

A Stylistic Analysis of Şeun Ògúnfidítímí's Songs

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Abstract

Şeun Ògúnfidítímí is a traditional Yorùbá artiste of Oòndó extraction. She is a promising and prosperous female artiste, who explores the richness of African values in creating her lyrics. Her songs are rendered in Oòndó dialect. Oòndó, a dialect spoken by the Oòndó people of Southwestern Nigeria, is a dialect of the Yorùbá language. There have been multiple studies on traditional African songs. Such studies have engaged traditional African songs mostly from the non-linguistic perspectives. Such studies have investigated the historical and philosophical values of Yorùbá songs. Studies on songs rendered in dialects of Yorùbá language are very scanty. Dearth of studies in this regard has prevented the propagation and documentation of dialects of Yorùbá language. This study examines the discourse stylistic import of the sociocultural values in Şeun Ògúnfidítímí's songs with the view to describing how contextual issues are negotiated in her songs. Recorded songs of Ògúnfidítímí constitute the data for the study. The audio compact discs of her songs were collected and played repeatedly. The songs were transcribed and translated into the English language. The translation process took the form of one-to-one translation in order to avoid distortion of meaning. The artiste resorts to the use of discourse analytical tools in creating her lyrics. The songs reflect political, social, cultural and religious ideals of the Yorùbá traditional African society. The contextual issues expressed in the songs include the importance attached to the child as success indicator, the significance of marriage, love, conspiracy and the place of detractors, corruption and embezzlement,

supremacy of God, social degeneration, gender inequality and the cyclical nature of life. Seun Ògúnfidítímí is an advocate of social and cultural revival of traditional African values.

Introduction

Traditional African songs belong to a particular discourse genre, and they reflect specific ideals of the African socio-cultural group. The songs are accompanied with indigenous verbal and non-verbal language and symbols of the immediate society. Prevailing socio-cultural values, belief system and religion of the people form the contents of the songs. The songs exist in different forms and patterns. They are improvisatory and repetitive and their values are rooted in the aesthetic and philosophies of the African people. As a means of communication, songs reflect anything, events, persons and they serve various purposes. Lamidi (2012) maintains that songs have different forms and functions, and for the same reason, have different classifications based on their functions. Seun Ògúnfidítímí is a Yorùbá traditional artiste of Oṅdó extraction. She is a promising and prosperous female artiste who explores the richness of African values in creating her lyrics. Her songs are rendered in Oṅdó dialect. Oṅdó, a dialect spoken by the Oṅdó people of Southwestern Nigeria, is a dialect of Yorùbá language. The dialect of the people of Oṅdó, which is the capital kingdom consisting of various towns spread across the Oṅdó West, Oṅdó East and Odigbo Local Governments, is different from other Yorùbá dialects. It may take time for the dialect to be clutched by non-indigenes of Oṅdó kingdom. Her songs communicate the socio-cultural experience of Oṅdó people.

There have been some studies on African traditional songs. Such studies have engaged African traditional song mostly from the non-linguistic perspective. Such studies include those of Ayantayo, 2002; Vidal, 2004; Balogun, 2007; Daramola, 2007; Vidal, Raji and Atanda, 2013; Eesuola, Bokini and Lawal, 2014; Odejoko, 2014; 2015; Amana and Omale, 2015; Fatuase, 2015; Olateju, 2015; and Olusegun, 2017. From the religious perspective, Ayantayo (2002) explicates the ethical significance of Igbo songs among the Ìgbómìnà people of Southwestern Nigeria. He submits that Igbo song is a medium of articulating social heritage, mutual cohesion, moral values and social justice among the people. From the point of view of gender, Daramola (2007) engages a gender description of some offensive Yorùbá proverbial songs in Olatunbosun's *Sokoro*. He surmises that Yorùbá proverbs have cultural classification and implication which are peculiar to gender. Considering the musical content of Yorùbá songs, Vidal (2004) describes the types of poetic and musical

forms of Yorùbá songs through the technique of structural analysis. He harps on the need to study Yorùbá songs along the lines of poetic classification.

On the stylistic investigation of *ekún iyàwó*, Raji and Atanda, (2013) hold that *ekún iyàwó* is a sub-genre of oral poetry song by the bride as she prepares to leave for her husband's home. On protest values in Fela's "Sorrows, Tears and Blood," and Bob Marley's "Stand Up, Get Up," Eesuola (2015) asserts that protest serves mediating purposes. Stressing the phono-stylistic import of bridal chants among the Oyo people of Southwestern Nigeria, Fatuase (2015) affirms that language is powerful in stressing will power and distressful situation. Harping on the multimodal significance of Yorùbá song drama, Olateju (2015) investigates the ideational, textual and interpersonal functions of the songs. She maintains the songs are used to request, inform, educate and create awareness. Olusegun (2017) explicates the roles of Yorùbá songs in pregnancy, labor and baby care in antenatal and post-natal clinic in Southwestern Nigerian hospital. He enthuses that Yorùbá songs are functionally rooted in socio-cultural values of the Yorùbá people. To him, the songs educate, inform caution, entertain, and encourage.

These studies are laudable in that they interrogate the socio-cultural peculiarities of Yorùbá songs. However, the studies have only engaged the songs of Yorùbá as a major ethnic group in Nigeria. Except for that of Ayantayo (2002), which investigates the significance of Igbo songs among the Ìgbómìnà people, all the studies concentrate on the ideals of the Yorùbá as a major ethnic group in Nigeria. The concentration of scholarly attention on the propagation of Standard Yorùbá language is not healthy for the future of indigenous languages in Nigeria. The Yorùbá language is already established in literature. There is need to ensure the continuous propagation of the indigenous language, considering the multilingual nature of Nigeria. Existing literature does not have a representative documentation of Oṅdó dialect. The documentation of its lexis, syntax, phonology and discourse categories still beg the attention of linguists. This is not unconnected with the dissatisfactory attitudinal approach to indigenous languages in Nigeria. Dearth of materials in Oṅdó dialect informs the present study.

