



Lexico-semantic Features as Creative/Stylistic Strategies in Joseph Edoki's *The Upward Path*

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Abstract

This study examines and explicates the lexico-semantic parameters, which Joseph Edoki deploys to convey his themes in *The Upward Path*, his second novel. Edoki is a contemporary Nigerian novelist who is preoccupied with the socio-political problems in Africa with the hope of a brighter future. The novel is the story of Mr. Gaga, a Rwandan American PhD student, on a fact finding mission in Savannah, an African country, for his Thesis entitled "Why Africa is Underdeveloped". For failing to portray Africa in line with the negative views about the continent in his proposal, Gaga's supervisor recalls him back to America in anger. But in defense of his conviction and research findings about Africa, Gaga remains in Savannah to complete his Thesis. This study is of significance because as a linguistic study, it will serve as a springboard to future researches in the language of African literature. Moreover, the good governance, which Edoki presents in Savannah, the fictional country, in which the novel under study is set, is a blue print for the development of Africa.

Keywords: Lexico-semantics; Findings; Good governance; Transformation; Leadership.

1. Introduction

The language of a literary text is studied at various levels, one of which is the lexico-semantic level. This paper examines and expounds the lexico-semantic features deployed by Edoki to convey his artistic visions in his novel. The socio-political and economic problems in African nations since independence, consequent upon corruption and bad leadership are responsible for the underdevelopment of Africa. The problems resulted from the corrupt practices of the new African leaders, who took over leadership from the imperialists and stepped into their shoes. Rather than alleviate the sufferings of the people, they plunged their fellow Africans into more hardship, unemployment, poverty and suffering, thereby dashing their high hopes leaving them disillusioned.

This lends credence to D. S. Izevbaye's claim quoted by Kolawole Ogungbesan that "with the achievement of national independence, the African eagle might be said to have discovered his identity; but has also become a vulture to his own kind...writers have come to regard the new ruler as no better than the oppressive colonize." (53). Many African literary artists such as Achebe (1975), Ayi Kwei Armah, Festus Iyayi, Ngugi Wa Thiong 'O', Joseph Edoki, among others have been addressing these socio-political problems in their works. They protested against the corrupt leaders, and condemned corruption in its entirety in their literary works. Corruption in governance has created more serious problems in Nigeria, especially among the youths due to unemployment, poverty and frustration. Confronted by these problems, many youths involve themselves in different vices.

Unlike other African writers who are pessimistic in their treatment of socio-political issues in their works, Edoki displays optimism in addressing the socio-political problems in Africa, with the hope of a brighter future. He is an African contemporary literary artist, whose literature creates visionary ideas geared towards the solution of the problems responsible for underdevelopment in Africa. Agho (2015), corroborates this view in his submission in his article entitled "The Audacity of Hope in the Novels of Joseph Edoki" when he says that:

Rather than maintain a regenerative stance and be involved in reinventing Africa in lines of positive development, much of African literature of the past century was concerned with weeping and protesting over the scenario we have painted above. However, but Joseph Edoki in his novels, *The African Dream* and *The Upward Path* supports the reinvention of Africa in the twenty-first century by using his novels to support democracy, good governance, regeneration of Africa and the value system of Africans, as prerequisites for repositioning Africa to be able to face the challenges of the new century, thus infusing his fiction with hope. (8)

Nigerian writers modify and contextualize English Language in their literary works to adequately articulate African culture, world views and concepts. This is due to the constraints in creating Nigerian literature in English, the language of a different culture. They deploy certain stylistic-creative strategies among which are lexical translation and transliteration. In support of the need for the creative artists to modify English to suit their purposes in literature, (Achebe, 1975) encourages that “the African writer should aim to use English in a way to bring out his message best...he should aim at fashioning out an English, which is at once universal and is able to carry out its peculiar experiences.” (61). The process of translating from the indigenous Nigerian languages into English in literary creation resulted in the new forms of English expressions in Nigerian prose that are worthy of note.

Some Nigerian writers translate culture-bound indigenous features in a refined manner, thereby preserving their local flavour. Ugwu asserts that the implication of this is that some measures of the local contents and the syntax of the indigenous languages are transferred into the English translations of the expressions, thereby creating new forms of English expressions. She further stresses that the conditioning effects of translations on the use of English in Nigerian prose affects all types of verbal literary forms used in the novels. Examples of such literary forms are idioms and proverbs (67). We commence this study with the examination and explication of how Edoki utilizes the verbal literary forms to create meanings and messages in the text under study.

