Cohesion as an Element of Style in Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* and Amma Darko's *Faceless*: A Systemic Textlinguistic Approach

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Abstract

Systemic Textlinguistics is a viable approach in the study of the second order text. This study, therefore, investigated cohesion as an element of style in Agary's Yellow-Yellow and Darko's Faceless using the approach of Systemic Textlinguistics. The study investigates how the authors were able to creatively use cohesive devices within the semiotic universe of the texts to project their message. Textual data were extracted at random, using the concepts of "projection" and "procedure" as postulated by Adejare (1992) and analyzed qualitatively using the primitive order level of language. The findings revealed that the message of the novels was projected at the primitive order level using cohesive devices such as coordinate conjunctions, transitory word, lexical repetition, personal reference and ellipsis. The researchers concluded that both authors used cohesion creatively in the semiotic universe of texts to project the message of women's subjugation in Africa.

Keywords: *Cohesion, Textlinguistics, Style, Novels, Primitive Order Level.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Language plays an important function in every facet of human experience. This is probably why Halliday & Matthiessen (2014: 25) suggest that language could be used "to make sense of our world, and to carry out interactions with other people." Language is therefore, an indispensable instrument that exists in all human communications and interactions (Sapir, 1921; Robins 1980; Agbedo 2015; etc.). Consequently, people exercise high levels of dexterity in manipulating language for various purposes in the communication, be it speech or writing; literary or non-literary.

No doubt, language does not exist in a vacuum because it is not used as an abstract concept; rather it is used connectively with other linguistic devices (cohesion and coherence) which assist in concretizing language. So, language could not have been the vehicle of Literature or any other subject if priority has not been shifted to text together with its accompanying cohesive elements. One of the textual elements which puts language together for it to make sense, is 'cohesion' because language, spoken or written unfolds in some sort of text in context (Eggins, 2004). "Our ability to deduce context from text is one way in which language and context are interrelated" (Eggins, 2004: 8). It is as saying that no text can function outside language. A text, therefore, is "any piece of language spoken or written of whatever length, that does form a unified whole" (Halliday & Hasan, 1976: 1). The chief determinant of the unity of a text, therefore, is cohesion (Halliday & Hasan 1976; Beaugrande & Dressler (1981); and Kadiri 2014).

Again, Kadiri (2014) posits that cohesion is a linguistic term which examines the grammatical relationship within a text or sentence. She goes further to say that cohesion is a link that holds a text together and gives it meaning. Halliday & Hassan (1976), on their part, see cohesion as the set of linguistic means for creating textures. Kadiri (2014) notes that Halliday's concept of grammatical analysis sees cohesion as a major term referring to surface-structural features of an utterance or text which links different parts of sentences of large units of discourse; for example, the cross-referencing function of pronouns, articles and some types of adverbs as in:

The man went to town. However, he did not stay long…. Here, 'he' refers to 'the man'.

Considering the function of this linguistic element, it won't be an understatement to state that a text looks beyond words and strings of fragmented sentences because it focuses more on cohesion and coherence that is afforded by the text itself. This perhaps explains why Beaugrande & Dressler (1981) argue that the textuality of any text is in great doubt if it does not meet the seven standards of textuality: cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situationality, and intertextuality. From this checklist, it is evident that cohesion occupies the first position and remains paramount in holding different parts of a text together to make meaning. To this end, most literary writers of African origin use the written English textual mode together with the accompanying cohesive devices to share their various experiences.

In fact, Nnadi (2010) notes that there is enough evidence to prove that African literary writers are significantly making progress in the domain of Literature. This would not be possible if these writers pay less attention to the functional attributes of language and textuality. In other words, these recorded successes are attributed to their creative use of language which bears the burden of native experience. Just as Orabueze (2016) would say "language can be used to create various scenes and to paint the mental pictures of war, suffering, crime etc." (Lecture notes on stylistics). These writers, to a very large extent, paint the pictures of their different experiences using cohesive devices inherent in the texts.

