Rhythmic Rhetoric: Analyzing Linguistic Subversion in Nigerian Hip-hop's Portrayal of Internet Scam

Abosede Oyinlola Shaguy, Adejoke Maria Olojede

Department of Languages, Yaba College of Technology, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Nigerian hip-hop artists utilize linguistic techniques to navigate cultural and societal boundaries. While past research on Nigerian hip-hop has delved into its use of English variations, portrayal of women, and the framing of identities and beliefs, there has been limited exploration of the language's role in depicting internet fraud. This study adopts an applied linguistic lens and an interdisciplinary methodology to analyze the portrayal of internet fraud in tracks by six renowned Nigerian hip-hop artists: Okafor Golden Chinedu (X Busta), Mikel Mint (Jupitar), Patrick Nnaemeka Okorie (Patoranking), Babatunde Olusegun Adewale (Modenine), Abolore Adegbola Akande (9ice), and Olumide Edwards Adegbulu (Olu Maintain). Drawing from the principles of Moral Disengagement and Lexical Semantics, the research elucidates how these artists linguistically navigate societal norms when addressing theme of internet fraud.

Key words: hip-hop lyrics, internet fraud, Nigerian hip-hop, lexico semantics, moral disengagement

INTRODUCTION

Hip-hop, a cultural movement that began in the economically disadvantaged neighborhoods of the Bronx in New York City, has evolved into a global phenomenon that articulates the struggles of marginalized communities (Chang, 2007). This evolution has been chronicled as a response to the systemic inequalities and the lived experiences of African-Americans, with its roots deeply entrenched in African-American cultural practices (Rose, 1994; Keyes, 2002).

The adaptability of hip-hop to reflect local cultural intricacies, while preserving its core ethos, has been widely examined, illustrating its capacity to serve as a cross-cultural medium (Krims, 2000; Alim, Ibrahim, & Pennycook, 2009). The genre has developed a distinct linguistic identity, providing artists with a dynamic lexicon to voice their narratives and address societal issues (Alim, 2006). This linguistic richness has allowed hip-hop to indigenize in different locales, evident in Nigeria, where it has been embraced and interwoven with local dialects and social narratives (Omoniyi, 2009).

In Nigeria, hip-hop has gained prominence, becoming a staple in mainstream music and embedding itself within the nation's diverse cultural landscape. The genre's domestication, marked by the critical release of 'Sakomo' by The Remedies in 1998, demonstrated a fusion of indigenous languages with English, paving the way for a unique Nigerian hip-hop identity (Olaniyan, 2004). These artists have not only mirrored the socio-economic issues prevalent in Nigerian society but also engaged with contentious topics such as internet fraud, locally termed 'Yahoo Yahoo' (Osumare, 2007).

This study seeks to address a gap in the literature by investigating how Nigerian hip-hop artists depict and justify internet fraud within their lyrical compositions. Through an analytical lens, this paper will explore the lexical strategies and rhetorical tools employed by these artists, aiming to shed light on their role in both reflecting and shaping the socio-economic discourse within Nigeria. By dissecting selected Nigerian hip-hop songs, the research will probe the following questions: (1) In what ways do Nigerian hip-hop artists linguistically construct narratives around internet fraud? (2) What lexical techniques and rhetorical devices

are utilized to express their stance on internet fraud? (3) How do these musical portrayals contribute to a broader understanding of socio-economic dynamics within Nigerian society?This investigation is significant as it will enrich the discourse on how a global cultural expression like hip-hop can be a lens through which local socio-economic issues are understood and articulated.

Statement of the Problem

Building upon the existing body of research on Nigerian hip-hop, the current study aims to address a significant gap in the scholarly examination of the genre. While previous inquiries have thoroughly investigated various aspects of Nigerian hip-hop, from its cultural influences and linguistic diversities to its sociological impact and representation of gender and spirituality, little attention has been given to the exploration of vernacular language use, particularly in the context of internet fraud—a prevalent and culturally impactful theme among Nigerian youth.

Despite the expansive thematic coverage by scholars such as Adedeji (2010), who documented the incorporation of indigenous languages like Yoruba into popular music, and Omoniyi (2006), who examined the genre's reflection of English language varieties in a globalized context, the specific use of local vernacular to convey the controversial subject of internet fraud remains underexplored. These linguistic practices, including code-switching, colloquialisms, and the creation of new lexicons, are crucial to understanding the cultural and social dynamics that Nigerian hip-hop encompasses.

