

SOCIO-STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF SAHEED OSUPA AND BEAUTIFUL NUBIA'S SELECTED SONGS

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Abstract

This study examines the socio-stylistic dimensions of selected songs by Saheed Osupa and Beautiful Nubia with a view to investigating how linguistic and stylistic resources are employed to construct social meanings, preserve cultural values, and communicate ideological positions. Despite extensive linguistic studies on Nigerian music, limited attention has been paid to the comparative socio-stylistic analysis of the works of Saheed Osupa and Beautiful Nubia. To address this gap, the study adopts Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Theory (SCT) as its theoretical frameworks. A qualitative descriptive research design was employed, while data were purposively selected from six songs, comprising three songs each by Saheed Osupa and Beautiful Nubia. The data were subjected to socio-stylistic analysis. The findings reveal the recurrent use of metaphor, proverb, repetition, symbolism, rhetorical questions, imagery, code-switching, and parallelism as dominant stylistic devices in the selected songs. These devices perform significant social and communicative functions by encoding indigenous philosophies, preserving cultural memory, constructing social identities, promoting moral values, and stimulating critical reflection on societal issues. The analysis further shows that Osupa's songs are characterized by a more direct and didactic style that emphasizes moral instruction, social responsibility, patience, and perseverance, while Beautiful Nubia adopts a reflective and reformatory approach that advocates peace, cultural preservation, social justice, environmental consciousness, and collective responsibility. The study concludes that the selected songs function as important socio-cultural texts that extend beyond entertainment to serve as instruments of social education, cultural continuity, and ideological engagement.

Keywords: Socio-stylistics, Musical discourse, Saheed Osupa, Beautiful Nubia, Ideology

Introduction

Music is one of the oldest and most influential forms of human communication. Across cultures and civilizations, it has served not only as a means of entertainment but also as a powerful instrument for the transmission of knowledge, values, beliefs, ideologies, and social experiences. Through its combination of language, rhythm, melody, and performance, music functions as a social text capable of reflecting and shaping societal realities. Scholars have long acknowledged that music performs communicative, educational, political, religious, and cultural functions within society (Nketia, 2004; Oikelome, 2012). As a form of discourse, music enables individuals and groups to express their perceptions of the world, negotiate identities, challenge existing social structures, and preserve collective memory. Consequently, the study of music extends beyond aesthetics and

entertainment to encompass broader concerns relating to language, society, culture, and ideology.

In African societies, music occupies a central position in social and cultural life. Traditional African communities have historically utilized music as a medium for storytelling, moral instruction, historical documentation, conflict resolution, and communal integration (Nketia, 1974). Music accompanies important social events such as birth ceremonies, marriages, festivals, coronations, religious rites, and funerals. Through these functions, music serves as a repository of communal wisdom and cultural heritage. The African musician is therefore not merely an entertainer but also a custodian of cultural values, a social commentator, and an agent of social transformation (Okafor, 2005). This multifunctional nature of African music has

continued into contemporary times, where musicians employ their art to address issues of governance, corruption, poverty, social justice, morality, identity, and national development.

Among contemporary Nigerian musicians, Saheed Osupa and Beautiful Nubia occupy unique positions due to the socio-cultural depth and philosophical orientation of their musical works. Although they belong to different musical traditions, both artistes demonstrate remarkable commitment to addressing social issues through language and artistic expression. Their songs transcend entertainment by offering social commentary, moral instruction, and cultural enlightenment. As such, they provide fertile ground for socio-stylistic investigation.

Saheed Osupa, one of the leading figures in contemporary Fuji music, is renowned for his philosophical lyrics, proverbial expressions, social criticism, and moral teachings. His music reflects the Yoruba worldview and frequently addresses themes such as perseverance, destiny, betrayal, social inequality, greed, humility, patience, and personal responsibility. Through his strategic use of indigenous linguistic resources, Osupa transforms ordinary musical performances into sites of social reflection and moral engagement. His lyrics often draw from Yoruba oral traditions, employing proverbs, idioms, metaphors, aphorisms, and rhetorical devices to communicate complex ideas in accessible forms. According to Olatunji (1984), proverbial discourse constitutes an important feature of Yoruba verbal artistry because it encapsulates communal wisdom and cultural values. Osupa's extensive deployment of such resources positions him within the broader tradition of Yoruba oral performers who use language creatively to educate and influence society.

Beautiful Nubia, on the other hand, represents a distinct tradition of socially conscious folk and contemporary African music. Widely regarded as one of Nigeria's foremost advocates of cultural renaissance through music, Beautiful Nubia consistently promotes themes of peace, social justice, environmental consciousness, cultural preservation, communal solidarity, and responsible citizenship. His music draws heavily

on indigenous African philosophies and Yoruba cultural traditions while simultaneously addressing contemporary social challenges. Through poetic language, symbolism, imagery, and narrative structures, Beautiful Nubia encourages listeners to reflect critically on societal issues and embrace values that promote collective well-being. His artistic philosophy aligns with the view that music should serve as a catalyst for social transformation and cultural continuity (Babalola & Alaba, 2011).

