

## 49. A Critical Discourse Analysis On Hausa Rap Genre

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### ABSTRACT

This paper investigates on the critical discourse analysis of Hausa Rap genre. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) stems from a critical theory of language which sees the use of language as a form of social practice. Moreover, CDA basically analyses the relationship between language and society. As a theoretical framework, CDA focuses on the “intersection and interrelationships between language, discourse, speech and social interactions” (Blommaert, 2005, p.25). Hence, the data used in this paper to illustrate this method of CDA is limited to Hausa Rap text. Fundamentally, the present study tries to adopt the ethnography research method, using critical discourse analysis as a mode of data analysis. Therefore, this paper contributes partly to the theoretical studies of critical discourse analysis as well as the contribution of English language discourse features into understanding Hausa Rap genre.

*Keywords:* Hausa rap, genre analysis, CDA and language use,

### Introduction

This paper set up representation analysis of contemporary musical discourse with particular interest in Hausa rap genre. A discourse analysis (DA) approaches, emphasizes on cultural study, and is compatible with a deeper sensitivity to social issues in an ethnographic sense. In the framework of critical discourse analysis (CDA), musical discourse can be interpreted as social practice; referring to a specific means of representation of social (musical) sphere. Hence, in this paper the mechanisms of critical discourse analysis in various ways facilitate the examination of Hausa rap genre in musical discourse and in determining some linguistic features. More so, the methodological approach for this paper is qualitative analysis of sampled Hausa rap lyrics. Therefore, this research endeavors to derive sources mainly from critical discourse analysis.

Accordingly, this paper highlights the ethnographic research processes through which Hausa rap musics incorporate the societal problems into their own experiences as youths. Therefore, this paper proposes that Hausa rap genre - its lyrics, take part in disseminating ideologically-driven discourses.

The paper also employs the conceptual tools of CDA in order to expose the hidden ideological discourses embedded within Hausa rap genre. It analyzes what the musics are trying to communicate through music and what are the audience hearing in the music, and as well “understanding the role of musical practices in social and cultural life” (Sudgen, 2014, p.21).

### Hausa Rap Genre

Musical discourse analysis is an “interdisciplinary study which is incomplete without consideration of relevant social, linguistic, psychological, visual, gestural, ritual, technical, historical and musicological aspects” (Nakhone & Musungu, 2014, p.350). Therefore, Rap genre, like any other, rests on the basis of language as Babalola & Taiwo (2009) assert that:

Rap music is a genre, which globally developed in the 1970s, when Black parties became common in New York City, particularly the Bronx, a community well known for its large African-American population. The term ‘hip-hop’ is often credited to Keith Cowboy, a rapper with the American singing group (the Furious Five) led by DJ Grandmaster Flash. It is believed that Cowboy created the term while teasing a friend who had recently joined the United States Army by scat singing (e.g., making melodies with the voice similar to musical

instruments) the words “hip/hop/hip/hop” in a way that mimicked the rhythmic cadence of marching soldiers (p.5).

In the midst of the communities that are found in West-Africa today are those “collectively recognized as the Hausa/Fulani, whose verbal means of communication is the ‘Hausa’. More so, the language is probably the most widely spoken language in sub-Saharan Africa used as first language by over 25 million people” (Muhammad, 2013, p.182 and Muhammad, 2014a, p.2). Currently, Hausa rap genre has a quite number of musics, which can possibly serve as evidence that “in northern Nigeria rap music is appealing to Hausa youths” (Muhammad, 2014<sup>b</sup>, p.2). It is also vital to understand in Nigeria, English is the official language of education and administration and the native languages (Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo) were “officially recognize by the Federal Government of Nigeria (1979) as tools for production in the National Assembly side by side with English language” (Balogun, 2013, p.70). Consequently, the historical processes that allowed Hausa language to be the most widely spoken language in Western Africa and English to be the dominant language created unique environment for rap genre and hip-hop culture to develop. As Hoa (2012) stresses English has integrated “the languages as well as the medium of communications of various societies and has become a major international language for integration of cultures among countries all over the world” (p.1).

