

ReSciLaC

Revue des Sciences du Langage et de la Communication

Numéro 4 / 2017 / 1^{er} semestre
© LASODYLA – REYO – UAC
ISSN : 1840-8001



Université d'Abomey-Calavi
Faculté des Lettres, Arts et Sciences Humaines
LASODYLA-REYO – UAC – 2017



ReSciLaC

Revue des Sciences du Langage et de la Communication

Dépôt légal N°8184 du 15/10/2015
Bibliothèque Nationale, 4ème trimestre
ISSN: 1840-8001 N°4 – 1^{er} semestre, juin 2017

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ReSciLaC (Revue des Sciences du Langage et de la Communication) est une revue du Laboratoire de Sociolinguistique, Dynamique des Langues et Recherche en Yoruba (LASODYLA-REYO) de l'Université d'Abomey-Calavi (UAC). ReSciLaC est une revue pluridisciplinaire qui accueille des contributions abordant un grand nombre de champs d'études des sciences humaines et sociales.

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L'objectif de ReSciLaC est d'encourager des discussions scientifiques et théoriques les plus larges possibles portant aussi bien sur les sciences humaines que sur les sciences sociales.

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CULTURAL CONTEXT, VERBAL ART AND DISCOURSE-SEMANTICS PATTERNS IN BAYO ADEBOWALE'S "SONG OF THE BRIDE" AND "SONG OF THE MAIDEN"

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Abstract

Poetry is generally viewed as complex because poets are familiar with using language in an uncommon way. The language of this literary genre is, according to some scholars, different from ordinary language. So the study of such texts requires appropriate methods and techniques. This article aims at analyzing two selected poems, viz, "Song of the bride" and "Song of the maiden" by Bayo Adebowale. The paper draws on Halliday's (1985) systemic functional theory to explore the language of the two poems. The analyses reveal that texture is created, first, through anaphoric, homophoric and exophoric reference. Second, patterns of lexical cohesion such as repetition and collocation are foregrounded to display the aesthetic and the artistic values of the two texts. The contextual features have also facilitated the interpretation of these texts. The analyses reveal that these cohesive elements are also meant to create coherence and reveal the nature of verbal art in the poems. On the basis of these analyses, it is argued that Adebowale has drawn immensely on his Yoruba culture to display his cultural identity and convey his message.

Key Words: Poetry, verbal art, texture, reference, lexical cohesion, contextual features, Yoruba culture

Résumé

Il est généralement établi une corrélation entre la poésie et le poète : celle de l'aisance du poète à manipuler la langue de façon très peu ordinaire. Le langage de ce genre littéraire diffère totalement du langage ordinaire. Il s'en suit que l'étude des textes poétiques requiert des méthodes et techniques appropriées. Le présent article vise à analyser deux poèmes, notamment « Song of the Bride » et « Song of the Maiden », tous de Bayo Adebowale. Ce travail dont l'épine dorsale est la théorie Systémique Fonctionnelle explore la langue anglaise à travers les deux poèmes en question. Les analyses révèlent l'existence de la texture créée par des références anaphorique, homophorique et exophorique. Par ailleurs, les formes de cohésion lexicale telles que la répétition et la collocation ont été mis en premier plan afin d'exhiber les valeurs esthétiques et artistiques des deux textes. Aussi, les caractéristiques contextuelles ont-elles facilité leur interprétation. Les analyses ont montré que les traits cohésifs ont permis de créer toute la cohérence qui sous-tend la nature de l'art verbal des poèmes. Il en ressort que Adebowale s'est fortement inspiré de sa culture Yoruba pour exprimer et imprimer son identité culturelle.

Mots-clés : Poésie, art verbal, texture, référence, cohésion lexicale, caractéristiques contextuelles, culture Yoruba

1. Introduction

According to Johnstone (2008), “discourse at which the primary function is poetic is sometimes referred to as verbal art” (p.255). The notion of verbal art is strictly associated with the language of poems. For a long time, the language of poems has been viewed as a subject of debate. It is generally assumed that poetry is different from that of prose fiction. When dealing with this literary genre, writers devise words and sentences in such a way as to convey their imagination and intention. As observed by Leech (1969), there is a difference between poetic language and practical language as poetics deviates from ordinary form of language. He also contends that the “*poet enjoys a unique freedom, among users of the language*” (p.5) and adds “*that most of what is considered characteristics of literary language... nevertheless has its roots in everyday uses of language, and can best be studied with some reference to these uses*” (p. 6).

