



A LINGUISTIC-STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE NIGERIEN NATIONAL ANTHEM

Une analyse linguistico-stylistique de l'hyme national nigérien

AYODELE ADEBAYO ALLAGBE

Université André Salifou, République du Niger
Laboratoire Lettres, Education et Communication (LaboLEC)

Email : ayodeleallagbe@yahoo.com

iD ORCID : <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-5389-9178>

ABSTRACT

This paper analyses the newly adopted Nigerien national anthem entitled “L’honneur de la patrie” (The honour of the Fatherland) from a linguistic-stylistic perspective. Drawing its conceptual insights from Simpson’s (2004) and Meyer’s (2009) models of language, and the descriptive qualitative research method, the study specifically examines how the author of this new anthem uses language to create stylistic effects therein. The findings reveal that the author employs, at the phonological level, for example, such phonological schemes as alliteration and assonance. They also exude that, at the graphological level, he organises his anthem into three stanzas, none of which has rhyming lines. But these stanzas are marked by the presence of some internal rhymes. The findings further unveil that, at the morphological level, the author uses both open-class and closed class words, the dominant type being open-class words. As the analysis indicates too, most of the words in the text are monomorphemic and polysyllabic words. The author employs, as it also proves, two word-formation processes, inflection and derivation, the most dominant type being inflection. Moreover, the findings show that, at the syntactic level, the three stanzas in the anthem deviate from the usual SVO word order, and are all marked by syntactic variation. Finally, they reveal that, at the semantic level, the author employs antonyms, synonyms, lexical and structural repetitions, etc. in the text. In conclusion, it can be deduced from the linguistic-stylistic analysis that the author deploys all the aforementioned linguistic resources to encode the oneness of Niger or the unity of all Nigeriens.

KEYWORDS: Deviation; models of language; national anthem; Niger; stylistic effects.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article analyse l’hymne national nigérien nouvellement adopté intitulé “L’honneur de la patrie” du point de vue linguistico-stylistique. S’appuyant sur les modèles de langage proposés par Simpson (2004) et Meyer (2009), et sur la méthode de recherche qualitative descriptive, l’étude examine spécifiquement comment l’auteur de ce nouvel hymne emploie la langue pour y créer des effets stylistiques. Les résultats révèlent que l’auteur utilise, au niveau phonologique, par exemple, des schémas phonologiques tels que l’allitération et l’assonance. Ils montrent également que, sur le plan graphologique, il organise son hymne en trois strophes, dont aucune ne renferme de rimes finales. Mais ces strophes sont marquées par la présence de quelques rimes internes. Les résultats révèlent en outre que, sur le plan morphologique, l’auteur utilise à la fois des mots de classe ouverte et des mots de

classe fermée, le type dominant étant les mots de classe ouverte. Comme l'indique l'analyse également, la plupart des mots du texte sont des mots monomorphémiques et polysyllabiques. L'auteur emploie, comme elle le prouve aussi, deux processus de formation des mots, l'inflexion et la dérivation, le type le plus dominant étant l'inflexion. De plus, les résultats montrent qu'au niveau syntaxique, les trois strophes de l'hymne s'écartent de l'ordre habituel des mots SVO et sont toutes marquées par des variations syntaxiques. Enfin, ils révèlent qu'au niveau sémantique, l'auteur emploie dans le texte des antonymes, des synonymes, des répétitions lexicales et structurelles, etc. En résumé, on peut déduire de l'analyse linguistico-stylistique que l'auteur déploie toutes les ressources linguistiques susmentionnées pour encoder l'unicité du Niger ou l'unité de tous les Nigériens.

MOTS-CLÉ: Déviation; modèles de langage; hymne national; Niger; effets stylistiques.

Introduction

Arslan, Mahmood and Haroon (2021, p. 21) define an anthem as a lyrical poem which is often sung by a nation or a group of people representing the country, or which they often sing to praise and pray for their homeland. In a much similar way, Ayinuola (2020, p. 124) holds the view that a "National anthem is a nation's song that shows ideologies, histories and worldview[s] of an independent state. Elsewhere, this scholar points out that "National anthems are a nation's sacred and official song that evokes emotional response and patriotism among citizens of a nation. Anthems remind citizens of their colonial experience, the topography of their land and their political-cum-historical memories" (Ayinuola, 2021, p. 131). Erden (2019, p. 44) concurs with the foregoing definitions and further claims that "National anthems are highly nationalistic and patriotic poems which are mostly accompanied by a suitable tune. These poems include myriad symbols and images that enable the solidarity among the members of a certain society." Without dismissing the foregoing, Israel, Richard, Mumuni and Rahinatu (2023, p. 149) argue that "One of the things that give a country a unique identity is an anthem. Anthems play [an] important role in showcasing the identity, mission as well as [the] ideology of any given country, institution or people." These scholars also submit that "Anthems perform numerous functions, which include a source of pleasant solidarity, and an identifier [or identity marker]" (ibid.).

