



East African Literature

Essays on Written
and Oral Traditions

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Children Literature in Kiswahili: A Stylistic Approach

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1.0. Introduction

Swahili children's literature in Kenya has seen tremendous developments in the recent past. The ambience in which this literature is produced and disseminated is usually characterised by a focus on content, particularly the theme. In essence, the literature has maintained a commitment to making young people aware of the topical debates taking place in the society, in particular; substance abuse, bullying, disability, children's rights, equal opportunities and injustices that are inherent in society. Style in children's literature receives little attention. However, style, thus the way in which things are represented, based on complex codes and conventions of language as well as presuppositions about language, is an important component of children's books (Stephen, 1992). A study of it allows us access to some of the key processes which shape text production. This essay explores style as used in selected Swahili storybooks for children, and shows how the literary elements make the language used in these books memorable.

Within the language system of Swahili, it is possible for young readers to encounter in their reading an extensive range and variety of language issues. Some textual varieties such as lexicon and syntax will seem familiar and immediately accessible, since they can be appreciated as everyday language. However, other features will appear as less familiar, either because the lexicon contains forms or uses that are specific to a different speech community, or because writers may choose to employ linguistic forms whose occurrences are largely or wholly restricted to narrative fiction. As a result of differences in language use, books which may have a common theme or topic will differ just because the theme is expressed through differing linguistic resources. This means that writers have many options of styles to choose from. The study is guided by models of Manfred (2005), R othlin (2001) and Lukens (2003), as they apply a structural approach which is one of the modern methods of literary study. We examine the novels in regard to discourse structure, point of view, register, and foregrounding. It also focuses on imaginary speech, presentation of speech, imagery, figurative language, hyperbole, allusion, use of proverbs and use of dreams.

2.0. Style and stylistics

In any work of literature, one can study in more detail and with more systematic attention how words or structures are chosen in preference to others. This means that within a text, it is possible to be more specific about how language serves a particular artistic function. This leads to the need of studying style and hence, on the nature of stylistic (Leech & Short, 1981). Widdowson (1975: 4) defines style as being concerned with the study of literature using linguistic description. This in short means, explaining the relation between language and artistic functions in any literary works. Leech & Short (1981) state that style like many semi technical terms has suffered from either over definition or the fact that the history of literary and linguistic thought has been littered with unsuccessful attempts to attach a precise meaning to it. For instance, David Crystal in *The Cambridge of Encyclopaedia of Language* (1997) argues that various scholars have come up with different definitions of style. Thus, Samuel Wesley sees style as 'the dress of thought' while to Jonathan Swift, it was 'proper words in proper place.' Without going into this debate, a good way to begin this is to quote what one of the modern practitioners of style has to say about it. In the introduction to his book *Language through Literature*, Paul Simpson states this about style:

One of the main assets of modern style is its heuristic value. Style is a method of applied language study which uses textual analysis to make discoveries about the structure and function of language. Simply put, finding out about what writers do is a good way of finding out about language (1997, p. 5)

Style can be seen as a kind of mediator between the two disciplines of literary criticism and linguistics, since it uses concepts and tools from linguistics on the one hand, while it is concerned with literary texts on the other hand (Widdowson, 1975). As a result of this relationship, style can neither replace any of the two disciplines nor can it exist without them because it is a means of relating the two disciplines. Stylistics, which can simply be defined as the study of style has a set of analytical techniques and strategies, for examining and explaining texts at its disposal. It is a detailed systematic and principled analysis of several levels that include syntactic, semantic and pragmatic. It employs different kinds of knowledge, namely linguistic, contextual and the general world knowledge (Röthlin, 2001).

Stylistic description can be attempted by means of several methodologies. These range from an impressionistic literary stylistic which is characteristic of most discussions of language of children's literature, to complex systematic analysis (Stephens, 1999). The later can offer very precise and delicate description of a literary work, but have limitations in that non-specialists may find them impenetrable.

Hunt (1990) points out that it is far too simplistic to think that style is a matter of sentence structure and choice of vocabulary only. Rather, it encompasses an author's use of image, the deliberate and unconscious references or the assumptions made about what a reader will understand without explication or description. The author's attitude to beliefs, customs, characters in the narrative are all revealed by the way they are presented.

In fiction, style at its best increases not only our pleasure in words and sounds, but also our belief in the character's reality (Lukens, 2003). We come to know them through the words that they say, through the words that they describe or how they look and act. We are eager to believe in the character's experiences as we follow the plot and visualize the action described in the chosen words. Through words we see, hear and even smell the setting, while realizing its effect upon characters and conflict. Style is the product of all the choices the writer makes in a text, whether conscious or unconscious (Lukens, 2003, Crystal, 1997). In this regard, each writer through his or her idiosyncratic view of life, way of thinking or mode of expression adopts an individual and unique style. Basically then, style is how authors say something. From an infinite number of words available, the writer chooses and arranges words in a particular way to create a story. The goal of analysing style in a literary work is to describe language features in that particular work and by so doing, reveal their function and effect. In the end, we arrive at a clear interpretation. However no interpretation is identical as every reader is different and consequently, texts are different to every reader.

3.0. Synopsis of the Storybooks under Focus

3.1. *Nyani Mdogo (Young Monkey)*. by Nyambura Mpesha. 1999. Nairobi. Phoenix Publishers

The story of *Nyani Mdogo* revolves around a young inquisitive monkey. He wants to know so much about the environment around him. On asking his grandfather he is sent to the park to find out for himself. In the park, his attention is directed to different types of birds. He is mesmerized by the way they behave. However one big 'bird' which has three legs and sits still surprises him. Even more is the fact that a man enters inside this big 'bird' which later flies away.

