

GRAPHO-SYNTACTIC ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLICAL PARABLES

*EZE, KINGSLEY ONYEBUCHI¹, ADETUNJI, BABATUNDE DELE² & OLUCHI CHRIS OKEUGO³

¹Lecturer, Department of Arts Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

²Lecturer, Department of English Language, African Thinkers Community of Inquiry College of Education, Enugu, Nigeria

³Lecturer, Department of English and Literary Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

This research work surveys the stylistic analysis of the language of the Biblical parables using the parable of the Sower, parable of the Weeds and the parable of the Mustard seed. This invariably involves a linguistic description of the language of religion with particular reference to the parables. Emphasis in this study is not on the parables but the impact of linguistic elements in actualizing the message the parables are set to achieve. This work is also designed to investigate how stylistic analysis can enhance the interpretation and understanding of the texts (parables). The linguistic elements in the parables are analyzed stylistically using the Quirk et al's model of sentence units. The aim of stylistic analysis is not simply to identify and describe formal linguistic features in a text for their own sake, but to show their functional significance in the interpretation and organization of the texts under study. It is therefore the concern of this work to analyze the stylistic peculiarities of the parables with the intention of bringing out the style of the writer and also to have fuller understanding of the parables.

KEYWORDS: Grapho-Syntactic, Stylistics, Language & Parables

Received: Jan 01, 2020; **Accepted:** Jan 21, 2020; **Published:** Apr 24, 2020; **Paper Id.:** IJELJUN20201

INTRODUCTION

Literature is essentially a mode or method of expression. It is also language in action. This means that language is well explored in literature. It is not just a subject that expresses something; but rather, it is the way, manner and method in which something is said or written. It is this fact that distinguishes it from other subjects like History, Geography, Economics and Religion, which though they express something are not in themselves methods of expression for they employ methods which are distinguishable from themselves as subjects but in the case of literature, the subject itself is the method of expression and is achieved through the aesthetic use of language. Thus, a study of Literature is essentially a study of definite method of expression as opposed to the study of a subject like Economics which can be separated from the study of the method of Economics. In this latter case for example, Economics is synonymous with its content while its method can be descriptive, analytical or mathematical. On the other hand, Literature is not synonymous with its content but rather with its method; for Literature can have as its content an Economic, Religious or Political problem, yet it is not Economics, or Religion or Political Science. It is way or mode in which it handles this problem.

Leech in his book *A Linguistic Guide to English poetry* argues that language complements and aids the study of literature. According to him:

Literature cannot be examined in any depth from language any more than language can be studied apart from Literature. In the case of foreign language or the English language of remote periods, this assumption is not different to justify for it is obvious that a literary work cannot be properly understood without a thorough knowledge of the language which is its medium of expression(1).

What the foregoing implies is that Literature offers a corpus material for linguistic study. Literature deals with the works of men who are sensitive to the language of their time and who use the skill of language to make permanent their visions of life. They manipulate language, making it to contain a unique sense of experience and interpretations. Chapman asserts:

Literature seems to offer language which is different from what may be loosely termed the normal or every day usage of a speech community, yet which is intelligible to the members of that community if they are willing to apply a special standard of acceptability (3 – 4)

A literary work may indeed offer information and it will probably have a meaningful content which can be paraphrased in preferential prose. A literary artist chooses and manipulates language with greater complexity than the average language user can or wishes to exercise. This is because the focal point of any literary artist is the aesthetic use of language in his work of art. It is this aesthetic use of language that differentiates Literature from History. Thus, Aristotle was right when he said that poetry is more serious than Philosophy and History. If this distinctive use of language by a writer is recognized, it may be possible to discuss extensively a writer's individual style. This work examines the language of parables in order to ascertain crucial characteristic linguistic properties, structures and patterns influencing perception of the texts.

The parable as an aspect of literature is also a method or mode of expression. It is manner in which the author wants to carry his message to his audience. Parable is a story in which all the details have no independent significance but that will lend significance and correctness to the actual theme. Thus, a parable is meant to stimulate in men a new abstract reality by comparing it to an already known reality. The parable is a piece of literature because it is simply a literary manner of saying something. What is actually said has nothing to do with the objects being referred to in any parable. For instance, in the parable of "the Sower", the objects being referred to in the passage namely seeds, path, birds, rocky ground, thorns and good soil have nothing to do with the thematic preoccupation of the passage. But these things on another level are also used for the purpose of suggesting a deeper meaning.

