

The Poetic Effects of Ellipsis in Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's Haiku Poems

By

Osariemen Okungbowa

**School of Postgraduate Studies and Department of English Language and Literature,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.**

Email: osasmikel183@gmail.com

Phone: 07036373162

And

Prof. Ephraim Azoluwaehu Chukwu

**Department of English Language and Literature,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.**

Email: chukwuephraim@yahoo.com

Phone: 08063788199

Abstract

Ellipsis, a stylistic attribute of poetry especially haiku poems, serves for the creation of poetic effects on the reader/audience. This study engaged with an analysis of the stylistic significance or effects of the various elliptical structures that typify the stylistic creations in Ezeigbo's haiku poems. From a close reading of representative texts, findings revealed that the dominant elliptical categories, namely VP-ellipsis, ellipsis of prepositional elements and ellipsis of conjunctive elements, have been deployed to create specific poetic effects: to draw the reader into the context of the poems as well as to engage the reader in the poetic processing of meaning. The brevity and shortness of the elliptical structures, many of which are largely realized by nominal sentences, have also helped to sharpen and sustain the artistic edges of the poems. The study therefore concluded that the poetic use of ellipsis in the poems does not occur merely as an optional grammatical process, but that they function as important means of supporting the discourse structure of the poems.

Keywords: Discourse, Ellipsis, Haiku, Poetic Effects, Stylistics.

Introduction

Background to the Study

It has been said that the lyric is the most notable form by which contemporary Nigerian poetry mostly expresses itself. This is because the poetic impulse in the lyric form essentially responds to issues, both personal and private, eliciting a kind of rupture which is perceived as a warning or

challenge to society. Put simply, the lyric poem is not just a squabble with itself but is indeed a sharp and unpretentious statement of the crises in the society. In a broader sense, poetry is not just a process of perceptible reality but a response to it. This is why it is not as large a canvas in terms of space as the two other literary genres. The poetic form is essentially a condensed and highly suggestive atlas of varying verse patterns, expansively spread to capture, in miniature terms, aspects of experience. Ellipsis is a major stylistic means used to achieve this process, and modern Nigerian poetry undoubtedly bears the marks of the above painting made of the poetic genre.

Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo, has come to occupy a distinctive place in the conclave of modern Nigerian poets since her incursion into the mainstream of poetry. Although she is more popular in the prose genre, yet her mastery of the poetic craft has been demonstrated time and time again in her ability to convey deep thoughts through her nuanced manipulation of the English language, Igbo, and even Pidgin. This paper explores an aspect of her poetry which further reveals her deft manipulation of the linguistic code which she compresses to capture various meanings and experiences in her haiku poems.

Commenting on the people-oriented nature of Ezeigbo's poetic message, Asika (2011) says that Ezeigbo employs her poetry to defend the course of her people. In the paper, the writer views Ezeigbo as one who draws on a Marxist ideology to reveal the suffering and oppression of the peasants by their capitalist overlords. Similarly, Akano's (2022) treatise examines Ezeigbo's *Heart Songs* as a volume whose thematic thrust centers on "social doldrums and martyrdom that define our identity and existence as a people and the world at large" (2002: 104). The writer affirms that Ezeigbo's "songs cover virtually all known important subjects that concern men and women", and that the poems are sermons casted in form of invectiveness, admonition, and tributes in her vision of exorcism (2022:113).

On the oral-poetic heritage in Ezeigbo's poetry, Asigbo and Amalukwue (2022) examine the place of the minstrel personae in Ezeigbo's *Heart Songs*. According to them, the poems in the volume dwell more on issues affecting women and as such, one hears the voices of female minstrels. The writers conclude that Ezeigbo creatively recreates the minstrels of old in some of her poems to give her poet personae voices that resonate with social issues (2022: 119). In their appreciation of the elegiac poems of Ezeigbo, Eke and Mukoro (2021) explore the elegiac disposition of the poet as well as those of Afejuku and Eghagha, two other contemporary Nigerian poets with specific

focus on elegies written for their mothers. According to the writers, Ezeigbo deploys seismic images, metaphors, and imaginative brilliance in the injection of grief demonstrated through emotional fluctuations (2021:104). For them, the freshness of Ezeigbo's elegist language, at once, deepens the grief evoked by the poet even as it illuminates the consolatory atmosphere of the poems (2021:192).