3.2. *Safari ya Kombamwiko (The Journey of Cockroach)* by Emmanuel Kariuki 1999. Nairobi. Phoenix Publishers.

Kombamwiko, a young cockroach lives peacefully with his parents in the thickets until he meets Faragano another young cockroach living in a hole. But Faragano is outgoing since he travels to the city every time. He informs *Kombamwiko* about the good life in the city. He tells him about plenty of tasty foods, and the various

types of juices in the city. The two decide to go to town against their parents wish. However, they encounter so many problems on the way.

Before they arrive in the city, they discover that there is fighting going on. The city-cockroaches have decided to prevent the village-cockroaches from entering the city. On the way, Faragano is hit on the head by one of the city-cockroaches and he faints. Kombamwiko has to nurse him and wait till he recovers so that they can proceed with the journey. Later, Faragano gets well and they move on and manage to enter the city. The problem however, is how they will get into one of the houses to get their meal. They elect to enter one of the houses through a sewage pipe. However, the owners of the house are on the lookout for cockroaches. In fact, they have already managed to kill a few by spraying them with insecticide. Kombamwiko and Faragano hide in the newspapers in the house. Considering that they have nothing to eat, they end up eating the newspapers. Kombamwiko is so annoyed with the turn of events, that he decides to go back home where he is welcomed by his parents.

3.3. *Ndoto ya Amerika (The American Dream)* by Ken Walibora. 2001. Nairobi. Sasa Sema Publishers.

At the heart of the story are two young boys, Isaya Yano and Madoa. Madoa has a dream of going to America. He wonders why Isaya Yano does not have a similar dream when every young boy is dreaming about the same. The fact that Isaya Yano has not dreamt about going to America disturbs him to the point of crying out to his mother. Isaya's mother finds this to be some kind of stupidity and so canes him. Isaya runs away from home. On the way, he meets Madoa who has also been caned by his mother. As a result of their brutal mothers, Madoa persuades Isaya to run away from home also. Before they leave, they steal money from Mzee Zakayo Wekesa. They travel to Nairobi to meet Madoa's friend Rock Mwamba, who is a robber. Rock Mwamba's and Madoa's adventure in crime is stopped by the police in the nick of time, and they are taken to court. Madoa is jailed while Isaya Yano is set free. However, Rock Mwamba commits suicide before his case is decided in court.

4.0. Style and the Novel: Concepts and Tools

To carry out a stylistic analysis, various concepts and ideas from linguistics are needed because style is concerned not only with the description of linguistic features in a text, but also with their function and effect. The following tools have *been selected for use in analysing style in the storybooks in question; discourse structure, point of view, register, foregrounding and fictional speech. Additionally, the presentation of speech, figurative language, hyperbole, allusion, use of proverbs and the use of dreams have been examined.*

4.1 Discourse structure

The general discourse situation serves as a starting point. Discourse analysis is concerned with all aspects of communication involving a message, an addresser and addressee, and their immediate context of situation (Wales, 2001, R othlin, 2001). This model can be applied to text as well, since text can be seen as discourse between writer and reader. The question one asks is how does a child's book work as a form? Here, the focus is placed on the narrative voice or the narrator's voice. Ultimately, just as Zubkova (1992) argues, the question that comes to mind is who is the speaker? This means that a reader can hear a textual voice with his or her "mind's ear just as she will be able to see the story's action with her mind's eye" (Manfred, 2005).

When we consider that a text, and in this case a child's storybook, is a piece of communication, it means that the storybook involves a message, an addressor and an addressee (R othlin, 2001). In other words, we are called to explore the roles and functions that a character may assume, and the relationship between various characters in the text (Zubkova, 1992). In this regard, we are looking at the person who talks in the novel. This person is not the author but the narrator. A narrator may tell his own story or someone else's story. There can be a series of narrators each associated with a different discourse level in a novel, consequently occasioning several levels of discourse embedded in one another (Zubkova, 1992, R othlin 2001). A narrator may be covert or overt. In covert narration, there is a voice telling about events, characters and setting; but the narrator remains hidden as seen in *Safari ya Kombamwiko* by Emmanuel Kariuki. On the other hand, an overt narrator describes the setting, presents characters and summarizes the events which take place between two scenes. This narrator may also make moral comments, explain and interpret the work to the readers thus, becoming an obtrusive narrator (Manfred 2005, Zubkova 1992). This type of narrator is found in *Ndoto ya Amerika* by Ken Walibora.

According to Leech and Short (1981), cited in R othlin (2001), a basic discourse structure in a novel could take the following shape or form.

Addresser 1 (Author)	Message	Addressee 1 (Reader)
Addresser 2 (Narrator)	Message	Addressee 2 (Narratee)
Addresser 3 (Character A)	Message	Addressee 3 (Character B)

Diagram 1: Source: R othlin (2001)

In the above diagram, we have author and reader at level 1 which is non-fictional communication. Leech and Short posit that authors and readers are not the only figures involved in the discourse situation of the novel, but rather there is a distinction between the author and the narrator, and the narrator may well be talking to someone distinct from the reader. At level 2, there is a narrator and addressee (s) on the level of fictional mediation and at level 3; we have characters on the level of action. The first level is considered to be an extra-textual level, while levels 2 and 3 are inter-textual (Manfred 2005). Manfred (2005) quoting Genette (1980) notes that a narrator is the speaker or 'voice' of the narrative discourse. He or she is the agent who establishes communicative contact with an addressee (the 'narratee'), who manages the exposition, who decides *what* is to be told, *how* it is to be told (especially, from what point of view, and in what sequence), and *what is to be left out*.

