



The Language of Companionship: A Critical Stylistic Examination of True and False Friendship in Niyi Osundare's Poetry

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ABSTRACT

Friendship, a central theme in human relationships, has been a subject of poetic exploration across cultures. Niyi Osundare, a renowned Nigerian poet, examines the dual nature of friendship in his poems *Friendship Blue*, *One Side* and *Friendship Blue, Another Side* from the collection *Random Blues*. This study employs the Critical Stylistics (CS) approach, developed by Jeffries (2010), to analyse how Osundare's linguistic and stylistic choices shape the representation of false and true friendship. This research uncovers the ideological underpinnings of these poems by examining Osundare's use of naming and description, representing actions/events/states, and comparing and contrasting. The study investigates how language constructs opposing depictions of deceptive and genuine friendships through qualitative textual analysis. Findings reveal that *Friendship Blue, One Side* employs negative imagery, contrasting metaphors, and descriptive language to depict false friends as exploitative and deceitful. Conversely, *Friendship Blue, another side*, portrays true friends using positive and valuable imagery, emphasizing trust and loyalty. The study highlights how Osundare's poetic style not only critiques hypocrisy in relationships but also celebrates sincere companionship. The conclusion affirms that linguistic choices in poetry are potent tools for ideological expression, allowing Osundare to influence readers' perception of friendship. This research contributes to Critical Stylistics and African poetry studies by demonstrating the effectiveness of CS tools in uncovering deep-

seated ideologies within poetic texts. It also provides insights into how language shapes human relationships in literature.

Keywords: Critical Stylistics, Niyi Osundare, Friendship in Poetry, Linguistic Analysis, Ideology in Literature

Introduction

Stylistics is a branch of linguistics that focuses on analysing linguistic and rhetorical features within texts to understand how language choices contribute to the overall interpretation and impact of a piece of communication (Oseni, 2023). Stylistics signifies exploiting linguistics as a tool for literary criticism to search and inspect the aesthetic effect of language in a broad sense and style for a specific reason. Stylistics also aims to study the language usage style in different linguistic or situational contexts. According to Maroufi et al. (2016), stylistics is a method of textual interpretation that gives language precedence over other elements. Stylistics is an academic field positioned between language and literary studies, according to Scott (2023). To demonstrate how the text is understood and how reading it affects the readers, it looks into how readers engage with the style of the texts. In recent times, new approaches to stylistics have emerged. These approaches shaped the discipline of stylistics. One of those approaches is the Critical Stylistic (CS) approach, which introduces a method to achieve more rigour and replicable textual analysis. Based on this approach, this present study analyses two selected poems of Niyi Osundare in his poetry collection titled *Random Blues*.

The release of Jeffries' Critical Stylistics: The Power of English in 2010 marked the beginning of the development of Critical Stylistics (CS) at the University of Huddersfield. According to Reeve (2010), critical stylistics aims to compile a text's primary general purposes in depicting reality. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) lacks the more sophisticated and rigorous analytical tools that essentially offer stylistics (Tabbert, 2013). According to Olaluwoye (2015), there is no connection between Critical Stylistics and political views. It makes the case that all writings have an ideological foundation, regardless of how consciously or unconsciously these ideas are formed. It seeks to reveal and uncover hidden ideologies in discourse and writings. Jeffries identifies the following tools as the instruments that critical stylistics uses to uncover ideologies which will be later discussed in this study: (1) Naming and Describing, (2) Representing Actions/Events/States, (3) Equating and Contrasting, (4) Exemplifying and Enumerating, (5) Prioritizing, (6) Implying and Assuming, (7) Negating, (8) Hypothesizing, (9) Presenting the Speech and Thoughts of other Participants, and (10) Representing Time, Space and Society.

