

PROCEEDINGS OF THE “*CONFERENCE ON NIGERIAN PIDGIN*”,
UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN, NIGERIA. 8-9 JULY, 2009

The rising profile of Naija literary discourse and entertainment in Nigeria

Macaulay MOWARIN,
Delta State University, Abraka
Department of English and Literary Studies
March, 2010

Abstract

Due to the vibrancy and elaboration of Naija within the past two decades, its domain of use has increased both as an informal and formal means of communication. This paper undertakes an analysis of the use of Naija in literary discourse and entertainment. It discusses the use of Naija by illiterates, marginally literates and elites, who use the language in a relaxed informal setting, in the novels of Achebe set in urban centres. It observes that Achebe's deployment of Naija in his novels is a rhetorical device. The paper also analyzes Ezenwa Ohaeto's poem in Naija titled "I Wan Bi President" with the main aim of comparing the sociolect in the poem with that of the standard sociolect. The paper observes that the use of Naija in the entertainment industry is growing rapidly; it however observes the predominant cases of code-mixing and code switching of English and Naija in the industry. Finally, the paper also observes the use of the acrolectal sociolect by musicians, comedians and characters in *Nollywood* (Nigerian film industry).

1. Introduction

The use of Naija in literature and entertainment in Nigeria has spanned half a century. Although it is a recent development, the use of Naija by characters in the fast expanding Nigerian film industry known as *Nollywood* has a close affinity to those characters who speak the language in novels and plays. Most of the characters who communicate in Naija in Nigerian literary works are semi-literate and illiterate urban dwellers who occupy the lower rung of Nigeria's socio-economic ladder. Literary artists and film producers use Naija as a rhetorical device to recreate in characters what Awosika (1997:6) calls:

Historically accurate character-type in their real environment endowed with their historically conditioned views and speaking the types of language we find them speaking in real life.

There has been a phenomenal increase in the number of musicians who sing in Naija or code-mix English with Naija in their music. They include pop, gospel, Afro beat and Ragga/Raggae musicians. Stand up comedians, whose comedy series *Nite of a Thousand Laughs* now span vols 1-17, also communicate mainly in Naija. The paper analyzes the sociolinguistic factors behind the recent surge of the use of Naija in the entertainment industry. It uses Achebe's novels set in urban centre and Ezenwa – Ohaeto's poem in Naija, titled: *A Wan Bi President*, as case study of Naija in literary discourse. It also discusses the phenomenon of code-mixing and code-switching among practitioners of the entertainment industry. Finally, the paper also analyzes the features of Naija used by creative writers and practitioners in the entertainment industry in relation to the standard sociolect.

2. Naija In literary Discourse

The use of Naija in literary discourse was a feature peculiar to prose fiction and partly to drama in the 1960s. Achebe deployed Naija as a rhetorical device in his novels in the dialogue of semi-literate and illiterate urban dwellers with the main objective of developing a distinct speech habit for each group.

Elugbe and Omamor (1991:129) identify three probable uses of NP in creative writing in Nigeria thus:

- i. *The language of the illiterate or marginally literate*
- ii. *The language of informal, relaxed, situations in mostly multilingual westernized gatherings, and*
- iii. *A means per excellence of achieving specific literary effects.*

While Cyprian Ekwensi's and Wole Soyinka's use of Naija in their creative writings conform with Elugbe and Omamor's first possible use, Achebe's deployment of the language conforms with the first two. These were cases of Naija in creative writing because an infinitesimal part of the novel or drama is written in Naija. The use of Naija in poetry is not as widespread as in the case of prose and drama.

The fact cannot be gainsaid that Mamman Vatsa and Aig-Imoukhuede are the pioneers of poems in Naija. Aig-Imoukhuede's collection of poems titled: *Pidgin Stew and Suffer Head* is a collection of 36 poems; about 2/3 or 23 of the poems are in Naija. Elugbe and Omamor (1991:131) find it difficult to adduce the motif behind Aig-Imoukhuede's use of Naija in the 23 poems thus:

Looking at the subject matter of the poems, one does not see a clear criterion which may have determined the author's choice of medium at any given point.

We believe, however, that the poet's overriding criterion must have been an attempt to foreground the rising profile of Naija in the 1980's as a lingua franca in the then Bendel State where the poet originated from. Another probable motif of the poet must have been a wish to standardize the language's orthography through launching it into the written mode. Most of the lexicon in the poems in Naija are distinct from the lexicon if the subject matter of the poem were to be in the oral form (see Elugbe and Omamor (121 – 132).

