

Ideational Dimensions of Wole Soyinka's *Idanre*: Dramatic and Poetic Interpretations

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Abstract:

This paper examines the ideational dimension of Soyinka's Idanre, in the light of two approaches. The first one is the Hallidayan approach which takes substance from Halliday's Theories on group and phrase clauses under the classification of process, participant and circumstance. The second approach is the method adopted by the Indian linguist Syal, in his book entitled Structure and Style in Commonwealth Literature. This method is issued to analyze the ideational function of texts from the perspective of grammatical classes of words like verbs, nouns, adjectives, prepositional phrases etc. It derives the interpretation from the textuality of the text, taking into account the fact that textuality reflects a particular social and cultural orientation through meaning, stated or implied, embedded in the discourse. The purpose of this study is to see how the ideational functions have been used to allow entry into the world of Idanre and to have a fulfilling interpretation of the poem, using grammar as the basis for the analysis. The study shows that the use of the two approaches to the ideational dimension has the advantage of offering an in-depth interpretation of the poem.

Keywords: Ideational; dimension; Soyinka; Idanre; Poetry

I. Introduction

This paper is prompted by the difficulty many African University students of Literature are faced with in their attempts to access texts and analyze them. Most of their reactions to literary works are, indeed, of little significance and their comments awkward: and this is evidence of the narrowness of their insights into those texts. Aware of their limited reading capacity, they only rely on critical works- the yardstick by which they measure their understanding of original works (Olofinsao et al, 2021). Even then, they remain confused and worried, as from one reader to another the meanings of texts vary and the critics appreciations of texts also differ. The question arises therefore as to how students would help the reader or critic reach the point where he is capable of teasing out meanings for himself and where the various alternative interpretations represent his own informed response (Oluwaseyi-Paul, 2022).

Not only does the issue of efficient reading confront Africans, it also does so to readers and critics on all continents. In this vein, many American and European critics and linguists having decided to alleviate the burden of young analysts have made attempts to demonstrate how linguistics models can help explain and elucidate text. Carter (1982), for instance, illustrates ways in which Linguistics models can help as points of entry into Literary texts. Halliday (1973), Leech (1987), Carter (1986), Fowler (1986), Short (1986), Hill (1987), Toolan (1988), Eggins (1994) have demonstrated in various ways the value of linguistics to literary appreciation.

All these efforts are a reaction against criticism done without a clear guiding philosophy. Literary critics were used to concentrating, each in his own manner, mostly on imagination, giving expression to the authors intention, with hardly any concern for texture.

Particularly, Hallidays efforts in explaining the functions of language allowed for the study of the functionality of features in a literary text in a clearly explicit way. He has demonstrated that linguistics categories are the most appropriate ones for describing the language of literary works. He suggested three macro-functions of language: the ideational function, the interpersonal function and the textual function, and linguists as Adejare (1992), Adika and Denkabe (1997), to the analysis of text.

The main objective of this study with the ideational function at its centre is the appreciation of poetry from the perspective of three functions. It may be important to observe that literary meaning is characteristically a fusion, the integration into a unity, of all three Halliday's categories of function. It is by abstraction that we here consider the ideational category separately (Areremako et al, 2021) In the process of stylistic inquiry; the functions must be so considered for us to see how each component makes its contribution to the total structural complex, i.e. to the total meaning.

The focus on Idanre is to see how this specifically culture-bound poem 'reputed difficult to understand' may be more fully appreciated. To analyze it from the ideational perspective is to examine how ideas are prompted into the poem. It is beyond the textual analysis, a step ahead on the way towards understanding the poem. The analysis is a unique illustration of the way language structure substantiates the ideational function. Two approaches are used to make sure we achieve a fulfilling interpretation of the poem. In addition, as Idanre is a long poem, the study focuses only on representative stanzas selected to demonstrate essential steps towards the objectives.

II. Results and Discussion

1. The analysis: The ideational function is of prime importance in the linguistic approach to interpreting Idanre. Here, Soyinka's Language, it is suggested, encodes sets of ideas about the Yoruba god Ogun, Ogun as realistic and pragmatic god. Language structure will be seen as giving form to the nature of Ogun as a dramatic persona in the narrative.
2. The First Approach: Before we analyze Idanre using the framework of processes, viz, material, mental and relational, we may first subject the poem to the tripartite interpretation of processes as espoused by Halliday (1994).

