

Linguistic Hybridity in the Nigerian Pop Culture: A Study of Selected Songs of Tuface Idibia, Davido and Tiwa Savage.

Mary Ogah-Adejoh

Department of English
Benue State University, Makurdi.

Abstract

Unofficial English language use in Nigeria reflects the nation's indigenous linguistic colouration, attested to by lexical innovations, direct borrowings from the local languages, code mixing and code switching, which is fast giving rise to a hybrid variety in the nation. This variety is very profound in Nigeria pop music. While the use of this hybrid variety in the country's popular music helps to popularize indigenous languages and other forms of culture, there is the concern about its respectability by listeners who do not share the indigenous codes embedded in them, especially foreigners. Even among indigenes, the great linguistic diversity in the country hinders mastery of all the languages. Taking into consideration the potential functions of music in a developing nation such as Nigeria in information dissemination, entertainment, ensuring the smooth running of the society among others, this paper adopts the language contact hypothesis and the encoding/decoding theory of Hall 1973 to interrogate the practice of shrouding popular music in obscure linguistic codes by Nigeria pop artists. Using the songs of Tuface, Davido and Tiwa Savage, the paper examines linguistic hybridity in Nigerian Pop music and what it portends for national development. It reveals that when and where listeners are unable to decode the message of the songs, their communicative value becomes doubtful. It reveals further that, lyrical ambiguity occasioned by arbitrary lexical innovations, unexamined code switching/mixing inhibits the communicative function of music; thus rendering such music ineffective in some cases, in shaping the society. The paper concludes that though linguistic hybridity in Nigeria hip hop music serves the aesthetic designs of the artist, it presents problems of intelligibility to its listeners. It suggests that artists should couch their songs in accessible and acceptable languages which are generally understood by the Nigerian public. If they must hybridise, they should do it in such a way that their messages are not lost to the people. This will aid to inform, re-orientate and propagate government policies, projects and programmes which will trigger the much desired national development.

Keywords: linguistic, colouration, lexical, innovations hybridity

Introduction

Music and language have close affinities due to their expressive power. Though there are many understandings of the concept of language; the consensus is that language is a medium of communication and information. Ewelu opines that, language incorporates all forms of internal and external representation, a fact which leads him to conclude that "language involves natural signs, sounds and conventional symbols like word, gesture, sign and body language/movements etc. which are indispensable in information" (55). Our concern in this study is not to dwell on what language is or is not. However, our re-affirmation that language is about communication and information substantiates our claim of the closeness of music and language, especially as music deploys lyrics (words) and sounds for communication purposes.

Due to its expressiveness, music has, overtime, proven to be an essential tool of human communication, and has performed a plethora of functions besides entertainment in bringing about a harmonious society. Music creates, perpetuates or counters human traditions and ideologies. This perception resonates in the assertion by Vidal that, "Music has proved to be one of the indispensable tools cultivated by man for growth, nurture and transfer of his institutions and values to future generations" (112). The import of Vidal's submission is that, music, like language, has potential for social organisation and transfer of ideas which are quintessential for societal cohesion, stability and development. As a communicative medium therefore, music as a matter of necessity, must be intelligible to its audience in order to be effective. In the light of

the above, we feel that pop music in Nigeria should tow this line of communicative essence.

The multilingual and multicultural nature of the Nigeria society has made it imperative for the nation's hip-hop music industry to reflect this linguistic diversity. In accord with this reality, Liali and Omobowale aver that contemporary music in Nigeria "combines in its lyrical text multiple words of different languages" (11). They express the opinion that this situation inevitably leads to "code-switching, random language mixing of lexical items in composition and performance of such music" (11). Thus, linguistic hybridity is an inevitable consequence of language contact. Against this backdrop, it is crucial to explain hybridity which is the focal concern of this study.

Hybridity, originally is a biological concept which describes the process of cross breeding different sex cells to produce a new breed of animal or plant. In linguistics, it refers to the merger of elements of two or more languages to produce a distinctive variety. This explains the mixture of Nigerian indigenous languages with English which has been used as a bridge between the nation's diverse peoples.

