

A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE ANTHEMS OF FIVE NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

In this paper², I examine, using foregrounding as a stylistic framework, the functions of phonological and lexical repetition, and graphological deviation in the anthems of five first-, second-, third-, fourth-, and fifth-generation universities owned by the Nigerian federal government. The written text of the anthems of the sampled universities, which were obtained largely from the websites and documents owned by the universities, were content and language analysed. The results indicate the use of lexical repetition, phonological repetition, punctuation and capitalisation to portray the universities as centres of knowledge and excellence. The results also indicate that students and staff of these institutions love and take pride in them.

Keywords: Foregrounding, repetition, graphological deviation, university anthem.

1. Introduction

In this study, I examine the functions of phonological and lexical repetition as well as graphological deviation as foregrounding features in the anthems of five federal universities in Nigeria. The term *anthem* originates from a Greek lexicon, *antiphora* — a song performed in a responsorial fashion (Fornäs, 2012). Fornäs (2012, p.150) observes that

an anthem as well as a hymn is a song of praise made for communal singing. It should preferably be reasonably easy to remember and to sing, making it tempting or even irresistible to join in singing, and this activity of participation is intended to spill over into some level of identification with what the anthem stands for. In this way, anthems are constructed to emotionally boost collective identification, through the medium of voice and sound.

In the university context, anthems are usually “easy to remember”, as pointed out above, partly because of sounds, words, or phrases, which are often repeated. Staff and students who sing their university anthems usually identify with the words in the anthem. Generally, a group of people sings an anthem in a formal gathering. The values, beliefs and hopes of an institution

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or a country are reflected in the words in them. For the university, students and staff sing the anthems during formal occasions such as matriculations, graduation ceremonies and inaugural lectures.

A university anthem often gives information about the university: its name; the city where it is located; its motto, vision, and mission; and, sometimes, the qualities that position it as an enviable institution of learning. Since an anthem is a type of song, I classify it as a type of poetry sung by a group of people to identify with their school, establishment, or organisation. I explore Nigerian universities' anthems to obtain the marked features of language use that pervade them. I examine the anthems of federal universities in this study because they largely represent the foundation of university education in Nigeria. The purpose of studying the anthems is to explore how and why sounds, lexemes, and the graphological devices of punctuation and capitalisation are foregrounded in the anthems. In the following section, I consider the historical classification of federal universities in Nigeria.

2. An Overview of the Classification of Nigerian Federal Universities

In April 1959, the Federal government of Nigeria commissioned the Ashby Commission to advise it on the establishment of more universities in Nigeria. Six years before independence, Nigeria had only three regions: the northern, western, and eastern. The University of Ibadan (UI) founded in 1948 was (still is) in the Western region. Though the Eastern government under the leadership of Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe had established the University of Nigeria (Nsukka) as a regional university before Nigeria's independence on 1st October 1960, and before the Ashby report was implemented, the university was not formally opened until six days after independence (Fafunwa, 1974; Ike, 1976). The Ashby report was later implemented in 1962 with the "establishment of University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife) ... by the Western region, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria ... by the Northern region, and University of Lagos ... by the Federal Government" all in the same year (Ajayi & Ekundayo, 2008, p.213). The Ashby report stated that only UI and the University of Lagos (UNILAG) were federal universities while Nsukka, Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) and Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) were regional universities. UI was granted autonomy in December 1962, "two years after Nsukka, and three months after Ahmadu Bello University, Ife and Lagos had been founded as autonomous institutions" (Fafunwa, 1974, p.156). In June 1963, the Midwestern state was created out of the Western region and Benin was made its capital. A few years later, the region clamoured for a university, sponsored by the regional government. Thus, the University of Benin (UNIBEN) was founded in 1970 (see Fafunwa, 2010; Nwagwu & Agarin, 2008; Okebukola, 2010; Oloyede, 2010 for arguments on the classification of first-generation universities in Nigeria). By 1975, the remaining four regional universities had become federal. These six universities are commonly called first-generation universities (see Ukeje, 1992; Nwagwu, 2014).

