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Language Alternation Strategies in Nigerian Hip Hop and Rap Texts

Maduabuchi Agbo

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Abstract

This work is a linguistic study of Nigerian musical artistes, especially of the Hip Hop genre. The study shows that the artistes skillfully use language alternation strategies to enhance the aesthetic and rhetorical qualities of their music. It is revealed in the study that the language alternation patterns involve major Nigerian languages and English, and, they interact with elements of the lyrical structure, namely, the lines, rhymes and stanzas to enhance the musical qualities of the artistes' works.

Language alternations have other connotations as they also bear the qualities of identifying the artistes' linguistic identity and preferences. It also has semantic significance as when some lexical items are used to highlight code switching occurrences like contrastive and expressive code switching as well as reformulations and repetitions. It is also used to achieve a greater audience/participant constellation and greater understanding of the discourse/message of the song.

Key Words: Hip Hop; Language Alternation; Code Switching; Text; Context.

1.0 Introduction

Rose (1994:21), offers the following definition of Hip Hop:

Hip Hop is a cultural form that attempts to negotiate the experiences of marginalization, brutally truncated opportunity, and oppression within the cultural imperatives of African-American and Carribean history, identity, and community. It is the tension between the cultural fractures produced by postindustrial oppression and the binding ties of black cultural expressivity that set the critical frame for the development of Hip Hop.

Hip Hop is not just about music, but rather a cultural form of expression rooted in individuals singing about their lived experiences (Rose 1994:24).

The Nigerian music industry has grown to mega status over the years. Music is at the core of any form of entertainment in Nigeria. Over the years a peculiar genre of music known as *Gbedu*, or Nigerian Hip Hop has developed and it is now popular in urban and rural areas. Hip Hop is not originally a Nigerian brand of music. It emanated from America in the early 1980s and up to the late 1990s, American Hip Hop stars were very popular in the Nigerian music scene. However, at

the turn of the twenty-first century a change began to emerge. Nigerians localized the American Hip Hop brand. They maintained the fast strong rhythm, and fast talk (known as Rap) but changed the language from Black American English to Nigerian languages and Nigerian English. This brand of music is variously called 'Naija' or 'gbedu' in Nigerian Hip Hop parlance.

This use of Nigerian languages and Nigerian English has even made Hip Hop and Rap more popular and appealing than before, as many youngsters can now relate to the language of this genre of music. Right now Nigerian Hip Hop stars have conquered the Nigerian space and Nigerian Hip Hop and Rap is gradually but surely easing out the original American brand from the Nigerian music space.

1.1 Background to the Text and Context of Nigerian Hip Hop

Text is a semantic concept. According to Halliday (1978:135), a text is a semantic unit, which is not composed of sentences but is realized in sentences. Halliday and Hassan (1989:17) define it as a functional language. Following Halliday and Hasan, we can identify the three features of texts in Nigerian Hip Hop.

As a semantic unit, Nigerian Hip Hop texts have meaning that can be interpreted within the context of situation; as a syntactic unit, it follows acceptable grammatical norms; and as a pragmatic text, it has wider interpretations that go beyond the ordinary, (especially when used in a Hip Hop event); and finally, as a literary text, it has literary features such as figures of speech, word play and parallelism (Bamgbose, 1968; Olatunji, 1984). The text is also perceived as a product and a process. As a product, Nigerian Hip Hop can be recorded and studied systematically. As a process, it involves a network of meaning potential from which choices are made depending on the environment/situation of use.

Nigerian Hip Hop is performed particular contexts and has particular meanings when performed in those contexts.

Finally, the text is a form of social exchange especially dealing with interactions between speakers. This means that meaningful texts are created in interactions (or dialogues). Nigerian Hip Hop is used to express the lived experiences of the musician or the audience as the case may be. It is a unified text which has its own subject matter, participants and events. In all these occurrences, the emphasis is on the context of situation: the context makes the meaning of the Hip Hop text come to life. So what is the context of a Hip Hop text?

Context is defined in different ways depending on the form in question. Three forms of context have been identified in the literature. These are the context of culture, the context of situation and the context of text. The context of culture is "a large and complex knowledge system spread between various members of a particular culture, and hence consisting of many sets of knowledge, including in particular, the institutional and the ideological... [In] a particular

context of situation, the context of culture is accessed by means of the knowledge systems which the various participants bring to bear on the situation, where the knowledge is triggered by aspects of the context of situation” (Leckie-Tarry 1995:20). This means that the shared knowledge of ideas, participants and events forms the background to the realisation of the meanings in a particular text. When taken out of context, the possibility of wrong or meaningless interpretations of texts obtains (Mey 2000).