According to Röthlin (2001), the different levels presented above are embedded in each other, and vary on each level. For instance, there can be a creation of tension when the reader is informed about something a character does not know, but which might be of importance. The reader might hope that the information gets through to the character before a tragedy can happen. Such knowledge variation is often used in children's stories, especially in adventure and comedy stories. Such a structure is evident in Ken Walibora's *Ndoto ya Amerika*. For example, Isaya Yano does not know that Madoa and Rock Mwamba have gone out to break into people's houses in order to steal. But the reader is made aware of this. The discourse structure of *Ndoto ya Amerika* can be seen as follows:

Addresser 1 (Ken Walibora)	Message	Addressee 1 (Reader)
Addresser 2 (Isaya Yano)	Message	Addressee 2 (Isaya Yano)
Addresser 3 (Isaya Yano)	Message	Addressee 3 (Madoa)

Diagram 2

The foregoing diagram shows the discourse structure of *Ndoto ya Amerika* at the beginning of the story. At level 2, the addresser, Isaya Yano is somehow writing his diary, so the addresser and the addressee are the same person. This is seen in the way Isaya Yano introduces himself in the text. He identifies who he is at the beginning of the book. However, as the story continues, level two seems to disappear for the time being and we move on to level 3 where we see the addresser, Isaya Yano with addressee Madoa. Occasionally, level 3 disappears and Isaya Yano speaks to the reader directly. Yano narrates most of the story and sometimes functions as a narrator solely, and later takes up the role of a proper character and active participant, interfering, manipulating and controlling events. The changes in discourse structure can have an interesting effect on the reader. This is because changing the discourse structure within a story can have the effect of creating dif-

ferent degrees of distance (Röthlin 2001: 18). Some passages run very close to readers, while others travel a long way before they reach them.

However, not all children's books have the above structure. They may take a different structure as seen below.

Addresser 1 (Author)	Message	Addressee 1 (Reader)
Addresser 2 (Characters)	Message	Addressee 2 (Characters)

Diagram 3

This type of structure is found in Emmanuel Kariuki's *Safari ya Kombamwiko* and Nyambura Mpesha's *Nyani Mdogo* and other similar stories. For instance, In *Safari ya Kombamwiko*, there is a lot of communication between Kombamwiko and Faragano. The same structure is seen at the beginning of *Nyani Mdogo*, where there is interaction between Nyani Mdogo and his grandfather. In children's literature, just like in adult literature, most novels are built up with narration of events, description of physical reality such as the character's appearance, setting; moral and psychological characterization and evaluation. Children's authors use various means to convey the thoughts and feelings of their characters. For example, they can use psychological descriptions, explanation and self-communing of the character presented in dialogue or monologues, as seen in some sections of *Ndoto ya Amerika* and *Nyani Mdogo*.

Within the discourse structure there is the narrative order. This refers to how the author is able to reorder existence and to rearrange events. Narrative order in fiction may follow several patterns. The most common pattern found in children's stories is the chronological arrangement (Lukens 2003). In most children's storybooks, sequence in the novels is generally progressing. This means that flashbacks are not used. There are many examples of this device in children's literature. The author moves with the character from one place of action to another, but in a chronological order. The author may choose to make the storyline complex by showing action that occurs with one character in one place, then turning to action that occurs to another character simultaneously, but in another place. For instance, in *Safari ya Kombamwiko*, we read the conversation between Kombamwiko and his parents in one place (chapter 2) and Faragano and his mother in another place (chapter 3), and all these are taking place simultaneously.

4.2 Point of View

The concept of point of view has a special meaning for literature. Point of view refers to the perspective through which a matter is presented, in reality as well as in fiction (Röthlin 2001). This brings us to the question of; who sees the events and actions that are taking place? As we read a story, we may be aware that we are seeing events through the eyes and mind of one character. Or we may feel that we are objective observers watching the events unfold before our eyes (Lukens 2003). Readers describe the point of view depending upon who sees and tells about the action. The analysis of the point of view shows how it affects the reader's positioning in relation to the development of plot and character.

In a story, the point of view determines how we see the story. The point of view is determined when the author chooses who is to be the narrator and also how much the narrator is to know. This involves the narrator's relationship to her story. More specifically, it involves the question whether the narrator is present or absent in it. The narrative types that are basically identified in a text are the *homodiegetic* narrative or roughly, first person narrative and the *heterodiegetic* narrative, thus the third person narrative (Manfred 2005). Additionally in some cases, the narration is presented as extradiegetic. This is where the narrator tells a story of characters outside the text. For instance, Isaya Yano tells us about his father's occupation and how he died. The term *Diegetic* means pertaining to narrating and *homo* means 'of the same nature' while *hetero* means of a different nature (Manfred, 2005).

The use of homodiegetic narrative is used when the story is told in the first person "I". This is employed by Ken Walibora in *Ndoto ya Amerika* where the reader is able to live, act, feel and think the conflict as the protagonist experiences and tells it. Isaya Yano tells us the daily life around him, the games, chores and the pastimes of his life. Here, the author used the view point of his narrator Isaya Yano. Isaya Yano tells the story at two levels, both as a protagonist and also as a character observing action. Thus in *Ndoto ya Amerika*, Isaya Yano who is telling the story, is limited to diction compatible with his age. One of the strongest assets of the first person narration is its great potential for pulling the reader into what appears to be autobiographical truth. However, Isaya Yano as the first person narrator is limited in that he cannot tell us what Madoa is thinking, until when Madoa reveals this to him. For example, Madoa tells Isaya Yano, "*Kuna wakati nitakwenda na sirudi tena.*" (p. 7) (A time will come when I will go and never return). Isaya Yano can only tell what he sees and hears.

