

## A Stylo-syntactic Study of Halima Amali's *Faces of Shame*

Joseph Alagbe

Department of English & Modern Languages, Federal University of Lafia, Lafia,  
Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

### Abstract

Syntax is one of the levels of language description through which the grammar of a language is acquired. Its primary concern is the well-formedness of phrases, clauses and sentences and their orderly arrangement to convey a meaningful sense. The syntactic features of a text are instrumental in understanding a text. This study has focused on the prominent syntactic features Halima Amali has employed in the poem, *Faces of shame*. The twenty-nine lines of the poem serve as the corpus for the study while Halliday's systemic functional grammar is deployed for analysis. Findings from the study reveal that the poet used clause and group to express her thoughts in the poem. Similarly, syntactic parallelism is observed in the piece; it is used to unmask what the "faces of shame" do with the wealth they loot from public coffers, the volume they loot, the currencies involved; as well as what they squander the stolen wealth on – ostentation and immorality. The nominal group is used to succinctly unmask the "faces of shame" as public functionaries. Preposition-headed adverbial group is utilized to identify the source of the looted wealth, the motivation for the looting and the unresponsiveness of the public office holders to the yearnings of the general populace. Findings also capture rank-shifted group and clause as qualifiers for their respective antecedents. The paper concludes that the poet is effective and apt in the use of syntactic features, which in turn, define her idiolect.

**Key words:** syntax, syntactic parallelism, rank-shift, clause, group, *Faces of shame*

### Introduction

Literary works are often valued, appreciated and rated not only on the content but how the content is expressed. As such, the content as well as its expressive dimension is important to a literary artiste and a literary critic. Literary appreciation, therefore, takes into cognizance both the message and its expression. No wonder the painstaking efforts invested by literary artistes in their works.

Poetry, as a literary work, thrives on effective deployment of language, which in turn defines the worth and the aesthetics of the genre. In poetry, language is creatively manipulated to give vent to the thoughts of the poet, as well as unravel the unsaid from the said. In other words, in a given poetic piece, more is meant than expressed. To this end, a major linguistic index of poetry is economy of lexemes to mean more than what is expressed. The language of poetry is known for brevity, but with a much more signification in mind, hence, the tact deployed by poets in the choice of their lexical entry in order to convey the intended meaning. Apart from dexterity in lexical choice, the poet also strings the

words together in a way that will let the message be easily understood and have a far reaching impression on the reader/listener. It is therefore, a combination of tactful lexical choice and a dexterous stringing together of same that culminate in the worth and aesthetics of a poem in particular and literary works in general. The duo, therefore, are an index of the idiolect of the poet. This study is set to examine how the content of Halima Amali's poem, *Faces of shame* has been strung together to cement its message and aesthetics. The study aims at identifying the syntactic features the poet has used to "weave" the lexical items together. Consequently, the syntactic choice is an index of Halima Amali's idiolect.

### Statement of the Problem

Halima Amali, an ardent satirist against social ills, and especially forces against societal progress, growth and development, has two poetry collections to her credit (as at the time of this study) namely *I want to Join Them* (2016) and *Faces of shame* (2020). Orji-Mba and Dogoh (2020) have studied satire in *I want to Join Them* from a literary perspective. The study used irony as an instrument of satire in the poem. Besides

that, the researcher is not aware of any study on *Faces of shame* either from a linguistic or literary point of view. As such, this study concerns itself with the prominent syntactic features the poet has employed in *Faces of shame* – (a poem in the second collection and the title of the collection) to identify and state the activities of the “faces of shame” who are responsible for lack of progress, growth and development in her society.

