

## **Issues and Challenges of Language in Contemporary Nigerian Music: A Study of Selected Musical Videos**

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### **Abstract**

Music is among the ancient art form that has been in existence since the creation of man. Through the medium of music, cultures and belief system of a people have been nurtured, preserved, sustained and transferred from one generation to another. Many young people in Nigeria today tend to be cut off from their traditional roots, due to urban life styles and new ways of socialization; occasioned by social media network platforms. This idea has affected the social lives of this millennium, as western life styles are richly propagated in most contemporary music in Nigeria. At the same time, some musical artistes have pushed the boundaries of this western ideology beyond the frontiers of mere entertainment. These artistes aesthetically combine local dialects with other languages in their lyrical composes to produce worthwhile songs. This paper discusses the social relevance of selected contemporary music in Nigeria and their effects on indigenous language culture. It is approached through a content analysis of the musical videos from selected songs. Findings of the work show that most children are developing high level of interest in learning and socializing with such songs, owing to their local embellishments. Hence, it is the conclusion of this paper that this sudden interest could help in rejuvenating, promoting and consolidating indigenous languages in Nigeria, among other utilitarian experiences. It recommends that, considering the essentialities

of music to cultures, music should be used as a paradigmatic approach to enliven the interest in local languages in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Contemporary, Artistes, Music, Culture, and Language.

### **Introduction**

Before the advent of colonialism in Nigeria, most tribes and ethnic groups maintained highly uncontaminated cultural and moral values. In Igbo cultural setting for instance, indigenous cultures and values were taught by elders in local dialects through folktales and folk songs. This makes it easier and possible for younger generation to learn from the start through songs. There is no doubt the fact that knowledge gained through music can be retained; as it stays in memory for so long, till life terminates. (Idamoyibo, 2003, p. 8) In other words, the content of folk songs showcases the socio cultural attributes and values of a given society. Therefore, this can capture the interest and trust of a people by reaching their innermost thoughts, as a result of the cultural flavours and values embellished in the folk songs. According to Sreekumar (2012, p. 59):

Story tellers, singers, minstrels and other kinds of folk entertainers have acted for centuries as sources for the transmission and dissemination of news and information through face to face life communication. Families, social groups and community gatherings, serve as the main fora of communication and sources of feedback for folk performers. The value, attitudes, beliefs, and customs of the people are propagated, reinforced and perpetuated through these folk forms. The issues in a society are depicted in form of a satire by the folk artists for curing societal evils.

Suffice it to say that, this cultural background and orientation, impact knowledge that permits the continuity and permanence in learning and culture promotion. As such, when people exhibit certain behaviours in the past, one can easily link such behaviour to the cultural background of the individual. In the view of Asigbo and Ojukwu,

Imparting new knowledge, information, ideas, feelings, and emotions is part of our daily activities. At every stage of one's development, education is taking place in one way or the other. Learning can come through the school system, or otherwise. It can take different shapes such as speech, songs, stories, proverbs, idioms, drama or even non-verbal forms as in sign language... All these go to reveal a very important aspect of African culture (2015, p. 64).

These folk art forms do not require any formal training; rather, through socialization and indoctrination, children learn the folk ways as they acquire their languages. Folk arts are closely linked with the customs and beliefs of the people. It is usually a folk heritage. Hence, its origin cannot be traced to any individual or period. Ipere (2002, p. 34) notes that in the traditional setting, folk music was thought to be the best and the fastest means of reaching and activating the people into performance. Therefore, entertainment and music are interwoven; they go hand in glove. In support of this statement, Ipere (2002, p. 31) posits that "music and theatre as entertainment media are interwoven" In many countries, folk media such as songs, dance and drama have been used to engage the interest of large numbers of people with the aims of community education and development. Folk songs have been proven to be essential tools for communicating important information and people's feelings.