Furthermore, the sociolinguistic fabric of Nigerian hip-hop has been enriched by its portrayal of women, as critiqued by Onanuga (2017), and its intersection with spirituality, as discussed by Babalola and Onanuga (2012). However, these analyses have not fully extended to how the genre tackles the complex issue of internet fraud—a phenomenon that has become synonymous with the struggles and ingenuity of the Nigerian youth.

The pervasive issue of internet fraud in Nigeria, colloquially known as 'Yahoo Yahoo', has been a recurrent theme in Nigerian hip-hop, yet its depiction through vernacular expressions and the linguistic artistry of hip-hop artists has not been systematically dissected. This study seeks to fill this void by examining the specific linguistic tools and narrative techniques employed by Nigerian hip-hop artists to represent and rationalize the acts of internet fraud. It aims to understand how these artists employ vernacular language to articulate, and sometimes challenge, the cultural and societal norms associated with this illicit activity. By doing so, the research will provide insights into the sociolinguistic elements of Nigerian hip-hop and contribute to the broader discourse on the role of music in reflecting and shaping socio-economic narratives. This study will, therefore, offer a nuanced understanding of the interplay between language, culture, and morality in the realm of Nigerian hip-hop, as it grapples with the realities of internet fraud among the youth.

Theoretical Anchors: Moral Disengagement and Lexical Semantics

Moral Disengagement

Moral disengagement, a theory formulated by Bandura in the 90s, delves into the mechanisms underlying the justification and defense of deviant or abnormal behavior (Bandura, 1990a). It scrutinizes how individuals indulging in such behaviors rationalize their actions (Bandura, 1990b; Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, &Pastorelli, 1996). The theory posits that typically, individuals avoid engaging in actions contradicting their personal moral standards, as such behaviors could lead to self-reproach or even self-imposed sanctions (Bandura, 1990a). However, moral standards are not unyielding internal behavior controllers; they necessitate activation of a self-regulatory system to function effectively (Bandura et al., 1996).

Bandura (1990b) asserts that self-sanctions can be detached from behavior through various methods, dubbed

as mechanisms of moral disengagement in social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1990b; Bandura et al., 1996). According to Bandura et al. (1996), four principal junctures exist in the self-regulatory system where "internal moral control" can be severed from "detrimental conduct". Individuals can disengage self-sanctions by:

1. Reinterpreting the conduct,
2. Concealing personal causal agency,
3. Disregarding or misrepresenting the negative action consequences,
4. Denigrating the victims by blaming or devaluing them (Bandura et al., 1996: 364).

Language is instrumental in shaping an individual's understanding and perception of their actions (Ayodabo and Amaefula 2021; Akinola 2018; Ogungbemi and Bamgbose 2021). Through euphemism, individuals can camouflage disgraceful conduct or sometimes portray negative conduct as respectable (Bandura, 1990a; Bandura et al., 1996).

A method to alleviate personal responsibility is comparing detrimental behavior to more severe misconduct, becoming especially effective when juxtaposed against more egregious activities (e.g., comparing armed robbery or money rituals to their actions). Responsibility dissociation can further be achieved by distorting the correlation between one's actions and their effects (Bandura, 1990a; Bandura et al., 1996). Once responsibility displacement is realized, actions are viewed as social pressure products, absolving individuals from responsibility (Bandura et al., 1996). Responsibility diffusion is another tactic where tasks are segmented; while individually segments may appear benign, collectively they may be harmful (Bandura et al., 1996).

Reducing self-censure can be orchestrated by neglecting or distorting an action's repercussions, leading to diminished guilt as individuals overlook negative outcomes through selective inattention or mental misrepresentation (Bandura, 1990a; Bandura et al., 1996).

Furthermore, disengagement practices can target the act recipients. By dehumanizing or blaming the victim, individuals can mitigate self-censure (Bandura et al., 1996). Dehumanization relegates the victim to a sub-human status or a being devoid of feelings, while perpetrators portray themselves as provoked, defending their actions as reactive (Bandura, 1990a; Bandura et al., 1996).

Bandura (1986) delineates eight moral disengagement mechanisms, categorized into four groups aligning with the four major self-regulatory process junctures where internal moral control could be detached from moral conduct. Within the discourse of reprehensible behavior, mechanisms like moral justification, advantageous comparison, and euphemistic labeling are deemed highly relevant (Caprara et al., 2009).