It is crystal clear in the above that national anthems are songs or oral poems composed to be sung or intoned on special occasions including official opening and closing of public events, Independence Day's celebrations, swearing in of new presidents, death of presidents, public demonstrations, public holidays, etc. (Ayinuola, 2021b). We consider national anthems here as symbolic poems in that they are made up of lyrics and music generally inspired by the culture and history of the people(s) for whom they are composed. National anthems, in this sense, can be argued to function to bond the members of a given nation together. They can also be argued to serve as cognitive or ideologically-invested frameworks meant for the development and instilment of certain social values including a sense of self or identity and belonging, unity, love, peace, sacrifice, patriotism, dignity, ethics, freedom, solidarity, work, justice, courage, etc., in the members of a nation. In

addition, as Erden (2019, p. 45) notes, national anthems can be used to control the masses in a given society. This is to say, they can be used to shape the way the members of the society behave, perceive and respond to social reality. Given the importance of national anthems in the life of a nation and in that of each of its members, their language has recently attracted the attention of some linguistic scholars. In fact, these scholars have focused their empirical linguistic studies on how language is deployed in (their selected) national anthems to construct or/and lexicalise ideologies or ideological inclinations (Ayinuola, 2020; 2021a), construct national identities (Alo and Ayinuola, 2017; Erden, 2019), encode intended meaning(s) or pragmatic connotations (Israel, Richard, Mumuni and Rahinatu, 2023) and distinctive style (Arslan, Mahmood and Haroon, 2021). While the aforementioned studies have examined the language of national anthems, none of them has investigated the language of the newly adopted Nigerien national anthem. This is the research vacuum this paper seeks to fill in.

To be precise, this article aims to analyse the newly adopted Nigerien national anthem entitled "L'honneur de la patrie" (The honour of the Fatherland) from a linguistic-stylistic perspective. In point of fact, this anthem was officially adopted by Niger's parliament on June 22nd, 2023; i.e. 63 years after Niger's independence and 62 years after her official adoption of the first one entitled "La Nigérienne" (The Nigerien) written by Maurice Albert Thiriet, a French movie composer. Of course, there is a reason why Niger decided to change her national anthem. According to an unauthored newspaper article entitled "Niger to change anthem over reference to colonial masters, France" published by *Punch* online on November 22nd, 2019, "The decision to adopt a new anthem follows criticism that some of the lyrics [in La Nigérienne] appear to express gratitude to the country's former French rulers for their freedom." It follows from this to argue that the newly adopted Nigerien national anthem was intentionally written to get rid of French paternalism and reposition Niger's cultural identity. This study specifically examines how the author of this new anthem uses language to create stylistic effects therein.

1. Conceptual Clarification

As mentioned earlier on, this paper aims to analyse the newly adopted Nigerien national anthem entitled "L'honneur de la patrie" from a linguistic-stylistic perspective. This is to say, it draws its theoretical underpinnings from linguistic stylistics. Before clarifying linguistic stylistics, let us first define stylistics. Stylistics can be simply defined as the study of language *in* literature (Toolan, 2013, p. viii). According to Burke (2014, p. 11), "Stylistics, or literary linguistics as it is sometimes called, is the study and analysis of texts; it is in particular, although not exclusively, the study and analysis of literary texts." It can also be defined as the linguistic study of style in language (Leech and Short, 2007, p. 11). Concurring with the foregoing, Simpson (2004, p. 2) submits that "Stylistics is a method of textual interpretation in which primacy of place is assigned to *language*". As it can be inferred from the foregoing definitions, stylistics provides a principled or systematic analysis of literary

and non-literary texts. In fact, its sole aim is to gain an insight into how language enacts style or produces stylistic effects in texts, and by so doing, it enriches our knowledge of/about language and the texts we study. Put in another way, in Simpson's words, "To do stylistics is to explore language, and, more specifically, to explore creativity in language use. Doing stylistics thereby enriches our ways of thinking about language and, as observed, exploring language offers a substantial purchase on our understanding of (literary) texts" (ibid., p. 3).

In point of fact, stylisticians differ from literary critics in the way they approach creativity in language use for two basic reasons. First of all, they often make or assume no value judgments about the texts they study. In other words, stylisticians do not choose to discuss only texts deemed of literary merit. What they do instead in their linguistic endeavour is to study how language is used to create effects in texts and how readers interpret those effects. Secondly, unlike literary critics who often read texts in a vague or impressionistic manner, stylisticians rigorously describe the language of texts and attempt to interpret the meaning that the linguistic facts encode. In this perspective, as Short (2013, p. 5) rightly observes, "Stylistics is [...] concerned with relating linguistic facts (linguistic description) to meaning (interpretation) in as *explicit* a way as possible."

As implied above, stylistics and linguistics are intimately related. In point of fact, the former draws most (not to say all) of its theoretical underpinnings, tenets and models from the latter to study style in texts. By so doing, stylistics contributes to the development of modern linguistics. Jeffries and McIntyre (2010, p. 3) are of this view when they write that "Stylistics has a firm place within linguistics, providing theories of language and interpretation which complement context-free theories generated within other areas of language study." Assuming that stylistics is applicable to all kinds of texts, Jeffries and McIntyre (2010, p. 2) further distinguish between two types of stylistics: literary stylistics and non-literary stylistics. They also point out that literary stylistics is concerned with the analysis of literature whereas non-literary stylistics is concerned with the analysis of non-literary texts. These scholars identify two major approaches to stylistics too: literary stylistics and linguistic stylistics. They observe that: "Literary stylistics [...] is concerned with using linguistic techniques to assist in the interpretation of texts, whereas linguistic stylistics is about doing stylistic analysis in order to test or refine a linguistic model (Wales 1989: 438) in effect, to contribute to linguistic theory" (ibid.).

