
Pragmatic Analysis of Elechi Amadi's Two Poems: Nsukka and Harmattan in Zaria

Stanley Ordu^{1*}, Blessing Jackson Igrubia Peculiar²

^{1*,2}*Department of English and communication Art, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education,
Port Harcourt, Nigeria.*

Corresponding Email: ^{1}stanleyordu12@gmail.com*

Received: 20 February 2023

Accepted: 09 May 2023

Published: 15 June 2023

Abstract: This research used literary work as the object of research. The literary works analyzed in this research are two poems by Elechi Amadi entitled Nsukka and Harmattan in Zaria. The aim of this research is to show the interpretation of language, culture and natural world 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 describing the natural world and its beauty.

Keywords: Elechi Amadi, Pragmatics, Language, Poems, Nature.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is a fundamental component of human existence. It makes sense that language is characterised as the fundamental means by which humans communicate (Aegbija, 2010). However, language can also be expressed through written, nonverbal, and other modes of communication. Therefore, communication is the basis of society (Maduako, 2022). There are a large number of additional channels through which communication can occur, 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 genre), and a great deal more. It should not be overlooked that, in each of these forms, individual pieces of information are essentially endowed with different senses (meanings) and then transmitted to various types of individuals who, based on their own personal views and biases regarding such information, derive different meanings from the transmitted information. This is an important point that should not be ignored. Therefore, Mr. Stanley's interpretation of "I love you" may differ from Miss Faith's, even if the same person is singing or speaking the phrase. Even if Mr. Stanley and Miss Faith are listening to the same person, this holds true. The entire procedure is referred to as "encoding and decoding," which is an abbreviation of "encode and decode." The capacity for individual perception enhances the aesthetic value of an artwork. A work of

art should be capable of existing independently in terms of meaning and interpretation. However, people are more appreciative of art when it is more prosperous (Ordu, 2022).

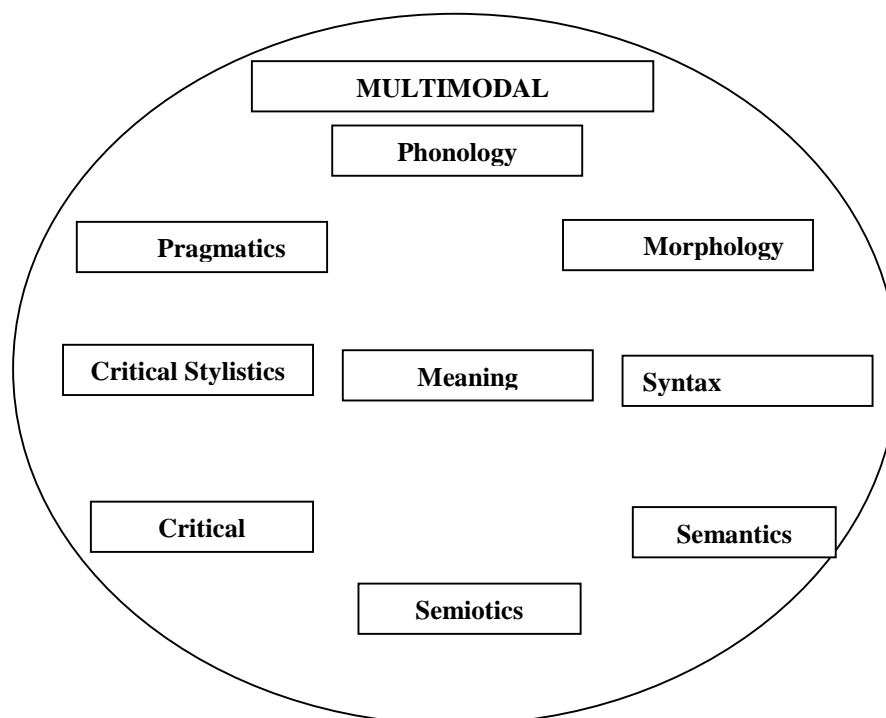
The Poet

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 Ikwerre Local Government in the Rivers State, Nigeria, attended Government College 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 natural world and describing nature at it state.

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.



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

Nsukka

Short Summary

The title of the poem represents the name of a town in the eastern part of Nigeria, precisely in Enugu State. Nsukka is a town where one of the first-generation universities was situated, called the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The poet describes his visit to the university in 1966 as something amazing compared to his previous visit when the university had been planted. Nsukka as a town has developed as a result of the university. The Nsukka that usually houses red mud houses is now housing supermarkets, colleges, beautiful halls, and shops. With the help of the university, Nsukka has woken up from decades of slumber at an unaccustomed speed. There are countless shops and students in the environment, making the town so beautiful.

