



Gospel Àpàlà music in African Christian worship: Thematic and stylistic analysis

Esther Titilayo Ojo

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Music is an indispensable tool of cultural transmission. Considering the vast nature of oral traditions, of which indigenous music is encapsulated, many studies on Nigerian indigenous music have concentrated on Jùjú, Ìjálá, Dadakuádà, Èsà, and Àpàlà. However, much research still needs to be done on Gospel Àpàlà, a variant of Traditional Àpàlà which was popularised by Hárúnà Ìshòlá and Àyínlá Omòwùrà, noted for its highly proverbial folklore, blended with percussive instruments of which *dùndún* drum and *şekere* play leading roles to give aesthetic appeal. In this research, therefore, I investigate and document Gospel Àpàlà as it translates from traditional Àpàlà into praise and worship of God, in order to identify and describe its unique style and communicative functions, especially in these changing times of modernisation and globalisation. Drawing on systemic functional linguistics and sociology of literature, in this article I provide an analysis and interpretation of six Àpàlà Gospel songs from three Àpàlà Gospel artistes: Sádé Òşobà, Yómí Olábísí, and Boiz Olórun. I portray the relevance of Àpàlà music both in Christian worship and events and gathering. Themes in Àpàlà Gospel include praises, thanksgiving and adoration to God, salvation/acknowledging Jesus, God's greatness and miracles, forgiveness, unity, holiness, heaven, love among brethren, commitment, and dedication to God's work. My findings reveal, among others, that Gospel Àpàlà music encapsulates indigenous knowledge contained in oral literature. I identify stylistic devices such as repetition, rhetorical question, personification, loan words, code-mixing/code-switching, and proverbs which garnish the metamorphosed music and conclude that Àpàlà has metamorphosed from traditional Àpàlà into Gospel Christian worship. **Keywords:** stylistics, deviation, Gospel Àpàlà music, Christian worship, oral literature.


Introduction

Music is an essential phenomenon and a vital part of everyday life in African societies. Vidal (28) states that over the ages, music “has proved to be one of the indispensable arts cultivated by [humans] for growth, nurture and transfer of [their] institution and value to future generations”. In the same vein, Isaac illustrates that “the society places a high premium on music and by extension musician[s]”. These claims further foreground music as a tool for cultural preservation. Music is quite important in the lives of Africans who make music at home, at social functions and gatherings, at event centres, and in the marketplaces. Music accompanies and celebrates festivals, social rituals, religious gatherings, and political rallies to mobilise people for solidarity. It also involves ceremonial life such as rites of passage, birth and christening, marriage, initiation into adulthood, housewarming, chieftaincy, death, and mourning. Music has roles in healing; therapy; educative purposes; visits of important dignitaries; announcements of the presence of important dignitaries such as kings, chiefs, and governors; and important personalities in society. To be human is to make music, therefore the music we make says a great deal about who we are, or at least who we think we are. Music projects African values with various traditions accompanied by a melody.

Music is a universal phenomenon among the Yorùbá of South-West Nigeria. Extensive studies have been carried out on indigenous music such as Jùjú, Ìjálá, Dadakuádà, Èsà, Sákàrà, Wákà, and Àpàlà. Yet not much attention has been paid to Gospel Àpàlà in African Christian worship. Furthermore, Àpàlà's metamorphosis from traditional to Gospel Àpàlà, which involves the worship and praise of God in churches, is not generally

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captured. This lacuna in knowledge is what I aim to bridge in this article by studying the music of three Gospel Àpàlà artistes, namely: Sàdè Ọṣòbà, Yòmí Ọlábíṣí, and Boiz Ọlórún, thereby foregrounding their contributions to the development and preservation of Àpàlà, an indigenous Yorùbá musical heritage. In this study therefore, from a stylistic point of view, I investigate Gospel Àpàlà, a variant of Àpàlà which is an Islam-influenced genre, which is indigenous to the Yorùbá people in Nigeria and noted for its highly proverbial folklore, with a view to identifying and describing its unique style and communicative functions. With the aid of transcribed albums of three Àpàlà artistes, I also look at stylistic devices which garnish Gospel Àpàlà music and anchor my research on the theoretical perspectives of systemic functional linguistics and the sociology of literature.

I document Àpàlà, especially in these changing times of modernisation and globalisation. In this article I argue that Gospel Àpàlà music in Christian worship has not received the attention it deserves.

Àpàlà: Origin, development, and metamorphosis

Scholars like Mustapha, Eúba, Olúsojí, Làsísí, Olúdàré, Ajétúnmòbí and Adépòjù, Ọmójolà, Adémowó, and Ajíkòbí have examined the origin and development of Àpàlà music. Àpàlà is a Yorùbá popular music whose origin could be traced to many sources cutting across such disciplines as music, linguistics, history, religion, and so on. Mustapha and Olúsojí (“Nigerian Dances for piano”) argue that Àpàlà evolved from the indigenous music of the Yorùbá and can be regarded as folk songs which later metamorphosed into social music. Àpàlà is a socio-religious music with a prominent instrumental part and a vocal accompaniment rooted in Yorùbá philosophy and poetry. Àpàlà is of the indigenous musical heritage transmitted from generation to generation, performed, recreated, and promoted by the musicians, thus giving the Yorùbá people a sense of their cultural history and identity. It is worth noting that *sàkàrà*, *Àpàlà*, *Wákà*, *dadakúádà*, and *fújì*, which are largely influenced by Islamic and more recently Western cultures, are new developments in Yorùbá dance music song poetry. It developed as a non-liturgical Islamic music used during Muslim festivals, from *wéré* and *wákà* musical forms, used by Muslims to wake up the faithful to eat *sààrì* (an early morning meal during the Ramadan fast) and welcome pilgrims back from the hajj pilgrimage in Mecca (Ọmójolà; Olúdàré). Eúba also argues that Àpàlà began during the fasting season when young Muslims got together to perform music to awaken people for the early morning meal known as *sààrì*, while some scholars (Ọmójolà; Làsísí) admit that Àpàlà has no particular date of origin, and that it has been in existence since 1930 and was called *eré fowó b’èti* (cover your ear). According to Ajétúnmòbí, Osiyale, and Sogbesan, Àpàlà has been in existence since before the likes of *Múránínà*, *Aláó*, and even *Ligali Mukáibà*, but it was popularised by Harúnà Ìshòlà and Àyìnlà Ọmowúra. Therefore, the origin and development of traditional Àpàlà music cannot be complete without reference to Harúnà Ìshòlà and Àyìnlà Ọmowúra.