### **Style/Style as Choice from Variants**

It has been established in literature that the concept of style has no definite definition due to its ‘nebulous’, ‘elusive’ and ‘slippery’ nature (Enkvist 1971:50; Azuike 1992:110; Awonuga 2017: 16). Notwithstanding, a general consensus among scholars shows that style, as a linguistic phenomenon, deals with some or a total language habits of a person, a group of people, a period, a genre, a school of writing, effective mode of expression, appropriate language use, and choice from linguistic possibilities (Chatman 1967:30; Crystal & Davy 1969:9-10; Leech & Short 1981:10-12; Azuike 1992:110; Azuike 2002:68; Lawal 2003:27). These are some of the working definitions scholars have in mind while studying the style of a writer/speaker. Furthermore, various approaches cum theories have been deployed in the analysis of style viz style as deviation from the norm, style as individuality, style as content and form, style as choice, style as context, and style as good writing (Azuike 1992:111-121; Lawal 2003). Hence, we shall consider style as choice due to its relevance to this study.

An interesting thing about language is that it is unlimited in variety and variability (Lawal 2003:27). Lawal (ibid) notes that “variety and variability are therefore inevitable features of language which is a unique, human attribute employed as a tool in widely differing circumstances for performing a multiplicity of social functions.” Language affords its users a myriad of variants from which selection can be made for effective communication and to achieve the intended end. Hence, “a writer or speaker therefore selects from these lexical possibilities in his linguistic repertoire an item that matches his message and situation” (Lawal 2003:28). Apart from lexical possibilities, the language user can also choose syntactic features or units that will

maximally convey the intention in mind. A good example is the choice of a passive voice over an active one. Note these two sentences.

Active: The man killed a lion.

Passive: The lion was killed (by the man).

In the first sentence (the active voice), the emphasis is on the man and what he did while in the second sentence, the emphasis is what happened to the lion. To this end, a language user chooses a syntactic possibility that appropriately matches his/her intention and produces the intended effect. As such, this study looks at the syntactic features Halima Amali chooses in the poem, *Faces of Shame*, to weave her lexical entry together.

### **Syntax: A Synopsis**

Syntax is one of the major levels of language description and or analysis. It is also one of the levels by which the grammar of a language is acquired. The term “syntax” is derived from the Greek word *syntaxis* which literally signifies “putting together in order or arrangement” (Bussmann 1996: 1169; Yule 2010:96). Several efforts have been made by scholars to explain the term. Bussmann (1996:1169), for instance, views syntax as “a system of rules which describe how a well-formed sentence of a language can be derived from basic elements.” The view of Bussmann reiterates the guidelines required for grammatically correct sentences. Leech (2006:110) conceives syntax as “the way words are combined into sentences.” This definition concerns itself with the orderly arrangement of the elements that constitute the structure of a sentence. To Meyer (2009:111), it is “how words are grouped and ordered within sentences, clauses, and phrases.” A common standpoint from these few scholarly viewpoints above is that syntax deals with the way words are strung together to form grammatically correct statements or expressions. From the thoughts above, it is obvious that words are not grouped together haphazardly but systematically to realize a correct phrase, clause or sentence. While the sentence is the highest level for syntactic analysis, the phrase is the lowest level.

Among the grammatical models that have been used for syntactic study of texts are classical grammar, transformational generative grammar

(TGG), and systemic functional grammar. Systemic grammar is adopted in this study for analyzing the poem, *Faces of shame*.

**Conceptual Clarification / Theoretical Perspective**

The theoretical perspective used for this study is Halliday’s systemic functional grammar (1966a). The five basic tenets differentiating the grammar from other grammatical models, according to Osisanwo (1999:10-11), are highlighted as follows:

- (i) Systemic grammar is noted for four theoretical categories namely unit, structure, class and system. These categories are the tools employed “to account for the fundamental grammatical patterns of any human language” (Osisanwo 1999:10).
- (ii) Unit and class operate at both surface and deep structure, structure applies to surface structure while system is associated with deep structure.
- (iii) The grammar is generative but non-transformational; it operates at surface and deep domains.
- (iv) “Classes are defined by their role in structure. For instance, the class ‘nominal group’ is defined in its role as subject and complement of a clause” (Osisanwo *ibid*).
- (v) “Items are different in terms of their delicacy. Some items are more delicate than others” (Osisanwo 1999:11).