With the emergence of this stylistic approach to linguistic study, several authors and researchers have researched this study area. Many have also analyzed Niyi Osundare's poetry. Kifayat (2023) examine three purposively selected poems in Tanure Ojaide's *Narrow Escapes* on the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors used four critical stylistics analytical toolkits: naming and describing, representing events/actions/states,

prioritizing, implying and assuming for their analysis. However, they concluded that the deployment of the critical stylistic tools for analysing the selected poems has unraveled the underlying sense that the poet conveys melodiously. Also, Hussein & Hussein (2021) attempted to apply Reeve's (2010) model of critical stylistics to analyze selected soliloquies in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The study specifically aimed at examining the two soliloquies made by the character Hamlet using only three textual-conceptual functions of the model: Representing Actions/ Events/ States, Exemplifying and Enumerating, and Hypothesizing. The data was analyzed qualitatively to show how the tools are used and then quantitatively to show how often these tools are used. This paper concluded that Shakespeare's language is ideologically loaded, and there are discrepancies in the frequency and function of these tools. Besides, the frequency of these tools proves how the ideology is enforced through the language of the text.

Ebim (2016) presented a paper titled "A Critical Discourse Analysis of Niyi Osundare's *Blues for the New Senate King*". Although Ebim's work did not use a Critical Stylistic approach, the text in his focus was Niyi Osundare's poem. This is what the study has to say about this current study. Using the CDA approach to examine the poem, the paper revealed that Osundare aims to bring about social reformation in society. The study implies that it has contributed to the field of stylistics by illustrating the interface between literary and linguistic features in poetic forms that advocate a positive approach to the style of governance in Nigerian society. Following the above empirical review, it is observed that the studies reviewed have areas of similarity in terms of approach (Critical Stylistics), the genre of text under investigation (poetry) or the author (Niyi Osundare) with this current study. However, there has not been any study using the Critical Stylistics model to study Niyi Osundare's poetry, notably his *Random Blues*. This, however, is the gap that this current study intends to fill, and this research aims to investigate the two selected poems (*Friendship Blue*, "One Side", and "Another Side") in Niyi Osundare's poetry collection *Random Blues*.

Niyi Osundare's poems "Friendship Blues, One Side" and "Friendship Blues, Another Side" explore two very different kinds of friendship. *Friendship Blues, One Side* talks about fake friends who pretend to care but are deceitful and harmful. These friends are compared to flies drawn to honey, only interested in what they can get from you. They hide their true feelings behind smiles and friendly greetings, but their intentions are bad. They are happy when you are sad and envious when you succeed, making them dangerous and untrustworthy. Meanwhile, "Friendship Blues, Another Side" celebrates authentic, genuinely caring, supportive friends. These friends are described as precious, like gold and honey. They share in your happiness and sadness, always standing by your side. They are trustworthy, protect your secrets, and support you through good and bad times. Their friendship is sincere and full of love and loyalty.

The study's main objective is to analyze how Niyi Osundare's linguistic and stylistic choices in his poems "Friendship Blue, One Side" and "Friendship Blue, Another Side" shape the representation of true and false friendship. Using the Critical Stylistics approach, the research aims to uncover the ideological underpinnings of these poems by examining Osundare's use of naming, description, and contrasting imagery to depict the

complexities of friendship, ultimately highlighting how language constructs perceptions of interpersonal relationships in literature.

Literature Review

Critical Stylistics

Lesley Reeve (2010) introduced a relatively new subfield of stylistics known as "critical stylistics," which seeks to merge stylistics with critical discourse analysis (CDA). According to Nørgaard et al. (2010), critical stylistics refers to stylistic work that explores how language represents social meanings. This approach is influenced by critical linguistics and CDA (Jeffries, 2016). Reeve (2010) noted that stylistics has evolved into an interdisciplinary field, and by applying stylistic theories alongside critical studies, significant advancements in critical stylistics can be achieved. Critical stylistics uses various analytical techniques to focus on the relationship between language, power, and ideology (Evans & Schuller, 2015). Critical stylistics aims to illustrate how writers embed their ideologies and social concepts into their work, leveraging the strengths of both stylistics and CDA. Coffey (2013) emphasized that critical stylistics endeavors to bridge stylistics with CDA, demonstrating how language functions in social interactions of dominance and power. Stylistics, or "the study of style," investigates "literary language" to reveal the connection between language and creative fiction. Critical stylistics strives to integrate the best elements of stylistics and CDA to examine how writers embed ideologies and social concepts into their works, whether literary or non-canonical (Tabbert, 2013).