Despite their divergent concerns, all the works acknowledge, even if only implicitly, that Ezeigbo's vision and artistic burden are conveyed through her carefully contrived linguistic choices. In this way, her poetry which has been said to treat issues in a most engaging manner, is a delight to read and behold for any researcher who takes time to familiarize with her art. Thus, Ezeigbo's work presents abundant materials for study, both for the linguist and the literary critic; hence the motivation for this study.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

This work is a stylistic exploration of the poetic value of the dominant syntactic structures of ellipses in Adimorah-Ezeigbo's haiku poems in *Waiting for Dawn*. The major objectives of the study are summed up as follows:

- To show that the poetic impulses that gave rise to Adimorah-Ezeigbo's haiku poems can be conveniently arrived at by undertaking a study of her deployment of the various elliptical structures in the poems.
- To identify and survey the structures of syntactic and semantic ellipses which are exploited as the overriding stylistic patterns serviceable for the representation of meaning in the poems.
- The study aims to ascertain the poetic effects (implied meanings or communicative value) of the use of syntactic and/or semantic ellipses by focusing on how the use of such structures convey the poet's attitude to the events or experiences that inform the poems.

Significance of the Study

The study provides pedagogical, economic, and political importance that would expand the literature on Adimorah-Ezeigbo's revolutionary agenda of a new political and economic order, as well as the struggle for a reformed socio-cultural value. Her Marxist and womanist agenda of

educating and sensitizing her audience towards collective action to assert their humanity and restore their dignity as a people, her subtle disposition towards rethinking the case for women's liberation and repositioning in society, and her vehement repudiation of immoral and amoral practices in the society are all very crucial to this study. Moreover, the study serves as a valuable reference material to linguists, literary critics, social critics, lecturers, students, and the general public.

Research Questions

The following are the research questions that underpin the purpose of this work:

- i. What could have necessitated the poet's experimentation with the haiku poetic form?
- ii. What are the structural features of the ellipses deployed in the poems?
- iii. What kind of poetic effects or meanings are evinced by the elliptical structures deployed in the poems?

Scope of the Study

This study is delimited to the analysis of the stylistic significance of ellipsis in Ezeigbo's haiku poems in *Dancing Masks* (2013). A striking feature of the volume is the poetic discipline and, yet, the freedom of creative exploration which the poet exhibits. The volume is divided into five separate sections, or "stations", from which the poet watches the poetic masquerade performance – a trope for human experience or life. "Haiku Connections" is the third section of the volume. In this section, the poet experiments with the Japanese haiku form in nine poems which express ideas and feelings in short and elliptical structures and with succinct images. Tellingly, the poet makes no attempt at a wholesome reproduction of the Japanese haiku form. Hers are free-wheeling, eclectic, and parochial; hence they serve as choice textual material for the explication that forms the focus of this study.

Conceptual Framework

Haiku as a Poetic Form

Sometimes called ‘hokku’, haiku is a Japanese short poem with origins as far back as the thirteenth century. Structurally, haiku are patterned syllabically with seventeen separate syllables arranged in three stanzas and segmented into a 5/7/5 count (Packard, 1994).

Essentially, traditional haiku are noted for their use of ‘kigo’, or season words, to specify whether the poem relates to winter, summer, spring, or autumn. They are “characterized by *renso*, or loose association of disparate images and contain an elliptical leap from the second to the third line which stimulates sudden zen *satori* or enlightenment, illumination of the true nature of reality” (1994:85).

Stylistically, haiku are also noteworthy for their use of plain and radically banal mode of expression reminiscent of everyday language according to the teaching of the classical master Basho (1644-1694) who advocated the principle of ‘*hosomi*’, or (linguistic) slenderness, the use of terse expressions, and understatement (1994:85). Packard (1994:86) also affirms that Basho is credited with writing the archetypal masterpiece haiku, roughly translated as follows:

old pond
frog jumps in
splosh

The poem, in all its brevity, embodies a simple event so starkly represented that it draws the reader into the world of the event. Ostensibly, the defining features of the poem are the unobtrusive and abrupt naming of entities without adequate modifiers or contextualization clues and the use of elliptical forms. For this very quality, Arai (2014) describes haiku as the literature of ellipsis.