2. Verbal Literary Forms

Nigerian prose artists deploy certain literary forms rich in images and figures of speech as stylistic strategies to tackle the problems of the use of a second language for literary creation. Proverbs and idioms rich in images are means through which the writers accommodate African/Nigerian speech and thought habits, thereby providing factors for the nativization of the English language in African literature. We examine below the contents of the following idioms and proverbs to illustrate the effects of the ideational function on the grammar of the verbal literary forms.

2.1. Idioms

An idiom is a group of words whose meaning is not derived from the meanings of its separate words put together. Niyi Osundare asserts that idiomatic expressions add a dramatic touch to literature when properly used, and that they are used depending on the situation to heighten the tragic or comic atmosphere (345). In Nigerian prose fiction, novelists deploy idiomatic expressions for the contextualization of the English language as exemplified below.

1. ‘The matter *came to a head* when the rulers carried out a mindless devaluation of our local currency.’(76)
2. ‘My life is full of sorrow,’ Gaga said. ‘And I want a woman like you – radiant and brilliant - *to light up my spirit*. (119)
3. ‘The listener was taken aback.’ I don’t understand, he said. (6)
4. He sat on the bed and began to reflect on the problem that *kept him on edge* all day. (109)
5. *A fair weather smile* spread about her face. (23)
6. ‘*No matter the odds*, I will find a way to generate electricity from the sun. (114)
7. He was based in Maranyaun-some fifty kilometres from Fingesse- but his name *rang a bell* through out all the nation. (103)
8. Remember we ran away from Africa because the continent *had nothing to offer*. (146)

The expressions, ‘came to a head’ and ‘mindless’ in the British Standard English denote ‘‘came to the climax’’, and ‘‘wrong’’ respectively. Edoki depicts the grievous effects of the wrong decisions taken by ignorant Nigerian leaders due to their lack of sound education. One of such decisions is the devaluation of the Nigerian currency, which is a contributory factor to Nigeria’s economic problems till date. This is not only affecting the economy, but Nigerians in general.

The devaluation has drastically reduced the purchasing power of the naira, thereby plunging Nigerians into financial crisis. Due to financial problems in Nigeria, a lot of Nigerians are forced overseas in search of greener pasture. Records have shown that many Nigerian youths are killed in the Mediterranean Sea, and some are slaughtered like fowls while taking illegal routes overseas. The problem of brain drain in Nigeria is also consequent upon the wrong policies of Nigerian bad leaders.

The idiomatic expression ‘‘light up my life’’ in excerpt 2, ‘‘denotes’’ to comfort me’’. Since the rejection of Gaga’s new Thesis topic by his supervisor, he has become so frustrated and sorrowful. As he proposes marriage to Ibis, he confesses to her that he needs her as a wife to comfort him.

‘‘Taken aback’’ as used in sample 3 expresses Gaga’s surprise on being informed in an interview with the Director of National Planning Commission that Savannah, an African country, is self-sufficient and highly developed with strong economy and zero inflation rate. The director also informs the researcher that there are job opportunities for all graduates, and that the citizens enjoy the dividends of democracy. Gaga becomes confused due to the contrary information.

‘‘Kept him on edge’’ as deployed in extract 4 denotes ‘‘disturbs him’’. In this sample, Edoki expresses Gaga’s disturbed, confused and restless state of mind over his contrary and astonishing findings about the high rate of development in Savannah, a country in Africa. The reason for Gaga’s present predicament is that prior to his research, Africa has been portrayed as a dark and underdeveloped continent in the media, books, and generally in the Western world. They have all portrayed Africa as an underdeveloped continent, generally associated with hunger, poverty and sufferings. Having reflected for a long time on his predicaments, Gaga finally resolves never to

continually to shy away from his convictions that Africa is indeed highly developed from his findings in Savannah. This is irrespective of the fact that Gaga himself has never believed that anything beautiful could come out of Africa.

In the light of these, Gaga changes the topic of his Thesis to reflect the true picture of Africa, with the assumption that the research would bring him to the limelight. But he is soon disappointed by the response from his supervisor about the new topic. Though his supervisor rejects his proposal and recalls him back to America in anger, Gaga remains in Savannah to complete his PhD programme. The rejection of the proposal is borne out of Gaga's contrary presentation of the image of Africa, which does not align with the general conception of the continent. In this extract, Edoki emphasizes the development of Africa by painting a beautiful picture of Savannah, as an organized and developed nation with zero inflation rate, employment for all youths and research development. The novelist does not only advance the path way to the development of African, but also the solutions to the problem of underdevelopment in Africa.