However, Jakobson (1985) seems to be the leading figure in the study of poetics. His main contention is that poetics, as part of linguistics, deals with verbal structure. According to him:

any significant poetic composition, whether it is an improvisation or the fruit of long and painstaking labor, implies a goal-oriented choice of verbal material. [...] the poet is more accustomed to abstract those verbal patterns and, especially, those rules of versification which he assumes to be compulsory, whereas a facultative, variational device does not lend itself so easily to a separate interpretation and definition. (Jakobson, 1985, p.59)

This is what makes a poem a work of art. In “Linguistics and Poetics”, Jakobson (1960) contends that if one wants to comprehend verbal messages, there exist six poetic functions that one must focus on. These include: the referential, emotive, phatic, conative, metalingual and poetic. He then proceeds to account for some principles of the linguistic study of the poetic function. He says:

the linguistic study of the poetic function must overstep the limits of poetry, and, on the other hand, the linguistic scrutiny of poetry cannot limit itself to the poetic function. The particularities of diverse poetic genres imply a differently ranked participation of the other verbal functions along with the dominant poetic function. Epic poetry, focused on the third person, strongly involves the referential function of language; the lyric, oriented toward the first person, is intimately linked with the emotive function; poetry of the second person is imbued with the conative function and is either supplicatory or exhortative, depending on whether the first person is subordinated to the second one or the second to the first. (Jakobson, 1960, p. 357)

As regards Hasan (1985), the concept of verbal art refers to how language functions in texts. This means, that the language of literature is useful when one can account for the way it is used. For her, features of

language have artistic values through the way they function in literary texts. She, then, accounts for how language contributes to the creation of verbal art. In fact, Hasan (1985), first, contends that the concept of foregrounding especially the one displaying consistency “*provides one reason for the centrality of language in the study of verbal art*” (p. 96). Then, she observes that verbal art is a semiotic system consisting of three strata which are: verbalisation- the level where meanings are located; symbolic articulation- level where the meaning of language are turned into sign having a deeper meaning; and the theme- the deepest level of meaning in verbal art, i.e., what a text is about when dissociated from particularities of that text.

In African poetry, the verbal art seems to go along with culturally-based language. Writers of African poetry’s main challenges are language problems. In fact, even if they produce their works in European languages, they use them in such a way as to reflect their culture and values. As Nwoga quoted by Mowah (1973) observes, there are certain features that are peculiar to African poetry texts. He says that “*they include symbols that are drawn from the traditions of the poets, passages constructed with metaphors as their semantic constituents; the use of the associations of images to produce meanings rather than the use of logical mental sequences*” (p. 25). These patterns are predominant in most African poets. For instance, Wole Soyinka’s poems are commonly said to be impenetrable because of the bilingual aspects and the complexities of his language which are mostly the result of the Yoruba poetry that are carefully mixed with English forms. For Osakwe (1995), “*the poet’s culture has been described as artistically inspiring traditions. Central to this tradition is Yoruba cosmology. Myths form a major aspect of the mystical contents of the poems.*” (p.xvi). Other poets such as Christopher Okigbo and Gabriel Okara fall within this group of first African poets with peculiarity in their use of language. Modern African poets seem to be in line with these principles where their cultural identities are reflected in their works. Such is the case of Bayo Adebowale whose selected texts represent the corpus of this paper. The work focuses on his two poems and aims at studying their language from the linguistic point of view. In fact, some aspects of texture are analysed through such linguistic features as reference and lexical cohesion in the selected poems.

2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 Language and context

The fundamental principle of functional linguistics is that a text is interpreted according to its context of use (Halliday, 1978; Halliday, 1985; Halliday & Hasan, 1985; Eggins, 2004). Eggins (2004) contends that there is an interrelation between language and context as it is possible to draw context from text. According to Halliday & Hasan (1985) context is *“the social environment in which a text unfolds”* (p. 5). Eggins (2004) interprets context into three main categories which are genre, register and ideology. Indeed, the context of culture is a broader background into which the text has to be interpreted. It is also referred to as genre since *“the concept of genre is used to describe the impact of the context of culture on language, by exploring the staged, step-by-step structure cultures institutionalize as ways of achieving goals”* (Eggins, 2004, p. 9). Register or context of situation relates to the environment of the text. There are three features of context of situation which are: field, tenor, and mode (Halliday, 1978; Halliday & Hasan, 1985; Eggins, 2004).

