

Point of View and Narrative Voice in 'Mother' by Asangba Reginald Taluah: A Stylistic Study Using Simpson's Model

Samuel Dapaah, Ebenezer Kyei & Ebenezer Benteh
Department of Languages Education,
University of Skills Training and Entrepreneurial Development,
Kumasi, Ghana

Abstract

This paper applies Paul Simpson's (1993) modal grammar of point of view for a stylistic analysis of 'Mother', a short elegy by the Ghanaian poet Asangba Reginald Taluah, published in 2014 in the *You/Me* anthology edited by Gabriella Valera Gruber. The poem mourns a mother on the first anniversary of her death, and much of its emotional force is carried by specific linguistic choices rather than declared through theme. Three research questions guide the study: how the poem is to be classified within Simpson's typology; how that classification is sustained by identifiable modal features and in what proportions; and how the narrative voice is managed across pronominal, deictic and figurative choices. The analysis identifies 'Mother' as a Category A text with positive shading, sustained by deontic, boulomaic, evaluative and perceptive modality, with evaluative modality the most frequent of the four. The study tracks the speaker's pronominal movement from second person address to first person plural and then to first person singular, and examines the temporal, spatial and personal deixis that anchors the grief to a specific commemorative moment. The antelope and panther couplet is shown to function as compressed evaluative modality drawing on Ghanaian oral tradition. Findings indicate that the narrative voice is plural and shifting, allowing the speaker to occupy several positions within a single utterance: bereaved child, communal mourner, individual poet and ritual celebrant. The paper extends to Ghanaian poetry the programme of systemic and pragmatic textual analysis of African data long associated with Wale Adegbite, and confirms the value of Simpson's framework for short lyric and elegiac forms.

Keywords: Stylistics, point of view, modal shading, deixis, Ghanaian elegy, Simpson's model

Introduction

Asangba Reginald Taluah is a Ghanaian poet and academic whose work draws openly on the oral traditions of northern Ghana, particularly Kasena and Dagbamba poetic forms (Taluah, 2013, 2015, 2021). His short elegy 'Mother' was published in 2014 in *You/Me*, an anthology of poems and essays edited by Gabriella Valera Gruber and produced through the Castello di Duino international literary conferences. The poem mourns a mother on the first anniversary of her death. It is twenty-six lines long, and its grief is delivered through a small set of carefully managed linguistic choices. This paper reads 'Mother' through Paul Simpson's (1993) modal grammar of point of view. Simpson's framework, set out in *Language, Ideology and Point of View* and developed in his later work (Simpson, 2025), provides a way of categorising narrative perspective in terms of who speaks, where they stand in relation to the events being told, and how their attitude colours the telling. The framework has been applied widely to fiction, but it is equally productive when used on lyric poetry, where deictic, modal and pronominal choices carry much of the work that plot would otherwise carry in narrative prose.

The study is offered as a contribution to a special edition honouring Professor Wale Adegbite, and its approach is shaped by his scholarly programme. Across a long career Adegbite has argued that the analysis of texts in African contexts is best served by combining a linguistic dimension, in which systemic functional theory is applied to textual form, with a pragmatic dimension, in which context, illocution and perlocution are made explicit (Adegbite, 2019; Adegbite & Odebunmi, 2006). He has also observed that systemic linguistic theory had, until recently, been applied only sparingly to textual analysis by scholars working on African data. Simpson's modal grammar sits squarely within that combination, since its account of modality is grounded in interpersonal grammar (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013) while its account of shading depends on the reader's reconstruction of speaker stance. The present paper therefore extends an established Nigerian analytical programme to a Ghanaian poetic text, and in doing so tests whether the tools travel across the two national literatures.

Three research questions guide the analysis:

- i. How is the point of view in ‘Mother’ to be classified within Simpson’s typology of narrative categories and modal shadings?
- ii. Which modal features sustain that classification, and in what proportions do they occur across the twenty-six lines?
- iii. How is the narrative voice managed through pronominal, deictic and figurative choices, and what positions does the speaker occupy as a result?

The poem is short, but its choices are dense, so a close stylistic reading is well suited to it. The paper also contributes to an ongoing conversation in African and Ghanaian stylistics about how frameworks developed in Britain and North America behave when applied to texts that are themselves shaped by African oral traditions (Aboh, 2018; Nkansah, 2024; Tunca, 2014). The discussion here suggests that Simpson’s framework remains useful for such texts, while requiring sensitivity to the cultural meanings of figurative items such as animal metaphors that carry specific resonances in Ghanaian poetic tradition.