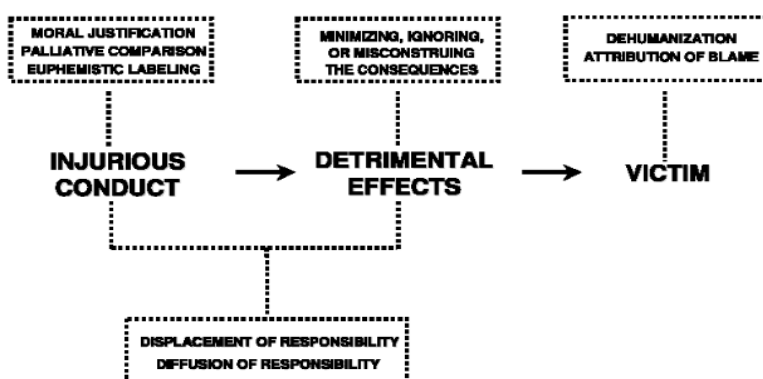Figure 1 below contains the eight mechanisms identified by Bandura.

Figure 1. Mechanisms of moral disengagement culled from Osofsky et al., (2005: 372)

LEXICAL SEMANTICS

Lexical semantics explores the realm of word meaning, delving into the representation and distinguishing of lexical items (Ogunsiji and Ogungbemi 2016; Cruse, 1986). Predominantly, its focus veers towards the examination of content words rather than grammatical ones. The intrigue for lexical semanticists often lies in the open classes encompassing nouns, verbs, adverbs, and adjectives. While the emphasis of lexical semantics is on content words, the analysis doesn't stray from the grammatical context, indicating a broader interest in the relationship between words, not just the words in isolation (Ogungbemi 2018). Murphy (2008) articulates various theories entwined with lexical semantics, categorizing them into two core approaches: componential and schematic.

Componential approaches lean on a language-like framework for portraying meaning, employing primitive symbols within a specified grammar (Aboh 2013, Ogungbemi 2018). Conversely, schematic approaches advocate for exploring word meaning within intricate conceptual structures, often turning to more image-centric emblematic forms, such as Lakoff's 'image schemas' (1987). The componential analysis is typically linked with the aims of generative linguistics, while schematics align more with cognitive linguistics. Given that a purely "generative" approach might solely engage with the denotations of words, there's a call for incorporating context-centric approaches to meaning elucidation (Ogungbemi 2016; Ogungbemi and Okunsanya 2016).

In this study, we opt for a context-driven approach, encompassing both the denotative and connotative dimensions of lexical items. The essence of a lexical unit is inherently tied to its context, which holds the potential to influence its meaning. A pivotal facet of lexical semantics is its engagement with social meaning, delving into how language crafts and upholds social roles (Jackson 1988, Olaluwoye and Ogungbemi 2019). The examination of lexical items in this investigation is anchored on the interplay between a word and the extra-linguistic contexts enveloping it.

METHODOLOGY

This study examines the lyrics from nine distinct tracks by eleven notable Nigerian hip-hop artists: X Busta, Jupitar, Patoranking, Modenine, 9ice, Yahooze, Tekno, Davido, Olamide, Phyno, and Lil Kesh. The song selection was intentional, chosen from a wide array of tracks released by these artists, based on the recurring themes of internet fraud prevalent in the lyrics. The original lyrics, penned in Nigerian Pidgin and Yoruba language, were transcribed and subsequently translated into English for a comprehensive analysis. A descriptive qualitative analysis was employed to delve into the identified themes within these songs. The analyzed tracks include: (i) "Yahoo Boyz" by Okafor Golden Chinedu (X Busta), (ii) "Maga Don Pay Enemies Remix" by Mikel Mint (Jupitar) Ft. Patrick Nnaemeka Okorie (Patoranking), (iii) "419 State of Mind" by Babatunde Olusegun Adewale (Modenine), (iv) "Living Things" by Abolore Adegbola Akande (9ice), (v) "Yahooze" by Olumide Edwards Adegbulu (Olu Maintain), (vi) "Pana" by Augustine Miles Kelechi (Tekno), (vii) "Fall" by David Adedeji Adeleke (Davido), (viii) "Story for the gods" by Olamide Adedeji (Olamide), and (ix) "Ladi" by Olamide Adedeji (Olamide), Chibuzor Nelson Azubuike (Phyno), and Keshinro Ololade (Lil Kesh).

