

HIP-LIFE AS A GENRE IN GHANA: A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF SOME SELECTED GHANAIAN HIP-LIFE SONGS

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ABSTRACT: *Ghanaian hip-life songs are considered as one of the other folk songs, wise sayings, proverbs, and myths which must be studied in the broader context of African culture. The connotative and denotative meanings that are derived from the songs depict the points of view of the youth who skilfully craft, perform, listen and participate in the songs to a very large extent. Hip-life musicians always try to portray their culture by using codified and pedantic language such as alliteration, imagery, metaphor, hyperbole, simile, rhythm etc. by reaching out to the youth and this should be looked at critically. In this study, some selected Hip-life songs have been translated into English language and their devices employed by Hip-life artistes analysed. The songs selected include: Lord Kenya's songs titled "Mmoborowa"(The Downtrodden) and "Yeresom Sika" (We are Worshipping Money); Joe Fraizer's song 'Yaa Maame' (Yaa's mother); Obrafour's songs "Odo"(Love) and "Okukuseku" and Obour's song 'Bo Atentenben' (Blow Trumpets). The conclusion revealed the role of Hip-life songs in literary studies.*

KEY WORDS: Hip-life, culture, linguistic analysis, music and literature

INTRODUCTION

Hip-life emerged as a fusion of other forms of music at the close of the twentieth century. It was coined with the view of familiarising the people of Ghana with Hip-hop which was then the choice of the masses (Annin, 2013). It is worth noting that Hip-life portrays both the culture of Africa and that of Europe and America. According to Taylor (1871), an anthropologist, culture is defined "in its widest ethnographic sense as that complex whole which include knowledge, belief, art, morals, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society". Udofot (2001:110-126) explores a linguistic analysis of selected short stories in *Breaking the silence* by the women writer of Nigeria. Her analysis is dependent on dominant linguistic features in each story. She considers linguistic items such as sound devices, where she gives attention to the identification of alliteration, onomatopoeia and their stylistic effects. She also identifies allusion and clearly accounts for this device. She also gives attention to the use of subjective cases or forms, use of repetitions and parallel structures as well as use of imagery, imperative sentences, direct and rhetorical questions. She considers coinages which together with other features accounts for the writer's verbal dexterity. Adejare (1992:6) espouses that within a language's semiotic universe there exist the use of the linguistic signs in a text as a unit of language that has been used in a specific context by a text producer with the purpose of communicating a message. This means that a writer uses a text to communicate a message. The grammar of the text allows the recognition of the overall structure of a text and

how it works to achieve a certain communicative goal. It is also observed that context of situation has to be involved before any text can be accurately interpreted. Brown (1970) draws the connection between music and literature as a concept of art that has existed since time immemorial. He posits that the relationship between music and literary arts vary from nation to nation and period and period. In the Elizabethan England, it was close but remote in the Augustan England. It is also prevalent in the folk epic. Shakespeare also mentions music many times in his plays. He included song lyrics in his characters' dialogue and use music or musical instruments as symbolism or as metaphor. The title of a song "Hail to the Chief" was derived from a poem titled "The Lady of the Lake" which was written by Sir Walter Scott and published on May 8, 1810. The discussion above has revealed that there is correlation between music and literature, and this can be viewed from the use of language by the artiste.

DISCUSSION

Linguistic Analysis of Selected Songs

The analysis of the selected songs is based on some devices such as sound effects which include alliteration, assonance, rhyme and repetition, simile, images, hyperbole, metaphor, personification, proverbs etc. that have been identified and their effects explained in the songs below.

1. "Mmoborowa"(The Downtrodden) by Lord Kenya

First and foremost, I would like to start with Kenya's song titled "Mmoborowa" (The Downtrodden). This song is arranged into two parts. The first part focuses on the hardship people go through in this world. It begins with a proverb which indicates it is when one gets closer to people that one realizes that truly, some people are really suffering in this world.

Wo pinkyen nsuo a na wo tese koto bo wa

when you get close to water then you will hear that crab coughs'.

The crab's coughing can only be noticed or heard when one gets closer to the pond/water. The crab does not cough in public; hence, it is difficult to notice that it also has problems. The proverb admonishes the downtrodden to be cautious about life and not to compare themselves to others by bemoaning the fact that they possess no gramophones, let alone going to buy records. Here those who are fortunate to be affluent in life are set against the poor in society. A gramophone can only be possessed by those who can afford it. The next two lines are similes used by the persona to buttress his advice to the downtrodden. The first simile is a piece of advice to cut one's coat according to one's own cloth.