Seun Ògúnfidítimí is the only surviving traditional female artiste in Oṅdó town. Her works have critically engaged the socio-cultural values of the Oṅdó people. Regrettably, no scholarly effort has been made to document the socio-cultural relevance of her song to contemporary Yorùbá society. The study, which anchors on the tenets of discourse stylistics, investigates the discourse stylistic peculiarities in Seun Ògúnfidítimí's songs. The specific objectives are to identify and describe contextual issues in the songs. Apart from projecting the socio-cultural ideals of Oṅdó people, the study will document the communal values inherent in the songs. Of significant benefit is that the study will

extend the body of knowledge in critical linguistic and cultural studies. The paper is divided into six sections. The first section provides the rationale for the study, and identifies the research problem. The second section justifies the appropriateness of discourse stylistic as an appropriate theoretical anchor on which the study feeds. Section three presents the method and the fourth section presents the analysis. While the fifth section contextualizes the findings, the last section concludes the study.

On Discourse Stylistics

The theoretical anchor for the study is discourse stylistics. Discourse stylistics could be described as a discourse-based stylistics. It is a discourse inclined approach to text analysis, which analyses text in context and describes a text in relation to the parts of discourse. Michael Hoey (1980) notes that, discourse stylistics involves the analysis of a text in relation to the context, immediate society, historical space and the cultural peculiarities of a society. It concerns a structural analysis of text and how language is used to perform various acts. By implication, it allows varying interpretation of text. Discourse stylistics accounts for implied meaning in a prose, drama or poem. Text interpretation relies on insights from pragmatic tools such as speech act theory, presupposition and so on.

Discourse stylistics uncovers ideologies underlying texts. It concerns how bias in language is analyzed. It engages linguistic analysis of our realities. Of significant concern to discourse stylistics is the notion of critical awareness and how it leads to social change. It opens up the possibility of alternative construction of reality. It processes text through ideological assumptions. Where readers share similar ideological assumptions, it is called ideology. It achieves interpretation by focusing on the link between text and ideology.

Discourse analysis and stylistics exhibit quite a good number of features. The relations between these fields present an engaging field of exploration, that is, discourse stylistics. Tannen (2000:1) sees discourse as the analysis of language 'beyond the sentence'. This definition takes the analysis beyond the grammar, phonology, semantics, morphology and so on. Discourse analysis considers larger units and context in order to achieve meaning in discourse. It explores the connection between language and society, with the interactive or dialogic properties of everyday communication. It tells us about itself, language, society, culture and thought.

Stylistics is of immense significance in discourse stylistics. It gives distinctive features to discourse stylistics. It appreciates the various forms and shapes of texts, and treats the text as pieces of information that could be read and analyzed. It controls and validates intuition through detailed analysis. It

presents a text as a form of dialogue between the literary reader and the linguistic observer. It depicts language in operation. It sees literary data from the linguistic perspective. Discourse stylistics emphasizes social roles in discourse. It holds that language reflects the realities of the society. It relies on the techniques and concepts of modern linguistics to reveal the functions and meaning of texts it analyses (Leech and Short, 1985; Fabb, 1997; Oyeleye, 1997). The stance of discourse stylistics shares similar characteristics with Halliday's notion of language. Halliday's sees language from the point of its social functions. He maintains that most of the reasons for using language could be reduced to the functional components of the Systemic Functional theory, which are known as the 'metafunctions' (Melrose, 1995:3). Style simply refers to the manner of doing or saying something. It is the way language is used in a particular context. Its main features are textual distinctiveness, habituality and aesthetic appeal.

Discourse stylistics and stylistics engage the functional role of language. Discourse analysis is concerned with an analysis of the message of a text while stylistics is preoccupied with how the message is woven. The two fields interact to unravel meaning in discourse. In a nutshell, discourse stylistics is concerned with the analysis of a text to uncover its social functions using various textual tools.

Context is the spine of meaning. Ochs (1979) holds that context is the social and physiological world in which the user operates in any given time and minimally language users' beliefs and assumptions about temporal, spatial and social settings prior ongoing and future actions and the state of knowledge of the participants. Mey (2001) contends that context is the totality of the environment in which a word is used. In human interaction, beliefs or assumptions held prior or during occasions of interaction come into and facilitate the communication process. Such communicative influences are referred to as contextual beliefs. Shared beliefs in human interaction could be described at two levels: language and situation levels. At the language level, meaning is possible if 'interactants' have access to the language of communication. This facilitates human interaction. At the level of situation, assumptions are held on the basis of interactants' Shared codes (linguistic and non-linguistics) and experience. It is at the level that the variety or dialect of the language selected and other situational variables are used to process meaning. Shared situation knowledge is an important assumption in the use of utterances. The situation of an utterance refers to an ongoing activity in which the utterance is used.

In interactions, participants draw from the situation to interpret utterances and to infer the speaker's intentions. This calls for mutual knowledge of the situation by the participants. As an embodiment of values and beliefs, culture

presents participants with numerous underlying presuppositions which facilitate meaning in interaction. This explains why in any communicative event, the participants must share the same cultural presupposition or make them explicit. Code refers to participants' linguistic choices. These choices include language, dialect or register. The present study investigates how meaning is facilitated in the songs of Seun Ògúnfidítímí through the deployment of Shared features of interaction identified above. The study also describes how such features help to describe contextual issues in the songs.

Data and Analytical Procedure

Seun Ògúnfidítímí's songs constitute the data for the study. The artiste under investigation has produced quite a number of singles. However, "Òbirí Ayé," "Ìtàn, Èkímògúnkúulí," "Ìyíyàto," "Ìre Ayo," "Òlórùn Àgbáyé," and "Èki Classic" were purposively selected because of their profound manifestation of the socio-cultural, linguistic, economic and political realities of Oñdó people. The audio compact disc of her songs were got and played repeatedly. The researcher also engaged the resourcefulness of the new media; some of the song were downloaded on YouTube and played several times so as to have a good grasp of the socio-cultural meaning of the words, phrases and sentences used in the songs. The present writer is an indigene of Oñdó town. He grew up in the town, and speaks the dialect with ease. The writer's mastery of the dialect facilitated interpretation and transcription of the text. The songs were transcribed and translated into the English language. The translation process took the form of one to one translation in order to avoid distortion of meaning. The songs were analyzed, using insights from discourse stylistics. Discourse elements like background knowledge, inference, speech act, context, Shared Situation Knowledge (SSK), Shared Cultural Knowledge (SCK), Shared Religious Knowledge (SRK), and Shared Linguistic Code (SLC) and so on were engaged to reveal how ideologies are negotiated in the songs.