Ezenwa – Ohaeto is a member of the second generation of African poets. These poets are disillusioned by the political misrule in the nation. Other prominent second generation poets that have written poems in Naija include Niyi Osundare, Tanure Ojaide, Odia Ofeimum, Tunde Fatunde and Hope Eghagha. The themes of the Naija poems are in consonance with those of post modernist poets: the problem of political corruption and deprivation of common Nigerians. Ohaeto's *I Wan Bi President* focuses on an avaricious man who wants to rule the country for the selfish purpose of enriching himself. Fatunde's poem titled: *Woman dey suffer* focuses on the plight of married women in Nigeria. We observe, however, that there is no one to one correspondence between the written poem and its spoken mode either because the poet does not have native competence in Naija or because Naija still lacks a standard orthography unlike Cameroonian pidgin (CP)¹.

¹ Elugbe B. and Omamor P. (1991) observe that the Book of St. Mark in the New Testament of the Holy Bible has been translated into Cameroonian pidgin because the language has been standardized.

2.1 An Analysis of Ezenwa Ohaeto's "A Wan Bi President"

This section undertakes an overview of Ezenwa Ohaeto's poem in Naija titled *A Wan Bi President* (1988). The theme that pervades the poem is the insatiable crave of a man whose dream is to become a president for the sole aim of satisfying his avaricious appetite, living an amorous life and enjoying compliments and laudation from sycophants. Finally, he wants to enrich his family at the detriment of the majority of the citizens he intends to rule. It is a lengthy poem in 18 uneven stanzas.

The obsession of this poet-personae to become the country's president is highlighted in the second stanza with the use of parallel structures thus:

**If I sleep small
Na di dream go come
If I close eye small
Na di dream go come
If I siddon for chair say make I rest small
Na di dream go come**

His irrational reverence for the office is not motivated by how he can develop the country socio-economically but by the allurement of the comfort and opulence life-style of most presidents as he attests thus:

**I never see president hungry
I never see president thirsty
Na government cook de make food
Na government driver de drive in motor
Na him make I wan bi president**

He is also enamoured by the office of the president because he wants to satisfy his erotic desires and gain complements and laudation from sycophants as he attests thus:

**I wan bi president
If I wan marry beautiful wife
I go order make she come
If I want girlfriend sef
Na so I go send driver for evening
I wan bi president
Make I get plenty titles
Dem go call me de Excellency
I go bi COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
I fit bi field Marshall and Admiral
I go bi lion of de Niger
I go answer Grand commander of de Nation
Dem go address me as snake we get forest**

The imagery of the snake foregrounds the fact that the would-be-president is an enemy of his would-be-subjects.

The poem is written in the acrolectal sociolect and broken English. This is why it has a closer affinity with Nigerian English. The few examples below buttress this fact:

I never see President *thirsty*.

The word “**thirsty**” is still calqued in the mesolectal thus “**wota de hongri**” so in the standard sociolect the above sentence will be written thus: **A nẹva si Prẹsịdẹnt we *wota de hongri*, I have never seen a President who is *thirsty***

All dem *vehicle* tyre de new

“**moto**” (motor) is still used in place of “**vehicle**” in the mesolectal sociolect. So it should be: **Ọl dem *moto* taya de niu.**

If the president go oversea na for red carpet e go *walk*

“**walk**” – is “**waka**” in the standard sociolect. So it should be: **If di prẹsịdẹnt go anọda kọntri na ọ kọpet we red e go *waka*.**

Na for *best* hotel e go sleep

should be : **Na ọ *fain* hotel e go slip, He will sleep in the best hotel.**

If I wan marry *beautiful* wife, I go order mek she come.

“**beautiful**” should be “**fain wel wel**”.

If A wan mari waif we *fain wel wel*, A go kọmand am mek e kọm., If I desire a beautiful wife, I just order for one.

The words that place the sentences either in the acrolectal sociolect or pseudo-pidgin are italicized in the examples above². Their mesolectal counterparts are also italicized.