Presently, Nigerian's native culture by circumstances of Western influence seems to be disintegrating and going extinct. In this circumstance, most children in Nigeria are not rooted in profound appreciation of cultures for them to explore and subsequently develop the spirit of respecting and appreciating them, as well as other people's culture. One can unequivocally state that, for children to participate fully in the cultural and artistic life, they need to progressively learn to understand the relevance of arts. This will enable them to explore and share insights on various aspects of experiences and co-existence. Consequently, people will have equal opportunities for cultural and artistic activities. This is necessary because the early musical exposure seems to be eluding this tech-savvy millennium in Nigeria, owing to

desperate quest for civilization and adaptation to emergent technological innovations. In affirmation, Ojukwu, Onuora-Oguno and Esimone (2014, p. 34) observe that:

Parents hardly had time for their children and this is a big problem. Children are no longer taught the core values of their cultures. In the process of being left unchecked, they imbibe both the negative and positive aspect of foreign culture. Children are most vulnerable as far as the depreciation of cultural and moral values of a nation is concerned, as they rely mostly on social media and their networking sites for basic interactions.

The above exposition is considered factual because, this present day children spend several hours daily on social networking sites, downloading different genres of music on which they construct their identities and new formed values. Obviously, Children are the driving force of the nation and often referred to as the future generation. This study believes that music is highly connected to their social existence and has formed social cement for most of them. The way and manner young people flaunt music with their various technological devices is a pointer to this fact. It is not uncommon to see them nodding their heads, singing aloud and dancing on the road and various public places with their ear piece connected to their musical devices. Therefore, it could be safe to say that if music is indispensable in young people's socialization, the medium could also be used to manipulate their psyche towards promoting, preserving and sustaining local languages in Nigeria.

### **Nigerian Entertainment Industry in Perspective**

Nigeria's internal population is estimated at 200 million citizens and still growing. Nigeria is broadly conceived of three major regions in alignment with the major ethnic groups. In the north are the Hausa, Fulani and Kanuri, in the Southwest are the Yoruba and their numerous subgroups, and in the Southeast are the Igbo people. These tribes and ethnic groups in Nigeria have produced renowned music artistes that have used their creative impulses and artistic endeavour to project and sustain their indigenous cultures through music. Some of their songs are tailored

towards a domestic audience; by using the situations within their environment to communicate to their people in the languages they can understand better through entertainment.

Entertainment as a concept can be seen as anything that has the capacity to hold the attention and interest of its audience, or give pleasure and excitement. For instance, storytelling, cultural performances, games, sports, musical performances, comedy shows, magic, movies, among others too numerous to mention. The entertainment industry has been assessed to be the highest revenue generating industry in America. By way of imitating the American society, the Nigeria entertainment industry has grown appreciably over the years. The industry ranks the highest income generating industry after oil and Agriculture. It is on record that the industry is fast growing as one of the greatest foreign exchange earner, and international strategic branding machinery for the country. Hence, Entertainment industry in Nigeria has been transformed from a mere community domesticated endeavour, into a global multi dollar business.

Nigerian entertainment industry has developed entrepreneurs, qualified artistes of repute and standard, managers and stakeholders, with estimated revenue of over \$2 billion annually. The industry spans movie making, music production, comedy shows, modelling, beauty pageantry, reality television shows, Talent hunts, dance competitions, concerts, fashion shows, among others. Prior to 1995, the industry was not recognised internationally. However, following the successful management of Nigeria's hottest music group at the time (Remedies) and the international breakthrough of 2 face Idibia in 2004, entertainment has become a big business with many Nigerian artistes swimming in millions of naira monthly with several national and international awards, a situation that could not be imagined in some years past.

