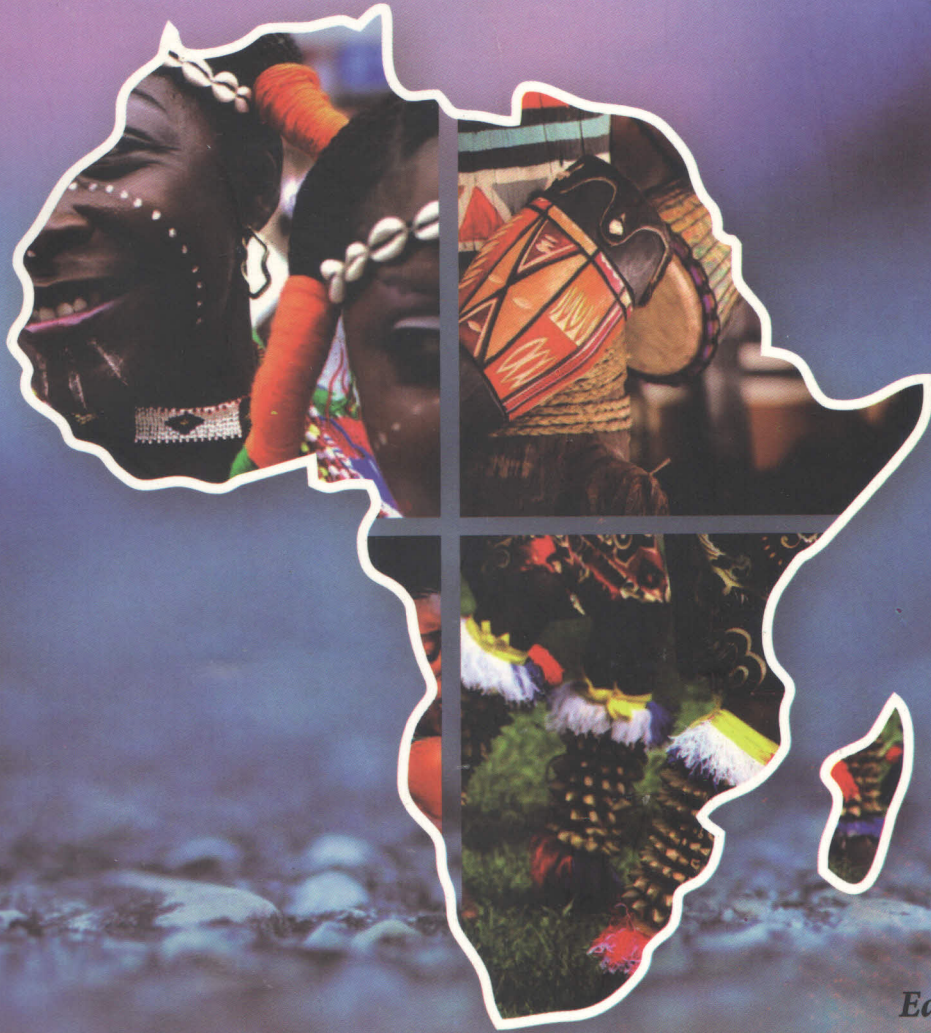


African Culture and Performance Dynamics in the Dramaturgy of AbdulRasheed Abiodun Adeoye



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'African Culture and Performance Dynamics in the

Dramaturgy of AbdulRasheed Abiodun Adeoye'

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10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

88	Examining the Impacts of Colonial Film Legacies on the Nigerian Film Industry -	264
	Osunkojo Adeola Abiodun	
96	The Religious Philosophy Regarding Retribution in Aeschylus' <i>Oresteia</i> -	276
	Gharbin	
112	African Culture and Performance in Transition: Evolution of Yorùbá Cultural	289
	Elements from Stage to Film - Joe Odedina	
123	Style and Language in the Yorùbá Indigenous Dramatic Tragic Plays: Insights	302
	from <i>Réré Rún</i> by Oládèjò Òkédijí - Òkèwándé Oluwolé Tẹwógboyè	
132	Stand-Up Comedy as an Alternative Theatre Practice in Nigeria -	317
	Helen Paul	
138	(De)Construction of Language of Environmentalism and Resilience of the poor	328
	in some Selected Commonwealth Movies - Afutendem Lucas Nkwetta	
153	The Socio-Cultural and Economic Impacts of the New Yam Festival in Boki Local	345
	Government of Cross River State - Theresa Nfam Odeigah	
158	A Critical Overview of the Principles and Characteristics of Islamic Literature -	354
	Lateef Onireti Ibraheem & Aliy Abdulwahid Adebisi	
180	Performance and the Politics of Incomplete in Girish Karnard's <i>Hayavadana</i> -	366
	P. Prayer Elmo Raj	
17	Media Roles in Harnessing Art for Peace Building in Improving Socio-Cultural	376
	Community Life - Silas Oghenemaro Emovwodo	
17	Indigenous Knowledge System and African Musical Arts Education: Toward a	384
	Responsible Pedagogy - Kayode Odujobi	
17	Re-Reading Spectacles: Historicizing Occupy Nigeria -	398
	Dotun Ayobade	
17	Identity and Politics in Nigerian Dance Practice and Scholarship: A Critical	406
	Examination - Kene Igweonu	
17	The use of Language in Radio Advertisements in Ghana -	422
	Philip Arthur Gborsong & Stella Aino Sasah	
17	Part Three	
17	An Interview with Adeoye	439

