

LANGUAGE IN INDIA
Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow
Volume 13 : 2 February 2013
ISSN 1930-2940

Managing Editor: M. S. Thirumalai, Ph.D.
Editors: B. Mallikarjun, Ph.D.
Sam Mohanlal, Ph.D.
B. A. Sharada, Ph.D.
A. R. Fatihi, Ph.D.
Lakhan Gusain, Ph.D.
Jennifer Marie Bayer, Ph.D.
S. M. Ravichandran, Ph.D.
G. Baskaran, Ph.D.
L. Ramamoorthy, Ph.D.
Assistant Managing Editor: Swarna Thirumalai, M.A.

**Semantic Implications of Authors' Names in Creativity:
A Study of Wole Soyinka's Name as
Reflected in His Selected Works**

Adedoyin Eniola Olamide
Redeemer's University, Nigeria

=====

ABSTRACT

Names deal in a process of identification. They constitute language which could be individually, socio culturally, psychologically or group influenced. Often metaphorically used, names could reveal the thought of its users. This paper studies the impact of authors' names on their creative use of language. We focus on the name of Africa's world acclaimed author; Wole Soyinka, deriving the utmost import of meaning(s) embedded in his name and the inseparable presence of these meaning significations in his works. We conclude that generic names absorb the creative faculty of an individual and ultimately find expression in his or her perceptions.

KEYWORDS: Ake, Apronym, Idea initiation, Pract, Soyinka, Worldview, Yoruba,

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

13 : 2 February 2013

Adedoyin Eniola Olamide

Semantic Implications of Authors' Names in Creativity: A Study of Wole Soyinka's Name as Reflected in His Selected Works

INTRODUCTION

This study is presented in two broad perspectives; the semantic as well as the pragmatic dimensions by which Wole Soyinka's name not only generates ideas that transform into character types and traits in his play texts, but also becomes noticeable in the general thematic preoccupation of his poems. We study the meaning of Soyinka's name and what it is used to mean in that the ideas, philosophies and phenomena that generate from his name, have onomastic implications. These implications can be tagged, and the tag by which a certain 'thing' is called is a name which justifies its functioning.

Recognizing this, Odebo (2010:25) records that onomasts have identified the various ways in which naming occur. Of these typologies, our work is centered on Anonym; a generic name that is aptly suited to its owner. These names are ultimately impacting because they are pivotal to the bearer's psycho-social realities.

From the Yoruba perspective, names are usually words encoded in the Yoruba lexicon, and they have cultural implications. It is viewed that the unique organization of the universe of the Yoruba people is embodied in the Yoruba language. This acts as a determining factor in the Yoruba man's habits of perception and of thought, thus forming and maintaining particular tendencies in the associated nonlinguistic culture. There is therefore a link between the personality of the author, his work, world and personality which cannot be separated from the name he bears.

The question, however, is this: Is a writer's name so powerful as to determine his psycho-social reality which is in turn pivotal to his input in his works? Hall (2007: 76) asserts that meanings arise from language and that there are relationships that can exist between language and the various *images and objects* with which it may interact. Yoruba names could reveal the totality of an individual's thought pattern; the names are given from particular social backgrounds and the values inherent in these backgrounds affect the culture of an individual. However, what is left for assertion is the reality behind the raw and culturally intended meaning of a name and how it affects an author's thinking so holistically such that he places his creative characters, fictional or not, in his train of thoughts.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

13 : 2 February 2013

Adedoyin Eniola Olamide

Semantic Implications of Authors' Names in Creativity: A Study of Wole Soyinka's Name as Reflected in His Selected Works

In the bid to respond to this inquisition, Sowande (1966: 42) proposes and we adopt, a process termed *Derivation by Amplification* which appears in his article on ‘Yoruba Names and Their Meanings’. Sowande views the significance of Yoruba name(s) to the bearer by stating that Yoruba names are much more than identification tags or mere luggage labels. They embody circumstances of birth, history, family, religion, or some other equally pertinent facts relevant to that particular individual bearing the name (Sowande, 1966: 39).

Unlike some English names where for instance, a girl named Joan might not necessarily be linked with the famous Joan of Arc, Yoruba names do not enjoy anonymity. They are usually always historical and linked with a predecessor, related with a family, the society or the pantheon. These names furthermore, are contractions of whole sentences.

In a connected speech situation, the analytical and synthetic nature of the Yoruba language (using inflections to express syntax) becomes evident. The language synthesizes grammatical units; contracting different morphemes into single words whereas, the interpretation and translation of such words into the English language expands into sentences or groups. For example, the name *Bánjì* is the contracted form of *Bámìjì* (wake with me). This is one of several other possibilities including *Oyèébámìjì*; *Oyètìbámìjì* (honour has woken up with me), or *Olátìbámìjì* (wealth has arisen with me). Another instance is in the name *Bólá*; *Abímbólá* but actually a contracted sentence; *Abí mi bí ọlá* (Wealth is born with me).

There is thus a high level of semantic expansion in Yoruba names. Soyinka reiterates the dynamism and significance of names in *King Baabu*; ‘*Moriya! Moriya!... never I want to hear that name again (sic)*’ (6). Beyond the surface level, and the monosyllabic and tone-base on which the Yoruba language rests (Sowande, 1966: 41), compounded words and whole sentences are actually derivable. It becomes worthwhile to therefore consider the summation of the individual components of a name in order to derive the meaning of the name.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

Scholars have practically illustrated that names play a very important role in the perception of an individual’s worldview. Ginet (2008) examines the significance of words and their meanings, and how words influence social practice. Her findings create a link between language and culture and the existence of a global linguistically-mediated communication

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

13 : 2 February 2013

Adedoyin Eniola Olamide

Semantic Implications of Authors’ Names in Creativity: A Study of Wole Soyinka’s Name as Reflected in His Selected Works

which has cognitive, social and historical dimensions. This communication cannot be established without words because words go beyond mere semantic representations. They indicate extra linguistic references and concepts depending on their use in varying socio-cultural milieu.

Therefore, lexical significance and denotations experience a shift as they journey through the complexities of customs, institutions and ideologies. She discovers further, that though words are said to be arbitrary, there is an existence of a mental dictionary which can incorporate multiple entries and evolve a unified sense of them. The study has promoted our understanding of the relations between words (used as names in the Yoruba context) and their meanings. Nevertheless, it over generalizes and is fundamentally theoretical. The present study addresses this by adopting a more practical approach via its focus on a particular culture (Yoruba) as it is reflected through one author in his selected works.

