

Exploring Style in Modern Fiction: an Example of Kaine Agary's *Yellow Yellow*

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Abstract: It is an interesting discovery in the literature that Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* has received less attention with respect to its linguistic style. This research, therefore, undertakes a linguistic- stylistic study of the text with the aim of establishing its style in addition to interpreting its message. Employing Halliday's Functional Linguistics and linguistic stylistics as its theoretical basis, the study appraises the major lexical, lexico-semantic, grammatical and graphological features of the text. In so doing, it discovers that the text employs mainly concrete nouns, active and dynamic verbs, first person-pronoun "I", co-ordinate and simple sentences, semi-colon and exclamation marks as its peculiar linguistic features. It also deploys neologisms, sexist tropes, parallel clause structures, Nigerianisms and pidgin to beautify and contextualise the discourse. The research, therefore, submits that Agary plays a major role in the thematisation of the nation's ills and the stylistic development of linguistic and literary theories.

Keywords: linguistics, stylistics, style, foregrounding, Nigerianisms, neologisms, Agary

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I. INTRODUCTION

Language and literature interrelate and intersect at the confluence of style, which, in this province, is the object of stylistics or stylistic study of a text. As human being's supreme tool of communication, language remains a powerful vehicle of socio-cultural, political, ideological and aesthetic transmission. Thus, a reflection on the role of language reveals the pervasive influence it exerts on every stratum of life and society. In line with this view, Adedimeji & Alabi(2011, p.124) cite Essien(1990) as asserting that, "Language is by far one of human being's greatest, most complex and most enigmatic possessions, the quintessence of their humanity, without which individuals and nations lose their mental and cultural heritage." Corroborating this notion, Trask (1995, p.1) sees language as "the single most remarkable characteristic that we have, the one that truly sets our species apart."

Accordingly, the function and beauty of language are seen in its stylistic and affective use in literary creations. Literature, which, in the words of Abrams & Harpham (2009,pp.177-8), "designates fictional and imaginative writings-poetry, prose fiction and drama," employs linguistic resources to mirror societal realities, transmit and preserve cultures, thereby entertaining and educating the people targeted. Sapir (1921) observes that language is the most fluid of mediums. It is the medium of literature just as wood, marble and bronze or clay are the materials of the sculptor. Generally, literary language is said to be unusually or stylistically unique. For instance, Adedimeji (2010,p.22) explains that when a linguistic expression has an "unusual significance", such an expression is referred to as literature. What this suggests is that, the language of literature is any expression that is unusually or markedly significant in the transmission and negotiation of meaning. Thus, what distinguishes the language of literature is "its marked literariness rather than unmarked literalness" (Adedimeji, 2010,p.22). The end product of a textual, marked literary features or unusual significance is regarded as style, the linguistic characteristics of a text and most distinctive feature of the language

of literature, which Crystal & Davy (1969) refer to as the art of saying the right thing in the most effective way. This style, according to Adedimeji & Alabi(2011) manifests itself at all levels of linguistic analysis, especially phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics, the concerns of stylistics.

Linguistics is the systematic study of language in terms of what it is and how it functions. In *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*(1982), it is stated that the field of linguistics is divided into three dichotomies: Synchronic versus Diachronic, Micro-linguistics versus Macro-linguistics and Theoretical versus Applied. This paper adopts applied linguistics which is the bedrock of M.A.K Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics. Combined with stylistics, the eclectic approach is intended to examine how Agary uses language in *Yellow-*

Yellow (2006, henceforth *YY*) to transmit her socio-cultural sensibilities in a unique manner that makes her language distinct from say the styles of Chinua Achebe or Sefi Atta.

