

## A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF DIESCHO'S DICTUMS PUBLISHED FROM JANUARY 2014 TO DECEMBER 2015

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### Abstract

*Using the Formalist Theory and the pedagogical stylistics perspective, this article analyses stylistic features of foregrounding and figurative language used by Joseph Diescho in his "Dictums", published in the New Era newspaper between January 2014 and December 2015. The study seeks to demonstrate how public discourse can provide useful insights to teachers and lecturers as well as students who are interested in understanding how language and literature can be analysed in the classroom. The study found that Diescho is a writer with multiple authorial styles. Furthermore, he creatively combines (writing) styles such as deviation, parallelism, reference, rhetorical questions and the extensive use of quotes to communicate what he intends the readers to understand. The varied styles are also intended to strengthen and enhance his arguments, as well as to voice his views, beliefs and opinions on multiple issues. The study recommends the need for classroom practitioners to scrutinise public discourse from a stylistic perspective in the primary, secondary and tertiary education sectors in order to enhance their interpretive skills and creative writing skills.*

### 1. Introduction

Using the Formalist Theory, this article seeks to analyse stylistic features of foregrounding and figurative language used by Diescho in his "dictums" published in the *New Era* newspaper between January 2014 and December 2015. According to the *Encarta World English Dictionary* (1999, p. 525), a dictum is "a pronouncement, authoritative saying, or a statement." The aim of the investigation is to provide language practitioners – teachers and lecturers of English as a first or second language, literature teachers, creative writing lecturers, and others with critical insights that can inform their pedagogical practices.

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Formalist theory treats literature as a special use of language, where the language use is distinct and deviates from everyday use (Zainul, 2009, p. 6). Various elements of literary language can be found in the dictums, and they are used in a way that makes Diescho's writing deviating from the norm. Diescho employs a complex, yet fascinating, writing style that is captivating and unusual, arousing interest in the reader and enabling him (Diescho) as author to address a wide array of issues and concerns. The study therefore sought to stylistically analyse the manner in which Diescho structures and chooses topics for his dictums, his creative use of language and the employment of linguistic devices, and how he expresses his ideas and opinions on multiple issues, ranging from the social to the political.

The dictums were purposively selected from the *New Era* newspaper and used as the primary source of data for stylistic analysis. According to Shauaibu, Soye and Cletus (2013, p. 22), "Newspapers are among the most accessible texts available to the vast majority of people – literate and illiterate, young and old, students, workers and elites and peasants in any community." Jaafar (2014, p. 239) defines stylistics as "the linguistic analysis of literary language". Furthermore, Busse and McIntyre (2010, p. 10) posit that stylistic studies have come a long way and the primary concern with literary texts is a direct result of the early interests of the formalists and structuralists, though it is by no means exclusively focused on literature anymore. Bingyan and Qianyu (2013, p. 1) define stylistics as "a discipline that is concerned with literary studies, linguistics and discourse studies as well". It is therefore acknowledged that, when language is used, stylistics is applied, and its effects are determined by the given context (Bingyan & Qianyu, 2013, p. 1). In recognition of this wide usage and application of stylistics, Krishnamurthy (2010, p. 13) opines that "the interest in academic stylistics in the field of English studies has grown in the past five years".

## **2. Theoretical framework and literature review**

This study is informed by the Formalist Theory or Russian Formalism as well as Pedagogical Stylistics. Pedagogical Stylistics is concerned with the study of language for the purposes of teaching. It focuses on how language is patterned in texts and how linguistic features can be used in the teaching of language. According to Zainul (2009, p. 6), the Formalist Theory is a literary theory that generally looks at the pattern or the form of a literary text. It treats literature as a group of literary devices and investigates the relationship among the smaller parts in the literature text. The theory also considers literature as a system where each component in it plays its own function in making up the whole text.