Our focal point in this section is the unit; that is the aspect that is germane to this study. Five units are recognized in the grammar of the English language viz: morpheme, word, group, clause and sentence when arranged in the ascending order in the grammatical rank-scale. Osisanwo (1999:11) observes that “the morpheme is the smallest meaningful unit pertinent to grammatical description while the sentence is the largest unit.” One or more morphemes build a word, one or more words form a group; one or more groups form a clause while a sentence comprises one or more clauses. Types of morphemes recognizable in

English are free and bound morphemes. While free morphemes can operate on their own without the addition of any other obligatory element, bound morphemes cannot. Bound morphemes require obligatory elements to function and convey meaning. Instances of free morphemes in English are “dance, good, play, sure” while examples of bound morphemes are “er, ed, ance, ing.” Bound morphemes require free morphemes to operate in order to make meanings. They are used to form other words; hence, they are referred to as derivational morphemes (Osisanwo 1999:58). When bound morphemes are associated with free morphemes to mark tense (for verbs), number (for nouns/pronouns), comparative and superlative degrees (of adjectives and adverbs), they are called inflectional morphemes.

All free morphemes are words in the English language. A complex word has one or more free morphemes with one or more bound morphemes while a compound word consists of more than one free morpheme. English words are grouped into “classes according to their syntactic position, function and their ability to take or reject inflexion” (Osisanwo 1999:57). Such classes are noun, pronoun, verb, adverb, adjective, preposition, conjunction and interjection. The group is made up of words. Systemic grammar recognizes three main groups – nominal group, verbal group and adverbial group. The nominal group is found in the slot of the subject and complement in the structure of the clause in systemic grammar. The nominal group has three internal constituents: modifier, head and qualifier. Modifier pre-modifies the head obligatory (which is either noun or pronoun) while qualifier is a post-modifier for the head. The obligatory element in the structure of the nominal group is the head while modifier and qualifier are optional. Modifier could be any or a combination of deictic, ordinal, and epithet. The qualifier could be adjective, emphatic pronoun, verb, adverbial group, nominal group or a clause. Note these examples of the structure of the nominal group.

<i>m</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>q</i>
-	nothing	meaningful (adjective “meaningful” as qualifier)
her	husband	himself (emphatic pronoun “himself” as qualifier)

the	money	stolen (verb “stolen” as qualifier)
my	neighbour	next door (nominal group “next door” as qualifier)
that	man	in red shirt (adverbial “in red shirt” as qualifier)
the	barber	who cuts my hair (clause as qualifier)

The verbal group occupies the slot of predicator in the structure of the clause. The verbal group is made up of auxiliary verb (a), negator (n), lexical verb (l) and prepositional particle (pt) as its structural elements. However, the obligatory constituent is the lexical verb. Observe the following examples of the verbal group.

<i>a</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>pt</i>
-	-	love	-
has	not	gone	-
have been	-	crying	-
-	-	put	up with

The adverbial group is found in the position of the adjunct in the structure of the clause. The adverbial group is of two types in English – adverb-headed adverbial group and preposition-headed adverbial group. The constituents of adverb-headed adverbial group are temperer (t), apex (adverb) and limiter (l). The apex is the obligatory constituent whereas temperer (intensifier) and limiter are optional constituents. Below are a few cases of adverb-headed adverbial group.

t	a	l
-	fast	-
too	soon	-
very	fast	indeed.

Preposition-headed adverbial group has two obligatory elements of preposition (prepend) and completive (nominal group or adverb). The preposition is usually at the initial position whereas the completive is the complement for the preposition. Observe these instances.

<i>p</i>	<i>c</i>
after	the meeting
before	now
till	tomorrow
for	my husband

The clause is another unit in the structure of systemic grammar. The clause comprises groups. A clause can either be alpha (main/free/independent) or beta (subordinate/bound/dependent). While an alpha clause can function alone, a beta clause has to be in association of a free clause to convey a full sense. A clause has four elements as its structural constituents namely subject (S), predicate (P), complement (C) and adjunct (A). The nominal group occupies the slots of subject and complement, the verbal group takes the position of the predicator while the adverbial group occupies the position of the adjunct. Examples of clauses are given thus:

<i>S</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>A</i>
The girl	is expecting	her parents	today.
-	go	-	-
The man	comes	-	here regularly.
My mother	speaks	French.	