In interviews I conducted with Mr Babáwálé Gáníyú on 16 April and 25 September 2020, he mentioned that Èdè is the birthplace of Àpàlà and that a man called Balógun and his son Tìjání were renowned Àpàlà singers as early as 1938. Olúsojí (“Comparative Analysis of the Islam influenced Apala, Waka and Sakara Popular Music of the Yoruba”), on the other hand, suggests that Àpàlà music started long before 1938. Ajádí Ìlòrin, for instance, was remembered to have played Àpàlà music as early as 1930 (Ajétúnmòbí, Babatunde and Sogbesan 38). Whatever position is true, what is certain is that Àpàlà evolved among different Yorùbá sub-groups that drew their inspirations from popular Yorùbá musical forms at different times. This explains why there are more than three different styles or forms of Àpàlà music, as dictated by the frequency of sound production and combination of instruments used at different times. Each individual developed his own Àpàlà version among the people of his community, getting inspiration from other Yorùbá music, local experiences, and creative ingenuity. According to Ajétúnmòbí, Osiyale, and Sogbesan, among such styles of Àpàlà are: *Àpàlà San-an* (cool beat)—Harúnà Ìshòlà; *Àpàlà Songa* (hot beat)—Àyìnlà Ọmowúra; *Àpàlà Wiro* (in between *Apala san-an and Songa*); *Àpàlà Igunnu* (mixture of beat)—Musiliu Haruna Ishola and *Àpàlà Olalomi* (mixture of beat)—Àyìnlà Ọmowúra. (39)

Whichever form it takes, Àpàlà music is noted for its highly proverbial folklore blended with percussive instruments of which drums play a leading role. An Àpàlà ensemble consists of *Àgídígbo* (a thumb piano having four or five keys and a rectangular box resonator), *ekere* (a gourd rattle), *agogo* (metal gong), *Akúbà* (membrane drum), as well as two or three king drums. The Yorùbá people refer to Àpàlà as “*Pàlapàlà ilù àpàlà*” (Àpàlà drum; of different sounds to form a whole). This implies that Àpàlà music is a conglomeration of various types of songs and drums to produce a unique whole. What this signifies is that Àpàlà music does not have a clear-cut identity or origin per-se but is a representation of other musical variances. In these present times, Àpàlà traditional music now has a variant which is Gospel Àpàlà. This is performed in church services and various entertainments. The

instrument of *Àpàlà* is still the same with Gospel *Àpàlà*. Gospel *Àpàlà* is a variant of *Àpàlà* music used in churches for the elevation of God's name. Generally, the stylistic features that are used in Gospel *Àpàlà* music include repetition, rhetorical question, personification, loan words, code-mixing/code-switching, and proverbs, among others. Instruments of Gospel *Àpàlà* include a rattle (*ṣẹ̀kẹ̀rẹ̀*), thumb piano (*àgídìgbó*), and a bell (*agogo*), as well as two or three king drums. In the present times, traditional *Àpàlà* has effectively moved to Gospel *Àpàlà*.

Systemic functional linguistics and sociology of literature

Systemic functional linguistics (SFL) was propounded by M. A. K. Halliday. SFL is an interpretive framework that views language as a strategic meaning making resource. This means that it is an important instrument for interpreting texts (Halliday; Matthiessen). The term “functional” symbolises that language performs many functions, hence it is functional. This model (SFL) accounts for how the language is used, whether spoken or written. SFL is functional and semantic rather than formal in orientation. It is bordered on how language is used in spoken or written form and this takes place in contexts of use. Language is viewed as a social activity that has evolved in the functions it serves and also in the structures which showcase these functions. In other words, the model operates in the context of use, which is the environment, situation, or circumstance of use, and not in isolated sentences or words. SFL is based on the context of situation and the context of culture and, in this article, my focus is on context of culture. *Apala* music as performed in the culture of Yorùbá society—which includes views, beliefs, emotions, psychology, and philosophy. Since culture is the way of life of a people, their language therefore reflects and transmits the cultural norms and values of the group. Context of culture is an eye-opener to the socio-cultural rules or codes of behaviour which one must understand in order to communicate appropriately in the society. SFL is a sociological theory which focuses on the sociological aspects of language description, and it is also an interpretive and contextual model.

Sociology of literature, on the other hand, is a scientific theory propounded by Hippolyte Taine (1828–1893). Sociology of literature as a whole deals with how society is represented in the literary work and the interaction of literature with other social institutions. The theory's focus is to show the symbiosis, interconnectivity, and interaction between literature and all the sociological activities occurring in society. *Ògún sí nà* reveals that literary works do not exist in isolation from the society that produces them, and that literature burdens itself with human expression, human experience, and human behaviour since man is a product of his society. Aside from this, literature employs language to represent the happenings of a particular society. As the name suggests, sociology of literature is a fusion of two separate disciplines—sociology and literature. As literature uses language as tools to reproduce human experience the society, the literary *Àpàlà* artistes produce songs by using materials from the society which are the property of the society. Sociology comprises of the study of social relationships and the outcome of such relationships for on-going systems, and the process of social change. Sociology burdens itself with all that happens to human beings as a result of their relationship with one another in the society (Barber 43). It is an art of words which entertains, enlightens, educates, and instructs—thereby projecting the experience and behaviour of man in the society. While sociology examines social institutions of family, marriage, economic, religious, and political structures (which form the social structures), literature involves the social world of man and his desire to change the same. Therefore, the field of sociology of literature concerns the study of society, and the social life of people cannot be discussed in isolation, since the culture of a people is reflected in their social life. In this study, Gospel *Àpàlà* music is a product—inclusive of content and language—of the society, and it is sung by, and for, the people of the society.

Method and literature review

This is a qualitative research study which adopts a historical and descriptive analysis for its research design. This historical method traces the origin of Gospel *Àpàlà*, which is a variant of *Àpàlà* music performed only by the Yorùbá people of South-West Nigeria, its development, and the exponents. Moreover, it focuses on the contribution of three Gospel *Àpàlà* artistes, namely: *Ọ̀ṣọ̀bà*, *Ọ̀lábí sí*, and *Ọ̀lórún*. The descriptive method engages a content analysis of the musical structure of *Àpàlà* music and particularly that of the three artistes, highlighting how their creative processes and performances of the genre in its authentic form has aided in promoting and conserving this indigenous musical and cultural heritage in order to safeguard its loss to modernity. My field work consisted of identifying selected Gospel *Àpàlà* artistes, attending their performances and recording them on audio devices, and thereafter the rigorous activity of transcribing, and analysing the performances. I also conducted

unstructured oral interviews with five respondents between the ages of 59 and 82 to get their views on the two different kinds of Àpàlà music.