Olaosun (2005) considers the general assumption that Soyinka's literary works are complex to understand. Adopting a stylostistical and componential analysis in *Kongi's Harvest*, he submits that this complexity can be made clearer if Soyinka's choice of words is shown to relate to themes, key concepts, ideas and motives in his texts. He also discovers that Soyinka uses names intentionally for projecting the meanings and ideas of the text. He believes that Soyinka does this to signify meanings and for communicating intentions in most of his literary texts. The study is beneficial in that it helps critics undertake their criticisms of Soyinka's texts with more clarity. However, the study does not delve closely into Soyinka's naming strategy with influences from his own name.

Ajileye and Ajileye (1997) debunk the assertion of scholars such as Ruth Kempson who is quoted as saying 'it is obvious that proper names do not have any meaning at all' (1994: 14). This statement is faulted via the instrumentality of a pragmasociolinguistic model to establish that names and nicknames have layers of meaning (primary, secondary and tertiary). To further buttress this, Ajileye and Ajileye (ibid) quote Hornby as saying a nickname is a 'name given in addition to or altered from or used instead of the real name' (Hornby 1974). They also quote Quarcopome (1987: 11) and Webster dictionary (1976), all submitting that there is a semantic implication in names and nicknames.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

13 : 2 February 2013

Adedoyin Eniola Olamide

Semantic Implications of Authors' Names in Creativity: A Study of Wole Soyinka's Name as Reflected in His Selected Works

This study, therefore, stylistically analyzes the names of (25) Yoruba speakers, identifying the significant characteristic manner of their construction, expression and perception. The respondents are shown to affirm the semantic and pragmatic relevance of their nicknames. The study also discovers that nicknames demonstrate a systematic strategy of naming and this is derived via a classification of the meaning of names into the ironic, descriptive, kinship, historical and virtuous category. Ultimately, Yoruba names are shown to be semantically distinguishable in their forms and functions. The study focuses on nicknames, their extra textual relevance and taxonomic classifications. This renders the work subjective. The present study focuses instead, on the proper names used in a particular text; rendering the work more objective.

Odebode (2005) discredits the views of scholars such as Latimer (1989), Bamisaye (1997) and others who claim that names and nicknames signify nothing and have no relevance semantically. This school of thought holds that proper names denote nothing and have no senses though they can be connotative. The researcher takes a different stance and proves this by deploying a pragmasociolinguistic approach in his analysis of character names in Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*. The study is related in several ways to the present study because it uses one of the contact literatures used in the present study, and also analyzes basically, the character names used in the literary text. However, the two studies differ in their theoretical approaches and methodology. While the former uses the pragmasociolinguistic approach, the later employs the ideational and pragmatic acts theories of meaning.

METHODOLOGY

We select and study the thematic roles of the characters in seven of Soyinka's play texts namely; *Kongi's Harvest* (henceforth KH), *Madmen and Specialists* (henceforth MAS), *Death and The King's Horseman* (henceforth DKH), *King Baabu* (henceforth KB), *The Road* (henceforth TR), *The strong Breed* (henceforth TSB), *The Lion and the Jewel* (henceforth TL J) two of his novels; *Isara* and *Ake* as well as six poems from his poetry collections namely; 'Last Turning', 'Purgatory', 'Journey', 'A Cobweb's Touch in the Dark', 'Conversation at

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

13 : 2 February 2013

Adedoyin Eniola Olamide

Semantic Implications of Authors' Names in Creativity: A Study of Wole Soyinka's Name as Reflected in His Selected Works

Night with a Cockroach’, and ‘To the Madmen over the Wall’. Our selection is limited because we hypothesize that based on the purpose of this research the conclusions derived from the selection of a few samples could be representative of all his works. Only the names of major characters are analyzed in the play texts because they embody the thematic preoccupation of the texts and on the theme lay the central message conveyed by the author. It is important to note also that not all lexical items in the source language (Yoruba) have their direct equivalence in the target language (English). Thus, translation is done freely; not in a restricted or partial forms. Lexical, phonological and grammatical items cannot be translated alone without negatively affecting meaning realization.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The Pragmatic Acts and Ideational theories of meaning are used in our analysis. The former is ‘a theory of context which considers the verbal behavior of an individual within the affordances of the context’ (Odebunmi 2011) while the latter is a conceptual theory which assumes that the meaning of an utterance or expression is the image which it conjures. Mey’s (2001) Pragmatic Acts theory recognizes Pragmeme, Allopract and Pract. A pragmeme is an abstract concept which means every possible pract while a pract is the specific pract in every situation. Meanwhile, ‘every pract is at the same time an allopract...’ (Mey, 2001: 221).

An expression is a Pract which demonstrates a synthesis of the Activity Part (constituting Speech Acts, Indirect Speech Acts, Conversational Dialogue Acts, Psychological Acts, Prosody and Physical Acts) and Textual Part (constituting Inference, Reference, Relevance, Voice, Shared Situation Knowledge, Metaphor and Metapragmatic Joker). Capone (2005: 1357) states that the goal of pragmeme as speech act is to ensure ‘effects that modify a situation and change the role of participants within it or bring about other types of effects such as exchanging/assessing information, producing social gratification or otherwise, rights and obligations and social bonds’. In the light of this, Soyinka’s name is seen as a Pract Unveiling, a pronouncement at birth; being the effect that influences the thematic role(s) and discourses of various characters within his play texts, as well as the themes in his poems. However, since the discourse situations in the selected texts are not considered, we focus primary on the textual part of the pragmeme though not all its features are infused in the analysis.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

13 : 2 February 2013

Adedoyin Eniola Olamide

Semantic Implications of Authors’ Names in Creativity: A Study of Wole Soyinka’s Name as Reflected in His Selected Works