The cases above are instances of alpha clause. See the examples of beta clause below.

<i>A</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>C</i>
As	she	told	all of us
Before	they	came	-

After we left -

The sentence is the fifth unit in the grammatical rank-scale. It is made up of one or more clauses. Sentence types, according to systemic grammar, are simple sentence (comprising only one alpha clause), complex sentence (made up of one alpha clause and one or more beta clauses), compound sentence (consists of two or more alpha clauses), compound-complex sentence (has two or more alpha clauses with one or more beta clause), multiple sentence (consisting three or more alpha clauses), multiple-complex sentence (three or more alpha clauses together with one or more beta clauses) and minor sentence (when beta clauses are used in conversation to assume the status and position of a complete sentence) (Osisanwo 1999: 21-24).

### Methodology

The data base for the study was the twenty-nine lines of *Faces of shame*. The frequency of the syntactic structures was identified using simple arithmetic tool: the prominent structures were then subjected to analysis with the aid of systemic functional grammar, stating what they are used for in the poem - to identify the “faces of shame”, their activities and the attendant effects of their activities on the nation (Nigeria).

### Text Overview

Halima Amali’s zero tolerance for corruption and injustice perpetrated by the political elite against the citizenry runs throughout the poetry – *Faces of shame*. She satirizes against the flamboyance and shamelessness of the public functionaries who loot public funds, expend same on frivolities and leave the hapless and helpless masses in abject penury, deprivation and destitution. The satirization is captured in many poems in the collection such as: *They have no shame, Strip them naked, Let us rise, Send them to gallows, Enemies of our time, Wolves in our money barn*.

In *Faces of Shame*, the poet pursues the themes of theft, prodigality (at the detriment of the progress

and the growth of the nation, Nigeria) and shamelessness of the public office holders. The twenty-nine line poem has four stanzas. In the first stanza, the poet laments the “carting off” of “our valued treasury” (line 2) which is “plastered unto her skin” (line 3).

In stanza two, the poet goes further to lament the impact of the loot on the national purse – “holes bored into our treasuries” (line 8), “burrowing deep into our vaults (line 10).” In other words, the loot almost leaves the public coffers empty. The looted wealth, the poet avers, is the proceeds of the national oil. Stanza three shows the amount of money stolen from the treasuries and the global currencies involved in the theft. Not only that, the stanza reflects how the stolen money is wasted – on promiscuity. Stanza four clearly unravels who the “faces of shame” are – “these ministers in robes of theft”, “epitomes of porky lifestyle” (lines 28-29). They are the public officials who steal the money meant for the progress and the growth of the nation, but they waste the wealth on frivolities “as they gallivant in gallant dances of shame” (line 27) without giving heed to the yearnings of the citizenry for a change – “In defiance of our cries for change”(line 26).

### Discussion, Analysis and Findings

Halima Amali’s *Faces of Shame* is a twenty-nine line poem. A thorough examination of the syntactic structure of the poem shows that the poet uses two units - clause and group - to express her thoughts. Sixteen lines are captured in various clausal structures while thirteen lines are presented in groups. The structural elements used for clauses are PA, PC, PCA, SPA and SPC. Five lines are presented in PA, four lines are expressed in PC while one line is captured in PCA. Five lines have their elements as SPA while only one line is presented in SPC. Observe the case(s) of each clausal structure in the tables below.