This paper intends to apply linguistic stylistics to the newly adopted Nigerien national anthem entitled "L'honneur de la patrie" (The honour of the Fatherland). It specifically seeks to apply the models of language proposed by Simpson (2004) and Meyer (2009) to the anthem. According to these scholars, language can be conceived of as rule-governed and context-dependent. It can also be viewed as an intricate web of levels, layers and links. This is to say, the linguistic structure comprises an organised set of strata or levels. While Simpson identifies seven levels of language in his model of language (phonology; phonetics, graphology, morphology, syntax; grammar, lexical analysis; lexicology, semantics and pragmatics; discourse analysis),

Meyer only lists four levels in his own model (phonology/phonetics, morphology, syntax and semantics). Combining conceptual insights from both scholars' models of language, this study deliberately chooses to apply five of them: phonology/phonetics, graphology, morphology; syntax/grammar and semantics. The definition of each level is provided in the table below:

Table 1: Levels of language and their definitions

Levels of language	Definitions
Phonology; phonetics	The sound of spoken language; the way words are pronounced. This level focuses on the smallest unit of structure in language, the phoneme. Linguistic rules at this level describe how sounds are pronounced in various contexts.
Graphology	The patterns of written language; the shape of language on the page. This level focuses on the graphic aspects of language including punctuation, paragraphing, spacing, foregrounding of structures and so on.
Morphology	The way words are constructed; words and their constituent structures. This level focuses on the smallest unit of meaning in language, the morpheme. Rules of morphology focus on how words (and parts of words) are structured.
Syntax; grammar	The way words combine with other words to form phrases, clauses and sentences. This level focuses on phrase, clause and sentence structures as well as their functions.
Semantics	The meaning of words and sentences. This level focuses on such topics as the meaning of individual words (lexical semantics) and the ability of words to refer to points in time or individuals in the external world (deixis).

(Slightly adapted from Simpson, 2004, p. 5 and Meyer, 2009, pp. 7-8)

The abovementioned levels of language will be applied, in a separate manner, to the newly adopted Nigerien national anthem under study here. The objective is to demonstrate systematically how the author exploits resources from each level of language to create textual or stylistic effects. Simpson (2004, p. 5) actually agrees with the foregoing when he states that "These basic levels of language can be identified and teased out in the stylistic analysis of text, which in turn makes the analysis itself more organised and principled."

2. Methodology

This paper draws on the descriptive qualitative research method. With this, it examines how the author of the newly adopted Nigerien national anthem uses language to create stylistic effects therein. Note that the anthem was composed in French. The subsequent linguistic-stylistic analysis does not intend to translate it into English as translation, the researcher cogently believes, will affect the language used therein. The anthem is given below:

L'HONNEUR DE LA PATRIE

Des rives du Niger aux confins du Ténééré
Frères et sœurs nous sommes
Enfants d'une même Patrie le Niger
Nourris de la sève des mêmes idéaux
Pour un Niger de paix libre fort et uni (5)
Pour un Niger prospère le Pays de nos rêves

Pour l'honneur de la Patrie
Incarbons la vaillance et la persévérance
Et toutes les vertus de nos dignes aïeux
Guerriers intrépides déterminés et fiers (10)
Défendons la patrie au prix de notre sang
Faisons du Niger symbole de dignité
Emblème et flambeau de l'Afrique qui avance

Pour ces nobles idéaux debout et en avant
En avant pour le travail en avant pour le combat (15)
Nous demeurons debout
Portant haut le drapeau de notre cher Pays
Dans le ciel d'Afrique et dans tout l'Univers
Pour construire ensemble
Un monde de justice de paix et de progrès (20)
Et pour faire du Niger la fierté de l'Afrique.

3. Analysis and Discussion

The stylistic analysis of the anthem begins with the phonological level.

3.1. Phonological Level

Significantly, the author of this anthem uses such phonological schemes as alliteration and assonance to create regular sound or musical effects therein. The alliterative patterns found in the anthem are formed with the phonemes /s/, /p/ and /d/. In point of fact, these phonemes are similar to and differ from one another with

regard to the VPM (Voicing, Place of articulation and Manner of articulation) features of consonant sounds. The phonemes /s/ and /p/ are voiceless, whereas /d/ is voiced. The consonants /p/ and /d/ are plosive sounds, whereas the consonant /s/ is a fricative sound. The phonemes /s/ and /d/ are alveolar sounds, whereas the phoneme /p/ is a bilabial sound. The three phonemes, as the analysis subsequently shows, are placed at the initial position of both stressed and unstressed words, open-class words and closed class words and lexical items and grammatical words.

For instance, the phoneme /s/ is used at the beginning of the words 'sœurs' and 'sommés' in Line 2, but the phoneme /p/ is used at the beginning of the words 'Pour' and 'paix' in Line 5 and at the beginning of the words 'Pour', 'prospère' and 'Pays' in Line 6 from the first stanza. Likewise, the phoneme /p/ is used at the beginning of the words 'Pour' and 'Patrie' in Line 1 and at the beginning of the words 'patrie' and 'prix' in Line 5 from the second stanza. Similarly, the phoneme /d/ is used at the beginning of the words 'demeurons' and 'debout' in Line 3, whereas the phoneme /p/ is used at the beginning of the words 'Portant' and 'Pays' in Line 4 and at the beginning of the words 'paix' and 'progrès' in Line 7 from the third stanza. As the preceding analysis clearly exudes, the dominant alliterative patterns in the three stanzas are formed with the phoneme /p/.

