran here for safety (p.71).

In the above excerpt c(i), "masquerade" and "the monster" mean the same thing based on the context. But in some other clime, they may be different in sense and reference.

(iv). Antonymy

Antonymy is a semantic relation expressing contrast or oppositeness in meaning. Lexical items that are opposite in sense are antonymous. Antonyms are relevantly used by Dugga in *Gidan Juju*. The cases below are a few examples in the play.

(a) Custodian: We are making progress. We have assembled some of the finest and daintiest maidens in the land - the slim, the fat, the tall, the short, the fair, the ebony, the black, the curvaceous and the straight ... (p.35).

(b) Kingmaker 2: Oh, God of heaven! What has darkness got to do with light? (p.76).

(c) Ekeangbo: ... These ancestors have become more human than spirits... (p76 -77).

In the utterance of Custodian in (a), the item "the slim" contrasts "the fat", "the tall" is opposite of the "short", "the fair" is at variance with "the ebony" and "the black", while "the curvaceous" is a contrast to "the straight". In (b), the word "darkness" is the antonym of "light" while "human" is the opposite of "spirits" in Ekeangbo's utterance in excerpt (c).

(v). Collocation

Collocation implies the co-occurrence of lexemes in a context or text (Halliday and Hasan 2001:284). It has to do with the company words keep by reason of usage. Instances of collocation in the play are exemplified thus:

- (a) Akpeshko: ...Our new King emerges today at the end of his coronation rites (p.15).
- (b) Aren: With motherly care and affection, you have nursed our community and its people... (p. 17-18)
- (c) Kingmaker 1: Your royal highness, the palace is a very large house. It has many rooms and chambers. (p.22)

The "coronation rites" collocates with the item "King" in excerpt (a) - they share the same semantic field. In the utterance of Aren in (b), "motherly care" attracts "affection" and "nursed" because they belong to the same semantic domain. In extract (c), the units "a very large house", "many rooms" and "chambers" collocate - they have the same semantic field.

Repetition, synonymy, near-synonymy, antonymy and collocation highlighted above are aptly deployed by Dugga to enhance the linguistic aesthetics of the play. More so, the use of synonymy and near-synonymy helps in entrenching the heterogeneous nature of language - saying the same thing in different ways. Furthermore, effective use of antonymy and near-synonymy helps in enhancing the vocabulary of the play. As such, lexical cohesive devices are aptly employed by Dugga, among others, to establish the texture of the play and to enhance the vocabulary development of the average reader. Also, they can add to the communicative competence and performance of the reader.

Graphological Features in *Gidan Juju*

Graphology has been viewed as the system of writing and orthography (Wales 1989: 213; Crystal & Davy 1969: 18). It considers issues like paragraphing, punctuation marks, capitalization,

italicization, spacing, front size etc. Two graphological features considered in this paper are the dash (-) and ellipsis (...).

(i). The Dash (-)

The dash is a punctuation mark that is mostly used for expansion of thoughts (Azuike, 2004). In *Gidan Jugu*, Dugga uses the dash for introducing clarification. Three cases in the play are presented thus:

- i. Custodian: ... We have assembled some of the finest and daintiest maidens in the land - the slim, the fat, the tall, the short, the fair the ebony, the black, the curvaceous and the straight. The king would have a good variety to choose from. (p.35)

“The slim, the fat, the tall, the short, the fair, the ebony, the black, the curvaceous and the straight” is a clear clarification of the “the finest and daintiest maidens.” The aforementioned qualities clarify and clearly spell what custodian means by “the finest and daintiest maidens.” As such, these qualities expand their antecedent - the finest and daintiest maidens.

- ii. Kingmaker 2: That is why we are there - to dutifully advise and counsel the king (p.35).

“To dutifully advise and counsel the king” clarifies why the elders/chiefs are present in the process of selection of queens for the new king. They are not to choose for him but “to dutifully advise and counsel” him. As such, “to dutifully advise and counsel the king” is an expansion and clarification of “why we are there.”

- iii. Ashe Ekopo: Your royal highness, years ago, your great grandfather was forcefully removed from the throne ... Today he returns ... he returns in a way no one would want to return - only bones, dry bones.... (p.89)

(ii). Ellipsis (...)