Reeve (2010) demonstrates that Critical Stylistics is employed to identify the primary overarching function of a text in representing realities. She also stated that Critical Stylistics offers various tools considered more comprehensive than those provided by other works in CDA. In her 2010 book *Critical Stylistics*, Jeffries integrates CDA and stylistics, explicitly focusing on the linguistic manifestation of social meaning and the necessary analytical tools. Furthermore, Reeve (2010) highlighted that these 'textual conceptual functions' are used to reveal the implicit ideologies conveyed through linguistic choices.

Differences between Critical Stylistics and Critical Discourse Analysis

Reeve (2010) demonstrates that Critical Stylistics is employed to identify the primary overarching function of a text in representing realities. She also stated that Critical Stylistics offers various tools considered more comprehensive than those provided by other works in CDA. Critical stylistics focuses on revealing the underlying ideologies in texts, demonstrating how language conveys specific ideologies through literary and non-literary texts without considering external circumstances (Jeffries, 2016). In contrast, CDA examines social, historical, and visual texts, emphasizing external contexts in its analysis. Jeffries (2016) acknowledges that stylistic analysis is equally valuable and insightful for non-fiction and literary data. According to Olaluwoye (2015), Critical Stylistics shows that all texts are ideologically influenced, whether consciously or unconsciously. One major criticism of CDA is its lack of comprehensive analytical tools, attributed to its multidisciplinary nature. Critical stylistics addresses this flaw by introducing a systematic analytical model that combines tools from stylistics and critical

linguistics, aiming to uncover the linguistic choices of text producers and their potential ideological motives and implications (Ibrahim & Hussein, 2018).

Ideology

The central focus of critical analysis research is ideology. The term "ideology" was coined in 1796 by French philosopher Antoine Destutt de Tracy, who envisioned it as a science of ideas similar to other scientific disciplines (Béraud & Numa, 2023). Eagleton (2014) described the term 'ideology' as "indeterminate and tricky," explaining that its meaning can be interpreted broadly or narrowly. He argued that the theoretical constructs that define ideology provide it with a particular perspective, which he refers to as "a shared or collective consciousness...a belief system" that unites community members. Ideology manifests in various forms, including as collective consciousness, as related to religion, and as a tool of power and domination, studying how it serves as an instrument of societal control (Langman, 2015).

Jeffries (2016) aligns with Fowler's definition of ideology, asserting that ideology is pervasive in texts and reflects the principles of credibility within a particular community or group. Additionally, Reeve (2010) defines ideology as the shared ideas of a community or society. She further emphasizes that ideologies are fundamental to our world, communicated, reproduced, constructed, and negotiated through language. Hodges (2015) partially agrees with Jeffries but expands on the definition, describing ideology as "systems of thoughts and ideas that represent the world from a particular perspective and provide a framework for organizing meaning, guiding actions, and legitimating positions."

Ideologies are often seen as the unexamined thoughts or ideas a particular group holds. However, Machin and Mayr (2012) view ideology as "an important means by which dominant forces in society can exercise power over subordinate and subjugated groups." Some linguists present ideology as a negative concept, while others describe it as a regular, neutral term. Essentially, the meaning assigned to ideology depends on the context and intent; ideologies are not inherently harmful. For example, there are both racist ideologies and anti-racist ones. Olaluwoye (2015) observes that no text is free from ideology or entirely objective; all texts carry specific values or shared norms and are inseparable from the social norms and processes they help maintain. Consequently, written and spoken language serve as a medium for reproducing, disseminating, and potentially altering these ideologies. Analysts examine textual features when detecting ideology in texts to explain and interpret underlying ideologies. This involves exploring biases, presuppositions, and intertextuality and relating texts to the experiences and beliefs of readers and speakers.

Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research design, specifically utilizing a Critical Stylistic (CS) approach for textual analysis. The qualitative approach is suitable for this research as it allows for an in-depth analysis of the poems' linguistic and stylistic features, revealing the underlying ideologies and the poet's stylistic choices. The primary data for this study consists of the two selected poems by Niyi Osundare: *Friendship Blue*: 'One

'Side" and "Friendship Blue: 'Another Side." These poems are chosen purposefully based on their thematic relevance to the study's focus on the poet's use of language and his ideology on friendship. The poems will be sourced directly from Osundare's poetry collection *Random Blues*.

Analytical Framework

This study employs the Critical Stylistic (CS) model, developed by Lesley Jeffries (2010), to analyze the selected poems. Critical Stylistics provides analytical tools that uncover the ideologies embedded within texts. Specifically, the following three tools from Jeffries' (2010) model will be applied. The first is naming and describing, representing Actions/Events/States and Equating and Contrasting. The diagram in the analytical framework likely illustrates the three key tools of the Critical Stylistics (CS) model as applied in the study. The second is naming and describing. This tool focuses on how the text names and describes individuals, objects, or concepts. It examines the connotations and implications of specific language choices, revealing how they shape perceptions of friendship. For instance, the terms used to describe friends may indicate trustworthiness or deceit. The third is representing actions/events/states. This aspect analyses how actions, events, and states are depicted in the poems. It looks at the verbs and narrative structures employed by Osundare to portray friendships. Positive actions may highlight loyalty and support, while negative actions can illustrate betrayal or exploitation, reflecting friendship's dual nature.

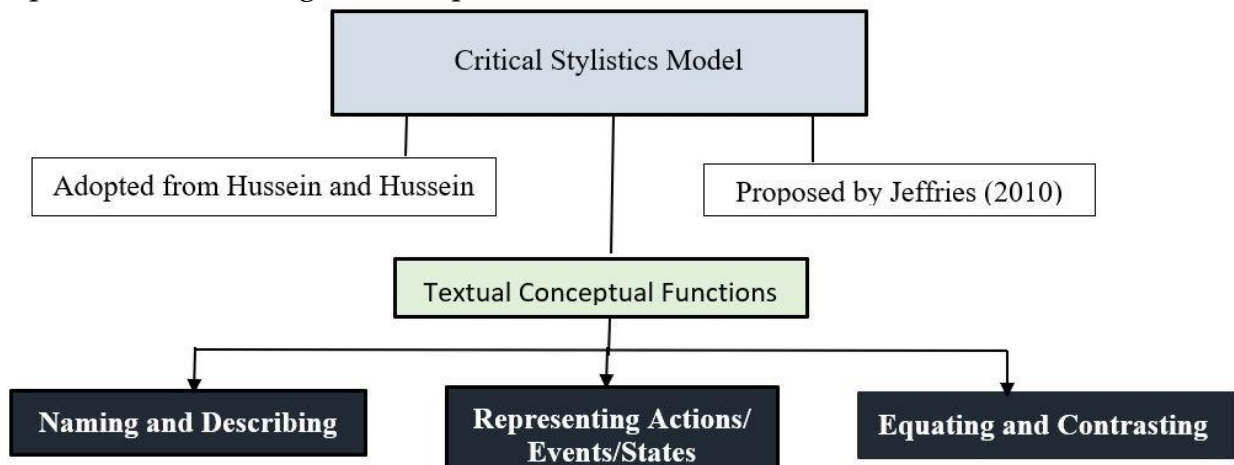


Figure 1. Analytical framework of the study

The fourth is Equating and Contrasting. This tool involves comparing and contrasting different representations within the text. It helps to reveal the ideological tensions between true and false friendships. The analysis can uncover deeper meanings and critiques of social relationships by juxtaposing positive and negative imagery. These tools provide a comprehensive framework for understanding how Osundare's stylistic choices convey ideological messages about friendship, emphasizing the complexities and contradictions inherent in human relationships.