The study of the language of the parables becomes important because of how the author explores the use of language to achieve both aesthetic and communicative functions of language.

CONCEPT OF PARABLE

The word parable comes from the Greek words – Para (by the side) and Bally (I put). A parable, according to the Concise Oxford Dictionary (ninth addition) is a narrative of imagined events used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson". In another vein, Adeyinka defines parable as "a story in which all details have no significance but that all lend significance and correctness to the central themes. Thus a parable is meant to stimulate in men a new abstract reality by comparing it to an already known reality (57). Hughes in a most interesting way traces the origin of parable to etymological derivation. He asserts that:

Parable is derived from two Greek words Para – bally. It means something which is placed alongside something else. In other words, comparison: One definition of parable might be an earthly story within heavenly meaning. Parables were Jesus' favourite form of teaching (15).

In the words of Olanyika, parable is “an allegorical or a similitude based upon something and designed to illustrate some important truth (29). It is a comparison between two deeds which belong to different spheres which aims at explaining an unknown fact with known one.

The parabolic method of teaching was employed basically because it was effective way of instruction; effective because it explains in a pictorial and concrete way a profound spiritual or moral truth about God which may not be readily understood by the hearers if rendered in abstract terms.

Thus, a parable is intended to arrest the hearer by its vividness or strangeness, and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt as to its precise application to tease it into active thought. It arrests the mind of the individual in such a way that it focuses him not only to think seriously about the truth being imparted, but also to act upon it. Therefore, the intention of the parable is to stir the mind of the hearers or the readers to awaken in them the recognition of a particular situation and to challenge them to action. The parables demand considerable thoughts for their understanding and precisely because of this, Jesus kept on saying:

“Those who have ears let him hear”. In the synoptic gospels, the parables of Jesus take three forms. At its simplest, the parable is a metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life, arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt as to its precise application to tease it into active thought. For example, where the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together”. (Matt :37); or if a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit (Matt. 15 -14).

Such a simple metaphor may be elaborated into a picture by the addition of detail. For instance, nor do we light a lamp and put it under a bushel but on a stand and gives light to all in the house” (Matt.5:15). Why do you see the speck that is in your brothers eyes but do not notice the log that is in your own”. The metaphor or simile may be elaborated into a story instead of a picture, the addition of details serving to develop a situation. This is what is called a parable proper. The story may be a short one, for example, “the Kingdom of heaven is like a yeast a woman mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough” (Matt. 13:33). Very little longer are “The parable of the lost sheep and coin”. “The hidden treasure and costly pearl”, “The Mustard Seed and The seed Growing secretly”. Some are longer. They include “The parable of the Two Houses” and “The Sower”.

THE CONCEPT OF STYLE AND STYLISTICS

Every time we use language, we adopt a style of some sort. We make selection from a range of syntactic and lexical possibilities according to the purpose of the communication. The most specific domain of style and in many ways the most valuable point for stylistics is the individual text or text extracts.

The term style can be traced to Saussure’s distinction between *langue* and *parole*. *Langue* according to him is “the code or system of rules common to speakers of a language, while *parole* is the practical uses of the system or selection from the system that speakers and writers make on this or that occasion” (Leech and Short 10). In this regard, style pertains to *parole* as this is basically the way a writer or speaker employs or selects his words, phrases and sentences to achieve desired effect in any given text. According to Abram style is:

The manner of linguist expression is how a speaker or a writer says whatever it is that he says. The characteristics style of a work or writer can be analyzed in terms of its sentence structure and syntax, the density and the type of figurative language, the pattern of its rhythm, component sound and other formal features and its rhetorical aims and objectives (190 -191)

Leech and Short also see styles as “the way in which language is used in a given context by a given person for a given purpose” (10). From the two definitions above, style can apply to linguistic habits of a particular writer and the way language is organized in a particular given school of thought and period.

This, of course makes it possible to talk about authorial style which has a link with the psychological disposition of the author. Traditionally, the Latin “*dictum stilus vriom argu*” explains that “style proclaims a man”. Each writer has a linguistic “thumbprint”, an individual combination of linguistic habits which somehow betrays him in all that he writes. The style of every writer deals with his domain. The domain of the author could be the author’s background, experience and genres of his interest. For instance, Achebe’s background, history and experience manifested vividly in his first novel, *Things Fall Apart*. This is why interviews are conducted to know more about the author as he speaks about his language and background.