In another development, Jibrin (2012) establishes the fact that there are language complexities in Anglophone Africa where multiple native languages are competing for recognition together with what he calls "exo-normative languages"- English, French and Arabic. Just as people in these regions use English as a second language; so do literary writers exercise some level of dexterity in English to create texts that tell their stories and project their messages; considering the fact that they are either bi or multi-lingual users. It is in the light of this background that Kaine Agary, a Nigerian born writer of prose fiction and Amma Darko, a Ghanaian born literary writer who Jibrin (2012) classifies as writers who use the indigenous English together with cohesion in their novels to express their local sensibilities; twist the English language skillfully to project the practical messages of male dominance/women subjugation, women emancipation and empowering in their novels: *Yellow-Yellow* and *Faceless* respectively. Jibrin (2012) goes a bit further to reiterate that it is obvious that mastering a second/foreign language constitutes a problem to the user but using it in fictional prose to express local sensibilities constitutes more problems. The focus of the study, therefore, is to explore linguistically how Agary and Darko deploy cohesive devices in their individual texts to project meanings.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study adopted the systemic textlinguistic theory propounded from Halliday's systemic functional linguistics and expanded by Adajere (1992). This approach is a fusion of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Textlinguistics. Halliday (1994:19) argues that Systemic Functional Linguistics is a theory of language for making meanings which he terms "language as a semiotic system." Textlinguistics, on the other hand, is the systematic study of the language of any text __ be it written or spoken __ literary or non-literary, irrespective of its size (Jibrin, 2012).

Systemic textlinguistics is an approach to study of text (spoken or written, literary or non-literary) that was developed from Halliday's systemic functional linguistics (SFL) and text-linguistics developed in 1970s. The frontier of systemic text-linguistics was extended by a text-linguist, Adajere (1992) who was inspired greatly by the works of van Dijk (1972) and de Beaugrande & Dressler (1981). Adejare did not see systemic textlinguistics as another branch of textlinguistics but as a kind of text-linguistic study of text using the systemic functional linguistic (SFL) approach, since SFL is a theory of a resource of making meaning.

According Adejare (1992: 6), the text is a unit of language that has been used in specific context by a text producer with the purpose of communicating a message through the use of the linguistic signs existing within a language semiotic universe. Halliday & Metthiessen (2014) add that language could be interpreted by reference to semiotic habitat. Adejare (1992) contends that a text can either belong to prime order text type or second order text type, considering their situational factors. The 'literary text' belongs to the second order text type. According to him, this text type is made up of three main levels of meanings where the message can be projected. The three levels include: primitive order level, the prime order level and second order level. According to him, the levels are determined by the combination of formal meaning with the two situational components: the simple situation and the complex situation, which are operational in the second order text. Adejare's simple and complex situations are significantly related to Halliday's context of situation. Halliday sums up the context of situation into field, tenor and mode of discourse. Halliday & Metthiessen (2004) posit that the combination of field, tenor and mode values determine different uses of language. Adejare (1992) goes further to explain that the primitive level is the component where primitive linguistic meanings are decoded. Primitive meanings are extracted from the phonological, grammatical and the lexical elements of this level. These meanings are said to be universal within a particular language's semiotic universe and they are commonly possessed by users of such a language. However, Adejare emphasizes that primitive meanings are not text meanings, since they do not project any known instance of reality. He goes on to give an example with "Lazarus is an albino" (p.7). This sentence cannot be said be maximally interpreted because of its ambiguous nature. In fact, it is looked at as a string of fragmented sentence that requires situation to make sense. In his words, he argues that:

> All that can be decoded from the text with any degree of certainty at this level of meaning is sign meaning. There is a subject, a predicator and compliment. The subject is a noun, is an equative copula, while the complement is an attribute. We need a real life situation to be able to disambiguate that primitive meaning (Adejare, 1992: 7).

The above excerpt implies that primitive meaning can only be realized if it is used in context of situation. This also agrees with Beaugrande & Dressler's (1981) 'situationality, the six standard of textuality.

