

PHONIC (S) SOUND PATTERN: A PRELIMINARY STUDY IN POETRY

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Abstract

With regards to duration, one must also recognize the contribution that vowel length and sound duration in general have to make to the speed of articulation of poetry. Phonic Sound devices are resources used by poets to convey and reinforce the meaning of poetry through the skillful use of sound. Poets tried to use a concentrated blend of sound and images to create an emotional response to sound pattern. Language(s) fulfills different functions to meet various needs. The individual style of writing poems is marked by its uniqueness. It can be unique or recognized by its specific or peculiar way of combination of language media, figures of speech, stylistic devices, and phonic sound pattern in which their interaction present a certain movement in the sound system (images). Apart from the preliminary study of poetry/images in sound system, this paper also looks at different types of stylistics writing in poetry. We used images in most of the discussions here and we have not left some terms used in this study undefined. The paper conclude that Sounds Pattern in English (SPE) cannot be only used phonologically and phonetically but also can be used in sound pattern in poetry. This study will be of help both for the trainer and trainee, in such a way that both of them will know that poetry does not only stop in writing system but has to do with words decoding and images.

Keywords: *Stylistics/literary devices, phonic sound pattern, images and word decoding.*

Introduction

The quest to find a representation of speech sounds that makes their behavior self evident goes back at least 3 centuries (Amman 1694; Jespersen 1889; Key 1855) but has been most intense in the past 3 decades. Two approaches to “natural” representation have been developed in parallel, one, the “mainstream” phonological one which employs discrete linguistic primitives and at the same time purports to represent the knowledge of the native speaker (Chomsky & Halle 1968 [SPE]; Clements 1985; Goldsmith 1979; McCarthy 1988) and another, phonetic models which are expressed with continuous physical primitives (Fant 1960; Fujimura 1962; Ohala 1976; Scully 1990; Stevens 1971; Westbury & Keating 1985) but which do not pretend to reflect psychological structure.

In this paper, we review certain well-known cases of sound patterns which are better explained by a study in poetry and its representations (images) and then discuss the relevance of it to individual mental narration/grammar. We will like to study the phonic pattern, stylistics systems in extracted stanza (poetry) and carried out sound pattern in all the stanzas used in this study. Here below is an extracted poem from Lenrie Peters

We have come home
From the bloodless wars
With Sunken hearts
Our boots full of pride
From the true massacre of the soul
When we have asked
“What does it cost
To be loved and left alone”

(Lenrie Peters)

This is a narrative poem, recounting the returnee-students' experiences in the foreign land where they have gone to acquire western education. To them coming back home from a hostile environment is like surviving a war. The stanza begins with the topic sentence "We have come home". So, it was a war because they had to undergo some traumatic experiences and some tortuous travails. It was a bloodless war because no gun, no knives were used. It was a turbulent academic exercise. Before we go into the proper analysis of the above stanza, we will like to give some definitions of "Phonics".

Definitions of Phonics

From the word "Phonics" is one of the primary building blocks of reading. Without an understanding of the relationship between letters and sounds, reading cannot occur. According to wikipedia.org definition of "Phonics", is a method for teaching reading and writing of the English language by developing learners' phonemic awareness—the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate phonemes—in order to teach the correspondence between these sounds and the spelling patterns (graphemes) that represent them. It also deals with sound correspondences and their use in reading and spelling. Phonics is also another method we have to apply in teaching learning of English Language especially for children. It will help them to know sounds, syllables and to decode certain vowel sounds, these will equally increase their proficiencies for reading and writing skills.

From the above definitions of what phonics is all about and brief analysis of what Lenire Peters poem that he titled "WE HAVE COME HOME", we can now present the phonic(s) sound pattern of the above extracted stanza and its technological effects on children which may be caused by health and environment.