The significance of language in musical discourse cannot be overemphasized. Language constitutes the primary medium through which musicians communicate meanings, emotions, and ideologies (Olaniyan, 2004; Oikelome, 2012). In music, linguistic choices are rarely arbitrary; rather, they are carefully selected to achieve specific communicative and artistic objectives. Stylistic devices such as metaphor, symbolism, repetition, imagery, allusion, code-switching, rhetorical questions, and parallelism contribute significantly to the construction of meaning in musical texts. These devices not only enhance aesthetic appeal but also encode social experiences, cultural values, and ideological positions (Leech & Short, 2007). Consequently, the analysis of stylistic features in song lyrics provides valuable insights into how language functions within particular social and cultural contexts.

The relationship between language and society has attracted considerable scholarly attention within sociolinguistics and discourse studies (Osisanwo, 2003). Sociolinguistic scholars argue that language is both shaped by society and instrumental in shaping social realities (Holmes, 2013; Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2021). Language reflects social identities, power relations, cultural norms, and ideological structures. Similarly, discourse analysts maintain that texts are not merely linguistic constructions but social practices embedded within specific historical, political, and cultural contexts (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 2006). Musical discourse therefore represents an important domain for investigating how linguistic forms interact with social meanings.

Stylistics, as a branch of linguistic inquiry, focuses on the systematic analysis of language in literary and non-literary texts. It examines how linguistic choices contribute to meaning, interpretation, and aesthetic effect (Simpson, 2004). Socio-stylistics extends this concern by emphasizing the relationship between stylistic choices and social functions. It investigates how language users employ stylistic resources to negotiate social identities, communicate ideological positions, and construct representations of reality. Within the context of musical discourse, socio-stylistic analysis seeks to understand how artistic language reflects societal experiences and influences audience perception (Olateju, 2005).

The growing popularity of socio-stylistic approaches in contemporary linguistic research reflects recognition of the fact that stylistic patterns cannot be adequately understood outside their social contexts. As Halliday (1978) argues, language is a social semiotic system whose meanings are shaped by the contexts in which it is used. Thus, the stylistic choices made by musicians often reveal underlying assumptions about society, culture, morality, and human relationships. Through socio-stylistic analysis, it becomes possible to uncover the ideological and cultural meanings embedded in musical texts. The present study is anchored on Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Theory. Halliday's SFL conceptualizes language as a resource for meaning-making and identifies three major metafunctions of language: ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). The ideational function explains how language represents human experiences and realities; the interpersonal function concerns the establishment and maintenance of social relationships; while the textual function accounts for the organization of discourse into coherent messages. These functions provide useful analytical tools for examining how song lyrics represent social experiences and communicate ideological meanings.

Despite the abundance of studies on Nigerian music, significant gaps remain in existing scholarship. Previous studies have largely focused

on thematic analyses, cultural interpretations, political commentaries, and performance aesthetics in Nigerian popular music (Olaniyan, 2004; Oikelome, 2012; Mosobalaje, 2018). While these studies have contributed significantly to understanding the social relevance of Nigerian music, relatively few have undertaken a comparative socio-stylistic investigation of Saheed Osupa and Beautiful Nubia. Most available studies examine the works of these artistes independently or concentrate on thematic issues without paying sufficient attention to the stylistic mechanisms through which social meanings are constructed and communicated.

Furthermore, existing studies often overlook the relationship between linguistic creativity and social function in musical discourse. There is limited scholarly understanding of how specific stylistic devices operate as tools for negotiating identity, promoting cultural values, criticizing social vices, and influencing audience perception. Given the increasing importance of music as a medium of social communication in contemporary Nigeria, there is a need for more detailed investigations into the socio-stylistic dimensions of musical texts.

It is against this backdrop that the present study undertakes a socio-stylistic analysis of selected songs by Saheed Osupa and Beautiful Nubia. The study seeks to identify the dominant stylistic devices employed by the two artistes, examine the social functions performed by these devices, investigate the ideological meanings embedded in their songs, and compare the socio-stylistic patterns evident in their musical productions. By doing so, the study contributes to the growing body of literature on language, music, and society while providing deeper insights into the communicative strategies employed by contemporary Nigerian musicians. The significance of this study lies in its contribution to socio-stylistics, discourse analysis, and African music studies. It expands scholarly understanding of how language functions within musical discourse and demonstrates the role of stylistic choices in constructing social realities.