The ideational theory has as its chief proponent, the highly revered empiricist John Locke in his work: *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690). He held that linguistic meaning is mental: words are used to encode and convey thoughts, or ideas. Ogden and Richards (1923), Kess (1992), Akmajian (2006) and Saeed (2003) among others, also emphasize the mentalist-linguistic nature of the theory. The strength of the Ideational theory is that it embodies the insight, that language is an instrument for the communication of thought. Three stages of change in meaning are differentiated by the ideational theorists: In the first stage a word is used in certain contexts, where a certain idea becomes connected to the word. In the second stage, the idea is called up in the mind even outside the original specific continuous use, so that the additional idea is called up in the mind even outside the original specific context. In the last stage, the new idea becomes the central idea which again admits new combinations of ideas. Thus, a secondary idea which is originally only associated to the word in certain specific contexts gains strength and becomes the primary idea (Stocklein, 1898: 14f). This notion of concepts, ideas and meaning change can be diagrammatically represented using our self-designed model of a concentric as below:

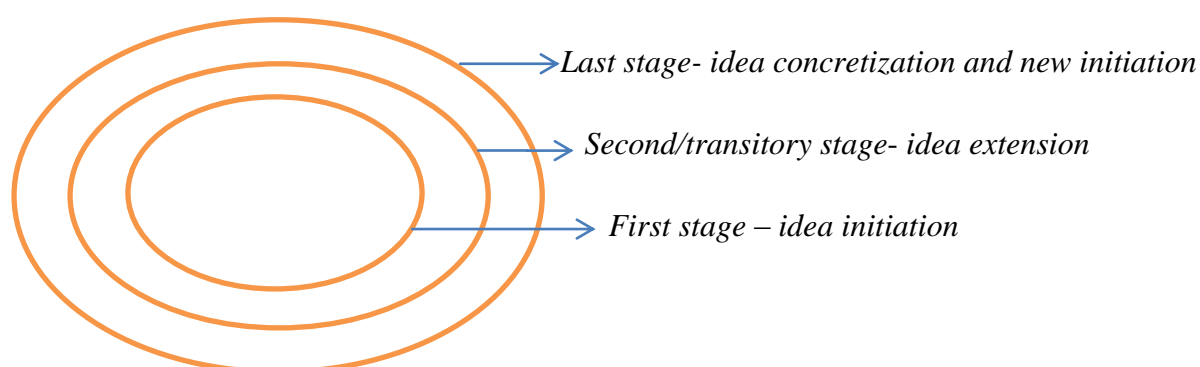


Figure 1: Concentric; Indicating stages of idea-development in meaning change

The model above reveals the spirals of idea generation, formation of new ideas and the extension of new ideas in the concretization of initial ones. Soyinka's name is seen as a Pract Unveiling, informing the *first stage* of the concentric. The author's name actually unveils his intended personality make-up according to the Yoruba cultural believe. The name seems to stand aloof from his corpus but actually, central to it. In the *transitory stage*, we locate the psychological extension of the impact of the first stage i.e., meaning of his name, in his

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

13 : 2 February 2013

Adedoyin Eniola Olamide

Semantic Implications of Authors' Names in Creativity: A Study of Wole Soyinka's Name as Reflected in His Selected Works

personality as shown in his autobiography, *Aké*. The Yoruba adage; *Orúkọ ọmọ ní ń ro ọmọ* (a child's name affects his psychological make-up), confirms this.

Another Yoruba adage states; '*Ilé là ń wò ká tó sọmọ lórúko*' (the family or lineage determines the nature of name(s) given to a child), also confirms our assertions in the transitory stage because Yoruba names are seen as an embodiment of culture, history and lineage which ultimately have a psychological impact on the child.

In the last stage, the first two stages are concretized through one of Soyinka's psychological expressions (writing). There is thus, a literal and idealist connection between his name and significations from his works. This literal reality is what engineers and fosters his deep connotative tendencies. In this vein, if an expression is a direct link from the meaning of his name, the meaning of his name in turn affects how the writer explains the expression whether from a denotative or connotative perspective. This is a rather interestingly complex structure, diagrammatically represented below:

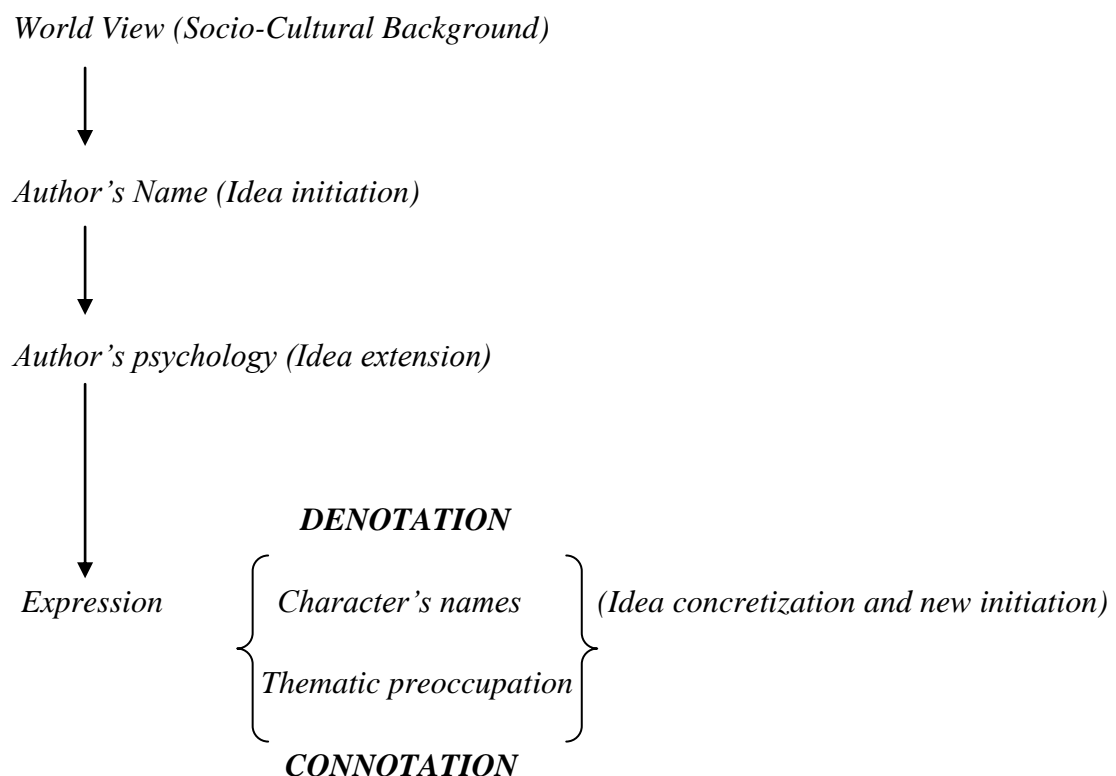


Figure 2; Soyinka's name as a pract; impacting on expressions/ideas

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

13 : 2 February 2013

Adedoyin Eniola Olamide

Semantic Implications of Authors' Names in Creativity: A Study of Wole Soyinka's Name as Reflected in His Selected Works

Essentially, the author's name has a literal meaning that is generally accepted by the Yoruba people. Such meanings are codified by Adeboye & Alaba (2003) in *Dictionary of Yoruba Personal Names* and other texts such as *Oruko Amutorunwa* Sowande et al (1969) and *Oruko Yoruba* Adeoye's (1982), among others.