Below is the phonic sound pattern in poetry:

Figure 1

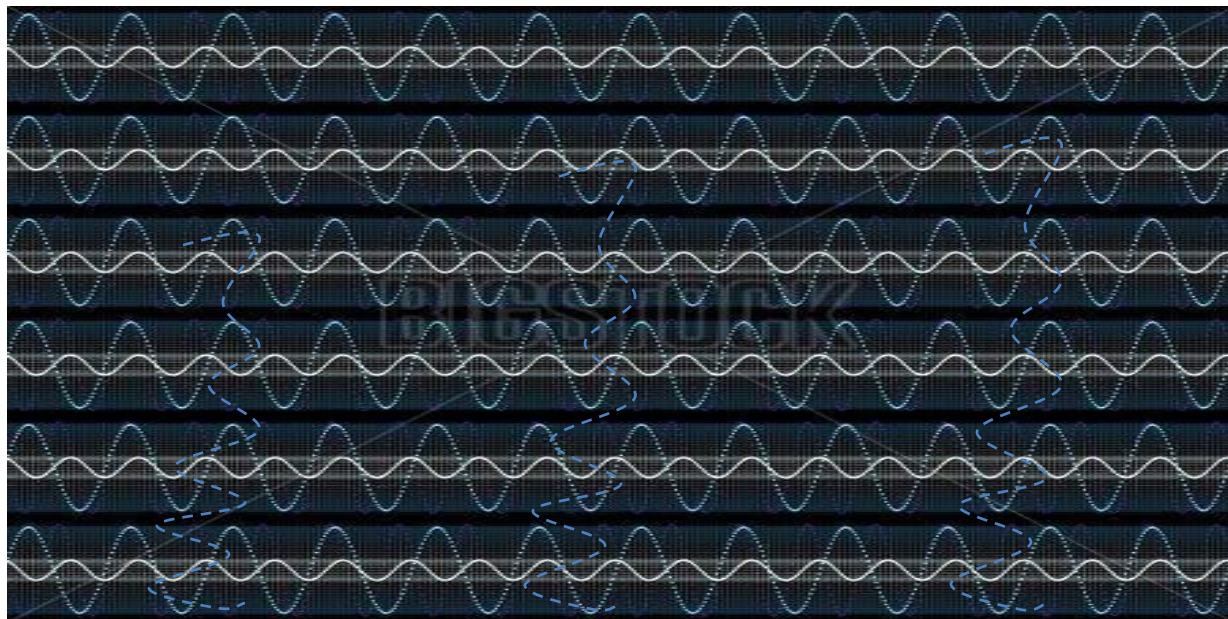


Figure 2



Source: www.personal.umich.edu

From the two diagrams presented above that represents the stanza “We have come home” shows the phonic sound pattern does not properly flow in figure 2. But during the sound presentation (teaching and learning), we observe that the vertical lines changes its shape which was affected by technological input sound and environmental pollution. The inserted vertical lines in above diagrams, shows the utterances made got to the receiver abnormally. The first diagram (figure 1) was not completely affected, that is, the two first lines in the above stanza, the obstructions in both diagrams show that the sound pattern was seriously affected which leads to disorganization of vowel sounds and capturing of number of phonemes. The following literary devices were used in the poem. These are: rhetorical question, parallelism, hyperbole, personification, metaphor, enjambment, repetition, rhythm, assonance, and alliteration. While allusion, synecdoche, imagery and irony were added in J . P Clark’s Abiku litereay devices, others were found except the four devices listed above.

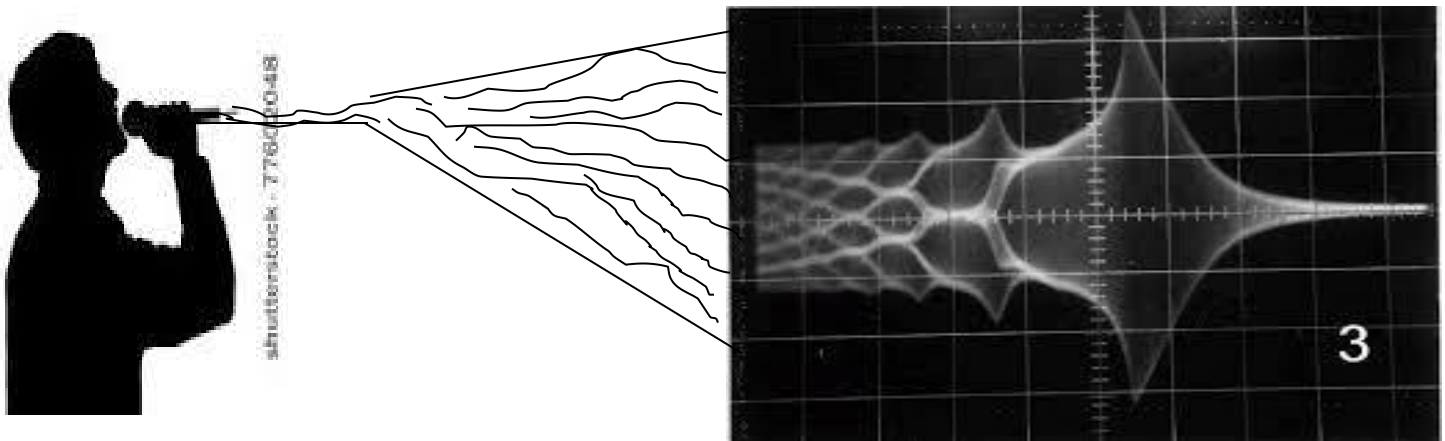
The below extracted stanza from J.P. Clark is different from Lenrie Peters’ stanza due to their different style of writing. The writing system of J.P. Clark in his poem titled “Abiku” is a free verse poem. See below the extracted stanza:

Coming and going these several seasons,
Do stay out on the baobab tree,
Follow where you please your kindred spirits, If
indoors it is not enough for you.
True, it leaks through the thatch,
When floods brim the banks,
And the bats and the owls,
Often tear in at night through the eaves,
And at harmattan, the baboo walls,
Are ready tinder for the fire
That dries the fresh fish up on the rack.
(J.P. Clark)

The fact remains that the length in the extracted stanza “We have come home” is shorter than the length in J.P. Clark’s “Abiku” and different in writing system. The poem has a good rhyming scheme/pattern. From the above stanza, according to the poet, “Abiku” is a Yoruba word for a kind

of ill-fated “spirit child” who comes in a cycle of early death and rebirth to the same mother. It is a common knowledge among the various tribes in Nigeria and some parts of Africa like the Akan in Ghana who call it “kosama” and among the Igbos who refer to it as “Ogbanje” that a stubborn child

Figure 3



Source: www.shutterstock.com

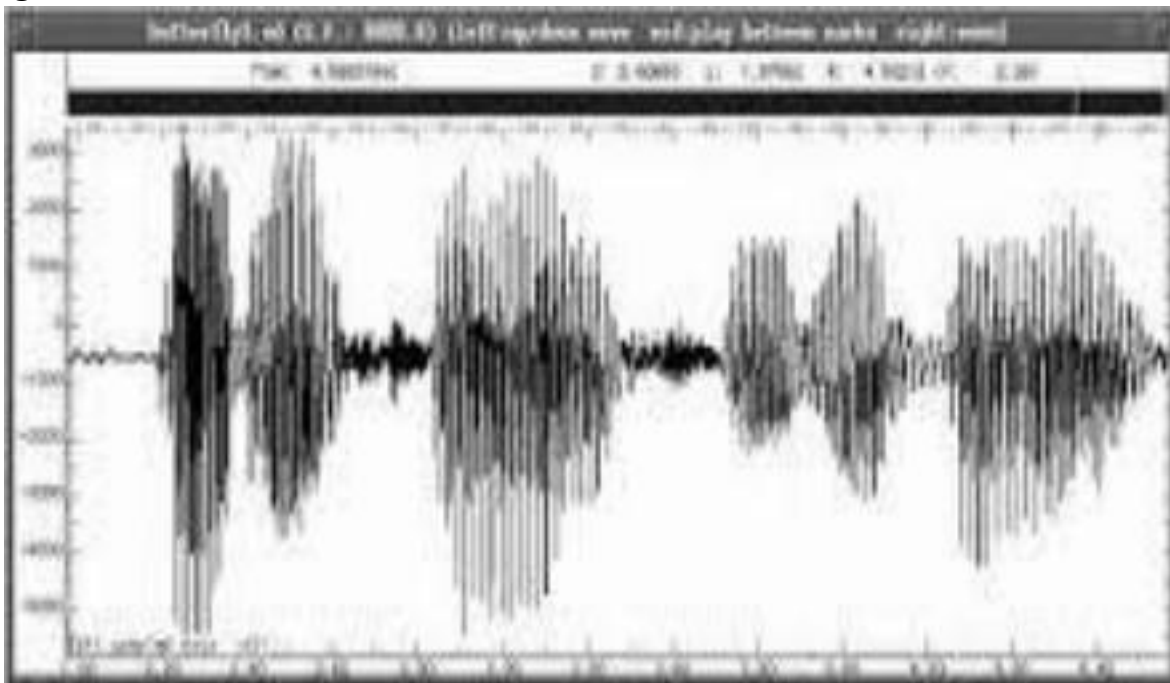
Source: pcbunn.cacr.caltech.edu

that punishes the parents when born, could re-appear to the same parents after death and be born again only for it to die and it follows in succession till the parents either incarcerate it or apply some ritualistic or mystical antidotes in order to stop it and mother from future harassment.

The below diagram shows the phonic sound pattern in J. P. Clark extracted stanza.

From the above diagrams, you can discover that the communication is entering to the hearer/receiver. The communication gap was little bit interrupted due to atmospheric condition. Does the diagrams above provide the information needed from the above stanza? No, because during the production of sound from the speaker to the hearer, we observe that not all the sounds flow, some couldn't get to its destination. The reason for this is caused by the distance. Therefore, the phonic sound pattern in that extracted stanza by J.P. Clark have not been fully realized. Assuming we used the same apparatus in figure 1 and 2 to carry out the experiment for phonic sound pattern in extracted stanza from Lenrie Peters, we may get the correct sound pattern. But why we abstain from that is the negative impact it has on the hearer/children. For clear indication, let us consider some of the following definitions of stylistics that maybe relevant to this study. But before we do that, we have to present the proper sound pattern (image) in the above extracted poem from J.P. Clark.

Figure 4



Source: wordpress.com

With this diagram, we have achieved our aim in that extracted poem above.

Some Definitions of Stylistics /stai'listiks/

According to Routledge dictionary of Language and Linguistics (1996:459), it grouped stylistics into three. These are: Methodically-this stylistics deals with a procedure for the analysis of texts; Normatively-deals with directive for what is right in the use of Language and Descriptively- this is a text linguistic discipline, which explains the style of a text and set (style).