2. Review of Related Literature

Scholarly investigations into the intersection of

music, language, and society have consistently shown that songs perform functions that extend far beyond entertainment. Music serves as a powerful communicative medium through which individuals and groups express emotions, construct identities, preserve cultural values, challenge social structures, and disseminate ideological positions. In many African societies, music occupies a central place in communal life because it functions as a vehicle for socialization, education, moral instruction, political mobilization, and cultural transmission. Consequently, researchers have increasingly explored musical discourse as a rich site for understanding the relationship between language, culture, and social realities. Studies conducted within the Nigerian context reveal that popular music often reflects societal experiences and provides artists with a platform to engage critically with issues such as governance, corruption, poverty, morality, cultural identity, and national development.

Oikelome (2012) examined the social significance of Nigerian popular music and found that contemporary musicians function as important agents of social commentary and public enlightenment. According to the study, music provides a forum through which artists express their views on prevailing socio-political conditions and communicate messages capable of influencing public perception and behavior. Oikelome argues that Nigerian musicians frequently deploy language strategically to criticize social vices, advocate positive social change, and reinforce communal values. The study found out that song lyrics often serve as discursive sites where societal tensions, aspirations, and ideological struggles are articulated. Through linguistic and stylistic creativity, musicians are able to transform ordinary entertainment into a medium of social engagement and consciousness raising.

Similarly, Bamgbose (2016) explored the role of language in African musical expression and observed that music serves as an important instrument for the preservation of indigenous cultures and traditions. The study demonstrates that African musicians rely heavily on culturally embedded linguistic resources such as proverbs,

idioms, metaphors, praise expressions, and folklore to communicate their messages. Bamgbose reveals that these stylistic elements do not merely enhance the aesthetic quality of songs but also function as repositories of communal wisdom and cultural memory. The study concludes that the language of music provides valuable insights into the worldview, values, and belief systems of the communities from which the music originates. This finding is particularly relevant to Yoruba musical traditions, where verbal artistry occupies a prominent position in artistic performance.

Mosobalaje (2018) investigated discourse patterns in Yoruba popular music and found that musicians employ a variety of linguistic and textual strategies to construct social meanings. The study identifies metaphor, repetition, symbolism, allusion, code-switching, and proverbial expressions as some of the most frequently used stylistic devices in Yoruba songs. According to Mosobalaje, these devices enable artists to communicate complex social realities in culturally meaningful ways. The study, hence, foregrounds that Yoruba musicians often combine traditional oral forms with contemporary discursive practices to address modern social issues. Through this fusion of tradition and modernity, musical discourse becomes an effective means of negotiating identity, preserving cultural heritage, and promoting social awareness.

More recently, Akintaro et al. (2025) investigated Yoruba songs as socio-pragmatic and therapeutic discourse and found that music serves not only as a source of entertainment but also as a means of psychological support and social guidance. The study demonstrates that musicians use language to encourage resilience, offer advice, motivate listeners, and provide emotional relief during periods of social and economic challenges. Akintaro et al. (2025) identified several linguistic strategies employed by musicians, including metaphorical constructions, proverbial expressions, persuasive appeals, and pragmatic acts such as warning, advising, encouraging, and criticizing. The study emphasizes the capacity of music to influence attitudes and behavior while simultaneously addressing the emotional and

social needs of audiences.

Studies that have examined the musical productions of Saheed Osupa specifically portray him as a highly philosophical artist whose songs are characterised by moral instruction, social criticism, and cultural consciousness. Scholars observe that Osupa frequently employs proverbs, metaphors, idiomatic expressions, and aphoristic statements to address themes such as destiny, perseverance, betrayal, greed, humility, patience, and social responsibility. His songs often encourage listeners to reflect critically on their actions and to embrace values that promote personal and communal development. Through his artistic manipulation of language, Osupa transforms musical performance into a platform for ethical reflection and social commentary. His reliance on indigenous Yoruba expressions further demonstrates the enduring relevance of oral traditions in contemporary musical discourse.

On the other hand, scholarly works on Beautiful Nubia emphasize his role as a cultural advocate and social reformer. Adejumo (2015) notes that Beautiful Nubia's music is distinguished by its commitment to promoting peace, cultural revival, environmental sustainability, and responsible citizenship. The study argues that his songs serve as instruments of cultural nationalism by encouraging audiences to appreciate and preserve African values and traditions. Through poetic language, symbolism, imagery, and narrative structures, Beautiful Nubia constructs alternative visions of society based on justice, harmony, and collective responsibility. His music frequently challenges social apathy and encourages active participation in community development.

Similarly, Akinrinade (2018) found that Beautiful Nubia employs indigenous philosophical concepts and folkloric traditions to communicate messages of hope, unity, and social transformation. The study revealed that his songs are often characterised by symbolic representations of nature, community, and spirituality, which function as metaphors for societal growth and renewal. By drawing upon traditional cultural resources, Beautiful Nubia creates musical texts that simultaneously preserve cultural heritage and address contemporary social

concerns. His work demonstrates how music can be used to inspire positive social change while maintaining strong connections with indigenous identity.

