

ОРИГИНАЛНИ НАУЧНИ РАД

УДК: 821.133.1.09-91

741.5

Irene N. Udousoro¹**Richard Oko Ajah**²

University of Uyo, Nigeria

Department of Foreign Languages

PMB 1017

HETEROLINGUISTIC POETICS AS CHARACTERISTIC OF A POSTMODERN LANGUAGE IN MARGUERITE ABOUEY'S AND CLEMENT OUBRERIE'S *AYA DE YOPOUGON*

Abstract: Marguerite Abouet's and Clement Oubrierie's graphic novel titled *Aya de Yopougon* represents a lived experience of a suburb of Abidjan, known as Yopougon and nicknamed "Yop City", as a means of expressing its postmodern sensibilities. Yop City's language is postcolonially postmodern because of its morphological arbitrariness, its postcolonial hybridism and its adherence to the postmodern character of montage. It is a language of a social group of a geospace, mapped and spoken among young Yopougon dwellers. This paper reads *Aya de Yopougon* as a heterolinguiistic text, a product of postcolonial and postmodern discourses; it employs Rainier Grutman's heterolinguiistic poetics. Abouet's text fits into heterolinguiistic paradigm since it makes a variable space for other languages, engages in syntactic and lexical borrowings, and adopts multiple registers of all social groups and status. In this context, a postmodern space appropriates its language or language appropriates its space and gives birth to its postmodern cultures and identities. In Yopougon's "third space", Abouet's characters adopt code-switching and interlanguage as a means of navigating linguistic boundaries of its geospace, thereby violating linguistic sacredness; they create a language that can be described as "profane" by its deconstruction of standard rules through linguistic deviations.

¹ iudousoro@yahoo.com

² ajrichard2000@yahoomail.com

Key words: Heterolinguistic text, Graphic Novel, Postmodern language, *Aya de Yopougon*, Nouchi

Introduction

Marguerite Aboutet's *Aya de Yopougon* is a graphic novel in six volumes with recurrent linguistic features in the areas of lexicon, phonology, morpho-syntax, borrowing, etc. that reflect evidence of contact between the local language and the foreign language in which the author writes, that is French.

Undoubtedly, in every day communication, language users navigate from one language, or a level of language, to another depending on their level of education and social relationships with their interlocutors and vice versa. This leads us to the notion of heterolinguistics, a sociolinguistic phenomenon, which we are adopting in the study of Marguerite Aboutet's graphic novel, *Aya de Yopougon*, from the phonological, morpho-syntactic and semantic perspectives of linguistic analysis. Faye (2011:148) observes that "L'écriture devient alors une force libératrice pour parler, écrire avec la totalité de son repertoire", meaning that in the context of heterolinguistic poetics, "writing therefore becomes a liberating force which makes it possible for one to speak, write with the totality of one's acquisition". This fact is corroborated by Zadesky, cited by Faye (Ibid.) in these terms:

Mais la littérature est autre chose : elle autorise à aller jusqu'où l'on veut dans l'usage de la langue dans la mesure où la compréhension est assurée. La seule limite imposée à l'écrivain tient donc à la compréhension ; dans cette limite, il est libre de bousculer les codifications et de tordre la langue.

The above statement implies that every writer has his or her own way of writing. Generally, particularly for an African Francophone author, writing goes beyond the use of language as a means of communication; it becomes, to some extent, a means by which he or she seeks to redefine himself or herself, to construct a cultural identity peculiar to him or her, that distinguishes him or her from other cultural entities. It also translates to a means of painting a picture of a society in its linguistic, educational, economic diversities, plurality or peculiarities among many other considerations. Marguerite's graphic novel shows evidence of language use relative to education, socio-economic, social factors as would be discussed in the sub-sections below: intrusion of African lexical items in literary work written in French; use of African discourse markers in works of French expression; transposition of African syntactic structures into works of French expression; use of language reflecting the level of education or social relationships of the interlocutors as well as use of African proverbs, sayings, fauna and

flora in works written in French, etc.; and use of English words or Americanisms in a work written in French and set in a Francophone environment. What becomes the relationship between space and language? How does Abouet's language reflect the postmodern identities of the inhabitants of Yopougon?

The rhizomatic character of literary texts appropriates a space that ends up appropriating the text itself. It means that a space, real or imagined, always predominantly leaves its footprints on the fabrics of literary narrative, thereby influencing its form and its language and interrogating "l'articulation complexe entre forme littéraire et temporalité" (Lacroix and Rao, 2011:82). Scholars have always underscored the primordial relationship between literature and geography (Ajah, 2010:68; Bertrand, 2006:26), establishing the mimetic aesthetics of literature that shows how a postmodern social space can influence human cultures and identity or vice versa. Through the postcolonial process of appropriation or abrogation and Harvey's time-space compression, popular cultures travel around the world, whether fictional or material. Thus, the dynamics of the production of space informs postmodern identities or subjectivities in Yopougon community that Marguerite Abouet and Clement Oubrierie represent in their graphic novel, *Aya de Yopougon 1-3*, which is the corpus of this work.