Style and Language in the Yorùbá Indigenous Dramatic Tragic Plays: Insights from *Réré Rún* by Oladèjò Òkédìjì



Òkèwándé Olúwólé Tẹ̀wógboyè

Introduction

From sociological perspectives, there is distinction between language and the social use in a society. In the opinion of Ferdinand de Saussure, there is distinction between *langue* (language) and *parole* (performance). In other words, it is one thing to have the knowledge of a language; it is another thing to have the appropriate use of the language in a society. In Chomsky's view, there is a distinction between language "competence", "the idealized and internal knowledge which a native speaker has about his language, and performance which refers to his actualized competence in the context of real life communication" (Lawal 2004, p. 51).

Variation in the use of language is determined by the speaker and the situation the speaker finds himself or herself. In other words, language and style is determined by the situation (context) of performance. The sociolinguistic competence of the speaker is determined by cultural use of the language elements in the society; as language is used to perform actions in different social situations.

Good style must be the language use in relation to the cultural materials, symbolisation, meaning and interpretation of the material in a society. That is, the appropriateness of the style and language is determined by the performers' understanding of culture. This is because; materials used in performance are panacea for communication of messages to the audience and the society. "Style is the intricate, bidirectional relationship between components of the message and those of the medium in the sociolinguistic process through which the speaker/writer has certain ideas, beliefs views, feelings and attitudes for which he chooses the medium of language to communicate" (Lawal, 1997, p. 38).

In stylistic analysis of a text, the stylistic elements must be selective. Such selective elements will serve as stylistic domain for such analysis. Therefore, this study attempts to

demonstrate the language and styles of the actors of some major performers in the text. The stylistic import of songs in the play is examined to account for its effect towards the realisation of dramatic text. *Réré rún* is a drama text written by Oládèjò Òkèdìjì and was published in 1973. The play had been staged by *Orí Olókun* dramatic group in Ilé-Ife, Ìbàdàn and Lagos.

In this study, the dramatic- *réré rún*, is the main source of data for analysis. However, where the data from the text seems inadequate to account for the analysis of this study, relevant available data are explored to complement the main data. The Yorùbá indigenous materials are interpreted as possible; but, in some cases, are "left raw" (uninterpreted) so as to preserve the Yorùbá cultural flavor of such word or data. This is because, "African authors are themselves motivated by a desire to closely approximate the local flavor" (Ọlóruntóba-Ójù, 1998, p. 4). However, where this is done, such will in no way jeopardize the content and intent of this study.

Language and Style in Dramatic Discourse

Style and language use in drama has been described by stylisticians, language and discourse analysts because of the peculiarity nature of genre. This peculiarity ranges from the incorporation of different actors, places of events or stage, topics or themes which bring different variations in the use of language and various forms of communication channels:

Drama often poses a special difficulty to the discourse analyst and stylistician. On one hand it is, unlike naturally occurring conversation, a 'neat' specimen of language use in interactional situations. It is typically stripped of conventional features of naturally occurring conversation such as false starts, hesitation phenomena, arbitrary topic shifts, speaker overlap, performance slip, interruptions, break-offs, etc, all of which may account to an unhelpful distraction in the analysis of various aspects of discourse....Drama is also typically condensed and stylized. As simulated interaction, it brings together numerous participants, settings and situations in a way that data of natural conversation cannot. Such rich condensation of discourse situations affords the analyst an overview of human communication in different situations...On the other hand, this same rich condensation in drama dialogues often results in a daunting complexity from the point of view of stylistics or discourse analysis...Indeed, a stylistics of drama is notoriously difficult to accomplish (Ọlóruntóba-Ojù 1998, pp. x and xi).

For appropriate stylistic and discourse analysis of dramatic texts, different knowledge ranges from sociocultural to linguistic knowledge must be incorporated.

Inadequacy in the knowledge of different variables such as actors, language use of the performers, including such variables such as the use of body language in communication among others influence the attainment or actualisation of dramatic performance.

