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EDITORIAL

Every academic environment is sustained by learning through rigorous methods. Research is one and the focal point for assessment. A serious member of the academic community is measured by the quality and number of academic articles.

In spite of the desire to acquire many research reports, this edition has insisted on standards and quality. It is important to note that many articles have been rejected for not meeting our requirements.

The first and most obvious task of our journal is to provide a level playing field for researchers all over the globe in language-related disciplines, which is the vehicle for conveying knowledge. In this edition, twenty-seven (27) articles have undergone academic scrutiny from our blind reviewers.

To our esteemed contributors and readers, thought-provoking articles are expected and we are ready to publish them in the next volume.

Professor Ali Amadi Alkali,
Editor-in-Chief,
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NOTES TO CONTRIBUTORS

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Sunday Okakwu Ape,

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A phono-pragmatic analysis of Taylor's "twinkle twinkle little star"

Abstract

The poem, "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" by Jane Taylor is an old nursery rhyme which can be analysed from a phono-pragmatic stance. The essence is to show how a phonological reading of any piece can contribute to meaning making of such a piece. To do this, the distinctive feature theory in phonology is adopted to explain how the end-line rhyme has been used to cause differences in word meanings. The major finding is that although the poem has been intended to provide a lullaby for babies in need of some soothing, the poet's use of distinctive feature device has taken it beyond a mere song to a more meaningful communicative enterprise. Creative artists are enjoined to explore distinctive features of sounds in order to achieve meaning-making in both oral and written communications.

1.1 Introduction

Pragmatics is the study of language in use by the speakers according to contexts. This is why pragmaticians are always in the business of explicating meanings of utterances; certain utterances have the capability of multiple interpretations due to the situations or contexts in which they were made. One would say that semantics also is about meaning, but there are still one or more differences between the two; pragmatics is the study of the use of language in a social context. This means that the treatment of meaning in pragmatics is always dependent on the social situation surrounding the utterance under analysis. Thus, there are pragmatics of health situation known as clinical pragmatics; pragmatics that investigates issues in forensics is known as forensic pragmatics, pragmatics of psychological situation

could be called psycho-pragmatics. In that sense, one can talk of pragmatics and phonology or phonology and pragmatics which could be called phono-pragmatics.

This study is of the hunch that phono-pragmatics is a relatively new and strange domain of study that can be applied in analyses of texts. Not so much have been heard or done in this domain compared to the other studies of pragmatics such as clinical pragmatics, forensic pragmatics, psycho-pragmatics, etc. It is this newness of phono-pragmatics that has interested this researcher. On the other hand, there have been several literary and linguistic stylistic analyses of Jane Taylor's "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star', but not much has been heard of any phono-pragmatic analysis of the poem to the best of the knowledge of this researcher.

Therefore, the poem, "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" by Jane Taylor which is an old nursery rhyme can be analysed from a phono-pragmatic stance. The essence is to show how a phonological reading of any piece can contribute to meaning making of such a piece. To do this, the distinctive feature theory in phonology is adopted to explain how the end-line rhyme has been used to cause differences in word meanings. Although the poem has been intended to provide a lullaby for babies in need of some soothing, the poet's use of distinctive feature device has taken it beyond a mere song to a more meaningful communicative enterprise.

2.1 What is phono-pragmatics?

Phono-pragmatics may be referred to as one of the new aspects of pragmatic study; there are other aspects such as psycho-pragmatics, clinical pragmatics, forensic pragmatics and so on. Phono-pragmatics is the marriage of phonology and pragmatics. Phonology is the study of how the sounds of a language are combined to produce meaning. It deals with studying both the segmental and the supra-segmental sounds in a language, investigating the properties of the segmental phonemes in order to tell how they can relate to produce the supra-segmental aspects like syllables, tone groups, intonation, etc. (Roach, 2009; also Jones, 2010)

Phonotactics, which is the study of the rules of the relationships between and among the sounds of a language, is the mainstay of phonology. Richards and Schmidt (2010) define it as the arrangements of the distinctive sound units (phonemes) in a language. For example, the consonant clusters /spr-/ and /str-/ can occur at the beginning of a word, as in "sprout", "strain", but cannot be at the end of a word in English. This anchor of phonological study can be used to account for distinctive feature theory which is used for the analysis in this present study.

