Journal of Humanities, Music and Dance
ISSN:2799-1180
Vol : 03, No. 03, April-May 2023
http://journal.hmjournals.com/index.php/JHMD
DOI: https://doi.org/10.55529/jhmd.33.1.10

Analysis of the Meaning of Elechi Amadi's Song of the Dead and Morning which Reflected His Culture: A Multi-Modal Critical Pragmatic (MCP) Analysis

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Received: 24 December 2022 **Accepted:** 12 March 2023 **Published:** 17 April 2023

***Abstract**: This Research Used Literary Work As The Object Of Research. The Literary Works Analyzed In This Research Are Poems By Elech Amadi Entitled Song Of The Dead And Morning. The Aim Of This Research Is To Show The Interpretation Of Language And Culture While Revealing The Meaning Through Language Features In The Poems. It Applied A Descriptive Method In Its Analysis. It Used Multi-Modal Critical Pragmatics As The Theory That Guided It. The Results Of The Study Revealed That The Poet Used Language In Promotion Of His Culture And Preservation Of It.*

Keywords: Elechi Amadi, Pragmatics, Language, Poem, Culture.

1. INTRODUCTION

An essential part of human existence is language. It makes sense that it is described as the primary means human beings use to communicate with one another (Aegbija, 2010). Language is largely spoken, yet it can also be expressed through written, nonverbal, and other forms of communication. As a result, communication serves as the foundation for society (Maduako, 2022). There are many other channels through which communication may take place, including engagement through conversation (discourse), the delivery of speech through the media (such as television and radio), sign language, spoken word poetry, music (regardless of the genre), and a great number of additional channels. It is a point that should not be overlooked here that, in each of these forms, individual pieces of information are essentially endowed with different senses (meanings) and then passed across to various types of individuals who, in turn, deduce various meanings from the information passed, based on their own personal views and prejudices regarding such information. This is a point that should not be overlooked. Therefore, Mr. Stanley's perception of "I love you" may be different from that of Miss Faith's, even if the person singing or saying the utterance is the same. This is true even if Mr. Stanley and Miss Faith are listening to the same person. The

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whole process is called "encoding and decoding," which is short for the words "encode and decode." The capacity of individual perception makes a work of art more beautiful. A work of art should be able to stand on its own for meaning and interpretation. However, the more successful a work of art is, the more appreciative people are (Ordu, 2022).

