

Stylistic devices used in communicating ethical violation and punishment in N. Okediadi's *Ihe onye metere*

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ARTICLE INFO	Abstract
Keywords: <i>The onye metere, Ethical violation, Punishment</i> ©2026 Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International 	Abstract The study focuses on stylistic devices used in communicating ethical violation and punishment in Nkechi Okediadi's <i>Ihe onye metere</i>. The objectives of the study were to identify and analyse the stylistic devices used in communicating ethical violation and punishment in the selected text. Document observation of <i>Ihe onye metere</i> was used for the retrieval of primary data for analysis. Secondary data was sourced through the internet and other sources. Expert purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the text for the study. The study revealed that Nkechi Okediadi used linguistic devices like figures of thought and non-linguistic devices like symbol that are appropriate to communicate ethical violation and punishment in her play. The study concluded that ethical violation and punishment affect both the culprits and non-culprits in the society and needed to be communicated to the audience/readers using appropriate stylistic devices for aesthetics, interest, and better understanding. It was recommended that the study be carried out in other related dramatic Igbo texts.

Introduction

Literature is a mirror of life and society and the way people live their life in the society. Ethics is one of the vital elements of the society. Ethics means rules and regulations guiding the society for peaceful co-existence. People often violate the societal ethics by not conforming to it. In drama, the playwrights choose the words and the language of the play(diction) to express their feelings and experiences about what is happening in the society. They use language to create the dramatic world and create actors to perform the desired roles to achieve the artistic objectives. Drama is the literary form designed for the theatre in which actors/actresses take the role of the character, perform the indirect role or action and utter the written or unwritten dialogue(Abrams, 1981). Nkechi Okediadi used her drama text, *Ihe onye metere* to address the issue of ethical violation and punishment in the society. This study sets out to identify and analyse the stylistic devices she used in achieving her objective or goal of her artistic writing.

There are basic elements of drama such as setting, subject matter, theme, act and scene, costume, cast, epilogue, dialogue, flashback, dialogue, dramatic monologue, soliloquy, aside, prompter, stage director, humour, tragic flaw, closet, interlude(Asika, 2015). In *Poetics* (Nwabueze, 2011), Aristotle points out and arranged the six elements of drama in their order of prominence: plot, character, thought, diction, music, and spectacle. In discussing the order of importance of the elements of drama, Agoro (2001:35) considers plot, character and thought as basic ingredients. However, he avers that:

In order to convey these elements to an audience or reader, the playwright has only two means: sound and spectacle. Since the spectator takes in a theatrical experience almost wholly through the ear and the eye, sound embraces language, music and other aural effects; spectacle includes all the visual elements of a production.

Nwabueze (2011) maintains that these characteristics combine together to reveal the unique meaning of a play. A playwright uses his own unique style to write in different ways that is suitable to him, using a lot of dialogues blended with stylistic devices that are both clear and appropriate to communicate and convey his meaningful ideas to his audience or readers.

Methodology

Conceptual Review

Style

Style is a writer's unique way of saying things. In the views of Georges de Buffon cited by Asika (2015:94), "the style is the man himself." The definition suggests that a person's literary style reflects his or her character or personality. But a writer's style does not always entail the totality of a writer's personality because a writer writes in response to a particular issue in society and such issue will obviously demand a type of style of writing which does not in reality reflect what a writer believes in or does. Writers write in different ways that are suitable to them and however way a writer writes or tells his/her story is the writer's style.

Other components of style grow out of a writer's diction (choice of words), imagery, syntax/variety, and organizational structure among others. One cannot discuss style significantly without discussing language – that is the diction, the choice of words of a writer.

A writer could choose to be simple, obscure or shuttle in between depending on his targeted audience or readers. Whatever the choice, however, an author's diction needs to be both clear and appropriate to satisfy his aesthetic needs and communicate and convey his meaning to his readers or audience (Nwabueze, 2011).