According to Halliday & Hasan (1985), the field of discourse refers to what is happening, to the nature of the social action that is taking place. Eggins (2004) observes that it is *“the situational variable that has to do with the focus of the activity in which we are engaged”* (p.103). The tenor of discourse is the social role relationships played by interactants (Eggins, 2004). It refers to who is taking part, to the nature of the participants, their statuses and roles. Tenor is broken into three main continua which are: power, contact and affective involvement. Mode is the role language is playing in an interaction. It refers to what part the language is playing, what the participants are expecting the language to do for them in that situation.

As far as ideology is concerned, Eggins (2004) contends that *“whatever genre we are involved in, and whatever the register of the situation, our use of the language will also be influenced by our ideological positions: the values we hold (consciously or unconsciously), the perspectives through our particular path through the culture”* (p.10). She also observes that the implication of identifying ideology in text is that while reading texts, people must develop skills to be able to make explicit the ideological positions encoded, in order to resist or challenge them.

2. 2 Discourse-semantics

Scholars view discourse as the way language is used, that is, the investigation of what language is used for (Yule, 1983; Schiffrin, Tannen & Hamilton, 2001). The study of discourse-semantics involves the description of two patterns including the semantic patterns of metafunctions (experiential, interpersonal and textual meanings) and the discourse patterns of cohesion, the texture-forming resources of language through which the clauses of the text have come to have a semantic unity. According to Eggins (2004), texture is what holds the clauses of text together to give them unity. It involves the interaction of two elements which are:

- Cohesion, i.e. the way the elements within a text bind it together as a unified whole;
- Coherence, the text's relationship to extra-external context.

As for Martin (2001), he contends that cohesion is reconsidered as a set of discourse semantic systems at a more abstract level than lexicogrammar, with their own metafunctional organization. He, then, interprets this concept as semantic system of discourse structure involving:

- Identification: concerned with resources for tracking participants in discourse;
- Negotiation: resources for exchange of information and of goods and services in dialogue;
- Conjunction: resources for connecting messages, via addition, comparison, temporality, and causality;
- Ideation: the semantics of lexical relations as they are deployed to construe institutional activity;

Following Halliday (1985), Eggins (2004) has suggested the different ways by which cohesion is created. These are: reference, ellipsis, substitution, conjunction and lexical cohesion. This article, as said earlier, focuses mostly on reference and lexical cohesion.

As observed by Yule (1983), *"the traditional semantic view of reference is one in which the relationship of reference is taken to hold between expressions in the text and entities in the world, and that of co-reference between expressions in different parts of a text"* (p. 204) Reference, according to Halliday (2014, p. 536) is a relationship between things, or facts (phenomena, or metaphenomena); it may be established at varying distances, and

although it usually serves to relate single elements that have a function within the clause (processes, participants, circumstances, it can give to any passage of text the status of a fact, and so turn it into a clause participant. As for Halliday and Webster (2009), they argue that reference refers to resources for referring to a participant or circumstantial element whose identity is recoverable. Eggins (2004) argues that the cohesive resource of reference refers to how the writer/speaker introduces participants and then keeps track of them once they are in the text. She contends that reference may be anaphoric, i.e., when the referent has appeared at an early point in the text. It can also be cataphoric when the referent has not yet appeared, but will be provided subsequently. Similarly, the item retrieved from the shared context of culture is known as homophoric reference, whereas the one retrieved from shared immediate context of situation is called exophoric reference.

Lexical cohesion: It involves the selection of items that are related in some way to those that have gone before. Bloor & Bloor (2004) contend that lexical cohesion has to do with the cohesive effect of the use of lexical items in discourse where the choice of an item relates to the choices that have gone before. Features of lexical cohesion to be considered in this paper are repetition and collocation. As matter of fact, repetition is the reiteration of the same lexical item. As for collocation, it has to do with the co-occurrence of lexical items. As observed by Bloor & Bloor (2004), collocation covers two or more words which can be said to go together in the sense of frequency of occurrence. The theoretical foundations being provided, the next section focuses on the practical analyses of the poems.