The idiom, 'fair weather smile' in sample 5 depicts 'satisfaction'. Edoki expresses Mrs. Bello's satisfaction after setting the dining table with assortment of food and drinks for dinner. Due to the different types of nutritious food set for dinner by Mrs. Bello, Gaga concludes that the woman wants to impress him. Unknown to him, the Bellos are used to such nutritious meals. In this sample, the author displays affluence among the Savannse families, thereby conveying the theme of luxury and comfort. Due to the transformation orchestrated by Fernando's good leadership, the Savanasse are all happy; they no longer suffer poverty and hunger. This is unlike in the bad old days characterized by abject poverty arising from corruption and bad leadership.

'No matter the odds' an idiomatic expression in example 6 denotes 'despite all the problems'. Mr Ewa, who returns home at 2 o'clock in the morning, leaves an hour later to join his colleagues working on the solar energy research in the office. As he walks out alone into the street in the cold night, he thinks about the research and all the processes they have to go through. He arrives at the conclusion that they must find a way to generate electricity from the sun despite all the difficulties they encounter. In this extract, the author depicts seriousness and commitment to duty, which spur Mr, Ewa and his team mates to put in their best for a national course. Edoki portrays the attitudes of the Savanasse to works. This is the secret behind their success and the development of their country, which other Africans should emulate to attain greatness.

The idiom, 'rang a bell' used in sample 7 denotes 'became very popular'.

The author creatively uses the idiom to emphasize Mr. Nkomo's popularity all over Savannah for his cassava production.

In the context in which the author uses 'had nothing to offer' in extract 8, it denotes 'life is difficult'. Robin, Gaga's friend in the US is shocked that Gaga has taken up appointment in Africa instead of returning back to US. He tries to persuade Gaga to return to USA, giving him various reasons why he should not remain in Africa where life is very difficult. In sample 9, Robin calls USA Gods' 'own country'. USA is so blessed with all the good things of life that Robin considers Gaga's decision to remain in Africa, instead of returning to US as the height of insanity. But Gaga informs his friend that life is better in Savannah, emphasizing that the country is on the upward path in the march to progress. The message Edoki conveys here is the increasing rate of development in Savannah. A look at Edoki's translation of idiomatic expressions above from the indigenous Nigerian languages to English reveals the word-by-word type of translation. Edoki uses the idioms to express his ideas in English based on the contexts. They do not only add local colour to such expressions, but retain the indigenous contents and forms.

2.1.1. Proverbs

Akporobaro (2006), sees a proverb as "an aphorism, a wise saying, based upon people's experience and is a reflection of the social values and sensibility of the people" (69). Nigerian novelists deploy proverbs, which reflect Nigerian culture and environment, transmit African traditional values, convey the themes of their novels, as well as to achieve verisimilitude in their novels. Proverbs also add local flavour to the conversations of the characters in literary texts. Akporobaro (2006), states the functions of a proverbs in his assertion that "it has been and remains a most powerful and effective instrument for the transmission of culture, social morality, manner and ideas of a people from one generation to another" (69). Below are two of the proverbs the author uses for stylistic effects in *the novel*.

1. Let me tell you, when a handshake passes the elbow, it becomes an insult. (119)
2. A good name is better than riches. (30)

Ibiso, who is in love with Gaga pretends to be angry with him while revealing her knowledge of his love advances towards her in sample 1. With Ibosi's action towards Gaga, the author promotes the African culture, by displaying one of the virtuous qualities of traditional African women. A virtuous African woman can never "throw herself at men", let alone profess her love for, and propose marriage to a man even when she is deeply in love. Such a virtue earns a wife her husband's respect when they eventually get married. In this excerpt, Edoki extols virtue, and condemns the irresponsible girls and women in the society for their loss of self respect. They make themselves so cheap in their attitudes towards men that they are used and dumped at will.

In excerpt 2, Edoki uses a proverb to emphasize the importance of a good name. As a group of friends socialize in a club, Abdullahi teases the barman who responds only when addressed as a manager, and not as a barman. They also discuss the two major candidates for the forthcoming council election, the man with a good name and the other who has inherited a bad name from his father, concluding that the one with a good name would win the election. Eventually, he emerges victorious at the polls as expected. In the excerpt, Edoki stresses the importance of a good name and credibility, a challenge to the corrupt, avaricious and materialistic Nigerians, home and abroad who do not value their names, let alone the image of Nigeria. Due to their quest for wealth and positions, they indulge in dubious and corrupt practices irrespective of their grievous consequences; this is responsible for the poor image of Nigeria

abroad. In this extract, Edoki encourages Nigerians generally to imbibe the culture of protecting their names, as well as the image of the country.

From the interpretations of the proverbs above, it is evident that Nigerian writers' choice of lexical items and images are to a large extent, dependent on the Nigerian social context and environment. The proverbs are products of orality, transferred from generation to generation, for the transmission of moral values associated with wisdom. Each of the proverbs in the text conveys one information or the other, thereby performing the ideational function of language in the text.