Hwe wo so ne wo kesie nwene wo buo se aserewa

Consider your size before you build your nest like the bird

Human beings are being compared to the bird which always considers its size before building its nest. The second simile is a further advice that we should regard human beings as very delicate and that as a result of this, there is the need to take great care in whatever undertaking we make. This is because there are individual differences so there is no need for someone to compare himself to another person.

Nnhwe nee obi reye; sonso n wo ho se okrawa

Do not look at what someone is doing; Protect yourself like the cat

There is phonological parallelism at the end of the first six lines:

Wo pinkyen nsuo a na wo tese koto bo wa

Abrabo mu nsem ne emu ntawa ntawa.

Mmoborowa tu wo ho fo, enni nnipa akyiri nnkoye aberewa'

Nkranni krakye besee adanfo, wommu wo nni gramophone wo akoto

apaawa.

Hwe wo so ne wo kesee nwene wo buo se aserewa

Nnhwe nea obi reye; sonson wo ho se okrawa.

When you draw close to water then you will hear that crab coughs

Life's challenges and troubles.

Downtrodden advise yourself, do not follow people into old age.

An Accra man will say, my friend you yourself you have no gramophone and yet you have gone to buy a disc plate.

Consider your size before you build your nest like the bird

Do not look at what someone is doing; protect yourself like the cat.

The ending rhyme which is "wa" had been used effectively by the poet. Here, the sounds at the end of the lines make sense, in that the words have been carefully selected and arranged to highlight the plight of the downtrodden. Semantically, the above lines foreground the theme of self assessment and realization. Again, the importance and power of money has been highlighted in a proverb which means that without money, it is difficult for one to take notice of good things:

Nkwankyen adee ye fe, ne nyinaa ene money power

Things along the wayside appear magnificent, but it is all

due to money power.

Another comparison has been made again to distinguish between the rich and the poor in society, where the rich are associated with eating full chicken' while the poor is linked to eating "gari". A simile is again used by the poet to describe his own situation. He states that life has treated him badly to the extent that, he has turned as white as cotton. It implies that he looks pale because of this situation and even the seat of his dress is in tatters. Again, he hyperbolically states that he is sitting in the midst of a big fire:

Me si fire kesee mu.....

I sit in big fire.....

Even though the poet employs exaggeration, it emphasizes the hardship the persona is going through because nobody will enjoy sitting in a 'big fire' knowing very well the dangers associated with fire. The next line is also a simile which compares the way life has got hold of him and is 'winding' him to 'Alikoto'

..... obra no akye me ere wind me te se Alikoto

..... life has got hold of me and it is winding me like 'Alikoto'

“Alikoto” is a game played by children. This is basically the winding of the game instrument made from a big ball pen and a thread holder. Hence, comparing his situation to "Alikoto", shows that he is not stable in life. Here, life had been personified and made to grab a human being. There is also the rhyming of these words "Alikoto", "kotoo", "kwadonto" and "koto" in the subsequent lines:

.. obra no akye me ere wind me te se Alikoto.

Me re Power but still me ne kotoo

Yebu me kwaadonto

Wonsi me koto

.....life has got hold of me and it is winding me like “Alikoto”

I am powering but still I do not have anything

They regard me as a useless person.

They should give me a knock.

The effect of these rhyming words is to emphasize the theme of poverty which is reflected in the person's empty pocket and therefore he is not regarded in the society. "Alikoto" is a game that involves winding because it is light. This indicates emptiness. "Kotoo" refers to someone who has nothing on him that is someone with an empty pocket. “Kwaadonto” relates to someone who cannot perform any meaningful task. “Koto” is a knock on the head of a foolish person. In spite of his predicaments, the persona is still hopeful that it will be well with him one day if God so wishes and this is emphasized in the refrain. The first line of the second part confirms the assertion made in the first part of the song that life is hard in Ghana.

Ene modern Ghana aye gawuta ghanaama

In this modern Ghana it is cash and carry.

Then, the persona goes ahead to say that, in Ghana, when you do not have money, you will be betrayed by life. This betrayal of life is said to be more than Judas's betrayal of Christ in the Bible.

Se wonni sika a mmoborowa, obra no beyi wo ama; more than Judas.

When you do not have money downtrodden, life will betray you more than Judas.

