

A Linguistic-Stylistic Analysis of Fálétí's 'Tẹ̀ Gbẹ̀Gbẹ̀ NíwòN' – Open The Goitre Less/Brag Less

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Abstract: *This paper explores Adebayo Fálétí's poem "Tẹ̀ Gbẹ̀Gbẹ̀ NíwòN as a critique of hegemonic posture adopted by individuals and nations. Through a close reading of the poem, we examine how Fálétí challenges notion of dominance and indispensability, highlighting the replaceability of entities with special attributes or gifts. The poem can be situated within the context of global power dynamics the poem offers a nuanced understanding of power distribution and encourages humility in the face of shifting allegiance and economic dependencies. The analysis of the stylistic and literacy devices identified in the poem contribute to a deeper understanding of the poem's themes and messages, throwing light on the complexities of power and dominance in contemporary world.*

Keywords: Hegemony, dominance, humility, power, brag less.

INTRODUCTION

A poem is a collection of spoken or written words that expresses ideas or emotions in a powerfully vivid and imaginative style. It comprises rhythmic and metrical pattern. It is a genre of literature that is different from prose or ordinary speech, as it is either in metrical pattern or free verse. One of the functions of a poem is to convey an idea or emotion in beautiful language. This is achieved by painting the picture of what a poet feels about a thing, person, idea, concept or even an object by means of good use of language. In other words, the poet arrests the attention of an audience through the use of vivid imagery and other rhetorical devices. A poem's major function is to transform imagery and words into verse form from to touch the hearts and minds of the readers. In addition, a poet evokes imaginative awareness about things by using a specific diction, sound and rhythm (source. Literary devices. Net).

Style in Adébáyò Fálétí's Art

Adebayo Fálétí, a celebrated Yorùbá literary artist, has left an indelible mark on Nigerian literature through his prolific works in prose, poetry, and film. His poetry in particular, is renowned for its mastery of Yorùbá language and culture as well as its exploration of themes relevant to the human experience. His literary work of art has attracted great scholarly attention from so many scholars (Olátéjù, 2016). One of such scholars is Olátúnjì (1984a, 1985b). Olátúnjì's work on Fálétí, especially on the use of language in his written poetry has provided a strong pedestal for a linguistic-stylistics analysis of Fálétí's "Tẹ̀ Gbẹ̀gbẹ̀ Níwòn"-Open the Goiter Less or Brag Less. Fálétí's style in literary communication in this poem is incomparable. His way of handling language, his creative imagination and deft craftsmanship stands him out among his contemporary poets in Yoruba society. Fálétí's style or technique, especially in his poems according to Olátéjù consists in the following: arresting opening lines; addressing an imaginary audience; dramatic presentation of scenes; imagery and dialogue; creative and impressive use of stylistic devices such as metaphor, simile parallelism, euphemism etc. In the poem "Tẹ̀ Gbẹ̀gbẹ̀ Níwòn", the poet Fálétí is seen addressing the powerful and the wealthy individual to be moderate in their attitude and character. His poetry is in particular, is renowned for its mastery of Yorùbá language and culture and imagery to convey complex ideas and emotions. 'Tẹ̀ Gbẹ̀gbẹ̀ Níwòn' is one of such poems that showcases Fálétí's skillful use of language and imagery to convey complex ideas and emotions. This analysis will delve into poem's themes, imagery and linguistic devices, exploring how Fálétí work continues to resonate with readers and contribute to the richness of Yorùbá literary heritage. Adébáyò Fálétí poem "Tẹ̀ Gbẹ̀gbẹ̀ Níwòn" offers a scathing critique of the hegemonic posture adopted by individuals and nations. In a world where power dynamics are often skewed, Fálétí challenges the notion that any one entity holds absolute control or dominance. Instead, he argues that no nation or individual is indispensable, and that alternatives can always be found.

Contextualising "Tẹ̀ Gbẹ̀gbẹ̀ Níwòn"

Adébáyò Fálétí's poem "Tẹ̀ Gbẹ̀gbẹ̀ Níwòn" offers a scathing critique of the hegemonic posture adopted by individuals and nations. In a world where power dynamics are often skewed, Fálétí challenges the notion that any one entity holds absolute control or dominance. Instead, he argues that no nation or individual is indispensable, and that alternatives can always be found. The poem can be situated within the context of global power structures, where nations like the United States and France have historically exerted significant influence over other countries in military, economy, trade and so on. Similarly, within Africa, sub-regional powers have often sought to assert their dominance. Fálétí's poem serves as counter-narrative to these hegemonic tendencies, emphasizing the replaceability of individuals, and nations with special attributes gifts.