Poetic Effects

The phrase, ‘poetic effects’ is borrowed from Relevance Theory in this study and used to refer to the stylistic effects or communicative value of poetry, especially the poetry of Ezeigbo. However, in its strictest sense, and according to the proponents, the term is used “to describe utterances which derive their effects from a wide range of relatively weak implicatures” (Sperber and Wilson, 1995: 222). According to Black (2006:87), metaphor is interpreted in this way as it is a less faithful form of expressing the speaker’s thoughts but it generates many implicatures or interpretations which

can be pursued by the hearer. Thus, interpretation is the responsibility of the hearer or reader who is assumed to share a good deal of knowledge and background with the speaker.

For Pilkington (1998), poetic effects refer to responses to poetry. It has to do with individual interpretation and evaluation of poetic texts. For him, responses to poetry may not be entirely identical since cognitive environments are also not alike. In other words, Pilkington's viewpoint reflects the search for relevance and meaning in a literary work. Accordingly, Pilkington believes that a poem is written and read for its value which comes from its poetic effects. It becomes successful and valuable only when it communicates these effects (Pilkington, 1998 cited in Stolarek, 2012:5).

Arai (2015:374) explains that certain mental effects that we experience during conversation are taken as cognitive effects, and poetic effects fall under these. To her, poetic effects, therefore, refer to the special effects we experience when a speaker intends his utterances to have multiple meanings. According to her, the effects of literary texts are often analysed using this notion. In fact, the poetic text and all its suggestive features – its special use of lineation and versification, disjointed/deviant syntax, the iconic patterning of lexemes – are all geared towards producing poetic effects on the reader. All the above represent the position taken in this study: that the essential value of verse forms can be adequately explained and accounted for by the notion of poetic effects.

The Concepts of Style and Stylistics

According to Semino (2010: 541), style, in language is generally defined as “the result of patterns of choice at different linguistic levels that may be characteristic of a text, the oeuvre of an author, a genre, etc”. The notion of style here seems to be fundamentally comparative: different styles in language arise from the possibility of speaking or writing in different ways, and the style of any text can only be described in contrast with that of a different text. Simply put, this view of style in language purports that it depends on both choice and difference.

Stylistics can simply be considered as the linguistic study of style. (Leech and Short, 2007: 11) Thus, a stylistic venture emphasizes language sensitivity and use for the explication of artistic vision. According to Bradford (1997: xii)

Modern stylistics is caught between two disciplinary imperatives. On the one hand it raises questions regarding the relation between the way that language is used and its apparent context and objective – language as an active element of the real world. On the other hand, it seeks to define the particular use of linguistic structures to create, fascinate models or distortions of the real world – literary language.

Pertinently, the goal or aim of stylistics “is to analyse language habits with the main purpose of identifying, from the general mass of linguistic features common to English as used on every conceivable occasion, those features which are restricted to certain kinds of social context...” (Crystal and Davy, 1969: 10). This reveals that style and stylistics deal with the analysis of linguistic features which are restricted to particular social contexts and created for certain artistic functions. These analyzable features are the stylistically significant elements.

Methodologically, stylistics is multidisciplinary in approach. It uses an eclectic means to “break up” the elements of texts for the sole aim of pinning down their artistic intent. This is why Webber (1996:7) says that stylistics openly acknowledges itself to be interpretive and interested. Ezeigbo’s experimentation with the haiku form of poetry in *Dancing Masks* shows a stylistic versatility which makes her sometimes unpredictable and eternally engaging. Her poetic vision and language use are best appreciated when stylistically investigated. Hence, in this study, the use of stylistic lenses can help to magnify the most microscopic significant detail of her texts.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts, as its theoretical, framework, the Referential Theory of ellipsis. The positions and scholarly submissions of the works of two linguists, namely McShane (2005) and Poppels (2020) are taken as most relevant to the present study. Fundamentally, Quirk *et al* (1985:862) says that “the normal understanding of the term ellipsis is that words are omitted where understanding can be achieved without word repetition”. This is taken as the working definition in this study.