3. Analysis of the two poems

As said earlier, this article focuses on the analysis of the two selected poems by Bayo Adebowale. These poems are displayed in the appendix and for the purpose of the analysis, the different verses of each poem have been numbered and the descriptive research design is carried out through a qualitative method.

3. 1 Analysis of reference

In the first poem.

Categories of reference identified in the poem are summarized in table 1 below:

Table 1: reference-types in poem 1

Types of reference	Patterns and location
Endophoric	--I (2)- I (8)- my (11)- I (15)- I –my(19)- my (21)- my(22)- my (23)- I (24)- my (27)- my (28) --him (29).
Homophoric	-- the clean water (2) -- the river bank (10) -- the deep forest (17)
Exophoric	-- the vibrant lily (1) -- new fruits (8) -- the fragile banana tree (9) -- tribal marks (11) -- the deep forest (17) -- the rattle gourd (25) -- bridal bangles (27)

The above table reveals that the endophoric reference is built around the bride who is anaphorically referred to as “I”. She is the major participant and the poem is constructed around her. The use of anaphoric reference “I”, thus, not only confirms the monologic organization of the poem, but it also directs the reader to the understanding of the title of the poem, “Song of the bride”. In addition, while the poem is about one person, i.e., the bride, it accounts for who she is, what she does; but it also focuses on what she has because the chain displays a predominant number of possessive references in clauses (11, 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28). This also indicates that the bride is revealing her true identity on her wedding day and she is satisfied to witness the event of the moment. Another anaphoric reference is “him”

in (29), which refers back to her husband. Actually, these endophoric ties are meant to create cohesion because they focus on the internal texture of the poem.

Apart from endophoric reference, the other types of reference are listed as follows:

Homophoric reference: it includes “the clean water” in (2); here “water” is something we have in common as members of this particular world (Eggins, 2004). There is also “the river bank” in (10). In the context of the poem, it is simply a place where villagers go to fetch the water they need for cooking, washing and drinking. Another type of homophoric reference is “the deep forest” in (17). These are generally retrieved from the shared context of culture (Eggins, 2004).

Exophoric reference: this is a type of reference retrieved from the immediate context of situation (Halliday, 1985). Its meaning is grasped in the situational context in which it is used. In (1), “the vibrant lily” is used to symbolise the bride’s beauty which is admired all over the village and of which the latter is very proud. Similarly, “new fruits” in (8) refers to the fruit of the womb which confirms the bride’s fertility; this is why she is compared to the “fragile banana tree” in (9). Actually, viewed from its context, there is a Yoruba saying which goes: “*bi ogede b’a ku a fi omo re ropo*”, which is translated as “when the banana tree dies, it is always replaced by a new plant”. This means that the bride is saying that she is fertile enough to bear children. Moreover, the exophoric reference “tribal marks” in (11) not only suggests the identity of the bride but it also refers to the idea of attraction since in Yoruba, this special mark put on the cheeks of a lady is meant to reflect not only her identity, but also her beauty. Other types of reference are “deep forest” in (17), “rattle gourd” in (25) and “bridal bangles” in (27) which refers to the jewelry worn by the woman on her wedding day.

In the second poem

Here again, the types of reference identified in the second poem are displayed in table 2 below:

Table 2: reference-types in poem 2

Types of reference	Features and location
Anaphoric	--I (1)-I (4)- I (8)-I (11)- my (14)-I (16)- I (18)-I (23) --men (25)- their (26)
Homophoric	--the night (24) --the road (24)
Exophoric	--the open market (3) --the wooden basement (6) --the kitchen pot of fire (10) --the grubby claws of ruffians (15) --the clumsy fingers of drummers (19)

Like poem 1, this text also shows some features of anaphoric reference. The main and dominant type is “I” which refers back to the maiden in (1, 4, 8, 11, 14, 16, 18, 23). It is important to point out that this anaphoric reference is also realized by ellipsis in (4, 11, 14, 16, 18). According to Halliday (1985, p. 300), *“the elliptical or substitute clause requires the listener to supply the missing word; and since they are to be supplied from what has gone before, the effect is cohesive”*. Actually, such a use of ellipsis suggests that the poem is written with a spoken mode. The other tie consists of “men” in (25) and the related possession “their” in (26), showing that the maiden is addressing men in her text.

