

THE USE OF SPECIAL COLLOCATION IN THE POEM *KALUBALE*

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Abstract

Violations of the rules of grammar and the use of surprising metaphors do not only foreground a poem but interpreted the mind of the poet. Certainly, it is what attract and persuade the target audience of the artist. It is undoubtedly what makes poetry and its architects unique among the literary artists. This paper therefore, examines, the use of special collocations, as one of the patterns of this motivational deviations employed by Akilu Aliyu in the poem *Kalubale (convergence)* to describe the crucial nature of the criterion governing the acquisition of knowledge and the decisive effects of ignorance, in Hausa thought. The data was generated from the edited version of the poem as compiled in *Fasaha Akiliya* and edited by Muhammad (1978:4-7), while the literally translated version was generated from Muhammad (1977:312-318) and complemented by the author of the article. Conclusively, the paper was able to discover the use of two forms of metaphorical (personification) and five forms of grammatical foregrounding usage of collocations by the artist in the poem: Abstract nouns versus Verb, Abstract nouns versus Verbal dynamic nouns, Adjective versus Common nouns, Dynamic nouns versus Verbal dynamic nouns and Personal pronouns versus Verbs. Also uncovered by the paper is the effective and artistic usage of *collocational range* between the collocates that connote the constrains, the distance in the processes of the quest for knowledge, the hard and difficult situation of ignorance and the ignorant in Hausa society.

Key words: collocation, kalubale, special collocation, poetic license

Introduction

Generally, literature, as opines by Abrams (2012:237) is primarily an art, that is a set of skills which although requires innate talents, must to be perfected by long study and practice and consist mainly in the deliberate adaptation of known and tested means to the achievement of foreseen ends upon the audience of readers". Among the three genres of literature, poetry is the most peculiar advocate of the characteristic features of literature, especially, the innate talent, long study and practice. In that, violations of the rules of grammar and the use of surprising metaphors do not only foreground a poem but interpret the mind of the poet. Certainly is what attracts and persuade the target audience of the artist. It is undoubtedly what makes poetry and its architects unique among the literary artists.

1.1. Poetic License:

This liberty, otherwise poetic license, gives birth to the employment of very many lexical foregrounding features in literary works, especially poetry, among which is the odd collocations. Traditionally as opines by Abrams (2012:300), poetic license is said to be confined to *poetic diction* alone, which justifies the poet's

departure from the rules and conventions of standard spoken and written prose in matters such as syntax, word order, the use of archaic or newly coined words, and the conventional use of *eye-rhymes*. He went on to further confirm that, 'the degree and kinds of linguistic freedom assumed by poets have varied according to the convention of each age, but in every case the justification of the freedom lies in the success of the effect'. He further asserts that, the application of the device does not confine to diction only, but is applicable to all the ways in which poets and other literary authors are held to be free to violate, for special effects, the ordinary norms not only of common discourse but also of literal and historical truth, including the devices of meter and rhyme, the recourse to literary conventions, and the representation of fictional characters and events.

1.2. *Kalubale (Convergence)*:

The poem *Kalubale*, written by Akilu Aliyu was composed and presented in the Kano State festival of Arts of 1970 by the Artist. The poem, according to Muhammad (1977:296) and Garba (2011:163, 2015:), centrally focused on the multivalent and multidimensional nature of knowledge, the advantages of its possession and

the disadvantages of ignorance. The poem, as manifested in the title, is a compendium of stylistic features and therefore worn the first position of the competition in Kano. The compendium nature of this poem is what really stimulates the current article on one, special collocation, out of many foreground features embodied in the poem.

Therefore, the crucial nature of the issue of quest for knowledge and the critical nature of the effects of ignorance in Hausa thought further necessitates the artist to employ the use of special *collocations* to seriously persuade the Hausa folk and other target audience toward the significance of knowledge and the threat behind ignorance.