Good style consists of choosing the appropriate symbolization of the experience one wishes to convey from among a number of words’ (Warburg50). What Warburg means is that style consists of selecting the appropriate words that match a given situation. But to Hockett, style occurs when there is a difference in the linguistic structures of two utterances” (556). Osgood on his part sees style as an individual’s deviation from norms of the language he is encoding; those deviations, being statistical properties of these structural feature for which there exists some degree of choice in his work”

Furthermore, the tradition that restricts style to choices of manner rather than matter of expression is regarded as common definition of style which is a way of writing or a mode of expression. This approach may be termed “Dualist” because it rests on assumed dualism in language between form and meaning. Again, the distinction between what a writer has to say and how it is presented to the reader underlies one of the earliest and most present concept of style; that is, style as the dress of thought”. This definition is implicit in Pope’s well known definition of wit in “An Essay on Criticism”. He defines wit thus’ “True wit is nature to advantage dressed, what often was thought but never so well expressed” (A. E Pope in Leech and Short 13).

This is a metaphor of style as some kind of “adornment” or covering of thought or meaning. “A converse implication of the “dress of thought” view is that it is possible to write in a style which is the “nadir” of plainness and neutrality” (Leech and Short 15). As Wesley puts it, style is the dress of thought, a modest dress, neat, but not gaudy, will true critics please” (18). From the above, we could in theory have a manner of writing in which content that is presented in its nakedness. There is also another angle to the study of style, which is in terms of function and that is stylistic pluralism. In this approach, language is seen to be performing a number of different functions and any piece of language is likely to be the result of choices made on different functional levels.

The pluralist like Halliday wants to distinguish various functions of language. Halliday is not contented with the dualists division between expression and content. It is obvious that in linguistic thought, language can perform varied functions or communicative roles. According to Halliday, language is used to perform three basic functions. These functions include “Ideational, interpersonal and textual functions (Longe 20). The ideational function is the use of language to express content; the interpersonal function is the use of language to express personal relations while the textual function is the use of language to create text. To stylistic pluralists, style can be viewed based on the function language is used to express. Style is studied because we want to explain something and in general, literary stylistics has implicitly the goal of explaining the relation between language and artistic function. The motivating questions are not so much what; but “why” and ‘how’. From the linguistic angle, it is why the author chooses this form of expression; from the literary critic’s view

point, it is how such an aesthetic effect is achieved through language. Since style is a relational term, the critic's concern for aesthetic apprehension is usually related to the linguist's concern for linguistic description.

Stylistics, according to Leech and Short is the linguistic study of style (13). Leech on his own part defines stylistics as "the study of the use of language in Literature' (1). "It is the exhaustive study of literary texts' (Banjo 24). "It is a branch of applied linguistics concerned with the study of style in text especially (but not exclusively) literary works (<http://www.google.com>.2014). Stylistics also is the linguistic characteristics of a literary text; it could be prose, drama or poetry. As a discipline, stylistics links literary criticism to linguistics; it does not function as an autonomous domain on its own, but it can be applied to an understanding of any literary text or discourse.

Text is the focus of stylistic analysis because through the text, we can discuss different domains and different linguistic features of a text. It is a distinction that may be used to determine the connection between form and the effect within a particular variety of language. Therefore, stylistics looks at what is "going on" within a language, what the linguistic associations are that style of a language reveals. It is the way a speaker or writer expresses whatever he meant to say. As Halliday puts it:

We can define linguistic stylistics as the description of literary texts, by method derived from general linguistic theory, using the categories of the description of the language as a whole; and the comparison of each text with others, by the same and different authors in the same and in different genres (34)

Stylistics is an essential component of literary criticism which makes it more practical, scientific, theoretical and objective. It stresses the need to form the literary grammar of a language, a literary transformation and satisfactory definitions of various literary terms such as style, poem, image and diction. More technically, it is the study of the linguistic features of a literary text, phonological, lexical and syntactic which directly affect the meaning of an utterance. It describes the characteristic choice of word, the sentence structure and syntax of a work.

From the fore going, it is indeed obvious that the meeting point of language and literature is stylistics. A stylistician must be one who is competent in language and in literature as well. Thus, there is a relationship between language, literature and stylistics; the relationship among these three terms facilitates stylistic analysis.