Relatively, as a branch of linguistics, stylistics is simply the linguistic study of style (Leech & Short, 1981). Alabi (2010) agrees with these authors and stresses that stylistics is the study of style or variety of language used in literary and non-literary contexts in the light of the effect the writer/speaker wishes to communicate to the reader/hearer. He further emphasises that stylistics seeks to evolve frameworks of linguistic principles and tenets which are capable of explaining the particular choices made by individuals and social groups in their use of language. In this sense, central to the practice of stylistics, in the views of Thornborrow and Wareing (1997), is the application of linguistic knowledge to describe the ways that writers use language and the choices that they make in creating texts. This, therefore, is the preoccupation of stylistic analysis, defined as being “concerned with stylistic features determined by artistic motivation” (Leech & Short, 1981, p. 14). To analyse a text stylistically, the researcher is involved in identifying, isolating, describing, explaining the formal features of the text, using a particular linguistic model. Based on the approach, such as linguistic stylistics, which is adopted in this study, the analysis goes on to interpret a work of art.

Kaine Agary's *Yellow- Yellow* (2006) is indeed a fascinating text. It is not just because of its relevant themes which centre on the pervading environmental degradation, exploitation and injustice suffered by women in the oil-rich Niger Delta, South-South Nigeria, but also its linguistic resourcefulness. Thus, the touching story of Zilayefa - a young girl of Greek and Nigerian parentage - and the stylistic features of the novel have expectedly caught the interest of linguists and literary critics.

It is therefore the thrust of this work to attempt a linguistic -stylistic study of this text, with a view to establishing its style and interpreting its content. In the light of this, this study illustrates the relationship between language use and style, the manner in which the writer's experience is conveyed, at the lexical, lexico-semantic, grammatical and graphological levels to showcase the distinctly Nigerian or Niger-Deltan flavour of *Yellow-Yellow*.

II. JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

Agary's *Yellow- Yellow*, to the best of my knowledge, has received little critical attention with respect to its linguistic repertoire, leaving some significant gaps to be filled. For instance, Olubunmi (2015) carries out a lexico-stylistic study of Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*, using the framework of Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics and Discourse-stylistics. Thus, this study leaves out other levels of stylistic analysis such as Lexico-semantic, grammatical and graphological features, which this present study aims to field using linguistic stylistics and Systemic Functional Linguistics as its framework.

Koussouhoun & Dossoumou (2014) also investigate the discourse of the text from a lexico-grammatical perspective. Employing Systemic Functional Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis, they explore the textual and experiential meta functions of the language. With their discovery that the salient features of *YY* (topical themes, use of deictic “the” and personal pronouns “I, me”) serve to enhance exchange of meanings, they conclude that the ideology of *YY* is oriented towards building an environment-friendly and judicial models which will guide social justice in the Niger Delta. Noticeably, this study fails to account for the lexico-semantic and graphological linguistics of the novel which are now being extensively explored in the present study, thus widening the scope of the study.

III. THEORETICAL CONSIDERATION

The work adopts an eclectic approach. It is anchored on the frame work of linguistic stylistics and M.A.K. Halliday's Systemic Grammar. Linguistic stylistics aims at describing the formal features of texts, in addition to explaining the functional significance of the features for the interpretation of the studied texts (Wales, 1997). The approach also focuses on relating literary effects to linguistic “causes” where they are felt to be relevant (p.438). This theory is adopted because of its merits so outlined, which serve the focus of this work.

On the other hand, Halliday's Systemic Grammar is founded on a complex network of systems (Eka, 1994). In other words, the term “systemic” captures the notion that language is a network of systems for generating meaning. Thus, Halliday (1970, p. 338) posits that “all options are embedded in the language system: the system is a network of options deriving from all the various functions of language.” Ufot (2009 p. 17) sees this theory as describing language “on the basis of the relationships among the various units of different ranks and also views the language as a system of meaning- creating choices.” The theory therefore analyses language in terms of its components and functions. The basic tenets of this theory revolve round such terms as “rank,” “system,” and “meta-function.” It is a two-dimensional theory – the Scale and Category (morpheme, word, clause and sentence) segment and the Meta-functional (ideational, interpersonal and textual) aspect. This paper draws insights from both dimensions.

