

Language of Igbo Poetry

Akpu, Ifeoma Loveth

Department of Linguistics and Nigerian Languages
Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri Imo State
ifyloveth@yahoo.com

and

Chira Ekwenze A.

Department of Igbo & other Nigerian Languages
Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe, Anambra State

Abstract

Poetry is one of the genres of Literature. If one is just beginning to delve into the world of poetry, one may initially feel overwhelmed by the occasional ambiguity and inaccessibility of this literary style. Poetry, therefore, is a method of literary expression which suggests by means of imagery, rhythm, and sound, (Egudu, 1985:4). The findings reveal two ways through which a poet manifests or exhibits his ingenuity in the manipulation of language for aesthetic effects. These are exploiting the established possibilities in the language and by creating new communicative possibilities. Through phonological and lexical cohesion, and rhythm, he creates with elements already in the language. Through lexical, phonological and grammatical deviation, he attempts to establish new areas of communication. Also figurative language is the language used in such a way as to force words out of their literal meanings by emphasizing their connotations to bring new insight and feeling to the subject. Most words convey several meanings or shades of meaning at the same time. It is the poet's duty to find words which, when used in relation to other words in the poem, will carry the

precise intention of thought. This paper therefore, aims at discussing language of Igbo poetry with reference to some selected written Igbo poems. Owing to the role language plays in poetry, the study cannot be exhaustive. It therefore recommends further studies.

Introduction

Language is considered to be a system of communicating with people using sound, symbols and words in expressing a meaning, idea or thought. The vital role which language plays in human life cannot be over-emphasized. It is used in every discipline as a means of communication. Nonetheless, its use in literature is mainly artistic. Igbo poetry as one of the genres of literature is one of the means of transmitting Igbo language. The language of discourse here is with special reference to poetry. Again, it is observed that the emphasis on the artistic use of language has been noted by many critics and literary stylisticians, some of them, at times, go as far as to highlight only the stylistic aspect of poetry at the expense of the content aspect.

Nevertheless, every genre of literature uses language as a medium of communication. The Igbo man's thought and value are preserved through language in written or oral forms of poetry Egudu (1985:1) sees poetry as literature in the first instance, as one of the major branches of literature. Poetry has regular stanzas, rhyme, et cetera. One of the secrets of good poetry is cohesion. However, Murphy (1972:22) is of the view that when a poet writes a poem, he uses the words that are available to all speakers of that language. What makes him a poet however is that he uses them with greater awareness and with conscious artistry?

Going still by the idea of artistic use of language, Egudu (1985:113) in his observation affirms that,

Poetry... expresses thoughts, ideas, or
experiences, and the feeling or emotion

associated with them. But this function is not peculiar to it... This purpose, therefore, of expressing thought and feeling can be considered secondary. The purpose which belongs most uniquely to poetry is the creation of beauty which generates pleasure.

Put succinctly, to achieve the primary purpose of poetry which is the creation of beauty which generates pleasure as earlier stated, a poet has to use language creatively. This is however, without neglect of the content. This is why Obi (1991:3) sees poetry as the art of managing language and compelling it to obey one's will. According to him, the poet bends language, fragments it and compels it to give experience a local habitation and a name. This is done to heighten thought, to pin emotions down, to evoke pictures and likeness in the reader's mind, to say things in memorable expressions, and to give a name to the unnamed and the unknowable. Through these, a poet manifests his ingenuity in the genre. Beauty in poetry can be classified in expressional beauty and musical beauty. The first is realized by means of the special use of language, particularly imagery and the second is affected through sound and rhythm. Through the analysis of the data, the findings would have made these clear for more understanding.

Literature Review

This area reviews the views of some scholars about the study of Igbo poems, especially the poet and poetry in examining the language of Igbo poetry.

Conceptual Framework

In this study, the following concepts will be discussed.

The Poet's use of Language

A poet uses words that are available to the speakers of the language. Murphy (1972:22) affirms that what makes him a poet, however is that he uses the language with greater awareness, greater sensitivity and greater artistry. These help to create and generate pleasure as far as language is concerned. Worthy of note is that creativity in language can be achieved through cohesion, whereby the author, artistically patterns the established possibilities of the language through deviation.