According to Onwukwe, stylistic analysis "aims at identifying the linguistic features of a particular style (language use) and their effects", (56).

Stylistic analysis is intended to help determine interpretation through examination of what a text contains, by describing the linguistic devices an author has used, and the effect provided in such devices. Such analysis is predominantly text based and has tended to see texts as containing meanings which a reader has to unearth (Alderson and Short 72).

Stylistic analysis, unlike traditional forms of practical criticism, is not interested primarily in coming up with new and startling interpretation of the text it examines, rather its main aim is to explicate by examining in details, the linguistic organization of the text and how the reader needs to interact with the linguistic organization to make sense out of it. The goal of stylistic analysis is therefore not simply to describe the formal features of texts for their own sake but in order to show their functional significance for the interpretation of the texts or in order to relate literary effect to linguistic causes where these are felt to be relevant.

BIBLICAL PARABLES: AN OVERVIEW

A lot of scholars have written on the synoptic gospel, one of such scholars is Witshurst whose article, "The Historic Present in Mathew's Parables; A Survey Analysis" Focused on Mathew 13 – 44. He examined the cluster of historic presents that appear in Matt 13 – 44, "The parable of hidden treasure". According to him, the context, position and the use of important Mathew's key words support the hypothesis that this parable has unique place in Mathew's gospel. He opines that the use of the historic presents highlights the crucial theme of the response to the discovery of the kingdom. In an article titled "Analysis of Jesus' Narrative Parables" Davis attempts to analyze some of Jesus' parables using a structuralistic approach beginning with three assumptions,"

- That the bible is the inspired inerrant word of God.
- That particular passages in the Bible can be isolated from their contexts and treated as independent units of discourse.
- That the structure of units of discourse is related to the underlying meaning of that unit.

On conclusion, he holds the view that few texts were identical in structure and all has same resemblance.

In general, according to Davis, four classes of narratives emerged. Class A contains only completed narrative schemata with no comparison involved. Class B is similar but centers on a negated narrative (on act of refusal or opposition). Class C consists of comparison of two similar narratives one a completed narrative the other negated. Class D according to him uses a sequence of two, class C comparisons, one leading to the other. Another interesting work is "Interpreting the Parables: A Hermeneutical Guide to their meaning" Here, John Sider divides his book into three parts. The first examines the concept of "analogy (the two things parables compared). The second explores literary features within the parables (diction, rhetorical structures, irony, plot, speeches, setting, point of view and tone)' and the third addresses the cultural milieu literary genre of the parables (910). Part two and three aim at determining the limits of analogical symbolism through an examination of internal and external features respectively; with the interpreting the parables, Sider proposes to offer a hermeneutical guide to the parables for college and seminary students and also to challenge by employing methods more similar in English Literature classes than in courses on biblical hermeneutics (18).

From the fore going, it is obvious that a lot of scholarly studies have been done on the parables and indeed on the parables of Mathew's gospel. These assertions not with standing, none to the best of the researchers view has worked on the graphological and syntactic features. This work therefore demonstrates that the parables in St. Mathew's gospel possess stylistically significance features in the areas of graphology and syntax.

METHODOLOGY

This work focused mainly on grapho-syntactic analysis of the Biblical parables with the aim of pointing out the place of language in actualizing the meaning of the parables. The population of the study includes three selected parables according to Saint Mathew's gospel chapter 13 verses 1 – 43. These parables are the parables of "the Sower", "the parable of the Weeds" and "the parable of the Mustard Seed and the Yeasts". The reason for choosing Mathew's account of the parables is that Mathew is the only person who brought the accounts together in a book. By such an arrangement, one would be able to make an easy reference. This work is essentially a stylistic analysis of the language of the parables with focus on graphology and syntax. It will also show how the two above mentioned elements contribute to the overall meaning and understanding of the Biblical parables.

CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE BIBLICAL PARABLES

There is a link between style and situation. In the course of our discussion on the need to study style in the preceding section, we have occasionally mentioned situation. According to Halliday, the term situation means the environment in which the language we use comes to life and becomes meaningful (58). It is also the configuration of environmental factors that typically fashion our ways of speaking. Situation also means a project on language as used by a particular set of people engaged in a particular kind of activity.