The choice of this grammatical model is informed by its merits. First, the functional approach allows us to explain the aesthetic functions of isolated linguistic choices found in the text. It also considers the concept of

context in meaning explication, linking the linguistic choices to ideological, cultural, and historical considerations of the author. This serves to enhance thematic interpretation of the text. The suitability of the theory is, therefore, further enhanced by its inclusion of both content and form of the text studied. Accordingly, the frame work allows the analysis to be done under linguistic levels and categories such as lexis, lexico- semantics, grammar in addition to graphology. In sum, the eclectic approach enables the grammatical structures, levels and aesthetic functions in the texts to be stylistically accounted for.

IV. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

4.1 Lexical Features in Agary's *YY*

Generally, the diction of Agary's *YY* centres on oil spillage, exploitation, corruption, relationship, plights of women, fear, emotion, Nigeria, Niger Delta, hardship, oil companies, expatriate workers and the identity crises. The vocabulary consists of concrete and proper nouns, active and dynamic verbs, adjectives, adverbs and personal pronouns. It also contains tropes, pidgin, vernacular, neologisms and Nigerianisms. The sampled texts below illustrate some of these features:

4.1.1 Tropes

Tropes refer to figurative expressions which are a conspicuous departure from what competent users of a language apprehend as the standard meaning of words in order to achieve some special meaning or literary effect (Abrams & Harpham, 2009). The most common tropes in the text include: metaphors as shown in these expressions, "After contributing to my growing *nest egg* in the bank, most of the extras I got from work went to my mother in the village"(p. 129). "I had thought that when I met my someone special, I would feel *butterflies in my stomach*, lose touch with reality, and we would be riding together into the sunset" (p. 23). Contextually, "nest egg" as used here connotes "money" that the protagonist kept in the bank, whereas "butterflies in my stomach" suggests bliss and sensuous gratification.

Another trope is symbol as in "...there were *trees* and many *flowers* to appreciate... The air was soaked with the *scent* from the *Queen of the hedges*..."(P. 136). In the context, the "trees", "flowers", "scent" and "Queen of the hedges" are all symbolic of sexual pleasure.

Simile is used in the expression, "... agreeing to follow Sergio to his place that day was *like a small fish dancing close to a fisherman's net*" (p. 170). Thus, by this trope, there is a foreshadowing of what fate Laye is likely going to suffer by willingly accepting to follow Sergio, his lover, home.

Among other figurative expressions, the language features euphemism as in "And make sure he uses his *raincoat* o,"(p. 133). "Raincoat" is a euphemism for condom.

4.1.2 Pidgin

Some characters, because of their background or socio-linguistic context, regularly adopt the simple or informal form of language known as the English Based pidgin. These extracts illustrate this feature, "As Mama Ebiye led my mother away, I heard her say, 'Yellow no be small pickin again o. You go allow de girl grow o. After all na inside house you siddon born de pickin?'" (p.16). "Bibi, na wa for you o. We all poor but we dey join hand help each other" (P. 8). In the first example, Mama Ebiye, a good neighbour and friend of Laye's mother, uses pidgin, because of her low background, to advise Laye's mother to allow Laye some freedom in the yard. In the second example, the Chairlady annoyingly frowns at Laye's mother over the non-compliance of the latter in their cloth- deal.

4.1.3 Neologisms

There are also instances of coinages known as neologisms. Typical examples are those found in this text "Maybe then I could understand better or with less anger why there were more and more of *my kind* – "*African-profits*" "*born-troways*," "*ashawo- pickins*," "*father-unknowns*" – running around the slums of Port Harcourt. (p. 17). These coinages, as explained in the next section, describe the kinds of children produced as a result of illegitimate relationships between some expatriate workers and African women in the area.

4.1.4 Nigerianisms

Some expressions identified as Nigerianisms are Nigerian English expressions, whose usages and meanings are peculiar to Nigerian socio-linguistic contexts. Examples include: "Esther showed me how to get a taxi or *okada*" (p.69). "She paused before adding, 'in my place, some *oyinbo* children were killed at birth..." (p.101) . Here, "Okada" is a Nigerian name for a commercial motorcycle, whereas, "oyinbo" refers to a Westerner.

