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Grammatical deviation in Niyi Osundare's essays as a tool for foregrounding socio-political challenges in Nigeria

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Abstract

This article investigates grammatical deviation in selected socio-political essays of Osundare in order to highlight some socio-political challenges which these deviations are deployed to communicate. Drawing on content analysis and hinging on Leech (1969)'s framework on foregrounding, the study explores the essayist's utilisation of language which deviates from the normal rules of linguistic usage. The findings of the study include some stylistic devices and particularly grammatical deviation involving subject displacement, verb displacement, and subject and verb omission deployed to creatively foreground the socio-political challenges which Nigeria has been grappling with since independence. The study concludes that grammatical deviation plays significant role in literary oeuvres in that it accentuates the message communicated, reflects the ideological stance of the writer, produces a strong impression on the minds of readers, and creates artistic beauty. The skillful manipulation of this device is one of the qualities that foregrounds the essayist's dexterity and style.

Keywords: Deviation, essay, foregrounding, style, stylistics

Introduction

Little attention has been paid to the subject of grammatical deviation in Niyi Osundare's essays published in the print media. This is perhaps due to the fact that many practitioners of stylistics may not consider it worthwhile to explore other aspects of his intellectual and literary efforts (Aluya, 2016). To bridge this gap, this article investigates grammatical deviation in selected socio-political essays of Niyi Osundare with a view to highlighting the contribution of this linguistic construct to the appreciation and interpretation of literary texts. The objectives of the study include to identify the nature of grammatical deviation utilised in the selected essays and determine the socio-political messages which the patterns of grammatical deviation have been used to communicate.

The article, which adopts leech's (1969) conceptual framework on foregrounding, is structured into five parts. In the first part, the concept of foregrounding is considered. The second part probes into the concept of deviation, the purpose being to provide a detail appraisal of it. In the third part, the context of the study is highlighted. This is followed immediately by the synopsis

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of the essays. The fourth part presents the research design, data analysis and discussion of findings. The conclusion of the study is captured in the final part.

The notion of foregrounding

Foregrounding is a widespread construct in stylistics popularised by Gavin (1964) and used to interpret the Prague school term *aktualisace* of the 1930s, that denotes actualisation. On the specific individual level of scholars, the term has been outlined in several manners. For example, to Wales (2011: p.166), it is “throwing into relief of the linguistic sign against the background of the norms of ordinary language”. Lawal (1987: p.98) says foregrounding is the inventive use of language in such a dexterous way that the medium attracts our attention over and above the aforementioned to concentrate on the message itself and how its communicated.

As a linguistic device by which defamiliarisation occurs, foregrounding theory avows that in any literary oeuvre, some linguistic elements are made prominent for special effects against the background features in such text (Jefferies and McIntyre, 2010). What this suggests is that some sounds, words, phrases, and clauses are made completely divergent from other linguistic elements in their backgrounds or from what is generally acceptable as the norms of language, and as a result, such features become significant. This point of view is further expressed by Halliday (1994) who asserts that foregrounding is prominence that is motivated. He defines prominence as the general name for the phenomenon of linguistic highlights whereby some linguistic features stand out in some way. Thus, to Halliday, a feature that is brought into prominence will be foregrounded only if it relates to the meaning of the whole text.

In the same vein, Leech (1969: p.59) affirms that it is a very common principle of artistic communication that literary oeuvre in some way departs from the standard “which we, as members of society, have learnt to expect in the medium used”. He further adds that the artistic deviation “sticks out” from its background like a figure in the foreground of a visual field (p.57). From the foregoing exposition, it is worth stressing that the significance of foregrounding in literary enterprise is purely for “aesthetic exploitation of language which has the aim of making what is unfamiliar familiar in order to attract attention”. Also, through this linguistic device, some features of texts are frequently made memorable and highly interpretable (Leech, 1969: p.67). Foregrounding can be realised either by linguistic *deviation* or *parallelism*. Since the former is the focus in this article, its concept is explored in the next sub-section.