The analysis also reveals that the assonantal patterns identified in the anthem are formed mainly with oral vowels, nasal or nasalised vowels and semi-vowels, the most dominant type being oral vowels. The oral vowels found in the anthem are /i/, /e/, /ɛ/, /a/, /u/ and /o/. These vowels, like the phonemes /s/, /p/ and /d/ are similar to and differ from one another with regard to the articulatory features of vowel sounds: the height of the tongue, the position of the tongue and the shape of the lips. The vowels /i/, /e/ /ɛ/ and /a/ are front vowels, while /u/ and /o/ are back vowels. Again, the vowels /i/ and /u/ are close vowels, but /e/ and /o/ are mid-close vowels, and /ɛ/ and /a/ are respectively a mid-open vowel and an open vowel. While /i/, /e/, /ɛ/ and /a/ are spread vowels /u/ and /o/ are rounded vowels.

In fact, the aforementioned vowels are placed at the beginning, middle or final position of words. For example, the vowel /i/ is employed in the words 'rives' and 'Niger' in Line 1, 'Niger', 'libre' and 'uni' in Line 5 from the first stanza. Likewise, the vowel /ɛ/ is used in the words 'sève' 'des' and 'mêmes' in Line 4, 'Niger' and 'paix' in Line 5, 'prospère' and 'rêves' in Line 6 from the first stanza. In the same way, the vowel /i/ is employed in the words 'Guerriers', 'intrépides', 'déterminés' and 'fiers' in Line 4, 'patrie' and 'prix' in Line 5, 'Niger' and 'dignité' in Line 6 and 'Afrique' and 'qui' in Line 7 from the second stanza. Equally, the vowel sound /e/ is employed in the words 'Guerriers', 'intrépides' and 'déterminés' in Line 4 from the second stanza. Again, the vowel /u/ is used in the words 'Pour' and 'debout' in Line 1, 'Nous' and 'debout' in Line 3 from the third stanza. Likewise, the vowel /a/ is employed in the words 'avant', 'travail' and 'combat' in Line 2 from the third stanza. In addition, the vowel /o/ is used in the words 'haut' and 'drapeau' in Line 4 from the third stanza. Moreover, the vowel /i/ is employed in the words 'ciel', 'Afrique' and 'Univers' in Line 5 from the third stanza. Finally, the vowel /ɛ/ is deployed in the words 'paix' and

'prospère' in Line 7 and 'faire', 'Niger' and 'fierté' in Line 8 from the third stanza. As it is obvious in the foregoing, the dominant assonantal patterns in the three stanzas are formed with the vowel /i/.

3.2. Graphological Level

Graphologically, this anthem comprises three stanzas. The first stanza contains six lines, the second stanza seven lines and the third stanza eight lines. Interestingly, none of the three stanzas contains rhyming lines. This is to say, the anthem is written in a free-verse scheme. However, a close look at the rhyme scheme of the anthem shows that it does contain some internal rhythmic patterns. For instance, the final syllables in the two highlighted words in Line 2 from the second stanza unmistakably indicate the presence of internal rhymes in the anthem: 'Incarnons la **v**aillance et la **p**ersévérance.' In addition, recall that the French language does not place stress on words the way the English language does. In fact, in French generally, stress is placed on the final syllable of a word. If we apply this basic grammatical knowledge to the anthem under scrutiny, let us take the first two lines from the first stanza for illustration, it will further exude how the author creates internal rhythmic patterns in the text. Note that stressed syllables are bolded in the examples below:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Des	rives	Du	Ni	ger	aux	con	fins	du	Té	né	ré
W	S	W	W	S	W	W	S	W	W	W	S
Duh	DUH	Duh	duh	DUH	Duh	duh	DUH	duh	duh	duh	DUH

1	2	3	4	5	6
Frères	et	Sœurs	Nous	som	mes
S	W	S	W	W	S
DUH	duh	DUH	Duh	duh	DUH

As it clearly appears in the analysis above, the two lines differ metrically or rhythmically. While the first line contains eight weak syllables and four strong syllables, the second line counts only three weak syllables and three strong syllables. What this reveals is that the anthem is marked by metrical or rhythmic variation. In addition, each line in each stanza begins with a capital letter. In the same vein, it is noted that there are some capitalised words located in the middle or at the end of some lines in the three stanzas. For instance, words like 'Niger', 'Ténééré', 'Patrie' and 'Pays' in the first stanza are capitalised. Likewise, 'Patrie', 'Niger' and 'Afrique' in the second stanza are capitalised. In addition, 'Pays', 'Afrique', 'Univers' and 'Niger' in the third stanza are capitalised. By capitalising the aforementioned words, the author not only intends to make them prominent in the text but he also abides by capitalisation conventions. Another major striking feature in this anthem is that none of the first two stanzas is marked by the use of punctuation marks. In other words, only the third stanza contains a punctuation mark, the full stop (.). In effect, the absence of punctuation marks in the first and second stanzas indicates **enjambment**.

The author's use of the stylistic device of enjambment in the anthem is meant to signpost an uninterrupted flow of ideas in it.