1.3. Collocation

Collocation has been defined by linguists such as Crystal, (1991:62), Abrams (2009:), Harpham (2009:) and Muhammed (2015:77-8) as the proper combination of words to give meaning. when words collocate each other they give an associative meaning. More so, the appropriate combination of words to give meanings is what stands for collocation. It is therefore a fixed expression that has become entrenched in the linguistic repertoire of language speakers. But not every word that collocates is acceptable in English language. In essence, Muhammed (2015:78) reiterated that, collocations are fixed expressions that have become entrenched in the linguistic repertoire of English speakers.

Muhammed (2015:78) further identifies six forms of collocations in English Language, as *adjective versus noun, Noun versus noun, Verb versus noun, Adverb versus adjective, Verb versus adverb and phrasal verb versus prepositional phrase*

1.3.1. Special Collocation and Poetry

Collocation becomes special, when a meaning is derived out of wrong combination of words. That is, deviation from the normal combination. Deviation in literature, especially poetry, is seen as one of the numerous aesthetic devices employed by literary artists. Widdowson, (1989:251) remarks that literature, and indeed all arts, create patterns out of deviations from normality and these patterns then represent a different reality from that represented by the conventional codes'. To further support the above expression by Widdowson and give it wider

exposure of this literary aesthetic feature, Adamson (1989:223) narrated the famous saying of Dr Johnson (1781), who opines that," the artifices of inversion by which the established order of words is changed, or of innovation, by which new words, or meanings of words, are introduced, is practiced, not by those who talk to be understood, but by those who write to be admired".

However literary authors, especially poets, under the auspices of poetic license, are at the liberty to aesthetically use odd combination of words to convey their messages in their various literary compositions. This is what Mathews (1997: 60 & 333) referred to as 'special collocation'. This gave birth to many odd collocations or wrong combinations of lexical items in poetry depending on the individual talent and the nature of the message. Akilu Aliyu as a celebrity and the crucial nature of the message therein, necessitate the use of such special collocations to put the message the Hausa common folk.

However, Crystal (1991:62) and Ahmad at el (2012:88-89), opine that, the central lexical item whose collocational pattern is being studied is the *node* of the text, while the collocational act is *collocational range* and the space created by the artist between the *node* and *collocate* is termed as the *span*. It could therefore conclude that, the paper tried to justify the Aristotelian statement on the application of linguistics to illuminate the forms and functions of poetry as in Kolawole (1997:9) which run thus:

The most effective means of achieving both clarity and diction and a certain dignity is the use of altered form of words, the unfamiliarity due to this deviation from normal usages will raise the diction above the commonplace.

Poetry, as asserted by Jeyifo and Biodun (2004:230-232), can contains such extremely contradictory intuitions and emotions because of its sheer delight in language and its semantics, phonetics and ideational resources. It often goes to the roots of words and based on this, it has the capacity to hermiticize within a single episode or passage tropes, metaphors and sentiments from

diverse and conflicting domains of life and experiences.

To further explicate the above statements, (Baldict, 2004: 100 and Kolawole, 1997:4) opine that, poetry is an expression of thoughts that are sublime through deliberate violations of the rules of grammar, and use of surprising metaphors and other devices by which its language draws

attention to itself. The violations of which do not only foreground the poem as a medium, but they also highlight the mind of the poet. The inspiring nature of the language of poetry is what always attracts the attention of many linguist and researchers. Indeed is what had prompted the current research on aspect of linguistic deviation as a poetic device to archive an effect.

2.0 Special Collocation in *Kalubale*

The artist employs two main classes of collocation in the poem: Metaphorical and non-metaphorical special collocations.

2.1. Grammatical Collocation:

As discussed above, the artist, employs several odd collocations, ranging from *abstract noun versus verb*, *abstract noun versus verbal dynamic noun and common noun versus adjective*. The collocations employed by the artist are said to be odd because they are used outside their collocational range and therefore are not collocate to each other. The artist deliberately used some lexical items disregarding their collocational restrictions for a purpose of disseminating a fascinating message to his audience.

a) *Abstract noun vs Verb*

- i) *A ofis, ko a cikinsito* *In the offices, or in the Store,*
A kowane gu ya makalkale *In whatever place it clings*

(knowledge)→(abstract+quality+human) vs (maalkale=cling)→(+concrete+animate+inanimate+activity)
Knowledge, according to Jagger,(2001:34-35) and Yusuf, (2011:15-16), is an abstract noun which denote an inherent quality and therefore non-tangible. Such class of noun does not collocate with verb such as *makalkale*, which usually denotes, an activity inherent to animate and inanimate which are concrete.