#### PA

	P (Predicate)	A (Adjunct)
1.	Canopied	in tonnes of cash (line 1)
2.	Flying	in the unseen financial carnage (line 12)
3.	Tucked	into her body contours (line 19)

**Table 1: PA Clause Structure**

PC

	P	C
1.	Carted off	our valued treasury (line 2)
2.	Adorn	silos of our wealth (line 23)
3.	Stunting	our progress and growth (line 25)

**Table 2: PC Clause Structure**

PCA

P	C	A
Burrowing	deep	into our vaults (line10)

**Table 3: PCA Clause Structure**

SPA

	S	P	A
1.	She	garners	in unholy pride (line5)
2	And oil proceeds	melt	into bags (line11)
3	Millions, billions, trillions of cash	fly	in colours (line 15)

**Table 4: SPA Clause Structure**

SPC

S	P	C
(And) she	prides	a face of mischief (line 14)

**Table 5: SPC Clause Structure**

On the other hand, the remaining thirteen lines are expressed in groups: nominal and adverbial. Five lines are expressed in nominal group while the remaining eight lines are captured in adverbial group. Out of the five cases of nominal group in the poem, only one is a case of head without qualifier, the other four has qualifier after each head. Find below tables showing examples of nominal and adverbial groups in the poem.

**Nominal Group**

Modifier	Head	Qualifier
-	wealth and hope	- (line 18)
This	custodian	of our oil wealth (line 20)
These	ministers	in robes of theft (line 28)

**Table 6: Structure of Nominal Group**

“Wealth and hope” is an example of head with two elements – “wealth”, “hope.” It does not have modifier or qualifier. The second example, “this custodian of our wealth” has “this” as modifier for “custodian” - the head, and “of our wealth” as qualifier for “custodian.” In the third example: “these ministers in robes of theft,” “these” is the modifier, “ministers” – head, “in robes of theft” is qualifier.

**Adverbial Group**

Preposition	Complement
Over	our stolen wealth (line 7)
For	a rebuild of her treasury of loot (line 13)
In	gallant success dance of filth (line 21)

**Table 6: Adverbial Group**

It is worthy of note to state that Halima Amali opts for preposition-headed adverbial group in her work under study: all of them have a preposition as the first obligatory element and a complement (noun) as the second obligatory element. Out of the eight cases of preposition-headed adverbials in the poem, only two instances are without qualifier in the complement (as demonstrated in “our stolen wealth” above, where “our stolen” serves as modifiers for “wealth”, the head); the remaining six cases all have post-qualifier for the head (as

seen in “a rebuild of her treasury of loot” (line 13)” where “of her treasury of loot” qualifies “rebuild” – head of the group).

### **Syntactic Parallelism**

From the arguments above, it is clearly evident that Halima Amali uses syntactic parallelism in *Faces of Shame* at the clausal and group levels. Parallelism, in general terms, has to do with the “repetition of the same structural pattern” (Wales 1989:335). The repetition can be at any level of analysis. At the grammatical level, it can be at the level of sentence, clause or group. Syntactic parallelism that is germane to our discussion here, and which is noticeable in the poem is at the levels of clause and group. At the clausal level, Halima Amali repeats a few structural patterns namely PA, PC SPA. For example, PA structure is repeated five times, PC has four cases while SPA occurs five times. PA structural pattern is used by the poet to disclose what “faces of shame” do with “our stolen wealth” (line 7) – they use the “tonnes of cash” as their covering. Not only that, they spend same on frivolity – spending on ‘women of easy virtue.’ The poet captures the scenario thus: “[p]lastered unto her skin” (line 3), “[t]ucked into her body contours” (line 19). The objects the “faces of shame” spend “our stolen wealth” on are women of easy virtue, for they readily expose their body contours for “faces of shame” to tuck wealth into. The poet pointedly notes that the prodigality of “faces of shame” leads to “unseen financial carnage” (line 12) – the impoverishment of the general masses for whom the stolen wealth is meant.

The poet does not mince words in unravelling the misconduct of “faces of shame” through PC structural pattern. She equivocally states that the “faces of shame “carted off our valued treasury” (line 2) as well as “devouring all that we have” (line 24). Consequently, they are responsible for “stunting our progress and growth” (line 25). Hence, the poet attributes the stagnation of the nation (Nigeria) to the loot of “faces of shame.”