The second type of point of view is the omniscient. The writer who employs this point of view tells the story in third person using the pronouns 'she', 'he' and 'they' (*a* and *wa* in Swahili). In this type of point of view, one is considered to be all-knowing or omniscient (Lukens, 2003), about all details of action, thought and feelings. One is conscious of past, present or future happenings. Such a writer can choose to recount a few or all details. The writer may flash back into the past ex-

periences, feelings and thoughts or forward into what will happen in the future. Using the omniscient point of view, the writer is able to relate anything she believes is relevant to the story, moving around, in and through the characters; knowing everything, explaining motives and giving the reader helpful information (Lukens, 2003). This is seen in Emmanuel Kariuki's *Safari ya Kombamwiko*, when he reveals to the reader how Kombamwiko feels when Faragano explains to him about the good life in the city. He informs the reader about Kombamwiko's meeting with Faragano, where they plan to leave the thicket and move to town. Kombamwiko's parents are not aware of this meeting. In other words, Kariuki concentrates on what is essential to the reader's understanding.

Another possibility employed by authors could be the objective or dramatic point of view. This also uses the third person. It operates as a camera where it records pictures. This means that the recording of events cannot be commented or interpreted. In most cases, the author does not enter the minds of the character. The action speaks for itself as it unfolds and the reader hears speeches and sees the action. This point of view is employed by Nyambura Mpesha in *Nyani Mdogo*. She mixes this aspect with the omniscient point of view in the story, whereby in some section of the book, she allows the reader to see what is going on in the forest with the character, Nyani Mdogo. Later, she decides to comment on the feelings and thoughts of Nyani Mdogo especially when he sees a type of 'bird' that is different from the other birds.

Hapo akaona ndege mkubwa sana. Ndege huyo alikuwa na miguu mitatu ya ajabu.

Hakuwa na mdomo.

Alinyamaza kimya.

Hakuwa na macho

Alikaa kimya kabisa.

Nyani akamwalia kwa muda mrefu. Alishangaa sana (p.15).

(Translation)

There he saw a very big bird. The bird had three funny legs.

The bird had no mouth

The bird was silent

The bird had no eyes

The bird sat silently

Monkey looked at the bird for a long time. He was surprised.

To aid in understanding the story of Nyani Mdogo, pictures are used to illustrate the feelings of Nyani Mdogo, especially his facial expressions.

Different modes of narration such as the use of an 'omniscient' narrator, the employment of first person narrative who is unreliable or the focus provided by the perspective of a single main character can in different ways be powerful means

of conveying a message or the author's ideology (Pinsent 2005). As Lukens (2005: 177) rightly observes, "it is not possible or even relevant to make authoritative statement about the best or most successful point of view for children's literature". What is notable however is that the first person point of view may present difficulties for the very young readers. This is so because such readers are just learning their own 'I' identity and therefore, may have trouble identifying with the strange 'I' of the story. However, this can be used for the relatively older readers who will find first person stories exciting. This is as a result of the fact that the mature reader has the capacity to project self into another 'I'.

4.3 Register

Register is another concept that is important in looking at style in children's literature. This is the principle which governs the choice among various possible linguistic realisations of the same thing. Register refers to a shift in style in the use of language, which collocates with particular social situations and written genres (Stephens 1992). For instance, people choose appropriate language variations for formal and informal occasions, as well as for specialized discourses. All these areas have configurations of lexical and syntactical choices. This also applies to children's literature not to forget that a wide range of genres develop distinctive registers of their own. Genres familiar in children's literature such as folk tales or riddles use some readily identifiable structures. Ken Walibora infuses the legal language in *Ndoto ya Amerika*. To create a realistic effect he presents Isaya Yano as one who is ignorant of the language of the court and because of this he has to be reminded first by Madoa, and later by the court prosecutor, on how to respond appropriately. Madoa informs Isaya Yano about the conventions of the court such as how one is supposed to respond when called upon to answer charges. For example:

Mwishowe karani akaisikia faili yangu. Finally the court prosecutor took my file.
"Isaya Yano!" "Isaya Yano!"
"ndiyo!" nilitikia na kusimama kizimbani. "Yes!" I responded as I stood up in the dock
"Sema ndiyo afande," alinikumbusha karani. "Say Yes Sir," he reminded me
"Ndiyo afande!" (p. 42) "Yes Sir"

In the same court, Isaya Yano is asked "*Una malilio gani?*" What defense do you have? (p. 43). The word *malilio* confuses Yano who, instead of defending himself cries out loudly. The word has been used to refer to self mitigation in a court case. This means that words acquire different meanings when used in a different setting. In other words, Isaya Yano is supposed to use formal words in court. However due to lack of experience, Yano finds the court language unusual and repulsive.

This is opposed to Madoa who happens to understand the court language and informs Yano about it in advance.

4.4 Foregrounding

Foregrounding originates from the arts, referring to the parts of a painting which stand out against the background (Röthlin, 2001). This idea was appropriated by the Russian Formalists and Prague School of Structuralism to be applied in poetry, which they later referred to as defamiliarisation. Later it was expanded in stylistics. In stylistics, it is defined as deviation against the background of a norm (Röthlin, 2001: 24). It refers to the sudden rapture of one's experiences when the daily routines of perception are interrupted by something which does not fit within our perception matrices (Ennagi 2000).

In linguistic terms, our processing of messages in our every day linguistic transaction has become so automatized that we normally process messages without paying much attention to the meaning of their words or grammatical structure. It is only when there is something striking in the message that we start scrutinizing and analyzing it in order to arrive at a possible effect or implication. Foregrounding therefore, is the result of a particular manipulation of language. It can be realized at various levels of language, resulting in different kinds of deviation. It can be used at the graphological level. This refers to the use of punctuation marks such as italization, hyphenation, capitalization and dotting in a text. Utilization of these features in a text has some semantic and stylistic implications.