Discussion and Analysis

A discourse stylistic investigation of the songs reveals that Seun's lyrics cut-across social, political, cultural and religious contexts. Specific contextual issues are expressed in each of the identified contexts in the songs. These contextual issues are described below:

The Supremacy/Sovereignty of Gods

A striking ideology that runs through the songs is the tenacious belief in the power and potency of gods. The traditional belief of the Yorùbá people holds that a man's destiny is greatly influenced and controlled by his/her small

god. This small god exerts tremendous influence in a man's life, and determines the success or otherwise of the man. It does not matter how industrious a man is, it is his small god that determines what becomes of his fate in life. This presupposes that every man has his small god that decides his fate. The small god in the Yorùbá traditional belief is referred to as *orí*, which means destiny. In "Òbìrì Ayé," for example, there is the recognition and appeal to god as the designer of destiny. She informs her listeners, which she calls *àwé*, (my contemporaries) that, *mo tì a là* (I would still be rich). The contextual meaning of the sentence is that she would still be successful in all ramifications. She identifies the fact that she would be successful in the job her *orí* (small god) has chosen for her. This statement presupposes that it is one thing to have a job, and another thing is to ask if the job was chosen for one by one's *orí*. One could be industrious and committed to a job but remains unsuccessful. It is one's *ori* that dictates success or otherwise (Adedeji, 1991, 2000, 2002, 2012; Abayomi, 2007). For one to be successful, one's *orí* must endorse the appropriateness of one's job. She goes further to assert that it is one's *orí inú*, (one's destiny) that lives life for one. She uses human metaphor to articulate the significance of destiny as the determiner of success in life. *Orí* literally means the head as a part of the body. In the excerpt above, she uses 'head' in a metaphorical sense to mean destiny. She eventually recognizes the supremacy of God over all competing factors which define human success or failure. She holds that whatever one says, God has the final say, *ìyówù kawí o, t'Èdùmàè o sàsé o*. Using Shared Religious Knowledge (SRK) and Shared Codes (SC), she employs the use of human metaphor to express the supremacy of god as the determinant of human existence.

Excerpt 1

"Òbìrì Ayé"

Àwéo mo tì a là o, usé o í yàn ghún mi.

Mo tì a là, mo tì a là ma nógó

Adáukó óúkó oi. oí non òwé bọne sayé

Èdá ne o abáwáyé, t'Èdùmàè o sàsé o.

Ìyówù kawí o, t'èdùmàè o sàsé o.

I will still be rich. The job my destiny has assigned for me.

I will still be rich. I will have money.

It is one's destiny that makes way for one.

It is one's destiny and God that have the final say

It does not matter what people say, God has the final say.

The Child as Success Indicator

Ògúnfidítímí chronicles the significance attached to the child in her songs. She engages the Yorùbá cultural belief system by recognizing the child as the measure of success within the Yorùbá belief system. However, she introduces another dimension into it. She does not place premium on number of children but the resourcefulness of the children. This anchors the fact that the level of productivity, responsibility and conformity to traditional societal values determine resourcefulness of children in African traditional belief system. The reality in her songs strikes a difference between having children and being successful. One could have many children, but remain unsuccessful and unfulfilled. She uses human metaphor to exemplify the difference between responsible and irresponsible children, paying particular attention to the Yorùbá cultural belief. She emphasizes that the quantity of one's teeth does not matter; what counts is the healthiness. One could have many bad teeth, and such would only constitute discomfort to the mouth. She maintains however that, a healthy tooth is better. This reality is captured in her song, "Ìtàn". The track harps on the preference of productive and resourceful children. *Wòdùwòdù*, a lexical choice from the context of Oṅdó dialect, connotes many but rotten. The use of *wòdùwòdù é sẹyín o koko*, a clausal choice, signals the undesirability of many children who are irresponsible.

She appeals to God not to give her irresponsible children, 'Édùmàè màmà díi bónùyà'. The notion of irresponsible children, within the Oṅdó cultural belief, is captured with the lexical item, 'Onùyà', an irresponsible and good for nothing fellow. She goes further to assert that whoever gives birth to irresponsible children has not given birth. In the Yorùbá cultural belief, it is assumed that such person has only suffered unnecessary untold hardship. The reality is captured thus: 'ó fidí jóná'. This explains her position that 'onébónùyà tí ó mabí' (Whoever gives birth to an irresponsible child has not given birth). She encourages those desirous of the fruit of the womb to be optimistic that brighter days are ahead. She uses biblical allusion to drive home her point; using the biblical story of Hannah who visited Shiloh, and experienced an unimaginable turning point in her story and Elizabeth's interesting miracle of conception despite her old age.

Excerpt 2

"Ìtàn"

Wòdùwòdù é sẹyín o koko

Ẹyín kan soso sà̀n jùgba

Édùmàè màmà díi bónùyà

Onébónùyà tí ó mabí

Dede èniyàn yé fọ̀ma

Wai tẹẹ gbéjọ
Elizabeth dàìgbó oitẹẹ gbéjọ
Hannah lọí Shiloh, oitẹẹ gbéjọ

It does not matter the quantity of one's teeth.
 A tooth could be better than many teeth.
 God, cause me not to have an irresponsible child.
 Whoever gives birth to an irresponsible child has not given birth
 All that are looking for the fruit of the womb.
 You will give birth to yours.
 Elizabeth was old, yet she gave birth to hers.
 Hannah went to Shiloh and gave birth.

The significance of marriage

Marriage in the Yorùbá cultural is seen as an age long institution, which is respected, protected and relished. Ògúnfidítimí' articulates the importance attached to marriage as an institution among the Yorùbá people. The excerpt below captures her voice:

Excerpt 3

“Èkí Classic”
Igbéyàwó o igbéyàwó yon yéye o
Níjọ ẹ dána, níjọ ẹ mọma ghónkọ
Uógbó, obì gbànjá, usu méjilélógún, iyọ, òoyibó, kòkọjìà, idẹmde', àgbálumà.
Núlọkọ wa bábo wa bábo
Ul ọkọ we lọ dóok ẹkọ
Aàn mínó bíẹ má báyoọkọ ẹ já
Dáná ghón kọ
Kanífara dà
Níjọ tẹmi wẹlẹwẹlẹ bẹí a séí o

Marriage is extremely good.
 The day we are handing the bride to her groom
 Bitter kola, kola-nut, twenty-two tubers of yam, salt, orange, coconut, paw-paw, cherry
 In your husband's home, you will have male and female children.
 Learn well in your husband's home.
 You will definitely be provoked. Do not quarrel with your mother-in-law
 Cook for your husband.
 Do persevere.
 Mine will be graciously celebrated this way too.