There is also the world of stand-up comedy and humour that package shows such as: *Nite of a Thousand Laugh*, *AY shows*, *Crack ur ribs*, *Gordon's clinic* and many more. The comedy shows are presently at the centre stage in the world of entertainment in Nigeria. Nevertheless, notable artistes such as Alibaba, Basket Mouth, Julius Agwu, I go die, I go save, Gandoki, A.Y, and lots more, are making serious waves in the industry. The fact that many Nigerian business outfits have realized that

entertainment is a medium of promoting their products and services, these artistes are sought for advertisements. As such, they are ambassadors of several brands. These various media of entertainment are self-enhanced skills and competences, put in use for self-reliance and nation building.

The Nigerian music industry is without argument one of the most diverse in the world. It is not surprising at the level of diversity in the industry since Nigeria as a country is a diverse nation that houses more than 250 minor ethnic groups. (Brocket and Hildy 2010, p. 174) The music industry as an aspect of the entertainment enterprise in Nigeria is valued at about \$600 million dollars, while Nollywood as a separate entity worth over a billion dollar. The estimation as it stands contributes approximately to 3.5% of Nigerian's Gross Domestic Product. Obahafuoso observes that "in just few years, Nollywood has grown to become the three best in the world generating USD 286 million per year for the economy" (Nollywood is Second largest film industry in the world – UNESCO latest ranking." 24 Jan. 2011.<<http://my-lagos.blogspot.com/2010//11/nollywood-is-second-largest-film.html>>)

The music industry is rich in job creation and reputed to be the second highest employer of labour in Nigeria; characteristically employing pools of young people with diverse skills and talents. There is no argument about the fact that the music industry is waxing stronger and creating real value, which has translated to a multi-billion naira playing field. On good authority, Nigeria has some of the most talented and accomplished musicians in African continent. Consequently, Nigerian music and artistes have captured the fancy and imagination of the world, following the rise of new generation of musicians, singers and performers, who have displayed their talent with much zeal globally. As such, one can hardly classify any Nigerian artiste as falling under a particular music genre; since most artistes tend to migrate spontaneously from one genre to another. As the tide of ever changing music culture sweeps through the country, the artistes continued to apply their creative ideas to enhance their lives and explore their environment; by adding meaning to their lives and the world at large. This is to ensure that they are not out of market, as the propelling force is financial gain and the popularity the music commands. But, within these lofty ideas, the most

paramount of them all is the message and information enshrined in the medium of music to the audience. Emeka (2013, p.342) opines that:

Every civilization in the history of mankind succeeded in applying creative ideas to enhance the life of man in its environment and to explore, explain or add meaning to the place and life of man in the cosmos.

In essence, Nigerian songs are not enjoyed in Nigeria alone, but also in diaspora. Evidently, significant number of persons believes that these songs are being played even more in foreign countries, than it is played in Nigeria. Many Nigerians living outside the shores of the country, specifically in Europe and America have testified that Nigerian songs by popular artistes are being played and enjoyed by both Nigerians and foreigners. In this regard, some Nigerian artistes have won several awards in both local and international levels. By the same token, most of them have made names in addition to wealth and affluence. These creative artistes are wielding serious influence on brands, and also affecting the social lives of young people and upcoming artistes who model them.

Presently, record sales in Nigeria have turned to be a windfall for artistes such as: Davido, Olamide, Whiz kid, Don jazzy, 2 face, Flavour, Phyno, D bang, Psquare, Kiss Daniel and many more, with several copies of their album in both local and international markets. The major source of inspiration is that Nigerian music and movie lovers prefer their own movie and music to their foreign counterparts that have been compromised before now. Hence, the determinant factors for nation's greatness in today's world are creative skills, industriousness, productivity, and competitiveness.

Creativity is the bedrock of every civilization and the truth of the assertion cannot be more obvious than the rapid changes that have brought about a wake of the internet, and the digital revelation. In other words, the potentials and possibilities available with various platforms are limitless. Okafor (2005, p. 14) opines that 'the industry moves a lot of money in the country and even outside Nigeria'. The industry is essential to the social lives of a people. It situates the heart of entertainment in the country and therefore, a fertile ground for tapping and distributing the

talents and creativity of musicians. Okafor and Okafor (2009, p. 20) notes that:

The system is the aggregation of several activities and organisations working towards specific ends, but united in the common objectives of distributing music for profit. As a result, the beneficiary is several centres; the composers, the artists, the industrialist, the agent, the producers, the marketers and the users. The implicated services would include advertising, banking, promotional services and public relations. The industry therefore, offers opportunity for several disciplines, talents, organisations and person. The most qualified person can position himself in any of the strategic arms of the industry.