According to Poppels (2020: xiv), the Referential Theory of ellipsis is a reaction against the other camp of theorists that propose a theory of ellipsis called the Identity Theory. For identity theorists, a linguistic material can be elided only if it is identical to a linguistic antecedent, as in the example below:

‘Someone solved the problem but I don’t know who #’ (solved the problem) (Poppels, 2020:17)

In this example, the elided clause has an identical linguistic antecedent in the first clause. In this way, identity theorists believe that ellipsis is only interpretable and felicitous if the linguistic context provides similar linguistic item(s), what Poppels (2020:6) calls an “an identical copy” of the ‘to-be’ elided material. Linguists like Sag (1976); Merchant (2001); Chung (2013) are also of this view.

For Webber (1978); Kehler (1993); McShane (2005); and Poppels (2020), Utin (2016), Utin, (2024) the reasoning is that the identity criterion or condition is neither necessary nor sufficient for characterizing the distribution and acceptability of ellipsis. Thus, they argue for a referential theory of ellipsis which takes, as its fundamental assumption, the axiology that ellipsis is enabled by the same underlying mechanism that governs other forms of discourse reference. Poppels (2020: xv), in particular, is of the opinion that there may be cases of “mismatch” between the elided material and its antecedent in which the meaning of the elliptical structure is not reducible to the linguistic context but must be inferred. He explains further that ellipsis has the capacity for exophoric (antecedent-less reference, or one outside the linguistic context of the text). Also, discourse referents can be evoked by the situational context in the absence of a linguistic antecedent. For example:

(Context: John bends down to lift a bag of cement)

James: Do you think you should #? (lift the bag)

Here, there is case of VP-ellipsis ‘licensed’ or allowed by the modal ‘should’. The referent of the elided part of the sentence is deducible from its context of occurrence. As McShane (2005:14) affirms, one way of resolving reference is by establishing a coreference relation and using it to trace back to the real-world referent. This is what has happened in the above. An example given by McShane (2005:15) is presented below:

(Context: Having just passed out test papers) Begin!

Here, McShane (2005:15) says that the auxiliary, ‘begin’, licenses the ellipsis of a verb that could mean ‘writing’, ‘working’, ‘taking the test’ etc. McShane further says that elided categories can

have a general referent, understood on the basis of real-world knowledge. She cites examples of the semantically obligatory, but grammatically optional agent-adjunct in passives which can refer to nonspecific humans, or to some contextually-implied subset of people or entities as in the example:

‘Promises are made, then broken.’

‘During the dry season in Africa, watering holes are desperately sought out and fought for.’

These two examples, according to McShane, represent semantic ellipsis because the ellipted parts are not syntactically required, thus, there is no syntactic gap in the expressions. Any attempt to analyse them as cases of ellipsis would require regarding them as it pertains to their meanings.

Accordingly, she stresses that there is no single most correct way to categorise and study elliptical expressions, and as such, there is no rigid pattern to be followed in the organisation of its analysis. However, as a means of providing an orientation towards the approach, McShane (2005:6-7) provides a ‘top-level’ classification of the phenomenon. She classifies elliptical expressions into the following:

- Syntactic ellipsis with coreference (that is, with an accessible syntactic antecedent)

Some examples of this kind of ellipsis are head noun ellipsis, VP-ellipsis, sluicing, gapping, stripping, etc.

- Syntactic ellipsis without coreference (with no syntactically accessible antecedent)

Examples are ellipsis of conjunction, ellipsis of relative pronoun, ellipsis of objects in a series of actions, etc.

- Semantic ellipsis (ellipsis of meaningful elements but with no syntactic gap)

Examples are unexpressed agents in passive expressions, unexpressed experiencers and possessors, etc.

- Language strategies

Dialogue strategies, sentence fragments, nominal sentences, unagentive impersonals, etc.

Methodologically, a work on ellipsis will require reference to syntax, lexical semantics, discourse analysis, and stylistics. According to her (2005:4), ellipsis represents a prime example of doing linguistics across language modules.

In conclusion, the Referential Theory emphasizes that what all forms of ellipsis have in common is that the meaning of the elided material must be provided by the context in some way. This is what makes ellipsis interpretable and acceptable, and it is the position taken in this study. The theory has, therefore, been adopted because it suits the analysis of some elliptical structures in Ezeigbo's haiku poems. Also, armed with the theoretical apparatus, some referents of the elided categories in the poems are analyzed endophorically.