Generally, ellipsis is used to indicate an unexpressed thought - something that ought to be said but is not uttered. Dugga consciously

punctuates *Gidan Juju* with ellipsis in the utterances of his characters. A few cases are the following:

Ezhim: Yes, but one does not sacrifice sleep because of the prospect of having nightmares. To our ancestors ... (*He pours libation*) (p. 33)

Custodian: When one's goat is missing; the aroma of a neighbour's soup becomes suspicious. I thought he was coming to take advantage of the vulnerable girls, perhaps extorting money from them in exchange for promises or some favour ... or even worse, that he was there to help himself to the fruits reserved for royalty... (p.49).

Aren: You sound quite smart ... it would be nice to have someone like you around ... (*Ekengbo starts to cry at the prospect of being chosen to join the King's harem*). Akpeshko! (p.59)

The use of ellipses entrenches brevity of expression without losing the sense of the utterances.

Syntactic Features in the Play

The syntactic patterns considered are interrogative and choppy sentences.

(i). Interrogative Sentence

A close look at the rhetorical functions of the sentence in *Gidan Juju* shows that Dugga dots the play with three types of English sentence namely declarative, interrogative and exclamatory. Imperative sentence is sparingly used in the play. Declarative sentences are overwhelmingly deployed in the text more than other sentence types. This implies that more sentences and utterances are made in the play than commands, questions and exclamatory utterances. More so, the playwright employs all the sentence types in English according to their internal structures to craft his declarative sentences. However, the sentence patterns that are brought to the fore in this section are interrogative and choppy sentence.

An interrogative sentence asks a question requiring an answer or one to which no direct answer is required. Dugga's style of crafting interrogative sentence in the play is apt and worthy of consideration in that he utilizes multiple devices in doing so. The structure of Dugga's interrogative sentence in the play includes "WH" elements, polar questions, rhetorical questions, polite questions, statement questions, "do" elements, "have elements" and tag questions.

Questions with "WH" elements are those introduced by words such as "who, why, where, when, how, whose, to whom, what". Polar questions are those requiring "yes" or "no" answer while rhetorical questions are those requiring no (direct) answer. A polite request is a form of question that requires the addressee to do some things for the inquirer - it is a request in form of a question. On the other hand, statement questions are the ones in form of declarative sentences but with a question mark, while questions with "do" elements are often introduced by words such as "do, does, and did." Questions with "have" elements are usually initiated with auxiliary verbs like "have, has, and had." A tag question has two component parts - it is usually introduced by a statement and ends in a question. Examples of each pattern of interrogative sentence in *Gidan Juju* are demonstrated below.

(a). WH Elements

Aren: Our elders, what are you talking about? (p. 22)

Aren: Yes, how exactly do I go about acquiring these accountments of office? (p. 23)

Aren: And who arranges this beauty parade? (p. 24)

Lami: Where are you packing to? (p. 27)

Shezi: Thanks. Why are you here then? Why did you come? (p. 29)

Aren: Whose word is law? (p. 48)

(b). Polar questions

Aren: ... Am I telling the story as it happened? (p. 19)

Tani: ... Is it true that the King is at liberty to choose up to three girls at once? (p. 28)

Manyi: Is there anything else I can do for you? (p. 53)

(c). Rhetorical Questions

Akpushko: ... What is a town without a noble king? What is a tree without fruits? (p. 15)

Kingmaker 2: Does anything upset the storehouse of history and tradition of the people? (p. 36).

(d). Polite Requests

Aren: This is some jigsaw puzzle. Can you all talk to me more plainly? (p. 22)

Aren: ... Could you check the UNESCO office for update on our discussion? (p. 47)

(e). Statement Questions

Aren: I see. So, it is one law for the people, and another for the King? (p. 23)

Custodian: ... But, your highness, you want to interview the girls in private? (p. 50)

Ezhim: So, this rules you out? (p.80)

(f). “Do” Elements

Aren: Does anyone have any daughter that is eligible at all? (p. 25)

Ezhim: ... Do you have a list of expected guests and the accommodation reserved for them? (p. 35).

Aren: Did you hit the queen? (p. 73)

(g). Tag Question

Aren: And she will be on the showcase as well, won't she? (p. 25)

(h). “Have” Elements

Aren Awasku: Have we mustered the warriors to stand guard along all the borders? (p. 39)

Aren: Nice strategy... has it worked well for you? (p. 55)

Variation in the patterns of interrogative sentence in the play portrays the syntactic prowess of the playwright; it is an index of his linguistic proficiency.

