Misogyny In Nigerian Hip-Hop: A Critical Discourse Analysis Of Selected Songs Of Olamide And Lil Kesh

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the language use that project textual violence against women in the lyrics of Olamide and Lil Kesh with a view to uncovering the interactions between linguistic devices and the ideologies. Fairclough’s and Mills’ models of critical discourse analysis served as the theoretical framework. Data were from songs of two Nigerian hip-hop artistes who were selected based on the relevance on their lyrics to the focus of the study. Four main ideologies, which have overlapping features, were found in the lyrics of the selected songs. These were representation of women as sex objects, the image of women as a passive object, female stereotypes and, legitimating violence. Olamide and Lil Kesh encouraged the act of comparing women to inanimate objects, negative evaluation of women, valuing women based on their appearances rather than their intelligence or personality. These were revealed through linguistic devices such as transitivity, noun phrase and clauses. Through these linguistic devices, these Nigerian hip-hop artistes encouraged naturalising misogynistic stereotypes of women.

1. Introduction

Language is not simply a medium of communication; it also projects culture, identity, tradition, and gender. It is responsible for constructing realities and orienting individuals, either consciously or unconsciously, on what to believe, and how to express what is believed. Language, in sum, projects ideology. In the same way, these ideologies are shaped by societal beliefs, which are consciously followed or unconsciously reflected in social and individual activities (and by extension, in language use). According to Fairclough (2010, p. 169), “people live in ways which construct work, family, gender, sexuality and so forth in particular ways, which emanate from experts attached to social systems and organisations, and which come to them through the mass media (print, radio, television, and the internet)”.

Hence, the development of language use in any society is akin to social attitudes displayed by human beings which according to (Obiols, 2002) is important in predicting a given linguistic behaviour and choice of a particular language in multilingual communities. In human communication and interaction, verbal communication is one of the means through which misogyny, sexism and gender discrimination are perpetrated and reproduced by speakers. Language subtly reproduces the societal asymmetries of status and power in favour of men, which are attached to the corresponding social roles. In all spheres of life, women are construed as a special gender, having certain social characteristics that distinguish them from men not necessarily through biology or hormonal influence but through social constructions. There are
social constructs that the society has formed which indicate the differences between men and women. These social constructions bring varied ideologies that are constructed and legitimised by the use of language. Language being the basic tool that constructs these ideologies equally constructs identities of social groups that are gender related.

Discourses can be used for an assertion of power, dominance and knowledge, and they can be used for resistance and critique. One such occasion where discourse is used to assert, sustain and legitimise gender inequality is in the song-texts of Nigerian hip-hop music. This study, therefore, examines the significant features of language of misogyny in selected Nigerian hip-hop songs not only from the angle of macro-linguistics structures but also from the perspective of discourse patterns, taking into consideration the ideological and gender patterns encoded and reproduced in the texts.

More often than not, misogynistic language is unnoticed. In society, men are considered the norm for the human species: their characteristics, thoughts, beliefs and actions are viewed as fully representing those of all humans, male and female. Where the misogynistic behaviour comes in is when women do not behave in the way men deem appropriate. Most misogynists believe that women should not be strong-willed, and should always defer to the men around her. This belief results in some men being verbally, and even physically, abusive. This practice can make women invisible in language or altogether excludes them. Women's linguistic status is often dependent on or derives from that of men, which is represented as autonomous. By relegating women to a dependent, subordinate position, sexist language prevents the portrayal of women and men as different but equal human beings.

Misogyny, in a simple term, is the act that belittles and prejudices women. It is an ideology that reduces women to objects for men’s ownership, use, or abuse. It diminishes women to expendable beings. It can be direct, surreptitious or through sarcasm, put in the context of a joke. The expression of misogyny by hip-hop musicians is not a new phenomenon. The expression of misogyny has been accepted and allowed to flourish, generating wealth for some of the artistes and the music industry as a whole. Akin to the trend in the global popular music, negative portrayal of the female gender has gained popularity in the recent years among some Nigerian popular musicians. In hip-hop music, this misogynist tendencies are observed in portrayal of females as inferior to males, use of derogatory terms, demeaning nature of lyrical content in connection with women, objectification of women in music videos, and stereotyping and prejudice in general against women.