She describes marriage as an interesting social event. In her words, she says, *ìgbéyàwó yon yéye*. The beauty of marriage is appreciated and treasured in the Yorùbá culture. She describes the traditional marriage system among the Oñdó people as that which is interesting and memorable. There is a long list of wedding materials brought by the groom. Significant among these materials are fruits. She mentions the fruits *uógbó, obì gbànja, usu méjilélógún, iyọ, òoyibó, kòkojià, idemdé, àgbálùmà*. (Bitter kola, kolanut, twenty-two tubers of yam, salt, orange, coconut, pawpaw and cherry). These fruits have cultural significance; they connote happiness, joy, peace and strength. She prays that the bride would give birth to male and female '*núlókọ wa bábo wa bábo* (In your husband's home, you will have male and female children). The reference to giving birth to male and female children is predicated on the fact that, having children, to a great extent, determines success in marriage. She, however, counsels the bride to exhibit good and acceptable mannerisms in her new home. She harps on marriage as a ground to learn new realities to which the bride would have to adjust. She mentions that the bride could be provoked by her would-be-in-laws, but she must be ready to accommodate these strange realities. She advises her not to trade words with her mother-in-law. *ulókọ we lọ dóokékọ* / Learn well in your husband's home.

Aàn mínó biẹ má báyoọọ ẹ jà (You will definitely be provoked do not quarrel with your mother-in-law). Besides, she appeals to the bride to recognize the need to cook for her husband regularly, and persevere in the face of daunting challenges that could come her way. She stresses that the pieces of advice stressed in her lines, no doubt, are recipe for a stable and prosperous marriage.

Corruption and Embezzlement of public fund

A striking ideological feature that runs through the lines of the text under study is corruption and embezzlement of public funds by the political class in Nigeria. Within the political context, Ògúnfidítímí projects misappropriation of public funds as a recurring decimal in the Nigerian political scene. Using Shared Situation Knowledge (SSK), she warns all stakeholders in the political sphere to desist from such unwholesome act. Her message is anchored in "Òbìrì Ayé"

Excerpt 4

"Òbìrì Ayé"

Àkíyèsí pàtàkì nálẹ̀ndó

Àkíyèsí pàtàkì ní Nigeria

Àkíyèsí pàtàkì nókẹ̀kun

Jẹ̀gúdujẹ̀rà émà n ẹ̀yìn o jẹ̀gúdujẹ̀rà émasúnwan

Òga Counselor tónwà ẹ se

Òga Chairman tónwà ẹ se
House of Assembly tónwà ẹ se
Òga Senator tónwà ẹ se
President wa tónwà ẹ se

A special call in Oñdó kingdom
 A special call in Nigeria
 A special call in Western world
 Reckless embezzlement is not desirable.
 Mr. Counselor, amend your ways.
 Mr. Chairman, amend your ways.
 Members of House of Assembly, amend you ways.
 Mr. Senator, amend your ways.
 Our president, amend your ways.

In the excerpt above, she creates a conscious awareness on the need to acknowledge the evil of embezzlement as hindrance to the growth of a nation. The mention of *àkíyèsí* creates a call in the subconscious of the reader and listener on the need to identify with the spate of corruption in Nigeria. She uses nomenclatural elements in the text to domesticate the social syndrome as that which is home grown. Instances in the text include the mention of *nálèndó* which means in Oñdó town. The mention of *nálèndó* presupposes that the evil of corruption is endemic in Nigeria as it cut-across all sphere of life, with particular reference to Oñdó town. The reality painted in the text connects with the background knowledge that corruption is part and parcel of life in Nigeria as mentioned in the second line of the excerpt above. She extends her clarion call to the Western world on the need to wage a holistic war against the scourge of corruption. She metaphorically typifies corruption as a negative development that retrogressed a nation.

Her use of *Jẹgúdújẹrà é mà n ẹyìn o jẹgúdújẹrà é masúnwan* reveals that corruption is an ill-wind that does not blow any good. Her claim is premised on Shared Situation Knowledge of the Nigeria's socio-economic realities. For some years now since the emergence of democratic governance in Nigeria, the masses have continued to live in abject poverty, even in the midst of plenty. This reality contravenes the international outlook the country has as an oil-producing nation. The Shared Situation Knowledge of the realities in Nigeria tends to facilitate an understanding of the ideology represented in the text above. Using focusing, an ingredient of discourse stylistic analysis, she identifies the political actors involved in the gross financial misconduct which has characterized the nation's polity as that which include *Òga Counsellor tónwà ẹ se, House of Assembly, Òga Senator, President wa*. She identifies these

political offices and office holders as the actors in the illegitimate political business. From the text, one could infer that the political office holders are the brain behind the gross financial escapade. Apart from identifying the culprits, she also harps on the need for the concerned looters to amend their ways for the good of the society. Her appeal for attitudinal regeneration is captured in her words, *tónwà ẹ se*.

Supremacy of God

The sovereignty of God constitutes another ideological issue that characterizes her songs. The supremacy of God as an underlying contextual issue is captured in "Òbìrì Ayé". She describes God as the designer of destiny. The text below emphasizes this ideology:

Excerpt 5

"Òbìrì Ayé"

Ọnẹ́ bá mú t'Ọlọ́un ẹ ẹ á rí bá tí ẹ á rọ̀nà gbe gbà

Mo mọ́pẹ́ mi wá Ọlọ́un nókè.

Ó pa mí nérín ayọ

Ó gbàso ùyà náà mi

Ó mú mi kúagijù ó mú mi lọ ságho fen

Whoever acknowledges the will of God will be prosperous.

I thank you God of heaven.

He made me laugh.

He took away my filthy rag of reproach.