The orthography adopted by the poet is the anglicized or press type. Three types of orthographies have been identified in the literature of the written medium in Naija. They are early orthographies, press orthographies and linguistic orthographies (see Esizimotor, 2002a, 2009 and Esizimotor and Ofulue 2010). It is the press orthographies that have been adopted by literary writers and this orthography makes Naija look like broken English. Attempts at standardization have now tilted in favour of the use of the language’s oral medium for orthography when Esizimotor (2009:15) assert that “...Naija should be based on the spoken form of the language”. This has a close affinity to the linguistic orthography. It can also be aptly described as the Nigerianized orthography since it bears a close affinity with those of Nigerian languages. It is this orthography that was adopted by the researcher in (6b-10b) above. This type of orthography will carve a niche for the language as a neo-Nigerian language and not as a

² For a detailed analysis of pseudo pidgins, see Elugbe B. and Omamor P. (1991) *Nigerian Pidgin* Ibadan: Heinemann Books Education.

bastardized form of English. The orthography adopted in this paper is the type used for kwa languages. Below is a table of some lexemes used by Ezenwa Ohaeto in his anglicized orthography and the proposed standard orthography.

S/N	I Wan Bi President	Proposed Standard
i.	worry	wɔri
ii.	small	smɔl
iii.	never	nɛva
iv.	tyre	taya
v.	him	im
vi.	some	sɔm

A stanza in Ezenwa Ohaeto's orthography in his poem in Naija is contrasted with the orthography adopted for this study:

- a. **For night when I lie for bed
When hunger blow me
When I never see food chop
When I never see water drink
Na di dream go come**
- b. **Fọ nait wẹn A lai fọ bẹd
Wẹn hɔnga de blo mi
Wẹn A neva si fud chop
Wẹn A neva si wọta drink
Na did drim go kọm**

So, if Nigerian creative artists use an orthography which is distinct from the anglicized one, as shown above, the impression that Naija is a bastardized form of English by majority of Nigerians will abate.

As a *neo-Nigerian language*, the poet highlights the features of intimacy that exist between speakers of indigenous languages in the two poems against the backdrop of the diaglossic situation between indigenous languages and English serves as an indicator of estrangement between Nigerians as attested to by Oyeleye (2005: 6) thus:

The indigenous languages are used in intimate interactions such as define father-son, friend-friend, husband-wife relations. They are used to court intimacy or cement an already flourishing one. In Contrast to this, the English language is the official language...and has attained a status analogous to Ferguson's category of high (H) as opposed to the low (L) status of indigenous languages. Even in face to face social and informal transaction, English serves more as a marker of distance, especially between a boss and his subordinate and in this instance could degenerate to being a marker of alienation which means it could become a language of overt separatist and vertical relationship rather than of horizontal camaraderie.

A syntactic feature of orality that permeates the poem is repetition which is synonymous to the drum beat of African tom tom drums. By conveying a repetitive mood to the readers, the poet conveys a picture of sight and sound in the manner of oral poetry to give a picture of public performance.

This is the reason why parallel structures predominate the poem. Below are two examples of parallel structures:

**For night when I lie for bed
When hunger de blow me
When I never see food chop
When I never see water drink
Na di drean go come**

**Dem go close di road
Dem go close even air too
Dem go take one car carry am
Dem go take another one dey follow**

2.2 Use of Naija in Achebe's Novels Set in Urban Centres

The three novels of urban setting by Achebe are *No Longer at Ease*, *A Man of the people* and *Anthills of the Savannah*. The themes of the first novel include the dichotomy between individual and communal responsibilities and the dissension between cultural change and cultural inertia.

The major theme of *A Man Of The people* is the disintegration between moral values and communal life. It is this disintegration that breeds naively poor people and avaricious politicians. *Anthills of the Savannah* depicts an African country under the clutches of military dictatorship.

The illiterate characters in the three novels are urban center dwellers and they include drivers, messengers, cooks, policemen and soldiers in the lower wrung of their respective force. They communicate in Naija. An example in *No Longer at Ease* is the dialogue between the driver of the mammy wagon Obi boarded to Umuofia and one of the passengers when the driver was dozing.

"You no get kola nut for eat?" asked one of the traders.

"Wetin I been de eat all afternoon?" asked the driver "I no fit understand this sleep?" (41).

When Chief Koko's Cook was accused of poisoning his master in *A Man of the People*, he defends himself in Naija Thus:

"Me put poison for master?" he drank the coffee.

"Why I go kill my master?" (35).

The dialogue between Braimoh, the taxi driver and the soldier at the checkpoint when Chris was escaping to Abazon in *Anthill of the Savannah* was in Naija thus:

"Hei stop there!" shouted the soldier.