In fact, although very few in number, features of homophoric reference are: “the night” and “the road” in (24) as they are also retrieved from the cultural context. Exophoric reference includes: “the open market” in (3) which refers to the place where people gather together, on a specific day, to display commodities to be bought or sold. Likewise, other exophoric reference are: “the wooden basement” in (6) and “the grubby claws of ruffians” in (15) which refer to unserious men whose desire is to take advantage of attractive young girls in order to satisfy

their sexual appetite. These reference elements are cohesive because “they contribute to thematic and metaphorical meanings the text is making” (Eggins, 2004, p. 40)

3.2 Lexical cohesion

Lexical cohesion is one of the linguistic features that create cohesion and coherence in texts. This paper has also attempted to focus on the study of lexical cohesion. In fact, as mentioned previously, repetition and collocation are the lexical cohesion features that deserve more attention in the study.

3.2. 1 Repetition

It has to do with the reiteration of lexical items. In the first poem, the repetition of the same item is less predominant. The items used twice include: “village” in (3, 16) and the duplication of “down” in (3). Actually, the item “village” is used to inform the reader that the setting of the story is the village, a rural environment and symbol of traditional Africa. As for the lexical item “down”, it is duplicated to show insistence and emphasis and also to reveal the Yoruba habit of speaking. Another feature of repetition is the parallel structure (Hasan, 1989) or syntactic parallelism (Johnstone, 2008) which is noticed in the following stanzas:

1-*I am the vibrant lily*

18- *I am the precious diamond*

The above sequence ‘subject + to be + object: “I am ...” in (1, 18) indicate the value of the bride and the latter is so happy to express it on her wedding day. As far as the second poem is concerned, instances of parallel structure are also displayed and they include:

1-*I am not for a cheap display*

4-*(I am) Not for free bazaar*

8-*I am not for frying*

11-*(I am) Not for tasting*

16-*I am not for trapping*

18-*(I am) Not a music calabash*

23-*I am not the barusus palmtree*

Here again, the sequence: 'subject + to be + not + object: "I am not..." in lines (1, 4, 8, 11, 16, 18, 23) reflects the maiden's personality and are used to stress the subject matter of the poem.

3.2.2 Collocation

Collocation features are used in the two poems and some of them include the following:

In the first poem

Here are some collocation items:

- 11-*my tribal marks*
- 12-*Sticking to my cheeks*
- 15-*precious diamond*
- 17-*The slender coconut in the deep forest*
- 18-*The striped zebra in the guinea savannah*
- 19-*carry the blackness of my skin*
- 22-*my heavy hips in bright beads*
- 23-*to make my peers green with envy*

The collocation items, as said earlier, can well be understood by referring to the context in which they have been used. In (12/13), the bride is displaying her pride about "the tribal marks" which reflect her true identity as Yoruba. The collocation items in (12) are used to show that these tribal marks are clearly visible on her cheeks and make her more beautiful. In (15), the collocation items are used in the hyperbolic form as "diamond" is already a precious stone. The exaggerative way of using this collocation items implies that the bride is overvaluing her personality. In lines (17) and (18), there are features of figurative language. The bride is, metaphorically, comparing herself to "the slender coconut in the deep forest" and "the striped zebra in the guinea savannah" to reveal that she is a special woman. As for (19), it displays an unusual instance of collocation "carry the blackness of my skin". Here, there is collocation clash as in Standard English the "blackness of the skin" cannot be carried but displayed. In fact, there is a case of transliteration as this is the direct translation of Yoruba into English. In (22), the collocation items "heavy hip in bridal beads" is used to display the bride's physical appearance. Indeed, African women, especially Yoruba wear beads in their hips to seduce their men. In traditional

marriage, the groom is supposed to offer the bride beads. This is really valued when the woman has a heavy hip, which is a sign of beauty in Africa. Finally, the collocation used in (23) is a form of idiom which is meant to describe people's emotions. "to make my peers green with envy" means "to make my peers very jealous". In the context of the poem, the physical appearance and the honour received by the bride cannot but cause the other women to be very jealous of her because, in Africa, women, on their wedding day, are really honored not only by the groom's family but by many people in their village.