This connotes that poverty can make one helpless and useless. In spite of the hardship the downtrodden is going through, he is in love with one Nana Ama but claims the lady does not love him as a human being simply because he has no money. In the next line, personification is used. Here, poverty is personified and portrayed as putting a ring on man.

Obra no aye ateetee; se wo anntintim a ohia behye wo kawa

Life has become troublesome; if you don't take care poverty will put a ring on you.

In short, poverty and life have entangled man so much that, human beings are suffering a great deal and have therefore resorted to drinking alcohol all the time.

2. ‘Yeresom Sika’ (We are Worshipping Money) by Lord Kenya.

The next song is entitled ‘Yeresom Sika’ (We are Worshipping Money) by Lord Kenya. This song catalogues the atrocities involved in the way people make or acquire money. It is in two stanzas. In the beginning of the first stanza, the persona personifies money. Money is made to stand on the same level with God:

Ene, wiase akoduru mpenpensoo bi a yeresom sika.

In today's world, we have reached a stage where we are worshipping money

There is a breach of selectional restriction rule (Yankson, 1987) because the poet is conferring a human feature on ‘money’. In the normal language code, the verb phrase ‘are worshipping’ usually select for its direct object a noun phrase, a lexical item with semantic feature /+human/. But it is only God who has to be worshipped and nothing else. The poet used the personification to portray how madly people can chase after money. They will move heaven and earth to get it. Surprisingly, most people chasing after money do not want to work and sweat; rather, they envy people who have toiled for their money to the extent that when someone is lying on his sick-bed, others will be fighting hard to get possession of his money. In the next line of the song, a simile is used to buttress the fact that man wants to enjoy the good things of life but is not ready to work hard for them. The persona thus compares sweet or good living to the sweetness of sugar:

... ope biribiara boko boko doko doko te se asikyire.

.. . they want everything cool and sweet like sugar.

There is also the use of alliteration, that is, the repetition of consonantal sounds in 'boko boko, doko doko' to emphasise the 'cool and sweet' life style that people want to enjoy. The second example of simile portrays the trouble people go through to get money and the recognition people give to those who have made money. Reference is made to Kofi Wayo who is one of the richest and most highly respected persons in Ghana because of his affluence:

Mugu Yaro, emmo wo ho se Kofi Wayo, eno dee gyina nkyen.

Mugu Yaro, if it is not on you like Kofi Wayo, then step aside.

Thus, if you are not in the same class with Kofi Wayo, then you are nobody. In the subsequent line, an ironical comment is made about a situation in which someone who deals in cocaine and acquires money is made the chairman of the church, whereas, a poor man has no right at all:

Obi de cocaine anya sika na nso oye chairman.

Someone has used cocaine to make money but is the chairman

This is meant to ridicule churches which do not consider the source of income of their congregants before they appoint them as leaders. The concluding lines of this stanza admonishes Ghanaians to be careful about money because money is nice and can also be sweet but it is the bane for death; hence, there is no need for one to worship money. The second stanza begins with a biblical allusion which says: 'a good name is better than riches' and therefore one should take one's time to make one's own money and not to allow money to enslave him or her. The first simile used in this stanza is meant to reinforce the same idea made in the first stanza that money dehumanizes man:

Sika anibere nti ahoma sen onipa kon te se pintoa.

Because of money, a rope is around the neck of people like bottle.

For a rope to be hanging around a man's neck, the poet is exaggerating the kind of pressure on man to make money and the frustration associated with this pressure. In the subsequent lines, the persona cautions us by using an image which is also a simile. Consider the following:

Emma wo ani nso koo te se ogya.

Nnko twe obi mogya.

Do not let your eyes light red like fire.

Do not go and suck a person's blood

In the first instance, comparing the red colour of somebody's eyes to 'fire' buttresses the fact that there is pressure on man to make money at all cost, even if it will tempt one to suck another person's blood. In the lines cited above, we notice the rhyming of 'ogya' (fire) and 'mogya' (blood). The effect of this rhyme is to stress the same idea that the desire for money had made people 'wild' to the extent that they would not mind killing other people to gain money. Again, another simile is used to dehumanize man:

Nnipa aye se kako.

Man has become like dry fish.

Comparing human beings to food is demeaning. 'Kako' is a kind of salted dry fish which is very hard. It therefore unveils the economic frustration of the citizenry.