The poem's message is particularly relevant in today's world, where shifting allegiances and economic dependencies are becoming increasingly common. The recent examples of Mali, Niger republic, and Burkina Faso severing their economic ties with France and looking inward for growth and development serve as a testament to Fálétí's argument. These nations have taken bold steps to reduce their dependence on former colonial powers and forge their own paths.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leech and short (1981) define style as "the way in which language is used in a given context, by a given person, for a given purpose. Widdowson (1975) defines stylistics as the study of literary discourse from linguistic orientation. Stylistics, especially linguistic stylistics can be described as the linguistic study

of style. It is the application of linguistics to the analysis of literature. A stylistician or linguistic analyst studies style purposely to explain the literary work. He does this by taking an in-depth look at the language of the writer using observable linguistic tools such as phonology, lexis, syntax and semantics in the analysis of such literary work. In other words, the analyst tries to explain the relation between language and the artistic function of such work. Thus, linguistic stylistics does not simply focus on the literary language for its own sake, it is concerned with highlighting the thematic implications of the use of language in literary works. Olátúnjì (2005) describes stylistic devices or poetic devices as those ingredients which are added to verbal or written art to make it unequalled and fascinating, colourful and memorable, so as to sustain the interest of the readers and spectators and achieve the greatest effectiveness as a work of art. The application of linguistic stylistics to the analysis of poetry is basically to reveal the stylistic features that conform with norms of language and those (features) which deviate from the norms using linguistic and stylistic categories such as phonology, semantics (figures of speech), lexis, grammar and graphology. Mansoor and Latif (2005) claim that the purpose of stylistic analysis of any piece of literature is to explore and explain the different choices made by the author/writer in the variety of words and sentence formation. Therefore, stylistic analysis through the use of different literary devices as seen in Adebayo Fálétí's "Tẹ̀ Gbẹ̀gbẹ̀ Níwòn or Don't be a Braggart has been analysed by the researchers. This study examines relevant literary and stylistic features employed by Adébáyò Fálétí in the poem under study to arrive at the message of the poet.

Theoretical Framework

This study falls within the domain of descriptive stylistics which analyses linguistic phenomena. The poetry has been thoroughly examined and the study finds some linguistic and literary devices useful for analysis and description. Among them are metaphor, simile, imagery, repetition, parallelism, and allusion. Also, Hallidayan Systemic Grammar Model of Subject-Predicator-Complement-Adjunct (SPCA) is employed to analyse the syntactic constituents of instances of structural parallelism isolated in the poem.

Review of Relevant Concepts

Metaphor

Goatly (1993) describes metaphor as "the figure of transport", the identification of two things from different ranges of thought it is the ability to find resemblance in both the tenor (idea) and the vehicle (image). An examination of these definition shows that they all have one thing in common which is that they talk of two terms that are related to each other because of their similarities. It must be noted that writers and poets employ metaphor for a number of reasons. It is used to express their thought in few words. It is also employed to express ideas that cannot be easily explained with literal language. Metaphor can also be used to make ideas more vivid.

Linguists have from a long time been working on metaphor in the domain of rhetoric which views metaphor as a mode of language and merely stylistic. In recent years however, they have begun to work on metaphor outside rhetoric. This theory sees metaphor as a mode of thought. Max Black (1979) notes that metaphor is a cognitive phenomenon. He talked about metaphor in terms of concepts rather than in terms of words. He claims that metaphor can function as "cognitive instruments". Also, Kovecses (2002:4) claims that in cognitive linguistics metaphor is defined as understanding one conceptual domain (A) in terms of another conceptual domain (B). The phenomenon that conceptual domain (A) is conceptual domain (B) is regarded as conceptual metaphor. The domain (B) is called the source domain

as it provides metaphorical expression to understand the conceptual domain (A) and that the domain (A) that is understood in this way is called the target domain. The conceptual correspondences between the two domain are regarded as mapping (Kovecses, 2002:6).

Imagery

According to literary critic and scholar Cleanth Brooks, "Imagery is the means by which a poem creates emotional impact" (Brooks, 1947). It refers to the use of language to create vivid sensory experiences for the reader. This can include visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory or gustatory descriptions that help evoke emotions, establish atmosphere, or convey meaning. Imagery can be achieved through various literary devices, such as metaphors, similes and descriptive language.