As we further intend to show, Yopougon space privileges a language that can be termed postcolonially postmodern because of its morphological arbitrariness, its postcolonial hybridism and its adherence to the postmodern character of "cut and join" or montage. It is a specific language of a social group of Yopougon geospace, consciously mapped and spoken among young Yopougon adolescent dwellers. Aside its postmodernity, the language of Yopougon inhabitants possesses the poetics of heterolingualism which Grutman (2006:17) describes as a composite of different language strands in the world of text. It can be said without generalization that African Europhone literature is haunted by the ghost of dynamics of interlanguage and heterolingualism as such linguistic textual manifestations could be found in the works of many francophone African writers such as Amadou Kourouma, Sembene Ousmane and other new authors who belong to an era Faye (2011:149) calls "tropicalisation de la langue française" or "vernacularisation pour livrer une communication efficace."

Concept of literary heterolinguistics and interlanguage

As a concept developed to illustrate linguistic dynamics in literary works, Grutman (18) explains that heterolingualism relates the world of text, while bilingualism or diglossia describes the world of people. He defines it as "toute textualisation d'idiomes étrangers aussi bien que de variétés (sociales, régionales, historiques...) de la langue autoriale. Le bilinguisme textuel et la diglossie textuelle en seraient des modalités spécifiques" (Gruthan, 1996 :40). In his work *Littératures francophones et théorie postcoloniale* that

is patterned after and influenced by Bill Ashcroft et al : *The Empire Writes Back*, Moura (1999 :74), this heterolinguistic concept aligns with francophone literatures and affirms that “il s’agit d’une caractéristique des littératures europheones et son étude, engageant une sociostylistique des textes [...] surtout dans les genres narratifs et moins en poésie ou au théâtre”. As a means of representing the African worldview, African writers are forced to adopt an heterolinguistic approach in their narratives because European languages are incapable of capturing all African realities; hence Achebe, Kourouma, and Ben Jelloun, among others, continue to write in the use of English and French languages, but introduce indigenous clichés, proverbs and other images of native tongues in representing indigenous realities. Ayeleru (2002:68) describes this sociostylistic characteristic of African writing as “la recherche d’une vraie identité ou d’un hybride linguistique”, where a postcolonial writer finds himself in an endless cycle of linguistic mediation between his dialect and colonial language (Ajah, 2007:283). In Moura’s words, heterolingualism “aboutit à une subversion expressive de la langue française qui le plus souvent ne malmène pas trop la norme linguistique” (Moura, 1999:81), thereby leading to the question of interlanguage.

The concept of interlanguage is also a socio-stylistic feature of African literature, as underlined by scholars (Ayeleru, 2011; Coker & Ademilokun, 2013) whose works center on the third-generation African novelists. The term *interlanguage* was defined by Selinker as “the separate linguistic system evidenced when adult second-language learners attempt to express meaning in a language they are in the process of learning” (Tarone, 2011:748), though it cannot be said that the African writers whose writing is embedded in interlanguage do not have the mastery of Europhone language; they rather tend towards what Ayeleru (2011:9) calls “strategies of language indigenization by the new West African writers”. Such “strategies” consist in the use of “orature, proverb, metaphor and metonymy” (Ayeleru, 2011:3), while Coker’s & Ademilokun’ (2013:89)’s “new approaches of domestication” entails the deployment of “loan words, Americanisms, code-switching and hybridized expressions”. Both scholars took approaches that were purely socio-stylistically linguistic as means of unveiling the contemporary linguistic reality of new African literature. However, it is needful to underscore the fact that interlanguage phenomenon is a product of “mutation des identités” (Fouillet, 2012:61) of African writers who are influenced by different transcultural and transnational spaces. This study demonstrates the paradigmatic relationship between interlanguage and postmodernism. We intend to use the Ivoirian graphic novel *Aya de Yopougon* 1-3 to show that this linguistic characteristic rather reveals the postmodern sensibilities of new African writers, since interlanguage dynamics also dismantles standardization of language rules; it affords the African writers the opportunity to engage in “l’auto-invention de soi en toute créativité” (Woodward, 2009:156).

