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POETIC DEVICES IN IGBO POEMS

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ABSTRACT

Poetry is a piece of compressed creative writing that contains emotions, resulting from nature or imagination which in measurement, often in verse. The language that is employed in poetry is always rich and dense. lt is the art of using imageries to express ideas. A poet turns words into pictures in order to express himself/herself better and clearer. Poetic devices are those literary techniques used in making a poem very interesting and messages clearly conveyed. Many times, students do not get the correct meaning of words used in a poem. This is because they are unaware of poetic devices and its uses in poetry. This make poetry difficult for them to understand. This is a survey research. The theory adopted is formalism. Findings revealed that poetic devices are alliteration, simile, metaphor, personification, repetition et cetera. Poets use poetic device to achieve effects beyond the power of ordinary languages, and this more in poetry than any other kind of writing.

Keywords: Poems, Poetry, Poetic Devices, Poets, Igbo Language.

Introduction

Poetry is the art of employing words in such a manner as to produce an illusion of imagination. It is an art of doing by means of words, as what the printer does with colors. In poetry, even more than in fiction or drama, words tend to become the focus- sometimes even the true subject of a work. For this reason, the choice of one word over another can be crucial. Because poems are brief, they must compress many ideas into just a few lines; poets know how much weights each individual word carries, so they choose with great care, trying to select words that imply more than they state.

In general, poets (like prose writers) select words because they communicate their ideas. However, poets may also choose words for their sound. For instance, a word may echo another word's sound, and such repetition may place emphasis on both words; it may rhyme with another word and therefore be needed to preserve the poem's rhyme scheme. Occasionally, a poet may even choose a word because of how it looks on the page.

Kirszner & Mandell (2007:890) says "poets may choose words for their degree of concreteness or abstraction, specialty or generality. A concrete word refers to an item that is perceivable or tangible. An abstract word refers to an intangible idea, condition, quality, something that cannot be perceived, while specific words refer to a particular item; general words refer to entire classes or groups of items. Whether a word is specific or general is relative; its degree of specificity or generality depends on its relationship to other words".

When poets choose words, they must consider what a particular word may suggest to readers as well as what it denotes. According to Meyer (1997 :482) "one important way that the meaning of a word is communicated in a poem is through sound". Individual words also convey meanings through denotations and connotations. Umegbolu (2009:164) noted that denotations "are the literal, dictionary meaning of a word". For example, bird denotes a feathered animal with wings (other denotations for the same word include a shuttlecock, an airplane or an odd person) but in addition to its denotative meanings bird also carries connotations, associations and implications that go beyond a word's literal meanings. Connotation derives from how the word has been used and the associations people make with it. Therefore, the connotation of bird might include fragility, vulnerability, altitude, the sky, or freedom, depending on the context in which the word is used. There is connotation for different types of birds such as: hawk, dove, penguin, pigeon, chicken, peacock, duck, crow, turkey, gull, owl, goose, and vulture. These words have long been used to refer to types of people as well as birds.

Poetic Devices

Poetic devices are that equipment which the poet uses in order to bring out the music of the poem. ln Igbo poetry, the poetic devices are figures of speech. Other literary writers can still make use of figures of the speech while writing. This study will base on how the poetic devices are used in Igbo poetry in different ways, in order to bring out music of the poem.

Figures of speech is a word or phrase used in different ways from its usual meaning, in order to create a particular mental picture or effect. A poet uses words soberly and conscientiously. He carefully selects particular words which would do justice to the ideas he has in the course of writing a particular poem. Umegbolu (2009:35) noted that "poet constructs words in such a manner as to build an idea of his choice. He is a builder. But his instrument of building is the word. He uses these words with greater consciousness, greater sensitivity and greater skill".

Poetry is simply one particular way of saying things is a unique and specialized form of self-expression having some artistic features.