Okediadi(2002) is motivated by the aesthetic needs to beautify her work with some stylistic devices that are both suitable and appropriate in showcasing ethical violation and punishment in her play. Literary artists use stylistic or literary device as a writing technique to express ideas, convey meaning and also highlight important themes in their artistic works. Stylistic devices are classified into linguistic and non-linguistic devices.

Lekin (2015) asserts that writing would be plain and shallow without figurative language. She lists the following 31 stylistic devices (figurative elements): adnomination, allegory, alliteration, allusion, anaphora (epiphoras), antithesis, apostrophe, assonance (consonance), cataphora, climax (anticlimax), charactonym, ellipsis, euphemism, irony, merism, metalepsis, metaphor, metonymy, onomatopoeia, oxymoron, parallelism (chiasmus), paranthesis, personification, pun, rhetorical question, simile, synecdoche, tautology and zeugma. Obidiebube (2020) grouped the stylistic devices or figurative elements listed above as linguistic devices. Diction is also a linguistic device. Linguistic devices identified in the present study were classified into three groups: figures of speech (rhetoric question, repetition, parallelism, exhortation and apostrophe), figures of thought (proverb, personification, metaphor, metonymy, euphemism, hyperbole, simile, synecdoche, idiom, wellerism, allusion, irony, antithesis), figures of sound (alliteration and assonance). Non-linguistic stylistic devices that were identified in this study are: the structure of the plays, symbol and symbolism, adaptation from other great works, use of dreams/ominous signs, use of prediction/prophesy, use of spiritual transcendence (use of native doctors, ritual), exile/movement, use of confession and use of letter writing.

Linguistic devices

Language is an indispensable tool in the life of people for communicating their ideas, thoughts, emotions, etc with one another. It is essential in the society, and in the creation of literary world of art in literature as Roger (1971) rightfully observes that language is central in everything we do in the in the society. In his own opinion, Ngara (1992:10) sees language as "the thing by which we judge the success of the author". Uzochukwu (1990:40) observes that aestheticism is carefully

abstracted in any piece of literature through the use of language. He maintains that because language is very important in literature, the study of literature is based on how a literary artist uses language to achieve aestheticism. Uzochukwu further posits that although drama could be read out like novel or poem, the aim of drama is more explicit in its stage presentation which also involves language. Okanume(2019) informs that Language is a creative tool of radiation as well as critical tool of analysis in literature.

In her explanation, Okanume (2019) emphasises that many people can speak and write, but not all the people have the mastery of the art of language use. She concludes that this is why one speech could be more powerful and captivating than the other, or a piece of writing, more beautiful and inviting than the other. Her information here borders on style. Style is a particular manner or method of expression in writing or speech, especially one regarded as good. According to Taylor (1981) in Okanume (2019:90), style is “an all-persuasive influence on a work of literature and it is without any doubt, the most difficult element of composition to analyse because of its infinite possibilities.” He further avers that style informs all other considerations, giving texture to the whole and influencing the reader’s value-judgment on action, characters and setting.

Linguistic devices are words, utterances or expressions that convey a meaning different from the literal one. A literary artist uses words as building block in forming out his style. He uses his description in choosing words (diction) that will be very accurate and appropriate in his type of writing in order to make his message clear and better for people to understand and appreciate his work. Playwright of the selected play made use of language in various forms to beautify her play. The figurative elements in the study are grouped into figures of speech, figures of thought, figures of sound and diction.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive survey design. It is used to gather data about varying subjects to know the extent to which different conditions can be obtained among these subjects (Zumuehlin, 1981). Descriptive survey according to Ali (2006) and Nworgu (2015) is concerned with the collection and description of data from a given population in a systematic way. The design is appropriate for the study since it is concerned with collection, description and interpretation of data.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample for this study was made up of one Igbo play selected purposively from the contemporary Igbo drama written from 1974 to 2002. Expert sampling as one of the purposive sampling techniques is more appropriate for the study. Expert sampling is a form of purposive sampling used when research requires one to capture knowledge rooted in a particular form of expertise (Patton, 2002). This will enable the researcher to collect information about Igbo ethical violation and punishment in the Igbo play, as well as facts and points relevant to the study.