3. 'Yaa Maame' (Yaa's mother) by Joe Fraizer

'Yaa Maame' (Yaa's mother) is the title of the next song by Joe Fraizer. This song begins with a refrain which constitutes praise to the mother-in-law. Interestingly, the persona is bent on

marrying Yaa so much that in spite of the fact that the marriage is yet to come off, he had recognized his mother-in-law and addresses her as such. Hence, the repetition of mother-in-law is to portray his seriousness about the marriage. The first four lines of the first stanza introduce some fictional characters to make the poem humorous. Names like 'Eyo', 'kwii', 'Hoo' create laughter. The persona continues to address the mother-in-law and remind her of the fact that she was not responding to his greetings sometime past because the mother-in-law was angry with him. But now, he is ready to marry Yaa by organising a grand wedding ceremony to honour her. The persona is deeply in love with Yaa that he tells us that Yaa's beauty has affected his skin to the extent that 'his liver is always laughing'.

N'ahoofe nti daa na me wedee ereka mu,
ama me bereboo sore a na oresere.

Because of her beauty, always my skin shouts.

It has made my liver gets up always and laugh.

This expresses the kind of joy within him because of his relationship with Yaa. This is further emphasized in the subsequent lines which are similes:

Adee bi gu Yaa sisi yefre no bansere.

Se me hunu a na me tiri aye se borofere.

Ofe m'ano a na merefere te se tefere.

'There is something around Yaa's waist it is called bangles.

When I see it, my head swells like pawpaw.

When she kisses me, I writhe like cockroach.

There is pattern repetition in the last two lines which are syntactically parallel. The sentences follow the same structure. They are complex sentences which begin with dependent clauses 'when I see it' and 'when she kisses me' which can be analysed as 'Wh + NP +VP+ NP'. The same pattern is employed in the main clauses: 'my head swells like pawpaw' and 'I writhe like cockroach' which is represented as NP + VP + PP. The similes portray the excess joy the persona experiences whenever he is in the company of Yaa, his partner. Comparing the swelling of his head to pawpaw and writhing like a cockroach implies that he is very proud of Yaa and that he likes everything Yaa does to him. Also, there is the rhyming of /fere/ sound in 'borofere, 'tefere', 'fere', 'aferefere' (pawpaw, cockroach, call, calling respectively). These words are rhymed for the sake of the sound effects they produce together, but their placement in the lines reinforces the fact that they are intended to serve as comparisons. The second stanza is made up of a host of similes. The first four similes highlights the state of joy the persona finds himself in because of his relationship with Yaa:

Seesei me tiri atoto te se agyinamoa

Dede bi rekoso tese mmoa ...

Hwe, ne do asi me so tese akom ...

Yaa hwe me a na afu atu se gari...

Right now my head has swollen like cat

Some noise is going on like animals

Look, her love possessed me like priest's dancing

When Yaa looks at me, my stomach swells like gari.

These are exaggerations but reflect his emotional and physical state whenever Yaa is concerned. The persona boasts about Yaa so much that, he admits Yaa is more than 'a grape fruit' and also the space in between her shoulders is very meaty, like beef. This shows how

beautiful and attractive Yaa, his partner, is to the persona. The persona also uses similes to express the intensity and firmness of their love for each other and hence the need for others to give them recognition:

Yen do no y'aka asi mu tese padlock.

Asew, ka yen bo mu te se Adam and Eve.

Our love has been locked like padlock.

Mother-in-law, join us together like Adam and Eve.

These images are apt because they suggest that the two lovers are closely attached to each other and hence inseparable. The persona appeals to the mother-in-law to join them together like 'Adam and Eve'. Also, the reference to the Bible simply means that their marriage is going to be based on biblical principles which border on 'for better for worse, till God do us part'. The last ten lines of the second stanza all end with English words. These include: 'shock', 'chock', 'lock', 'clock', 'padlock', 'beef', 'chief', 'Eve', 'thief' and 'fifth'. The first five words rhyme while the last five also rhyme with each other. The effect of the rhyme is to enhance the euphony of the lyric. Finally, the persona sums up by telling us how much Yaa has affected as well as changed his life. Because of Yaa, he has stopped drinking alcohol and also, whenever she is not beside him, he immediately falls sick. Therefore, he pleads with his mother-in-law to consider all these and join them together.

