



## Pragma-Stylistic Strategies in President Donald Trump's Speeches on "Christian Genocide" in Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Violent attacks and insecurity in parts of Nigeria have generated international concern over alleged religious persecution, particularly against Christian communities. The activities of extremist groups such as Boko Haram, Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), and armed herdsmen have intensified debates about religious violence, human rights, and national security. Global attention to the issue increased when former United States President Donald Trump delivered speeches that framed the violence against Christians in Nigeria as genocide, thereby shaping international discourse on the country's security crisis. Despite growing scholarship on Nigeria's insecurity and analyses of political rhetoric, limited attention has been given to the pragma-stylistic strategies embedded in Trump's discourse on the issue.

**Objective:** This study examined the pragma-stylistic strategies in President Donald Trump's discourse on the alleged "Christian genocide" in Nigeria, with particular attention to how linguistic choices construct moral narratives, attribute responsibility, and legitimise international concern or intervention.

**Method:** The study adopted a qualitative research design that integrates Searle's Speech Act Theory with Leech and Short's Linguistic Stylistics. Selected speeches, media reports, and social media posts produced by Donald Trump between November and December 2025 were purposively sampled based on the presence of evaluative language, threat rhetoric, and attribution of responsibility. The data were analyzed through pragma-stylistic analysis to identify the interaction between communicative functions and stylistic features in the discourse.

**Results:** Findings revealed the strategic deployment of assertive, directive, and expressive speech acts to present claims about violence as factual realities, call for action, and express moral condemnation. These pragmatic functions are reinforced through stylistic devices such as lexical intensification, repetition, hyperbole, and deliberate syntactic structuring, which amplify emotional appeal and rhetorical force. Together, these linguistic resources frame the violence as morally urgent and construct a persuasive narrative that positions external attention and intervention as necessary.

**Conclusion:** The study concluded that Trump's discourse on Christian genocide in Nigeria is shaped by the convergence of pragmatic functions and stylistic choices that simultaneously perform acts of assertion, evaluation, and persuasion. Through this interplay, the discourse constructs moral urgency, assigns responsibility, and legitimizes international engagement with Nigeria's security challenges.

**Unique Contribution:** This study provided fresh insight into how pragma-stylistic resources function in international political discourse to shape narratives about conflict and humanitarian crises. It contributes to the fields of pragmatics, stylistics, and political discourse analysis by demonstrating how speech acts and stylistic strategies interact to produce persuasive meanings in global political communication.

**Key Recommendation:** Scholars and analysts of political discourse should pay closer attention to the combined role of pragmatic functions and stylistic devices in shaping international narratives about conflicts. Such an approach can deepen understanding of how political actors influence global perceptions and policy debates through strategic language use.

**Keywords:** Pragmatics, Stylistics, Donald Trump, Christian genocide, Nigeria



## 1. INTRODUCTION

Language in political contexts is rarely neutral. Political speeches are deliberately designed communicative events in which speakers mobilize linguistic choices to pursue pragmatic aims such as persuasion, evaluation, alignment, condemnation, and emotional activation. From pragmatic and stylistic perspectives, analysis extends beyond propositional meaning to speaker intention, contextual inference, and patterned linguistic form. Political utterances therefore function as social actions, shaping beliefs and attitudes, while simultaneously operating as stylized performances that project authority, credibility, solidarity, or moral stance.

The United States President, Donald Trump is widely recognized for a distinctive rhetorical style marked by directness, repetition, emotional intensity, and strategic simplification. A recurrent theme in his speeches is the persecution and killing of Christians in Nigeria, often framed as a form of “genocide.” These utterances are not simply descriptive reports but pragmatically loaded acts and stylistically foregrounded choices. From the point of media, language in media performs far more than an informational function; it is a powerful resource for shaping public perception, regulating behaviour, and legitimizing institutional authority (Ammeh & Abochol, 2026). It functions to arouse moral outrage, construct a sense of urgency, and align audiences with the speaker’s evaluative stance, while simultaneously positioning Trump as a moral advocate and protector of religious freedom on the global stage.

