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Editorial

NJECS is a yearly national journal published by the National Association of Teachers of English in Colleges of Education and Polytechnics (NATECEP). It focuses on salient aspects of the English Language teaching and learning today. It extends to comparative literary studies, approaches, and the application of literary genres and theories. Studies of individual writers as well as language and literature in contact with various cultures are also accepted. Communication studies of indigenous languages are also accepted for publication in this journal. The other papers in this publication are the best of the lot presented at the 14th Annual National Conference held at Idah in Kogi State, Nigeria. It is our strong belief that these papers have addressed the steady decline, which has become ubiquitous, in the quality as well as quantity of the spoken and written English in Nigeria. In other words, the poor performance in English in Nigeria, not just among students but even among teachers, administrators, politicians and lot of others is enough to provoke self re-examination by all committed teachers of English Language since the English Language in Nigeria for now is not just a source of internal but also external communication. It is our hope that this publication is a step in the right direction. This Vol. 6B is a follow up to our earlier publication which could not take care of all the papers. It is published based on the collective decision of the congress of NATECEP held at Agbor on 6th October, 2010.

Dr. Baba, D.D.
 Editor-in-Chief.

Note to Contributors

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A SYNTACTIC ANALYSIS OF ELECHI AMADI'S THE CONCUBINE

BY
OMENOGOR, H. D.

Abstract

The fact that there is an interface between literature and language is no longer a novel one. Elechi Amadi explores this fact in The Concubine. Consequently, this paper focuses on the syntax of the novel in question.

In the course of this, it examines the group types, the sentence types, the mood and the transitivity system of the novel. This paper equally explains and illustrates the positive effects of the various syntactic devices observed in the novel.

INTRODUCTION

Elechi Amadi is undoubtedly a man of many facets being a novelists, a dramatist and a scientist. He served as a public administrator, a school master and a soldier. Among his novels are The Concubine(1966) The Great Ponds(1969) and The Slave (1978). His plays include: Isiburu (1973), and The Dancer of Johannesburg (1977). He also published a social political work entitled: Ethics in Nigerian Culture (1982). The Concubine, our focus in this paper, is "a powerful love story, written with effortless ease in lucid and beautiful prose (117)", as Palmer notes. The novel examines the problems of young lovers and man's relationship with the gods. At the time of the story, no destruction or distortion had been done to the African traditional heritage.

The story is centred on Ihuoma, a lady with a superlative degree of beauty, highly endowed with many positive intrinsic and extrinsic qualities. This heroine is so good that some critics describe her as a character that is too sweet to be real. Irrespective of her good qualities, Ihuoma is not able to marry successfully because of her relationship with the spirit world. Consequently, two young and promising men Emenike, and Ekwueme suffer untimely deaths because of their relationships with her.

This paper focuses on the syntactic analysis of the novel. It treats the group types, sentence types, mood and the transitivity systems of the novel. According to Chomsky, syntax is "the study of the principles and processes by which sentences are constructed in a particular language (1)." Syntax stipulates or spells out a set of rules users of a given language must follow (Agbedo, 97, O'Grady 537 and Anagbogu et al. 37).

From the above fact, we can conclude that syntax is the branch of language study that deals with how words are brought together to produce grammatical constructions. Syntax constitutes one of the various levels of stylistic analysis. Our grammatical model in this paper is the Neo-Firthian Systemic Functional Grammar (S.F.G.). As Butler notes, on application of systemic linguistics, The stylistic features of a text or body of texts may involve any or all of the levels of phonology, graphology and form (grammar and lexis) at each of these levels of scale and category model

provides theoretical apparatus, for a comprehensive description of texts (197).

The above view shows that systemic linguistics embraces grammatical analysis of any text at any level.

2. THE GROUPTYPE IN HE NOVEL

Tomori notes that "a group is one or more words that occupy a distinctive grammatical slot in a stretch of linguistics signals (18)." We will focus our attention on nominal group and verbal group in this paper because they dominate in the novel.