Igbó dídí tó sòro ó sán ni àgbékalẹ̀ ịṣowọ́ afọ́-ajẹméré-oníṣe. Èyí rí bẹ̀ẹ̀, nítorí onírúurú akópa àti èdè tó n kó wọ́nú. Ìlànà ịṣowọ́ ịṣòrí afọ́ yìí máa n yàtò gedegbe sí ilànà ịṣowọ́ afọ́ yòókù (Òkéwándé 2014, p. 16).

It is very complex to establish the style of a drama text. This is as a result of different actors and languages that the text incorporates. The style of this form of text is unique among other forms of texts.

In the opinions of Culpeper, Short and Verdonk (1998), dramatic discourse has some unique differentiated features from other forms of literary texts. This is the same view of Qlóruntóba-Ójù (1998, pp.x-xiii) that, “relatively little work has been done on the style of dramatic discourse.” On the classification of indigenous drama, Ògúnbiyí suggested two broad forms in an attempt to complement the opinion of Clark: Traditional and literary, which Clark refers to as religious and secular forms:

And “within the sacred species, there are again two types”, the myth and ancestral plays on one hand and the masquerade plays of different cult and age group into the religious and secular forms of traditional Nigeria drama, he identifies five types—magic or trick plays, pastoral or puppet plays, civic drama, dance or song drama, narrative or epic drama” (Ògúnbiyí, 1981, p. 9).

A dramatic text is judged by the level of variations in styles and language of a dramatic discourse. However, “such style shifting demands constant judgment” (Stubbs, 1983, p. 4). The sociolinguistic competence of the speaker is determined by cultural use of the language elements in the society; as language is used to perform actions in different social situations. This means, language and styles varies according to the situation and context of performance. To this end, “shift of style are obviously accompanied by shifts of context; the same holds true of the speech of different character” (Spencer and Gregory, 1964, p. 45). That is:

Various social factors determine the individual speaker's use of language. All speakers are multidialectal or multistylistic, in the sense that they adapt their style of speaking to suit the social situation in which they find themselves. Such style-shifting demands constant judgments, yet speakers are not normally conscious of making such judgments until they find themselves in a problematic situation for which they do not know the conventions, or of which

the criteria for speaking in a certain way clash...People therefore adapt their speech according to the person they are talking to and the point behind the talk. These are social, rather than purely linguistic constraints (Stubbs, 1983, p.45).

Stylistician or style analyst is tasked with measuring or analysing the appropriate symbolisation of words in dramatic performance. In other words, good style in relation to adaptability of the performers is judged by the social situation the performer finds himself or herself. Good style must be the language use in relation to the cultural materials, symbolization, meaning and interpretation of the material in a society. In other words, ignorance about the component of cultural language used in the discourse determines the dramatic performance.

In any literary work, play or event, three elements are important- the character, the language and the event. Out of these elements, language is the most important because the other two elements cannot function in the absence of language. For instance, it is by the language in the work of art one can describe the events and characters. "Akópa ni onkòwé maa n fèdè sí lénú láti gbé tàbí láti fi èrò-òkàn onkòwé tàbí aṣafò ráńsé sáwùjọ" (Òkèwándé, 2015, p. 111). (A writer allocates language to the characters so as to show communicate his message to the society).

Different scholars have attempted to categorise the actors in a play. For instance, some are of the view that,

Since drama presents us directly with scenes which are based on people's actions and interactions, characters play a dominant role in this genre and therefore deserve close attention. The characters in plays can generally be divided into major characters and minor characters, depending on how important they are for the plot. A good indicator as to whether a character is major or minor is the amount of time and speech as well as presence on stage he or she is allocated (Lethbridge and Mildorf, nd, p. 26)

In the opinions of some authors, characters in a play can broadly be divided into two. However, some authors are of the view that characters in a play can be grouped into three.

Ọnà mèta ni a lè pín ìjẹyọ àwọn akópa sí nínú ìṣẹ aláwòmọ-lítirésọ: olú-akópa, akópa amúgbálẹgbẹẹ àti akópa amágbokún. Olú-akópa jẹ orí. Akópa amúgbálẹgbẹẹ jẹ amúpé; nígbà tí akópa amágbokún jẹ àfikún. Láìsí Tàgírì, awọ ò hu ni olú-akópa maa n jẹ. Kò sí lágbo, agbo ò kún; kò sí lájọ, àjọ ò jọ ni. Ipa àti ipò