2.1.2. Figures of Speech

Howard asserts that 'figurative language is a deviation from what the speakers of a language apprehend as the ordinary or standard, significant or sequence of words in order to achieve some special meanings (160). Below are few of the author's use of figurative expressions in *Upward Path*.

2.1.3. Similes

A simile is a figure of speech involving the comparison of one thing with another of a different kind. Here are few examples.

1. 'White lies...Lies disguised as official secrets...(7)
2. 'It is as common as cold, catarrh and cough' (110)
3. 'This country is like an oasis in a desert.' (117)

Extract 1 above is Gaga's conclusion about all the fantastic information given to him about Savannah's high rate of development, comparing them to 'lies disguised as official secrets'. But, he is later proved wrong from his personal experiences, and interactions with experts in the various field of human endeavour in Savannah, an African country. He discovers to his astonishment that all the views about Africa being characterized by poverty, hunger and pain are misconceptions, and that Africa is indeed developed.

In the same vein, Edoki deploys the idiom in sample 3 to reiterate the high rate of development in Savannah. He likens Savannah to an 'oasis', a place in a desert where there is water and, therefore plants and trees, and sometimes a village or town. On the other hand, he likens Africa to a desert, where no plant can grow due to lack of moisture. In this example, Edoki states that Savannah is a very well developed country in Africa, which is generally believed to be poor and underdeveloped.

2.1.4. Repetition

As a figurative expression, repetition involves repeating the use of a particular lexical item for emphasis as exemplified below.

1. But if you build the best houses, the best roads, the best hospitals and the best schools in farming communities, the best human beings will normally scramble for the piece of the action by moving to the comfort zones. (164 -165)
2. If you invest ten billion US Dollars in oil and gas, the sector can at best employ five thousand workers, but if you invest the same in agriculture, it can generate five million jobs. (165)
3. 'Lies,' he thought, as he waved at the secretary. White lies...lies disguised as official statistics...(7)
4. The girl with the pepperless voice looked at the dishes and frowned. 'Food, food food' she whispered. 'Food all day long' (86)
5. From the ancient days to the modern age, knowledge has been what has been ruling the world....Knowledge....What did I say? Knowledge! (71)
- 'What I know is that my friend is taking this aeroplane thing too far. She doesn't rest, She doesn't play; always working. Can you imagine, I couldn't even see her; they say she is carrying out a text. Every time texts, trials (126)

In excerpt 1, the lexical item, 'best' is repeatedly used by the author for stylistic effects. He emphasizes the high quality social amenities, which the Savanese government has provided in the rural communities, which are responsible for urban-rural drift in the country. Artistically, Edoki advances the solution to the problem of rural-urban drift faced by African countries, which has been created by the neglect of the rural areas.

The novelist condemns Nigeria's overdependence on petroleum and the neglect of other sectors of the economy in excerpt 2. Gaga expresses his surprise that despite being a major crude oil producing country, Savannah does not accord priority to the oil sector. In response, the director of National Planning Commission emphasizes that most oil producing countries make the mistake of developing their mineral resources at the expense of agriculture. He asserts that they fail to realize that the oil industry cannot employ one percent of the population. The expressions, 'if you invest' in sample 2 is repeated to emphasize the need to develop the agricultural sector, which can employ up to fifty percent of the skilled and unskilled manpower if well developed.

As Mrs. Bello carries dishes of food to the dining table, and begins to set the table for a meal, one of her twins looks at the dishes and frowns, complaining as in sample 5 above. The repetition of the lexical item "food" in the extract is emphatic. The novelist emphasizes the fact that there is abundance of food in Savannah. This has proffered

solution to the problem of hunger, one of the major problems in Africa. The abundance of food in the country is the result of all the efforts made by the government to boost food supply.

Therefore, other African countries should emulate Savannah to solve the problem of hunger in the continent generally.

Edoki emphasizes the importance of knowledge for the growth and development of every society by the use of repetition, a figure of speech. In extract 5, there is the repetition of the word "knowledge" deployed for emphasis. In a history class on the topic "Colonialism", Kezie, the history teacher, informs the students that knowledge, generally regarded as power is responsible for the rise of Europe as a world power. He also emphasizes that Europe's ability to rule the world is attributed to the knowledge the people have, thereby stressing the importance of education, the source of knowledge.