Adejare (1992) further explains that to generate a prime order text meaning, the primitive meaning must combine with simple situation (thesis, immediate situation and wider situation) or what Halliday and Hasan (1976) called context of situation. These three situations come together to generate the prime order text meaning. Adejare (1992: 7) explains that "the presence of features revealing the speaker's linguistic and cultural background can help to determine the semiotic framework through which his utterance will be decoded." The second order level is the fictionalized situation which could also be regarded as complex situation. This is because it is the highest level of interpretation. Adejare emphasizes that the second order level of interpretation of message in systemic text-linguistics is a fictionalized situation. This deals with distorted realities. It is a situation within situation as such it is regarded as the complex situation. The distortion in fictionalized situation may affect any of the elements of prime order level of meaning in the text. Thus phonology, grammar, lexis, immediate situation and wider situation may be distorted in the second order text (literary text) in order to project the author's intended message. For example, the pattern of phonology may be distorted to project meaning. All other elements may be distorted for the projection of messages. "The immediate situation can be distorted through a dislocation of sequence as in the use of the flashback technique where events are presented in an order different from their natural order of occurrence" (Adejare, 1992: 8). The wider situation may experience distortion via the use of semiotics of the writer's second language situation for fictionalization. Last but not the least, the linguistic component of the wider situation may be distorted by the author if he makes the character metaphor to switch code into the language or dialect which he knows.

3. PROJECTION AND PROCEDURE

In systemic text linguistics, one of the factors that is considerably important in the identification of either literary idiolect or literary dialect, is 'projection'. Adejare (1992) argues that the notion of projection must be used at every process of linguistic analysis in order to avoid the need to analyze every linguistic structure in text as the theory requires us to do. Projection is a systemic text linguistic concept that holds that in any text, the linguistic structure conveying the message projected at different levels are evenly distributed throughout the text. This concept (projection) enables the text-analyst to make a selection from the multiplicity of data in the text without necessarily going through all the linguistic elements or properties of the text. We, therefore, adopt this concept as the basis for the selection of features to be analyzed with the conviction that the selected features can represent the totality of the linguistic properties, elements or features used in the texts to project the text's massages.

'Procedure' is another systemic text linguistic concept that is used in the selection of data in this study. This concept helps the analyst to identify the common features of language used by individual author (literary idiolect) or those by group authors (literary dialect). Adejare (1992) terms 'procedure' as a multi-stage operation because the analyst is expected to start from one stage to another. For example the analyst is expected to start with the analysis of individual text to determine the projected messages by each of them. The analyst who is interested in a writer's literary idiolect will first and foremost analyze all the texts produced by the same writer before scanning for their common linguistic features for analysis. However, an analyst who is interest in texts produced by different authors will first examine thoroughly the message each author is trying to project. Secondly, the peculiar linguistic features of each of this text will be identified and analyzed and finally, the common linguistic features used by these authors will be identified and analyzed. This study belongs to the latter because it looks at linguistic description of two texts: Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* and Darko's *Faceless.*

Conclusively, the concepts also holds that the features selected for analysis are believed to represent adequately the linguistic properties used in projecting the messages of the texts by the author since it is practically impossible to identify all the linguistic features common to them.

4. ANALYTICAL PROCEDURE

The data of this study were extracted from the selected texts and analyzed in accordance to the provisions of systemic text linguistic approach. Much has been discussed on the theoretical section about the workings of this approach. We are, therefore, reminded that the text, according to Jibrin (2012), is a unit of language used by the author in a context that is specific, with the aim to communicate using linguistic signs that do not exist in vacuum; rather, these signs exist in the semiotic universe of the language. With this, we say that the analysis was a functional one because attention was given to context. In specific terms, considering the scope of this study, the text analysis only covered the primitive order level of meaning. So we consider the special properties of language such cohesive devices under the level of lexis in this analysis. These properties are discernable in the projection of the messages of all the texts studied.