In the study I adopt the views of Beier in his understanding of the term 'music' when he explains how the Yorùbá people engage music in all their endeavours:

There is no occasion in Yorùbá life that is not accompanied by songs. Births, marriage, house warming and funeral are all occasions for lyrical songs of great beauty. Everyday life is also accompanied by a great deal of impromptu singing, a kind of musical thinking, in which the singer puts everything to tune which happens to pass through his head. (23)

Beier's argument regarding the Yorùbá engagement of musical composition in all spheres of life is germane as nothing happens whatsoever that doesn't prompt the Yorùbá people to sing. Mention one area of human participation in life, and the Yorùbá people always have a ready-made song that can neatly fit into that domain. It is pertinent to also consider the contribution of Nketia's (*African Music in Ghana*) belief of Africans and music, of which the Yorùbá society is an integral part. He explains thus:

The African life and music are inseparable. Music accompanies him in the worship of his gods. The African gods (divinities), some of whom are deified heroes, and each with his own praise chants, chanted in his praise by his own established cult and devotees at worships and special rituals, serve intermediary purposes. The African believes in the existence of a Supreme God, who is the "Prime mover" and maker of all that exists. The African approach Him in worship, praising Him and making their request known through the gods. And in doing this, song is mostly adopted. (4)

The above statement explains that music is one of those tools Africans makes use of during the worship of their gods or deities. It is used to invoke the spirit of the gods, to make supplications, and to pray in terms of people's need. The power of music is brought to the lime-light here. This implies that there is a strong spiritual bond in music generally. In another vein, Nketia (*Music of Africa*) tries to categorise the African songs. He ponders the category of songs that he terms the 'songs of the elders'. He stresses that these types of songs remind one of the past, and it requires some kind of knowledge to understand them: "One of the most important categories of songs found in African societies, may be described as 'songs of the elders'. They remind people of the past and values of a society and require some knowledge of oral tradition before one can understand them" (196).

Nketia's position here is very straightforward and can be likened to the Yorùbá songs meant for the elderly people, *Orin àgbà* (songs of the elders). This type of song, unlike contemporary music, takes more experience of life to digest and understand, hence they are mainly understood by the elders. Apart from this, there are songs referred to as *Orin awo* (songs of the initiates). Omíbiyí gives a detailed explanation of the effect of music on the Yorùbá life and the categories of songs:

Among the Yorùbá of Nigeria, as well as other ethnic groups in Africa, music is an integral and functional part of daily activities. It permeates every level of traditional life be it social, religious or ceremonial. Consequently, there exist a large repertory of both vocal and instrumental music such as various songs for entertainment, songs for individual and group labour, praise songs for kings, deities and other important people to mention a few. (492)

Wachsmann gives an insightful explanation as to how the African child imbibed the spirit of musicality from the mother at cradle. He asserts:

He starts off on his mother's back and for a long time he never leaves it [...] When she speaks he must feel the vibrations of her body, when she pounds a mortar he must be aware of the muscular effort of lifting the pestle; he probably is aware of the actual thud of the pestle reaching the bottom of the mortar. Here an experience of rhythm is introduced. (499)

Ìdòwú supports Omíbiyí's views about the African take on music, providing further evidence that Africans always accompany everything in life with music:

We have the songs. These constitute a rich heritage of all Africa. Africans are always singing; and in their singing and poetry, they express themselves: All the joys and sorrows of their hearts, and their hopes and fears about the future, find outlet. Singing is always a vehicle conveying certain sentiments or truth [...] in each people's songs, there is a wealth of material for the scholars who will patiently sift and collate. (85)

Awólálú and Dòpámú (qtd in Ajíkòbí) compliment the above statements on music thus: "In all, songs tell the stories of the people's past [...] they also express the joy and sorrows of the people, their assurances, hopes and fears of the future and life after death" (1).

One important point he tries to lay emphasis on with the above statement is the fact that a good relationship exists between dance, drum, and music.

Olúkójù (118) explains the various ways and manners by which one can make use of songs or music. He outlines those ways based on life phenomenon and human endeavour, and views music as a vehicle that transports our thoughts for people to hear in terms of joy, sadness, or during praise and thanksgiving. He attests to the fact that music serves as a therapeutic tool to heal and ease the mind of the bereaved and goes further to explain that music serves as a motivational tool that boosts and encourages the mind of the African towards any physical engagements such as war or during stressful work.

Themes of Gospel Àpàl`

Praises, thanksgiving, and adoration of God

This theme is common to Gospel Àpàl` artistes as it is their usual practice to make it a priority. Before they commence their performance, they give praises to God for the gift of life, their audience, and their hosts' invitation to minister. The praises they offer include the gift of salvation which speaks volumes of deep knowledge of Jesus. It is obvious that praises permeate their performances.

Salvation/acknowledging Jesus

In the excerpt below, Ọ̀ṣòbà, a female Gospel Àpàl` artist, sings about salvation thus: “Ọ̀rẹ̀ ẹ̀ kálo, wá lo tọ́ Jẹ́sù wò” (Friends follow me, come and taste Jesus)”:

Lílẹ̀: Ọ̀rẹ̀ ẹ̀ kálo, wá lo tọ́ Jẹ́sù wò)

Ègbẹ̀: Ká jumọ́jumọ́ gbé Jẹ́sù sòkè

Lílẹ̀: ọ̀rẹ̀ ẹ̀lẹ̀sẹ̀ taráyé n'fẹ̀

Ègbẹ̀: Ọ̀rẹ̀ ẹ̀ kálo, wá lo tọ́ Jẹ́sù wò

Lílẹ̀: Èni tí ò bá sá ti ni Jẹ́sù o)

Ó ti dájú, ó n'fina seré

Ègbẹ̀: Dájúdájú, oluwa rẹ̀ a fímú dánrin)

A gbá pé bẹ̀liliti yatò sí bantẹ̀ ọ̀ e

Lílẹ̀: Èyin elégbẹ̀ mo ní

E sá a n'gbohùn lenu mi n na

A ní o gba Jẹ́sù,

O lo n'gbémú

Ègbẹ̀: O lo n' sapa kónúdu)

Lílẹ̀: Ánú rẹ̀ lo se mí, mi ò fẹ̀ kó o jó nínu' iná

Èni tí ò bá sá ti ni Jẹ́sù

Èni tí ò bá sá ti ni Jẹ́sù

Ègbẹ̀: Ó ti dájú, ó n'fina seré

Lílẹ̀: Dájúdájú, ó n'fina seré

Ègbẹ̀: A gbágbé pé bẹ̀liliti yatò sí bantẹ̀

Lead: Friends follow me, come and taste Jesus)

Chorus: Let us together lift Jesus up

Lead: Friend of sinners that the world loves

Chorus: Friends follow me, come and taste Jesus)

Lead: Anyone who does not have Jesus)

Certainly, he is playing with fire

Chorus: Certainly, he will suffer seriously

He will know for sure, that belt is different from charmed belt.