4. "Okukuseku" by Obrafoo's

Obrafoo's song entitled "Okukuseku" is the next to be discussed. This song begins with a refrain which states that it is better to fear man than to fear a ghost because man is ungrateful to his fellow man. The song is arranged in two parts. This first part begins with the alliteration of the sound (h) as in 'hu hu hu' or 'ha ha ha' which indicates the sound of persona's weeping and that of his laughter respectively. The persona has been deceived by a seemingly trustworthy friend with whom he both breaks and laps the egg. This friend is so jealous of the persona that he wishes that the persona will forever wallow in poverty and disgrace and be confronted with insoluble problems. There is the use of imagery to portray all the evil acts being perpetrated against him by the so called friend in a bid to cause his downfall:

Merekyekyere na oresane, meresane na orekyekyere....

W'atwe me to akonwa ama meto apem fom.

Ope se biribiara bo me se dee dwonso abo akoko

W'akeka m'anum ahunu se menni se.

While I am binding, he will be unwinding; while I am unwinding he will be binding.

He has removed the seat from me and my buttocks have crashed the ground.

He wants everything to go against me just like the wine
is beyond the cock.

He has felt inside my mouth and realised I do not have teeth.

We can deduce from the lines above that the person who is thinking evil of the persona does so in such a hidden and crafty manner as to make it difficult for the persona to recognize what is going on until everything gets out of hand. Again, the persona says his enemy is a nocturnal being who works on him in the night. This is because he compares his foe to the mosquito who is going to suck him dry from night until morning. This is also an image which reinforces the notion that the person who is working for his downfall is doing so in secret. He buttresses this by saying that even in thick darkness, the enemies wink at him. These are people who are close

to him because he quotes this proverb which says that if anyone will get you, it is often from within:

Se obi benya wo a eye a efiri fie.

If anyone will get you, it is from home.

He also uses paradox in the subsequent line to describe his enemies:

W'anim seree enso w'atiko kusuu.

Your face smiles but the back of your head is dark.

The persona compares the enemy smiling simply means that the person portrays himself/herself as a friend but only pretends because the back of his head is very dark with evil thought. Here, hypocrisy is at work. There is also the use of an image to depict the pains the persona endures at the hands of his enemy;

M'aso mu da ho paara na yerebo me yam.

My cheeks are there and you hit me in the belly.

He would have preferred to be slapped on his cheeks rather than being hit in the belly which is a more vulnerable spot. This first part also ends with an image which states that the one who is fighting against the persona is wearing a pair of bamboo shoes, so the persona cannot hear his footsteps when he comes around him. This is to confirm the fact that the enemy deals with in the night and in secret. So he has no idea about the specific time the enemy comes to work on him. Finally, the persona admonishes that there is no need for anyone to be overly happy about his plight because it can happen to everybody else as well. The persona begins the second part by telling us that because there is darkness in man's head, he has become extra careful with his life. He emphasizes through repetition the wickedness and wizardry of human beings and cautions everyone to be careful. Hyperbole has been employed to portray the extent of wickedness towards fellow human. Here, the wickedness of man has been compared to 'Living Bitters' which tastes very bitter.

Nnipa yamu ye nwono kyen Living Bitters.

Man's stomach is more bitter than Living Bitters.

He again alludes to the betrayal of Jesus by Judas in the Bible and here a rhetorical question is posed:

Aden, w'annte dee Judas de yee Jesus?

Why, did you not hear of what Judas did to Jesus?

This is to confirm that it is usually the so-called true friends who can betray you, and it is more painful when one comes to the realization that a supposedly worthy friend is after one's downfall. Thus, just as Judas betrayed Jesus Christ so also has his friend betrayed him. Obrafour also makes use of proverbs. The first one confirms his belief in God; he tells us that in spite of all the evil that is coming his way, he still believes that God's time is the best;

Nso me se, mmere pa ne Nyame mmere.

But I say, God's time is the best.

Another proverb which indicates that charity begins at home in the same manner as destruction comes about with the help of family members is seen here:

Se obi benya wo a eye a efiri fie.

If someone will get you, it is from home.

In the same vein, he says that if one will not make any effort to help another person's cause, one must not then turn around to prevent him from forging ahead in life;

Wo annya biribi amma w'ase a yebo no korono?

If you could not get anything for your mother-in-law, do not steal from her?

The next proverb connotes that there is no limit to the contempt in which his peer holds him and that all that is evil is what his peer thinks he deserves:

Wo pamoo kwasea m'afikyire na wo bekyereno.

When you chased the fool, you apprehended him behind my house.