4.1.5 Vernacular

Vernacular or local expressions are common in the diction as in, “There was *kekefia*, *banga* soup, pepper soup, *jollof* rice, He had gorged himself with food, and *kainkain* for two days” (p. 19). While, “Kekefia”, “banga” and “jollof” are names of delicacies common in the Niger Delta, “kainkain” is a type of local drink. Most of the characters also bear local names like Zilayefa, Sisi, Pastor Ikechukwu, Emem, etc. These localised forms serve to contextualise the discourse.

4.1.6 Word Categories

As can be illustrated from the sampled texts below, the diction of Agary's *YY* primarily consists of purely concrete nouns, proper nouns, active and dynamic verbs, adjectives, adverbs and adverbials and personal pronouns. The lexemes are noticed to be a combination of simple and complex words.

1. There was *kekefia*, *banga* soup, pepper soup, *jollof* rice. He had *gorged* himself with food, and *kainkain* for two days (p. 19).
2. *My heart was pounding* against my *chest* as I tried to *imagine* what could have *happened* that left her *void* of words (p.3).
3. I felt such a *strongemotional* need for *him* that the *tenderness* and my *longing* for *him* erased all *my* anger. *Hepulled* me *close* and *kissed* me before he *carried* me to the *bed* (p.151).
4. After all, *Nigeria* was in the middle of the *oil boom*, and there were many *businessmen* around (p.7).
5. During my second to last year in secondary school, one of the *crude oil pipes* that *ran* through my *villagebroke* and *spilled oil* over *severalhectares* of *land*, my mother's *farm* included (p. 3).
6. “*Bibi, na wa for you o. We all poor but we dey join hand help each other.*” (p. 8).
7. ... Sometimes we would hear an *Ijaw person*, living in *Port Harcourt* or *Lagos*, speaking about how the *oil companies* had *destroyed* over *Niger Delta* with *impurity* (p. 9).
8. After *contributing* to my growing *nest egg* in the bank, most of the extras I *got* from work *went* to my mother in the village (p.129).
9. I was *afraid* that, despite my *best* efforts, *bigRomeo* had managed to *track* me down (p. 129).
10. Maybe then I could understand better or with less anger why there were more and more of *my* kind – “*African-profits*” “*born-troways,*” “*ashawo- pickins,*” “*father-unknowns*” – running around the slums of Port Harcourt. (p. 17).
11. *He* was so *attentive* and *sweet* except sometimes he *really*, *sounded* like an old headmaster, *especially* when he was expressing his views on the *NigerDelta* (p. 139).
12. After a few minutes, he returned to inform us that our *head of state* had *died* overnight (p.175).
13. I *soon* started *looking for plants* that resembled the ones girls in the village claimed were used to “*washedout*” *belle* (p. 176).
14. The *policetaskforce* – *operationsweep* – that was to maintain law and order *pretended* to be in full effect, but *lawenforcement* was so *lax*, the *police* so *corrupt*, that if you had enough money, you could *pay your way out* of any police trouble (p. 111).
15. She paused before adding, “in my place, some *oyinbo* children were *killed* at birth it was a *shameful* thing to have a *half-caste* in the family” (p. 101).
16. When we got to the *fillingstation*, there was a guarded excitement in the air besides the regular *commotion* around the long *queue* for *petrol* (p.175).
17. I could find my way to a place like *Bony*, the base of *expatriatesworking* for the *oilcompanies* and sell *mybody* to a *whitey* (p.35).
18. I had no clue what *myfatherlookedlike* (p. 19).

The word categories are summarised in table 4.1

Table 4.1: Word categories in *YY*

S/N	WORD CATEGORY	EXAMPLES
1.	Concrete nouns	Crude oil, pipes hectares, land, farm, heart, chest, businessmen, Ijaw person, kekefia, bed, petrol, plants, belle, expatriates, body, whitey, the police, etc
2.	Proper nouns	Port Harcourt, Niger Delta, Lagos, Ijaw, Nigeria, etc.
3.	Active and Dynamic verbs	Spilled, was pounding, happened, peaking, destroyed, gorged, contributing, got, trackdown, felt, erased, pulled, kissed, expressing, returned, had died, got to, started looking for, wash out, paused, were killed, working, maintain, pay your way out etc.
4.	Adjectives	Several, void, poor, growing afraid, big, strong, emotional, close, attentive, sweet, shameful, etc.
5.	Adverbs and Adverbials	Really, especially, with impurity, overnight, soon,
6.	Personal pronouns	I, he, my, him, we, you

These features are further explained in the following section.

