

A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Code-switching and Code-mixing in the Lyrics of Nigerian Afrobeats Songs

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Abstract

The paper investigates the phenomena of code-switching and code-mixing in the lyrics of Nigerian Afrobeats songs, exploring how these linguistic practices reflect and influence sociocultural dynamics. Furthermore, the paper identifies the patterns and types of code-switching and code-mixing in the lyrics of the selected songs; shows their sociolinguistics effects and functions in Nigeria and assesses their influence in enhancing Nigeria's culture in the global context. Four songs released by four prominent Nigerian Afrobeats artistes between 2022 and 2023 were subjected to sociolinguistic analysis using Junko Hibiya's approach to sociolinguistic variationist theory. The results reveal that three languages are employed in the lyrics of Nigerian Afrobeats songs: the English language, Nigerian Pidgin and Nigerian indigenous languages, with each language playing distinct roles in the songs. The results further establish that the creative use of language in the lyrics of Afrobeats songs in the years past has rubbed off positively on the songs. Finally, the results show that the Nigerian culture is presented in its best form to the global audience through the languages and the roles they play in the songs. The study concludes that the trend is not just for the purpose of creativity, but also to make sociolinguistic impacts, which include the preservation of language, encouragement of language teaching and learning, and, ultimately, the global acceptance of Nigerian cultures and languages.

Key words: Code-switching, code-mixing, Afrobeats culture, sociolinguistic impacts, Nigerian Afrobeats songs

Introduction

Sociolinguistics, as defined by Holmes (2013), is the study of the relationship between language and society; it examines how social factors influence language use. This field of study highlights the complex interactions between language, culture, and society. By examining the relationship between language and society, sociolinguistics provides valuable insights into the complex dynamics of human communication and social interaction (Adegbite, 2020; Hudson 1999; Milroy & Muysken, 1995). According to Holmes (2013), social factors such as gender, class, age, ethnicity. Other key concepts in sociolinguistics include: code-switching: switching between languages or dialects in a single conversation or interaction (Gumperz, 1982); language variation: The study of how language use varies across different social contexts and groups and language attitudes: the study of how people perceive and evaluate different languages or dialects (Garrett, 2010).

Code-switching, code-mixing, and multilingualism are interconnected concepts in sociolinguistics that play a crucial role in shaping language use in diverse cultural contexts (Harmers & Blanc, 1989). Understanding these concepts is essential for analysing their manifestation in various forms of expression, including music. Nigerian Afrobeats music is

characterized by its vibrant and eclectic language use, reflecting the country's rich linguistic diversity. With over 250 ethnic groups and more than 500 languages spoken in Nigeria (Oladayo & Balogun, 2021), Afrobeats artists often draw upon multiple languages and dialects to create a unique sonic identity. Nigerian Afrobeats songs frequently feature code-switching and code-mixing, where artists seamlessly switch between languages, such as English, Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, and Pidgin English. This linguistic flexibility allows artists to convey complex emotions, cultural nuances, and social commentary.

Adeyanju (1998) explains that code-switching is the practice of alternating between two or more languages or language varieties within a single conversation, interaction, or even sentence. This can occur between different languages, dialects, or registers. Code-switching serves various purposes, such as: identity negotiation: code-switching can be used to signal group membership, affiliation, or to distance oneself from a particular group; contextualization: switching codes can help speakers adapt to different social contexts, topics, or audiences; emphasis or emphasis shift: code-switching can be used to add emphasis, convey emotions, or create a specific tone; discourse strategy: code-switching can be employed to manage conversations, signal transitions, or convey complex ideas. Code-mixing can be a result of language contact, bilingualism, or multilingualism. It can serve similar purposes as code-switching, such as identity negotiation, contextualization, or emphasis (Adegbite, 2020).

Multilingualism refers to the ability to communicate in multiple languages, either individually or within a community. Multilingual individuals or societies often exhibit complex language use patterns, including code-switching and code-mixing. Multilingualism can: foster creativity: multilingual individuals can draw upon multiple linguistic resources to create new expressions or convey nuanced meanings; facilitate communication: multilingualism can enable communication across linguistic and cultural boundaries; shape identity: multilingual individuals may use language to negotiate multiple identities, affiliations, or cultural backgrounds (Enisire 2024; Adegbite 2020).

