Aspects of Structure in Ken Saro Wiwa's Sozaboy: A Novel in Rotten English

By

Peace Ibala Amala, PhD.
Department of English and Communication Art,
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education,
Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.
Email: amalapeace@yahoo.com

Abstract

This paper discusses aspects of narrative structure in Ken Saro-Wiwa's *Sozaboy: A Novel in Rotten English*. The study turns from the typical discussion of *Sozaboy* as an anti-war novel which employs an unconventional language to convey its message, to concentrate on the much neglected aspect of the novel, the discussion of various literary elements which have contributed to the novel's effectiveness while lending it form and charm. The study, through a close reading, utilizing the formalistic perspective offers fresh insights into the novel and reveals that of all Saro-Wiwa's works, *Sozaboy* is the one that has all the strength of his genius as an innovative writer who conveys originality to African literature and brings to the fore that his novel is a completely serious work of art with meaning and beauty, which authenticates and shapes African experience and sensibilities. The paper concludes that the results of the approach through narrative structure is profitable to examine the novel as it reveals the artistic features employed by the writer to enrich his work and provides a useful tool for the literary criticism of the African novel.

Keywords: Close reading, Formalism, Literary Criticism, Sozaboy, Structure

Introduction

Of all Ken Saro-Wiwa's works, *Sozaboy* is the one with all the strength of his genius and a completely serious work of art, dominated by what the formalists consider as artistry and literariness (the poetic language employed in literary works which differs from everyday language). For the Formalists then, it is the successful deployment of craft, which offers the unique identity of a novelist's art in dealing with issues of modern literature and that whatever narrative method is employed by the writer, is essentially rhetorical by nature of its organization and appeal to close and sensitive reading.

Modern literature is known for its experimentation (Bray, Gibbons and McHale 1). Clearly, Saro-Wiwa's *Sozaboy* as the product of a modern mind, is marked out by the sheer force of its experimentation. The novel stands out from any other novel by the technical issues

illuminated through the use of unconventional English or what Saro-Wiwa terms "rotten English." Saro-Wiwa gives to the world a compelling and memorable novel. The passages in *Sozaboy* are far too engaging with the critique of the Nigerian Civil war, along with the trauma and disposition of the Nigerian citizens at the time of Saro-Wiwa's writing.

The novelist's craft, irrespective of the narrative method employed is essentially rhetorical, is an axiom, which perhaps might be generally acceptable as such by critics and scholars of every literary persuasion. In approaching the novel in this way, we should be conscious of Mark Schorer's seminal article "Technique as Discovery" which offers insights as a model of close analysis applied to a work of fiction, as it summarizes the principles of modern criticism, founded on the "exacting scrutiny of literary texts and lending to a view of form (structure) and content as inseparable, since style of a literary work is not an ornamental embellishment upon the subject matter of a work of art, but the very medium in which the subject of a literary creation turns into art.

Closely associated with Schorer's notion of how criticism should carry its study, is the critic Coleridge, who acknowledges that works of art have component parts as the "essential organizing principle" (qtd in Abrams 67), which calls attention to each component part, as an object of pleasure. The composition of the novel would appear to be in Coleridge's aesthetic as the "delight from the *whole*, as is compatible with a distinct gratification from each component *part*" (Lodge 9). Thus, the structure or component parts of the novel will clearly illuminate the literary quality of the novel in terms of the striking elements used. Accordingly, it is by means of structure that a novelist seeks to convince the readers to the validity of his/her aesthetic vision.

In general, Saro-wiwa's *Sozaboy* has been criticized for being unconventional in connection with the world of literature. The novel is an innovative blend of Pidgin, broken, and Standard English. To his defense, Saro-wiwa we can conceivably say, was attempting in his fiction what others before him had never done. His was a satire on the nature and horrific effect of the Nigerian civil war, so in the process he tries to evolve the structure of his novel so as to achieve his purpose of writing. Saro-wiwa's craving for form ultimately culminates in *Sozaboy* (1985). It is the intricate structure and exceptional creative writing style that stimulated the interests of critics and readers to study and further explore the exquisite literary charm of the novel. The critically mined, right from the moment of its publication, find the organization of this novel to be rich and close in literary complexities. Christopher Walsh sees *Sozaboy* as an empowering voice for suffering ethnic minority groups in the 'fractured reality' created by the nation-state in postcolonial Nigeria (112). For Jeffrey Gunn "Ken Saro-Wiwa's identity as a member of the ethnic minority Ogoni