Moura summarizes Klaus Vogel's ideas about interlanguage by saying that

L'interlangue n'est pas seulement composée de formes correctes et de règles propres au système et à la norme de la langue-cible, mais aussi de formes grammaticalement incorrectes et de règles non conformes à la langue-cible (Moura, 1999:82).

Moura is right to affirm that interlanguage is "un phénomène individuel" as a product of heterolingualism or "un third code" in Chantal Zabus' term which typifies a social "third space". However, it is wrong to assume that interlanguage is not a language of any given linguistic community, because it is revealed as a language of adolescent dwellers of Yopougon, as represented in Abouet's and Oubrierie's *Aya de Yopougon* series. As in Amos Tutuola's *The Palm-wine Drinkard* and Ken Saro-Wiwa's *Sozaboy*, the use of pidgin English is not only a literary heterolingualistic reality, but it is a social reality of the occupants of the Niger Delta region and other parts of Nigeria where Pidgin is predominantly spoken.

***Aya de Yopougon* as a Heterolingualistic Text**

Abouet's and Oubrierie's *Aya de Yopougon* chronicles the daily life of Yopougon dwellers who are mostly adults and adolescents. Standard French language coexists with the glottonym, spoken by Aya and her friends; this spatially constructed language is not a product of Aya's or her group's illiteracy, but it is a language that gives them a particular linguistic and social identity as modern "Yop city" dwellers. It can be said that the graphic novel engages in heterolingualistic discourse as it is constructed in multiple registers, syntactic and lexical borrowings, coinages and neologisms and Americanisms, defined by social and age groups in Yopougon, a middle-class suburb of Abidjan.

In *Aya*, for short, multiple registers of the spoken French exist to reveal the heterogeneity of the social space of Yopougon, whose occupants are mostly educated low-income earners. The register adopted depends on the situation, setting, character, milieu and not necessarily audience. Quoting Crystal, Lee (2011:41) defines register as a "variety of language defined according to its use in social situations, e.g. a register of scientific, religious, formal English." In essence, Schmitt describes it as "les variations de style qui rendent chaque mot plus ou moins approprié à certaines situations ou à certaines fins linguistiques" (qtd in Ferraris, 2011 :21). *Aya*, the protagonist of the novel, oscillates between "le registre populaire" and "le registre familial" from where comes a language type that is fed with the "vocabulaire familial" and "l'argot moderne", to generate "un vocabulaire populaire" and which she uses to discuss with her peers. Ferraris (2011:22-23) calls it "le registre relâché" which includes "le vocabulaire populaire et le vocabulaire vulgaire (ou grossier), eux-mêmes composés

respectivement du vocabulaire familier et de l'argot moderne pour le vocabulaire populaire ; des insultes, injures, jurons et mots obscènes pour le vocabulaire vulgaire". For example, during Koffi's family conflict with his wife, Hyacinte, who presides over the reconciliatory meeting, says:

Or depuis quelque temps, Koffi a perdu sa culotte dans sa maison c'est sa femme qui l'a trouvée et qui la porte maintenant (Aboutet & Oubrerie, *Aya* 3 2007:119)

The language as shown above demonstrates the deployment of popular registers with indigenized familiar vocabulary. Hyacinte's use of "perdu sa culotte" [lost his short trousers] is quite proverbial and tropically typifies an indigenous setting of African society, though in French, "culotte" is attributed to female dressing rather to men's "pantalons". It is used here as representation of a pair of men's trousers which is symbolic of manhood and its providential responsibility in African family structure. Koffi's loss of his "culotte" implies his loss of manhood and the authority it confers on men; this power is now transferred to his wife who is currently the breadwinner of the family. Hyacinte's use of *culotte* is comparable to Bintou's *je ne suis pas ta chose* to (Moussa Aboutet & Oubrerie, *Aya* 1, 2005:11). "*Ta chose*" designates an object to be used and abused, handled and mishandled, as well as possessed and dispossessed; it is typically a common register that demonstrates and denotes offensive vocabulary.

Defamatory words are recognized as vulgar vocabularies which characterize Ferraris' "le registre relâché". Such registers tropicalize dialogic communications in Marguerite Aboutet's and Clément Oubrerie's texts where characters exist, not as individualized entities, but as integral part of family entities, where father, mother and children play complementary roles in the evolution of the plot. As a projection of African communal identity, *Aya* unveils a paradigmatic network of interpersonal relationships, hence quarrels, insults and vulgar languages, revelational of community conflicts, as part of interpersonal communications. With the discovery of Ignace's extramarital affairs, *Aya* and her mother are traumatized; Fanta does not hesitate to say injurious words to Ignace: "enlève tes sales pattes de là, avec tes poils parsémés sur tes joues, on dirait dents de râteau" (*Aya* 3, 2007:13). Fanta's statement reveals her state of trauma as she considers her husband unclean to touch her body with his hands which are now referred to as "sales pattes" of an animal and whose "poils" is now derogatorily compared to "dents de râteau". More so, in replying Ignace's claim that his relationship with Jeanne was a mistake, Fanta asks mockingly: "Ah oui? En empoisonnant ton bangala?". The use of "bangala" is erotically vulgar and offensive; it amounts also lexical borrowing, as it is an African word used to describe the male sex organ in this context.