The language used in the lyrics of Nigerian Afrobeats songs often reflects the artist's cultural background, personal experiences, and social context. For example, Yoruba and Igbo languages: Artists from southwestern and southeastern Nigeria often incorporate Yoruba and Igbo languages, respectively, to showcase their cultural heritage and connect with their audience. As a widely spoken lingua franca in Nigeria, Pidgin English is frequently used in Afrobeats songs to reach a broader audience and convey messages that transcend ethnic boundaries (Akande, 2013). English is often used in Afrobeats songs to appeal to a global audience, convey complex ideas, or add a touch of sophistication. Nigerian Afrobeats artists are known for their linguistic creativity, often inventing new words, phrases, and slang that become popular among fans. This innovative language use contributes to the genre's dynamic and evolving nature (Omoniyi 2006).

The language used in Nigerian Afrobeats songs has played a significant role in the genre's global popularity. Artists like Wizkid, Davido, and Tiwa Savage have successfully blended local languages with international styles, making Afrobeats a staple of global music. By exploring the language of Nigerian Afrobeats songs, this study hopes to project insight into the complex relationships between language, culture, and identity in this vibrant musical genre. The language used in Nigerian Afrobeats songs has played a significant role in the genre's

global popularity. Artists like Wizkid, Davido, and Tiwa Savage have successfully blended local languages with international styles, making Afrobeats a staple of global music. The complex relationships between language, culture, and identity in Nigerian Afrobeats music are multifaceted and dynamic (Babalola & Taiwo 2014; Akande 2013; Omoniyi 2006).

The English language, a heritage adopted to be Nigeria's official language through the influence of colonisation, has been playing more dominant roles in the affairs of Nigeria since its introduction than the several indigenous languages that exist in the country (Adegbite 2020). It serves as the official language, playing the significant roles of the language of government, education, media, international relations, business and other important functions in the Nigerian society. The use of multiple languages challenges the dominance of English and asserts the importance of Nigerian languages. The power English language wields is so supreme that other languages in the Nigerian are made to appear inferior to it, this dominance is what the phenomena of code-switching and code-mixing challenges through the infusion of Nigerian Pidgin (NP) and Nigerian indigenous languages in the lyrics of Nigerian Afrobeats songs (Babalola & Taiwo 2014).

According to Akande (2013), NP serves as the unofficial *lingua franca* of the country, a language that cuts across all social strata being spoken by people whose languages are mutually unintelligible. It serves as a unifying tool between the different people of different linguistic and ethnic backgrounds in Nigeria. It is a creole language that originated from simplifying the English language to enhance communication. There are three major indigenous languages in Nigeria: Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, exhibiting the diverse nature of the culture and language and NP's richness. The musical context seems to be one of the few spaces that a particular indigenous language can be chosen for usage over others and there will be no dispute. None of the indigenous languages are chosen as the national or official language in the bid to avoid any form of dispute that may arise as Nigeria has over 520 indigenous languages (Akande & Okanlawon, 2011; Adegbija, 2004).

Previous research about sociolinguistics concepts, code-switching and code-mixing regarding music have all achieved an aim of projecting contributions of code-switching and code-mixing to artistic expression, rhythm, and meaning-making in music which has contributed to the general knowledge of this field of study. Out of these research endeavours are Enisire (2024)'s "code-switching and code-mixing in the popular music of Arube Otor of Isoko."; Balogun and Oladayo's (2021)'s "code-switching and code-mixing in the selected tracks of hip-hop music of Flavour and 9ice" and Nigerian Pidgin (NP) and Nigerian indigenous languages in the lyrics of Nigerian Afrobeats songs (Babalola and Taiwo, 2017). These studies have successfully concluded their aim of reflecting the ethnolinguistic diversity of the Nigerian nation, integration of the ethnolinguistic diversity of Nigeria and global and local influence on music, and lastly, the reflection of identity through language and knowledge of how code-switching and code-mixing in music preserve, rejuvenate, and revitalize the people's language and culture.

Though their aims were achieved, it seems not much studies have investigated how these phenomena have impacted Nigerian music through the use language to convey cultural identity and heritage as well as, the role code-switching play in shaping the cultural significance of Afrobeats music and how this has positively influenced Nigeria's image globally and this is

what this research seeks to do. This study hopes to answer the following Questions: What are the patterns and types in which languages are switched and mixed in the lyrics of Nigerian Afrobeats songs? To what extent have code-switching and code-mixing impacted in shaping the cultural significance of Afrobeats music? How has Afrobeats music been received globally, and what are the factors that contribute to its international appeal?