Method of Data Collection

The primary data for the study were collected through document observation or intent reading of text related to the topic under study for the retrieval of the primary data or corpus for the analysis. Secondary data were sourced from electronically-stored materials and from other literary materials like journals, research papers, seminar papers and relevant conference papers.

Method of Data Analysis

The primary data collected through intent reading of the selected text was analysed paying proper attention to the contribution of the style to the atmosphere of the play. Choice of words were

considered. Other stylistic devices like metaphors, similes,, structure of the play, etc were identified and analysed.

Textural Analysis

In the present study, textural analysis will be grouped into two: Linguistic and non-linguistic devices.

Linguistic Devices

Linguistic devices identified in this study are grouped into figures of speech, and figures of thought.

Figures of Speech

In literature, words are used in unusual manner for special effects, such as lending vividness or heightening the beauty of style (Nnabuihe, 2010). In the selected contemporary Igbo plays for this very study, there are various uses of language which “deviate from literal language which are meant to provide new literal language, provide new effects or fresh insights into the themes being discussed” (Nnabuihe, 2010:243).

A figure of speech is a deviation from the ordinary use of words in order to increase its effectiveness. It is also known as a rhetorical figure because it produces a rhetorical effect. It deviates a statement from its real meaning or common usage to create a new required effect. It usually emphasises, embellishes or clarifies language in both written and oral form (Vedantu, n.d). They are devices or utterances that have no deep meaning or deep structure different from a surface structure of the utterances or devices.

Rhetorical Question

Rhetorical question refers to question that does not necessarily demand an answer. According to Nnabuihe (2010:259), it is “a question put forward in an argument, conversation or dialogue to create effect, enhance emotion, elicit sympathy and to lay emphasis”

Okedjadi used rhetoric question in *IOM*

Uchenna: Ọnwụ! Gịni ka nna m mere gị
i ji gbuo ya na-erughị eru. Ọnwụ! Ogbu mmadu
mgbe ndu na-atọ ya uto (page 29, emume nke
atọ, nkiri nke mbu).

Death! What did my father do
to you that made you to kill him
untimely? Death! Killer of person at his
prime of life (page 29, act three, scene
one).

In Uchenna’s lamentation about the death of his father, Ogbonnaya, Uchenna personified death in the rhetoric question giving it the attribute or qualities of human being. Uchenna is lamenting on the untimely death of his father, killed as a result of ethical violation by Okezie in violating the principles of land ownership.

Figures of Thought

Figures of thought identified in the study are itemised and discussed

Proverbs

Proverb according to Holman (1960:42) is a sentence or phrase which briefly and strikingly expresses some recognized truth or shrewd observation about practical life and which has been preserved through oral tradition. Proverbs according to Abrams and Harpham (2005:8) are ‘short, pithy statements of widely accepted truths about everyday life’. Proverbs are popular but short sayings that contain wisdom and warning (Meludu, 2014). It is also expressed and transmitted in written

literature. Proverbs are used by writers to enrich language or style and also for purposes of clarity, enforcement and embellishment of their works.

Okedjadi (2002) made use of proverbs in her play, *IOM*

Ahudiya: Chetakwa na o bu a bia ka a bia mere na awo epughị odu. Matakwa na e mee ngwa, e meghara odachi (page 5, emume nke mbu, nkiri nke mbu).

Remember that delay is dangerous. Know that a stitch in time saves nine (page 5, act one, scene one).

Ahudiya used the above proverb to let her husband know the implication of delay in going to Okezie, his brother for them to share their father's properties. Okedjadi also made use of proverb cluster in her play.