Deviation: An aspect of foregrounding

The term ‘deviation’ is closely connected to that of foregrounding in that what is foregrounded is made to deviate from the familiar pattern. Deviation is a wide-ranging concept introduced by the Russian formalists in the 1960s. As a stylistic feature, it is demonstrated mostly in the genre of poetry, though it is also common in other genres and text-types, therefore giving credence to the view that a distinct language exists in literature (Jefferies and McIntyre, 2010). The concept has been defined by diverse of scholars as follows: Leech (1969: p.57), for instance, defines it as the creative use of language which differs from the norms of literary convention or everyday speech. Also, as aptly observed by Wales (2011: p.110), it “refers to divergence in frequency from a norm, or the statistical average”. The divergence which Leech (1969) refers to may occur as a result of: a) breaking the normal rules of linguistic structure (whether phonology, grammatical, lexical or semantic) or b) the overuse of normal rules of usage. While Chapman (1973: p.114) uses the notion to mean the “linguistic usage that deviates from normal expectations of users of the language”;

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Crystal (2003: p.134) says it is a sentence, or another unit, which violates the rule and appears grammatically, phonologically, or even semantically ill-formed. In Jeffries and McIntyre (2010: p.31) view, it is seen as "...the occurrence of unexpected irregularity in language which results in foregrounding on the basis that the irregularity is surprising to the reader".

As the abovementioned definitions suggest, deviation is indispensable as far as literary enterprise is concerned, and as aptly expressed by Ogu (2003: p.142), it facilitates communication and heightens the aesthetics of literary texts. Also, it should be stated that when the content of a text has deviated from the norms of language use, a style is carved out. To determine the area of deviation in the study of stylistics is to identify the different highlighted aspects that have been made prominent. Thus, foregrounding is related to the notion of deviation and it provides the basis for the reader's recognition of style.

Over the years, scholars, in their study of linguistic deviations, have identified the different kinds of deviations that exist in literature. Two of such prominent scholars are Levin (1965) and Leech (1969). For instance, Levin (1965) identified two types of deviation, namely external and internal deviation. While the former measures the language of the text against the norms outside it; the latter refers to the features within a text that differ from the expected, set up by the norm of the text itself. Leech (1969: p.37) discusses different types of linguistic deviations distinguishing the three main levels of language: realisation, form, and semantics. Realisation is actualised by phonology and graphology; form comprises grammar and lexicon; and semantics is denotative or connotative meaning. Leech (1969: p.42-51) further identifies eight types of linguistic deviation which are as follows: 1) lexical deviation, 2) grammatical deviation, 3) phonological deviation, 4) graphological deviation, 5) semantic deviation, 6) dialectical deviation, 7) register deviation, and 8) deviation of historical period. These types of deviation are further briefly discussed below.

Lexical deviation, as the name implies, is the "violation of lexical rule" (Leech, 1969: p.42). It involves the exploitation of language at the level of word; and usually, it is associated with neologism -the invention of new words or those which are introduced into language through nonce-formation. Nonce-formation is a linguistic form which a language user deliberately creates or unintentionally deploys on a single occasion (Crystal, 2003: p.315). However, Leech observes that lexical deviation is the "readiest way for writers to express their feelings or opinions" (p.42). This is realised through functional conversion, a concept which Short (1969: p.46) explains as the process of converting a word from one grammatical class to another. Other means by which lexical deviation can be achieved are coinages, malapropism, and compounding etc.

