



Naming, Shaming, Presupposing and Hypothesising in Farooq Kperogi's Selected Essays

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Abstract. This study critically explores the stylistic elements in the socio-political writings of Farooq Kperogi. It focuses on how his linguistic and stylistic strategies construct and convey ideological critiques of governance, corruption, and social inequality in Nigeria. Employing a qualitative research approach, the study analyses a purposively selected corpus of ten essays published between 2019 and 2024, using critical stylistics as framework to examine features such as naming, presupposition, and negation. The findings reveal that Kperogi's writings are characterised by evocative naming and shaming strategies, ideologically loaded presuppositions, and the strategic use of negation to emphasise governance failures and expose systemic corruption. His essays consistently situate these critiques within Nigeria's socio-political discourse, highlighting issues such as nepotism, media complicity, political corruption, government laxity, and the erosion of democratic principles. The study concludes that Kperogi's linguistic choices are not merely descriptive but perform a critical function, shaping public discourse and challenging dominant narratives. Kperogi engages readers in a way that fosters critical reflection and advocacy for accountability.

Keywords: Critical Stylistics, Socio-Political Discourse, Farooq Kperogi, Linguistic Strategies, Nigeria, Governance Critique.

1. Introduction

Language functions as a potent instrument for communication, shaping perceptions, articulating ideologies, and advocacy (Fairclough, 2015). Words are not just neutral carriers of information, they embody choices, each with the potential to highlight, conceal, or reshape our understanding of issues. When used in writing, language becomes even more potent, enabling writers to engage with their audiences in ways that challenge societal norms, critique power structures, and inspire change (Fairclough 2015;

Ahmed, 2017). In every society, writers and commentators play a crucial role in helping people make sense of their realities. Writers craft narratives that reflect collective experiences, question governance, and expose social inequalities. One such writer is Farooq Kperogi. Farooq Kperogi is a Nigerian journalist, academic, and public commentator known for his sharp political analysis and media critique. He grew up in Nigeria, where he developed a strong interest in journalism and communication. His academic journey took him from Nigerian universities to the United States, where he earned a PhD in Communication from Georgia State University. Kperogi is best known for his *Notes from Atlanta* column and other writings, where he examines Nigerian politics, governance, and the role of the media. His work often challenges those in power, advocating for press freedom and accountability. Beyond journalism, he has written books on digital media and political communication, solidifying his reputation as a respected scholar and influential voice in public discourse. His writings have become a significant voice in Nigeria's socio-political environment. Kperogi's articles, often featured in newspapers, blogs, and academic platforms, dive into critical issues such as corruption, ethnicity, media accountability, and governance (Kperogi, 2019). His ability to articulate complex ideas in a relatable yet thought-provoking style has earned him a wide readership, both within Nigeria and in the diaspora.

Kperogi's writings go beyond simply reporting facts; they interrogate deeper societal issues, often asking difficult questions about leadership, public ethics, and the role of media in democracy. His essays combine personal insights with a broader critique of institutional systems, making his works not just informative but also transformative. However, the power of his writing lies not only in the themes he addresses but in how he uses language to craft his messages. Through critical stylistic choices Kperogi is able to engage his audience and persuade them to

reflect on the socio-political issues he discusses. Critical stylistics combines the precision of linguistic analysis with the insights of critical discourse studies to explore how texts construct and convey ideologies (Gaitet, 2024). It examines the linguistic choices embedded in texts to uncover the implicit power relations and assumptions that underpin communication (Jeffries, 2010).

The role of critical stylistics in understanding socio-political texts has been increasingly emphasised in linguistic scholarship. Jeffries (2010) asserts that critical stylistics goes beyond traditional stylistic analysis by interrogating the ideological underpinnings of linguistic structures. This framework is relevant to Kperogi's texts, which deploy metaphor, irony, lexical choices, and narrative structures to highlight systemic issues while advocating for reform. His essays are not merely descriptive but are imbued with persuasive intent, aiming to provoke critical reflection and action among his audience (Ahmed, 2017). Kperogi's writings are deeply rooted in the socio-political dynamics of Nigeria, which is marked by a significant interaction of ethnicity, religion, and political instability. The media, as a key agent in Nigerian society, often mirrors these complexities, oscillating between serving as a watchdog and perpetuating elite interests (Skjerdal, 2011). Kperogi critiques this duality, especially in his analyses of media practices and government policies.