The paper is organised as follows. The literature review surveys work on stylistics, point of view, textual analysis in West African scholarship, and African and Ghanaian poetic studies. The methodology section sets out the scope of Simpson’s modal grammar as applied here and the procedure followed. The results and discussion section presents the analysis under four headings: modality and classification, the distribution of modal features, pronominal shift, deixis, and figurative evaluation. The conclusion draws the findings together and notes directions for further work.

Literature Review

Stylistics and Point of View

Stylistics treats literary texts as objects of linguistic description (Simpson, 2025; Verdonk, 2002). The discipline assumes that the meanings and effects of a text are produced through specific linguistic choices, and that those choices can be analysed systematically. Foundational work by Leech (1969), Leech and Short (2007) and Short (2018) established the basic principles of stylistic analysis for poetry, prose and drama. Later work by Jeffries and McIntyre (2010) and Toolan (2013) consolidated the field and extended it into critical and narrative directions.

Point of view has been a central concern of stylistics since Fowler (1996) drew attention to the ways grammatical choices encode perspective and ideology. Genette (1980) provided the influential distinction between focalisation and narration, and Bal (2017) refined the model further. Uspensky (1973) had earlier offered a typology of point of view across the spatial, temporal, psychological and ideological planes. These accounts share the recognition that point of view is not a single thing but a bundle of choices distributed across the text.

Simpson's Modal Grammar

Simpson (1993) brought together earlier work on point of view and modality into a single analytical model. The model classifies narration into Category A, in which the speaker exists inside the story world, and Category B, in which the speaker stands outside it. Category A narration is intrinsically narratorial, since the teller is also a participant, while Category B divides into narratorial and reflector modes according to whether events are reported by an external narrator or filtered through the consciousness of a character. Each variant is then shaded as positive, negative or neutral depending on the kinds of modality that dominate the text. Positive shading is built through deontic, boulomaic, evaluative and perceptive modality, while negative shading uses words of estrangement, alienation and uncertainty (Simpson, 1993, 2025).

Modality, in the sense Simpson uses, is grounded in functional grammar (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013) and modal logic (Palmer, 2001). It includes attitudes of obligation and permission, desire and wish, judgement of value, and verbs and adjectives of feeling and perception. Each contributes to building the speaker's stance toward what is being told.

Deixis in Poetry

Deixis is a separate but related concern. Levinson (1983) provides the standard treatment, distinguishing personal, temporal, spatial and discourse deixis. In poetry, deictic expressions do specific work because the lyric speaker is often unanchored in any narrative situation, so the few deictic markers that appear carry disproportionate weight in establishing speaker, addressee and moment. Adegbite (2019) makes the related point that context in pragmatic analysis is not a background against which a text is read but a resource that participants actively

construct, and that the analyst's task is to show which textual items do the constructing. In a lyric with almost no narrative furniture, the deictic markers are precisely those items.

Textual Analysis in West African Scholarship

The application of systemic functional and pragmatic tools to African textual data has a substantial history, and Adegbite's work is central to it. Adegbite and Odebunmi (2006) analyse diagnostic interactions in Nigerian hospitals by combining mutual contextual beliefs, speech act patterning and linguistic realisation, and in doing so demonstrate that a single analysis can hold pragmatic and grammatical description together without collapsing one into the other. Adegbite (2019) develops the theoretical basis of that position, arguing that context and knowledge construction should be treated as analysable textual matters rather than as interpretive glosses. The same commitment runs through his sociolinguistic work, where the description of English in Nigeria proceeds from attested usage rather than from prescriptive assumption (Akindele & Adegbite, 1999; Adegbite, 2020), and through his account of second language processing in Nigerian educational contexts (Adegbite, 2009).

The reach of this programme is visible in the festschrift assembled by Odebunmi and Ayoola (2016), where contributors apply speech act theory, mood analysis and stylistic description to a wide range of Nigerian texts. Ononye (2016), for example, examines stylistic strategies of legitimisation in Nigerian supreme court judgements, showing how a stylistic vocabulary developed for literary texts transfers to institutional ones. The present study makes the reverse move within the same framework, taking analytical categories associated with narrative fiction and applying them to a short lyric. It also moves the data across a national border, from Nigeria to Ghana, which allows a modest test of how portable the categories are.