Following the pattern introduced in dialectal varieties, Gregory has the situational category of purposive role, which places the user of language in a given field of discourse and hence imposes such restriction as to whether the English language should be technically oriented or otherwise and also the user's relationship which decides for him what mode of discourse, whether spoken or written to use. This implies that context of situation has a huge relationship with the language used in text which indicates the writer's style.

In the Biblical parable, the style of the writer is predicated on the situation and contents that the writer intends to convey. The language of the Biblical parables were carefully selected because of the context that Christ found himself. He was among the Jews whose conversion was very hard. He therefore employed the parable which is earthly story with heavenly meaning.

The situation also makes Christ to explain in a pictorial and concrete way a profound spiritual or moral truth about God which may not be readily understood by the hearers if rendered in abstract terms. It was used mainly by Rabbais (Teacher) and Christ being a Rabbai followed the examples of his predecessors. But in His own case, he raised the meaning of the parables to a higher level. Like other Rabbais that lived in the same Jewish society with Christ, He made use of everyday things and occurrences in the natural surroundings of His hearers to teach important Heavenly truths; the material used is normally so simple and familiar that the main truth is fixed in the hearer's mind.

What we have established in the above discussion is that the situation, whether it is sermon, parable or any discourse would call for the type of language or register. It is the situation that calls for the style of the language to be used as Christ demonstrated in the parables.

GRAPHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLICAL PARABLES

Graphology in all ramifications deals with the science of writing. It is concerned with the arrangements and lay outs of any discourse.

Leech sees graphology as 'the whole writing system; punctuation, paragraphing as well as spelling (39). It refers to the study of the writing system or orthography of a language as seen in hand writing and typography. It is important to note that devices such as paragraphing, spacing lineation, capitalization, punctuation, print size and other graphics give a written text its overall visual design.

It is true that language of poetry exhibits peculiar features, as the above definitions tend to show, However, the language of the parables and such others, like advertising and public speaking are grouped together because they have shown similar graphological features which are decidedly peculiar to them. A cursory look at the parables would reveal that they are partnered and written in almost the same way that many of the other documents (The written constitutions, decrees) are in terms of the use of chapter, paragraphs, verses and their numbering, and punctuations. Those features and their stylistic significance are discussed below.

VERSIFICATION OF THE BIBLICAL PARABLES

The parables of Jesus as recorded by St. Mathew's gospel are characterized with the arrangement of verses. A look at the first text which is "The Parable of the Sower" would reveal this feature. This same arrangement of the text in verses runs through the other texts under investigation. The parable of the first text starts thus:

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. Such large crowd gathered round him that he got into the boat and sat in it while the people stood on the shore².

Then he told them many things in parable saying:

A farmer went out to sow his seed³, as he was scattering the seed, some fell along the part, and the birds came and ate it up⁴, some fell on rocky places where it did not have much soil, it sprang quickly, because the soil was shallow⁵. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root⁶, others seeds fell among thorns which grew up and choked the plant. He who has ear, let him hear.

The first text ends with verse 23 and it say thus:

But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the one who hears the word and understands it. He produces crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.

One observable thing that a careful reader would notice is the uniform arrangement of the verses. This same arrangement is true of the other parables that are being studied in this work. It is of particular interest that the verses are numbered. The numbering of the verses has stylistic importance. The verses are located with the numbers in order to enhance easy reference, reading and understanding of the whole message. For instance, if one is asked to go to verses 3 and 4 of this very chapter, with the aforementioned numbers, one quickly locates the place in the text. The verses also make it possible for the audience to follow the teaching logically and creates avenue to set for clarifications where necessary.

PARAGRAPHING

Another graphological device used in the parables is paragraphing, a feature of written texts in general. The term paragraph by Boyle is:

The largest single unit of an essay; it consists of a set of sentences, all of which deal within a common topic or a unit of broad topic. When the writer has said all that needs to be said in a particular unit, the paragraph ends and the writer moves on to the next paragraph. Generally, a good paragraph is closely linked to the paragraphs which go before and after it (112).

A paragraph has two major functions; from the writer's point of view, it helps in controlling the organization of an essay by grouping like things together and separating different grouping through separate paragraphs. From a reader's point of view, a paragraph breaks a long piece of writing in to small units, thus making reading easier. Effective paragraphing therefore makes for easier communication.

Thus in the parables under study, the device of paragraphing has been effectively deployed. Some of the paragraphs are long while some others are short depending on the theme of the topic.