Pragmatics, on the other hand, refers to the study of language use and the context of usage. Yule (2007) refers to pragmatics as the study of "the intended speaker meaning". This means that there are possible meanings of an utterance that may not be "the intended speaker meaning". It then means that the speaker's meaning may be unseen or invisible, in which case there could be a misinterpretation of what is said. The right interpretation can only be when the interlocutors have shared assumptions and expectations. In such a situation, more gets communicated than is said. The

speaker's presupposition is that the hearer already knows the referent, therefore he or she leaves certain things unsaid, making the hearer to decipher.

The question is what happens to readers or hearers who do not have shared knowledge with the speaker or writer? The encoder may be operating from a world view that is different from that of the audience (decoder). This is where there may be a possibility of miscarriage of information, a failure of linguistic communication. Yule (2007) gave an example of this kind of situation in a simple dialogue (interlocution) between a visitor and a passer-by:

Visitor: Excuse me; do you know where the Ambassador Hotel is?

Passer-by: Oh sure, I know where it is. (And he walks away).

The passerby walked away because he did not know the need of the visitor, did not have a shared knowledge with him, took his question to be literal instead of a request like, "Could you please, show me where the Ambassador Hotel is". The passerby would have been of help to the visitor if he had a shared knowledge with the visitor that he was just visiting the town. Other than that, the only way he could help the visitor would have been through a polite request.

Quoting Adegbija (1998), Ibileye (2021) presents the following as goals of pragmatic enquiry:

a) to explain how utterances convey meaning in context;
b) to convey how meaning is decoded from utterances in context in a particular situation;
c) to explain how context contributes to the encoding and decoding of meaning;
d) to explain how speakers and hearers of utterances perceive them as conveying the meaning they are considered as conveying in particular utterances;
e) to explain how speakers can say one thing and mean something else;
f) to explain how deductions are made in context with respect to what meaning has been decoded in a particular utterance.

From the foregoing therefore, the issue of meaning which is the business of pragmatics can be described as naughty, particularly when the encoder and the decoder are not adequately attuned to each other. There is however a point where pragmatics and phonology can converge to make meaning explicit. A phono-pragmatic analysis of an utterance or a discourse or a text can make meaning explicit. This can be achieved through the phonological concept called "Distinctive Feature Analysis" (DFA).

2.2 Distinctive Feature Analysis

Distinctive feature analysis is a practice in phonology where the differential qualities of a sound make it distinct, or different from other sounds. According to Clark, Yallop and Fletcher (2012), distinctive features of a sound are those qualities of a sound that make it different from others. It is these qualities that contribute to differences in word meanings; meanings are the concern of pragmatics. What makes

the words "tick" and "lick" different from each other are the initial sounds /t/ and /l/; while one is a voiceless alveolar plosive, the other is a voiced alveolar lateral. The differences therefore are in their voicing and manner of articulation. These differences help to arrive at meanings in such a way that all words in a language are not the same; such is a contribution of phonology to pragmatics.

Crystal (1992) presents the distinctive feature matrices with the features being identified as consonantal, vocalic, diffuse, compact, grave, flat, voice, continuant, strident, nasal. He, drawing from Jakobson and Halle (1956), uses the plus/minus (+/-) binary to indicate what a feature is and what it is not; thus we have:

+compact referring to low vowels;

-compact referring to high and mid vowels;

+consonantal referring to obstruction in the vocal tract;

-consonantal referring to no vocal tract obstruction;

+continuant referring to fricative/approximant consonants;

-continuant referring to stop/affricate consonants;

+diffuse referring to high vowels; labial/dental/alveolar consonants;

-diffuse referring to low vowels; palatal/velar/back consonants;

+flat referring to rounded vowels;

-flat referring to unrounded vowels;

+grave referring to back vowels; labial/velar/back consonants;

-grave referring to front vowels; dental/alveolar/palatal consonants;

+nasal referring to nasal consonants;

-nasal referring to oral consonants;

+strident referring to fricative/affricate consonants with high frequency noise;

-strident referring to consonants with low frequency noise;

+vocalic referring to glottal vibration with free passage of air through vocal tract;

-vocalic referring to no glottal vibration or free passage of air;

+voice referring to voiced consonants;

-voice referring to voiceless consonants.