people, along with his political activism and execution on their behalf, is inseparable from the content in *Sozaboy"* (1). Saro-Wiwa constructs a voice for the voiceless by designing a language which he terms 'Rotten English' and defines it as "a mixture of Nigerian pidgin English, broken English and occasional flashes of good, even idiomatic English" (Saro-Wiwa's Author's Note). It is this blend which allows 'Rotten English' to traverse national and social barriers and permits an appraisal of all groups engaged in the Nigerian Civil War. Michael North is of the view that "Rotten English" is a hybridized, syncretic language" which "allows Sozaboy to contradict, to speak against, the civil war at the level of form" (109). On the part of Michael Onwuemene, Saro-Wiwa shatters the centre or sideline ideal and provides a post-colonial variety of English, which operates in conjunction with "standard English" in a non-ranked style. Onwuemene goes on to state that it is this "process of displacement" which initiates a chain reaction in which Saro-Wiwa expands the parameters of Nigerian 'national literature' and counteracts the Nigerian government's 'national silencing' of 'ethnic particularism' (1055). John Marx categorizes *Sozaboy* among "[m]emoir-style child soldier novels" (78).

The Aim of the Paper

The aim of the paper is to explore the use of structure in the novel *Sozaboy* and analyse its semantic and structural features.

Objectives of the Paper

1. to study the theoretical approach concerning the application of the concept and features of structure in a fictive work.
2. define structure in literature and present the aesthetics of its usage.
3. analyze structural features of Saro-wiwa's *Sozaboy* in the light of contemporary literature.

Conceptual Clarification

In any literary composition, it is fundamental to have a general plan or shape on how the actions of the work would revolve. It is clearly this planned framework of a piece of literature that forms its structure. It is worthy to point out that structure in the novel, is either the way the constituent parts are pieced together and arranged or can refer to how a writer divides a story into parts and how they link with each segment to give the novel a peculiar nature or character. *Sozaboy*, the novel for this investigation consists of narrative structures by which it addresses a number of topical issues of a particular moment in history.

Structure is made of elements which together form a system that brings about unity and coherence of a work of art. Following our literary perspective, a text cannot stand alone in the operation of things or in its signification process – other component parts would be connected to make a whole. The different parts must function together to achieve coherence. Thus, structure becomes an important element in a work of art. In the production of meaning, the constituent parts of a text would have to be studied thoroughly to see how they correlate in generating meaning or in coming to terms with what the work means. This implies that, to understand and appreciate a literary text, it is imperative we acknowledge the existence of structure and its elements which build the work into a perfect whole.

In this connection then, we might usefully think of the structure of a writer's work as a system which conveys the dynamics of his/her perception, indicating the nature of the experience as well as how the experience is apprehended.

In criticism, many writers have different views about the term structure and it is necessary to highlight some of these views to establish which term will be used in this paper. In *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* for instance, structure is well-defined as the "sum of the relationships of the parts of literary whole to one another" (812).

The *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* defines structure thus: "to arrange the different parts of something into a pattern or system in which each part is connected to the others" (1752). Structure in fiction is usually considered as the way in which parts of the work are connected to each other to form a whole or create a unity.

The underlying idea here, is that, structure is the intrinsic system or constituents of a narrative, which help to guide readers in the navigation of the created world of a story and through which meaning is achieved. For Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, the formalists "brought new stimuli to the study of the literary work" by postulating that "Structure" is a concept including both content and form so far as they are organized for aesthetic purposes. The work of art is, then, considered as a whole system of signs, or structure of signs, serving a specific aesthetic purpose (140-141).

To make a critical issue then, we should be made conscious of the fact that narratives comprise structure, which makes a story a self-sufficient entity, in which when analyzed generates meaning without making extrinsic efforts as to what constitutes its meaning. This prompts Seymour Chatman to note that: "every narrative… [has] a structure with a content plane (called "story") and an expression plane (called "discourse")" (146). It is

therefore very imperative to realize the fact that the contents of a story are as significant as the structure by which contents find expression. On his part, Jonathan Culler asserts that "narrative structures are pervasive" (83). This pervasiveness has to do with the fact that every story has a structure. The structure is ubiquitous in all narratives across the universe. Thus, Culler underscores the universality of narrative structure in stories. As we see buildings with their structural components, so it is with works of art. This analogy is apt in our discussion of the concept of narrative structure. Narrative structure determines artistry and literariness of a work. This captures the postulation of Mieke Bal who states that "… it is not the existence of narrative texts but the relevance of narrative structure for their meaning that is the issue" (13). The evaluation of the narrative structure of *Sozaboy* is cardinal, as the novel is perceived to be the crown of Saro-Wiwa's achievement.