Furthermore, Edoki conveys the alarming rate at which scientific and technological researches are going on in Savannah, and how assiduously the Sudanese work with the repetition of "she doesn't". In sample 6, the author expresses Adasuwa's anger and complaints about her friend, an aeronautical engineer's lack of rest and too much involvement in research activities. She is so busy carrying out series of texts and trials that Adasuwa no longer sees her on her visits to her office. The novelist deploys repetition in this excerpt as a creative device to emphasize the theme of hard work and commitment to duty by the Savanese. These are vital prerequisites for national growth and development, which other Africans should emulate in Africa's march to development.

2.1.5. Personification

Personification is a figurative expression involving the conferring of a human attribute on a non-human. Here are some examples of Edoki's use of personification in the text deployed for artistic effects.

'News from Africa...The famine in Ethiopia has grown more teeth and is biting harder...'The poverty in Chad has develop more wings and is flying higher...(1)

In this extract, "famine" is personified by the author by being made to grow "teeth" like a human being to bite. Creatively, the author depicts the seriousness of the famine in Ethiopia. Similarly, the human act of flying has been conferred on poverty in sample 2 to emphasize the high rate of poverty in Chad.

2.1.6. Metaphor

Metaphor is a figurative expression involving two things that are completely different as exemplified below.

1. He was a gold fish; a famous man. (143)
2. 'This man is an encyclopedia of knowledge,' he thought. (82)

Ordinarily, gold is very valuable. The metaphor, "A gold fish", in the context in which Edoki uses it in sample 1 above depicts an important personality. To regard somebody as "a gold fish" portrays the importance of such a person to the society, probably due to his/her meritorious services to such a society. In Savannah, people are recognized and honoured with the title "Genius" not for their wealth, but for their contributions to the development of the nation. Genius Adamu is regarded as "a gold fish" due to his contributions to the development of the society. This is contrary to the practice in Nigeria where only the rich are recognized and honoured in the society irrespective of their illegal sources of wealth.

In a political discourse among a group of friends in a Savanese club, Gaga expresses his general opinion about the perfect conduct of the elections earlier conducted that day. Being so impressed about the perfect conduct of the elections, he concludes that it is 'Democracy in action', and that it is the best election he has ever witnessed. In response to Gaga's question on the secret behind the free and fair election, the lawyer reveals that the excellent electoral law, which is unlike what they used to have in the bad old days, is the secret. We observe from this sample that the author advances the measures African leaders should adopt to enhance free and fair elections.

In support of Gaga's opinion about the election, Mr. Kezie emphasizes that the man with a good name has emerged victorious in the election as they have all predicted. At that juncture, Mr Kezie, the historian, gives a comparative analysis of elections in developing and advanced nations. So impressed with the analysis, Gaga concludes that Kezie is an encyclopedia of knowledge. Conventionally, an encyclopedia is a book or a set of books containing many articles, which deal either with the whole of human knowledge or with a particular part of it. The message inherent in this excerpt is that Kezie is highly knowledgeable.

2.1.7. Code-Mixing

Code-mixing is a creative-stylistic device deployed by Nigerian literary artists to contextualize English in Nigerian literature. It is one of the characteristic features of the use of English in Nigeria, resulting from the complex linguistic situation. It is a socio-linguistic phenomenon that results from languages in contact, which usually takes place in informal situations, among speakers with the same language background. Instances of code-mixing abound in Nigerian novels. In literary creation in Nigeria, code-switching involves the presence of the dominant English (the target language) and the indigenous Nigerian languages (the source languages). Code-mixing involves the insertion of words and expressions of the local languages into English speeches and sentences. Code-mixing is very common in the speeches of semiliterate characters in Nigerian novels. Below are few instances where Edoki utilizes code-mixing in his text.

1. The man brought out his telephone from his *agbada* and began to write a text message. (10)
2. Gaga shove his *nkwobi* into his mouth, spoon after spoon, and washed it down with a glass of beer. (10)
3. 'Mr. Ewa took the last drop of his zobo. ((91)

4. Do you care for *isi-ewu*? (23)

No, 'th e man in *agbada* replied. (11)

5. Let us bleach her skin,' someone replied, 'and make her look like *oyinbo*!' (112)

6. They were eating *isi-ewu* and palmwine. (116)

Nigerian literary artists incorporate indigenous words and expressions into English sentences in their literary works when they lack English equivalents to adequately express some ideas or culture-bound concepts in English target texts. Sometimes, such indigenous words are also incorporated to project the Nigerian languages. In *Upward Path*, we observe that Edoki makes profuse use of words of the indigenous Nigerian languages, most of which lack English equivalents. In extract 1, the word '*agbada*' is a Yoruba word for a traditional robe worn by men in Nigeria. Edoki incorporates the word into his English target text due to its lack of English equivalent. In the same vein, '*nkwobi*' an indigenous Igbo word is incorporated into English sentences by the author because it lacks English equivalent. *Nkwobi* is a type of food eaten by the Igbo people in Nigeria.