All the descriptive information on the qualities of the English sound segments (phonemes) can be summarized into binary matrices (consonant matrix and vowel matrix) as presented under the Appendix.

Clark, Yallop and Fletcher (ibid), also drawing from Jakobson and Halle (1956), attempts a simplification of the features by presenting them against their opposites; thus, they present the following:

1. vocalic/non-vocalic distinguishing vowels and vowel-like sounds from non-vocalic sounds like stops and fricatives.

2. consonantal/non-consonantal distinguishing sounds with low energy and relatively substantial obstruction in the vocal tract from non-consonantal sounds; thus, for example, a typical vowel can be considered vocalic and non-consonantal, a plosive non-vocalic and consonantal, an approximant such as a lateral both vocalic and consonantal, and a glottal stop non-vocalic and non-consonantal.

3. compact/diffuse referring to the acoustic spectrum and distinguishing sound with energy concentrated in the central region of the spectrum (such as low vowels and velar consonants) from those with a more 'diffuse' spread of energy (such as high vowels and labial and alveolar consonants).

4. tense/lax

5. voiced/voiceless

6. nasal/oral

7. discontinuous/continuant

8. strident/mellow distinguishing 'noisy' sounds like sibilant /s/ from more 'mellow' fricatives like /θ/.

9. checked/unchecked referring to the higher rate of energy discharge in glottalized sound and therefore, distinguishing ejectives from pulmonic sounds.

10. grave/acute referring to the acoustic spectrum and distinguishing sounds with more energy in the lower frequency ranges (such as back vowels and labial and velar consonants) from those with greater concentration of energy in the upper frequencies (front vowels and alveolar consonants).

11. flat/plain referring to the lowering or weakening of upper frequencies created by some kind of narrowed aperture: distinguishing lip-rounded sounds from non-rounded, as well as other articulations with comparable acoustic consequences, notably pharyngealized consonants from their 'plain' counterparts.

12. sharp/plain being more or less opposite of 'flat/plain' and referring to the upward shift of upper frequencies characteristic of palatalized consonants.

From the above distinctions of sounds, words are also made to be distinct from one another, yielding different meanings. Such is the contribution of phonology to meaning. The same concept can be used to analyze texts/discourses such as Jane Taylor's poem/lullaby, "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star", which was published in a collection, *Rhymes for the Nursery* by Jane and her sister Ann in 1806.

2.3 "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" as a Lullaby

According to *The New International Webster's Comprehensive Dictionary of the English Language, Encyclopedic Edition*, lullaby is a song to lull a child to sleep; it is a cradlesong. It can also be referred to as a goodnight or farewell song. According to **Wikipedia**, "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" is an English lullaby. The lyrics are from an early 19th century English poem written by Jane Taylor. The poem, which is

in couplet form, was first published in 1806 in *Rhymes for the Nursery,* a collection of poems by Taylor and her sister Ann. It is now sung as a lullaby to the tune of the French melody "Ah! vous dirai-je, maman", which was first published in 1761 and later arranged by several composers, including Mozart. The English lyrics have five stanzas (see Appendix), although only the first stanza is widely known. It is widely sung as a lullaby to soothe babies needing comfort.

3.1 Presentation and analysis of data from the poem

This study attempts to analyse the end-line rhyme in the poem using distinctive feature theory; and thereafter investigate other sounds devices in the poem with focus on meaning making. It is hoped that this attempt at phono-pragmatic analysis of the old poem (lullaby) will spur and guide other scholars to approach analyzing other texts (poems, plays, playlets, prose writings such as novels, novella, short stories, etc) using the same approach.

