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CHAPTER SEVEN

A LEXICO-STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF KAINE AGARY'S *YELLOW-YELLOW*

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Introduction

Creativity, the expression of a writerôs imagination, is drawn from the totality of the writerôs experiences. Writers use language, the common middle-ground and the writerôs communication tool, to convey or express their experiences (as in the case of *Yellow-Yellow*) as well as their cultures and backgrounds which they may or may not share with their readers. A peopleôs culture certainly includes their language (Bodley 2008). This implies that language in use cannot be excluded from the society in which it is used. Moreover, context is a major determinant of any act of language behaviour while choice of words and meaning derivations are a factor of context or environment (Bright 2006). Firthôs (1957:173) view of language as ñoccurring in a culturally determined context of situationò is, therefore, apposite. Eggins (2004:8) states that ñour ability to deduce context from text is one way in which language and context are interrelatedò. In the light of this, this chapter illustrates the relationship between language use and style, the manner in which the writerôs experience is conveyed, at the lexical level to showcase the distinctly Nigerian or Niger-Deltan flavour of *Yellow-Yellow*.

Plot Summary of *Yellow-Yellow*

Kaine Agaryôs *Yellow-Yellow* (2006) is a prose fiction set in the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria. It recounts, in first person narration, the story of a girl, Zilayefa, fondly referred to as Yellow-Yellow, who was born to a Greek father and a Nigerian mother, and who struggled to find an identity for herself in Port Harcourt where she faced racial prejudice. She went through a phase of life where she had to deal with several issues including the opposite sex. The story raises such thematic concerns as oil spillages and vandalisation of oil pipelines in the Niger-Delta, and other social ills such as prostitution and examination malpractices, which are, indeed, symptomatic of contemporary Nigerian society. These thematic concerns, however, are not the main focus of this study. Rather, this study is premised on the postulation that language use in the text will logically mirror that which is used by the Nigerian society, specifically the Niger Delta, in which the text is set.

Nigerian Literature and the English Language

Because of the utilitarian status of English as a world language, and its role and place as a national Nigerian lingua franca (Achebe 1975), Nigerian writers have made attempts at deftly using it to depict the linguistic community on which their works are based, for example, in Cyprian Ekwensiôs *Jagua Nana* (1961), Jagua, the heroine, used pidgin expressions. Ken Saro-Wiwaôs *Sozaboy* likewise features a character, Mene, the semi-literate narrator of the events in the text, who mixes Nigerian English with Broken English or ñrotten Englishò (p.30) (see Irele 1988: 337). Soyinkaôs *Trials of Brother Jero* (1964) also portrays the use of pidgin by Chume, Jeroôs disciple. Other writers of fiction adorn their works with local imagery and transliterations, all in a bid to maintain their Africanness. Okara (1963) argues that:

> As a writer who believes in the utilization of African ideas, African philosophy and imagery to the fullest extent possible, I am of the opinion the only way to use them effectively is to translate them almost literally from the African language native to the writer into whatever European language he is using as his medium of expression (quoted in Ohaeto 1988: 80)

This is closely related to Soyinkaôs (1988:107) position that:

> ...when we borrow an alien language to sculpt or paint in, we must begin by co-opting the entire properties in our matrix of thought and expression. We must stress such a language, stretch it, impact and compact it, fragment and reassemble it with no apology, as required to bear the burden of experiencing and of experiences, be such experiences formulated or not in the conceptual idioms of the language.

As a result of the interaction between the English language and the Nigerian culture, the language has been domesticated and nativized in Nigeria (Kachru 1992). Thus, (Bamgbose 1995:11) observes that:

> Nativization of English in Nigeria is not limited to the usual features of transfer of phonological, lexical, syntactic and semantic patterns of Nigerian languages into English, it is also concerned with the **creative development of English including the evolution of distinctively Nigerian usages, attitudes and pragmatic use of the language (our emphasis).**

The result of this continued contact between English language and the over 500 indigenous Nigerian languages is a locally-based English identity which Adegbija (2002:20) calls ñDomesticationò of the English language in Nigeria. This, he argues is characterized by people using the language naturally in a way that reflects their socio-cultural norms without unnecessarily sounding ñbookishò. Nigerian English has shown some marked departure from the native speakersô usage of English. This nativization, also called domestication or indigenization of English in Nigeria, is a natural response to the linguistic and socio-cultural needs of the people.