From a pragma-stylistic perspective, Trump’s utterances on Nigeria warrant close analysis because they foreground multiple pragmatic mechanisms, including speech acts, presuppositions, implicatures, deixis, and evaluative language. Language is a powerful tool through which authority, clarity, and professionalism are constructed (Ekpenyong et al, 2025). These are reinforced by stylistic devices such as hyperbole, repetition, parallelism, and emotive lexis. Thus, language functions as both a tool for connection and a means of division, depending on how it is used and the social context in which it operates (Ogolekwu et al., 2025). Meanings in language are frequently constructed implicitly rather than through explicit argumentation, allowing persuasive force to emerge from linguistic form and contextual inference rather than from detailed empirical evidence or systematic justification.

Although Trump’s rhetoric has attracted considerable scholarly attention, much of the existing research has examined it from ideological, critical, or discourse-analytical perspectives rather than from a pragma-stylistic standpoint. For example, Wodak (2015) investigates populist political rhetoric through the discourse-historical approach and demonstrates how political actors construct “us versus them” narratives to mobilize public support. Similarly, van Dijk (2018) analyzes the ideological structures embedded in political discourse and shows how language reflects power relations, dominance, and social cognition in political communication. In the context of Trump’s political communication, Mercieca (2020) examines the persuasive strategies and propaganda techniques that characterize his rhetoric, emphasizing how populist appeals and rhetorical manipulation shape audience perception. While these studies provide valuable insights into the ideological and persuasive dimensions of Trump’s discourse, they pay limited



attention to the interaction between pragmatic meaning and stylistic patterning in his speeches. More importantly, little scholarly attention has been given to a pragma-stylistic analysis of Trump's speeches on the alleged "Christian genocide" in Nigeria. This study, therefore fills this gap by examining how pragmatic functions and stylistic features interact to construct persuasive narratives about religious violence in Nigeria.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Construction and Labelling of "Christian Genocide" in Nigeria**

The act of labeling events in political rhetoric carries pragmatic force: it doesn't merely describe a situation; it constructs meaning and shapes interpretation. Contemporary research in political linguistics highlights that naming functions as a form of framing that signals moral evaluation and agenda setting (Borah, 2017). When a speaker uses the term genocide to describe violence in Nigeria, the label immediately invokes a specific interpretive frame that is legally and morally charged, and that positions the conflict as a human rights crisis. Pragmatically, such labeling involves presupposition. Modern pragmatics views presuppositions as background assumptions presented as taken-for-granted information (Simons et al., 2017). When a political actor labels violence as "Christian genocide", they implicitly signal that this characterisation is established and non-controversial, whether or not independent verification exists. This can prompt audiences to accept the frame as part of the common ground, shaping interpretation without overt argument. In conflict rhetoric specifically, presupposed labels function to align audience perception with the speaker's stance (Bhatia, 2019). This implies that in conflict situations, speakers use labels that carry hidden assumptions in order to influence how the audience interprets the issue and to make them see it from the speaker's perspective.

Furthermore, speech act theory in recent pragmatic scholarship emphasizes that assertions do more than report; they project certainty and shape the epistemic environment of a discourse (Guasti & Rizzi, 2020). By asserting violence as genocide which refers to a term with specific ethical and legal implications; thus, the speaker invites audiences to adopt a particular worldview. Research on political speech shows that assertive labelling intensifies perceived severity of events, especially when used repeatedly over multiple statements (Verschuere, 2019). Linguistic framing theory also supports this, to labels influence agenda setting by making certain interpretations more cognitively salient (Pan & Kosicki, 2017; Ogedengbe & Adams, 2025). In the context of Nigeria, describing violence as genocide foregrounds religious identity as the core of the conflict, potentially sidelining socio-economic or political explanations. This strategic linguistic choice functions pragmatically to shape international perception. In a nutshell, the construction and labeling of the Nigerian situation as an Christian genocide operates through naming, presupposition, and assertive force as a combination that co-produces meaning and channels audience interpretation toward a specific moral narrative.