Ahudiya: Umụ m agwo nọ n'akirika ugbo a. Osisi ka a si na a ga-egbu o kwuru mana e were mma gafee mmadu n'azu ya na oso a neme. Anya unu niile ghere oghe. O ji oso agbakwu ogo amaghi na ogo bu onwu (page 34, emume nke ato, nkiri nke abuo).

My children, trouble is around the corner now. A tree hears that it will be killed and stood still but human beings flee if matchet is taken behind them. Let your eyes be open. He who hasten into fight (war) does not know that fight (war) is death (page 71, act three, scene two).

Ahudiya used the above proverb cluster to speak to her children and warned them to be very careful about the impending danger around them after she has rejected Okezie's request to remarry her according to the culture of the land.

Metaphor

Abrams and Harpham (2005:102) defined metaphor as "a word or expression that in literal usage denotes one kind of thing applied to distinctly different kinds of thing, without asserting a comparison." Ezugu (1998:58) sees metaphor as "a compressed simile which does not make use of "as" or "like". Nnabuihe (2010:243) sees metaphor as "a figure of speech in which a term or phrase is applied to something to which it is not literally applicable, in order to suggest a resemblance."

Okedjadi (2002) made use of metaphor in her play.

Okezie: Ekeogba Diokpa! Anu kporo nku na-eju onu. Gaagaanogwu (page 50, emume nke ano, nkiri nke abuo).

Okezie used the above metaphors for Ahaotu, his friend from Umukem, the leader of the hired assassins (other members of the group are Okoro and Ahazie) he paid to kill Uchenna because he knows the evil and atrocities they are capable of committing. He also knows that they are capable of doing the work for which he called them.

Euphemism

Euphemism is the use of a word, phrase or an expression to substitute or replace another statement that would seem offensive, rude, unpleasant or harsh to make it mild, polite or harmless. Ezugu (1998:64) informs that euphemism is the figure of speech in which "direct and blunt" statements are deliberately avoided. They are often regarded as "lexical swap" as the same meaning is expressed in several other words. Abrams and Harpham (2005:88) describe euphemism as "an offensive expression used in place of a blunt one that is felt to be disagreeable or embarrassing."

Okedjadi (2002) made use of euphemism in her play.

Chinyere: O bu ihe di na ngada nwaanyi ozọ na-echu gi ura (page 37, emume nke ano, nkiri nke mbu).

It is what is in another woman's laps that is making you sleepless (page 37, act four, scene one)

Simile

<https://ojs.universityedu.org/index.php/anjosol/index>

Okediadi (2002) opens the stage with Ahudiya being worried and angry about the attitude of Okezie and his wife towards her each time she goes to harvest crops from their inherited lands because they have not been shared. She reminds her husband about sharing the land. Okezie and his wife are violating the societal ethics by harassing Ahudiya each time she goes to their land and she was not happy about it. She decides to call Ogbonna's attention.

Ahudiya: ... <i>Ọ dị ihe m chọrọ i chetara gị.</i> <i>Ihe ahụ bụ ihe gbasara ike ihe nna unu</i> (page 4, <i>emume nke mbụ, nkiri nke mbụ).</i>	... There is something I want to remind you about. It is about sharing your father's properties (page 4, act one, scene four).
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Okediadi creates suspense in the play and sustains the interest of the audience or readers by starting in the middle of the narrative. Ahudiya brings up the issue of ethical violation by Okezie in the play concerning their inherited plots of land.

Symbol

In the opinion of Meerloo (1952:220) cited in Igbokwe (2013:25), "symbol refers to a material object having cultural significance and as well as the capacity to attract a response upon which interaction can be organised." Symbol usually stands for or suggests something else by means of relationship, association or convention. This means that symbols are tangible and visible and they are culture specific as they are manufactured by man in his culture area to stand for and represent something different from the objects or materials being used or referred to.