Over time, many Nigerian hip-hop musicians indulge in a lot of textual violence on women with the sole intention of being accepted and getting wider view. Many of these musicians can be said to be misogynists in their language use. According to King (2017), misogyny is rife in America and in the entire world; no woman is safe from unwanted sexual advances, the threat of sexual violence and crude remarks. Linguists therefore are getting more and more interested in both the linguistic structures of texts and how texts feature these misogynist tendencies.

1.2 Existing studies on misogyny in language use

One of the important issues contributing to the maltreatment of women is the way through which they are represented socially, including in the music industries. Within language
and gender research, there has been a wealth of research whose aim is to demonstrate empirically how women are relegated to less powerful positions by their male counterparts. A considerable number of studies have been done on the role of texts in the construction of gender identity and gender inequality. Notable among them are Frye (1983), Wright (2002), Romaine (2008), Bamgbose (2012), and Noor (2015). Existing studies on the objectification of women in media and in literature have been investigated from different fields of study in many countries of the world including Nigeria. Some of these are Babatunde and Osuolale-Ajayi (2015), (discourse analysis) Nwaolikpe (2014) (critical discourse analysis), and Daniel (2008) (pragmatics).

Babatunde and Osuolale-Ajayi (2015) examined the linguistic and non-linguistic indicators of stereotypes of women in selected telecommunication and drink advertisements in The Punch newspaper in Nigeria. They worked with a randomly selected twenty-four adverts featuring female models. Their study revealed that the advertisements are active platforms of negative stereotypes of women. While the study investigates gender inequality, it did not examine the role of discourse in the production, reproduction and contestation of the underlying ideologies in news reports focusing on gender issues in political discourse in the media.

Nwaolikpe (2014) examined the representation of women in the media. He used the agenda-setting theory to explain the importance readers attach to gender representation in the photographic image of women in print media. Findings from the content analysis of articles published from January to December 2012 in two Nigerian national newspapers showed that the photographic images of women in the print media undermine the status of the African woman. Nigerian women were portrayed negatively by confining them to areas traditionally meant for them, and reinforcing gender discrimination and stereotypes. Being a study from the perspective of media discourse, Nwaolikpe (2014) is related to the present study. However, it is a semiotic analysis; this is a point of departure between the present study and Nwaolikpe’s study. The present study sourced its data from song-texts and is focused on the verbal aspect of language only.

2. Research Objective

The studies above have made tremendous efforts to establish the linguistic and non-linguistic indicators of stereotypes of women. However, there is a dearth of studies on the objectification of women’s sexuality, particularly, within the context of Nigerian hip-hop culture. Past studies have been unable to sufficiently isolate misogyny and gender ideologies that are prevalent in the Nigerian hip-hop music. This study therefore aims to fill this gap by identifying the lexical choices that project female stereotypes and gender ideologies in Nigerian hip-hop music. This is done using songs of two popular Nigerian hip-hop musicians.

3. Theoretical background: Fairclough’s and Mills’ Models of Critical Discourse Analysis

This study adopts the Critical Discourse Analytical framework. Its methodology relies on the Fairclough model of CDA and aspects of Mills’ model. In CDA, analysis of discourse is not merely transparent; it is instead a perspective and committed approach that includes examining the web of social processes implicated in the discourse. According to Fairclough and Wodak (1997), CDA sees itself not as dispassionate and objective social science, but as “engaged and committed”. Critical Discourse Analysis is one of the most widely acclaimed theoretical models in modern linguistics.
Fairclough (1989) adopts critical discourse analysis (CDA) as an approach for analysing social interactions in a way which focuses on their linguistic elements. For Fairclough, these linguistic elements are determinants of the social relationships within the social system. As an approach for discourse analysis, CDA links many interdisciplinary approaches for the sake of providing more profound analysis for discursive practices. Fairclough describes CDA as 'critical' as it analyses and criticises the connection between properties of texts and social processes as represented in the ideologies and in power relations. His framework approaches the analysis in three dimensions. For him, the discursive practices involve, simultaneously, "(i) a language text, spoken or written, (ii) discourse practice (text production and text interpretation), (iii) sociocultural practice." (Fairclough 1995, p. 97). Fairclough sees his CDA framework as an assessment of semiosis that perceives language as an essential part of social processes. He is of a view that theoretical orientation to discourse is a three level analysis of discourse, which examines not only linguistic features of a text but also processes of text production, distribution and interpretation. He believes that textual analysis should analyse both form and meaning. He further perceives texts as integrating, ideational, interpersonal and textual meaning, which are in line with Halliday’s meta-functions of language.