The Hip Hop texts we are studying are shared experiences by both the artistes and his audience.

The context of situation is the environment in which the Hip Hop text becomes meaningful. Halliday & Hasan (1989) identify the three categories of field, mode and tenor, which are said to be realized by three metafunctions – ideational, interpersonal and textual . The ideational knowledge, being knowledge resources of a culture, refers to the background knowledge within the society. It is gained through experience or from existing texts in a culture. The interpersonal knowledge deals with how people interact in particular situations, especially dealing with participant roles acceptable to the society/culture. Textual knowledge is that gained from other texts including knowledge of intratextual and intertextual contexts. This involves conventions for the realizations and cohesion of texts.

The context of text is the independent realization of meaning within the lyrics of the music. This means that the Hip Hop text is independent and bears a specific interpretation. However, meanings in Hip Hop texts can be analogous to happenings in the real world; and that is why they are invoked at such events.

Since the Hip Hop text is based on the wisdom, culture, experiences, history, etc of its society, it is easily interpretable within the society.

1.2 Method

The corpus of data used for this research is from the output of twenty Nigerian Hip Hop artistes that have received rave reviews in the past four years. The list of these artistes is in attached as an appendix to the work. This researcher keenly follows the development of Hip Hop in Nigeria. The selected artistes have the widest appeal in Nigeria in the past four years. The lyrics of the songs used for this study can be found on the jacket of the CDs and most of these lyrics can also be found on the internet. The date of launch of each album is included in the appendix at the end of this work.

The lyrics of these songs were second-read by a group of Hip Hop music lovers and they were checked at least three times against the recorded versions of the song on CD and Video. A minimal amount of transcription was made in places where the songs have not been well transcribed. The transcription and cross-checking of the lyrics was done by competent native

speakers of the languages in question. For example, the Yoruba translation and transcription was done with the help of the Yoruba teachers in a secondary school in Lagos. The Igbo and Nigerian Pidgin (NP) translation and transcription were done by the researcher, who is competent in these languages. The Efik and Hausa translations and transcriptions were done with the help of native speakers. In transcribing the data we tried to be as simple and plain as possible. We decided to disregard, in all instances, the phonetic accuracy of the transcription, especially as this was not necessary for the analysis. We did some new transcriptions because they were not available on the CD jackets and on the internet.

When these translations and transcriptions have been completed, every utterance is accorded a number and every word is accounted for. A group of lyrics to be analysed is given a number for easy identification and the track title and artiste's name is written on top of the body of lyrics. If the body of lyrics in question is the chorus or the stanza of a song, this is indicated at the top of the lyric.

In formatting the lyrics, the translations are in bold print, while all the languages are in normal print. However, where necessary a word may be highlighted in bold print to bring it to the fore for analysis.

1.3 The concepts of Language Alternation, Code Switching and Code Mixing

In the analysis of our data, we are following the concepts of code switching, language mixing and language alternation strategies as elucidated in Peter Auer (1998). This is because our data contains abundant evidence of language alternation. Auer (1998) argues that code switching can only be interpreted as a locally meaningful event and there are no limits to the number of meanings that can be ascribed to a code switching event. We are following this theory because the local meaning of a code switching or language alternation in Hip Hop can be interpreted on a case by case basis as each artiste has distinct motivations for the language alternation strategies in his work.

The terms code switching (CS), language mixing (LM) and Fused Lects (FL) are used in the following way. Code switching is reserved for those cases in which the juxtaposition of two codes (languages) is perceived and interpreted as a locally meaningful event by participants. The term language mixing, on the other hand, is used for those cases of the juxtaposition of two languages in which the use of two languages is meaningful (to participants) not in a local but only in a more global sense, i.e. when seen as a recurrent pattern. The transition from CS to LM is discussed in details within interpretive sociolinguistic approaches since it is located on the level of how speakers perceive and use the 'codes' in question. It is beyond the scope of this work.

Stabilized mixed varieties are called fused lects. The transition from LM to FL is primarily an issue for grammatical research. The essential ingredients of this transition are a reduction of variation and an increase of rule-governed, non-variable structural

regularities (see Auer 1998 for further details). We shall follow the concepts of code switching and language mixing according to the theory of Auer (1998)

1.4 Language Alternation Strategies in Nigerian Hip Hop and Rap

In the Nigerian Hip Hop and rap texts we are studying there is an abundance of transition from one language to another. This is known as language alternation. The meaning attributed to the transition from one language to another in any code switching event cannot be determined a priori, but is constantly changing and evolving in relation to the context in which every occurrence of language alternation is actually embedded. What we observe in our data is the language preference and choice of the artiste. The artiste's choice of language is critical to the interpretation of the message of his song.