According to David Crystal in a dictionary of Linguistics and phonetics (2003:440), he posits that:

stylistics is a branch of Linguistics which studies the feature of situationally distinctive uses (VARIETIES) of Language, and tries to establish principles capable of accounting for the particular choices made by individual and social groups in their use of language.

He further said that “general stylistics deals with the whole range (or repertoire) of non-dialectal varieties encountered within a language; Literary stylistics deals with the variations characteristic of literature as a genre and of the style of individual authors”.

According to Katie Wales in A Dictionary of Stylistics, 2nd ed. (Pearson, 2001), "The goal of most stylistics is not simply to describe the formal features of texts for their own sake, but in order to show their functional significance for the interpretation of the text; or in order to relate literary effects to linguistic 'causes' where these are felt to be relevant." There are various overlapping subdisciplines of stylistics, including literary stylistics, interpretative stylistics, evaluative stylistics, corpus stylistics, discourse stylistics, feminist stylistics, computational stylistics, and cognitive stylistics.

According to wikipedia.org/wiki/Stylistics_(field_of_study) says that “Stylistics is the study and interpretation of texts in regard to their linguistic and tonal style. As a discipline, it links literary

criticism to linguistics. It does not function as an autonomous domain on its own, but it can be applied to an understanding of literature and journalism as well as linguistics”.

According to unigiessen.de/anglistik/ling/Staff/mukherjee/pdfs/Stylistics.pdf Says that “Stylistics is the description and analysis of the variability of linguistic forms in actual language use. The concepts of 'style' and 'stylistic variation' in language rest on the general assumption that within the language system, the same content can be encoded in more than one linguistic form”.

Since we have given some definitions of stylistics. In this study, we deal with literary stylistics, with the help of literary stylistics, we can provide phonic sound pattern in poetry. Let us take another example from Jared Angira titled: “No Coffin,

No Grave”.

He was buried without a coffin

Without a grave

The scavengers performed the post mortem

In the open mortuary

Without sterilized knives

In front of the club

According to the poet, this is a satirical poem highlighting the brutal murder of a proud leader whose dead body was found “in front of the night club”. This poem typifies biblical Jeremiah chapter thirty-six, verse thirty thus: “...his dead body shall be cast out to the heart by day and the frost by night”. This self-important and rude administrator was criminal because of the following reasons: he starved his subjects and indulged in promiscuity hence he was a “woman magnet”.