Lead: My esteemed comrades

At least you are hearing my voice

We implore you to accept Jesus,

You are proving stubborn.

Chorus: You are proving arrogant

Lead: I am only pitying you, I don't want you to burn inside fire

Anyone who does not have Jesus

Anyone who does not have Jesus

Chorus: Certainly he is playing with fire
Lead: Certainly he is playing with fire
Chorus: He will know for sure that belt is different from apron.

From the excerpt above, the artist projects Jesus as a friend of sinners whom the world loves (*òrẹ̀ ẹ̀lẹ̀sẹ̀ táráyẹ̀ n'fẹ̀*). She also spells out the spiritual implication of not accepting Jesus such as playing with fire and encounters with poverty/suffering (*Ó ti dájú, ó n'fíná.seré*). She counsels people not to be stubborn and arrogant. The next example is titled, "Since I've known Jesus, I have liberty".

Lilẹ̀: Since I've known Jesus, I have liberty
Ègbẹ̀: There is no *tíròbù fún mi rárá*)
Lilẹ̀: *Afolásadé*
Since I've known Jesus, I have liberty
Ègbẹ̀: There is no *tíròbù fún mi rárá*.
Lilẹ̀: *Gán án ní á fí jí, iròyìn ò táfojúbà*
Ègbẹ̀: *Gán án ní á fí jí, iròyìn ò táfojúbà*
Lilẹ̀: *Gbogbo èniyàn ẹ sáré wá*
Ègbẹ̀: *Gbogbo èniyàn ẹ sáré wá*
Lilẹ̀: *The difference is clear, I tẹ̀lì you*
Ègbẹ̀: *Ògá ní Jesù wa lójókójó*
Lilẹ̀: *Mo wòkun, mo wòsá*
Ègbẹ̀: *Olúwa tóbi*
Lilẹ̀: *Ó dá sánmò*
Ègbẹ̀: *Ó tún dẹ́ja sínu ibú*
Lilẹ̀: *Dájúdájú pé kò sòba bíi TOLúwa*
Ègbẹ̀: *Dájúdájú pé kò sòba bíi TOLúwa*
Lilẹ̀: *Olupèse Ẹ́aà ní Jesù*
Ègbẹ̀: *Ó kú ká wa lè ní ìgbàlà*
Lilẹ̀: *Jesù mi o*
Ègbẹ̀: *Since I've known Jesus, I have liberty*
Lilẹ̀: *I have liberty o*
Ègbẹ̀: *There is no tíròbù fún mi rárá*
Lilẹ̀: *Béyin bá forí sọ àpáta*
Ègbẹ̀: *Ó ti dájú, fífó ló mí a fọ́ dájúdájú, kò sỌ́ba bíi tOLúwa*
Lilẹ̀: *Anú rẹ̀ ló ẹ̀ mí ló jẹ́ kí n bá ẹ̀ dàmòràn*
Ègbẹ̀: *Ò bá ní Jesù, Kóo lOLúwa*
Lilẹ̀: *Ẹ̀ ẹ̀ rí ẹ̀ni bá ní Jesù kó lOLúwa*
Ègbẹ̀: *Ẹ̀ ẹ̀ rí ẹ̀ni bá ní Jesù nínu ayé rẹ̀*
Lilẹ̀: *Ìyẹn dájú.*
Ègbẹ̀: *Àmọ́ ẹ̀ni ì bá ní Jesù nínu ayé rẹ̀.*
Lilẹ̀: *Di ẹ̀ni à mú Ẹ̀rẹ̀ fún satáni*
Since I've known Jesus, I have liberty o
Ègbẹ̀: *There is no tíròbù fún mi rárá*

Lead: Since I have known Jesus I have liberty
Chorus: There is no trouble for me at all
Lead: Afolásadé
Since I've known Jesus, I have liberty
Chorus: There is no trouble for me at all
Lead: Seeing is believing, news cannot be compared to eyewitness
Chorus: Seeing is believing, news cannot be compared to eyewitness
Lead: Everybody come quickly
Chorus: Everybody come quickly
Lead: The difference is clear, I tell you
Chorus: Our Jesus is the master any time
Lead: I look at the seas and rivers
Chorus: God is big

Lead: He created the firmament
 Chorus: He also created fish in the depths of the sea
 Lead: Surely, there is no king like Lord
 Chorus: Surely, there is no king like Lord
 Lead: The provider is Jesus
 Chorus: He died that we may have salvation
 Lead: My Jesus
 Chorus: Since I've known Jesus
 Lead: I have liberty
 Chorus: There is no trouble for me at all
 Lead: If an egg collides with a stone)
 Chorus: It is certain, it will break, certainly there is no king like God)
 Lead: I pity you, that is why I'm counselling you
 Chorus: You would have accepted Jesus, have God
 Lead: You see, anyone who does not have Jesus, has no God
 Chorus: You see, anyone who has Jesus in his life
 Lead: Certainly,
 Chorus: But anyone who doesn't have Jesus in his life
 Lead: Becomes a play person for Satan
 Since I've known Jesus, I have liberty
 Chorus: There is no trouble for me at all.

In the above example, she emphasises confidently that she has not encountered trouble since she encountered Jesus, thereby sending out such invitation to accept Jesus into their lives. She expresses that, since she received Jesus, she has never been disappointed.

The following example is titled "Orúkọ Jẹsù Làwá Nlò" (It is the name of Jesus that we use):

Lilé: *Orúkọ Jẹsù làwá nlò*
 Ègbè: *Ìwọ ò dírò mọ́ Jẹsù*
 Lilé: *Á á fí ọ̀ ẹ̀ wónḡdà*
 Ègbè: *Á á fí ọ̀ ẹ̀ wónḡdà*
 Lilé: *Olúwa ni transformer tó n tóná)*
 Kéni má nìí rò pòògùn ni, orí ni.
 Ègbè: *Kéni má nìí rò pòògùn ni:*
 Lilé: *You na de du mi well well*
 Ègbè: *Jesus you too much*
 Lilé: *You na de du me well well*
 Ègbè: *You carry my matter*
 Lilé: *You carry my matter for your head*
 Ègbè: *You na dey do me well well*

Lead: It is the name of Jesus, we use
 Chorus: You uphold Jesus
 Lead: He will turn you to wonder
 Chorus: He will turn you to wonder
 Lead: God is the transformer that is bringing light
 A selfish person thinks it is medicine, it is destiny
 Chorus: A selfish person thinks it is medicine
 Lead: You are doing me well
 Chorus: Jesus, you are too much
 Lead: You are doing me well
 Chorus: You shoulder my matter
 Lead: You shoulder my matter as a priority
 Chorus: You are doing me well

From Ọ̀ṣọ̀bà's examples above, she mostly sings about her salvation and the liberty she has in Christ Jesus. She narrates her encounters since she came in contact with Jesus and says there is no trouble for her (*There is no tíró̀bù fún mi rárá*). She mentions the differences between her former life and her present experiences.