Ajayi and Ekundayo (2008, p. 213) observe that in the “third national development plan (1975-1980), the government established seven universities instead of the four proposed in the plan”. They are: Universities of Ilorin, Jos, Sokoto, Calabar, Maiduguri, Port Harcourt, and Bayero University, all founded in 1975. These federal institutions are regarded as second-generation universities (Ukeje, 1992; Agboola, 1993; Omeje & Eyo, 2008; Ajayi & Abiodun-Oyebanji, 2010; Oloyede, 2010). It is striking that the first state-owned university in Nigeria was founded in 1980 while the first privately-owned university in Nigeria was founded in 1999 (Oloyede, 2010). Thus, the first thirteen Nigerian universities are all owned by the federal government. These universities were adequately funded with money from the oil-boom in the 1970s. Several federal universities have been created since after 1975, and they have been categorised into third, fourth and fifth generation universities (Omeje & Eyo, 2008; Oloyede, 2010; Etuk, 2015). Third-generation universities include “specialised universities for agriculture and technology” (Omolewa, 2010, p. 38) founded in the 1980s. Fourth-generation universities were founded from 1991 till 2010 (Oloyede, 2010). The federal government established nine fifth-generation universities in 2011 (see Etuk, 2015). In the next section, I examine foregrounding techniques in poetry.

3. Foregrounding Techniques in Poetry

The concept known as *foregrounding* in the field of stylistics was first introduced in Garvin’s (1964) translation of the work by Mukařovský (1964). Mukařovský (1964) contrasted what he called *standard language* and *poetic language* and observed that poetic language is not a brand of the standard language but, rather, that standard language is the “background against which is reflected the esthetically intentional distortion of the linguistic components of the work” (p. 18). He asserts that “the violation of the norm of the standard, its systematic violation, is what makes possible the poetic utilization of language; without this possibility there would be no poetry” (p. 18). For Mukařovský, the “consequence of such deviation is the creation of a defamiliarizing effect for the reader” (Busse & McIntyre, 2010, p. 6). Thus, foregrounding refers to “cases where the language is sufficiently deviant to draw attention to itself and thereby prompt an interpretation of extra meaning” (Emmott & Alexander, 2014, p. 329). Foregrounding deals with “perceptual prominence” (Gregoriou, 2014, p. 87). The author observes that the difference between the concepts of “figure” and “ground”, from the work of Stockwell (2002), is that while figures stand out, are more obvious and conspicuous, ground is the platform where the figures rest. Studies such as Leech (1969, 2008), Short (1996), Simpson (2004), Alabi and Alabi (2010), Abdurraheem (2010), Alabi (2012), among others, have examined repetition and deviation as foregrounding features of poetry.

Several studies have examined repetition in poetry from a stylistics perspective (Leech, 1969; Myers & Simms, 1985; Short, 1996; McIntyre & Busse, 2010; Wales, 2011; Kemertelidze & Manjavidze, 2013; Verdonk, 2013;

Alabi, 2012; Abrams & Harpham, 2015). Myers and Simms (1985) define repetition as a “fundamental aesthetic, structural, and rhetorical element in poetry that can occur in rhythm, form, sonic structure, and syntax and which affects predictability, unity, coherence, emphasis, and surprise” (p. 255). Kemertelidze and Manjavidze (2013) observe that repetition is used for emphasis and is “necessary to attract a reader’s attention on the key-word or a key-phrase of the text” (p. 2). They assert that apart from words and phrases, sounds are repeated in poetry. Myers and Simms (1985) also state that repetition includes alliteration, anadiplosis, assonance, and so on. Marked use of repetition of sounds and words are examined to find out their meanings and stylistics implications in the anthems.

Deviant forms can be phonological, grammatical, graphological, syntactic, semantic, dialectal, historical, and so on (see Leech, 1969; Short, 1996; Li & Shi, 2015). Only graphological deviation is employed to analyse the anthems in this study because they are more pronounced than other forms of deviation, in the anthems. Leech (1969) observes, on graphological deviation, that “to the extent that spelling represents pronunciation, any strangeness of pronunciation will be reflected by a strangeness of written form” (p. 47). This assertion will be interrogated in this paper. The discussion in the paper will follow Leech’s (2008) *Cohesion of foregrounding* where foregrounding features are “related to one another, and to the text in its entirety” (p. 31).

There have been very few studies on anthems. Some of them have largely examined language use in the anthems of some countries or regions: the anthems of the European Union (Fornäs, 2012); African nations (Cusack, 2005); countries with a “Western musical tradition” (Cerulo, 1989, p. 84); the UK, the US and France (Erden, 2019); as well as of individual countries like Nigeria (Mohammed & Ayeni, 2010). This study adds to the literature on the subject.