Josiah intimates that, "the contact of ... [Nigeria's] indigenous languages with English language [has brought] about a great deal of interlingual and intralingual sociolinguistic forms" (161) which have given rise to the hybrid variety that dominates Nigeria's contemporary hip-hop industry. While this mixture of the nation's different languages and English popularizes such indigenous languages regionally and internationally, the complete communicative value of this form of music is doubtable which accounts for the divergent views on this topic by scholars. Liade and Omobowale seem impressed with the creativeness of these musicians who have blended Nigerian languages with English contending that, "...you can hardly listen to any of such music now without noticing the creative use of one Nigerian language or another with English or its pidginized variety. ... in some of these pieces, almost half of the music is composed and sung in a Nigerian language" (2).

While not refuting the observation by Liade and Omobowale on the creative ingenuity of

these musicians, we contrast this against the view point of Leva that contemporary Nigerian hip-hop artists conceal or blur the messages of their songs by their deployment of many dialects [sic] in their lyrics...[and some are popular] "for meaningless songs" (10). As a communicative and functional component of the Nigerian society, one can hardly sacrifice the functionality of the nation's popular music for the sake of its aesthetics. It is on the strength of these contending views that this study examines linguistic hybridity in Nigerian hip-hop music and the impact this has on the nation's development using the songs of Tuface, Davido and Tiwa Savage.

Review of Literature

Researchers on the origin and development of hip-hop culture are in unanimous agreement that it was founded in the Bronx borough of New York City, by the young coloured population of the United States in reaction to the turbulent issues of the times. It was a distinctive form of protest against increased poverty, racial discrimination and social inequality characterized by rap music, dancing, graffiti and deejaying. Price informs that:

During the 1960s and 1970s – as the streets of New York erupted with violence, social decay and economic demise - young multiethnic inner city kids devised their own solutions to the traumatic challenges that they continually faced...these diverse youths created an alternative to the hopelessness in their neighborhoods (2).

These contending issues are still very much with us in Nigeria and they usually form the message of the songs of hip hop artists.

This movement gained public attention and fast became popular with youths and even the elderly in the United States in the 1980s. The success of hip-hop as a form of expression, spread across the world and found new homes in the underdeveloped countries of Africa where corruption and mismanagement of public resources by government officials reigned supreme.

It is crucial to emphasize that hip-hop music, right from inception, was a vehicle of communication, conveying prevailing issues of society. Price observes that, the greatest impact of

the movement was its ability “to unite people of diverse beliefs, cultures, races and ethnicities, young and old to express themselves in a self-determined way” (3). This thus justifies its attractiveness to Nigerian Yoruba born artist, Fela Anikulapo Kuti, who adopted it and channelled it in addressing the nation’s social issues in his Afrobeats.

While the utilitarian value of hip-hop music is important to this study, our emphasis is on the linguistic facility through which this is realized. On this note, Babalola and Taiwo inform that, “hip-hop tends to be grounded on local or regional syntax or vernacular...It is based on the practitioner’s unique experience” (8). This position is collaborated by Ugot, who expresses the point that this form of music is characterized by hybridization of indigenous languages and active creation of lexical items and deployment of local nuances (225-238). This tradition is obtainable in the music of Fela and contemporary music artists like Tuface, Davido, Tiwa Savage, Flavour among others. Due to the popularity of Nigerian hip-hop music among the youths, its themes are fast becoming the moral compass and the reality upon which most Nigerian youths interpret their social vision and environment and these dictate their lives.

According to Liade and Omobawale, this kind of music may be a catalyst for arousing nationalist feelings in the youths as “... even the unlettered and some adults are not left out in the frenzy created by the music” (3). In the midst of the wide acceptability of this form of music, studies have discovered that majority of the songs are meaningless and are replete with sexual innuendos and foul language. This led Dunu and Ugbo to examine the portrayal of women in these songs in their study which discovered that the lyrics are embedded with hypersexual themes which portray women negatively. They base their study on the music of Flavour N’abania, who according to their findings is notorious for “using vulgar language and raunchy images of women” (37). They thus express the opinion that since popular music has a strong influence on social reality, Flavour’s derogatory portrayal of women may condition public negative attitude towards the female sex. This assertion finds firm foundation in

the submission by Railton and Watson that, “If a song is played over and over and everybody likes it, then it becomes normal and acceptable and by extension, whatever is being represented in that song becomes acceptable in turn with the time” (51-63). While these are concerned with the morality of the songs, this paper is concerned with linguistic hybridity.