2.1 THE NOMINAL GROUP: Butler observes that "we may take the 'nominal group' to be equivalent to "noun phrase". "Within the noun phrase, the head is pre or post modified by other words" ... (Lamidi, 99). The primary elements of structure in the nominal group are: "M(odifier), H(ead word) and Q(ualifier)" as Butler notes (19). Still, he notes that "at primary delicacy, then Halliday's examples given below would have the same structure namely: M M M H Q (19)."

2.12 all the ten houses on the river side (19).

M M M H Q

2.13 the finest old houses on the river side (19).

M M M H Q

Halliday and Hasan further note that the nominal group "consists of a head and a modifier, with modification constituting its logical structure: The modifier is optional and it includes elements, some of which precede the head and some of which follow it (39)."

The elements that come before the head are pre-modifiers while the ones that come after it are post-modifiers.

The nominal group features prominently in The Concubine and they represent human beings, spirits, gods and some basic concepts. They function as mostly subject, objects, and complements. With the aid of the instances of the nominal group, Amadi is able to present an exact copy of the village life among his people. A major message of the novel is that the gods greatly influence the affairs of man. With the aid of the nominal group, Amadi demonstrates the fact that the gods are the performers of most of the actions that affect man negatively. Clear instances are the deaths of Emenike, Madume and Ekwueme.

Some examples of the nominal group in the novel are underlined in the following sentences.

i. Beauty seems to carry sorrow with it, ugly people do not suffer as much as the beautiful (35).

H H M H

ii. Several Spirits swore to kill you ... (58).

M H

iii. This thing is obviously the act of a god (70).

M H M H Q

iv. He unleashes all the powers at his command and they are fatal (196).

M M H Q

v. Ihuoma's late husband apparently died of 'lock-chest' (195).

M M H H

With the aid of sentence one above, the novelist is able to make the readers get into the thoughts of his heroine, Ihuoma. Other nominal groups in the sentences represent human beings, spirits and some basic concepts.

They function as subjects, objects and complements and they are used to demonstrate that the gods influence the affairs of man.

2.2 The Verbal Group This group functions as predicate in sentences. Butler notes that "the verbal class of the unit 'group' is that grouping recognizable by its potentially of occurrence at the P elements of clause structure (24)." On the nature of this group, Muir points out that it is "one of the most complex areas of English grammar (41)." This complexity occurs because many systemic choices take place in the verbal group and there is no one to one correspondence between a term in a system and an element of structure realizing this choice. We are interested in how Amadi has used the various tenses to project the message in the novel. Some examples of the verbal group in the novel are as we have stated below.

- i. Beauty seems to carry sorrow with it (35). (simple present tense)
- ii. Several spirits swore to kill you ... (55). (Simple past tense)
- iii. This thing is obviously the act of the gods ... (7). (simple present tense)
- iv. It would be a terrible mistake to marry Ihuoma (105). (Simple future in the past tense)

Amadi has used mostly the present tense and the past tense. The future tense comes in occasionally. His frequent use of the present tense is stylistically significant because it makes his readers feel that the discussion of the characters is being listened to. Besides, the present tense makes his presentation real because his aim is to present what occurs often in the present time. The past tense makes it possible for him to use the literary device called 'flash-back'.

(a) Several spirits swore to kill you transitive

(b) ... Your husband is ill (164). Intransitive

The usage of "kill" above signifies that the gods often fashion man's fate in the novel.

3. SENTENCE TYPES IN THE NOVEL

A sentence as Crystal notes, is "the largest structural unit in terms of which the grammar of a language is organized (432)."

A sentence is important because it is the basic unit of expression. With respect to the usage of sentences, every language user has his or her linguistic universe and through the utterances of such language used, we can have an idea of his or her real nature hence style has been viewed as a signature.

There are various types of sentences in the novel but we shall restrict our analysis to only the ones that project Amadi's message in the novel.