This research aims to describe how code-switching and code-mixing in Nigerian Afrobeats songs have impacted Nigeria locally and globally. The specific objectives are to: identify the types and patterns of code-switching and code-mixing in the lyrics of the selected Nigerian Afrobeats songs; examine the role of Nigeria Pidgin and indigenous languages, code-switching, and cultural references in Afrobeats music; and investigate the impacts of the global popularity of Afrobeats on cultural exchange, and the role of multilingualism in facilitating this exchange.

Afrobeats songs by four Nigerian artistes, Ayra Starr, Burna Boy, Davido, and Rema, were selected for this sociolinguistics study for several reasons. These artists showcase the diverse language use in Nigerian Afrobeats, blending English, Nigerian Pidgin, and indigenous languages in their songs. This blend reflects the complex cultural identity of Nigeria and provides rich data for studying language use and cultural expression. The selected artists frequently employ code-switching and multilingualism in their lyrics, making them ideal subjects for studying these linguistic phenomena. By examining their songs, researchers can gain insights into how Nigerian artists use language to convey meaning, connect with audiences, and negotiate cultural identities (Oladosu, 2011).

Burna Boy, in particular, is known for his thought-provoking lyrics that address social and political issues. Analysing the lyrics of his songs, along with those of the other selected artists, can reveal how Afrobeats artists use language to comment on societal issues and tell stories that resonate with their audience. The artists' music is popular among Nigerian youth, making them suitable for studying the impact of Afrobeats on youth culture and identity. Researchers can explore how the artists' language use and cultural expression shape and reflect the values, attitudes, and experiences of young Nigerians. With artists like Burna Boy and Davido gaining international recognition, the selected artists offer a unique opportunity to study the global spread of Afrobeats and its implications for cultural exchange and language use (Enisire, 2024; Oladosu, 2011). These four artistes have been selected because of the global popularity of their songs. One song is selected from each artiste between 2022 and 2023. This study falls within the purview of social-cultural linguistics and it focuses on the trend of code-switching and code-mixing Nigerian languages with English in Nigerian Afrobeats songs.

Literature Review

Sociolinguistics and Its Relevance to Nigerian Music

Adegbite (2020) posits that sociolinguistics plays a significant role in understanding the complex dynamics of language use in Nigerian music, particularly in the context of multilingualism and code-switching. Nigerian artists often blend multiple languages, such as English, Nigerian Pidgin, Yoruba, Igbo, and other local dialects, to convey emotions, cultural identity, and authenticity in their music. Nigerian artists employ code-switching and multilingualism to connect with diverse audiences, convey complex emotions, and add cultural

depth to their lyrics. This linguistic phenomenon is a hallmark of Nigerian music, reflecting the country's rich cultural heritage and linguistic diversity. Nigerian music showcases the country's cultural identity through the use of indigenous languages, rhythms, and cultural references. Artists like Burna Boy, Davido, and Ayra Starr use their music to promote Nigerian culture and values, while also addressing social issues and contemporary concerns.

Sociolinguistics helps us understand how language use in Nigerian music reflects social context, power dynamics, and cultural norms. For instance, the use of Nigerian Pidgin English in music can be seen as a way to connect with a broader audience, while also asserting cultural identity. Nigerian music has gained global recognition, with artists like Burna Boy and Wizkid collaborating with international artists and showcasing Nigerian culture to a global audience. This globalization of Nigerian music has led to the creation of new sounds, styles, and linguistic fusions. Nigerian music plays a vital role in preserving the country's cultural heritage, promoting linguistic diversity, and fostering a sense of national pride. Nigerian music often addresses social issues, providing a platform for artists to comment on contemporary concerns and promote critical thinking. Nigerian music has become a significant cultural export, promoting Nigerian culture and values to a global audience.

