

Bilingualism and Biculturalism as Elements of Indigenisation in Selected Nigerian Artists Pop Music

Julianah A. Akindele

Osun State University- Nigeria

julianah.akindele@uniosun.edu.ng

Ebuzoeme Franklin

Osun State University- Nigeria

olarotimi@yahoo.com

To cite this paper:

Julianah A.& Ebuzoeme, F. (2016). Bilingualism and Biculturalism as Elements of Indigenisation in Selected Nigerian Artists Pop Music. *Revue Traduction et Langues* 15(1), 144-153.

Abstract: The peculiar linguistic history of Nigeria has rubbed off on language use at the micro level. In the Nigerian music industry today, one can hardly find a single song that feature without using English, Nigerian pidgin or any of the Nigerian indigenous languages. The English language has been viewed as not having enough expressive resources that can match any of the native languages. English is seen as being too formal, complex and foreign to Nigerians and as a result of this complexity, speakers often result to the use of indigenous languages because it tends to make the speakers feel at home without much attention paid to the grammatical formations. This study seeks to find out this assertion by exploring the extent of bilingualism and biculturalisms techniques adopted by the selected Nigerian artists. Cummins Threshold Model of Bilingualism and Text Translation Model were used to interpret the lyrics of the songs - 'Ojuelegba, Jaiye Jaiye, and Orente'. Bicultural elements were portrayed in the musical videos of artists via their costumes and physical settings. Artists employ dressing techniques that merge bits of European and African cultural values. The data sampled also showed the artists' high level of cultural consciousness and solidarity with mother tongues as indispensable tools for self-expression and self-actualization. The switches between codes were used for emphasis where necessary.

Keywords: Cummins threshold model, Biculturalism and Bilingualism, Nigerian indigenous languages, Nigerian artist pop music, Nigerian Pidgin English.

Résumé : L'histoire linguistique particulière du Nigéria a déteint sur l'utilisation de la langue au niveau micro. Dans l'industrie de la musique nigériane aujourd'hui, on peut difficilement trouver une seule chanson qui figure sans utiliser l'anglais, le pidgin nigérien ou l'une des langues indigènes nigérianes. La langue anglaise a été considérée comme n'ayant pas suffisamment de ressources expressives pouvant correspondre à l'une des langues maternelles. L'anglais est considéré comme trop formel, complexe et étranger aux Nigériens et, en raison de cette complexité, les locuteurs aboutissent souvent à l'utilisation de langues autochtones car cela a tendance à faire en sorte que les locuteurs se sentent chez eux sans trop prêter attention aux formations grammaticales. Cette étude cherche à découvrir cette affirmation en explorant l'étendue des techniques de bilinguisme et de biculturalisme adoptées par les artistes nigériens sélectionnés. Le modèle de seuil Cummins de bilinguisme et le modèle de traduction de texte ont été utilisés

Corresponding author : Julianah A. Akindele

pour interpréter les paroles des chansons - 'Ojuelegba, Jaiye Jaiye, et Orente'. Des éléments biculturels ont été représentés dans les vidéos musicales des artistes via leurs costumes et leurs paramètres physiques. Les artistes utilisent des techniques vestimentaires qui fusionnent des éléments de valeurs culturelles européennes et africaines. Les données échantillonnées ont également montré le haut niveau de conscience culturelle des artistes et la solidarité avec les langues maternelles comme outils indispensables pour l'expression et la réalisation de soi. Les commutateurs entre les codes ont été utilisés pour mettre l'accent là où c'était nécessaire.

Mots clés : Anglais pidgin nigérian, biculturalisme et bilinguisme, langues indigènes nigérianes, modèle de seuil de Cummins, musique pop d'artistes nigérian

1. Introduction

It has been observed that most Nigerians are either bilingual or multilingual due to the multi-ethnic nature of the country. Nigeria has a complex linguistic situation of more than 400 languages and above 1000 dialects spoken by over 160 million people (Lewis et al., 2013). Hardly would anyone disagree that English is the world's most important language as it has become the medium for connecting people across the globe. English is more essential than other languages because it has become the lingua franca for international communication in several areas, such as technology, medicine, business, and mass media, and it is inevitable that other languages would be influenced by English. This study aimed at a critical assessment of the cultural effects caused by songs composed by artists who are exposed to the lexicon of two distinct languages using the songs of Wizkid and Adekunle Gold.