### **2.2 Pragmatic Attribution of Responsibility and Moral Judgment**

Attribution of responsibility in political rhetoric often operates through implicit mechanisms rather than explicit argumentation. Contemporary work on attribution in



discourse shows that leaving agency suggested but unexplicated can be rhetorically effective, especially on sensitive topics like conflict and violence (Stokoe, 2018). When a speaker repeatedly pairs descriptions of violence with references to a government's inaction, audiences are invited to infer culpability without direct accusation. Implicit blame functions pragmatically through association and evaluative choice. Research in appraisal theory suggests that evaluative language conveys moral stance by aligning attitudes with judgments of propriety (White, 2015). Language serves not just to convey information or provide instructions, but also to exercise authority and maintain control (Ogolekwu, 2025). Terms like failure, neglect, or allowing violence are interpretative cues that position actors as morally responsible, though not through legal argument, but through an evaluative stance.

Contemporary pragmatics further highlights the role of presupposition triggers in moral framing. By stating that an institution "could have prevented violence," a speaker embeds an assumption of prior ability and moral duty (Simons et al., 2017). This frames responsibility as given, shifting audiences toward a normative evaluation that correlates inaction with moral failure. Studies in political communication also show that implicit attribution of blame often provokes less resistance from audiences than overt accusation (Hutchby, 2019). Implicit strategies allow speakers to maintain plausible deniability while still guiding interpretation toward desired conclusions. Thus, pragmatic attribution and moral judgment in speech do not always appear as direct claims; instead, they leverage linguistic structure, lexical evaluation, and implied expectations to steer audience interpretations.

### **2.3 Stylistic Projection of Authority and Persuasive Force**

Stylistic strategies that project authority are central in political speech. Research suggests that direct, unambiguous language styles are often perceived as authoritative because they minimize interpretive ambiguity (Hyland, 2017). Stylistically, the use of intensified emotional language plays a central role in how violence is communicated and perceived in Nigeria. Within its communities, language varieties and norms reflect shared practices and values (Ogolekwu et al, 2022). Short, declarative constructions communicate confidence and reduce cognitive load for audiences, increasing perceived speaker credibility. Simplicity as a stylistic choice aligns with findings in linguistic pragmatics that accessible vocabulary promotes wider audience engagement and retention (Biber et al., 2016). In persuasive contexts, simplicity complements certainty: the use of strong modal expressions such as "must" and "will" signals confidence and positions assertions as uncontested claims. Repetition continues to function as a key persuasive device. Contemporary analyses show that repeated lexical items are more readily internalized by audiences and can significantly enhance message memorability (Remael & Mertens, 2018). This stylistic pattern reinforces authority by presenting claims with consistent emphasis over time. Stylistic projection of authority combines these elements: directness, simplicity, certainty, repetition to increase persuasive strength, shaping how various audience receive and interpret political messaging. According to Ekpang and Ogolekwu (2024), "Language does not exist in isolation; instead, it operates within specific contexts or phenomena." Stylistic choices that emphasize emotional content therefore, do not



operate in isolation; they structure audience reception through cognitive and affective engagement.

### **3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study adopted a dual theoretical framework, integrating Searle's (1989) Speech Act Theory and Leech and Short's (2007) Linguistic Stylistics to analyse President Donald Trump's speeches on the Christian genocide in Nigeria from different social media. Speech Act Theory views language as action, where utterances perform functions such as asserting, directing, or expressing (Searle, 1989). Trump's labelling of violence as "Christian genocide" functions as an assertive, projecting moral and factual claims, while implicit attribution of responsibility operates as expressive and directive acts (Stokoe, 2018; Simons et al., 2017). Pragmatic analysis shows how presuppositions and assertions shape audience interpretation and perform persuasive action. Linguistic Stylistics focuses on lexical intensification, extreme adjectives, repetition, and syntactic patterns that emotionally engage audiences, amplify persuasion, and reinforce pragmatic force (Coffin & O'Halloran, 2018). This integrated framework enables a holistic analysis, revealing how language constructs moral narratives, evokes emotions, assigns responsibility, and projects authority in politically charged discourses.

