

Narratives of Pain, Ecology and Identity: A Discourse-Stylistic Analysis of Ogoni Resistance Texts

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Abstract

This research critically investigates how linguistic choices in Ogoni resistance texts construct narratives of collective pain, ecological devastation and ethnic identity within a long history of environmental injustice in the Niger Delta of Nigeria. Drawing on a discourse-stylistic approach, the paper examines how lexical patterning, evaluative expressions, metaphor, and rhetorical foregrounding articulate the Ogoni people's claims to dignity, land, and survival. The analysis is anchored on two complementary pragmatic theories. Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson, 1986/1995) offers a framework for examining how inferential communication shapes the interpretation of Ogoni resistance texts. It enables the study to show how readers recover implied meanings—particularly implicatures of state neglect, environmental grief, and moral indictment—through the interaction of contextual cues and cognitive expectations. Alongside this, Politeness and Impoliteness Theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Culpeper, 1996) guides the investigation of how resistance discourse manages, negotiates, or deliberately threatens face-relations when addressing the Nigerian state, multinational oil corporations, and international audiences. These theories illuminate how pain and protest are encoded through both explicit and implicit pragmatic cues. The study examines two key texts—the Ogoni Bill of Rights (1990) and selected speeches of Ken Saro-Wiwa—not for their political content alone but for their stylistic texture: the recurrent deployment of collective pronouns, ecological metaphors, lexical intensifiers, and morally loaded evaluative terms. Findings reveal that these texts function as acts of identity construction, using stylistic patterns to frame the Ogoni as an endangered community whose struggle for environmental justice is inseparable from their cultural survival. The paper argues that the fusion of pragmatic inferencing and stylistic patterning deepens our understanding of how African resistance discourse performs pain, mobilizes solidarity, and constructs enduring political narratives.

Keywords: *Discourse-Stylistic Analysis; Pragmatics; Ogoni Resistance Discourse; Ecological Metaphors; Relevance Theory; Evaluative Language; Ken Saro-Wiwa.*

INTRODUCTION

Background to Ogoni Resistance Discourse

The delta region had been noted for its struggles for self-determination since the second decade of the twentieth century (Tamuno, 1970; Saro-Wiwa, 1995), and has since been the site of ethnic minority struggles for a measure of autonomy during the period leading to independence in 1960. The Ogoni resistance movement, however, developed as a response to decades of ecological destruction, political exclusion, and corporate-state exploitation in the Niger Delta. Central to this struggle is the use of language as a tool for articulating collective suffering and asserting political identity. Recently, identity politics in the delta has become

more pronounced, violent and widespread, even to the extent of threatening the Nigerian nation-state as presently constituted (Obi, 2001). African scholars have shown that resistance discourse in the Niger Delta is not only a narrative of grievance but also a rhetorical project aimed at redefining agency within oppressive structures (Obi, 2001; Ikelegbe, 2005). The Ogoni, like many minority communities in the region, deploy discourse as a strategic instrument for confronting domination, mobilising solidarity, and demanding justice (Okonta & Douglas, 2001). Through manifestos, speeches, communiqués, and declarations, they construct a counter-narrative that challenges state power and multinational oil corporations.

When it is considered that the bulk of the oil is extracted from the lands and waters of the Niger delta, it is not difficult to explain why the continued marginalisation of oil minorities of the delta from the centres of economic and political power has now become a volatile issue in Nigerian political discourse. Environmental degradation lies at the heart of Ogoni resistance. Oil extraction has resulted in unprecedented ecological damage, including spills, gas flaring, loss of farmlands, and polluted water bodies. Scholars argue that this ecological devastation is inseparable from a larger pattern of eco-political marginalisation, where state institutions and oil multinationals benefit economically while local communities bear the destructive consequences (Bassey, 2012; Obi, 2022). Nnimmo Bassey (2012) describes this condition as environmental racism, highlighting how Niger Delta communities are systematically exposed to toxic environments without adequate remediation. Similarly, Ikelegbe (2013) emphasises that environmental degradation fuels political agitation because it threatens cultural identity, livelihoods, and social continuity. Thus, in Ogoni discourse, the environment becomes both a site of suffering and a symbolic resource for constructing political resistance.