He brought of the wilderness and brought me to a palace.

In the excerpt above, Ògúnfidítìmí depicts God as the maker of destiny. She identifies that whoever identifies with the will of God will definitely be prosperous. This submission is premised on the belief in God as the author of destiny. It could be inferred from the text that man has choices to make in life, one of which includes the choice of following God's will. In addition, one could deduce that there are many other gods that one could turn to in time of distress. She identifies God as the Supreme being who has the only solution to man's unending challenges. Meaning is facilitated in the text through Shared Religious Beliefs. Another important factor that facilitates meaning in such interaction is the Shared Linguistic Codes. Code here refers to the dialect of the immediate environment, in this case, Onḍó dialect. She performs quite a number of acts in the discourse like that of assuring the reader and listener about the sovereignty of God. She equally performs the act of *thank-ing* with the use of *mo mọ́pẹ́ mi wá Ọlọ́un nókè*. In furtherance to this, she

uses material metaphor to exemplify God's unfailing assistance. The depiction of the supremacy of God is in tandem with the findings of Akande, 2002; Adekoya, 2004). Her use of 'Ó gbàsò ùyà náà mi' paints the picture of poverty, want and squalor with the use of clothes. She likens poverty to clothes and emphasizes that God has taken the clothes of poverty off her. Using journey metaphor, she describes God as being capable of taking one from poverty to affluence. This reality is expressed in her words, *ó mú mi kúagijù ó mú mi lẹ sághofen Aginjì*, from the Yorùbá cultural perspective, is a thick forest. The use of *aginjù* metaphorically creates a feeling of disillusionment and misery. *Ághofen*, on the hand, is a palace. She maintains that God took her from poverty to affluence. In "Ìyíyàtò" for example, the supremacy of God is emphasized and portrayed. God is portrayed as great and unquestionable. His greatness is captured in lines below:

Excerpt 6

Ìyíyàtò

Ọlọ̀un wo lála; Èdùmàrè mi wò lálaò

Kàbìesí, kàbìesí ẹ o, Ọlọ̀un wolála o

Ọbàtàbùtú ọba ólálajù; ewé gbàá, ewé gbòò; ẹ̀mòbí ẹ̀mọkọ

God, you are great.

Nobody dare question your majesty, God you are great.

The greatest God who reigns in majesty and supremacy.

His greatness in gender cannot be fathomed.

She further harps on the need to appreciate God in whatever we do. In "Ire Ayọ", she describes God as being worthy of our praises. She identifies God as being behind every success a man records. God is described as a deity that is worshipped by all. She further prays never to allow her wealth and fame to replace the supremacy of God.

Excerpt 7

"Ire Ayọ"

Èé ee ọlọ̀un wo

Débásúwọ eséjémi ọlọ̀un wo sé o

Ìyìn ọpẹ yẹ ẹ Jehovah ọlọ̀un wó se gan ò

ọlọ̀un àgbáyé

Òrìsà àgbáyé kàbìesí ọlọ̀un àpésìn

Mámà díi nóghó iyi ma mú gbérag

Mámà díi nókíkí yí maa mú fi èsée júwọ

Mámà díi tẹ nọwọ ọnẹn fẹràn mi

Má dīi kàn bùkù n ójọ́ eyẹ́ mi

God, I thank you.

I am nothing without you.

Jehovah you are worthy of my thanks.

Deity of the universe, your majesty. Everybody worships you.

Do not give me wealth that will take me from your presence.

Do not give me fame that will take me from your presence.

Do not let me be despised by my admirers.

Do not let me be ashamed on my day of celebration.

God is portrayed as the one that has the final say over the affairs of men. She describes God as a deity that everyone worships. Her stance underscores the fact that humans are mere mortals and pencils in the hands of God. It could be deduced from the excerpt that, certain worldly things could distract one from adhering to the will of God. Some of those things she mentions are money and fame.

Conspiracy, detractors and Haters

Within the social context of the song, she enjoins the reader/listener to identify with the social challenges of the society. These challenges, as far as she is concerned, concern the complexities of human relations. In “Ekimogun Kuuli,” she maintains that human societies have been bastardized because of the unhealthy rivalry among people. One of the social issues raised is that of conspiracy that defines human relationship. Her position is expressed in the lines below:

Excerpt 8

“Ekimogun Kuuli”

Kén ísì kén gbà sí

Làgwoṅeká yéḅonejé' ógbòdo

Ríkísí pen lágbèdẹ́ sí paper rọ

What did he get in return?

Gossips and backbiters have failed.

Conspiracy has ended. The blacksmith has misfired in his art.

The text above establishes that conspiracy is inherent in human societies. She uses Shared Situation Knowledge of the immediate society to paint

the picture of the dimensions of conspiracy and its negative impacts on social relationships. Such Shared Knowledge of the prevailing situation helps to achieves meaning with ease. She mocks detractors who go about working towards the downfall of others. Such conspiracy is carried out to gain prominence. In “Ìyíyàtò,” the destructive roles of haters and detractors are emphasized again:

Excerpt 9

“Ìyíyàtò”

Èdùmàrè bínúe o. ọ̀nẹ́ bínú mi

Bósòkùen, obìnen, ọ̀mọ̀de àtàgbà

Upòkúpò wo bátìgha o jọ́ọ́ màmà bínú àwéo èniyàn daka dúpẹ́ daka yọ̀ ò

God, be angry with my haters.

Be it male, female, young or old

Whatever situation you find yourself, do not be angry, but be thankful to God.

In the above excerpt, she recognizes the place of haters in life. She, however, affirms that whoever demonstrates hatred towards her should also get the same treatment in return, be it young, old, male or female. In furtherance to this, she preaches contentment as a great virtue an individual should strive to possess. Her use of *Upòkúpò wo bátìgha o jọ́ọ́ màmà bínú àwéo èniyàn daka dúpẹ́ daka yọ̀ ò* underscores the need to exhibit contentment in life. Her stance lends credence to the biblical injunction that holiness and contentment is a great gain. Her submission in the excerpt takes cue from the Situation Knowledge of the immediate environment. In recent times, it is alarming how the youths run after wealth. Some people cut corners in a bid to make early in life. Based on this premise, she enjoins the listener to shun such attitude and embrace contentment. In the same album, she notes that contentment and patience pay, adding that it is needful in life. She enjoins everyone to tread softly and recognize the place of perseverance. She notes that a million mushroom cannot fill a pot of soup.

