

Language Tonality through Dialectical Registration in Selected Musical Tracks of Adéolá Fáléye

Abstract

Music and Language consist of structured patterns of tonality, pitch, duration and intensity, and are temporal, hierarchical, communicative and expressive to derive meaning as expected from both the sender and the receiver. It is on this premise that this paper investigates the contributions of Adeola Faleye to musical and language tonality through dialectical registration in her selected musical tracks especially, on language tonality, preservation and promotion. This paper adopts a descriptive method to examine the musical and language tonality as found in the dialectical registration of selected towns in Southwestern Nigeria. This paper finds out that the use of lyrics in the selected songs of Adeola Faleye communicate meaning to the hearers and also gives a sense of belonging to the dialectical registration of the people of these towns, not only has the songs achieved the role of energizing the emotional feelings of the people of the selected towns but has also cantabile these languages. The paper therefore concludes that the musical and language tonality as practiced by Adeola Faleye has not only made communication meaningful and helpful but, has equally popularized Ife dialects among other neighboring towns in the Southwestern Nigeria.

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Introduction

This paper is a reflection of Adeola Faleye's musical activities and contributions to music and language tonality through dialectical registration in her selected musical tracks especially, on cultural promotions and preservations of Ife dialects in Southwestern Nigeria. Recounting from

anthropogenesis, music and language have been treated as part of African cultural channels to drive communication from the sender to the receiver at different times. This duality of communication power is reflected in virtually all African communities especially, in the southwestern Nigeria. This paper focuses on the musical and language tonality with perceptive dialectical registration as peculiar to and as identified in the selected songs as specified in the research limitations skills and on whether pitch-processing deficits might influence tonal language perception. In an attempt to examine whether there is an interactions between musical and language tonality as a function, Ott, Langer, Oechslin, Meyer, and Jancke (2011), note that professional musicians process their lyrical content in line with language tonality to convey registered meanings to listeners, it was also argued that musicians possess a neural proficiency for language selectively to sustain auditory attention to and perception of language and that music thus represents a potential benefit for right message comprehension.

In the same thinking, Gordon, Magne, and Large (2011) examine the interaction between linguistic stress and musical meter and established that alignment of linguistic stress and musical meter in song enhances musical beat tracking and comprehension of lyrics especially for those that understands the content of that language. Investigating the effect of a musical chord's tonal function on syntactic and semantic processing of language, Hoch, Poulin-Charronnat, and Tillmann (2011) conclude that neural and psychological resources of music and language processing strongly overlap. Although there are still some differences between music and speech-processing, there thus is growing evidence that speech and music processing strongly overlap yet, the duo can still function independently as well dependently but the fact remains that music and language could be two expressions of the same competence for human communication.

Music and Language Relationship

Language, according to Olaniyan (2014), is one of the five dimensions in music creativity; this was further defined as a ‘system for the expression of thoughts and feelings and also by the use of spoken sounds or conventional symbols’ (Collins: 1979). Every culture has its own language either in speech or music which are used as means of communication and interaction that are culturally developed and equally culture based. Olaniyan (2000) observes that:

Vocal language of music encompasses the text proper. The texts are made up of descriptive praises as in love songs and songs for praising traditional rulers. Texts are also derived from proverbs, folk songs, idioms, metaphors, anecdotes, simile, irony, etc. It could be noted that contextual occurrences and current affairs provide necessary stimulus for composition of text (Olaniyan: 2000:152)

It is equally worth to say here that most African instruments derive its tonality from languages especially, the Yoruba language which could be displayed in the use of the talking drum as human voice imitator. In Africa, music becomes effectively understood only if the text language is equally well understood, then the music gives direct message and channels good communication. Furthermore, the incidence and context of performance determine the extent to which drum communication is understood in Africa. Blackings (1973:41) states that “the contexts in which songs are sung are not exclusive, but the way in which they are sung is generally determined by context”. Chernoff (1979:31) also confirms the importance of appreciating the context of performance by stating that ‘we understand that music’s effectiveness and meaning are dependent upon its context because aesthetic standard of judgment, taste and perception are relative.

Pinmiloye (2006:125) discovers that for one to understand drum language properly in communication, one need to understand the context to which the drum is being used. He affirms that “whenever the semiotic figure (drum speeches or rhythm) is contextualized, musical language communication would always be easier”. It is thus sufficient to say at this point that we can clearly perceive music and language only if we understand how they achieve their effectiveness, within the situation surrounding their use especially within social situation. However, throughout the history of Yoruba people, music and language are inter-related and well integrated, the inter-relatedness of music and language thus revealed that most of Adeola Faleye’s music perform dualistic functional role of promotion and preservation. On this note, Nzewi (2005) concludes that for music to fulfill its function as an agent of the people’s cultural communion, the music should represent a ‘five dimensional’ creative art forms of music, language, dance, drama, and visual arts.