Zobo, an Hausa word, which also lacks English equivalent is used for a local type of drink taken, especially by Northern Nigerians. *Isi-ewu* is an Igbo word for a special delicacy prepared with head of goat, species and palm oil, usually eaten while drinking palm wine or beer in beer palours.

'*Eba*', '*pomo*', '*bokoto*' and '*kporokoto*' used in excerpt 6 are all instances of Edoki's insertions of words of Nigerian indigenous languages into English sentences in his target text under study. It is important to state here that Edoki's utilization of code-mixing as a stylistic strategy in the novel under study is for artistry.

2.1.8. Loan Blend

Loan blend is also a stylistic-creative device deployed by Nigerian writers to reflect the use of the English Language in Nigerian literature. Loan blend involves the process of bringing together lexical items from an indigenous language and English, the target language to form a compound word. In most cases, the word of the indigenous language modifies the English words. Below are few examples utilized in the text.

1. The lady changed into *boubou* skirt and walked back into the living room. 1)

2. The school authorities soon realized they were wrong and the *yeye* boys and girls right. (38)

3. The lady was looking at the wretched and *jagajaga* door. (157)

4. The Okirikata River could have as well been River Nun; and the bird his very self. (98)

5. They took the first course: an appetizing chicken soup; the main meal; pounded yam and *eguzi* soup, and snail, beef, and venison... (23)

In each of the examples above, an indigenous lexical item modifies an English one to give more information about such English word. The lexical item '*boubou*' in extract 1 modifies 'skirt' to indicate the kind of skirt referred to. The word '*yeye*' in extract 2 originally of Yoruba origin is a popular word in Pidgin English in Nigeria, which denotes 'useless'. It modifies 'boys' and 'girls' in the extract to give more information about them as irresponsible youths. But ironically in the novel under study, the *yeye* boys and girls put an end to the ugly trend of conferring honorary doctorate degrees on dubious people of questionable characters and personalities in Savannah. On getting the news of the plan by Apex University to honour Money-Miss-Road, a dubious man, Masses and the *yeye* boys and girls strategize and dress a goat in convocation gown, parading the goat and chanting the song:

Ani man e wan be doctor

Ani man e come wear suit O!

Ani man e come wear tie O!

Ani man in human skin.... (38)

Their action which signifies conferment of honorary degree on a goat prevents Money-Miss-Road from being honoured. Edoki satirizes Nigerian university authorities in this extract. With the success of the *yeye* youths in stopping such a wrong practice in Savannah as portrayed in the novel, the author discourages the Nigerian university authorities from honouring dubious and corrupt people in the society for their wealth, in attempt to solicit their financial assistance.

In extract 5, the word, '*egusi*' generally used in Nigeria means 'melon', which is used for cooking soup. In this extract '*egusi*' modifies soup to specify the type of soup referred to. We observe that the author has carried over the word verbatim into the target text, not because it lacks English equivalent, but as a way of promoting Nigerian languages.

2.1.9. Borrowing

In literary works, borrowing occurs in the form of carrying over verbatim the linguistic items of the local Nigerian languages into the English target texts. Edoki resorts to carrying over words of the local languages verbatim into the English target text, to articulate culture-bound concepts that cannot be translated, as well as to promote Nigerian indigenous languages. We observe that the novelist makes profuse use of lexical items of the three major Nigerian indigenous languages in the text under study as exemplified below.

1. 'Hnn!' the truck pusher said, 'if I remember those days I just laugh. When

I was a boy, my father warned me never to eat the meat in my soup until

I have finished the *eba*, *fufu* or *tuwo*.' (151)

2. He organized a fund-raising ceremony and invited all his *ogogoro* friends. (37)

3. 'Come and eat your *eba* before it gets cold.' (86)

4. The cassava tubers and pellets, *garri* and *fufu* he supplied every day were

- enough proof of his dominance in the market. (103)
5. He would take a ball of *eba* and then chunks of beef, *pomo*, *bokoto*, *kporoko* and then sip the wine. (150)
 6. *The lady was looking at the wretched window and the jagajaga door.*(157)
 7. *He saw a bowl of eba and ogbono soup; a dish containing beef, kpomo bokoto; and another containing a full chicken...*(149)
 8. I often forget this man is from oyinbo country. (99)
 9. 'Can you see the woman wearing kampala?' (57)

Eba, *fufu* and *tuwo* are lexical items of Nigerian indigenous languages incorporated into the target text under study due to their lack of English equivalents. *They* are the names of three different types of food made from cassava and eaten in Nigeria. *Ogogoro* in sample 2 is a popular word in many Nigerian languages, referring to locally brewed liquor, usually taken by low income earners. In some Nigerian traditional societies, it is a requirement in some ceremonies. *Kpomo* is the skin of dressed cows used for cooking soup and stew.