As said earlier, the poem, "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" is written in five stanzas. Each stanza is comprised of two couplets; couplets are pairs of lines, typically with rhyming end words. In the first stanza, the words "star" and "are" rhyme; "high" and "sky" rhyme. Though "star" and "are" rhyme with the vowel /a:/, they are made to be different with the presence of the consonant cluster /st-/ in "star". The words "high" /hai/ and "sky" /skai/, on the other hand, end with /ai/, but are made to be different with their initial sounds /h/ and /sk-/; while /h/ is a voiceless glottal fricative, /sk-/ is a cluster of two consonants, one being an alveolar fricative and the other a velar plosive. Though the end words rhyme, they mean differently.

The second stanza features two couplets, the first ending with "gone" /gɒn/ and "upon" /əpɒn/ and the second with "light" /lait/ and "night" /nait/. Though they all end with /-ait/, their initial sounds have caused the difference in their meanings; /l/ is a voiced alveolar lateral consonant, while /n/ is a voiced alveolar nasal consonant. They are the same in all other features except in the manner of articulation: one is a lateral, the other is a nasal.

In the third stanza, "dark" and "spark" rhyme, "go' and "so" rhyme. The words /da:k/ and /spa:k/ end with /-a:k/ but differ in their initial sounds /d/ and /sp-/. While one is a voiced alveolar plosive consonant, the other is a cluster of /s/ and /p/; /s/ being a voiceless alveolar fricative and /p/ a voiceless bilabial consonant. The words /gəu/ and /səu/ end in the diphthong /əu/, but are different in their initials /g/ and /s/; /g/ is a voiced velar plosive consonant, while /s/ is a voiceless alveolar plosive consonant. The initial sounds make the difference in the words.

The fourth stanza features two couplets; the first being "keep" and "peep", the second "eye" and "sky". In the first couplet, /ki:p/ and /pi:p/ rhyme with /-i:p/, but differ in their initial sounds /k/ and /p/. /k/ is a voiceless velar plosive consonant, while the /p/ is a voiceless bilabial plosive consonant; they differ in voicing. In the second couplet, the words /ai/ and /skai/ differ in the sense that the first word, as a mono-syllable, has neither onset nor coda, while the second has an onset which is a cluster of the consonants /s+k/. It is the consonant cluster that makes the difference between the words.

The fifth and final stanza features two couplets like all others. The first couplet is like the first couplet of the third stanza, while the second is like the first of the first stanza. Their analyses will be like the analyses of those earlier stanzas.

Other phonological (sound) devices used in the poem include repetition, onomatopoeia, alliteration, assonance. Repetition is a device which involves repeating a particular sound or word for some emphasis. For instance, in lines 1 of stanza 1, 4 of stanza 2, and 4 of stanza 5, the word "twinkle" is repeated for emphasis. The word "when" is also repeated in lines 1 and 2 of stanza 2.

Another case of repetition is that of alliteration and assonance. Alliteration, according to Richards and Schmidt (2010), is the repetition of an initial sound, usually a consonant, in two or more words that occur close together, that is, they occur in sequence. In line 2 of stanza 1, the consonant /w/ occurs sequentially in "wonder what". The same can be said of /l/ in "little light" of line 3, stanza 2. Assonance, on the other hand, is the repetition of similar or identical vowel sound(s) though with different consonants in a line. Assonance is illustrated in line 1 of the fifth and last stanza in the words "bright and tiny"; the vowel (diphthong) /ai/ is repeated in that sequence.

According to Richards and Schmidt (ibid) again, onomatopoeia "refers to words that are considered by convention to be imitative of nature, acoustically similar to the thing to which they refer ... or the sound made by the thing to which they refer". They give examples such as the 'bow-wow' of a dog or the 'tick-tock' of a clock. According to them, words such as 'splash', 'growl' can be considered as semi-onomatopoeia. In "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star", examples of onomatopoeia abound. The word "twinkle" which feature in the topic and in line 1 of stanza 1, line 4 of stanzas 2 and 5 is a typical example of onomatopoeia. Other examples include "blazing" (line 1, stanza 2) and "shut" (line 3, stanza 4).

4.1 Discussion of findings

Phono-pragmatic analysis includes identifying distinctive features of sounds used in a piece of writing. This means identifying the qualities that make each sound different from others so that one can tell how it has made a word mean differently from other words; the same difference contributes to meaning in a whole piece. The same analysis involves identifying other sound devices such as repetition, alliteration, assonance, onomatopoeia, etc and establishing their effects on the piece.