Research Methodology

The methodology adopted for this study is qualitative. This approach is characterized by “inductive approaches to knowledge building aimed at proving, disproving, or lending credence to existing theories” (Leavy, 2017:9). This method also involves tapping into subjective experiences and meaning-making processes to acquire a depth of understanding, that is, detailed information from a small sample. This kind of research is generally appropriate when your primary purpose is to explore, describe, or explain phenomena (Leavy, 2017:9). The methodology has been adopted here because it best suits the purpose of describing and explaining the stylistic significance of ellipsis in Ezeigbo's poems.

In terms of data collection, the observation technique was used. In this regard, the researcher carefully read, re-read, identified, and categorised the various elliptical structures in the poems vis a vis their stylistic features, consequently extracting these as primary data for analysis.

The purposive sampling method has been adopted in this study as it evinces a technique whereby you sample with an overriding purpose or intent in mind. In this paper therefore, relevant and representative excerpts from the haiku poems were sampled for analysis. The extracted data were analysed to reveal the poetic effects occasioned by the deployment of elliptical structures in the poems. Finally, findings and conclusion were drawn from the analysis without recourse to arithmetic or statistical occurrences.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Syntactic Ellipsis in the Poems

Syntactic ellipsis is "the non-expression of a word that is expected to occupy a place in the syntactic structure of a sentence" (McShane 2005:3). For instance, in the sentence, 'James bought a car and Peter a bike', the verb 'bought' in the first conjunct is not expressed in the second clause (conjunct). It is elided, perhaps to avoid repetition or redundancy. For many linguists, syntactic ellipsis has come to represent the 'default' interpretation of the term 'ellipsis' as it occurs more frequently in speech or writing than other types of ellipsis (McShane, 2005:3).

In Ezeigbo's haiku poems, the message is largely realized in syntactic, elliptical forms. A close reading of the poems reveals that their main distinctiveness lies in their brevity and ability to say much in little spaces. The following manifestations of syntactic ellipsis are noticed in some of the poems.

Verbal or VP-Ellipsis

The structure of the following poems in 'Haiku Connections' is largely realized by VP-ellipsis

Text 1

1 Deep in Igbo heartland

Unique tourists' paradise

Amidst volcanoes (2013: 81)

2 sea of heads: bristles

curls, floppy mops: hybrids at

Waterloo station. (2013: 78)

In text 1(a), two elliptical structures spread across the three lines of the poem epitomize the syntactic structure. The first clause, or sentence fragment, consists of an adjective + adverbial, the

second line consists of a noun phrase premodified by adjectives. The third and last line also consists of an adverbial element, realized by a preposition + abstract noun. Contextually, the poet makes reference to her village, native land or community. The noun phrase in the second line refers back to “Igbo land” in the first line. Here, although the message seems to be fragmented or presented in bits, yet one can deduce that the poet’s intent is that of praise and admiration for her nativity. This much is portrayed in the second line. At first glance, the reader of these lines is first bewildered and lost, not

In text 1(b), the first line consists of a noun phrase which also contains an elliptical relative clause introduced by a punctuation mark, that is the colon. In lines two and three, noun phrases make up the construction. Also, the use of the colon substitutes for equative verbs such as ‘are’ or ‘were’, in the case of the past tense. In this poem, the poet persona is referring to a busy and crowded station experienced in Waterloo, on one of her trips to Western Europe. The tone here differs from that in the first excerpt. In this instance, the poet is critical of the busy and crowded nature of the station, laying bare the fact it is not only in Nigeria that none experiences such.

Understandably, in texts 1(a) and (b), two separate poems are presented with each without finite verbs or subjects. Here, the absence of finite verbs and subjects in the whole of the three-lined poems, and consequently of any specification of tense and agency foregrounds the juxtaposition of a series of visual images providing descriptions of the setting of the poems. This can be interpreted to mean that the poet’s voice is somehow passivized, revealing her intention to engage with a description of the environment or setting instead of referring to people or entities.

A different form of VP-ellipsis is employed in another haiku poem from the volume below:

3 ‘We’ll prosecute him
When caught’, said the President;
the cultist: his son!