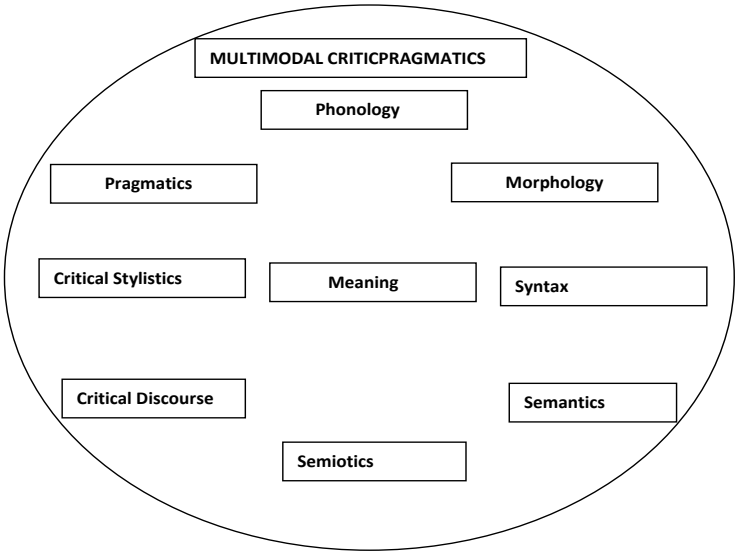
The Poet

Elechi Amadi was a Nigerian writer and soldier who lived from May 12, 1934, until June 29, 2016. He has served in the Nigerian military in the past. He wrote plays, poetry, essays, and novels mostly on African village life and pre-Western African customs, beliefs, and religious activities. The Concubine, Amadi's debut novel from 1966, has been hailed as "an exceptional piece of pure fiction" and is considered to be his greatest work. Elechi Amadi, who was born in Mbodo-Aluu in what is now the Rivers State, Nigeria, region of the Ikwerre local government, attended Government College in Umuahia from 1948 to 1952, Survey School in Oyo from 1953 to 1954, and the University of Ibadan from 1955 to 1959, where he earned a degree in physics and mathematics. In college, he changed his name from Emmanuel Elechi Daniel to Elechi Amadi because he believed it better represented his Ikwerre background. The poems used in the analysis of this work were taken from his collection of essays and poems entitled Speaking and Singing (essays and poems). The poems exhibit culture and arrogation of powers to the supernaturalism. This is relevant when Amadi grants Wonjo such "powerful political authority" in his poetry. Say, "Wonjo will destroy the earth." It is comparable to a politician who makes lofty promises to his constituents during a speech but then fails to follow through on all of them. Similar to Amadi, who asserts in the Song of the Dead that the gods will end the world.

Theoretical Framework

Multi-Modal Critical Pragmatic Model:

It is a model propounded by Ibiere Ken Maduako (2022). It is a model that uses or applies all kinds of linguistic levels, items, and machinery in interpreting meaning. And the foundation of the model is pragmatics, which means its focus is on the context of speech. According to her, attention is also given to the social aspects of language, power, and dominance, thus bringing out the critical aspects of communication.



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2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative and descriptive work. Critical resources are evaluated, assessed, and interpreted using qualitative research criteria. To begin, a short summary of the poems' analytical methodology is offered. Then, pertinent lexical items from the poems are picked using the applied theoretical framework. Grounded theory and practice, ethnography, phenomenology, case studies, and textual analysis are all data gathering methodologies used in qualitative research (Melaknel, 2008).

3. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Song of the Dead

Short summary

Song of the Dead is a poem derived from a folksong. And it is said to have been sung at night by ghosts during the influenza epidemic of 1918. The poem is all about the curse the gods invoked or laid on the people in the form of influenza. Wonjo is the name of the curse, and it has killed both the young and the old. It happens that the people are living in such fear that you dare not mention or call the name of your brother aloud. Wonjo ravaged the lives of the people because they do not have able-bodied men to dig graves to bury anyone who dies because a chief was thrown inside a well. The people believed that one day the wonjo would stop.

Phonological Analysis

The most commonly used sounds in the poem are /æ/,/ð/,/o/, /I/, /I:/, /d/, /h/, which are repeated sounds. "That"; "Wonjo"; "done", "has", "is". The repetition of these words and the usage of the rhythmic words create the damage that the influenza has caused. The poet used some words to describe the nature and degree of the curse of the gods. The poet had done this to describe how powerful the gods are.

Morphological Analysis

The use of perfect, future, and present aspects described how the poet viewed the actions of the influenza, which is the curse from the gods. "Has done" was used repeatedly to show or focus attention on the resulting state of what the gods have done. There is the use of future aspect words in the poem. For instance, "Wonjo will end the world." This is an indication of what will befall people in the future. And it was repeated to create that futuristic awareness.

The placement of the verbs from the poem

Present form	Perfect form	Future form
Dig	Thrown	Will
End	Has done	Will Join
Await		Will end
May		
Know		
Offer		

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Call		

From the analysis, the present aspects, perfect forms, and future forms were mostly used. This shows that the majority of the influenza's activities were immediate and ongoing. The killing of the people by the Wonjo was serious. From a semantic standpoint, the poet is expressing the cultural attachment he has with the gods. On the other hand, the poet finds himself in a sad mood because his brothers and relatives are dying as a result of the curse of the gods.