In Nigeria generally, 'Oyinbo' refers to a white person or anything foreign, and in the context in which it is deployed in this sample, it refers to a foreign country. *Kampala* refers to a locally made fabric designed with different colours of dye to beautify it; it is produced by the Yoruba people of western Nigeria.

2.2. The Use of Pidgin English

There is also the profuse use of Pidgin English in *and their stylistic effects Upward Path*. This reflects the Nigeria's linguistic situation due to lack of a common language of interaction among the different ethnic groups. The situation necessitates the use of Pidgin English, a common language that cuts across the various ethnic groups and social classes in the country. Here are few instances of the use of Pidgin in the text.

1. Some boys heard the news from the grapevine, gathered in an ogogoro shed and after taking one *pelebe* each, chanted "we no go gree". (37)
2. The consequences of his *hurry-hurry* attitude soon caught up with him. (12-13)
3. 'I get load-plenty load. Make you come tomorrow morning-very early. Okay. I go come. (150)
4. But I get native sense. Na the sense wey I get I use make the motor. I don do mechanic work for thirty years since I don be mechanic. (102)

The expressions *we no go gree*, *'hurry-hurry, I go come, I get load well well and I no know book but I know motor engine well, well* in the extracts above are usages in Pidgin English. The excerpts above are utilized by the novelist to reflect the use of language in Nigerian prose fiction, as well as in Nigeria generally.

2.3. Collocational Clash

There is the tendency for certain lexical items to collocate. But in literary works, literary artists sometimes deploy uncommon collocates referred to as collocational clash in literary texts for stylistic effects; this is due to the poetic license, which the authors have. Below are few examples of the artist's use of this creative strategy in the novel.

1. 'The greatest lesson I have learnt for my stay here is that it takes one good leader –only one leader-to heal a sick society.' (117)
2. 'An unusual excitement greeted him as he walked down the street. (122)

In the extracts above, the author deploys uncommon collocates for the conveyance of his artistic visions. For instance, as used in excerpt 1, 'sick' and 'society' constitute collocational clash. To be 'sick' denotes a state of 'ill health', which is associated with living things. But here, its conferment on a 'society', an abstract entity is for artistry. In its context of use in this sample, 'a sick society' denotes a society characterized by societal ills such as corruption, crimes, killings, embezzlement of public funds and other vices. The message inherent in this extract is the need for good governance in Nigeria. The artist also emphasizes that only good leaders can transform, and rid Nigeria of societal ills, in order to enhance national development.

The use of 'greeted' as a collocate of 'excitement' in sample 2 is also an example of collocational clash. It is deployed by the author to express the people's joy as Mr. Ewa passes by. This portrays the respect and honour accorded him due his meritorious service in developmental researches in Savannah. The novelist encourages hard work and patriotism in this sample.

2.4. Functional Conversion

Functional Conversion also referred to as category rule violation is a literary device where a linguistic item is deliberately replaced and/or adapted to anew grammatical function without changing its form. Geoffrey Leech calls it zero affixation (43). We observe the author's deployment of this device for stylistic effects in the following samples.

1. The man thanked him, and pocketed the money and smiled at his luck. (13)
2. 'They would have used it to oil their looting machine.' (66)
3. I want you to realize that they were laws against stealing in those thieving years.(167)
4. Mr. Nkomo prided himself on being the biggest cassava producer in the world. (103)

The word, "oil", in excerpt 1 is a noun, which has been made to function as a verb, "oiling", It is satirically deployed by the novelist to ridicule the corrupt leaders in Nigeria who loot public funds. In the same vein, "thief",

in sample 3 is converted to function as an adjective qualifying ‘year’. ‘Thieving years’ as used in sample 3, which denotes ‘years of embezzlement’ also conveys the theme of corruption perpetrated by the former Savannese leaders who have looted the treasury and plunged the country into poverty.

2.5. Neologism

Neologism is a common practice in language involving the formation of new words for communicative purposes. It is a creative device, which involves the deployment of affixations and compounding in literary creation. Akmajian and Demers (2001), assert that to deal with the potentially infinite world, the finite vocabulary can be expanded and altered. They add that this can be done through the addition of new words to the language, and the change in meanings of some already existing ones. We observe from the examples below that Edoki uses neologisms extensively in order to suit his purpose in his novel. He deploys compounding and affixation to create unique meanings for stylistic effects as exemplified below.

2.6. Compounding

As a rich source of new words in English, compounding involves the joining together two or more separate words to form compound words. It is a very useful creative device in Nigerian prose fiction, which Edoki profusely deploys in the novel under study. Here are few examples.