The study is necessary in the light of its ability to bridge existing gaps in critical stylistics and Nigerian studies. While scholars have explored the thematic dimensions of Nigerian socio-political commentary, there is limited attention to the stylistic strategies employed by influential writers like Kperogi (Ette, 2018). This oversight undermines a comprehensive understanding of how language functions as a tool for critique and mobilisation. Through a critical stylistic analysis of Kperogi's writings, this study seeks to uncover the linguistic mechanisms that underpin his advocacy for social justice and good governance. Moreover, Kperogi's works engage with global issues, which reflect the interconnectedness of local and international discourses. His critique of media ethics, for instance, resonates with broader concerns about the erosion of journalistic integrity in the digital age (Mutsvauro, 2016). In situating Kperogi's texts within this context, the study highlights the transnational dimensions of his critical discourse, reinforcing the relevance of his writings to both Nigerian and international audiences.

2. Literature Review

The application of critical stylistics has been explored extensively in empirical research. Scholars have used this analytical approach to uncover how linguistic choices encode ideologies, frame narratives, and influence public opinion. These studies collectively illustrate the versatility of critical stylistics, while also highlighting its methodological challenges and contextual adaptations. This review looks at empirical studies on the subject-matter, their findings, methodologies, and contributions to the broader understanding of socio-political discourse.

John (2018) investigated socio-political themes in Nigerian rap music, with a focus on the song *Boosit* by Cobhams Asuquo. The study uncovered how linguistic elements such as metaphor, lexical repetition, and rhetorical questions critiqued corruption and governance. This work is significant as it extends critical stylistics beyond traditional texts, demonstrating its utility in analysing creative forms of socio-political expression. Moreover, it underscores the role of music as a medium for advocacy, linking linguistic analysis to cultural resistance. Building on the theme of socio-political critique in creative texts, Sahan (2021) explored the representation of war ideology in English poetry. Through an in-depth analysis of selected poems, the study identified how presuppositions and negations were used to construct narratives that glorified or condemned war. Sahan's research highlights the intersection of language and ideology in literary texts. This study connects seamlessly with John's work by emphasising the adaptability of critical stylistics across different genres of socio-political discourse.

While creative texts offer rich terrains for analysis, political speeches provide equally fertile ground for examining linguistic strategies. Ahmed (2022) conducted a comparative study of critical stylistics and CDA in analysing political speeches. The research found that while CDA contextualised speeches within broader socio-political frameworks, critical stylistics was more effective in dissecting the micro-level features of language, such as naming and metaphor. Ahmed's work is valuable for emphasising the complementary nature of these methodologies, advocating for their integration to achieve more comprehensive insights.

Media texts are another important site for the application of critical stylistics, as demonstrated by Ononye (2014). The study was on Nigerian newspaper

reports on the Niger Delta conflicts. The research analysed how headlines and lexical choices shaped public narratives about the conflict. It revealed that media texts often reflect the ideological leanings of their publishers, subtly influencing public perceptions through linguistic framing. The relevance of critical stylistics in media studies is further highlighted by Hamukwaya's (2016) analysis of satire in Namibian newspapers. The study examined how rhetorical devices such as irony and hyperbole were used to critique governance and corruption. By focusing on the humorous yet incisive nature of satire, the research revealed how language can serve as both a tool for resistance and a means of evading direct confrontation with authority. This connects with earlier studies by showcasing the diversity of linguistic strategies in socio-political discourse, particularly in non-conventional genres.

Digital communication has added new dimensions to the study of language and ideology, as illustrated by Alaghbary (2022), in his analysis of Donald Trump's tweets. The research applied critical stylistic tools to examine how Trump used intertextuality, deixis, and rhetorical questions to delegitimise opponents and reinforce his authority. This is significant in demonstrating the applicability of critical stylistics to digital texts, which often combine brevity with ideological intensity. It also complements earlier research by expanding the methodological scope of critical stylistics to new media contexts.