Ọ̀lábí sí, a male Gospel Àpàlà artist, also makes the theme of appreciation to God his major pre-occupation as he sings: "Ladies & Gentlemen, Ẹ̀ sọ̀pá ijó" (Let us dance):

Lilé: Ladies & Gentlemen, Ẹ̀ sọ̀pá ijó
 Ègbè: O my Jesus mo love rẹ̀ gan-an
 Lilé: Wáká jẹ́jẹ́ omọ̀ Jẹ́su)
 Ègbè: Wáká small small
 Lilé: Wáká jẹ́jẹ́
 Ègbè: Wáká jẹ́jẹ́
 Lilé: Léfu mi ti change mo ti elevate
 Ègbè: Mo ti elevate
 Lilé: Mí ò níí ẹ̀ gbà visa lọ sí ilú ọ̀ba
 Ègbè: Ẹ̀ bá mi dúpẹ̀
 Lilé: Ayé mi ti change
 Ègbè: Mo ti elevate
 Lilé: Sànmọ̀rí ẹ̀ dídẹ̀, ẹ̀ jẹ́ á jó, ó yá sọ̀pẹ̀
 Ègbè: Gbésẹ̀ jẹ́ ká yin Olúwa
 Lilé: Rọ̀ra gbésẹ̀, ẹ̀ jẹ́ ká yin Bàbá Ègbè: Gbẹ̀bodi rẹ̀, jẹ́ ká yin bàbá o

Lead: Ladies and gentlemen let us dance
 Chorus: Oh my Jesus I love you very much
 Lead: Walk gently, child of Jesus
 Chorus: Walk softly, softly
 Lead: Walk gently
 Chorus: Walk gently
 Lead: My level has changed I am elevated
 Chorus: I am elevated
 Lead: I will soon collect my Visa to overseas.
 Chorus: Join me to thank God
 Lead: My life has changed
 Chorus: I am elevated
 Lead: Important dignitaries, stand up, let us dance, please, rejoice
 Chorus: Lift up your leg, let us praise God
 Lead: Lift up your legs gently let us praise father
 Chorus: Lift up your body, let us praise father

Ọ̀lábí sí makes appreciation to God his major priority as seen above. He employs loan words from English and Pidgin English. He expresses faith in Christ by using faith language such as "Léfu mi ti change (my level has changed), mo ti elevate (I am elevated), Mí ò níí ẹ̀ gbà visa lọ sí ilú ọ̀ba (I shall soon obtain visa abroad), Ayé mi ti change (my life has changed), Rọ̀ra (lift your leg gently), gbésẹ̀ (lift your leg), ẹ̀ jẹ́ ká yin Bàbá (let's praise Father), Gbẹ̀bodi rẹ̀ (lift up your body), jẹ́ ka yin bàbá o (let's praise Father)". This use of language portrays him as an international man in this age of civilisation and globalisation.

Another male Gospel Àpàlà artist, Olórun, focuses on appreciation and gratitude to God. The name "Boiz Olórun" means "God's Boys". This implies that "God's boys" is a special name chosen by the leader of the group. Just like other Gospel Àpàlà artists, Olórun's preoccupation is praises and adoration to the Lord. He mentions many negative experiences that God shields one from as in the examples below: "Olórun tí ò jẹ́ o ya wèrè" (God that does not allow you to run mad), "Olórun tí ò jẹ́ kí sọ̀jà nà ọ̀" (God that does not allow soldier to beat you), "Olórun tí ò jẹ́ kí o rìn lọ" (God that does not allow you to get lost) in the song "Olórun tí ò jẹ́ o ya wèrè" (God that does not allow you to run mad):

Lilé: *Olórun tí ò jẹ́ o ya wèrè*
Olórun tí ò jẹ́ kí ọ́jà ná ọ́
Olórun tí ò jẹ́ kí o rin lo
Jésù ló dàmílólá, mo se wá n dúpé
 Ègbè: *Jésù ló dàmílólá, mo se wa n dúpé*
 Lilé: *Ó ti ní kí n ma mà jawé*
Ó ti ní kí n ma mà jobi
 Chorus: *Jésù ló dàmílólá, mo se wá n dúpé*

Lead: God that does not allow you to turn mad
 God that does not allow soldier to beat you
 God that does not allow you to get lost
 Jesus has made me wealthy, that is why I'm giving thanks
 Chorus: Jesus has made me wealthy, that is why I'm giving thanks
 Lead: He has said I should not go eat leaves
 He has said I should not eat Kolanut
 Chorus: Jesus has made me wealthy that is why I am thanking Him

Olórun also sings “*Ṣọpẹ́ tiẹ*” (Give thanks for your own):

Lilé: *Ṣọpẹ́ tiẹ*
 Ègbè: *Mo, ọ́pẹ́ tẹmi*
 Lilé: *Èni bá moore Olúwa*
 Ègbè: *È mà mà, ọ́pẹ́*
 Lilé: *Dákun wá, ọ́pẹ́*
 Ègbè: *È seun tí È kú fún wa*
 Lilé: *Immortal Invisible God*
Títí ayé la ò má a yin Ọ́o
 Ègbè: *A dúpé*
 Lilé: *Somebody shout Halleluyah*
Immortal Invisible God
 Ègbè: *Ó yá ká praise the Lord*
 Lilé: *Lòkúnrin – Lòbìnrin praise the Lord*
 Ègbè: *A dúpé*
 Lilé: *È mà mà praise the Lord*
 Ègbè: *Mo ní kí la ò bá se fún Baba*
 Lilé: *Á fi ká máa dúpé*
Bí babá bá ní ká mú pépéyẹ wá
 Ègbè: *Pépéyẹ one million ò lè to láíláí*
 Lilé: *Wón ni babá n jẹ ráisì*
 Ègbè: *Rára*
 Lilé: *Ábí n jẹ Bógá?*
 Ègbè: *Rára*
 Lilé: *Ábí n jẹ Sẹmó?*
 Ègbè: *Rára*
 Lilé: *N mu kòòkì?*
 Ègbè: *Rára*
 Lilé: *N mu kùnù*
 Ègbè: *Rára*
 Lilé: *Kí lounjẹ babá mi?*
 Ègbè: *Ọpẹ lounjẹ babá mi*
 Lilé: *Kí lounjẹ babá mi?*
 Ègbè: *Ọpẹ lounjẹ babá mi*