In the first text, the Parable of the Sower” the first paragraph is lengthy,

“That same way, Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake, such large crowd gathered round him that he got into a boat and sat in it while the people stood at the shore. Then he told them many things in parables saying”. A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along... He who has ear let him hear”.⁹

It is obvious that the opening paragraph of “the Parable of the Sower” is long, also long is the last paragraph. Placing the long paragraph at the beginning and at the end of the first parable and having the short ones in between has a stylistic significance. The long paragraphs give detailed explanation and in some ways develop some topics or subjects. The long paragraphs are used to prepare the minds of the audience since the message came in parables. The speaker has to elucidate has points in order to arrest the mind of his audience. The long paragraphs at the beginning and at the end of the ‘parable of the sower’ are intended to make the sermon meaningful to the generality of the people.

In the parable of the weeds, the paragraphs are arranged in almost similar way. The first paragraph is relatively longer than the rest. This arrangement is likely to reflect the presence of the weeds in the good seed.

The explanation that one can give to justify the use of short paragraph in the language of the parables as exemplified in the text is the nature of the theme and the composition of the evidence at a particular time. Thus, the use of both long and short paragraphs in the parables is to facilitate better understanding of the parables, hence each of the paragraph quoted, presents as precisely as possible single aspect of the subject matter of the entire parables.

SYNTACTIC ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLICAL PARABLES

The discussion here concentrates on the syntactic analysis of the language of the biblical parables as recorded in St Mathew gospel, chapter 13 verses 1 – 43 of the Holy Bible. Chomsky sees syntax as “the study of the principles and processes by which sentence are constructed in particular languages” (1). The use of syntactic structures and features by the writer of the gospel according to Mathew contributes in no small way to the projection of the message of the parables and their readability. A look at the parables for our analysis shows that sentences occupy a prime position in the language of the parable and they are usually arranged and organized in a way that they are understood.

Simple Sentences

A simple sentence comprises one main or an independent clause. Hartman and Stork define a simple sentence as “consisting of a subject and a predicate without complement depending on class of verb” (206). The writer of the gospel of St. Mathew makes good use of simple sentences. Simple sentences enable the people the parable are meant for to understand the message vividly. Therefore, these simple sentences serve as one feature of his narration, description and instruction. Below are some examples:

A S V O A

1. / Then/ he/ told/ them/ many things in parables// (3)

S V A V O

2. // a farmer/went/out/to sow/his seed// (v3)

S V C A

3. You/ speak/ to the people/ in parables?. (10)

S V O A

4. - - -// I speak to Them in parables//(35).

S V O

5. He / told / them / another parable (24)

Table 1

	Simple sentence	Structure
1		ASVOA
2		SVAVO
3		SVCA
4		SVOA
5		SVOO

From the table above, one can observe that even though all the sentences are simple ones. They vary greatly in structure. The writer’s use of simple and short sentences is to provoke interest in the readers and make the message easy to understand.

The simple sentence takes many forms and these include the declarative, the interrogative, the imperative and the exclamatory sentences. These sentences are abound in the biblical parables.

Declarative Sentence

Declarative sentences are statements and they always have a subject and predicate as their obligatory elements. The primary function of statements is to convey information or make assertions. Declarative sentences are very dominant in the texts. Here are some examples:

A S V A

6. That same day/ Jesus/ went/ out of the house (V1)

S V A V O

7. A farmer/ went / out / to sow/ his seed (V3)

A S V C

8. / For/ this people’s heart/ has become/ calloused/ V15)

S V C

9. This/ is / the seed(V19)

S V O A

10. I / will open/ my mouth/ in parables/ V55

Table 2

6	Declarative	ASVA
7	Sentence	SVAVO
8		ASVC
9		SVC
10		SVOA

This structural arrangement of the elements goes to inform the viability of the sentences elements. It is appropriate to say that the writer uses these declarative sentences to emphasize very vital points in the texts. These statements are fictitious, anecdotes used by Jesus to make the listeners understand his points. The use of these statement also arouses the curiously and grips the attention of the listeners, there by directing their attention to what the speaker is saying.

Interrogative Sentences

The second form of the simple sentence is the interrogative sentence. Interrogative as the name implies is a type of sentence that asks for information on a specific point. It is necessary to point out that interrogative sentences appear only in two verses as they are shown below.