Farid and Hussain (2021) explored the linguistic strategies in Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari's political speeches, focusing on how pronoun usage and rhetorical structures constructed his political identity. The study found that Buhari's speeches often employed inclusive pronouns like "we" to foster a sense of unity while subtly distancing himself from accountability through strategic vagueness. This work contributes to the broader discussion on how political figures use language to navigate power dynamics, linking back to Ahmed's emphasis on the micro-level features of political communication.

The interaction between linguistic and visual elements in socio-political texts has also attracted scholarly attention. Khuzaee (2019) examined advertisements with socio-political themes, analysing how textual and visual elements combined to create persuasive narratives. The research highlighted the importance of multimodal analysis in understanding contemporary socio-political communication, where language is often intertwined with imagery.

The representation of conflict in international media has also been explored through critical stylistics. Abeer (2017) conducted a corpus-based analysis of news coverage during the Libyan revolution, examining how lexical choices framed the Gaddafi regime negatively. The study revealed that international media used linguistic strategies such as nominalisation and thematic progression to construct narratives aligned with geopolitical agendas. This research connects to earlier studies on media ideology, highlighting the global relevance of critical stylistics in understanding socio-political discourse. Furthermore, Bankole & Ayeomoni (2024) applied critical stylistics to Segun Adekoya's poem *Under the Bridge*, focusing on its critique of urban poverty and marginalisation. By analysing lexical choices, thematic organisation, and presupposition, the study demonstrated how language in poetry can reflect socio-economic realities and advocate for change. This study complements earlier research on creative texts by illustrating the enduring power of literary works to engage with socio-political issues.

3. Theoretical Framework

Critical stylistics serves as the theoretical foundation for this study. As a theory, it is an analytical lens to explore how language encodes ideology, constructs power relations, and shapes social realities. The framework was pioneered by Lesley Jeffries in her seminal work *Critical Stylistics: The Power of English* (2010), which integrates elements of traditional stylistics with CDA. Jeffries aimed to address the gap between linguistic microanalysis and the broader ideological dimensions of language, thus creating a methodological framework that interrogates the interplay between language and power in texts.

The origins of critical stylistics are rooted in the evolution of stylistics as a discipline and its intersection with critical linguistics. While traditional stylistics focused on the aesthetic and formal properties of language, the critical turn introduced a focus on the ideological and social functions of language (Simpson, Mayr & Statham, 2010). Critical stylistics builds on this tradition by systematically analysing how linguistic structures, such as lexical choices, syntactic patterns, and semantic functions - embed power dynamics and ideological assumptions. It moves beyond describing linguistic features to interrogating their role in reinforcing or challenging socio-political ideologies.

The framework operates through a set of textual-conceptual functions, which serve as its core analytical tools. These tenets, as outlined by Jeffries (2010), include:

Naming and Describing: This refers to the labels and descriptions authors assign to people, objects, or events. The act of naming carries ideological significance, as it can frame subjects positively or negatively, depending on the lexical choices made.

Representing Actions/Events/States: This examines how processes and relationships are constructed in texts, including the use of active versus passive voice to foreground or background agency.

Equating and Contrasting: This analyses how texts establish relationships of similarity or difference, often reinforcing binary oppositions that reflect ideological stances.

Prioritising and Suppressing Information: This focuses on the inclusion and exclusion of details, revealing the author's intent to foreground certain ideas while downplaying others.

Implying and Assuming: This investigates presuppositions and implicatures within texts, which embed unspoken assumptions that shape the audience's interpretation.

Negating: This explores how negation is used to reject or deny certain ideas, often framing them as implausible or undesirable.

Hypothesising: This examines how speculative statements or possibilities are constructed, influencing how readers perceive potential outcomes.

Presenting the Speech and Thoughts of Others: This analyses how external voices are integrated into texts, which can lend credibility or discredit opposing viewpoints.