Halliday sees process as the grammatical distinction of word classes into verbs, nouns and the rest.....(108)

Halliday goes on to dilate on the functions of group and phrases classes, thus.

Table 1.

Type of Element	Typically realized by
1. Process	Verbal Group
2. Participant	Nominal group
3. Circumstance	Adverbial group or prepositional phrase

A notable view of Halliday which is important for our textual analysis of *Idanre* is that, “the concepts of process, participant and circumstance are semantic categories which explain, in the most general way, how phenomena of world are presented as linguistic structures” (109)

“The Phenomena of the real world” in *Idanre* is difficult to understand because of the oddity of language structure. This oddity is purposefully meant to approximate the oddity of Ogun whose processes and circumstances are difficult to fathom.

However, we may get some interpretative leeways in the text by the use of the structural categorization models espoused above by Halliday. Let us refer to *Idanre* for some examples.

He comes, who scrapes no earthdung from his feet
 He comes again in harvest, the first of reapers
 Night is our tryst when sounds are clear
 And silences ring pure tones as the pause
 Of iron bells
 (ii:i)

We may do the structural analysis by the tables below:

Table 2.

He	Comes	Who scrapes	No earthdung	From his feet
Participant	Process	Participant	Participant	Circumstance
Nominal Group	Verbal Group	Nominal Group	Nominal Group	Prepositional Phrase

Table 3.

He	Comes	Again in harvest	The first of reapers
Participant	Process	Circumstance	Participant
Nominal Group	Verbal Group	Prepositional phrase	Nominal group

Table 4.

Night	Is	Our tryst	When sounds are clear
Participant	Process	Participant	Circumstance
Nominal Group	Verbal Group	Nominal group	Adverbial

In all the figures there is no dislocation of the sentence structure pattern of subject+ verb + Object as seen in most of *Idanre*.

This suggests a state of normalcy concerning the participant advent. In table 2, and table 3, the process of ‘comes’ substitutes the normalcy in Ogun’s advent as the verbal expression does not connote arbitrariness and destruction.

Also, in table 3, the process of ‘comes’ and the circumstance ‘again in Harvest’ have been fused into the noun ‘first’ and the prepositional phrase of ‘reapers’. This fusion is

suggestive of the fact that there is a link between the habitual advent of Ogun and the time of habitual traveller to earth to visit tragedy on the apostate.

Let us now use a more complex language structure in *Idanre* so as to categorise the lines into the concept of process, participant and circumstance.

The sky cracked halfway, a graying skull
 On blooded highways. I turned, vapour rose
 From sodden bitumen and snaked within
 Her wrap of indigo, her navel misted over
 A sloe bared from the fruit
 (II:5)

The tables representing the lines are as follows:

Table 5.

The Sky	Cracked	Halfways	A graying Skull
Participant	Process	Circumstance	Circumstance
Nominal Group	Verbal group	Adverbial Phrase	Adjectival Phrase

Table 6.

On blooded highways	I	Turned	Vapours	Rose
Circumstance	Participant	Process	Participant	Process
Prepositional Phrase	Nominal group	Verbal group	Nominal group	Verbal group

Table 7.

From sodden bitumen	And Snaked	Within
Circumstance	Process	Circumstance
Prepositional Phrase	Verbal group	Adverbial

Table 8.

Her wrap	Of indigo	Her navel	Misted over
Participant	Circumstance	Participant	Process
Nominal group	Prepositional Phrase	Nominal group	Verbal Group

In table 5, the participant ‘the sky’ has been encoded as a noun functioning as a head/Thing in a nominal group function as identifier. The process cracked and the circumstance ‘halfways’ have been embedded as modifier and qualifier in the nominal group ‘the sky’ which is further qualified by the Appositive ‘a grey skull’. The inference is that the action of Ogun’s advent causes a celestial explosion in the form of lighting. The process of ‘cracked’ signifies the explosion while the circumstance of ‘halfways’ depicts the manner of the explosion, and also the circumstance ‘a greying skull’ illustrates the goal of the nominal ‘the sky’ after the cataclysm.