Emmanuel Kariuki employs this device in *Safari ya Kombamwiko* where all the proverbs are italicized to create a greater impact on the reader. They add visual emphasis to the text. Foregrounding can also be realized at the grammatical level, where deviation is created at the level of grammar. For instance, Ken Walibora makes Mzee Zakayo Wekesa one of his characters to speak Swahili with a Luhya¹ accent when he says *Muzuri Kitoko* (A bit good) (p. 11) instead of *njema* (fine). In the same way there is deviation at the level of grammar when Isaya Yano and Madoa greet the old man. However, the old man fails to reply in the conventional manner. For instance the two boys greet him '*Shikamoo babu*' (Grandfather, How are you?). The conventional response would be '*Marahaba*,' but he chooses to say *muzuri kitoko* (A bit good) (p. 11).

Another example is seen when Mzee Zakayo explains to Isaya Yano and Madoa why he has to travel to Bungoma. He says, "*Naenda Bungoma, nduku yangu nakufa*" p.12. (I am going to Bungoma, my brother has died). The correct grammatical structure should have been, "*Ninaenda Bungoma, ndugu yangu ameaga dunia*". In *Safari ya Kombamwiko*, we see Faragano deviating from the correct grammar to

¹ Luhya is a term that is used to refer to a group of related speech forms used by most people of Western Kenya. Lubukusu is one of the speech form that has been used by Ken Walibora. In standard Swahili the words *muzuri kitoko* should be *nzuri kidogo*.

show his contempt and lack of respect to the old people. He uses the diminutive *vizee* to refer to old people. He tells Kombamwiko, "*Vizee haviieleweki na wala haviambiliki* (The old people cannot be understood nor can one say anything about them) (p. 12). The correct structure should be "*wazee hawaeleweki na wala hawaambiliki*"

At the lexical level, neologisms, that is the creation of a new word, expression or a new meaning for an existing word can be employed. For instance, in *Safari ya Kombamwiko*, Kombamwiko refers to city dwellers as *majini* (genies), because they live in *Mijini* (towns) (p. 7). Here the meaning of the word *majini* is changed and a new meaning is attached to it. The usual meaning of *majini* is genies, a magical spirit ascribed to Arab traditional stories that does or provides whatever the person who controls it wants. However in the storybook, it is used to refer to people who live in town. Similarly, in *Ndoto ya Amerika*, Madoa is unable to pronounce the word *Amerika*. He pronounces it as *Mekerani* despite the efforts made by Isaya Yano to correct him all the time. The narrator wants to show that Madoa is not a very clever character. Furthermore in *Ndoto ya Amerika*, Isaya asks Madoa what Mwamba does with a pistol in the house, only for Madoa to tell him "*Anafanya 'kazi'. Wee' Isa ni mshamba kweli*" (He 'works'. You! Isaya, You are very primitive) (p.32). The word *kazi* (work) is presented in quotation marks meaning that the kind of work that is being referred to here is not the typical work as it involves stealing. In addition, the word '*mshamba*' in the same sentence is used to refer to Isaya Yano's ignorance to matters of crime life.

Repetition is another kind of deviation since it is a departure from the norm in respect to frequencies where redundancy is avoided. It involves the repetition of a word, phrase or sentence. Emmanuel Kariuki employs this type of style in *Safari ya Kombamwiko* when Kombamwiko and Faragano realize that they have nothing to eat implying that they must eat anything they find in town.

"Chochote Kile" Kombamwiko alitamka, kama asiyesikia anavyosema rafiki yake.

Aliangalia mbele tu kwa macho ya fisi.

"Chembe za ugali, tone la mchele, chochote kile.

Kombamwiko alianza kusfurabishwa na maneno haya ya chochote kile. Alisikia kama ni sbairi tamu la maneno mawili. Kumbé si yeye peke yake. Punde si punde, Faragano alianza kurudia maneno yale.

"Chochote kile"

"Ugali, mkate, maziwa"

"Chochote kile"

Mchuzi nyama, nbwabwa"

Chochote kile. (p.34)

(Translation)

"Anything whatsoever" Kombamwiko said as if he was not hearing what his friend was saying. He just looked ahead with eyes of a hyena.

“Morsel of ugali, drops of rice, anything whatsoever.

Kombamwiko started to feel happy with the words anything whatsoever. He considered the words as a poem of two words. Surprisingly, he was not alone. Within no time, Faragano started to repeat the same words.

“Anything whatsoever”

“Ugali, bread, milk”

“Anything whatsoever”

“Soup, meat, rice, gruel, porridge”

“Anything whatsoever”

In the same book, repetition is used when Kombamwiko finally decides that he is going back home and that he is no longer interested in the different types of foods found in town. He says to himself, “*Tone la chai, potelea mbali, mkate, potelea mbali. Wali, potelea mbali. Nyama ive ni ya punda au ng’ombe na potelea mbali.* (A drop of tea, to hell with it, bread, to hell with it, rice, to hell with it. Meat; be it from a donkey or a cow, to hell with it). (p. 63)

Repetition lays emphasis on the ideas that the writer wants the readers to understand clearly. In this case, Kombamwiko is finally fed up with the various types of foods found in town. This is because he has to struggle very hard under difficult circumstances to get the tasty food.