The extracted data was analyzed to uncover the ideologies reflected in the poems. The analysis will focus on how the poet's language conveys his ideological position on friendship. Patterns and recurring themes will be identified to understand the broader implications of the stylistic choices. The study focuses solely on the selected poems from Niyi Osundare's *Random Blues*, limiting the generalizability of the findings to other texts or contexts. The analysis will be confined to the tools specified within the CS model, potentially overlooking other stylistic elements in the poems. The interpretation of the poems may be subjective to some extent, influenced by the researcher's perspective and biases.

Findings

Naming and Describing

In both poems, there is a clear distinction between how true friends and false friends are labelled and described. The poems vividly characterize different types of friends using specific nouns and descriptive phrases. True friends are likened to precious materials, while false friends are described with imagery of deceit and treachery. The naming and describing function plays a crucial role in characterizing the nature of friendship in the two poems, with each poem employing specific words and imagery to highlight either the deceitful traits of false friends or the genuine qualities of true friendship. This function enriches the poems by providing readers with vivid mental images and emotional resonance, ultimately contributing to the thematic exploration of friendship dynamics. For example: Poem 1: (One side)

"Feigners" (line 5), "flies at the "honeypot" (line 5), "grave greetings" (line 7), "Lethal smiles" (line 8), "sour souls" (line 12), "masks" (line, 18), "snake" (line, 40), "scorpions" (line, 41).

The above are instances of labelling and describing words, which the poet used as vivid imagery and descriptive language to label and describe the behaviour of false friends. They are likened to "flies at the honeypot," implying their opportunistic and deceitful nature. The word "masks" in the phrase "Their masks are loose, their faces tight" suggests a facade of insincerity and hidden intentions. Similarly, the word "scorpion" in the phrase "stomach as a pit of scorpions" conveys a sense of internal malice and duplicity within false friends. Terms and descriptors like "feigners", "snake," "grave greetings", and "lethal smiles" emphasize and reinforce the theme of betrayal and manipulation. On the other hand, the instances of these linguistic features in poem 2 (Another side) are as follows: "honey" (line 2), "Stainless gold" (line 5), "unvarnished silver" (line 5), "dear" (line, 6) "heart" (line 11), "trust" (line 36), "embrace" (line, 40), "no Cassius scowl" (line, 41), "Brutus dagger" (line, 41) wholesome" (line, 42), "timely blossom" (line, 43).

Contrary to the first poem, "Friendship Blue: Another Side" celebrates the positive aspects of true friendship. This poem's naming and describing function portrays the positive attributes associated with true friendship. Words like "Stainless gold" and "unvarnished silver" evoke images of purity and authenticity, emphasizing the genuine nature of true friendships. Descriptors such as "heart" and "wholesome" underscore the

emotional depth and integrity of true friends, while terms like "smile" and "embrace" convey warmth and sincerity. The absence of negative imagery, such as "Cassius' scowl" and "Brutus' dagger," further reinforces the theme of trust and reliability in true friendships, culminating in the imagery of "timely blossom" to symbolise the sweetness and growth that genuine friendships bring. In addition, in the context of the poems, pronouns such as "they," "he," or "she" are used to refer to different types of friends, thus naming and describing their characteristics. For example:

In Poem 1:

"They laugh with their teeth / sour in their souls" (lines 11 & 12)

"Your tears water their field" (line 35)

In Poem 2:

"S/he forgives your errors" (line 26)

"His smile is genuine" (line 37)

In each case, pronouns are employed to name and describe the referenced individuals or groups, providing insight into their qualities and behaviors. Therefore, pronouns can be examples of poetry's naming and describing functions.

Representing Actions/Events/States

The portrayal of actions and states differs significantly between the two poems. The actions and states in the poems provide deeper insight into the nature of these friendships. In the first poem, false friends are depicted as insincere and manipulative, shown through actions like shouting "Good morning" in the middle of the night (lines 13 & 14) and sending a snake in return for an earthworm (lines 37 & 38). Generally, the actions of false friends are malicious and self-serving:

Malicious Actions: Phrases like "They laugh with their teeth / sour in their souls" (lines 11 & 12) and "Your tears water their field / Your smiling face will make them mad" depict false friends as deriving pleasure from others' pain and benefiting from others' misfortunes. These friends' actions are designed to deceive and exploit, masking their true intentions behind superficial friendliness.

