

**Development, Underdevelopment and Poverty: A Linguistic  
Study of Joseph Edoki's  
*The African Dream***

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**Abstract**

Historically, European countries: Britain, France, Germany, Portugal, among others, partitioned Africa at the Berlin Conference of 1884/1885. They colonized the continent for over a century before the countries gained independence, resulting from protest led by educated Africans who saw how their European colonialists exploited and bastardized the socio-cultural values of Africans. The exploitation of Africa was so obvious that a Guyanese activist, Rodney Walter, wrote a text entitled *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1972) to historically situate its massiveness and set an agenda for Africa's future. However, after independence, the expectation of most African countries have been dashed because of corrupt leadership, selfishness and lack of a philosophical focus, unlike the Asian Tigers such as Malaysia, Indonesia, India and South Korea which had their independence almost at the same time with many African countries. It is not surprising, therefore, that several coup d'états have occurred in many African countries after independence and unbridled corruption, ethnic jingoism and selfishness have mainly been responsible for the underdevelopment, poverty and misery on the African continent. This unfortunate state of affairs has provoked African writers, who have written novels, plays and poems, to expose the moral decadence and corruption in African countries, with a view to refocus the development agenda for the common good of Africans. Among such works is, Joseph Edoki's *The African Dream*, which is pre-occupied with corruption and abuse of office by political leaders in Nigeria in particular and Africa generally. Employing

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content analysis and historical approach, this article examines how Edokio's text utilizes linguistic features to describe and expose some of the social vices plaguing Africa.

**Keywords:** Africa, Development, Poverty, Socio-cultural structure, Politician, African society

### **Introduction**

The continent of Africa before colonialism had a close-knit socio-cultural structure. The partitioning of the continent at the Berlin Conference of 1884 to 1885 among the European countries (Britain, France, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Italy, the Netherlands and others) distorted this structure. This resulted in the devastation of the close-knit social cultural values of Africans. Chinyere Nwahunanya notes that in the pre-colonial era, the oral literary artist in such societies was vested with enormous social responsibility, especially with regard to his or her position as an entertainer and regulator of social behaviour (52). Thus, the literary artist was able to appreciate artifacts, music, anecdotes, proverbs, and moonlight stories by means of which the social cultural values and cultures were transmitted from generation to generation. This means that the social cultural values did not have to be written down before they were transmitted. Thus, the period of colonization witnessed exploitation and ruin of African economy and social cultural values.

Edokio's *The African Dream* exploits the effects of corruption on the traditional African society as the ancestors never tolerated it. He portrays the penalty of a corrupt person (male or female) caught to include being fined, ostracized or sacrificed to the gods (239). The imperialists on arrival set aside African values and imposed their language and religion. This point is vividly captured in Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Rodney was a Guyanese who saw the injustices perpetuated against Africans, and took it upon himself to champion the African cause. Chika Ezeanyi in line with Rodney's view posits that the colonialists were responsible for the underdevelopment of African countries. Regarding the above submissions, Omo-Ojugo and Okugbe view them as belated. This position is informed based on

the fact that there were other countries in the Diasporas and other continents that were also colonized but have long moved on by developing their countries, the examples of India and South Korea with which most African countries gained independence. These countries have joined the league of world power (253). In fact, Ezeanyi later acknowledges Africans' ability to transform Africa and further notes the significance of Africa's indigenous knowledge in all fields of human endeavour and is critical to the continent's advancement (<http://chikaforafrica.com/about> 1) Otiye Igbuzor argues that Africans are responsible for the underdevelopment of Africa. He relays the various theories that have been so far propounded to explain the challenges of development and underdevelopment of Africa. He tells Africans to stop shifting the blame of underdevelopment to slavery, colonialism and imperialism. He affirms that our future has been placed in our hands long ago. He likens blaming Europe as the cause of Africa underdevelopment to treating worms and leaving leprosy unattended. Igbuzor chronicles the various ways Africans have been truncating the process of development and selling of able bodied men of Africa to colonial masters, borrowing of foreign loans, brain drain, wars and conflicts, looting and plundering of limited resources, and to lend my voice, abandoning our diversified agrarian farming for a sole economy (crude oil). Igbuzor concludes that horror, inhumanity and injustice have been done to Africans by fellow Africans (<http://joshuagbo.wordpress.com> 1). Joseph Edoki, one of the new generation African writers, is on a crusade to sanitize the society and reverse the trend of injustice and inhumanity. His study abroad has enabled him to understand and appreciate what democracy entails.