### **Genre Analysis**

Genre analysis “reflects the way people get things done through their practical use of language in particular settings” (Sarjit Singh, 2014, p.29). In addition, genre is referred to as “mode of text that determines the generic textual structure” (Halliday, 2002, in Halim, 2012, p.8). Therefore, scholars such as Hyland (2003), Johns et al. (2006) and Bhatia (2008) believes that genre analysis helps language scholars to realize the social relation that genres build and strengthens. For instance, Bhatia (2008) “argues for serious commencement on genre analysis using a more analytical perspective on professional genres to generate evidence of knowledge transfer” (Sarjit Singh, 2014, p.29). Usually, genre analysis, as applied in Swales (1990) and Bhatia (1993) is incorporated with contextual elements that are proper to the notion of genre, albeit in a rather static way. The main characteristic of Swales’ analysis in his (1990) seminal work is the division of the text into phases or ‘moves’, further subdivided in ‘steps’. Therefore, Bhatia (1993) continues this trend of analyzing genre types, and determine conventional features of chosen genres, and then explain them on the basis of both the socio-cultural and the cognitive characteristic of the respective fields of professional or academic specialization. Bhatia (1993) further affirms:

The notion of genre analysis [. . .] is a very powerful system of analysis in that it allows a far thicker description of functional varieties of written and spoken language than that offered by any other system of analysis in existing literature. [. . .] It expands linguistic analysis from linguistic description to explanation taking into account not only socio-cultural but psycholinguistic factors too (p.39).

### **Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in Hausa Rap Genre**

Mey (1985) and Fowler et al. (1979) claims that focus on language and discourse was initiated with the "critical linguistics" that emerged (mostly in the UK and Australia) at the end of the 1970s. On the other hand, scholars such as Agger (1992) maintains that some of the tenets of CDA are already be found in the critical theory of the Frankfurt School before the Second World War. Furthermore, Fairclough and Wodak (1997), Pennycook (2001), Jager and Maier (2009), Van Dijk (2010) and Gee (2011) both confirms CDA as a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. For this reasons, critical discourse analysts “take explicit position, and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality” (Van Dijk, 1993, p.249). Therefore, studies on critical discourse analysis has been carried out in various point of view such as Zummo (2013), Rightler-McDaniels (2014), Dressen-Hammouda (2014) and Morwe (2014) to mention but few.

For instance, Rightler-McDaniels (2014) assert that critical discourse analysis (CDA) allows for greater flexibility in uncovering the underlying meanings in media texts. In order to carry out a critical discourse analysis, each episode in season one for both of the television programs chosen was viewed in its entirety multiple times. Since understanding is only accomplished through inductive interpretation, deeper readings of each episode (scene-by-scene) are necessary.

Nevertheless, Rajandran & Taib (2014) studies communication patterns of corporate social responsibility (CRS) performance in Malaysian CEO. They examine language features using a corpus containing 27 CEO statements from 2009 to 2011 from 10 Malaysian corporations. The analysis was grounded in critical discourse analysis (CDA), which employed social actors and attitude from systematic functional linguistics (SFL) and interviews with corporate representatives to understand the ideology of CEO statements. So also, Pramoolsook & Qian (2013) investigate the current situation of move-step structure of argumentative essays written by English learners in an EFL context. Two sets of corpus of English argumentative essays written by Tongren University students were built, 100 from English majors and the other 100 from non-English majors. A selected analytical framework was used to analyze the move-step structure of the essays and some linguistic features were also investigated. Results revealed that the majority of the argumentative essays were found to follow the three stages set in the model. As such, these studies are an important contribution because extensive knowledge is available about the portrayal of critical discourse analysis of genres. Yet, there is a gap in our knowledge on Hausa rap genre because most research has not studied the critical discourse analysis of such genre.

Therefore, this paper endeavors to use critical discourse analysis to examine some few lyrics of Hausa rap genre. Hausa rap musics takes music as the medium of communicating ideas, emotions and feelings, taking music beyond good time but rather illuminating problems faced by Hausa society. Thus, critical discourse analysis (CDA) recognizes institutionalized forms of dominance, which, for this paper, ties into social constructivist theory (SCT). For this reason, one of such ways of encouraging research in this area of Hausa rap genre is by doing a critical discourse analysis of the repertoires so as to have a basic understanding on the genre, as a function of growing disciplinary experience.