Literary effect: The artist implores the Hausa folk to seek for knowledge wherever it clings. Knowledge is neither concrete nor animate that could cling in a hidden place. However the artist assumes that, as in Hausa thought, had *knowledge* been a living or any concrete material and could cling in a hidden area, it should have been followed by a Hausa folk to get rid of it.

The artist further stresses that:

Mu je mu tsaya mu fito da shi *Let us go, stand firm and bring it out,*
Mu jajjawo shi, mu kwakule *Drag it out, ney winkle it out.*

- a) [knowledge]→[abstract+quality+human] vs [fito da shi= bring it out] →[+animate +concrete +tangible]
b) [knowledge]→[abstract+quality+human]vs [jajjawo =drag] → [+concrete +tangible+animate +inanimate]
c) [knowledge]→[+abstract+quality+human]vs [kwakule = winkle] →[+concrete +tangible +inanimate]

In (a) above, *knowledge* as an abstract human quality could not collate with the verb *fito da shi* (*bring it out*)

Literary effect: Even though *knowledge* is an abstract quality but if it happens to hid firm in a hidden arealike cavity of a rock or tree, as animate do, one is expected to labour himself in using a force to drag it out.

- ii) *A nan ina magana kan ilmu ne here I speak of knowledge;*

A nan kumshinsa na walwale (7-9) *That is the bundle I now unwrap*
Mu lura da saurin zamani, *We must note the speedy lapse of time,*
Ya dafe kansa ya walwale

As it **hastens** on its way unrolling as its goes,
[knowledge]→[+abstract+quality+human] Vs[**dafe**= haste]-→[+animate +human +tangible]

Literary effect: *Hastening* is an animate attribute usually human folk, is now attributed to *knowledge*, to indicate the seriousness attached to the quest of it in Hausa thought. Even if it be an animate and hastens fast its way, one is expected to run faster to get rid of it.

- a. A **gurguje** ba ya waiwaye, **Fast-a -running**, with never a backward glance.
Mu nace bin sa azazzale (19-20) We must press on in urgent pursuit of it

[knowledge]→[+abstract+quality+human] Vs[**a gurguje**= fast-a running] → [+animate+ human+tangible]
Literary effect: *Knowledge* as an abstract quality could not be qualified with an animate- human attribute of *fast-a-running*. But the artist intentionally deviates from the normalcy just to crave the indulgence of Hausa folk to the necessity of seeking knowledge in which ever condition one may find it.

- b) *Abstract Noun Vs Verbal dynamic noun*

i) *Ina Magana kan ilmu ne I speak of knowledge*

A nan kumshinsa na walwale That is the bundle I now unwrap

[knowledge]→[+abstract+quality+human] vs[**kumshinsa** = bundle]→ [+concrete+tangible+light]

Literary effect: *Knowledge* as an abstract noun, which is non-concrete, non-tangible, could not be in a bundle but deliberately described as such to indicate the resources and bounties enclosed therein that makes it resemble a bundle of a concrete material in layers that could be unwrap. Even if it be within a bundle that needs a force to unwrap it, in Hausa thought, one must use all the resources and force to unwrap it for its utilization.

2.2. Metaphorical Collocation:

This is a non-literal comparison device in human communication which is rich in persuasive effects. on the target audience. The artist employs this type of collocation to persuade the Hausa folk on the serious effects of Ignorance on the general development of the society and on an individual in particular.