Edoki's published literary text includes *The Flight Ticket* (1994), *The Upward Path* (2008), and of course *The African Dream* (2005). Therefore, he is not a strange bed fellow in the field of literary studies. Jude Agho notes that *The African Dream* has been quite popular and has elicited from critics favourable critical commentaries. Edoki is peeved with the attitude of leaders whose reign of misrule has made normal human beings: men and women and children, search for food at refuse dump, in Pearl

Townö while the leaders engage in stupendous life style, leaving the masses to languish in penury (52). Edoki's *The African Dream* is a post colonial novel that treats similar themes as some other post colonial novels, the examples of Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat*, Achebe's *A Man of the People*, and others who have been dismayed and disillusioned about the turn of events after independence without proffering solution. Edoki did not stop at enumerating the evil caused the people due to selfishness and visionless leaders. Agho notes how the novel demonstrates redemptive capacity of literature to become a channel to proselytize the tenets of democracy, good governance and good leadership in Africa. This article adopts the Halliday's Systemic Functional model which is socially oriented, essentially concerned with describing the relationship of language, text, and social life. The approach focuses on language as a system and the choices available in any language variety using the representation tool of the system network. This study will focus on the syntactic and lexico-semantic structures of the text under review.

### **Linguistic Approach**

As has been mentioned above, the study focuses on the syntactic and lexico- semantic analysis of *The African Dream*. Syntax, according to Abrams and Harpham is the study of the sequences of word order with a view to making phrases, clauses, and sentences (149). Lexico-semantics on the other hand is seen by Hartmann, R.R.K. and Stork, F.C. as the vocabulary items of a language as well as their lexical or semantics meaning in specific context (129). Utilizing these items, Edoki demonstrates a ray of hope for Africa nations, particularly Nigeria. The use of these linguistic features reveals that thorough well- researched and delicately knitted piece of creative writing could be used as a veritable tool for political, social and economic reforms (Omo-Ojugo and Omo-Ojugo 1).

### **Sentence Types**

English sentences are sometimes classified according to the mood of their verbs (Coghill and Magedanz 9). Several structures of the mood system of the clause are realized from the text under study.

Eggenschwiler and Biggs affirm that verb moods are classifications that indicate attitude of the speaker (19). Mode enables the verb used in a clause to express a particular action. Simple sentences may be divided into four major syntactic clauses whose use correlate with different communicative functions ó statement (declarative), questions (interrogative), command (imperatives) and exclamatory statement (Quirk and Greenbaum191).

### **Statements (Declaratives)**

Coghill and Magedanz note that ðdeclarative is a sentence whose main verb is indicative. Most English sentences are declarative; they simply make statementsö (56). Statements are sentences in which the subject is always present and generally precedes the verb. Declarative can be a sentence or a phrase. Statements that are declarative usually assert or state ideas that are based on facts. The structure of a declarative is + subject, + verb with an optional (+object +complement and adjunct). Declarative structure is essentially to communicate information. Edoki employs the use of declarative to reveal the level of corruption perpetuated by leaders and their ineptitude and to state what he would do to improve the living standard of his people. Here are instances of declaratives:

- 1) I want to be president. (17)
- 2) This country is in dire need of exemplary leader.

In extract 1, ðI want to be presidentö is a statement by Fernando, the protagonist, who dreams that he will be president. When he first dreamt, he needed some time to think it over whether he heard himself right. For all things considered, he did not have what it takes to be president. For instance, his study room was made up of a chair, table and a bookcase with different books on Philosophy, History, Religious, and Psychology, Administration, Politics and other disciplines. However, the voice of reason, a product of his intellect, convinced him that the idea behind the dream would work just as he has imagined. It was at this point that he became more convinced. However, when he broke the news of the dream to his wife, she derided him. She saw the dream laughable especially as he did not have what it takes to be president. Fernando could not adequately cater for his home, let

alone be president. When he told his friends, they mocked and made jest of him.

The climax was that Darl Salam, an old friend, asked if he had taken anti-malaria medicine of recent. He asked the question because, to him, for a poor man to want to contest with all the money bags and emerge was far from being realistic. Fernando, who could hardly feed his family, was on a rescue mission to save the people of Savannah and so could not be distracted. Rather, everyday, he finds justification for his cause to become president. Era, another of his friend, believes that such positions are not meant for common people and wanted to know the person who sold such an idea to Fernando. Despite all odds and oppositions, Fernando was not dissuaded, he was more than convinced that he would become president, Therefore, he would re-enact, well, in case you don't know, you are talking to a man who will be president (21).

The authorial voice is more than convinced that he would be president. Fernando was on the long run, able to convince his friends who accepted to be part of the programme.

Extract 2 is a statement by Fernando. This statement came as an insight to the issue of poverty bedeviling the country. The statement became necessary as there were visible legacies such as Schools, Hospitals, Factories and so forth. Apart from these legacies, every year, new budgets are announced and more and more structures were built. Therefore, Edoki could not imagine why the country of Savannah is still very poor. There are several primary schools, over ten thousand Secondary Schools, and so many tertiary institutions in the country which have produced teachers, artisans, technicians, scientists, engineers, doctors, and administrators to mention but are few.