Sociolinguistics as a study focuses on the use of language mostly in social and informal conversations and in media around us which happens to be controlled by people of various social groups (Wardhaugh and Fuller, 2015). This claim is also supported by Meyerhoff (2018) that sociolinguistics is interested in the social dimension of language, that is, sociolinguistics is about how language is used socially which can vary due to the difference in gender, class, age or ethnicity. In sociolinguistics, language is made to demonstrate its functional potency in society when the dynamic social nuances that are invoked by users are brought to the fore" (Oladayo & Balogun 2021; Adegbite, 2020)

Kelly (2016) explores how music teachers in schools can understand better how music is inherent in society and in turn that many aspects of society impact on students' lives. He believes that to effectively and fully understand what music is, the societal factors have to be reviewed, that is, how they have come to play a role in music. Barton (2018) reveals that music tradition has been noted to be dynamic, not static, and has increased substantially as a result of global movements of people and also the access to others' music culture in an online environment. The phenomenon of music would not be possible without acknowledging cultural context and society's impact on its practices. It is an important part of any culture especially in Africa, a continent that prides itself on its cultural heritage. Music is an integral part of African cultural practices and there is hardly any country on the continent without it. Osere (2014) opines that music is the most integral part of most indigenous and cultural practices in Nigeria because of its foremost roles during artistic events and festivals.

Code-switching and Code-mixing in Nigerian Music

Bokamba (1989) defines code-switching as a mixture of words, phrases, and sentences of two different grammatical systems (sub) and can cross sentence boundaries in the same speech event. Code-switching in song lyrics is by no means a recent phenomenon, motivated by the expansion of mass media that provides unprecedented opportunities for people all over the world to be exposed to music originating in cultures other than their own (Davies and Bentahila,

2006). Oladayo and Balogun (2021) affirm that code-switching and code-mixing depict the ethnolinguistic diversity of the Nigerian nation, and link the literate and illiterate. Dunbar (1996) claims that music and language help humans knit together in social groups. Through the careful selection of language choice, evoking emotions might not be the only thing music does, it can also gain the extraordinary power of binding people together by creating a form of solidarity in them. Society, language and music can be said to be intertwined; language and music are part of the components of a society through which a society is recognized. A society cannot be without its culture, what it stands for and language and music are two of the ways this is showcased.

Several scholars have investigated the use of several languages interchangeably and alternatively in the world of Nigerian music and have each come up with several notions about this act which can be quite similar and different all the same. Balogun and Oladayo (2021) attempt a comparative analysis of code-switching and code-mixing in the Nigerian music industry using the lyrics of popular Nigerian artistes - Flavour and 9ice. In carrying out the study, Myers-Scotton's Markedness Model (1993) is employed in investigating the language used in the songs and what influence the choice made has on the artistes and the language. The study's investigation results in the realization of the act of code-switching and code-mixing being done with the use of three languages: English language, Pidgin English and the artiste's mother tongue or first language. It is said to provide the links between the literate and illiterate thereby giving the artistes the popularity desired.

Also, Babalola and Taiwo (2009) investigate the phenomenon of code-switching using five artistes' songs: examined their nature, the reason, stylistic effect and the implication for communication through music. In the study, it is revealed that three languages are used in code-switching: English language, Nigerian Pidgin and Yoruba. Yoruba plays an important role as it serves as "the vehicle for the elaboration of themes within the songs". The study concludes that code-switching in Nigerian hip-hop has created unique identities having positive local and global influences for music and artistes, reflecting the ethnolinguistic diversity of the Nigerian nations. While the study achieved its aims, there was no clear stipulation of a theory being employed which can raise the doubt of it being an effective research work and the analysis of songs with Yoruba as the third language only puts Yoruba on the forefronts, neglecting the other major and minor indigenous languages we have in Nigeria, where as it can be expressed as a symbol for the existence of other (indigenous) languages.

Enisire (2024) further describes these phenomena understudying using the language of the Isoko's people and the popular music of one of their artistes, Arube Otor. It is a study that undertakes the syntactic analysis of code-mixing and code-switching of Isoko and the phonologically modified English words in the music of Arube Otor. The work relied on Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (2004) for its structural analysis and Myers-Scotton's Matrix Language Frame (1993, 2000) for the analysis of the matrix and the embedded languages in the code mixed and code-switched structures. Bridging the language gap, reaching out to a broader audience and maximizing profits are said to be what encourages this trend. The study concluded that the phenomenon in music is not so chaotic but rather rule-governed and structured, and languages in the code-switched sentences are believed to have an asymmetrical

relationship. It is decided that the deliberate switching of languages by artistes is to display their traditions, i.e. the reflection of identity and preservation of language and culture.