African and Ghanaian Poetic Studies

The stylistic study of African poetry is a developing area. In Nigeria, Aboh (2012, 2013, 2018) has applied modal and pronominal analysis to recent Nigerian poetry, particularly the work of Joe Ushie, and has shown how language constructs identity in the postcolonial novel; his more recent work reads Ushie's poetry through Bette-Bendi indigenous

epistemology (Aboh, 2024). Tunca (2014) presents a sustained stylistic treatment of Nigerian fiction. In Ghana, Nkansah (2021, 2024) and Nkansah and Bonsu (2022) have conducted stylistic analyses of Ghanaian Hiplife lyrics and African fiction, demonstrating that the tools of foregrounding, transitivity and narrative perspective can be productively applied to texts grounded in Ghanaian cultural materials.

Ghanaian poetry has long had a strong elegiac strain. Nketia's (1969) study of Akan funeral dirges established the basic forms and conventions of one of the oldest poetic genres in the country. Awoonor (1974) brought the Ewe dirge tradition into wider scholarly view, and his own poetry, alongside that of Anyidoho (1985), has been read as a contemporary literary extension of these oral forms (Okunoye, 2005). Yitah (2009) has examined Kasena women's verbal art, and Taluah's own scholarship has analysed Kasena dirges and war songs (2013), the transmission of knowledge through Kasena oral tradition (2015) and Dagbamba panegyrics (2021) from a literary linguistic perspective. Finnegan's (1970/2012) general account of oral literature in Africa remains a useful reference point for situating Taluah's poem within a tradition that bridges oral and written forms.

What this body of work establishes is a context in which the elegy 'Mother' can be read both as an individual lyric and as a written reflex of older Ghanaian elegiac and panegyric traditions. The present paper takes this dual context as its starting point.

Methodology

This study is a qualitative stylistic analysis of a single poem, supported by simple frequency counts. The approach is text-immanent: the paper works from the linguistic features of the text outward toward interpretation, rather than from external biographical or historical claims toward the text. The analytical framework is Simpson's (1993) modal grammar of point of view, supported by Halliday and Matthiessen's (2013) account of interpersonal grammar, Levinson's (1983) treatment of deixis and Adegbite's (2019) account of context as an analysable textual resource. The full text of the poem, with lines numbered for reference, is given in the appendix.

The procedure involved the following steps. First, the poem was read closely several times to identify candidate features for analysis. Second, the text was examined for the four kinds of modality that

Simpson identifies as building positive shading: deontic, boulomaic, evaluative and perceptive. Each instance was tabulated with its linguistic marker, its line reference and its contextual function, and the instances were then counted by type so that the relative weight of each could be reported. Third, the poem was scanned for pronominal shifts, with attention to the addressee and the implied community of mourners. Fourth, deictic expressions were identified and categorised by type. Fifth, figurative items were examined for their evaluative function within the context of Ghanaian oral tradition.

The unit of analysis throughout is the linguistic item in its context, not the line as a metrical unit. Where a line contains more than one feature of interest, each feature is recorded separately. Where a feature spans more than one line, it is recorded once with the relevant lines noted. To reduce the risk of idiosyncratic coding, each of the three authors coded the poem independently and the three sets of codings were then compared. Disagreements, which concerned the boundary between evaluative and perceptive modality in two instances, were resolved by discussion against Simpson's definitions before the final counts were fixed.

We wish to observe that a single poem cannot exhaustively test the framework in the way a corpus study could; hence the conclusions drawn here apply directly only to 'Mother'. The frequency counts are correspondingly small and are reported as a description of this text rather than as a basis for statistical inference. The cultural readings of figurative items also depend on broader claims about Ghanaian oral tradition that are supported by reference to existing scholarship rather than by primary fieldwork. The aim is to demonstrate the explanatory power of Simpson's model for this particular text, while opening the way for wider studies of contemporary Ghanaian poetry along similar lines.

Results and Discussion

The analysis is organised under five headings. The first deals with modality and the classification of the poem within Simpson's typology. The second reports the distribution of modal features. The third deals with pronominal shifts, the fourth with deixis, and the fifth with figurative evaluation, focusing on the antelope and panther couplet and the closing paradox.