2. Statement of the problem

The English language has been viewed as not having enough expressive resources that can match any of the native languages which also co-exist with Pidgin. Standard English is seen as being too formal, complex and foreign to Nigerians and as a result of this complexity, speakers often result to the use of indigenous languages because it tends to make the speakers feel at home without much attention paid to the grammatical formations. The peculiar linguistic history of Nigeria has rubbed off on language use at the micro level whereby bilinguals are conditioned to view English language as being superior and of higher prestige value than the various mother tongues. In the Nigerian music industry today, it has been observed that many Nigerian artists hardly make their songs without using English, Nigerian pidgin or any of the Nigerian indigenous languages. Artists who make a choice to sing in a language other than that of their native language group may face questions of authenticity and rejection from a number of sources, including their native community. The study is concerned with the cultural effects of bilingualism in the Nigerian music industry. The following research questions guided the study:

- What is the degree of the bilingual proficiency portrayed in the songs of Wizkid and Adekunle Gold?
- How does biculturalism and bilingualism mediate in the Nigerian society as exemplified in the selected songs of Wizkid and Adekunle Gold?

3. Bilingualism and Biculturalism

The terms bilingualism and biculturalism are often used together in the same context. Language and culture are so greatly intertwined that it is often hard to conceive of one without the other (Grosjean, 1997, 2001, 2008; Benet-Martinez et al., 2005). Bilingualism is the regular use of two or more languages (or dialects). Biculturalism involves dual cultural involvement and adaptation, and because of the complexity of the construct, it has been a challenge to try to define exactly who is bicultural and what it means to be bicultural. Definitions of biculturalism cover a wide spectrum, with some researchers relying on demographic information to stricter definitions that require dual cultural involvement and adaptation.

However, most researchers in this field would agree that theoretically, a bicultural individual is one who has internalized two cultures (Berry 1990; Benet-Martinez, et al., 2002), most commonly the ethnic culture from which they came, and the mainstream culture in which they live. Additionally, the concept of biculturalism has evolved over the decades, emerging from earlier works on acculturation typologies (Berry, 1980), to more current conceptualizations of the construct. The possession of a language inevitably means the acquisition of a culture. However, a monolingual person may be said to be essentially mono-cultural but not all bilinguals can be said to be bicultural, except a coordinate bilingual, since bilingualism and biculturalism are not co-extensive. Several Nigerian artists have made it a point to make creative use of their indigenous languages in their songs even though most of these songs are written in English.

4. Wizkid and Adekunle Gold

Ayodeji Ibrahim Balogun was born on 16th July, 1990. He is known professionally as Wizkid. He is a Nigerian singer and songwriter. He began recording music at the age of 11 and managed to release a collaborative album with the Glorious Five, a group he and a couple of his church friends formed. Wizkid signed a record deal with Empire Mates Entertainment (EME) in 2009. He rose to prominence after releasing "Holla at Your Boy", the lead single from his debut studio album *Superstar* (2011). "Tease Me/Bad Guys", "Don't Dull", "Love My Baby", "Pakurumo" and "Oluwa Lo Ni" were also released as singles from the *Superstar* album. In February 2014, Wizkid became the first Nigerian musician to have over one million followers on Twitter. Ayo, his self-titled second studio album, was released in September 2014. It was supported by six singles: "Jaiye Jaiye", "On Top Your Matter", "One Question", "Joy", "Bombay" and "Show You the Money". Wizkid left EME after his contract expired. In 2016, Wizkid achieved international recognition following his collaboration with Drake on the global hit, "One Dance", which reached number one in 15 countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia.

Adekunle Kosoko, known professionally as Adekunle Gold, is a Nigerian highlife singer, songwriter and graphic designer. Adekunle Kosoko was born into the Kosoko royal family of Lagos State, Nigeria on the 28th of January, 1987. He holds a Higher National Diploma in Arts and Design from Lagos State Polytechnic. He gained widespread attention after releasing the 2015 hit single "Sade", a highlife cover of One Direction's

"Story of My Life". In 2015, he signed a record deal with YBNL Nation and released his debut studio album *Gold*, which debuted at number 7 on the Billboard World Albums chart. *Gold* was preceded by the release of three singles: "Sade", "Orente" and "Pick Up". Adekunle Gold revealed to Nigerian entertainment Today that prior to signing with YBNL, he designed the label's official logo and completed other designs for Lil Kesh, Viktoh and Olamide.

