

ENUMERATING AND EXEMPLIFYING AS CRITICAL STYLISTIC DEVICES IN KAINE AGARY'S YELLOW-YELLOW

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Abstract

Writers express themselves differently. However, they all reflect aspects of human lives and address societal issues. Critical Stylistics is that branch of study that enables the investigation of a text to assess how social problems are expressed through language. This study is based on Enumeration and Exemplification as Critical Stylistic Devices in Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*. It, therefore, approaches the text *Yellow-Yellow* from a critical Stylistic perspective. With the main objectives of identifying the critical stylistic tools used by Kain Agary in the selected excerpts in *Yellow-Yellow* and identifying the effects of the identified tool on the text and its meaning, Jeffries' (2010) theory of Critical Stylistics was adopted to help complete the study. The study relied on both primary and secondary sources of data. The data for analysis was purposively selected to suit the purpose of the study. The study revealed that Kaine Agary in *Yellow-Yellow* adopted the enumeration tool in his writing style. This is in response to the first objective. On the discourse meanings from the enumerations, Agary presents from a critical perspective issues that affect humanity and the society humans live in, particularly the oil-rich communities, such as corruption and its resultant consequences; how some illustrious sons help the outer world to destroy their ancestry; how some women change their skin colors with the use of creams to meet up with some standards, the destruction of sources of livelihood, vulnerability of the women of these communities and its effect as well as the obstruction of activities by hoodlums.

Keywords: Critical Stylistics, Enumerating, Exemplifying, *Yellow-Yellow*

Introduction

Individuals express themselves differently. These differences constitute what is known as style. Stylistics is a branch of applied linguistics, which studies and interprets texts of all kinds and/or spoken languages with respect to their linguistic and tonal style, and style is the particular variety of language used by different individuals and/or in different situations or settings (Betti 2021:1). This definition emphasizes that the concern of Stylistics is the variations in language forms of people. It also draws out the point that stylistics also investigates variations that exist as a result of context or setting. This implies that different authors present different texts according to their individualistic differences. These different styles are used to create special social meanings studied under a branch of Stylistics known as Critical stylistics (Aluya & Uduma, 2024).

Olaluwoye (2015:88) defines Critical

Stylistics as a stylistic method used for linguistic analysis that is concerned with how social meanings are expressed through language. The branch of linguistics deals chiefly with how humans use language to express significant meanings shared by many at a time. As observed, the origin of 'Critical Stylistics' could be traced to Jeffries in 2007 through the exploration of text features which are discourses on the female body in society and considering whether thoughts of feminism have successfully been incorporated into these hegemonic discourses. It investigates how many thoughts are expressed in a text and is shared in some cases by many texts.

The primary focus of Critical Stylistics is to bring together the main general functions performed by a text in representing reality, considering the level of existence at which texts organize human experiences of the world we live in (Olaluwoye 2015:88). This implies that it

concentrates more on how language functions to capture reality and its existence as expressed in texts by different writers. Olaluwoye (2015:88) states further that Critical Stylistics is a bridge that connects CDA and Stylistics through its use of the Critical Linguistics approach to text analysis. Critical Stylistics provides comprehensive and systematic set of analytical tools among which are: (a) Naming and Describing, (b) Representing Actions/Events/States, (c) Equating and Contrasting, (d) Exemplifying and Enumerating, (e) Prioritizing, (f) Implying and Assuming, (g) Negating, (h) Hypothesizing, (i) the Speech and Thoughts of other Participants, and (j) Representing Time, Space and Society. The various texts available are the materials through which writers exercise the features that are analysed by Critical Stylistics. One of such which is the focus of the study is *Yellow-Yellow*.

Okorafor et al. (2024) state that *Yellow-Yellow* is a text by Kaine Agary which examines the struggles of the Niger-Delta people with the environment critically. The novel as they state examines the politics behind the exploratory efforts by oil companies in the area. The role of the government is also portrayed as well as the adverse effects that accompany it. The novel according to Aluya & Ocheme (2024) raises concerns which include underdevelopment, carelessness, pollution, kidnapping, gas flaring, vandalism, destruction of farmlands and micro/macro-organisms, and prostitution. The novel also discusses the environment of the oil rich communities and the effects of the activities of oil companies in their lands. *Yellow-Yellow* is a text by Kaine Agary which projects the plight of the people of the oil-rich communities. One of the Critical Stylistics features used by the text is enumeration and exemplification.