Speech Acts

Illocutionary acts were employed by the poet to make his message known to the readers. And this involves acts of informing, persuasion, and education. The poet employed dirge as a means of portraying the style of life of his people. Elechi Amadi is very rooted in the culture and norms of his people. He craftily infused the word “Wonjo," which stands for influenza, in the poem. This shows his love for culture and lineage. He further shows this attribute when he questions himself about who will feed the gods if everyone dies. There are catchy phrases that the poet used to show his love for culture, which will be analyzed below using illocutionary acts.

Datum 1: Wonjo (A cultural name for influenza)
Illocutionary Act: assertive-assertion. The poet wants us to know that Wonjo is a cultural name for influenza. This is not just a scientific name but a curse that emanated from the gods of the land as a result of a violation of a rule or norm of the gods. The gods do not inflict the people with a curse called Wonjo because he does not derive joy in their suffering, which is a result of their disobedience.
Datum 2: Do not call your brother aloud (grip of fear)
Illocutionary Act: Informative-stating. The poet informs either the guest or other relatives that you don’t dare call any body’s name aloud to the hearing of the gods, or else the gods will come after you when it is not your turn to die. Amadi tries to tell us he knows his culture very well, unlike those who are not acquainted with the norms of the land.
Datum 3: A Chief thrown into a well (forbidden)
Illocutionary Act: expressive-expressing. What a shame that a chief is not supposed to be thrown inside the well when he dies! But in this case, a chief was thrown inside the well due to a lack of able-bodied men that would dig the grave where he would be buried. Pragmatically, it is forbidden to bury a chief in the well, as the customs demand.
Datum 4: Twenty angry gods are starving (Lack of human beings)
Illocutionary Act**:** Informative-information. The poet is letting the readers know that there are foods to feed the gods but no humans to offer sacrifices to the gods. It is also an indication that the gods are their own enemies because they killed those who are supposed to feed them. There is interdependency among the gods and the people. The gods protect the people, and the people feed the gods.

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Lexical Analysis

Under this pat, the words will be group according to different word classes

NOUNS	VERBS	ADJECTIVES	ADVERBS	PRONOUNS
Children, motherless, Wonjo(12x), Maidens, Widows, gods(3x), World(2x), Sacrifices, Grave, Chief, well, Brother, Man, Answer, Curse(2x), Twenty, Turn	Dig, Are, Has(10x), Will (3x), Offer, Thrown, Call, May, await, know, End(2x), Join, Done(10x)	Starving, Angry	Never, aloud, Soon, No(2x)	What(10x), That(10x), His, Us,

From the analysis above, the verb appeared more than any other category. The verb appeared at thirty-five (35). The noun thirty-two (32) is followed by the adjective two (2), the adverb five (5), and the pronoun twenty-two (22). The semantic interpretation is that the poet is concerned about the death and sickness that are ravaging the land. And this action affected both the maidens, mothers, chiefs, and children. The involvement of numerous verbs is an indication of the activities and actions of the gods in the land. The employment of nouns is to show those whom these activities of the gods have affected. And the use of pronouns is to show the referents of discourse that have happened. With the help of these pronouns in the poem, the poet managed to use them to emphasize casualty and mayhem. The use of "that" shows the involvement of dialogue between the poet and whomever he is demonstrating and telling the effect of the curse of the gods has resulted in.

Syntactic Analysis

The Song of the Dead, being a poem derived from the folksong, lacks that coordination of sentences. There is abuse of concord and arrangement despite being poetic. Amadi makes use of simple sentences in The Song of the Dead to get his message across. Probably The Song of the Dead was structured in such a manner to portray the cultural identity. For instance, in stanza six, line 1, "let each man await his turn". There is a deviation from the rule of agreement between the "noun" and the verb "await" in that sentence. There were a lot of phrases that dominated the Song of the Dead.

Pragmatic Interpretation

The poem depicted the cultural setting and environment the poet came from. It discussed the death crisis in the land. Scientifically, it is called influenza, but the poet called it wonjo traditionally. Wonjo, according to the poet, is a curse that emanated from the gods as a result of the disobedience of the people to the norms and rules of the gods. The poet equally let us

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know that man and the gods have an interrelationship, i.e., the gods protect the man, and the man feeds the gods in turn.