Conversely, "Friendship Blue: Another Side" presents the supportive actions of true friends:

Supportive Actions: In contrast, the second poem portrays true friends as supportive and empathetic, sharing joys and sorrows.

"His smile is true" (line, 37)

"They laugh when you laugh / They cry when you cry." (lines 13 & 14)

"S/he rights your wrongs / S/he forgives your errors." (lines, 25 & 26)

"The key to your life is in her hands / His trust fails not and never flicks." (lines 35 & 36)

These lines represent various actions and states associated with true friendship. The parallelism in "They laugh when you laugh / They cry when you cry" illustrates the shared experiences and emotional resonance between true friends. Furthermore, the representation of "righting wrongs" and "forgiving errors" signifies true friendship's supportive and forgiving nature. Lastly, the imagery of "the key to your life" symbolises the trust and reliability inherent in true friends, contrary to the betrayal and deceit often

found in false friendships. The depicted actions are rooted in genuine care and empathy. These friends are shown to provide emotional support, forgiveness, and honesty, reinforcing the theme of loyalty and steadfastness.

Equating and Contrasting

The two poems under investigation employ contrasting linguistic markers to highlight the differences between true and false friends. These functions reveal how each poem constructs its thematic message about friendship through linguistic choices and structural elements. Semantic relations tools, especially antonyms and synonyms, achieve this linguistic feature. The poet uses this in the poem's context to instil cohesion and draw his contrasting ideology about the two kinds of friendship.

Using equating and contrasting emphasises the differences between false and true friends. In "Friendship Blue: One Side," contrasts are drawn between appearance and reality:

Contrast: The juxtaposition of "grave greetings" (line 9) and "lethal smiles" (line 10) and the underlying deceit of false friends highlights the stark difference between their outward behaviour and inner intentions. This contrast underscores the danger and duplicity inherent in these friendships.

"Feigners abound, flies at the honeypot." (line 5)

"Sad when you are happy, Happy when you are sad." (lines 31 & 32)

These lines contrast the behaviour of false friends with the expected norms of genuine friendship. The contrasting functions are evident in juxtaposing the image of "flies at the honeypot" with the concept of true friendship, which is associated with sincerity and trust. Additionally, the reversal of emotions, being "Sad when you are happy, Happy when you are sad," emphasises the insincerity and opportunism of false friends compared to the supportive nature of true friendship.

In "Friendship Blue: Another Side," equating true friends with precious materials elevates their value:

Equating: By likening true friends to "Stainless gold" and "unvarnished silver" (line 5). Osundare equates them with purity and incorruptibility. This comparison elevates the status of true friends, emphasising their worth and reliability. The absence of negative imagery, such as "Cassius' scowl" and "Brutus' dagger," further underscores their trustworthiness.

"Friends there are / That is sweeter than honey." (lines 1 & 2)

"Happy when you are happy / Sad when you are sad." (lines 7 & 8)

"You disagree to agree / You agree to disagree." (lines 19 & 20)

These lines equate the traits and behaviors of true friends with positive and supportive qualities. The contrast between the sweetness of honey and the bitterness associated with false friendship emphasizes the genuine nature of true friends. Additionally, the repetition of "Happy when you are happy, Sad when you are sad" highlights the empathetic connection between true friends, contrasting with the opportunistic nature of false friends. The phrase "You disagree to agree, You agree to

"disagree" exemplifies the flexibility and mutual respect inherent in true friendship, contrasting with the manipulative tendencies of false friends. Osundare's linguistic choices in these poems reveal his ideological stance on friendship. Through vivid imagery and descriptive language, he critiques the deceit and harm caused by false friends while celebrating the sincerity and support offered by true friends. His use of CS tools effectively conveys these ideologies, making the reader reflect on the nature of their relationships and the qualities that define genuine friendship.