4. Data and Method of Analysis

Data for the study (i.e., anthems) were collected from the websites (including YouTube recordings), newsletters and documents of five universities: Obafemi Awolowo University, University of Ilorin, Nigerian Defence Academy, University of Uyo, and Federal University, Lafia. These universities are first-, second-, third-, fourth-, and fifth-generation federal universities, respectively. I code the anthems from each of them as OUA (Obafemi Awolowo University Anthem), UIA (University of Ilorin Anthem), NDA (Nigerian Defence Academy Anthem), UUA (University of Uyo Anthem), and FUA (Federal University Lafia Anthem). The anthems have striking features that recommend them for analysis .

The documents were content and language analysed. To gain an insight into how the anthems are sung, the researcher listened to the YouTube recording. He also listened to students, who were attending or had graduated from the universities, between 2010 and 2019. Regarding content analysis, it is important to note that, in this study, it is an “objective, systematic and

quantitative description” (Berelson, 1952, p. 18) of the selected anthems. It is important to note also that OAU has two anthems. One is referred to as the “university anthem” while the other is referred to as the “alumni anthem”. Both anthems were published in the university’s forty-third convocation ceremony book that was held in December 2018. I chose the alumni anthem because of its popularity among staff and students. Current and former students of OAU that were randomly interviewed reported that they were not aware of the “university anthem”. The findings of the study are discussed in the next section.

5. Analysis of the Anthems³

The anthems of the five selected universities are analysed in this section. In 5.1, the OAU is analysed while the UILA is examined in 5.2. In sections 5.3, 5.4, and 5.5, I analyse the following anthems: NDAA, UUA and FULA, respectively.

5.1 Analysis of OAU

The 10-line OAU is presented below:

- [1] Great Ife! Great Ife!
Africa’s most beautiful campus.
Conscious, vigilant, progressive
Aluta against all oppression
- [5] Forward ever, backward never
For learning and culture, sports and struggle
Great Ife! I love you
There’s only one Great Ife in the universe
Another Great Ife is a counterfeit
- [10] Great! Great! Great! Great! Great!

In the anthem, “Great” is mentioned ten times. Certainly, the repetition of “Great” draws attention to itself and is therefore foregrounded. According to *The concise Oxford dictionary of current English*, great is defined as “... a size, amount, extent, or intensity considerably above the normal or average”. The anthem mirrors this definition in its entirety. First, it is used to show that the University, represented as Ife (line 1: Great Ife), is of uncommon distinction or status, far above other universities in Nigeria, Africa and the world (see lines 8 and 9). In line 10, there is the intense lexico-syntactic foregrounded cohesion of the word “Great” which is not only repeated five times, but occurs with initial capital letters and with exclamation marks such that students are louder in pronouncing the words. Second, Great Ife’s uniqueness is seen from a narrower lens related to Africa. It is described as the most beautiful campus on the African continent. It is a place where students demand their rights [line 4], and where one will continually make

³ The anthems: OAU, UILA and FULA were collected by the author from electronic and print sources: The Great Ife Alumni Association Inc. USA website; The 2011 Unilorin Diary; and the FULafia-Bulletin Facebook page, respectively.

progress [line 5]. In other words, the anthem depicts OAU as a unique, most attractive environment in which great things happen.

The use of words that collocate in the anthem support the foregoing interpretation. Wales (2011, p. 68) observes that the term “collocates” refers to “the habitual or expected co-occurrence of words, a characteristic feature of lexical behaviour in language, testifying to its predictability as well as its idiomaticity”. The first group of words shows the extent of the diversity that the university embraces. In line 6 are the combination of activities that are encouraged in the university; Great Ife is “for learning and culture” (this is the school’s motto) and “sports and struggle”. These activities give direction to students and staff regarding how to conduct themselves within the institution. The second category shows two antonymous phrases that relay positive and negative polar movements. In line 5, the collocates, used to show the two extremes, are “Forward ever, backward never”. The anthem ascribes the positive aspect – continuous progress – to the university. A similar indirect polar assertion is also indicated in lines 8 and 9. It should be noted that Nigerians believe in making positive confessions even when situations do not look favourable. Thus, these specific lines ensure that when staff and students sing these anthems, they make positive confessions with the belief that the confessions will always bring positivity.