For Mills (1998, 2004), critical discourse analysis in post-feminism stance is as a way to expose the patriarchal social practices that put either an overt or covert forms of sexism and gender values that disadvantage the powerless. It transcends being a resistance against dominance of the powerful by the powerless. She contends that for texts that are blatantly sexist, the exposure is easier. However, sometimes the sexism and gendered assumptions are not always visible from the start, and on the surface, can seem to not have been sexist at all. What one must do, she contends, is to put an emphasis on the exposure of discursive frameworks which are themselves gendered in nature and which mislead the reader, especially a female reader, in reading them. Mills’ analytical tools consist of two viewpoints: the subject-object positioning, followed by the reader positioning. Afterwards, the tools are then employed to detect and dissect the portrayal of women in terms of the marginalisation patterns within these texts.

4. Research Methodology: Data collection and Data analysis

Ten song-texts (five from each artiste) were selected from two popular Nigerian hip-hop artistes: Olamide and Lil Kesh. The song-texts used in this study were sourced from an online lyrics archive. The artistes (Olamide and Likesh) were selected based on their visibility on the social space and the large followership they enjoy. They are well-known among young people who claim that their songs, among others, are true to listeners’ real life experiences. Olamide Adedeji also known as Baddo is from Bariga, a suburb of Lagos State. He started his career in 2000, but did not get his big break until 2010 with his single, “Eni Duro”. He primarily raps in the Yoruba. Keshinro Ololade, popularly known by his stage name Lil Kesh rose to fame after releasing the chart-topping song titled “Shoki”. He, like Olamide, was born and raised in Bariga too.

The song-texts were selected purposively because they have lyrical content that are relevant to the study. The lyrics were obtained from www.azlyrics.com and were checked for correctness. The songs were transcribed and an interpretation of the songs are provided. The texts were then coded to identify misogynistic themes. During the coding, careful attention was paid to the context in which specific terms were used. Ideology embedded in the texts and the
representation of social actors were examined from Fairclough’s (1989) and Mill’s (1998) models of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

5. Data analysis

The choice of vocabulary in the song-text represents ideological stances. One can analyse the participants’ choice of vocabulary in relation to their experiential, relational and expressive value of words, with these choices encoding assumption about women being debased. The artistes represent the society by the experiential value of words. Excerpts from songs by Olamide and Lil Kesh project lexical choices appear misogynistic in nature. The stereotypes found in the lyrics of Olamide and Lil Kesh, which have overlapping features, are the following: representation of women as sex objects, the image of women as a passive object, the ideal of domesticity, the stereotype of the liberated women and, legitimating violence.

5.1 Women as sex objects

Sexual objectification refers to the ideal that women are good only for sex. Nigerian hip-hop musicians often through their lyrics brazenly engage in pornographic use of woman’s body. A high number of lyrics from Olamide and Lil Kesh are based on the idea of the woman as a sexual object, who must transform herself in order to appeal to men. Women are not presented as being beautiful and intelligent, but as having to become beautiful for men.

Excerpt 1:                        Translation

She say for dollars                She said for dollars
I would ride and die for you       I would ride and die for you
because of dollar                  because of dollars
I ko e je and gbon e mu            I am rushing you
because of dollars
I would fall for you               because of dollars
because of dollars
because of dollars
So I say                           So I say

(Lil Kesh, “Kojo”)

The artiste portrays the woman being depicted in the excerpt above as manipulative, exploitive and greedy. She is ideationally positioned as an agent of prostitution, acting intentionally on the man, who is cast as the goal of her negative material actions, to manipulate, and extort him (Lilkesh). The material clause *I would ride for you and die for you because of dollar* is a naming strategy aimed at negative representation. It is a negative material process which encodes that the woman is a sex worker, hence the pejorative naming of prostitution. The lexical choice *ride* can be inferred as an act of lovemaking.