In consonance with the objectives of this study, the above excerpt re-emphasizes the role of popular music as an opinion forming tool, especially in Nigeria where a large percentage of the population are impressionable youths whose minds can be easily swayed. This then, underscores the dire need for a popular music with understandable lyrics and morally sound themes which will help forge a healthy society.

The above line of thought is in tandem with the view of Green who holds that:

Popular music has two tendencies towards reification and legitimating [where] reification means to treat abstract subjects as real and immutable [while] legitimating means justification of beliefs in reified concepts (151).

This means that lyrical ambiguity occasioned by arbitrary lexical innovations, or unexamined code mixing and code switching, inhibits the communicative function of popular music which then renders such artistic works useless in shaping society.

In a related study, Ojukwu, Obielozie and Esimone on the one hand, and Adeola on the other, examined the influence of popular music on contemporary Nigerian values and inform that, “contemporary Nigerian music can be employed to connect the African heritage to the world” (1). While re-echoing the opinions of Dunu and Ugbo on the prevalence of negative content in some Nigerian pop music which has a consequent effect on moral decadence, they suggest that the government can curb this ugly trend by giving grants to “up-coming pop musicians in a bid to commission them towards producing music that will promote the moral values of the country” (127).

From the foregoing, it is clear that popular music, particularly the Nigerian contemporary pop

music, has a huge influence on social behaviour and ideology formation. This understandably justifies the considerable scholarly attention on Nigeria pop-music. It is also on this note that the study investigates hybridity and its communicative essence in Nigeria's hip-hop music.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the language contact hypothesis and the encoding/decoding theory of Hall 1973. The choice of these theories is from the understanding that a foundational feature of Nigerian hip-hop music industry is the fusion of different indigenous linguistic codes with the pidgin or Standard English, in addition to other individualistic innovative practices in the lyrics of the songs. This results from the presence of many languages in Nigeria which have made inter-language mixtures inevitable – a process explained in the contact linguistic hypothesis.

Language contact occurs when many languages co-exist in a speech community and influence each other. This intercourse results in a plethora of linguistic situations which include, but not limited to, borrowing, code mixing and code switching, lexicalization, pidginization, creolization, convergence, adoption of other language features in phonology, grammar or morphology, language shift, among others. As an aspect in sociolinguistic theory, language contact defines the behaviour of converging linguistic codes in a speech community. To fully understand contact linguistics, an understanding of sociolinguistics is imperative.

Developed in the last quarter of the twentieth century, Sociolinguistics, according to Holmes, is “the relationship between language and society” (1). Hudson sees it as “the study of the relationship between language and social factors such as class, age, gender and ethnicity” (3). All these explain the dynamics of human language in the society which are typified in language contact linguistics. This reality is crucial in our current study because, it provides explanation for the character of the Nigerian multilingual situation, particularly, the linguistic mixtures which are the points of our investigation in the nation's hip-hop music industry.

Language contact essentially brings about assignment of specific roles to various existing

codes in such contact situations. Usually, situations of superstratum, substratum and adstratum emerge; where the superstratums are given prestige or powers above the substratums which have low prestige and powers while the adstratums have no status at all. Central to this is the mixture that emerges as these stratum co-exist. Sarah Thomason informs that “mixed languages [which are a result of hybrid element] are formed by communities fluent in both languages [in existence] while creoles result in speech communities lacking a common language” (13). The mixed or hybrid variety emerging in Nigeria can therefore be explained along these lines. The problem however is how these mixes are intelligible in communication. This then leads us to the encoding and decoding theory of communication.

The encoding and decoding communication model was first developed by Stuart Hall in 1973 and offered various approaches on how media messages are produced, disseminated and interpreted. “A code” according to Stephen Littlejohn, “is a set of organizing principles behind [a] language employed by members of a social group” (178). This has strong effect on the way a group uses language and the type of speech that emerges.

Simply put, encoding is the process of carefully tailoring a meaningful message. Decoding on the other hand is the act of extracting the meaning in a coded message in such a way that the message encoded is understood. Decoding generally is facilitated by the background knowledge of the decoder on the message received. This explains why the encoder is duty bound to use words, signs, sounds, images or body language which he believes the decoder understands.