The indigenization of English in Nigeria is clearly evident in Nigerian literary texts. In other words, Nigerian writers add vigour to the English language by vernacularizing it (Ohaeto 1988). For example, Okara, in *The Voice* (1964) uses the idioms of his native Ijaw language in forms that are easily understandable in English. Literary and linguistics scholars have, therefore, made attempts to study this creativity at different levels of linguistic analysis (See Ayoola 2012, for example).

Igboanusi (2001) has examined the Igbo tradition in the Nigerian novel, as reflected in the works of seven writers, and noted that the tradition is expressed through language use. This ranges from the translation of proverbs, idioms, images and culturally rich expressions to the transfer of Igbo words and expressions into English. There is also evidence of code-mixing and code-switching in Nigerian prose fiction (Ibhawaegbele and Edokpayi 2012). These scholars posit that the innovative use of lexical items has become a significant stylistic device in Nigerian literature.

In line with the foregoing, Yeibo (2011) explored lexical choices and their stylistic functions in Clark-Bekederemoôs poetry. Amongst other choices that reflect cohesion and thematization, the study noted that the appropriation of indigenous idioms helped to effectively express cultural meaning, thus, indicating that a writer can make choices from the alternative linguistic resources at his or her disposal. The choices, though, may be influenced on the one hand by the subject matter, and on the other hand, by social and contextual variables.

From the foregoing, it is evident that Nigerian literary works are written in contextualized English language, one which clearly projects the imagery of the sociocultural contexts of Nigerians, and which gives the works a distinctly Nigerian brand.

The Lexico-Stylistic Approach

The lexico-stylistic approach is a two-fold approach that incorporates lexicology and stylistics into analysis. Howard and Etienne (1999) define lexicology as the study of lexis. In Darbyshireôs (1967:139) view, ñlexis is that branch of linguistics which deals with the major units of language that carry the burden of referential meaningò. Though lexis is generally perceived as the stock of words in a given language, it is not limited to this. Lexis also comprises certain phrases and idiomatic expressions that are larger linguistic stretches than the traditional lexical items in which writers employ the undulating twists and turns encountered while putting together the message.

Lexico-semantics simply describes the study of word meanings and their relationships. Lexical semantics deals with the study of lexis such as derivational relations, denotation, lexical relations and universals. Saeed (2007:53) reinforces this fact when he argues that: ñé the meaning of a word is defined in part by its relation with other words in the languageò. By lexico-semantic relations, we mean how meanings are realized in texts through the appropriate lexical choices.

Stylistics, which is combined with lexicology in this study, is ñthe study of literary discourse from a linguistic orientationò (Widdowson 1975:3). The term, ñstyleò, from which stylistics is derived, has acquired a number of meanings in linguistics. Leech and Short (1981:10, 11) posit that it ñrefers to the way in which language is used in a given context, by a person, for a given purpose and so onò. They further add that, ñit is selection from a total linguistic repertoireò. Lawal (1997:6), similarly, describes style as an aspect of language that deals with choices of words, phrases, sentences and linguistic materials in relation to the subject matter and the sociolinguistic context of a literary text (cf. Crystal and Davy 1985; Awonuga 2009).

Abioye (2009:2) has argued that:

> due to experiential differences, the way one individual uses language differs, sometimes significantly, from that of another even when they are talking about the same thing. The way a writer presents his message to his readers is often referred to as the óstyleô of that writer.

Polikarpov and Kurlov (1994) explain that three basic factors form the basis for the fundamental stylistic qualification of vocabulary units; these include social-functional, temporal and territorial factors. This is closely related to Ogunsijiôs (2000) submission that stylistic meaning is relative to contextual variables. Hence, stylistic analysis applies the principles of general linguistics to the examination of graphological, phonological, syntactic, lexical and semantic features of a text (Alo 1998; Dada 2004; Taiwo 2001; Abioye 2008). In addition, Halliday (1971) explains that a formal feature is stylistic if it is functional; that is, if that feature carries a particular meaning, effect or value. In this study, therefore, lexical features are explained along functional lines, especially with reference to the context of use. The fact that the linguistic choices the writer makes are the most important aspects that contribute to the success of any writing cannot be over-emphasized, thus the creative ability of the writer is put to task.