Agunbiade (2024) asserts that Afrobeats music has become subject to varying degrees of singularity, thereby experiencing different christenings from one point to another: AfroRave, Afro-Soul, Afro-Adura, Afro-Fusion, Afro-Pop, Afro-Life. While almost every new Afrobeats artiste tries to establish their 'uniqueness', the everyday taxonomy betrays its local provenance, the potpourri of local sounds, and any claims to artistic vision or purpose. For instance, any reference to Fela's Afrobeats and its distinctive features by any current Afrobeats artiste as their artistic grounding is more or less a tongue-in-cheek claim.

These studies have in one way or the other ascertained the fact that the idea and purpose of code-switching and code-mixing in the Nigerian music industry is not lost since they reaffirm cultural and individual identity, and the preservation, rejuvenation and revitalization of language and culture. In sum, these effects highlight the importance of code-switching and code-mixing in Nigerian Afrobeats songs and demonstrating how language use can shape identity, culture and community in music Oladayo and Balogun, (2021).

Theoretical Framework

The analysis of data was carried out based on Interactional Sociolinguistics (IS) framework developed by John Gumperz (1982). Interactional Sociolinguistics is a suitable theoretical framework for analysing code-switching and code-mixing in Nigerian Afrobeats songs because it focuses on the social context of language use, examining how speakers use language to negotiate meaning, identity, and power relationships. Key Concepts of IS include contextualization cues: linguistic features that signal context-specific meanings, such as code-switching, tone, and pitch; conversational inference: the process of interpreting meaning based on contextualization cues and background knowledge; and social identity: the ways in which language use reflects and constructs social identity, including ethnicity, nationality, and social class.

Using the IS framework, researchers can analyse how Nigerian Afrobeats artists use code-switching and code-mixing to: construct identity: negotiate Nigerian identity, cultural heritage, and linguistic diversity; signal social relationships: express solidarity, intimacy, or distance with their audience; create meaning: convey complex emotions, attitudes, and values through language choice. Analytical Tools:

- i. Code-switching analysis: examining the functions of code-switching, such as topic shift, emphasis, or identity negotiation.
- ii. Discourse analysis: analysing the linguistic and social context of code-mixing, including the use of Nigerian Pidgin, English, and indigenous languages.

The IS framework provides a nuanced understanding of the social context of language use in Nigerian Afrobeats songs, highlighting the complex relationships between language, identity, and power. By applying this framework, researchers can gain insights into the ways in which language use reflects and shapes social relationships, cultural identity, and artistic expression. This study employs this theory to investigate how variation in codes affects Nigeria locally and

most especially, globally. Some lines of the song's lyrics were analysed by figuring out which language is used, and where code-switching and code-mixing occur; then, the functions of this switch and mixture of these codes will be related to the development and achievement of the aim.

Methodology

The methodology adopted for undertaking this study is a qualitative one as it takes the form of description in achieving its objectives. The data and data-gathering method entailed downloading the lyrics of the songs of four selected Afrobeats musicians from YouTube, Audiomack platforms. The popular Nigerian Afrobeats artistes, Ayra Starr, Burna boy, Davido and Rema were purposively selected on the basis of virality and international recognition. The selected songs are "Rush" by Ayra Starr, "Last Last" by Burna boy, "Calm Down" by Rema and Davido's "Unavailable".

Data population and sampling method entails the selection of four songs between the year 2022 and 2023 were chosen through purposive sampling method on the basis of global virality and recognition of the songs. The sampling took the consideration of the artistes' influence in changing the minds of people about Afro-culture and exposure to the African and Western music industry. Two years, 2022 and 2023, were also selected since these were the years the four artistes selected were adjudged to be in the prime of their career. The procedure for data analysis entailed identifying the types and patterns of code-switching and code-mixing in Nigerian Afrobeats music, examining the sociolinguistic effects and assessing the enhancement of the Nigerian Afrobeats culture in the international world.

Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Types and Patterns of Code-switching and Code-mixing in Nigerian Afrobeats Songs

The patterns and types of code-switching and code-mixing the lyrics of the selected songs are identified. In the lyrics of the selected Afrobeats songs, there is inter-sentential code-switching, intra-sentential code-switching, extra-sentential code-switching, hybridization and code-mixing. Also, three languages are dominant in the lyrics of the songs: English language (E), Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) and Yoruba (Y). The analysis is done in the following paragraphs:

1. Inter-sentential Code-switching

This is the alternative use of languages between sentences. According to Adegbite (2020, p. 102), "An inter-sentential code change realises a switch that takes place across sentences." In the selected Afrobeats song by Ayra Starr and *Rush*, the inter-sentential code-switching does not occur as frequently as the intra-sentential code-switching, but here is an instance:

Extract 1

You can't count my grace—E
I just dey my lane — P

This expresses that the artiste's grace cannot be measured and that she is focused on herself and nothing more. There are several other instances of this type of code-switching in *Last Last* by Burna Boy. In this song, inter-sentential code-switching is seen the most in the first stanza of the song. Instances identified are:

Extract 2

You go bow for the result, oh — P
Nothing to discuss, oh — E
Cause I dey win by default — P
And without any doubt, oh — E
Omo, me, I be adult, oh — P

The interchange in the use of English language and Pidgin between the sentences is employed to explain the artiste's refusal to be taken for a fool. He sees himself as an adult who believes that the result of any action speaks for itself. Extract 3 below illustrates this:

Extract 3

Last, last — E
Na everyone go chop breakfast — P

These lines capture the entire meaning of the songs as expressed by the artiste that no matter what actions one takes or does not take, everyone will be served breakfast (experience disappointment or rejection) and not necessarily the heartbreak from a romantic relationship; it can even be from the downs of life. There are quite a number of instances of inter-sentential code-switching in Davido's *Unavailable*. Below is an example:

Extract 4

I'm unavailable — E
Dem no dey see me — P

The artiste claims to be unseen since he is busy doing other important things that benefit him which according to him is "owo" [i.e. money] as shown in another instance of this type of code-switching:

Extract 5

If it's not owo o — P
I can't talk — E

The artiste is so focused on making money that he uses pejorative expressions to show his nonchalant attitude towards all other things including whatever rumour people might be spreading about him:

Extract 6

Fuck all the rumour (rumours) — E
Abi e get when I talk sey I be pastor? — P

Just like the song *Rush* when it comes to inter-sentential code-switching, there is not much to write about in *Calm Down* by Rema.

2. Intra-sentential Code-switching

Intra-sentential code-switching is when there is a change of code within a sentence. Adegbite (2020) defines it as a switch that takes place within a sentence at major constituent boundaries such as noun phrases, verb phrases and clauses. In the song *Rush*, this type is quite dominant and can be found in lines of the lyrics like:

Extract 8

But you must hustle if you wan chop - P

The extract reveals the artiste's opinion about survival that unless one works hard, there's no food for one. The choice of the words "hustle" and "chop" shows the degree to which the actions are significant to the survival of humans; a kind of cause and effect. Another example is:

Extract 9

Me no get the time for the hate and the bad energy

This points to the fact that when one is focused on survival tactics, nothing else matters. Instances of intra-sentential code-switching embedded in the lyrics of *Last Last* by Burna boy include:

Extract 10-12

On my mind as you dey talk
Na small thing remain, could've been all over
I need Igbo and Shayo

These lines denote different things ranging from the artiste's mind being on the insults he was receiving which he believes he shouldn't be subjected to. It is also a remembrance of when his life almost ended from a car crash to his need for weed (igbo) and alcohol (shayo) so as to deal with the pain of his heartbreak.

Also, instances of intra-sentential code-switching can also be pointed out from *Unavailable*. Instances such as:

Extract 13-14

If it's not owo o
Cause owo ni koko

These reveal that for the artiste, aside from money, everything is baseless. He draws attention to the fact that money is one of the important needs of humans. Instances can also be found in *Calm Down*:

Extract 15-18

Day one day two, I no fit focus
Finally I find way to talk to the girl but she no wan follow
Cause her friend go dey gum her like chewing gum
Every other girl dey do too much but this girl mellow

These code-switched sentences explain the attraction of the artiste to a lady's beauty, body figure and character which cause him to lose focus but could not do anything about it due to the constant company of her friends. Their interference are obstacles to the opportunity to have access to her.

3. Extra-sentential Code-switching

Extra-sentential code-switching also known as tag switching refers to code-switching that involves the insertion of a tag from one language into an utterance which is otherwise entirely in another language. In the lyrics of the selected Nigerian Afrobeats songs, each has an instance of this type of code-switching.