Modality and Point of View Classification

'Mother' is a Category A text. The speaker exists inside the world being described. This is established immediately by the use of first-person plural pronouns, which place the speaker among the mourners, and by the first-person singular in the line 'The Maker did give me song'. The speaker is a child of the dead mother, addressing her at what reads as a memorial event on the first anniversary of her death. Because the teller is also a participant, the narration is narratorial in Simpson's sense; the reflector mode is not available in Category A.

The shading is positive throughout. All four kinds of modality that Simpson identifies as building positive shading appear in the poem. Table 1 sets out Simpson's framework for reference. Table 2 then maps each modality type to specific examples drawn from 'Mother'.

Category	Description	Mode	Possible shading
A	Homodiegetic narration; the speaker exists in the world of the story	Narratorial only, since the teller is a participant	Positive, negative, neutral
B	Heterodiegetic narration; an external narrator reports events	Narratorial	Positive, negative, neutral
B	Heterodiegetic narration; events filtered through a character's consciousness	Reflector	Positive, negative, neutral

Table 1. Simpson's (1993) categories of point of view.

Modality type	Linguistic marker	Example from the poem	Function
Boulomaic	Counterfactual conditional with wish meaning	'If tears could bring life / Mother, you would have risen / The moment you fell to death'	Articulates an impossible desire and signals the speaker's awareness of its impossibility
Boulomaic	Assertive paradox	'Even though you die / You live'	Converts the opening wish into an assertion that the poem itself is offered to justify
Deontic	Polite request with softening adverb	'So kindly accept this song / From an infantile tongue'	Appeals to the dead addressee and humbles the speaker by self-description as childlike
Evaluative (qualitative)	Comparative chiasmic construction	'Life succeeded you in length / But you succeeded life in depth'	Asserts the value of the mother's life over its mere duration
Evaluative (hyperbolic)	Hyperbolic comparison	'For your deeds drown a thousand gun salutes'	Places the mother's deeds above the highest formal honour
Evaluative (figurative)	Animal metaphor couplet	'born an antelope / Yet took her time to learn the acumen of the panther'	Delivers a compound judgement of character through culturally weighted images
Perceptive (verba sentiendi)	Sensory adjective	'answered with just a faint goodbye'	Records the speaker's close perception of the moment of death
Perceptive (verba sentiendi)	Bodily metaphor	'You are a stain in our minds / A scar in our hearts'	Records the felt presence of grief in the bodies and minds of the mourners

Table 2. Modality types and examples in 'Mother'.

The pattern that emerges is clear. The poem combines wishes that cannot be fulfilled with appeals that can be made, judgements about value, and perceptions that record both the moment of loss and its continuing presence. This is the configuration that Simpson labels Category A positive. The speaker is not estranged or uncertain. The speaker grieves with conviction, and that conviction is built into every line.

It is worth noting, with reference to Aboh's (2012) work on modality in Nigerian poetry, that boulomaic modality often functions in

African elegiac contexts as a way of bridging the impossibility of communication with the dead. The wish ‘if tears could bring life’ works in this way. It is not naive. It is the conventional opening move of an elegy, marking the speaker’s recognition that the appeal that follows will be made in the awareness that the addressee cannot reply.

Distribution of Modal Features

Table 3 reports the distribution of the modal instances identified in the poem. The counts are small, as the length of the text requires, and they are offered as a description of this poem rather than as evidence of any general tendency.

Modality type	Instances	Percentage	Lines in which the instances occur
Evaluative	3	37.5	See appendix for line references
Boulomaic	2	25.0	See appendix for line references
Perceptive	2	25.0	See appendix for line references
Deontic	1	12.5	See appendix for line references
Total	8	100.0	

Table 3. Distribution of modal features identified in ‘Mother’.

Two observations follow. First, all four of the modality types associated with positive shading are present, which is what secures the classification rather than the raw totals. Second, evaluative modality is the most frequent of the four. This is consistent with the generic demands of elegy, in which the central obligation is to praise, and it is consistent with the panegyric strain that Taluah (2021) himself identifies in Dagbamba oral verse. Deontic modality occurs only once, but it occurs at the structural hinge of the poem, where the speaker turns from describing the loss to offering the song, so its weight is not proportional to its frequency.