3.3. Morphological Level

In the anthem, it is noticed that the author employs both open-class (nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs) and closed class words (pronouns, prepositions, articles, quantifiers and conjunctions). But he employs open-class words more than closed class words. We can classify the words in the anthem into two groups: mono-morphemic words ('Niger' and 'Ténéré' in Line 1 from the first stanza; 'Pour', 'honneur' and 'Patrie' in Line 1 from the second stanza and 'Dans', 'le', 'Afrique' and 'Univers' in Line 5 from the third stanza) and bi-morphemic words (for example, 'Des', 'rives', 'Frères' and 'sœurs' in Line 1 and 'Enfants' in Line 3 from the first stanza, 'toutes', 'les', 'vertus', 'nos', 'dignes' and 'aïeux' in Line 3 from the second stanza and 'ces', 'nobles' and 'idéaux' in Line 1 from the third stanza). As the analysis displays, mono-morphemic words are highly predominant in the anthem.

We can also group the words in the anthem into two other categories: mono-syllabic words (for example, 'rives' in Line 1, 'sœurs', 'nous' in Line 2, etc. from the first stanza, etc. from the second stanza in Line 1, 'haut', 'cher' and 'Pays' in Line 4 from the third stanza) and polysyllabic words (e.g. 'Niger' and 'confins' in Line 1, 'Frères' and 'sommets' in Line 2, 'Enfants', 'Patrie' and 'Niger' in Line 3, etc. from the first stanza, 'honneur', 'Patrie', 'vaillance' and 'persévérance' in Line 2, 'vertus', 'dignes' and 'aïeux' in Line 3, 'Guerriers', 'intrépides', 'déterminés' and 'fiers' in Line 4, 'Emblème', 'flambeau' and 'Afrique' in Line 7 from the second stanza and 'nobles', 'idéaux', 'debout' and 'avant' in Line 1, 'avant', 'travail', 'avant' and 'combat' in Line 2, 'drapeau' in Line 4 from the third stanza. As it can be discerned from the foregoing, polysyllabic words outnumber mono-syllabic words in the anthem.

It is also noticed that the author draws on two word-formation processes (**inflection** and **derivation**) to create his anthem. Consider how he does so below:

1. Inflection:

Stanza 1

Des (De + s); **rives** (rive + s); **aux** (au + x); **confins** (confin + s); **Frères** (Frère + s); **sœurs** (sœur + s); **Enfants** (Enfant + s); **Nourris** (Nourri + s); **des** (de + s); **mêmes** (même + s); **idéaux** (idéal + x); **nos** (notre + s); **rêves** (rêve + s).

Stanza 2

Incarnons (Incarnier + ons); **toutes** (toute + s); **les** (la + s); **vertus** (vertu + s); **nos** (notre + s); **dignes** (digne + s); **aïeux** (aïeul + s/x); **Guerriers** (Guerrier + s); **intrépides** (intrépide + s); **déterminés** (déterminé + s); **fiers** (fier + s); **Défondons** (Défendre + ons); **Faisons** (Faire + ons).

Stanza 3

ces (ce + s); **nobles** (noble + s); **idéaux** (idéal + x); **demeurons** (demeurer + ons); **Portant** (Porter + ant).

2. Derivation:

Stanza 1**prospère** (derived from 'prospérer')**Stanza 2****persévérance** (persévérer + ance)**Stanza 3****fierté** (fier + té)

As the analysis above overtly exudes, the author exploits inflection more than derivation. The inflection includes the plural –s and –ons and –ant forms of verbs. Significantly, the most dominant type of inflection identified in the anthem is the plural –s. On the contrary, there are only three instances of derivation in the anthem. Astonishingly, the three derived words are evenly distributed across the three stanzas. The first word in Stanza 1 is an adjective derived from a verb. Unlike the first word, the second word in Stanza 2 is a noun derived from a verb. On the contrary, the third word in Stanza 3 is a noun derived from an adjective. The analysis shows too that the anthem does not contain invented words, *neologisms*. Moreover, it unveils that the author of the anthem draws mainly on the French lexicon to create his text. However, he uses in the text a Tuareg word 'Ténéré', meaning 'a wild and uninhabited land or desert' in Tamachek. This word, though single, is foregrounded in the text. The author's use of this word actually points to code-switching or code-mixing, which serves as an identity marker in the anthem.

3.4. Syntactic Level

As stated earlier on, this anthem counts three stanzas. These stanzas are of varying length and grammatical intricacy. Significantly, all the stanzas include ideas which span more than one line. Recall we said earlier on that this denotes **enjambment**. In fact, while the first stanza includes ideas which span six lines, the second and third stanzas respectively comprise ideas which span seven and eight lines. One major striking feature in these stanzas is that none of them follows the usual Subject (S) + Verb (V) + Object (O) word order, suggesting thus that the anthem is marked by deviation. In the first stanza (in the first two lines), for instance, we have the Adjunct (A) + Complement (C) + Subject (S) + Verb (V) word order:

Lines 1 & 2: Des rives du Niger aux confins du Ténéré Frères et sœurs nous sommes
A C S V

Again, when we look at the next four lines in the first stanza, we notice the following word order: Complement (C) + Restrictive Clause (RC):

Lines 3, 4 & 5: Enfants d'une même Patrie le Niger (qui sont) Nourris de la sève des mêmes idéaux...
C RC

Like the first stanza, the second and third stanzas begin with an adjunct comprising a preposition (P) 'Pour' and a noun phrase (NP):

Pour l'honneur de la Patrie (Stanza 2)

P NP

Pour ces nobles idéaux debout... (Stanza 3)

P NP

In fact, the abovementioned adjunct is followed by three successive imperative sentences in the second stanza. These sentences follow the same word order: Verb (V) + Object (O):

Sentence 1: Incarnons (V) la vaillance et la persévérance Et toutes les vertus de nos dignes aïeux Guerriers intrépides déterminés et fiers (O)

Sentence 2: Défendons (V) la patrie au prix de notre sang (O)

Sentence 3: Faisons (V) du Niger symbole de dignité Emblème et flambeau de l'Afrique qui avance (O)

This denotes structural parallelism. The author's deployment of structural parallelism, like phonological schemes, is meant to create musical or rhythmic effects in the text.