Intentions of the speakers or writers are made known to the society by the use of language. Performers can be grouped into three in a literary text: the hero-the main or major, the minor performers and those that complement. Without the hero in a dramatic text, the objective of the play cannot be realised. He performs the major

rè ló máa n rinlè jù ló. Kètékètè kú isó pin lórò olú akópa, bí ó bá ti kú, eré kú (parí tàbí kí ó pin) niyẹn. Kò sí kòmóòkun kankan tí a lè fi sòdiwòn tàbí tí a lè fi sègbéléwòn afò tí olú-akópa kò ní jẹ òtẹ fún. Akópa kan soṣo lèyí sáà máa n jẹ. Àwọn akópa amúgbalégbè jẹ 'mò- jẹ-ò-bàjẹ', àwọn ni akópa èjìkà, tí kò jẹ kí èwù bó lórùn. Láìsì àwọn akópa wònyí, àṣeyorí jìnnà sí olú-akópa papáa; sè awo níí gbáwo nígbàwò. Ìsòrí akópa yìí, akópa tàbí àwọn akópa lè jẹ méjì sókè, èyí dá lórí afò. Díẹ ni t'Àlábá nínú ọrọ ibeji ni àwọn tàbí akópa amágbokún jẹ nínú afò; nítorí, bí a bá mú wọn kúrò nínú afò àgunlá, àguntètè' ni; kò lè sàkóbá kankan fún ikésejari afò. Àràkún laṣọ Gbági lórò àwọn akópa amágbokún, àfikún ni wòn (Òkewándé, 2015, pp. 111 & 2).

roles in the play. His or her death or end in the play ends the play. Only a performer performs this role in a play. Other participants or performers complement the roles of the hero; as their death or end in a play may not end the play

However, language in relation to how some characters in *réré rún* describes the style of the text or play.

In dramatic text such as *réré rún*, one character is allocated time, speech, and language different from others. Therefore, the turn – taking is associated with dramatic texts.

In analysing dialogue, one can look at *turn – taking* and the *allocation of turns* to different speakers, eg., how many lines is each character's turn? Do some characters have longer turns than others and, if so, why? One can also analyse how often a character gets the chance to speak through the entire play and whether he or she is interrupted by others or not (Lethbridge and Mildorf, nd, p. 38).

***Réré rún* as a Dramatic Tragic Play**

Réré Rún, is a Yorùbá indigenous drama text that evinced the Yorùbá system of government before the advent of colonial rule. The realism of the text will ever remain fresh as it mirrors the present Nigeria labour situation. The play relates the protest by the workers against their poor state or living condition, the oppressive rule and exploitations by the rulers or the government. Workers were forced to labour, underpaid and under different form of

oppressions. The government, under the indigenous rule, used every form of power ranges from divide and rule among the workers, money and materials, propaganda among others against the worker so as to have their ways. The workers' protest results into some tragic events; especially to the labour leader- Láuwo. He lost his wife in the struggle and was also in partial insane. The author's message for the workers shows the need to be in unity before they can be liberated from the exploitative and oppressive rule. The vulnerability of the labour leaders is demonstrated by the one form of calamity to the other that was visited on Láuwo by the Onímògún and his council. The insane event that eventually made things to fall apart is curable. After all, Láuwo did not die. There is still hope for the workers to be liberated and gain freedom from the employer- government.

The plot in *Réré Rún* is based on the indigenous political system. This shows that, Africans generally and the Yorùbá in particular have a peculiar indigenous system of governance. Ìmògún town is the setting of *Réré Rún*. "Towns became the centre of political administration under the headship of oba" (Alao, 2017, p. 599). Onímògún was the head of the indigenous government with the council of chiefs refers to as *Ìgbimọ́ ilú Ìmògún* among who are Olúgbón, Arẹ̀sà and Oníkòyí.

In dramatic discourse generally and in *réré rún* in particular, performance through the indigenous language has been observed to be appropriate for dramatic performance. In other words, dramatic performance with the use of foreign language, especially, of dramatic performance, to express indigenous idea have been found to be inadequate and inappropriate. For instance, Clark (1981, p.71) opines that, "in literature content and expression determine each other so fundamentally that the validity and authenticity of a work suffers as soon as the native content is expressed in a foreign language." This opinion establishes that, the use of indigenous materials, which language and its cultural symbolisation plays a vital role, cannot be overemphasised in dramatic discourse.

Language and Style of Performers in *Réré Rún*

As earlier mentioned, it is difficult to dissociate language from the character in performance. This is because; language is a vehicle by which the messages are exchanged among the characters and in various events. In other words, the objective of any dramatic text cannot be realised without language. In *réré rún*, performers' styles of language are used in relation to individual performer in particular and to the text in general.

In the text, the head of government, Onímògún is associated with authoritative, command and sometimes an insult language. This is perhaps because of the overall control, including appointing chiefs to various positions over his subjects. Such words are neither quarried nor questioned; even when such is against his subjects' opinions or views. On one

hand, within the side of the authorities, represented by Onímògún, Olúgbón and Arèsà, such group interactive discourse copiously demonstrates this.