The Nigerian Hip Hop artiste usually displays his language choice at the beginning of the song. This is to enable him/her to clearly define the target audience of the song. The initial language of the song is usually the unmarked code. The artiste could introduce another code for aesthetic effect or to increase the variety of audience participation. In our data we have examples of Hip Hop artistes who sing entirely in one language. Others code-switch as the context of the song warrants.

The encounter between an artiste and his audience is like that between two strangers. When two strangers meet, there is some hesitation before they converge on a common language. The artiste acts like the stranger who makes the initial effort to speak a language he thinks the other stranger will understand. If the artiste continuously sings in one language then it is assumed that he does not want to negotiate a common language between him and the audience. It is an asymmetrical type of code switching because the members of the audience who cannot understand the artiste's language but enjoy the sound of his music will be forced to sing along in the language of the artiste. This is illustrated in the song PERE by Mo Hits All Stars. Here D'banj raps (sings) entirely in Nigerian Pidgin (NP) in stanza three of the track.

(3) PERE by Mo Hit all stars

Stanza 2 by D'banj

Dont forget
That I have promised say
That I have promised
you go be my pet
You will be my pet
oya make we bet
So let us bet
you no go regret
You will not regret it
Na me go dey work the work oh

I will be doing all the work

you no go sweat

You will not sweat

Anybody wey try to come between us

Anyone who tries to come between us

them go kick bucket

Is going to kick the bucket

Oya I suggest

So I suggest

You can now dey rest

You can now take a rest

Even if na thief you want make I thief

Even it means stealing

na to pick pocket

Or pick pocketing

You no go enter molue again,

You will not move around in molues again

na my private jet {...}

You will move in my private jet

D'banj is known in the Hip Hop and rap industry because of his creative use of NP. His language preference in rapping is NP and this is an instance of code switching intended for the audience. In the song the artiste is relating his experience of wooing a girl in which he promised to make her live a life of comfort and bliss. D'banj's fans and audience who are not competent in NP usage are forced to sing in NP because the artiste has refused to negotiate a common language for them.

Another piece of Hip Hop track titled EBUTEMETTA NAIJA UMBRELLA REMIX ((4) below) by Banky W is delivered entirely in Black American English. Banky W, tries to be as American as possible in his speech pattern. There is no code-switching incidence in this track. Banky W's target audience is not necessarily the Nigerian Hip Hop loving youth who may not even understand most of what he is saying. He has his mind set on appealing to an international audience and to a select group of Nigerian youths who can understand him. His choice of Black American English is also related to his identity (He was born and partly raised in America) and the message. He wants to be identified as an original Hip Hop artiste who sings like the Hip Hop artistes in America.

The song EBUTEMETA NAIJA UMBRELLA REMIX is a self-glorifying track which has its roots in Black American Hip Hop. The language is aggressive and such aggressiveness can only be tolerated in another language. If the song had been done in NP or a Nigerian language, the message will be meaningless because it will not be euphemistic. The Black American English douses the aggressiveness and meaninglessness because it is a foreign language that is alien and not internalized in the Nigerian audience

Banky W's track is also an instance of asymmetrical code-switching because his fans and audience, who cannot understand Black American English but enjoy the rhythm of his song, will be forced to sing along in a language they do not understand.

(4) EBUTEMETA NAIJA UMBRELLA REMIX
By Banky W

Laser sharp hair line shaped by Dominicans
Mr. Capable is back with his pad and his pen again
Catch me in the Bronx politicking with mami's
Blowing up like I'm more juiced up than Rocky
Mad cuz ur girl fell in love with a black man
And yes I'm so African, tell by my accent?
And yes I'm Nigerian damn right I am packing
And yes I'm the future the rest of you are past tense

2.0 Data Analysis

2.01 Reformulations

In the analysis of our data, we come across instances of Reformulations. This involves the paraphrase of an original utterance in another language, in order to increase or lose the information. In our data, reformulations lead to an increase in the information or message.

Reformulation is done by artistes when they want to re-emphasise the message of their song. This is done in order to improve on what has been uttered in a different language.