5. SELECTION OF TEXTS

The choice of Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* and Darko's *Faceless* was informed by the researcher's desire to investigate the linguistic manifestations of texts produced by contemporary female novelists who belong to the canon of Anglophone literary tradition. As contemporary Anglophone female writers, their texts are qualified for selection. Secondly, the researcher has a strong conviction that there are linguistic features that are common to both texts which could be interpreted using some form of simple or wider situations; Agary's text (Nigeria) and Darko's text (Ghana) are selected to confirm or refute this conviction. More so, the researcher gives priority to the selection of texts (novels) produced by female writers in West Africa, which have not been subjected to serious linguistic readings; both texts are, therefore, selected on this basis. Finally, most researchers who worked on systemic text linguistics concentrated more on literary idiolect of the author; for example, Adejare (1992), Obuo (2015) etc. This selection is seen as a deviation from the traditional practice and following Jibrin's (2012) method of selection. This study is, therefore, a literary dialectal study.

6. ANALYSIS OF DATA

The novel's message is projected at the primitive order level under lexis. At this level, the message of the novel was discussed first; then, cohesive devices such as coordinate conjunctions, transitory word, personal reference and ellipsis were discussed subsequently.

6.1 The message of text 1 (*Yellow-Yellow)*

Oil exploration is the major commercial activity in the Niger Delta, Nigeria. This is because the oil boom had attracted many foreign and local investors to the region; thereby opening many golden opportunities to graduates and non-graduates to attain economic emancipation. Amid this oil boom, there was poverty and confusion. Vibrant, young and energetic women who were struggling for self-determination and economic freedom met their pitfalls when they were trying to have their own pieces of the national cake. In all these, it was no longer strange to hear that some of these girls were being ripped off of their prides and

innocence by men; especially, foreign investors. This is the situation Bibi, Zilayefa's mother finds herself in when she leaves for Port Harcourt, Nigeria to pursue her dreams at the age of eighteen. Even though the African society has made it look like a norm for women to depend on men for their financial and emotional needs. However, it is no crime if women are financially and materially independent. Moreover, it is indisputable that love is a beautiful thing and women dish out sincere love from their heart of hearts but sometimes; it leaves the them in a state of depression when the man in question does the 'disappearing act', leaving his own 'seeds' to germinate in her. After nine months of toiling with blood and sweat; an upgraded specie is produced under the tutelage or mentorship of one parent (woman) whose own dream is aborted for the sake of this. This is exactly the pains Bibi experiences before and after Zilayefa is born. Bibi's door is shut, and this left Zilayefa's door opened.

Meanwhile, the struggle for self-identity, redemption of self-image and self-realization of girls with mixed parentage in the rich Niger-Delta is the thesis of *Yellow-Yellow*. The writer, through some character-metaphors, has brought to limelight the plight of women in the Niger-Delta. She also portrays men as the real reason why most women in Africa fail. This is because these men leave them more devastated than they already were, thereby compounding their problems. Most glaring, as portrayed by Agary, is female bonding which helps to loosen the tight grips of men and skyrocket them (women) to educational and socioeconomic empowerment.

6.2 Lexis

6.2.1 Cohesive devices

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976:13), "Cohesion accounts for the essential semantic relations whereby any passage of speech and writing is enabled to function as text." They go further to add that "cohesion is a semantic relation between one element and another in the text and some other element that is crucial to the interpretation of it" (p.8). Cohesion, is therefore, the surface structures that enable text to be linked mutually together in order to be coherent. In the text, some cohesive devices selected for discussion include:

The coordinate conjunction 'but'

The coordinate conjunction **'But'** is used by the author to show sharp contrasts in the language use; nevertheless, it is used to link the former sentence or clause to the latter in order to project the message of land degradation and environmental pollution and the marginalization of the people of the Niger Delta. The excerpt below illustrates this point:

> The community took the matter up with the oil company that owned the pipes **but** they suspected sabotage by youths and were not going to pay for the destruction that the pipes had caused (p. 4).

In the excerpt above, the author used the cohesive device 'but' to mutually link up the first clause to the second even though both clauses are in contrast with each other, they are carefully selected and crafted for the projection of the message mentioned above. It is, therefore, understood that the introduction of the coordinate 'but' by the author signifies negation which dampens the proposition of the first positive statement. By implication, the people's complaints would not be heard.