"Where you de go?"

“We de go three cowries market” replied the taxi driver.

“Wetin de inside dat bag?” (197)

On the other hand, Chief Nanga speaks Naija in *A Man of the People* in order to hoodwink the poor illiterate citizens. Unfortunately, he is an enemy of the people because his aggrandizing and aggressive spirit destroys the nation. He also creates deceit when he tells his audience lies that he is a patriot. When the proprietor of Anata Grammar School tells Chief Nanga that “You must have spent a fortune today” at a reception organized for the minister, he replied.

“I no de keep animi for myself, na so, so troway. If some person come to you and say “I want make you minister make you run like breeze commot” (15).

When Chief Nanga was invited to open a book exhibition, he tells Odili and his girl friend, Elsie, thus:

“Wetin be Minister? No be public football? So instead for me to sidon to rest for house I de go knack grammar for this hot afternoon” (61).

This utterance exposes Chief Nanga as an adroit liar who affixes deceit into politics. Chief Nanga’s cackling about his proposed trip to the United States for an honorary degree in Law exposes him as an egoistic man squandering public funds for his personal glory. When Odili tells him that he will now be called “Chief the HONOURABLE Dr. M.A. Nanga,” The minister says: **“You no see say the title fit my name kpam?”** (18).

Chief Nanga exposes himself as a morally depraved man who treats his office with levity when he discusses his sexual exploits in Naija. He tells Odili of an amorous affair he had with a married woman who never removes her brassiere because her jealous husband has put charm in it by saying: **“E fool pass garri. Which person tell am say na bobby dem de take do the thing? Nonsense”** (69).

3. Naija in the Entertainment Industry

This section deals with the use of Naija in entertainment. In this paper, entertainment is an umbrella word for music, the Nigerian film industry now known as *Nollywood* and the comedy series *Nite of a Thousand Laughs* which now has 17 volumes.

3.1. Nite of a Thousand Laughs

The most popular comedy series in contemporary Nigeria is performed by a group of standup comedians. The fact is that the comedians mainly speak in Naija. They include: *Ali Baba, A Go Dye, A Go Save, Maleke, Akpos, Gordons, Basket Mouth, Klint the Drunk, Sandokah* and others. It is pertinent to state here that some of them are university graduates. So, they are competent speakers of the English language. They communicate in Naija because of the popularity of the language among youths and adults. Another reason is due to the fact that some of the popular ones trace their roots to the Warri/Sapele speech community. Two of such comedians are *I Go Dye* and *Gordons*. The fact that Naija has now become the language of comedy has popularized it among teeming Nigerians who savour the jokes and laugh heartily when each of the comedians mounts the stage. Below are texts from the jokes

of *A Go Dye* and *Gordons*. The two jokes from *A Go Dye* are from Vols 1 and 17 respectively while that of *Gordons* is taken from vol. 17.

A Go Dye (Vol 1)

Theme: **Wọri Bois Had Well Well**

Wen A kọm wen A luk Abuja Bebs dem tu fain. And de boys de bai chikin and ais krim fọ dia gelfriends. Wọri bọi can neva kari yu go pati ask yu what do you care for? If di gel se A wan chọp, e go ask di gẹl "wetin yu wan chọp. Yu nọ chọp kọm fọ haus? Na hiẹ yu wan chọp yọ nait fud?"

Translation

Theme: *Warri Boys' Hard Line Posture Towards Girls*

When I arrived at Abuja, I discovered that the ladies are very beautiful. And the boys buy chicken and ice cream for their girlfriends. A boy from Warri can never take a girl to a party and ask the girl "want do you care for?" If the girl says she is hungry, he will retort rhetorically: "You want to eat? Didn't you eat at home before you left for the party? Is it here you want to take your dinner?"

(Warri is a city in Western Niger-Delta of Nigeria and Naija is a lingua franca in the city. Many stand up comedians trace their root to this city).

A Go Dye (Vol.17)

Theme: **Level Dọn Chej And Gẹls Laik Moni**

Yọ fada de blich. Do you know what they call the power of money? If to se mai bọdi no strọng mai bọdi fọ dọn tọn to oyibo. A de always tell pipul; eni gọvanọ we dọn tek pawa e kọm bikọm fair, nọr bi mọni, nọr bi fud, nọr bi dẹn mek am fair, na rest of maind.