A V S V O

11. / why do/ you/ speak/ to the people / in parables? (V10)

S V A

12. The weeds/ did come / from where then? (27)

The above extracts are interrogative sentences in the texts and their structures are tabulated below:

Table 3

	Interrogative sentence	Structures
11		AVSVO
12		SVA

From the examples above, it can be observed that sentence structures 11 and 12 are not the same. They are not from Jesus himself but from the audience. It is likely that the audience used the interrogative to seek clarification for statements that were not properly understood. This goes to buttress what Quirk and Greenbaun write to the effect that the usual formation of a question in a discourse is to request the listeners to respond verbally to information that the questioner seeks” (306).

Imperative Sentences

Imperative sentences are used in giving orders that are expected to be obeyed. They often begin with a verb element because it is usual to omit the subject. Imperatives include commands, instructions, requests, warnings, directives and invitations. Below are some examples:

V A O C

13. Listened to / then / what the parable / of the sower means (18).

V C V S V O

14. Let / him / hear/ he who/ has / ear (9).

V O A

15. Throw / them / into the fiery / furnace(30).

The structures of the sentences above are shown in the table below.

Table 4

		Structure
13	Imperative sentence	VAOC
14		VCVSVO
15		VOA

The table above shows that imperative sentences have different structures. They show authority of the speaker and confer credibility covers in the subject. They also show distance between speaker and hearers. The imperative sentences used in the parables under study invoke the aura of superiority of the speaker who is all known being, but reduces himself to the extent of using the parables for teaching.

Exclamatory Sentences

Generally, exclamatory sentences are used to convey intense emotions of fear, regret, anger, pain or joy. Exclamatory sentences are not found in this parable. The reason for their absence is likely to be that the lesson being delivered is a spiritual truth and there is no room for emotion.

Complex Sentence

A complex is a sentence that has only one independent clause and one or more subordinate clauses (Babajide 31).

The writer of the parables makes use of complex sentences in order to make the parables more understandable.

16. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away (V21). The above examples have one main clause and two subordinate clauses. The main clause, “he quickly falls away and “when trouble or persecution comes”, // because of the word. The main clause carries the main meaning and thus it is a grammatical sentence while subordinate cannot because it depends on the main clause to arrive at its meaning.

17. The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field (4). The main clause is “The kingdom of heaven is like a man” while the subordinate used is “who sowed good seed in his field”.

18. The kingdom of heaven is like mustard seed which a man In his field (V31) main clause is “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed’ while “which a man in his field is the subordinate clause.

These four examples are selected from the three parables. They are complex sentences for at least each sentence contains one main clause and one or more subordinate clauses would be seen from the analysis. Thus the writer of the parables by this method subordinates some ideas to others that are more important and at the same time tries to co-ordinate them. The complex sentences are also used by the writer of the parables to suspend some ideas there by arousing the curiosity of the audience. He says: “Let both grow together until” the harvest. The main clause (main idea) is that both crops should be allowed to grow. The harvest time is the time to tell which is which.

Compound Sentence

A compound sentence according to Crytal and Davy consists of “simple main clause and one or more simple independent clauses linked by one of the sequence determining (coordinating) conjunctions or in writing, by one of a range of co-ordinating punctuation devices for instance, a semi colon “ (47). The two or more independent clauses must be joined by the linker of any element that has the property of joining structures of equal rank together like “and”, but, ‘or’ and ‘nor’. Below are some of the examples from the texts.

20 As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path and the bird came and ate them up (V4). “As he was scattering the seeds” is subordinate clause because it depends on the main clause ‘some fell along the path’ for a meaning.

The next sentence is joined by the linker and”

21. “The disciples came to him and asked why” do you speak to the people in parables: (V10).

22. ‘whoever has, will be given more and he will have abundance’ (V12).

23. “The owners servant came to him and said why didn’t you sow good seed in your field” (V27).

24. “Then he left the crowd and he went into the boat”. The examples above have two main clauses and they are linked together with a coordinating conjunction. It is remarkable that each sentence attempts to bring related ideas or events together in one sentence. It is interesting to note that all the examples have the syntactic co-ordinator. ‘and’ so the ideas are omitted to avoid verbosity and ensure the economy of words, thus coordinating two clauses of equal ranks.