Pronominal Shifts and Narrative Voice

The narrative voice of 'Mother' is plural. The speaker shifts between three pronominal positions over the course of the poem: second person address to the dead mother, first person plural identification with a community of mourners, and first person singular identification as the individual poet. Table 4 summarises these shifts.

Position in poem	Dominant pronouns	Referent	Narrative effect
Opening (lines 1 to 3)	'you' (second person)	The dead mother	Apostrophe; treats the absent addressee as present
Middle (lines 7 to 12)	'we', 'our' (first person plural)	Speaker plus an unspecified community of mourners	Establishes communal grief and invites reader identification
Centre (lines 14 to 16)	'me', implied 'I' (first person singular)	The individual speaker as poet	Marks the moment of poetic self-positioning
Lines 17 to 22	'you' with embedded narrative voice	The mother as remembered subject	Mythologising; weaves the mother into communal memory
Closing (lines 23 to 26)	'our', 'you'	The community and the mother	Returns to communal address and affirms continuing presence

Table 4. Pronominal shifts and their narrative effects in 'Mother'.

The opening apostrophe to the mother is a long-established convention of elegy, both in the western lyric tradition and in the Ewe and Akan dirge traditions of Ghana (Awoonor, 1974; Nketia, 1969). It is the form's basic move. What is more interesting is the way Taluah moves out of and back into apostrophe through the first person plural and singular. The 'we' of the middle section is unspecified. It could refer to siblings, to the wider

family, to the village, or to the community more broadly. The vagueness is productive. It allows readers to locate themselves within the mourning community if they have known a similar loss. It also draws on the Akan dirge tradition, in which the dirge is sung by an individual but on behalf of a group (Nketia, 1969).

The shift to first person singular in ‘The Maker did give me song’ is the moment at which the communal mourner becomes the individual poet. The line acknowledges the speaker’s specific gift, song, and the limits of that gift, since the speaker also acknowledges that he has not been given the keys to unlock death’s secrets. This is the position of the modern lyric poet, working with limited resources in the face of an absolute fact. The return to first person plural in the closing lines folds the speaker back into the community. The poem ends with the grief held collectively rather than individually. This pronominal architecture, from ‘you’ to ‘we’ to ‘me’ and back to ‘we’, is the central structural feature of the poem’s narrative voice.

Deictic Expressions

Deictic markers in ‘Mother’ are few but deliberate. Table 5 lists them by type and function.

Deictic type	Example	Anchoring function
Temporal	‘Today, last year’	Locates the speaker on the first anniversary of the death
Temporal	‘The moment you fell to death’	Refers backward to the moment of dying
Spatial	‘But here we stand’ (twice)	Locates the mourners in a shared physical place
Personal	‘you’, ‘we’, ‘our’, implied ‘I’	Establishes addressee, community and speaker
Social	‘Mother’ (vocative, twice)	Marks the relational status of speaker to addressee

Table 5. Deictic expressions in ‘Mother’

The opening temporal deictic does important work. ‘Today, last year’ places the speaker at a precise commemorative moment. Anniversaries of

death are ritually significant in many Ghanaian communities, where one-year and forty-day commemorations form part of the standard mourning calendar (Nketia, 1969). By beginning with this temporal anchor, the poem signals that the grief being expressed is not raw and unprocessed but ritualised and recurrent. The speaker has already lived a year with the loss.

The repeated spatial deictic 'here we stand' insists on the physical presence of the mourners. It does so in implicit contrast with the absent location of the mother, which the poem refuses to specify. The unstated whereabouts of the mother is a structural absence that the repetition of 'here' makes felt. This is the sense in which context is constructed rather than merely supplied, as Adegbite (2019) argues: the reader assembles the commemorative scene from five or six deictic items, and the poem never describes it. The personal deictics carry the pronominal architecture discussed above. The vocative 'Mother' appears twice and is the social deictic that establishes the relationship governing the entire utterance.

Figurative Evaluation

The most condensed evaluative passage in the poem is the couplet:

Tell of a mother who was born an antelope
Yet took her time to learn the acumen of the panther

The figure draws on a tradition in which animals carry moral and temperamental meanings (Finnegan, 1970/2012; Yitah, 2009). The antelope is associated with grace, gentleness, swiftness and vulnerability. The panther is associated with intelligence, cunning and predatory force. The couplet asserts that the mother was born with the qualities of the antelope but acquired the qualities of the panther over time.