DATA ANALYSIS

A. Justifying internet fraud

In many hip-hop songs, providing justification for internet fraud is prevalent especially when it is seen as a means of surviving the harsh economic realities that the youth face in the country.

Ex. 1	Translation
Daddy ehn, after graduation	"Daddy, after graduation"
No job for street. No pay no way.	"There was no job, no money."
How boys go eat?	"How would boys eat?"
He saved money buy laptop to work.	"He saved money and bought a laptop with which to work."
Few months later, boys start to rock.	"Few months later, boys started making money."
You no go know wetin him *go through* for *contacts*.	"You would not know what he went through to get contacts."
You no go see how e dey*crack brain* for *format*.	"You would not see how he used his brains to come up with awinning formula."
You know go consider how e *hustle* allthose years. (X Busta, "Yahoo Boyz")	"You would not consider how he worked hard all those years."

In portraying internet fraud as a less reprehensible activity, X Busta employs specific lexical items and expressions to elucidate why young Nigerians are drawn to internet fraud. He vocalizes the plight of university graduates who, faced with unemployment, struggle even to sustain themselves. Utilizing expressions like "go through," "crack brain," "format," and "hustle," X-Busta depicts individuals indulging in internet fraud as exerting both physical and mental effort before ensnaring individuals with their deceit. For instance, the phrasal verb "go through" implies a meticulous and careful approach by the fraudsters in choosing their targets and persuading them to relinquish their contacts. The term "crack brain," as employed here, is a Nigerian pidgin phrase signifying the act of deploying one's cognitive abilities to tackle a challenging task. In this scenario, it represents the myriad tactics the fraudsters employ to beguile individuals unlucky enough to fall for their ruses. The lexical term "hustle," a Nigerian pidgin expression, typically denotes hard work and striving to make ends meet. Through these expressions, the artist attempts to provide a rationale for internet fraud. Continuing in the same vein, X Busta further extends his justification for internet fraud in the subsequent verses of the song.

Ex 2	Translation
Ogaolopa eh, you dey vex say boys donhammer.	"Police chief, you are angry that boys have made money."
But you make them cash maga.	"But you have turned them to your source of makingmoney."
You dey para for him, too much enjoyment.	"You are angry with him because he is enjoying."
You don forget say this one na*self-employmentso dem go see food on their table, attend to family issues, life go stable*.	"You have forgotten that this is self-employment, allowing them to put food on their table, attend to family issues and live a better life."
Dem no wan *carry gun* so dey grab computeras dem no see job.	"They do not want to carry gun so they make use of thecomputer as they cannot find job."

As the *economy don leave us*, some boys don bring us together, create their industry.	"As the economy has collapsed, some boys have broughtus together and created their industry."
Na oyinbo invent computer, dem don give us key.	"It was the white man who invented the computer; they have given us the keys."
Abeg*forget yahoo boys*, focus on injustice and how to make our country a better place so everybody can look forward to a better day. X Busta, "Yahoo Boyz"	"Please leave the yahoo boys alone; pay attention to the injustice in our society and how to make our country a better place so that everybody can look forward to a better day."

Once more, X Busta defends the actions of internet fraudsters, commonly dubbed as Yahoo boys in Nigeria and elsewhere. In the track, he reproaches the Nigeria Police Force for hassling the Yahoo boys, urging them instead to channel their efforts towards fostering justice and tranquility in the country. He underscores that those resorting to internet fraud are propelled into it by circumstances beyond their control. He articulates: This one na self-employment so dem go see food on their table, attend to family issues, life go stable. Noteworthy expressions emerge from these lines, particularly the term "self-employment." X Busta rationalizes the illicit endeavors of Yahoo boys as a fallout of the employment crisis, casting internet fraud as a means to achieve life stability, address family concerns, and secure daily sustenance. The illicit nature inherent in this act is brushed aside by alluding to the rampant unemployment in the nation. Additionally, in his bid to justify their engagement in internet fraud, he argues that resorting to fraud is a lesser evil compared to partaking in armed robbery, as depicted in the line: dem no wan carry gun so dey grab computer as dem no see job. Here, a juxtaposition is drawn against a more harmful behavior, specifically, the act of wielding firearms to rob, injure, or kill.