Methodology

The methodological approach of this analysis places emphasis on lexemes that give *Yellow-Yellow* its distinctiveness. Thus, this research involves the analysis of instances in the text where Nigerian English lexical items, Nigerian Pidgin expressions, lexical items from indigenous languages, loan words, and so on feature. In the discussion, the lexical choices are discussed on the basis of their associative (implied, based on context, time and background of the language user, among other things) and denotative (general and universally acceptable) meanings.

Because some of the data are sentences, the use of tables is avoided. For clarity, however, collected data are grouped based on contiguity and proportion into the following linguistic categories. This means that some of the categories overlap. The categories are as follows:

- Loanwords/ Loan-Blends/ Loan expressions

- Semantic Extensions
- Coinages/ Neologisms
- Nigerian Pidgin
- Imagery drawn from the immediate environment

Presentation and Discussion of Data

Loan words/Loan Blends/Loan Expressions

Loan words, also referred to as ñlexical variantsò (Jowitt 1991: 63), are words that are incorporated directly, through borrowing, into another language without any change in form (Treffers-Daller 2010). They are somewhat related to loan-blends. The difference however is that for a loan-blend, one element is a loan word and the other is a native element (Hoffer 2005). In this study, loan expressions are used to refer to the direct transfer of entire structures from an indigenous language into English. The relevant lexical items in the text (italicized) together with their translations or meanings are as indicated in items 1-11:

1. Ere owôama bien mo *gbein mo* daba ,owei mo óyaimo aki, hm hmò (p.15).
   (As the ladies *throw their backsides*, the men should pick them up). (Ijaw)
2. ñIn my place, some *oyinbo* children were killed at birth (p.101).
   (white/ white-skinned) (Yoruba)
3. to pounded yam and *egusi soup* (p.119).
   (melon soup (Yoruba)
4. so we would play *awigiri* tapes (p.10).
   (Ijaw highlife music)
5. There was *kekefia*,... (p.19).
   (boiled black plantain (Ijaw)
6. ... can you buy me *kilishi*?ò (p.85).
   (kebab, different from *suya* in spices and seasonings) (Hausa)
7. We bought...*suya* (p.94)
   (kebab; roasted meat on stick (Hausa), but widely known in Nigeria)
8. ...*fufu* for breakfast (p.100).
   (a dough-like dish made from pounded plantain or cassava, eaten with soups and stews (Twi, but now a common meal in southeastern and southwestern Nigeria).
9. an elaborate embroidered *adire boubou* (p.49).
   (a large female gown [boubou] with tie-dye imprints [adire] (Yoruba-Senegalese blend)

10. ñ*Okoido*, sir,ò (pp.118, 127).
(greeting a young person says to an older person (to show respect); the literal translation is, ñI am kneeling or I have knelt downò). (Ijaw)

11. ñturn *ofogorious* with the jobless boys in town.ò (p.34).
(the root word is ñofogoriò, which means to be wayward) (Ijaw-English blend).

Item 1, a voice-over from a radio presenter (Agary 2006: 15), is aesthetically stylistic, as it infuses some level of orality into the setting, as well as adds local/cultural flavour to the text. Items 2-9, however, are loan words that have become Nigerianisms, especially as they (items 4-9) do not have direct lexical substitutes in English. In sociolinguistic contexts where this occurs, borrowing is not unusual (Hoffer 2005; Durkin 2009).

As language is relatively reflective of cultural conventions in every society, English does not capture in its entirety the concepts Kaine Agary wished to express in item 10. Thus, she used the terms *"okoido",* a form of greeting that literally means: ñI am kneeling or I have knelt down.ò Presenting this in English would have been awkward, as it is not a feature of Standard English. More so, it embodies the culture of respect that is situated in the African context, as this is a mode of greeting reserved for the elderly.

Example (11) reveals a lexical innovation and creativity made possible through the morphemic processes of affixation and conversion. *Ofogori,* which is an infinite verb in Ijaw (meaning ñto be waywardò) is imported into English and, through the suffixation of ï *ous*, changed into the adjective *ofogorious*. These loans are, therefore, aesthetic and socio-culturally relevant to the linguistic composition of *Yellow-Yellow*.

Semantic Extensions

Ayoola (2012) observes that the flexibility of the English lexis can accommodate new ideas and notions in particular contexts. Semantic extensions or semantic loans are those words whose meanings have been extended beyond those which are conventionally or generally recognised either ñas a result of association with the meaning of a partly synonymous word in another languageò or non-linguistic influence (e.g. cultural) in the development of a new semantic sense (Igboanusi 2001; Durkin 2009: 136).