4.2 Lexico- Semantic Features in Agary's YY

The register employed in the narrative helps to situate the discourse within Nigerian socio – cultural context. The lexico- semantic features are explained under the following headings:

4.2.1 Setting

The proper nouns like *Port Harcourt, Niger Delta, Lagos, Ijaw, Nigeria*, etc. serve to locate the spatial setting where the events occur. The physical, economic, social and psychological engagements of the participants are captured by the concrete nouns. Thus, the Niger Deltans are primarily agrarian as indicated by “farm, land” (5). The lexis therefore points out the field of discourse – agriculture and commerce.

4.2.2 Pollution and Exploitation

However, oil exploration in the area regrettably has destroyed (7) and polluted (5) their land and waters and, as a result, the people are suffering severe hardship. In addition, the unhealthy engagements of young women in the area by the expatriate workers have aggravated the plights of the women as some of them take to prostitution (17), are impregnated leading to complexities like half-caste (one of whom is Yellow-Yellow, the protagonist)(10), abortion(13), etc. The psycho-social trauma suffered by the people are further intoned by such adjectives as “strong, emotional”(3), “afraid”(9), etc.

4.2.3 Feminist Concerns

These lexical features exemplify the theoretical concerns of feminist stylistics, by exploring the concepts of love, relationship, emotion, patriarchy, women subjugation, etc. The author, by her register, subtly rebels against women subjugation and oppression in the Niger Delta. Bibi, Zilayefa's mother, Zilayefa herself, Emem, her mother, Sisi, are all victims of exploitation in the hands of white men (3, 9, 10, 17).

4.2.4 Identity Crises and Anxiety

The novel also explores such concerns as identity crises in the area: Yellow- Yellow does not know her father (18). Others include fear, anxiety and emotional instability (2, 3, 9), corruption in the nation (14), fuel scarcity and attendant hardship (16) and condemnation of military dictatorship (12). The death of the former Head of State, possibly late Sani Abacha in 1998, symbolised freedom for Nigerians.

4.2.5 Active Participants

Moreso, the active, dynamic verbs demonstrate the sense that the Niger Deltans and the foreigners are evidently active and vibrant people, engaging in one business or the other to make their profits as Zilayefa's sixty-year old fiancé, Admiral, affirms: “I am a businessman; my main concern is to make profit”(p.137).

4.2.6 Use of Pronouns

Combining with the verbs, personal pronouns are extensively employed to identify speakers, addressees and others. The dominant pronouns in the text are “I”, “he”, “she”, “my”, “him”, “we”, “you”. Of these, “I” features most. According to Carter, Goddard, Reah, Sanger & Bowring (1997), the pronouns “I”, “my” and “we” serve to “personalise” or “individualise” a message in a text (137). When combined with “he”, “she”, “him” etc, they function to foster a relationship with the addressee as demonstrated by (3,9,17,18). Thus, in YY, the message has been individualised. Laye, a young woman of 18, takes upon herself to tell her story from a female perspective. This is in line with Ufot(2012), who posits that feminist writing prefers “I” and “We” to “he” as narrative character.

4.2.7 Neologisms

Another lexico-semantic feature is the use of neologisms or coinages to describe children born from the illicit affairs between Nigerians and the foreign capitalists. Such are “born-troways”(discarded babies); “ashawo-pickins”(those born from prostitution); “father-unknowns”(those whose fathers are not known),etc. These are all the type of Yellow-Yellow herself (10).