5. Methodology

This research is a library-based research because most of the materials were gathered from online libraries, audio and books. Three songs from Wizkid's 'Oujelegba and Jaiye jaiye' and Adekunle Gold's 'Orente' were sampled for this study based on the corpus in the use of English, pidgin and Yoruba, a Nigerian major indigenous language to reveal the aesthetic in the music because of the use of bilingualism features in the songs. The corpus of data used for this research is from the output of two Nigerian secular artists that have received prominence in the past seven years. The selected artists have a very wide appeal to Nigerians. The lyrics of songs used for this study can be found on the jacket of the CDs and Internet. The researcher cross-checked the lyrics collected from online libraries with the songs on CDs and Videos by listening to the songs several times. Both artists are amongst the most respected Nigerian hip hop artists. They are popular artists and each chosen song from the various artists is recognized by almost all Nigerians. Their albums are constantly in the Nigerian charts and the songs have won various awards both within and outside the Nigerian entertainment industry.

6. Cummins Threshold Model of Bilingualism and Text Translation

The translation and cross-checking of these three languages was done by competent native speakers of the language. The Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin English translations and transcriptions were done by the researcher. Bilinguals are open to many codes but in order to explain the level of bilingual proficiency, Cummins (1976, 1979) presents the 'Threshold Model' that emphasizes and explains the 'how and why' of linguistic choices of bilingual individuals in negotiating their way through everyday interactions by selecting among the linguistic varieties they know from cultures they identify with.

This research work employed Cummins' Threshold model of bilingualism developed in 1976. It attempts to explain language choices and level of linguistic proficiency that bilinguals can be classified. The study focuses on Bilinguals who employ the use of Standard English, Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin English. The theory/model will be useful in understanding the effects and functions of bilingualism, and thereby revealing that speakers and singers who employ the use of more than one language as a communication strategy in most cases can be classified either under the upper, middle or lower level of bilingual proficiency of Cummins Threshold theory. The bicultural elements that explain the bicultural techniques adopted in order to portray instances of biculturalism for efficient analysis have been made possible via the application of Ferdinand de Saussure's theory of sign. This research work employed Ferdinand de Saussure's theory of sign and it attempts to explain the relationship between cultural

signifiers and the signified. It also attempts to explain how artists have been able to blend the European cultures with the African cultures. Each of the song sampled has switched between two or more different languages and also referenced more than a cultural background.

Table 1. Artists Sampled Data

Name of artist	Title of song	Album title	Year of Release	Languages Used	
Wizkid	Jaiye Jaiye	Ayo	2014	English, Nigerian English (NPE)	Yoruba, Pidgin
Wizkid	Ojuelegba	Ayo	2014	English, Nigerian English	Yoruba, Pidgin
Adekunle gold	Orente	Single	2015	English, Nigerian English	Yoruba, Pidgin

7. Analysis of Songs

The data listed in the table above are excerpts from each of the selected song lyrics of Wizkid's Jaiye Jaiye, Ojuelegba and Adekunle Gold's Orente and Ire.

• Excerpt 1: "Jaiye Jaiye" by Wizkid

In this song, Wizkid tries to tell us about how he really hopes he could one day attain some of his goals in life. One amongst many wishes includes building his mum a house and buying a house for his father. A major part of verse one is written in English and Yoruba words. In the first verse, the artist gave a sonorous rendition about things he hopes to accomplish and expresses his bilingual prowess via the adoption of the mixture of Yoruba and English in describing how he hopes to accomplish what he dreams of.