### **An Overview of Past and Contemporary Music in Nigeria**

With good background sense, the early musicians in Nigeria concentrated more on the content of music, than on the instrument accompanying it. Although, both variables; lyrics and instrument work together, one should have a greater percentage of priority than the other. This is opposed to the idea of the present day musical artistes, where the market value determines the standard of their creative input. Contemporary musicians in Nigerian are directly or indirectly compelled to apply diverse creative ingenuities in order to stay in market. This is because; the propelling force is profit maximization and stardom. To this end, meaningful lyrics consciously composed to effect change in the society are hard to come by. The lyrics of Onyeka Onwenu's *One Love* are typical example of music intended for social change in Nigeria. Some of the extracted lyrics read thus:

Don't be sad; understand,  
everybody has a day when the sun stays away.  
Take heart in a new tomorrow.  
Living one love between;  
Looks for a brighter day.  
You never need to worry;  
Let one love set you free



### Chorus

One love, keep us together.  
Living in a world it's a struggle to staying alive  
One love keep us together.  
Living in a world it's a struggle to staying alive

### Verse 2

Somebody tell me;  
Oh why do we fight it,  
One love can set us free;  
if we just let it be.  
Take heart in a brand new day.  
Cause love is all we need;  
To chase the past away.  
You never need worry;  
If you just let it be.

This song preaches brotherliness and the need to show love even when it is most difficult, regardless of tribe, religion or race. Gross lack of these positive values is the genesis of the insurgency the country is experiencing at the moment. This is as a result of not realizing the need to create a united Nigeria that our children would be proud of in future. In the era when family planning and sexual issues could only be discussed in the secrecy of partners, King Sunny Ade and Onyeka Onwenu took the challenge of salvaging such ignorance in the society by producing two songs *Wait for me* and *Choices* in the 1980's. *Wait for me* targeted young and unmarried people, while *Choices* gives information on the relevance of family planning. The songs were performed jointly by the duo. The excerpts from *Choices* include:

Choices, choices; choices we can make the  
choice.

This is the time.

Take a stand: on the kind of world we want:

Is it love with peace of mind?  
Or children we are prepared for?  
We can make the choice.

This song came in at the time when families were beginning to face the realities of child responsibilities, coupled with economic hardship that hit couples with so many children to carter for. This song spoke to the conscience of most couples to be more cautious in making babies, considering the glaring responsibilities that come with it. The song brought closer the need for family planning which was adopted by many. On the other hand, the excerpt of *Wait for me* include:

If you are not ready to make babies, then stay  
off sex.

Plan it well.

Tell your bobo to wait for you and plan with  
you.

Chelumooooo

Because, having babies, no be joke ooo.

You go feed them, give them cloth, and give  
them love too.

If you never ready, to carry the load,  
why put am for another person head.

In the same vein, *Wait for me* targeted adolescents and youths that could be swayed into the euphoria of love for the opposite sex to involve themselves in senseless sexual exploration. The song highlights the dangers associated with such recklessness and admonished caution.