The relevant lexical items, with their conventional and extended meanings, are provided below:

12. ...that drivers used for *okada* transportation (p.86).
    Conventional Meaning: the name of a former Nigerian airline plagued with a poor safety record
    Extended Meaning: motor-bike taxi
13. Clara *gisted* with me all day... (p.59).
    Conventional Meaning: Verb derived from *gist* - the main idea of what has been said or written (noun)
    Extended Meaning: chat(ted) (verb)
14. ...the time for guys to ñ*rush*ò the incoming girls (p.67).
    Conventional Meaning: move fast
    Extended Meaning: scout for and woo
15. Her mother, like me, was the product of a *hit-and-run* with a Portuguese trader (p.73)
    Conventional Meaning: used in describing a road accident, in which the driver escapes without stopping at the accident scene
    Extended Meaning: quick sexual affair
16. I found out there were generations of *yellows* in the Niger-Delta (p.74).
    Conventional Meaning: derived from yellow - a colour (adjective)
    Extended Meaning: half-castes (noun)
17. And make sure he uses his *raincoat* oò (p.133).
    Conventional Meaning: a waterproof coat worn in the rain to keep the wearer dry
    Extended Meaning: condom
18. This was the *boys' quarters*, where the maids and servants of the house lived (p.55).
    Conventional Meaning: housing (including outhouses) meant for boys
    Extended Meaning: houses (outhouses) reserved for servants or young relatives.
19. I wanted to experience Lagosôs *go-slow traffic* (p.87).
    Conventional Meaning: the first part of the compounded word refers to an industrial protest where workers work slowly
    Extended Meaning: a traffic jam.

With the exception of item 12, which is an eponym, the semantic extensions are English words that have been contextualized to acquire new references. They are unique to Nigerians who use the English language; hence, the use of these lexical items is not peculiar, as they aptly reflect the Nigerianness of the text.

Indeed, the English language has been acculturated in Nigeria. It has become subjected to the tool of acculturation and contextualization. Thus, it has been beaten into the desired shape (see, Soyinka 1988) in *Yellow-Yellow* to yield appropriate semantic extensions.

Coinages/Neologisms

Coinages/neologisms are lexical inventions; they result from morphological processes that either build upon pre-existing morphemes, or totally create new ones (Yule 1996). Some coined lexical items in *Yellow-Yellow* are:

20. The boys had come with two bottles of *shine-your-eye* (p.15).
    Translation: alcoholic drink
21. We went to *a bend-down boutique* (p.17).
    Translation: an open market for second-hand clothes sold cheaply and usually spread on a mat at a roadside
22. I was a *JJC* (p.61).
    Translation: (Johnny Just Come); a derogatory term used to denote someone new to an environment.
23. the much-touted *October Rush* (p.67).
    Translation: Frantic chasing after female freshmen in Nigerian universities by senior male students.
24. ..., he had yams for legs, perfectly *yamulous* legs (p.23).
    Translation: ... muscular.
25. Girls did anything to get a *whitey* (p.37).
    Translation: a white man/white men.
26. There was even much less regard for *born-troways* such as me ... (p.74).
    Translation: child(ren) born outside wedlock or illegitimately
27. The *pepper soup* was very good (p.91).
    Translation: soup made from meat, poultry or fish, containing chilli pepper. No oil is added
28. I found myself drawn to Admiral like a fly to a gourd of *palm wine* (p.139).
    Translation: sap tapped from the terminal bud of palm trees. It is an alcoholic drink. A fly that follows palm-wine is destined for destruction.

The lexical items identified above are largely descriptive coinages. Descriptive coinages are alternative constructions intended to describe certain socio-cultural elements that are not directly expressible in Standard English, but that exist in the Nigerian English lexicon. ñShine-your-eyeò (item 20), for instance, describes the effect of the drink; it paints the bold, daring expression that the affected wears after consuming the drink. Item 21, ñbend-down boutiqueò derives from the manner in which clothes and other materials are purchased in an open market - that is, bending down to pick the desired items. The addition of ñboutiqueò to this coinage is more of sarcasm; it mocks those who patronize such open markets, as normal boutiques in Nigeria are generally for the rich and well-to-do. Item 24, ñJohnny Just Comeò, refers to someone who just came into a setting, probably from a journey. It derives from ñjourney + just +comeò. In Nigeria, a JJC is, therefore, someone who is yet to adapt to the ways of life of a group. JJCôs require some time for enculturation. Another example of this descriptive coining is seen in item 25. Since the rush to woo girls is an October phenomenon in Nigerian tertiary institutions, depicting the beginning of a new academic year/calendar, the term ñOctober Rushò (item 25) seems appropriately coined; it is a Nigerianism that is easily understood particularly in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