The writer observes that although there are thousands of infra-structures or industrial structures, refineries, flour mills, paper mills, textile mills, assembly plants, breweries, pharmaceutical industries, scores of banks, export barrels of rubbers, cotton, cocoa, groundnut, export barrels of crude oil and so on, that structures are not enough to wipe out the misery of a nation, which is why the people are still among the most miserable human beings on earth.

The fundamental question which is rhetorical is "what is our problem?" Edoki does not leave the reader to go on endless search for what the problem could be but notes through insight that the problem is that of leadership and declares, "The country is in dire need of exemplary leaders" (58). He notes that the development of a country is measured by the quality of life of people who live there and not by the quantity of structure laid down for them. He observes that past leaders focused on development without maintaining the misery index.

The author's profuse use of structures as "dregs of society eat from refuse dumps, "living in the slums, "children of the poor become : beggars, hawkers, prostitutes and thieves to live, "Best brains go to foreign nation to work or waste at home, "enactment of laws and policies by leaders aimed at annulling future of children and children's children, reflect a country whose leaders have not been able to harness and put to use the potential of the country to the advantage of the citizens because of lack of focus. In a press briefing, when Fernando was asked what he hopes to achieve if elected president, his response was "I will use the wealth of our nation to improve your living condition " I will serve my people with the fear of God" (61).

Edoki infuses Fernando who is an independent gubernatorial candidate of Greater Tomorrow Society with all the qualities of a dedicated, sensitive and focus driven leader to show that good governance is realizable. Therefore, when elected, Fernando did not waste time but swings into action to salvage the people by mapping out strategies as blueprint for transforming the lives of his people. In pursuance of his vision, he sets out to revolutionize the economy " monetary rewards and incentives are given to investors to encourage technological growth, and agriculture is given a boost under his Green Revolution programme in order to achieve bumper harvest and thereby solve the problem of hunger. Fernando also revolutionized education in Savannah by making the primary and secondary education tuition free so that many children can access education. The hospitals are not left out. They are refurbished and essential drugs made available in them all.

### Interrogative Sentences

An interrogative sentence asks a question. Interrogative always end in a question mark. Technically, 'interrogative' is not a verb mood, although one common way of asking a question involves inversion, that is, placing the verb in front of the subject (Coghill and Magedanz 202). Hartmann and Stork note interrogative is a structure containing a question as opposed to one expressed in declarative mood (117). Interrogative is a word used in question, such as how or what. Here are instances of its use in *The African Dream*.

3) What about all the people who have seen him? (135)

4) How can an independent candidate become our president? (203)

In extract 3, the question 'what about the people who have seen him?' is a wh- type of structure, made by Darl Salem, Fernando's friend, a lawyer and a party member who turned a betrayer. From the beginning when Fernando succeeded in convincing him of his dream to be president, he has supported him very faithfully. It was after Fernando's interview with the press, an interview for which professor Seba Mensa, congratulated him for his brilliant performance that Darl Salem began to withdraw for fear of Fernando losing and thereby put him on opposition. The press had manipulated the editorial of the interview in favour of Halle Bashal who had bribed them, thus, projecting him as the 'messiah' – a genius and advertised him with statement such as 'a vote for Bashal is a vote for progress.' Darl Salam who has been studying the event from the perspective of the press began to nurse a change of mind. He decides to join the 'supposedly winning team' because he did not want to belong to opposition. He is after what the nation can do for him and not what he can do for the nation. He convinces some members of Greater Tomorrow Society with whom he disassociate from Fernando's camp with the hope of going into an alliance with the Conservative Convention Party whose presidential flag bearer is chief Ikoyiko.

When some members of the press rejected the bribe, Mr. Dickson Ander, the editor was forced to resign. This action reveals the level of corruption in the country. We find the press which is supposed to be the mouth piece of the society being compromised.

The action of Mr. Dickson Ander, the editor is commendable. Surprisingly, Darl Salam suffers humiliation in a bid to meet with Ikoyiko. He is prevented several times from seeing Ikoyiko, until the third day. Darl Salam in wonderment asks 'what about all the people who have seen him?' The 'what' is interrogative. It wants to know why some people are permitted to go in and see the chief while he is prevented. The revelation of the gate man who spoke in pidgin after receiving the sum of twenty-pound note shows the level at which people are ready to divulge information and this is a form of corruption. Salam suffers great humiliation in the hands of Ikoyiko. This treatment should be the lot of people like him - betrayals.