A symbol is a communicative element intended to represent or stand for a complex entity such as person, object, group and idea (Obidiebube, 2011). It is a mark, sign, or word that indicates, or signifies or is understood as representing an idea, concept, object or relationship (Obidiebube, 2019). A symbol is a sign used to refer to meaning other than itself (Nnabuihe, 2010). Kanu cited in Okanume (2019:101) defines symbolic sign as "signs where the relationship between signifier and signified are purely conventional and culturally specific." Symbols are figurative because they compare or merge two unlike objects or entities in an unlike manner.

In this study, symbol is cultural specific communicative element (person, object or idea) intended to communicate meaning other than itself. Literary artists frequently use symbols in order to include special meaning for special effect in creating their literary work. Symbolism is the representation of a concept through symbols or underlying meanings or objects or qualities (Obidiebube, 2011). Symbolism refers to the use of symbols in writing (Nnabuihe, 2010). Nwaozuzu (2007:44) classifies symbols into two broad groups: public or universal symbols and private or local symbols. Public or universal symbols are those symbols that are generally known all over the world (a dove is generally known as a symbol of peace). Private or local symbols are peculiar to a particular locality or area or culture (kola is a symbol of hospitality in Igbo culture).

In the selected play, *ọji* (kola), *mmanya* (wine), *nzu* (kaolin) are symbolic. They represent goodwill among other things, in Igbo culture that is why they are used in receiving visitors to show hospitality. They are also used for rituals. In Igbo culture, the first thing one presents to his visitors is kola to show hospitality and goodwill.

Umunnakwe: <i>Ka anyị na Obiekwe jizie otu iko</i> <i>nyọ mmnanya, ka e wee kwusị okwu ala a</i> <i>(page 88, emume nke atọ).</i>	Let us drink with one cup with Obiekwe, to put an end to this land dispute (page 88, act three).
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Okediadi (2002) used symbol and symbolism in her play, *IOM*. *Mmanya* (drinks) and *ọji* (kola) are private symbols in Igbo culture used for well-being and hospitality but some times, people

apply intrigue in their usage and use them to harm other people. Ezemmiri is Okezie's friend and partner in crime. Okezie bought Ezemmiri over and they violated the societal ethics by poisoning unsuspecting Ogbonna (because of land) through drink presented to them by Ojiekwe in his house on the day he celebrated his son's completion of his course and return from abroad as a medical doctor. They used the occasion because it is a neutral ground, nobody can trace it to them or suspect them. They also took undue advantage of Ezemmiri's position as one of the sharers in the occasion to poison Ogbonnaya.

Ogbonnaya: Ọ bụ gini na-arụ m afọ nke a? Chei! Chi moo! Afọ arụgbuola m oo! Ọ bụ nri m riri ka ọ bụ mmanya m nuru? (page 27, emume nke atọ, nkiri nke mbụ).

What is aching my stomach? Chei! My God oo! My stomach is aching me oo! Is it the food I ate or the wine I drank? (page 27, act three, scene one).

Ezemmiri poisoned Ogbonnaya through wine and he died.

Use of Dreams and Ominous Signs

Nature has a way of communicating to human beings through signs, signals and symbols. Nwadike (1999b:59) informs that "doubts, fears, worries, disappointments, failures, etc. are readings from the barometer of the spirit, good in themselves to make us engage in the right gear and adjust to the right speed for the journey." Before the mishaps enumerated above get to us, the ominous gives a suggestion or warning about something bad that is about to happen.

Some playwrights make use of dreams in their creative works of art. In most plays in which dreams occur, they have predictive value. This means that dreams tend to warn us that some events we do not anticipate are going to take place. In this way, the audience or reader is prepared for a particular change or action in the play (Anagbogu, n.d.)

Closely related to the predictive value of dreams are the statements made by characters which are also predictive by their nature. The dramatic value of predictive statements lies in their ability to provide suspense in the play thereby sustaining interest of the audience or readers as the play progresses.