Adéolá Fáléye’s Music as a Socio-dialectical expression

Virtually in all African societies, performances of music like other forms of artistic expressions such as theatre and dance represent an integral part of the total culture of which language is inclusive. In this connection, Okafor (1994) describes culture as the total expression of life of any given group of people which is usually passed from generation to generation. This is to say that the music of a given cultural or sub-cultural group is the traditional music of such people which is generally a communal composition. Furthermore, Nketia (1979) opines that African musical culture do not only have its anthrop genetic only from historical roots of Africa but, overshoots in other cultural aspects of dress style, musical practice, language usage, and shares common features of procedural pattern and basic contextual understandings.

Agu (1999) observes that in typical African cultures, music is a rallying point and unifying factor in community life, and in this connection, music becomes a medium for expressing and displaying cultural and social life of different African peoples. Musical activity in African societies is functional and often reflects the socio-economic and political organization of the society as observed by Samuel (2009) with the argument that emphasis is placed on musical activity as a functioning part of the society and that the music life in sub-Saharan Africa is focused on social events and other similar socio-cultural activities. Musical arts as a form of human behaviour, plays some psychological functions and aesthetic roles in Yoruba traditions of music making and performances. This was buttressed by Blackings (1976) that music can express social attitude and cognitive processes which are useful and effective when it is perceived by people who shared common cultural understandings.

Adéolá Fáléye's Music and Dialectical Language Tonality

Over the years especially, with the penetration of western musical ideas and understandings, our traditional music with lyrical content have lost the sense of tonality in speech and musical communication when spoken or cantabile. Moreover, with the tonal nature of Yoruba and several dialects incorporated the idea of relating to a tonal center inherent in African songs. Adeola Faleye has been engaging in the process of dialectical language through musical tonality, dramatic reality and dance where she has painstakingly researched into the dialects of selected towns in the southwestern Nigeria, this paper therefore identified Ile-Ife and Ibadan vis-à-vis the existing sub-dialects within the two selected towns as musically produced by Adeola Faleye in two selected musical albums. It is generally accepted that the audience will

have to interpret the lyrics based on context/sentence arrangement. In general, sentences/lyrics sang/spoken substituting chosen pitches for lingual tone are easily understandable.

It could also be taken that tones can be quite absolute in this context, In other words, if ‘person A and person B are speaking same words in the dialectical language won't necessarily mean that the two would at the same pitch level, but person A will consistently say the same word at a very similar pitch level even on different days. So with that in mind, the instance of absolute pitch for tonal speakers makes some sense, although it is by no means necessary to have perfect pitch to speak a tonal language but can only achieve a sense of tonality through the use of tone marks which predominantly applicable to the Yoruba Language of the southwestern Nigeria. Chernoff (1979) observes that “the best way to begin to appreciate culture in music is to try to understand the people who make it and its place in their society”. The functional role that language tonalities play in Africans' socio-cultural life is enormous. Music, especially in Yoruba culture, has strong utilitarian association. Chernoff (1979) also states that

There are very few important events which happen without music through the language of any culture and the range and diversity of specific kinds of music can astound a westerner as a result of the harmony of language and music tonality.

The relevance of language in music is analogical to fuel in a vehicle; the propelling factor of music is the medium of expression, a factor that has been well adapted in most of Adeola Faleye’s musical albums, buttressing this fact, Agu (1999) notes that in typical African cultures, music is a rallying point and unifying factor in community life through the language of any particular society. According to Sloboda, (1996), music as an expression of philosophy, depends on the way people in different cultures hear and organize them which tends to conform with their language, philosophy, beliefs and perceptions of the cosmos.

Adéolá Fáléye's Music and Language promotion

One fact I have come to realize about Adeola Faleye and her musical voyage is that all her songs and rhythms are peculiar to a one particular cultural or sub-cultural group in the Southwestern Nigeria; this was achieved through dialectical registration of each community of people with common language, belief, value and aspiration. Several examples of such songs are labelled as part of musical productions of Adeola Faleye and of which has the certificate of intellectual property. Cultural-lingua promotion and identity according to Bennet (2012), have been addressed in many disciplines to anthropology, history, sociology, political science, cognitive science, cultural studies, gender studies and psychology. Researchers such Frith (1992) has written on the concept of identity in relation to language and music in framing how individual views himself and his cultural attachments to a particular society. It is widely acceptable in Africa that where there's music, there are sometimes words in the form of lyrics; the lyrical context makes the communication possible or impossible. These musical words have had an effect on society that has included rhetoric, fantasy, appropriation, and also participation. For example, in some cultures like the African-Americans, the rhetoric found in the lyrics of rap music has been an elevating force in status for some members of the community (Alaja-Browne: 1986).