### **4. METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a qualitative research design to examine pragma-stylistic strategies in Donald Trump's discourse on the persecution of Christians in Nigeria. Data comprise official transcripts and social media posts drawn from verified media sources (New York Post, AP News, LSE United States Politics and Policy) and Trump's Truth Social posts between November and December 2025. Purposive sampling was used to select statements containing evaluative language, threat rhetoric, or attribution of responsibility (Palinkas et al., 2015). Analysis was guided by Searle's (1989) Speech Act Theory to identify assertive, expressive, and directive acts, and by Leech and Short's (2007) Linguistic Stylistics to examine lexical choice, repetition, emotive intensifiers, and syntactic patterns (Coffin & O'Halloran, 2018). Thematic content analysis integrated pragmatic and stylistic coding to identify recurring rhetorical strategies. All data were publicly accessible and properly acknowledged, ensuring ethical compliance. This approach enables an in-depth understanding of how language constructs meaning, projects authority, and conveys moral evaluation within socio-political discourse.



## 5. DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1:** Pragma-Stylistic Analysis of Trump’s Discursive Construction of U.S. Intervention in Nigeria (November–December 2025)

Title	Newspaper/Source	Date	Text	Pragmatic Elements (Searle)	Stylistic Elements (Leech & Short, 2007)	Pragma-Stylistic Implications
Trump threatens to go into Nigeria ‘guns-a-blazing’ if slaughter of Christians doesn’t stop	New York Post	Nov 1, 2025	Text1	<b>Assertive:</b> Claims Christian genocide is ongoing. <b>Directive:</b> Threatens military action (“go into... ‘guns-a-blazing’”). <b>Expressive:</b> Shows moral outrage and condemnation.	<b>Lexical intensification:</b> “horrible atrocities”, “guns-a-blazing” <b>Repetition:</b> “immediately stop all aid and assistance” <b>Syntactic pattern:</b> Conditional clauses emphasizing threat (“If the Nigerian Government...”)	Combines moral condemnation with a persuasive threat. Lexical intensifiers heighten emotional impact. Conditional phrasing emphasizes responsibility and urgency.
Trump threatens Nigeria with potential military action and escalates claim of Christian persecution	AP News	Nov 3, 2025	Text2	<b>Assertive:</b> Reiterates Christian persecution; presents fact so of casualties. <b>Directive:</b> Threat to halt aids; indirect call for policy change. <b>Expressive:</b> Anger, moral evaluation of Nigerian government.	<b>Lexical intensification:</b> “completely wipe out”, “horrible atrocities”. <b>Repetition:</b> Social media quote repeated verbatim for emphasis <b>Syntactic pattern:</b> Parallelism in warning statements	Repetition reinforces persuasiveness. The Intensified vocabulary increases perceived severity. Syntactic parallelism structures threat clearly, projecting authority.