Integration of Local and Foreign Lexical Items into the French Lexicon

Lexical borrowing abounds in Marguerite Abouet's *Aya* as it remains a part of the transcultural textuality of her graphic novel from where comes its deployment of code-mixing or code switching as elements of heterolingualism. Bamiro defines code-mixing as "the transfer of untranslated words into a text as a counter-discursive strategy of otherness" (quoted in Coker & Ademilokun, 2013:89). It is engraved in the linguistic concept of borrowing which is exemplified in the authorial choice of "bangala", not "sexe". This amounts to what Dunand (2005 :26) calls "l'emprunt connotatif" which "relève, par sa part, de la façon de penser d'existence et de la vie; it traduit des faits de société". Abouet intentionally introduces a lot of local lexical items into in her works as reflected in the following selected statements in *Aya 2*, thereby constituting lexical deviations, which is reflected in her use of foreign words:

- Ce sont de fausses *wouya*, Papa ("Aya 2", 2006 : 26)
- Encore du *koutoukou*. (*Ibid.* p.15)
- Elle vend des *claclos* au marché! (*Ibid.* p.29)
- Je peux prendre *kédjénou* de poulet? (*Ibid.* p.45)
- Ma pauvre Adjoua, *yaco*! (*Ibid.* p.13)

Some of the local linguistic items used by the author are explained at the end of the novels. In some cases, the author may not actually find the equivalent of these items in the French language, but generally, the author uses them intentionally to adapt inevitably to the existing sociolinguistic realities. A word like *Yaco* means *Pitié*. If the author uses it in its local form, it is obviously an attempt to construct or to project a cultural identity for herself.

In reading Abouet's novels, one is quick to observe that almost every character, irrespective of class and level of education, ends his or her statements with words like 'dêh', 'ô', kêh, etc. as in the examples below:

1. - On est frères ô
- Il ressemble à son père ô
- Mmm, pas trop, dêh!
- Vite ô, nous allons nous saper ("Aya 2", 2006 :7)
2. Ton fils s'appelle Bobby?
- Oui, kêh!

There are many instances of these parasitic elements: *dêh*, *o*, *kêh*, etc. in all six volumes of Marguerite Abouet's and Clément Oubrerie's graphic novels. These linguistic elements borrowed from the local language are just discourse markers that have no semantic implication. They only show emphasis, to ensure that the interlocutor is

following the discussion, and is still part of the discourse. They constitute part of domestication of language and ultimately imply a nationalistic tendency on the part of the author. It is not only local lexical items that are introduced in Yopougon's French; foreign lexical items of English are integrated to create cultural hybridity.

In *Aya*, Yopougon is popularly called "Yop City" as a means of Americanizing this town and its spatial identity. Intervallic englishification of lexical elements of French words produces what Coubier (2011:6) calls "franglais ou franglish" which "montre tout le poids de l'influence de l'anglais sur le système de ces langues" including the French language. Such words are *freschnie* [a beautiful girl] ("*Aya 2*", 2006:43), *Miss Yopougon* [Beauty pageant] (Ibid. p.43), and "c'est du play back" ("*Aya 3*", 2007:38), among others. Like Kourouma and other Ivoirian writers, Aboutet hybridizes French words with Abidjan's indigenous language of *Nouchi*.

Nouchi or popular French is described as "a sort of national linguistic compromise" (Adama, 2011:28); it "is a contact language that emerged on the streets of urban Côte d'Ivoire between the late 1970's and early 1980's" (Sande, 2015:243), which exactly suits the historical situation of *Aya de Yopougon*, whose young generation constitutes majority of its speakers or users. It is also called Dago French or Ivorian French, or a hybrid language in the words of Kube-Barth because it "takes its morpho-syntactic frame from French whereas its lexicon is highly heterogeneous", borrowing "a lot of words from various Ivorian languages such as Dioula, Baule, and Bete and from English, and its speakers are especially creative in inventing new terms" (Kube-Barth, 2009:105). In essence, Nouchi is a product of linguistic deviations.