It therefore stands to reason that if the encoded message is not based on familiar knowledge of the decoder, the decoding process will be impossible thereby leading to misunderstanding and communication breakdown.

The contact linguistic hypothesis, and the encoding/decoding theory, are relevant explanatory postulations to our current study, since the hybrid variety in Nigerian popular music which forms our core concern, is a function of

linguistic contact situations, while songs of such popular hip-hop artists like Tuface, Davido and Tiwa Savage are encoded messages based on this arbitrary hybrid variety, which may task the decoding abilities of Nigerians for whom the codes are intended.

Other concepts that need clarification as prominent features of the songs under study are code switching and code mixing. These are both sociolinguistic terms that are very closely related such that some use them interchangeably. Though both terms involve hybridization of words, phrases, clauses or even full sentences of two or more languages, there is a thin line that separates one from the other. Code switching is when a speaker alternates between two or more languages or varieties of a language within the context of a single conversation for a particular purpose. This has special socio pragmatic consequences which are outside the scope of this paper. Examples of code switching include:

- i. Are we eating **moi moi** and **ogi** for dinner? (English and Yoruba)
- ii. **Ahinya** for the lovely gift. **O lphi nphi**. (English and Idoma)

Code mixing on the other hand is the mixing of mostly words, but also phrases, clauses or even sentences of two or more languages or varieties. Consider (iii and iv) below:

- iii. **Kwu** shoe **oma kpo gu** bedroom (English and Idoma)
- iv. Cup **a che eyu** table (English and Idoma)

According to Khular, while code switching is something speakers do intentionally because they want to express themselves with a personal style or flavour, code mixing is something speakers do unintentionally because they do not know the correct word or phrase. In other words, while code switching occurs for a particular purpose, code mixing occurs out of a linguistic necessity.

Biographies of Selected Artists

Tuface: Innocent Ujah Idibia was born in Jos, Nigeria, in 1975. He is from the Idoma ethnic group in the south senatorial zone of Benue State. He started his music career at the Institute of Management Technology, Enugu in 1994 with two of his friends- Blackface and Faze (stage names)

as Plantashun Boiz. They however went their separate ways in 1996, and Tuface went on to carve a niche for himself as a solo artist. Though he is now known as 2baba, prior to 2014, he went by the stage name Tuface. He is one of the most decorated and successful Afro pop artists in Africa. He has won several music awards nationally and internationally.

Davido: David Adedeji Adeleke, a Nigerian, singer, song writer and producer was born in Atlanta, Georgia in 1992, but relocated to Lagos at a very young age. He started his music career in 2011 and has about fifteen albums to his credit.

Tiwa Savage: Tiwatope Savage is a Nigerian singer, song writer and actress. Born in 1980, she hails from Isale Eko in Lagos State. She started her music career in 2013 and has received eight music awards.

Linguistic Hybridity in the Songs of Tuface, Davido and Tiwa Savage

Contemporary hip-hop music in Nigeria is characterized by the incorporation of many of the nation's indigenous languages which has given rise to hybridity in the lyrics. The emergent Nigerian hip-hop variety, constantly evolves as individual artists add new words from a vast store of the nation's multitude of languages, in addition to other speech behaviours as code switching, code mixing, innovation of lexical items, coinages, and in some cases, outright distortion of conventional meanings in their renditions. This practice has raised questions on the communicative value of these songs to the multilingual Nigerian society.

It is assumed here that most Nigerians are bilingual, who have linguistic proficiencies in their mother tongues in addition to English, Nigerian pidgin or any of the other Nigerian languages. Since there are over five hundred languages in Nigeria (36), the mutual intelligibility of these rainbow songs becomes a problematic issue. This is compounded by the lexical innovations and words distortion which are constant features of this type of music.

According to Shishima "where words or sentences are employed in an unconventional way, the problem of ambiguity or misunderstanding sets in" (56). From this backdrop, the ability of Nigerians to completely understand the coinages, innovations and words distortion that is a regular

feature of the nation's hip-hop music becomes doubtful.