4.5 Fictional Speech

Fictional speech is the imitation of real conversation in a work of art. Before we consider the fictional speech, let us briefly look at the characteristics of real speech. In real life conversation, we find people interrupting themselves by breaking off sentences, changing their minds about the grammatical structure in mid-sentence or even mid-word, uttering sounds like ‘mhh,’ ‘ehh,’ etc. (Röthlin, 2001) refers to such features as normal non-fluency. Non-fluency features include false starts, mispronunciations, syntactic anomalies, unnecessary repetition as well as delaying devices like fillers and hesitation pauses. These are discourse markers used by speakers to signal various psychological stances such as hedging.

In conversations, such features are noticed but edited out by the listener unless their occurrences are unusually frequent. When they are noticed, the listener gives them meaning. For instance, it is deducible that speakers could be nervous if they produce too many fillers. With respect to grammar and lexis, the kind of language used in real conversation is often informal and colloquial, including for example; the use of informal vocabulary and idiomatic expressions. The grammar in conversation is rather simple because of the speed at which verbal language is produced.

In fictional speech, the author has to decide which features of the spoken language to include in the story and which ones to leave out. As pointed out by Röthlin (2002), if the author tried to be as close as possible to real conversation,

the reader would have great difficulties reading the text and also in making sense out of it. In this regard, when an author makes use of non-fluency features in conversation, the aim is not to be realistic, but to prompt the reader to an interpretation. The features indicate something about the speaker's character or state of mind, or about the origin of a character.

Looking at *Ndoto ya Amerika*, it can be noted that Madoa is the only character whose fictional speech involves non-fluency. Madao has the habit of using the words 'Ndiyo alaa' (Yes alaa) in all his conversation, until he is nicknamed *Ndiyo Alaa* by his classmates (pp. 6, 7, 18). For instance, when he is asked by Isaya Yano:

"Ulikuwa Nairobi?" ("Were you in Nairobi?")

Madoa answers

"Ndiyo Alaa" ("Yes Alaa")

"Wewe ndiwe Michael Chochote au lolote, au sio?" ("Are you Michael whatever or anything?")

"Ndiyo Ala" ("Yes Alaa")

This type of device adds humor to the novel. However writers of children's stories use this device less frequently for fear that it would result in unintelligibility.

4.6 Presentation of Speech in Children's Storybooks

This section deals with how speech can be represented by an author. The two most widely used modes of speech presentation are the Direct Speech and Indirect Speech (Leech & Short, 1981, Nikolajeva, 2002). The reason for presenting speech in different ways contributes to the understanding of characters. We can learn something about characters from what they say and from what other characters say about them (Nikolajeva, 2002). In addition, the presentation of speech is related to the degree of importance (Röthlin, 2001). The more important a conversation is the more direct it is presented, and hence, foregrounded.

In direct speech, the actual words of the speaker are presented in quotation marks without any filter usually followed by a verb signaling the kind of speech act involved. Likewise, the linguistic features such as tense, pronouns, deictic terms in direct speech are related to the speaker's position. According to Röthlin (2001) direct speech represents the most reliable information in a text. It is a foregrounding device in two respects: firstly, in respect to the utterance in general, and secondly; in terms of reliability. This device is employed by children's authors extensively. For example, it has been used by Ken Walibora in *Ndoto ya Amerika*, Nyambura Mpesha in *Nyani Mdogo* and Emmanuel Kariuki in *Safari ya Kombanwiko*. The use of direct speech produces a feeling of realism and closeness. Similarly, it creates some kind of drama, while tending to show the reliability of the characters through what they say.

Using direct speech in children's books as a device goes a long way in enhancing the authors' communication with the young readers. The children characters talk to each other, while also holding conversation with adult characters. The direct speech breaks the monotony of prose narration and infuses the character with life, adding to the vivacity of the stories. In Indirect speech, the content is still conveyed but the exact wording is not used in this method. Instead of the words of the character, the words of the narrator are used and the linguistic features of the utterances in indirect speech are changed and related to the narrator's position (Röthlin, 2001: 37). Here, the first person pronoun becomes a third person pronoun, tense is back-shifted and deictic terms are changed. This device is used together with the direct speech device when writing for children, rather the two devices alternate in a story.

4.7 Imagery

Imagery is the most frequently used device in children's books and is quite important. It involves the use of words to describe ideas or situations. It helps create setting, establish a mood and show a character (Lukens, 2004: 188). Writers rely on imagery to give readers impressions of what they wish to depict. The writer, by choice of detail and the words used to describe the details, stirs the reader's imagination. *Safari ya Kombamwiko* demonstrates the use and effectiveness of imagery. In chapter three, there is a fight between the cockroaches living in town and those from the thickets who want to get into town to start a new life. In this chapter, we see how the fight takes shapes and how Faragano and Kombamwiko escape it. For example,

Walijificha chini ya jive ambako kulikuwa na mwangaza wa kutosha kuwawezesha kuona mbali. Kule mbele kulikuwa na vita vikali. Wanene, yaani wenyeji walikuwa wakiwapiga wageni. Tena kwa hasira kubwa. Waliwana wengi sana na wengine kufanywa walemavu.

"Tatubidi tujifiche bapa hadi vita vitakapokwisha," Faragano alimwambia mwenzake.

"Kwa sasa tule chochote, bwana," Kombamwiko alisema bila nguvu

"Ehee hata kama ni majani, tutayala kwa sasa. Vita vikiisha tutaingia na kula vyakula nilivyokutajia," Faragano alilazimishwa na njaa kukubaliana na Kombamwiko.

Faragano alijitokeza nje kidogo na kuchuma matawi mawili makubwa. Kabla hajarudi mafichoni, rungu kubwa lilitupwa na kumpiga kichwani, akaanguka papo hapo, akawa amezimia. (p. 41)

(Translation)

They hid under a stone that had some light that enabled them to see far. A head of them was fierce fighting going on. Wanene, that is, the town dwellers

were beating the visitors with a lot of anger. They killed most of the cockroaches from the village while others became lame.