These functions enable analysts to uncover the ideological underpinnings of texts, making critical stylistics a powerful tool for examining socio-political discourse. Despite its robust methodological

foundation, critical stylistics is not without critique. A common criticism is its perceived emphasis on textual analysis at the expense of contextual factors. While the framework excels in dissecting micro-level linguistic features, it can sometimes neglect the broader socio-historical and cultural contexts that influence text production and reception (Wodak, 2014). Another concern is the subjective nature of interpretation, as different analysts may draw varying conclusions from the same linguistic data (Akhyani, 2024).

4. Research Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative research approach. This is a suitable approach for exploring language use and meaning in socio-political discourse. Qualitative research prioritises depth over breadth, enabling a comprehensive examination of texts to analyse their implicit meanings and ideological underpinnings (Creswell, 2014). This approach facilitates an interpretative analysis of linguistic and stylistic elements, aligning with the principles of critical stylistics, which seek to interrogate how texts reflect and shape societal ideologies.

The qualitative approach is justified by its ability to accommodate the nuanced and context-dependent nature of socio-political texts. Farooq Kperogi's writings, which critique governance, media practices, and societal inequalities, demand a methodological framework that allows for a detailed examination of his linguistic strategies and their socio-political implications. This interpretative approach ensures a holistic understanding of the data within its cultural and ideological context.

5. Data Presentation and Analyses

Data for this study are presented in the Table 1 below. The table shows six selected writings by Farooq Kperogi, chosen based on the inclusion criteria of relevance, thematic focus, and publication within the last five years. Each article explores critical socio-political issues such as corruption, nepotism, governance failures, and political propaganda. The texts also provide a strong basis for linguistic and stylistic analysis.

Table 1: Selected Writings by Farooq Kperogi

Article Title	Publication Year	Main Themes	Key Observations	Source
Foul Stench of Buhari's Corruption and Its Lingering Legacy	2024	Corruption, governance failures, misuse of power	Highlights massive corruption during Buhari's tenure, including embezzlement and financial mismanagement by officials and family members.	Farooq Kperogi's blog
Ambassador Campbell's Curious Defence of Buhari's Inner Circle	2020	Defence of corruption, political propaganda	Critiques Campbell's defence of Buhari's regime, pointing out inaccuracies and regional biases in his arguments.	Farooq Kperogi's blog
Tinubu's Buharisation of the NNPC	2024	Nepotism, ethnocentrism in national governance	Addresses the overrepresentation of Yoruba individuals in strategic positions under Tinubu, echoing Buhari's nepotism.	Nigerian Tribune
Government of Buhari's Family by His Nephews and Nieces	2019	Familocracy, nepotism in Buhari's administration	Exposes widespread nepotism in Buhari's administration, with family members occupying critical positions and benefiting financially.	Farooq Kperogi's blog
Forget Onnoghen, Let's Talk About Buhari's Asset Declaration Fraud	2019	Fraud, hypocrisy in asset declarations	Discusses Buhari's failure to fulfil his promise of transparent asset declaration, revealing hidden wealth and financial misconduct.	Farooq Kperogi's blog
The Tragedy of Abba Kyari: A Surrogate Presidency	2020	Cognitive decline, surrogate governance under Buhari	Details the growing influence of Abba Kyari as a de facto leader due to Buhari's alleged cognitive decline.	Farooq Kperogi's blog
Tinubu, Osinbajo, Buhari: Troika of Ethnic Betrayal	2022	Ethnic politics, betrayal of promises	Explores how Tinubu and others prioritised ethnic allegiance over national unity, resulting in broken promises and betrayal.	Farooq Kperogi's blog
Rise of Right-Wing Economic Populism in Nigeria	2024	Economic populism, socio-political impacts	Critiques the rise of economic populism in Nigeria, noting how it is used to mask deeper structural issues.	Farooq Kperogi's blog
Tinubu's Anti-People Reverse Robin Hood Economic Model	2024	Anti-people policies, socio-economic critique	Analyses Tinubu's policies that exacerbate economic inequality, likening them to a reverse Robin Hood strategy.	Farooq Kperogi's blog
One President, Many Spokesmen, and Mixed Messages	2024	Communication breakdown in governance	Highlights the lack of unified messaging from Tinubu's administration, portraying governance as chaotic and directionless.	Farooq Kperogi's blog