The context of music goes with the prospect of language use, and globally, rap musical practice is like a forum where youths formulate their places in the world and negotiate their social identities. Such is the case in Hausa rap genre, the Hausa musics draw on beliefs about language in their repertoires because they heavily believe that they do not possess the strength and the power to face the politicians, their only weapon is the language, for example one of the Hausa rap musics, Ziiriims assert:

Lead : I'm hustling like motorcycle taxi driver, night and day, until the morning,  
 : In the time of the cool, rains and in the hot season, and in the night,  
 : It is hip-hop that I love, I will never retire, never get tired,  
 : Cause I'm rolling like a tire, go on go on all you hip-hop guys,  
 : You hip-hop boyz, wealth comes to an end, power passes away, road cut  
 off,  
 : If you are going to say something, tell the truth,  
 : In everything, tread in the way of your forbearers,  
 : Allah, much less hasn't given me body strength,  
 : To go out to meet you and huddle you up,  
 : But, Allah made me a sharp mouth, sharper than a blade.  
 (Ziiriims: This is me)

Also, the focus on messages and conveying or interpreting them through music exhibits the intersection of a global popular music (rap) with local youth concerns. That's why; Hausa rap genre conveys not only the “figurative devices and or uses poetic license in the form of dialect to violate the lexical, phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic norms of language to pass their point” (Muhammad, 2014<sup>b</sup>, p.6). Instead, Hausa rap musics often employs language criterion expressing their feelings, opinions and difference in conjunction with the social constructivist theory (SCT) that moves toward understanding a constitutive factor in building social personality and also language use

“that shape understanding of the social world” (Freeman & McElhinny, 1996, p.219). As such, the Hausa rap musics shapes their language usage towards issues concerning problems in Nigeria, for instance the case of political dominance in the country. For example, Kano Ryderz put in plain words the political situation in Nigeria as:

Lead : The tough life in this country has permeated everywhere confusing us,  
: The poor are constantly suffering, where’s the country’s wealth?  
: The big shots have stolen the lot, there is hunger everywhere and they know it!  
: Rulers! Please pity the people – having bricks houses!  
: Ours are made of mud and collapse during the rains,  
: They keep the leadership amongst themselves only,  
: When you are fearless, they ostracize you,  
: No school! No education! No drugs in hospitals! No social development!  
: They are heartless, and refused to help, see, we have lots of natural resources,  
: Why should we be suffering! Suffering! Suffering!  
: Don’t forget the big fat cats, with massive pot bellies,  
: Are the ones who stole the wealth of our nation!  
(Kano Ryderz: Everyday inside difficulties)

From the above extract, we understand that in Hausa rap genre language use serves as a vehicle opinion conveyer and this is a sign of participation in a globalized musical culture that they enact as a localized phenomenon. The context of these lyrics suggest inferences where meaning and interpretations are drawn, hence, they believe that Nigerian political system runs negatively. However, the lyrics prays for a more grounded political system in Nigeria, as the citizens of the country should enjoy from the natural resources of the country rather than having leaders who do not cater for the masses.

However, in any modern industrialized society with a lot of professional specialization, there is a great deal of linguistic variation and discursive variation. Critical discourse analysis embodies the “social context within which they were generated and through analysis of text, one is able to reveal the biases and discursive sources of power that exist. The text essentially becomes a major source of evidence for grounding claims about social structures, relations and processes. The affected issues mostly raised by the musics are of course about love, standardization of education, puberty, corruption and embezzlement of government property, frequent divorce issues, AIDS, hardships encountered by youths if they embark on marriage e.t.c. Thus, Hausa rap genre, “is a modern art form mostly composed by Hausa youths that offers a new style of language expression; advocating creativity, adapting foreign ideas and aesthetics to the local culture” (Muhammad, 2014<sup>c</sup>, p.2). For example, Kano Ryderz here advises there audience to better seek for education:

Lead : Education is good in life, I will explain gradually,  
: Doctors, governors, teacher are all educated, in future, without education,  
: If you are educated you can struts your stuff, everyone will hail you,  
: Education in this country has gone bad, it is now only for the privilege,  
: No qualitative education even if you are ready to pay for it.  
(Kano Ryderz: Let’s seek for knowledge)