In table 6, the circumstance ‘On blooded highways’ has been embedded as a preposition functioning as Qualifier in the process ‘turned’ within the nominal group ‘I’. This suggests that Ogun’s destructive force is qualified by the directional flow of his anger.

Also, the complexity of the sentence structure in the lines is illustrated by the run – on lines. This suggests that Ogun’s escapades are resistant to all conventional processes.

Although the three processes – process, participant and circumstance – have metaphorical intent, the separated expressions that are categorized under these elements are natural. What makes these expressions to have interpretative underpinnings is the connotative effect that the language categories carry.

3. Material Processes

According to Halliday, ‘Material processes are processes of doing’. They express the notion that some entity ‘does’ something – which may be done ‘to’ some other entity. In *Idanre*, we see Ogun as the actor in the lines:

Gone, and except for horsemen briefly
Thawed. It in deep cloud mirrors, lost
The skymen of Void’s regenerate wastes
Striding vast across
My still vast across
My still inchoate earth.
(1:1-5)

The material process which expresses the process of ‘doing’ is captured in this table.

Table 9.

Actor	Process	Goal
1.	Gone	
2.	Thawed	
3. The skymen	Sriding	

Intransitivity is implied in the verbs ‘Gone’, ‘Thawed’, and ‘Striding’ since they do not extend to any other entity.

The intransitive nature of these clausal verbs suggests that ‘The skymen’, who is Ogun, does not extend his powers to any other entity apart from himself.

‘The skymen’ is in the nominative case and this suggests that the function of Ogun is constant. The material process should have an obligatory Actor, and this is embodied in ‘the skymen’, an attributive epithet to Ogun. The process should optionally also have a goal. The Participant that results from the creative process, referred to as a Goal is absent in the above lines, implying that Ogun is an actor without a referent goal. In other words, his actions are indiscernible.

We may look at another example of the material process in these lines:

He catches Sango....
And runs him down to earth....
I have set the Iron One against
All wayward boits.....

Again ‘doing’ is a process as this table depicts:

Table 10.

Actor	Process	Goal
1. HE	Catches	Sango
2.	runs him down	to earth

In the first example, the transitive verb ‘catches’ extends to another entity which is ‘Sango’. In the second one, the implied Actor is Ogun and the goal is ‘earth’ where he throws Sango.

Again in the example, ‘He’ is ‘doing’ something. ‘He’ in this sense is in the nominative case, suggestive of the constant attribute of the Actor, who, by implication, is Ogun.

In a material process there is an obligatory Actor, who is a particular participant. Throughout *Idanre*, we encounter this particular Actor in the form of Ogun. He casts a magisterial shadow over the entire events in *Idanre*.

In *Idanre* there is a lot of ‘going-on’ in the form of process found in the grammar of language. It is the process which substantiates the functions and actions associated with participants in a literary text such as *Idanre*.

4. Mental Processes

Halliday defines mental processes as a process of “feeling, thinking and sensing” (117). He goes on to state that they are not kinds of doing, and cannot be probed or substituted by ‘do’. What Halliday implies is that Mental process is a grouping together of clauses of feeling, thinking and perceiving. An analysis of *Idanre* from the ideational perspective will be done by using three out of the five criteria for Mental process as the framework for the analysis (see Halliday, 114).

This is because the other two criteria are not applicable to *Idanre*.

- i. In a clause of mental process, there is always one participant who is human. He is the one that senses, feels, thinks or perceives. The participant in the mental process is ‘endowed with consciousness’. He is also treated as conscious and is referred to in the pronoun ‘he’ instead of ‘it’.

Ogun is endowed with consciousness because he is referred to pronominally as ‘he’ in lines like:

1. “He comes. Who scraped no earthdung from his feet”
2. “He comes again in harvest”
3. “wordlessly he rose.....”
4. “He made a mesh of elements, from stone”
5. “He made an anvil of the peaks”.

Ogun is therefore a sensing participant who is capable of liking, knowing and thinking. He knows when the harvest is ripe; he likes coming when action dictates so, and is also capable of thinking after which he makes an ‘anvil’ and ‘a mesh of elements’.