In this poem, the poet employs the force and dramatic immediacy of reported speech to expose the hypocrisy and pretence of political office holders. Given that dialogue permits reductions that are not normally typical of written language, the first two lines of the poem are presented in quotation marks representing direct speech or dialogue to accommodate the use of the contracted form of the

modal ‘will’ in the first line. The reporting clause employed in the second line further reinforces the indication of direct speech in the poem. In the third line, a sort of VP-ellipsis is negotiated or licensed by the use of the colon. Here, a sort of parallelism occurs between the first and second phrases (supposed conjuncts) divided by the colon. Both are noun phrases modified by a determiner, ‘the’, or pronominal ‘his’ identifying and imputing definiteness on the noun heads. Also, both phrases are coreferential, that is, they refer to one and the same person. Thus, in the asyndetic construction, “the cultist: his son!”, the elision of the BE form of the verb (‘is’ or ‘was’) is foregrounded.

Thematically, the poet drives the ideology of the double-standard practiced by leaders and rulers in power. In this short but dense poem, the poet makes indirect reference to an ironic situation of attempting to prosecute a ruffian or tout when the leader’s son is a leading scoundrel! Here, the ironic nexus exists when the first line, which is also the title of the poem, and last line are juxtaposed.

Ellipsis of Preposition

Ezeigbo deploys ellipsis of preposition to drive home her poetic intent in the poem titled “Benin bronze in London”. The poem is shown below:

Text 2

a. Benin bronze, London

Uprooted, living in bondage

Handwork of plunderers (2013:80)

In the poem above, the first line would read better as ‘Benin bronze in London’. However, the poet seems to be of the opinion that presenting issues through syntactic fragmentations creates stronger effects. A case of ellipsis of prepositional element, the first line of the poem introduces the main issues through noun phrases ‘begging’ for the insertion of a preposition (‘in’), preposition +verbal element (‘are in’, ‘taken to’) or even a relative clause (‘which are in’, ‘that are in’). In the second line, a participial adjective “uprooted” seems to serve as the subject of the verbless clause “living in bondage”, before the final description “handwork of plunderers” is presented in the third and

last line of the poem. Also, in the deployment of the participle “uprooted”, the voice of the persona is passive, referring to the action of uprooting as if agentless. This also represents a case of semantic ellipsis where the agent of a passive construction is unexpressed.

Overall, the message of this poem is clearly delineated in the referent to the subject “Benin bronze”. Although the elliptical structuring means that the poet is economical with words in the rendition, however, the overall meaning of the poem can be arrived through the semantic and pragmatic implications of the verbless clause in the second line and the nominal sentence in line three. Placed against its socio-historical context, the poet artistically refers to the Benin bronze, pieces of artefacts that epitomized the work, creativity and might of the Benin empire at the peak of its glory. The five thousand or so artefacts which were mostly created from the 13th to 16th centuries by master craftsmen in the ancient Benin kingdom were stolen in 1897, after the British sacked the kingdom (The Guardian, 28 November, 2022). The royal palace was looted and burned and the oba exiled to Calabar. Thus, the British confiscated all the royal treasures, sharing some amongst themselves and taking some to auction in London.

The poetic disposition of Ezeigbo is clear in this poem. The poetic voice is openly satiric and speaks against the evils of British imperialist power. They are referred to as “plunderers” who invade and steal valuable things, leaving deaths and destruction in their wake. Within the smallest available space and couched in elliptical structures, the poet succeeds in raising up serious topical issues that bother on invasion, colonialism, and imperial domination, some of the aptest demonstrations of man’s inhumanity to man.

Ellipsis of Conjunction

Conjunctions not only bind parts of a sentence together, they also show the semantic relationship between them. In English expressions, conjunctions are expressed overtly where they are required. The following poem demonstrate ellipsis of overt conjunction in Ezeigbo’s poems:

Text 3

4 Drought! Farmers lament
then rain comes with thunderstorm
drowns everything in sight (2013: 83)

In text 3(a), the subordinating conjunction “then” indicates a contrasting link between the first and second lines. The link is said to be that of contrast when one considers that the farmers referred to in the poem have been lamenting because they had been experiencing a period of drought. However, in a quick twist of fortune, rain comes suddenly. One is surprised at the deliberate omission of the coordinating conjunction ‘and’ which is supposed to knot lines two and three together.