Furthermore, Devardhi and Nelson (2013, p. 7) argue that "the Russian Formalists introduced a new, highly focused and solid method of literary and linguistic analysis. The formal method used in linguistics was based on the analytical view of the form, and the content of a literary work was seen as a sum of its stylistic methods." According to Smit (2012, p. 45), Russian formalism and the Prague School of Structuralism had direct and lasting impact on the methods of contemporary stylistics since the early 1900s. The most central ideas of these two schools of thought can be found in contemporary stylistics.

"[T]he formalists are textualists: meaning that they regard the stylistic features of a particular text as a product of an empirical unity and completeness." (Smit, 2012, p. 45) Therefore formalism attempts to treat each work as a distinct piece, free from its environment, era, and even author and the keys to understanding a text exists within the text itself. Additionally, proponents of the Formalist Theory, Jakobson and his followers, "exclude readers and context from consideration and only study the intricate patterning of the literary text" (Smit, 2012, p.45). The latter implies that social context is not considered despite the fact that it could be helpful in unveiling the meaning, and also that it can add value to the overall study and interpretation of a text.

Another renowned proponent of the Formalist Theory is Victor Shklovsky who has contributed two of the most well-known concepts of the theory, namely, defamiliarisation (estrangement) and the plot/story distinction (syuzhet/fabula). Of interest for the current study, is the use of Formalist Theory in relation to foregrounding and figures of speech. According to Liu (2015, p. 76), "foregrounding is the opposite of automation". Jaafar (2014, p. 241) defines foregrounding as "giving unusual prominence to one element or property of a text, relative to other less noticeable aspects". Gregoriou (2009, p. 27) outlines that "in the context of text analysis, foregrounding is achieved by a variety of means, which have largely been grouped into two main types, 'deviation' and parallelism". The forms of deviation and parallelism are mainly found in poetry as Ui (2014, p. 38) explains:

Poetic language is different from the standard language, as standard language is the norm of language and it is for the purpose of communication. In poetic language, on the other hand, the purpose of communication remains in the background and replaced by the aesthetic purpose.

Liu (2015) further states that foregrounding has its origins in the Russian formalist school of thought and its proponents are the Czech theorist Jan Mukarovsky of the Prague School and Garvin. Alazawi (2014, p. 32) stresses that "foregrounding is the opposite of automatisisation, that is the deautomatisation of an act, the more an act is automatised the less consciously executed; the more it is foregrounded the more

completely conscious it becomes". Moreover, Jaafar (2014) believes that foregrounding is the most important part of stylistic analysis in poetry, even though this concept is also applicable in the analysis of prose texts, such as the dictums studied in this paper. As newspaper articles, the dictums analysed in this study are written in a way that makes the reader become curious. This curiosity is due to linguistic features, such as deviation and parallelism, which makes the dictums prominent, defamiliarised and hence, foregrounded.

### **3. Textual analysis of Diescho's dictums**

#### **3.1 *Foregrounding***

In teaching language and literature through pedagogical stylistics, the focus is on the text as action, which means that there is a proactive engagement between the text and the reader. Textual interpretation is taught through the discovery of the linguistic elements which stand out and their pragmatical and cognitive functioning within specific social and cultural contexts. One aspect that stands out, and is foregrounded about the dictums, is the way the author titles and presents each dictum.

An example of foregrounding is found in some titles of the dictums. For example, *'Quo Vadis Namibia?'* is a title or a phrase in Latin, meaning *Where are you going Namibia?* This title is different from all others because it is not written in English, though the dictum is. Readers therefore need to look for its meaning, either through reading the dictum, which we believe is the intent of the author, or to find the English meaning of the phrase/title. The other examples of foregrounding are through the formulation of titles in the form of questions (rhetorical questions). Such formulations are evident in the following three examples:

*"Is Namibia's dream likely to explode like the Afrikan dream?"*

*"Is continuity and change the return of African politics?"*

*"And is the world coming to an end?"*

From the above examples, the reader is persuaded to read these dictums in order to find answers to the questions. This is because the above titles are provocative since the author uses hyperbolic expressions, such as 'explode' and 'world coming to an end'. The sense of action evoked by these hyperbolic expressions is equally startling and alarming, thereby creating a sense of apprehension in the reader. This is due to the 'apocalyptic' connotations which are aroused in the reader through the use of, for example, Biblical allusion. The sense of wonder and intrigue may have an attraction to the reader, thereby making one want to read the entire dictum so as to unravel the maze.