Source: Researchers' compilation

5.1 Data Analysis

Foul Stench of Buhari's Corruption and Its Lingering Legacy (2024)

In this article, Kperogi delivers a scathing critique of the systemic corruption that defined Muhammadu Buhari's administration. The language is highly evocative, with phrases like "fetid corruption" and "kleptocratic bazaar" painting a vivid picture of moral decay. These lexical choices are not merely descriptive but ideologically loaded, framing Buhari's administration as inherently corrupt and beyond redemption. The use of naming is central to this critique; individuals such as Godwin Emefiele and Sadiya Umar Farouq are labelled "ruthlessly avaricious" and "infernally incompetent." These descriptors shift the focus from abstract corruption to identifiable figures, personalising the systemic failures and reinforcing the article's ideological stance. Through naming, Kperogi ensures the reader associates corruption with specific actors, amplifying the emotional weight of his argument.

Presupposition is another significant strategy employed in this article. Kperogi presupposes the reader's agreement with his assertions, embedding ideological assumptions into statements such as "All that happened during Muhammadu Buhari's eight-year reign was unrestrained corruption." This claim assumes that corruption was the sole defining feature of Buhari's governance, leaving no room for counter-narratives or alternative interpretations. By structuring his argument around such presuppositions, Kperogi positions the reader as a co-critic of Buhari's administration, subtly encouraging alignment with his viewpoint. Negation is also a key rhetorical tool, as seen in the statement, "Buhari's administration was not transparent or accountable." This form of argumentation focuses on unfulfilled promises, redirecting attention from any potential achievements to what the administration failed to deliver.

The article's critique is contextualised within Nigeria's broader socio-political environment, where corruption has long undermined governance and public trust. Buhari's administration, which initially positioned itself as an anti-corruption vanguard, becomes emblematic of betrayal in Kperogi's

narrative. This framing resonates deeply with a populace disillusioned by unfulfilled promises of reform. In linking individual failures to systemic decay, Kperogi constructs a narrative that is as much a critique of Buhari's leadership as it is a condemnation of Nigeria's governance culture.

Ambassador Campbell's Curious Defence of Buhari's Inner Circle (2020)

Here, Kperogi critiques the foreign narrative that defended Buhari's administration. Ambassador Campbell's claims are systematically deconstructed through sharp lexical choices and rhetorical strategies. Words like "tendentious assertions" and "evidence-free whitewashing" undermine Campbell's credibility, framing his defense as both biased and detached from Nigerian realities. Naming plays a central role, with Campbell labelled as an "apologist" for Buhari's regime. This descriptor positions Campbell not as a neutral observer but as someone complicit in propagating false narratives, effectively discrediting his arguments.

Kperogi frequently employs contrast to expose the discrepancies between Campbell's claims and Nigeria's socio-political realities. For instance, Campbell's portrayal of Buhari as a "simple leader" is juxtaposed with examples of opulence, such as his private helipad. This stark contrast highlights the gap between perception and reality, compelling the reader to question the legitimacy of Campbell's defense. Presupposition is evident in statements like "Campbell's defence ignores the evidence of corruption and nepotism," which assume that such evidence is both abundant and irrefutable. This strategy shifts the burden of proof onto Campbell, framing his position as inherently flawed.

Negation is another prominent feature, as seen in the claim, "Buhari's simplicity does not extend to his governance." Through an emphasis of what Buhari's administration failed to achieve, Kperogi redirects attention to systemic issues that contradict Campbell's narrative. These linguistic strategies are contextualised within a broader critique of foreign commentators who are perceived as out of touch with local realities. Kperogi's argument reflects the frustrations of Nigerians who feel misrepresented on the global stage, adding emotional resonance to his critique.

Tinubu's Buharisation of the NNPC (2024)

In "Tinubu's Buharisation of the NNPC" (2024), Kperogi critiques the ethnic bias in appointments under Tinubu's administration, drawing parallels to Buhari's governance style. The term "Buharisation" is a potent example of naming, encapsulating the continuity of nepotistic governance practices. Through this term, Kperogi links Tinubu's actions to Buhari's record, framing the new administration as a mere extension of the old. The phrase "Yoruba-centric ethnocracy" further amplifies this critique, suggesting that Tinubu's appointments prioritise ethnic allegiance over merit or national unity.