Repetition

Literary theorist Roman Jakobson (1960) notes that repetition is a fundamental device in poetry creating a sense of rhythm and emphasising certain words or ideas. It is a successive repetition of words, phrases and lines of poetry. Also, Smith (1968) argued that repetition can create a sense of unity and coherence in a poem. It can also be described as a literary device in which words, phrases or ideas are repeated for emphasis, rhythm, or to drive home a point. This may involve repetition of sounds, words, phrases or lines, and can be used to create unity, emphasise certain themes or ideas or build momentum.

Parallelism

Frye (1957) notes that parallelism can be used to create a sense of balance and order in poetry. Also, Kennedy (1991) describes parallelism as a powerful device for creating emphasis and rhythm in language. It can also be described as a stylistic device in which a literary artist uses components in a sentence that are grammatically the same or have similar sounds or constructions.

Foregrounding

Foregrounding refers to any attention-catching device in a text. Halliday (1978) describes foregrounding as motivated prominence given to a particular textual feature, in the sense that it covers linguistic strategies used by literary artists or other authors to make parts of a text prominent which contribute substantially to their meaning, and attract the attention or close scrutiny of scholars and reader alike. Douthwaite (2000) observes that foregrounding can be deviational and non-deviational. The non-deviational type is a structure that acquires prominence in a text as a result of certain aspects of language or literary norms. It is such a system that attracts the attention of the reader whereas the deviational type draws its own attraction of the reader's attention by way of violating the rules and norms. Other means of achieving foregrounding include parallelism, capitalization, underlining, italicization and repetition. The poem under study is written in Yorùbá. Since English is the medium for carrying out the study, the poem is translated into English as could be seen in the appendix. It is then examined for its linguistic and literary features.

The Meaning/Message of "Tẹ̀ Gbẹ̀gbẹ̀ Níwòn"

In the poem "Tẹ̀ Gbẹ̀gbẹ̀ Níwòn" is a call/admonition for humility and recognition of the interconnectedness of global power dynamics. Fátéti's poem reminds individuals and nations that their perceived dominance is fleeting and that alternatives can emerge at any moment. By challenging the notion of hegemony, the poem encourages a more nuanced understanding of power and its distribution in the world.

In the poem *Té Gbègbè Níwòn*, Fálétí employs subtle but caustic language and stylistic devices to pass his message across to the rich, the wise and the wealthy. He admonishes the rich to remember always that his money is not what is used to feed every human being. He tells the wise to remember always that his wisdom trails that of King Solomon as recorded in the Bible. To the wealthy, he urges him to also remember always that his wealth can never be sufficiently large enough as covering cloth for all human beings. He observes that patience and wisdom are qualities a person uses to lead his equals or contemporaries. He impresses it on the persons/individuals addressed to remember always that wealth is not restricted to or domiciled in a particular home or family. Likewise, wisdom is not domiciled in one individual or home. Hence, the addressee should use what God has bestowed on him to impact on his fellow human being.

Fálétí's poem is a reflection on the dispensability of all things whether human, non-human or material thing. Fálétí used 'Iyán' a highly prized Yorùbá meal, eaten by the Yorùbá people of South Western Nigeria to drive home his argument. He pointed out that 'Iyán' a valued Yorùbá meal obtained from boiled pounded yam can also be got from other sources other than yam. This underscores the dispensability of all things living or non-living.

This is seen in the lines: 28 and 29

E máa rántí
Iṣu nìkan kiyán

Kindred, always remember
Yam, does not only make pounded meal

The social commentary Fálétí made here is that some people have an exaggerated opinion of themselves, they think they are indispensable in their family, community and society. Fálétí stresses here that no matter how important a person or a thing is, that thing or person must not be deluded into believing he is indispensable. In the case of 'Iyán', used by Fálétí, the message he passes across is that if for any reason 'Iyán' a most cherished meal is not available, some other pounded meal can still be eaten to replace it and satisfy our hunger. In other words, nothing has monopolistic value. There are always alternatives to everything in life. This argument is further buttressed by Fálétí in ' - his use of variety of vegetables like Ìlása, Oṣyṣ, tètè, ògùnmò and ègúnsí to convey the message that all of the aforementioned are variety of soup in the South-southwest Nigeria which can be used to eat. He emphasises the fact that if one is unavailable, one can make do of the other.