O n í m ò g ú n : K a á s à !
Kaàsa!Balógun....àkúkuùjoyè,njẹ kò yáju
 “ẹnuu mi ọ kálúu” lẹ? Ẹ sì wá sọ ara yín di
 jẹkúredí kalẹ!.Olúgbón, ká fi yín joyè, kẹ ẹ
 má le gbádiye. Láwúwo sì wá digi osè mọy
 yín lówó, ọ dàràbà, apáa yín ọ ká a, **Kaàsa!**
 Arèsà, Balógun! Ẹni à bá tà ká fowó rẹ ra
 àtùpà. Ìgbà tó wá sọ araa rẹ di àjítannáwò
 mọy yín lówó yíí ñkọ!**Hówu**, ọgèdè ñ bàjẹ ẹ
 ló ñpón! Ayé ñ tán lẹ mọ yín lówó, ẹ sì ñ
 wòran! Ẹ wá fiẹtẹ sílẹ ẹ ñpa làpàlàpá; Ẹ máa
 kún àwọn ọ̀sìsẹ lẹyìn pé ká fi lówó, àwọn
 nàà ñ bá yín fi wọlẹ kún owóo wọn. Ẹ ñ gbé
 ọláyín lẹ àwọn mẹkúnù

(Òkédijí, 1973, p.11).

Onímògún: **It is a pity! It is a pity!**
 Balógun, is it not better not to be chief
 than inability to control the town? You
 then made yourself to be irrelevant!
 Olúgbón, to install you without
 functional. Láwúwo has now become
 uncontrollable for you. **It is a pity!** Arèsà,
 Balógun! A person that is to be controlled
 is now controlling. **It is too bad**, Things
 are going out of hand or you and you are
 folding your arms. You then left necessary
 things undone. You are supporting the
 increment in workers' salary. You are
 making jests of your honorable position
 with the workers.

Onímògún's use of language to his chiefs who are negotiating with the workers, headed by Láwúwo is authoritative and abusive. Despite the support by the chiefs on the salary increase, the need and the reasonability behind the workers' demand, Onímògún turn deaf ears to the explanations or presentation of the chiefs. Onímògún utters his words sometimes in exclamatory statements to show that; he 'meant business' with what he says. The use of bolden words such as *Kaàsa!* (It is a pity!), *Hówu*, (It is too bad) are used as connection (marker or indicator); that is, to somehow connect an idea with another.

Every element of a text or discourse- themes, characters, events, language and so on must be connected with one another, “such ingredients must be somehow be connected unless they can be connected, they will remain assorted ingredients, very well capable of destroying the text” (Awóyalé, 1991, p. 33). For instance, subsequent statements are summed up with 'pity' while 'it is too bad' is what the second idea is encoded in. The performance of Onímògún here shows the reality of event during the industrial disharmony or unrest. The elms man- chief executive, who may be the president or the governor in the Nigerian democratic system of government, appoints his ministers or commissioners who relate with the labour leaders. They are just relating the ideas of the executives; eventhough, those ideas are germane to the progress and development; the executives want their wishes or opinions forced on the workers.

Another language associated with Onímògún is that of an interruption. The chiefs were never allowed or given floor to speak contrary to the idea of Onímògún. When such an

idea is opened, it is immediately interrupted without conclusion.

Balógún: Kábiyèsí, bí ẹ bá rí bí....

Onímògún: Ìwọ Balógún,

Arẹ̀sà: Kábiyèsí. Àwọn èniyàn ilú ni kò jé kí á le...

Onímògún: Kí ẹ le ẹ kín ni Arẹ̀sà? Kí ẹ le ẹ kín ni!

Kí ẹ le ẹ kín ni! O ò sì máa sọ ọ kí n máa gbọ... (Òkédìjì, 1973 p. 12)

Balógún: Your royal majesty, if you see as....

Onímògún: You Balógún,

Arẹ̀sà: Your royal majesty. It is the people in town that prevented us from...

Onímògún: To do what Arẹ̀sà? To do what!

To do what! Go on and say it for me to hear...

It is clear that, Onímògún imposes his wish and will on his chiefs. The chiefs are toothless dogs that cannot bite, the cocks that cannot crow. The use of honorific pronoun, with which Yorùbá is known and used for an older person, is far from Onímògún: *Ìwọ* (you), is used for Balógún. In addition, the chiefs were even prevented to give a true report of situation on ground. The use of interrogative statements is sometimes used as a follow up to the idea earlier presented. The chiefs in this situation have no choice but to join the king. In this case, Onímògún.

Onímògún: Ilá a máa ga ju olóko lọ?

Onímògún: Can okro be taller than the farmer who plucks?