Over the years, Nigerian music has made great impact with Highlife, Fuji, Juju, and Afro beat genres with notable artistes such as; Bongus Ikwe, Fela Anikulapo Kuti, Christy Essien Igbokwe, Onyeka Onwenu, King Sunny Ade, OsitaOsadebe, Ebenezer Obey, Oliver de Coque, Felix Liberty, Oritz Wiliki, The Mandators, Mike Okri, Charly Boy, Evelyn Edna, Peter Side, Tina Onwudiwe, Stella Monye, Funmi Adams, Blackky and Majek Fashek, among others. These artistes were popularly known for their musical dexterity, and their ability to use the music medium effectively for social change; with suitable and decent lyrical contents. It was more of a competition of inspiring and creatively crafted poetic words, such that no one could pinpoint who the best artistes was. However, with the current trend, where rhythm rather than lyrics sells songs, many have come to argue that the present style of music has

somehow declined in standard. Apart from serving as a source of livelihood, the old generation artistes equally used the platform and talent to pass messages that impacted positive ideals to people all over the world.

Consequently, culture purists blame the regulatory bodies and media, particularly the terrestrial TV station and online media for promoting certain music that have no positive messages and impact on the society. They are of the opinion that many Nigerian artistes are always imitating American musicians rather than be themselves. They believe that majority of artistes are not versed and knowledgeable enough on the rudiments of music. They also argue that a lot of young folks who patronise these artistes do not have their ears and patience to listen to good lyrics; instead they prefer songs that can keep them on their feet at all times. As long as the beat is good and at the same time project people in the most appealing way. These ideas indirectly give credence to mediocrity. However, Côté and Allahar, (1996, p. 148) argue that ‘‘the manner in which the mass media portray aspects of the outside world might be said to actively prevent young people from developing a critical consciousness that will allow them prioritize larger issues of personal and social responsibility’’ In furtherance of their opinion, they posit that

Since they are bombarded with tantalizing images of the ‘good life,’ it is not surprising that the young are dispirited by the reality of their poor economic prospects... what lies at the heart of all this activity, however, is the fact that these media can sell young people some element of an identity they have been taught to crave... leisure industries such as music, fashion, and cosmetics have a largely uncritical army of consumers awaiting the next craze or fad... Furthermore, distracting young people with these trivial identity pursuits prevents them from protesting against their impoverished condition.

One can unequivocally state here that, the artistes of old wrote and sang songs with many positive messages that promoted great values. They spoke of hope, joy, love, peace, tolerance, and forgiveness. But today,

little or nothing can be said of new generation musicians, as they have bastardised the arts of music with lewd lyrics and nude videos. Rather than promote positive values, “they sing praises of alcohol, marijuana, women, sex, nudity, money and drugs, which have done nothing but corrupt and pollute the minds of children who are fast taking to such behaviours. Uto- Ezeajugh (2011, p. 66) views that

Nigerian video films find in Nigerian youth, a large and dedicated viewership. The addictive nature of film in the freedom to sit at home and slot in DVDs and VCDs or tune to any cable network has made it possible for even underage kids to watch obscene portrayals irrespective of the fact that they are meant for adult viewership.

However, the consciousness of some contemporary artistes to use the medium of music to relate with aspects of culture such as language is considered germane by this study. It has been observed that this has created the need for most children to learn and relate with their local dialects and indigenous cultures. As such, this novel idea has promises of propagating, rejuvenating and sustaining language culture in Nigeria.

### **Analysis of Selected Contemporary Music in Nigeria**

A good number of popular musicians in Nigeria have adopted the culture of using their local dialects in their songs. This may probably be the sudden realization that some Nigerian languages are under the threat of extinction as a result of westernization. For instance, the Igbo language has witnessed an alarming decline in the number of its speakers in recent times. According to Duruaku (2011, p. 4)

There is a growing urgency to stem the death of cultures and particularly languages, even as the extant languages are not increasing. It is estimated that several hundreds of cultures are dying out and in few years, many more would join the growing rank of dead languages. Indeed, over four hundred and seventy three languages are classified in the ethnologies as nearly extinct. These are languages that only the few elderly speakers are still living.

This may perhaps be attributed to the polarization of ideologies stemming from families, where parents would either force their children to learn and speak English language, or distinguish their children from associating with those they erroneously regard as the less trained, ill-mannered and village kids.