### 3.2 Deviation

Deviation is the element that affects the reader psychologically, as they come into contact with the given text. This element works by startling the reader as they interact with the text, since the text works through presenting the unexpected. Deviation occurs at different levels within and around the text and the dictums present such deviations as illustrated below.

#### 3.2.1 Lexical deviation

A text qualifies to be lexically deviant when the words in it diverge from their actual and standard form in order to have a deeper aesthetic and psychological value (Jafaar, 2014, p. 241). In almost all dictums by Diescho, the aspect of lexical deviation is prominent. For most parts of numerous dictums, the manner in which words are used, is deviant in the context they are used, or from other words within the same context. Here are a few examples:

##### Example 1:

<b>Lexical deviation</b>	<b>Intended meaning</b>	<b>dictum</b>
<i>Unrepresented</i>	not represented	Diversity in Namibia
<i>pornography of wealth and political power</i>	caress/irresponsible use of wealth and power	Diversity in Namibia
Namibia is a small country <i>sandwiched</i> between two big economies	located	Diversity in Namibia
the old <i>recycled</i> people	the same people who have been serving for long	The agony of change

In **Example 1**, the author uses words such as *unrepresented*, *sandwiched*, *sandwiched*, and *recycled* as new or unusual words in context. For instance, readers might find the word *recycled* unusual although the meaning can be deduced contextually. The common expression, however, could be 'the same people who have been serving for a long time.' In other instances, words such as *Africanrecord* and *Africanmindset* are eminent examples of compounding, where words are formed from two or more independent morphemes. In these cases, *Africanrecord* is formed from *African* and *record*, while *africanmindset* is made up *African*, *mind* and *set*. Here, lexical deviation, as illustrated by means of compounding, makes the author's style novel, de-automised and effective.

#### 3.2.2 Phonological deviation

Everything related to sound that is unfamiliar in a text, ranging from unusual sound effects, alliteration and assonance, the altering of normal spelling to represent particular accents and dialects, and the pho-

netic misspelling of words, is classified under phonological deviation (Gregoriou, 2009). The following are some examples of phonological deviation extracted from the dictums.

### Example 2

*Anthem of the lonely Namib*

(a) 9<sup>th</sup> line ... good and bad. [d].

The rhythmic effect is created by the repetition of the [d] sound at the end of each of the two words namely; good and bad.

(b) 48<sup>th</sup> line ... yesterday and yesteryear

Here, there is rhythm in the use of parallels in the two words yesterday and yesteryear. This is achieved by means of the prefix 'yester-'

(c) 74<sup>th</sup>-77<sup>th</sup> line ... I am here, hear me

- I am real, feel me
- I am for you need me
- I am with you, be me

In (c) the author phonologically deviates such that he creates rhythmic effects and rhyming patterns. The rhythm is produced by the use of 'I am...' at the beginning and 'me' at the end of each line. A certain sound pattern is created in these lines through the use of parallel structures which makes the entire verse to have a common rhythmic pattern and a rhyme scheme.

### 3.2.3 Syntactic deviation

Syntactic deviation has to do with unusual or incorrect sentence presentation and/or structure. Every language has syntactic rules that dictate how sentences must be structured. For example, the order in which words are arranged in the formation of statements in English is SVO = Subject–Verb–Object. Furthermore, sentences must begin with capital letters and punctuated with a full stop at the end. If this is not adhered to, the writer has syntactically deviated from the normal or "correct" way of sentence construction in English.