Arẹ̀sà: Ó tì o, Kábiyèsí. (p.12)

Arẹ̀sà: Not at all, your royal majesty.

To the Yorùbá people, "ọ̀jù èniyàn lẹ̀ tọ̀rọ̀, kẹ̀nu rẹ̀ má gbọ̀rọ̀; bẹ̀ẹ̀ sì ni ẹ̀nu èniyàn lẹ̀ gbọ̀rọ̀, kọ̀jú rẹ̀ má tọ̀rọ̀" (you may witness an event without power to relate it; and you may have power to relate an event without seen the event). However, the Onímògún's cabinet- council of chiefs are the ones that witness events; but lack jurisdiction to account such an event. In other words, they are chiefs without portfolios. The leader's ideas or opinions are expressed in an interrogative form. Such idea is most of the time in support or corroborates the master's voice. On another hand, on the side of the workers, represented by Láwúwo and Wúraòlá, the reverse or opposite is the case.

Láwúwo: Ẹ̀yin èniyàn mi, ẹ̀yin èniyàn mi!
À n kì í, à n sà á bá yíí, ẹ ní ẹ ò mọ ẹ ni tó kú
(Òkédìjì 1973, p. 25)

Láwúwo: Comrades, comrades! Despite all efforts being made, you are yet to recognise the situation of things.

The introductory or opening statement of the labour leader- Láuwo, indicates the spirit of togetherness and equality. Unlike the language of the executive leader- Onímògún, earlier examined, that shows disparity between the leader and the subjects or subordinates. Instead of the authoritative and instructive language from, the chief executive- Onímògún, opposite is the case with the labour leader- Láuwo, which the language is of an appeal, equality and encouragement. The use of “comrade” has been in collocation within the labour unions. This word is normally used to arrest the attention of the workers by their leaders as used by Láuwo: *Èyin èniyà mi, èyin èniyàn mi* (comrades or my people) (p. 25). The implication of this word is to show that, they have one struggle- freedom in common. And unless this is actualised, their objective will be far from being realized or achieved. This form of language that portrays the workers as a family, group of people with a common goal was never heard from Onímògún to his chiefs. The shift in the performers and context of performance has greatly led to shift in the style and language use.

The shift in the performer, speaker or character is observed in *réré rín* to influence a shift in the use of style and language from the family members of the labour leader, represented by Wúraqlá- a sister to Láuwo. This is because; on one hand, the interests of the family and that of the work place- labour, are represented by the character and on the other hand, it gives the female character the opportunity of stake in labour issues.

Wúraqlá: O şeun Láuwo. O kú oğbón inú. O kú u wàhàlè. O kú ifiyàrèra (p. 32)

Wúraqlá: Dejú o rímú, Láuwo. Dejú o rímú. Omọ aráyé ò fèni fòrò, àfori èni. Pèlèpèlè dọwọ̀ rẹ (p. 33).

Wúraqlá: Fiyè dènú. Wo ikúnlẹ̀ mi (pp. 33 & 4)

Wúraqlá: Bá ò bá torí epo jẹşu, à maa torí işu jẹ epo (p. 36)

Wúraqlá: Tóò.....Láuwo, tún ọ̀rọ̀ yíi rò wò o. Rò ó dáadáa o. Èrò lẹ̀bẹ̀ gbẹ̀giri (p. 36)

Wúraqlá: Thank you, Láuwo. Your wisdom is acknowledged. Your commitment is acknowledge. Your sacrifice is acknowledged.

Wúraqlá: Be cautious, Láuwo. Be cautious. Nobody is loved in wealthy position except one's. Please be careful.

Wúraqlá: Don't be annoyed. I plead by kneeling down please.

Wúraqlá: Think both sides to have a balanced decision.

Wúraqlá: O. k...Láuwo, give this a second thought. Think deeply on this.

Wúraqlá's language is persuasive, passionate and advisory. It is equally noted that, the Yorùbá culture accord respect for an elderly person, this is upheld in *réré rín*. For instance, despite the position of Láuwo as a labour leader, which Wúraqlá is one of the workers; Láuwo

respects the cultural practice of respect for elders. This is why Láwúwo could not accommodate seeing Wúràqlá kneeling down for him. Láwúwo quickly reject this attitude that, *E dide, ànti mi* (rise up my sister) (p. 34). In addition, the use of words such as *ìdòbalẹ̀* (prostration), *ìkúnlẹ̀* (kneeling down), *ìkúnlẹ̀ abiamọ̀* (kneeling down of mother during delivery) are persuasive. This is done to passionately consider the addresser's request.