Through SPA structural pattern, the poet further reiterates the volume of the theft, the impact of same, as well as the activities of the “faces of shame.” She reveals the volume of money and some currencies the “faces of shame”

have carted off from the national treasury. In lines fifteen and sixteen, the poet discloses: “Millions, billions, trillions of cash fly in colours” “In euro, in dollar, in pound, world currencies.” These looters of our national wealth do not only steal millions, billions, trillions in Nigerian currency, they also steal in stronger world currencies: euro, dollar, and pound sterling. This reveals their depth of their selfishness and their insatiable urge for money to meet their ostentation and prodigality. Commenting on their prodigality and what they further spend their ill-gotten wealth on, the poet states: “... they gallivant in gallant dances of shame” (line 27) – they travel from place to place; engage themselves in dances of shame and thus waste the national wealth. To this end, their wasteful lifestyle drains the national purse as noted by the poet: “Holes bored into our treasuries” (line 8). The poet does not fail to disclose the source of the money being looted and squandered by the “faces of shame” in line eleven. She says: “And oil proceeds melt into bags”.

As mentioned above, five lines are presented in nominal group. The use of nominal group in the five lines is not without its significance. The poet uses nominal group to point out, in specific terms, what the “faces of shame” squandered the substance on, and who the faces of shame are. In line thirteen, Halima Amali identifies “wealth and hope” as the substances the “faces of shame” squandered. Wealth of the nation which should have been used for the good of the general populace and which, in turn, should have given them the hope of having a better living condition has been looted and “[t]ucked into her body contours” (line 19). In line twenty, the poet succinctly states the owner of body contours as “[t]his custodian of our oil wealth”. In other words, the looted wealth is squandered on “body contours.” As such, the owner of body contours becomes and is the custodian of our oil wealth: this is “what” the “faces of shame” squandered the stolen wealth on. The poet unequivocally unmask who “the faces of shame” are in the last two lines of the poem thus: “[t]hese ministers in robes of theft” (line 28), “[e]pitomes of porky lifestyle” (line 29). The “faces of shame”, therefore, are the

ministers – public or government functionaries – who have access to public funds, steal or loot, and waste same on ostentations and frivolities. Their flamboyance, therefore, is hinged on the stolen wealth from public coffers. Hence, their lifestyle, seen by all, is fake and not admirable.

Eight lines of the poem are presented in preposition-headed adverbial group. The poet uses adverbial group for certain purposes. Among others, adverbial group is deployed to state the source of wealth looted, stolen and squandered by the faces of shame. Line seventeen clearly states a major source of the national revenue: “From our basins of oil boom”. By this, it is evident that the funds squandered by the public functionaries are from petroleum transactions – Nigeria’s major source of earning. Furthermore, adverbial group is used to state the motivation for the public officials’ stealing of the public funds. This is unambiguously disclosed in line nine of the poem: “[i]n disguise of a church rat”. Nigeria’s public officials loot public coffers because of poverty – they opine they are poor. Moreover, adverbial group is used to capture the unresponsiveness of public officials to the plight and yearnings of the governed. The former keep “devouring” national wealth which stunts progress and growth, yet, they remain unconcerned about the cries of the ruled for a change. The irresponsible attribute of the faces of shame is reflected in line twenty-six and twenty-seven which reads: “In defiance of our cries for change ... they gallivant in dances of shame.” “In

defiance of our cries for change” thus portrays the “deafness” of the faces of shame to the yearnings of the general populace.

### Rank-shifting Units

Another syntactic feature that characterizes Halima Amali’s *Faces of Shame* is rank-shifting. A grammatical unit is said to have rank-shifted when “a larger unit operates within a smaller or similar unit” (Osisanwo 1999:64). This implies a situation where a clause is found in the slot of a group or it operates alongside a group, or when a group occupies the position of a word or operates alongside it. The major types of rank-shift in English, according to Osisanwo (1999:64-66), are clause as subject, clause as complement, clause as qualifier in nominal group, adverbial group as qualifier in nominal group, nominal group as deictic in nominal group modifier and nominal group as completive in adverbial group. In the twenty-nine line poem, there are sixteen identified cases of rank-shifted group and an instance of rank-shifted clause. All the cases of rank-shifted group in the poem are preposition-headed adverbial group – all but one instance has preposition “of” as prepend. Each of the rank-shifted group functions as the qualifier for the preceding noun. Thus, the rank-shifted groups are adjectival, hence, modifying their antecedents and giving vividness to same; as such, they expand the structure of the unit where they are found. Note a few examples of rank-shifted group with their antecedents.