The interrogative statement in extract 4, 'how come an independent candidate become our president?' is uttered by Major Buma Donga, a member of the Supreme Ruling Council at the cabinet office where the election result that saw Fernando through as winner of the presidential election would be discussed. There were several dissenting voices against Fernando being declared the winner and subsequently sworn in as president. Apart from the fact that Bashal has bribed the members of the ruling council, they were also afraid of Fernando, who has been very critical of their administration and were naturally afraid of being jailed by him. The Head of State, Colonel Aile, was bent on handing over to Fernando, whom has been duly elected as president. The members of the Supreme Ruling Council did everything humanly possible to forestall the swearing-in of Fernando but failed. Even the Chief Justice, Madume whose duty it was to swear-in Fernando was intimidated and brought at gun point to Colonel Kufo Amatta who pressurized him to annul the election that was adjudged to be free and fair because the government had adopted the open Ballot system, a system that ensures voters knew the outcome of the voting exercise in each polling station as soon as voting is concluded. Fernando, who has contested as an independent candidate under Greater Tomorrow Party was asked why he did not join already existing political party by a representative of the *Statesman*. His response was that he naturally was not a conservative or a socialist, and secondly, he recognized that the

parties were out to play traditional politics which he vehemently opposed to. Fernando was not ready for either of the above. Edoki employs the use of lexical parallelism to recount Fernando desire to change the destiny of his society.

It is my desire to build a strong and virile nation.

It is my desire to make our society worth living in. Therefore, a man who is set to change the destiny of his society for good, could not have aligned with a people who are already used to the existing political order and societal values of bribery and corruption as the norm.

This shows that Fernando cannot be manipulated and distracted from his mission and vision to improve the living standard of his people.

### **Syntactic Parallelism**

Parallelism in sentences refers to matching grammatical structures. Elements in a sentence that have the same function or express similar ideas should be grammatically parallel, or grammatically matched Jean Eggenschwller and Emily Dotson Biggs, (280). Edoki utilizes parallel structures as balance and grace to his writing while conveying his message. Here is an instance of the use of parallelism.

5). They used the money to build private mansions, buy luxury cars, marry many wives, and maintain many concubines.

They used the money to buy airplanes and ships and yachts.

They used the money to buy titles of nobility in palaces, churches, and universities.

They used the money to lure single girls and married women to bed (49).

The use of parallel structures in extract 5 reveals that the people are not ignorant of how these political leaders misappropriate their funds, an act that has impoverished them. This is reflected in the introductory pronominal *ōtheyö* plus the verb *ōusedö* which help to enumerate the various useless activities that the corrupt leaders spend the money meant to develop and enhance a good life for the people.

The irony is that, these same groups of leaders that have wasted the peoples' funds are always applauded, honoured and

numbered among the richest people in the world, when in the real sense; they ought to be prosecuted and jailed. The fact that nothing is done by way of punishment, rulers, the like of Sir Afram Dodo and General Edgar Mollan, enrich themselves at the detriment of the people by acquiring monumental wealth comparable to the annual earnings of some African states put together. This was the situation that Fernando met on his return from abroad where he went to study. Thus, he could not recognize his country whose national anthem he used to recite with pride. On his return, corruption had become common place. The country had become so corrupt that the good people who make deliberate effort to stay uncorrupted were held hostage together with the bad people as reflected in the extract below:

The good people who were inclined to do that which was good and who constantly strove to avoid evil were corrupted by the bad í and appropriating sugar and milk and honey inmeasures to the *bad- badder-baddest*. (50)

The hyphenated ungrammatical italics *ō bad- badder-baddest*” portrays the extent corruption has developed with impunity that God fearing people were beginning to wonder if Armageddon has come.

### **Rhetorical Questions**

Abrams and Harphan see rhetorical question as a sentence in the grammatical form of a question which is not asked in order to request information or to invite a reply, but to achieve a greater expressive force than a direct assertion. This is relating to or concerned with the art of rhetoric (280). Repetition is a common rhetorical device. It is expressed in terms intended to persuade or impress. It is asked in order to produce an effect or to make a statement rather than to elicit information, Concise Oxford Dictionary. M.H. Abrams posits it is one which functions as a forceful statement. í a sentence in the grammatical form of a question which is not ask in order to request information or to

invite a reply, but to achieve a greater expressive force than a question. Here is an instance of the use.

6.) What is our problem?

The above is a rhetorical question by Fernando during his speech at the main auditorium of Apex University where Colonel Allison invites all patriots who believed he could provide exemplary leadership to come out and contest the elections. Fernando enumerates qualities such as 'we have skilled men and women, our people have ideas, vision and drive. As potentials, the people are endowed with that which should make them trail blazers as a developed nation. He wondered why in the face of these endowments, the people are hungry and miserable. Fernando explains how schools, hospitals, court, roads, dam, bridges, factories, airports and others have been built. He mentions how developed they are industrially, that their exports fetch tonnes of rubber, cocoa, cotton, groundnuts; they also export barrel of crude oil and tones of gold every week. Fernando wonders why Savannah, in spite of her developments, is still one of the poorest nations in the world and harbouring the most miserable human beings on earth.