The foregoing studies collectively establish that Nigerian music serves as a significant site for the construction and dissemination of social meanings. They demonstrate that musicians utilize various stylistic resources to communicate ideologies, reinforce cultural values, negotiate identities, and engage with societal issues. These findings align with the socio-stylistic perspective, which emphasizes the relationship between linguistic form and social function. From this perspective, stylistic devices such as metaphor, symbolism, repetition, imagery, rhetorical questions, allusion, and code-switching are not merely ornamental features of language but important mechanisms through which social experiences and ideological positions are represented. The meanings encoded in these stylistic forms are often shaped by cultural contexts and social realities, making them valuable tools for understanding how discourse functions within society.

Despite the substantial body of literature on Nigerian music and discourse, a noticeable gap remains in existing scholarship. While many studies have examined the thematic, cultural, pragmatic, and ideological dimensions of Nigerian musical productions, relatively few have undertaken a comparative socio-stylistic investigation of the works of Saheed Osupa and Beautiful Nubia. Most existing studies focus on individual artists or particular musical genres without systematically examining how linguistic and stylistic choices function as social resources across different musical traditions. The present study seeks to address this gap by providing a comparative socio-stylistic analysis of selected songs by Saheed Osupa and Beautiful Nubia. By examining the linguistic and stylistic resources employed in their musical discourse, the study aims to reveal how both artists construct social meanings, communicate ideological positions, and engage with contemporary societal concerns. In doing so, the study contributes to ongoing discussions on language, music, culture, and

society while expanding scholarly understanding of the socio-stylistic dimensions of contemporary Nigerian musical expression.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Theory (SCT). The choice of these theories is informed by their emphasis on the social functions of language and the relationship between discourse, society, and ideology. Since the study examines how Saheed Osupa and Beautiful Nubia employ linguistic and stylistic resources in their songs to communicate social meanings, cultural values, and ideological positions, both theories provide an appropriate analytical framework for understanding the interaction between language, style, and society. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) was developed by Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday (1978, 1994, 2014) as a theory of language that views language as a social semiotic system. Unlike formal linguistic approaches that focus primarily on grammatical structures, SFL emphasizes the functions language performs in social contexts. Halliday argues that language is a resource for meaning-making and that speakers and writers make linguistic choices based on the communicative purposes they seek to achieve. Thus, language is not merely a collection of rules but a network of options through which social actors construct and exchange meanings.

According to Halliday, every linguistic expression simultaneously performs three broad functions known as metafunctions: the ideational, interpersonal, and textual metafunctions. These metafunctions explain how language enables individuals to represent reality, establish social relationships, and organize messages into coherent discourse.

The second theoretical framework underpinning this study is van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Theory, which emerged from Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Developed by Teun A. van Dijk (1998, 2006, 2015), the theory seeks to explain the relationship between discourse, cognition, and society. Van Dijk argues that discourse is not only a linguistic phenomenon but also a social practice that is mediated through

cognitive structures such as beliefs, attitudes, ideologies, values, and knowledge systems. According to the theory, individuals interpret and produce discourse based on mental representations that are shaped by social experiences and collective knowledge.

The relevance of Socio-Cognitive Theory to this study lies in its capacity to explain how musical discourse influences social perception and reflects collective values. Since the selected songs are deeply rooted in Yoruba cultural traditions and contemporary Nigerian social realities, the theory helps reveal how linguistic and stylistic choices are shaped by shared cultural knowledge and ideological assumptions. It also enables an examination of how audiences are encouraged to interpret social issues through the perspectives offered by the artistes.

The integration of Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics and van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Theory provides a comprehensive framework for the analysis of the selected songs. While SFL focuses on the functional aspects of language and explains how linguistic choices realize social meanings, Socio-Cognitive Theory explains how these meanings are linked to broader cognitive and ideological structures within society. Together, the theories facilitate a multidimensional analysis of musical discourse by accounting for both the linguistic mechanisms through which meanings are constructed and the social processes through which those meanings are interpreted.

4. Methodology

A qualitative descriptive research design was adopted. Data were purposively selected from a total of six songs (three each, respectively) by Saheed Osupa and Beautiful Nubia. *Pace Setter* (2017), *Dynamism* (2018) and *New Dawn* (2022) are that of Osupa while, *Seven Lifes* (1997), *Kurunmi* (2009) and *Awero* (2006) are of Beautiful Nubia. Selection was based on thematic relevance to morality, leadership, social justice, culture and human relations. Lyrics were transcribed and analysed using socio-stylistic procedures informed by SFL and Socio-Cognitive Theory.