Stylistic and Pragmatic Importance of Resistance Texts

Ogoni resistance texts are stylistically layered and pragmatically strategic. From a discourse-stylistic perspective, these texts utilise parallelism, metaphor, repetition, and collective pronouns to foreground unity, shared trauma, and moral legitimacy. Pragmatically, they perform key acts such as accusation, warning, persuasion, and self-assertion. African linguists have shown that resistance movements across the continent rely on such rhetorical and pragmatic devices to challenge hegemony, galvanise group identity, and legitimise political claims (Adegbija, 1995; Oha, 2003). In the Ogoni context, texts like the Ogoni Bill of Rights and Ken Saro-Wiwa's speeches employ speech acts that condemn state injustice, demand autonomy, and project an ecological consciousness rooted in indigenous identity. These communicative strategies transform personal pain into collective memory and political action.

Aim and objectives of the Study

The study aims to investigate how Ogoni resistance texts linguistically construct narratives of pain, ecological injustice, and collective identity through the interplay of discourse-stylistic features and pragmatic strategies, in order to illuminate how these texts document lived experiences and articulate political resistance. And the set objectives are to: analyse the stylistic features—such as metaphor, foregrounding, lexical patterning, and evaluative language—through which Ogoni resistance texts depict pain, environmental devastation, and cultural identity; Examine the pragmatic strategies employed in the texts, including implicature, inferential communication, and facework, in order to understand how resistance, persuasion, and moral positioning are performed; Explore how the selected texts link ecological degradation to political marginalisation by combining stylistic markers with

pragmatic meaning-making to construct a coherent narrative of Ogoni collective struggle and authority.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ogoni Struggle and Environmental Justice

Scholarship on the Niger Delta has produced extensive documentation of the ecological crisis and political marginalization experienced by the Ogoni people. Foundational works—including those by Nwosu (2014), Welch (1995), Osaghae (1995), Sam et al., (2024), Okonta and Douglas (2001), and Saro-Wiwa (1992; 1995)—chronicle the long history of oil-induced dispossession, state violence, and resistance in Ogoniland. These studies consistently portray the Ogoni struggle as a paradigmatic case of environmental injustice in Africa, where the extraction of petroleum creates what Obi (2010) describes as a “triangular collusion” among the state, oil multinationals, and local power structures.

African scholars have emphasized both the environmental realities and the sociopolitical implications of this degradation. Ikelegbe (2005; 2013) argues that the destruction of land and water systems generates what he terms “environmental governance failures,” which communities interpret not only as ecological harm but also as assaults on identity, dignity, and autonomy. Similarly, Agbese (2003) and Osaghae (1995) highlight how minority groups such as the Ogoni construct public narratives of injustice and citizenship in response to prolonged exclusion from the benefits of resource extraction.

Scientific evidence reinforces these social analyses. The UNEP (2011) Environmental Assessment of Ogoniland provides empirical confirmation of hydrocarbon contamination, destroyed farmlands, and polluted water bodies—conditions that shape the “lived experience of ecological suffering” (Bassey, 2008). Researchers such as Omeje (2006) and Jaja et al., (2024) link these environmental impacts to broader political-economic structures of oil extraction, showing how grievances accumulate and crystallise into sustained movements for environmental and cultural survival. While this body of literature richly documents political ecology, dispossession, and activism in Ogoniland, most studies prioritise political-economy, environmental science, or human-rights analysis. Very few examine how the Ogoni narrate their pain, ecological trauma, and identity through linguistic and stylistic choices, and even fewer adopt a combined pragmatic and discourse-stylistic framework. Thus, the textual mechanisms through which Ogoni resistance discursively constructs ecological memory, moral authority, and collective identity remain underexplored—this is the gap the present study fills.

On the other hand, discourse-stylistics explores how linguistic texture—lexical patterns, rhetorical structures, foregrounding techniques—produces meaning and ideological effect (Leech & Short, 2007; Wales, 2014). Applied to African political texts, stylistic analysis reveals how writers craft narratives that mobilise solidarity, articulate grievances, and negotiate authority. Metaphor plays an important role, especially in environmental and postcolonial discourse. Lakoff and Johnson’s (1980) conceptual metaphor theory has been extended by African scholars to contexts such as land dispossession and pollution (Obi, 2010; Bassey, 2008). Images such as “dying land,” “poisoned rivers,” and “wasted earth” perform ideological work by framing ecological damage as embodied pain and moral violation.