1. ill-gotten wealth.’ (36)
2. ‘riff-raffs and Money-Miss-Roads (36)
3. oil wealth (66)
4. razor-sharp voice (134)
5. face-to-face apartment (147)
6. build- and-sell (100)
7. the hero-worshippers
8. right-thinking person (143)
9. a big-man laugh (151)
10. Masses had gone to the show that day without taking his breakfast and dinner since he was still on zero-one-zero. (62)

The compound words in the examples above are coined for stylistic effects. The novelist deploys the derogatory compounds words ‘riff-raffs’ and ‘Money-Miss-Roads’ to describe the wealthy, but dubious people in Savannah, whose sources of wealth are questionable and illegal. He ridicules them for almost destroying the traditional values, by turning marriage ceremonies, birthday and burial ceremonies into occasions for the display of their ill-gotten wealth.

‘Oil wealth’ in sample 3 means the wealth accruing to the nation from petroleum. ‘Face-to-face apartment’ used in extract 4 is a very poor type of accommodation inhabited by poor people in Savannah in the bad old days. With the coinage, ‘face-to-face apartment’ the author captures the poor standard of living in Savannah before the reformation of the country.

The title, ‘Genius’, is the appellation given to people who distinguish themselves by their outstanding contributions to the development of Savannah. In sample 7, Edoki refers to the admirers who hold Genius Adamu in high esteem, praising him as ‘hero worshipers’. Due to the respect and honour admirers accord Genius Adamu due to his contributions, Gaga feels proud walking side by side with him. In this extract, Edoki does not only emphasize the need to appreciate people who contribute to the development of the society, but encourages hard work and excellence.

The coinage, ‘right-thinking person’ as used in sample 8 denotes a reasonable person who would strive to receive the appellation, ‘genius’, a mark of respect and honour. The idea Edoki portrays in this excerpt is that the appellation, ‘Genius’, given to people in appreciation is also motivational. People strive to earn the title, thereby working harder in their different fields of human endeavour. Therefore, the practice is one of the factors responsible for the development of Savannah, and should be emulated by other African leaders.

In sample 9, the novelist regards the laughter of the truck pusher as ‘a big-man laugh’. The truck pusher burst into such laughter due to Gaga’s reaction and disbelief on hearing that his neighbour who lives in affluence is a mere truck pusher saying:

‘You think there is no money in truck pushing? Well, maybe before -but now, it pays’. (151)

To further buttress his claim that there is money in truck pushing, the truck pusher says:

‘I thank God. By the grace of God, I have built a story building in my village; I have shares in many companies. My children are doing well , in school.’ (151)

In the extracts, the novelist encourages dignity of labour, which is very important for the development of any society.

In sample 10, Edoki uses the coined word ‘zero-one-zero’, to express a situation where somebody eats once daily, skipping breakfast and dinner. Masses skips breakfast and dinner like most Savanese in the bad old days, not because he does not want to eat, but due of lack of food. In this excerpt, the novelist portrays the hunger and lack, the ugly experiences of the Savanese before President Fernando’s reformation of Savannah. Edoki also conveys the fact that reformation is vital for the development of African countries.

2.7. Affixation

Affixation in language is a morphological process, which involves the attachment of morphemes to bases aimed at coining new words. We exemplify and explicate below the stylistic significance of prefixes and suffixes, the two commonly used types of affixation as used by Edoki in the novel under study.

1. de-Americanize (140)
2. re-Africanize (140)
3. girlish foolish (124)
4. simplistic (166)
5. pepperless voice (128)

In excerpt 1, the prefix “de” and the suffix “nize”, are added to the lexical item “America” at the beginning and the end respectively to form the word de-Americanize. In the same vein, the prefix “re” and suffix “nize” are added to “Africa” to form “re-Africanize in sample 2. The suffix “ish” is added to the word “girl” to form “girlish”. The suffix “istic” and “less” are added to “simple” and pepper to form “simplistic” and pepperless respectively. The author has formed the above affixes in conformity with the word formation rule.

The author utilizes some of the neologisms and affixes to verbalize the speech habits of the Nigerian characters in a second language. We observe that to unravel the semantic imports of some of the coined words requires a consideration of their context of use.

3. Conclusion

In this study, we have stated that Joseph Edoki deploys lexico-semantic features as creative/stylistic devices in his novel, *The Upward Path*. The devices comprise proverbs, idioms, figures of speech, borrowing and neologisms, among others. We also established the fact that the deployment of the devices in the text is borne out of Edoki’s stylistic/creative needs to express his messages and intentions in the best possible manner in a second language.

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