The artiste tries self-reformulations. In self-reformulation, the artiste is expressing his bilingual identity to the audience. Reformulation is also done to include more participants in the song. AREA by Sound Sultan and DRIVES ME CRAZY by Styl-Plus illustrate instances of reformulations

(5) AREA by Sound Sultan

Chorus

(111) Ajo o dabi ile

There is nowhere like home

(112) No matter where you go make you no forget area oh

It doesn't matter where you are, do not forget home

(113) Area oh

Home oh

(114) Na naija

It is Nigeria

(115) Ti ode ba tile pada wale o

If the journey is not smooth you can always come back home

(116)Wale o

Come home

(6) DRIVES ME CRAZY by Styl Plus

Chorus

117.Anya na-egbu m

My eyes are painful

118.Isi na-awam o

My head is aching

120.O na-eme m ka m nwuru mmanya

I feel as if I am drunk

121.She drives me crazy

122.She drives me crazy

The reformulation in line 112 does not imply any alteration of the original meaning. *Ajo o dabi ile* is a Yoruba proverb meaning that home is the best. So the artiste is reformulating what he sings in NP, that one should not forget his home in spite of where one finds himself or herself. In line 120 , *o na-eme m ka m nwuru mmanya* literarily means, 'I feel as if I am drunk'. *She drives me crazy* in lines 121 and 122 is a reformulation of the feeling in English.

Note that the reformulations discussed above do not imply any alteration of the original meaning. Reformulations should not be seen as a translation from one language to another. 'it is probably more accurate to speak of *semantic proximity* (Guerini 2006:122).

2.1 Code Switching Intended for the Audience

The artiste and the audience of the artiste are the active participants in the music event. In our data we observe that the code switching occurrences in some texts are meant to index the features of the audience in the music event, while others are meant to contextualize the features of the artiste himself. In other words, code switching is used to indicate the language preferences of the artiste and audience alike.

Code-switching is resorted to in order to express the artiste's feelings and sentiments (expressive functions), in order to signal a change within the participant constellation, to emphasise the contrast between different parts of an utterance (contrastive function), to express comments or parenthetical remarks, to introduce a new topic (topic shift), to underscore part of an utterance, to deal with the problems concerning the channel of communication (phatic function) and in order to quote through direct or indirect speech the utterances pronounced by another participant or even by the artiste himself.

2.11 Expressive Code Switching

Expressive code-switching is the one resorted to in order to show the feelings and sentiments of the artiste and his audience. In multilingual speech, the wish to express one's feelings more effectively is one of the main reasons for the choice of a code contrasting with the language of interaction. In our observation we are focusing on that utterance the expressive component of which appear to prevail and is signaled at lexical level, by the choice of lexemes with an evident expressive connotation.

(7) EGO by Djine

Stanza 1

(123).If I die now, I go happy say

If I die now I will be happy that

(124).Say when I dey this world I don fall in love

When I was alive, I fell in love

(125).Which one you dey

What is your problem

(126).Wey you dey treat me so

Why are you treating me so

(127)I don beg I don do everything

I have begged, I have done all I can

(128).But you tell me say you need time and

But you are telling me that you need more time

(129).You no fit dey wit me

You cannot be with me

(130).Na so I vow

So I have taken a vow

(131).Anyway I dey go Ewo!

Anyway. I am going ewo!

CHORUS

(132).If you help me see Ego

If you see Ego

(133).Make you tell am I don go

Tell her that I am gone

(134).She no look me and so

Let her not look for me

(135).Don pack my load go Ewo!

I have moved my things and gone ewo!

The track EGO by Djinee has the language of interaction as Nigerian Pidgin. In the song, the artiste is singing about love that is not returned. The beloved is not responding to the love of the lover. So in Line 135 the artiste code-switches to Igbo to express his feeling of dejection at the unremitted love with the Igbo expression *ewo!*. This expression in everyday Igbo speech is used to show pain or surprise.

The artiste Djinee is not Igbo by ethnic origin. He uses the word ‘ewo’ because it rhymes with, Ego, the name of the beloved. Ego also means money in Igbo and his rhyming of the two words alludes to the fact that the girl he loves rejects him because he is not rich. In line 132 there is also a codeswitching from NP to Igbo but this is to perform a rhyming function with the word ‘go’ in Line 133. However the expressive function of line 135 is in no doubt because it can still be seen that the artiste is expressing his pain using the Igbo word ‘Ewo!’

In (8) below, Tuface Idibia is singing about his bid to be rich and successful. The unmarked code (language of interaction) of his discourse is NP but in Lines 136, 138, and 143 he switches to the Efik word Nfana Ibagha which means ‘*no problem.*’ Nfana Ibagha is an everyday emotional expression in the language to show that the speaker has a clear conscience in his dealings. Tuface in his song is code-switching to Efik from NP to capture the emotion imbued with the use of the expression.

We take note of the fact that Tuface is not Efik by ethnic identity. He uses that expression to appeal to his multilingual audience and also for aesthetic effect. The audience of the artiste is multilingual. In other words, it is a constellation of participants of different language background. So the Hip Hop and rap artiste has the duty to involve every member of this multilingual audience in his music. In our data, there are instances when the artiste code-switches in order to include a segment of the audience that has hitherto been excluded from the music event due to language use.