Repetition and foregrounding are also central stylistic devices. Okonta and Douglas (2001) show how MOSOP documents repeatedly foreground collective pronouns (“we the Ogoni people”) to build unity and assert citizenship claims. Boele, Fabig, and Wheeler (2001)

similarly demonstrate how the Ogoni Bill of Rights uses textual patterns—enumeration, rhythmic repetition, and emphasised clauses—to encode urgency and legitimacy.

According to Hunston and Thompson (2000), evaluative lexis is a major resource in African protest texts. Words indexing suffering, violation, and resilience help authors position readers to share the moral stance of the oppressed community. Although stylistic studies illuminate important rhetorical features of African protest discourse, few focus specifically on the stylistic construction of ecological pain and identity in Ogoni texts, and even fewer integrate stylistics with pragmatic theories—a combined approach that this study adopts.

Pragmatic theories help illuminate how resistance discourse communicates meanings that go beyond literal linguistic content. Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson, 1986/1995) is especially useful in showing how audiences derive implicatures from minimal cues, allowing resistance texts to imply state culpability or corporate misconduct without explicit accusation.

This interpretive process is critical in contexts where overt statements may attract censorship or repression. Speech Act Theory (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) and Politeness/Impoliteness Theory (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Culpeper, 1996) provide further insight. Resistance texts routinely employ performative acts (“we demand,” “we insist,” “we reject”) to enact political agency. They also deploy strategic face-threats to challenge the moral authority of the state and multinational corporations. In many cases, impoliteness becomes a deliberate resistance strategy used to confront asymmetric power relations.

Theoretical Framework

Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson, 1986/1995) provides a cognitive-pragmatic foundation for understanding how Ogoni resistance texts guide readers toward optimal interpretation. At its core, the theory distinguishes between explicatures, which capture explicitly communicated meanings enriched through pragmatic processes, and implicatures, which represent inferred meanings accessible through shared contextual assumptions (Sperber & Wilson, 1995).

These concepts are crucial in analysing the Ogoni people’s rhetorical strategies, where environmental devastation and political marginalisation are frequently communicated through layered metaphors, symbolic references and condensed evaluative expressions.

In the context of Ogoni discourse, metaphorical constructions such as “ecological war” or “deathly silence of oil” (Saro-Wiwa, 1995) rely on heightened inferential work. The audience draws on contextual assumptions about state neglect, corporate violence, and the lived reality of environmental toxicity (Nwagbara, 2010; Okonta & Douglas, 2001). Relevance Theory thus provides the analytical means to unpack how resistance texts condense accusations of injustice, mobilise moral outrage and foreground communal suffering through minimal linguistic material that yields maximal cognitive effects.

The study also draws on politeness and impoliteness frameworks to examine interpersonal positioning in Ogoni resistance rhetoric. Brown and Levinson’s (1987) model of positive face (desire for approval) and negative face (desire for autonomy) illuminates how activist discourse alternates between solidarity-building appeals to communal identity and explicit challenges to state authority. In contrast, Culpeper’s (1996) impoliteness model highlights deliberate face-threats as communicative strategies rather than breakdowns in decorum.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a discourse-stylistic qualitative design, integrating pragmatic analysis with stylistic examination; and it focuses on two purposively selected texts whose historical and rhetorical significance make them central to understanding Ogoni resistance discourse. The Ogoni Bill of Rights (1990/1992) serves as an institutional manifesto that outlines the political, ecological, and cultural grievances of the Ogoni people. Complementing this is a corpus of Ken Saro-Wiwa's speeches and public statements (1990–1995)—including courtroom declarations, UNPO addresses, and selected interviews—which provide an individual, yet globally resonant, articulation of Ogoni resistance. Together, these texts capture both collective and personal dimensions of the struggle, and they remain pivotal sources in scholarship on Niger Delta environmental justice and indigenous activism.

For clarity, all data excerpts from the Ogoni Bill of Rights are coded as OBR-1 to OBR-7, while excerpts from Ken Saro-Wiwa's speeches and statements are coded as KSW-1 to KSW-7. These codes are used consistently throughout the analysis to identify specific paraphrased segments used for stylistic and pragmatic interpretation.

• Excerpt ID: OBR-1

Quoted Text: "Ogoni lands have become an ecological disaster zone; farmland is destroyed, water polluted, and health endangered."