Lead: Thank God for your life
 Chorus: I thank God for my life
 Lead: Anyone who knows the goodness of God
 Chorus: You better give thanks
 Lead: Please come and give thanks
 Chorus: Thank You for dying for us
 Lead: Immortal invisible God
 Forever we shall praise you
 Chorus: We give thanks
 Lead: Somebody shout Halleluiah,
 Immortal, invisible God.
 Chorus: Its time, let us praise the Lord
 Lead: Men, women, praise the Lord
 Chorus: We give thanks
 Lead: We should please praise the Lord
 Chorus: I say what can we do for the father
 Lead: We should give thanks God
 If father say we should bring duck.
 Chorus: One million ducks can never be enough
 Lead: They say father eats rice?
 Chorus: No
 Lead: They say father eats Burger?
 Chorus: No
 Lead: Or He eats Sẹmó?
 Chorus: No
 Lead: He drinks coke?
 Chorus: No
 Lead: He drinks a type of Hausa drink called Kunu?
 Chorus: No
 Lead: What is the food of my father?
 Chorus: Appreciation is the food of my father
 Lead: What is the food of my father
 Chorus: Praise is the food of my father.

and “Children of God are you here?”:

Lilé: Children of God are you there?
Ègbè: Yes, we are here?
Lilé: Some have food, and cannot eat
Ègbè: Àwọn kan lè jẹ́'lé run tí wón ò rounjẹ́ jẹ́
Lilé: Kí la à bá fí san án?
Ègbè: Kí la à bá fí sán òrè Babá mi
Lilé: Tí wón bá ní n kówó wá?
Ègbè: Sẹ̀kẹ̀rẹ̀ n'be níbí
Lilé: Omele n'be níbí
Ègbè: Onígáńgán n'be níbí
Lilé: Opẹ́ lounjẹ́ babá mi
Ègbè: Opẹ́ lounjẹ́ babá mi

Lead: Children of God are you there?
 Chorus: Yes, we are here?
 Lead: Some have food, and cannot eat
 Chorus: Some people can eat a whole building but don't have food to eat
 Lead: What shall we use to appreciate?
 Chorus: What shall we use to appreciate my Father?
 Lead: If they say I should bring money?
 Chorus: There is rattle

Lead: There is a type of talking-drum
Chorus: There is *gangan* drummer here
Lead: Appreciation is the food of my father
Chorus: Appreciation is the food of my father

God's greatness/miracles

Another song by Olórun is “*Iṣé Olúwa Ó Ta Lenu*” (God’s work is pepperish in the mouth):

Lilé: *Iṣé Olúwa ó ta lenu*
Ègbè: *Iṣé Olúwa ó ta lenu*
Lilé: *Àbí ẹ̀ ò rí lójó ojó yen?*
Ègbè: *Kí ló ṣe?*
Lilé: *Ó sọ ẹnu eja di ATM*
Ègbè: *O sọ ẹnu eja di ATM*
Lilé: *Mi ò gbọọ rí*
 Ó ní ‘Peter wá lẹ gbowó wá’
Ègbè: *Ó ní ‘Peter wá lẹ gbowó wá’*
Lilé: *As in, ó ki ike bọ ẹnu irin*
Ègbè: *Ó ki ike bọ ẹnu irin*
Lilé: *Kí lẹ ló wí?*
Ègbè: *Ó ní ‘enter your pin’*
Lilé: *Ló bá ní ‘J E S U S’*
Ègbè: *A fi gòròrò, lowó bá jáde*
Lilé: *Ló jẹ wí pé*
Ègbè: *Iṣé Olúwa ó ta lenu*
Lilé: *Ló jẹ wí pé*
Ègbè: *Iṣé Oluwa ó ta lenu*

Lead: God’s work is pepperish
Chorus: God’s work is pepperish
Lead: Can you see on those days?
Chorus: What did He do?
Lead: He turned the mouth of fish to ATM
Chorus: He turn the mouth of fish to ATM
Lead: I have never heard it before
 He said ‘Peter come and go and withdraw money’
Chorus: He said ‘Peter, come and go and withdraw money’
Lead: As in he inserted ATM card inside the ATM machine
Chorus: He inserted ATM card inside the ATM machine
Lead: What do you say?
Chorus: He said ‘Enter your pin’
Lead: He then said ‘J-E-S-U-S’
Chorus: Instantly money started gushing out
Lead: That is
Chorus: God’s work is pepperish in the mouth
Lead: That is
Chorus: God’s work is pepperish in the mouth

Olórun showcases *ṣèkèrè*, *omele*, and *gangan* as the major instruments of Gospel Àpàlẹ̀ music. He mostly asks his audience to praise and appreciate God for all His goodness. An example of such appreciation is “*Olórun ti o jẹ o ya wèrè*” (God that does not allow you to run mad), “*Olórun tí ò jẹ kí ọjọ ná ò*” (God that does not allow soldier to beat you), “*Olórun tí ò jẹ kí o rìn lọ*” (God that does not allow you to get lost), “*Èni bá moore Olúwa*” (whosoever appreciate the goodness of God), and “*A fi ká máa dúpẹ*” (We should just thank Him)”. He frequently asks pertinent questions about the nature of the appreciation, for example “*Bí bàbà bá ní ká mú pépéyẹ wá, Pépéyẹ One Million ò lè to láíláí*” (perishable things or natural things are not enough to appreciate God). He asks if God eats rice, burgers, or drinks coke: “*Àbí n jẹ Bọ gá?*” (Does he eat burger), “*Ṣè kẹ rẹ n bẹ nìbí*” (There is rattle here), “*Omele n bẹ nìbí*” (There is

talking drum here), “*Onígangan n’bè nìbí*” (Gangan drummer is here), and his lyrics “*Ìṣẹ́ Olúwa ó ta lé nu*” (God’s work is pepperish in the mouth) align with current happenings and money-related matters as it happens in a globalised world. It is very germane to mention this aspect as it showcases the present/modern day foods and drinks such as burgers, cokes, etc.