Analysis of the Poem 'Té Gbègbè Níwòn' – Open the Goitre Less/Brag Less

The poem entitled 'Té Gbègbè Níwòn' when explained literally means – Open the Goitre Less/Minimally. The title is advisory or admonition to the addressees. It can be interpreted from the cognitive standpoint to mean that the vocal cord (organ of speech) identified by a swelling around the neck is goiter. Fálétí is of the view speaking with force such that the vocal cords become noticeable as goiter is tantamount to bragging. The poet Fálétí, cautions the addressee that the more the bragging, the more pronounced/visible the goiter whereas the less bragging, the less visible the goitre. The description of the vocal cord an organ of speech is pungent and it is intended to put the addressee on edge as the organ of speech is derisively described as a goitre. So, open the goitre less means less bragging/don't be a braggart. Fálétí seeks to persuade the addressee to curtail self from talking boastfully or with pride. Fálétí points out that bragging or pride is not peculiar to human being alone, as edible vegetables also

do. He admonishes those he listed not to brag as there several other varieties of edible vegetables that one can use in their place if a particular one is not within reach. The poet addresses the vegetables that it is for the fertility of the land and the grace of the farmer that these vegetables spread out their leafy green leaves. This is seen in lines 23, 24, 25 and 26 in:

Àyè ló gba gbòòrò
Ló fí n fà kálè
Ilè ló gbàlasa
Ló fí té rẹrẹrẹ níwájú olóko

But for space given to gbòòrò
That it spreads about unhindered
But for the fertility of the land for 'Ìlasa'
That it spreads its leafy green leaves before the
farmer.

One of Fálétí's use of language device is repetition is a stylistic device exemplified by repeated words or expressions to draw the listener or addressee to what the poet is saying is employed by the poet. We have instances of this in lines (2,3,4and 5)

Bówó lo bá ní
Máa rántí
Owó rẹ nìkan
Kọ ní gbogbo ayé fí n jẹun

If it is money you possess
Always remember
It is not your money only
That is used to feed everyone else.

The expression 'always remember' is also repeated in lines 8, 15 and 27 to jostle the addressee to the fact that riches, wealth and wisdom is not an exclusive property or gift of the people the poet is addressing. Repetition is also seen in lines 37 & 40 and in lines 39 & 41 as in:

Ìwọ nìkan kòbẹ
Íwọ nìkan kọ
Ìlasa, tẹ gbègbè níwọn
Ìwọ nìkan kòbẹ
Tẹ gbègbè níwọn.

You are not the only soup
You are not
Ìlasa brag less
You are not the only soup
Brag less.

Here, it is observed that the admonition for 'Ìlasa' in line 1 is repeated in line 4. The vegetable 'Ìlasa' is used metaphorically to represent the rich, wise and the wealthy. Fálétí uses these lines to reiterate the thematic trust of the poem.

'Ìlása', 'you are not the only soup' is intended to reiterate the poet's message that the rich, the wise and the wealthy should note that there are other people who are equally blessed as well. Brag less is repeated as an advice to the category of people the poet is addressing to eschew arrogance. The repeated words add rhythmic effects to the lines of poetry.

Parallelism

Short (1996) views parallelism as a stylistic device where some features are held constant (usually structural features) while others (usually lexical items e.g words, idioms are varied). Parallelism manifests itself in form of verbal parallelism, syntactic/structural parallelism, phonological parallelism, as well as free verbal repetition. Fálétí employed this stylistic device in the poem as seen in lines 30-32. The following parallel structural patterns exemplify this.

S	P	C	A		S	P	A	C
There	/ is /	ọ́ọ́yọ́	/ in this land	-	It	/ is /	also /	soup
S	P	C	A		S	P	A	C
There	/ is /	tẹ̀tẹ̀	/ in this land	-	It	/ is /	also /	soup
S	P	C	A		S	P	A	C
There	/ is /	ògùnmò	/ in this land	-	It	/ is /	also /	soup

These lines are examples of structural/syntactic parallelism. The structural pattern for the clauses to the left is SPCA, SPCA, SPCA while the structural pattern for the clauses to the right is SPAC, SPAC, SPAC. Fálétí, has by so doing foregrounded the variety of the vegetable plants which are all used for the same purpose which is to make soup. The clauses to the left reinforce this argument.

Allusion

Fálétí also makes use of allusion in the poem 'Tẹ̀ Gbẹ̀gbẹ̀ Níwọ̀n'. The allusion is to the Bible or the Holy Quran. This allusion is seen in lines 5 and 6 of the poem.

Bí o bá sì nímọ̀ ìjìnlẹ̀
O ò tí ì mọ̀ràn tó tí Súlẹ̀mána

If it is wisdom/knowledge that you have
You are not as gifted as Solomon.

Fálétí insists that the wise man cannot be as deep in wisdom as King Solomon. In other words, King Solomon's wisdom has remained unparalleled among men as recorded by the Bible and the Holy Quran. The poet deliberately uses this allusion to tell his addressee that there is nothing to brag about as his gift of wisdom, trails behind that of Solomon. The poet attempts to show the limitations of man in all things.