Through insights, Fernando identifies what has been the problem, he says institutions and structures do not make nations great but that men and women do. He concludes that the problem has been the lack of exemplary leaders. He emphatically states 'the country is in dire need of exemplary leaders' (49). He employs the rhetorical question as platform to sell his candidature to the people. Fernando has promised to reinvent democracy in the land, he promised to set a good example for every citizen to follow. This he demonstrates during his reign.

### **Nominal**

Randolf and Greenbaum note that 'a nominal element is a vocative added to a sentence or clause... denoting the one or more people to whom it is addressed' (321). The most prominent nominal in *The African Dream* is Dr. Amedumego Fernando, a 34 years old man who trained abroad and returned home to contribute to the development of his country, Savannah. Fernando signifies a loving husband to his wife, Angela. Despite Angela's pestering to start a

fight because there is no money in the house for food, Fernando refuses to lay his finger on her. He rather pleads with her to let peace reign and subsequently resorts to borrowing money from his neighbor, Jeremiah who is a trader, to meet the demands of his family, as he hasn't been paid his salary for that month. This is evident in the extract below:

7) . . . Are you ready to give me money, yes or no? . . . How much do you want from me? Fifty pounds. The front door was open. Fernando walked through it and made straight for Jeremiah's house. The man was one of his close neighbours and the only one who had never disappointed him anytime he begged him for money. (7-8)

Fernando has explicit trust in God. He doesn't subscribe to diabolic empowerment to confront challenges he is faced with. Despite the fact that he has so many enemies, he entertains no fear but expresses faith in God. When past corrupt leaders and heads of state worked tooth and nail to make sure he was impeached, offering sitting legislators all sorts of outrageous allowances from the money embezzled from the coffers of government, Fernando was advised by Yvonne, his aid, to engage a diabolic means to subvert the judgment of the court but he refuses and says:

Extract 8.) I will overcome the trials. Yes, I will overcome the trials. I know that the God who has lifted me above the commonShoulder will never cast me down (327).

When Yvonne tries to justify why he should compromise his faith, he advances further reasons why he should stick to his faith.

9.) If it is the will of God that I remain here, no amount of evil force will send me away, but if it isn't, the wiles of Satan will not keep me a second longer on the throne. (329)

Fernando's selfless service is reflected in the above extract. The *if* clause is a conditional structure portraying the nominal as

not greedy and ready to relinquish power when occasion calls for it. At a rally, towards the end of his second tenure, an interviewer noted how the National Assembly amended the constitution such that a leader can serve a maximum of four consecutive terms instead of two. When Fernando is asked what informed his decision to withhold his assent. His response was that:

10.) No leader is indispensable!

There are so many people who can do far better than what I Have done. After all, if I hadn't the chance to prove myself, Nobody would have known I could do it. (434)

The nominal Fernando, according to Agho, is an instrument of audacious change (6). He represents a man who believes that what is wrong can in no way be justified as right. He is determined, principled, bold, and an orchestrator of good-will in the African Dream. He is an achiever. By the end of his second tenure, we have encomiums pouring in from far and near about the man (driver) who had succeeded in carrying a wondering people to the home of his dream. He is able to deliver on his campaign promises to put smiles on faces of people of savannah and alleviate poverty (220). This development attracted a famous European journalist who interviewed him at the Zenith Office on how he is able to transform Savannah so that other leaders will learn.

#### **Lexico-Semantic Analysis**

Edoki utilizes lexico-semantic features to communicate how past leaders have underdeveloped the country of Savanna in the text. A lexico-semantic analysis is an attempt to offer linguistic explanation to structure, and meaning of a given text as can be deduced from the author's use of language. Prose fiction, unlike other genres of literature, is written with details in mind not to make complex the ideas in the narration, consequently making the volume of the work large and somehow elusive for the interpreters whose sole aim is to pick minute details for analysis and interpretation of the ideas in the story. Unlike the poets that communicate in few words, the prose writer believes in expressing

himself copiously. For a meaningful analysis of the lexico-semantic features in the text, certain lexical categories exploited by Edoki are identified. Adagbonyin notes Leech's view that says lexico-semantic analysis cannot ignore the meaning(s) derived from lexical items and their combinations (364). The focus here is on the nature and total significance of lexical item exploited. Thus, features such as metaphor, simile, irony, neologism will be examined.