Stylistic devices

The use of stylistic devices and oral traditional materials such as repetition, rhetorical question, personification, loan words, code-mixing/switching, and proverbs explicitly beautify, embellish, and magnifying the dominant intents of the singers. It thereby positions the two genres—traditional *Àpàlà* and Gospel *Àpàlà*—as pieces that breathe into one another in terms of form, voices, and popularity. The excitement most Christians get from it affirms people’s nostalgic feeling for their heritage embedded in *Àpàlà* music. Scholars such as *Ìṣòlá*, *Bámgbòsé*, *Ọ̀lábòdè*, *Ọ̀látúnjì*, *Adebòwálé*, *Ọ̀látéjú*, and *Ọ̀jó* have emphasised the importance of stylistic devices in works of art. Stylistic devices are linguistic resources employed deliberately to fulfil a stylistic task or expressive means of the language. Their primary goal is to achieve aesthetic ornaments, that is, to beautify literary works. In order to make their Gospel *Àpàlà* music enticing and classical, the artistes employ different stylistic devices to enrich their performances. They dexterously exploit the resources of the Yorùbá language in a special and heightened manner with the intention of transforming their experiences into works of art. *Ọ̀látéjú* asserts that the ambition of any literary writer/artist is to achieve two things, and these are ‘message’ and ‘entertainment’ (277). *Ọ̀látéjú*’s point is further buttressed with the fact that in order to achieve his purpose of writing, the “writer/artist employs consciously his literary and linguistic skills by packing into the work all ingredients that would generate aesthetic pleasure” (277). As a work of art, literature involves a skilful exploitation and manipulation of language and, through this, an artist may be described as brilliant and ingenious. In the following section, I examine a few stylistic devices employed by the multi-talented artistes who skilfully mint and mend words in both Yorùbá and English languages. This act of skilfully smiting words could be seen in all their songs. They achieve this through the use of stylistic devices such as repetition, rhetorical questions, personification, loan words, code-mixing/code-switching, and proverbs, among others.

Repetition

This is a stylistic device that involves intentional usage of a word, phrase, or full sentence two or more times in a speech or written work to create effect. As an aesthetic device and chief among all stylistic devices, repetition creates beauty and good taste in a work of art (*Babalòlá*). It projects creativity of the writer’s sense of value, thereby aiding and sustaining memorability. It helps in shaping and sharpening one’s memory and is used as a foregrounding tool in highlighting and reiterating an important message. For repetition to be noticeable, the words, phrases, or sentences should be repeated within close proximity of each other for the purpose of emphasis and memorability. The lexico-structural pattern can be either full or partial (*Ọ̀látúnjì*). Repetition is common in almost all the Yorùbá poetic genres, such as *orin* (songs), *oriki* (praise-poetry), *ófò* (incantation), *ese-ifá* (ifá divination poetry), *ekún-iyáwó* (bridal cry), and *òwe* (proverbs). There are six types of repetition: full, partial, lexical, semantic, phonetic, and thematic repetition. Traditional *Àpàlà* also use repetition, which explains the occurrence of repetition in Gospel *Àpàlà*.

Full/sentential repetition

Full or sentential repetition is the intentional repetition of a sentence structure in several lines in a literary work for effect, usually to create a concrete and stronger impact in a poem or song. *Ọ̀ṣòbà*, *Ọ̀lábísí*, and *Ọ̀lórún* repeated the full sentences to provide clarity and emphasis, highlighting deeper meanings of their songs. Also, the whole elements of the sentence being repeated are reduplicated to vividly express what they have in mind. The examples given below are sentential repetition:

Òrẹ̀ ẹ̀ kalò, wá lọ tọ̀ Jẹ́sù wò
Òrẹ̀ ẹ̀ kalò, wá lọ tọ̀ Jẹ́sù wò

Èni tí ò bá sá tí ní Jẹ́sù
Èni tí ò bá sá tí ní Jẹ́sù (Òsoba, “Òrẹ̀ ẹ̀ kalò, wá lọ tọ̀ Jẹ́sù wò”)

Friends follow me, come and taste Jesus
Friends follow me, come and taste Jesus

Anyone who does not have Jesus
Anyone who does not have Jesus

Iṣẹ́ Olúwa ó ta lẹ́nu
Iṣẹ́ Olúwa ó ta lẹ́nu (Olórún, “Iṣẹ́ Olúwa ó ta lẹ́nu”)

God's work is pepperish in the mouth
God's work is pepperish in the mouth

The layman's judgement of the above repetitions may be light and inconsequential, but a close look at them will make one see the basic rudiment and stylistic purpose of full/sentential repetition

Lexical repetition

Lexical repetition foregrounds or focuses on some items which may occur at the beginning, middle, or end of the sentence. The effect of this kind of repetition is intensification and topicalisation. The writer beams his searchlight on a particular word repeatedly for emphasis, bringing out a central message. Whenever there is a preponderance of a particular word, lexical repetition is found. To avoid ambiguity, lexical repetition is necessary. Lexical repetition is shown in the example below:

Lẹ́fú mi ti change
Mo ti elevate
Mo ti elevate
Ayé mi ti change
Mo ti elevate (Olábí sí)

My level has changed
I am elevated
My life has changed
I am elevated

Sọpẹ̀ tíẹ̀
Mo, sọpẹ̀ tíẹ̀ mi
Èni bá moore Olúwa
È mà mà, sọpẹ̀
Dákun (Olórún, “Sọpẹ̀ tíẹ̀”)

Thank God for your life
I thank God for my life
You better give thanks
Please come and give thanks

Wón ni babá n'jé ráisì
Rará
Abí n'jé Bógá?
Rará (Olórún, "Ṣopé tiẹ")

They say father eats rice?
No
They say father eats Burger?
No

The words *Jésù*, *change*, *elevate*, *ṣopé*, and *rará* are constantly repeated to prevent ambiguity.

Partial repetition

In partial repetition, the sentence structure is repeated, but not all the lexical items are repeated. Below are few examples of partial repetition:

Ó ti dájú, *ó n'fíná .sere*
Dájúdájú, *ó n'fíná .sere* (Ọṣobà, "Ọrẹ e kálo, wá lo tọ Jésù wò")

Certainly he is playing with fire
Certainly he is playing with fire

Ọlórún tí ò jé o ya wèrè
Ọlórún tí ò jé *kí ọjà nà ọ*
Ọlórún tí ò jé *kí o rìn lo* (Olórún, "Ọlórún tí ò jé o ya wèrè")

God that does not allow you to turn mad
God that does not allow soldier to beat you
God that does not allow you to get lost

In partial repetition, half of the sentence, that is, a phrase, is repeated for effect. The phrase may occur at the beginning, middle, or end of a sentence. In the above example, the bold phrases such as: "*Ọlórún, Ọlórún tí ò jé, ó n'fíná .sere*" are examples of partial repetition.