The first major linguistic deviation which is omnipresent in her *Aya* series is the author's use of uppercase and lowercase in her text; all dialogues and monologues in panels are represented in uppercase letters, though some of the letters, such as i, é, ç, î, etc. (with accents), retain their marks and accents in uppercase unlike French language's norm, except when they are used for emphasis. Here are some examples:

- LAISSE-MOI! ("*Aya 1*", 2005:39)
- JE RÉFLÉCHISSAIS. ("*Aya 2*", 2006:66)

However, the narrator's story is narrated and represented in lowercase right from the first page of *Aya 1* that starts with "En 1978, la Côte d'Ivoire, mon beau pays..." ("*Aya 1*", p.1). This deviation's purposefulness does not appear overt, except that it gives Aboutet's graphic novel some stylistic distinctiveness and decipherability, since words in graphic panels could be illegible to the eyes, depending on the number of panels on a page.

Phonological Deviations

One observes a number of words used by some characters in their discourse that reflect, at the phonological level, what could be considered as vowel extension or rather a linguistic deviation, which Mbatiah (2012:117) admits, “is negative since it constitutes a breach of the rules of grammar [...] On the other hand, deviation in literature is a positive stylistic feature of literary works”. In Abouet’s and Oubrierie’s *Aya*, such deviations remain her “communicative strategy” intended to achieve different purposes, including the intermarriage of language structures. Below are some examples:

- Et ça fait longtemps que tu habites chez lui? (“*Aya 1*”, 2005:44)
- *Longteeeemps; voiiilà* (*Ibid.* p.44, p.89)
- Et la place à la *musiiiiique* (*Ibid.* p.90)
- *J’arriive* (“*Aya 2*”, 2006:38)
- Du champagne?
- *Champaaagne...?*
- Tu connais Barbès? (*Ibid.* p.38)
- *Ouiii.*
- J’ai un beau 2,000F pour vous *deeeux* (*Ibid.* p.73)

The phonological deviation/vowel extension observed in the above examples is foreign to the French language. This type of deviation is related to the sounds of language and mainly involves unconventional pronunciation of words. In written texts, this is reflected in spellings that deviate from the norm (Mbatiah, 2012:118). Generally, in many African languages, vowel extension is used to mark an imprecise duration like in the case of *longteeeemps*, a note of finality as in *voiiilà*, emphasis as in *musiiiiique*, *j’arriive*, *ouiii*, *deeeux*, etc. The introduction of African vowel extension makes Abouet’s Nouchi a hybrid language whose emphasis is not placed on grammaticality, but creativity. This linguistic phenomenon is mostly common among the uneducated, clearly demonstrating the use of language as a true reflection of class, status, or the linguistic realities of the milieu from which it emanates. The impulsive creativity of words, coupled with nonobservance of grammatical rules, is what attracts the speakers, whose majority are students and youths, because typical for every interlanguage, Nouchi is composed “de formes grammaticalement incorrectes et de règles non conformes à la langue-cible”. Naked violation of French’s morphological rules is witnessed in Abouet’s and Oubrierie’s texts.

Morphological Deviation

Abouet’s view on, or mockery of the inconsistency of the French language, as regards conjugation of verbs, is implied in the following example:

- Sourissez les mariés!

Obviously, the author of this statement, a photographer, is uneducated, but that does not rule out the fact that non-native speakers of French often find it difficult to handle conjugations of some verbs that belong, particularly, to the second group, that is, verbs that end in *ir*. This deformation of the conjugation of the verb *sourire* in the second person plural can be explained, perhaps, by the fact that it is modeled after, for instance, the conjugation of the verbs: *périr*, *se divertir*, etc.

If the imperative forms of *périr*, *se divertir* in the second person plural are *périssez* and *divertissez-vous*, then ‘logically’, that of *sourire* should be *sourrissez*, therefore, ‘respecting’, in principle, the norm of the French language as far as the imperative is concerned! This may be the implicit view of the author that the inconsistency of some grammatical rules in the French language generally, not just as regards the French verbal system, makes it difficult for the non-native speaker or learner of French not to ‘deviate’ from norms of the language.

Syntactic Deviation

As far as the use of shifters in the French language is concerned, the collocation of two opposite shifters as in the example below is certainly against the acceptable norm:

- Les filles de France ne sont pas sérieuses
- Nous, *ici*, *là*, on est bien ô...

Using the two shifters indicating the position of the interlocutor at the time of making his statement, *ici* (here) and *là* (there) is not linguistically acceptable in the French linguistic system. There’s no doubt that the author of the above statement is uneducated. It could also be that the shifter *là* in this context does not have any semantic implication; it may just be a form of emphasis of the view expressed by the interlocutor with regard to the seriousness of African women in terms of marriage. The following example seems to confirm this assertion:

- Toi, *là* tu n’as rien à faire, hein?