Olaluwoye (2015) states that Enumerating and exemplifying are critical stylistic tools that involve classification of things and their examples which involves making a long list of the members of a group. As he states, sometimes, these functions create categories and categorise members. The structural techniques which set up exemplification are many and varied, but often include explicit reference to the fact that they are examples. Sometimes, enumerating involves the

use of verbs such as include or adverb introductions like such as. For some cases, where the items in the list are clausal.

Rawian et al. (2024:92) state that Exemplifying and enumerating serve as a rhetorical tool which embeds a wide range of meanings achieved by listing to indicate category members without aiming for understanding them. These examples that are listed according to them present a unique worldview in the text, defying easy classification. This study therefore is focused on achieving the following objectives:

1. Identifying the critical stylistic tools used by Kaine Agary in *Yellow-Yellow*.
2. Identifying the effects of the identified tool on the text and its meaning.

The following questions will therefore be answered in the study:

1. What are the Critical Stylistics tools that are visible in the excerpts selected in *Yellow-Yellow*?
2. What is the meaning that the identified tools have on the discourse?

Achieving the objectives and answering the questions will make the study very relevant and enable a better understanding of the text and the excerpts selected and analysed using Enumeration and Exemplification.

Reconceptualizing Related Studies

This section reviews existing literature relevant to the present study, drawing distinctions between previous scholarly focuses and the unique perspective of this research.

Ogunfolabi (2019) in an article titled *Biracialism and trauma in Kaine Agary's Yellow-Yellow* evaluates the nexus that exists between the discourse of racial purity and the adverse traumatic effects it has in women which is central in Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*. Trauma and biracialism are identified by Ogunfolabi as biracial subjects. The study concludes by arguing that there is a connection between racial purity and its traumatic effects on the biracial woman. This article with its focus on the connection between biracialism and its traumatic effects differs from the present study. This is because the present study rather focuses on the use of Stylistics tools by Kaine Agary.

Ojiafor (2020) in Re-evaluating the Image of the Niger Deltas in Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* evaluates the actions of the Niger Delta indigenes in their quest to attain existential fulfilment. Adopting the analytical research design, the study looks critically at the social issues that affect the Niger Delta communities as presented by the novel. The study reveals that the Niger Deltans contribute to the underdevelopment of their communities in addition to the activities of the oil communities. While the reviewed article considers some factors that are responsible for the underdevelopment of the oil producing areas with priority given to the causes, the present study rather differs from it as it focuses on how the author employs the enumeration and exemplification in the work to capture the plight of the oil rich communities.

Simon (2010) in an article The Niger Delta and the Women's Predicament: A Study of Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*, evaluates the sociological conditions of the woman and the Niger Delta environment. Without a clearly outlined framework, the article draws readers' attention to the social irregularities that prevail. Also considered is the female predicament and the dichotomy between the rural and urban areas. This study differs from the present study in that, the present study focuses rather on enumerating and Exemplifying as stylistics tools used in the novel.

Adeyemo & Shittu (2006) in the damaged woman in the Damaged Environment: An Ecofeminist Critique of Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* analyses the nexus between violence on women and degradation of the environment as captured in Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*. Adopting Vandana Shiva's critique of patriarchal capitalism, the study argues that ecology is a feminist issue. It reveals that females are directly affected by destruction of the environment. The study concludes by emphasizing the urgent need for humans to shift from power-based relationships in order to achieve an egalitarian society and a healthy environment. The reviewed article focuses on how the language of texts in connection with violence against women and the environment is exhibited by Kaine Agary in *Yellow-Yellow*. Consequently, it differs from the present study because the focus of the present is on

the use of enumeration and exemplification as portrayed by Kaine Agary.