- c) *Adjective Vs Common noun*

Marar ilimi dattijo ne, The Ignorant man is a an old gentleman

Irin na Biri mai]an kwale Like a monkey, with a woman's tiny cheek-mark (kbl: 37)

[ignorance]→[abstract+quality+human] vs [dattijo=old gentleman] → [+quality +animate+human]

Literary effect: Though an *ignorant* may be a gentleman in terms of age, but could not be regarded as a complete gentleman, who possess enormous wisdom and commands enormous respect, instead he is described as *Dattijon Biri*, useless old man, who only leads to destructive activities as opposed to constructive ones in the society. Therefore, when it is figuratively compounded like in this case, it signifies the most unfortunate situation one is deemed to find himself, whenever he prefers ignorance over knowledge. He will appear to all members of the society as *odd* as this collocation, looking down upon him as all that glitters is not gold. The most preferred endeavor to such a person is destruction such as tarnishing others' personality, causing chaos and feuds in the society, as is the case of an *old Monday*.

- d) *Dynamic noun Vs Verbal dynamic noun*

Juhala noman Barka ne Ignorance is Barka's farming

Da baya, da baya a zokale Back and back it goes for its continual repetition

(kbl: 36)

[*juhala* =ignorance] →[+abstract+quality+human] vs [*noman Barka*=Barka's farming]→[+animate+human +activity+]

Literary effect: *Ignorance* as an abstract noun is now personified with a typical human activity, *noman barka*, which is a typical of odd collocation. *Noman Barka* is normally backwardly done, as opposed to normal farming, which is forwardly done. According to the Hausa thought, ignorance is the chief facilitator of down-drift of all human endeavours, morally, socially, economically and politically. Therefore, ignorance in Hausa

thought, is an odd situation supposed to be confronted awkwardly, otherwise, a dwindling development will be the consequence.

e) *Personal pronoun Vs Verb*

Cikin nema nasa kar mu ji

*Kasala, **kar mu katangale** (bl:11)*

In searching for it we should not feel

Lazy, nor be haphazard.

[we]→[+animate+human+personal] vs [**katangale**= haphazard] →[-animate, -human, +activity]

Literary effect: The word *katangale* normally qualifies concrete and light items, which is less valuable, for instance, *ya katangalar da tsohuwar motarsa a waje* (he left away his old worthless car outside). Therefore, attributing it to human, is an odd collocation signifying the useless a person will seem to be in the absence of knowledge in the society as portrayed by the artist. In Hausa thought, therefore, it is believed that, knowledge uplifts one from which ever level to a higher degree and to prevent him from total collapse that may lead to his total degeneration in particular and the society in general.

In essence, one should never be away from knowledge and neither should he neglect the issue of knowledge in whichever way.

The span and the collocates

As earlier discussed, span is the spaces created by the artist between the *node* and *collocate*, which denotes a special message from the artist. For instance:

- i) *Mu kyale bukata kowace, let us ignore every other desire,*
Cikin ilimi, mu shugulgule. And with learning become fully involved
- ii) *A ofis, ko a cikin sito In the office, or in the Store,*
*A kowane gu ya **makalkale** In whatever place it **clings***

In the above example, the *node* is **ilmi (knowledge)** and the *collocate* is **makalkale (cling)**, which are separated by ten (10) lexical items.

The use of wider span, separating *node and collocate* by 10 and 3 lexical items, in verse 6,7,8 and 9, was employed by the artist while describing the nature of knowledge, suggests the time frame, usually longer period one is expected to spend in the process of knowledge acquisition and the constrains attached to all the processes. On the other hand, closer spans were employed by the artist in verses 10 and 11, while imploring the folk to quest for knowledge. This suggests the dare need for one to become educated and close contact with it, despite all constrains and circumstances.

The proximity of the *span* in describing the features of ignorance further suggests the rigidity of ignorance, the hardhearted nature of ignorant mind and the dare need to extinguish it within the individuals in particular and the society in general.

Conclusion

In conclusion, one is made to understand the wisdom behind the art of deviating from the normal conventions that characterized literature in general and poetry in particular. It is further justified that, the linguistic freedom assumed by literary artists, especially poets, across the ages, is for a purpose as clearly seen in this poem as contained in Abrams (2009:271). The two major

effects of deviating from the normal convention in this poem is said to cherish the advantages of multidimensional education in itself and its acquisition. While on the other hand, it highlights the dangers and grave effects of ignorance on an individual, community and the nation in general. These effects were clearly and successfully disseminated by creating special patterns through deviations.

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