Another instance where the author deploys the contrast 'but' to project the message of the novel is in page 8. This device is used to juxtapose Bibi's current state and the future of Zilayefa. This is illustrated below:

Disillusioned, my mother went back to the village to face the shame of being an unwed mother with nothing **but** dreams about my future (p. 8).

African society treats unmarried mothers with little or no regard because it is believed that such women are the cause of their woes. However, society is so forgetful that women cannot get pregnant alone; Bibi's case is no exception. In all this disillusionment and shame, she still has a package of fruitful dreams for the child at her detriment. This cohesive device is appropriate and helps to echo the message of the novel.

The coordinate conjunction 'and'

The use of the coordinate conjunction **'and'** is also preponderant in the text. This is because it is used to join words, phrases and sentences of equal grammatical rank. We have selected just a few excerpts for examination of how they are used to show textual unity and also to project the text's message:

> Young boys threatened to rough up Amananaowei and his elders because rumours, probably true, had reached their ears that the Amananaowei and his elders had received monetary compensation, meant for the village, from the oil company and shared it amongst themselves (p.40).

It is gathered at the beginning of the story that crude oil had overrun many farmlands in the village (p. 3); and in page 4, it is claimed that the oil company responsible for the damage promises no monetary compensation. Generally, through this device, the audience is informed that those in the helms of affairs in the Niger Delta (Amananaowei and his elders) had collected these monetary compensations. Specifically, the coordinate conjunction 'and' in the excerpt above mutually links the two last sentences together; thereby fully explicating how the money is collected and shared by Amananaowei and his kinsmen. Through this device, corruption is projected.

Another message of corruption is projected using the coordinate conjunction "and" in the excerpt below:

> People did not call the police to settle disputes, and even on those rare occasions when they did and the matter was charged to court, there was so little confidence in fairness of justice that very few waited for the court's decision. The judges were so corrupt that a simple case would be adjourned over and over again until the litigants and their lawyers got the message and paid some bribe to the judge. Whoever acted quicker received a judgment in their favour (p. 106).

The coordinate conjunction 'and' gives the excerpt above a touch of textuality in that it appropriately joins words and sentences together for the sake of making meaning. For instance, the first two linkers "and" are used to join two sentences that ensure continuity: (i) Why people no longer invite the police to settle dispute (ii) what happens if police are invited. By implication, the police, a presupposed law enforcement agency, are technically corrupt. Worst still, is the nonchalant attitude of judges in the judicial system. This is explicated by the two last sentences joined together by the cohesive device 'and'. Through the use of this device, bribery and corruption in Nigeria's judicial system is projected.

Transitory word (however)

Another word of contrast used by the author to project the message of land degradation and pollution of the environment is the transitional word '**however'.** The excerpt below exemplifies this:

> And so it was that, in a single day my mother lost her main source of income. However, I think she had lost that land a long time ago, because each season yielded less than the season before (p. 4).

In the above excerpt, the transitional word 'however' naturally links up the first clause to the second. It does not matter if the first clause ends with a full-stop but what matters here is the continuation of the statement and the contrast that it bears. It is through this form of contrast that we are made to understand that from the inception of oil exploration and the harmful activities of the oil companies in the region that the lands and the rivers which serve as the main sources of their income have been lost completely. Agary, through the use of this cohesive device, reveals that the people of the Niger Delta lost their lands a long time ago but officially lost it with the spillage of oil in the land. This device has contributed immensely in projecting the message above.

Personal reference

A personal reference is another cohesive device deployed by the author to achieve textual unity in the novel, which in turn helps in the projection of the message. The first-person pronouns 'I' and 'my' are mentioned repeatedly throughout the text. It is important to emphasize at this point that the repetition of these pronouns does not carry special meaning in itself but its reference to one special character metaphor (Zilayefa), makes the message to stand out. Agary uses this technique to hold the text together. There are many instances in the text but we shall take the ones below as samples:

> During **my** second to the last year in secondary school, one of the crude oil pipes that ran through my village broke and spilled oil over several hectares of land, **my** mother's farm included. **I** was at home that day when she returned shortly after leaving for farm (p. 3).