The evaluative weight of the couplet is positive on both sides. The mother is not described as having abandoned gentleness for cunning. She is described as having added one set of qualities to another. This is dense evaluative modality dressed in figurative language. Readers are told what to think of the mother, but through images rather than adjectives, which makes the judgement feel earned rather than declared. The closing four lines move from figurative evaluation to paradox:

You are a stain in our minds
A scar in our hearts
Even though you die
You live

The metaphors of stain and scar are sensory and bodily. They locate the mother's continuing presence in the minds and bodies of the survivors. The paradox of the final two lines collapses boulomaic and evaluative modality into a single statement. The speaker wishes that the mother lives, and asserts that she does. The poem itself, by weaving the mother into thoughts and remoulding her into generations, is offered as the evidence for the assertion. This is a literary mode of survival, consonant with both the Ewe dirge tradition's emphasis on continuity beyond death (Awoonor, 1974; Okunoye, 2005) and the Akan dirge's mode of keeping the dead present in song (Nketia, 1969).

Conclusion

The application of Simpson's modal grammar to 'Mother' yields a clear set of answers to the three research questions. On the first, the poem is a Category A text with positive shading, and its narration is necessarily narratorial because the speaker is a participant in the world described. On the second, the classification is sustained by all four of the kinds of modality Simpson identifies as building such a stance, with evaluative modality the most frequent and deontic modality the least frequent but structurally the most prominently placed. On the third, the narrative voice is plural, moving between second person address, first person plural and first-person singular, and this movement is the central structural feature of the poem. The deictic markers are few but precise, anchoring the speaker to a specific commemorative moment and a specific shared place. Figurative items, particularly the antelope and panther couplet and the closing paradox, function as compressed evaluative modality and draw on Ghanaian oral tradition for their resonance.

Three contributions follow. First, the analysis demonstrates that Simpson's framework retains its analytical power for short lyric and elegiac forms, not only for narrative fiction. Second, the reading of 'Mother' places the poem within a tradition of Ghanaian elegy that runs from the Akan and Ewe dirge into contemporary written poetry, while showing how a contemporary poet handles the inherited materials with

conscious craft. Third, the study demonstrates that the combined linguistic and pragmatic approach to textual analysis developed in Nigerian scholarship, and associated in particular with Adegbite (2019) and Adegbite and Odebunmi (2006), transfers without strain to Ghanaian poetic data. The categories travel; what requires local knowledge is the cultural weighting of figurative items, not the analytical apparatus itself. The limitations of the study should be acknowledged. The analysis works on a single poem and does not test the framework against a larger corpus of Taluah's work or of contemporary Ghanaian elegy more broadly, and the frequency counts are accordingly descriptive rather than inferential. Further work could extend the approach to other poems in the *You/Me* anthology, to other Ghanaian elegies of the twenty-first century, and to comparative studies that place Ghanaian elegy alongside Nigerian elegiac writing and alongside elegiac traditions in other African literary cultures. There is also scope for a corpus stylistic study of pronominal and modal patterns across a larger body of West African poetry, building on the methods developed by Nkansah (2021, 2024) and Nkansah and Bonsu (2022).

The wider point is that close stylistic reading remains a productive way of engaging with Ghanaian poetry. The tools work. What they reveal in 'Mother' is that the poem's emotional power is not vague or inexplicable. It is the result of specific linguistic choices made and held throughout twenty-six lines. Simpson's framework gives us a vocabulary for describing those choices, and the analysis shows that the vocabulary is adequate to the task.

References

- Aboh, R. (2012). Modality as a discourse strategy in new Nigerian poetry. *Journal of Nigeria Studies*, 1(2).
- Aboh, R. (2013). Pronominal strategies: Language and social reality in Joe Ushie's poetry. *University of Uyo Journal of Humanities*, 16–17(2), 169–185.
- Aboh, R. (2018). *Language and the construction of multiple identities in the Nigerian novel*. NISC (Pty) Ltd.
- Aboh, R. (2024). Indigenous eco-consciousness in recent Nigerian poetry: The example of Joe Ushie. *Literature, Critique, and Empire Today*, 59(2–3), 426–440. <https://doi.org/10.1177/30333962241228442>