In an attempt to assess the use of foregrounding by Kaine Agary in *Yellow-Yellow*, Okorafor et al. (2024) undertook a study titled Foregrounding Oil Exploration and Exploitation on the Ecology: An Ecolinguistic Study of Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* in which they examine the deployment of ecolinguistic theory to highlight the problems encountered by oil-rich communities which result from the activities of companies that drill oil in the Niger Delta region. Using Stibbe's framework of framing and evaluation, six extracts from the text were purposively sampled and analysed. The article revealed that Agary's novel foregrounds issues like prostitution, discrimination, environmental degradation, kidnapping, destruction of Micro/macro-organisms on the ecology, and oil theft/bunkering. The article reviewed focuses on how Agary foregrounds key societal issues enumerated above. Consequently, it relates to the present study in its approach to the text. Where they differ is, while the reviewed article uses Ecolinguistics theory, the present study uses the approach of critical stylistics and the use of enumeration and exemplification in *Yellow-Yellow*.

Okwuokei (2019) in a dissertation assesses the effect of psychological damage of the degraded Environment on the selected Characters in Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* and Helon Habila's *Oil on Water*. The study asserts hopelessness, helplessness, fear, guilt and anger transcends to trauma in some characters. The study revealed that grief, nostalgia and aggression are traumatic Manifestations. The study concludes that problems actually serve as a test of true personality and affect the society in general. This reviewed article differs from the present study. While the reviewed article concentrates on the effects of the problems on the society and even characters, the present study looks at how enumeration and exemplification appear in the text as a Stylistic device used to create a special meaning.

Francis (2019) in an article titled Ecocritical Analysis of Kaine Angary's *Yellow-Yellow* assesses the problems that women and other people face as projected by the novel. The

article mentions that the problems highlighted result from societal and social irregularities. The article enumerates some of them as joblessness, poverty, lack of social amenities, and environmental degradation in the Niger-Delta. The study also examines how exploration of oil eludes the people who are supposed to benefit greatly from the exploration of oil in the region. The reviewed article focuses on the plight of women in the oil rich communities. As a result, it differs from the present study because the present study rather concentrates on how enumeration and exemplification are used in the text as special stylistic devices.

Akung & Iloeje (2011) in Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow: A Study in Ecocriticism* examine the relationship between ecology and literature, with its focus on Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*. With the use of Ecocriticism theory, the novel explores the socio-cultural effects of oil exploration and exploitation on the ecology. With a focus also on the social issues that affect women, the society or environment and the oil rich communities specifically, the study reveals that environmental pollution leads to pollution of morals. It reveals also that women in this novel have been sexually polluted pointing out that the body of the woman in the novel symbolizes nature which man has polluted. As a study that is uniquely designed, the reviewed article approached the text and established a connection between a woman's body and the environment connecting the devastation done to both of them. As a result, it differs from the present study. This is because the present study concentrates on the use of stylistic devices of enumerating and exemplifying.

Ogene & Okolo (2023) title their article Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow: An Eco-feminist Bildungsroman* Novel evaluates the genre that the novel could be classified under and focuses on the origin of the novel group. Bildungsroman is identified as the genre which the novel belongs to. Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis theory was used to complete the analysis and results indicate that the novel under survey is an eco-feminist Bildungsroman –which implies a novel that pursues feminist drive on the one hand, and an advocacy conservation on the other hand

projecting the need for environmental protection on the other. The study revealed that African Bildungsroman, like most other African novels sometimes are used as advocacy tools for social, political, economic and ecological change. Hence, Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* is a tool for creating the needed awareness, agitation and protesting. The reviewed article critically examines the text *Yellow-Yellow* and traces its genre and its source. It also examines the connection between the environment and the human body. Therefore, the study is very interesting and vital in the understanding of the situation in the Niger-Delta as Agary presents it. It however differs from the present study. The present study focuses rather on the use of critical stylistics tools by Kaine Agary in the novel.