Poetry whether written or oral is an outpouring of one's great emotional feeling using language. The language of poetry is manipulated to yield aesthetic effects. This is similar to what Wordsworth, a romantic poet in Kennedy and Gioia (2007:703) believes that poetry is a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. To borrow a leaf from Egudu (2002:3), in traditional African societies, performers and even the audience have used poetry especially songs to accompany the activities of daily life and also to express their joys and sorrows. That is why we have things like dirge, panegyric poems, songs of sorrow and songs of joy and praise poems. In another way, we observe that there is a wealth of culture and fine feeling which find expression in our music in poetry. We sing when we fight, work, love, hate, a child is born, death takes a toll, et cetera. The fact is that there is no end to what can elicit oral poetry amongst African peoples. Professional performers use the art of poetry to serve the society. The aim is not only to entertain and amuse but also to instruct and educate as poems contain deep reflections about the society and man's place in it. Some poems treat the relationship between man and his relationship with nature (Okoye, 2012:156). Expanding his view, Okoye believes that we create poetry through imagination just like the sun, moon, river, hill, wife, husband, child, et cetera, or something which we cannot see but which caresses our creative souls. This is why most performers or poets harp on abstract imageries like death, reincarnation, gods et cetera. It is because whenever creativity caresses the soul

of the performer, it opens a new world for him and his vision of things that have never existed.

Creativity in Language

In poetry, its primary purpose is the creation of beauty which generates pleasure and to achieve these, a poet has to use language creatively. We can also point out that when we talk about creativity in language, we also talk on the aspects, which will help us to do away from the idea that is only deviant language that qualifies being creative. Uzochukwu (1993:40), summarizes the views of some critics and stylisticians such as Traugott and Pratt (1980), that creativity in language can be achieved through cohesion, whereby the author artistically patterns the established possibilities of the language or through deviation, whereby the author creates new communicative possibilities which are not already in the language.

Empirical Studies

Ordinarily, cohesion means joining or working together. That is to say, the state of condition of joining or working together to form a united whole, or the tendency to do this.

To Mbah and Mbah (2007:351), poetry has cohesion or internal pattern and repetition exceeding those of most non-literary genres. In other words, poetry has repeated refrains, parallelism, regular stanzas, rhymes, meter, rhythm, interactive assonance, alliteration and similar devices. Phenomenon of cohesion in literature and particularly in Igbo poetry shows that literature is an art and literary texts are constructed to produce in us a kind of experience in art in which symmetry and interplay of sameness and difference play a major role. Expanding these views, one can also observe that one of the secrets of good poetry is cohesion. However, when cohesion is too much as to outweigh the theme of the poem, it leads to doggerel or worthless verses. Different language types have different patterns of cohesion depending largely on the manner by

which they make use of pitch variations. Okeabalama (1999:61-62), carried out a study on the main concern of poetry, and posits that poetry merely imitates a reality in the way video recording imitates an event. The pictures of an incident in a recorded event is not that event but a photographic representation of the event. When a cabinet builder builds a bed and another one copies him to make a similar bed, the second bed is at best another bed not the bed being copied. One's photograph cannot be that person. In the same vein, what every poet is talking about is a photographic realization of his experience or even the figments of his imagination.

Okeabalama (1999) expanding his view, observed that poetry is the interpretative dramatization of experience. It is the form that most clearly asserts the specificity of literature. To Ebot (1998:43) if a poem appeals to us, it is because "the authorial aesthetic devices used are captivating and persuasive. And as rightly observed by Ricoeur (1994), through the employment of images and symbols, poetry, therefore is a text that has a multiple meaning.

Poetry is a medium through which man gives expressions to his inner feelings. Akporobaro (2006:304) states that:

Poetry is a universal form of artistic self-expression. Through it man articulates his thought and feelings for public sharing and experience. Poetic expressions are to be found in all societies irrespective of their social and economic conditions and level of development

Poetry has been used to store and preserve society's (oral) tradition. Even at the present time, poetry is an effective means of arousing the consciousness of the people socially, politically and culturally. Through poetry, the poet tells the people the truth of life, mobilizes them for social change and in fact, prophesizes about the future. Ample examples of these roles of poetry

will be seen under analysis section. Nonetheless, poetry has intrinsic quality, which commends it as a handmaid to revolutionary action.

Also, as a literary genre, it makes use of language cohesively and defiantly to express emotions thoughts and feelings. Worthy of note, it is the poet's job to find words which, when used in relation to other words in the poem, will carry the precise intention of thought. Often, some of the more significant words may carry several layers or depths of meaning at once. The ways in which the meanings of words are used can be identified.