In their various drama texts, Igbo playwrights make use of "marked time period to get across certain actions ascribed to certain characters" according to Nnabuihe (2010:198). In some cases, natural phenomena like cloud, rain, thunder, lightning and sounds of ominous birds (like owl, *kukunkuo*) play significant roles. Sudden appearances of some creatures like python (in great number in one's compound, *edi* (civet), bees (in large number in one's compound) at unusual places and times are relevant. Igbo people believe that such unusual phenomena, more often than not, are indications or designs of danger.

Okedjadi (2002) made use of dream in her play, *IOM*. On the morning of the day Ogbonnaya was to honour Ojiekwe's invitation, Ahudiya had a bad dream like Calponia in Shakespeare's (1959) *Julius Ceasar* on the day her husband, Julius Caesar was to go to the capitol where the conspirators were waiting to kill him. Ahudiya narrated her dream to her husband, Ogbonnaya. But like Julius Caesar, Ogbonnaya would have been saved if he had listened to his wife but he neglected and disregarded the people's belief about nature's warning to him through his wife not to attend the function at Ojiekwe's house. Ogbonnaya's refusal to heed to the warning from the ominous sign furthers the plot and moved it to another dimension.

Ogbonnaya: (Dachapu, kpoo ikikere ochi) Ahudiya nwunye m ... nro umunwaanyi! Hapu ihe ahụ. Ọ dighi ihe ga-eme. Nke a bụ nro nkiti (page 24, emume nke atọ, nkiri nke mbụ).

(Laughed uncontrollably). Ahudiya my wife... women's dream! Forget it. Nothing will happen. This is an ordinary dream (page 24, act three, scene one).

Security gives way to conspiracy according to Artemidorus in Shakespeare (1959). Ogbonnaya felt secured and went to the occasion and met his untimely death. Okedjadi also made use of another ominous sign in her play. The sky was cloudy on the day Ezemmiri poisoned Okezie showing a bad sign for the day.

Ezemmiri: Ihu eluigwe adighi mma ubochi taa (page 69, emume nke ise, nkiri nke ano).	The face of the sky is not good today (page 69, act five, scene four)
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Ezemmiri made this statement after killing Okezie and he is about to rush home. The sky is moody showing that something bad is about to happen. Shortly after he had left, Nnorum, his son came, crying that thunder has struck his father dead.

Use of Spiritual Transcendence Ritual

Ritual is a set of actions or words performed in a regular, often as part of a religious ceremony (Cambridge University Press, 2021). The spirits are involved in the day to day affairs of man. Ancestral spirits are the spirits of the dead ancestors who are still regarded and revered as part and parcel of the various communities in Igbo land (Nwala, 1985). Kola is a private or local symbol in Igbo culture and it is always accompanied by ritual each time it is presented to ask for favour and protection from the ancestors. The playwrights used kola for ritual.

Okedjadi (2002) made use of ritual for kola in her play. Ogbonnaya visited Okezie for the sharing of their properties. Okezie presented kola to him before he made his intention for the visit known.

Okezie: Ututu bia taa oji. Amadioha gbaanu izuzugbe! Onye siri na anyi agaghi adi ya buru okuko uzọ lakpuo ura. *Ome ihe jide ofo*.... Ala Mbanaasa bia taa oji! Ndu ndu, nka nka nu. Omumu na uba ka anyi chorọ. Ogbonnaya ndu gi, Oriaku m ndu gi, ndu mu onwe m na-agọ oji! Mmuo ndi anyi kpọrọ aha ha, ndi anyi na-akpoghi aha gbazuonu taa oji. Ogwu m n'onu ooo (page 8, emume nke mbu, nkiri nke mbu).

Morning come and eat kola, *Amadioha* gather from every corner! He who wishes us evil will go down before the dusk. Let every action be justified. Mbanaasa land come and eat kola. We shall live to old age. Children and wealth are what we want. Ogbonnaya you will live, my wife you will live, life to I myself performing the ritual for kola! Spirits that we mentioned their names and the ones whose names we did not mention rally round here and eat kola. I am done ooo (page 8, act one, scene one).