He concludes by saying in the refrain that precautions must be taken at all times in dealing with friends.

5. "Odo" (Love) by Obrafour

Another song by Obrafour entitled "Odo" is the next to be looked at. It begins with a refrain which seeks to advise the lover, servant, not to allow anybody to deceive her but to wait for the Lord's own time for them to succeed. The song is divided into two parts. The first part starts with words of assurance of true love from the persona to the lover. His love for the lover is so intense that he shows how important she is to him by describing her as something most valuable which needs to be heavily and securely protected:

Wo ne me kookoo afuo.

You are my cocoa farm.

Comparing how he treasures his lover to a cocoa farm shows that she is his asset which needs protection. Obrafo uses a series of images which are most effectively manipulated to bring out the true nature of his sentiments:

Entie, ente saa, ope na aba ama me ho aye hoyaa ...

Apatere, merebenyini aye mpataa.

Don't listen, it is not like that, the harmattan has made me look pale

Tilapia, I know I will definitely grow into big fishes.

His coffers have dried up and the above quotation is used to express this idea. In spite of this dryness which is attributed to the season, he has hope that his predicament will change into something better one day like the 'tilapia'; he will grow into a big fish. He also uses imagery to portray how different people react to different situations. All these go to prove that it is not through our efforts as human beings but rather by God's grace, blessings and services that we are what we are:

Dee okraman hunu a obepo wow wow, agyinamoa hunu
a obebu no Anikyie.

What the dog sees and barks at, a cat sees and winks at it.

The 'okraman' (dog) represents those people who do not take their time to analyse issues before reacting to them while the 'agyinamoa' (cat) is representative of people who are patient in all things and do not rush into doing things. Thus, the issue of individual differences comes in here. Imagery is used also to explain the fact that no matter what a person does, others never appreciate it:

Akoko sa kyee, enye akoroma fe.

No matter how well the cock dances, the hawk will never appreciate.

The persona tries to emphasise the need for his partner to be patient because God's time is the best. Again, he buttresses with what God has blessed will be successful no matter what happens:

Ope besi ama dufokyee aye egya

The harmattan season will set and rotten wood will turn into firewood.

It has already been mentioned that the harmattan has dried up all his resources, and here it is the same harmattan which is his source of hope because too much rain has dampened his

resources. Obrafoo also makes use of proverbs to convey his message across to his audience. Most of the proverbs admonish and encourage everyone. The following lines provide a good example:

Onyame afa ne boo, eye deen ara obeto
Ewiase, baako kyekyere agoro a egu
Medofo, me se ehia wo a ennwu.

God has picked his stone, whatever happens he will throw it.

In this world, if a single person plays a game, it fails

My love, I say when poverty strikes at you do not die

From these lines, we can infer that what God has ordained will come to pass, no matter what happens. The persona is advising his lover not to give up; rather, they should put their heads together so that together they can achieve success. There are other proverbs to buttress this point:

Nokore, ntobasee wie nkunimdie.
Apese ye kесеe a oye ma dufokyee.
Mpanyin se akwantia ye musuo.
Yenam baanu sum a yenam baanu na yehwe
Nya abodwokyere.
. . .obi rekra ne Nyame na obi nnyina ho.
Kye na ebekye na nso erenka ho.

True, patience ends in success.

When 'apese' grows fat, it does so for rotten trees.

Elders say shortcuts are dangerous.

Have patience.

When two people set a trap, the two check on it.

When one was taking leave of God, no one was there.

It will take a long time, but it will not be there forever'a

All these proverbs reinforce the fact that with patience and hard work, one can achieve a great deal in life. It is also necessary for people to work in collaboration in order to achieve their goals and enjoy the fruits of their labour. Repetition is used in the last two lines to stress the fact that even though it might take time for the persona to overcome his hardships, they will surely be over one day:

Kye na ebekye na nso erennka ho.

It will take a long time, but it will not be there forever.

All these are meant to stress the need to be patient in life. The persona makes allusion to Abraham and Sarah in the Bible who were ninety years and over before giving birth to Isaac. This reinforces the need to be patient always, like the class one teacher who is always tolerant with his pupils.

6. 'Bo Atentenben' (Blow Trumpets) by Obuor

Obuor is one of the renowned hip-life artistes. His song to be analysed is entitled 'Bo Atentenben' (Blow Trumpets). The rap begins with an onomatopoeic metaphor which implies that no matter how strong others may be, the persona is more powerful; no matter your capabilities, he is more capable; whatever you do, he can do it better:

Woye loore kwan a metwa wo mu hwimhwim.