B. Dehumanizing the victim

Diminishing the victim and assigning fault to them serve as avenues for individuals to lessen their self-reproach and perceive no wrongdoing in internet fraud. This notion is vividly echoed in several Nigerian hip-hop tracks.

Ex 3	Translation
To all mi enemies, *maga* don pay	"To all my enemies, the imbecile has paid."
To all mi fake friends, *maga* don pay	"To all my fake friends, the imbecile has paid."
Yeah we go happy today	"Yeah, we will be happy today."
Yeah*maga* don pay	"Yeah, the imbecile has paid."
And no time to play	"We have got no time to relax"
Oh yeah *maga* don pay (Jupitar Ft. Patoranking, "Maga Don Pay Enemies Remix"	"Oh yeah, the imbecile has paid."

In Nigerian pidgin, the term "Maga" holds a resemblance to another word, "mugu," both derogatory labels implying a lack of intelligence. Internet fraudsters often view their victims as simple-minded individuals. This portrayal of the deceived as feeble-minded has been notably propagated by Nigerian hip-hop artists. The tag "maga" carries the semantic attributes of +imbecility, +gullibilty, and +foolishness. Among those the hip-hop artist categorizes as adversaries and insincere friends are individuals who disapprove of internet fraud, perhaps expressing their disapproval vociferously.

The act of diminishing the victim and placing blame on them is further exemplified in Modenine's track,

"419 State of Mind."

Ex 4	Translation
Some call it 419 or advance fee fraud	"Some refers to it as 419 or advance fee fraud."
I say it's getting money from *greedy* victims without pulling a trigger or slashing with a sword ("419 State of Mind," Modenine).	"I say it's getting money from greedy victims without pulling a trigger or slashing with a sword."

In the eyes of 'yahoo boys' or internet fraudsters, it's the victims' greed that renders them susceptible, warranting the misfortune that befalls them. This sentiment is echoed in Modenine's track, "419 State of Mind." The lyric, "I say it's getting money from greedy victims," underscores the notion that victims are at fault for being deceived out of their hard-earned money. The adjective 'greedy' embodies semantic attributes like +selfish desire, +covetous, +exploitative, and +predatory, suggesting it's the victims' exploitative inclinations that set the stage for their deception. The term 'greedy,' as utilized by Modenine, hints at questionable motives on the part of the victim, who seeks to gain where they've not invested. Another tactic employed by Nigerian hip-hop artists to diminish the severity of internet fraud is by softening the depiction of fraudsters through the use of more benign labels, as elaborated in the ensuing section.

C. Euphemistic labelling for internet fraud

Nigerian hip-hop artists utilize slang expressions to diminish the stark criminal nature of internet fraud within the country. Through their lyrical narratives, they've managed to detach internet fraud from its criminal undertones, thus inhibiting the Nigerian youth from vehemently denouncing the act. Employing slang phrases such as 'sa'se', 'wire wire', 'money order', 'come and marry', and 'yahoo yahoo', some of these artists along with their followers view those engaging in internet fraud as not truly perpetrating a crime; for them, the criminal aspect has lost its legal sting, morphing into a commonplace occurrence. The following excerpt aptly demonstrates our assertion.

Ex 5	Translation
Awontemi*sa'se*	"My buddies are 'fraudulently' working."
Won *sa'se*	"They are working."
Won *sa'se*lorumoju	"They are working from dusk till dawn
laifojukan'run	without sleeping."
Ole sun, ole lagun	"Lazy people sleep and perspire."
Ole sun, komo google	"Lazy people sleep; they don't know google."
Ole sun, ole ran'run	"They sleep, they snore."
Ole sun, ole o kaku (9ice, "Living Things")	"They sleep and do not calculate."

In numerous songs glorifying both the actors of internet fraud and the act itself, hip-hop artists challenge the negative discourse entwined with internet fraud. In Example 5, 9ice overtly aligns himself with the internet fraud actors. In an effort to portray internet fraud as something permissible and not aberrant, 9ice employs the slang 'sa'se', a Yoruba phrase signifying 'to work'. Through this positive terminology, the criminal implications tied to internet fraud are significantly softened. Here, 9ice identifies the fraudsters as his close companions. His use of the term 'awontemi' (my buddies) strongly emphasizes the camaraderie between 9ice and the fraudsters. He lauds them for their actions while labeling other industrious individuals as lazy merely due to their non-participation in online fraud. Even those who choose to rest after a day's work are not exempt from criticism; 9ice claims they lack knowledge of Google. However, the phrase 'to know google' transcends merely knowing how to navigate the search engine. It alludes to mastering the art of

exploiting the internet to defraud unsuspecting individuals. In this context, to 'sa'se' is to partake in online fraud.