The last point to note here is that the staff and students have very strong emotions for their university. In line 7 is the sentence “I love you”. Love is defined as “an intense feeling of deep affection or fondness for a person or thing” (*The concise Oxford dictionary of current English*). The sentence is remarkable in a couple of ways. It individualises the experience of each student and staff in the University. Everyone expresses his/her love for the institution by singing the anthem. The you in the line (7) personifies Great Ife. This implies that the love students and staff have for Great Ife is equivalent to that of humans for one another. The researcher’s interview of an OAU student supports this interpretation. There is thus a deep emotional connection between the students and their institution.

The emotional connection is also apparent in the way the anthem is sung. Mukařovský (1964) observes that “more concretely: sometimes intonation will be governed by meaning (by various procedures), sometimes, on the other hand, the meaning structure will be determined by intonation; sometimes again, the relationship of a word to the lexicon may be foregrounded, then again its relationship to the phonetic structure of the text” (p. 45). Lines 3 to 9 constitute an excellent example of enjambment. They show that when the anthem is sung, there should be no pauses in the call to action. In addition, the strong emotional content of the anthem is also indicated by the fact that “Great!” or “Great Ife!” are exclamative words (see lines 1, 7 and 10). The prosodic elements of the anthem together with raised right hands (palms fisted) when it is sung, as student interview reports show, demonstrate the greatness of the university. All these stylistic ingredients show that the OAU is one of the most memorable in Nigeria.

5.2 Analysis of UILA

Unlike the OAU, the UILA has 20 lines:

- [1] In love, peace and harmony,
We shall build the tower
Unilorin!
Hear the clarion call,
- [5] In unity we grow,
Committed to the seat of our learning,
Our hearts from vanity,
Standing firm in wisdom, in knowledge and in truth,
We honour your virtues;
- [10] Unilorin, you stand in strength and pride,
Learning, winning, building, praying,
Showing the way for all who yearn;
Making a future for the ones who follow,
Rising high we must never turn,
- [15] Ilorin, Unilorin,
Your torch has guided us
Upwards and onwards,
Ilorin, Unilorin.
Our Alma Mater,
- [20] We sing!

The blended name of the university - “Unilorin” is repeated four times, just as “Ife” in “Great Ife!” is mentioned five times in 5.1. What does the anthem say about Unilorin? Perhaps, the primary import of the anthem is to show that it is an institution that aims for lofty heights. This meaning is motivated by the repetition of the progressive aspect marker “-ing” in the following words and phrases: “Standing firm” (line 8); “Learning, winning, building, praying” (line 11); “Showing the way” (line 12); “Making a future” (line 13); and “Rising high” (line 14). This type of repetition is what Firth (1964) calls *phonaestheme*, that is, sound symbolism realised systematically within morphemes, which “convey certain sense-related meanings in a language” (Abelin, 2015, p. 20).

The function of the progressive aspect marker in line 11, for example, is to present the virtues of learning, winning, building, praying, as central and critical to the making of a great institution. Note that the progressive aspect in “Making a future” (line 13) supports this meaning. The progressive aspect also indicates that these virtues should be continuous; they are virtues that should be a permanent part of Unilorin. Staff and students are expected to be imbued with these virtues. Four of the phrases containing the progressive aspect marker are also important in that they are phrases that signpost the direction in which the university should grow:

- Standing firm (line 8)
- Showing the way (line 12)

- Making a future (line 13)
- Rising high (line 14).

It is obvious that the University needs to stand firm (standing firm) for the virtues and attributes that it believes in. Wavering about the virtues would make it impossible to achieve its academic goals. There is usually the need for it to map the way (showing the way). Nothing can be achieved if the means of doing so is not available. The University needs to be creative (making the future) regarding its stated goals (the future). The cumulative effect of the foregoing actions would be growth and excellence (rising high). The last progressive aspectual verb and its complement (Rising high) collocate with the adverbials “Upwards and onwards” (line 17) which connotes a constant, never ending upward trajectory in the growth of the University.

Finally, there is the repetition of consonant sounds like /k/ (line 4), /f/ (line 13), /s/ (line 10), and vowels like /ə/ (lines 16 and 17), /i/ in (line 8), /ai/ (line 14). They all show the unity and coherence of sounds in the anthem. However, the use of exclamation marks in lines 3 and 20 remind the analyst that the anthem is not only a song, as line 20 indicates, but that it is one that is done with the strong emotions of love and fondness although the intensity is not as high as that of OAU. Nevertheless, the ULA fulfils the function of a song that praises the institution and motivates its staff and students.