Phonological Analysis

There are a lot of sounds in the poem, but the most commonly used are /ai/, /s/, /d/, /b/3/, /æ/, /ð/, /o/, /ʌ/, /u/I:/, /s/, /d/, /b/3/, /o//, and /u/and/i/. These sounds are constantly used in the poem. The repetition of these words and the usage of the rhythmic words create a mental picture of how Nsukka was and when the poet visited it. There were a lot of changes, ranging from buildings, shops, humans, and the beauty of the environment. The poet did this to describe the natural world and the world that is evolving.

Morphological Analysis

The poet uses past and continuing aspects in describing Nsukka. The use of the past aspect shows the previous visit of the poet to the town. The development of Nsukka shocks the poet so much that he describes it in line one stanza one as "a resurrected village, Nsukka, of blood-red mud walls." The development of Nsukka takes him by surprise, and this is as a result of the presence of the university. The use of "continuous" aspects describes the beauty of nature and humans within Nsukka.

The placement of the verbs from the poem

Past form	Continues form	
Resurrected	Conjuring	
Erected	Laughing	

Dressed, Filed, mowed, thought, swollen,	Causing, Straining, Carrying, Spewing, Clutching, Marching, Displaying	
--	--	--

In the analysis above, past and continuing aspects were used. The poet's descriptions were of the past, where he describes how Nssuka was before the University of Nigeria, where Nssuka was stationed. He goes on to further describe the nature of Nsukka and the things within Nssuka, which he uses as a continuation in describing them.

Speech Acts

The poet makes use of illocutionary acts in passing his message to his intended readers. And these acts involve describing, educating, informing, and creating.

The poet employed dirge as a means of portraying the style of life of his people. Elechi Amadi is very rooted in the environment and culture. This gives him the ability to describe Nsukka both in the past and when he visited the university in 1966. This shows his love for nature and the environment. There are catchy phrases that the poet used to show his love for the natural world, which will be analysed below using illocutionary acts.

Datum 1 : Blood-red (Color of the mud houses)

Illocutionary Act.

Informative-stating. The poet is describing how Nsukka was before the University of Nigeria was built. Nsukka's buildings were known to have red mud walls. The then village has resurrected as a town as a result of the development that is taking place brought about by the university. Amadi tries to tell us that he knows Nsukka very well by describing it thus: "A resurrected village, Nsukka, of blood-red mud walls, racing now with unaccustomed speed."

Datum 2 : Roads too obviously tarred (Decent Accessibility)

Illocutionary Act. Expressive-expressing. The poet is expressing his surprise over the different roads tarred in Nssuka. He is surprised to see how accessible Nsukka looks compared to when there were no roads. And the majority of the roads lead to the university, making the environment look beautiful and decent. The poet tries to tell us that neatly tarred roads give the environment beauty and decency.

Datum 3. Mammoth halls (lecture halls)

Illocutionary Act. Expressive –expressing. He expresses joy over the lecture halls he sees at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. And these halls bear fearful names and are situated in good areas of the university. As the poet describes it, "Mammoth halls and colleges stand proudly in the uncertain sun, with names strangely assorted, some conjuring fearful legends..."

Datum 4. Tall American Teachers (Beautiful lecturers)

Illocutionary Act. Informative-stating. The poet describes the kind of quality lecturers that are there at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Most of the lecturers are foreign and look beautiful and simple in nature, as he describes them: "tall American teachers, with the hurry of New York and hair mowed to a millimetre, displaying ready-made pants to announce their simplicity."



Lexical Analysis

Nouns	Verbs	Adjectives	Adverbs	Prepositions
Village, Nsukka, blood- red, mud-walls, speed, decades, patter, slumber, shops, repair sheds, barbers, saloons, baby, hurry, supermarkets, shafts, target, roads, New Varsity, anxiety, diamond, hillocks, buildings, soldier ants, carcass, elephant, halls, colleges, sun, names, assorted, legends, days, houses, shiploads, staff, numberless 2x business, 3X students, men, dread, winter, earth, books, born, examination, girls, ball, 2x hair, Miriam Makebas, motorists, necks, gravel, American teachers, New York, millimeter, pants, suits,	Cut, menaced, devour, announce, swerve,	Unaccustomed, hungry, new, impatient, Mammoth, uncertain, too, sudden, assorted, fearful, puny, fresh, constant, tall, incredible, impossible, giant, plateful, quick, hot	Obviously, now, proudly, strangely, feverishly, nearly, heavily,	Towards, amidst, some, for, many,



law, children, toilet reference books, files, ultra modern eating house, leviathan, meals, meal ticket, witches				
--	--	--	--	--

From the analysis above, the noun appeared more than any other category. The noun appeared at seventy-nine (79). Following the verb five (5) are the adjective twenty (20), the adverb seven (7), and the preposition five (5). The semantic interpretation is that the poet is concerned about Nsukka and the natural world, which are important to humanity. And this action shows the love he has for Nsukka as a town that harbours a great university in Nigeria. The involvement of numerous nouns is an indication of the nature of Nsukka. The use of verbs is to show the actions and activities that are going on in Nsukka. And the use of prepositions is to show the relationships between humans and the environment.