Ex 6	Translation
As living thing,	"As a living thing,"
I wanna be on top of things	
I wanna be doing things	
I wanna be controlling things	
Yeh, ki n sa ti l'owo	"Yeah, I just want to be rich."
Ole lob'omo je	"Robbery brings ignominy on a person."
Ki n satil'owo	"I just want to be rich."
Wire wire	"The internet fraud"
Ki n satil'owo	"I just want to be rich."
Money order	
Ki n satil'owo	"I just want to be rich."
Olo je *come and marry*	"It could be come and marry."
Ki n satil'owo (9ice, "Living Things")	"I just want to be rich."

In Example 6, three slang expressions serve as euphemisms for internet fraud, namely: wire wire, money order, and come and marry. Within the circles of hip-hop artists, their aficionados, and the internet fraud practitioners, these phrases are synonymous with internet fraud. However, this connotation is lost on the older generation. Although some words forming these slang expressions are familiar to most individuals acquainted with the English language in Nigeria and beyond, their implied meanings remain obscure to those outside the sub-culture of these artists and their ardent followers (see Ayodabo 2015). The process of slangification often stems from a "youth-centric language, the nuances of which elude members alien to the hip-hop culture" (Gbogi 2016:177). The mutual understanding between Nigerian hip-hop enthusiasts and the artists facilitates a seamless interpretation of the contextual meanings behind the slang expressions coined and propagated by the hip-hop community. This level of comprehension, however, does not bridge the gap between the older generation and the hip-hop artists; being estranged from the hip-hop culture, the older demographic tends to perceive this musical genre and its lyrics as nonsensical (Abati 2009).

Ex 7	Translation
Ewoawon boys yi.	"Look at these boys."
Kamikaze on a Ketto level	"*Kamikaze* on a Ketto level."
Yahooze	"internet fraud"
E jamisi jo…	"Please introduce it to me."
Yahoo oh oh	"internet fraud"
If I hammer,	"If I become successful,
1st thing na hummer.	the first thing is Hummer."
1 million dollars.	"One million dollars."
Elo lo ma je ti n ba se si Naira? (*Yahooze*, "Olu Maintain")	"How much is it if converted to Naira."

Moreover, Example 7 sheds light on what Halliday (1976) terms as antilanguages, which denote realms of

typically frowned-upon activities in society, often associated with individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Gbogi 2017). Within Example 7, three slang terms related to internet fraud are showcased: 'kamikaze', 'yahoo', and 'yahooze'. The artist persona, Olu Maintain, is widely recognized as a trailblazer in introducing online fraud themes within the Nigerian hip-hop arena. The song essentially extols the advantageous lifestyle of a Yahoo boy. The term 'yahoo' has seen an expansion in its meaning within the Nigerian hip-hop domain, transcending its original reference to an internet portal and search engine, to now epitomizing individuals engaged in internet fraud. Additionally, 'yahooze' is a novel slang conceived by the artist persona, which, since its inception, has come to symbolize online fraud, Nigerian fraudsters, and their particular lifestyle. We align with Gbogi (2017:96) in the observation that such slang terms "legitimize and reshape the societal perception of internet fraud, often furnishing individuals from lower socioeconomic strata a ladder to upward social mobility." What unfolds here is a class struggle between a subculture and the conventional affluent society. The slang phrases, or 'antilanguages' as Halliday (1976:570) categorizes them, serve as potent tools wielded by hip-hop artists to contest and defy prevailing cultural and societal norms.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has illuminated the role vernacular language plays in shaping the discourse around internet fraud within the Nigerian hip-hop scene. The research revealed that artists employ a range of vernacular expressions, including slang and pidgin, which resonates with the youth and, at the same time, sidesteps the conservative views of the older generation and societal norms. This linguistic strategy not only includes a younger, more receptive audience but also deliberately excludes those who may be critical of such fraudulent activities.