5. Data Analysis and Discussion

The selected songs of Saheed Osupa and Beautiful Nubia reveal a remarkable deployment

of stylistic devices which function as communicative resources for the expression of social realities, cultural values, and ideological positions. The analysis demonstrates that metaphor, proverb, repetition, symbolism, imagery, rhetorical questions, code-switching, and parallelism are not merely ornamental features of language but significant tools through which both artistes construct meanings and negotiate social relationships. Through these stylistic devices, the musicians perform the roles of moral instructors, cultural custodians, social critics, and advocates of societal transformation.

Metaphor and Social Meaning

Metaphor is one of the most prominent stylistic features in the selected songs. Both artistes employ metaphorical expressions to simplify complex social realities and make abstract concepts more accessible to their audiences.

In several of his songs, Saheed Osupa conceptualizes life as a journey marked by

struggles, obstacles, and uncertainties. Expressions such as "*aye l'oja*" (life is a market) and "*irin ajo aye*" (the journey of life) present life as a dynamic process in which individuals encounter different experiences and challenges. The metaphor of life as a market suggests competition, bargaining, gains, and losses. Through this metaphor, Osupa communicates the idea that human existence is characterized by unpredictability and constant negotiation.

From the perspective of Halliday's ideational metafunction, the metaphor represents life experiences in a culturally familiar form. The metaphor allows listeners to understand abstract realities through concrete experiences associated with market activities. Interpersonally, Osupa positions himself as a wise observer who offers guidance to his audience regarding the realities of life. Textually, the metaphor often appears in prominent positions within the songs, thereby foregrounding its significance:

Aditu laye yii Olorun loda pelu asiri,
Research aye mo se debe yen
Moribi ti won fabere gun iyan ta'nje
yam)

(God has created and has made this world mysterious)
(I know this due to my research about human existence)
(I have been to where needle is used to make pounded

Using van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Theory, the metaphor activates shared cultural knowledge among Yoruba listeners. The market occupies an important place in Yoruba social life; consequently, audiences easily interpret the ideological message embedded in the expression. The metaphor promotes values such as patience, resilience, and wisdom in navigating life's challenges.

Similarly, Beautiful Nubia frequently employs metaphors drawn from nature. In songs that contain expressions such as "*the river keeps flowing*" and "*the tree stands through the storm*," natural phenomena are metaphorically used to represent perseverance, continuity, and communal survival. The river symbolizes progress despite obstacles, while the tree represents endurance and stability.

Ideationally, these metaphors portray society as a living organism capable of growth and

regeneration. Interpersonally, the artiste encourages listeners to remain hopeful despite social difficulties. Through van Dijk's socio-cognitive lens, these metaphors draw upon shared African ecological experiences, thereby reinforcing collective beliefs about resilience and communal strength.

Proverbs as Cultural Memory

One of the most significant stylistic resources employed by both artistes is the proverb. Proverbs occupy a central position in Yoruba oral tradition and serve as repositories of indigenous wisdom and cultural knowledge. Saheed Osupa extensively employs proverbial expressions in his songs. For instance, expressions such as "*bi omode ba subu a wo iwaju, agba to ba subu a wo eyin*" (when a child falls, he looks ahead; when an elder fall, he looks back) are used to communicate lessons about experience and reflection. The proverb suggests that wisdom is acquired through

learning from past mistakes. Complementing these proverbs is Osupa's consistent use of lexical items such as *suuru* (patience), *iwa* (good character), *kadara* (destiny), *orẹ* (friendship), *owọ* (wealth), and *ọlá* (honour). These lexical choices are not arbitrary; they foreground the moral and philosophical concerns that dominate Yoruba society and reinforce the artiste's identity as a moral instructor and custodian of indigenous wisdom.

Ideationally, the proverb represents human experience and social learning. Interpersonally, Osupa adopts the role of an elder imparting wisdom to younger members of society. Textually, the proverb serves as a thematic statement that structures subsequent messages in the song.

From van Dijk's perspective, the proverb reflects shared cultural cognition within Yoruba society. The audience already possesses knowledge of the proverb and its implications. Consequently, the expression activates communal memory and reinforces accepted social values. Beautiful Nubia similarly draws upon proverbial wisdom. Expressions such as "*a river that forgets its source will dry up*" emphasise the importance of cultural identity and historical consciousness. Although presented poetically, the statement functions proverbially by communicating a moral lesson about cultural continuity. The socio-cognitive significance of such expressions lies in their ability to connect contemporary social realities with inherited cultural wisdom. Through proverbs, both artistes preserve indigenous knowledge systems while simultaneously addressing modern societal challenges.