Extract 19

Aje, aje, aje, can never take my cake away,

"aje" is a Yoruba word in the lyrics of the song *Rush* which is a swear word of certainty or assurance in the context. It is used as a tag which is inserted into the line before the switch to English. Another instance is in Burna boy's *Last Last* in the line:

Extract 20-22

Omo, me, I be adult o
This fame took all my freedom omo 'Cause
I'm a big propeller, save your rumours
Shebi, you feel my pain

The above excerpts are from the lyrics of Burna's *Last Last*, Davido's *Unavailable* and Rema's *Calm Down*, respectively. The Yoruba word "Omo", which refers to a child in the normal context of Yoruba usage, has been used in the lines above as a slang to express shock, awe, surprise, etc. In the context of the song, it is a slang which refers an individual. "Shebi" used in the lyrics of Rema's song is also a Yoruba word usually used for confirmation of a statement.

4. Code-mixing

The mixture of codes in the lyrics of the selected songs is more prominent than the switch. In Ayra Starr's *Rush*, the codes mixed include the English language, NPE, Yoruba and Hausa. Instances include:

Extract 23

Sabi girl no dey too like talk

The opening line to the song which serves as a window to the creative use of language that expresses that the artiste or any other IT girls or Gen Z baddie (young ladies, not necessarily of Generation Z who see themselves to be attractive and confident), as the girls of the generation call themselves, do not like to talk unnecessarily and too much.

Extract 24

Animals dey in human form

Extract 24 is a metaphorical code-mixing in which humans are regarded as animals which may be a result of such individual's character and uncouth behaviour. Another example from the lyrics of the song is

Extract 25

Kudi na my fantasy

This basically means that money is the only thing the artiste fantasizes about. The word "Kudi" is a Hausa word and this is an act that is not so common in the trend of code-switching and code-mixing in Nigerian songs since emphasis and recognition is placed more on Yoruba amongst the other indigenous languages. In addition, code-mixing is in almost all the lines of the lyrics of *Last Last* like:

Extract 26-28

I no holy and I no denge pose
I dey Port Harcourt when dem kill Soboma
My feelings been dey swing like Jangolova

This choice is an intentional one to express the personality, mind and emotions of the artiste. Due to the intentionality in the choice of words, the artiste creates what is known as semantic contrast through the usage of the words "swing" and "Jangolova"; Jangolova is a Yoruba word for Swing. There are also several instances of code-mixing in the lyrics of *Unavailable* such as

Extract 29-31

So make no body para
who wan gbe my matter s'ori
Oga ade, dey your dey

Davidido uses these lines to tell off those who have decided to concern themselves with his business. Furthermore more, instances such as:

Extract 32-34

Na so me I call am, say make we link up (say make we link up)
... if you leave me, I no go live again
because e get many girls wey put my heart for pain

These are found in *Calm Down* by Rema, and they reflect the mind and opinion of the artiste. There is a case of hybridisation in the song in which there is creation of the word "telly", a combination of English language and Pidgin which means to tell, and "padi man" a compound word coined from Yoruba and English language, referring to fellow humans in the song *Rush*.

Global Recognition of Nigerian Afrobeats Songs

The enhancement of Nigerian Afrobeats culture in the international world through code-switching and code-mixing has significantly contributed to its global popularity. Code-switching, which involves switching between languages in a single conversation or song, and code-mixing, which involves mixing elements of multiple languages within a single sentence or phrase, are common linguistic practices in Nigerian music.

Afrobeats has become a cultural ambassador for Nigeria, blending traditional African rhythms with contemporary sounds and resonating with audiences worldwide. The genre's global recognition can be attributed to its adaptability and genre-bending nature, allowing it to seamlessly blend with international styles like R&B, reggae, and pop. This fusion has enabled Nigerian Afrobeats to transcend cultural boundaries, fostering a sense of community and shared identity among listeners from diverse backgrounds (Enisire, 2024; Omoniyi, 2006).

The use of code-switching and code-mixing in Nigerian Afrobeats allows artists to express themselves more effectively and connect with their target audience. By incorporating indigenous languages like Yoruba, Igbo, and Nigerian Pidgin, artists can convey complex emotions and cultural nuances that might be lost in translation. This linguistic diversity has helped Afrobeats to gain popularity not only in Nigeria but also among African Diaspora and international audiences (Oladayo & Balogun, 2021). Nigerian Afrobeats has become a powerful tool for cultural exchange and identity formation, particularly among the African diaspora. The genre's global popularity has sparked interest in Nigerian culture, fashion, and language, with many international artists incorporating Nigerian Afrobeats elements into their music. This cultural exchange has also led to collaborations between Nigerian artists and international musicians, resulting in ground breaking hits and further solidifying Afrobeats' position in the global music landscape (Enisire, 2024; Oladosu, 2011).