However, the point here is that the extent of the conventionality of such interpretations is subject to the ACTS that the names perform. For instance, Soyinka's first name; *Akiíwándé* conventionally means *bravery comes visiting* but when accessed in the context of his writings, several acts are derived which are extensions and sometimes, deviations from the semantic implication of the name.

An example is located in *DKH* where an instance of bravery is parodied in the major character, *Elésinoba* because his nature of bravery is a mockery of what bravery epitomizes. For the first time in the lineage of the King's Horsemen, Elésin 'bravely' deviates from his beliefs, custom and tradition while true bravery is located in his son, Olúndé. This is a parody of intentions and roles which can only be contextually realized.

If, therefore, the conventional ideas conjured in our minds when we hear the word or name 'Akin' includes strength or bravery, such strength is validated in the environment of pragmatic acts and shared situational occurrence in the play text.

On the basis of conventional or semantic meaning, we clearly interpret Soyinka's name as the first level of idea generation, and situate them in the contexts of his writings, testing their possibility to retain such conventionality in various contexts. This means ultimately, that the dynamic nature of author's name, when studied in the light of his creative works, can both be conventionally and contextually realized. Hence, there is the need for us to create an intersection between the impacts of convention and context in meaning extension(s).

The ideational theory is not without its criticisms (Alston, 1964:10-31; Fodor, Bever, & Garrett, 1974:141-170; Lyons, 1968:400-442), one of the major being that it renders meaning subjective. However, we have hinged our work on this theory and our justification lies in the fact that creativity requires subjectivity. Since the central message of a creative literary work might not be realized if a writer's intentions are not delineated, this necessitates an attempt at

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

13 : 2 February 2013

Adedoyin Eniola Olamide

Semantic Implications of Authors' Names in Creativity: A Study of Wole Soyinka's Name as Reflected in His Selected Works

understanding his psychological make-up which is informed by his cultural perspective as reflected through his name.

DATA ANALYSIS

Adeboye & Alaba (2003) state the writer's name in full as Sóyínká Olúwólé Akínwándé. The names, though in full are still contracted. Sowande (ibid) terms this phenomenon as *Àsúnkìorúkò* (abridgements of names), where lexemes are taken out of their full forms and made to stand out of the context of their meanings. A Yoruba speaker might therefore say; Wólé for (**xx**wólé or **xx**wólé**xx**), Yínká for (**xx**yínká), Akin for (**xx**akin or Akin **xx**), Wándé for (**xx**wándé), Olú for (Olú**xx**or **xx**olú); where (**xx**) refers to any name form provided it is properly morphologically set and coherent.

The point to note here is that if we say Wólé (come in), we tend to ask the questions; who or what is coming in -is it victory (Ìségunwólé; victory comes in)? Also, if we say Yínká (surround me), we ask what or who surrounds me? Is it money; Owóyínká (riches surround me), wealth; Oláyínká (wealth surrounds me), the glory of God; Ogoolúwayínká (the glory of God surrounds me), children; Omóyínká (children surround me) and many other possibilities? Sowande gives the fullness of the names as a Yoruba man would articulate them.

OSÓYÌNKÁ OLÚWOLÉ AKÍNWÁNDÉ - DERIVATION OF MEANING BY AMPLIFICATION

Osóyínká (mystery surrounds me) Olúwólé (the peak of the bunch comes in; leader) Akínwándé (bravery comes visiting) are statements that situate instances of pract unveiling, demonstrating a synthesis of direct speech acts and (con)textual features (reference, inference, voice and shared situation knowledge). Usually, a Yoruba child is named during a naming ceremony, by an elder in the family or clergy, where there is an audience. Hence, the child's name is pronounced in a speech situation. Reference is made to the child, who is considered to be brave in an environment of the belief in mystery; the Yoruba religion is animistic.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

13 : 2 February 2013

Adedoyin Eniola Olamide

Semantic Implications of Authors' Names in Creativity: A Study of Wole Soyinka's Name as Reflected in His Selected Works

Possible inferences can be derived in the namer's goal to state that in Soyinka's immediate family, he is the first male child or just a male child whose circumstances of birth is a pointer to his character as a brave individual. Relevance occurs in the truth of Soyinka's sex; *Akin* is a typical male-dominated name, and also in the truth of the reasons why the name is given. The voice inherent in the statements is socio-cultural as it represents the Nigerian or Yoruba society's beliefs in circumstantial naming, while knowledge of the selection of the name and the connection with the situation is shared between the namer and the audience.

The middle name; Akínwándé /**akīwande**/ in the Yoruba morphology is actually Akín wá mi dé' meaning 'bravery, valor or strength comes visiting'. This is a noun clause which denotes vibrant alacrity in the essence of the individual who bears the name. However, this is still a contracted form of Akín ti wá mi dé; Akin (*the man of valor*) ti (*has*) wá mi dé (*come visiting*). Hence the apt meaning of the name Akínwándé is *the man of valor has come visiting*. This suggests that Akin, who is the man of valor, has come to visit. The statement is an assertive one and is in the present perfect tense. Its assertiveness and immediacy suggest that 'Akin' *Valor* will constantly and always epitomize the bearer. In all his dealings, valor is exhibited.