Excerpt 10

“Ọ̀lọ̀run àgbáyé”

Èniyàn se jẹ́ jẹ́

Má sàré ọ̀lá kọ̀lò̀sì

Èniyàn, la se gw

Ugbasẹ̀sẹ̀tẹ̀ ùkòkọ̀bẹ̀

Humans, tread softly.
 Do not chase wealth hastily and harvest poverty.
 Humans, be calm.
 Millions of mushrooms are not enough for a pot of soup.

The statement above takes cue from Shared Cultural Knowledge of the Yorùbá people. It is understood in Yorùbá culture that *olúorán* (mushroom) is good for soup, but there is no quantity of it can fill a pot. It could be inferred from this statement that patience is needed to traverse the journey of life. The same attitudinal regeneration is emphasized in “*Qlórùn àgbáyé.*” She implores haters and detractors to desist from working against the goals of others and instead, work to assist the visions of others. The use of the pronoun, ‘*we*’ and ‘*wo*’ establishes a distinction between her and the listener. She warns the listener to turn a new leaf. In articulating her ideology, she dwells on the profound use of image-evoking metaphor to drive home the destructive tendencies of detractors and haters. She uses *ajá* (dog) *agbépòd* (disposer of excreta) and ‘*imí* (excreta) to exemplify the role of haters in human relations. She wonders why a dog should be chased away from eating excreta, and challenges the chaser whether he would eat the excreta. She later enjoins that excreta should be left for the disposer of excreta. From the metaphorical representation in the text, she discourages all acts of jealousy, envy, undue hatred, wickedness and inhumanity towards fellow humans. This ideology is painted in the excerpt below:

Excerpt 11

“*Ìyiyàtò*”
We lájá kúoí ghowín
Wo daa jẹ́
Àyìn wín nò ghágbé pọ́
Mábà tọne jẹ́
Èniyàn yófédí toun sà

You are chasing a dog from eating excreta.
 Will you eat it?
 Leave excreta for the waste carriers.
 Do not destroy others.
 Those who want prosperity.

In furtherance to this, she harps again on contentment in “*Ìyiyàtò.*” She enjoins all humans to express gratitude to God irrespective of their circumstances. She further calls on humans to rejoice with the successful as such act

would inform their success too: *èniyàn daka dúpé daka yọ* (let us be thankful and happy).

Excerpt 12

“Ìyíyàtọ”

Ópẹ wé tí yọ léun o sàń á kàńẹ ò bópẹ bóyá

Èééé daka yọ ákàńẹ ò dandan mđan

Géwúò jẹ ayòń ee gbeyin ẹ o

Áúe ojú yó rúbi dètífo

Áúe o.

He that rejoices with the successful will have causes to celebrate.

Let us rejoice. It will soon be our turn.

A bitter leaf usually tastes pleasant despite its initial unpleasant taste.

The eye that has seen evil, which has not gone blind, will definitely behold good.

It will behold good.

Optimism in the face of trying situation is foregrounded in the excerpt above. She uses the images of *ojú* (eye) to register the significance of optimism. She affirms that any eye that has not gone bad will still behold good. The statement, from the Yorùbá cultural belief, means that anyone who perseveres will definitely be prosperous. The statement is predicated on shared Yorùbá cultural belief as an important ingredient of processing meaning in such discourse.

Love

Of significant contextual relevance in Ògúnfidítímí's songs is the concept of love. This constitutes an important ideological issue in the songs. In “Òbiri Ayé,” she stresses the place of love in human relations. Using her personal experience, she pledges an unalloyed love and affiliation with Fredrick, Fred in short. She affirms her resolve to remain committed to the course of the relation through the use of simile as a narrating strategy. Her commitment to Fred is captured in her words, ‘*Fred mabáẹlọ*’. Hear her:

Excerpt 13

“Òbiri Ayé”

Fred mabáẹlọ

Úyàì nólùfẹ lé jẹniyàn pa

Úse ẹja dé sé gwe níńó omi

Ífẹ mi gwe ghun ẹ Fred o

*Ûse àlùmóyèn désé dàgbà nń́ igr
 Ífẹ́ mi dàgbà ghún ẹ́ Fred o
 Ûse òsùpọon désé tàn kárirí ayé
 Ífẹ́ mi tàn ghún ẹ́ Fred o*

Fred, I will go with you.
 The pains of not having a lover could kill
 Just as fish swim in the ocean, my love swims for you.
 My love swims for you, Fred.
 Just as mangoes grow on the tree
 My love grows for you, Fred.
 Just the moon shines the earth
 My love for you shines, Fred.

In a bid to affirm her love, resolve and commitment to the relationship, she describes how terrible it is to live without having a lover. The pain, as described by her, could kill. The use of such exaggeration paints the degree of her emotional involvement in the relationship. It could be inferred from her statement that the expression of love towards the opposite sex is an essential ingredient of relations. From lines 3 to 6, she resorts to the use of simile to underscore the profundity of her love for Fred. She asserts that her love for Fred swims as a fish swims in the ocean. Using the comparison between how a fish swims in the ocean, and the way her love swims for Fred, there is a conscious attempt to express the enduring nature of her love for Fred. She uses the process involved in the growth of mangoes on the trees to also register the depth of her love for Fred. As the mango grows on the tree, her love for Fred also develops by the day. As if that is not enough, she uses the activity of the moon to describe her emotional attachment to the relationship. Just as the moon lightens and brightens the earth, her love for Fred lightens her soul. This description borrows from the cultural belief of the Yorúbá people. The moonlight tale, which is narrated by elders in Yorúbá culture, takes place in the evening and children gather to listen to the voice of elders within the community. The moon provides enabling atmosphere for the rendition of such tales. Her love for Fred shines just as the moon brightens the earth.

Social Degeneration

Social degeneration constitutes a strong contextual issue in Ògúnfídítímí's songs. In "Òbirí Aye" she expresses deep concern about the way the society has lost its values. She is worried at the spate of moral collapse, loss of societal ethics, neglect of important societal values like honesty, industry, respect

for constituted authority, patience, perseverance, love and unhealthy rivalry. The excerpt below stresses this contextual issue:

Excerpt 14

“ Òbìrì Ayé”

Báyé ti yídà

Àínó semí o koko ibi ayé lọsí o mémà o.