5.3 Analysis of NDAA⁴

The 9-line NDA anthem, presented below, is the shortest of those discussed in this paper:

- [1] Academy, my academy, our academy.
Academy mother of African warriors.
Academy of wonders, fascination and adventures.
Academy mother of all Generals, Admirals and Air Marshals.
- [5] You indeed are the cradle of service with courage conviction and victory.
Academy of indelible memories, dreams and visions.
Academy, Academy, in you I realized my potentials and in you I am what I am.
Forever the academy, long live the academy
Forever the Nigerian Defence Academy.

The noun “Academy”, repeated twelve times, is pervasive and prominent in the anthem. The noun, which is foregrounded, collates with the word “Defence” (line 9) to aid the interpretation of the institution as “a place of study or training in a special field” (military school, in this instance) (*The concise Oxford dictionary of current English*). Thus, the word connotes elitism in that it implicitly compares the NDA (as a school of distinguished military specialists) to other societies or institutions that consist of “distinguished

⁴ The NDAA was obtained from the university website: <https://www.nda.edu.ng/?#pages/group/About/30/view>

scholars, artists and scientists” (*The concise Oxford dictionary of current English*). Without a doubt, then, the anthem projects the NDA as an elite military school in Nigeria, especially, but also in Africa, generally. This is a school of which the staff and students can be proud.

The notion of elitism is apparent throughout the anthem. It is achieved through restrictive appositive phrases and post-modification, as the following examples show:

- Academy *mother of African warriors* (line 2).
- Academy *of wonders, fascination and adventures* (line 3).
- Academy *mother of all Generals, Admirals and Air Marshals* (line 4)
- You indeed are *the cradle of service with courage conviction and victory* (line 5).
- Academy *of indelible memories, dreams and visions* (line 6).

The restrictive appositive noun phrases (NPs) in lines 2 and 4 seem to suggest that the NDA is the only elite military school in Africa. It certainly attracts trainees from the African continent. This is supported by the use of the word “mother” in current English to denote the greatest of all things. The bomb recently used in Afghanistan to show the USA’s military might is described as MOAB (Mother of all bombs). Therefore, that the anthem is used to project the NDA as the greatest military school in Africa cannot be disputed.

Each of the five appositive or phrasal constructions highlighted above has a prepositional phrase postmodifying academy or its synonym. The NPs in the prepositional phrases paint a graphic picture of NDA’s achievement, as a trainer of African warriors who eventually become Generals, Admirals and Air Marshals. These are the top ranks in the Nigerian Military, the Nigerian Navy, and the Nigerian Air Force, respectively. The “Academy” is, thus, the place where men and women can choose any area of focus, whether as a naval officer or air force officer, and excel in it. The NPs also, among other things, paint a picture of wonder, attractiveness, mystery and bravery. All these are exemplified in such phrases as: *wonders, fascination and adventures* (line 3); *service with courage conviction and victory* (line 5); and *indelible memories, dreams and visions* (line 6). It is no wonder then that the staff and students of the institution regard it very highly and take pride in it.

5.4 Analysis of UUA⁵

A 15-line item (see it below), UUA reads like an exhortation (or encouragement) to staff and students to fulfil the purpose of the University by playing the roles expected of them:

- ARISE AND SHINE
- [1] Let us all arise as one
And light up wisdom’s path

⁵ The UUA was obtained from the University of Uyo website: <https://uniuyo.edu.ng/phpfiles/anthem.php>

- The citadel our great forebears
 Raised from nursery to its apogee
 [5] Now stand like a giant
 In the African sun
 Arise, Arise, Great Uniuyo
 We shall arise and shine
 And take our place in the firmament
 [10] Of cultured men and women
 Blest with wisdom, depth and vision
 And leave behind traditions
 For generations to come
 Arise, Arise
 [15] Arise and shine forth, Great Uniuyo

Support for the interpretation of the anthem as an exhortation is found in the foregrounded use of the inclusive and exclusive imperative clauses or sentences highlighted below:

- Let us all arise as one (line 1)
- And light up wisdom's path (line 2)
- Now stand like a giant (line 5)
- Arise, Arise, Great Uniuyo (line 7)
- Arise, Arise (line 14)
- Arise and shine forth, Great Uniuyo (line 15)

These sentences “urge or advise strongly or earnestly” (*The concise Oxford dictionary of current English*) the staff and students of the institution to arise (repeated 7 times) and shine (repeated twice). This gives the impression that arising, that is, beginning or starting (something), is probably the harder part of the two important actions the anthem advocates. It is interesting to note that the imperative clauses containing the words “Arise”/“arise” and “shine” (or its pseudo-synonym “light up”) start (lines 1 and 2) and end (lines 14 and 15) the anthem. This buttresses not only the importance of imperative clauses in the anthem, but also the actions expected of the staff and students which is to stand up and act.