Syntactic deviation is common in poetry, where it is used as a creative tool to make writing and especially reading, exciting. Readers are made to pause and reflect on what they are reading, and internalise the meaning of what is being read. Syntactic deviation, as a writing style, inculcates the need for critical

thinking, and the meaning being discovered this way may be viewed as new since the way it is presented brings out a sense of novelty. This view is in agreement with Elnaili (2013, p. 14), who observes that "the grammar in literary language has always attracted linguists, especially the language of poems. Patterns in language structure can participate to the overall meaning of a literary discourse".

Syntactic deviation is apparent in several of Diescho's dictums, especially those that are written as poems. Dictums such as *Anthem of the lonely Namib*, *Wisdom of African proverbs on love*, *If the world was a village of 100 inhabitants*, and *Letter to the Namibian child*, employ the following tools.

#### **(a) Writing using lines**

Here the author uses shorter syntactic units, such as clauses, etc., instead of longer sentences which can cause boredom. By using shorter syntactic units, the author makes his work attractive to the audience. The same applies for verses as opposed to paragraphs. Verses naturally appear shorter than paragraphs, and they may be more attractive to the readers than paragraphs, which can be long and wordy. Consider **Example 3**:

#### **Example 3**

*If the world was a village of just 100 inhabitants*

The world is safely unsafe

The world is ours

The word is itself

A world of contradictions: There are more people and fewer relationships

There are more educated people but fewer solutions

More information yet less understanding

More knowledge yet less wisdom

More stories yet more ignorance

More medicines yet less wellness

More food yet more hungry people

In **Example 3**, the author has not only followed syntactic rules with regard to sentence structures but he has also put down ideas with no clear explanation or elaboration. Furthermore, the claims are presented without any other extra references to corroborate them. The resultant effect with this kind of deviation is that when the sentences are read, they sound more like listening to a person on a one-to-one basis, and in this way this arrests the reader's attention as the writing can be unsettling and they "awaken" the reader because of their unexpectedness, immediacy and "defamiliarised" syntactic constructions.

### **(b) Enjambment as a form of syntactic deviation**

In typical prose style, lines are usually filled to the end of the page. However, the author of the dictums used incomplete sentences that fill only half the line, and he continued the same sentence in the lines that follow. This is referred to as enjambment, and this is often used as a form of syntactic deviation. Enjambment is more common in poetry than prose. Poetry (because of poetic licence) transgresses grammar rules, language usage rules and other rules of language usage and writing more often than prose texts, allowing poets to be creative in a more profound and reflective manner. While on the one hand the use of such techniques is usually intentional and meant to simplify the message of the author, poets use such techniques to create a whole sense of newness and novelty for the readers, on the other hand. This also adds a sense of artistry to the text, bringing a degree of sophistication which, though it may be repulsive to the untrained reader, brings about a voyaging reading, as the reader seeks to discover the message in the text. Diescho employs enjambment in the extract shown in **Example 4** below.

#### **Example 4**

##### *Anthem of the lonely Namib*

I am aware of what went on before this day  
But I remain ignorant about the details that would transport me into my new world.  
I know my politicians, good and bad  
But I have yet to know my leaders

From the above example, the writer uses enjambment in almost all the lines and bearing in mind that the dictum appeared in a newspaper, the use of enjambment makes the dictum foregrounded, it makes the dictum stand out as unique and as such possibly attracting the reader's attention. Moreover, through the use of enjambment, the dictums dictates that the reading may need to be slowed down, be more ponderous as it becomes more cognitively demanding, which is opposed to the quick browsing of a newspaper, which often is the case when people read the daily newspaper.

#### **3.2.4 Grammatical deviation**

According to Short (1996, p. 47), "the number of grammatical rules in English is large, and therefore the foregrounding possibilities via grammatical deviation is also very large." Gregoriou (2009) also notes that grammatical deviation can occur at the level of the individual make-up of the word or at the level of syntax. This may be evidenced by no punctuation between sentences, elimination boundaries between words and incorrect use of tenses. Some of these deviations may be seen in **Example 5**.