Abẹg tek bẹta pẹsin pitchọ bo! Abẹg go laminet am. Tẹl yọ papa se A bi yọ lẹkshọra de deliva lẹkshọ (we im taitul bi) "breaking the yoke of poverty".

Wetin yu de si fọ mai bọdi bifọ na evidence of poverty but what you are seeing now is resurrection of money. E get wie yu go get mọni rich yọ vọis go krak.

Naijirian gẹs una de trai de sprej difren tins fọ bọdi; spre pẹfium, rol ọn, kamfọ and shẹltọx. Awa Naijirian gẹs trai much as possible to support awa yọng bọis. Nigerian gels nid mọni fọ perfume, ice cream and recharge cards. Without money there is no true love.

Gels het mek dem de sọfa an wen gẹs si se dia boifrens nọ de họsul, dem go jus liv am. To mek mọni nọ bi about wọking had. If not, trọk pusha and konkri wọka fọ dọn mek mọni. Making money is about thinking smart.

Translation

Theme: *Transition from poverty to wealth and the crave of Nigerian girls for comfort*

(When a member of the audience accused I Go Dye of bleaching his skin, he retorted): Your father bleaches his skin. Do you know what they call the power of money? If I didn't have a tough skin,

my complexion would have changed into that of a white man. I have always reiterated the fact that a governor does not become light complexioned after assuming office due to either food or wine but because of peace of mind.

(When a member of the audience tries to take his snapshot using a mobile phone, A-go dye says): Please take a responsible man like me a photograph, laminate the picture and tell your father that "I am your lecturer delivering a lecture titled: 'Breaking the yoke of Poverty' ". What you used to see in me before was evidence of poverty but what you are seeing now is resurrection of money. When you accumulate so much money, you will develop a cracked voice.

Nigerian girls use different types of perfumes in order to exude pleasant odour. They use spray, roll on, camfour and shelltox (insecticide). Our Nigerian girls should support our young boys. Nigeria girls need money for perfume, ice cream and recharge card. Without money, there is no true love. Girls abhor suffering and when any of them notices that her boyfriend is not making it financially, she dumps him. You don't create wealth by mainly working hard. If it is mainly through hard work, truck pushers and concrete carriers (at building sites) would have become very wealthy. Making money is about thinking smart.

Gordons (Vol.17)

Theme: **Chenj**

A dọ fresh abi? Na God o. Eniwię yu si pọvati jọmp am pas. We were so por even poor pipul de kọl ọs puọ. Hallelu! Eni bọdi we se mek mai wọta nọr bọil, im own nọr go họt³.

Evribọdi fọ dis kọntri de tọk ọf chenj nau. Man nọ de ches wuman egein, man de ai man imagin mi Gordons go go de luk Basket maut yansh. Holi Gost faya!!! Wuman sẹf de ches wuman nau. Ivun Oprah Williams de tẹl ọs to chenj. E go se "Gordons, we need new materials, you need to deliver" bẹt awa salari nọ de chenj. Evriwie nau na chenj chenj chenj. Si intakontinental bank dẹm dọn chenj dia logo komot fọ wetin e bi bifọ dẹm dọn chenj to Hexagon. Si GT bank, dẹm dọn chenj dẹm logo from green e kọm bi ọreng and wait: Di wọn we de pein mi pas na EFCC. As dẹm si se intakontinental bank dọn chenj dia logo, dẹm (EFCC) kọm chenj dia logo from igul dẹm kọm put babalawo (native dọktọ)

*We have to change the method of doing things even as Africans. Ọmọ wetein bi wuman sakọmsishọn at this age? Wai yu go go de kọt tins we bi se yu nọ put fọ die. Yu go si man de shap kọtlas laik se e wan kil nama. Jus bikọs yu wan rimuv wetin yu nọ plant. Yu no se wuman we dẹm sakomaiz bi laik gọvanọ we dẹm impish. E get neim bọt e nọ gẹt ọfis. I'm telling you. Leave the woman alone. They deserve to enjoy what we are enjoying. If you circumcise a woman you (will) literarily disengage the hydraulic press that leads to the conglomeration of the political **bahaha**.*

³ Proverb.

Translation:

Theme: *Change*

I'm now looking fresh and robust, not so? It is the Lord's doing. God punish poverty. Anywhere you see poverty jump over it. We were so poor that even poor people called us poor. Halleluyah! Anybody who says I will not make progress in life, progress will also elude him/her (proverb).