There is another reason why aspects of structure seems a particularly useful term in discussing Saro-Wiwa's *Sozaboy*. This lies in the author's oratorical or historical voice and love and concern for the survival and development of the minority group of his country.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical perspective that underpins this study is formalism. Formalism, also known as ¨New Criticism¨, is a literary methodology that analyzes, interprets or evaluates the inherent features of a literary text, by examining it through its aesthetic composition such as form, language, technique and style. Fundamentally, the formalist perspective allows literature to be viewed from a scientific viewpoint. Implicated here is that the formalistic perspective enjoys what other literary methods obviously lack: a method of isolating and defining correctly and effectively the shaping principles of structure in particular literary works and the artistic reasons that justify the configurations observable in individual literary works. In contrast, the techniques of other literary schools have principally been to generalize, speculate or moralize, while that of the formalist school is essentially specific, analytical and constructive.

The formalist school of critics on their part considers historical, biographical, sociological and cultural context as extrinsic factors in understanding literature and subsequently irrelevant as a critical tool. As it has rightfully being stated, "it is the work itself we are judging", not its "intention nor social significance to be got from it" (Kettle 12). Wellek and Warren endorse this view by maintaining that it is "only the works themselves which, justify all our interest in the life of an author, in his social environment and the whole process of literature" (139). Cleanth Brooks asserts that, "what belongs to biography and psychology may be interesting but it is not to be confused with an account of the work" (qtd in Blamires 355). Such concerns, it has been contended, "detract from making the work

yield its sweet juices to the reader" (Nnolim 9). Undoubtedly then, any repeated interest or pleasure we take in a novel, once information has been imparted, is in its structure and how the novelist generates meanings through manipulation of his subject matter. More decisively, it is the formalistic approach alone which esteems the individual proficiency of the writer, his/her creative and controlling hand, and ultimately his/her success as an exemplary artist of literary art.

The formalistic approach is definitely as Wilbur Scott declares, "the method one automatically thinks of when speaking of contemporary criticism" (179). Wellek and Warren perceive it as, "the natural and sensible starting-point in literary scholarship" (139). This method, Roger Webster records, is at "the heart of the interpretive process", and with it, it is impossible to misread a literary work (23). Quite pointedly, it is the formalistic appeal which enables readers to "enjoy the aesthetic or characteristic values of literature" (qtd in Blamires 354).

According to Roman Jakobson, "the object of study in literary science is not literature but literariness" (cited in Abrams, 127). Therefore, how language is used to make estrange or defamiliarize a work of art becomes an issue of interest for formalist critics. This infers that the manner in which a narrative is presented is as important as the narrative itself. In this connection, M.H. Abrams affirms that: "Formalism views literature primarily as a specialized use of language" which "offer the reader a special mode of experience by drawing attention to its own "formal" features – that is, to the qualities and internal relations of the linguistic signs themselves" (127). Essentially, the formalistic approach renders the exceptional features of a work, using various structural strategies, Maduka asserts, to reveal hidden truths which enrich the experiences of the readers (2).

The point being emphasized here is that Formalist criticism underscores the form of a literary work to determine its meaning and that the aesthetics of a work is in the structure of its construction. Emphasis here is principally on the work itself, rather than on the social or historical contexts of the work. The proponents of the formalist method are of the view that the crucial meaning of a work is revealed through a detailed examination of the formal elements in the work instead of approaching it from a social consideration.

What brings the formalistic approach so superbly to mind is its critical concern with the objective reading of a text. It cannot be overstated that unlike other critical methods, a formalistic study can sensitively reveal the dynamics of a work of art. The formalistic criticism is at the moment invaluable because only a complete description and an in-depth analysis will give a full insight into the incredible intricacies of a literary work and what

the author sets out to achieve. Accordingly, a formalistic investigation of Saro-Wiwa's *Sozaboy,* will give insights into the technical concerns thrust up by his unconventional deployment of language and reveal that the novel is not only rich in the complexities of its language use but is indeed a master piece of art in its own right. Having offered these perceptions, we shall now turn our attention in the remaining part of this paper to the critical evaluation of aspects of structure in Saro-Wiwa's *Sozaboy.*

Analysis of Aspects of Structure in Saro-Wiwa's *Sozaboy*

In this paper, we shall isolate and establish the technicalities of fictional elements used in this analysis and determine how the novelistic structure calls attention to Saro-wiwa's craft.