### Example 5

*From the dictum Anthem of the lonely Namib*

I know who I am, in my tribe and in my village,  
But I know not enough about my home, my nation and my extended family beyond my  
childhood memories.  
I am aware of what went on before this day,  
But I remain ignorant about the details that would transport me into my new world.  
I am grateful for the vast sacrifices made by countless who make them on my behalf,  
But I do not possess sufficient grammar to express my gratitude at the most appropriate  
moments so that the relevant people can hear me.  
I know my politicians, good and bad,  
But I have yet to know my leaders.

Grammatical deviation may be observed at the sentence level. The very first line is punctuated with a comma, despite the fact that it seems to express a complete line. However, there is also a sense in which the idea introduced in the first line seems to be continued in the second line – which can make the punctuation of the first line somewhat uncertain. Furthermore, the second line, although plausibly a continuation of the first line, starts with a capital letter. This is interesting in that the line that preceded, is punctuated with a comma, and commas are never followed by capital letters.

The pattern described above is evidently repeated in this whole extract, and the author does this for a purpose and the effect is that without knowing, the reader might easily be made to feel/think that s/he is moving on to something new every time s/he moves to a new sentence which begins with a capital letter, a strategy that is intended to captivate their interest.

Other examples of grammatical deviations are evident in **Example 6**.

### Example 6

*A letter to the Namibian child*

Oh my child of the truth  
Know yourself  
Know your name and say it wherever you are,  
Without apology, without fear  
Shout your name to complete the symphony  
And the meaning of the anthem  
None will know you  
If you do not state your presence  
And your warmth to those around you.

In addition to the grammatical deviations mentioned above, another indicator of grammatical deviation observed in this excerpt is repetition, which is tactically used to drive the point home. This is illustrated in Example 6 in the repetition of *Know yourself, Know your name, Shout your name None will know you*. The Namibian child is called upon to have a comprehensive appreciation of who s/he is, and that, unpretentiously, *without apology, and without fear*. Another example in the same dictum reads: “*Information gets more and more – yet poorer and poorer in every respect*”, and in this instance the author successfully uses binary opposites with ‘more’ and ‘poorer’ to create emphasis and to bolster the point he is making.

### 3.2.5 Graphological deviation

Graphology deals with estrangement of text through uncommon letters and/or word arrangements. Gregoriou (2009, p. 32) states:

Graphological deviation includes unusual layout and use of space, strange word and letter arrangement, as well as altered punctuation. Essentially anything that is visually unusual constitutes graphological deviation. The use of capital letters and the omission of the gaps between some of the words and/or sentences form part of such deviation.

Graphological deviation is found in most dictums examined in this study, and it ranges from entire text structure or layout, paragraphs and/or verses, sentences and phrases to individual words. Graphological deviation is apparent in the following ways:

#### (a) Unusual layout and use of space

The unusual structure and/or layout and the unusual use of space are found in *Anthem of the lonely Namib, African proverbs on love, If the world was a village of just 100 inhabitants, and A letter to the Namibian child*. These dictums are largely written as poems, and the layouts appear similar to those of poems. They are written in lines, rather than in sentences, in verses rather than in paragraphs, and at times they contain stand-alone sentences or lines or phrases. The dictums are thus characterised by short sentences and multiple lines, rather than full, long sentences that fill the lines. Another obvious element in these dictums is that the words used here may be sparsely distributed on the page. The way the author writes, seems to give a message that what matters is the message and not necessarily the space and/or paper, hence the use of a few words on a lot of space. The use of graphological deviation through unusual layout and use of space has a psychological effect upon the reader, who gets jolted just on seeing the dictum in the newspaper, as this is rather unusual and it is this unfamiliarity that becomes a cause for curiosity for the usual newspaper reader who finds something atypical in the normal newspaper.

### **(b) Deviation through capitalisation**

Capital letters are typically used at specific places for specific reasons. For example, in English, they are used at the beginning of sentences and also for proper nouns. Where entire sentences, paragraphs and/or essays are written with capital letters, it is usually for emphasis. Diescho uses capital letters in an unusual manner at unusual places in most of his dictums. Consider **Example 7** and **Example 8**:

#### **Example 7**

*Diversity in Namibia (part 2)*

LIKE with many issues in development and the changing dynamics in any society,...