Everybody in this country now talks of change. Lesbianism and homosexuality are now common phenomena. A man does not dote over a lady again; rather he desires affection for a man. Imagine me Gordons developing a yearning infatuation for Basket Mouth's buttocks and anus. (Basket Mouth is a standup comedian) Never. Even Oprah Williams (the producer of the comedy series Nite of a Thousand Laughs) also harps on the need for change to us, the comedians. She wants us to generate new jokes but our salaries don't change.

Due to the pervading effect of change, Intercontinental bank has changed its logo to Hexagon and GT bank has changed its logo from green to orange and white. The most baffling change is that of EFCC (Economic and Financial Crime Commission) which has now changed its logo from Eagle to a native doctor.

As Africans, we need to change our atavistic practices. What is female genital circumcision at this modern age? You see a man sharpening his cutlass to circumcise a lady as if he wants to slaughter a cow just because he wants to uproot what he did not plant. A woman who is circumcised is like an impeached governor who has a title (ex-governor) but lacks an office. I'm telling you leave women alone. They need to enjoy what we are enjoying. If you circumcise a woman you (will) literarily disengage the hydraulic press that leads to the conglomeration of the political bahaha.

3.1.1. Data Analysis

Based on the three texts above, the following observations can be made about the use of Naija by standup comedians in the comedy series *A Night of a Thousand Laughs*.

First, there is always a series of interlocution between the respective comedian on stage and members of the audience. This phenomenon invigorates the interest of the audience and elicits much laughter. The two examples below are drawn from Vol.17. When a member of the audience accused A Go Dye that he now bleaches his skin, the comedian replies:

Yọ fada de blish. Do you know what they call the power of money? If to se mai bọdi nọr strọng mai bọdi fọ dọn to oyibo

When a member of the audience told Gordons that the comedian is now adding on weight, Gordons responds thus:

A dọn de frẹsh abi? Na God o: Halleluyah. Eni bọdi we se mek mai wọta nọr bọil, im own nọr go họt (proverb)

Second, one notices from the data above, that there are predominant cases of code mixing and code switching of Naija with English. The code-mixed and code-switched sentences are italicized in the data for easy identification. The preponderance of code mixing and code-switching makes it difficult for the researcher to accept the general perception by Nigerians that the comedy series are rendered mainly in Naija with the prevalent variety of Naija being the standard Warri/Sapele sociolect.

Third, we observe that the two comedians use the acrolectal sociolect in instances where their utterances are exclusively in Naija.

Below is an example of the use of this sociolect by A Go Dye and Gordons respectively.

And bois de bai chikin and ais krim fọ dia gelfrens (A Go Dye Vol.1).

Qmọ wetin bi woman circumcision at this age? (Gordons Vol. 17)

The use of English plural marker (-s) for **bois** (*boys*) and **gelfrens** (*girlfriends*) by A Go Dye and the use of the preposition **at** instead of **fọ** by Gordons are features that predominate utterances of acrolectal speakers of Warri/Sapele variety of Naija.

Fourth, the utterances of the two comedians sometimes degenerate from the acrolectal sociolect to broken English due to the preponderance of English words. This observation becomes apparent when one looks at the cases of code mixing. Below are two examples:

Wetin yu de si fọ mai bọdi bifọ na evidence of poverty (Gordons Vol.17).

Qmọ wetin bi woman circumcision at this age? (Gordons Vol.17).

The two structures above have features of broken English due to the predominant use of English words in each of them respectively.

Fifthly, we observe that the comedians deal with topical issues. The issues of female genital circumcision highlighted by Gordons has occupied the front burner of the fight for emancipation of African women from atavistic practices for the past decade. He tied this issue to “change” which is now the most frequently used English word since Obama campaigned and won the U.S. 2008 Presidential election under the platform of change with the catch phrase: “Yes We Can”. A Go Dye, in Vol 17, focused on the crave of Nigerian girls for wealth and comfort.

Finally, we note that regardless of the few deviations of the Naija used by the two comedians in relation to an ideal use of Naija, an ideal which might sound rather puritanistic, the fact cannot be gainsaid that these comedians have popularized the use of the Warri/Sapele variety of Naija in particular, and Naija in general, in Nigeria.