Presupposition plays a crucial role in the article's argumentation. Statements like "State-sanctioned ethnocentric domination exacerbates divisions" assume that such domination is already occurring and that its consequences are inherently negative. This presupposition frames the reader's understanding of Tinubu's appointments, encouraging alignment with Kperogi's critique. Negation is also used effectively, as in the claim, "This is not the change Nigerians hoped for." This statement redirects focus from campaign promises to governance realities, highlighting the perceived betrayal of public trust. Kperogi's analysis is deeply contextualised within Nigeria's history of ethnic politics. By comparing Buhari's and Tinubu's administrations, he underscores the cyclical nature of nepotism and its detrimental impact on national cohesion. The repetition of terms like "nepotism" and "exclusion" reinforces the article's central themes, urging readers to consider the long-term consequences of governance that prioritises ethnic interests over inclusivity.

Tinubu, Osinbajo, Buhari: Troika of Ethnic Betrayal (2022)

In this column, Kperogi critiques the trio for prioritising ethnic allegiance over national unity. The term "*troika*" is used metaphorically to depict the three leaders as a unified but problematic force. Naming is central to this critique, as Kperogi assigns descriptors like "*opportunists*" and "*ethnic brokers*" to the trio, framing their leadership as self-serving and divisive. These labels direct the reader's attention to the perceived betrayal of their public mandates, aligning their actions with the broader narrative of failed governance. Kperogi employs presupposition to embed ideological assumptions into the text, as seen in the statement, "*Their actions have left the nation more divided than ever.*" This assumes that the nation's

divisions are a direct result of the trio's leadership, encouraging the reader to attribute blame to them. Similarly, the phrase, "*Ethnic allegiances have always trumped national interests under their watch,*" presupposes that such prioritisation is not only real but also an entrenched characteristic of their governance. These presuppositions guide the reader toward accepting Kperogi's argument as self-evident.

Negation is also a prominent feature, as seen in the statement, "*They have not fulfilled any of their promises to bridge ethnic divisions.*" This rhetorical strategy shifts focus from achievements to failures, reinforcing the narrative of betrayal. In laying emphasis on what the leaders have *not* done. Kperogi constructs a critique that centres on unfulfilled promises and deepening divides. The critique is contextualised within Nigeria's historical struggles with ethnic politics, where leaders often face accusations of prioritising regional interests over national unity.

Rise of Right-Wing Economic Populism in Nigeria (2024)

This publication examines the emergence of economic populism under Tinubu's administration. It critiques it as a tool for masking deeper structural issues. Kperogi begins by framing populism as inherently problematic, using phrases like "*deceptive rhetoric*" and "*short-term appeasement*" to critique the administration's economic policies. Naming plays a significant role, as policies are labelled "*tokenistic*" and "*regressive,*" framing them as insufficient responses to systemic problems. These labels carry ideological weight that shape the reader's perception of the policies as ineffective and insincere.

Presupposition is used to question the effectiveness of populism, as seen in the statement, "*Populist policies do not address the root causes of economic inequality.*" This assumes that such policies inherently fail to resolve deeper issues, guiding the reader toward scepticism. Similarly, the phrase, "*This government relies on populism to distract from its failures,*" presupposes that the administration is using economic policies as a smokescreen, embedding criticism within the narrative. Negation is also evident in Kperogi's assertion, "*These policies are not designed to empower the masses.*" Kperogi's analysis is contextualised within Nigeria's economic situation, marked by high levels of inequality and public distrust in leadership. Having linked Tinubu's policies to broader economic challenges, Kperogi situates his

critique within a larger socio-political framework, reinforcing its relevance and urgency.