They only know the story of the liberation struggle, but NOT what the country has going for it.

In spite of the not so hopeful picture above, Namibia remains a Land of Opportunities.

Namibia has her challenges, and they are growing, starting this Year of Great Expectations...

#### **Example 8**

If the world was a village of just 100 inhabitants

It's time to speak OshiAfrika! To Find Our Place In This Village

Deviation through capitalisation can be explained to mean that Diescho wants to create an impression or sense of command and emphasis in the opinion and/or message he is communicating with that specific word or phrase. In that way, the dictums can be read in a more intensive manner and more ponderously, as readers ask questions and try to seek for answers at the same time which, in turn, lead to a better understanding of dictums. It is a form of "advertising" a particular word or phrase within the text, and a way of drawing the particular attention of the reader.

### **3.3 Semantic deviation and figures of speech**

Semantic deviation and figures of speech are closely related. Semantic deviation deals with the literal use of language where the meaning, however, is literary. What one reads is not what is meant directly. The meaning must be understood or derived through contextual or linguistic interpretation. Gregoriou (2009, p. 30) defines semantic deviation as "illogical or paradoxical meaning relations between words, such as with the use of metaphors." Jafaar (2014, p. 241) further says that "this deviation shows that a simple word can have an extraordinary meaning, and that a word can have differences in meaning depending on the poet's life and background." Consider the following illustrations:

### 3.3.1 Metaphors

When an object or person is directly compared to the other to clarify meaning or to entertain, this is called metaphorical comparison. This is usually done because it might be that the hearer or reader is not familiar with what is being spoken/written about at that moment, but well acquainted with the other. The following extracts are some illustrations of how Diescho used metaphors in various dictums.

#### Example 9

*Diversity in Namibia (Part 2)*

we are doomed to the **pornography of wealth** and political power.

*Constitutional amendments and pot politics (Part 2)*

The end result is a disconnection of leaders from the people, **which is the bed on which dictatorship sleeps.**

*The meaning of Namibia's silver jubilee celebration).*

**There is no title I shall wear more proudly than that of an ordinary citizen**

*Is Namibia's dream likely to explode like the Afrikan dream? (Part 2)*

**Is Namibia's dream likely to explode like the Afrikan dream?**

**Let us die fighting**

*Quo vadis Namibia?*

Prime Minister Hage Geingob, in his characteristic style of getting to the point, **lamented the inefficiency in the nation's public service**

urged those who are paid by tax payer's money to **pull up their socks**

The metaphors in **Example 9** provide a commentary on politics and or political leaders in Namibia at a particular point in time. They present (positive) criticism, and they also enlighten, inform and encourage citizens on the politics being played out around the country, without being highly philosophical or political. Metaphors are used to explain a seemingly complex issue in simple, yet novel and captivating language or terms. Furthermore, metaphors can help the readers to create mental pictures and images in their minds as they read as in, for example, **Let us die fighting, lamented the inefficiency in the nation's public service, and pull up their socks.**

### 3.3.2 Personification

Personification can be defined as “the attribution of human feelings, emotions or sensations to an inanimate object” (Croft & Cross, 2004, p. 331). The following are illustrations of how Diescho used personification:

#### (a) Personified titles

Personified titles may be observed in *Anthem of the lonely Namib*, *Is Namibia's dream likely to explode like the Afrikan dream?* *Quo vadis Namibia (Where are you going Namibia?)* and *The seven cardinal virtues of the Namibian nation*. In the three titles ‘Namibia’ as a country is the inanimate object which is given human qualities, and in one dictum, the ‘Namib’, which is the oldest desert in Namibia, is humanised. In *Anthem of the lonely Namib* the desert is humanised as being ‘lonely’, like human beings and, like human beings, it has the ability to sing an anthem (a solemn patriotic song officially adopted by a country as an expression of national identity). Again, usually people sing because they are joyful. In *Anthem of the lonely Namib*, it is ironic that a lonely desert, which is typically characterised by harsh weather conditions, is singing! Using these two realities that are not commonly associated with each other may not only be an attention gripping style on the part of the author, but an attempt to get the readers to identify with the Namib by using personification.