In general, the change that code-switching appears to contextualize most frequently is a change of addressee, that is a present speaker selects a new addressee, and signals that the message is directed to a new participant by switching into a code contrasting with the one employed up to that point of the discourse. The choice of the addressee’s preferred code is in fact an unmarked communicative behaviour, that, some scholars include among the universal principles regulating multilingual and multiethnic interactions. (cf Grosjean 1982)

In our data we found out that code-switching may be employed to narrow down the participant constellation for example in the song LEE LEE (10) by Resonance. This is done to exclude the English-speaking audience from participating in singing along. The artiste Resonance starts the song in English but immediately switches to Igbo in Line 172. This is an attempt to exclude her audience who cannot understand Igbo and also for aesthetic effect. The message now is directed at the English-Igbo bilinguals who are the only ones capable of understanding the full import of the message in the song. The artiste is simply praying that God should take over her life and give her direction.

(10) LEE LEE by Resonance

Stanza 1

167. Tutup tutup tutup (4x)
168. Yesterday I asked my mama
169. Mama could you please tell me the road from here
170. That I could take
171. She said
172. Lee lee (5x) lekene m o so chi ma e (2x)
Look at me, only God knows

173. In my days as I could see
174. All of my potentialities
175. Hang like a spell in my dreams
176. I need to spring back I ...
177. I need reality

CHORUS

178. Yeah
179. Lee lee (5x) lekene mu o!
Look look look at me o!
180. So chi ma e (echo)
Only God knows
181. Lee lee (7x) lekene mu o!
Look look look at me o!
182. Nee m anya a nom ebea
Look at me, I am here
183. Chukwu muo nso
Holy Spirit
184. Gbadata e
Come down
185. Echezokwana nwa gi e
Don't forget your child
186. Onye nwem o
My creator
187. Gbapute mu e
Save me

The analysis in (10) above can be applied to (11) below. The artiste Stylplus has the stanzas of the song in English but the chorus is in Yoruba. There is no doubt that the switch in code is for aesthetic effect but it is also to change and widen the audience-participant constellation. The Yoruba chorus draws more fans from Yoruba-speakers to the group Stylplus because it is clearly directed at the Yoruba speakers.

(11) OLUFUNMI by Styl Plus

Stanza 1

187. When I said to you that I never want to love another
188. Woman girl it was true
189. So true
190. I meant to marry you and when I did I d be the one to
191. Take care of you for you
192. Now you say you want to leave me girl, when around
193. You I have built my world
194. Whatever you heard about me baby is definitely crazy
195. Please give me one chance to show...

Chorus

196. Olufunmi ooo
Olufunmi
197. Ma pa mi lekun ooo
Don't let me cry
198. Olufunmilola
199. Ma se fimi sile lai lai
Don't leave me alone
200. Duro timi oo
Stand by me
201. Olufunmi ooo

(8) NFANA IBAGA by Tuface Idibia

Chorus

136. Nfana Ibag
No problem
137. Never give another man yawa o
Don't make trouble for other people
138. So the reason why I say nfana Ibag
So the reason I say no problem
139. Is that I got my conscience on my side
140. Got peace of mind inside
141. Nfana Ibag
142. No matter what I do I m going to make my dough(money)
143. So the reason why I say Nfana Ibag (no problem)
144. Is he who God bless no man can curse
145. No man can curse
146. No man can curse

In (9) Faze's expressive code-switching is in the utterance and not a word or phrase like the ones in (7) and (8) above. In Line 153 he codeswitches to Igbo from the unmarked code of NP and in Line 154 he codeswitches to Yoruba. The two expressions in Lines 153 and 154 mean the same thing. They are proverbs which are used to express fear about someone's life. In the song Faze is telling his audience about the betrayal and treachery he suffered in the hands of his friends. So in Lines 153 and 154 he code-switches to express the pain he felt. This emotional code-switching to Nigerian languages is because his feeling is better captured by the proverbs.