Like in the first stanza, the last sentence in the second stanza surprisingly includes a restrictive clause 'qui avance'. Unlike in the second stanza, the adjunct in the third stanza is followed by a single sentence whose internal structure is Subject (S) + Verb (V) + Adjunct (A) + Adjunct (A):

Nous (S) demeurons (V) debout (A) Portant haut le drapeau de notre cher Pays Dans le ciel d'Afrique et dans tout l'Univers Pour construire ensemble Un monde de justice de paix et de progrès Et pour faire du Niger la fierté de l'Afrique (A).

As we can notice from the syntactic analysis, this anthem is marked by syntactic variation.

3.5. Semantic Level

In the morphological analysis above, I observed that the author employs both open-class (nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs) and closed class words (pronouns, prepositions, articles, quantifiers and conjunctions) in his text without demonstrating how he manipulates these word classes to encode meaning therein. In this section, I attempt to do just that. In addition, I intend to show how the author's choice of words relates to the subject-matter of the text. The newly adopted Nigerien anthem is entitled "L'honneur de la patrie" (The honour of the Fatherland).

As stated earlier on, the author mainly selects words from the French lexicon to make his text. These words actually form a lexical field. For instance, in the very first stanza of the anthem, the author starts out with the use of antonyms: 'rives du Niger' and 'confins du Ténére' in Line 1 and 'Frères' and 'sœurs' in Line 2. As it appears, while he uses the two terms in Line 1 to encode the topography of Niger, he employs the two terms in Line 2 to represent her citizens. These terms joined together with terms like 'Des... aux' and 'et' indicate that Niger is marked by plurality and diversity. They signify the oneness or indivisible nature of Niger too. Furthermore, the author employs the group of words 'Enfants d'une même Patrie le Niger Nourris de la sève des mêmes idéaux' in Lines 3 and 4 as a synonym for the first two lines. This synonym clearly expresses the unity or cohesion of Niger. In the subsequent lines of this stanza, he mentions the outcomes of the oneness of Niger or the unity of all Nigeriens. In Line 5, to drive his message home, he successively employs three adjectives (*libre, fort* and *uni*). As it is obvious, these adjectives ascribe qualities to Niger.

In contrast, in the second stanza, the author deploys three consecutive imperative sentences (*Incarignons..., Défendons...* and *Faisons...*). In Pragmatics (Levinson, 1983; Yule, 1996; Black, 2006), these sentences are considered as directive speech acts. The author actually employs them to get his fellow Nigeriens to do things or act in a given or desired way. In this sense, the sentences can be said to perform an illocutionary act of giving advice, making requests or exhorting. Note that the author himself is concerned with the illocutionary act as indicated by the -ons form of the verbs. Now let us see in detail the pragmatic meanings the author intends to convey with the imperative sentences. In the first imperative sentence, for example, he urges all Nigeriens to embody in social life the values (*vaillance, persévérance, toutes les vertus de nos dignes aïeux...*) of their forefathers or ancestors. As it appears in the foregoing, the words '*vaillance*', '*persévérance*' and '*vertus*' are abstract nouns associated by means of the preposition 'de' with the concrete noun '*aïeux*'. Consider how the author characterises the noun '*aïeux*' in the stanza (Line 4, precisely). In effect, he employs four adjectives (*Guerriers intrépides déterminés* and *fiers*) consecutively to represent the worth of the Nigerien ancestors and why all Nigerien-born citizens should look up to them. In the second imperative sentence, the author further exhorts all Nigeriens to defend, at all costs, just like their ancestors did in the past, their Fatherland. In other words, they should be ready to pay the supreme sacrifice to protect the integrity of their Fatherland. In the third imperative sentence, he pleads too with all Nigeriens to

make Niger a 'symbole de dignité Emblème et flambeau de l'Afrique qui avance'. Notice that the aforementioned expression is an attribute ascribed to Niger. In effect, the third imperative sentence represents a formal mandate teleologically assigned to every Nigerien-born citizen; **s/he is expected to know that, each time s/he sings the anthem, s/he is pledging to play a significant role in the development of Niger and Africa at large.**

In the same vein, in the third stanza, the author encourages all Nigériens to stand up for the ideals of their forefathers. He repeatedly uses the adverbial expression 'en avant' (mentioned three times in Lines 1 and 2) for this purpose. He also employs the construction 'pour + noun phrase' twice (*pour le travail* and *pour le combat* in Line 2) to emphasise his view. In the subsequent line, he uses the clause complex 'Nous demeurons debout Portant haut le drapeau de notre cher Pays Dans le ciel d'Afrique et dans tout l'Univers...' to further foreground their determination and unflinching conviction to defend the honour of Niger in Africa and in the world at large. The author's use of the pronoun 'Nous' here is inclusive; i.e. he uses it to deictically point to himself and his fellow Nigériens. As it appears, this clause complex is a declarative sentence. Unlike the three imperative sentences identified in the second stanza, it is meant to provide information. But, pragmatically, this sentence is a representative speech act. As Black (2006, p. 20) observes, "Representative speech acts are statements and descriptions. [In truth, in representative speech acts], The speaker offers [his or] her view of the world as [he or] she understands it." Apart from this observation, the third imperative sentence sounds highly imagistic and figurative in nature. This is to say, it expresses a strong image; the image of someone constantly bearing a flag, an insignia of a sovereign state. The flag in this context is the Nigerien flag and the flag-bearer the Nigerien people(s). A few words on Niger's flag and what it stands for semiotically will help us better understand the image schema of a flag-bearer formed in the third stanza.