From the foregoing, the study reveals that Fálétí has effectively deployed various linguistic and literary devices to satirize human beings who exhibit arrogance on account of their achievement. The poet subtly condemns this act and charges his addressee on the need for humility.

CONCLUSION

The study has examined the use of stylistic devices in Adébáyò Fálétí's work "Tẹ̀ Gbẹ̀gbẹ̀ Níwòn". The analysis has been carried out. The study identified metaphor repetition, parallelism, imagery have been deployed to convey the poet's message. The study has shown that linguistic stylistics is a veritable means of analysing and interpreting literary works. This study has revealed the poet's effective use of linguistic and literary tools to pass his message across. The study confirms the argument that stylistic interpretation is a potent means of carrying out literary works analyses and interpretation.

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Appendix

The Poem and Its Translation

Tẹ̀ Gbẹ̀gbẹ̀ Níwòn
Bówó lo bá ní,
Máa rántí
Owọ̀ rẹ̀ nìkan
Kọ̀ nì gbogbo ayé fì ń jẹun;

Bí o bá sì nímọ̀ ìjìnlẹ̀,
O ò tí ì mòràn tó tí Súlẹ̀màná
Bọ́lá lo bá ní
Máa rántí
Pẹ̀ ọ́lá rẹ̀ nìkan

Kò tó gbogbo ayé bora bí asọ;
Ìrèlẹ ní mọ́lá yẹni ní mùtúmùtẹ,
Bédùmàrè bá gbé ọ jù sípò nílá,
A kì í fiyà jẹmẹsẹ í sògo
Pẹlẹ lonílàákàyẹ í fíí sọgá ojúgbàa rẹ

Máa rántí
Pé ìwọ nìkan kọ
Ọlá ò ẹbìkan,
Ìmọ kò fẹnìkan sẹmùlẹ
Bía lówó.
Bí a lólà,
Ènìyàn làá fí í mọ
Kò séwébẹ tí kò fẹ níkáárí
Àyè ló gba gbọ̀rò
Tó fí n fà kálẹ
Ilẹ ló gbàlasa
Tó fí tẹ rẹrẹrẹ níwájú olóko
Ẹ máa rántí
Ìṣu nìkan kíyán
Ìlása nìkan kíyán
Ìlása nìkan kóbẹ

Ọ́yọ m bẹ nílẹ̀ yíí – ọ̀bẹ náà nì
Tẹ̀tẹ m bẹ nílẹ̀ yíí – ọ̀bẹ náà nì
Ọ̀gùnmọ m bẹ nílẹ̀ yíí – ọ̀bẹ náà nì
Ẹ̀gú sí igrá àti tìbàrà
Wón m bẹ nílẹ̀ – ọ̀bẹ náà
Nì

Ìlása kò le dá dunbẹ̀ lòbòró
Àfí bí a mégùúsí sèlása kó tó doge
Ìwọ nìkan kóbẹ,
Ìwọ nìkan kó.
Ìlása, tẹ gbẹ̀gbẹ níwòn

Ìwọ nìkan kóbẹ
Tẹ gbẹ̀gbẹ níwòn.

Open the Goitre Less/Brag Less

If it is money you possess
Always remember:
It is not your money only
That is used to feed everyone else;
If it is wisdom/knowledge that you have

You are not as gifted as Solomon.
If it is wealth that you have
Always remember
That your wealth alone
Cannot suffice everyone as covering cloth
Gentle nature helps wealth fittingly
If God puts you in a big position.
Inflicting pains on the lowly palace workers not evidence of royalty
Gentleness is what the wise employs to lead his contemporaries
Always remember
That you are not the only person,
Wealth is not confined to a place,
Knowledge has not taken an oath of secrecy with a person.
If we are rich,
If we are wealthy,
It is human being that it is used to impact on.
There is no vegetable that does not want to be useful,
It is unhindered space that is available to gbọrọ,
That allows it to spread on the land;
The land is fertile for ilasa
That permits it spread its leaves unhindered in the presence of the farm owner.
People always remember;
Iyán is not gt from mainly yam,
Ilasa is not the only vegetable soup;
There is ọ́yọ́ in this land – it is also soup.
There is tẹ̀tẹ̀ in this land – it is also soup.
There is ogùnmò in this land- it is also soup.
Ègúsí and bàrà which are types of melon.
They are available in this land – it is also soup
Ilasa cannot make palatable soup if cooked alone
Until ègúsí is added to make it tasteful
You are not the only soup,
You are not;
Ilasa brag less
You are not the only soup
Brag less.