Setting

Setting is regarded as the physical and sometimes spiritual background against which the action of a story takes place (Holman 453). For Kennedy, the setting of a story conjures "time and place" which prompt characters to reveal their innermost natures (51). Boshego sees setting as "the sum total of references which constitute the social environment and circumstances, the physical and temporal objects, the artefacts as well as the feelings of characters" (89).

In *Sozaboy*, Ken Saro-Wiwa takes his reader into the imaginative milieu of Dukana, where the narrator dwells. This is a rural community in which "everybody" as the narrator makes us to understand "was happy at first" (1) before the change of a new government in his own estimation.

The setting of Dukana is presented as no better than an embryonic village without basic facilities:

> Dukana is far away from any other better place in the world…. All the houses in the town are made of mud. There is no good road or drinking water. Even the school is not fine and no hospital or anything. The people of Dukana are fishermen and farmers. (4)

The narrative places the time after a good harvest where "All the nine villages were dancing" and "eating plenty maize with pear and knocking tory under the moon" waiting for the "new government of soza and police" (1) as perceptible suggestions that things are about to improve for Dukana inhabitants.

Despite their eagerness the "new government" fails to meet the desires of the Dukana people as they become the "new government's" economic victims when they are bound to hand over their money, food and clothing to Chief Birabee on behalf of the 'new government'. Precisely, "every man must bring three shillings and every woman one shilling" (8). However, this new measure is difficult to bear for the Dukana people who struggle to survive on a daily basis. This prompts Duzia to question: "How can porson like myself without house, without wife, without farm, without cloth to wear begin to give money, chop and cloth to government?"(7). To this, Duzia adds a crucial point: "Now government dey give chop and money and cloth to person? Now person go begin give government chop?" (7). Thus, Duzia's query underscores the exploitative nature of the "new government" and reveal the powerless situation of the Dukana people.

Point of View

This is one of the critical elements of a story that defines the perspective from which a reader experiences the narrative. Abrams says it is "the mode or perspective established by the author by means of which the reader is presented with the characters, actions, setting and events which constitute the narrative in a work of fiction" (142). Stories get told from a number of standpoints and in *Sozaboy*, it is from the first person point of view.

First Person Point of View

In a first person viewpoint, the story is rendered by a narrator who is also the central character within the story. The story revolves around the narrator and allows the reader insights into the motif and inner thoughts of the narrator. In *Sozaboy,* the story is told from the prism of Mene's vantage point.

From the account of the narrator, Mene, we first discover of the speculation of an impending war in Dukana:

> So, although everyone was happy at first, after some time, everything begin spoil small by small and they were saying that there is trouble everywhere.
> Everywhere, the people were talking about it. In Pitakwa, in Bori. And in Dukana. Radio begin dey hala as 'e never hala before. (3)

The main action of Sozaboy, we must remember, centers first on Mene's determination to obtain a license and become a lorry driver himself: "I get my own licence and then I can get my own lorry to drive" (11). The narrative informs us that Mene's first desire of becoming a lawyer or doctor was cut short when his mother informed him of her inability to pay his school fees beyond elementary school. He intimates us thus:

> When I passed the elementary six exams, I wanted to go to secondary school but my mama told me that she cannot pay the fees. The thing pained me bad bad because I wanted to be big man like lawyer or doctor riding car and talking big big English… so when I see that I cannot go to secondary, I was not happy. However, that is my luck. (11)

Character

A character is a fictive creation of the author by means of which the author effectively communicate of his/her ideas to the readers. In the novel, Mene, is the central character. Helen Chukwuma considers Mene as an "internalizing character" which actions burst over his head, how his environment continuously preys on him" (39). Mene is described as naive character who joins the army in an effort to prove his manhood to his would-be-wife, Agnes and to clinch a hero's welcome as a true Dukana son. Mene's drive to join the army is first developed by pressure from his idealistic girlfriend, Agnes, who tells Mene when they first met: "When trouble come, I like strong, brave man who can fight and defend me" (19). Later on in the novel we see Mene's yearning to be a "sozaboy" is driven by pride:

> So from that time wherever I go people are calling me 'sozaboy', 'sozaboy'. Even I am very famous in Dukana sef. All the young young men are saying that I am tough man. Marrying fine Lagos girl, and just like that and preparing to go and join army…. Myself, I was prouding plenty…. I like the name well, well. (65)

Of Mene's character, we are made to see that Saro-wiwa seems to have sketched a protagonist with no inner moral strength, who is incapable of standing up as a man. Mene is a character who he is hallow at the core. His mother pays for his driving apprenticeship (55), marries Agnes as wife for him (60), gives him money to bribe his way to recruitment into the army (67) and tells him "what to do and what not to do" (55). As Mene confesses: "this mother is both father and mother to me" (55) and how "can I disobey this my mother?" (56).