However, grammatical deviation is the violation of the rules of syntax or syntactic features. More on this type of deviation is reserved for the analysis section because the nub of the present study hinges on it. Next, is phonological deviation which is connected to the sounds of language and it mainly involves unconventional pronunciation of words. Leech notes that the two types of phonological deviation are conventional licences of verse composition and special pronunciation for the convenience of rhyming. While the first include apharesis; the omission of an initial part of a word or phrase, syncope; the omission of a medial part, and apocope; the omission of a final part, the second type involves a situation where the noun *wind* is pronounced like the verb *wind* (Leech, 1969: p.46). This is followed immediately with graphological deviation which involves the disregard for the rules of writing. It is realised through "the neglect of capital letters and punctuations where convention calls for them, jumbling of words, and the eccentric use of parenthesis" (Leech, 1969: p.47). Also, semantic deviation relates to the illogical element of meaning of words and other linguistic items in a text. It is the transmitting of messages by

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unconventional arrangements of words. This kind of deviation according to Leech is divided into “non-sense or absurdity” and is achieved through the exploitation of figurative tropes (Leech, 1969: p.48). When figurative tropes are exploited, the literary elucidation of text becomes preposterous to the reader who now resorts to the figurative interpretation.

Finally, dialectal deviation refers to “the borrowing of features of socially or regionally defined dialects” (Leech, 1969: p.49). Here, words or structures which are not from the Standard English are transferred into literary oeuvre to achieve the writer’s purpose. Deviation of register is the “borrowing of language from other non-poetic register” (Leech, 1969: p.50). In register deviation, writers deploy “in the same text features or characteristics of different registers”. Deviation of historical period is the deployment of archaic words or structures, which are no longer accepted in Standard English, into a text to enhance the aesthetic value of the text (Leech, 1969: p.52). The arrays of deviation discussed above are some of the several ways in which writers may digress from the norms of English language.

Context of the Study

Deviation is mostly exemplified in poetic texts which explain the reason most stylistic studies (e.g., Osoba, 2008; Nachafiya, 2008; Adagbonyin and Dada, 2012; Okunowo, 2012; Otemuyiwa and Akinsoye, 2015; Dick, 2015 etc.) on *Osundare* have concentrated on his poetic works. Undoubtedly, Osundare is a creative writer who manipulates the resources of language to suit his artistic purpose. As part of his style, he switches to languages which is different from the conventional and everyday usage, and in so doing, creates an enduring impression in the minds of readers through his stylistic dexterity. Rather than exploring the notion of linguistic deviation in his poetic collections as exemplified in the aforementioned studies, the present article focuses on his essay texts due to the gross deficiency of critical works in this area, most especially from the linguistic perspective. The few studies on his essays published in the print media include Aluya, 2016; Aluya and Ochulor, 2017; Aluya and Edem, 2018; Aluya, Kofoworola and Terver, 2019. The foregoing is why the present study is designed to examine grammatical deviation in his essays published in the print media. This study is guided by the following questions:

- (a) what are the types of grammatical deviation used in the selected essays?
- (b) What message have the patterns of grammatical deviation been used to convey?

Research methods

The study adopts the analytical descriptive method. The data for this study were selected essays of Niyi Osundare who is a Nigerian columnist and social critic. The fourteen essays were sourced from *Dialogue with my Country*, an independently compendium of essays he contributed to *Newswatch*, a Nigerian weekly news magazine. These essays were chosen because they: (a) offer profound representations of the socio-political challenges of Nigeria since independence, and (b) exemplify the aspect of deviation which the present article is set out to investigate. The fourteen essays selected for this study include: “Scars of the season 1”, “The real gains of SAP”, “Tears for my country”, “Nigeria errways”, “Murders, be not proud”, “Truth of my politics”, “Leave the law makers alone”, “The real abusers”, “The unthinkable”, “The untouchable”, “Abominations”, “Not an internal affair”, “Distance of power”, and “The SFEM revolution”. To conduct the analysis, the essays were read extensively and sample texts extracted. The sample texts were analyzed for the different types of grammatical deviation used in the essays as proposed by Leech (1969).