"We shall have to hide here until the fighting comes to an end," Faragano told his friend.

"For the time being we can eat anything," Kombamwiko said weakly.

"Yes, even if it is grass, we shall eat for the time being. When the fight is over, we shall enter the town and eat all the food that I mentioned to you."

Hunger forced Faragano to agree with Kombamwiko.

Faragano tried to come out and cut two big leaves. Before going back to the hiding place, a big club was thrown at him. It hit him on the head. He fell and fainted.

The imagery is effective because we are able to conceptualize the fight. Faragano's and Kombamwiko's arrival in town is created for the reader by imagery. We see how they struggle several times to get into the house through a dirty pipe. Imagery is used to aid the understanding of events in a story. The narrator carefully gives a vivid picture of the events that are unfolding in the story. In *Ndoto ya Amerika*, there is use of imagery when Isaya Yano decides to hide under the bed as the police come to search for more guns from Mwamba'a house. His leg is pulled from under the bed. Isaya Yano is so scared that he screams '*mamaaa waaaiii*' (p. 37) (mother waaaiii)

4.8 Prosopopoeia

Prosopopoeia refers to cases where an inanimate object is represented as being able to speak. Personification is one of the common types of figurative language found in stories for children. This is a style borrowed from oral literature and contributes to the vividness of stories for children. In *Safari ya Kombamwiko* and *Nyani Mdogo*, all the cast of non-human characters is personified as exemplified by Kombamwiko and Faragano who are both cockroaches and Nyani Mdogo, who is a young monkey. These characters relate to the children and behave like them. We hear the cockroaches talking and singing rather than hissing. They are also uneasy, rude to their parents, want to move and live in town, are anxious and fight amongst themselves over resources. Nyani Mdogo is inquisitive, curious, smiles and laughs. The birds in *Nyani Mdogo* sing, are scared and run away. In these two books and other stories for children, we see human qualities being given to non-human characters.

4.9 Hyperbole

Hyperbole as another form of figure of speech is created through the stretching of a comparison. Exaggeration or hyperbole often adds humour to a story. For example, Isaya Yano in *Ndoto ya Amerika* says "*Nilicheka mpaka karibu meno yangu yaan-*

guke" (p. 9). (I laughed until my teeth almost fell off). In the same book, the narrator exaggerates about the names that Madoa would want to adopt when he tells Isaya Yano that he is going to change his name once he arrives in America. Yano asks him:

"Kwa nini ubadilishe majina tena?" Nikamwuliza. ("Why should you change your name? I asked him")

"Huko Maakerani..." (In Maakerani..)

"Sema Ma-re-kanii," nikamwambia. ("Say Ma- re- kanii, "I told him)

"Ndiyo Alaa!" Madoa akasema. Lazima mimi pia nabadilishe jina. Huko kila mtu anaitwa Michael au kwa kifupi Mike. Rais wa huko ni Mike Tyson, Waziri wa Elimu anaitwa Michael Jordan. Waziri wa Afya anaitwa Michael Jackson. Makamu wa rais ni Michael Johnson (p.10).

(Translation)

Yes Alaa! Madoa said. I have to change my name also. There everybody is called Michael or in short Mike. The president is Mike Tyson. The minister for Education is called Michael Jordan. The Minister for Health is called Michael Jackson. The Vice President is called Michael Johnson.

In *Safari ya Kombamwiko*, we find Kombamwiko being warned against failure to listen to the advice of his parents through the use of a proverb, "*Asiyesikia la Mkuu huvunjika guu*" (p. 14). (He who does not listen to elders breaks his leg). However, he retorts "...*Sitavunjika guu, na isitoshe, hata nikivunjika guu moja, kwangu si lolote, kwani ninayo sita mie kama kawaida ya mende wote*" (p. 14). (I will not break my leg. In any case even if I break one, to me that is nothing, for I have six legs as is the case with all cockroaches). Hyperbole adds humor to the story. The image that such exaggeration creates in the reader's mind is usually vivid.

4.9 Allusion

Allusion is the process of deducing meaning, and relies on recognition of a reference to something in our common understanding of the world and how it works (Lukens, 2003: 191). Allusion is very important in everyday life as it enables us to communicate effectively and to understand what is going on in the world. In addition, it enables us to construct and interpret texts. However, allusion is not explained by the writer but relies on the reader's familiarity with what is thus mentioned. The technique of allusion is an economical means of calling upon the history or the literary tradition that the author and reader are assumed to share. For instance in *Ndoto ya Amerika*, Madoa says;

Lazima mimi nibadilishe jina. Huko kila mtu anaitwa Michael au kwa kifupi Mike. Rais wa huko ni Mike Tyson, Waziri wa Elimu anaitwa Michael Jordan. Waziri wa Afya anaitwa Michael Jackson. Makamu wa rais ni Michael Johnson. (p. 10)

(Translation)

I have to change my name also. There everybody is called Michael or in short Mike. The President is Mike Tyson. The minister for Education is called Michael Jordan. The Minister for Health is called Michael Jackson. The Vice President is called Michael Johnson..

The list of names presented by Madoa refers to certain well known Americans who are sportspeople, and at least one is a well known musician. However, they can only be understood by readers who know the personalities behind the names. However use of allusion for the very young readers may be difficult to catch, since it relies on a background that some of them may lack.