Style

Style in literature can be delineated as how a writer decides to express whatever he/she wants to say; the author's choice of words, the sentence structure, syntax, figurative language and sentence arrangement constitute the author's style and all work together to establish mood, images, and meaning in the text. Literary style is largely used to "draw attention to the characteristics or peculiar use of language in a particular text, author, or period" (Dutton 73). Abrams defines it as "the manner of linguistic expression in prose or

verse," or how a speaker or writer choses to communicate his/her emotions or thoughts (190). Saro-wiwa's writing style is marked by aesthetic particularities which aid in the development of motifs in the storyline and what he/she wishes to represent. The following aspect of style as utilized in *Sozaboy* will now be addressed.

Code Switching

Another literary device which contributes to the stylistic effects of the novel is code switching, which refers to the use of two languages within a sentence or discourse. Code switching occurs when a speaker alternates between two or more languages or language varieties in the context of a single dialogue. The term code switching has been defined as "the use of two or more languages in the same conversation or utterance" (qtd in Gardner-Chloros 361). In code switching, individuals who are articulate in two or more languages can code switch from one to the other according to the situation, the person being addressed or even the topic. An instance where Saro-wiwa engages his characters in code switching is given below:

> "What is the meaning of this handkerchief?" is what I asked Bullet.
> "It means surrender," he answered. "That means to say that the person who is holding that handkerchief does not want to fight again. He want make we settle our quarrel. Make we talk. Make we no fight again,"
> "So true true that this enemy don tire for fight as the Chief Commander General was talking was talking that day?" I asked.
> "I no think so". (92)

In the extract above, the code switching is from Standard English to Pidgin and it is used as a form of showing solidarity and camaraderie as we see Bullet pointing Mene in the right direction to the symbol of handkerchief during war periods.

Linguistic adaptation

Linguistic adaptation is a phenomenon where language representations change in response to linguistic input. As part of Saro-wiwa's experimentation with language, there are elements of phonological interference in the words and expressions used by the protagonist, Mene to convey his thoughts. The phonological interferences are spread throughout the novel. Examples include words such as:

"lomber" for (number); "de" for (the); "porson" for (person); "zenttle" for (gentle);"enzoy" (enjoy); "awright" for (alright); "sarzent" for (sergeant); sah" for (sir); "sosa" for (soldier);

"foto" for (photo); "Hitla" for (Hitler); "massa" for (Master); "sanmazor" for (sergeant major);
"Quashun" for (Attention); "terpreta" for (interpreter); "corple" for (corporal); "Tan papa dere"
(stand properly there) and so on as aptly explained in the glossary of the novel.

Use of Slang

Saro-wiwa also utilized local slang in his novel, *Sozaboy*. Slang words or expressions consist of informal registers generally spoken to show inclusion in a certain social group. It is worth noting that authors generally use slang in their literary works to show that the narrative belongs to a certain time and place. Some slang words are also so embedded in a particular culture that authors might use them to mean something which is obvious at the time of writing, but which must be interpreted by readers later on. Here are some examples of slang from the novel:

"ye-ye man" (means a never do well); "bobby" (means breast); "yekpe" (means useless); "free-born" (means citizen); "see pepper" (means to see red); "oyibo" (means a white man); "hot drink" (means alcoholic drink). Translation are in author's glossary.

Repetition

Repetition is a term which is used to designate words, phrases, expressions and concepts that are repeated in one form or the other to call attention to something or for the sake of emphasis. In repetition, it must be recalled, is subsumed as a suitable way to achieve cohesion in any written text. To this Jeffries and McIntyre add a crucial point. They see the core mechanism of cohesion as repetition of similar or identical words, phrases or clauses (85). Repetition is a common device of style in *Sozaboy.* It is mainly used to emphasize ideas, create rhythm and bring certain features to the fore. The words repeated could be lexical or structural.