4.2.8 Deviations

Also, instances of lexico-semantic choices mark out some deviations in the form of vernacular (“kekefia, banga, jollof”- describing the type of food common in the area)(1); Nigerianisms – Nigerian English expressions (“Oyinbo”-white children; “whitey” – foreigners(15, 17); “Okada” – a commercial motorcyclist(p. 69)); pidgin English(6). Also, “Port, no be like village o...You go learn boku and meet boku people, but you no fit survive city life if you slow o”(p.53)). The function of these lexico-semantic deviations is to situate the discourse within the participants' socio-cultural context. The informal diction therefore vividly and aesthetically

captures the peoples' speech patterns and sensibilities, in addition to marking out their societal status. The tenor of discourse in this case indicates informality, joviality and friendship.

4.2.9 Tropes

Besides, the register is replete with tropes of animals, flowers (nature) and sexism. For instance, there are metaphors ("nest egg" – money in the bank(8); symbols ("...there were trees and many flowers to appreciate...The air was soaked with the scent from the Queen of the Night hedges..."(p.136)). Semantically, the "trees," "flowers," "Queen of the hedges," in the context used, connote sexual act and pleasure which Zilayefa and Admiral have come home to enjoy. The expression therefore foreshadows this act. Simile is also reflected in the language: "... agreeing to follow Sergio to his place that day was like a small fish dancing close to a fisherman's net" (p. 170). This expression relates the ugly experience of Laye at Sergio's house to that of an innocent fish waiting to be trapped by a fisherman's net – she is incidentally seduced and deflowered by Sergio. Another simile is seen in "I missed her scent, so sweet and mellow, like a bouquet of flowers" (p. 175). Here, Laye compares the sweet affection she cherishes from her company with Lolo with the sweet scent of flowers. All this imagery of animals, flowers and sexism exemplifies the feminist style which fancies nature language, believing that women are closer to nature than men (Ufot , 2012). Euphemism is intended in the expression, "And make sure he uses his raincoat o,"(p.133). "Raincoat" here is a reference to condom -a sexist term. Lastly, there are allusions, for example, big Romeo in (9) reminds us of Shakespeare's Romeo who chases Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*. The reference in this context is appropriate, in that it compares Romeo's chase of Juliet to the unrequited love of big Romeo for Laye.

In effect, the deployment of these tropes serves to beautify and contextualise the discourse. It creates literary (aesthetic) effect, thereby pleasing the reader. Together with other lexico-semantic features explicated above, these sexist tropes perform the ideational, inter-personal and textual meta-function of language use, aiming at communicating feminist and environmental thematic preoccupations of the author to the reader.

Table 4.2 presents a list of marked lexico- semantic features.

S/N	FOREGROUNDED EXPRESSIONS	CONTEXTUALISED MEANINGS
1.	Crude oil pipes	Underground pipes that transport crude oil to a refinery.
2.	Oil boom	Oil-induced wealth of the nation in the 50's when oil was newly discovered.
3.	Business men	Local and foreign workers and merchants in the area.
4.	Ijaw Person	Someone from Ijaw land in Delta State.
5.	Niger Delta	An oil rich area in the South South region of Nigeria.
6.	Kekefia, banga, jollof	Some Local food.
7.	Nest egg	Money.
8.	African Profits	Kids seen as gains to Africans.
9.	Born – troways	Discarded babies.
10.	Ashawo- pickins	Kids born from prostitution.
11.	Father – unknowns	Kids whose fathers are not known.
12.	Head of State	Reference to late Sani Abacha.
13.	Washed out belle	Abortion.
14.	Oyinbo	White man
15.	Half – caste	A child of mixed parents.

Table 4.2: Expressions and meanings

4.3 Grammatical Features in Agary's YY

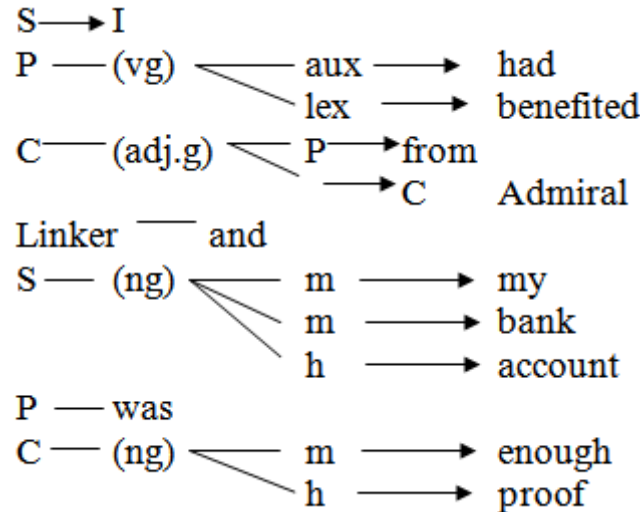
Syntactically, the text features a preponderance of simple, co-ordinate or paratactic sentences. The following texts exemplify these features.