### **Figures of Speech**

Hartmann and Stock perceive figures of speech as a device for extending the semantic meaning of a word or a group of words to achieve a desired effect (302). This is achieved when the primary term and secondary term technically known as tenor and vehicle respectively are compared. The two types of figures of speech that will be examined in the paper are simile and metaphor. Edoki employs their use to communicate the import of his message.

### **Metaphor**

Abrams and Harphman assert that metaphor is a word or expression that in literal usage denotes one kind, of thing is applied to a distinctly different kind of thing without asserting comparison (102). Metaphor is a word that is applied to a distinctly different kind of theory, without asserting comparison. Halliday observes that metaphoric modes of expression are characteristic of all adults discourse and that metaphor and simile serve to animate and humanize what is inanimate (342). Here are instances of its use;

- 11.) They moved on, to the east; across the Iworiwo waterside, and moved, on and on, through an empty space; The wide wild way to the bowel of the sea (99).
- 12.) I believed that going by the sail of events, my ship will berth at destiny Port (192).

The first instance of metaphorical expression in 11 is a reflection of what is involved in campaign. There are usually lots of movement, risk, intimidation, confrontation and the likes. Before this scenario, Fernando and his group had just been

humiliated in Dodokodo, a village by the bank of the river reed, where he and his group went to campaign. A group of hooligan would not allow Fernando to speak. They booed him as he spoke thereby preventing the crowd from hearing what he was saying. He is insulted and told to ōshut upö. The peak was that he was smeared on his face with feces. This, Fernando accepts has been ōthe saddest experience in his lifeö. The following parallel structures portray the difficulty and the risk involved in campaign;

13.) They moved in the day light, under the lazy  
hazy rays of the September.

They moved through the moribund raffia  
fields í They moved on- the voyagers- and  
on.

They moved on- the crusaders- and on.

They moved on to the east, acrossí and  
moved; on and on and on.

Through an empty space: the wide wild way  
to The bowel of the sea (99).

Here, the use of the metaphorical expression ōbowel of the sea.ö represents the task involved in crusading for good life for his people. In order to be in a position to impart (impact should be used in this context as a verb to mean affect, influence or to have an on) positively on the suffering people; he has to be in a position (President). Fernando, therefore, is prepared to take all the risk on behalf of his people. The alliterative words ōwide,ö ōwild,ö are used to capture and communicate the danger on the way to the throne of president ó ōbowel of the seaö. The person talked about here is Fernando and his group ó tenor. The common ground here is election.

### Simile

Abrams and Harpham see simile as a comparison between two distinctly different things is explicitly indicated by word *ōlikeö* or *ōasö*. Murfin, Ray and Supryia M. define simile as a figure of speech that directly compares two things (447). Although similes and metaphors are similar, similes explicitly use connecting words (such as like, as, so, than, or various verbs such as resemble), though these specific words are not always necessary. While similes are mainly used in forms of poetry that compare the inanimate and the living, there are also terms in which similes and personification are used for humorous purposes and comparison. Merriam Webster Dictionary defines simile as a figure of speech comparing two unlike things that is often introduced by *ōlikeö* or *ōasö*. Similes are generally easier to identify than metaphor but not always. Sometimes a speaker or writer may use the words *ōlikeö* or *ōasö* and not make any comparison. Simile like metaphor serves to animate and humanize what is inanimate. Edoki in *The African Dream* engages the use of simile for various comparisons and literary imaginative creations as evident in the extract below:

14. He doesn't behave like somebody who has been to London.

The extract is a comparison of Fernando's taste for African food as against continental (foreign). Angela, Fernando's wife and her friend Mary Agatha talk about her husband the president. The discussion is about Fernando's love for African food. This, Angela and her friend mistook for primitivism. By utilizing features of the Nigerian English *ōBig manö* which semantic features are (+ wealth, +Affluence, + Eating of foreign food), Mary Agatha concludes in pidgin *ōBig-man no fit your husbandö* (270).

Angela did not anticipate that Mary Agatha was envious of her and would probably have done anything possible to be in her friend's shoes *ó* be first lady. Angela, ridicules her husband who is engaged with people oriented programmes and monitoring and ensuring the cost of foodstuffs is affordable. Angela and her friend have colonial mentality which makes them feel that the eating of

foreign food is civilization. Edoki employs the use of simile to admonish leaders to be themselves and be more concerned with the purpose for which they are elected.

### **Neologism**

To Hartmann and Stork, neologism is a newly coined word or phrase which has not yet received general acceptance (150).

Neologism is the name for a relatively new or isolated term, word or phrase that may be in the process of entering common use, but that has not yet been fully accepted into mainstream language. Neologisms are often directly attributable to a specific person, publication period or event (Solon Lawrence 36). Neologisms are usually introduced when an individual or individuals find that a specific notion is lacking a term in a language, or when the existing vocabulary is insufficiently detailed.

