
Aspects of Textual Cohesion in Selected Poems of J.P. Clark-Bekederemo

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Abstract

This study examines aspects of textual cohesion in J. P. Clark-Bekederemo's poetry, using the methods and insights of discourse analysis. With Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesive devices viz: ellipsis, references, and conjunction, as the analytical platform, we have shown some linguistic strategies used by the poet to achieve inter-sentence connection in his poetry. We have also shown the network of interdependencies among linguistic and non-linguistic features, which give his poetry a thoroughly cohesive structure. The aim is to "... provide a unified synthesis of language used in different parts of the text" (Alo, 1998). The study will, no doubt, enrich our perspectives not only on the language of J. P. Clark-Bekederemo's poetry, but also on the language of poetry in general. It will also beam further insights on the concept of poetry as discourse.

Introduction

As one of the leading lights of Nigeria's first generation of modern literary scribblers, J. P. Clark-Bekederemo's works have attracted prodigious acclaim and critical attention. However, from the corpus of available literature, it is obvious that there is an acute dearth of critical works on the language of the poet by language scholars. The inference of this thesis is that most of the critical investigations of the poet's oeuvre are literary and thematic in focus (Eyoh, 1997). This is a sharp contrast to the considerable volume of linguistic studies that the works of such poets as Soyinka and Osundare have evoked. In fact, Eyoh's (1997) *J.P. Clark's Poetry: a study in Stylistic Criticism*, which examined and characterized the writer's poetic idiolect from phono-stylistic, lexical and paralinguistic affective levels, remains the only full-scale linguistic exploration of the writer's poetry. Significantly, the scholar himself acknowledges the inherent limitations of this work and suggests that it has opened up new vistas for research on the poet, particularly from the perspectives of syntax, tenor of discourse and graphology.