It is clear that some of the coinages underwent certain morphological processes; hence, they were formed through the suffixation of derivational morphemes. Items 24 and 25 are examples:

yamulous = yam + ulous
whitey = white + y

ñYamulousò (an adjective) is derived from the addition of the suffix ñ-ulousò to ñyamò (a noun). Thus, ñyamulousò means ñbeing characteristic of a yamò. In other words, the large calf muscles are now compared to a tuber of yam, which is a popular food in Nigeria. It is not unusual for Nigerians to metaphorically refer to large calf muscles as ñyamsò. The next item ñwhiteyò is also formed through derivational suffixation. However, unlike ñyamò, the word ñwhiteò is not a Nigerian English expression. In other words, ñwhiteyò is a noun derived from the adjective ñwhiteò.

The morphological process of compounding is at work in *born troway*:

born-troway = born + throw + away

It merges three independent words (morphemes), ñbornò, ñthrowò, and ñawayò. It is a contracted and compressed single unit that connotes an illegitimate child abandoned by either or both of his or her parents. The act of ñthrowing awayò is similar to being abandoned or rejected. Another interesting item is a descriptive term - ñpalm wineò (palm + wine). It denotes wine that is derived from a palm. Hence, the headword is ñwineò while the adjective that describes it is ñpalmò. Both items and others already identified are contextually Nigerian, and to some extent, African.

From the foregoing, it is evident that the stylistic use of coinages that are largely Nigerian help to properly situate *Yellow-Yellow* as Nigerian, and by extension, they function in its overall aesthetic composition.

Nigerian Pidgin

In this category are some of the instances of the use of Nigerian Pidgin (NP) in *Yellow-Yellow*. It should be noted that NP has not been codified and, therefore, that there has been no agreement regarding its word stock and grammatical rules. In view of this, examples of NP sentences are provided and discussed. Some of the lexical items are also highlighted when necessary:

29. é leaving behind his planted seed in my motherôs *belle* (p.7).
    Meaning: ñbellyò. In this context, it means womb/pregnancy, used interchangeably.
30. *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).
    Meaning: Port (short for Port Harcourt) is quite different from the village, ...youôll learn a lot and meet so many people, but smartness is the key to survival in the city.
31. *Market dey?... E dey* (p.70).
    Meaning: is anyone alighting at the market?.. a response in the affirmative.
32. Ah, you are the one from our big auntie,...*Dem don send us anoder mami-wata o* (p.71).
    Meaning: ... weôve been sent another mermaid.
33. My dear, *papa story no begin wit you and e no go end wit you* (p.102).
    Meaning: My dear, youôre neither the first nor last to be faced with a ñfatherò quest.
34. *Bros, your brodas dey hungry here o!* (p.112).
    Meaning: Bros, (short for brother) your brothers here are starving
35. *No mind dem; na so dem dey do. Dem no sabi do anytin wit sense* (p.156).
    Meaning: Thatôs their habit, they never apply logic to anything they do.
36. *My oga say make I call you* (p.167).
    Meaning: My boss asked me to call you.

The premise here is that a particular linguistic characteristic of the Nigerian society is Nigerian Pidgin (NP). It is the unofficial lingua franca of the country, well understood especially by the average Nigerian. Noticeably, the language of many of the characters in *Yellow-Yellow* was dominated by NP, which also has a distinctive vocabulary, some of which are: *belle* (belly or womb) (item 29), *boku* (plenty) (item 30), *mami-wata* (mermaid) (item 32), *brodas* (brothers) (item 34), *sabi* (know, understand) (item 35) and *oga* (boss) (items 36). The language was so dominant that Sisiôs sales representative hardly spoke in English; her language use was almost entirely NP (see, for example, item 30). NP was also the language of communication in commercial buses (item 31), used by the cook (item 35), the driver (item 36), the police (item 34) and so on. Even in the Port Harcourt metropolis, NP is spoken by and to Royal Hotel staff (items 32 and 33). It is the language of the common class, and one of wider communication. However, esteemed members of the society, those who have access to the corridors of power in *Yellow-Yellow*ð Sisi, Lolo, Admiral, Kamalð are content with restricting themselves to the English language, which truly defines their strata on the social ladder. This reveals that some still do not see NP as a language of prestige (Igboanusi 2008; Ativie 2011); they perceive it as inferior and not representative of their social status and would hardly speak it.