As the case may be, Hausa rap genre reveals the constant negotiations between musics and larger groups (audience); hence, the Hausa rap musics mediate within Hausa and English. Consequently, it is more complex than saying use of English in Hausa rap musical practice reflects a global influence and the use of native language a local influence, for English is not indigenous but it has a strong local presence in Nigeria being the official language of administration and education; subsequently, although English carries "meaning" as a foreign phenomenon, the choice to use it or another local language in rap musical practice is not always couched in terms of "foreign" versus "indigenous" by performers or enthusiasts. By virtue of this, Hausa rap musics inspiration of mediating between using Hausa or English was influenced by their background, their association with

each language and their particular language abilities. Basically, rap genre became more a part of both rural and urban life; talking in a certain accent or using key vernacular phrases entails a level of participation in rap music via language that does not predicate overt explanation. Yet, even the musics who could speak English, relied on Hausa as it gave them a voice to speak about relevant issues to Nigerian citizens. This can be justified in this extract:

Lead : Every day for the thief, one day for the owner,  
 : Ran da za mu ka ma barwo wallahi za mu koono,  
 : Zuciya tana kuka everybody yana fushi,  
 : Nigeria is 50, why we no see any good thing?  
 : Why waste so much on golden anniversary? When Naija no get common electricity!  
 : We dey produce fuel we no get refinery, when Naija no get common electricity!  
 : Why bomb no go blow for FCT? Our education no authority? No respect for the living!  
 : Nor the dead can see, this no be Naija wey our heroes build,  
 : Politicians na dem get mony today, we go vote for dem,  
 : We go still dey follow dem, why be dat way? Me I no feel tell!  
 : Servant and master na who go ring bell? Yallabai?  
 : Help me! I need some food, my wife is pregnant and my child is sick,  
 : My lanlord wanted me out of my suits, please help me! help me oga - God damn it!  
 (Lil'T: God damn it)

From the above example we understand that in Hausa rap genre, language use often entails more of a choice between two (or more) viable alternatives that carry different meaningful implications, depending on the language ideologies invoked by youths. The Hausa rap musics represent the cultural cognitive schema in Hausa society, by extension their lyrics represents their culture. Hausa rap musics defines the core value and norms of the culture as well as the social vices that affects the country at large. It is argued that cultural schemas are “conceptual structures that develop the cultural level of cognition rather than the psychological level” (Bowe and Martin, 2007, p.42). Hausa rap musics, usually look around the society and observe what is happening and then weaving it into effective use. This showcase to the government that looks we are youth this is our problem, listen to our problem and see what you can do about it and this can be justified with this extract of lyrics from Kano Ryderz concerning marriage:

Lead: Expensive weddings, marital accouterment, these are not compulsory,  
 : Marriage is considered Prophet Muhammad’s way, nay cultural practice,  
 : I’m damn sure there is no true love; your wealth is what makes girls love you,  
 : You spent eight years dating with girl, someone wealthier than you will get her,  
 : Let return to Allah we will be saved, even I the singer had once been rejected,  
 : By Allah I was rejected because of money, they shunned me, hated me, aha!  
 (Kano Ryderz: marriage)

Fundamentally, Hausa rap musics are on the believe that with their piece of music, they can possibly induce changes, there objective is to sing about their pains in the heart, thus, Hausa rap musics provided the most beautiful mechanism of language use, using a universal protest movement. Preferably, Hausa rap musics aspire for a total change in the country, the love for money that besiege the minds of Nigerians should be washed, the culture should be stable not to be politicized, and let the hardships perish in the country.

## Conclusion

The paper explores Hausa Rap genre in on the critical discourse analysis (CDA) perspectives that stems from a critical theory of language which sees the use of language as a form of social practice. The paper focuses on the lyrics of Hausa rap genre and the intersection and or interrelationships between language, discourse, speech and social interactions. Hence, the data used to



illustrate this method of CDA is limited to Hausa Rap text. Fundamentally, the present study tries to adopt the ethnography research method, using critical discourse analysis as a mode of data analysis. Hausa rap musics takes music as the medium of communicating ideas, emotions and feelings, taking music beyond good time but rather illuminating problems faced by Hausa society. Thus, critical discourse analysis (CDA) recognizes institutionalized forms of dominance, which, for this paper, ties into social constructivist theory (SCT). Therefore, this paper contributes partly to the theoretical studies of critical discourse analysis as well as the contribution of English language discourse features into understanding Hausa Rap genre. In conclusion, the paper understands, upon their contributions to the society, Hausa rap musics lacks sponsorship as well as the avenues where they can actually showcase their work.

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