3.3.1 Simple Sentences

1. He was listening to highlife music (p 130).
2. Relax. I am not going to bite you (p. 130).
3. I was too shy to look at him (p. 130).
4. The man wants you (p. 128).
5. That smile on his face was not for nothing (p. 128).
6. The identity of the person before me did not instantly register in my brain (p. 168).
7. We spent over one hour waiting for Mr Moses (p.71).
8. I enjoyed my work at the reception desk (p.75).

14. It was possible that Sergio knew him, and that made our meeting in his house even riskier (p. 130)
 15. I wanted to receive a message from him and expected his driver every other day (p. 149)

Furthermore, sentences (10 - 14) are examples of co-ordinate (paratactic) sentences, containing co-ordinating conjunctions that link two clauses together. For instance, sentence (12) has the structure SPCS PC as analysed below:



It may be pointed out that these short and co-ordinate clauses tend to emphasise independence, individuality and a rebellion against male oppression and subordination in the text (Ufot, 2012). Agary, therefore, by using these structures subtly frowns at women exploitation as seen in novel.

4.3.3 Parallel Structures

Apart from co-ordinate syntax there are also instances of parallel structures as these three sentences can illustrate.

(16) Communities were fighting over who legitimately owned what land after more local government areas were created after local government boundaries were reviewed, and after local government headquarters were relocated (p. 109)

(17) They stole, blackmailed and vandalised for the progress and development of the Ijaw Nation, the Niger Delta (p. 158)

(18) They took away my books one weekend forced me to eat and gave me valium to help me sleep (p.159)

Thus, the sentences as arranged above, indicate the parallel structures. In (16) the parallelism is heightened by repetition of “after” “were”, “local government” and past participle verbs (“created”, “reviewed”, “relocate”) and the three parallel structures are adverbial elements.

In (17), past participle verbs are placed side by side, whereas in (18), simple past verbs (“took”, “forced”, “gave”), repetition (“me”) and infinitives (“to eat”, “to help me sleep”) enhance the parallelism.

Again, (17) and (18) feature the device called Zeugma, in the sense that the three clauses in each case are governed by a singular subject (“They” and “They”) respectively.

However, parallelisms function to create rhythm and economy of words in the text. Sentence (17), for instance, would have been longer and bored if it read “they stole, they blackmailed and they vandalized for...”

4.3.5 Inversions

In the novel, some sentences regularly undergo changes known as inversions. That is to say, a clause or sentence takes an unusual structure so that an element is fronted and thematised in such a way that this fronted item aesthetically strikes the reader in a unique way. The obvious inversion in YY is the adjunct fronting. When an adjunct is fronted, it is done to modify the entire sentence. The following sentences illustrate this:

(19) Armed with our drinks, we moved to a smaller, adjoining room (p. 137)

(20) In one very swift motion, he moved me from the arm onto a seat...(p.137)

(21) Looking deep into my eyes, he said...(p.131)

In these sentences, the adjunct elements (“Armed with our drinks, in one swift motion, looking deep into my eyes”) have been fronted mainly to emphasise the actions or manner of action contained therein.

Sentence (20), for instance, could still have been written as “He moved me... in one very swift motion.” But in this version, the emphasis would have been shifted from the adjunct to the subject. It should also be

pointed out that inverted clause structures, with their trailing elements, create anticipatory effect (suspense) in this reader. Thus, she would be eager to read on to discover what happens at the end of the clause. In *YY* these structures are further used to describe and amplify scenes or events of strong emotion like sexual acts. Significantly too, the stylistic feature as exemplified in the above sentences serves to boost feminism. It strongly foregrounds the exploitative habit of men against women in this area.