- ii. Mental processes are processes of feeling, thinking and seeing. They are not kinds of doing, and cannot be probed or substituted by ‘do the processes of feeling, thinking and seeing are exemplified in the following lines in *Idanre*.
- a. Feeling
 - a.1. “in the leer of lighting, and sadness filled the lone face of the wine-girl”.
(II:28-29)
 - b. Thinking
 - b.1. “That the skin be bared to welcome rain and earth prepare, that seed may swell”.
(1:32-33)

- c. Seeing
 - c.1. “my skin
Grew light with eyes”.
(II:83-84)

iii. In a.1., the nominal “sadness” is sensed or felt as a state of being. The participant undergoes an experience which is felt by the persona to be a feeling of gloom.

In b.1., “be bared” denotes a wish which comes out of thought. The use of the modal “may” denotes probability and this does not constitute a fact. In these expressions, the participant is undergoing the process of wishful thinking.

In c.1., the interpretation given to the persona’s light skin is metaphorical. The adverbial light is sensed as restlessness. The process of seeing is a sense process like saying: “I see that I am restless”.

5. Relational Processes: processes of being

Halliday regards relational process as process of being (119). It is not ‘being’ in the sense of existing. There is a related, but distinct, category of existential clauses. In Halliday’s words: in relational clauses, there are two parts to the ‘being’: something is being said to ‘be’ something else (119). This implies that there is a relation being set up between two separate entities.

Idanre embodies relational processes as signified in lines below:

1. “Ogun is the Lascivious god...”
2. “Ogun is the god that ventures first”
3. “And now she is a dark sheath freed”

In the first two examples, the relational processes are in the attributive mode since the quality of lasciviousness and of primal adventure is ascribed or attributed to him. “The lascivious god” in 1, and ‘that ventures first’ in 2 are known as the Attribute, while the entity Ogun in 1 and 2 is the carrier.

In 1, ‘the lascivious god’ is a nominal group functioning as Attribute as is indefinite. The adjective ‘lascivious’ is the Head. In 2, ‘the god that ventures first’ is a nominal group functioning as Attribute and it is indefinite. The common noun ‘god’ is the Head. As in heads, the noun is a common noun since it cannot be a proper noun.

What we can suggest in both examples is that Ogun carries with him the states of primal and infinite existence.

In example 3, the nominal group is ‘a dark sheath freed’, an identifier, and is functioning as Attribute and is also indefinite. The adjective ‘dark’ acts as the head and the indefinite article is ‘a’, with the Carrier as ‘she’ which refers to the goddess Oya. Here, Ogun is seen not in terms of an entity within finite boundaries. His tragic demeanor transcends time and space.

The structural configuration seen in the three processes- material, mental and relational – are the major pillars of the grammar that functions ideationally in *Idanre*. Through their application, we have a world view of *Idanre*, for the structural formations of its grammar embody meanings in the context of the poem. It is thus evident that grammatical structures embody ideas or thoughts.

The Second Approach To The Ideational Perspective

This method analyses the ideational function of texts from the perspective of text and from the perspective of grammatical classes of words like verbs, nouns, adjectives. Preposition phrases, verbal phrases, etc. This approach will start from examining the linguistic features of the text that has such things as the order of items, transitivity, nominalization, modality, etc. taking into account such inter-sentential features as coordination, pronominalisation and ellipsis. This will constitute the analysis of the textuality of the poem. From it will be derived the interpretation, taking into account, the fact that textuality reflects a particular social or cultural orientation through meaning, stated or implied, embedded in the discourse.

The first stanza of *Idanre* Portrays Ogun as a potent cosmic force.
Gone, and except for horsemen briefly
Thawed, lit in deep cloud mirror, lost
The skymen of Void's regenerate Wastes
Striding vast across
My still inchoate earth
(1:1-5)

This stanza mixes various grammatical structures to demonstrate the multi-dimensional attributes of Ogun. Thus, we have verbs like 'gone' 'Thawed' 'lit', 'lost', 'Striding'. We also have noun phrases in 'cloud mirrors', 'skymen of Void's regenerate Wastes', 'Inchoate earth'. There are also adjectives like 'deep', 'still'. These grammatical distinctions, however, aggregate a unique perception, description and nature of Ogun. The ideas encapsulated by the verbs are that Ogun is a primal potent god, a god of action, fierce in his missions. 'Gone' evokes the rapidity with which Ogun performs an action. When he wants to act, before one says presto he completes the act and is gone. Whenever he thaws, signifying whenever he rests his action, it is just for a brief period. Ogun's bright nature is 'lit', symbolising his glowing and electric force which ignites the 'deep cloud' atmosphere through which he penetrates. The verbs 'in still life' in the poem which may otherwise look drab because of its apparent difficulty and technical oddity.