This section of the review pays attention to the studies done on Critical Stylistics and the enumerating and exemplifying tools of analysis. Thomas (2023) in an article titled A Critical Stylistic Study of Wole Soyinka's Reenactment of Actions in Interventions I, IV and VIII explores Soyinka's re-enactment of actions in Interventions I, IV and VIII with attention paid to the critical stylistic use of language to depict leadership ills. Jeffries' critical stylistics theory represents the framework with specific attention given to the tool of representing actions/events/states. The study explores also the action of the leaders and the led in the Nigerian society. It revealed that the Nigerian leaders disregard their responsibilities which has led to the condition the nation currently finds itself in. The study revealed further that leaders in Nigeria are only concerned with following the steps of their predecessors rather than identifying ways through which the nation could be emancipated from its despondent state. The reviewed article focuses on the use of stylistic tools to depict social ills of leaders in the society. The present study instead focuses on the use of enumerating and exemplifying Stylistic tools in Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*. Though they differ in their focus, they relate in the framework within which they are carried out.

Omotunde (2023) titles an article A Critical Stylistic Study of Peter Obi's Campaign Speech Delivered at Chatham House and in it conducts a critical stylistic analysis of the

presidential campaign speech delivered by Peter Obi in the United Kingdom on January 26, 2023. With the aim of investigating some meanings and ideologies presented by Peter Obi to his listeners through his selection of words, three tools propounded by Jeffries (2010) namely naming and describing, prioritising and equating and contrasting are used as the framework for the study. Findings from the study reveal that different texts could have one ideology behind them that serve as the foundation for all the interpretations.

Hussein & Hussein (2021) title their work *Speaking Loudly: Critical Stylistic Analysis of Selected Soliloquies in Hamlet* and in it analyses two soliloquies made by Hamlet using only three textual-conceptual functions of the model: Representing Actions/ Events/ States; Exemplifying and Enumerating; and Hypothesizing. The Critical Stylistics model of Jeffries (2010) was used to framework the study. With the use of qualitative tools for the analysis, the study revealed that Shakespeare's language is ideologically loaded and contains discrepancies in the frequency and function of these tools.

Hussein & Hussein (2021) are of the opinion that Exemplifying and Enumerating are Critical Stylistics tools. Exemplifying according to them means "giving a number of specific categories as examples rather than listing all the category members." Enumerating on the other have is "giving a full list or listing all the items of a certain category." Hussein & Hussein (2021) state that Jeffries (2010: 66) uses these concepts while giving examples of something and/or mentioning certain things. This review is useful to the present study as it provides the framework that is relevant in completing the present study.

Olaluwoye (2015) is of the opinion that Enumerating and exemplifying are critical stylistic tools that classify things and their examples which involves making a long list of the members of a group. As he states, sometimes, these functions create categories and categorise members. The structural techniques which set up exemplification are many and varied, but often include explicit reference to the fact that they are examples. Sometimes, enumerating involves the use of verbs such as include or adverb introductions like such as. For some cases, where the items in the list are

clausal (Ogunsiji & Aluya, 2022).

Ahmed (2022:6794) opines that Critical Stylistics is an approach to language that combines input from stylistics and critical discourse analysis. Jeffries (2010) states that critical stylistics is a method used to identify thoughts in any text, which in some cases may not be agreed with but cuts across all forms of texts in existence. This branch of linguistics studies considers how language is used by humans to express social meanings through language. It investigates how many thoughts are expressed in a text and is shared in some cases by many texts (Aluya et al., 2019).

The reviewed literature underscores the thematic richness of *Yellow-Yellow* and the applicability of critical stylistics to uncover textual meanings. As observed, none of the studies discusses how enumeration is used with exemplification to indicate special stylistic effects. Consequently, this study uniquely investigates the interplay of enumeration and exemplification as stylistic devices in Agary's work, contributing a new dimension to the analysis of the novel.

Methodology

The study is qualitative in nature and depends both on primary and secondary sources. The articles reviewed and consulted constitute the secondary data while the excerpts analysed from *Yellow-Yellow* form the primary data. 7 excerpts were extracted from *Yellow-Yellow* by Kaine Agary and subjected to analysis using the critical stylistics theory. The focus was on the enumerating and exemplifying tools. To analyse the data, each excerpt was presented and analysed using the theory. A discussion of the data follows using the framework to enable the conclusion.

Theoretical Framework

This study approaches the *text Yellow-Yellow* from the perspective of critical stylistics theory propounded by Jeffries (2010). According to Jeffries (2010), CS is that model of stylistic analysis which combines three broad areas of language studies namely Critical linguistics, Functional linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis as it examines texts to uncover hidden Ideologies and meanings.