According to Butler, "four basic elements of clause structure are recognized in systemic linguistics which Halliday labels S(ubjects), P(redicate), C(omplement) and A(djunct) (17).

He also notes that:

Halliday uses the terms 'complement and adjunct' more widely than in some other

accounts: the former covers the direct and indirect object of traditional grammar as well as complements of copula-type verbs, the latter covers a wide range of groups with 'adverbial' functions (19).

Butler, further notes that 'the elements of structure of a given unit are 'ordered' in 'places', where there are alternative orderings a variety of structural types may result (18)."

Based on the above fact, the four elements of the clause structure S.P.C and A could be combined in different ways, and C and A might appear at more than one structural place giving structures such as; SPC ASP, SAPA, ASPCC and so on.

'Clause structure' has been used in a synonymous sense with 'sentence' since an independent clause is a simple sentence.

Different types of sentences are used in the novel. The sentences will now be analyzed according to their types. The sentence structures is our basis of classification here.

3.1 Simple Sentence: According to Hartman and Stock, a simple sentence is the one that consists of:

A subject and a predicate with or without a complement depending on a class of verb occurring as predicator with or without one or more adverbial and with or without a vocative (206).

Some instances of the simple sentence in the novel are as follows.

- (i) The gods // were // behind it (58).
S P C
- (ii) The marriage // will not work out // well (194).
S P A
- (iii) They // are // against the marriage // (195).
S P C
- (iv) Ihuoma // belongs // to the sea // (195).
S P A
- (v) With the Sea king, // it // is // impossible // (196).
A S P C

Amadi uses the above declarative sentences to depict the circumstances surrounding Madume's toe injury, Ihuoma's spiritual background and the fate of the proposed marriage between Ihuoma and Ekwueme. This is why the sentences are stylistically important.

3.2 Compound Sentence: Crystal and Davy define a compound sentence as "A sentence that is made up of two or more simple sentences joined by a conjunction or conjunctions (98)."

- (i) He // unleashes // all the powers // at his command // and
S P C A conj.
they // are // fata (196)
S P C
- (ii) Accept // my sacrifice // and spare // me (59).
P C conj. P C

- (iii) It // was // all the design of the Sea king // (195).
 S P C

The above compound sentences are used to portray the brutal nature of the Sea king and man's helplessness before him.

3.3 Complex Sentence:

Babjide notes that a complex sentence is "a sentence that has only one independent clause and one or more subordinate or dependent clauses" (31). The sense expressed by the subordinate or dependent clause is usually not complete until it is joined to the main clause with the aid of subordinating conjunctions like 'if', 'when', 'as' etc. Instances of a complex sentence in the novel are as follows.

- (i) They // don't want // you // to have // anything to do with Ihuoma (58).
 S P C P C
- (ii) As soon as // Emenike // married // Ihuoma // his life // was // forfeited (195).
 A S P C S P C
- (iii) That // was // when // Ekwueme // died.
 S P A S P

Amadi has used the above sentences to inform his audience, subordinate some information to the more important ones and throw more light on the deaths of Madume and Emenike. This further validates the fact that the events of the novel are influenced by the gods.

4. Mood

This is the form of a verb which shows the manner in which an action is expressed. Three moods exist in English language. They are the indicative mood, the imperative mood and the subjunctive mood.

According to Waldorn and Zeiger,

The indicative mood is the mood of fact, or rather of statement presented as fact, the imperative mood is the mood of command and request while the subjective mood is the mood of doubt, condition, wish, imagination and the like. (29).

Butler notes that in the 'mood' options of English provided by Halliday, An independent clause (a sentence) is either (indicative) having an expressed subject or (imperative), having no expressed subject. Clauses which are (indicative) go on to select either (interrogative) or (declarative).

Interrogative clauses are either (yes / No) (polar interrogatives) or ('Wh') (introduced by Wh-words such as 'who' 'what' 'where'), declarative clauses select either (assertion) or exclamation. Clauses with the feature (imperative) can be either (jussive) or (optative) ... (44).