It is now necessary to examine the semantic and lexical relations that “arise” and “shine” contract in the anthem. The synonyms of “arise” are “stand” (line 5) and “take our place” (line 9). Though not synonyms, other closely related words are “raised” (line 4), “apogee” (line 4) and “giant” (line 5). These connote the resolve of the institution and its staff and students to achieve their goals and the height they can reach in the pursuit of those goals. The synonym of “shine”, as already indicated, is “light up”. Other words closely associated with shine are “sun” (line 6) and “vision” (line 11). The word “vision” is especially important, as it denotes the goal which the institution wishes to achieve when staff and students arise and shine. The import of all this is that the foregrounded words “arise” and “shine” are critical to decoding the message the anthem projects. Therefore, the message

of exhorting staff and students to action, a vision of what the institution wishes to achieve, is unmistakable.

There are other stylistic features that enable the critical analyst to arrive at the conclusion that UU is a great institution. “Great” (lines 7 and 15) qualifies Uniuyo, just as it did Ife in 5.1. Thus, the university community, represented as “us” (line 1) and “we” (line 8), the people called to arise, are indeed great. It is striking to note that throughout the anthem, there is no punctuation mark at the end of each line. This means that the anthem is meant to be sung without pause. This deviant use of a punctuation mark suggests that the call to “Arise” and “shine” is an unending task.

5.5 Analysis of FULA

FULA is the last one discussed in this paper. The anthem is presented below:

FULA

- [1] FULafia where dreams come true
 A citadel of learning
 A center for great minds and a place for strength and peace
 FULafia beacon of hope we pledge allegiance
- [5] Equipping for Nigeria a people of knowledge and skills
 FULafia where dreams come true
 Like sunrays shining brightly,
 Lifting our Nation higher with quality to excel
 Innovation, transformation, integrity our pledge
- [10] FULafia where dreams come true a place of knowledge and skills

In this two-stanza anthem, the phrase that is foregrounded is: “FULafia where dreams come true”. It is repeated fully or partially in lines 1, 4, 6 and 10. The function of the repetition is to suggest and then emphasise that whatever academic or educational dreams anyone has, FULafia is the place they will be fulfilled. The name of the university, mentioned four times, has such synonyms as: “A citadel of learning” (line 2), “A centre for great minds” (line 3), “a place for strength and peace” (line 3). These labels have roughly the same meaning of “a pivot or axis” (*The concise Oxford dictionary of current English*) around which learning rotates or “a fortress ... protecting and dominating a city” (*The concise Oxford dictionary of current English*). Note that a citadel usually dominates a city from a high ground. This meaning coheres with the content of line 8; FULafia lifts the Nation higher in terms of academic (“knowledge and skills” – line 10) excellence. In essence, then, FULafia dominates learning in Nigeria. This statement implies that its great educational and training credentials are equal to none. The institution is also compared to “sunrays shining brightly” (line 7). In other words, FULafia, a visible and great learning institution, is available to all.

The attributes of the institution are many. For example, it traffics in “knowledge and skills” (see lines 5 and 10). Added to these desirable attributes are “Innovation, transformation, integrity” (line 9). All universities

want to be purveyors of these noble, creative and moral articles. With its anthem, therefore, FULafia stakes its claim as one of the best universities in Nigeria. This means that the anthem has achieved its purpose of indicating the excellence of the university and the pride that the staff and students have in it. In brief, and as implied by the anthem, the university is a place to attend, that positively influences people and that moves the Nigerian nation to greater heights.

6. Conclusion

In this paper, many foregrounded lexical, phonological, grammatical and graphological features have been used to depict each of the five universities as unique, excellent and forward looking. The paper has shown that the staff and students love their universities and have a sense of pride in their great achievements or the potential to achieve great things. In terms of aesthetics, the anthems are thoughtfully and creatively crafted. Which is why they elicit the strong emotions of love and pride by the staff and students of the various institutions. There is need, in terms of future studies, to collect larger data sets. The enlarged data should include the anthems of state and private universities, as this would enrich the study of the anthems.

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