Excerpt 2:                        Translation

Hey where are you going? Baby come here!
Your buttocks are bigger than Bombay.
Mo ti so fun e ko ye ma tele Tobey  I have told you to dating Tobey.
(Olamide, “Owo Blow”)

In the excerpt above, the underlined words signify dominance, sexism, and victimisation. The artiste uses the rhetorical question, where are you going? Which is interpersonally a reprimand, to infringe on personal space of the woman to stay back. It also presupposes the masculinity of the artiste. The text characterises Baby come here! to be dominating, and embarrassing. The artiste (Olamide) feels he is in a higher position and can control the woman in question. Other than calling a woman a girl, the use of the noun Baby, is widely used to describe a woman. The term ‘baby’ as defined in Oxford dictionary means an infant or toddler. But in this context, the term is used to refer to the woman character in the lyrics. From this context, one can see that the noun baby is used as an endearment for a woman. The artiste considers the woman a toddler, an infant that is incapable of independent thought and needs to be guided.

The word bum bum is from Nigerian Pidgin meaning “buttocks” and the artiste has compared them to a city in India formerly called Bombay but now called Mumbai. The population of the city is estimated to be over 18 million. One of the important features of the city is that all the tribes in Indian have their roots from it. To say that the bum bum of the woman the artiste is addressing is bigger than Bombay, is to claim that the woman can accommodate sexual intercourse from as many possible men irrespective of class, age and tribes in Nigeria.

Excerpt 3

Bend it over, burst it open for me, bend it over,
burst it open for me, eh
Bend it over, burst it open for me, burst it open for me
Oya burst it open for me, hmnn

(Olamide, “Bend it Over”)

Olamide in the excerpt above blatantly exhibits his masculinity not considering the emotions of the woman in question. An attitude of sexual conquest of women is presented in the above excerpt whereby the artiste repeatedly uses the lexical choices Bend it over, burst it open for me to present his sexual needs. The artiste paints a picture that is suggestive of a woman being persuaded for a round of hot sex. It can also be said that the lexical items describe a woman who is abused sexually and portrayed as a usable and discardable. This reflects the societal ideology where women are often marginalised, trivialised and presented as mere toys.

5.2 Female stereotypes

Excerpt 4

Ahh, oh baby, ki lo Sele Gan Gan?
A ti ba e wi, ba e so, o ko, o fe gbo oh
Come here, what is wronging you?
Say ‘yes’, make I use money to spoiling you
And, all these other girls no reach, won de silly

Translation

Ah oh baby, what exactly is going on?
We have persuaded you, but you refuse to
Come here! What is wrong with you?
Say yes, so that I can spend on you
You are different from others
You're so real, but them fake like a silicon  You are real while they are fake
See, if I break your heart, ki n kan!  Let me break if I break your heart

(Lil Kesh, “Love Story”)

This excerpt uses both relational and material processes to emphasise the cultural belief about what it means to be male or female and the roles ascribed to each of them. The relational clause *come here what is wronging you* (come here what is wrong with you), emphasises the physical potency of the masculine gender, contrasting it with the weakness of the feminine gender. The lexical choices *Say YES, make I use money to spoiling you* linguistically constructs the woman as a gold digger. Lil Kesh confirms the stereotypical notion that women associate money with love by further implying women’s social dependence on men. These material processes also play an important role in reinforcing and reproducing the dominant ideology which accords men such attributes as strong, competitive, risk-taker and confrontational. Another excerpt below from *Pepper Dem Gang* by Olamide presents a stereotype that associates women with money.

**Excerpt 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Throw money in the sky like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine girl do not worry about dollar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You know we have been there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We can give them Rolls-Royce tomorrow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| (Olamide, “Pepper Dem Gang”)

From the excerpt above, the artiste as the actor addresses ‘a girl’, the agent, and the only means through which the girl is being persuaded is with the noun *money*. The personified object builds up with the metaphorical *fine girl*, which represents the female gender. This is an indexical reference to the fact that females are all lovers of *money*. The artiste even goes further to make a reference to foreign currency like *dollar* and expensive car Rolls-Royce to depict that women are materialistic in nature. Another example of stereotypical misogynistic expressions that present women as money lovers is in the excerpt below.