The figurative language, also called figures of speech, is a statement which cannot be understood within the context in which they are used. Ezeaku (2014:52) says figurative language "are deliberate deviation from the usual style of writing or speech. They are also the devices used in beautifying a literary work. They cast pictures and images as a result of the writer's deliberate deviation, and as such add extra dimension to meaning". Poetic devices are special use of words in poetry to achieve an effect. Put the other way, poetic devices are

those linguistics and structured techniques, that constitute the ingredients of intellectual pleasure thereby reinforcing the poetic art. Umegbolu (2009:77) opined that poetic devices "are those literary techniques used in making a poem very interesting, the message clearly conveyed". This means that poets employed poetic devices to drive home the message in the poem. ln poetry as well as in other genres of literature, writers are allowed to use certain style of diction (kinds of words, phrases, sentence structures and figurative language) to achieve a distinction of language commensurate with the quality of their work. This special style of language used to achieve special effect buttresses what John Dryden in the late seventeenth century in Abram and Harpham (2010:300) in Nwaokoye (2012:155)called "poetic license" .Poetic license is the liberty which poets have assumed to themselves; in all ages, of speaking things in verse which are beyond the severity of prose". According to Okodo (1992:57) poetic license "is the authority the poet has to manipulate language in order to suit what he want to say or write". It means that poet can use a noun as a verb or change a sequence of words when writing his poems. Poet freedom in the choice of word is more in poetry than drama and prose.

Theoretical Framework

Formalism is a theory of literature that would have a reader understand, and value a work for its own inherent worth, not for its service to metaliterary matters. Dobie(2009:34) says "the movement began informally in the 1920s at Vanderbilt University in discussions among John Crowe Ransom ,Robert Penne Warren, Allen Tate, Cleanth Brooks ,and others who were interested in getting together to talk about literature" .For three years, they published a literary magazine called The Fugitive. Not only influenced by one another but also bolstered by the work of theorists from abroad, such as T.S.Eliot, I.A.Richards and William Empson ,they began to develop their own ideas of how to read a text. Important to their thinking, for example, was Eliot's announcement of the high place of art as art rather than as expression of social, religious or political ideas. According to Goring, Hawthorn& Mitchell (2013:143) formalism "is now frequently used very loosely to denotes a view of literature which excludes and downplay consideration of social, historical and political or ideological issues". Richards, who was concerned with the investigation of meaning, they adopted the practice of working towards the scrupulous explication of poems. Although, the Fugitive would later become well known for their own poems and stories, they are also remembered for beginning to formulative principles of literary analysis, that would shape the habits of serious readers for several decades to come.

The critic who wants to write about literature from a formalist perspective must first be a close and careful reader who examines all the elements of a text individually and questions how they come together to create a work of art. Dobie (2009:36) noted that "such a reader, who respects the autonomy of a work, achieved an understanding of it by looking inside it, not outside it or beyond it. Instead of examining historical periods, auto biographies, or literary styles. For example, one will approach a text with the assumption that it is a self-contained entity, and one is looking for the governing principles that allow the text to reveal itself".

According to Cuddon (2014:286) formalism "studied the poetic devices poet used in writing poem". Formalism calls for a close reading of the texts, the first time though, you cannot

expect to notice all the subtleties and details that will ultimately figure in your analysis. It is on subsequent readings that the formalist perspective begins to take shape. The second time around, you may begin to notice the repetition of words and imageries, patterns of sound, multiple meanings and ambiguous dialogue. One will ultimately investigate every detail for its contribution to and connections with the whole. Such observation made by the scrupulous reader are the key to discovering how all the formal elements of the texts work together. Some of the main elements that call for attention are, diction and unity as well as the various literary devices they subsume. This research adopts the formalism theory, because it looked at the poetic device used in poetry rather than emotion, action and reality.