The noun phrases and nouns are coinages that reveal the subtlety of Soyinka's language. This portrays the idea that Ogun is subtle and is not space-controlled. His personality stretches wide. Such a force cannot be described by a limited name language. There are limitless name coinages which encapsulate Ogun's laughter; the noun 'horsemen' depicts Ogun's flights in fury, a galloper when executing his filial duties.

The noun phrase, 'the skymen of Void regenerate Wastes' is an attributive epaulet connected with appellation poetry which is used for traditional Yoruba pantheon. Ogun operates from the skies. He is the actor of giant proportions. From the skies he swoops to perfect the void or emptiness in man; an emptiness akin to 'Wastes' signifying uselessness. When man's hollowness has gone deep and has become waste, Ogun descends to correct the void by a regeneration process. It is then that Ogun is perceived 'striding vast across/my still inchoate earth' (ii, 4-5). The verb 'striding' denotes a kingly or majestic action of entry across the void or emptiness of space into the 'inchoate earth'. The noun phrase 'inchoate earth' acts as the object of the verb 'still': the idea postulated here by Soyinka is the stillness in action of the 'inchoate earth' prior to Ogun descent to perfect it. Inchoate is an adjective which limits the attribute of earth, describing the earth as undeveloped, immature and rudimentary. It is

Ogun's lot, as a skyman, therefore to stride vast across space to animate and energize this rudimentary, still and formless earth.

The preponderance of transitive verbs in this stanza is obvious. They have a direct object, but these objects are implicit. The intransitives 'Gone' 'Thawed,' 'lit', 'lost', 'striding', 'still', normally used without objects, imply that Ogun has little sense of action.

However, the associated nouns such as 'horsemen' and 'skymen' denote superhuman entities whose actions are implied rather than explicit. The corollary is that Ogun's action through swift, unseen or secret is devastating. His actions are only seen in their effects. The second stanza forces action on the poem, either explicitly or implicitly. Here again, the preponderant use of verbs denote Ogun as an entity of action. We experience electrical imagery in 'flaming' and combative imagery in 'roaring' controlling the actions in the stanza. The specific verbs indicate Ogun's character. He is therefore imaged as a fearsome and an avenging deity.

Ogun's descent to earth is characterized by a deluge as expressed in
The flaming corkscrew etches sharp affinities
(no dream, no vision, no delirium of the dissolute)
When roaring vast of an unstopped heaven deluge
Earth in fevered distillations, potent with
The fire of the axe-handed one
(II. 6-10)

The above lines denote indefinite action as seen in the continuous forms of the 'flaming and roaring'. Ogun as an infinite entity is in continuous flux as he seeks to subdue his enemies through 'roaring vats of an unstopped heaven' is another euphemism for ceaseless flood-causing rains from the skies to the earth. The roaring vats 'deluge' the earth, another euphemism for flood or inundate the earth.

The noun phrase 'fevered distillations' qualifies the noun 'Earth' indicating the multiple ailments the earth abounds in. it also describes the way and manner in which Ogun's descent reverberates throughout and shakes the foundation of the earth. Its power is 'potent with/The fire of the axe-handed one',(II.9-10) sango is the 'axe- handed one', the Yoruba god of lightning. Thus, Ogun and Sango merge into a fearsome flaming avenging god, potent with fire. The compound in 'axe-handed signifies the dualistic properties of Ogun. He is a sharp and cutting instrument which destroys with precision. He is also the deity whose hand is made of an axe fashioned out iron. The attributes and potency of Ogun still find expression in the third stanza.

And greys are violent now, laced with
Whiteburns, tremulous in fire tracings
On detonating peaks. Ogun is still on such
Combatant angles, poised to a fresh descent
Fiery exe-heads fly about his feet
(II. 11-15)

Here, there is a preponderance of noun phrases in the form of 'fire tracings', "detonating peaks", "combatant angles", "fresh descent".