Verse 1:	Translation
(1) Mo fe k'ole fun mama mi	(I want to build house for my mum)
(2) Mo fe r'ale fun baba mi	(I want to buy house for my dad)
(3) Aiye ni Miami	(Life in Miami)
(4) Maserati fun iyawo mi	(Maserati for my wife)
(5) Ferrari for soshi	(Ferrari for soschi)
(6) Ferragamo Bugatti	
(7) Owo lo dun to yii	(Money so sweet like this)
(8) Mo fe lowo bi Adenuga	(I want to be rich like Adenuga)
(9) Mo fe fe Esosa	(I want to marry Esosa)
(10) Ngozi penperenpe	
(11) All of them for me	
(12) Ati Tee baby now	(and Tee baby now)
(13) You cannot believe what I have seen with my eyes	

(14) Say my people it is a beautiful story

(15) See I fought through defeat now I am living a better life

(16) And I'm thankful for the life that I am living

Line (1) signifies the starting of the first verse of the song. He starts with a sentence in Yoruba ‘Mo f k’ole fun mama mi’ which means ‘I want to build house for my mum’. This reflects one amongst the many desires of the artist. He expresses his closeness to his audience as he uses the vocative in conversation with them and draws them closer to him. He tries to carry them along as he relates his feelings. Lines (2) through to Lines (10), the artist is seen expressing his various goals and heart desires in Yoruba language, which is his mother tongue. Line (12) ‘Ati Tee baby now’ meaning ‘And Tee baby now’ is an evidence of inter-sentential code switching in accordance with. Lines (13) through to (16), the artist recounts how he prevailed over the trials life threw at him, before things eventually turned around for good for him. This he expresses using Standard English. By virtue of the above analysis, it’s evident that the artist possesses sound knowledge of both the Standard English and Yoruba thus making him a balanced bilingual. His competence of both languages makes it possible for him to be classified under the upper level of the Threshold’s theory of bilingualism. The official video of the song uploaded to Wizkid’s YouTube channel Starboy TV portrayed various elements of biculturalism.

The video begins showing the artist costumed in a black singlet, dark sunglasses, a wristwatch and trousers made out of ankara fabrics. The singlet, ark sunglasses and wristwatch all symbolize elements of European culture but his trousers made of ‘ankara’ fabrics symbolizes the dress culture of people of the African heritage. The later part of the musical video has its physical setting set in ‘Fela shrine’. Fela shrina was founded by late legendary Fela Anikulapo Kuti during his career as a musician. The shrine is conceived by all to be the place where the Afrobeat genre of pop music was birthed. In the shrine, various musical instruments are seen in sight, Femi Kuti is seen playing the saxophone and some other instruments such as the shekere and agbamole are being used by others to form a melodious harmony.

The saxophone being a European instrument is used together with other indigenous instruments hence portraying a degree of biculturality. From the analysis gotten from the music video, there are various signifiers that depicts different signified of both the African and European Culture. The Shekere as a signifier signifies the essence of the African culture while the saxophone as a signifier represents the European culture.

- **Except 2: “Ojuelegba” by Wizkid**

As result of his continued relevance since his breakthrough as a rising star into the Nigerian Music industry in 2010, Wizkid relased a song in 2014 titled ‘Ojuelegba’. The song is rendered with a narrative style. The artist tells his story on how his musical career kicked off in Ojuelegba, a ghetto in Lagos.

Verse 1:	Translation
(1) Ni ojuelegba	(In Ojuelegba)
(2) They know my story	
(3) From holdup studio	
(4) I be hustle to work eeeh	
(5) Ni ojuelegba ooooh	(In Ojuelegba)
(6) Me and CD	
(7) We been hustle to work eeeh	
(8) Ni ojuelegba ooooh	(In Ojuelegba)
(9) From holdup studio	
(10) My people dey there	
(11) My people suffer	
(12) Them dey pray for blessing eh	
(13) Ni ojuelegba o	(In Ojuelegba)
(14) My people dey there	
(15) Them dey pray for blessing	

The Verse 1 of the song is rendered using Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE) and Yoruba. Line (1) signifies the starting of the first verse of the song. He starts with a sentence in Yoruba ‘Ni Ojuelegba’ which translates to mean ‘In Ojuelegba’. The core essential of that statement is built on reminisce. The artist tries to take himself and his audience down memory lane to describe how his music career began years back in Ojuelegba, a place in Lagos Nigeria. Lines (2) through to Lines (14) towns on succeeds in the story telling narrative initiated by Line (1). The artist tells his story on how he held his chin up amidst the various kinds of difficulties life threw at him on his musical journey towards success.