Pragmatic Feature(s): High-modality certainty; implicature of systemic neglect

Stylistic Device(s): Metaphor (ecological disaster), Parallelism, Evaluative lexis

• Excerpt ID: OBR-2

Quoted Text: "Despite generating immense revenue for Nigeria, the Ogoni people receive no meaningful development; roads, schools, and health systems lie abandoned."

Pragmatic Feature(s): Implicature of state neglect; negative face

Stylistic Device(s): Contrast, Repetition, Evaluative lexis

• Excerpt ID: OBR-3

Quoted Text: "We demand the to protect our environment and call for laws that respect the survival of minorightrities."

Pragmatic Feature(s): Positive face (collective identity), assertive speech act

Stylistic Device(s): Declarative statement, Modality ("demand")

• Excerpt ID: OBR-4

Quoted Text: "The Ogoni people are historically distinct, with our own cultural, linguistic, and political heritage, deserving constitutional recognition."

Pragmatic Feature(s): Positive face; stance-taking

Stylistic Device(s): Collective pronouns, Evaluative adjectives

• Excerpt ID: OBR-5

Quoted Text: "We must take our destiny into our own hands if our grievances remain unresolved."

Pragmatic Feature(s): Negative face (autonomy), high-modality certainty

Stylistic Device(s): Imperative/Modality, Parallelism

• **Excerpt ID:** OBR-6

Quoted Text: “The Nigerian state and Shell have brought hardship without compensation.”

Pragmatic Feature(s): Face-threatening act (moral accusation)

Stylistic Device(s): Evaluative lexis, Parallelism

• **Excerpt ID:** OBR-7

Quoted Text: “Ogoni representation in governance has been systematically denied, leading to political powerlessness.”

Pragmatic Feature(s): Implicature of political marginalisation

Stylistic Device(s): Repetition, Declarative

• **Excerpt ID:** KSW-1

Quoted Text: “The oil pollution in Ogoniland is a form of genocide; environmental destruction is slowly killing our people.”

Pragmatic Feature(s): Moral accusation; high-modality certainty

Stylistic Device(s): Metaphor, Evaluative lexis

• **Excerpt ID:** KSW-2

Quoted Text: “Shell’s reckless greed strips the land while abandoning our people to poverty.”

Pragmatic Feature(s): Face-threatening act; stance-taking

Stylistic Device(s): Evaluative adjectives, Metaphor

• **Excerpt ID:** KSW-3

Quoted Text: “The Nigerian government is complicit in suppressing Ogoni rights and enabling corporate abuse.”

Pragmatic Feature(s): Implicature of state failure; face-threat

Stylistic Device(s): Declarative, Evaluative lexis

• **Excerpt ID:** KSW-4

Quoted Text: “Our villages are places where the air is poisoned and rivers carry death.”

Pragmatic Feature(s): Implicature of suffering; high-modality certainty

Stylistic Device(s): Metaphor, Parallelism, Evaluative lexis

• **Excerpt ID:** KSW-5

Quoted Text: “We have a proud history and culture that must not be erased.”

Pragmatic Feature(s): Positive face; stance-taking

Stylistic Device(s): Collective pronouns, Evaluative adjectives

• **Excerpt ID:** KSW-6

Quoted Text: “The Ogoni struggle cannot wait; we must act before our land becomes uninhabitable.”

Pragmatic Feature(s): Negative face (autonomy), high-modality certainty

Stylistic Device(s): Imperative, Modality, Parallelism

• **Excerpt ID:** KSW-7

Quoted Text: “I am not guilty... the struggle continues.”

Pragmatic Feature(s): Moral assertion; stance-taking

Stylistic Device(s): Ellipsis, Declarative

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This section presents a discourse-stylistic and pragmatic analysis of selected Ogoni resistance texts, focusing on the Ogoni Bill of Rights (1990/1992) and Ken Saro-Wiwa’s speeches and statements (1990–1995). The analysis demonstrates how linguistic, stylistic, and pragmatic features are employed to construct narratives of pain, ecological degradation, and political identity, while asserting moral authority and collective agency.