According to Smith (2023), Niger's flag is a horizontally striped orange-white-green national flag with an orange sun on the centre stripe. The flag's width-to-length ratio is approximately 6 to 7. The orange colour represents the north and east of Niger, largely covered by the Sahara, as well as the heroic efforts of citizens to overcome this difficult environment. The white of the flag stands for purity and innocence as well as civic consciousness and the responsibility of citizens to uphold their duties. The green, suggesting the southwest of Niger and her fertile lands along the Niger River, is a symbol of agriculture and hope. From the foregoing explanation, we can simply infer that Niger's flag symbolically embodies her topography, history, economic potentials and values. Bearing the foregoing inference in mind, we can interpret our image of a flag-bearer in the following terms.

With this image, we can say that the author intends to remind all Nigériens that they are all (or should all be) potential flag-bearers. In point of fact, in his representation, he seems to suggest that flag-bearing is a highly priced social practice in Niger that associates such social values as a sense of responsibility, honour, pride, dignity and hard work with nation-building efforts. From this, we can deduce that he

creates a new conceptual metaphor: *flag-bearing is nation-building*. This metaphor indicates that every potential Nigerien flag-bearer is a nation-builder. However, as indicated by the adjunct “Portant haut le drapeau de notre cher Pays Dans le ciel d’Afrique et dans tout l’Univers...” in the sentence, the potential of the Nigerien flag-bearer is deliberately exaggerated. Indeed, the image of a flag-bearer encoded in the third stanza somehow supplements and enforces the suspected formal mandate teleologically assigned to every Nigerien-born citizen. Again, to buttress the role and mandate of a potential Nigerien flag-bearer, the author deploys the construction ‘pour + verb’ two times (*Pour construire ensemble Un monde de justice de paix et de progrès* in Lines 6 and 7, and ... *pour faire du Niger la fierté de l’Afrique* in Line 8).

We can now move on to map out from the foregoing a mental representation of a potential Nigerien flag-bearer not *explicitly* signaled in the third imperative sentence. To do so, all we need is to activate our “flag-bearing/flag-bearer” schema. In passing, we can gloss schema as “A conventional knowledge structure that exists in memory” (Yule, 2010, p. 150). In other words, it is a cognitive structure that gives information about our understanding of the world (Jaafar, 2020, p. 54). Using our schematic knowledge about “flag-bearing/flag-bearer”, we can imagine that a potential Nigerien flag-bearer, at a solemn or official ceremony attended by a countless number of people, including some celebrities, artists, political and religious authorities, will boldly and proudly carry the flag of his/her beloved country, Niger. With a bold gaze and steady strides, s/he will hold the flag up firmly. For this special occasion, the Nigerien flag-bearer will be clad perhaps in a jersey and shorts whose colours are the same as those of the flag s/he is carrying or s/he will simply be clad in a local attire of one of Niger’s ethnic groups, Hausa or Songhai-Zarma, for example. Though this mental representation is not exhaustive, it does clearly exude the sociocultural, affective and ideological dimensions of the social practice of flag-bearing encoded in the newly adopted Nigerien national anthem.

Conclusion

This paper has analysed the newly adopted Nigerien national anthem entitled “L’honneur de la patrie” (The honour of the Fatherland) from a linguistic-stylistic perspective. It has drawn its conceptual insights from Simpson’s (2014), Meyer’s (2009) models of language and the descriptive qualitative research method to specifically examine how the author of this new anthem uses language to create stylistic effects therein. The linguistic-stylistic analysis has yielded some important findings. The findings reveal that, at the phonological level, for instance, the author deploys such phonological schemes as alliteration and assonance to create regular sound or musical effects in his text. The alliterative patterns identified in the anthem are formed with the phonemes /s/, /p/ and /d/. The dominant alliterative patterns in the three stanzas are formed with the phoneme /p/. The analysis also reveals that the assonantal patterns identified in the anthem are formed mainly with oral vowels, nasal or nasalised vowels and semi-vowels, the most dominant type being oral

vowels. The oral vowels found in the anthem are /i/, /e/, /ɛ/, /a/, /u/ and /o/. All these vowels are used to form assonantal patterns in the text but the dominant assonantal patterns distributed across the text are formed with the vowel /i/.

At the graphological level, the analysis also exudes that the anthem counts three stanzas. The first stanza contains six lines, the second stanza seven lines and the third stanza eight lines. None of these stanzas surprisingly comprises rhyming lines. But, as the analysis further reveals, these stanzas do contain some internal rhythmic patterns. Moreover, each line in each stanza begins with a capital letter. Likewise, it is noticed that there are some capitalised words located in the middle or at the end of some lines in the three stanzas. For example, words like "Niger", "Ténéré", "Patrie" and "Pays", etc. are capitalised in the text. By capitalising these words, the author not only intends to foreground them in the text but he also observes capitalisation conventions. Another major striking feature in this anthem is that none of the first two stanzas is marked by the use of punctuation marks. In other words, only the third stanza contains a punctuation mark, the full stop (.). The absence of punctuation marks from the first and second stanzas suggests **enjambment**. By employing the stylistic device of enjambment in the anthem, the author intends to showcase an uninterrupted flow of ideas in it.