3.2. Naija in Nollywood and Music

In the Nigerian film industry, Naija is used mainly by members of the lower wrung of the society. They include prostitutes, drivers, mechanics, cooks, houseboys, and nannies. On rare occasions however,

highly educated characters use the language informally. So, use of Naija by characters in the Nigerian film industry is a prototype of those of Achebe's characters in his novels set in urban centres.

The prevalence of Naija as the language of Nigeria music is not a recent development. Highlife music was sung in Naija in the 1960s. Fela Anikulapo Kuti and his former African 70s Afro Beat Band remains at the nodal head of the popularization of Naija by musicians. He was committed to socio-political change of his nation. Within the past decade, a new set of musicians called Galala or Ragga/Reggae singers have continued the crusading role initiated by Fela in Naija.

Afro beat and its successor Galala or Ragga/Ragae share similar identity with the two generations of modern African poets because we are inclined to describe their music as musical crusaders fighting against injustice and oppression in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular. In their use of language, they remain at the vanguard of popularizing Naija as the language of entertainment.

Galala is an offshoot of highlife, Afro beat and Ragga music. Galala musicians have low social esteem because most of them are school dropouts with modicum knowledge of the English language. Most of them grew up in *Ajegunle*, an urban slum in Lagos mainland which is resided mainly by people from the South South and South East geo-political zones of the country. For these reasons, Naija is the lingua franca of this community. *Daddy Shokey* is the pioneer of Galala music. Others popular Galala musicians include *Danfo Driver*, *African China* and *Papa Fryo*.

4. Conclusion

As a lingua franca and an ethnically neutral language, Naija is fast becoming the beautiful bride of the entertainment industry in Nigeria. In Nigerian literary discourse, Naija is used, even if marginally, in all genres of literature. In this paper, the following observations have been made. The use of Naija in the entertainment industry is spreading faster than in literary discourse. This development can be attributed to the comedy series *Nite of a Thousand Laughs* which has breached age and tribal divide in Nigeria. As far as popularizing Naija within the past half a decade is concerned, *Nite of a Thousand Laughs* remains a trail blazer in the entertainment industry. Cases of code-mixing and code-switching with English are prevalent. The acrolectal sociolect is mostly used in the industry. Achebe's characters who communicate in Naija in his novels are mostly stereotypical since a substantial number of them are the illiterate and marginally literate urban poor who occupy the lowest rung of the social ladder. However, there are a few cases of elites who communicate in Naija in a relaxed informal setting. There are certain deviances between Ezenwa Ohaeto's use of Naija in his poems titled "I Wan Bi President" and the standard sociolect. The paper concludes that while the entertainment industry has helped to popularize Naija, it is literary discourse that will play a substantial role in the standardization of the language especially in the area of orthography.

References

- Achebe, C. (1964) *No longer At Ease*, London: Heinemann Educational Books London.
- Achebe, C. (1996) *A Man of the People* (African Writer series) London Heinemann Educational Books. London.
- Achebe, C. (1988) *Anthills of the Savannah* (Heinemann frontline series. London. Heinemann Educational Book. Ibadan.
- Awoska, O. (1977) *Forms and Technique in the African Novel*. Ibadan. Sam Bookman Educational Books Ibadan.
- Elugbe, B. and Omamor A. (1991) *Nigerian Pidgin* Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Esizimotor, D. O. (2002) "On the Question of a Standard Orthography for Naija" Paper Presented at the Conference in Honour of Professor Abiodun Adetugbo at 65, held at the Department of English, University of Lagos, Akota, Lagos. October 9 – 10.
- Esizimotor, D. O. (2009). "What Orthography for Naija?" Proceedings of the "Conference on Nigerian Pidgin", University of Ibadan, Nigeria. 8-9 July, 2009. [<http://www.ifra-nigeria.org/>]
- Ezenwa – Ohaeto (1999) "I Wan Bi President" (eds) Tenure Ojaide and Tijan M. Sallah. *The New African Poetry: An Anthology* London: Reiner Publishers.
- Holm, J. (1988) *Pidgins and Creoles*. Vol. I (Theory and structure) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Obaino Music (2003) *Nite of a Thousand Laughs* (vol. 1 & vol 17). Obaino Music, Lagos.
- Oyeleye, L. (2005) "The New Linguistic Order: A Critical Examination of the Impact of Globalization on English Language in Nigeria" Olateju, M. and Oyeleye, L. (eds) *Perspective on Language and Literature*, Ile-Ife, Obafemi Awolowo University Press.