<p>Why Donald Trump is threatening military intervention in Nigeria and what it means for the government</p>	<p>LSE United States Politics and Policy</p>	<p>Dec1 2,20 25</p>	<p>Text3</p>	<p><b>Assertive:</b> Labels Nigeria as “Country of Particular Concern” <b>Directive:</b> Suggests U.S. intervention; implicit urging Nigeria to act. <b>Expressive:</b> Displays concern for persecuted Christians.</p>	<p><b>Lexical intensification:</b> “guns-a-blazing”, “cherished Christians” <b>Extreme adjectives:</b> “powerful,” “deadly” <b>Repetition &amp; syntactic emphasis:</b> Multiple references to intervention and threat</p>	<p>Stylistic intensification creates urgency. Repetition emphasizes moral narrative. Pragmatically, combines factual reporting with a persuasive appeal to the audience’s empathy and moral judgment.</p>
<p>Tonight, at my direction as Commander in Chief, the United States launched a powerful and deadly strike against ISIS Terrorist Scumin Northwest Nigeria...</p>	<p>Truth Social( Donald Trump)</p>	<p>Dec2 5,20 25</p>	<p>Text4</p>	<p><b>Assertive:</b> Reports U.S. military action as fact. <b>Directive:</b> Implicit warning to perpetrators. <b>Expressive:</b> Pride, triumph, <b>Moral justification:</b>  (“there would be hell to pay”).</p>	<p><b>Lexical intensification:</b> “powerful and deadly strike,” “viciously killing” <b>Extreme adjectives &amp; hyperbole:</b> “level not seen...even centuries”. <b>Repetition &amp; exclamation:</b>“ May God Bless...MERRY CHRISTMAS” <b>Syntactic pattern:</b> Long, elaborate sentences emphasizing personal authority</p>	<p>Stylistics amplify narrative authority and moral justification. Hyperbolic intensifiers dramatize the event. Pragmatically, assertive and expressive acts merge to legitimize U.S. intervention and project dominance.</p>



## 6. DISCUSSION

### 6.1 Pragmatic Strategies in President Donald Trump's Speeches on the Christian Genocide in Nigeria

This section applies Searle's Speech Act Theory to examine the pragmatic functions of President Donald Trump's statements on Nigeria. It highlights how his utterances perform distinct communicative roles which include asserting facts, directing actions, and expressing attitudes or emotions across the four selected texts. By categorizing the texts into assertive, directive, and expressive acts, the analysis demonstrates how language is strategically used to construct reality, influence behaviour, and convey moral and emotional positions concerning the reported persecution of Christians and the corresponding U.S. responses.

#### 6.1.1 Assertive

Assertive speech acts involve a speaker presenting statements they regard as true, effectively committing to the reality of their claims. These include declarations, reports, or claims that convey the speaker's perspective as factual. In political discourse, such acts do more than share information as they shape how events are interpreted morally and politically, influencing how different audience respond. In Donald Trump's commentary on the alleged Christian genocide in Nigeria, assertives work to construct a clear narrative. Excerpts Demonstrating Assertive Acts

**Text 1 (Nov 1, 2025, New York Post):** "There is ongoing Christian genocide in Northwest Nigeria."

**Text 2 (Nov 3, 2025, AP News):** "Christians continue to be persecuted; hundreds have been killed."

**Text 3 (Dec 12, 2025, LSE United States Politics and Policy):** "Nigeria has been designated a 'Country of Particular Concern' due to violations against religious freedom, with statistics showing increasing attacks on Christians."

**Text 4 (Dec 25, 2025, Truth Social):** "Tonight, at my direction as Commander in Chief, the United States launched a powerful and deadly strike against ISIS terrorists in Northwest Nigeria."

Across the four excerpts, Trump's assertive speech acts operate on multiple interrelated levels. First, establishing reality, each excerpt affirms the truth of events, using phrases such as "ongoing 'Christian genocide,'" "hundreds have been killed," and "launched a powerful strike," reinforcing the perception of factual urgency and credibility. Second, framing moral and political context: by highlighting Christian persecution, Trump casts the conflict in ethical terms, positioning himself as defending an oppressed group. Formal labels (Text 3) and military reporting (Text 4) further legitimize U.S. intervention as necessary and justified. Third, building consistency across platforms and dates: despite varying media and timelines, the repeated emphasis on persecution and U.S. action strengthens the narrative of a continuous, verifiable threat. Finally, blending evaluation with fact in phrases like "powerful and deadly strike". This combines descriptive reporting with evaluative judgment, enhancing persuasive impact. Previous studies show that political leaders use assertive speech acts to establish authority and legitimize actions (Bhatia, 2019; Holmes, 2017). Framing claims as factual enhances credibility and guides audience interpretation. Trump's assertives extend



this by linking moral evaluation with political justification, showing that factual statements can frame ethical imperatives and support intervention, consistent with crisis rhetoric research in international contexts (Fairclough, 2010). Their frequent use reflects the need to assert control and reduce ambiguity during crises, confirming established patterns in persuasive political discourse.