Woye abe dege a mewo wo pimpim.

Woye fufuo a metwa wo timtim.
Awo de wo a kote annye saa wo be himhim.

If you are a traffic route, I will pass over you at top speed.
If you are a palm fruit, I will pound on you with thick paste.
If you are fufu, I will eat you in big morsels.
If you are feeling cold, then go and hide yourself else you would shiver
There is also the use of repetition to emphasise the persona's powers and strengths:

Obuor me ho ye huhuhuhu
I am very fearful.

He goes further to exaggerate his capabilities by using some similes and metaphor;
Metumi bobo loore kwan tese kete.

I can roll up the lorry route as if I am rolling up a mat.

This simile is reinforced with further exaggerations:

M'anum asem baako bubu edan
Wo fufuo ntoa ye me nkontonmoa, bo no ntoa
Me de me se keke we mpentoa.

Na mewie a, me de me to asi so asa adowa
Me se merennto nko na m'da.
Me ne oboronsam to dame a, me te no kwakwa.

One word from my mouth can make a building collapse.

Your lump of fufu is just a morsel of it to me

I use my bare teeth to chew glass bottles.

After that, I sit on them with my bare buttocks to
dance 'Adowa.

I will not doze before I sleep

When I play a draught with the devil, I take it for free

From the extract above, it can be deduced that the persona is even more powerful than Satan; he is so strong that he can use only one hand to carry what others cannot carry on their heads. The persona also says that he is not afraid of anything because where one person would tread carefully, he will pass with audacious ease; what one person will do and become befuddled, he can do and remain clear-headed.

Dee worenntumi nsoa no me de nsa baako beso mu.

Baabi a wobenate ahwease no me de mmirika betwa mu.

Ensa a wobenom aboro no menom agyina ho pintin.

What is too heavy for you to carry, I will carry with just
a finger.

Where you will walk and fall down, I will pass running at top speed.

The wine you will drink and get drunk, I drink and still stand firm.

There is the use of complex sentences in the lines above which are both syntactically and semantically parallel. This presupposes that the structure follows the same pattern with the same semantic feature /+ supernatural/. Again, Obuor uses paradox to buttress how human beings can behave at the same level as the supernatural. He depends on the kind of inspiration he gets from God:

Me a mennye tia mennsan nnye nipa tenten.

Me nnye dede mennsan nnye nipa dindin.

Me ye ho ne ho, saa na mebo m'abrabo.

I am not short but I am not a tall person.

I do not like noise but I am not a quiet person.

I am neither this nor that, that is how I live my life.

He reinforces the notion that he possesses supernatural powers by metaphorically comparing himself to Samson. According to him, he is the Samson of rap and therefore all the attributes that Samson has in the Bible can be ascribed to him too. He again compares himself to the devil, by saying that he is the devil of rap:

Se wo nim me nsesoo.

Samson a owo Bible mu ahooden no bi na me kuta.

Rap mu boronsam, wo beka me a mees wo se esam .

If you know my contemporary.

The strength of Samson in the Bible is what I have.

Devil in the rap realm, if you dare challenge me I
will grind you to floor.

The extensive use of hyperbole and other figures of speech in this song is meant to show that he is superior to other rap artistes. He claims that he had faced even greater challenges so he is better than the other artistes.

CONCLUSION

This study has tried to do a linguistic analysis of some selected Hip-life songs which happens to be the mouthpiece of the youth in Ghana. Hip-life songs were transcribed from the local language (Twi). From the above analyses, it can be concluded that almost all the artistes employ a similar style by using common devices like repetition, imagery, metaphor, personification, alliteration and so on. It is clear that hip-life rap is a sophisticated poetry which utilizes many literary devices. A simple rap song may contain more devices than can be found in a single poem of English and African extraction.

Notes:

1. Joe Friazer (2001) "Yaa Maame" produced by Spider Web Records.
2. Lord Kenya (1999) "Yeresom Sika" produced by Mount Kenya/Goodies Records.
3. Lord Kenya (1998) "Sika Baa" produced by Zap Mallet/Slip Music.
4. Obour (2000) 'Bo Atentenben' produced by Family Tree Entertainment.
5. Obrafoo's (2001) "Asemsebe" produced by Homebased Records.

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