Critical Stylistics offers a set of analytical tools that are useful for the analysis of textual ideas. The tools include the following: (a) Naming

and describing (b) representing actions, states, and events (c) equating and contrasting (d) exemplifying and listing (e) prioritising (f) implying and assuming (g) Negating (h) speculating (i) presenting the speech and thought of other participants and (j) Representing time, space, and society (Jeffries, 2009; Aluya & Ocholor, 2024, p.9). This study, however, concentrates on the use of exemplifying and enumerating for its analysis.

Olaluwoye (2015) states that Enumerating and exemplifying are critical stylistic tools that involves classification of things and their examples which involves making a long list of the members of a group. Aluya & Ocholor (2024:16) state that exemplifying and enumerating are very similar and could be difficult to differentiate. While exemplifying is introduced by textual markers like for example, for instance, to exemplify etc., enumerating lists all members of a category. The choice of enumeration and exemplification is made in agreement with the focus of the study and is useful to reveal how such is used to create special stylistic effects.

Analysis and Discussion

Enumerating and exemplifying are two terms that are close to each other and are both used in stylistics as tools for describing things in the society. Rawian et al (2024:92) state that Exemplifying and enumerating serve as a rhetorical tool which embeds a wide range of meanings achieved by listing to indicate category members without aiming for understanding them. The extracts from the text can be analysed as follows using enumeration and exemplification:

Excerpt 1...Coupled with mismanagement, the country experienced untold corruption, Hunger, hardship and unimaginable poverty amidst plenty of wealth which has remained persistent till date. (p. 11)

Excerpt one speaks of the challenges faced by oil rich communities. A list of the problems is made and the list is preceded by the cause of the problems. As observed, the critical Stylistic tool of enumerating is employed by Kaine Agary here. As Aluya & Ocholor (2024:16) posit, enumerating lists members of a category and is not introduced

by textual markers. Though there is a list of problems namely untold corruption, Hunger, hardship and unimaginable poverty, they are not introduced by any verbs or other categories of textual markers. The list enumerated refer to the consequences of corruption as mentioned in the preceding group of words. Agary therefore with the aid of the Critical Stylistics tool of enumerating draws the attention of the readers of Yellow-Yellow to the challenges encountered daily in these oil producing communities.

Excerpt 2: In the bloated language of bureaucratic deference He is now “His Excellency Joseph Koomson, Minister Plerupitentiory, Member of the Presidential Commission, Hero of Socialist Labor. He now lives in one brasher residential estates that previously accommodated the envied colonizer. (p. 17)

Except two addresses the honour that is enjoyed by some members of these oil rich communities who have helped the oil companies to destroy their ancestry. This point is affirmed by Ojiafor (2020) who states that Niger Deltans contribute to the underdevelopment of their communities in addition to the activities of the oil communities. A list of the titles held by one of such is made. Using the enumeration tool by Jeffries (2010) and introduced by the words he is now, the titles of the man are enumerated as His Excellency Joseph Koomson, Minister Plerupitentiory, Member of the Presidential Commission, Hero of Socialist Labor. Agary uses this tool here to indicate how sons of the soil collaborate with the government and the oil companies to help destroy their communities while they enjoy fame and honour from the oil companies. This tool helps readers to see some of the titles given to people and indeed how big the titles are. It however implies that the titles and their holders do not work in the favour of the communities they are from but rather work against its progress.

Excerpt 3: Their faces, hands, legs, and Feet were yellow, though some parts Had big smudges of black (p 35).

Excerpt three describes the complexion of some persons (women) who use body enhancement creams in order to gain attraction and describes

their appearance. Here, an enumeration of the parts of the body that are affected by the skin enlightening cream is mentioned in the order: faces, hands, legs, and Feet. By this enumeration, Agary aims to communicate the effect of skin enlightening cream and aims at warning people to desist from it. This is indicated by the concluding part of the excerpt which contradicts the introductory part as it says “though some parts Had big smudges of black.” Without using any text markers to introduce the list, Agary simply makes a list of parts of the body. This is in line with Rawian et al's (2024:92) position that Exemplifying and enumerating serve as rhetorical tools for listing to indicate category members without aiming for understanding them. Agary therefore does not explain further to enhance understanding but makes an enumeration to enable deduction of context-based meanings.