Data Presentation and Analysis

We present here sample of poems used for the study to demonstrate or exhibit their ingenuity in the manipulation of language for aesthetic effects. We shall now examine how cohesion operates at the phonological and lexical levels in Igbo poetry.

Phonological Cohesion

Phonology is the study of the pattern of speech sounds used in a particular language. To Mbah and Mbah (2007:352), phonology can be a source of cohesion in a text with such figurative phonic devices as alliteration, assonance and rhymes, all of which involve patterns created by repetition of the same or similar sounds. Alliteration, assonance and rhyme seem to be one of the ways of making a poem phonologically cohesive. As Okebalama (1985:62) observed, alliteration is the retention of initial consonant in two or more words in a line of poetry. There is consonance which is defined as the retention of the medial consonants in two or more words in a line of poetry. In fact, even though sounds in themselves have no meaning, there are ways of using sounds to compliment meaning. For example, Okafor (Nd: 27) gives a clear picture to this in his poem titled "N'Ichu nta vootu"

Nye m vootu unu

ka m si n'eluigwe dqtara unu mmiri

Nyenụ m vootu unu

ka m si n'anyanwụ ọtara unu ọkụ latrịki

Nyenụ m vootu unu

ka ụmụ unu gawa ụlọ ọgwụ n'efu

Alliteration, (Bịambịa Mgbochiume), is obvious in the excerpt as shown in the recurrence of the consonant sound: /ny, m, v, t, k/ and assonance, (Bịambịa ụdaume) as exemplified in the recurrence of the vowel sound /e, o, u, e/, syllabic rhyme, (Ndakọrịta nkejiokwu), is not common in Igbo; instead tonal rhyme (Ndakọrịta ụdaolu) occasionally occurs. Also, in the above excerpt, all initial words have identical tone, namely, low-low thus, illustrating the phenomena of tonal rhyme. We also observed that the incidence of tonal rhyme in the excerpt is a deliberate effort on the part of the artist. More so, the tonal rhyme do not feature only initially but also medially and finally as shown in the low-low tone pattern in “Vootu, unu, and efu”.

Worthy of note, the difference between consonance and alliteration consists in the difference in the positions of consonantal sounds in a line of poetry. While assonance, which is another element of sound in poetry, is the sounding alike of two or more vowels contained in lines of poetry. It strikes a contrast with consonance which has to do with consonantal sounds (Egudu, 1985:58). Let us look at another example of poem written by Obienyem (1975) titled “Ọnwụ”

Nwanyị para afị ime, ya n'uche (sic)

Isi waba nwoke ya n'uche (sic)

Ọnwụ na-egbu onye nwere ego

Ọnwụ na-egbu onye enweghị ego

Ọnwụ, olee ebe mma gị dị?

Ọnwụ, I zoro ube gị ebee? (p. 3)

In the last stanza of the poem the tempo of rhyme gradually rises as the poet (shrewdly) introduces assonance. Also in this stanza, the burden is on the idea of the inevitability of the phenomenon of death, which we must learn to accept without questioning, thereby bringing out elements of sound in poetry. For instance, in Ọnwụ, we noticed sounding alike of two or more vowels (assonance) - /q, x/, /u e/, /e, o/, through alliteration: /nw gb b/. Finally, through lexical matching of words, which almost have identical sounds: ‘nwaany[na nwoke, ‘onye nwere ego, na onyeenwegh[ego, ‘mma na ube’ and through repetition of identical items; uche na uche, ego na ego.

Lexical Cohesion

This means associating words in a text through their shared semantic features. Instances of lexical cohesion abound in lexical matching which has been pointed out in the excerpts already quoted. But lexical cohesion can further be exemplified with the following poem from *Akpa Uche* titled ‘Ụra’.

Ụra, nwanne ọnwụ

Ebe ike gị niile gwurụ

bụ na nkweghepụ ụzọ be ọnwụ

I na-ariọ mmadọ ma ọ bụ anụ mgbà

Anyà nọ nso na-ahụ.