In the novel *Isara*, Soyinka states clearly that the essence of a thing is in its name (4) and his is a lineage of Akins, his father bearing also, Akińyọ́dẹ (bravery has appeared). Little wonder that the former loved the world of books (80) just like his father, the headmaster of the personage school, who teaches him to exert his brain (85). Soyinka's paternal grandfather also declares his true expectation of his sons and grandsons:

Wole, you did well – strong. You acted like a true Akin. And now, listen to me. Listen very carefully, and this inspite of anyone, ANYONE tells you... If they tell you the contrary, tell them I said it... (2007: 147).

The title, 'The+Strong+Breed' combines a definite article 'the' with adjective 'strong' and noun 'breed', connoting the definiteness of the strength located in the name 'Akin'. We also notice this signification in *TSB* where the major character; 'Eman' embodies the ideas behind the strength embedded in the author's name. As an epitome of strength, he is to ward off the evil of the old year by being sacrificed for the good of the new year. Eman bravely takes on this responsibility just as Olúndé does in *DKH*. Olundes' is a family of strong men and it runs

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

13 : 2 February 2013

Adedoyin Eniola Olamide

Semantic Implications of Authors' Names in Creativity: A Study of Wole Soyinka's Name as Reflected in His Selected Works

through their lineage in comparison with Soyinka's grandfather, professing that their family is a lineage of the Akins and that Soyinka happens to be a true *Akin*.

The author creates a very clear distinction between bravery and cowardice in *TSB* and *DKH*. While Elesin cowardly shies away from his duties in *DKH*, Ifada also does the same in *TSB*. Recognising his weighty responsibility, Eman searches for the shrine of secret strength in (*TSB*: 36). The name *Akin*, therefore semantically divulges ideas of bravery and courage in the face of deep commitment to the call of culture and tradition. Poems which highlight the poet's strength of mind, character and will, evidenced in his theme include: 'Journey', 'Purgatory' and 'To the Madmen over the wall'.

In 'Journey', Soyinka attributes his suffering in prison during the Biafra war in Nigeria, to his act of bravery as his name denotes. The idea generated from *Akin* is seen in his bold attempt to help his fellow Nigerians. Soyinka compares his suffering in the prison, to that suffered by Jesus Christ as recorded in Mathew (26: 27). He alludes to the last supper and compares the body and blood of Christ to his own body and blood. So, by extension, his act of bravery is justified from the extra-textual material; the Holy Bible.

Words used in the poem are placed within the ambience of the Biblical context. For instance, because the poet has survived his ordeal, he has 'passed the sharing with death and dearth on his way' and has returned home. Consequently, the readers of the poem are made to picture Soyinka as the *Biafran Christ* who 'layed down' his life for the benefit of all Nigerians.

In 'Purgatory', Soyinka employs satire to distance himself from the scenes he describes in order to demonstrate his fierce will to see a change in the mysteriously unpleasant stance that the Nigerian Judicial system has gained. Such disposition is also noticed in *The Madmen and specialists* and 'To the Madmen Over the Wall'. In both writings, Soyinka ventilates his anger over the insanity of man's thinking and his unjust imprisonment respectively.

The persona (Soyinka) in the poem literally cries for help but then, this negates the attribute of the persona Akin (Bravery). Why then, does he 'cry?' we can suffice it to say that his tears, as sign of protest, are still boldly harnessed through his writings. As handicapped as he was about the state of the nation, his pen did not cease to wield the internal strength needed to fight against the prevalent occurrences in the nation.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

13 : 2 February 2013

Adedoyin Eniola Olamide

Semantic Implications of Authors' Names in Creativity: A Study of Wole Soyinka's Name as Reflected in His Selected Works

Soyinka's first name Olúwólé /**əluwəle**/ is a contracted form of Olúawótiwólé. Olú is short for Olúwo, which is in turn a contracted form of Olúawo (*The Adept of adepts*). In similar situations, Olúqrun is fully pronounced as Olúawoòrun (*the adept of adepts or the chief of chiefs of heaven*). Olú signifies the crown, the apex, the peak of the bunch while awo signifies mysteries. Hence, we can interpret Olúwólé to mean Olúwatiwólé (*the adept of adepts of the sacred mysteries has come in or the leader has come in*). This is also an assertive statement in the present perfect tense. It denotes that the apex of mysteries has come in, has emerged and has been established. The underlying words here are *apex* and *mysteries* (sacred); mysteries surround and engulf the bearer. He is to perpetually emit mysteries and leadership in all his dealings. This individual is intended for the top, the peak in all endeavors. Little wonder that the writer is the first African recipient of the Nobel Laureate in literature. The name also points to the fact that there is a clan, a group of people who are superseded by the leader Olúàwa (Our head or leader), the important lexeme here being *Olú*.

In *KH*, we have a replica of the carriers of pain as it is in *DKH* and *TSB*. Here however, there is meaning extension because unlike the sacrificial nature of the carriage in the *DKH* and *TSB*, Kongi merely 'carries' capitalism, acting as a demonic messiah. The idea of conquest is sustained, however satirically. Just as the Marxian ideology creates a divide between capitalism and communism, through 'Kongi', Soyinka leads or heads the notion that modernism is seen as evil when compared with traditionalism by making reference to the capitalist nature of Nigeria and how the government suppresses the individual by it.

The last name Sóyínká /**ʃəʊjɪkə**/ in full is pronounced Osó yí mi ká (*Oso surrounds me*). The prefix 'Osó' indicates the worshippers of Òrìsànlà, also known as Obàtálá in Yoruba mythology. Obatala is an ancient god who was entrusted with modeling the physical man with the solid mass he was given. He shaped the head, ears, nose and all the physical characteristics of man. He is the only Òrìsà that has a specific colour which is white. The Yoruba word for white is 'àlà' which is derived from Obàtálá the Òrìsà's other name and cooperatively, the symbol of this Òrìsà is white chalk which in Yoruba is called 'efun'. 'Osó' also refers to Òrìsànlá. This is a Yoruba word for wizard in its original sense – it stands for one who is wise in the knowledge of spiritual things and not in the distorted and super imposed incorrect sense of *sorcerer*.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

13 : 2 February 2013

Adedoyin Eniola Olamide

Semantic Implications of Authors' Names in Creativity: A Study of Wole Soyinka's Name as Reflected in His Selected Works

The words to note here are *Wizard*; wisdom in spiritual matters, Obàtálá (*god of creation*) and *Efun/ Àlà* (*white*). Osó comes in two forms here; Osó' as a worshipper of Òrìsà / Obàtálá the god of creation whose symbol of recognition is white chalk, and Osó, the one who is knowledgeable in spiritual matters.