The first words of the phrases amply describe the elemental and geographical imagery connected with Ogun's locations and manoeuvres.

All these actions emanate from the 'grey', the euphemism for the skies.

The skies are violent with heavy rains('whiteburns'). This setting ignites 'fire tracings', connoting fierce lightning. This takes place through the process of igniting a bomb on hilly locations, the abode of Ogun. Thus, the firing lightning takes the form of detonating thunder in the location of the sky. Ogun's poise is mercuric ('angle') and his mood is combative, warlike. It is in this mercuric location and fiery mood that he makes a descent with his objects of destruction-'fiery axe-heads fly about his feet' (1.15)

In the fourth stanza, Soyinka makes creative use of verbs to evoke Ogun as a god of action. The lines read:
In these white moments of my god, plucking
Light from the day's effacement, the last ember
Glow in his large creative hand, savage round
The rebel mane, ribbed on ridges, crowded in corridors
Low on his spiked symbols

He deconstructs the word 'white' and uses it to express the word dark, instead of using 'black'. Thus in Ogun's dark moments, he plucks light day. The transitive verb 'plucking' has as its object 'light'. This signals Ogun as a god who limits the object of his fancy.

When people are in their joyful elements (the day's effacement), 'the last ember', denoting the last breath 'Glow in his large creative hand'. The verb 'glows' is used as a causative verb in the sense that it causes a thing to be done. It denotes the ever-functioning nature of Ogun in silencing him whom he pleases, in his hand, he snuffs the last ember of life glowing in a person, his delight being in joying (Glow) over the destruction of his victim. The word 'savage' is directed towards 'the rebel mane...' (l. 18-19). The action 'savage' is directed towards 'the rebel mane', object of the verb savage. The inference is that Ogun's actions are object-specific. Ogun does not destroy the innocent. Rather, he directs his actions against social and religious rebels.

In *Idanre*, we find Soyinka weaving words as if possessed; the effect is magical. Ogun is a symbol of power and energy. These are fearful attributes, capable of scaring the reader. But the more we are scared of the contents of the poem, the more we are attracted to it through the power, intensity and energy of an aesthetic work which glows through the medium of the poet's complex and deep language.

The poignancy of sounds as ideas is also powerfully evoked in *idanre*. In regular every day speech, we are not concerned so much with the sound properties of the words we use, except when we employ intonation and stress for semantic purposes. We are generally concerned with choosing words to convey meaning. But Levin argues that there is a peculiar linguistic structure in most poems which consists of semantically or phonically equivalent forms in similar positions. He adds that "these semantic and phonic correspondences frequently extend throughout a poem, or through significant, multi-sentence portions of the poem" (Fox: 18). What Levin implies is that the linguistic structure of poems has some features in common. These features are the following: they may possess the same syntactic

form or they may belong to the same semantic field, or they may manifest the same type of sound.

Artistic prosodies therefore come into being when sound repetitions occur in texts, especially when they are in close succession. The phonological dimension of Soyinka's *Idanre* presupposes that the rhymes, assonance, alliteration, onomatopoeia, the various phonological features which dictate the sounds of words, may be at work. This section of the ideational analysis of the poem therefore focuses on the phonological dimension.

The rhythm and the sounds in *Idanre* are imbued with poetic features. They are part of the art employed by Soyinka to propel the attributes of Ogun which are his exploits in war, acts of valour, his determination, magnanimity, courage, authority and royal quantities.

The power and unrelenting nature of Ogun, and his fearsome attribute are embedded in the following lines:

When roaring vats an unstoppered heaven deluge
Earth in fevered distillations, potent with
The fire of the axe-handed one
(Pt 1:1. 8-10)

Ogun's descent to earth is aptly described through the retroflex sound 'roaring'. The power and force of the sound connotes the might and the lion-like roaring nature of Ogun, which achieves an auditory effect. This attribute is the more fearsome when his roaring nature is compared to 'an unstoppered heaven deluge', which symbolizes a typical tropical deluge of a rain falling. This fearsome nature is reinforced by the fricative sound /f/ is lower-pitched in /3/ noise, suggestive of Ogun's near-silent approach to launch a lethal furtive attack on his enemies.