Moreover, collocation items occur in poem 2. Here are some examples:

- 1-...*cheap display*
- 4-...*free bazaar*
- 8-*I am not for frying*
- 11-*not for tasting*
- 18- *Not a music calabash*
- 20- *Certainly not a piece of meat*
- 21- *Wrapped up in dry leave*

In this poem, one can notice that unfamiliar items co-occur. They are used in figurative form. In (1) "cheap display" refers to waywardness. The maiden as an addresser is telling the addressee (the reader) that she is not cheap (of easy virtue) for anyone to be coming and having a love affair with her. Similarly, in (8), the maiden says she is not for frying. Actually, the item "fry" that is "cook in hot oil" goes with fish, yam, potatoes, etc. In this poem, it is used to mean "to have sexual intercourse with". Similarly, in (11), the maiden is "not for tasting", i.e., "to be having sex with somebody she will not marry". Likewise, in (18), she refuses to be "a music calabash" that is "using her body as an instrument of pleasure". On the other hand, "wrapped in dry leave" in (21) is used in figurative form. In Yoruba semiotic, "dry leave" (*efo riro*) means "vegetables mixed with stew and dried up through cooking". Yoruba people really enjoy this particular food. So "to be a piece of meat wrapped up in dry leave" means to let oneself to a man in order for the latter to satisfy his sexual appetite". This implies that the maiden is not ready to be involved into pre-marital sex. Thus, the collocation elements used in metaphorical forms are centered on the maiden whose strong desire is to keep away from pre-marital sex.

4. Discussion

From the above analyses, this study has revealed that the writer displays the use of symbols and figurative language which points out the way verbal art functions in the two poems. As a matter of fact, the analysis of reference in the two poems shows that the first person “I” is the main tie of the anaphoric reference. The artistic and poetic value both poems convey is that while the former is meant to display the quality, beauty and personality of the bride on her wedding day, the latter is used to reject the wrong reputation that can be ascribed to the maiden.

As for the exophoric reference items, they are also cohesive and contribute to the thematic and metaphorical meanings the two poems are making (Eggins, 2004). In addition, both homophoric and exophoric references are brought back from the cultural and situational context in which they are used. In this respect, a brief account of the situational context of the poems in terms of register variables (Halliday, 1985; Halliday & Hasan, 1985) is provided in table 3 below:

Table 3: Register analysis of the two poems.

Register variables	Poem 1	Poem 2
Field	-The bride, through her song, is expressing her joy of being so precious to witness her wedding day. -With pride and determination, she is revealing her internal and external beauty.	-The maiden is displaying her value as a true African woman -she is not ready to be cheated on by anyone who wants to take advantage of her
Tenor	-No direct contact between the poet-narrator and the reader -Affective involvement is high between the narrator and her husband -Formal/ serious tenor	-No direct contact between the poet narrator and the reader -No affective involvement between the narrator and the reader -Formal/serious
Mode	-Written to be read -monologic organization, with no feedback -Formal but with figurative language	-written to be read -monologic organization, with no feedback -formal with figurative language

From the above table, it can be inferred that the two poems do not share the same field even though they are dealing with songs. While the former is about the woman on her wedding day, the latter focuses on the

village young girl who is not married. More importantly, the lexical items such as “village lake”, “calabash full of sweet wine”, “erotic village pond”, etc. in poem 1 and “festival ram”, “open market”, “music calabash”, “clumsy fingers of drummers”, “on their way to distant farm”, etc. in poem 2 show that they are set in traditional villages and most specifically in rural life. As for the tenor of discourse, it is serious in the two poems as there is no contact between the poet narrator and the reader. There is a formal mode because the two poems display uncommon features of language. Figurative language, in which features of metaphor, hyperbole, and symbolism are displayed and rooted in the Yoruba traditional context, abounds in the two poems.

Moreover, the cultural context also facilitates the understanding of verbal art in the two texts. As a matter of fact, the writer has drawn on his culture (Yoruba) to produce his art work. This is what accounts for the fact that understanding cultural Yoruba context plays a very important role in the study of the two poems. Indeed, in the traditional Yoruba culture, a woman must remain virgin till she gets married. When she does so, she is respected in her community. On her wedding night, the bride goes in with the groom with a white piece of cloth. Some women sleep outside the door of the couple to ensure that the defloration has really occurred. This is proved by an exclamation of pain made by the bride and the display of the white cloth with blood just after the sexual intercourse or early in the following morning. So any woman who wants to be honored on her wedding day must avoid having pre-marital sex. Therefore, in the context of the poems, the maiden is taking good care of herself in order to avoid being disgraced on her wedding day. Thus, a woman who is sure that she is going to be glorified on her wedding day cannot but take good care of herself so as to be able to sing like the bride in the first poem.