According to Uzuchukwu and Ewelukwa (2008:321) poetic devices in Igbo poems are ;
Ilu (Proverb)
Nkwusara (Apostrophe)
.**Ajuju Nzaraonwe (Rhetorical question)**
Myiri (Simile)
Mburu (Metaphor)
Uda uda (Onomatopoeia)
Mbiambia Mgbochi Mmalite Mkpuruokwu (Alliteration)
Assonance (Mbiambia uda)
Personification (Mmemmadu)
Ekwuechezo (Irony):
Nhagide okwu (Euphemism):
Mbiambia Mgbochi Ime Mkpuruokwu (Consonance):
Repetition (Kwunkwukwa):
Akpalaokwu (idiom)
Imagery (enyookwu)
1. Ilu (Proverb)

According Akparobaro (2007:79) proverb "is an effective mode of traditional expression formulated for the purpose of moral education, and for the application of thought and experience".

In Igboland, proverb is quoted on both side that is for and against every aspect of life.
Example of a poem with proverbs are;

Poem 1 ilulu
Mma d[nkq enwegh[isi
Nke nwere isi ad[gh[nkq
Ada ji akx kwaa nna ya
Q bxgh[d[qkpara kugburu ya
Anx ya adqrq erighi eri
Ogunjiofor in Ekechukwu (1975:43)
Proverb
Sharp knife is without handle
The one that has handle is blunt
Daughter who is wealthy, should takes care of their father's funeral rite

Because it is not the first son that killed their father

Poem 2 Onyenkuzi M

Ahu dimkpa ahu ogologo ime,
Anya ka eji ama oka chara acha,
O di mkpumkpu eme ire,
Nkenke enyi na-achu igwe enyi oso
Ode wayi wayi na ode akiri aki.Neblisa(2020:50)

My teacher

You are a man with great strength
A riped maize is noticed at first glance
You are small but do great things
Small elephant that pursued numerous elephants
You cherished writing

The poet used proverb to describe that taking care of one's parents, is the duty of everyone in the family not precisely the duty of the first son. The burden in the family should not be abandoned to the first son. ln second poem, the poet, describe her teacher as someone filled with strength, wisdom, knowledge and one who cherished teaching profession.

2. Nkwusara (Apostrophe)

Apostrophe is a poetic device where by the poet is talking to something that is not human as if it hears and understands him .Gwynn(2002:46)says apostrophe "is a variety of personification in which a nonhuman thing ,abstraction, or person not physically present, is directly addressed as if it could respond". For example, in *Akpa Uche* by Ekechukwu, the poet is talking about the death of Odogwu Kabral.ln this poem the poet talked to dead Kabral as if hears and understands him.

Odogwu Kabral

Amiika Kabral,nod umma o..
Ebele akwa n'ala mmuo
I di ndu ma taa…
By (Ekechukwu 1975:73)

Hero Kabral

Amiika Kabral, farewell to you
Do not cry in the land of the spirit
Your still alive

3. Ajuju Nzaraonwe (Rhetorical question)

This poetic device is where by question is asked and does not required an answer. Example is a poem in *Utara Nti* by Emenanjo;

Moto ole ka I nwere?
Udi leesi ole ka I kwara?
Akpa wonyosi gi di ole?
Kedu maka eleganza gi?
Akpati ole ka ha di?
Utara Nti(1980)inEkwealor(2009)

How many motors do you have?
How many types of lace materials do you have?
How many is your wonyosi bag?
What about your eleganza?
How many boxes do you have?

4. Myiri (Simile)

A smile is a poetic device in which likeness is definitely or formally expressed. The objects or situation compared may be of different kind and quality. But similarity can be noticed in certain areas, and this resemblance can be easily seen. According to Ibitola (2009:42)" there are also simple and extended similes. They are used to create images to clearly identify merits and demerits of a literary work. It is also aim at assisting reader to have a clear picture of the concept similarised.