Synopsis of the essays

This section contextualises the fourteen essays selected for this study. “Scars of the season 1 (1986)” examines the issues of inflation and unemployment in Nigeria. “The real gains of SAP (1989)” and “The SFEM revolution (1987)” discuss Nigerian leaders’ unfavorable economic policies and their adverse impact on the masses. “Tears for my country (2002)” portrays the dysfunctional social and political state of Nigeria. While “Nigeria errways (2001)” unravels all kinds of malpractices and inefficiencies in most government organisations, “Murderers, be not proud (1986)” and “Abominations (1996)” decry the unlawful maltreatment of journalists and social critics in Nigeria. “Truth of my politics (2001)” evaluates politics in Nigeria with a view to highlighting the two major enemies that have marred the nation’s political system. “Leave the law makers alone (1993)” censures mismanagement of the nation’s resources by Nigeria’s law makers. The top government officials who devalue the nation’s most revered currency are exposed in “The real abusers (1993)”. “The untouchable (1999)” criticizes corrupt political actors in Nigeria who perpetrate various crimes and get away because they are above the law. “The unthinkable (1996)” laments government’s violation of the rule of law while the sanctity of human life and the right to basic human freedoms which the masses have been deprived of are captured in “Not an internal affair (1996)”.

As the foregoing contextualisation has shown, the essays address pressing socio-political challenges which Nigeria has been grappling with since independence. Osundare projects these socio-political issues with a view to reminding Nigerian leaders of the reasons behind the nation’s developmental setbacks for decades. His seriousness of purpose and faithful depiction of these challenges are among the driving factors for this study. As Crystal and Davy (1969: p.77) in their *Investigating English Style* have observed:

To talk of studying the style of an author does not usually imply a study of everything in the language he has used, but only an attempt to isolate, define and discuss those linguistic features which are felt to be peculiarly his, which help to distinguish him from other authors.

This insight as gleaned from the quotation above will be our guide in the discussion of grammatical deviation as tool employed by the writer in projecting Nigeria’s pressing socio-political challenges from the background to the forecourt. The norms used to assess the grammaticality of the language deployed in the collections under study are the rules and conventions that govern Standard English.

Data analysis and discussion

Grammatical deviation in *Osundare’s* essays is achieved through hyperbaton, a linguistic construct which refers to inversion in the arrangement of common words. Wales (2011: p.202) uses the notion to mean “a figure of speech in which normal word order is transposed by inversion or fronting”. He defines fronting as the “syntactic shifting of elements, usually for highlighting or emphasis, from the normal post-verbal position to the beginning of the sentence” (p.178) and inversion as “the reversal in normal word order of the major sentence element, particularly subject and verb” (p.238). For Leech (1996: p.45), hyperbaton denotes “syntactic rearrangement”. As the name implies, it is a rhetorical device in which the literary writers manipulate the normal position

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of words, phrases and clauses to create different organized sentences, which will still suggest similar meaning. The various forms of hyperbaton observed in Osundare's essays are: a) subject displacement: b) verb displacement, and (c) omission of subject and verb. The next sub-section begins the analysis with subject displacement.

Subject displacement

In grammar, the subject is a major sentence element which typically precedes the verb and other sentence elements in declaratives (Wales, 2011). To Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 117), it "supplies the rest of what it takes to form a proposition". What the foregoing implies is that, traditionally, the subject occupies the first slot in any grammatical string. This is due to the significant role it performs as the initiator of the action or state of being expressed in the clause. Subject displacement is a grammatical situation where the subject does not occur in the canonical subject position. This type of grammatical deviation is very commonly applied in the texts as follows:

Text 1

Now, these beggars are neither from Chad nor Niger
("Scars of the season 1", 1986: p.8).