Instances of this hybridity abound in the songs of the selected artists for this study. In the song "Implication" by Tuface Idibia, the artist blends two local language s(Tiv and Idoma) with pidgin English to create a song whose central theme is only vaguely discernable in the title as a warning of the consequences of man's actions as can be seen in the first stanza. This means that any decision or action by man on earth has consequences/implications. This is evident in his allusion to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, their disobedience and the resultant punishment. Also, in line 4, he disobeyed his mother and the consequence is "*plenty wahala*"

1. *As I kolobe your sister*
2. *As I jasi Deborah*
3. *As I disobey my mother*
4. *I come dey get plenty wahala*
5. *As I follow dey brother*
6. *As he commit the disaster*
7. *Just because I dey dia*
8. *I follow enter de yawa*

A close examination of this excerpt reveals a complex hybrid arrangement. In line 1, the word "kolobe" cannot be decoded. It is either an instance of coinage/lexical innovation or it is a borrowing from any of the local languages. Hence, its' combination with the noun phrase "your sister" gives no conventional meaning. This is replicated in the 2nd line where the combination "As I jasi Deborah" gives the audience no clue as to comprehend the nature of the action of "I" on the object "Deborah".

The words 'wahala' and 'yawa' in the 3rd and 7th lines are from pidgin English, both meaning problem or trouble. The refrain of the song is rendered completely in Idoma (olele, olele, oleje lobunu lele, olegwa, olegwa, oleje lobunu legwa, etc). Half of the second stanza begins in Tiv and ends in pidgin English, representing a classic case of code mixing which, apart from the rhythm, leaves the multilinguistic audience grasping for bits and pieces of meaning which may be gleaned from the few familiar words.

In his second song selected for this study titled "thank you Lord" in which the artist appreciates God for his mighty works in his life,

Tuface mixes Yoruba, pidgin (English), (Standard) English and Idoma languages. While the chorus is rendered in Yoruba, the stanzas are alternately in English, pidgin or Idoma languages. It is worth noting that the artist's code mixing has no effect on the intended meaning since every stanza is delivered in Yoruba, Idoma, pidgin (English) or conventional (English). Each stanza is a repeat of the same central message. The snag in the song however is the chorus/refrain which is done exclusively in Yoruba, thus shrouding the meaning from the non-Yoruba speakers/audience. This case of code switching however, poses little or no communication difficulties as was demonstrated in the first song because the central message is repeated in all the languages used in each stanza. The most conspicuous ambiguity in the first song is that, the chorus/refrain is rendered exclusively in Idoma thus, making the meaning inaccessible to non Idoma speakers/audience.

In the song, "See Me So" Tuface presents a linguistic scenario where there are instances of inter and intrasentential mixtures between English, Yoruba and pidgin as the following excerpt illustrates:

1. *As you see me so*
2. *Edumare don bless me oh*
3. *But that one no mean say*
4. *I go come dey pose I oh*
5. *As you see me so*
6. *I no send you oh...*

In the above, line 1 represents a variety of English used by Nigerians which is between pidgin and Standard English, often referred to as standard Nigerian English. The 2nd line is a blend of Yoruba and Pidgin English in which the word "Edumare" means God and "don bless me" means God has blessed me. The remaining four lines are delivered in pidgin English with certain phonological and grammatical adaptations from the local languages as is noticeable in the faulty amalgamation of the verbs "go" and "come" after the personal pronoun "I". The sentence "I no send you oh", apart from its grammatical problem in the verb phrase (no send), presents semantic challenges as the intended meaning (I don't mind what you think or believe) contradicts the meaning carried by the words of the sentence. This thus typifies cases of

meaning distortion and a fusion of phonological and grammatical features of the Nigerian indigenous languages and English language. While these do not necessarily mar the message of the song, they may create difficulty in understanding for an audience that is not familiar with the local codes or the Nigerian pidgin. The features of hybridization are also noticeable in his songs “You no Holy Pass” and “No Shaking”. Notable in these songs are instances of lexical innovations in words like “kolo” and “kpai” which refer to “insanity/madness” and “death” respectively. With these observations, one is torn between the musicality, which is appealing to the listener, and the meaning of the song encumbered by the use of hybridity.