This extensively shows how Nigerian Afrobeats genre has become one of the most popular music genres globally. People of diverse cultures can be heard in videos of the show online singing word-by-word the lyrics of the songs, which includes the Nigerian Pidgin English and Nigerian indigenous languages. Several shows and tours have been hosted over the years in several countries, and not once has the venues of these shows been empty or the audience small, but the rather large number of people are seen screaming out the lyrics at the

top of their lungs, revelling in the pleasant rhythmic sound and captivating language. This has shown the power of Nigerian Afrobeats genre to influence a global audience. It also draws attention to Nigeria and its languages and portrays the country in a positive light as a nation with vibrant culture, languages, and trail blazing lifestyles.

Conclusion

The study investigates the phenomena of code-switching and code-mixing in Nigerian Afrobeats songs, exploring how these linguistic practices reflect and influence sociocultural dynamics. A key area of focus in this research is the analysis of linguistic patterns in Afrobeats songs to identify instances of code-switching and code-mixing. By examining lyrics, the study seeks to understand how artistes blend English, Nigerian Pidgin, and indigenous languages. This linguistic interplay not only adds a unique flavour to the music but also serves as a mirror reflecting the multilingual reality of Nigerian society. The frequent and creative use of multiple languages in songs demonstrates the fluidity and adaptability of language use in contemporary Nigerian culture. It aims to understand whether exposure to code-switching and code-mixing in music leads to increased acceptance and usage of these practices in everyday communication. It also explores whether Nigerian Afrobeats songs contribute to shaping positive attitudes towards multilingualism and cultural diversity among the people of the nation, especially the youths

Cultural significance is another vital aspect of this study. Understanding how code-switching and code-mixing reflect the multicultural and multilingual landscape of Nigeria highlights the role of music in promoting cultural identity and unity. Nigerian Afrobeats, with its global reach, acts as a cultural ambassador, showcasing Nigeria's rich linguistic diversity to the world. The seamless integration of different languages in music, exemplifies the coexistence and mutual respect among various ethnic groups, fostering a sense of national identity and pride.

The study also delves into the communication strategies employed by artistes to connect with diverse audiences, express creativity, and convey messages more effectively. Through the strategic use of code-switching and code-mixing, artistes can reach a wider audience, resonating with both local and international listeners. This linguistic dexterity allows artistes to navigate different cultural contexts, enhancing the appeal and relatability of their music. By switching codes, artistes can also infuse their songs with nuanced meanings, humour, and emotional depth, enriching the overall listening experience.

Finally, the study places these linguistic practices within the broader sociolinguistic context of Nigeria, considering factors such as urbanization, globalization, and the influence of social media. The rapid urbanization in Nigeria has brought together people from different linguistic backgrounds, creating a melting pot of languages and cultures. Globalization and the rise of social media have further amplified the reach and impact of Nigerian Afrobeats, allowing the music and its embedded linguistic practices to transcend geographical boundaries. This global exposure has implications for the perception and evolution of Nigerian languages, both within the country and internationally.

This study significantly enhances our understanding of how popular music acts as a powerful medium for linguistic innovation and sociocultural expression in Nigeria. By

thoroughly examining the intersection of language and music, the research illuminates the dynamic and evolving nature of Nigerian society. It underscores the pivotal role of language in shaping contemporary cultural identities, revealing how Nigerian Afrobeats not only reflects but also influences the multifaceted linguistic landscape and sociocultural dynamics of Nigeria.

This study concludes that popular music serves as a medium for linguistic innovation and sociocultural expression in Nigeria. By examining the intersection of language and music, the study sheds light on the dynamic nature of Nigerian society and the evolving role of language in shaping contemporary cultural identities. Further research can also be carried out on other genres other than Nigerian Afrobeats and even movies to examine how Nigerian culture and languages are gaining ground in the international market. Further research can be on the degree of language learning achieved through language(s) in music and the extent to which Nigerian indigenous languages have been rescued from death through their use in music.

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