Ijituo agụ

mgbada a bịa fụwa ya ụfụrụ n’ahụ

Akpamiike gị na-aga mgbe niile, ebe niile

A chuo gi oso mgbe eleghi anya ibia ozo

Ma q dighi onye na-egwu gi anya

Mmadu no ndi na-ese utiri

Any a gbapere ma ha adighi ah uzo

Ahu ku o udiri nti ku o pam

Isi na-atu kwekem dika nke Ngwere

Mgbe olu chozo iso n'ala, onye aho agho ada

Magharja anya ka o mara mmadu ole huru gi

Sleep, a brother to death

Where your strength ends

Is the opening of death's gate

Your might is everywhere, any time

When you are chased out, within a

While you come again

Yet nobody sees you.

Man is seated and stretches

Eyes are open, yet they do not see

Body is still, the ear is dead
Head nodes (kwekem) like that of lizard
When the neck wants to fall, the person
Withstands it
Open his eyes in pretence to know
how many people that have seen him

In the above poem, lexical cohesion is achieved by word repetition whose inherent semantic features portray both attributes of life and that of sleep. In the excerpt, 'Xra' (sleep) is given the attributes of life as seen in the following lines.

For instance;

- | | | |
|---------|---|------------------------|
| Line 3 | - | Nkwahọpụ ụzọ be ọnwu |
| Line 7 | - | Mgbada ifusa agu ufuru |
| Line 11 | - | ino odu na-ese utiri |
| Line 12 | - | Anyahughị ụzọ |
| Line 13 | - | nti anughị ihe |
| Line 14 | - | Isi na-atu kwekem |
| Line 15 | - | Olu na-asị n'ala. |

The poem also demonstrates the universality of the phenomenon of sleep, thus: mgbe niile ebe niile (anytime, anywhere)

These words are not randomly chosen but are carefully selected and patterned. Other examples of lexical cohesion could be seen in such poems as O.L Oguḡua's 'kọrọ m akukọ ndu' in *Obiageli* and J.C. Obienyem's Akwukwo oru ego in *Akpa uche*. In Oguḡua's poem, the fulfillment of the

obligation, for instance, will lead to the realization of the wishes. While that of Obienyem's poem the attributes of beauty are portrayed, the vices of money illustrated and the attributes of love shown respectively.

Rhythm

Rhythm can be seen as an important aspect of poetry obtained in language Egudu (1985:34-35) affirmed that it can be compared with a beat or pulse and as a beat or pulse implies the presence of movement in which there is recurrence of identical points. Rhythm, can also be said to mean movement. Any action, in which motion is involved therefore, has some rhythm. For example, a moving vehicle shows rhythm, a flowing stream exhibits rhythm. Also the rise and fall of the water in the ocean is rhythmical. In the same way, a person walking, running or dancing is moving rhythmically. One major characteristic of rhythm therefore is repetition. Rhythm in poem differ from one language to the other. Whereas rhythm in English language is metrical based on the regular recurrence of stressed and unstressed syllables, rhythm in Igbo is non-metrical.

To Okebalama (1985:55), language could be split into segments which are in some sense of equal duration. Such segments are the syllables. By the same token one could say that the number of syllable in an utterance or in consecutive utterances is an indication of rhythmic beats in the utterance or consecutive utterances. Uzochukwu (1993:45) posits that the constituents of Igbo poetic rhythm are the regular recurrence of the breath-pause which gives rise to fast or slow rhythm depending on whether the verse line delimited by the breath-pause is short or long; the regular recurrence of equal time duration in consecutive utterances, and the regular recurrence of sense balance which produces the rhythm that is tied to the sense.

Simply put, the reason Igbo poetic rhythm is non-metrical is attributable to the nature of the language. Below is a poem which illustrates further the

regular recurrence of equal time duration and the regular recurrence of sense balance as rhythmic factors in Igbo poetry.

Ugomma

A/chọ/rọ m/ọ/chị si/n'i/me/ o/bi/ a/pụ/ta
- 13

Ọ/chị/ na/-e/gbu/ i/we/, na/-a/gwọ/ n/so/gbu
- 13

Ọ/chị/ na/-e/gbu/ a/mụ/ma/ na/-e/gbo/ m/kpa
- 13

Gwa/ m/ o/kwu/ na/-e/we/ta/ n/dụ/ ọ/hụ/rụ/ kwa/ ọ/bọ/chị
- 17

N/ke/ na/-e/me/ ka/ n/dụ/ di/ ga/ra/ga/ra
- 13

N/ke/ na/-e/we/ta/ra/ m/ ọ/mụ/mụ/ ọ/hụ/rụ
- 14

(Madụbuike Nd: 38)

The rhythm of the first three lines of the poem is based on equal time duration as the utterances have almost equal number of syllables. When these poems are rendered, one can see the beauty of their rhythm and how emotionally the reader feels.