In *The African Dream*, Joseph Edoki subscribes to the use of neologism in order to make clear expression and have insight into occurrences and happening in his story. He makes use of neologism in order to appropriately and accurately communicate the situation in the text.

15. Professor Seba Mensa devoted a chapter to what he terms mollanization.

In extract 15 above, mollanization is coined from the word mollan. In *The African Dream*, General Edgar Mollan was an extremely corrupt president who ruled Savannah for three and a half years. During his reign, he stole over ten billion US dollars. He made the billions by diverting a major part of the World Bank's loans meant for rural development, purchase of drugs and vaccines, supply of water and electricity. As a result, the projects which the loans were made for were either abandoned or poorly executed. The Governors, Ministers and Commissioners in his regime were not left out as they stole public funds and used part of the money to build mansions in their villages and major cities for all to see. Edoki protests against the above attitude of these categories of corrupt leaders who have impoverished a majority of the people. He therefore coins a new word 'mollanization' from Mollan. 'Mollanization' is a phenomenon whereby the leader of a country,

region or district steals a colossal sum of public funds while in office leaving his people grossly impoverished. He then uses the new word to communicate and paint the picture of General Edgar Mollan's corruption which connotes evil and condemnation.

The irony of it all is that these corrupt persons and leaders who have derived ill wealth from various corrupt practices are the ones who are respected in the African society. They are applauded at occasions and given special recognition in churches and even made to sit at the front rows. As a result of African mentality, people feel that when a man has money, he has it all, in line with Machiavellian philosophy that holds that the end justifies the means. African people have become so poor in mentality that they worship and adore these corrupt leaders. For instance during elections, these corrupt leaders buy the consciences of voters who in turn chant their praise. In Africa, virtues such as uprightness, discipline, integrity and reputation have lost their place. All that people are interested in is how much one has in his or her bank account. The corrupt leaders embezzle monies meant for the development of their people and then donate peanuts to orphanage, churches, schools, and other organization in order to deceive. Edoki says this act of hypocrisy is unacceptable.

### **Irony**

According to Williams irony is a rhetorical device or literary technique in which what appears on the surface to be the case differs radically from what is actually the case. Irony is often used for emphasis in assertion of the truth (183). Abrams, and Harpham, note irony is a statement in which the meaning that a speaker employs is sharply different from the meaning ostensibly expressed. The ironic statement usually involves the explicit expression of one attitude or evaluation, but with indications in the overall speech situation that the speaker intends a very different and often opposite, attitude or evaluation (49). Irony portrays some forms of sarcasm and may stir up some kind of contrast and contradiction. *The African Dream* is however an embodiment of ironies. Edoki engages the use of Irony to portray some bitter truths in the operations of the African government. The following are instances of its use:

16.) The irony of it all is that the leaders who ruled the people and stole their riches were numbered among the richest men in the world.<sup>57</sup>

Extract 16 above is an ironic situation; Edoki utilizes features of irony to criticize the way and manners the world celebrates corrupt leaders and list them amongst the richest men in the world. These leaders who are recognized and celebrated, have converted public monies into their personal pockets, made the nation poorer, turned young ladies to prostitutes and young men to fraudsters, armed robbers and kidnappers, murdered innocent people, lured married women to bed and perpetuate all forms of crimes.

The youths who are potential leaders of tomorrow see them as role models and mentors, subscribe to their philosophies and cultures. This attitude has led to perpetuation of bad leadership in Africa, a merry-go-round, an activity that continues to increase misery. This is because as the years go by, these corrupt leaders constitute themselves as god-fathers who adopt political sons who allow themselves get fathered in line with the tenets of their god-fathers. It is however a circle of irony, one which portrays the celebration of corruption and the engineering of the younger generation to follow suit. Here is an instance of the use.

17. The civilians and military officers who have ruled us

Have done so much for us. Without them we wouldn't be where we are today (299).

From the above, Fernando satirizes the evil and havoc, perpetrated by the past leaders. The use of *ōso muchō* to portray *ōwell-doneō* connotes positive. It is an irony because on the faces of the common man on the street are:

+frustration

+confusion

+hunger

+desperation for good leadership.

The people express government's insensitivity to their plight and therefore desire a change. They desire leaders who will give those jobs and put smiles on their faces. The use of irony in the text is to conceal but expose the atrocities of bad leaders who

have jettisoned their duty of servicing the masses to servicing themselves.

### **Parallelism**

Coghill and Magedanz note parallelism ðas a rule of style stating that parts of a sentence that have the same grammatical function or weight should have the same grammatical form. Lack of parallelism commonly affects grammatical units joined by conjunctionö (216). Parallelism according to Gary Black and Robert W. Bly ðis a balance within one or more sentences of similar phrases or clauses that have the same grammatical structureö (71). The application of parallelism improves writing style and readability, and is thought to make sentences easier to process. The examples below show the use of lexical parallelism in *The African dream*.