4.3.6 Interrogative and Rhetorical Devices

Interrogative and rhetorical sentences also characterise the text. In (21), Admiral interrogates Laye, her lover:

22) What are you doing now? Who are you staying with? How is your mother? When did you come to Port Harcourt? (p.169)

Meanwhile, Laye, being a very naive, rustic young lady always runs to Emem, a more experienced friend of hers, for explanation of events as sentence (22) illustrates:

23) Emem, I am in trouble. What am I going to do? (p.168)

Besides, rhetorical questions are deployed to question some state of affairs as in the case of the oil – rich country constantly experiencing fuel shortages.

24) How could a country that exported crude oil have petrol shortages? How could a country that housed four refineries be exporting petrol when its residents were suffering without petrol? What was the minister of petroleum doing? (p. 111)

4.3.7 Past Verbs and Progressive Aspect

Morphologically, there is a constant use of the past form of verbs as in “*Damiete pulled out his vehicle papers...*” (p.112) some other past tense verbs include “*asked, explained, gathered, revealed, complained etc.*” These words are basically made up of free and bound morphemes, with the structure.

b..... ask/explain/gather/reveal/complain

s..... ed

However, there are also instances of verbs with the progressive aspect as in “lying in bed, my brain struggling to process a million thoughts” (p. 132). Whereas the past forms of verbs are used to indicate that the events as narrated occurred in the past; the progressive forms, on the other hand, show continuous actions as at the time of discourse.

4.4 Graphological features in *YY*

At least five graphological features have been foregrounded in the text: dashes, questions marks, exclamation marks, semi-colons and abbreviations.

4.4.1 Dashes

The dashes are used to explain preceding information as in:

23) I could not sleep that night, wondering what kind of relationship Admiral wanted – mentor, quick affair or long-term relationship (p. 132)

24) She wanted to know everything – every word that was spoken, every move!” (p.145)

In (23), the kind of relationship is explained or described by the additional information using dash, similarly “everything” is explained by the additional phrase.

4.4.2 Question Marks

Questions marks have already been explained with sentences (21-23).

4.4.3 Exclamatory Marks

Exclamatory marks (“God, Emem, your mind, is going for O!, (p. 133) “I had missed him” (p. 148) capture the speakers’ emotions. Women are said to be very emotional as seen in Emem’s advice to Laye:

“My dear, if you like him, go ahead and enjoy yourself. You only live once! I stood glued to the spot as I watched her walk away” (p. 133)

4.4.4 Semi-colons

Furthermore, semi-colons function as coordinating conjunctions linking coordinate sentences together. The feature is a purely feminist graphological feature as in, “I really did not have any plans; I had to get home soon” (p.144).

4.4.5 Abbreviations

Lastly, abbreviations provide short-cuts to long names of organisations.

The following examples: United Africa Company (UAC) (p 74)

Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) p. 87

Officer in Charge (C) (p.112)

V. CONCLUSION

This study has evidently established the unique style of Agary's *YY* from linguistic stylistic perspective. It has proven that stylistics draws insights from linguistic and literary theories to provide the basis for the investigation of texts from functional linguistic framework. The systematic analysis of the text reveals regular patterns of representation of such issues as oil pollution, female exploitation, identity crisis and socio-political crises in the Niger Delta. A linguistic stylistic analysis thus facilitates the isolation, description and explanation of the various style markers in the discourse of the text.

As the study has revealed, Agary's *YY* contains linguistic features which mark its style as feminine (simple and co-ordinate sentences, exclamatory marks and semi-colons, nature and sexist imagery and the pronoun "I", etc). The text also deploys features of neologisms, parallelisms and tropes which beautify the language. From the analysis, the style of the work is effective as it has facilitated the successful passage of the message as intended by the author, thus making the text an appreciable work of art. Consequently, it is logical to conclude that, from the linguistic stylistic reading of the text, the author plays a major role in the thematisation of the nation's ills and the stylistic development of language and literary theories.

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