Deviation

This involves doing something which is different from the usual or common way of behaving. The poet uses it to create beauty in language for aesthetic effects. To Leech (1969:105), a work of art in some way deviates from norms which we, as members of society, have learnt to expect in the medium

Akukọ akụ na ụba	-	1
Akukọ anarala m ụra	-	4
Akukọ oke aha	-	2

Lexical Deviation

Under this aspect, we can examine neologism.

Neologism

This is the formation and fabrication of a new word, or expression, or a new meaning for an existing word. It is one of the ways by which a poet or literary artist might exceed the provisions of his language in order to express his ideas fully. An instance is seen in Madubuike (Nd:39), in the poem called “Ogbuniigwe”. This is a formation of new word that gives a graphic description of the Biafran war machine that was invented during the Nigerian civil war.

Acronym is another process of forming neologism. For example in Igbo we have I.M – a short form for [ma mmadu (favouritism), compounding for example, Mahadum – an abbreviation for mara ha dum (university), compound abbreviation for example, opek – a conscripted form for opekata mpe (low cadre workers) and simple abbreviations for example, Okn (Okankuzi) – a shortened form of professor, Mz – an abbreviation for Maazi (Mr) etc. Mbah and Mbah (2007:345) also in expanding their views, affirms that some types of word formation have been so used in poetry that their use causes little or no confusion to the reader. The use of such words falls under routine license. It is often believed that the meaning intended could not be expressed without neologism.

Poetic Devices

There is other form of deviation which are no other way than the most prevalent devices employed by the Igbo poet. To Okoye (2012:155), in poetry as well as 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 & Harpham (2010:300) called “poetic license” – “the liberty which poets have assumed to themselves; in all ages, of speaking things in verse which are beyond the severity of prose”. Some examples of poetic devices include the following:

Simile (Myiri/Nd[ka])

This word simply means ‘like’. When the poet uses a simile, he makes it plain to the reader that he is using a conscious comparison. He does this by drawing the reader’s attention to the comparison by using certain words; like, as if, as, as though. In Igbo, it is ka, dika, yiri, For example in his poem ‘Ọnwu’, Ajaegbu used simile in stanza 1 line 2 thus:

Ọnwu! olee ebe ị dị?
Ị di ka onye ọrụ ubi,
Nke na-adịghị eche ọka ya ka ọ chaa
Tupu ọ ghọrọ. (Ajaegbu, 1975:6)

Death where are you?
You are like a farmer,
That never waits for his corn
To ripe before plucking it.

In this excerpt line 2, Ajaegbu compared death to a farmer.

Metaphor (Mbxrx)

Here, this type of comparison is not quite as simple as the simile. The comparison used in metaphor is a direct one and the reader's attention is not drawn to it by any sign posts, such as "like" 'as' and so on. The poem *Abali* by I. Madubuike is a metaphorical poem.

Abali (first stanza line 4)

Isi kpuru ebe dum

Anyasi na-eji ka unyi

Eluigwe anaghi achi ochi ma oli

Kpakpando anya abal[- alakpuola

Onwa na anyanwu na-ehikwa ura

Egwu di ebe dum.

(Madubuike, Nd:32)

There is darkness everywhere

The night is as black as charcoal

The sky is moody for the stars,

The eyes of the night, have retired

There is fear everywhere.

He was comparing the night to charcoal since the stars, moon and the sun are asleep. You will notice that he started the comparison directly. The resultant effect being that there is fear everywhere. The example of metaphor proper in this poem is where the poet states that the stars are the eyes of the night.

Personification (Mmemmadu)

This is another common device of comparison. It is really a special form of metaphor. In personification, a non-human thing is referred to as having the characteristics of a human being. Look at this poem.

Onwu (stanza 9)

Q di ajuju ozọ m chorọ iju gi, onwu,

Olee ihe i na-ahapu mmadu q na-ata ahuhu,

Gbuo ya naani mgbe o malitere iri uru?

Q bu ya mere mmadu ji kpoo gi asi?

(Nzeako, 1975:5)

There is a question I would put across to you, death,

Why do you leave a person to suffer?