The findings show that some Nigerian hip-hop artists not only identify with internet fraudsters but also use their platform to subtly endorse and rationalize their actions. Through their lyrics, these artists often present internet fraud in a less condemnable light, using euphemistic language to diminish the severity of the crime and, in some cases, dehumanizing the victims to redirect empathy towards the perpetrators. Such portrayals can dangerously normalize internet fraud, potentially making it more appealing to impressionable listeners.

The moral implications of this phenomenon are profound. By legitimizing and glamorizing internet fraud, these artists contribute to a cultural narrative that undermines ethical standards and normalizes criminality. This trend poses a risk of eroding social values, as music is a powerful tool that can influence behavior and attitudes, especially among the youth who constitute the majority of the genre's audience (Solanke and Ayodabo, 2017).

This article posits that Nigerian hip-hop, as a vibrant and evolving genre, operates within a complex linguistic and cultural space that reflects and influences the society from which it emanates. The hybrid use of language not only provides a means for artists and their fans to navigate around cultural and societal limitations but also raises critical questions about the responsibility of artists as influencers. As this genre continues to evolve, it becomes imperative to engage with these moral questions and consider the impact such music has on societal norms and the ethical orientation of its audience.

REFERENCES

1. Abati, Reuben. "A Nation's Identity Crisis." The Guardian, 21 June 2009, p. 35.
2. Aboh, R. A. "Lexical and Discursive Construction of Identity in Selected Twenty-First Century Nigerian Novels." Thesis, University of Ibadan, 2013.
3. Adedeji, A. "Yoruba Culture and its Influence on the Development of Modern Popular Music in Nigeria." Thesis, The University of Sheffield, 2010.
4. Adegoju, A. "The Musician as Archivist: An Example of Nigeria's Lagbaja." Itupale Online Journal

of African Studies, no. 1, 2009, pp. 1–23.

5. Akinola, J. A. "Pragmatics of Crisis-Motivated Humour in Computer Mediated Platforms in Nigeria." Journal of Language and Education, vol. 4, no. 3, 2018, pp. 6–17.

6. Ayodabo, S. J. "A Configuration of Socio-Political Dialectics in Nigerian Pidgin English: Trends in Peter Onwudijo's Poetry." INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES AND CULTURAL STUDIES, vol. 2, no. 3, 2015, pp. 79-93.

7. Ayodabo, S.J., and Amaefula, R.C. "Continuity and Discontinuity: Masculinity and Power Blocs in African Cinema." Quarterly Review of Film and Video, vol. 38, no. 7, 2021, pp. 654-675. https://doi.org/10.1080/10509208.2021.1876482.

8. Babalola, E. T., and Onanuga, P. A. "The Portrayal of Religion in Selected Nigerian Hip-Hop Lyrics." In Critical Perspectives on Language and Communications Studies: Festschrift in Honour of Professor Siyan Oyeweso, edited by Babalola, E. T., and Azeez, T., Obafemi Awolowo University Press, 2012, pp. 101-110.

9. Bandura, A. Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory. Prentice-Hall, 1986.

10. Bandura, A. "Selective Activation and Disengagement of Moral Control." Journal of Social Issues, vol. 46, no. 1, 1990, pp. 27-46.

11. Bandura, A. "Mechanisms of Moral Disengagement in Terrorism." In Origins of Terrorism: Psychologies, Ideologies, Theologies, States of Mind, edited by Reich, W., Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp. 161-191.

12. Bandura, A., et al. "Mechanisms of Moral Disengagement in the Exercise of Moral Agency." Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, vol. 71, no. 2, 1996, pp. 364-374. https://doi.org/10.1037//0022-3514.71.2.364

13. Caprara, G.V., et al. "Assessing Civic Moral Disengagement: Dimensionality and Construct Validity." Personality and Individual Differences, vol. 47, 2009, pp. 504-509.Cruse, D. Lexical Semantics. Cambridge University Press, 1986.

14. Cummings, M. S., and Roy, A. "Manifestations of Afrocentricity in Rap Music." Howard Journal of Communications, vol. 13, no. 1, 2002, pp. 59-76. https://doi.org/10.1080/106461702753555049.

15. Dare, A. S. "Sexual Discourse in NiyiOsundare's Poetry: A Sociolinguistic Reading." African Study Monographs, vol. 26, no. 2, 2005, pp. 89-97.