Repetition and Emphasis

Repetition constitutes another dominant stylistic feature in the selected songs. Both artistes strategically repeat words, phrases, and clauses to reinforce key messages and enhance audience retention. In Osupa's songs, expressions such as "*suuru ni baba iwa*" (patience is the father of good character) are often repeated multiple times. The repetition foregrounds the moral significance of patience and ensures that listeners internalize the message.

Within Halliday's textual metafunction, repetition contributes to thematic coherence and textual unity. The repeated expression becomes a focal point around which other ideas revolve. Interpersonally, repetition serves a persuasive function by emphasizing the artiste's evaluative stance regarding desirable social behaviour.

Beautiful Nubia similarly employs repetition in songs promoting peace and social responsibility. Expressions such as "*let the people rise*" or "*we shall overcome*" occur repeatedly throughout his songs. These repetitions create rhythmic emphasis while simultaneously reinforcing collective aspirations. Similarly, lexical items such as *suuru* (patience), *iwa* (character), *kadara* (destiny), *orẹ* (friendship), and *ọlorun* (God) recur throughout his songs, creating a consistent lexical pattern centred on morality, perseverance, faith, and responsible living. The repeated use of these culturally significant lexical items reflects Osupa's didactic style and reinforces his role as a moral philosopher who seeks to educate rather than merely entertain. The lexical repetition also mirrors the oral performance tradition of Yoruba music, where recurring expressions aid memorability and audience participation.

Van Dijk's socio-cognitive theory explains repetition as a mechanism for strengthening mental representations. Repeated expressions become cognitively salient, increasing the likelihood that listeners will remember and adopt the values embedded within them. Thus, repetition functions not only as an aesthetic device but also as an ideological strategy.

Code-Switching and Identity Construction

The selected songs reveal frequent instances of code-switching between Yoruba and English. This linguistic practice reflects the multilingual reality of contemporary Nigerian society. Saheed Osupa often alternates between Yoruba and English expressions such as "*life goes on*" and "*eniyan laso mi*" (people are my covering). The combination of indigenous and foreign linguistic resources enables him to reach diverse audiences while maintaining cultural authenticity. From the perspective of the interpersonal metafunction, code-switching

enables the artiste to establish rapport with listeners from different linguistic backgrounds. Textually, it creates variation and enhances audience engagement. Lexical choices such as *kadara* (destiny), *suuru* (patience), *iwa* (good character), *ore* (friendship), and *eniyan* (human beings) are intentionally maintained in Yoruba because they embody cultural meanings that cannot easily be conveyed through direct English translation. These culturally loaded lexical items carry philosophical and emotional connotations deeply rooted in Yoruba worldview, thereby reinforcing the authenticity of the artiste's message.

Beautiful Nubia similarly combines Yoruba and English lexical items. In songs advocating cultural pride and social reform, English is often used to communicate universal ideas, while Yoruba expressions provide cultural grounding. This dual linguistic strategy reflects an attempt to balance global relevance with local identity. Beautiful Nubia similarly combines Yoruba and English lexical items, although his code-switching reflects a somewhat different communicative orientation. In songs advocating peace, cultural pride, environmental sustainability, and social reform, English expressions are often employed to articulate universal ideals such as *justice*, *freedom*, *peace*, *unity*, and *humanity*, while Yoruba lexical items provide cultural grounding and reinforce indigenous identity. Through expressions rooted in Yoruba philosophy and culture, the artiste establishes continuity with traditional African worldviews while simultaneously engaging contemporary global discourses on development, democracy, environmental conservation, and social responsibility. This deliberate linguistic strategy enables Beautiful Nubia to position himself simultaneously as an indigenous cultural advocate and a global social commentator.

The lexical distribution observed in the selected songs further demonstrates that the choice of language is ideologically motivated rather than arbitrary. English lexical items frequently introduce concepts with wider national or international relevance, whereas Yoruba lexical items predominantly convey indigenous

philosophies, communal values, moral teachings, and traditional wisdom. Consequently, the alternation between both languages reflects not merely bilingual competence but a conscious socio-stylistic strategy through which the artistes negotiate multiple identities and communicate across different cultural spaces.

Van Dijk's theory explains code-switching as a reflection of multiple social identities. The linguistic choices made by both artistes reveal awareness of different audience groups and demonstrate how language can be used to negotiate belonging, identity, and cultural affiliation.

Rhetorical Questions and Social Criticism

Rhetorical questions feature prominently in the selected songs and serve as powerful tools for social criticism. Osupa frequently asks questions such as "*ta lo mo ojo ola?*" (who knows tomorrow?) and "*ki l'aye fi n se eniyan?*" (why does life treat people this way?). These questions do not require direct answers; rather, they stimulate reflection on human existence and social realities.