Generally, the language of Wúràqlá is gender bound. "It is clear that language can be used to promote sexism. It can be used to promote and cause, good or evil, just or unjust. Language are infinitely flexible and expressive" (Weinreich 2007, p. 448). It is noted from the statements of Wúràqlá's opinions above that; language use is sometimes determined by sex (gender). The language use of Wúràqlá above is as a result of the family relationship between Láwúwo and Wúràqlá and, as well as the gender. In other words, there will be variation of language use if for instance, the addresser is not Wúràqlá- not a family member and, if the addresser is not a female. As earlier noted, language in performance is influenced or informed by the speaker and the situation the speaker finds himself or herself.

Variation according to the gender of the speaker has been subject of a lot of recent research. One general conclusion from dialect surveys is that speakers tend to use more prestigious forms than male speakers with the same general social background... In some cultures there are much more marked differences between male and female speech... Women are reported to use more expressions associated with tentativeness (Yule, 1985, p. 242)

Another style and language in a dramatic tragic text is the one that can be regarded as meaning extension. This is when there is a metaphorical transfer of quality, quantity or attribute or value of things on another thing or on somebody. This is used sometimes to show power or strength.

Within what has been described as second order signification; the phallic image has over ages and cross cultures acquired stability as a metaphor for physical strength, courage, vigour, firmness, power of regimentation, etc. The Yorùbá in Nigeria are particularly unequivocal about the metaphoric placement of maleness (Ọlóruntọba-Ojù, 1998, p. 120).

In *rẹrẹ rín*, for example, this language is associated with Láwúwo.

Láwúwo: Ẹkúukàlẹ̀ o, ọlọ́lá gbogbo

Olúgbọ́n: Ọkúnrin mẹ́ta! káabọ̀ Ìwé pọ̀
(p. 47)

Láwúwo: Greetings to you all, your Excellencies

Olúgbọ́n: Three men! You are welcome Too much books.

The metaphorical placement of qualities and values of Láwúwo's strength- the "metaphor for

physical strength, courage, vigour, firmness, power of regimentation” are realised as meaning extension in the discourse. The use of metaphor is closely related with habit or behavior. “Metaphor is habitual in language – many metaphors are now simply accepted as normal usages (Matterson and Jones 2000, p.34). In *rẹ́rẹ́ rún*, Láwúwo's strength and courage is equated to the one possessed by *ọ̀kùnrin mẹ́ta* (tree men); even though he is a single person. The use of this form of language is as a result of cultural and gender bound. In other words, the use is restricted to the male gender. For instance, it will culturally be out of context to say: *obìnrin mẹ́ta* (tree women) referring to one woman in the context of meaning extension or in sociocultural context. Instead, the Yorùbá will say *obìnrin bí ọ̀kùnrin* (a woman as a man). Language use in context will be comparison of value, strength or courage used as simile.

Language and Style in Relation with Songs in *Rẹ́rẹ́ Rún*

Songs, in dramatic texts has been one of the ways to account for the styles and language of dramatic performance. This means, the cultural context and contents including the dramatic meaning effect of songs go a long way in the description of the play. The language used in songs of *rẹ́rẹ́ rún* accounts for its dramatic tragic text. The Yorùbá cultural symbolism of songs in *rẹ́rẹ́ rún* adds styles to language use in the dramatic text.

Gbogbo wọn: Èrò tí n rọ́jẹ́jẹ, Ọ́jẹ́jẹ, Ẹ wí fún ìyáà mi, Ọ́jẹ́jẹ, Ẹyin tó fi sílẹ̀, Ọ́jẹ́jẹ, Lorogún sè fọmọ rẹ, Ọ́jẹ́jẹ, Ewùrà tó kan bóbó, Ọ́jẹ́jẹ, Lorogún sè tó fún mi jẹ, Ọ́jẹ́jẹ, Èrò tí n rọ́jẹ́jẹ, Ọ́jẹ́jẹ, (Òkédijí, 1973, p. 1)

All of them: Passengers going to ọ́jẹ́jẹ, Ọ́jẹ́jẹ, Tell my mother, Ọ́jẹ́jẹ, The egg she left behind, Ọ́jẹ́jẹ, Was cooked for the child of her rival, Ọ́jẹ́jẹ, A very sour water-yam, Ọ́jẹ́jẹ, Was cooked for me to eat by the rival, Ọ́jẹ́jẹ, Passengers going to ọ́jẹ́jẹ, Ọ́jẹ́jẹ This song is repeated by all the workers on page 9, even, when another song was suggested by Adéníyì on page 21, the workers failed to sing along; but rather preferred the above song. According to Wúraòlá, “Èrò tí n rọ́jẹ́jẹ, Ọ́jẹ́jẹni ẹ máa kọ (p. 21) (be singing passengers going to ọ́jẹ́jẹ). This song is repeated on pages 96 and 110. It is equally noted that, the song opens and ends the drama. This is symbolism of bitterness and sorrow.