There are a number ways in which elements such as subject, verbs, objects, complements and adjuncts can be arranged within a clause. Depending on how these constituents are arranged, prominence can be accorded to certain constituents over others, especially if they are arranged in an unusual way. The typical word order we normally expect to find is placing the subject (the topic or the theme) first before the verb and other constituents within the clause structure. The text above is a simple sentence. It begins with the grammatical item *now* which is an adjunct. This is followed immediately by the nominal expression *these beggars* denoting the subject of the clause. Whereas *are* serves as the verb (i.e., finite verb), *neither from Chad nor Niger* represents an adjunct realised by a prepositional group. From the foregoing, the clause configuration consists of adverb, subject and adjunct contrary to the typical word order of subject, verb, object, complement and adjunct. Observe that in the structure of the above clause, the grammatical subject *these beggars*, which is meant to occupy the first position, does not occur in the canonical subject position but rather has been displaced by the adjunct *now*. Due to this displacement, prominence is accorded to the first adjunct. While the first adjunct is fronted to foreground the significance of time as it relates to the essayist's discourse theme which dwells on the issues of unemployment and starvation, the second adjunct on the other hand serves complementary role in that it specifies the identity of the beggars being referred to in the text.

Consider the next example on subject displacement as captured below:

Text 2

Since that foul annulment of 1993, Nigeria has been behaving
like a giant in a stupor ("Nigeria Image Problem", 1995: p.67).

Text two is a complex clause configured with adjunct, subject, verb, complement and adjunct. The expression *since that foul annulment of 1993* denotes the first adjunct in the clause structure. It is realised by an adverbial group functioning as the information focus. The nominal expression *Nigeria* represents the subject, *has been behaving* signifies the verbal group, *a giant* represents the complement while *in a stupor* denotes an adjunct realised by a prepositional group. From this analysis, one observes that the first adjunct *since that foul annulment of 1993* has been topicalized

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by virtue of moving the subject out of its natural environment. As a result of this displacement, there is a shift of emphasis from the subject constituent to the adjunct constituent. Here, Osundare addresses the issue of electoral malpractice and its adverse effects on the nation. By fronting the adverbial group as captured in *since that foul annulment of 1993*, the essayist attempts to redirect attention to the foregrounded constituent in the clause structure where the crux of the message is hinged.

Text 3

Jail those journalists if you can (“Abomination”, 1996: p.321).

Text three constitutes two clauses (a main and subordinate). It is an imperative clause configured with verb, object, subject and verb. The discourse is the case of grammatical deviation where the subject in the main clause has been displaced by other constituents within the clause structure. Here, *jail* represents the verb, *those journalists* denote the object, *if you can* embody a conditional subordinate clause where *you* signify subject and *can* a finite verb. A close evaluation of this structure indicates that it deviates from the typical structure of word order. In this piece, Osundare censures the Nigerian government for ruthlessly waging war against the press's right to freedom of expression. By elevating the verb and object constituents to the status of the subject, the essayist strives to make non-subject constituents the theme of the clause.

Unlike in text three where the grammatical subject was displaced by two elements in the clause structure, text four, as captured below, is a case of subject displacement by four constituents within the clause structure.

Text 4

New buildings in different stages of completion, with their ambitious structures and futuristic designs, demolished in the most barbaric way by agents of Lagos state government (“Abominations”, 1996: p.321).

Text four is a complex clause configured with object, adjunct, verb, adjunct and subject. This structure is contrary to the typical word order we are used to. The nominal group *new buildings* functions as the object, while the adjuncts *...in different stages of completion... and ...with their ambitious structures and futuristic designs...* serve as a prepositional group. The grammatical item *demolished* denotes the verb while *in the most barbaric way* represents an adjunct realised by a prepositional group. The nominal expression *agents of Lagos state government* serve as the subject of the clause. From the foregoing, the subject is seen to have been displaced and replaced by the object, adjunct, verb and adjunct. Elevating these elements to the status of the subject is to make them the nucleus of the clause. The writer employs fronting in organizing the flow of information in this text. This is to enable him achieve his intention of foregrounding the atrocities perpetrated by the Lagos state government.

Text 5

Once again, evil forces had hurled the night on the noon of the country's rejoicing (“Murders, be not proud”, 1986: p.348).