Syntactic Analysis

Nsukka, as a poem, involves phrases. There is no rule of concord. Amadi makes use of simple phrases in Nsukka to get his message across. Probably, Nsukka was structured in such a manner to portray the natural world of Nsukka. For instance, " A resurrected village, Nsukka, Of blood-red mud walls, Racing now with unaccustomed speed" The statements are all in phrases, and there is no full or complete sentence.

Pragmatic Interpretation

The poem depicts the natural world and its evolution as a result of man's activities in his quest for development. Nsukka has that natural beauty, but man adds to it by building universities. There were buildings, beautiful tarred roads, supermarkets, and other man-made things.

Stylistic Analysis

There are different kinds of styles employed in the poem. For instance, the poem is divided into eight stanzas. And each line of a stanza starts with a capital, making the statement incomplete. There is the use of alliteration in line two, stanza one, for "blood red mud" . 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, "filling stations barbers saloons." This statement appears in stanza one to create rhythm. This is a style because it serves as a rhyme in the poem. There is also an element of personification in the poem. In one of the statements by the poet, he said, A resurrected village." The poet applies this style to let us know that Nsukka, as a village, is becoming a town as a result of the ongoing development.

Semiotic Analysis

Elechi Amadi explores a few signs and symbols in Nsukka. 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 Nsukka. "Varsity" means and represents a place of formal learning. "Blood red" represents colour and landscape. Students are the representation of learners in the Varsity. American teachers represent those foreigners who came to impart knowledge in the poem, etc.

Harmattan in Zaria

Short Summary

Harmattan in Zaria is a poem that describes a natural world. Harmattan is a season in West Africa that occurs between the end of November and the middle of March. It is characterised by and known by the dry and dusty northeasterly trade wind of the same name, which blows from the Sahara over West Africa into the Gulf of Guinea. The poet describes how this season displays itself in the northern part of Nigeria, called Zaria, where he had an encounter with it. It destroys trees and makes everywhere look dusty. It equally describes how the season helps people identify beautiful women for marriage.

Phonological Analysis

There are a lot of sounds in the poem, but the most commonly used are /i:/, /ei/, /ai/, /s/, /d/, /b³/, /æ/, /ð/, /o/ ^/, /u/i/, These sounds are constantly used in the poem. The repetition of these words and the usage of the rhythmic words create a mental picture of how Harmattan creates havoc in Zaria. There was a lot of destruction caused by Harmattan, ranging from the destruction of human skins, creating dust all over the place in Zaria, killing economic and non-economic trees, and causing cold to the animals..

Morphological Analysis

The poet uses past and continuing aspects in describing the havoc Harattan has caused. The use of past aspects shows the destruction the harmattan has caused. Harmattan causes humans in Zaria to not laugh as they were supposed to, resulting in injuries they may sustain in the course of laughter. This is how the poet depicts "Eve's lips cracked." "Laughter-starved thanks to pomade," Eve's lips get injured as a result of laughter in harmattan season.

The placement of the verbs from the poem

Past form	Continues form
Twisted, Cracked, Starved, Toasted, Shrivelled,	Sniffing,

Speech Acts

The poet makes use of illocutionary acts to make his message known to the intended readers. And these acts involve describing, educating, informing, and creating.

The poet employs speech acts as a means of interpreting the meaning surrounding Harattan's havoc in Zaria. Elechi Amadi is very familiar with harmattan in Zaria and the environment. This gives him the ability to describe the situation mostly in past form. There are catchy phrases



that the poet used to show his love for the natural world, which will be analysed below using illocutionary acts.

Datum 1: Northeast stranger (Harmattan)

Illocutionary Act. Informative-informing. The poet is informing us that the Northeast stranger is harmattan. It is a stranger because it comes in season. The harmattan is not friendly to the people of Zaira, which is why it is called a stranger. It comes from the northeast trade wind with dust and dryness.

Datum 2 : Foo foo (local fermented food)

Illocutionary Act. The harmattan makes this local food so irritating during the season. The poet describes how the toasted food looks. Harmattan makes it look horrible because it dries the food.

Datum 3: Allah ba mu lafia (May God bring normalcy)

Illocutionary Act. Expressive: expressing The poet is expressing his desire for God. He did this by offering prayer to the almighty God to calm the harmattan because the destruction was too great for the people. Considering how the harmattan has destroyed so many things, the people are tired of such a season.