However, this study reiterates that the consciousness of some contemporary music artistes in Nigeria to adopt the culture of using their local dialects to compose beautiful songs is a commendable attribute. Consciously or unconsciously, the new generation of artistes that perform in local languages have helped to bring the local dialects closer to the hearts of the younger ones. They have breathed life into them and made them highly admirable and appreciable. Young people who learn through imitation now relate in their local languages, even with people from other countries of the world. This is owed to the fact that the people they admire, dream about and aspire to be like, sing in local dialects. The artistic vision of these musicians have helped in great measures to demystified and deconstructed the long standing believe that local dialects are for the less privileged in the society. This has indirectly made music a powerful process of inter-cultural communication and socialization. Okafor (2005, p. 87) believes that:

Even though music and dances usually migrate through communities, as more and more people learn about them, they are cultural exports at the same time and reflect certain things about the place of origin. For that matter, the identity of the originators of the music or dance lives in fragments through other clans, but is never lost entirely.

Therefore, with the threat of culture extinction and dearth of most Nigerian languages, the concept of singing with local dialect will help in rejuvenating cultures and languages.

Again, the predominant language of choice in Nigerian music industry presently is Pidgin English, laced with varying concentration of pure English and host of local languages ranging from mostly Igbo and Yoruba dialects. As such, the music industry has produced notable artistes with beautiful lyrics mixing English language, Pidgin English and

some local dialects such as: Kiss Daniel's *Woju* and *Laye*. These tracks were hit tracks, sang and danced by people who do not even understand the Yoruba dialect infused in the songs. Rather, the interest is on the artistic and aesthetic combination of different languages that popularized the songs. The first stanza of *Woju* lyrics read thus:

No be you I carry come,  
but na you I go carry go ooo,  
Sisi agbari go eh ya, yo wey.  
No be you I dey check on oo,  
but na you I wanna know,  
Sisi ferarioo eh ya, yo wey  
Very sweet, very nice.  
Baby tu di du di, Odikwa tight.  
Sho mop e o sexy. Ma lorobaya iron i.  
Otun mop e o de wa pa. O wafe ma buga siemi

### **Chorus**

Woju o, ye le lelelelele.  
Baby koya wojuoo.  
Ye le lelelelele.  
Koya woju o, Omo de yi le lelelele.  
Baby koya woju o.  
Le lelelelele.

In the same tradition, Kiss Daniel also released another hit track titled *Laye* which has almost the same style of rhythm, instrumentation and appeal with the *Woju*. The first verse of the song reads:

I know I'm crazy, but this is all I have for you,  
oh for you.  
I nagbawa mu isi eh, girl I'm falling for you, uh  
uh eh.  
Turn around, around, around, my baby see your  
lover.  
Everything I give to you girl I don't want it  
back.  
See I'm ready to be yours forever, no another.

Say don't you worry girl they can't take you  
away eh.

**Chorus**

Laye eh laye eh baby kojoo.

I just want to let you know, just want to let you  
know oo.

Laye eh laye eh baby kojoo.

See I just want let you know, no girl can take me  
away.

Laye eh, laye eh, baby kojoo.

Kosiru re lode baby ko jo oo.

There are yet other musicians from Yoruba descent that are equally spicing their songs the same way with Kiss Daniel. Such as: Davido, Korede Bello, Olamide, Tiwa Savage among others. These talented artistes provide thrills and entertainment in their songs to the extent that their fans are indirectly persuaded and coerced into accepting and appreciating the dialectical aesthetics of Yoruba language creatively weaved into their songs.

Notable artistes from Igbo descent such as Flavour and Phyno are also doing it their own ways in their local Igbo dialect. In almost all the songs by flavour and Phyno, one can scarcely associate them with pure English language. There have always been constant injections and projections of Igbo language and culture in their songs, laced with pidgin English as well. Instances can be drawn from Flavours *Ada Ada* and Phyno's *Fada Fada* among others. In Flavours *Ada Ada*, one could see the way traditional marriage in Igbo land is being performed. The song centres on the beauty and elegance of an African maiden whose traditional marriage rite is being performed, to be taken away as soon as the ceremony ends by the groom. The first stanza of *Ada Ada* reads:

Have you seen my beautiful baby?