And kill him when he is about to enjoy the fruit of his labour?

Is this the reason why human beings hate you?

Here, the poet directs the question to death as if it is a human being. This can also be called a rhetorical question for who is to answer such question.

Euphemism (Nkwuma)

By the use of euphemism, the poet speaks of unpleasant things in favourable terms or rather in less provoking to the feeling than the actual everyday words that are used to describe the phenomenon. For instance, death, in Igbo poetry is often described in euphemistic terms. This could be illustrated with the following excerpt taken from *Omenka* titled “Dib[a Adxgburuja”.

Dibia mbu anyi kpoo oru

Uwe agbada ka o yiri bia

Agbada ọnụ ya miri emi

Fqjuchaa ego anyị n'ime ya

Maka dibia na-agwọ

Dibia a na-eri

Ọ lawara n'inyo

Hapụ anyị n'ụkọ (Ikwubuzo, 2011:28)

In summary, the poet instead of calling them corrupt politicians, he called them native doctors. He used different things to castigate our politicians that pillaged our money. He addressed them as native doctors so as to look euphemistic and they will not know that they are being referred to. He addressed them also, as exploiters and looters with pockets all over their clothes.

Hyperbole (Egbe okwu)

This is one of the figurative language whose result is a vivid impression located by an obvious exaggeration. Exaggeration here is not to lie but rather to validate a point within a universe of discourse. An example can be seen in written Igbo poetry, *Xtara ntf*, p. 39, stanza one.

Ogbuniigwe

Omere dike

Ogbu dimkpa

E leli nwa ite, ya agbqnyuọ ọkụ

Anụ kpọrọ nkụ na-eju ọnụ

Ogbu nnx ọrịa (Madubuike, Nd:39)

Here, the poet presented the word Ogbuniigwe in a hyperbolic language. That is an over statement. Finally, a look at most of the figurative language treated so far appeal to us by their oblique references.

Devices of Sound

According to Murphy (1972:35), poetry is usually best when it is read or spoken. This is because we can hear the sounds, rhythm and rhyme of the poem, all of which add to our enjoyment of it. It is only one device of sound that we need mention here; onomatopoeia.

Onomatopoeia

This as seen in Egudu (1985:54) is a speech sound and by so doing suggests the thing that makes the sound in life. There are ways of using sounds to compliment meaning. In this excerpt:

Akwa m na-ebere Princess Alexandria Auditorium!

Kamgbe afo iri na anq ka ha buliri ya elu

Haa ya aka, ya adaa gworogodom kukasja

Noro na Nsuka soso kaka! Kaka kaka! Sukasja!

Yokasja yorokotom! ka ero rere ere,

Princess Alexandria Auditorium!

Princess Alexandria Auditorium! (Chimezie, 1982:50)

Chimezie key dictum here is that the sound must be seen as an echo to the sense. In other words, sounds are used to compliment meaning. The onomatopoeic words “gworogodom! Yqkqtqm! And ‘kaka kaka’, reinforce the idea of destruction or ruin by the use of repeated palatal sounds /r/ and /k/. /k/ is carried from the first line through the fourth and occurring thirteen times in these four lines. /r/ is carried from the first line through the sixth line and occurring fifteen

times. It is important to note that in this stanza, sounds suggest meanings that are associated with the key words.

The key words are ‘daa and kọkasĩa’ all in the second line. The plosive /k/ echoes the destruction or vandalization of an auditorium that was once, a pride of the University of Nigeria.

Summary and Conclusion

The language of poetry as we know is creative, rhetorical and figurative. It is also appearing to be that one of the functions of Igbo poetry is to control and clarify emotional, spiritual and sensuous experience. It is therefore, not too much to say that poetry, one of the genres of literature is the greatest reservoir of the treasures of any language. At times it involves linguistic deviations. Such deviations may be grammatical, phonological or lexical. It is this device that introduces uniqueness in poetry.

The findings in the work have actually proved that there is much to learn and enjoy with regard to meaning and artistic use of the Igbo language in the poems we have studied. More so, the poetic device demands a measure of alertness on the part of the reader. The liberty enjoyed by poets to depart from the conventional standard rule of written language gives them the license to use poetic devices to achieve beautiful effects in their poems. Finally, it is hoped that the language of poetry will be appreciated by all and sundry so that the great health of our literary tradition and language may be conserved for our own benefit and that of posterity.

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