The song is rendered in *ìjálá* chanting mode. *Ìjálá* can be performed by two categories of performers. The women performers who perform by carrying about a toothless python (*ejò mọnnámóná*) as she goes begging from door to door, and perform *ìjálá* chants . . . The other *ìjálá* artists are the trained bards (male) who after a period of training are asked to perform on various occasions of merry-making; wedding childnaming, housewarming,

chieftaincy celebration, funeral feast family reunion and others, the *ìjálá* chanters are referred to as *Oníjàálá* and are well known as talented and trained verbal artists who people at different kinds of social gathering. *Ìjálá* is described as *aré odẹ* (hunters' entertainment) and the *ìjálá* artists are called *àwọn aláré odẹ* (those who performs the hunters' entertainment) (Babalọlá, 1981, pp. 1-2).

However, the second category of *ìjálá* performance described above is what this study employs. One can say that, this is done in order to entertain the workers' themselves and to create awareness on them all about their predicaments. Since the characters, settings and events are cultured in the indigenous material, the songs sung by the workers as well rendered in indigenous genre. *Ìjálá* is composed and rendered orally, with oral valuable materials along with cultural symbolism.

Selection and energy go into the composition of primitive songs or poems...
(for) their makers are moved by a truly creative desires to make the most of something which presses urgently on them and demands to be fixed in memorable words (Babalọlá, 1981, p. 7).

Songs in a story or dramatic text also add in no small measure to the beauty and aesthetics of the play. Discourse and the language of dramatic texts incorporate the collective participations of all the characters in the play as well as the audience participations and feelings in the play. For instance, Olá Rótímí, quoting Finnegan, draws attention to the role of song in "marking the structure of the story in clear and attractive ways" (2014, p. 93).

The symbolism of the only song in *réré rún* quoted above best accounts for the style and language of the text. The structural, plots and setting of the song in the text is worth examination. The song starts and ends the dramatic discourse in *réré rún*, which evinced the sympathetic condition that the workers find themselves. It also occurs twice within the text close to the beginning and to the end of the play. This is to encapsulate the tragic mood and mode in the plot of the drama- from beginning to the end. This means that the analysis of the song in isolation and in relation to the structure of the play express the tragic emotion that could not ordinarily be expressed and accounted for in speech mode. It also paves way for the general participation both with the audience and the performers. This is why the performers of the song are allocated to all the workers as they are all concerned with the situation in the play.

The *ìjálá* song quoted above, encoded the tragic event in the play. The workers- the *ìjálá* performance is projected and preempted into their future probable hope from the ancestors. Those who are on final eternal journey (death) are conjured to carry the workers message to the dead mother: *Èrò tí n' rọjẹẹje*, (passengers going to *Ọjẹẹje*). They could no longer help themselves out of their entanglement. There problems is that the good things left behind for them, symbolised by *eyin tó fi sílẹ* (the egg she left behind) are being interchanged

with the worst things symbolised by *ewùrà* to *kan bóbo'* (the sour water-yam). Culturally, *isù ewùrà* (water-yam) cannot be used for pounded yam without several lumps. This means, without being used for yam flower, it is mostly eaten as yam. However, to eat the metaphorical yam of the water-yam eaten by the workers in *Réré Rún* is not edible, as it is sour or bitter. This x-rays the economic system of the workers in Ìmògún town.

The dramatic language effects of songs in *Réré Rún* is to create awareness that, the past is better than the present experience the workers are going through. To the Yorùbá people, *iyá ni alabàáròòmọ* (mother is a burden bearer of a child). This is why the spirit of the dead mother is being conjured to synthesize that, the legacy left behind by *iyá* (mother) had been turned to another thing totally different form the past by the present rulers or government- *orogún* (rival). The play starts and ends in *ìjálá* chants modes to invoke, conjure and connect the dead, the ancestors to intervene in the present day labour disharmony or unrest.

Summary and Conclusion

This study has attempted to evince the influence, impact and input of the style and language use in the Yorùbá indigenous plays using *Réré Rún* as a point of reference. The performers are grouped into two major divisions- the rulers, who are the executive headed by Onímògún and the workers, headed by the labour leader- Qláuwo. It is noted that, the style and the language of the rulers is authoritative, command or order. The head of the government- the chief executive, makes use of language as means to subject his chiefs to force them to his own wish and will. On the side of the workers, the use and style of language is in appeal, and equality. This is as a result of the universality of problems that touches on all the workers. In addition, it is observed that the use and style of language, especially in a tragic dramatic plays such as *Réré Rún* is gender bound. That is, the female performers are mostly associated with "flexible language"- advisory, admonition, appeal and tentativeness. This work concludes that, language use and style in indigenous dramatic tragic plays are paradigms or maxims to the success of the performance and performers.

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