Íbáyé yí e o mémà

Èn en mé ghen úda kiko, en mókè pód

Molọ Òbòtò, mo yàì Tẹpọ́

Aleko dede ti dà ti kọ̀lọ̀lọ̀lọ̀ tán

Àínó semi

Àgbàgbà kiyèsá

Dọ̀maléran má padà wá jegungun

Dọ̀malásọ mátun wákísà o

Àwon ẹbi èn en jà lógón miy

Omaye méjì o en en paawon

How the world has changed!

It is pathetic how the realities of the world unfold.

Where the world tilts to baffles me.

People force eggs into the fowl's genital organ. They turn things upside down.

I went to Òbòtò, I called at Tẹpọ́.

The entire farm land has been taken over by the fox

I am extremely baffled and sorrowful.

Elders be watchful.

So that the children of the butchers will not feed on bones.

So that the children of the rich will not appear in rags.

Family members are fighting over the inheritance of relations.

Siblings are killing each other.

She expresses wonderment and sympathy at the downward trend experienced in the society in terms of social values. She notes that no one can actually tell the angle to which the world tilts, ‘íbáyé yí e o mémà’. She mentions a number of atrocities that have become the order of the day in our society. These atrocities which include dishonesty, hate and corruption are recklessly perpetrated in our society. She paints the social ills with the imagery of *eghen* (egg) and *àkìkọ* (fowl). She likens the activities of those that cut corners to someone that forces egg into the private part of the fowl. Such representation also borrows insights from the Yorùbá culture. It is believed in Yorùbá culture

that, a fowl does not lay egg. Forcing egg into the private part of the fowl connotes an act of dishonesty. This unwholesome act could also be interpreted as turning the world upside down, ‘*En mókè pódò*’. She disapproves such act, and enjoins the public to desist from such.

In projecting the evil of corruption, she expresses the fact that ‘strangers’ have taken over the land in Oṅdó kingdom. According to her, she got to know this development when she visited Tẹpó and Òbòtò, two neighboring villages in Oṅdó kingdom. She laments that the villages which was known to be occupied by indigenous farmers have been taken over by the “fox” (*kọlọlọ* – the Yorùbá people of Oyo and Osun extraction). These *kọlọlọ* are seen in Oṅdó State as strangers, who compete for resource control in the kingdom. These ‘strangers’ are basically farmers who deal in cacao and kola-nut production. She rebukes such developments, and holds the elders responsible for the influx of *kọlọlọ* in the land. She, however, charges the elders to rise to the occasion and salvage the land. She uses human metaphor to depict the consequences of such flippant attitude of the elders to the well-being of the native people. The metaphor she uses takes the form of a situation that happens when the son of a butcher feeds on bones, *dọmaléran má padà wá jegungun* and the son of the rich will not appear in rags, *dọmalásọ mátun wàkìsà o*. The situation, according to her, should be addressed in a bid to ensure a saner society.

Moreover, she projects the evil development of strong acrimony and division that exists between family relations and siblings. In most cases, this acrimony is engendered by greed and the desire to inherit the property of fellow blood relations. She captures this contextual issue thus, *àwon ẹbi ẹn ẹn já lógón miye, ‘omaye méji o en en paawon*. Her utterances, within the context of the Yorùbá culture, perform the pragmatic act of warning, appealing, rebuking and challenging the reader about the need to improve the status quo.

Gender Inequality

Gender issue is also portrayed in Ògúnfidítímí’s songs. Gender, as constructed in the songs, revolves around females castigating fellow females. In “*Ìyíyàtọ*,” she presents, in a dialogic pattern, a scenario of a lady who goes to visit a male friend. On getting there, she knocks on the door repeatedly, and finds out that the man is having an affair with another woman. She (the visiting friend) lambasts the woman, and rebukes her severely for visiting another man despite the numerous children she already has. Hear the conversation between the visiting female friend and the man.

Excerpt 15

“*Ìyíyàtọ*”

Seun: (*A knock at the door*).

Another character: *Èsì eyèn o*

Seun: *Èmi lúwa seun*

Another character: *Àwé me wa o.*

Seun: *Me tí kẹ́sì ẹ nà tòwúọ o. mo kéké ọfán fẹ́tíya. sé sùé jínunjẹ?*

Another character: *À mé júnjẹ. àntí mà ó fẹ́mi wáí ò*

Seun: *Àntí wo tón fẹ́wá. Néyin oma mén en o. Iba ọkọkàn o*

Wo pàkàn léyìn o wo fàkàn l ọwọ́

Wo dọkàn úkù

Ìyẹfẹ́kẹ ún j

We tón pèbùdákawa

Sé sen en tón yón ẹ io?

Another character: *Jọ́ kẹ kàńẹo Şeun*

Dabalonen dẹbọne

Şeşe padà néyin ọne.

Seun: (A knock at the door).

Another character: Who is it?

Seun: I am Oluwaseun.

Another character: Friend, I am coming.

Seun: I have been calling for some time now. I strained my voice beyond limits. Were you stealing something?

Another character: I was not stealing. Aunty came looking for me.

Seun: Aunty, you came again. After four children with different fathers.

One is strapped to your back, another is held in your hands.

One is still in your womb.

The one crying is yet to be fed.

Still you are beckoning to brother.

Another character: Is it itching you?

What is your business, Seun?

You have to retreat.

In the excerpt above, Seun wonders what could have kept the young in the room despite her persistent knocks on the door. She subsequently accuses the man of carrying out a secret agenda which she terms, *Sé sùé jínunjẹ?* The statement, from the Yorùbá (Oñdó) cultural perspective and the context of the interaction, connotes whether the man is perpetrating an unwholesome act. Seun's utterance, in the context of its use, is hinged on the Shared Knowledge of code and situation. These two significant factors help to enhance meaning in the interaction. The use of Oñdó dialect can only be understood by speakers of the dialect and knowledge of the contextual situation also facilitates meaning in the discourse. The man's response sparks another narrative in the interaction. He responds that *à mé júnjẹ àntí mà ó fẹ́mi wáí ò*. He affirms

that he is not carrying out any secretive act, and that a woman visits him. The response of the man propels Seun to retort and castigate the woman. She rebukes her severely for hovering around with another man despite the four children she has.