A simile makes an explicit comparison between two things by using words such as "like - dika in Igbo. For instance;

Poem 1 Okpu Ite

Mmadu dika ite Chukwu kpuru
O kpuchara ya n'afo nne ya tupu o puta uwa
Na-eleta ya anya site n'aka ndi mmadu
Oge niile o ga-ebi n'uwa.Ekeigbo(2005:27)

Translation

Human beings were like pots moulded by God
He moulded them in their mother' s wombs before coming into the world
He takes care of man through the help of another man
All the time he is lives on in the world

Poem 2 Ajo Nwaanyi

Ajo nwaanyi na-aga ije
O dika shakara
O manye akwa n' ukwu
O dika o puru ara.Emenanjo(1980:21)

Evil woman

When evil woman started walking
She will look like shakara
When she tied wrapper on her waist
She will look like she is mad

The underlined words are simile.

5. Mburu (Metaphor)

According to Abram (1981) in Onwukwe (2009:49) "a metaphor is a word which in standard (literal) usage denotes one kind of thing, quality, action is applied to another, in the form of an identity instead of comparison". Metaphor is said to be expressing one thing in terms of another. In Igbo literature, metaphor make use of the word "Bu" to show identity. For instance;

Nwaanyi
Ihe nyiri anyi ka I bu
A na-ekwu n'elu I na-ekwu n'ala
Onyika o doro ka I bu
Onye ga-egbochi gi ihe I choro ime.
By Mmaduelosi(2011:52)

Women
You are stubborn
Saying all things about you
You remained stubborn
Who will stops you from what you want to do?

Underlined words are metaphor

6. Uda uda (Onomatopoeia)

This is a poetic device that the word resembles the sound it denotes. The sound and sense of these words are closely related. Umegbolu (2009:67) noted that onomatopoeia "is the use of word that imitate sound of object. That is why onomatopoeia is called suggestive sound". It is the marriage between sense and sound. For example;

Nshiko
Abu m nshiko
Kakwororom
Ukwu asato
Kakwororom
Mkpa abuo
Kakwororom.

Crab
I am crab
Kakwororom
Eight legs
Kakwororom
Two sharp edges
Kakwororom By Ihejirika (2013:37)

Kakwororom denotes the sound and movement of a crab.

7. Mbiambia Mgbochi Mmalite Mkpuruokwu (Alliteration)

Alliteration is the repetition of the same consonants sounds at the beginning of nearby word in a line of a poem. It is the occurrence of similar consonant sound at the beginning of two or more words in succeeding lines; that is the repetition of initial consonant sound at the

beginning of words. In most common form, the initial sound are the same, this same sounds recur in close succession Ezeaku (2014:54&55) says that effective poet use alliteration to create beauty in language use and also to achieve emphasis.

Kedu Nwanne Gi
Kpichikom kpichikom
Onodu m nkwucha nkwucha
Mana
O chegharia ma kwugharia
E kwobezie ura ekwo
Egwuregwu
Aburuzia nke nkita
Onye daara ibe ya
Ibe ya adaara ya.
By Ofomata (2006:58)
Where is Your Brother/Sister?
Kpichikom kpichikom
You are scared
But if you
Repented, everyone
Will sleep soundly
Sports will be like
Dogs,.if you fall in me
I will fall on you.

The underlined words are alliteration.

8. Assonance (Mbiambia uda)
Assonance is the repetition of the same vowel sound in nearby words in a line of poem. Both alliteration, consonance and assonance, helps to establish relations among words in a line or series of lines in a poem. According to Kirszner & Mandell (2007:982) assonance unifies the entire poem, it lays emphasis on thematic connections among words, and thus links poem's ideas. For instance;

My Ikenga
Aka nri saa aka ekpe
Aka ekpe saa aka nri
Ikenga m!
Kenye m nze;Kenye m ozo
Kenye m akara oma kwa ubochi
Arinze gi! Chukuezi(2001:46)
My Ikenga
Right hand washed left hand
Left hand washed right hand

Ikenga a
Share to me nze,share to me ozo
Share to me good destiny example today
Thank you By