Semantic repetition

Semantic repetition is the re-occurrence of words that are synonymous which are placed at close range in a given literary text. For example:

A ní o gba Jésù,
O lo n'gbémú
O lo n'ṣapá kónú (Ọṣobà, "Ọrẹ e kálo, wá lo tọ Jésù wò")

We implore you to accept Jesus,
You are proving stubborn.
You are proving arrogant

In the above examples, the words *gbémú* and *ṣapá kónú* are semantic repetition for they are synonymous and mean "proving stubborn". *Jáwé* and *jobì* are examples of semantic repetition, meaning consultation with other gods. Also, *ya wèrè* and *ọjà nà ọ, rìn lo* are examples of semantic repetition representing something evil.

Rhetorical questions

The rhetorical question is derived from classical rhetoric. It is the art of public speaking in which a speaker asks some questions in order to buttress a point. A rhetorical question is stylistic use of interrogative language, in such a way that the response to the said interrogation is already suggested as provided by the speaker him/herself. In literature, a rhetorical question is a question posed to the audience in which an answer is not expected since the answer is already suggested in the question. This is known as apparent interrogation and when rhetorical

questions are uttered, they are not expected to be responded to by the referents/addressee. This stylistic technique is very conspicuous in the songs of all the artistes. Examples abound in the provided texts.

Personification

Personification is a stylistic device which gives animate qualities and strength to inanimate things (Òjò, “Predominant Stylistic Devices of Proverbs in Selected Yoruba Literary Texts” 282). Personification is a reference to inanimate objects as if they were animate. It is an extension of a metaphor, especially as it invests non-human things with human attributes with the intention of making them vivid (Ọlátúnjí). Examples of personification employed by the artistes are “*Ẹ̀kẹ̀rẹ̀ n bẹ̀ nìbì*” (There is rattle here) and “*Omele n bẹ̀ nìbì*” (There is talking drum here) (Ọlórún, “*Ṣopẹ̀ tiẹ̀*”)—the gourd or rattle, and talking drum are personified, as if they can attend events.

Loan words

These are words taken from one language and incorporated into another language’s vocabulary. The selected artistes loan words from English, Pidgin, Hausa, etc. Examples are: “*A á fi ó ẹ̀ wónḡá*” (He will make you a wonder) (Ọ̀sobà, “Orúko Jẹ̀sù Làwá Nlò”) “*bẹ̀lìtì*” (belt); (Ọ̀sobà, “*Ọ̀rẹ̀ e kálo, wá lo tọ́ Jẹ̀sù wo*”; “*There is no tíróbù fún mi rárá*” (There is no trouble for me at all), “*The difference is clear* and “*I tẹ̀lì you*” (I tell you) (Ọ̀sobà, “Since I’ve known Jesus”); “*You na de du me well well*” (You are doing me well) and “*Gbẹ̀ bódì rẹ̀, jẹ̀ ká yin bàbá o*” (Lift up your body lets praise the father) (Ọ̀sobà, “Orúko Jẹ̀sù Làwá Nlò”; and “*Gán án ní á fí jí*” (Ọ̀sobà, “Since I’ve known Jesus”). In these examples, the following words are loaned from English: wonder, belt, trouble, tell, rice, burger, coke, body, and level, while *Gán án ní á fí jí* is from the Hausa language.

Code mixing/code switching

Code-mixing is a means of linguistic socialisation and a sign of modernisation. It signifies an interaction of two languages within a sentence as a result of bilingualism. In the following examples the inclusion of words like transformer, love, ATM, and Visa makes for a code-mixing expression: “*Olúwa ni transformer tó n tóná*” (God is the transformer that brings light), “*You carry my matter*” (You shoulder my matter) and “*You carry my matter for your head*” (You shoulder my matter on your head) (Ọ̀sobà, “Orúko Jẹ̀sù Làwá Nlò”); “*Ladies & Gentlemen, E sọ̀pá ijo*” (Ladies and Gentlemen, let us dance), “*O my Jesus mo love rẹ̀ gan-an*” (Oh my Jesus, I love you seriously”, “*Lẹ̀fú mi ti change mo ti elevate*” (My level has changed, I am elevated), “*Mí ò níí pẹ̀gbà visa lo sí ilú ọ̀ba*” (would soon get VISA abroad), “*Gbẹ̀ bódì rẹ̀, jẹ̀ ká yin bàbá o*” (Lift your body, let us praise the father) and “*Waká jẹ́jẹ́ omọ́ Jẹ̀sù*” (Tread softly, child of Jesus) (Ọlábísí); “*Ó sọ̀ ẹ̀nu ẹ́ja di ATM* (He turns the mouth of fish to ATM) and “*O ní ‘enter your pin’, Ló bá ní ‘JESUS’*” (He said enter your pin, He then said JESUS) (Ọlórún, “*Iṣẹ̀ Olúwa Ó Ta Lẹ̀nu*”).

The examples contain many instances of alternation between Yoruba and English.

Proverbs

Proverbs are reflections and expressions of wisdom, ethics, philosophy, and beliefs of a given society (Òjò, “A Stylistic Analysis of Proverbs in Selected Yorubá Written Literature” 2). Proverbs employ figurative language to make a statement of fact as shown below:

Béyin bá forí sọ̀ ọ̀páta
Ó ti dájú, fífo ló mí a fọ́ (Ọ̀sobà, “Since I’ve known Jesus”)

If an egg collides with a stone
It is certain, it will break certainly there is no king like God

The above proverb expresses the truth that if an egg collides with the rock, it will break. It shows how fragile an egg is. This proverb means “to attempt the impossible”.

Conclusion

In this article I explored the description, thematic, and stylistic traits of Gospel Àpàlà music which is a variant of Àpàlà music. I argued that Gospel Àpàlà artistes Ọ̀sobà, Ọlábísí, and Ọlórún improved on traditional Àpàlà’s original form in terms of the music, lyrics, language, and instrumentation by resuscitating the dying traditional Àpàlà into global limelight. I I present the description and relevance of Gospel Àpàlà in line with the principles

of systemic functional linguistics and sociology of literature. Themes of Gospel Àpàlà focus mainly on praise and worship of God, thereby projecting God's greatness, and entertaining, educative, informative, and therapeutic functions of literature. The styles, beats, and instruments of traditional Àpàlà have been retained but modernised to project the continuity of the genre. Stylistic devices which garnish their music include repetition, rhetorical questions, personification, loan words, code-mixing/code-switching, and proverbs. From the discussion, it is clear that traditional Àpàlà has become a variant of Àpàlà music. It is therefore safe to conclude that Gospel Àpàlà has become a new register of African music.

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