Stylistic Analysis

There are different kinds of styles employed in the poem. For instance, the use of indigenous languages like "Wonjo." It is called scientifically Influenza. This is a sickness. But the poet says it is a curse from the gods.

There is the use of repetition in the poem. According to Leech (1969), style is the way in which something is spoken, written, or performed. The essence of the recapitulation is to create emphasis and meaning for the readers. The manner in which the repetitions occur gives meaning to the poem, and the meaning is the poet's culture. For example, "that is what Wonjo has done." This statement appeared in almost every stanza. This is style because it serves as a chorus in the poem. There is also an element of hyperbole from the poet. In one of the statements by the poet, he said, "No one to offer sacrifices." The poet applied this style to let us know the level of death in the land that Wonjo is destroying.

Semiotic Analysis

Elechi Amadi explores a few signs and symbols in The Song of the Dead. And these items carry meanings, and they are meanings themselves. Onwuegbuzie (2008) defines semiotics as a science that explores the relationship between signs, including talk and text, and their intended specific meanings. For instance, let's look at some of the symbols and signs in the Song of the Dead. "Wonjo" means and represents "curse" and "gods." The "gods" mean the ancestors or the supernatural beings. Sacrifice is the representation of the food of the gods. A chief is a symbol of title or ruler of a village, etc.

Critical Discourse Analysis

This comes into play when Amadi arrogates such "mighty political power" to Wonjo in his poem. For instance, "Wonjo will end the world." It is like a politician who promises his people "heaven and earth projects in his speech, whereas he will not deliver them all. Likewise, Amadi predicts that the gods will destroy the world in the Song of the Dead.

Morning

Short Summary

The poem Morning talks about reincarnation and the birth of a baby that bears the nature of Ojukwu. And Ojukwu is a powerful man from the eastern part of Nigeria. Morning is one of the poems of Elechi Amadi that describes the belief system of an African man. Elech Amadi talks about this system as a "natural world" and a cosmological worldview of the Africans. Even the natures attest to the reincarnation by a way of rejoicing in the different manners in the poem. Elechi Amadi believes in reincarnation and the culture of his people. Morning portrays the dexterity and engagement attached to culture by Elechi Amadi.

Phonological Analysis

The most commonly used in the poem are: /ai/, /i/, /i:/, /3:/, /e/, /á:/, /ð/, /æ/ which are repeated sounds. Light, shadows, dead The repetition of these words creates and conveys a message of belief and custom. The poet makes use of these words to narrate and describe

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how natural reincarnation is. Those words show that the poet is at home with his culture and is thereby promoting it.

Morphological Analysis

The use of phrases and present form occur most frequently in the Morning. The use of the past morphemes describes how the poet describes reincarnation and the qualities the newly born baby possesses.

Confirmed {+ past + Confirmation}
Surprised {+ past + surprise}
Forged {+ past + forge}
Possessed {+ past + possess}
Heightened {+ past + heighten}
Bewitched {+ past + bewitch)

The placement of the verbs from the poem

Present form	**Past form**
Announce	Encrusted
Sleep	Bedecked
Dive	Whispered
Bedeck	Lived

From the analysis in the table above, the past and present forms were mostly used. This shows that most of the activities have been done at some point in the past. Some of the activities are still ongoing. From a semantic standpoint, the poet is celebrating the arrival of the newly born baby and its reincarnation process.

Speech Acts

Illocutionary acts were employed by the poet to convey his message to the readers. And this involves acts of informing, educating, and persuading. The poet makes use of catchy words and phrases that give the poem meaning.

Datum 1. Amadioha (a god)

Illocutionary ActAssertive-informing the poet is informing the people of the blessings the god had bestowed on the newly born baby. And these promises from Amadioha have gladdened his heart and made him rich.