In *Is Namibia's dream likely to explode like the Afrikan dream?*, Namibia and Africa can ‘dream’ like human beings, and in *Quo vadis Namibia (Where are you going Namibia?)*, Namibia has the ability to ‘walk’ like human beings. Embedded within the last question is uncertainty and concern regarding where Namibia is ‘walking’ towards, and Namibians as human beings may thereby empathise with and exercise grave concern for the seemingly directionless walking of their country, because their experience as ‘walking’ human beings informs that it is not good.

#### (b) Personification within the dictums

Personification within the dictums can be seen in the following expressions (**Example 10**):

#### Example 10

*Lack of clarity of purpose and roles lead to peril*

Institutions of higher learning must *claim* their fair share in **fostering a self-respecting** culture as **they are the moulders** of young minds who are to carry forward a meaningful civilization.

*Diversity in Namibia*

The Land of the brave is infested with **a psychosis of fear**

*The meaning of Namibia's silver jubilee celebration*

A welcome affirmation of what **Namibia was and is saying to herself** and the world...

*Wisdom of African proverbs on love*

A **letter from the heart** can be read on the face

The use of personification in the expressions in Example 10 helps the reader to relate the experiences and through this cognitive process, this thereby helps to clarify and deepen meaning as well as improve understanding.

### 3.3.3 Proverbs

Other figurative expressions used in the dictums studied, are proverbs. *Wisdom of African proverbs on love* is composed mainly of proverbs, and they help to explain the concept of love in African societies. Proverbs are common in African folklore, and they are often repositories of wisdom. Expertise in the use of proverbs is commonly considered to demonstrate wisdom. The proverbs used in *Wisdom of African proverbs on love* are packed with meaning beyond what immediately meets the eye (**Example 11**):

#### Example 11

*Wisdom of African proverbs on love*

Here is a glimpse of what Afrika taught about love:

It is better to be loved than feared.

Where there is love there is no darkness.

Dogs don't love people; they love the place where they are fed.

The way to the beloved isn't thorny.

One doesn't love another, if one doesn't accept anything from that person.

Love doesn't listen to rumours.

Love is like a baby: it needs to be treated tenderly.

If a woman doesn't love you, she calls you brother.

Love put the eaglet out of its nest...

Two proverbs can be used to illustrate how the author uses semantic deviation and figures of speech through the use of proverbs as follows: *the way to the beloved isn't thorny* and *love doesn't listen to rumours*. Firstly, the proverb 'the way to the beloved isn't thorny' can mean that harsh circumstance of any kind cannot become insurmountable hurdles when one wants to be with the one they love. The proverb 'love doesn't listen to rumours' may be understood to mean that a person who is in love does not easily believe the bad things they hear about the one they love.

### 3.4 *References/Allusions*

Authors often references (allusions) to other authorities in order to strengthen their arguments, especially on topics they are not experts on. This also demonstrates thorough research on the part of the writer. The end result is the ability to persuade readers by appealing to authority and the most common forms of reference is classical and biblical allusion. Diescho made references in the following ways (**Examples 12 and 13**):

#### **Example 12**

##### *The agony of change*

THE premier British naturalist, Charles Darwin, that one who gave us the theory of superiority versus inferiority types of human races, is quoted often to have said: "It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent; it is the one most responsive to change." Another philosopher said that the only condition in life that is constant is change. The Chinese sage, Lao Tsu, commonly known as Confucius taught: "Life is a series of natural and spontaneous changes. Don't resist them; that only creates sorrow. Let reality be reality. Let things flow naturally forward in whatever way." The German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche wrote: "The snake which cannot cast its skin has to die. As well the minds which are prevented from changing their opinions; they cease to be mind." The Mother of Black Poetry Maya Angelou warned: "Stepping onto a brand-new path is difficult, but not more difficult than remaining in a situation, which is not nurturing ...." Then Albert Einstein says: "The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking."