Metaphor is a salient stylistic device across the texts. In OBR-1, the description of Ogoni lands as “an ecological disaster zone” conveys both literal and inferential meanings. Through Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson, 1986/1995), readers infer that environmental destruction is not accidental but systematically linked to state and corporate action. Similarly, Saro-Wiwa’s characterization of oil pollution as “a form of genocide” (KSW-1) frames ecological degradation as morally reprehensible violence, invoking both urgency and collective suffering (Bassey, 2012; Nwagbara, 2010). Parallelism and evaluative lexis, evident in phrases like “farmland is destroyed, water polluted, and health endangered” (OBR-1) or “air is poisoned and rivers carry death” (KSW-4), reinforce the narratives of pain and draw attention to the scale of devastation (Okonta & Douglas, 2001).

Pragmatic analysis, however, highlight the implicature of state neglect. Statements such as “Despite generating immense revenue for Nigeria, the Ogoni people receive no meaningful development” (OBR-2) and “The Nigerian government is complicit in suppressing Ogoni rights” (KSW-3) imply institutional betrayal without explicit accusation. These utterances trigger inferences about political marginalisation and governance failure, reflecting the Ogoni’s frustration with unresponsive state structures (Ikelegbe, 2005; Obi, 2010). Complementing this, face-threatening acts are employed to hold the Nigerian state and Shell morally accountable. Descriptions like “reckless greed” (KSW-2) and “brought hardship without compensation” (OBR-6) function as deliberate attacks on the negative face of state and corporate actors, simultaneously reinforcing the positive face of the Ogoni community by emphasising collective identity and moral righteousness (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Culpeper, 1996).

Collective identity is further constructed through inclusive pronouns and evaluative adjectives. Phrases such as “we the Ogoni people” and “our land is our life” (OBR-4; KSW-5) anchor resistance discourse in shared cultural, historical, and ecological experiences, positioning the community as morally and politically coherent. Negative face strategies are observable in demands for autonomy, as in “We must take our destiny into our own hands” (OBR-5) and “The Ogoni struggle cannot wait” (KSW-6), signalling assertive claims to self-

determination (Sperber & Wilson, 1986/1995; Brown & Levinson, 1987). High-modality verbs such as “must” and “cannot” communicate epistemic certainty, strengthening the urgency and inevitability of collective action (Jeffries, 2010).

Stylistically, the texts employ parallelism, metaphor, and evaluative lexis to construct ecological identity, moral authority, and urgency. Metaphors like “poisoned land” and “dead rivers” map the lived experience of environmental degradation onto moral and political claims (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Narrative foregrounding, evident in eyewitness vignettes and repeated appeals to “our children” and “our survival,” evokes empathy and positions the Ogoni struggle within a broader human-rights discourse (Agbese, 2003; Obi, 2010). The interplay of stylistic markers with pragmatic features demonstrates that language operates simultaneously as symbolic protest, identity construction, and political mobilisation.

Further, this research shows that Ogoni texts frequently deploy strategic face-aggravation—for example, Saro-Wiwa’s public indictments of the Nigerian state as “genocidal” or “morally bankrupt”, function to delegitimise power structures and reframe the Ogoni as moral agents resisting institutional violence. Scholars such as Oha (1994), Adegoju (2009), and Nossiter (2015) have shown that African resistance texts often rely on calculated impoliteness to expose state failure while reasserting suppressed voices. These theoretical perspectives allow the present study to trace how confrontational rhetoric in Ogoni discourse performs ideological work, shifts authority relations and constructs an oppositional identity grounded in ecological justice.

In summary, the analysis reveals that Ogoni resistance texts are intricately structured to achieve multiple discursive goals. They articulate collective pain, attribute moral blame, assert political and ecological identity, and mobilise audiences through high-modality certainty and evaluative language. These strategies show that the Ogoni’s linguistic practices are not merely expressive but performative acts of resistance, situating the texts at the intersection of pragmatics, discourse-stylistics, and environmental justice scholarship (Nnimmo Bassey, 2012; Ikelegbe, 2005; Okonta & Douglas, 2001; Oha, 1994; Adegoju, 2009).