Arnold (1993, p. 228) opines that 'everyone seems to be labelled into one sub-cultural group or the other', even in Nigeria. Chernoff (1979) concludes that even in the caveman days, everyone was in a certain tribe, ethnic or group which gave them special and peculiar identity. These groups of people also listen to particular types of music, wear certain types of dress, eat certain types of food and operate within certain cultural ambience. Other forerunners of music

research consider the multiple ways that language and music are continuously interwoven into everyday personal and social life. The primary uses of language in music across a wide range of individuals are rational or cognitive appreciation, emotional regulation, and as background for collective cultural affiliation with harmonious lingua and musical bond.

The promotional element of language and other embedded cultural values through music is located in how music has made known hidden languages such as ifè ‘igbomìnà’, ‘íla’ ‘ikìrè’ ‘ìjèsà and a host of others.’ It has also been observed that there are strong attachments between a particular cultural music and indigenes of such cultural cycle on the basis of identifying with such music. In this connection that De Nora (2000), asserts that ‘music has been tied to and inseparable from our identity, in his argument; he defines musical use as “self-conscious and work articulation,” or a tool to articulate ourselves to others in an intentional way. Individuals can continually change and update their musical image to manage new tastes and life changes’. De Nora writes that “the sense of ‘self’ is locatable in music... Musical materials provide terms and templates for elaborating self identity, for identity’s identification”. This suggests that Adéolá Fáléye applies individual and collective use of music to promote and to make understandable, the reality of the importance of these set of people and define them internally as well as externally’.

Dialectical Registration in the Selected Musical Tracks of Adéolá Fáléye

This section of the paper states the dialectical registration in terms of the lyrics (language text) and musical values as applied by Adéolá Fáléye in her musical tracks. These tracks were selected because each addresses a particular dialect within the ambience of this paper. The texts of each musical track are examined below:

SONG 1: *ÌBA BÀBÁ T'Ò FÚN WÀ SÈ*

Solo: *Ìba Bàbá T'ò Fún Wà Sè*

Ogbón t'ò fún wa làá nlò yí o

Àní óse é se kò ní sà' se lówó Ògún onirè okoòmi

Ègbè léyìn omo òrúkàn

Ògúnwúsi alága yèyè Íbà

Ìba yèyè Ìba bàbá, ìbà gbà ìbà omodé

Ìbà Gbogbo omo Ògúnwúsi

{Chorus} *Ìba Bàbá T'ò Fún Wà Sè*

SONG 2: *ÓDI KÓRÓ*

Call: *Ódi Kóró, Ódi Kóró, Oyè náà bó'n lé e wa, Ódi Kóró*

Response: *Ódi Kóró, Ódi Kóró, Oyè náà bó'n lé e wa, Ódi Kóró*

In order to establish a musicological documentation of these tracks, the melodies of the song were notated and could as well be performed by any musically literate individuals. Below is the staff notation of the selected tracks.

Song 1

Ìbà Baba wa t'ó fúnwa se

Adekogbe and Omolaye

Lead Voice *Solo*
I ba ba-ba r'o fun wa a se e,

Backup I *Chorus*
I

Backup II
I

Backup III
I

O gbon t'i o fun wa la - nlo yi - o

ba ba-ba r'o fun wa - se - I

ba ba-ba r'o fun wa - se - I

ba ba-ba r'o fun wa - se - I

A ni o se e se, k'o ni sa i se lo wo o gun o ni re - o ko mi

ba ba-ba r'o fun wa - se - I

ba ba-ba r'o fun wa - se - I

ba ba-ba r'o fun wa - se - I

E gbe le yin - o mo o run kan

ba ba-ba r'o fun wa - se - I

ba ba-ba r'o fun wa - se - I

ba ba-ba r'o fun wa - se - I

O gun wu si, a la ga ye -ye I ba

ba ba-ba r'o fun wa - se - I

ba ba-ba r'o fun wa - se - I

ba ba-ba r'o fun wa - se - I

I ba ye -ye, i ba ba-ba, i ba-gba i ba o

ba ba-ba r'o fun wa - se - I

ba ba-ba r'o fun wa - se - I

ba ba-ba r'o fun wa - se - I

mo - de I ba

ba ba - ba r'o fun wa - se -

ba ba - ba r'o fun wa - se -

ba ba - ba r'o fun wa - se -

gbo gbo o mo O - gun wu si

I ba ba - ba r'o fun wa - se -

I ba ba - ba r'o fun wa - se -

I ba ba - ba r'o fun wa - se -

Song 2

ODIKORO

Adekogbe and Omolaye

Lead Voice *Call*

O di ko ro, o di ko ro, O ye naa -

Backup I *Response*

Backup II

Backup III

-bo nle - e waa o di ko ro

O di ko ro, o di

O di ko ro, o di

O di ko ro, o di

ko ro, o ye naa - bo nle - e wa o di ko ro

ko ro, o ye naa - bo nle - e wa o di ko ro

ko ro, o ye naa - bo nle - e wa o di ko ro

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