Evidence of bilingualism is seen in the verse as the bilingual competence of the artist is well exemplified in the first verse of the song via the usage of his mother tongue, Yoruba and NPE. By virtue of the above analysis, it is evident that the artist possesses sound knowledge of both Standard English and Yoruba thus making him a balanced bilingual. His competence of both languages makes it possible for him to be classified under the upper level of the Threshold’s theory of bilingualism. This is so because the artist did not falter with the grammatical rules governing the creation of the Yoruba and Standard English sentences. The official video of the song uploaded to Wizkid’s YouTube channel Starboy TV portrayed elements of biculturalism.

Although the artist was costumed in a European manner, the physical settings displayed elements of biculturalism. Following the storyline of the lyrics, the video starts showing the artist getting inside a danfo alongside other people headed out to places of work early in the morning. The physical setting then shifts to a canteen where everybody is costumed with European attires but eating African ‘swallow’ delicacies. This was aesthetically used by the artist to show that although his music has made him tilt towards acceptance of European cultures and values, he as a person would not forget his African

values thus portraying element of biculturalism. Jeans and a round neck top as a signifier represents the European culture while the various type of indigenous food served at the canteen as signifiers represents the African culture.

• **Excerpt 3: “Orente” by Adekunle Gold**

In this song, Adekunle tries to tell us about the strong bond that exists between him and his lover. A major part of verse one and two is written in NPE with a mixture of few Igbo and Yoruba words. In the first verse, the artist gave a shout out to the love of his life and declares his strong love for her. The mixture of Yoruba, English and Pidgin in describing how content the lady is carries more emotions.

(1) oya now	(let’s start now)
(2) shout out to my one and only	
(3) na you be my alobam	(you are my friend)
(4) nkem you are my one in a million	(Mine)
(6) na you be my girlie o	
(7) temi you are one in a million	(Mine)

Line (1) signifies the starting of the song. He uses a Yoruba word ‘oya’ which means ‘let’s start’. This reflects the artist’s closeness to his audience as he uses the vocative in conversation with them and draws them closer to him. He tries to carry them along as he relates his feelings. This can also be seen as the artist talks directly to his audience thereby drawing them closer to himself with the use of NPE. Line (3) is a continuation of line (2), making it an inter-sentential switch. In line 2, ‘shout out to my one and only’ can be seen as Standard English. He uses NPE to talk about the fact that he cannot deny about his lover. The artist could have expressed himself in Standard English but the choice of NPE is significant as noted above. In line 4, there is an intra-sentential switch because the union between Igbo word ‘Nkem’ meaning ‘mine’ and ‘you are my one in a million’ which can be seen as a Standard English. Also, there is a type of code-switching involving a change in pronunciation as seen in Line (6), “Girl as Girлие”. The whole verse 1 is about love confessions from the artist to a special one out there as he uses. ‘Orente’ as used in the lyrics by the artist is to show cultural coloration. He used that not because he did not have the target equivalent, but to use it stylistically.

By virtue of the above analysis, the bilingual competence of the artist is well exemplified. He possesses competence with his usage of both Standard English and Yoruba thus making him a balanced bilingual. His competence of both languages makes it possible for him to be classified under the upper level of the Threshold’s theory of bilingualism.

The official video of the song uploaded to Adekunle Gold’s YouTube channel Adekunle Gold showed elements of biculturalism. The videos start showing the artist costumed in a ‘round neck’ top made out of European fabric but had undergone the process of tie and die. To complement his European adire round neck top, he wears plain trousers.

As the video proceeds, the artist's costume changes to a jacket suit sewed in a European manner. The jacket was made out of European fabric; his shirt was made out of adire fabric and a trouser. The artist's costume was aesthetically used to prove that a cultural identity can be created from merging bits of the European and African culture thus showing elements of biculturalism. From the above analysis, the suit as a signifier and it represents an Afro-European hybrid thus expressing the artist's bicultural essence of social identity.