Our second artist of study, Davido, composes songs which have similar features as the ones by Tuface Idibia examined above. In the song “Back when”, rendered in pidgin and Standard English, the artist deploys word coinages and intrasentential switches to Yoruba. The following excerpt from the first stanza bears some of these:

1. *Back when I was broke yo*
2. *Nobody wanted to jonze yo*
3. *And the girls they tell me no no*
4. *Because I no geti motor...*

While the 1st line comes in pidgin English, line 2 carries the word ‘jonze’ which is an indigenous coinage whose meaning may, at best, be guessed from the context to mean “suffer”, which will be in line with his opening statement “back when I was broke yo”. This however, presents ambiguity since there is bound to be different interpretations by his audience.

In the 4th line, there is the use of an inflection represented in the sound /i/ which is characteristically used as an affix (prefix) for proper nouns in most Nigerian local languages. This is a case of transfer of the indigenous phonology into English which has the potential of blurring the intended meaning for an audience that is not familiar with phonological features of the Nigerian local languages.

Other instances of hybridity in the song are in such loan words as “owo” (money), “baba” (father or master), and lexicalizations in words like “zallas”, “sharrap”, to mention a few. This trend is replicated in another of his song “Dami Duro” in

which he alternates between English and Yoruba and on some occasions, switches completely to Yoruba. Below is a random selection of lines from the song to illustrate this mixture;

1. Ema dami duro – dami duro
2. *Yeah*, emi omo baba lowo
3. Ani wofe dami duro-duro...

1. *Namy money – money oh*
kpokpokpo
2. *Ji money oh – money oh*gon-gon-gon
3. Kilo so ewe agba gba ewe
4. Losun finwo omo eki dokita kotode...

It is crucial to mention that the above lyrics have communication value only to an audience that is competent in Yoruba. This consequently, limits the coverage of whatever message that may be embedded in the song. An examination of most of his songs such as “Coolest kid in Africa”, ‘Return’ and “Gbagbe Oshi” report similar findings:

1. Mo ni gbagbe Oshi – shaba – daba
2. Mo ni gbagbe... shizzi
3. Omo pon dearea
4. *We leave a trace...* (Davido, **gbagbe Oshi**)
5. *And the way she put it on me*
6. Oju nkan mi, oju nkan mi oh
7. *Return ni oh, baby* (Davido, “Return”)

The above lyrics in Yoruba and English have produced a hybrid linguistic situation whose value is restricted to the Yoruba audience while the rest of the audience is cut off from the message. It is worthy of note that some hip hop artists deploy more of pidgin English in their lyrics than the Nigerian indigenous languages. Tiwa Savage, a female Nigerian hip-hop musician bears evidence of this.

Tiwa Savage’s themes are conspicuously lacking in depth as she makes no pretence whatsoever, to engaging the core issues of society. Her songs are characteristically loaded with erotic images in celebration of sexuality. Her duet with Flavour N’abania, “Baby mo” bears this out:

1. *Baby softly shake your something baby mo*

2. *De way youwynedey kill me softly*
3. *Sugar sugar sweet bananaonyeke mo*
4. *Deway youwyne dey kill me softly lolo mo... oya dancia*
5. *Elewu ko gwewubaby die tiebio mo*
6. *Okirikata wanka dancia for me...*

The above excerpt depicts the predominant theme of Tiwa Savage's songs which is sexuality. The phrase "shake your something" in line 1, is a call on the female to shake her buttocks in a seductive dance. This then arouses the lover who confesses that "de way you wyne dey kill me softly". Crucial to our study is the blend of certain indigenous linguistic elements with English in the lyrics such as "mo"(an exclamation) "sugar-sugar" (an emphasis), "oya (come on) and "lolo" a female title borrowed from Igbo which refers to the wife of a chief. There are also sentential mixes of English and Igbo languages in the 5th and 6th lines.

1. *N'abania my baby o*
2. *You go fall in love*
3. *When I shake it for you*
4. *You go beg for more...*

The foregoing discussion has been an investigation of linguistic hybridity in the songs of Tuface, Davido and Tiwa Savage, who are contemporary hip-hop Nigerian musicians. The objective is to point out particularly, cases of linguistic hybridity and to show that hybridity is a hindrance to effective communication as observed in the works under study.

Implications of Linguistic Hybridity for National Development

Rather than contribute to national development, hip hop music as discussed above, fall short of this very important objective in some aspects because of the linguistic elements employed (hybridity). The concept of development is a victim of definitional pluralism as there exists varied understandings of its meaning. Chrisman views it as "a process of societal advancement where improvements in the well-being of people are generated through strong partnerships between all sectors, corporate bodies and other groups in the society". The development of the individuals, organized bodies and a

society's structures inevitably, leads to national development.