FINDINGS

The findings of this study demonstrate that Ogoni resistance discourse constitutes a sophisticated semiotic space where ecology, identity, and political marginalisation converge. The data reveal that metaphor, implicature, evaluative lexis, and strategic impoliteness function not merely as stylistic embellishments but as core communicative resources through which the Ogoni articulate historical trauma and mobilise collective identity. This aligns with Nwagbara’s (2010) argument that Niger Delta resistance texts deploy “linguistic symbolism” to expose structural violence, and with Bassey’s (2012) insistence that environmental degradation in the region is inseparable from political injustice. Just like as Said (1994) emphasizes, that the complexities of cultural identity and displacement in literature require nuanced interpretations beyond traditional categorizations. It is however observed, that the metaphors identified—such as Saro-Wiwa’s description of Ogoniland as being under “ecological war”—serve cognitive and ideological purposes. From a Relevance Theory perspective, these metaphors trigger rich contextual inferences: they prompt audiences to connect environmental devastation with warlike aggression, thereby constructing an implicit accusation of state and corporate culpability. Through minimal linguistic input, these metaphors yield high cognitive effects, validating Sperber and Wilson’s (1995) assertion that effective communication relies on optimal relevance.

Similarly, implicatures embedded in lexical patterns such as “silenced voices,” “abandoned people,” and “poisoned land” function as indirect condemnations of governance failure. These meaning-patterns align with Okonta and Douglas’ (2001) findings that Ogoni texts consistently indict both the Nigerian state and multinational corporations for human rights violations. Facework analysis reveals that the Ogoni movement deliberately disrupts normative politeness expectations. Saro-Wiwa’s direct accusations—branding government actions as “genocidal” or “criminal”—represent calculated face-threats. Culpeper’s (1996) model helps clarify that such impoliteness is not a breakdown in communication but a political strategy: it delegitimises state authority and asserts a counter-hegemonic moral stance. This resonates with African scholarship showing that protest rhetoric in postcolonial contexts often relies on confrontational language to unsettle entrenched power structures (Adegoju, 2009; Oha, 1994).

The Ogoni Bill of Rights further illustrates a dual communicative orientation: while it maintains a formal tone addressed to the Nigerian state, it simultaneously deploys forceful evaluative language (“gross underdevelopment,” “criminal neglect”) that implicitly challenges state credibility. The text therefore balances politeness strategies (requests, appeals to justice, communal ethos) with necessary face-threats aimed at exposing governance failure. This confirms that resistance discourse thrives on a tension between moral persuasion and ideological confrontation.

Overall, the discussion reveals that Ogoni resistance texts are not mere expressions of pain—they are strategic communicative interventions aimed at transforming political reality, reclaiming indigenous ecological identity, and mobilising global attention.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the study proposes several academic and socio-political recommendations. Firstly, the Nigerian state should adopt a governance framework that recognises linguistic expressions of resistance as indicators of systemic grievances requiring structural response—not as threats. Policies on resource extraction must integrate community-led ecological monitoring and address the moral logic encoded in Ogoni protest language. On the other hand, Oil companies operating in the Niger Delta must confront the ethical criticisms embedded in resistance texts and implement transparent environmental accountability systems. And grassroots groups should continue to deploy discourse-based strategies—storytelling, documentation, protest rhetoric—to preserve collective identity and maintain global visibility.

Furthermore, future research should explore multimodal aspects of resistance (songs, visual texts, digital activism), expanding African pragmatic studies into contemporary communication landscapes. Comparative studies across Niger Delta groups should be encouraged as it can deepen the understanding of how environmental suffering is linguistically framed across ethnic contexts. And finally, international agencies must treat discourses of environmental injustice as legitimate epistemic resources, recognising indigenous knowledge embedded in protest rhetoric.

CONCLUSION

This study has shown that Ogoni resistance texts operate as powerful linguistic instruments for articulating ecological injustice, constructing collective identity, and challenging political marginalisation. Using Relevance Theory and Politeness/Impoliteness Theory, the analysis demonstrates that Ogoni discourse relies on inferential enrichment,

metaphorical framing, evaluative lexis, and deliberate face-threats to communicate layers of meaning that extend beyond literal interpretation. The study concludes that metaphorical and inferential strategies effectively encode ecological devastation and moral accusation, enabling the Ogoni to articulate grievances with profound emotional and ideological force. Impoliteness and strategic face-threats also play a central role in delegitimising state authority and amplifying demands for justice, especially in Saro-Wiwa's speeches. The Ogoni Bill of Rights blends politeness and confrontational rhetoric, functioning as both an official petition and a declaration of identity, autonomy, and ecological rights.

In all, Ogoni texts illustrate how African resistance discourse uses language to reclaim agency, expose structural violence, and mobilise domestic and international solidarity. Thus, discourse-stylistic and pragmatic analysis reveals that language is not simply a medium of protest—it is itself a form of resistance.

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