16. Gbogi, M. T. "Language, Identity, and Urban Youth Subculture: Nigerian Hip Hop Music as an Exemplar." Pragmatics, vol. 26, no. 2, 2016, pp. 171-195.

17. Gbogi, M. T. "Language and the Redrawing of Class Cartography in Nigerian Hip Hop Music." 3rd MISR Graduate Students' Conference, 28-29 July 2017. https://misr.mak.ac.ug/sites/default/files/events/Gbogi-MISR-GSC%202017%20.pdf.

18. Halliday, M. A. K. "Anti-Languages." American Anthropologist, vol. 78, no. 3, 1976, pp. 570-584.

19. Iwamoto, D. K., et al. "Feeling the Beat: The Meaning of Rap Music for Ethnically Diverse Midwestern College Students—A Phenomenological Study." Adolescence, vol. 43, no. 166, 2007, pp. 337–51.

20. Jackson, H. Words and their Meaning. Longman, 1988.

21. Keyes, C. L. Rap Music and Street Consciousness. University of Illinois Press, 2002.

22. Krims, A. Rap Music and the Poetics of Identity. Cambridge University Press, 2000.

23. Lakoff, G. Women, Fire and Dangerous Things. University of Chicago Press, 1987.

24. Murphy, M. L. Semantic Relations and the Lexicon. Cambridge University Press, 2008.

25. Ogungbemi, O.D. "The Ideological Square and Transitivity in the Poetry of Remi Raji Oyelade." Journal of Linguistics and Language in Education, vol. 10, no. 2, 2018, pp. 14-32.

26. Ogungbemi, O. D. "Whose Boko Haram? A Critical Discourse Analysis of Print Media-News on Terrorism in Nigeria." In Academic Writing for Africa: The Journal Article, edited by Schmied, J., et al., 2018, pp. 61-77.

27. Ogungbemi, Olarotimi Daniel. "Dissecting JP Clark's Ozidi: A Syntactic Perspective." The African Symposium (TAS), vol. 15, no. 3, 2016.

28. Ogungbemi, O.D., and Bamgbose, G. "Imagery in Fuji music: SaheedOsupa as an Exemplar." Ihafa: A Journal of African Studies, vol. 12, no. 1, 2021, pp. 154–176.

29. Ogunsiji A, and Ogungbemi, O.D. "The Portrait of the Political Leaders in Niyi Osundare's Random Blues: An Exercise in Critical Stylistic Analysis." In Grammar, Applied Linguistics and Society: A Festschrift for Wale Osisanwo, edited by Odebunmi, A., et al., OAU Press, 2016, pp. 375-392.

30. Ogungbemi, O. D., and Okunsanya, Y. A. "The Parasite, the Deprived and the Slanderer: Ideologies and Identity Construction in Selected 2014 National Conference Discourse in the Nigerian Print Media." Papers in English and Linguistics, vol. 17, 2016, pp. 185-199.

31. Olaluwoye, L., and Ogungbemi, O. D. "A Sociolinguistic Investigation of Toilet Graffiti Among Male Students of the University of Ibadan." KIU Journal of Social Sciences, vol. 5, no. 4, 2019, pp. 167-175.

32. Omoniyi, T. "Hip-Hop through the World English Lens: A Response to Globalization." World Englishes, vol. 25, no. 2, 2006, pp. 195–208. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0083-2919.2006.00459.x.

33. Onanuga, P. A. "Of Commodities and Objects: Women and Their Representations in Nigerian Hip-Hop." Muziki, vol. 14, no. 2, 2017, pp. 81-108. https://doi.org/10.1080/18125980.2017.1393319.

34. Osofsky, M. J., Bandura, A., and Zimbardo, P. G. "The Role of Moral Disengagement in the Execution Process." Law and Human Behavior, vol. 29, no. 4, 2005, pp. 371-393.

35. Rose, T. Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America. Wesleyan University Press, 1994.

36. Solanke, S. O., and Ayodabo, S. J. "Contemporary Marriage Processes in Nigeria: Willing Love, Perilous Business, Post-Marriage Problems." Journal of Sociology and Social Anthropology, vol. 4, no. 3, 2017, pp. 339-361.

37. Weinstein, S. "A Love for the Thing: The Pleasures of Rap as a Literate Discourse." Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy, vol. 50, no. 4, 2006, pp. 270-281.