The analysis of lexical cohesion has shown that the two poems have displayed features of verbal art. This is realized through the parallel structure /syntactic parallelism and collocation which are used in the foregrounded form to show literary-aesthetic purposes. As observed by Simpson (2004),

foregrounding refers to a form of textual patterning which is motivated specifically for literary-aesthetic purposes. Capable of working at any level of language, foregrounding typically involves a stylistic distortion of some sort, either through an aspect of the text which deviates from a linguistic norm or, alternatively, where an aspect of the text is brought to the fore through repetition or parallelism (p. 50).

The foregrounding of syntactic parallelism displays the attribute of both the bride and the maiden, especially what the bride is at a given point and what the maiden is not; so, the real expression of self-identity is revealed in the two poems. Moreover, the fact that they are used in an ellipsed form in lines (4, 11, 18) is an indication that features of spoken language is noticed in the poem.

The collocation features in the two poems are meant to reveal the traditional realities the poems are conveying. The foregrounding of these collocation items provides a deep lexical cohesion of the poems. The peculiarity of these lexical items is that they are deliberately used and reflect the culture and tradition of the writer, Bayo Adebowale.

5. Conclusion

This article has surveyed the language of Bayo Adebowale's poems entitled "Song of the bride" and "Song of the maiden". It has shown that the two poems are written in a language different from the ordinary one. Through the theory of discourse-semantics, the analysis reveals that reference and lexical cohesion patterns are used by the writer not only to achieve the texture of the poems but also to display the way language functions. The study of reference has made it easy to point out the intention of the poet in his text. Indeed, Adebowale has used the reference items to enable his readers to perceive the meanings his language has made. The study of lexical cohesion has pointed out how the meanings of words in the two poems are interrelated. This paper also shows that the foregrounding of these linguistic features facilitates the understanding of verbal art of the two poems of which the meanings are deciphered through the study of cultural and situational context of production of the selected poems.

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APPENDIX

Poem 1: SONG OF THE BRIDE	Poem 2: SONG OF A MAIDEN
1. I am the vibrant lily	1. I am not for a cheap display
2. Floating on the clean water	2. Like a festival ram
3. Of the village lake,	3. At the open market.
4. Reaching down, down	4. Not for free bazaar,
5. Into the deep mire—	5. Like low-priced tobacco
6. Gay and steady	6. At the wooden basement
7. Like a calabash full of sweet wine	7. Of a deserted homestead
8. I ripen with new fruits	8. I am not for frying
9. Like the fragile banana tree	9. Like slashed plantain
10. On the river bank,	10. Inside the kitchen pot of fire
11. My tribal marks	11. Not for tasting
12. Sticking to my cheeks	12. With the mere tip of the tongue
13. Like the shapely line in antinomy	13. Like saltless okra soup
14. On the pretty face of a bean seed.	14. The strands of my plaited hair
15. I am the precious diamond	15. Are not for the grubby claws of ruffians,
16. Picked from the erotic village pond	16. I am not for trapping
17. The slender coconut in the deep forest.	17. Like a rodent in a snare
18. The striped zebra in the guinea savannah.	18. No! Not a music calabash

<p>19. I carry the blackness of my skin 20. Like a shining royal gown 21. Over my smooth body 22. And deck my heavy hips in bright beads 23. Rich enough to make my peers green with envy. 24. I wriggle to the delightful rhythm 25. Of the rattle gourd 26. Strung up with two hundred cowries, 27. My bridal bangles jingling 28. To tease my man, 29. Banishing him to a long period 30. Of sweet midnight dreams. Source: <i>A Night of Incantations (and Other Poems)</i>; (p. 79)</p>	<p>19. For the clumsy fingers of drummers. 20. Certainly not a piece of meat 21. Wrapped up in dry leave— 22. Sent out to whet people's appetite 23. I am not the barusus palmtree 24. Fallen, after the night rain, across the road 25. For men to trample on at dawn 26. On their way to distant farm Source: <i>A Night of Incantations (and Other Poems)</i>; (p. 80)</p>
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