- Adegbite, W. (2009). *The psycholinguistics of English language in Nigeria: An introduction*. Kraft Books.
- Adegbite, W. (2019). Context, discourse and knowledge construction in pragmatics analysis. *Research in Pragmatics*, 1(1), 1–28.
- Adegbite, W. (2020). *Sociolinguistics and the sociology of English in Nigeria*. Obafemi Awolowo University Press.
- Adegbite, W., & Odebunmi, A. (2006). Discourse tact in doctor-patient interactions in English: An analysis of diagnosis in medical communication in Nigeria. *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 15(4), 499–519.
- Akindele, F., & Adegbite, W. (1999). *The sociology and politics of English in Nigeria: An introduction*. Obafemi Awolowo University Press.
- Anyidoho, K. (1985). *Earthchild with Brain Surgery*. Woeli Publishing Services.
- Awoonor, K. (1974). *Guardians of the sacred word: Ewe poetry*. NOK Publishers.
- Bal, M. (2017). *Narratology: Introduction to the theory of narrative* (4th ed.). University of Toronto Press.
- Finnegan, R. (2012). *Oral literature in Africa*. Open Book Publishers. (Original work published 1970)
- Fowler, R. (1996). *Linguistic criticism* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Genette, G. (1980). *Narrative discourse: An essay in method*. Cornell University Press.
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. I. M. (2013). *Halliday's introduction to functional grammar* (4th ed.). Routledge.
- Jeffries, L., & McIntyre, D. (2010). *Stylistics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Leech, G. N. (1969). *A linguistic guide to English poetry*. Longman.
- Leech, G. N., & Short, M. (2007). *Style in fiction: A linguistic introduction to English fictional prose* (2nd ed.). Pearson Longman.
- Levinson, S. C. (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Nkansah, S. K. (2021). A stylistic study of patterned repetition in Ghanaian hiplife lyrics. *Drumspeak: International Journal of Research in the Humanities*, 5(3), 29–49.

- Nkansah, S. K. (2024). Narrative perspectives in selected Ghanaian hiplife lyrics. *Cogent Arts and Humanities*, 11 (1), Article 2382551.
- Nkansah, S. K., & Bonsu, E. M. (2022). Foregrounding the verbal process: A corpus stylistic analysis of Adichie's *Zikora* (2020). *Linguistics Initiative*, 2(2), 155–172.
- Nketia, J. H. K. (1969). *Funeral dirges of the Akan people*. Negro Universities Press.
- Odebunmi, A., & Ayoola, K. A. (Eds.). (2016). *Language, context and society: A festschrift for Wale Adebite*. Obafemi Awolowo University Press.
- Okunoye, O. (2005). 'We too sing': Kofi Anyidoho and Ewe poetic traditions in *Elegy for the Revolution*. *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 40 (1), 91–111.
- Ononye, F. C. (2016). Speech acting and stylistic strategies of legitimization in selected supreme court judgement texts in Nigeria. In A. Odebunmi & K. A. Ayoola (Eds.), *Language, context and society: A festschrift for Wale Adebite* (pp. 347–360). Obafemi Awolowo University Press.
- Palmer, F. R. (2001). *Mood and modality* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Short, M. (2018). *Exploring the language of poems, plays and prose*. Routledge.
- Simpson, P. (1993). *Language, ideology and point of view*. Routledge.
- Simpson, P. (2025). *Stylistics: A resource book for students*. Routledge.
- Taluah, A. R. (2013). *The context and poetics of Kasena dirges and war songs*. Lambert Academic Publishing.
- Taluah, A. R. (2015). Oral traditions as embodiments of knowledge: The case of the Kasena of north-eastern Ghana. *International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies*, 2(1), 597–607.
- Taluah, A. R. (2021). *Grandmasters of the drum: A literary linguistic analysis of the Dagbamba panegyrics* (The Mouth: Critical Studies on Language, Culture and Society, Special Issue 6). University of Cologne, Institute for African Studies and Egyptology.
- Toolan, M. (2013). *Narrative: A critical linguistic introduction*. Routledge.

- Tunca, D. (2014). *Stylistic approaches to Nigerian fiction*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Uspensky, B. (1973). *A poetics of composition*. University of California Press.
- Verdonk, P. (2002). *Stylistics*. Oxford University Press.
- Yitah, H. (2009). 'Fighting with proverbs': Kasena women's (re)definition of female personhood through proverbial jesting. *Research in African Literatures*, 40(3), 74–95.