(9) FAZE ALONE by Faze

Stanza 3

147.It's a small world wey many things dey happen

It's a small world where many things are happening

148.Dey happen dey happen, dey happen

Happening happening happening

149.It's a small world wey many things dey happen

It's a small world where many things are happening

150.A brother you trust today go fit betray you tomorrow

A brother you trust today can betray you tomorrow

So

151.Be careful this life is full of sorrow

152.Watch the company you keep and the friends you follow

Cos

153.O kwa onye ma mmadu na-egbu mmadu

It is he who is familiar with someone that can kill him

154.Eni tomo elio pa yi wo

It is he who is familiar with someone that can kill him

155.Nothing stays the same

156.And as you lay your bed na so you go lie on top am

2.2 Code switching to select a new audience

The audience of the artiste is multilingual. In other words, it is a constellation of participants of different language background. So the Hip Hop and rap artiste has the duty to involve every member of this multilingual audience in his music. In our data, there are instances when the artiste code-switches in order to include a segment of the audience that has hitherto been excluded from the music event due to language use.

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197. Ma pa mi lekun ooo
Don't let me cry
198. Olufunmilola
199. Ma se fimi sile lai lai
Don't leave me alone
200. Duro timi oo
Stand by me
201. Olufunmi ooo

2.21 Contrastive Code Switching

Contrastive code-switching takes place within an utterance. The aim is to emphasise the word that has been used in another language in the same utterance. The possibility to take advantage of the contrastive effect derived from the juxtaposition of elements belonging to different linguistic systems is one of the most functional communicative resources that multilingual speakers have at their disposal in order to organize an ongoing interaction. In this case, code-

switching may be resorted to either to accentuate the antithesis existing between or among the various portions of an utterance or to emphasise a single segment of the utterance (for example a word or a phrase) in contrast with what precedes or follows it.

A syntactic feature distinguishing contrastive code-switching from other forms of code-switching fulfilling discursive functions is the tendency to be within an utterance rather than involving two or more utterances. This peculiarity can be explained if we consider that in this case the juxtaposition of different codes serves the purpose of marking the contrast between portions of the same utterance. Such a contrastive effect would be more difficult to achieve if the juxtaposition were extended to consecutive sentences or turns. In other words, contrastive code-switching is a conversational device that multilingual speakers have at their disposal, in addition to the syntactic and prosodic strategies typical of monolingual speech, in order to underscore a portion of the utterance.

In (12) Stylplus code switches from English to Yoruba in each of the lines. Each of the code-switching occurrences is within each utterance of the song. The lines start in English but code-switch to Yoruba. The switch to Yoruba is to accentuate the discourse marker 'imagine that' that begins each line. This discourse marker is a sentence that needs to be explained further and the artiste decides to use Yoruba to explain it. This language negotiation strategy is to appeal to the Hip Hop loving English-Yoruba bilinguals who will be interested in the message of Stylplus. The message is about a lover who is about to be jilted.

(12) IMAGINE THAT by Styl Plus

Chorus

218. Imagine that, afi gba to de dan dan pe kose mo,

Imagine that, she doesn't want the relationship again

219. Imagine that pelu gbogbo ife ti moti fi fun

Imagine that with all the love I have shown her

220. Imagine that kilon fe ko sele simi to balo

Imagine that, how do you want me to feel

221. Imagine that to balo

222. Imagine that imagine that

In (13) the track E DON HAPPEN by Psquare also contains evidence of contrastive code-switching. Lines 55 and 58 have the contrastive effects of Igbo-Yoruba code-switching. The line starts with the Igbo interrogative sentence *I jikwa ego* 'do you have money' and ends with the Yoruba word *Owo* 'money'. Psquare uses this contrastive code-switching for stylistic effects. Juxtaposing the Igbo and Yoruba words for money is very creative in a musical framework. Besides, the Yoruba word *Owo* sounds like an exclamation which is in tune with the discourse of the song. Psquare is also identifying with the speakers of the major Nigerian languages of Igbo and Yoruba. Psquare is of Igbo extraction and their use of Igbo is not unconnected with their identity while Yoruba is to appeal to their Lagos audience. Lagos is the capital of the entertainment industry in Nigeria.

(13) E DON HAPPEN by Psquare

Chorus

53. Oh no! yes oh!

54. Come on honey shake your body

55. Iji kwa ego! Owo!

Do you have money! Money!

56. Come on honey shake your body

57. Oh no! yes oh

58. Come honey shake your body

59. Iji kwa ego! Owo!

60. Come on honey shake your body

GONGO ASO by 9ice is also a veritable example of contrastive code-switching. Here 9ice code-switches between Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin. He accentuates Yoruba with NP and vice versa. In Line 42 he starts the utterance in Yoruba and switches into NP in the same utterance. In Line 45 he starts the utterance in NP and switches to Yoruba in the same utterance. This language negotiation strategy by 9ice is for aesthetic effect and also for his fans to really understand his message, which is centred on how great he has become in a short time.

By contrasting the two languages, the import of his discourse will linger longer in the minds of his audience. 9ice is Yoruba by origin and a typical Lagosian. The target audience participants are people like him who are bilingual in Yoruba and NP and use the two languages interchangeably everyday.