Lexical Repetition

The words repeated are lexical if they occur anywhere or at different places in a sentence. Let us make references to these in *Sozaboy*:

In response to Chief Birabee, Duzia comments: "You say make we no give *trouble*. Awright. We cannot give *trouble*. We cannot give *trouble*. We people in Dukana do not give *trouble*. We never give *trouble* before. So we cannot begin to give *trouble* now" (7). Mene having realized the futility of war says: "if anybody say anything about war or even fight, I will just *run* and *run* and *run* and *run* and *run*." (181). [italics added].

Structural Repetition

For this, the repeated expressions occur in identical positions within the sentences in a particular pattern to call readers attention to the expressions given prominence. We make reference to the instance when Mene and his group are thought to take care of their guns:

> Don't joke with am. Love am, respect am, keep am clean every time. Don't allow cold to catch it. Love it as you love your picken; as you love your wife, as you love your girlfriend. Sleep with am as you sleep with your wife or your girlfriend. (74)

Ideophones

Ideophones are usually words that imitate the sound they refer to or words that depict sensory imagery that evoke ideas in sound. The major purpose of an ideophone is to convey meaning on the basis of its sound and imitative forms. The term "ideophone" is defined as: "A vivid representation of an idea in sound…a word, often onomatopoeic, which describes a predicate, qualificative or adverb in respect to manner, colour, sound, smell, action, state or intensity." (Doke 118). Saro-wiwa artistically sustains the tension in the *Sozaboy* through the use of ideophones. They abound in the novel and are quite imitative and mostly expressive of the military activities during warfare. Let us quote well known instances from the text for our comfort.

On seeing armed soldiers in Dukana for the first time, Mene, in a sudden trepidation of feelings says: "My heart begin cut, *gbum, gbum, gbum*" (38). When Mene dreams of soldiers attempting to conscript him into the army, he further comments: "My heart begin to beat drum more than before. *Tam tum tum. Tam, tum tum. Tam tum tum*…. I am afraid of the sozas. I do not want to join the sozas" (47). For his refusal to join the army, Mene intimates us that: "they (soldiers) begin to shoot their guns: *Tako, tako. Tako- tako-tako"* (47). The sounds of guns in the night are characterized as "*Gbagam! Gbaga gbaga gbagam!! Kijijim!!kikijijigim*" (31). The speed of the bullets is described as "*heeuun! Heeuun*!" (105). Again during a training drill at the P. T. ground Mene says: "and all of us will move our right leg and stamp it on the ground *gbram*" (71). (All italics are from the text)

Reduplication

Reduplication is a morphological process in which some part of a base, the root or stem of a word is repeated. The author also makes use of reduplication for expressive and aesthetic effects. Mene has a propensity for reduplication in his speech once more in conformity with pidgins. There are different manifestations of reduplication in diverse contexts in the

novel, which are used to convey different meanings or to magnify the meaning of the qualifying term. Illustrations of reduplications abound in the novel such as:

"small small people", "*far far* places", "*big big* grammar", "*long long* words", "to eat *quick quick*", "*very very* fine things", "*dirty dirty* rag", "*big big* bribe", **"***jolly jolly"*, "true true", *"before before "*, *"corner corner"*, *"slowly slowly"*, *"proper proper"*, *"at all at all"* (italics mine)

Borrowed words

Borrowed words are words adopted from one language to another. The words borrowed are called loan words, which are words taken from another language and used without translation; it has a precise meaning that is characteristically not present in an individual English word. To add quality of the atmosphere and background of history, Saro-wiwa in *Sozaboy*, borrowed from the local expressions of not only his immediate Khana environment, but also from the range of vocabularies from other parts of Nigeria, thus creating unity in the use of English language in Nigeria. The borrowed words are evident in such words like: "ginkana";"sarouk"; "kpongoss" (Khana) "lailai" ; "koboko"(Hausa), "Okporoko" "ngwo- ngwo", (Igbo), "Wayo" "wuruwuru", (Yoruba),

Euphemism

Another element of style used in the novel is euphemism, which is an indirect expressions that substitute words and phrases considered harsh, impolite, offensive or unpleasant. Fromkin and Rodman define a euphemism as "a word or phrase that replaces a taboo word or serves to avoid frightening or unpleasant subjects" (304). Geoffrey Leach see euphemism as "the linguistic equivalent of disinfectant" (53). The need for euphemism is both social and emotional, as it permits discussion of taboo topics such as sex, body parts, personal appearances, excrement or reference to death and serves as a medium for upholding the appearance of politeness.