In a strict sense, National development is the socio-economic, political as well as religio-cultural advancement of a country or nation. It is when national development is conceived in this broad sense "as social, cultural, political, religious and economic with its goal as the full realization of human potential" (Kaan 184) that music, of any kind, can have a role to play in national development. In this wise, music is found to be very useful in driving development as observed by Kaan.

For every facet of the nation to develop however there must be sufficient flow of information within all the individual units of such a nation which underscores the importance of effective communication in development. Without communication, there can be no meaning exchanges which define the purpose for every group activity and the roles of each individual member towards actualizing the set goals. This then means that without communication, all organized human institutions will not have been possible. This is exemplified in the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel where language occurred in the absence of meaning and led to communication breakdown.

The Nigerian contemporary hip-hop music can only impact positively on national development if it is seen to act as a medium of information and education through which the perspectives of the nation's population will be broadened, to appreciate and participate in social, economic and political issues. Even its value as a foreign exchange earner will be compromised if it has no functional value in itself. This reflects the opinion expressed by Amase while discussing the role of the musician as a social critic. According to him:

[music]" serves as a vital tool for looking into government policies and decisions, and like a two edged sword, it has the power to cause both negative and positive responses among people. Music criticism educates the masses on activities of government and people who occupy certain positions"(10).

Music and the musicians are more valuable to the society, when their music contain

messages transmitted in a language that is explicit, than entertainment and the entertainer. It has been a tool for directing the people to the path of truth and light, it preaches freedom and the need for a democratic society, it advocates self-reliance and condemns parasitic dependency, improves mental and emotional health and serves as a powerful vehicle of social mobilization; all of these are quintessential to a nation's growth and stability.

The Nigerian hip-hop music can be an invaluable partner in the nation's growth if it can harness its current advantage of enjoying the faithful patronage of a teeming young Nigerian population which represent over 60% of the nation's total population (National Population Commission), to inform them well. This prospect however, appears bleak in the face of their current fashion of linguistic hybridity where song lyrics are rendered in multiple indigenous codes and laced with lexical innovations and coinages that are largely incomprehensible and therefore, inaccessible to their multicultural and divergent linguistic audience.

Conclusion

This paper has investigated linguistic hybridity in Nigeria hip-hop music culture. The objective was to demonstrate the multilingual status of Nigeria hip-hop and determine the intelligibility of the lyrics of the songs to the Nigerian in particular, and the world audience at large. The paper particularly examines the deployment of linguistic features such as code switching and code mixing, word borrowings, lexicalization, coinages, creative prefixation and the incorporation of the phonological and grammatical features of the indigenous languages into these songs, and their implication on the

communicative value of the songs. The songs of Tuface Idibia, Davido and Tiwa Savage studied in this paper reveal a complex case of linguistic mixture which, while serving the aesthetic designs of the artists, present problems of intelligibility for its audience.

There is no doubt that Nigerian hip-hop music industry has a serious influence on the nation's population, especially the youth who have begun to model their lives on the themes and lifestyles of these artists. The reality that many Nigerians have become self-sufficient through their engagement in one aspect of this music industry or another is not in doubt. We must also not lose sight of the fact that this form of music serves as one of the potential uniting forces of the country's multicultural population, who enjoy it across social class, age and religion. It should therefore, not be sacrificed on the altar of hybridity that hinders communication.

Given the vast potentials of the industry, this paper suggests that Nigerian artists should make their themes more accessible to the audience. Artists should couche their songs in accessible and acceptable languages that are readily understood by the Nigerian public. If they must hybridise, they should do it in such a way that more and more people will get their messages. This will not only solve the problem of ambiguity in their lyrics which inhibits communication, it will also popularize local languages and cultures. Since this music enjoys a wide coverage and acceptance, the artists should cash in on this and inform, re-orientate and propagate government projects and programmes in order to trigger the much needed national cohesiveness and development in the country.