(ii). Choppy Sentence

Within the preview of this paper, a choppy sentence is when a word especially a content word, phrase or an expression that is not structurally up to a sentence is used as same. This is often employed in discourse to entrench brevity without inhibiting the sense conveyed by the choppy unit. Dugga copiously utilizes choppy sentence in the play to facilitate the flow of expression. Instances of choppy sentence are given below.

i. Ezhim: Good. Excellent. (p. 33)

Ezhim's expressions above are a response to the utterance of Kingmaker 2 that: “The caterers have been mobilized and the cooking will start in two days, as the guests begin to arrive.” The expression could have been “That is good. That is excellent” where “that” and “is” would have been the subject and predicate respectively and “good” with “excellent” would have been the complement of each expression, but the playwright uses “good” and “excellent” instead for brevity. As such, the expressions - “good” and ‘excellent’ are not anomalous in that ellipsis (omission of lexical item) has been deployed to make the choppy units complete and meaningful.

ii. Aren Awasku: ... Speak up, you imp. You earthworms, you lizards ... (p.43)

“You earthworms” and “you lizards” are choppy sentences in that in full, each one would have read “speak up, you earthworms, “speak up, you lizards” or “you are earthworms”, “you are lizards”. However, “speak up” is expunged in each expression to avoid needless

repetition of the unit. More so, “are” is also ellipped in the second option to realize “you earthworms, you lizards”. To this end, ellipsis is adequately utilized in the choppy units, hence, the meaning of the utterances is not lost; the sentence is also not incongruous.

iii. Custodian: ... However, I went. Alone... (pp. 75 – 76)

“Alone” as used above is dependent on the subject and predicate of the proceeding sentence to realize its full structure: “I went alone.” Notwithstanding, these elements (I - subject, went - predicate) were ellipped in the second sentence, hence “alone” standing and functioning as a full sentence. Consequently, the subject and predicate of “alone” can be realized from the proceeding sentence. So, in this structure (“alone”), the complement “alone” – functions as a complete sentence. Thus, subject and predicate can be realized in the preceding sentence.

iv. Youth Leader: Young ones! (p.86)

Youth Leader’s utterance is an answer to Aren’s question: ‘Who are those who will carry out the task? The full sentence would have been: “It is the young ones!” but “it is the” is omitted to give the King a sharp and brief answer. In this example, “Young ones” which is part of the complement of the sentence “it is the young ones” is made to function as a full sentence. Hence, the choppy unit - “young ones” is not incongruous nor does it inhibit the intended meaning.

Dugga’s use of choppy sentence in *Gidan Juju* is apt, it entrenches brevity of expressions without inhibiting the intended signification. More so, deployment of choppy sentence is a reflection of the syntactic dexterity of the playwright.

Based on the findings above, it is evident that proverbs, adages and witty-sayings are laden with cultural wisdom which, in turn, should regulate comportment of people towards exhibition of worthwhile behavioural patterns, as well as discouraging unethical conducts. More so, figures of speech aid the understanding of the text as they make the reading more interesting and appealing – they add to the linguistic aesthetics of the work.

Also, lexical cohesive devices have the tendency to improve the proficiency of the average reader in that as they come across these synonymous, near-synonymous, antonymous and collocating words and terms, the reader has the privilege of not only understanding them, but also use same in their interlocution; thus, adding to their linguistic proficiency.

In a nutshell, Dugga's choice of these linguistic devices is apt as they make the reading of the play an interesting exercise; they also facilitate the understanding of the message of the text. These choices made by the playwright, which enable him to pass his message to the wider readership, are apt; they are indicative of his idiolect, a parameter of his style.