In text five, Osundare relates one of those gory happenings in Nigeria during the military administration using a simple clause configured with adjunct, subject, verb, object and adjunct. The discourse berates the military for perpetrating a despicable act in the midst of the nation's

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period of jubilation. While the jubilation here refers to the monumental Nobel achievement of Wole Soyinka; the despicable act points at the murder of Dele Giwa. The utilisation of subject displacement is conspicuous in this text. Observe that the adverbial element *once again* appears before the subject *evil forces* and verb *had hurled* which is a deviation from the normal word order. To follow the normal order of clause structure, the text should be rearranged as “Evil forces (S) had hurled (V) the night (O) on the noon of the country’s rejoicing once again (A)”. The adjunct is foregrounded in order to emphasize the frequent occurrence of the gory events being referred to in the discourse.

From the analysis above, it is evident that the collections studied are replete with subject displacement, a mechanism that provides opportunity for other elements in the clause structure to become focalized or tropicalized. Subject displacement serves as a mechanism exploited by Osundare to effectively communicate to the audience. Foregrounding of other elements in the clause structure aid in drawing readers’ attention to the content of the message captured in the fronted elements. Another form of grammatical deviation observed in the data is verb displacement. This is examined in the next sub-heading.

Verb displacement

Verb refers to the major constituent of the sentence other than the subject (Wales, 2011). It describes the action of the subject or its state of being. It is an obligatory part of any sentence because without it, no meaningful sentence can be made. In grammar, the verb, traditionally, is a major sentence element which typically succeeds the subject and precedes other elements within the clause. Verb displacement is a grammatical situation where the verb does not occur in the canonical verb position. This is illustrated in the following texts:

Text 6

Nigeria today looks very much like an extensive psychiatric asylum with Aso Rock as its intensive care units (“Mad Times”, 1994: p.300).

Text six is a complex clause configured with subject, adjunct, verb, adjunct, complement and adjunct. It begins with the nominal item *Nigeria* representing the subject. This is followed immediately by the grammatical item *today* an adjunct realised by an adverbial group. The nominal expression *an extensive psychiatric asylum* functions as the complement, while *very much* functions as adverbial group after the verb *looks* which operate as the hub of the clause. As can be seen above, the construction involves a fronted positional adverbial constituent. Observe that in this structure, the grammatical verb *looks*, which is meant to occupy the second position in the clause structure, does not occur in the canonical verb position but rather has been displaced by the adjunct *today*. Due to this displacement, prominence is attached to the adjunct element which serves to underscore the exact period being referred to by the essayist.

Text 7

The repercussions at personal and public levels of this air ban were simply incalculable (“Nigeria Errways, 2001: p.362).

Text seven begins with *the repercussions*, a nominal group representing the subject of the clause. Observes that in this structure, the adverbial element *at personal and public levels of this air ban*

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appears before *looks*, which functions as the verb in the clause structure. Here, Osundare laments the United State withdrawal of air link with Nigeria due to corruption and insecurity at Nigerian airports. The focal constituent in the clause is the fronted adjunct which precedes the verb in the clause. As a positional adjunct, it performs a complementary role in that it provides a multidimension representation of the extent of the nation's degeneracy.

Text 8

That, now, is once upon a time ("Scars of the season 1", 1986: p.8).

Text eight is another case of unusual word arrangement. Here, Osundare recounts the better life previously relished by Nigerians, using the statement, "that, now, is once upon a time" (p.8) to underscore the new phase of life, that of destitution, which Nigerians are now in. The configuration of this clause contrasts the previous one. Whereas the previous is a complex clause, this is a simple clause configure with the subject, adjunct, verb and complement structure. A close study of the text shows that the clause structure deviates from the normal word order. This deviation is achieved through transposition in that the adjunct element has been repositioned before the verb. To follow the normal word order of subject, adjunct, verb and complement structure, the clause should be rearranged as "That is once upon a time now". Such syntactic shifting of elements as observed in this passage according to Wales (2011) is used for highlighting. In this regard, Osundare uses the feature to stress the significance of the essay content. The next text (No.9) is the last batch of example in this section under the use of verb displacement as grammatical deviation.