WORKS CITED

- Adeola, Shola. "Contemporary Nigerian Popular Music: A Tool for National Development". Nigerian Theatre Journal. 6 (1) 2001: 80-85. Web. Accessed: 13/08/2018.
- Babalola, Taiwo and Taiwo, Rotimi. "Code-switching in Contemporary Nigerian Hip-Hop Music". 2009. Web. Accessed: 14/08/2018.
- Christman, Taylor. "Music Therapy: Diverse Approaches." 1970. Web: Accessed :16/8/18.
- Dunu, Ifeoma & Ugbo, Gregory. "Women in Nigerian Popular Music: Empowered or Debased". Global journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. 3 (5). 35-52. 2015. Web. Accessed: 22/07/2018.
- Ewelu, Benjamin I. "Private Language Thesis and its Epistemological Import: A Study in Philosophy of language." 2008 .Philpapers.org. Web. Accessed: 22/7/18.

- Green, Lucy. "Ideology" in B. Homer & t. Swiss (Eds.). *The Key Terms in Popular Music and Culture*. United Kingdom: Blackwell. 1996. Print.
- Grimes, Barbara, F. (Ed.) *Ethnologue. Languages of the World*. 14th Edition. Dallas Texas: International Academy Bookstore, 2000. Print.
- Hall Stuart. *Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse*. Birmingham: Centre for Cultural Studies. 1973. Print.
- Holmes, Janet. *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. London: Longman, 1992. Print.
- Hudson, Richard. *Sociolinguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. Print.
- Kaan, Aondover and Amase Lanior. "Nigerian Pidgin: A Revaluation of its Role in National Development." *The salt of the system*. (177-189) Lagos: Bahiti and Dalila Publishers, 2015. Print.
- Khular, Payal. "Differences between Code Switching and Code Mixing". 2018. Languagelinguistics.com Web. Accessed 7/5/2020.
- Leva, Vareba. "Language and Message Construction in Nigerian Multilingual Hip-Hop Music." *International Journal of Media Science Works*. 1(2): 9-14. 2015 Web. Accessed: 7/08/2018.
- Liade, Olusegun and Omobowale, Ayokunle. "Music Multilingualism and Hip-Hop Consummation among Youths in Nigeria". *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*. 3 (2), 469-477. 2011 web. Accessed: 5/08/2018.
- Littlejohn, Stephen. "Theories of Human Communication." Web. Accessed 14/7/2018.
- Ojoawo, Adeola. "A Discourse analysis of Sexual Themes in Nigerian Hip-Hop Music". *Journal of the Department of English, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife*. 12 (2). 104-140. 2016. Web. Accessed: 4/08/2018.
- Ojukwu, Ebele, Obielozie, Elizabeth, & Eimone, Chinyere. "Nigerian Values and Contemporary Popular Music: A New Look." *African Journals online*. 114 – 129. Web. Accessed 14/7/18
- Price, Emmett. "What's new? The Effect of Hip-Hop on Everyday English. *ejournal USA*. 2007. Web. Accessed: 14/07/2018.
- Sackey, Ofofu. "The African Composer as a Social Critic". Web. Accessed: 14/09/2018.
- Railton, Diane & Watson, Paul. "Naughty Girls and Red Blooded Women: Representations of Female Heterosexuality in Music Video." *Feminist Media Studies* 2007. (1) 51- 63. Web: Accessed: 14/7/2018.
- Sarah, Thomason. *Language Contact*. Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2001. Print.
- Shishima, Daniel. "English Language Endangerment: An Assessment of the use of Slangy Expression by Students of Benue State University Makurdi." *The Salt of the System*. (52-61) Lagos: Bahiti and Dalila Publishers, 2015. Print.
- Trudgill, Peter. *Sociolinguistics*. London: Penguin, 2000. Print.
- Ubong, Josiah, Ekerete. "Multilingualism and Linguistic Hybridity: An Experiment with Educated Nigerian Spoken English." *American Institute for Policy Development*. 157- 184. Web. Accessed 14/7/2018.
- Ugot, Mercy. "Lexical Pidgin Innovations in Contemporary Nigerian Popular Music." *Oniong: A Contemporary Journal of Inter- Disciplinary Studies* (1), 2009. 225-238.
- Vidal, A. O. "From Traditional Antiquity to Contemporary Modernism: A Multilateral Development of Music in Nigeria." *Music and Social Dynamics in Nigeria*, 2002. 112-125. Web: Accessed: 25/7/2018.