In **Example 12** Diescho explains the pros and cons that come with change and clarifies its impact which can be both good and bad. He quotes five renowned persons in order to gain the trust of his readers. This is an example of classical allusion.

#### **Example 13**

##### *Wisdom of African proverbs on love*

In the debate about which of the ancient four cardinal virtues (Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, Temperance) was more important than the others, the Apostle Paul concluded by his additional three Christian virtues of Faith, Hope and Love. He sealed the conversation with these words: 'And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love' (1 Cor., 13:13).

By alluding to the biblical text (biblical allusion) taken from the text of one of the great apostles in biblical times, Paul, Diescho rhetorically appeals to the beliefs of his readers. Biblical allusions are very powerful tools because people take as truth most of what is written in the Bible and they rarely argue about it, or question it. By starting *Wisdom of African proverbs on love* with the biblical quote, Diescho

attempts to make a convincing invitation to the readers to read this dictum. It is as if he is saying 'Believe what I say because the Bible says so'.

### 3.5 *Parallelism*

The use of parallel structures is one of the most prominent elements that characterise Diescho's work.

**Example 14** illustrates this:

#### **Example 14**

*Constitutional amendments and pot politics*

*discomfort and lack of confidence, intents and purposes, speed and urgency, freedom and liberation, good and clear, hope and trust, good faith, and in good time*

*The meaning of Namibia's silver jubilee celebration*

*peace, security and stability, norms and values, quarrel and disagree, minds and hearts, tolerant, accommodative, secular and integrative, known and known, trend and pace, weakness and challenges, rich and the poor and the land-hungry, the haves and have-nots*

*Quo Vadis Namibia*

*50/50 gender and zebra balancing, One Namibia, One Nation, free and fair, serve and not to be served, eat and not to eat, small but powerful*

In examples such as *50/50 gender and zebra balancing, One Namibia, One Nation, free and fair, to serve and not to be served, minds and hearts*, the author uses words that are commonly used together in English to create emphasis and to highlight the core of his message. In some cases Diescho uses words or expressions with opposite meanings for the same effect, as illustrated in, for example, in *small but powerful, rich and the poor and the land-hungry, between the haves and have-nots*. Furthermore, the author uses binary opposites to highlight contrasts that in turn aid in creating clarity, since the reader maybe be intrigued and persuaded to look for, and think deeply about, the relationships between the words that are used together, even though opposite in meaning.

Parallels that are created through words that almost have the same meaning, such as *discomfort and lack of confidence, intents and purposes, speed and urgency, freedom and liberation, good and clear, hope and trust*. As with other types of parallels discussed above, these types of pairings are used to create emphasis for aesthetic as well as for musical purposes.

#### 4. Conclusion

The study sought to demonstrate that the teaching of language and literature in the classroom can benefit from pedagogical stylistics. The insights gained from this paper have educational benefit as they shed light on how language and literature can be studied using discourse from popular texts which students encounter on a daily basis, in this case, the newspaper. It has been demonstrated that the author's choice of words plays an important role in the creation of the meaning intended for his audience. Furthermore, it is crucial that the author presents and communicates the intended message in the best possible way and through the use of a wide array of styles available. It has been observed that, by using various writing styles, Diescho can make a commentary on varied socio-political issues, taking into account varied sensitivities and varied audiences. Overall, the study showed that Diescho is an archetypal scholar, author and a great writer who, if emulated by novice and aspiring writers, especially his authorial style, can create great writers in Namibia.

Based on the findings made by this study, the following recommendations are made: There is need for more stylistic studies on other popular authors in order to unravel the pedagogical value of stylistics by allowing students to engage in everyday texts. This would develop more scholars who can conduct stylistic analyses of texts. Lastly, dictums analysed in this study can be re-analysed using different theories which may aid in bringing about different understandings which, in turn, will add more value to the formalist theory that this study employed. Theories that can be used include Discourse Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis.

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