Tinubu's Anti-People Reverse Robin Hood Economic Model (2024)

In "Tinubu's Anti-People Reverse Robin Hood Economic Model", Kperogi critiques Tinubu's economic policies as exacerbating inequality, likening them to a "*reverse Robin Hood strategy.*" This metaphor, central to the article, frames the policies as taking from the poor to benefit the wealthy, encapsulating the critique in a vivid and memorable phrase. Naming is again a key strategy, with policies described as "*anti-people*" and "*exploitative,*" positioning them as fundamentally opposed to the interests of the majority.

Presupposition is used to assert the negative impact of these policies, as seen in the claim, "*These policies widen the gap between the rich and the poor.*" This presupposes that inequality is a direct consequence of Tinubu's governance, embedding criticism into the narrative. The statement, "*The administration is more concerned with enriching its allies than addressing public needs,*" carries a similar presupposition, guiding the reader to view the administration as self-serving.

Negation is prominent in phrases like "*This is not the economic reform Nigerians were promised.*" By focusing on unfulfilled promises, Kperogi critiques the disconnect between the administration's rhetoric and its actions. The critique is contextualized within Nigeria's socio-economic realities, where policies often fail to address systemic issues. Going by the way narratives are constructed in the paper, linking Tinubu's policies to historical patterns of governance, Kperogi constructs a narrative of continuity in leadership failures, urging readers to demand accountability.

One President, Many Spokesmen, and Mixed Messages (2024)

Here, the column critiques the communication failures in Tinubu's administration. It shows the lack of coherence and unified messaging. Kperogi uses terms like "*chaotic governance*" and "*confused leadership*" to frame the administration as directionless. Naming is central to this critique, with government officials labelled as "*conflicted*" and "*incompetent,*" framing them as emblematic of broader governance failures. Presupposition is evident in statements like "*A*

government that cannot speak with one voice cannot govern effectively," which assumes a direct link between communication and governance. This presupposition guides the reader to view the administration's communication issues as indicative of deeper systemic problems. Also, the phrase, "*The president's inability to rein in his spokesmen reflects weak leadership,*" embeds criticism within the narrative, encouraging the reader to question Tinubu's leadership capabilities.

Government of Buhari's Family by His Nephews and Nieces (2019)

Farooq Kperogi's critique of nepotism in "Government of Buhari's Family by His Nephews and Nieces" is a bold commentary on the erosion of meritocracy under Muhammadu Buhari's administration. The phrase "*government by family*" encapsulates the central argument, casting Buhari's governance style as one prioritising familial loyalty over national interest. This framing serves not only as a critique of Buhari himself but also of a system that permits and normalises such governance. Kperogi uses naming to personalise the critique, meticulously listing relatives of Buhari who occupied prominent positions in his administration. For instance, Sabiu Yusuf, referred to by his nickname "*Tunde,*" is highlighted as wielding significant influence despite lacking requisite qualifications or experience. This way, Kperogi transforms an abstract critique of nepotism into a concrete exposé, making the argument tangible and relatable. This naming strategy also draws attention to the broader issue of familocracy, a term Kperogi implicitly critiques through phrases like "*governance by kinship ties.*"

Presupposition is a central rhetorical device in the article. Statements like "*It is no coincidence that family members dominate critical sectors*" presuppose that these appointments were deliberate acts of nepotism rather than accidental or coincidental occurrences. Similarly, Kperogi's assertion that "*this nepotistic practice undermines Nigeria's progress*" embeds the assumption that meritocracy is essential for development, framing nepotism as an unequivocal threat to governance. Then, negation amplifies the critique, as seen in phrases like "*This is not the inclusive governance Nigerians were promised.*" Kperogi contextualises this critique within Nigeria's struggles with leadership and accountability. The nepotistic practices he describes are not unique to Buhari but part of a systemic problem that undermines trust in governance.

Forget Onnoghen, Let's Talk About Buhari's Asset Declaration Fraud (2019)

This article focuses on Buhari's alleged failure to fulfil his promise of transparent asset declaration, exposing what Kperogi terms "*a façade of integrity.*" The title itself is a strategic critique, redirecting attention from Justice Onnoghen's alleged misconduct to what Kperogi frames as Buhari's own ethical failings. The phrase "*asset declaration fraud*" is ideologically loaded, suggesting not only hypocrisy but also deliberate deception.