**Excerpt 6**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We spend dollars and not cedes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She was pretending to be so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initially, she was feigning disinterest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When she saw my pocket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She began to dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And did not stop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| (Lil Kesh, “Gbese”)

The excerpt above also expresses the ideological perception that views women as money-lovers. Here, the woman is seen as prone to entrap and exploit him. For instance, the underlined expressions: *when she see my pocket; she just dey dance; she no wan stop*. These expressions indicate that the woman in question gave him audience based on his huge financial status and not
because she is in love with him. The artistes paints a picture of women as those who sell their bodies for financial gains.

**Excerpt 7**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Story yi tife ma long, ma se bayi now</td>
<td>This story is becoming too long</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Igba wolode tofe ma lo, mase bayi now</td>
<td>you came late and you are leaving so soon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Won roko, won roko tasi Wolfe</td>
<td>You will see the sophisticated girls that’ll we’ll take home with us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oju re lomase, wa ́awon mo tama si lole</td>
<td>I am caressing you and you are meowing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Won fowo pa o lara, oun dun meeooowww!</td>
<td>Are you a cat?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S’ologbo ni o ni?</td>
<td>And you are looking into my eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oti wan womi loju</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Olamide, “Du Rosoce”)

Olamide in the excerpt above from *Durosoke* acts out the dominant male enticement of women that seems natural way of luring women which can be said to be a stereotype that is acceptable in the society. In this case, the woman’s body becomes a ‘performance site’, objects of attainment, desire and pleasure for men. For instance, *won fo wo pa o lara ondun meeoooww we are caressing you and you are making a crying sound of a cat* convey a contradictory message to the woman, which implies that social validation comes from sexuality and then holding her in contempt for behaving sexually.

### 5.3 Women as passive objects

It has been found that while there is a tendency to represent men as agents of processes, women tend to be represented in relation to states. The passive status of women is seen in the following excerpt

**Excerpt 8**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No designer, no Dolce, no Gabbana</td>
<td>No designer, no Dolce, and no Gabbana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are not hungry jor</td>
<td>We are not hungry they say</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep your banana</td>
<td>Keep your banana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oni ion do local boys maybe Canada</td>
<td>I do not do local boys maybe Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And I don’t talk to boys that don’t have nada</td>
<td>And I do not talk to boy who have nothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oshe ko si suit pelu Ankara</td>
<td>Why did you were suit and Ankara</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Lil Kesh, “No Fake Love”)

In excerpt 9, the artiste intentionally makes use of passive constructions to avoid the agent. In passive constructions, the agent is usually omitted to avoid redundancy; but it also could be for ideological reasons. Fairclough (1989) says omission of agents may be ideologically motivated in order to make it difficult to understand casualty and therefore understand responsibility. In the expression *No designer, no Dolce, no Gabbana*, the agent has been avoided but can be inferred to be a woman who likes rich men who can give her materials things. It can be argued that, the artiste uses the underlined words; *Keep your banana*, metaphorically to conform to the
traditional stereotype that some women do their utmost (including objectifying their bodies) as means to an end. The use of the pronoun “we” by the artiste does not only categorizes a woman, but by extension to the feminine gender, in the class of people who are dependent and, who exchange their bodies for money. The lexical choices used by the artiste depict that women are frequently encouraged to use sex as a tool, and their bodies as ways of getting material things from men.

Excerpt 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ni bo lon lo? Enini</td>
<td>Where are you going?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Me I want to feel that menini</td>
<td>I want to feel that menini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gbe sun mo mi, baby I'm needy</td>
<td>Bring it closer, I am in need of it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mo le gb'ori le bi ti Finidi</td>
<td>I can bring my head in like Finidi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And I'm not even kidding</td>
<td>And I am not even kidding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The active voice is associated with the artiste, in the excerpt above using the action verb want. The artiste using this transitivity verb passes an idea of being in charge. The woman on the other hand is presented as a passive object of male consumption. The expression Gbe sun mo mi, baby I'm needy (Bring it closer, I need ‘it’- it being sex) depicts the artiste in transitivity terms in an agentive position as a Behaver while the woman is depicted as the target or the victim. She is presented as passive, docile, inert, acted upon as if she is a lifeless matter.