COMPOUND COMPLEX/MULTIPLE SENTENCES

A compound complex sentence is a sentence that has at least two independent clauses and one or more subordinate clauses. In some cases, it may have at least three principal clauses without subordinate clause. Examples of compound complex abound in the parables. Let us illustrate with this sentence.

I tell you the truth many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it (17). Other multiple sentences in the parables under study are verses 15, 22, 29 and 35.

The use of multiple sentences in the parables is to create variety and stimulation of the interest of the reader as the sentences are skillfully arranged in the texts.

CONSLUSIONS

By employing these significant stylistic elements, the writer of these parables has achieved a lot by making the message of the parables meaningful to the readers. This work has also made it possible for the location of these significant items in the texts, how they are used and their effects. It demonstrates that for better and effective understanding of the parables, it is crucial to understand the linguistic elements deployed in the work. It is in unlocking the meaning of these linguistic elements that the meaning of the discourse can be achieved. The graphological features of the parables make it easier to understand the parables and also make reference. The syntactic features facilitate the sequence of the logic in the parables.

REFERENCES

1. Abrams M. H. and Harpham G. G. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. 9th ed. Boston: Wadsworth, 2009. Print.
2. Adeyinka, A. *The Synoptic Gospels*. Ibadan: Onibonoje Press and Book Industries, 1972. Print.
3. Akwanga A. N. *Semantics and Discourse: Theories of Meaning and Textual Analysis*. Enugu: Acena Ventures Ltd. 2004. Print.
4. Alderson, Charles and Michael Short. "Reading Literature". *Reading Analyzing and Teaching Literature*. Ed. Michael Short. London: Longman, 1980. Print.
5. Babajide, A. O. *Aspects of Grammar in the Use of English*. Ibadan: Stirling Horden Publishers, 1989. Print.
6. Brooks C. and Warnen R. P. *Understanding Fiction*. New York: Harcourt, 1990. Print.
7. Chapman, Raymond. *The Language of English Literature*. Longman: Edward Arnold, 1982. Print.
8. Chomsky, N. *Aspect of the Theory of Syntax*. Cambridge: Massachusetts. The M. I. T. P. 1968. Print.
9. Crystal, David and Derek Davy. *Investigating English Style*. London: Oxford University, 1969. Print.
10. Guy H. A. *The Gospel of Matthew*. London: Macmillan Education Limited, 1972. Print.
11. Halliday M. A. K. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Edward Arnold. 1985. Print.
12. "Descriptive Linguistics and Literary Studies" In *Linguistics and Literary Style*. New York: Holt Rinchat and Winston Inc. 1964. Print.
13. *Explorations in the Functions of Language*. London: Edward Arnold, 1972. Print.
14. Hartman R. R. K. and F. C. Stork. *Dictionary of Language and Linguistics*. London: Applied Science Publishing Limited, 1992. Print.
15. Hockett, Charles A *Course in Modern Linguistics*. New York: Macmillan 1958. Print.
16. *Holy Bible. New International Version*. United States: International Bible Society
17. Igicigi E. and Ogeninyi S. *Literature for Enjoyment: An Introduction to Nature and Theories of*
18. *Literature*. Leech G. N. *A Linguistics Guide to English Poetry*. London: Longman, 1969. Print.
19. Leech G. N. and Short M.H. *Style in Fiction*. Essex: Longman 1981. Print.
20. 2nd ed. Enugu: Computer Edge Publishers, 2006. Print.
21. Neena.K. Francis, "Dostoevsky as a Mentor of Suffering to Reality in his Selected Novels", *International Journal of English and Literature (IJEL)*, Vol. 6, Issue 6, pp. 109-112
22. Manoj Kumar & Sanjay Kumar, "Speech as Text for Teaching: An Analysis of Linguistic and Stylistic Maneuverings of Steve Jobs' Famous Speech Stay Hungry Stay Foolish and Exercises for Enhancing Students' Language Skills", *International Journal of English, and Literature (IJEL)*, Vol. 6, Issue 1, pp. 47-58
23. Sudha Mishra, "A Stylistic and Structural Analysis of "Snakes" by A. K. Ramanujan", *International Journal of Linguistics and Literature (IJLL)*, Vol. 3, Issue 1, pp. 27-34
24. Virginia C. Okafor & Gloria U. Issife, "Mood and Modality in Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari's Inaugural Speech: A Stylistic Study", *International Journal of Linguistics and Literature (IJLL)*, Vol. 6, Issue 5, pp. 27-40