Naming is a key strategy in the article, with Buhari described as "*a paragon of anti-corruption rhetoric but not of anti-corruption practice.*" This descriptor juxtaposes Buhari's public persona with his alleged private actions, creating a narrative of duplicity. Kperogi also names specific assets that Buhari allegedly failed to declare, such as real estate holdings and financial accounts, adding credibility and specificity to the critique. Presupposition permeates the argument. Statements like "*Asset declaration is the cornerstone of transparency*" presuppose that Buhari's failure to fully declare his assets constitutes a fundamental breach of trust. This rhetorical strategy positions the reader to view Buhari's actions as inherently incompatible with his anti-corruption rhetoric. Similarly, Kperogi presupposes that the selective targeting of Justice Onnoghen reflects double standards, as seen in the assertion, "*Punishment cannot be just when the enforcer is equally guilty.*" Negation plays a prominent role in exposing contradictions. For example, the statement, "*Buhari did not declare his full assets as promised,*" underscores the gap between Buhari's campaign promises and his actions, framing this as a betrayal of public trust. Kperogi employs irony as well, highlighting the paradox of an administration that claims to champion transparency while allegedly concealing its own ethical lapses.

The Tragedy of Abba Kyari: A Surrogate Presidency (2020)

In this piece, Kperogi explores the concentration of power in Abba Kyari, whom he describes as "*the de facto leader of Nigeria.*" The title itself, "*A Surrogate Presidency,*" encapsulates the central argument: Buhari's perceived cognitive decline created a leadership vacuum that Kyari filled. This framing shifts the critique from Kyari's actions alone to a systemic failure in governance, where power became concentrated in unelected hands. Kperogi's use of naming is particularly potent. Kyari is referred to as a

“shadow president” and a “Frankenstein monster,” labels that evoke imagery of unchecked power and unintended consequences. These names position Kyari as both a symptom and a cause of governance failures, framing him as emblematic of a larger problem. The phrase “surrogate presidency” further reinforces the idea that Buhari’s administration was not functioning as a traditional democracy but rather as a proxy for Kyari’s influence.

Also, presupposition is a critical rhetorical device in this article. Statements like “Everyone knew that Buhari was merely a figurehead” presuppose widespread awareness of the power dynamics within the administration. This rhetorical strategy encourages readers to accept the premise of Buhari’s incapacitation as an established fact, reinforcing the narrative of Kyari’s dominance. Kperogi also presupposes that Kyari’s actions had detrimental consequences, as seen in phrases like “Kyari’s overreach destabilised governance.”

Negation is central to Kperogi’s critique, as in the assertion, “This was not the leadership Nigerians deserved.” Kperogi highlights the administration’s perceived failures, framing them as betrayals of public trust. The critique is sharpened by rhetorical questions, such as “How can a nation thrive when its leader is merely a ceremonial figure?” These questions engage the reader directly, prompting critical reflection on the implications of surrogate governance. The contextual backdrop of the article is Nigeria’s history of leadership crises, where incapacitated presidents have often ceded power to unelected figures. In situating Kyari’s influence within this historical pattern, Kperogi amplifies the gravity of his critique, portraying the administration as both a continuation of and a deviation from past failures. Themes of accountability, power dynamics, and the erosion of democratic principles dominate the article, with Kperogi’s linguistic strategies ensuring the critique resonates deeply with readers.

6. Conclusion

This study analyses the critical stylistic elements in Farooq Kperogi’s writings, focusing on how linguistic and stylistic features construct and convey socio-political critiques. The paper demonstrates that Kperogi employs a sophisticated array of linguistic strategies to critique governance, expose corruption and advocate for accountability. His use of naming, presupposition, and negation is central to constructing compelling narratives that engage readers and

challenge dominant ideologies. The study also highlights the relevance of critical stylistics as a framework for analysing socio-political texts. Through combining linguistic precision with ideological critique, critical stylistics provides reasonable information into how texts construct meaning and influence public discourse. This approach is relevant in Nigeria, where language plays a crucial role in shaping and contesting socio-political narratives.

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