(14) GONGO ASO by 9ice

Chorus

42. Gongo aso kutupu ahu anywhere I dey now

The ultimate is yet to happen, when it does it will explode , anywhere I am now

43. Gongo aso kutupu ahu any show I go now

The ultimate is yet to happen when it does it will explode, any show I attend

44. Ajisebi Oyo Laari, Oyo O'shebi Baba eni kankan

We can only see Oyo imitators, Oyo will never imitate anybody

45. I be double now aiye nlo e' o ri nkan

I am now great, the world is transient, can't you see

2.22 Repetitions

In this section attention will be focused on those contexts in which an utterance (or part of it) is expressed by means of a certain code and then repeated in a language contrasting with the language of interaction. Unlike reformulations discussed in section 3.2, repetitions do not represent a participant related language alternation strategy but fulfill a discourse function, for

example they are performed in order to emphasise the linguistic behaviour of the addressee, in this sense the audience-participants.

It is important to note that from the semantic point of view, repetitions do not involve any reformulations or paraphrases of the original utterance. Sornicola (1999 cf Guerini 2006: 167) states that repetitions differ from reformulations by the presence of two fundamental features.

- i) semantic equivalence between the original utterance and the repetition,
- ii) absence of morphologic and syntactic alterations.

Guerini (2006:16) admits that the latter criterion is problematic because translating from one language to another ‘inevitably implies some kind of morpho-syntactic alteration.’ Guerini asserts that semantic equivalence is certainly the most prominent requisite, whereas the presence of morphologic or syntactic alterations is a drawback which ought to be taken into account when investigating repetitions in multilingual speech. In (11) LOVE DRUNK by Obiwon has an instance of the kind of repetition described above. In Line 254 the utterance starts with English and code-switches into Igbo. This utterance means ‘my love’. But in Line 255 the whole utterance is in Igbo but it is a repetition of Line 254. *Obi* is semantically equivalent to ‘love’. Line 256 is also a repetition of Line 254. *Uso* is semantically equivalent to ‘love’ also in the context of the song.

Obiwon is Igbo, and his code-switching from English to Igbo can only mean that he wants to show his identity to his English-Igbo bilingual audience-participants. It is also a strategy to delineate his audience participants to only English-Igbo bilinguals. One cannot forget the aesthetic effect such code-switching strategy adds to the music.

(15) LOVE DRUNK by Obiwon

Chorus

254.Love mu o

My love o

255.Obi mu o

My love

256.Uso mu o

My sweetness

In (12) the language negotiation strategy of repetition is noticed in Line 144 where the artiste Sunny Neji code-switches from Yoruba to English.

This is to keep in tune with the linguistic behaviour of his audience-participants who are English-Yoruba bilinguals. It is instructive that Sunny Neji is not Yoruba so he is not code-switching to show his identity but for commercial purposes. The target audience is the English-Yoruba urban youngsters, who most probably live in Lagos the entertainment capital of Nigeria.

(12) ORUKA by Sunny Neji

140. Chorus

141. It's your wedding day, so be happy and rejoice

142. Whatever they say, today you made your choice

143. This is only where one and one is one

144. Ololufe re, together you belong

You are the same thing, together you belong

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2.23 Code Switching with Rhyming Function

A rhyming function is normally fulfilled by those expression, the purpose of which is to establish or preserve the contact between interactants, to confirm that the message has been correctly understood, and to ensure that the conversation proceed. In a musical framework the function of code-switching in rhyming is to create melody and artistry in music. Examples of this is illustrated in (13) and (14) below with the tracks AREA by Sound Sultan and E DON HAPPEN by Psquare.

In (13) the discourse is about Nigerians in diaspora who are stranded in foreign lands because of financial difficulties. Sound Sultan is appealing to them to come back home if they find the condition overseas unbearable.

In Line 145 the utterance is in NP but the last word 'ego' is an Igbo word. It rhymes with the word Chicago in Line 146. Chicago is a city in the US. This is an evidence of code-switching.

(13)

AREA by Sound Sultan

Stanza 1,

145.Chinedu somebody borrow you ego
Chinedu someone borrowed you some money
146.Make you take travel go Chicago
So that you can travel to Chicago
147.Remember Nnamdi sell im car
Remember Nnamdi sold his car
148.So you go go America
So that you can go to America
149.All these people wey bin dey raise you
All these people who have been helping you financially
150.Still dey stay for face me I face you
Are still living in 'face me I face you'
...