Lexical Analysis

Nouns	Verbs	Adjectives	Adverbs	Prepositions
Stranger, buds, northeast, scourge, trees, agony, flowers, buds, surprise, place, peace, offering, dust, Eve, lips, laughter, pomade, thanks, time, marriages, foofoo, apples, oranges, wrinkles, water snail, chairs, tables, sniffing, upholstered, dust, servants, water, laundry, sacrifice, man, beast, sahara, plaything, Alla,	Leaves, Twisted, cracked, starved, toasted, despair,	Thirsty, relentless, disobedient, sweet, crusty, shriveled, wise, jealous, idle, cold, instant, wheezing, creaking	Out, sickly,	To, on,

From the analysis above, the noun appeared more than any other category. The noun appeared at forty (40). The verb six (6) is followed by the adjective thirteen (13), the adverb two (2), and the preposition two (2). The semantic interpretation is that the poet is concerned about harmattan, which is causing havoc to humanity. And it shows that the poet is happy with the environment. This is because harmattan is destroying plants, animals, and human beings. The involvement of numerous nouns is an indication of the nature of harmattan. The use of verbs is to show the actions and activities of Harattan. And the use of prepositions is to show the relationships between humans, the environment, and the natural world.

Syntactic Analysis

Harmattan in Zaria is a poem that involves phrases. There is no rule of concord. Amadi makes use of phrases in the poem to get his message across. Probably Harmattan in Zaria is structured in such a manner to portray how Zaria looks during the northeast wind.

Pragmatic Interpretation

The poem is all about the natural world. It tells us where the harmattan comes from each season. Harmattan in Zaria depicts most things the natural world does to mankind, such as the destruction of crops, trees, animals, and human beings. According to the poet, harmattan is a season where you can easily identify a beautiful lady with whom you can get married. For instance, in stanza 3, line 5, "time for marriages,"

Stylistic Analysis

Harmattan in Zaria is divided into six stanzas with thirty-one lines. There is the use of indigenous language in the poem. For instance, "Allah ba mu lafia." There is the use of assonance in stanza one line four "And leaves brown leaves," and stanza four line three "Orange wise with wrinkles". The poet also employs alliteration, for instance, "Strange, sweet "in stanza two line three, "fofo crusty toasted" in stanza four line one, etc.

Semiotic Analysis

Amadi weaves in a few signs and symbols to give the work its real originality and a message to the readers. There is the use of "Allah," which symbolises divinity. There is also the use of the word "fofoo," which represents local African fermented foods. "Harmattan" stands for a particular season. And "man" represents a particular gender.

4. CONCLUSION

The ideas of nature, environment, and the natural world have been explored in this work. Amadi has been able to extol and describe nature in a classic manner in his poems. In the poem "Nssuka," he creates that language and environment for one to understand and appreciate the relationship between man, environment, and development. Amadi is deeply rooted in the African environment, traditions, and culture of Maduako and Ordu (2023). In an African environment, there is always the belief that a good environment gives a fresh breath and a sense of nature. And development makes way for a better and neater environment. In the Harmattan in Zaria, Elechi Amadi portrays nature as unfriendly to man and his environment. This can be deduced from the manner in which the harmattan destroys things and makes man



uncomfortable to the point of destroying his skin. In both poems, the poet appreciates nature in Nsukka, whereas the reverse becomes the case in Harmattan in Zaria.

5. REFERENCES

1. Ademilokun, M. and Olateju, M. (2015). A multi-modal discourse analysis of some visual
2. Images in the political rally discourse of 2011 electioneering campaigns in South
3. Western: International Journal of Society Culture and Language 1-19
4. Amadi, E. (2003). Speaking and singing (Papers and poems) University Port Harcourt Press
5. Limited
6. Crystal, D. (2022). The Cambridge encyclopedia of the English language. Cambridge University Press.
7. Leech, G. (1983). Principles of pragmatics. Longman
8. Maduako, I.K. (2022). Meaning and the linguist. An inaugural lecture. PEARL publishers.
9. Maduako, I.K & Ordu, S. (2023) Analysis of the Meaning of Elechi Amadi's Song of the Dead And Morning which Reflected his Culture: A Multi-Modal Pragmatic (MCP) Analysis. Journal of Humanities, Music and Dance (JHMD) ISSN:2799-1180, 3(03), 1-10.
10. Melakneh, P.G. (2008). Qualitative evaluation and research methods. SAGE publications.
11. Onwuegbuzie, A.J (2008). Qualitative data analysis: A compendium of techniques and a Framework for selected for school psychology research and beyond. School Psychology Quarterly, 23 (4), 587-604
12. Ordu, S. (2022). Symbolic characters and class struggles in Ngugi wa thiongo's petals of blood. Journal of Social, Humanity, and Education 2(2), 129-139
13. Ordu, S. and Francis, A. E (2022). A multi-modal critical pragmatic (MCP) analysis of Deji Ige's Selected poem Let there be light. Journal of Pragmatics and Discourse Analysis. 1(1), 14-22