The vowel sounds in the underlined word are assonance

9. Personification (Mmemmadu)

Personification in Greek is 'prosopopeia' where an inanimate objects or abstracts is spoken of as if its endowed with life, human attributes and feelings. Asika (2014:21) says personification "is the poetic device that endows inanimate object or abstractions with human characteristics. It represents our attempts to explain the universe in terms of ourselves, and ways we can understand most personally". In other words, personification is used when an object or non-living thing is given the qualities of a living thing. The object or idea is said to be personified. For instance;

Oge
Oge,I bu nne ubochi mutara afo.
Akuko jiri oge hiri isi
Ihe obula mere na-enweghi oge
Dara mmiri n'ihe miri emi
Nchoputa adikwaghi ya.

Oge, onye ochichi ihe niile
Onye na-amaghi gi no n'isi
Onye matara gin were aku na uba
Ihe ochie,na ta ana odinihu
Ka I kpokobara maka amamihe.
By Obierozie (2014:37)

Time
Time, you are the mother of
Days that gave birth to years.
History is possible with the
Use of time.
Any incident without time
Is unverifiable

Time, the leader of all things
Those who don't have you are blind
Those that have you has wealth
Time, you gathered all the past
Present and the future
For knowledge.

In this poem, time is personified as if it has human qualities.

10. Ekwuechezo (Irony): An irony is a poetic device which speaks word of praise when, in truth, it is blaming. This implies saying the opposite of what is meant, but in such a way that the real meaning is understood. Irony seems contradictory at the surface level but deep down, lt has an underlying meaning-it bears truth or the main point beneath. Ezeaku (2014:56) says in literature, Irony is produced when the audience has information unknown to the characters or the poet implies a different meaning from that intended" .ln verbal irony, this is saying the opposite of what one means. While situational irony involves an incongruity between actual circumstances and those that seem appropriately. An irony, generally, there is the element of discrepancy or contrast or incongruity. For instance;

Udele

Nnunu isi ya kwochara akwocha
Ebe obula e gburu anu ka a na-ahu gi
Ozu ihe nwuru anwu bu ihe na-amasi gi
I joro njo ile anya
Makana I bughi anu oriri
I kporo onwe gi eze nnunu
By Maduelosi(2011:35)

Vulture

A bird with bald head
You are normally seen where animals are killed
Dead bodies are always your favorites
You are ugly
Because you are not edible
You called yourself king of all birds.

The underlined words are irony, in the sense that because the vulture called itself king does not mean truly that vulture is the king of all birds. A good leader is not happy when his citizen died, unlike the vulture who is always happy whenever death occurred.

11. Nhagide okwu (Euphemism): Euphemism according to Ibitola (2005:44) "is a poetic device in which harsh and unpleasant events are presented in a pleasant way" .It means that, an ugly or ridiculous event is reported in a mild or soft manner. Example

Ego

Ajo ihe juru gi ahu
I bere isi mmadu
Isi onye di ndu
Tinye n'azu ugboala

I bere adaziani nwaanyi
Isi onodu ochichi ime obodo
Ebumnuche ihe omumu kpomkwem

Ibere umu nwoke
Ngwongwo na ngwongwo
Na-ayochi nwata anya

Ma nwata bulie nna ya elu.
By Anozie(2007:96-97)
Money
You full of evil
Cutting of human head
The head of someone who is a life.
Put it in the boots of a moving vehicle.

Cutting of female
The local government headquarters.
For the purpose of procreation

Cutting of male
The law materials
That covers children's eye
When a child raised his father up.
The underlined words are euphemism.