18) This useless administration.

This stupid government.

These corrupt people.

19) I am prepared to live and die for my father land.

I am prepared to lead and leave behind a good legacy.

In extract 12, Edoki employs parallel structures to qualify past leaders who have impoverished and caused Africans misery. Fernando returns from abroad to meet that so much water had gone under the bridge. The country he left at the time when money realized from the sale of mineral deposits was used to improve the lot of the people had changed. Leaders stole money and impoverished the people. Edoki notes how the national anthem which Fernando used to recite with pride had changed so much while he was away. Funds which are supposed to be spent to provide basic amenities for the people and develop the overall Savannah nation are diverted to personal use.

This attitude leaves the people in an untold hardship and hunger. Since Fernando's return, he has been very critical of the different government and has written series of articles condemning the evil that bedeviled the society as a result of misrule. It is to this that captain Eto Sundata refers in 'we might as well take gun and shoot ourselves' (250). The statement presupposes that if as a common man Fernando could dare leaders by challenging them, it is better imagined what he would do if he is given power. The Captain likens handing over power to Fernando to suicide. In extract 13, Edoki utilizes parallel structures to express Fernando's determination and conviction of how he would govern to ensure he leaves good legacies behind for others to emulate. The use of the lexical word 'leave and die' is a portrayal of his willingness to sacrifice for his people. The structure reflects one who is patriotic and ready to deliver on his campaign promises. This attitude presents hope for democracy.

### Collocation

Hartmann and Stork define collocation as a technical term in linguistics which is an instance of co-occurrence of two or more words considered as individual lexical items, used in habitual association with one another in a given language (41). David Crystal defines collocation as a term used in lexicology by linguists to refer to the habitual co-occurrence of individual lexical items (471). Collocation is a type of syntagmatic relation. They are linguistically predictable to a greater or lesser extent. In *The African Dream*, Edoki utilizes collocation to signal insensitivity of some people to the plight of the common man in the text.

20. He is always talking about the poor I think he is suffering from poor-man mentality.

In extract 20, the compound word 'poor-man' is a combination of two independent words 'poor' and 'man'. The co-occurrence of 'poor' and 'man' creates a linguistic effect. Edoki uses the hyphenated words 'poor-man' to depict a state of aberration to Fernando's people oriented programs. Fernando's concern for the poor is what Angela ridicules and calls a mentality; Fernando is prepared to serve his people and would not allow

anything to distract him from his vision. Fernando's attention for Savannah infuriates Angela his wife especially as he says, "my country is my life". The metaphor suggests that the country is his joy, and must therefore impart (impact) positively on it, so as to put smiles on the faces of the people according to his promises. There is a kind of symbolic relationship between him and the country of Savannah. Angela likens her husband's love for his country to the love of a man for a woman, who should be loved, maintained, nourished, and protected. Therefore, Angela concludes "my husband has a second wife". Edoki utilizes the extract to communicate commitment of good leadership. It is only through the selfless services of a leader can the dividends of democracy get to the less privileged and the voiceless in the society.

Fernando has explicit trust and confidence in God. He does not subscribe to diabolic empowerment to confront challenges. In the phase (face) of enemies, he entertains no fear but expresses faith in God. An instance was when past corrupt leaders and heads of state walked (worked) tooth and nail to sabotage his administration and finally impeach him. The legislature conspired and awarded outrageous allowances from the money embezzled from the coffers of state government, when Fernando was advised to seek diabolic means to subvert court judgments, his response was:

21) I will overcome the trials.

Yes, I will overcome the trials.

I know that the God who has lifted me

Above the common shoulders will never cast me down (329).

The above extract portrays Fernando's faith and hope in God. He says, "I will overcome the trials". The presence of the affirmative "yes" in line 2 above, complements the collocate "overcome". Therefore, when Yvonne, his aid persuades him to compromise his faith by going diabolical, he responds:

22.) If it is the will of God that I remain here, no amount of evil force will send me away, but if it isn't, the wiles of Satan will not keep me a second longer on the throne (329).

The clause ðif it is the willö is conditional, suggesting that God is the determinant of happenings.

### Conclusion

Conclusively, this paper has been able to critically examine causes of underdevelopment and poverty in Africa. Through the use of syntactic and lexical semantic features, Edoki has been able to demonstrate that truly African leaders are responsible for the underdevelopment and poverty in Africa. Fernando is able to transform the country of Savannah through dedication and commitment. True to his campaign promises, he works relentlessly and selflessly to ensure that the people live a good life.

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