Here, ellipsis of the conjunctive ‘and’ occurs for stylistic effects. It serves to juxtapose two independent clauses that could have been brought together as one. The poet exploits this to present a series of actions as they occur sequentially. The poet, here, adopts a communal voice to present a sort of cause-and-effect narrative in short elliptical structures. Also the presence of finite verbs in each of the structures (‘lament’, ‘comes’, ‘drowns’) help to invigorate the activities of referents in the poem. The coming of the rain, after a period of lamentable drought, and the result of the action of the rain are what informs Ezeigbo’s poetic concern in this poem.

Conclusion

On the whole, some inroads have been made in the analysis of the stylistic significance or effects of the various elliptical structures that typify the stylistic creations in Ezeigbo’s haiku poems. Findings reveal that the various elliptical categories, namely VP- ellipsis, ellipsis of prepositional element and ellipsis of conjunction have all been deployed to create poetic effects: to draw the reader into the context of the poems as well as to engage the reader in the poetic processing of meaning in the poems. The brevity and shortness of the elliptical structures, many of which are largely realized by nominal sentences, have also helped to sharpen and sustain the artistic edges of the poems. The study therefore concludes that the poetic use of ellipsis in the poems does not occur merely as an optional grammatical process, but that they function as important means of supporting the discourse structure of the poems.

References

Adimora-Ezeigbo, A. (2013). *Dancing Masks*. Ibadan: Kraft Books.

- Akano, R.K. (2022). Tributes, Censors, and Exorcism in Akachi Adimorah-Ezeigbo's *Heart Songs*. *Sino-US English Teaching*, 19 (3) , 104-114.
- Asigbo, A.C., and Amalukwue, L.L. (2022). From Orality to Printed Words.: The Minstrel Personae in Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo's *Heart Songs*. *Rajasthali Journal*, 2(1), 119-123.
- Arai, K. (2008). The Ellipsis of Haiku: The Effects of Poetic Ellipsis in the Framework of Relevance Theory. In G. Watson (Ed). *The State of Stylistics*, Amsterdam and New York: PALA, Pp. 347-362.
- Asika, I.E. (2011). Art for Humanity Sake: Marxist Ideology and Consciousness in the Poetry of Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo. *International Bi-Lingual and Multi-Disciplinary Journal of Contemporary Issues and Development Studies (IBAMJOCIDS)*, 1(1), 94-104.
- Bradford, R. (1997). *Stylistics*. London: Routledge.
- Crystal, D. and Davy D. (1969). *Investigating English Style*. London: Longman.
- Egudu, R.N. (1979). *The Study of Poetry*. Ibadan University Press.
- Eke, K., and Mukoro, E., (2021). Elegies for Mama: A Study of Elegiac Dispositions of Three Nigerian Poets. *ANSU Journal of Language and Literary Studies (AJLLS)*, 1(5), 182-194.
- Leavy, P. (2017). *Research Design*. London: The Guilford Press.
- Leech, G. (1969). *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry*. Essex: Longman.
- Leech, G. and Short, M.(2007). *Style in Fiction: A Linguistic Introduction to English Fictional Prose*. (2nd ed.)Edinburgh: Pearson Education.
- McShane, M. (2005). *A Theory of Ellipsis*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Packard, W. (1994). *The Poet's Dictionary: A Handbook of Prosody and Poetic Devices*. New York: HarperPerennial Publishers.

- Poppels, T. (2020). Towards a Referential Theory of Ellipsis. Dissertation. University of Carlifonia
- Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G. and Svartvik, J. (1985). *A Comprehensive Grammar of TheEnglish Language*. New York: Longman.
- Stolarek, J., (2012). Poetic Effects in Relevance Theory: Literary Criticism from a Relevance Theoretic Perspective. Accessed 23rd of September, 2023.
<https://researchgate.net/publication/280559411>
- Utin, I.D. (2016). Information and Communication Technology: A tool for the Teaching and Learning of the English Language in the Open Educational Resources Development in Nigeria. *International Journal of Academia* 1 (1), pp 78 – 87.
- Utin, I.D. (2023). Spoken English and the Nigerian Identity: A Study of the Varieties of Nigerian English-Based Pidgin. *Sapienta Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Development Studies*, pp 343-353, 2023
- Wales, K. (2014). *A Dictionary of Stylistics* (3rd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Weber, J J. (1996) Towards Contextualized Stylistics: An Overview. In J.J. Weber (Ed), *The Stylistics Reader: From Roman Jakobson to the Present*. London: Arnold, PP. 1-8.