### **6.1.2 Directive**

Directive speech acts involve a speaker attempting to get the hearer to act, either explicitly or implicitly. These acts include commands, requests, threats, advice, or warnings, and in political discourse, they do more than seek compliance rather, they communicate authority, assign responsibility, and shape behavior within moral and strategic frameworks. In Donald Trump's commentary on the alleged Christian genocide in Nigeria, directives function to compel both the Nigerian government and perpetrators of violence to act, emphasizing accountability and signaling potential consequences. By issuing threats, linking aid to policy changes, and reporting military intervention, Trump frames himself as both a moral authority and an active enforcer of justice. Excerpts Demonstrating Directive Acts

**Text 1 (Nov 1, 2025, New York Post):** "If the Nigerian government does not act, we may go in... 'guns-a-blazing'."

**Text 2 (Nov 3, 2025, AP News):** "We may halt foreign aid unless Nigeria changes its policies regarding Christian persecution."

**Text 3 (Dec 12, 2025, LSE United States Politics and Policy):** "The U.S. stands ready to intervene if necessary, and Nigeria must address these human rights violations."

**Text 4 (Dec 25, 2025, Truth Social):** "Tonight, at my direction, the U.S. launched a strike against ISIS terrorists in Northwest Nigeria."

In the above excerpts, Trump's directive speech acts operate on multiple interrelated levels. First, compelling behavior: each excerpt seeks to influence actions, either urging Nigeria to reform policies (Texts 1–3) or warning perpetrators through reported military action (Text 4). Second, Texts 1 and 2 contain overt directives, threatening military or economic consequences, while Texts 3 and 4 communicate subtler guidance, combining warnings with moral and political expectation. Third, it emphasizes responsibility and accountability by signaling potential intervention or linking aid to policy change, Trump pressures Nigerian authorities to act against persecution and signals that violent actors will face consequences. Finally, by reinforcing authority and strategic position, the directives highlight U.S. readiness and moral authority, framing intervention as justified and necessary, while shaping audience perception of both urgency and legitimacy. Directive speech acts shape policy and assert leadership authority, often using conditional warnings or threats (Searle, 1979; Holmes, 2017). In Trump's discourse, directives are combined with moral framing, showing that commands can carry ethical justification, similar to humanitarian appeals used by political leaders (Chilton, 2004). Moral framing reinforces public acceptance and the legitimacy of political or military action, consistent with crisis discourse research.



### 6.1.3 Expressive

Expressive speech acts involve a speaker conveying psychological states, emotions, or value judgments toward a situation. These include expressions of anger, concern, pride, condemnation, or approval. In political discourse, expressives do more than reveal personal feelings as they frame events in moral and emotional terms, shaping how audiences interpret responsibility, injustice, and legitimacy. In Donald Trump's commentary on the alleged Christian genocide in Nigeria, expressive acts intensify the emotional and ethical force of the message. They communicate outrage toward violence, moral judgment toward perceived inaction, sympathy for victims, and pride in intervention. Through these emotional evaluations, Trump reinforces the urgency and moral framing already established through factual claims and calls for action. Excerpts Demonstrating Expressive Acts:

**Text 1 (Nov 1, 2025, New York Post):** Language expressing moral outrage and condemnation of violence against Christians.

**Text 2 (Nov 3, 2025, AP News):** Statements conveying anger and moral judgment toward the Nigerian government's response.

**Text 3 (Dec 12, 2025, LSE United States Politics and Policy):** Expressions of concern and sympathy for persecuted Christians.

**Text 4 (Dec 25, 2025, Truth Social):** Language expressing pride, triumph, and moral justification for military action, including warnings that "there would be hell to pay."