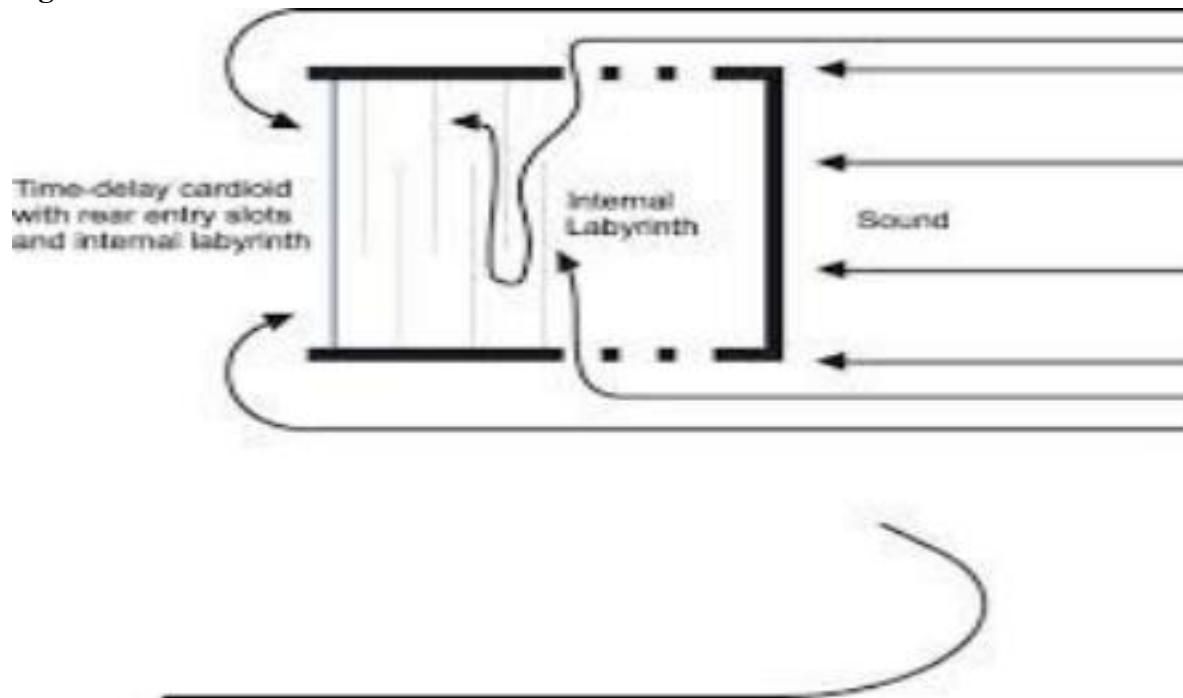
Now lets us present the above extracted stanza in a phonic sound pattern;

Figure 5



Source: 123rf.com

Figure 6



Source: soundonsound.com

This is true representation of phonic sound pattern in poetry (i.e both figure 5 & 6).

Word Decoding/Word Identification Skills in Phonics

Decoding refers to the process of translating a printed word or sentence into a sound. Now, according to eduplace.com/rdg/res/literacy/phonics that says that word identification and decoding are broader than phonics. Using phonics is only one of several important approaches to identifying words. Other clues include the grammar and syntax of a sentence, meaning (semantic) clues, word parts (prefixes, suffixes, base words), and familiarity with other similar words. Reading, like listening, speaking, and writing, is a facet of communication.

Findings

- Word decoding help the children to easily identify some words that appear twice in a sentence.
- This study would be an advantage to language teachers especially to those that teach poetry in a secondary schools. Therefore, it would be of help for the trainer and the trainee.
- This work shows that poetry did not only stop in writing systems but also make use of images for proper decoding.

Recommendations

- Poetry has to be taught with phonic (s) sound pattern in secondary schools so that pronunciations should be properly handled.
- Provisions of audio-visual machines and other electronic devices should be made by the government to schools for effective learning processes.
- Institutions/schools for training of teachers for them to learn how to use these machines during the teaching exercise should be provided.
- There are other methods of language teaching but phonics method should be seriously taken into considerations for proper use.

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