Là in the above context is not a shifter indicating the place where the interlocutor is at the time when he makes this statement. It is rather a form of emphasis. In another communication instance, an interlocutor says: “*Va là-bas*, toi!” *Là-bas* is obviously not a shifter indicating ‘place’. It probably reflects influence of local languages on the foreign language in contact. It is no doubt the African way of saying: ‘*Va t’en!*’

From the above examples, one observes that Aboutet consciously transfers linguistic patterns inherent in her local language to the French linguistic pattern. Is this a

conscious attempt to construct, reflect, and express an African identity or a personal cultural identity? Another syntactic deviation observed in Abouet's work is the use of three conjunctions of coordination consecutively, which is against the linguistic norm in French as seen in the following example:

- Vous choisissez des robes compliquées dans les magazines pour me fatiguer!
- *Mais et alors?* Tu sais coudre ou non? (*Aya* 1 88)

Admittedly, the interlocutor who uses three conjunctions consecutively is uneducated; it could also be Abouet's style aimed at creating a humoristic effect!

All the linguistic deviations decipherable in *Aya de Yopougon 1-3* demonstrate that Nouchi, Yopougon's Dago French, could be seen as a language of social convenience and social space we can describe as postmodern and postcolonial. It is a language that emanated from the refusal of the standard, the desire for liberty, the search for difference and the drive for communalism.

Yopougon's Language of a Postmodern Space

Typically, postmodern space is a means of communication that can be referred to as a "new language of consciousness", emanating from the cognitive mapping of the city through the perception of its inhabitants rather than their conception with the urban environment, reduced to the perceptual knowledge of physical form (Fahmi, 2005:367). Though Yopougon's language evolves from a new social consciousness of its geospace, it is not entirely generated from urban imagery as purports Fahmi, but as a product of "contact zone" that explains a clash of disparate cultures (Pratt, 2008:7), informing the toponymic transformation of Yopougon. It is now anglicized by its youth and referred to as "Yop City" as if to parody America's New York City. It should not be forgotten that "thirty percent of Abidjan's population are foreigners, and the inhabitants of Ivorian nationality belong to the about 60 Ivorian ethnic groups" (Kube-Barth, 2009:104).

Like religion, language and history, a name can be postmodernly regarded as *metanarrative*, hence sacred and surrounded by its myths. The trope of rechristening in postmodern texts constitutes a leitmotif of violence against history, showing the fictional nature of history and how it is possible to rewrite it in arts (Moreira, 2009:45). This is because Lyotard's *La Condition postmoderne* had problematized the production of knowledge and challenged the Eurocentric universalism of epistemology while examining the codes and conventions that govern representation itself (Ross, 2008:72). In essence, rechristening of Yopougon to Yop city amounts to onomastic anamorphosis, yet it justifies Yopougon's glottonym as spoken by Abouet's teenage characters in *Aya de Yopougon*.

Yopougon's glottonym is a postmodern language that particularizes and distinguishes the new generation, otherwise referred to as *les nouveaux Bovary* of Yop City; it is a language developed by the postmodern identity of the inhabitants who express their "freedom" through the linguistic deviations of this language. It can be related to E. T. Hall's *proxemics*, which Popa (2011:68) defines as "the study of the social space in bio-communication, or, in other words, as the study of the micro-space in the interpersonal communication relationship", though it cannot be considered as a Hall's *The Silent Language*, yet a product of space and time. This *Nouchi* language is popular among youths and students who resort to its language form because it is spoken without strict grammatical rules of standard French (Kube-Barth, 2009:108); it is akin to Pidgin which does not submit to the grammaticality of Standard English that is highly Eurocentric. In the same vein, such disobedience or destruction of set rules of language constitute the dynamics of interlanguage and incidentally of postmodernism that will categorize language under the domain of the "sacred", therefore a subject to be deconstructed and *dissacralized* because "le sacré désigne ici tout ce qui est interdit" (Khalla, 2004: 68).

Nouchi as popular French is not favorable to language rules since it is a product of contact zone or social spaces of encounters. For example, determination of noun groups is partly submitted to French morphology and syntax, hence it can be said: "grâce aux nombreux invités surprise" (*Aya 2*, p.188), a statement which does not show concordance of number and gender as required in French language.