A careful examination of The Concubine reveals that Amadi has used mostly the indicative mood, some sentences in the imperative mood and a few others in the subjective mood. Amadi's major usage of the indicative mood agrees with Waldhorn's and Zeiger's observation on the indicative mood.

The indicative mood is much the most important in English; perhaps ninety-eight percent

of the verbs employed in speaking and writing are in the indicative mood (29).

Instances of sentences in the indicative mood in the novel are as follows:

- (i) Emenike and others // tried to drag // me // across // in a dream // (50).
S P C A A
- (ii) Ekwe, his only son // mad (174).
S C
- (iii) A mad son // was // as good as a dead one // probably // worse // (174)
S P C A C
- (iv) 'Do // you // think // Ekwe // is // mad // (174)?'
P S P S P C
- (v) ... as a wife, // she // is // completely // ruled out // (196).
A S P A P
- (vi) with the Sea-king, // it // is // impossible // (196).
A S P C

Examples of sentences in the imperative mood in the novel are stated below.

- (i) Accept // my sacrifice // and spare // me (59).
P C conj. P C
- (ii) Oh! Amadioha // please help // our son (175).
S P C
- (iii) 'Come' (102)!
P
- (iv) ... don't forsake // him // now (175).
P C A
- (v) 'Speak // to him // if you want to (192).'

The followings are examples of sentences in the subjective mood in the text.

- (i) Beauty // seems to carry // sorrow // with it (35).
S P C C
- 76
- (ii) Well // she // could be // someone's concubine (196).
S P C
- (iii) May // the day // break (49).
P S P
- (iii) I // wish // we // were // at the arena (155).
S P S P A

The stylistic importance of the mood employed by Amadi lies in the following areas. The simple and short nature of the sentences enhances understanding, the sentences in the indicative mood are used to put important points to the audience eg. Ihuoma's spiritual background. The interrogative structures among the sentences in the indicative mood serve as appeal to the emotion of the audience and suggests the persona's out burst of natural feeling.

Our view above is supported by the observation of Quirk and Greenbaum that the usual function of a question in a discourse is "to request the listener to respond verbally with the information that the question seeks (306)." Amadi uses the imperative sentences to express strong appeal, command and instructions. The mood used enables the readers to get into the thoughts of the characters through elaborate use of direct speech. At times, the readers have a feeling of being spoken to directly by the characters.

5. **Transitivity:** As Halliday puts it,

Transitivity is concerned with the type of process expressed in the clause; with the participants in this process, animate and inanimate, and with the various attributes and circumstances of the process and the participants (38).

Transitivity has something to do with the relations between the process of verbs and other participants. A functional relationship exists between types of processes. For instance, action processes and the types of participants involved in the processes. Such processes involve for instance, the subject or the actor which performs the action and the object or goal towards which the action is directed. The ideational function of language has therefore provided a structure that contains functional elements such as Actor, process and Goal.

While analyzing the transitivity system the novel, we shall examine the transitive clauses and the intransitive clauses and identify the participants in the verb processes. Finally, we will also explain their stylistic significance in the novel.

5.1 Examples of Independent Clauses with Transitive Verbs in the Novel

- (i) Beauty seems to carry sorrow with it (35).
- (ii) Several spirits swore to kill you ... (58).
- (iii) Emenike and others tried to drag me ... (50).
- (iv) Accept my sacrifice and spare me ... (59).
- (v) It would be a terrible mistake to marry Ihuoma (105).
- (vi) As soon as Emenike married Ihuoma, his life was forfeit (105).
- (vii) All this was too much for the Sea king and he himself assumed the form of a serpent and dealt with his rival (195).
- (viii) Just before Emenike died, I detected some spirits among the throng that liquidated him (195).
- (ix) He unleashes all the powers at his command and they are fatal (196).
- (x) Madume's real trouble began after he had assaulted Ihuoma while she was harvesting plantain (195).