The use of NP in *Yellow-Yellow*, therefore, illustrates social frictions within the Nigerian society, creating a distinction between the highly-privileged and the ordinary masses. The text, through stylistic lexical choices, simulates the social realities of the Nigerian society.

Imagery Drawn from the Immediate Environment

Certain lexical items help to create images that give a text its peculiar expressive beauty (Yeibo 2011). Imagery can be interpreted on two levelsð the literal and the metaphorical (Ugwu 1990). While literal meaning is usually denotative, metaphorical meaning is influenced by presuppositions and sociocultural contexts. Some of the imagery are listed below:

37. ... *the spirits of the water would tie my womb* and make sure that, for my ungratefulness, I never experienced the joys of motherhood (p.10).
38. His skin was *the colour of ripe plantain peel* (p.19).
39. ...*like a rough current against a canoe* (p.23).
40. ...my heart pumping... *as if it had been entwined in a fishing net and thrown into the murky waters of the River Nun* (p.34).
41. ...as though *the water spirits had tied the fishes' wombs*... (p.39)
42. Her skin as *the dark brown of palm kernel soap* and was of the *silky smoothness of refined palm oil* (p.51).
43. I found myself drawn to Admiral *like a fly to a gourd of palm wine* (p.139).

The identified examples of imagery used in *Yellow-Yellow* are sourced from the immediate environment, and are indicative of the symbiotic relationship between the language of *Yellow-Yellow* and the culture of the people. The religious values upheld by the people of Niger-Delta are observed in texts 37 and 41, which refer to water spirits and their power over reproduction of both humans and animals. The metaphoric meaning of this suggests ñbarrennessò where there should be abundance.

The constant reference to water also creates the Niger-Delta scenery (it is a geographical delta), the physical setting of the text. Items 37, 39, 40, and 41 effectively capture the water symbolð spirits of the water, canoe, fishing net, murky waters of the River Nun, water spirits, fishesô wombs, etc. The simile in item 38 is also drawn from the immediate environment. Plantain is a staple food in Nigeria and this makes it a suitable image. The author did not use such abstract imagery as ñhis skin was the colour of a blooming sunflowerò; rather, she drew elements that would fit the setting. ñPalm kernel soapò, ñrefined palm oilò (item 42), ñgourd of palm wineò (item 43) are all typical of the palm trees in rainforest Nigeria. These choices undoubtedly add aesthetic value to the text as well as place the message in proper perspective.

Conclusion

The lexical choices in *Yellow-Yellow* have been stylistically made to create a synergy between the language used in the text and the environment in which it is used. In other words, the linguistic inspiration and style of *Yellow-Yellow* is largely Nigerian. The inspiration is seen in the use of loan words, loan-blends, and loan expressions; semantic extensions; coinages; Nigerian Pidgin; and imagery drawn from the immediate environment. These choices are aesthetic and socio-culturally relevant to the linguistic composition of the text, as the culturally rich expressions are able to provoke vivid images in the reader; these are images the reader can readily identify with. Thus, the possibility of misinterpretation, particularly by the Nigerian reader, is highly reduced. In addition to this, there are also lexical choices that indicate that the English language has indeed been acculturated in Nigeria. Again, the lexical choices that the author makes for the characters even capture the social status of English in Nigeria.

Yellow-Yellow thus represents a critical interrogation of the ideological configurations in the Nigerian society, epitomizing the dichotomous categories and social formations first, in the Niger-Delta and then in Nigeria as a whole: white versus black (and or yellow); rich versus poor; old versus young, an oil-rich environment, yet living in poverty, etc.

All of these findings portend that the lexico-stylistic markings of the text are ñterritorialò and ñsociofunctionalò (Polikarpov and Kurlov 1994). They acquire a hue of Nigerianness and are functional in (re)creating the territorial setting of the text and in providing aesthetics which add to the overall quality of the text.

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