Conclusion

One of the approaches that have been and is being used to study the style of a language user or writer is the choices they make to build their discourse or work. This paper has attempted to look at the style of Victor S. Dugga in his play *Gidan Juju*, by considering the prominent linguistic choices he has made to build the text. Content analysis has been used to gather data for the study while integrative method/approach is deployed for analysis. The study discovers that the diction of the playwright is simple as he uses familiar words, terms and expressions drawn from various fields of human endeavour to build the text. Not only that, the study has succinctly established that Dugga uses language ornaments such as proverbs, adages, witty-sayings and figures of speech to embellish the work - they add to the aesthetical value of the work and make the reading of the text a delightful and pleasurable adventure. Findings of the study also demonstrate that Dugga copiously uses elements of lexical cohesion such as repetition, synonymy, near-synonymy, antonymy and collocation to weave the text together. These lexical cohesive devices have the potentials of improving the linguistic competence and performance of the reader. In addition, effective deployment of the dash and ellipsis respectively to expand

thought and account for the unsaid cum brevity of expression is indicative of the linguistic dexterity of the playwright as well as adds to the aesthetics of the text. Finally, Dugga's use of various patterns to derive his interrogative sentence, and choppy sentence used to facilitate the flow of expression reveals his syntactic proficiency. The study concludes that these linguistic choices made by the playwright are apt, they are a feature of his idiolect which is, in turn, an emblem of his style.

References

- Anjum, K. (2022). "A Stylistic Analysis of Dennis Brutus' *Remembering Leeuwkop*". *International Research Journal of Management Sociology & Humanity*. Vol. 13 (2). pp.30 - 40.
- Awonuga, C. (2017) "What does this text mean? Stylistics and the process of interpretation." *Inaugural Lecture Series, Covenant University, Canaan Land, Ota*. Ota: Covenant University Press.
- Azuike, M. N. (1992). "Style: Theories and Practical Application." *Language Sciences*. Vol. 14 No 1/2. 109-127.
- ~~~~~ (2004). "Expanding Thoughts: The Stylistic use of the Dash in Cheikh Hamidou Kane's *Ambiguous Adventure*." In Koroye, S. & Anyadike's, N. C. (Eds.) *Women in the Academia: Festschrift for Professor Helen Chukwuma*. Port-Harcourt: Pearl Publishers.
- Bradford, R. (1997). *Stylistics*. London: Routledge.
- Chapman, R. (1973). *Linguistics and Literature: An Introduction to Literary Stylistics*. London: Edward Arnold Ltd.
- Chatman, S. B. (1967). *Essays on the Language of Literature*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Crystal, D. & Davy, D. (1969). *Investigating English Style*. Essex: Longman Group Ltd.
- Dadjo, S.D.D.Y. (2022). Linguistic Stylistic Analysis of Wole Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel*." *International Journal of Linguistic Studies*. Vol. 2 (1). pp. 31-39.

- Dayo, O. J. (2021). "A Stylistic Analysis and Thematisation of Adamu Kyuka Usman's *Sieged*". In Usman, A. K. & Yero, S. I. (Eds.) *Language, Tradition and Society: A Festschrift on Kyuka Lilymjok*. Makurdi: Sevhave Publishers. pp. 111-127.
- Dugga, V. S. (2021). *Gidan Juju*. Ibadan: Kraft Books Limited.
- Enkvist, N. E. (1964). *Linguistics and Style*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Halliday, M. A. K. & Hasan, R. (2001). *Cohesion in English*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
- Hussein, A. L.; Majeed, N. & Atu, R. A. K. (2021). "Linguistic Stylistic Analysis of Sarcasm in *American Granddaughter*". *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation*. Vol. 4 (11). pp. 82-88.
- Lawal, A. (2003). "Aspects of Stylistic Theory and the Implications for Practical Criticism." In Lawal, A. (Ed.) *Stylistics in Theory and Practice*. 2nd Edition. Ilorin: Paragon Books. pp. 25-47.
- Leech, G. N. & Short, M. H. (1995). *Style in Fiction*. Essex: Longman Group Ltd.
- Missikova, G. (2003). *Linguistic Stylistics*. Nitra: FILOZOFICKA Fakutta, Univerrzita Konstantina Filozofa.
- Norgaard, N.; Montoro, R. & Busse, B. (2010). *Key Terms in Stylistics*. London: Continuum.
- Osundare, N. (2003). *Cautious Paths through the Bramble: A Critical Classification of Style Theories and Concepts*. Ibadan: Hope Publications.
- Simpson, P. (2004). *Stylistics*. London: Routledge.
- Toolan, M. (1996). *Language in Literature: An Introduction to Stylistics*. London: Hodder Education.
- (2013). *Language in Literature*. New York: Routledge.
- Turner, G. W. (1973). *Stylistics*. Harlow: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Wales, K. (1989). *A Dictionary of Stylistics*. UK: Longman.