It is possible to inquisitively wonder if it is a coincidence that Soyinka's physical features especially the hair and moustache, is predominantly white, age notwithstanding. As religion presupposes, the one whom you worship encapsulates your person, features and thought. Osó can also translate to ritualism. When it is said; *mo sésó*, it means 'I have participated in an occulted ritual for the purpose of gathering wealth'. Osó is equally considered as a deity who is known to travel through the sky, at the speed of light. If it is seen at all, it would be only once in an individual's life time. This description fits well with the *comet*; an astronomical object that is composed of a mass of ice and dust and has a long luminous tail produced by vaporization when its orbit passes close to the sun. In an interview conducted for a few people from the southwest Nigeria and its sub regions, we gathered that when peoples from Ondo state Nigeria, see the *Osó* in the market place, virtually every trader believes that the *Osó* has taken away all the profit. The *Osó's* equation with the *comet* reveals that our experiences could naturally form our beliefs and our beliefs in turn form our opinion and productivity. Soyinka's experiences while growing with his parents, informed some of the thrusts of his writing.

For instance, his interests in activism were formed in his growing up years during the nationalist movement of the 60's and the women uprising in Egbaland, Nigeria, who fought over increment in taxes. Despite restrictions, Wólé, at the age of three, located the scene of protest and joined in, to the amazement of his aunt who uttered; '*l'oógun, otiyáadébi*' (Man of strife, you are here already). Some of his other environmental influences are recorded in his memoir, *Ake*, where Soyinka is seen to be constantly in a world of his own, always reading (102), always brooding and deeply engrossed in thought (69, 101). His mother, Wild Christian remained constantly perturbed and surprised at Wole's attitude (52, 53, 104).

Wild Christian noticed the mystery that surrounds her son and wondered why he acted the way he did; habitually separating himself from others. In (105), the author himself wondered if he had not been possessed by the devil due to a 'black-out' period that he experienced. He

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

13 : 2 February 2013

Adedoyin Eniola Olamide

Semantic Implications of Authors' Names in Creativity: A Study of Wole Soyinka's Name as Reflected in His Selected Works

was referred to as *Abàmi* (*a strange child*), being surrounded always by mysterious events and character; *an adept of adept of mysteries*. At a time, Soyinka takes up the personality of a Juju-band guitarist and sings habitually; 'What sort of Wizard I maybe...' The author situates the mystery surrounding the Yoruba culture as he has witnessed it while growing (4, 17). Some of the images and mystical ideas that appear in his play texts are derived also, from his childhood experiences.

Ideas such as *Egúhúh* (*masquerade*; 150, 17), *Iwin* (*Gnome*), *Anjonu* (*spirits*; 153), *Oro* (202), *Osugbo* (83), *Invocation of spirits* (63), *Magun* (86), *Ifa* (*divination* 8, 221), *Juju* (*charms*; 81) and *Ogboni* (*Cult*; 89, 202) were formed. We also see reference to images such as *Itoko*; sacred tree whose existence is further confirmed in *TSB* (36) where Oroge makes reference to a sacred tree. Soyinka's poem, 'Abiku' equally alludes to his experiences in childhood. Abiku is a wanderer-child who is born and keeps dying, yet to be born again, taunting the mother. The notion of Abiku itself is rooted in the Yoruba belief and Soyinka's recorded experience in *Ake* (15, 16) where Bukola, the only child of the book seller's wife fits into the description. Soyinka's understanding of the mysteries in his surrounding enables him to give adequate attention to the repercussion of this mysterious birth 'Abiku' on the child's parent and a family.

In *TR*, Professor embodies the essence of the name Osóyínká. The Professor is seen as a sage who is highly knowledgeable in various areas of discourse. This same ingenuity is seen in the characters in *MAS*, such as the madmen and the specialists who are fictional representations of knowledge in wiered and criminal things respectively. The author uses the phenomenon 'As' as an alternative world view against that of a normal human by drawing parallels in the myths he creates. Professor searches for the essence of life (the word), in the church, the driver's shack and beer parlour (christian stage, traditional stage and magical stage respectively). Professor's thirst for knowledge equals Soyinka's thirst for, and embodiment of knowledge. The former follows through on this thirst to the extent that spirits are consulted to give superhuman insights into the issues surrounding mankind. The nature and consequence of wizardry; is also noticed in the information conveyed in some of his poems including 'Last Turning', 'A Cobweb's Touch in the Dark' and 'Conversation at night with a Cockroach'. There are Yoruba religious images in Soyinka's 'Last Turning'.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

13 : 2 February 2013

Adedoyin Eniola Olamide

Semantic Implications of Authors' Names in Creativity: A Study of Wole Soyinka's Name as Reflected in His Selected Works

The poem illustrates 'death' with imagery that refers to the Yoruba traditional belief. Death is seen as a journey to wisdom which is more valuable than life. Soyinka exalts death by connecting it to particularly important phenomena in Yoruba belief: hills, the earth, rain and paths. Hills were traditionally seen as the exalted home of gods because they protect during wars, their vegetation is seen as home to wild animals and spirits, and also seen as an epitome of longevity. The earth is also highly significant in traditional Yoruba religion because it is worshipped by various Yoruba people. In 1966, the worship of the earth had become transformed into a cult called the *Ogboni*, who offered sacrifices to the land because it is the giver of food, trees, cash crops and most of the requirements for human sustenance. We would recall from above, that the *Ogboni* cult is a familiar item of discourse in Soyinka's works especially *Ake*. The rain also holds great importance in Yoruba religion. The rain-making rituals are the most formal rituals in Yorubaland, and as they are often performed, their success is very important to all members of the society. If rain does not fall when it ought to, the rain makers are called upon to perform rituals. The rain is seen as refreshing and awakening, which the dead are privileged to deeply feel, before the living does. Ultimately, there is a "path" which is also described in *DKH* where a movement of transition occurs between the dead and the living, a close connection where only the dead have a better privilege to peep into the mysteries of the world.