Preceding Noun	Preposition-headed Group
tonnes	of cash (line 1)
dance steps	of no shame (line 6)
disguise	of a church rat (line 9)
our basins	of oil boom (line 17)
bleary-eyed faces	of no shame (line 22)
these ministers	in robes of theft (line 28)

**Table 7: Examples of rank-shifted group in *Faces of Shame***

In “tonnes of cash” (line 1), “tonnes” is a noun (head) while “of cash” is the qualifier for the noun “tonnes.” In “dance steps of no shame” (line 6), “of no shame” is the qualifier for “steps” – the head of the group “dance steps.” Likewise in “disguise of a church rat”, “of a church rat” post-modifies “disguise” – noun; “of oil boom” (line 7)

qualifies “basins”, the head of the group “our basins”, while “of no shame” of line twenty-two is the qualifier for “faces” – the head of the group “bleary-eyed faces.” The only instance of rank-shifted group without prepend “of” is “in robes of theft.” The group in question is a case of compound rank-shifted group – consisting of two

rank-shifted groups namely “in robes” and “of theft.” While “in robes” is the qualifier for “ministers” – the head of the group “these ministers,” “of theft” serves as the qualifier for “robes.”

Each qualifier expands the structure of the unit where it is found because each one would have ended with the head of the group, but with the insertion of the qualifier, each structure has been expanded thereby. The only case of rank-shifted clause in the poem is “that we have” in line twenty-four. The unit is the qualifier for “all” – the complement of the verb “devouring.” It is also adjectival in that it gives additional information about “all” and thus expand the structure of that clause.

The syntactic features pointed out above are not only apt; they are efficiently used by the poet to string her lexical entry together. The choice of these features, therefore, is part of what determine the style of Halima Amali in this poem: it is an index of her idiolect.

### Conclusion

This paper has done a stylo-syntactic

study of Halima Amali’s *Faces of shame*. The study has established that the poet uses different clausal structure in conjunction with nominal and preposition-headed adverbial group to pass across her message. It is evident from the study that syntactic parallelism is deployed by the poet to explain what the “faces of shame” do with their looted wealth, the volume and the currencies involved in the theft, as well as what these prodigal government officials waste the stolen wealth on. Not only that, the nominal group is employed to identify the “faces of shame” as the public officials. Furthermore, preposition-headed adverbial group has been used to show the source of the looted wealth, and the deafness of public functionaries to the demand of the masses for a change. In addition, findings of the study also show that rank-shifted group and clause are used as qualifiers for their antecedents, thus they give vividness to same and expand the structure of the unit where they are found. Finally, the identified syntactic features are apt and effective; they form a part of the idiolect of the poet

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## Appendix

### **Faces of shame**

Canopied in tonnes of cash  
Carted off our valued treasury  
Plastered unto her skin  
Glittering in golden carats  
She garners in unholy pride  
In dances of no shame  
Over our stolen wealth

Holes bored into our treasuries  
In disguise of a church rat  
Burrowing deep into our vaults  
And oil proceeds melt into bags  
Flying in the unseen financial carnage  
For a rebuild of her treasury of loot  
And she prides a face of mischief

Millions, billions, trillions of cash fly in colours  
In euro, in dollar, in pound, world currencies  
From our basins of oil boom  
Wealth and hope  
Tucked into her body contours  
This custodian of our oil wealth  
In gallant success dance of filth

Bleary-eyed faces of shame  
Adorn silos of our wealth  
Devouring all that we have  
Stunting our progress and growth  
In defiance of our cries for change  
As they gallivant in gallant dances of shame  
These ministers in robes of theft  
Epitomes of porky lifestyle