Discussion

The findings reveal how linguistic choices shape ideological perceptions of these relationships. It highlights the contributions to knowledge in the field of Critical Stylistics and African poetry. The clear distinction in the naming and descriptive language used to characterize true and false friends is a significant finding. In "One Side," Osundare employs negative imagery—terms like "Feigners," "grave greetings," and "lethal smiles"—to portray false friends as deceitful and exploitative. This aligns with previous studies that emphasize how language can reflect societal attitudes toward relationships, suggesting that deceptive behavior is often critiqued through vivid, negative descriptors (Reeve, 2010). Conversely, in "Another Side," the use of positive imagery, such as "Stainless gold" and "wholesome," elevates the status of true friends. This portrayal resonates with findings from Norton & Toohey (2011), who argue that language can construct social identities and values. The contrasting linguistic choices in Osundare's poetry enrich the thematic exploration of friendship dynamics and reinforce the idea that language is a powerful tool for ideological expression. The portrayal of friendship-related actions further emphasizes the differences between true and false friends. False friends are depicted engaging in malicious actions, such as pretending to care while deriving pleasure from others' pain. This reflects earlier research highlighting the performative aspects of friendship, where actions often reveal underlying intentions (Van Doorn, 2010). The actions described in "One Side" critique insincerity, aligning with social psychology findings that suggest deceptive relationship behaviors can lead to emotional harm (Van Der Merwe & Wetherell, 2020). In stark contrast, "Another Side" presents true friends as empathetic and supportive, with actions that embody care and reliability. This aligns with previous findings that emphasize the importance of emotional support in friendships (Costello et al., 2023). The study contributes to Critical Stylistics and African poetry by demonstrating how linguistic analysis can reveal deep-seated ideologies within poetic texts. Osundare's stylistic choices serve as a critique of hypocrisy in relationships while celebrating sincere companionship. This dual focus enhances understanding of friendship as a complex interplay of emotions, actions, and societal expectations. Furthermore, the findings underscore the relevance of Critical Stylistics as a framework for analyzing literary texts, providing tools to uncover ideological messages that shape readers' perceptions. By applying this framework to Osundare's poetry, the study highlights the effectiveness of linguistic choices in conveying thematic depth, enriching the discourse in African literature and broader literary studies.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Niyi Osundare's poems "Friendship Blue, One Side" and "Friendship Blue, Another Side" effectively utilize critical stylistic tools to convey deep ideological insights about friendship. Through the strategic use of Naming and Describing, Representing Actions/Events/States, and Equating and Contrasting, Osundare critiques the deceitful nature of false friends while celebrating the virtues of true friendships. The findings highlight how linguistic choices can powerfully convey complex social and personal themes, offering readers a nuanced understanding of friendship dynamics. Ultimately, Osundare's work encourages reflection on the qualities that constitute genuine and meaningful relationships, emphasising the importance of loyalty, sincerity, and emotional support in true friendships. This study's findings highlight the significance of linguistic choices in shaping perceptions of friendship within poetry, particularly in the works of Niyi Osundare. Employing the Critical Stylistics model offers valuable insights into how language constructs and critiques social relationships. The implications extend to contemporary literary studies by demonstrating the effectiveness of stylistic analysis in uncovering deeper ideological meanings. This approach can be applied to other poets and literary works to explore themes of companionship, loyalty, and betrayal, enriching the discourse in African literature and broader literary studies. While this study thoroughly analyses Osundare's poetry, it is limited by its focus on only two poems from the collection *Random Blues*. This narrow scope may not capture the full range of themes related to friendship in Osundare's broader oeuvre or other literary contexts. Additionally, the study's reliance on qualitative textual analysis may introduce subjectivity in interpreting linguistic choices, potentially limiting generalizability. Future research could expand the scope by examining additional poems by Osundare or exploring other poets who address similar themes of friendship. A comparative analysis of different cultural perspectives on friendship in poetry could also provide a richer understanding. Furthermore, quantitative methods, such as corpus analysis, could be employed to analyze larger datasets of poetry, allowing for more robust conclusions about linguistic patterns and their ideological implications. Finally, interdisciplinary approaches incorporating psychology or sociology could enrich the analysis of how literature portrays and perceives friendship.

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