The poem under this study is not a mere song or lullaby, even though it is meant to serve that purpose. It is a creative work woven together in the enterprise of meaning making. Though the words in the end-lines rhyme (sound alike), they are made distinct by the use of distinctive features; different consonants and consonant clusters have been introduced at word-initial position and final position to make difference in meanings. These differences contribute to the whole meaning of the poem - it eulogizes the star as it twinkles to shine forth its light to humanity.

Most words in the vocabulary of the poem are simple, mono-syllabic and bi-syllabic, targeting an audience that largely includes children. Children are more at home with

simple words, words of one syllable and those of two syllables, such as star, sky, dark, shine, twinkle, little, wonder, diamond, blazing, etc (running through all the stanzas). Their mental capacity may not cope with multi-syllabic words. A lullaby is mostly for children. That is why it is referred to as cradlesong.

A lullaby will not feature just mono-syllabic and bi-syllabic words only; it can feature vocabularies meant for adults, after all it targets adult audience too. They need to be lulled to sleep at night (goodnight song), or to be bade or bidden farewell (farewell song). Words such as diamond, blazing, traveler, spark cannot be said to appeal to children alone; they make appeal to adults also.

5.1 Conclusion

Pragmaticians have been busy about meaning expectedly so as human beings cannot coexist without language. Their focus has been on the contextual use of language. Most pragmaticians explore structural and lexical pragmatics in the domains of clinics, forensics, psychology, etc being oblivious of its interface with phonology. This study has attempted to point to us that phonology can interface with pragmatics to analyse texts and discourses in order to make meaning explicit.

However, the study has not been able to do more than analysing end-line rhymes and some sound effects in the chosen text. Further works could be done on other phonological matters like rhythm, acoustics, etc and related to pragmatics to explicate meanings in utterances, texts, etc. It is also suggested that scholars should attempt phono-pragmatic studies of other textual materials to see how phonology can make meanings explicit.

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English consonant matrix

	p	b	f	v	m	t	d	θ	ð	s	z	n	tʃ	dʒ	ʃ	ʒ	k	g	l	r	w	j	h	ŋ
consonantal	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	−	−	−	+
vocalic	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	+	+	−	−	−	−
diffuse	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	−	−	−	−	−	−	+	+	+	+	+	−
compact	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	+	+	+	+	+	+	−	−	−	−	−	+
grave	+	+	+	+	+	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	+	+	−	−	+	−	−	+
flat	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	+	−	−	−
voice	−	+	−	+	+	−	+	−	+	−	+	+	−	+	−	+	−	+	+	+	+	+	−	+
continuant	−	−	+	+	−	−	−	+	+	+	+	−	−	−	+	+	−	−	+	+	+	+	+	−
strident	−	−	+	+	−	−	−	−	−	+	+	−	+	+	+	+	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−
nasal	−	−	−	−	+	−	−	−	−	−	−	+	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	−	+

Matrix for a seven-vowel system

	i	e	a	u	o	ɔ	ɑ
consonantal	−	−	−	−	−	−	−
vocalic	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
diffuse	+	+	−	+	+	−	−
compact	−	−	+	−	−	+	+
grave	−	−	−	+	+	+	+
flat	−	−	−	+	+	+	+
voice	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
continuant	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
strident	−	−	−	−	−	−	−
nasal	−	−	−	−	−	−	−

Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star

BY JANE TAYLOR

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,

How I wonder what you are!

Up above the world so high,

Like a diamond in the sky.

When the blazing sun is gone,

When he nothing shines upon,

Then you show your little light,

Twinkle, twinkle, all the night.

Then the traveler in the dark

Thanks, you for your tiny spark,

How could he see where to go?

If you did not twinkle so?

In the dark blue sky you keep,

Often through my curtains peep

For you never shut your eye,

Till the sun is in the sky.

As your bright and tiny spark

Lights the traveler in the dark,

Though I know not what you are,

Twinkle, twinkle, little star.

Source: **Wikipedia (2024)**