Have you seen my tomato baby ooo, nyelee.

Make you soffry cool me temper, Ada.

Baby na sugar, sugar I yoo ho.

**Chorus**

Everybody dey wait, puta kenen'ogbo, lhedinma  
amaka.

Beta soup na money kill am ooo.  
Adanma ngwa pekem pekem I ya, Ada ada.  
Ada ada I yoooo.

**Second stanza:**

Ada no de lack Ada, I get am for everywhere.  
Ada no de lack, Ada I get am for up and down.  
Baby natomatoe, baby too fresh like morning  
wine.  
Ada we le le lee, I yokokokoo.

Phyno is another musician from Igbo land who is also promoting Igbo dialect and culture through his lyrical composites. In his song *Fada Fada*, Phyno recounts the different stages of his life and challenges that came with each stage. He gives his background as a ghetto boy and where he is at the moment. He is indeed very grateful to God for His grace and mercies that made him a successful and an accomplished man. The first verse of *Fada Fada* reads:

Chineke Nna emego kwa nwa ogbenye Ezege.  
Every day by day I just dey celebrate oo.  
Everything I do I just dey penetrate ooo.  
I just want to say I thank you Jehovah oo.  
See I'm living like I get angels for my gate oo.  
Never forget where I come from na from ghetto.  
Oh no nonononono.  
I just want to say thank you Jehevahooo.

**Chorus**

Buru ekene, riwootito,  
Fada eh, Fada eh.  
A di kwa m loyal oo.  
Fada Fada eh eh.  
FadaFada eh..



Suffice it to say that the songs under the review of this study are popular and hit tracks which are danced, sang and appreciated by many not minding the ethnic divides and boundaries. Most people that do not understand the lyrics have taken it upon themselves to research on the dialectical meaning of the lyrics, just to be abreast with the message the songs are communicating. This nascent styles of lyrical composure of contemporary music artistes in Nigeria have helped to popularize many local dialects and distinct their creativity. Hence, most Nigerian youth and children are no longer ashamed or see their culture as inferior; as they proudly promote them by appreciating the creative ingenuities of the musical artistes.

### **Issues and Challenges in Nigerian Contemporary Music**

Over the centuries, Nigerian contemporary music has been moved from one stage to another to suit the current trend and demand of the people. The Nigerian contemporary music covers so many indigenous songs from various ethnic groups in the country, with popular songs adapted from western world. However, each kind of song is distinctive with each having deriving their techniques, instruments and language from various cultures. Indeed, every performance has its target audience. In essence, most contemporary songs are directed towards the taste of the younger people.

Suffice it to say that the industry has witnessed lots of artistes moving from one music genre to another, trying to give the society what they desire most. They see this idea as the only avenue to launch themselves as stars. One typical example of this genre migration is embodied in a particular Nigerian gospel singer turned reggae, high life, Hip hop and blues crooner known as Flavour. Flavour started his music career as a gospel singer, but did not gain much popularity and recognition. He quickly switched over to Hip hop world, which happens to be more attractive for adolescents and youths. Flavour automatically changed into composing songs that fit into the social-psychological features of vibrant youths and children alike. Basically, a song that exalts and promotes worldliness and promiscuity is game for new generation of music consumers. The response and demand of Flavours new choice of music accelerated his social status, with his music played all over Nigeria

and beyond. This goes to support the fact that, there are circumstances and conditions of values which the artistes cannot control; rather they depend on what the society is in need of. The society has cultural objects which are sacrosanct. As such, when those cultural objects are projected or portrayed creatively, it captures the attention of the masses or the target group.