In Stanza 2 below, which is a continuation of the discourse of the same song there is code-switching with rhyming function in Lines 155 and 156. The unmarked code of the utterance in Line 155 is NP but the last word , 'kpai', in the utterance is an Edo word, meaning death. It rhymes with the word 'cry' in Line 156. Again, in Lines 159, 160 and 161 there is code-switching function with rhyming. The words 'Canada', 'wonder' and the Yoruba word 'pada' rhyme. In Lines 159 and 160 the utterance is in NP but Line 160 is in Yoruba ending with the rhyming word 'pada.'

Stanza 2

151.You bin say na one year
You said you stay one year
152.E come turn to two years
Then it became two years
153.You don go for seven years
You are now gone for seven years
154.But you dey serve eleven years
But you are serving a jail term of eleven year
155.Even when your papa kpai
Even when your father died
156.Plus the tears your mama cry
In addition to the tears of your mum
157.Bayo for Chicago
Bayo in Chicago
158.Dem dey miss you for Okokoro
You are being missed in Okoko
159.Biodun for Canada

Biodun in Canada

160. Your mama still dey wonder

Your mother is still wondering

161. Igba wo lo to ma pada

When you are going to return

(14) below also has evidence of rhyming as a code-switching function. Here Psquare is talking about a girl he meets in a nite club and what he wants to do with her. In Lines 168, 169 and 170, there is rhyming. Lines 168 and 170 are completely uttered in NP but there is code-switching in Line 169 from NP to Hausa (za mu je gado) in order to achieve rhyming. The Hausa word 'gado' rhymes with the end words in Lines 168 and 169.

E DON HAPPEN by Psquare

(14)

Stanza 3

162. See I no dey like anything wey no dey like show

See I don't like anything that doesn't like being showy

163. See some chics their hips and lips dey glow

See some girs have glowing hips and lips

164. Step on your toe girl

165. To the dance floor

166. Then make you slow

Then take it slow

167. Make my mind blow

Let my mind blow

168. Girl I got code baby ain't got dough

Girl I have a message but I have no money

169. But after the show zamu je gado!

But after the show we shall go to bed

170. But after the show for sure we go roll...

But after the show we shall surely enjoy

3.0 Conclusion

Our analysis reveals that code switching is a pervasive language alternation strategy used by Nigerian Hip Hop and rap artistes to appeal to their fans. Other language negotiation strategies that are not discussed here include transfer and borrowing. They are discussed in the larger part of this work.

The music genre of Nigerian Hip Hop is phenomenal. The artistes are adored by their teenaged and adolescent fans. These fans in their everyday speech imitate the language use of the artistes. It is possible that as time goes by a variety of language with Nigerian Hip Hop as the background will be developed among teenagers and adolescents. This is already the case in Black American

English in which Hip Hop language is affecting the way American teenagers speak Black American English.

Language use in Nigerian Hip Hop has implications for language teaching. The strategies used by the artistes to make their work appealing to their fans could be studied and applied in inter-translation studies of Nigerian languages. The code switching instances of repetition, reformulations and contrastive code switching can be useful in this regard, especially in nursery and primary schools.

Again, language use in Nigerian Hip Hop has implications for language planning. When the language alternation strategies have been well studied and documented, they could be used to forestall language endangerment. If the artistes are encouraged to sing in languages that face extinction, these languages could be revived and interest in learning them will be awakened in our youth.

Hip Hop artistes also instill a sense self esteem in the use of our local languages. A number of them including D’banj, 9ice, Ruggedman, Tuface and Psquare are well known and appreciated in the African continent and in Europe and America. Many Nigerian Hip Hop fans from other African countries are already conversant with many words of Nigerian origin and many of them ask these artistes for the translation of their music. This obviously popularizes Nigerian languages and makes Nigerian youngsters to be proud of speaking them.

Nigerian Hip Hop artistes are language activists. Even though they sing for commercial purposes, their language use patterns is also a statement to the world that Nigerian languages have the right and capacity to be used to entertain a world audience. Many of these artistes, especially D’banj, Tuface and 9ice, when granting interviews to the world press infuse large doses of NP and Nigerian languages in their speeches. They do not bother to interpret their speeches to their interviewers. This is a way of telling the world it should make the effort to understand Nigerian languages since it enjoys Nigerian Hip Hop.

Hip Hop is an expression of experience. Nigerian Hip Hop artistes express the linguistic experience of Nigerian languages. These experiences are the result of the language contact phenomenon. The study of the language use of these artistes is a continuation of the study of language contact and language attitude. Here, language contact is not studied for communicative purposes but for entertainment. It gives a new perspective to the study of language contact and language attitude and adds to the literature and ideas about them.

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