Datum 2. Ikoro (a god)

Illocutionary Act: Stating the fact that Ikoro had confirmed who reincarnated the baby, and there is no doubt about who reincarnated it.

Datum 3. Ojukwu

Illocutionary Act: expressive—expressing what the poet feels. The poet intends to let the readers and audience know that the newly born baby has been possessed by Ojukwu. And Ojukwu is a brave and courageous man from the eastern part of Nigeria who led the Igbos, known as Biafrans, to the Nigerian civil war

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Lexical Analysis

Under this part, the words will be group according to word classes.

NOUNS	VERBS	ADJECTIVES	ADVERBS	PRONOUNS
Light (2x), Shadows (3x), Reincarnation, Dead, Yesterday, Partridge, ikoro, wilds, Rebirth, Birds, Insects, Trapper, Neck, Necklaces, Air, Gossamer, Fever, Spiders, Earth, Body, Ojukwu, Amadioha, Soul, Life, Laughter, Path	Announce, Confirm, Lived, Surprised, Bewitched, possessed, Whispered, Heightened, Dive, Forged, Bedeck	Clear, Clean, Fresh, Firm, Bushy, Disobedient, Sweet,	Yesterday, Early,	It, They, His

From the analysis above, it is obvious that more nouns appeared in the poem. There are twenty-nine (29) nouns, eleven (11) verbs, eight (8) adjectives, two (2) adverbs, and three (3) pronouns. The semantic interpretation of the poem is that reincarnation is one of the value systems of the African environment or society. The involvement of verbs is an indication of activities that happened before and are happening now. The employment of different kinds of pronouns is to show referents of discourse that have happened earlier, present, and in future discourse. With the help of the few pronouns in the poem, the poet was able to manage them in the form of description and narration.

Syntactic Analysis
The structure of the poem is in three stanzas. And the poet employs phrases and indigenous words and names. For instance, Amadioha, Ikoro, and Ojukwu, etc.

Pragmatic Interpretation.
The poem talks about reincarnation. And how the newly born baby possesses the features and qualities of Ojukwu. Invariably, Ojukwu reincarnated the baby. This was confirmed by Ikoro.

Stylistic Analysis
The poet employed different kinds of styles in the work. There are indigenous names used in the poem. And in an African environment, names are identities. The name Ojukwu indicates that the person comes from the eastern part of Nigeria without coming into contact with another person.

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There is the use of literary devices like alliteration and assonance. An example of alliteration is "vices like alliteration and assonance. An example of alliteration is "clear, clean light in stanza 1, line 3 of the poem. An example of assonance can be seen in stanza two, line three: "He confirmed this rebirth."
There is the use of repetition in the work as a style. According to Leech (1969), style is the way in which something is spoken, written, or performed. The essence of the repetition is to create emphasis and meaning for readers.

Semiotic Analysis
There are a few signs and symbols employed in the Morning by Elechi Amadi. For instance, the name Ojukwu is a symbol of a once-brave and courageous man from Anambra State in the eastern part of Nigeria. In an African environment, the word "rebirth" represents reincarnation. Amadioha is a representation and stands for "god".

Critical Discourse Analysis.
Elechi Amadi's language in the Morning sounds so rhetorical that you have no option other than believing in the rebirth or reincarnation. He carries the ideology of reincarnation as a thing of nature and the natural world that Africans have to embrace and imbibe the culture of reincarnation..

4. CONCLUSION

The ideas of culture, meaning, and environment have been explored in this work. Elechi Amadi has been able to extol culture in a classic manner in her poems. In the poem, "Song of the Dead," he created that language and meaning environment for one to understand and appreciate the relationship between man and the gods. In an African environment, there is always the belief that the gods are guardians and protectors of the living and of man. In other way round man reciprocate by feeding the gods by means of sacrifices and obedient to the laws of the gods. In the Morning, Elechi Amadi portrayed the cosmological world view in terms of the belief system of reincarnation in the African environment. He sees reincarnation as a natural world and, as such, should be appreciated and absorbed as an African.

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