Another instance:

> …oil from where? **I** was walking behind her, and then **I** heard people shouting.

In this particular excerpt, the pronouns '1' and 'my' are used to refer to the same person (Zilayefa) who was already mentioned in the first excerpt above. In short, all the first-person singular pronouns and the possessive 'my' mentioned or repeated in this text refer to Zilayefa (Yellow-Yellow) as their antecedent. This is also an indication that the story is told from the first-person viewpoint. Words are used together to create text, so they fall back on each other to achieve cohesion and coherence, as we have seen in the excerpts above. To further clarify this, let's revisit these structures: "…so I was home…" and "I was walking behind her…" The first structure precedes the second, and so does the use of the pronoun 'I'. The repetition of the pronoun 'I' in the second excerpt is used to refer to the one previously mentioned. The author employs this usage to project the message of awareness of the danger of oil spillage in the region.

Lexical cohesion

Apart from the pronoun 'I', some words are repeated severally for the sake of emphasis. However, the words repeated are somewhat mutually linked up with one another in the production of this text; most importantly, they project the meaning of the text. The word 'oil' is introduced in the first chapter to connote both wealth and problem. Ordinarily, the people of this region are supposed to enjoy the benefits that come with oil exploration however, these same people are subjected to untold hardship because their farmlands and rivers are now destroyed and no compensation is paid or apology tendered. In chapter two, the word 'oil' is repeated to draw the readers' attention to the salient theme of the novel. To the majority of the people, the oil mentioned here does not denote wealth; to them, it is penury, misery and abortive dreams. This is illustrated below:

> The day my mother's farmland was overrun by **crude oil** was the day her dream for me started to wither, but she carried on watering **it.** The **black oil** that spilled that day swallowed my mother's crop and unraveled the threads that held together her fantasies for me (p 10).

It is noted in the excerpt above that the word 'oil' is mentioned twice. Black oil and crude oil are one of a kind. The author deliberately uses 'black' attributively to qualify the noun 'oil' to connote what Adejare (1992) calls environmental apostasy. Agary knows that the adjective 'black', within the semiotic universe of language, signifies evil. The oil that overruns Bibi's farm is black, and so is the danger it has caused. Funny enough, the same 'black oil' that has impoverished the region is used to enrich pockets of selfish individuals and beautify other States. We will not help but conclude that lexical cohesion has contributed greatly to projecting the message of the marginalization of the people of the Niger Delta.

Ellipsis

The use of ellipsis is found to be prevalent in the text. They are deployed by the author to achieve cohesion in the novel. Some words are only understood in context but omitted or explicitly not stated in words. The excerpt below illustrates this:

> I was as interested in these scholarships as I was in finishing school, but my mother saw this as a way to achieve her dream of my success.

It could be noticed that the word 'interested' is omitted in the second clause; however, the first proposition provides a rudimentary background which helps readers to understand the meaning of the second one and it helps to project Zilayefa's desire to complete her secondary education and proceed to the university. However, students' scholarship which is part of the little benefit meant for Ijaw and Itsekeri students in the Niger Delta are often times not provided for them because the procedures involved are so rigorous that the rural dwellers such as Zilayefa and others find it difficult to access it. Technically, the message of marginalization is projected.

Another instance:

> Sunday evenings were always quiet in my village, and that evening was no exception. I was sitting on the porch outside my mother's house, enjoying the evening air, when I saw Sergio strolling down the path that passed the house (p.21).

In this excerpt, the word 'Sunday' is omitted but it is understood. The message of quietude and serenity of village life is projected through this device.

6.3 The message of text 2 *Faceless*

The fictionalized situation of the novel deals with the pathetic story of Fufu, a character metaphor who experiences the harsh realities of street life in modern Ghanaian society. Baby T, a sixteen-year-old daughter of Maa Tsuru, is forced into prostitution out of Maa Tsuru's fear that evil men such as Poison, Onko and Kpakpo who already had sexually assaulted Baby T, might continue in their assaults.