5.4 Legitimating violence and aggression

Violence is portrayed in these songs as the most appropriate response to women who act disrespectfully toward men, and to women who do not want to yield to their sexual advances. In the excerpts below, the artistes use lexical items to boost their ego on sex acts that appear to harm women, justify other acts of violence, warn women who challenge male domination that they will be assaulted. Violence is portrayed as the most appropriate response to women who violate gendered etiquette or who do not know their place as prescribed by the male-dominated society. These lexical choices appear to be the normalisation of violence against women as a means of social control.

Excerpt 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wo me I can’t lie, me I don jogodo</td>
<td>See I can’t lie, I am drunk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ban wa omo to n’idi to robobobo</td>
<td>Get me a woman whose buttocks is soft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wo me I can’t lie, me I don jogodo</td>
<td>See I can’t lie, I am drunk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma run e je bi kokoro</td>
<td>I will crunch you like chips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omo yi ba bend down lo select</td>
<td>Hey woman, bend down to select</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nkan Thomos ba erect</td>
<td>Thomas has got an erection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oloun to be sincere</td>
<td>God to be sincere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shey lo wun mi kin invent</td>
<td>I feel like inventing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Lil Kesh, “Bend Down Select”)

In the above, the word kokoro functions as a self-created lexical item introducing an aggressive sexual desire by the artiste. The word, which originally means chips in Yoruba, is portrayed as
the act of love-making in this song. The artiste vaguely describes the way he intends to sleep with the woman whose story is being narrated in the lyrics. This way of requesting for an intimacy with a woman is of the audacious type. In order words, as he thinks he admires the beauty of the woman, he is also performing his desire to sexually objectify her through his allusion to kokoro (chips). The choice of words in the above excerpt can be said to be possessive relational clause I feel like inventing. This choice of possessive relational process grammatically ascribes him some power through ownership whereby relegating the woman to a less powerful position.

Excerpt 11

Oya sun mo bi, ma slow
Ma lo ma slow
O girl, there is something about you
And you know
Say me no dey doubt you...ah
But if I catch you,
Ma je e bi cashew

Translation

Come closer, do not be sluggish
Do not be slow
Oh girl, there is something about you
And you know
that I don’t doubt you...ah
But if I catch you
I will eat you like cashew

(Olamide, “Pepper Dem Gang”)

In excerpt 11, the material processes; catch and je (eat) portrays Olamide who is the agent/actor as being aggressive. The choice of the transitivity material processes constructs the artiste as being violent verbally. The woman, who is the goal, is being objectified by the actor (Olamide). The choice of the material processes oya sun mo bi ma lo slow (come here! Do not be sluggish) expresses capacity and dominance over the woman. From the above excerpt, it can be inferred that the artiste believes that he has every right over the woman’s body and can do with it whatever he wishes even if it is through violence. The above song-text can be said to be aggressive, sexualised, and misogynistic. Women are frequently objectified, that is, seen as bodies that perform tasks rather than as people. For Olamide, women are possessions that can be owned, bought or sold.

Excerpt 12

If u do Brazilian or you do shuku
L’ale yi, ma kanra mo e bi luku
e oya gba mukutu mukutu
Ba mi wa omo to ni di to ro
bi ti fuku

Translation

Whether you are wearing Brazilian hair or shuku
this night, I will vent my anger like Luku
Dance round
And find me a woman whose buttocks are soft
Just like cattle offal (lungs)

(Lil Kesh, “Gbese”)

In the excerpt above, it is notable that a woman is presented and portrayed as a goal of the material processes la le yi ma kanra mo e bi luku (this night, I will vent my anger like Luku). Through his verbiage vent, an aggressive way through which he wants to have sex with the woman is expressed.

Excerpt 13
Flip this thick thing, twerk for Daddy
Break it down; it's unbreakable, and you know that my kiki is capable
I've been to South Africa, Kampala, to Lagos, Accra, and Manchester
And I've seen a lot of girls, but none like you
This your beauty, make me to act the fool

(Lil Kesh, “Love Story”)

While trying to imitate American rappers, Lil Kesh in the above excerpt indulge in textual violence on the woman in question. For instance, *flip this thick thing, twerk for daddy break it down, it’s unbreakable and you know that my kiki is capable*. Lil Kesh blares in “Love Story” so as to sound more hardcore in a bid to align with some American hip-hop artistes and to demonstrate that he is up to date with current trends, while hoping to encourage sales. Lil Kesh sexually assaults a woman as he subdues her by saying *-flip this thick thing, twerk for daddy.*