Text 9

My pain at the loss of a splendid gentleman is compounded by the shame of having come from a country whose every act is a heart rending affront to humanity ("Tears for my country", 2002: p.366).

Here, the clause *whose every act is a heart of affront to humanity* is preceded by prepositional group *by the shame of having come from a country* that functions as compliment. The main clause is the first one, *my pain at the loss of a splendid gentleman is compounded by the shame*. The nominal expression *my pain* is the subject of the main clause. Placing the prepositional group before the verbal group provides information that is vital to the understanding of the writer's discourse theme, and make the reader aware of the detail that comes before it. The prepositional group that precedes the verbal group functions as focal element in elaborating the discourse theme which captures some acts of utter barbarism committed in the name of religion by some religious fanatics in Nigeria.

As this analysis has shown, the texts exhibit the use of verb displacement, a device employed for climatic effect and to embody the most crucial bit of information supplied in the subject slot within the clause. Another form of grammatical deviation observed in the data is subject and verb omission. This is examined in the next sub-heading.

Subject and verb omission

This is a grammatical situation where the subject and verb are omitted. A careful study of the following texts shows that the essential ingredient missing in each of them are the two most significant elements within the clause structure.

Text 10

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In eight short years ("The real abusers", 1993: p.53).

For example, text ten speaks about the Nigerian naira which was once held in high esteem by nationals of other countries, most especially business executives, who traverse their lands to Nigeria for business transaction. Osundare laments the sudden devaluation of the national currency due to the wrong policies introduced by the government. The text above has no subject and verb. It is a prepositional phrase which functions as a focal constituent to represent 'a span of time' thereby providing a contrastive information between when the naira had value and when it lost this value.

Text 11

And a few days later at the News and Tempo
("Abominations", 1996: p.321).

In text eleven, Osundare depicts the woes and trauma of the press under military dictatorship, which introduced summary arrests and torture of suspects and even innocent Nigerians who confronted government officials over their misdeeds. The text above has no subject and verb; therefore, it is a phrase functioning to specify those news media who had their share of the gory happenings in Nigeria at that time.

Text 12

Such insufferable nonsense ("The SFEM revolution",
1987: p.13).

Text twelve focuses on the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) introduced by the government ostensibly for the economic relief of the citizenry. The initial goal of SAP was to improve the life of the Nigerian populace but unfortunately it ended up subjecting the masses to greater poverty and widened the gap between the rich and the poor. Osundare observes that SAP became an avenue for government officials to stack up their foreign accounts, ride in new exotic cars, and erect mind-boggling mansions, leaving the populace to die in poverty and starvation. The foregoing precipitated the expression *such insufferable nonsense* from the writer. This is an adverbial phrase used to express his utter displeasure over the situation profiled above.

The analysis above shows that in addition to subject and verb displacement, texts with omitted subject and verb are also used by the essayist for communicative reasons. The omission of subject and verb in these texts break the norms of linguistic usage. However, it is worth mentioning that according to Lawal (2003), it is this breaking of the normal rules of linguistic structure that makes us focus on the content in the text due to the elements of surprises it creates in us as readers.

Conclusion

This article set out to investigate grammatical deviation in selected socio-political essays of Osundare in order to highlight some socio-political challenges which these deviations are deployed to communicate. This is due to the established deficiency of critical works on his essays from the linguistic perspectives. From the analysis conducted, it is evident that Osundare exploits the following forms of grammatical deviation, subject displacement, verb displacement, and omission of subject and verb etc., as effective communicative devices in advancing the social, economic and political content in his essays.

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The creative manipulation of these features accentuates the contents of his essays; make the crux of his messages clearer as well as highly interpretable, creates artistic beauty, and also produces a strong impression on the minds of readers who through this skillful manipulation appreciate his message. The study concludes that grammatical deviation is a purposeful and meaningful feature in literary enterprise, and also helps to facilitate communication and enhances the aesthetic effects of literary texts.

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