According to Seun, the said woman goes around with four children. The children, according to her, are born of different fathers. Even while in the house of the man, one of the children is strapped to her back, she holds one in the hand, she carries one in her tummy and one is crying for food. Yet she beckons to the man. She asks if her *something* itches her. The mention of 'something' by Seun could be better explained with particular attention to Shared Situation Knowledge and Shared Linguistic Code. The use of *something* denotes the private part of the said woman. Seun accuses her of coming to have an affair with another man outside her matrimonial home. From the excerpt, one sees a situation in which there is a paradigm shift. Gender issues raised in the excerpt do not take the usual form of male castigating female and subjecting females to untold hardship under the umbrella of traditional African values. Seun presents a peculiar form of gender assault, where females instigate females. Seun cast aspersions on the woman concerned for parading four children from different fathers. The utterance describes the woman as a prostitute and an infidel. Such portrayal of women tends to depict women in bad light.

The Cyclic Nature of Life

Seun's songs chronicle the order of life. The songs hold that life is in phases, and that nothing is static in life. Whatever goes around comes around. This stance is preached and stressed in Seun's "Ìyíyàtò." The excerpt below demonstrates this submission:

Excerpt 16

"Ìyíyàtò"

Ọmọdé bá baẹ lọúj

An an péń obì níbẹ

Ọmọ ajá mà gbé sí kílíwí, ọmọdé àná dàgbà bódọl

Baba kàn in ọmọiton jobì

ọmọdàgbà ó jọba

Baba àná in an joyè

Omaiton ma jọbi, àgbà wé joyè

A child followed his father to a social function.

Kolanut was served there.

A puppy will definitely grow, a child will definitely grow into adulthood.

A particular man said a child does not eat kola-nut.
 The same child grew and became a king.
 The elder who denied him kola-nut indicated interest in chieftaincy title.
 A child does eat kola-nut, elders too do not assume chieftaincy positions.

The excerpt above tells a short story of a lad who follows his father to a social function. Right at the function, kola-nuts were served at the venue, and the boy was not given because of his age. It is believed that elders only take kola-nuts. The same boy grows and becomes a man. Years after, he became the king of his community, and the elder who denied him kola-nut some years back vied for a chieftaincy title in the same community. The king eventually denied him access to such exalted position. The situation could be better explained with recourse to the Yorùbá culture. It is not within the provisions of Yorùbá culture to give a child kola-nut. The voice of elders is respected, and held sacred within the culture. The episode in the text above stresses the cyclical nature of life. The elder who denied the young boy of kola-nut the other day did not consider the fact that the concerned boy will grow into adulthood. The same boy eventually rose through the ranks and became the king of his community. The boy's social status empowers him to control the state of affairs in the community. The boy's royal status made him to deny the man who vied for a chieftaincy title in the community. The scenario reveals that life is cyclical and that the young shall grow. Seun affirms that, *omọ ajá mà gbé sí kílíwí, omọdẹ àná dàgbà bódọla*. The statement needs to be situated within the context of Yorùbá culture. The use of *kilíwí*, a puppy denotes a state of innocence and powerlessness. The boy in question is metaphorically described as *kílíwí*, considering his inability to change the order of things when he was cheated by the elderly man. The use of the lexical choice *kílíwí* underscores the writer's recourse to the significance of the cyclical nature of life.

Contextual Relevance of Seun Ògúnfidítimí's Songs

The sections above describe the varying contextual issues in Seun's songs. There is need to reflect on the contextual significance of the song to contemporary Yorùbá society. Considering the discourse stylistic significance of the songs, one finds out that the songs are situated within political, social, cultural and religious contexts. Within the cultural context of the songs, Seun relies on Shared Cultural Knowledge (SCK) to signal the significance of the child in Yorùbá culture. Besides that, she harps on the premium placed on marriage and encourages the average member of the society to cherish it. From the political context, she relies on Shared Situation Knowledge of the prevailing political situation in Nigeria to portray the unpleasant realities in

the political scene in Nigeria. She identifies corruption as the bane of development in Nigeria and calls on various stakeholders to checkmate the trend. While the religious context of the songs harps on the supremacy of God, the social context of the songs captures some social realities of the writer's immediate environment. Such social realities cut-across conspiracy, love, social degeneration, gender inequality and the cyclical nature of life. These realities are portrayed with the use of Shared Situation Knowledge and Shared linguistic code. It is apposite to assert that Seun's songs are laden with political, social cultural and religious realities of the immediate society. These contextual issues are portrayed in a bid to create consciousness in the listener to propagate the ideals of a desired society.

Conclusion

This study has engaged a discourse stylistic investigation of Seun Ògúnfidítìmí's songs with particular attention to the contextual issues raised in the songs. The paper describes the contextual significance of some discourse stylistic features such as Shared Situation Knowledge, (SSK) Shared Cultural Knowledge, (SCK) Shared Religious Knowledge (SRK) and Shared Linguistic Code (SLC) in facilitating meaning between the songwriter and the audience. The songs are situated in political, cultural, religious and social contexts of the Yorùbá society. Contextual issues such as the significance of the child in Yorùbá society, the importance of marriage, bribery and corruption, supremacy of God, conspiracy, love, social degeneration, gender inequality and the cyclical nature of life are brought to the fore. It could be safely said that Seun's songs are characterized with prevailing contextual issues of the immediate society. Such contextual issues are reflected and projected in a bid to educate the audience and create a saner society. Seun's lyrics are replete with Shared discourse stylistic features, which facilitate meaning between the audience and the song writer. The study offers a new perspective at analyzing dialectal text; it embraces the resourcefulness of Shared linguistic Code, Shared Situation Knowledge and Shared Religious Knowledge as essential ingredients that facilitate meaning in discourse situations. The paper has offered an addition to the plethora of studies in cultural studies. Besides, the work presents a fascinating attempt at documenting Òndó dialect in the literature. Apart from serving as a resource material in language teaching and documentation, the paper holds that Òndó dialect is a viable area that needs further vigorous linguistic investigations.

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