Ideationally, the questions represent uncertainty and human vulnerability. Interpersonally, they establish a dialogic relationship between the artiste and the audience. Rather than imposing conclusions, Osupa invites listeners to participate in meaning-making. Beautiful Nubia also employs rhetorical questions in addressing social issues. Questions such as "*where are the leaders?*" and "*who will heal the land?*" challenge societal complacency and draw attention to failures of governance and collective responsibility. From the socio-cognitive perspective, rhetorical questions activate critical thinking processes. They encourage listeners to evaluate existing social conditions and reconsider accepted assumptions. Consequently, rhetorical questions function as instruments of ideological critique and social awareness.

Symbolism and Ideological Representation

Symbolism is another prominent stylistic feature evident in the selected songs. Beautiful Nubia frequently employs symbols drawn from nature. The river symbolizes continuity, hope, and renewal; the tree symbolizes endurance and

rootedness; while the road symbolizes collective destiny and social progress. These symbols communicate ideological messages relating to communal solidarity, cultural preservation, and sustainable development.

Using Halliday's ideational metafunction, these symbols represent abstract social concepts through concrete images. Interpersonally, they establish emotional connections with audiences by drawing upon familiar environmental experiences. Osupa's songs similarly contain symbolic references. The road often symbolizes life's journey, while wealth and clothing symbolize social status and human vanity. Expressions such as "*aso eniyan*" (human beings are one's covering) symbolically emphasize the importance of social relationships over material possessions. Van Dijk's theory reveals that these symbols derive their meanings from shared cultural knowledge. The effectiveness of symbolic expressions depends on the audience's familiarity with the cultural associations attached to them. Through symbolism, both artistes communicate ideological messages without explicit exposition.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study demonstrate that the selected songs of Saheed Osupa and Beautiful Nubia employ diverse (linguistic) stylistic resources which include metaphor, proverb, repetition, symbolism, rhetorical questions, imagery and code-switching, to construct social meanings and communicate ideological positions. This finding is consistent with the observations of Mosobalaje (2018), who found that Yoruba popular musicians rely extensively on metaphor, repetition, symbolism, allusion, code-switching, and proverbial expressions to represent complex social realities in culturally meaningful ways. Similarly, the present study confirms Bamgbose's (2016) assertion that African musical discourse derives much of its communicative strength from culturally embedded linguistic resources that preserve indigenous knowledge systems and collective memory. By demonstrating how these stylistic devices simultaneously perform aesthetic and social functions, the present study reinforces the argument that musical discourse should be understood not merely as artistic performance but

as a form of socially situated communication.

The finding that metaphor serves as an important mechanism for representing social experiences agrees with Halliday's (1978) conception of language as a social semiotic through which speakers encode experiences and realities. The metaphors of life as a market, a journey, a flowing river, and a resilient tree illustrate how abstract concepts are interpreted through culturally familiar experiences. This also supports Leech and Short's (2007) view that metaphor is not simply an ornamental device but a significant linguistic resource through which writers and speakers shape interpretation and construct meaning. However, unlike many previous studies that merely identify metaphors as stylistic features, the present study extends existing scholarship by demonstrating how these metaphors simultaneously perform ideational, interpersonal, and ideological functions within Nigerian musical discourse through the combined application of Systemic Functional Linguistics and Socio-Cognitive Theory.

The extensive use of proverbs identified in the selected songs corroborates Olatunji's (1984) position that proverbs constitute one of the most significant features of Yoruba verbal artistry because they encapsulate communal wisdom and cultural philosophy. Likewise, the finding supports Nketia's (1974, 2004) argument that African music functions as an important repository of indigenous knowledge, historical memory, and cultural continuity. The songs analysed reveal that proverbial expressions are not employed merely for artistic elegance but also for transmitting moral lessons, preserving cultural identity, and strengthening communal values. In this respect, the present study extends previous scholarship by illustrating how proverbs function as socio-cognitive resources that activate shared cultural knowledge and facilitate audience interpretation within contemporary musical discourse.

The finding on repetition equally aligns with previous studies on African musical discourse. Akintaro et al. (2025) observed that Yoruba musicians frequently employ repetitive linguistic patterns to encourage, persuade, and motivate listeners while reinforcing socially

desirable behaviour. Similarly, the present study demonstrates that repeated expressions such as those advocating patience, perseverance, peace, and collective action enhance thematic emphasis and improve audience retention. This finding also supports Halliday and Matthiessen's (2014) argument that textual organization contributes significantly to meaning-making, as repetition creates cohesion and foregrounds ideologically significant messages within discourse. Unlike previous studies that focus primarily on the persuasive effect of repetition, this study further demonstrates its cognitive function by showing how repeated expressions reinforce shared beliefs and values among listeners, consistent with van Dijk's socio-cognitive framework.