In *Sozaboy*, there is a touch of euphemism. This is evident in the narrator, Mene's night encounter with Agnes in the African Upwine Bar. Mene uses euphemism when talking about Agnes, his ideal girl, by referring to her as "service" instead of a sales person or stewardess. As Mene informs us: "So that night, I was in the Upwine Bar. No plenty people at first. I ordered one bottle of palmy from service. This service is young girl" (13). Again Mene refers to her sexual appeal as "Jonny Just Come", he exclaims: "Him breasts na proper J.J.C, Jonny Just Come- dey stand like hill" (13). Ultimately, he makes reference to his penis as "my man". Let us hear the narrative account: "As I look am, my man begin to stand small small. I beg am make 'e no disgrace me especially as I no wear pant that night" (13). The narrative tells us that when thoughts filled him of seeing Agnes again, Mene did

not hesitate to say "when I think that I will see Agnes I begin to glad more than. My man begin to stand up up like snake wey no get house" (35). On her part, Agnes refers to Mene's penis as "thing". To quote her: "you want to stay here and marry with that your thing standing like snake wey no get house" (37).

Humour

Humour refers to the quality of being funny or amusing; or something that invites laugher to reveal a message. Humour consists primarily in the recognition and expression of inconsistencies or peculiarities present in a situation or character. Romero and Cruthirds define humour as "amusing communications that produce positive emotions and cognitions in the individual, group, or organization," (59). There is a splendid use of humour is at the beginning of the novel where a police man, Sergeant Okonkwo laments his promotion to the rank of Inspector:

> My master and myself went to gratulate him. But lo and behold, when we reached there now, Inspector Okonkwo was crying….with water from his eyes.
> No joke oh…. I have not seen such kain thing before. How can person who get promotion begin to cry. Instead of be happy. When my master ask Okonkwo why 'e dey cry, Okonkwo said… "Smog, how I no go cey. Look my house, fridge, radiogram, carpet, four wives, better house for my village. You tink say na my salary
> I use for all dese things…. Ah, dis promotion, na demotion. Make dem take de inspector,
> Give me my sarzent." (2)

We must not forget the humour inherent in Mene's question to Bullet on there way to the war front: "What he mean by we are going for front. No be inside lorry we dey?" (80). Mene on learning about "one porson called Enemy that plenty people will go to kill, plenty people including the girls (54), sets him pondering: "Wetin we dey go do dere? God alone sabi. Especially as Mr Enemy don die finish and we no go shoot am again. And we do not hold gun sef" (81). Mene's classification of the "Enemy" as an individual provokes additional laughter: "Every time he will be calling that Enemy. I begin to fear this Mr Enemy you know. Because I am thinking he must be a man pass Hitla sef" (78).

Irony

Another device of style used in this novel is irony, which is the use of words to convey a meaning that is the opposite of its literal or intended meaning. Dennis Green defines irony

as "a statement in which the real meaning is the opposite of the apparent meaning" (4). The most conspicuous example of irony occurs when Mene speaks of joining the army. Hear him:

> I will wear uniform like those boys. I will sing fine fine songs. Begin to march up and down, chop better chop. And as I am marching with gun and singing, prouding, all the people will come and look at me. They will say how I am brave man. Very brave man. (54).

It is ironical that even after the demolition of the soldiers' site, Mene is still ignorant of the cause of the war:

> The Chief Commander General have not told us why we are fighting. No. Tan Papa did not tell us why we are fighting. The soza Captain did not tell us why we must go inside the pit. I just carry gun, fight, go inside pit because they tell me to carry gun, fight, go inside pit; right turn, left turn, about turn, udad
> arms, run, no run, stand still, chop, piss, shit. (114)

Another reference to irony, is the case of Sergeant Okonkwo, who shades tears when he was promoted to the rank of Inspector. He expresses despair at the promotion: "Ah, dis promotion, na demotion. Make them take de inspector, give me my sarzent" (2). The irony of Sergeant Okonkwo's promotion catalogues the unrefined toll that unrestrained corruption can wield on the psyche of an individual. As Sergeant Okonkwo exclaims: "You think say na my salary I use for all dese things? If I no stand for road dere to be traffic you tink say I for fit?" (2).The irony here is that as sergeant, he would acquire wealth through the collection of bribes from motorists. But as an Inspector his hands would be tied.