The thesis of *Faceless* is, therefore, signified by the title of the novel. The word is used in the novel to suggest a person whose face is mutilated, burnt or disfigured beyond recognition. The character metaphor who suffers this fate is Baby T. The concern of this novel, therefore, is the plight of children, especially the female ones, who roam the streets of Accra, Ghana in order to fend for their families. Some of the girls, just like Baby T, sometimes meet their sudden death.

In summary, the message of the novel is that most male parents of low economic status in Africa, especially in Ghana, have since refused to take responsibility for their respective families; thereby exposing their children to the bitter experience of street life.

6.3.1 Cohesive devices used in the text

Just as in text 1, the author uses cohesion to project the text's message. She uses a good number of these devices to link up the text to achieve meaning. Ellipsis and references are, however, discussed.

Ellipsis

Elliptical sentences are preponderant in the novel. The following excerpts have been selected for discussion:

i. …Fofo frowned. Her unasked question was obvious.

Maa Tsuru went on. "Since she was the one I entrusted Baby T to, she…

That the body behind the hairdressing salon…" fresh tears choked the rest of the word (p. 23).

ii. "Creamy is giving me headaches again. The mechanic said…"

Kabria… can we talk about this after work? (p. 32).

iii. "Government!" the girl cut in (p. 47).

iv. "Sickining! "Dina yelled 'Only a man with a low down soul would bundle a mentally ill woman into the bush and rape her. A stinky mad woman? Who is already… (p. 68).

In the first excerpt above, the last sentence is not completed by the character metaphor. The author uses a sign of ellipsis (…) to show that. It is, however, understood that what she meant is that the body that was found behind the blue kiosk is Baby T's corpse. This device is not only used to avoid the unnecessary repetition of word, phrases or sentences but it also plays a useful role in holding the text together. Conversely, the author projects the message of trust, betrayal and economic apostasy. In excerpt (ii), the last sentence is still not complete but understood in context. But before the completion of the utterance by Kabria; Adede, her husband; a typical African husband, had already suppressed her; and as a typically African wife, Kabria needed not to insist. The message of modern women's subjugation is projected. The author does not make use of a sign of ellipsis in the third excerpt. The word 'Government'

is not a complete sentence but it is understood to mean that the character metaphor who uses it is seeking justice for the murder of her sister; the justice which the Ghanaian Government could not have given her. The message of injustices and lack of respect for human life in Ghanaian society is projected. The last sentence of the last excerpt is not complete however, the previous sentences have provided a clue as to what the last one suggests. The sentence could be completed in any of these ways: "A stinky mad woman who is already **sick, abnormal, mentally weak etc.**" The author projects the message of wickedness, callousness and barbarism in Ghana and other African countries.

Lexical reference

The most noticeable cohesive device used in the novel by the author to achieve textuality is the reference. The three books of the novel refer to the same character metaphors in the novel. For instance, it is established in Book 1 that Baby T was brutally murdered. The author still references Baby T mentioned in Book 1 in Books 2 and 3. In the same vein, Fofo, the heroine of the novel is repeated severally in the novel not only for the purpose of textuality but also for the projection of message of the text. For instance, on pages 2, 7, 18, 27 etc. the name of this character is mentioned to send across a particular message. The names of other characters are also mentioned severally and they are logically and sequentially organized to project the meaning of the text. Names such as Odarley, Maa Tsuru, Kabria, Poison, Macho, Kwei, Kpakpo etc. are repeated to achieve unity in the text.

Apart from names of persons, names of places are also repeated. For example, Sodom and Gomorrah is first mentioned in page one to refer to the inner city of Accra, where all kinds of atrocity take place. This particular lexical item is virtually repeated in all the major chapters in the text to express meaning. So, no matter the context at which the word is used, its semantic import suggests filth, decay and corruption just as the one earlier mentioned.