The study further reveals that code-switching functions as an important linguistic strategy for negotiating identity and expanding audience reach. This finding is consistent with Holmes (2013) and Wardhaugh and Fuller (2021), who argue that multilingual speakers frequently alternate between languages to express multiple social identities, establish solidarity, and adapt to different communicative contexts. The alternation between Yoruba and English in the songs enables both artistes to maintain indigenous cultural authenticity while simultaneously communicating with linguistically diverse audiences. This finding extends sociolinguistic scholarship by demonstrating that code-switching in Nigerian musical discourse performs not only interpersonal functions but also ideological functions by balancing local cultural identity with contemporary global realities.

The findings relating to rhetorical questions and symbolism equally support previous discourse studies. Fairclough (1995) argues that discourse functions as a site through which power relations, ideology, and social realities are negotiated, while van Dijk (2006) emphasizes that discourse shapes social cognition by influencing the beliefs and assumptions of audiences. The rhetorical questions employed by both artistes encourage critical reflection on governance, morality, leadership, and human existence rather than merely seeking information. Likewise, the symbolic representations of rivers, roads, trees,

clothing, and markets embody broader ideological meanings relating to resilience, communal solidarity, social responsibility, and cultural continuity. These findings therefore reinforce the argument that stylistic choices in musical discourse are deeply connected to broader social and ideological processes.

Another significant finding is the observable difference in the communicative orientation of the two musicians. While both artistes share a commitment to moral instruction and social transformation, Saheed Osupa adopts a relatively direct, didactic, and philosophical style characterized by explicit moral evaluation and personal responsibility. Beautiful Nubia, in contrast, employs a more reflective, reformative, and symbolic discourse that foregrounds peace, environmental consciousness, cultural renaissance, and collective social responsibility. This observation supports Adejumo's (2015) and Akinrinade's (2018) descriptions of Beautiful Nubia as a cultural advocate whose artistic philosophy emphasizes social renewal through poetic expression. Likewise, it confirms earlier observations that Osupa's musical discourse is rooted in Yoruba philosophical traditions characterized by moral instruction, proverbial wisdom, and ethical reflection. However, unlike previous studies that examine the two musicians separately, the present study offers a direct comparative socio-stylistic analysis, thereby revealing both convergences and divergences in their linguistic strategies and ideological orientations.

In essence, the findings contribute significantly to the growing body of scholarship on socio-stylistics, discourse analysis, and African music studies. While previous studies have largely concentrated on thematic interpretation, cultural criticism, or pragmatic functions in Nigerian music, the present study demonstrates that stylistic devices operate as systematic linguistic resources through which social meanings, cultural identities, and ideological positions are simultaneously constructed and negotiated. By integrating Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics with van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Theory, the study provides a more comprehensive explanation of the

interaction between linguistic form, social function, and audience cognition. Consequently, it fills an important gap in the literature by offering one of the few comparative socio-stylistic analyses of the musical works of Saheed Osupa and Beautiful Nubia, thereby extending scholarly understanding of contemporary Nigerian musical discourse.

Conclusion

The study concludes that the selected songs are important socio-cultural texts that extend beyond entertainment. Through sophisticated stylistic strategies, Saheed Osupa and Beautiful Nubia construct social meanings, preserve cultural heritage and advocate societal transformation. Their songs demonstrate the inseparable relationship between language, style and society in contemporary Nigerian music.

Implications and Recommendations

The study has pedagogical implications. This is feasible because the selected songs can serve as valuable instructional materials in the teaching of stylistics, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, African oral literature, and cultural studies. Their linguistic richness provides authentic examples for illustrating how language performs social, communicative, and ideological functions within real-life discourse. Additionally, the study contributes to African music scholarship by showing that popular musicians such as Saheed Osupa and Beautiful Nubia serve as cultural educators, moral commentators, and social reformers whose artistic productions preserve indigenous knowledge while addressing contemporary societal concerns. Their songs

function as valuable repositories of Yoruba philosophy, communal values, and cultural identity, thereby supporting efforts toward cultural preservation in an era of increasing globalization. To this end, the following recommendations are made:

1. Scholars in linguistics and stylistics should undertake more comparative socio-stylistic studies involving musicians from different Nigerian languages and musical genres in order to broaden understanding of language use in African musical discourse.
2. Researchers should incorporate additional theoretical perspectives, such as Critical Discourse Analysis, Cognitive Linguistics, Pragmatics, and Multimodal Discourse Analysis, to provide more comprehensive interpretations of musical texts.
3. Nigerian universities should integrate indigenous musical texts into the teaching of stylistics, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, and African literature because they provide authentic materials for demonstrating the interaction between language, culture, and society.
4. Musicians should continue to employ creative linguistic resources in promoting moral values, peaceful coexistence, cultural preservation, environmental awareness, and responsible citizenship, given the significant influence of music on public attitudes and behaviour.

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