A glossary of what constitutes Aboutet's postmodern language is presented as "un petit lexique" at the end of each novel à la Kourouma. Such words cannot be understood by every francophone identity outside the space of Yop City since they are spatially 'customized' to serve and reflect an urban imagery produced by time and space. *Aya de Yopougon 1* presents these gender related words as *génito* (young rich man), *galérien* (flâneur/stroller), *gazer* (to engage in an evening stroll), *gazelle/freshnie* (a beautiful girl), *bodjo/peton/tassaba* (buttocks), *bangala* (male sex organ); exclamations: *Kéh*, *déh*, and *yako* (expression of compassion), etc. In the second album, new words are added to Aboutet's glossary: *koutou bou* (impossible), *behou* (to go out, go and celebrate), *wouya* (accusation), *ploco-placa* (lovemaking), *môgô* (a guy), *gaou* (an idiot), *en agouti* (in hiding), *mamie-wata* (mummy water), *zôtôs* (money), etc. Lastly, *Aya 3* portrays a further development on Aboutet's lexicon with addition of such words as: *une go* (a girl), *entrer coucher* (a studio), *bellaisse* (beauty), *enjaille* (to please, attract), *deuxième bureau* (a mistress/concubine), *le chocobisme* (speaking like a Whiteman), *les lolos* (breast), *etre culotté* (having fat buttocks), *wêré-wêré* (excited person), *woubi* (gay), *s'affairer* (gossip), etc. Although Aboutet's "Petit Lexique" (Lexicon) does not make provision for the etymology of its words, the use of these words in sentences constitutes linguistic deviations which are simply a challenge to the

Eurocentric puritanist perception of language rules. So, Yopougon's Nouchi is a language that emerges from the deconstruction of French language.

Conclusion

Marguerite Aboutet shows herself as a committed writer. She uses a lot of words in her local language of Nouchi in her attempt to "compel" her readers to know much about her culture and identity. Analogous to contemporary African literature, her style of writing displays the nationalist tendency of constructing the collective cultural identity of subaltern peoples of Yopougon as her voice becomes a "lone voice crying in the wilderness". It can be said that her use of language generally reflects status, class, etc. as it shows itself as a language in contact, influenced through linguistic borrowings, transfer of linguistic patterns, and general linguistic deviations. In essence, morphological, lexical, syntactic deviations that constitute the fabrics of Nouchi, Yopougon's hybrid French language, demonstrate the postmodern sensibilities of Aboutet's characters in Yopougon's geospace as represented in *Aya de Yopougon 1-6*, though we have only considered three albums in this work. This is because hegemonic standard of French language is now challenged, deconstructed and violated by Nouchi, as a language in the periphery whereby the Margin "writes back" to the Centre, or the colonised now appropriates the language of the coloniser as a means of "writing back".

References

- Aboutet, M. & Oubrierie, C. (2005). *Aya de Yopougon 1*, Paris, Gallimard.
Aboutet, M. & Oubrierie, C. (2006). *Aya de Yopougon 2*, Paris, Gallimard.
Aboutet, M. & Oubrierie, C. (2007). *Aya de Yopougon 3*, Paris, Gallimard.
Adama, S. (2011). Evolution and transformation of the French language in Cote d'Ivoire. *MJAL* 3 (2), 23-39.
Ajah, R. O. (2010). Naples and Lagos: postmodern representations in Tahar Ben Jelloun's *labyrinthe des sentiments* and Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come*. *Meridian Critic* XVI (1), 85-98.
Ajah, R. O. (2007). Stratégies d'appropriation textuelles dans *La Femme aux pieds nus* de Scholastique Mukasonga. *The Parnassus* 5, 282-293.
Ayeleru, B. (2002). La langue de la littérature africaine francophone: entre une identité et un hybride linguistique. *Ibadan Journal of European Studies* 3, 68-91.
Ayeleru, B. (2011). Linguistic innovation in the new West African Europhone novel: between interlanguage and indigenization. *California Linguistic Notes* XXXIV (1), 1-31.