5.2 Analysis of the Transitive Clauses

S/Nos	Participants (Actors)	Processes
	Participants (Goals)	
1.	Beauty Seems to carry	<u>Sorrow</u> ...
2.	Several spirits	Swore to kill <u>You (Madume)</u>
3.	Emenike and others	Tried to drag Me (Ekwueme) ...
4.	You (gods) You (gods)	accept spare my sacrifice me (Madume)
5.	It	would be to marry a
	terrible mistake Ihuoma 6.	... Emenike married Ihuoma ...
7.	... he himself (Sea-king)	Sea-king assumed dealt with the form of a serpent his rival
8.	... I (Anyika, the ... the throng	detected liquidated Some spirits Him
9.	He (the Sea-king) unleashes	all the powers at his command
10.	... he (Madume) had assaulted Ihuoma ...	

The above analysis shows that abstract concepts, spirits, gods, human characters in the novel and the sea king are the actors. There are animate and inanimate actors.

The usage of the above actors, processes and goals has some stylistic significance in the novel. The transitivity options analyzed above contribute to the reader's feeling of sympathy for man following his helplessness before the gods. A good number of the transitive clauses depict the gods are actors performing cruel actions against men. The clauses where the gods are actors contain centrally transitive verbs of lexical powerful nature like 'kill' (58), 'dealt' (195), 'liquidated' (195) and 'unleashes' (196).

Contrary to the above observation, the transitive clauses with man as actor have less centrally transitive verbs with less lexical power. Examples of such verbs are 'marry' (105) 'met' (155), 'harvesting' (195) etc. Most of these clauses do not have the gods as goals. The pattern of transitivity Amadi displays makes the readers feel that the gods are the attackers of the helpless man whenever there is a conflict involving them.

5.2 Examples of Independent Clauses with Intransitive Verbs in the Novel

- i. "How can a man who marries you ever regret" (92)?
- ii. "The marriage will not work out well" (184).
- iii. She was to die untouched by men (196).
- iv. May the day break.
- v. 'Why is he behaving this way' (175)?

5.3 Analysis of the Intransitive Clauses

S/Nos.	Participants (Actors)	Processes
	Participants (Goals)	
1.	... a man who (Ekwueme)	Regret None
2.	The marriage Will ... work	"
3.	She Was to die	"

4. ... the day break "
5. ...he (Ekwueme)Is behaving "

The analysis of the above sentences show that animate and inanimate actors have been used. The transitivity pattern noticed here shows that man does not take any actions (particularly offensive ones) against the gods. Instead, the gods act against him which further validates the opinion that he (human character in the novel) merely lives under the superintendence of the gods. The contextual implications of the intransitive clauses lie in the fact that they depict vividly the circumstances that occasioned Emenike's death, Ihuoma's relationship with the spirit world and why the proposed marriage between her and Ekwueme will not be successful.

Expectedly, the intransitive clauses in question have no goals (objects) because they do not require any to be able to express their meanings. Pink and Thomas' observation that "an intransitive verb is one denoting an action that is not performed upon an object (34)," supports the above view of ours. The application of the intransitive clauses is significant because they express the actions that cannot be expressed with transitive verbs. Besides, it makes Amadi's work interesting as variety in terms of clause structure is enhanced.

To conclude this paper, we reiterate that Amadi uses the group appropriately. The nominal group and the verbal group dominate in the novel, various sentence patterns such as: S P C S P C A, A S P etc. are displayed. Expectedly, the indicative mood dominates in the novel, the imperative mood and the subjective mood are also utilized. Lastly, the transitivity system in the novel indicates the application of transitive and intransitive clauses animate and inanimate actors and goals. The transitivity system affirms the fact that man lives in a society greatly influenced by the gods. The gods always have the upper hand in the case of any conflict(s). all the above features combine in making Amadi deliver his message to the audience creditably.

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