Excerpt 4: Flooding and farming, the occupations that had sustained my mother, her mother, and her mother's Mother no longer provided gain (p. 39).

The fourth excerpt makes a list of members of a category. Rawian et al (2024:92) states that Exemplifying and enumerating serve as rhetorical tools for listing to indicate category members without aiming for understanding them. Consequently, “my mother, her mother, and her mother's Mother” are categorized as farmers and people who are sustained solely by farming. In the excerpt, Agary projects how oil exploration activities have destroyed many sources of livelihood. By the list enumerated above, Agary implies that the aged people in the communities are experiencing what could be summed up as hell because of the destruction of their sources of livelihood leaving them without anything to help them meet up with the many needs they have.

Excerpt 5: Our crop of yellows was full of variety, coloured by Filipinos, the Chinese, the British, and the Americans who worked in the Oil sector (p. 74).

The fifth excerpt suggests the origin of the light-skinned girls in oil communities where foreign nationals live. An enumeration of the origins of the various possible fathers of the Yellow children in

these oil communities is listed. As posited by Olaluwoye (2015:88), Critical Stylistics brings together the main general functions performed by a text in representing reality, considering the level of existence at which texts organize human experiences of the world we live in. Consequently, Agary has through enumeration made a representation of reality by projecting that the crop of light skinned children in these communities are children whose fathers are Filipinos, the Chinese, the British, and the Americans. This implies the vulnerability of women in oil rich communities as the fathers of the children abandon them, leaving without a notice.

Excerpt 6: There were more and more of my kind, “African profits”, “born troways”, ashawo picking, father unknown (p. 171)

Excerpt six projects the discrimination that children of the list in excerpt 5 pass through in the oil rich communities. The excerpt enumerates the discriminatory words that are used on such children such as “African profits”, “born troways”, ashawo picking, and father unknown. Olaluwoye (2015:88) states that Critical Stylistics is a stylistic method used for linguistic analysis that is concerned with how social meanings are expressed through language. As a result, Agary expresses some social meanings which majorly are discriminatory as observed by the words. Agary, through the enumeration tool here reemphasizes the point in excerpt four which implies that foreign nationals abandon women they have affairs with, even when the women are pregnant hence, the names listed above which suggest that a child is not known with a father.

Excerpt 7: They stole, blackmailed, and vandalized for the progress..... (p. 154)

Excerpt seven enumerates the activities of hoodlums or notorious natives of the oil communities. The activities which categorize them as negative. Rawian et al (2024:92) state that Exemplifying and enumerating serve as rhetorical tools for listing to indicate category members without aiming for understanding them. This implies that by enumerating that they stole, blackmailed, and vandalized, they have been categorized as hoodlums or bandits. This also implies that oil exploration is not a peaceful

venture always as oil workers face challenges poised by bandits (Edem & Aluya, 2023). Agary therefore projects the fact that bandits always disrupt the peace of oil rich communities and that of oil workers.

Conclusion

This study has examined Select excerpts from Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*. The study concentrated on the use of enumeration and exemplification as critical stylistic tools for analysis. In the study, Agary uses majorly the enumeration tool in his style of writing and neglects the exemplification tool. Through the use of the enumeration tool, Agary presents from a critical perspective issues that affect humanity and the society humans live in. An enumeration of the bane corruption is done in excerpt one and its

resultant consequences. Agary also enumerates how some illustrious sons help the outer world to destroy their ancestry, how some women change their skin colours with the use of creams to meet up with some standards, the destruction of sources of livelihood, vulnerability of the women of these communities and its effect as well as the obstruction of activities by hoodlums. Consequently, Critical Stylistics is useful in helping to reflect the issues inherent in the society and assessing them. Societal realities therefore is captured by different authors using different styles and Critical Stylistics enables a great deal of understanding of the texts hence, the need for an understanding of Critical Stylistics and its analytical tools.

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