5.5 Figurative expressions and rhetorical techniques as ideological tools

Figurative expressions are expressions that differ from the customary everyday conversational use of such expressions for the purpose of giving them a different meaning entirely. In this study, it was observed that the hip-hop artistes use figurative expressions to project misogyny in their lyrics. The figures of speech foregrounded in the course of this study are metaphor and hyperbole. A metaphor, in the context of Critical Discourse Analysis, can belong to a variety of life experiences. It is not restricted to the kind of metaphor in poetry and literature. In general, metaphors are used to represent an incident using terms that belong to another area, and it is, according to Fairclough, especially interesting when it is possible to choose between alternative metaphors, since the ideological attachments of a particular text becomes even more evident when a particular metaphor has been chosen instead of another (Fairclough, 1998 p.119).

Olamide and Lil Kesh make use of figurative expressions and rhetorical techniques to express misogynistic ideas in their lyrics. Examples of such can be seen in the excerpts below:

**Excerpt 14**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Excerpt 14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baby, bo ibi</td>
<td>Baby, come here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your bum-bum bigger than Bombay</td>
<td>Your buttocks is bigger than Bombay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mo ti so fun e, k’o ye ma tele Tobe</td>
<td>I have you not to follow Tobe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Olamide, “Owo Blow”)

Hyperbole is one of the peculiar features found in the above excerpt. It is a figure of speech used to exaggerate objects or event. It ascribes unimaginable quality that a person, an object or event, ordinarily, would not have had. The expression your *bum-bum is bigger than Bombay* (your buttocks are bigger than Bombay) is an exaggeration of the woman’s buttocks which can be said to be derogatory and misogynistic.

**Excerpt 15**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Excerpt 15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mosunmola, s’omo lollypop la</td>
<td>Mosunmola, do you take lollypop?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oun tuda, oun tu re, oya ola</td>
<td>Where is it? This is it, taste it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilo se ena, yema fimì pop collar</td>
<td>What is it? Do not use me to pop collar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ofe ma paja lobo funmi,
Se mo kola?
You don’t want to straightforward,
Do I look like a fool?

(Olamide, “Durosoke”)

*Lollypop* in the excerpt above is metaphorically used to imply the male organ. The artiste derogatorily calling out the woman to perform an oral sex. He used the rhetorical question *Mosunmola, s’omo lollypop la* (*Mosunmola, do you take lollypop?*) metaphorically to woo the woman. Another example of a metaphorical expression can be found in the excerpt below.

**Excerpt 16**

What? No 1 nobody badder badder
Oya, fisi, no wahala hala, anytime you wanna do
that silly panapana

*Translation*

what? No one is better
you can put it, anytime you want
to do that silly panapana

(Olamide, “Bend It Over”)

Olamide into the above excerpt expresses a negative representation of woman. He interchanged and compared sex to *silly panapana*. He metaphorically presented the woman as a sex worker/prostitute which is derogatory and demeaning.

5.6 **Valuing women based on their appearance rather than their intelligence or personality**

Taking elements from Mills’ model of CDA, the following were discovered from the artistes language-use in the song-texts.

**Excerpt 17**

She carry front, she carry back
She too package, can’t leave her

*Translation*

She has big boobs, and she has big buttocks
she is endowed and I can’t leave her

(Olamide, “Stupid Love”)

Olamide in the excerpt above degrades a woman, by saying "she carry front, she carry back" in this song-text. This clearly requires no context. Thinking that the woman is only qualified to be his lover just because she is well endowed enough is sexist. Accordingly, he resorts to the semantic strategy of presupposition and implication to present his innuendo. Here, Olamide’s comment about how the woman in question is physically is the only reason why he is in love with her, and also the reason why he would not leave her. Again, Olamide’s evaluation of women depends on their beauty rather than their intelligence, success, and essence.