4.10 Use of proverbs

Use of proverbs is one of the prominent segments of the metaphorical use of language in human communication. The aim is to convey a particular effect from the speaker to the reader or hearer. In most cases, proverbs are used to ensure that certain required social norms are observed and excesses are curbed (Salami, 1998: 147). When skillfully woven into a character's speech, proverbs express briefly and effectively a certain topic or summarize a certain situation. Proverbs are aesthetically appealing in a story. There are ways in which proverbs are introduced to the readers. Of the ways is by use of such short statements as '*wahenga walisema*' or '*wavyele walinena*' (The old people say). The proverbs may be marked by quotation marks or italics. The narrator in *Ndoto ya Amerika* summarizes his narration by quoting a proverb; *asiyefunzwa na mamake hufunzwa na ulimwengu* (p. 48) (He who is not disciplined by his mother will be disciplined by the world). Emmanuel Kariuki has also used proverbs in a skillful way. For instance, when Kombamwiko tells his parents, Bi. Mende and Mzee Mende that he is tired of eating honey and mushrooms and therefore wants to go and live in town where he can have tea and bread for breakfast, the narrator puts it as follows:

Mzee Mende alikumbuka wahenga walivyosema kuwa, 'Asiyekuwa na mwana, aeleke jive'. Alimwambia Kombamwiko alipokuwa akizungumza kwa muda mrefu. Moja kwa moja akaamua ya kwamba yeye na bibi Mende bawana mtoto. 'Mke wangu, eleka jive. Ikiwa haja yake ni kwenda kuishi katika pango la binadamu, naomba Mungu amlinde.' (p. 13).

(Translation)

Mr Mende remembered the old saying that, 'He who has no child should carry a stone'. He looked at Kombamwiko as he talked for a long time. Immediately he concluded that Bi Mende and himself had no child.

"My wife, carry a stone. If his aim is to go and live in a human cave, I pray that God protects him."

Through this proverb, Mende is warning his wife to prepare for the eminent death of her son, who wants to go and live in town. Kombamwiko is the only child of Mr. and Mrs. Mende. In the same story, when Faragano explains to Kombamwiko about life in town, Kombamwiko asks him, "*Hebu nieleze, Faragano. Haya yote umeya-juaje?*" ("Tell me, Faragano. How did you get to know all these?")? In his response, Faragano starts by referring to a proverb saying, "*Mtamba kule, anamshinda mzee wa kale*" (p. 6) (He who travels far is better than the people of old). He tells him how he hates living in the thickets and holes and how he has made several journeys to town and back. In other words, Faragano is telling Kombamwiko that because he travels a lot, he knows much more than the old people who have lived long, but stuck in thickets or holes.

4.11 Dreams

Dreams can be the means by which authors set a tone or create a theme that underlies their fiction (Anonymous 1998). A dream may be a sleep narrative, nightmare, vision, social construct or even a wish for personal action. Ken Walibora uses dreams as a device in *Ndoto ya Amerika*. The dream in *Ndoto ya Amerika* can be interpreted in two ways; as a wish for personal action and a sleep narrative. On one hand, Madoa and Isaya Yano's dream is their wish to go to America (p. 9, 43). On the other hand, Isaya Yano longs to dream about America because he has been told by Madoa that everyone dreams about America and that he is the only one who does not. This surprises Isaya to the point of making him cry (p. 14). In chapter two, Isaya finally dreams about going to America and this makes him happy. In the dream, he sees himself as the driver and Madoa is with him. They arrive in New York and sample various drinks. Isaya says this of his dream:

Tukashuka na kuingia boteli moja kubwa. Ndani mlikuwa na mabomba ya soda, chai, kahawa na vinywaji vingine mbali mbali. Ukifungua tu bomba bilo vinywaji hivyo vinabubujika kama maji katika mto. Utakunywa kiasi chochote utakacho. Niliona chakula nacho kinajipika na kujileta mezani chenyewe. Nikaona sabani zinjajiosha na kujikausha zenyewe.

Nilipomwambia Madoa kuwa nataka kulala alinishauri nikiite kitanda.

"Kitanda njoo," nikasema na punde si punde kitanda kikaja...

Niliamka ghafla usingizini. Nilikuwa bado niko chini ya mti...

(Translation)

We came out of the car and entered one big hotel. Inside were big tanks of tea, coffee and other types of drinks. Immediately you open the tanks, the drinks gush out like a stream of water. You can drink as much as you want. I also saw food that cooked on its own and brought itself on the table. I also saw plates that washed and dried on their own. I told Madoa that I wanted to sleep. He advised me to call out the bed.

"Bed come out," I said and immediately the bed came.

I suddenly woke up. I was still under the tree

Dreams take the reader into a fascinating world of make-believe where exciting and out-of-the-ordinary things happen as exemplified in Isaya Yano's dream. The dream and fantasy in *Ndoto ya Amerika* help capture and maintain children's attention because the young readers, being dreamers and masters of fantasy, imagine themselves in the position of these characters.

5.0. Conclusion

In this essay we have examined style in three selected children's storybooks. The various styles in which language is used have been enumerated. Among these were discourse structure, point of view, register and foregrounding. Additionally, there has been an illumination on imaginary speech, presentation of speech, imagery, figurative language, hyperbole, allusion, use of proverbs and use of dreams. The essay has shown that writers employ various styles in order to communicate to the younger readers. In order to realize this, it was espoused that the various stylistic features employed for each level of the readers is clear and simple, and must be within the scope of the tender level of the target audience. The essay had demonstrated that for messages to be clear, the writer has to strive to ensure that there is rapport between the text and the young readers. Taking into account that the experience of children is limited, it follows that the mode of presentation of the novels be simple and closely tied to what they can understand. In a nutshell, the paper has argued that for storybooks for young readers to be successful, their form and content must be simple and straight forward, as per the age levels of the target readership.

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