More so, the researcher has observed that excessive use of Pidgin English by contemporary music artistes in Nigeria has greatly influenced the language choice of young people in recent time. In some years past, Pidgin English is spoken in cities with high concentration of different tribes and ethnic groups; who hardly understand each other's language. A good example can be drawn from the south- south region. Some other examples are cities that experienced rural urban migration of citizens in search of greener pastures and civilized lives. Therefore, in order to communicate, interact and socialize effectively with their fellows, Pidgin English becomes an alternative. Presently, Pidgin English has become the commonest language for most children and youth in the course of their socialization. This has grossly affected their language use both for academic and official purposes. The excessive use of Pidgin English has influenced the social lives of the young ones that one can hardly hear them conversing with their peers without the injection of this language. They socialize more with some of the slangs or local dialect from popular music. These languages and slangs like cancer has penetrated every part of the country as a result music influence. The language is so rampant to the extent that teachers and school administrators are trying to curtail its usage with severe punishment and expulsion. Parents are not left out in this amazement and turn-around of children's' new use of language. The researcher believes that if this infiltration is not forestalled, Pidgin English will very soon short-change the official language of Nigerians. It is not uncommon to hear children using words like "pull over" as used by Whiz Kid in one of his songs. "Pack for one corner" as used by GhanianPataapa, "if you do me, I do you, man no go ves" as used by P Square, "Kolomental" by Timaya, "mugu don pay" as used by Olu Maintain and many other jargons used in popular music.

The lyrics of any song depend on the intention or mind set of the artiste put together to pass information. If there were broad classification

of lyrics in contemporary music in Nigeria, then the greater percentage would be classified under those songs that glorify women's anatomy, their materialistic tendencies and perhaps, their undue influence on men. This may be closely followed by lyrics that talks about the hustles of life, dreams of making it big, success stories and many more. This is also in line with the fact that these songs are meant to appeal to a particular demographic classification of tech savvy generation. This class of people do not believe in struggling to achieve greatness, but always aim at the quickest and easiest means of success. This explains why most of young people believe in yahoo, drug dealings and other shoddy business transactions for survival.

Another issue is that contemporary music in Nigeria has evolved to fit into an entirely different generation of consumers, whose quest for social life and novelties dictate the pace for most artistes. Some of the lyrics exalt and promote worldliness and promiscuity with excessive vulgarity because; they fit into the social psychology of highly sexual active humans. Hence, these artistes apply diverse creative ingenuities in order to stay in market, since the propelling force is profit maximization and stardom. This opposes the idea of music of old; known for their musical dexterity and their ability to use suitable and decent lyrics effectively for social change.

Obviously, contemporary music in Nigeria is a brand of music that enjoys the favour and acceptability of new generation of consumers. Most adults have difficulties in understanding the lyrics and therefore, cannot fit into the realities of this nascent style of music and the jargons trending in most of them. One of the phenomenon's that highlights the level of influence in contemporary music in Nigeria is the creation of dance styles. The dance steps go a long way in popularizing the music. The music goes viral and lingers on, until a new music and dance style replaces it in popularity and reduces it to old fashion.

## **Conclusion**

This study has so far established that contemporary music in Nigeria is a brand of music that enjoys the favour of acceptability by demographic characteristics of tech savvy millennium. In other to fit into the demands and taste of this group of people, most of these artistes seem to

compromise some cultural standards and boundaries. Suffice it to say that the thematic pre-occupation of most artistes of old was based on how to use the medium of music to effect changes in the social system. Presently, the tastes and demands of this new brand of music consumers determine the style and brand of music to be produced by these artistes. Hence, many of these artistes witness forced migration from one genre of music to another just to satisfy their consumers and to stay in market. However, the culture of infusing local dialects to effectively communicate to the audience through the medium of music is a commendable initiative. This has in no small measure rekindled the interest in speaking and socializing with local dialects by the young ones as they keep abreast with indigenous cultures.

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