Personal reference

It is said that proper names should not be repeated unnecessarily to avoid monotonous redundancy. This rule was taken into consideration by Darko in using personal pronoun whose antecedent refers to Fofo, the heroine in the novel. An example is found in chapter one, page one, where the author writes:

> **She** was smiling still in her dream and doing it comfortably in the toilet with a roof when **she** felt a light pressure on her breasts under the weight of a pair of hands…

The third person pronoun "she" was repeated in the extract above even without mentioning the antecedent, it is however understood that the pronoun 'she' refers to Fofo, the innocent character who is exposed to all manner of evil and abuse due to parental irresponsibility. The reference 'she' runs all through the text. The usage, is therefore, deliberate because it helps to hold the textuality of the novel together.

Similarly, on page 10, the author introduces Kabrial, a character metaphor who works day in and day out to make sure she keeps her work and family together. But despite all these, her husband does not think that she is doing enough. Technically, Kabrial represents women who are experiencing neo-slavery in Africa. So, through the use of personal references 'she' and 'her', Kabrial plight is exposed:

> …The mother, wife, worker and battered car owner that **she** was, no day passes that Kabrial didn't wonder how come the good Lord created a day to be made up of only twenty-four hours, because from dawn to dusk, domestic schedules gobbled **her** up;

office duties ate **her** alive, her three children devoured her with their sometimes realistic and many times very unrealistic demands… (p. 10).

The pronouns used in the excerpt above refer to Kabrial as their antecedents, thereby unifying the whole text meaningfully. It is, therefore, important to state at this point that it is not in every occasion that proper names are supposed to be mentioned or repeated. The personal pronouns are used instead as references to the right antecedents in the text. Each pronoun used in the text makes reference to the noun it is supposed to; thereby creating variation in the use of language. Since the story of the novel is told using the third person or omniscient narrator, the third person singular pronouns appear most frequently; apart from the dialogues which some characters are engaged in. In a nutshell, we may conclude that the author is exceptional in handling cohesive devices in the text to make meaning.

6.4 Summary of the findings

In text 1, the author makes creative use of cohesive devices such as coordinate conjunctions (but, and), the transitory word 'however', personal and lexical references and ellipsis to project the message of ecological genocide and marginalization of the people of the oil region. For instance, the lexical repetition of the nominal and pronominal items 'oil' and 'I' in that order were dominant in Agary's text. Hence, these linguistic items were used skillfully in the text to project environmental degradation in the Niger Delta. It is through the use of these devices that we are made to understand that Zilayefa's future dream is at stake. Words such as oil spillage, crude oil, black oil, Oil Company etc. are repeated severally to mutually link up the surface structure of the text to the overall linguistic organization of the text in order to project the message of environmental degradation in the Niger Delta. Also, via this cohesive device, the message of corruption and human apostasy is projected. In the same vein, in text 2, the author deploys more ellipses and references to project the message of mistrust, betrayal and economic apostasy. More so, the message of injustice and lack of respect for human life is projected using these cohesive devices. Darko uses the mark of ellipsis (…) to show the incompleteness of sentences. By and large, Darko deployed more elliptical sentences than Agary did to echo the message of the novel *Faceless*.

7 CONCLUSION

The study has demonstrated that systemic textlinguistics is a viable approach in the study of literary texts; especially, novels produced by African writers. Unlike the traditional stylistic approaches that examine linguistic features at word and sentence levels, systemic textlinguistics examines texts holistically taking into consideration all the linguistic nuances in the semiotic universe of the text that are used by the authors in the projection of the meanings. Therefore, we make bold to say that the authors give special attention to cohesion in the projection of the texts' messages.

Finally, it is also demonstrated that Anglophone female-authored texts could be described or theorized using systemic textlinguistics. This is because every second-order text is seen as a communicative occurrence in which the writer tries to pass a message to the readers. So, to interpret the text explicitly, the semiotic variation of the text must be considered. Hence, it is on premise of this assertion that the authors significantly make use of cohesive devices in their novels for both sense and artistic effects.

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