12. Mbiambia Mgbochi Ime Mkpuruokwu (Consonance): Consonance is the repetition of consonant sound(s)within word(s)and at the end of word(s). Umegbolu (2009:67) says "mark the difference between consonance and alliteration. While alliteration is about consonant sounds at the beginning of a word in a line of a poem, and consonance deals with consonant sounds within word(s) and at the end of word(s) in a line of a poem. For instance;

Ibe Mata M
Metu mara ibe bu aha m
Mmata ibe matara m agaghi egbu m
N'ihi agbaala m ogige m tamtam.
Mgbagbu mgbada bu njide ya
Agaala m uwa gburugburu
Ibe ji uba ibe ha
Uba m bara bu ka ibe hara m.By Nwadike (2012:21)
The consonant sounds within words and at end of the words in these lines of poem are consonance

13. **Repetition (Kwunkwukwa): It** is the repetition of a word or a phrase in a line of poetry in order to achieve emphasis. Asika (2014:18) noted that "when one word or phrase is repeated in a line of poem, the poet has employed repetition". The purpose which might be obviously to lay emphasis and draw closer attention to the word and what the message it tries to pass in the poem.

Ekwenti
Udi m buru ibu
Enwere m nke ndi Mtel
Enwere m nke ndi Celtel
Enwere m nke ndi MTN
Enwere m nke ndi GLO

By Anozie(2007:68)

Phone

I am of different type
I have Mtel brand
I have Celtel brand
I have MTN brand
I have GLO brand.BY Anozie(2007:68)

Here, poet lay emphasis on the kinds of GSM people can have access to in the market. These phone irrespective of their brands serve same purposes.

14. Akpalaokwu(idiom)

Idiom is a group of words whose meaning is different from the meanings of the words. ln idioms, you have to think very deeply before knowing what it means, because the answer is hidden. For example;

Gee Nti

Too nti ala
Ka a kuziere gi
Ihe I maghi
Nka di na nti.
By Ihejirika(2013:17)

Listening

Lay your ear on the ground
So that you will be taught what you do not know
There is creativity in the ear.

The underlined words are idioms.

15. Imagery(enyookwu)

This is a type of language that produces pictures in the minds of people reading or listening. Poets take in the world and give readers impressions of what they experienced through images. An image is language that addresses the senses. The most common images in poetry are visual; they provide verbal pictures of the poets' encounters-real or imagined-with the world. But poets also create images that appeal to our other sense. Images give us the physical world to experience in our imaginations. For instance;

Ezinna M

Ibe gi na-echi ozo;
Ibe gi na-azu akwa ukwu;
Ha na-azu okike ozo;
Na-anu nkwuelu chara acha;
Ma ngi,odogwu nwoke,
Akwu chara mgbe ibe ya ka no na adeni,
Okuko buru ibe ya uzo putu ura,
Nwa huru uzu mgbe ibe ya ka no n'itiri,

I kpatara aku.
I mutara umu,
Ma aku l kpatara,
A bughi ihe nkonko,
I chekwawara ya,
Iji dozi umu gi.
By Mgbemena (2008:41)

My dear father
When others are taking ozo title
When they are buying expensive clothes
When they are buying elephant tusk
They have concubine
They are drinking palm wine
But you are a hero
You are palm fruits that ripped
When others are still in darkness
You are hen that gives birth
When others are still sleeping.
You have started seeing when others
Are still in darkness.
You gathered wealth
You have many children.
Irrespective of your wealth,
You remain humble.
You secured it for the
Sake of your children.

In this poem, the poet told us about his father. From what he said, one understood that his father is a hardworking man, who wants good for his children by scarifying his wealth for their sake.

Conclusion

In poetry, many levels of diction are available to poets. The variety of diction to be found in poetry is enormous. No language is foreign to poetry, because it is possible to imagine any human voice as the speaker of a poem. When one says a poem is formal, informal, or somewhere in between, one is making a descriptive statement rather than an evaluative one. What matters in a poem is not only which words are used but how they are used

In order to understand the theme of a poem, readers should consider poetic devices, which include alliteration, metaphor, simile, irony *et cetera* and all of its elements. Together, these elements communicate the ideas that are important in the poem. Keep in mind, however, that a poem may not mean the same thing to every reader. Different readers will bring different backgrounds, attitude, and experience to a poem and will therefore see things in various ways.

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