Based on the above excerpts, Trump's expressive speech acts operate on multiple interrelated levels. First, intensifying moral evaluation using emotional language such as outrage, anger, and condemnation frames the situation not merely as a political problem but as a moral crisis requiring urgent attention. Second, assigning ethical judgment by expressing anger toward perceived governmental inaction (Text 2) and concern for victims (Text 3), Trump constructs a moral hierarchy that distinguishes between protectors, victims, and those deemed responsible for failing to act. Third, reinforcing legitimacy through emotional alignment: pride and triumph following military action (Text 4) present intervention as not only strategic but morally justified, strengthening its perceived righteousness. Finally, amplifying persuasive force: the emotional intensity of outrage, concern, and triumph deepens audience engagement, making the assertive claims more compelling and the directive pressures more urgent. Expressive acts frame events as moral struggles and strengthen audience alignment with ethical positions (Searle, 1979; Fairclough, 2010). In this discourse, they reinforce assertive and directive acts, showing how emotional framing supports factual and action-oriented messages (Bhatia, 2019). This agrees with Lakoff (2004) that emotional and moral language enhances engagement and persuasive impact, consistent with research on affective political communication.

### 6.2 Stylistic Strategies in President Donald Trump's Speeches on the Christian Genocide in Nigeria

This section examines Leech and Short's (2007) stylistic devices in Donald Trump's political commentary on the alleged Christian persecution in Nigeria. It focuses on how specific language strategies shape meaning, influence audience perception, and convey evaluative



stances. In particular, it highlights lexical intensification, which uses emotionally charged and morally weighted vocabulary to dramatize events and legitimize intervention, and repetition, which reinforces key themes, emphasizes urgency, and ensures the audience retains critical messages. Together, these stylistic devices illustrate how language functions pragmatically to persuade, construct moral authority, and frame political crises in highly compelling ways.

### **6.2.1 Lexical Intensification**

Lexical intensification uses highly charged vocabulary to amplify emotion and evaluation in political discourse, by framing events as urgent or catastrophic. In Donald Trump's commentary, such language magnifies violence, legitimizes intervention, and signals moral certainty, presenting the crisis as severe, immediate, and demanding decisive response while shaping audience perception through evaluative framing.

**Text 1:** Use of extreme evaluative phrases such as “horrible atrocities.”

**Text 2:** Militarized metaphorical language such as “guns-a-blazing.”

**Text 4:** Emphatic evaluative descriptions such as “powerful and deadly strike.”

Lexical intensification operates through several interrelated effects. Emotionally charged descriptors such as “horrible” and “deadly” magnify violence, transforming conflict into moral catastrophe and heightening urgency. Dramatic imagery like “guns-a-blazing” portrays intervention as forceful and decisive. Extreme evaluative language signals moral certainty, while heightened emotionality strengthens persuasion, amplifying both the crisis's seriousness and the perceived legitimacy of response in political discourse. Previous studies show that emotionally charged and evaluative language amplifies moral and persuasive force in political discourse (Leech & Short, 2007; Stibbe, 2015; Lakoff, 2004). Trump's use of extreme descriptors such as “horrible atrocities” and “guns-a-blazing” aligns with these findings, dramatizing events and reinforcing urgency. This extends prior research by demonstrating how lexical intensification combines moral evaluation with calls for intervention in an international crisis context.

### **5.2.2 Repetition**

Repetition involves the deliberate recurrence of words, phrases, or themes to reinforce meaning and sustain emphasis. In political communication, it stabilizes narratives, signals importance, and enhances memorability. Within commentary by Donald Trump on Christian persecution in Nigeria, repetition foregrounds urgency, reiterates threats, and continually highlights intervention, ensuring attention across platforms and shaping audience interpretation and response patterns strongly over time. Examples of Repetition.