- Bertrand, L. (2006). Géographie et littérature. une synthèse historique. *Le Globe* 143, 25-52.
- Coker, O. & Ademilokun, M. (2013). An appraisal of the language question in the Third-generation African fiction. *The African Symposium* 13 (2), 86-93.
- Coubier, C. (2011). *De l'usage de l'emprunt linguistique*. Québec : Office québécois de langue française.
- Dunand, M-D. (2005). Les emprunts linguistiques. *Encuentro* 15, 25-31.
- Fahmi, W. S. (2005). City of pixels: experimental imaging of postmodern other urban spaces. In M. Schrenk (ed.), *CORP2005 & GEOMULTIMEDIA 05*, 365-376.
- Ferraris, C. A. (2011). Vocabulaire familier, populaire, grossier, argot...quelles différences ? *Lengua y voz* 1 (1), 20-35.
- Fouillet, A. (2012). L'esprit du jeu dans les sociétés postmodernes. Thèse doctorale, L'Université Paris Descartes.
- Faye, B. (2011). Non-coïncidence du dire et mise en scène de l'hétérolinguisme dans les écritures francophones africaines. *Les Cahiers du GRELCEF* 2, 145-185.
- Grutman, R. (2006). Refraction and recognition: literary multilingualism in translation. *Target* 1 (1), 17-47.
- Gruthman, R. (1996). Effets hétéolingues dans le roman québécois du XIX^e siècle. *Littérature* 101, 40-52.
- Khalla, S. (2004). Le sacré comme nouvelle approche du consommateur postmoderne. *Management et Avenir* 2 (2), 65-81.
- Kube-Barth, S. (2009). The multiple facets of the urban language form, Nouchi. In F. McLaughlin (ed.), *The Languages of Urban Africa* (103-114), London & New York : Continuum.
- Lacroix, D. & Rao, S. (2011). Histoires de pionniers français dans l'ouest canadien: le cas d'un héros malgré lui de Marcel Durieux. *Voix Plurielles* 8 (2), 79-93.
- Lee, D. (2001). Genres, registers, text types, domains, and styles: clarifying the concepts and navigating a path through the BNC jungle. *Language Learning and Technology* 5 (3), 37-72
- Mbatiah, M. (2012). Deviation as a communicative strategy in *Gamba la Nyoka*. *Swahili Forum* 19, 117-126.
- Moreira, L. da C C. (2009). *Geographies of home's Annabel: a postmodern rewriting of Poe's Annabel*. *Literatura: TODAS AS LETRAS M* 11 (1), 42-48.
- Mourra, J-M. (1999). *Littératures francophones et théorie postcoloniale*. Paris: PUF.
- Popa, D. M. (2011). Dialogic language in communication: time and space. *Postmodern Openings* 2 (8), 63-74.
- Pratt, M. L. (2008). *Imperial eyes*. Second Edition, London & New York: Routledge.

- Ross, A. (1983). The alcatraz effect: belief and postmodernity. *SubStance* 42, 71-84.
- Sande, H. (2015). Nouchi as a distinct language: the morphological evidence. In R. Kramer *et al* (Eds.), *Selected Proceedings of the 44th Annual Conference on African Linguistics* (243-253). MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.
- Tarone, E. (2006). Interlanguage. In R. Mesthrie (Ed.), *Concise Encyclopedia of Sociolinguistics* (747-752). Oxford: Elsevier Ltd.
- Woodward, S. (2009). Jules de Gaultier, le bovarysme, la psychologie dans l'œuvre de Flaubert. *Analyses* 4(1), 155-160.

Irene N. Udousoro
Richard Oko Ajah

ХЕТЕРОЛИНГВИСТИЧКА ПОЕТИКА КАО ОДЛИКА ПОСТМОДЕРНОГ ЈЕЗИКА У ГРАФИЧКОМ РОМАНУ АЈА ДЕ ЈОЛУГОН МАРГЕРИТ АБУЕ И КЛЕМАНА УБРЕРИЈА

Апстракт: Графички роман Маргерит Абуе и Клемана Убрерија под насловом Аја де Јолоугон приказује искуство живота у Јолугону, предграђу Абицана, познатом и као „Jop Siti”, као средство изражавања постмодерних сензибилитета. Језик Јоп Ситија је постколонијално постмодеран због његове морфолошке арбитрарности, постколонијалне хибридности и постмодерног карактера монтаже. То је језик једне друштвене групе, једног геопростора, који мапирају и којим говоре млади становници Јолугона. Овај рад тумачи роман *Aya de Yopougon* као хетеролингвистички текст, производ постколонијалног и постмодерног дискурса; у њему се употребљава хетеролингвистичка поезика Рејниера Грутмана. Абуеин текст се уклапа у хетеролингвистичку парадигму пошто оставља варијабилан простор за друге језике, упушта се у синтаксичко и лексичко позајмљивање и усваја регистре свих друштвених група и статуса. У том контексту, постмодерни простор присваја свој језик или језик присваја свој простор и рађа своје постмодерне културе и идентитете. У „трећем простору” Јолугона, Абуени ликови усвајају промену кодова и међујезик као средство за превазилажење лингвистичких граница његовог геопростора, чиме нарушавају лингвистичку светост; они деконструкцијом стандардних правила путем лингвистичких девијација стварају језик који се може описати као „профан”.

Кључне речи: хетеролингвистички текст, графички роман, постмодерни језик, *Aya de Yopougon*, *Nouchi*

Датум пријема: 24.9.2015.

Датум исправки: /

Датум одобрења: 10.10.2015.