Okezie used the kola to pray for their needs especially long life, protection and prosperity even though he does not have a clean heart (which the kola requires) towards his brother Ogbonnaya. Okezie's action thereafter when Ogbonnaya told him the intention of his visit does not fall in line with the ethics of the ritual he performed with the kola.

Exile and Movement

Okedjadi (2002) made use of movement in her play. Uchenna, Ogbonnaya's son is now independent, doing business in a nearby city. His mother sent for him to return on a date fixed by *umunna* (kinsmen) for sharing their family land of inheritance with Okezie after his father's death. Okezie got the hint about his return and planned to kill him on the way back home. Okezie hired assassins to kill Uchenna, and instructs them thus:

Okezie: Ọ dị ihe m chọrọ ka unu rụrọ m. Ihe ahụ bụ iwepụ ndụ otu nwoke na-etinye anya n'ihe na-abughị nke ya. Nne ya gwara onye ụmụna anyị na ọ na-alọta ụbọchị ikpe ahụ n'oge elekere abụọ nke ehihie. Ọ ga-agafe n'ụzọ mmiri Akpakaolu Mgbe unu jidere ya gbuonu ya. Tụnyekwanụ ya na mmiri Akpakaolu ka m hụ ebe ọ ga-anọ were zọọ ihe nna ya (pages50- 51, emume nke anọ, nkiri nke atọ).

There is something I want you to do for me. It is about taking the life of a man who claims what does not belong to him. His mother told one of our kinsmen that he will return on the day of our case by 2pm. He will pass through the Akpakaolu river... When you get him, kill him. Throw him into the Akpakaolu river let me see where he will be to contend for his father's inheritance (pages50 – 51, act four, scene three).

Uchenna's movement coupled with Okezie's plan to assassinate him is very significant in the play because it created room for a misplacement of identity and also furthers the plot of the play. Uchenna's movement was purposely delayed by the playwright, and the person that appeared within the stipulated time was Ahamefula, the only son of Okezie, and the hired assassins mistakenly killed him thinking that he is Ogbonnaya's son, Uchenna. Shortly after, Uchenna returned home safely through the same route.

Use of Confession

Okediadi (2002) made use of confession in her play, *IOM*. Okezie confessed that Ezemmiri deceived him to kill his brother Ogbonnaya and his son, Ahamefula. Okezie's confession furthers the plot of the play. Ezemmiri killed him to avoid being implicated. Ezemmiri was struck dead by thunder on the same day.

Findings

The study has critically examined N. Okediadi's *Ihe onye metere*. The playwright used stylistic devices that are both clear and accurate to beautify, communicate and convey the meaning and theme of her writing to the readers/audience. Linguistic and non linguistic devices were identified in the text. The linguistic devices identified and discussed in the study are figurative elements. The figurative elements identified in the study are figures of speech such as repetition and rhetoric question. Figures of thought identified in the study are proverbs, metaphor, simile, synecdoche, allusion,

Non-linguistic devices identified in the study are: the structure of the play, symbol, dreams and ominous signs, adaptation from other great works, use of spiritual transcendence, use of confession. The stylistic devices used in the text were well blended by the playwright to achieve the desired result.

Conclusion

Drama mirrors the society it helps to solve the problems of life. N. Okediadi as an Igbo playwright knows her society and does not write for writing sake. There is meaning about life or the central or dominating idea which she wants her audience or readers to deduce from her play. To achieve her objective, the playwright is very articulate and used stylistic devices that are both suitable and appropriate to beautify her work and showcase subject and theme of her play.

Recommendations

This research recommends a very deep and proper knowledge of the stylistic devices. Writers write for a purpose, therefore the playwrights should be very knowledgeable about stylistic devices so as to apply them properly to make their writing beautiful, and more appealing to the audience and

readers, and also for better understanding of the theme and subject matter of their writing. The study should be carried out in other related dramatic Igbo plays.

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