Soyinka's ability to divulge new meaning from an everyday experience as exemplified in his wizardry (*Osó*), is also evident in the poems: 'A Cobweb's Touch in the Dark' which describes a single event while he was in solitary confinement; the rustling of wind and the plastering of cobweb on the skin of the persona (Soyinka). The sound of the wind rustling through the leaves likewise puts him in touch with fellow countrymen who have died. He hears the 'voices of our dead' in the rustling noise because the dead have fertilized the soil and have made the life and growth of trees possible. The darkness describes isolation and makes him forget his pains and discomfort. The web of the cobweb by extension describes the web of emotion and mixed feelings that he suffered presently.

This same wizardry ingenuity is noticed in the poem; 'Conversation at Night with a Cockroach' where we find a structured dialogue between a man, cockroach and a third persona. The continued violence in Nigeria at in the 1960's informs the theme of the poem

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

13 : 2 February 2013

Adedoyin Eniola Olamide

Semantic Implications of Authors' Names in Creativity: A Study of Wole Soyinka's Name as Reflected in His Selected Works

where clearly, Soyinka paints a bleak future for mankind. The cockroach symbolizes the little and devalued mind that Nigerians seem to possess. They have come to reason, not like human beings, but like cockroaches by encouraging violence. Soyinka employs imagery and symbolism to express his ideas and emotions and such images asides the Cockroach, include the land which is described as airless, loveless, brittle and full of hailstorm.

The totality of the meaning of Soyinka's name can be summed up as follows:

Akiñtiwamidé: Bravery, valor or the brave has come visiting

Olúawótiwọlé: The adept of adept of mysteries/the leader of the group has come in

Osóyímiká: Wizardry (knowledge and creation of new things) encapsulates me

Totality of the central idea behind the name: The peak of mysteries dwelling in the man of valor leads to an exhibition of great knowledge in spiritual matters; ultimately springing forth ingenuity and ingenious ideas.

Below, we tie-up our discourse by contextualizing and locating Soyinka's name in the major characters, in his play texts. By this, we aim to establish that thematic roles in Soyinka's play texts are informed by influences from the import of meaning from the author's name.

CONTEXTUALIZING AUTHOR'S NAME IN HIS PLAY TEXTS

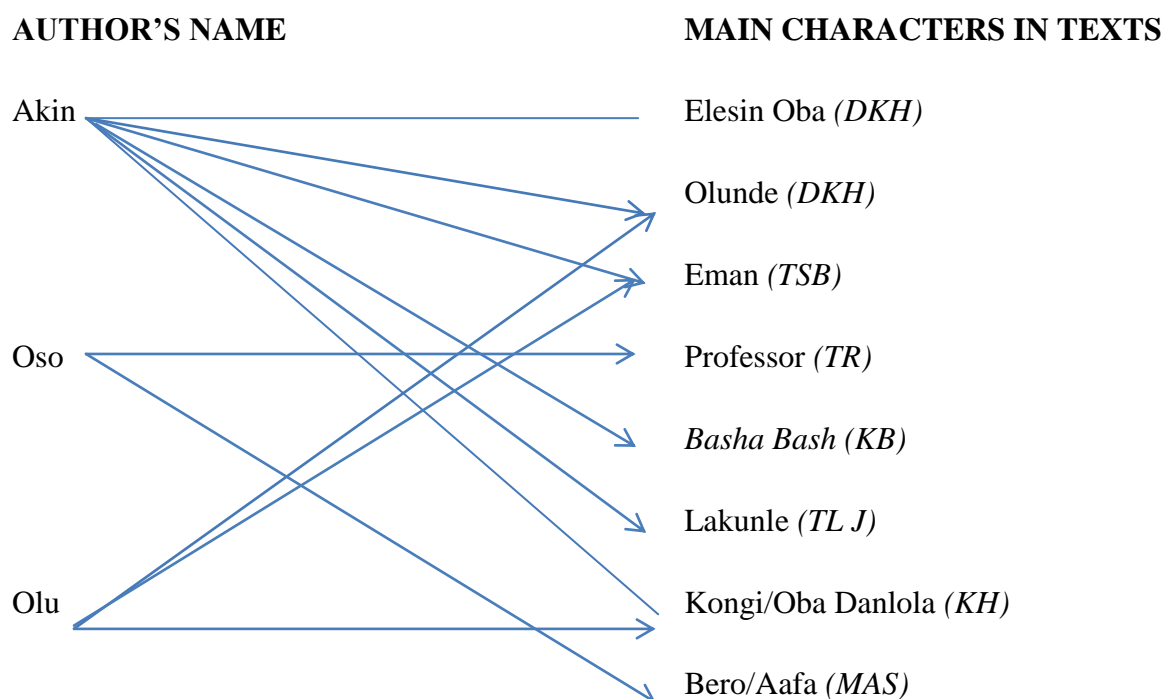


Figure 3: (IDEA-LINK between author's name and major characters in his play texts. Pointed arrows indicate a perfect link where no-point arrows indicate an imperfect link)

The chart links the name 'Akin' (bravery/valor) with six characters namely: Elesin Oba in *DKH*, Olunde in *DKH*, Eman in *TSB*, Basha Basha in *KB*, Lakunle in *TL J* and Kongi in *KH*. 'Oso' (wizard) is linked with Professor in *TR* and Bero/Aafa in *MAS* while "Olu" (leader) is linked with Olunde in *DKH*, Eman in *TSB* and Kongi in *KH*. The pointed arrows indicate a perfect connection in meaning representation from author's name to characters' names while the no-point arrows indicate that meaning is not perfectly represented but subverted. For instance, the act of bravery is seen in Elesin oba but his nature of bravery is a parody. of the lineage of the King's men, Olunde's father; Elesin is the only one 'brave' enough to avoid his responsibility of dying with the Kings. True bravery is located in the son, Olunde. Similarly, bravery is located in Kongi when he introduces capitalism into his government although this introduction is seen as injurious to his people.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

13 : 2 February 2013

Adedoyin Eniola Olamide

Semantic Implications of Authors' Names in Creativity: A Study of Wole Soyinka's Name as Reflected in His Selected Works

CONCLUSION

We have adopted Locke's ideational theory of meaning and Mey's Pragmatic acts theory to establish that Soyinka's name embody some ideas which cannot be separated from the nature of meaning significations in his writings. From the Yoruba perspective, a mere understanding of the conventional meaning of Soyinka's names, disambiguates his person and psychological make-up, consequently, the central message of most of his works. We therefore hypothesize that since the subject matter of every discourse is most important in the unravelling of an author's idiosyncrasy, an understanding of the socio-psychological background, detailing the meaning of Soyinka's name becomes pivotal to the understanding of his textual messages. Further research can dwell on the writings of other Yoruba authors to establish the validity of this assertion and by extension, a replica of such study can also be undertaken in other cultures. Then, we might have a rich body of discourse that details the dynamism of names generally, as well as authors' names and the impact in their various literary endeavors.