8. Results and Discussions

The data revealed levels of the artists' bilingual proficiency. This is evident from the song titled 'Ojuelegba, Jaiye Jaiye, and Orente'. Bilingualism is a common phenomenon noticed in the lyrics. The influence of Pidgin English is highly noticeable and in constant use in the sampled lyrics too. This tendency results to frequent cases of bilingualism. Pidgin is in use in the Western part of Nigeria, in fact, there is fusion of lexical items from the Nigerian indigenous languages into Nigerian pidgin English. Yoruba slangs like 'Alobam' and 'Dorobucci' among others have been successfully introduced into the Nigerian Pidgin English. The data reflect the attitudes of Yoruba-speaking Nigerians towards their indigenous languages. Although, the use of English in the western part of Nigeria is accorded respect, still it does not erase those ethnic traits known with Yoruba in their verbal discourse. The use of indigenous languages in these sampled songs has gone a long way to preserve its authenticity and richness. It has also helped to awake the interest of non-native speakers in other languages and cultures. This is a bold step in keeping alive Nigeria's indigenous languages.

The concept of bilingualism and biculturalism as fused by Nigerian secular artists in the composition of their song lyrics reflects a creative use of their indigenous languages as well as Standard English in the composition of their lyrics. Both artists are proficient with the use of Standard English and Yoruba English. They also tried as much as possible to blend elements of European culture and the African culture in manners categorized very aesthetic. These artists use their indigenous languages to demonstrate their bilingualism proficiency, thereby switching between codes and elements of biculturalism displayed predominantly through the way they dressed in the music videos. To them, their indigenous languages can express their feelings better than any other language. To them, such feelings are better captured, expressed and properly described in their indigenous languages. These artists employ the use of pidgin in order to reach out to their audience irrespective of their background, leaving no room for anyone to feel left out. Nigerian Pidgin English is such a variation of a language that unifies all Nigerians and the use of it helps facilitate closer rapport between users. It is therefore necessary to note that the use of NPE by Nigerian Secular artists is to establish a kind of connection between them and their audience. The lyrics reflects the use of Yoruba, NPE and Standard English and, with NPE and Yoruba being at the center of preference by these artists.

9. Conclusion

The preference of Nigerian artists in the use of indigenous languages, Nigerian Pidgin English and English is a matter of choice. Standard English is seen as being too formal, complex and foreign to Nigerians and as a result of this complexity, many Nigerian artists tilt towards the use of bilingualism and biculturalism because it tends to make the listeners feel at home without much attention paid to the grammatical formations. It is, therefore, necessary to note that the use of NPE by Nigerian secular artists is to establish a connection between them and their audience. The features of biculturalism and bilingualism displayed in the sampled songs show the artists' high level of cultural consciousness and solidarity with the mother tongue as indispensable tools for self-expression and self-actualisation.

References

- [1] Benet-Martinez, V., & Haritatos, J. (2005). Bicultural Identity Integration (BII): Components and psychosocial antecedents. *Journal of Personality*, 73, 1015–1049.
- Berry, J. (1990). Psychology of acculturation. In J. Berman (Ed.) *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation*, 1989: Cross-cultural perspectives, Current theory and research in motivation, Vol. 37 (pp. 201–234). Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.
- [2] Cummins, J. (1976) The influence of bilingualism on cognitive growth: A synthesis of research findings and explanatory hypotheses. *Working Papers on Bilingualism* 9, 1–43.
- [3] Cummins, J. (1979) Linguistic interdependence and the educational development of bilingual children. *Review of Educational Research* 49, 222–51.
- [4] Berry, J. (1990). Psychology of acculturation. In J. Berman (Ed.) *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation*, 1989: Cross-cultural perspectives, Current theory and research in motivation, Vol. 37 (pp. 201–234). Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.
- [5] Grosjean, F. (1997). The bilingual individual. Interpreting: *International Journal of Research and Practice in Interpreting*, 2, 163–87.
- [6] Grosjean, F. (2001). The bilingual's language modes. In J. Nicol (Ed.), *One mind, two languages: bilingual language processing* (pp. 1–22). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- [7] Grosjean, F. (2008). The bicultural person: A short introduction. In F. Grosjean (Ed.), *Studying Bilinguals* (pp. 213–220). Oxford, UK/New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- [8] Lewis, M. Paul, Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig. Eds. 2013. Eds. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World, Seventeenth edition*. Retrieved September 23rd, 2013, from <http://www.ethnologue.com>.