**Text 2:** The claim of atrocities is repeated verbatim, reinforcing the scale and urgency of the crisis.

Across these examples, lexical intensification operates on several interrelated levels. Emotionally charged descriptors such as “horrible” and “deadly” magnify severity, transforming conflict into moral catastrophe and heightening urgency. Dramatic imagery like “guns-a-blazing” portrays intervention as forceful and decisive. Extreme evaluative language signals moral certainty, while heightened emotionality strengthens persuasion, amplifying



both the seriousness of the crisis and the perceived legitimacy of the speaker's response overall. Research indicates that repetition stabilizes narratives, emphasizes key themes, and enhances audience retention (Chilton, 2004; Bhatia, 2019). Trump's repeated claims of atrocities reinforce the scale and urgency of the crisis, consistent with these studies. The findings extend previous work by showing how repetition functions across multiple platforms and timeframes to strengthen interventionist messages.

### **6.2.3 Syntactic Patterns**

Syntactic patterns refer to the structural arrangement of clauses and sentences used to organize meaning and emphasize relationships between actions and consequences. In political discourse, syntax functions strategically to assign responsibility, structure warnings, and project authority. In Donald Trump's commentary on the Christian genocide in Nigeria, conditional clauses such as "If the Nigerian Government..." foreground accountability by linking inaction to consequences. Parallelism organizes warning statements into balanced, rhythmic structures that enhance clarity and memorability. Meanwhile, long, elaborate sentences particularly in Text 4 create a sense of authority and narrative control, allowing detailed justification of action while amplifying rhetorical impact. Collectively, these syntactic choices structure responsibility, intensify warnings, and reinforce the speaker's authoritative stance.

### **6.2.4 Hyperbole and Extreme Adjectives**

Hyperbole and extreme adjectives involve deliberate exaggeration to intensify emotional and evaluative force. In political discourse, such language dramatizes events, magnifies perceived threats, and reinforces claims of urgency or moral necessity. Expressions such as "levels not seen... even centuries" elevate contemporary violence to historically unprecedented proportions, intensifying perceived crisis. This exaggeration asserts the scale of the threat while simultaneously projecting dominance and decisiveness in response. By heightening emotional intensity and enlarging perceived consequences, hyperbolic phrasing strengthens persuasive appeal, framing intervention as not only justified but unavoidable within an extraordinary moral and historical context. Previous research shows that hyperbole exaggerates events, heightens perceived threat, and legitimizes intervention (Leech & Short, 2007; Stibbe, 2015). Trump's expressions like "levels not seen... even centuries" confirm these findings by dramatizing violence. The study extends this work by illustrating how historical framing combined with emotional exaggeration enhances both moral authority and urgency in international political communication.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of the analysis, the study concludes that President Donald Trump's discourse on the alleged Christian persecution in Nigeria strategically combines pragmatic and stylistic resources to construct a morally charged narrative that legitimizes political and military intervention. The integration of assertive, directive, and expressive speech acts demonstrates how political language can simultaneously present claims as factual, demand action, and evoke emotional alignment from audiences. Through these pragmatic functions, the discourse establishes a clear hierarchy of victims, perpetrators, and protectors, thereby positioning the speaker as both a moral authority and an active agent responding to injustice. In addition, stylistic devices such as lexical intensification, repetition, syntactic structuring, and hyperbolic expressions amplify urgency and reinforce persuasive impact. These linguistic



strategies collectively transform political commentary into a compelling rhetorical framework that frames the conflict as an urgent moral crisis. The study therefore concludes that pragma-stylistic choices play a decisive role in shaping political narratives, legitimizing intervention, and influencing public interpretation of international conflicts.

### **Ethical clearance**

No ethical clearance was obtained or required for this study because the data analysed were publicly available in national and international dailies as well as on social media platforms.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

### **Authors' Contributions**

Ammeh O. Faith conceived and designed the study. Edidiong O. Blessing was responsible for data collection. Ogolekwu Oche prepared the initial draft of the manuscript and carried out the data analysis/interpretation. All authors critically reviewed, revised, and approved the final version of the manuscript and accept responsibility for the content and similarity index of the work.

### **Data availability statement**

The datasets used or analysed during the current study are publicly available in national and international dailies as well as other open sources. They can also be obtained from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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