References

- A Dictionary of the Yoruba Language*. 1976. Ibadan: Oxford University Press.
- A Dictionary of Yoruba Personal Names*. 2003. Adeboye, B. & Alaba, O. Eds. Ilupeju: West African Book Publishers Limited.
- Adeoye, C.L. 1982. *Oruko Yoruba*. Ibadan: University Press Ibadan.
- Ajileye and Ajileye. 1997. "Pragmasociolinguistic Features of Yoruba Nicknames". *Stylistics in Theory and Practice*: Eds. Lawal and Oyekola. Ilorin: Paragon Books.195-204.
- Akmajian, A. et al. 2006. *Linguistics: An Introduction to Language and Communication*. New Delhi. New Delhi Prentice Hall of India.
- Alston, W.P. 1964. *Philosophy of Language*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Language in India www.languageinindia.com
13 : 2 February 2013
Adedoyin Eniola Olamide
Semantic Implications of Authors' Names in Creativity: A Study of Wole Soyinka's Name as Reflected in His Selected Works

"Benjamin Lee Whorf." 2008. Microsoft Encarta 2009 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation.

Frege, G. 1892. Trans. "On Sense and Reference". *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege*. Eds. Peter, G&Black, M. Oxford: Balckwell. 56-78.

Hall, S. 2007. *This Means This-This Means That: A User Guide to Semiotics*. London: Laurence King Publishing Limited.

Halliday M.A.K. 1961. "Categories of the Theory of Grammar". *Halliday: System and Function in Language*. Ed. Kress G. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 52-72.

Jerry, F. Bever, A. Garrett, T. G. & M. F. 1974. *The Psychology of Language: An Introduction to Psycholinguistics and Generative Grammar*. New York: Mcgraw-Hill.

Kess, J.F. 1992. *Psycholinguistics: Psychology, Linguistics and the Study of Natural Languages*. Canada: John benjamins Publishing Company.

Lyons, J. 1968. *Introduction to theoretical linguistics*. England: Cambridge University Press.

Marren, S. 1993. "Soyinka, Wole 1934." Contemporary Black Biography. 1993. Encyclopedia.com. 2 Nov. 2011 <<http://www.encyclopedia.com>>

Mey, Jacob L. 2001. *Pragmatics: an Introduction*, 2nd ed. USA. Blackwell Publishers.

Odebode, I. O. 2005. "A Pragmasociolinguistic Study of Names and Nicknames in Soyinka's Death and the King's Horseman". *Perspectives on Language and Literature*. Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press Ltd. 199-214.

_____. 2010. "A pragmatic Analysis of Names of Characters in Selected Plays of Wole Soyinka". PhD. Dissertation. University of Ibadan.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

13 : 2 February 2013

Adedoyin Eniola Olamide

Semantic Implications of Authors' Names in Creativity: A Study of Wole Soyinka's Name as Reflected in His Selected Works

Odebunmi, A. 2006. *Meaning in English: an introduction*. Ogbomoso: Critical Sphere. Class Note.

Ogden, C.K.&Richards, I.A. 1923. *The Meaning of Meaning*. London: Routledge Regan Paul Ltd.

Palmer, F.R. 1995. *Semantics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Saeed, J.I. 2003. *Semantics*. Austratian: Blackwell Publishing.

Sowande, F. & Ajanaku F. 1969. *Oruko Amutorunwa*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.

Sowande, F. 1966. "The Mind of a Nation – The Yoruba Child". *"Yoruba Names and Their Meanings"* Retrieved at <http://www.jambalayah.com>. August 31 2011. 43-55.

Soyinka, W. 1974. *Wole Soyinka: Collected Plays 2 (The Lion and the Jewel. Kongi's Harvest. The Trails of Brother Jero. Jero's Metamorphosis. Madmen and Specialists*. London: Oxford University Press.

_____ 1974. *The Strong Breed*. London: Oxford University Press

_____ 1975. *Death and the King's Horseman*. London: Methuen.

_____ 2002. *King Baabu*. London: Methuen Publishing Ltd.

_____ 1965. *The Road*. London: Oxford Univeristy Press.

_____ 1981. *Aké: The Years of Childhood*. Ibadan. Spectrum Books Limited.

_____ 1989. *Ìsarà: A Voyage Around Essay*. Ibadan: Fountain Publications.

Stern, G. 1931. *Meaning and Change of Meaning with Special Reference to the English Language*. Goteberg: Elander.

Stocklein, J. 1898. *Bedeutungswandel der Worter. Siene Entstehung und Entwicklung*.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com

13 : 2 February 2013

Adedoyin Eniola Olamide

Semantic Implications of Authors' Names in Creativity: A Study of Wole Soyinka's Name as Reflected in His Selected Works

Munchen: Lin-dauersche Buchhandlung.

The New Encyclopedia Britannica. 2005. Volume 23. Macropedia Knowledge Indepth. 15th Edition. Encyclopedia Britannica Inc.

Wundt, W. 1904. *Volkerpsychologie: Eine Untersuchung der Entwicklungsgesetze von Sprache, Mythos und Sitte*. 2 Bde. 2. Aufl. Leipzig. Engelmann.

"Yoruba people" Microsoft Encarta 2009 DVD. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 2008.

=====

Adedoyin Eniola Olamide adedoyine@gmail.com
Redeemer's University
College of Humanities
Department of English
KM 46 Lagos-Ibadan Express Way
Redemption City
PMB 3005
Redemption Post Office
Mowe
Ogun State
Nigeria.

Language in India www.languageinindia.com
13 : 2 February 2013
Adedoyin Eniola Olamide
Semantic Implications of Authors' Names in Creativity: A Study of Wole Soyinka's Name as Reflected in His Selected Works