Ogun's steel-like nature is further symbolized by the plosive sound /k/ in 'axe'. The unbending aspect of Ogun's fiery nature receives a boost when he is described as the frighteningly splitting type, who chops into pieces all objects of his anger.

The fricative sound is also found in 'fiery', 'fly' and 'feet', in 'fiery axe heads fly about his feet'(Pt1:1.15). Again, this illustrates the frightening fire-like emission that floats about wherever he strides into the arena of vengeful battle. Again, though his movements elicit a low noise, their effect is lethal.

The electric coils' are charged 'point to point', showing Ogun at his charged and, explosive state. Ogun's terrifying nature is encapsulated in the hard sounds in the following:

His nipples
Glow with blackness
(V:8)

The oxymoron 'Glow with blackness' is a vivid description gun's paradoxical nature. His blackness suggests his terrible and tyrannical attribute. He comes as an angel of light, and at, a time when suspects him least, to exact terror against his victims. These views expression in the plosive sound /g/ in 'glow", in a symbiotic relationship with the hard counterpart plosive sound /k/, which is, expressed in 'blackness'. When Ogun exacts vengeance on his victims, it is meant to act as a light onto people who refuse to tread the virtuous path in life, for whom 'blackness' is the symbol. So, it is not often that Ogun is a god of terror. To the

recalcitrant, he is a terror. But to the defenseless and innocent, he is a fortress of piety and a benefactor to the child ravaged by poverty. This is exemplified in the fricative /S/ sound seen in the following lines:

shield of orphans, was your shield
In-spiked that day on sheltering lives?

The /S/ sound in 'shield' and 'sheltering' vibrates an audible friction to ward off enemies, and a soothing protection against enemies who do not come near on hearing such an audible noise, which serves as comforting assurance to the unprotected and vulnerable in society.

Soyinka has in *Idanre* used the rhythm and the sounds of the words and lines of the poem to propel the attributes of Ogun. The rhythm and sounds emphasize these attributes through the various exploits of the god clearly showing that, within the context of poetry, they also are ideational components. Although the sound properties of words, singly and in combination, may not be the most important aspects of poetry writing, the poet-craftsman finds that his ear is an indispensable part of his poetic equipment and establishes the usefulness of a phonology in a full ideational analysis of poems in general and of *Idanre* in particular.

III. Conclusion

This study set out to construct an analytical approach that may best help students of literature to achieve thorough understanding of works of art in general, and of poetry in particular. For this purpose, it demonstrates how Halliday's model of ideational function contributes to meaning in Soyinka's *Idanre* and how we can fully appreciate the poem. The main objective of the study is to find out how the ideational aspect of language functions in relationship to a specific text. From the ideational analysis it appears that the difficult language of *Idanre* is not impossible to unlock. The phenomena of the word of *Idanre* are captured by the syntactic, lexical and phonological aspects of Soyinka's complex language. The interpretation is that the subject of the poem, Ogun, a Yoruba deity, is a complex phenomenon. The speaking voice recounts the poet's experience of this powerful deity. This worldview is opened up by the linguistic patterning of the worlds which explain the phenomena. The opening up of the world of *Idanre* has been made possible through the use of language to structure the persona's experience and his point of view. That is, each of the two models has, by its descriptive force, unlocked the poem, thus vindicating scholars' view that linguistic models help to explain and elucidate poems.

However, as poetry is a genre whose language is more or less elusive compared with prose, and sounds are ideas, much of the meaning of the poem is in 'the feeling, in -its emotional side, that is, beyond the word and grammar. Hence, the importance of the second approach for which textuality reflects a particular social or cultural orientation through meaning embedded in discourse. Thus, the use of the two models has proved worthwhile as they have allowed for a largely objective, fair and fulfilling interpretation of Soyinka's *Idanre*. Clearly, an analysis of *Idanre* shows that poetry can be interpreted from the perspective of Halliday's postulates of language functions. Only that the complexity of a poem like *Idanre* - where the boundaries of the sentences and clauses vanish and run into one another making it extremely difficult to determine ends and beginnings, and where metaphors, connotative associations and other, obscurities are recurrent means of expression --calls for a particular focus on the cultural orientation and the sounds for in-depth interpretation.

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