Conclusion

This study has endeavoured to analyze aspects of structure in Ken Saro-wiwa's novel, *Sozaboy* in the best of formalistic practice. The study disregarded current discussions of *Sozaboy* as an anti-war novel which employs an unconventional language to convey its message, to concentrate on the structures which envelope the work giving it form and appeal, while revealing Saro-wiwa's most technical innovations as a novelist; who conveys originality to African literature as a satisfying and completely serious work of art. Finally, it is the finding of this paper that an investigation of aspects of structure, makes this study a refreshing reinterpretation of Saro-wiwa's *Sozaboy*, as it discloses the artistic features

employed by the writer to enrich his work, convey his message and provides a useful tool for the literary criticism of the African novel.

Works Cited

Abrams, M.H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms* 4th ed. New York: Holt, 1981.

Amala, Peace I. *Modes of Literary Studies.* Port Harcourt: Amphibious School Accessories 2011.

Blamires, Harry. *A History of Literary Criticism*. London: Macmillan, 1991.

Bray, Joe, Allison Gibbons and Brian McHale. *The Routledge Companion to Experimental Literature*. London: Routledge, 2012.

Boshego, P.L. "Setting in I.T Maditsi Short Stories". *South African Journal of African Languages.* 15.3 (1995):89-99.

Chatman, Seymour. *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film.* Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1980.

Chukwuma, Helen. "Characterization and Meaning in Sozaboy". *Critical Essays on Ken Saro-Wiwa's Sozaboy: A Novel in Rotten English.* Ed. Charles Nnolim. London: Saros International Publishers. (1992):39-52.

Culler, Jonathan. *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Doke, Clement Martyn. *Bantu Linguistic Terminology.* London, UK: Longmans, Green and Co, 1935.

Dutton, Richard. "Newer Than New: Stylistic and Structuralism". *Introduction to Literary Criticism.* London: Longman. (1984): 72-79.

Fromkin, Victoria and Robert Rodman. *An Introduction to Language*.5th ed. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1993.

Gardner-Chloros, Penelope. "Code-switching: Language Selection in Three Strasbourg Department Stores." *Sociolinguistics: A Reader and Coursebook*. Ed. Coupland, Nikolas, and Adam Jaworski. New York: Palgrave. (1997): 361- 375.

Green, Dennis Howard. Ed. *Irony in the Medieval Romance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

Gunn, Jeffrey. "Inside 'Rotten English': Interpreting the Language of Ambiguity in Ken Saro-Wiwa's *Sozaboy*". *E-sharp 11 Social Engagement, Empowerment and Change.* (2008):1-22.

Holman, Hugh, et al *A Handbook to Literature*. New York: Odyssey, 1960.

Jeffries, Lesley and Dan McIntyre. *Stylistics*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Kennedy X. J. *Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry and Drama* 4th ed. Boston: Little 1987.

Leech, Geoffrey. *Semantics*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books. 1974.

Lodge, David. *Language of Fiction: Essays in Criticism and Verbal Analysis of the English Novel*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1967.

Maduka, Chidi T. *The Intellectual and the Power Structure: Abrahams, Achebe, Wright and Flaubert.* Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press, 1999.

Marx, John. *Geopolitics and the Anglophone Novel, 1890-2011.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Nnolim, Charles. *Approaches to the African Novel: Essays in Analysis*. Owerri: Ihem Davis Press Ltd, 1999.

North, Michael. "Ken Saro-Wiwa's *Sozaboy*: The Politics of Rotten English". *Public Culture.* 13.1 (2001): 97-112.

Onwuemene, Michael C. "Limits of Transliteration: Nigerian Writers' Endeavour Towards a National Literary Language. *PMLA*. 114.5 (1999): 1055-1066.

Preminger, Alex, Ed. *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics.* Enl. ed. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1974.

Romero, Eric J and Kevin W Cruthirds. "The Use of Humor in the Workplace". *Academy of Management Perspectives*. 20. 2 (2006):58-69.

Saro-Wiwa, Ken. *Sozaboy*: *A Novel in Rotten English.* New York: Longman, 2003.

Scott, Wilbur. *Five Approaches of Literary Criticism: An Arrangement of Contemporary Critical Essays*. New York: Collier Books, 1962.

Walsh, Christopher. "Saro-Wiwa's *Sozaboy*: A Novel in Rotten English". *The Explicator*. 60(2). (2002):112-113.

Webster, Roger. *Studying Literary Theory: An Introduction*. 2nd ed. London: Arnold, 1996.

Wellek, Rene and Austin Warren. *Theory of Literature.* Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1956.