In addition, as the analysis at the morphological level unveils, the author employs in his text both open-class (nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs) and closed class words (pronouns, prepositions, articles, quantifiers and conjunctions), the dominant type being open-class words. The analysis further indicates that most of the words in this text are mono-morphemic and polysyllabic words. It also shows that the author draws on two word-formation processes: **inflection** and **derivation**, the dominant type being inflection. Again, it exudes that the anthem does not contain invented words, *neologisms*. It unveils too that the author of the anthem draws mainly on the French lexicon to create his text. However, he uses in the text a Tuareg word "Ténéré", meaning "a wild and uninhabited land or desert" in Tamachek, which suggests code-switching or code-mixing. The author's use of code-switching functions as an identity marker in the anthem.

At the syntactic level, the analysis reveals that none of the three stanzas in the anthem follows the usual Subject (S) + Verb (V) + Object (O) word order. This clearly denotes that the anthem is marked by deviation. As the analysis further unveils, the anthem is marked by syntactic variation. In fact, the three stanzas begin with an adjunct followed by varying structural features. We can summarise the structural features in the three stanzas for the sake of clarity here:

Stanza 1

A + C + S + V

C + RC

Stanza 2

A + V + O

V + O

V + O + RC

Stanza 3

A + S + V + A + A

Moreover, at the semantic level, the analysis shows that the author employs antonyms, synonyms, lexical and structural repetitions in the national anthem. He actually uses all the aforementioned semantic features to encode the lexical field of the anthem. In conclusion, it can be deduced from the linguistic-stylistic analysis that the author deploys all the aforementioned linguistic resources to encode the oneness of Niger or the unity of all Nigeriens. Since this linguistic-stylistic analysis is only concerned with the analysis of the lyrics of the anthem, future research can look, for example, at how the anthem is musically performed. It can also examine how Nigeriens receive or/and appropriate the anthem in social life.

References

- Alo, M. A. and Ayinuola, O. A. (2017). Lexical and Discursive Construction of National Identities in Selected English-medium National Anthems of African States. In Jean Francois (ed.) *The African Symposium (TAS journal)*, 16(1), 6-20.
- Arslan, M. F., Mahmood, M. A. and Haroon, H. (2021). Stylistic and Textual Analysis of Pakistani National Anthem. *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 1(2), 21-29. <http://doi.org/10.53057/josh/2021.1.2.3>.
- Ayinuola, O. A. (2021b). National Anthem: Its Origin and Typologies in African Context. *Academia Letters*, pp. 1-6. <https://doi.org/10.20935/AL1546>.
- Ayinuola, O. A. (2021a). Linguistic Construction of Ideational Meaning in National Anthems of Selected African States. *Jos Journal of THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE*, 4(1), 131-150.
- Ayinuola, O. A. (2020). Lexicalization of Ideology in National Anthems of Selected African States. *Issues in Language & Literary Studies*, 6(1), 124-136.
- Black, E. (2006). *Pragmatic Stylistics*. First Edition. Edinburgh University Press.
- Burke, M. (2014). Introduction: Stylistics: from Classical Rhetoric to Cognitive Neuroscience. In Michael Burke (ed.) *The Routledge Handbook of Stylistics*. Routledge Talor and Francis Group, pp. 11-30.
- Erden, Y. (2019). National Anthems as Unifying Tools: A Comparative Analysis of Selected Western National Anthems. *Eurasian Journal of English Language and Literature*, 1(2), 44-50.
- Isreal, P. C., Richarch, N. B., Mumuni, Y. and Rahinatu, I. (2023). A Lexico-Pragmatic Analysis of the Ghanaian National Anthem. *Journal of Language and Linguistics*, 8(1), 148-180.
- Jaafar, E. A. (2020). Schema Theory and Text-worlds: A Cognitive Stylistic Analysis of Selected Literary Texts. *Journal of College of Education for Women*, 31(2), 52-65. <http://doi.org/10.36231/coedw/vol31no2.14>.
- Jeffries, L. and McIntyre, D. (2010). *Stylistics*. First Edition. Cambridge University Press.
- Levinson, S. C. (1983). *Pragmatics*. First Edition. Cambridge University Press.

- Meyer, C. F. (2009). *Introducing English Linguistics*. First Edition. Cambridge University Press.
- Niger to change anthem over reference to colonial masters, France (2019, November 22). *Punch Newspapers*. <http://punching.com> (visited on April 26, 2024.).
- Short, M. (2013). *Exploring the Language of Poems, Plays and Prose*. Second Edition. Routledge Taylor and & Francis Group.
- Short, M. (1988). *Reading, Analysing & Teaching Literature*. Longman.
- Simpson, P. (2004) *Stylistics: A Resource Book for Students*. Second Edition. Routledge Taylor and & Francis Group.
- Smith, W. (2023, July 3). Flag of Niger. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com> (visited on April 22, 2024.).
- Toolan, M. (2013). *Literature in Language: An Introduction to Stylistics*. Third Edition. Routledge Taylor and & Francis Group.
- Verdonk, P. (2002). *Stylistics*. First Edition. Oxford University Press.
- Yule, G. (2010). *The Study of Language*. Fourth Edition. Cambridge University Press.
- Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. First Edition. Oxford University Press.