5.7 **The male gender as the norm**

**Excerpt 18**

Kilon shey e, se n’lo gbeni wa ni
All the girls show me love, so tell me why me
In Malaysia, loun loun, won wa mi

*Translation*

What is wrong with you, should I bring mat
All the girls show me love
So tell me why me, even in Malaysia
Olamide believes that he can get any woman of his choice mainly because of his status. He describes himself as a man wanted by all women. The inappropriate use of identity markers or derogatory language may cause irritation or anger of feeling of inferiority. It is clear in the detailed description of the woman in question in the above excerpt that the man (Olamide) is looking down on her while raising himself in a higher rank of respect and self-esteem, hyper-masculinise himself. Misogyny can be expressed in gender-specific pejorative terms, i.e. with negative gender-oriented implication to portray women in submissive roles, dehumanized sexual objects, thing or commodity this can be seen in Olamide’s song text saying *kilon se e, sen’nlo gbeni wa ni* (what is wrong with you, should I bring a mat). This expression above can be said to be misogynistic.

### 5.8 Women as inanimate objects

**Excerpt 19**

Oya, ka jo ma jo, like D’pizzle
mo ti mu Alomo yo
Oya sun mo bi, ma lo ma slow, ma lo ma
O girl, there's something about you,
And you know say me no dey doubt you
But if I catch you, ma je'se bi cashew

(Olamide, “Stupid Love”)

Olamide compares women to inanimate objects such as a fruit that can be eaten. By such an equation, he looks disgustedly at women. This attitude is really disincentive and disingenuous to humanity, i.e. the treatment of a person as if they are silent, lacking the capacity to speak. It seems as if he implies that women have no feelings; they are objects with colourless feelings. Valuing women based on their appearance rather than their intelligence or personality.

**Excerpt 20**

I have been seeing this girl for Quilox
I like her front and I will not pass you by

(Lil Kesh, “Gbese”)

Lil Kesh sizes up a woman as if she is a slab of meat existing only for male consumption. Lil Kesh reduces the woman's worth to her physical beauty and perceived physical desirability. This indicates absolute disregard for women as objects for carnal gratification. In other words, he likes women for their sexuality and his excessive sexuality robs women from being objects of love and respect. Objectification in social philosophy is the act of treating a person as an object or thing. It condones the idea that the objectifier treats the object as interchangeable with other objects with the same type and/or with objects of other types or as lacking in agency and perhaps in activity (Nussbaum 2013). Lil Kesh in his songs presents a woman as a sex object who does
not get tired of sex by saying “she no dey tire”. He also likens the woman to a mere tire that rolls in the course of their lovemaking.

5.9 Semantic derogation/disparagement of women

Excerpt 21

| Skibo, waa. Aunty Sidi, what wrong with you? | Skibo, come. Aunty Sidi, what is wrong? |
| Ah de ba yin soro lataro ede sha ko, | I’m conversing with you and you are giving me attitude |

(Lil Kesh, “Gbese”)

It is argued that misogynistic jokes can be a form of sexual objectification when the subject of the joke is reduced to an object. Such jokes not only objectify women but can also condone violence and prejudice against women. A joke can trivialise sexual discrimination under the veil of being amusing.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

The study revealed that ideology is deployed as a strategy of negative representation by using lexical items that enact negative expressive values. Olamide and Lil Kesh used different lexical items that usually degrade women. This can be viewed as a means of constructing gender dominance through language. Song-texts of these artistes are characterised by linguistic choices that project women as inferior, and reinforce their subordinate position in the Nigerian society. The material processes for instance, cast women as sex objects, expletives, and as weaker beings. Interrogation of transitivity patterns also revealed that women are represented as carriers of attributes depicting them as devoid of physical strength, a representation that forms a basis for their discrimination in tasks that require physical strength. Further, the transitivity patterns emphasize the objectified identity of women. Her beauty and body parts are topicalised.

The research also revealed the use of rhetorical strategies and figurative expressions which carry ideological colourations in the song-texts. The artistes used the rhetorical strategies such as metaphor and hyperbole to construct women as objects of male gaze. Metaphors are used in the lyrics to talk about women’s physical attributes and attitude. Female stereotypes illustrated in the selected songs perpetuate the ideas that construct women as distinct social group whose world is dependent on that of men.

Misogyny exists in the lyrics of Nigerian hip-hop music. Much of the mainstream hip-hop music in Nigeria has been reduced to a never-ending obsession with women. This is a reflection of the social structure in the larger society. It is increasingly evident that hip-hop music’s stereotypes about women contribute significantly to the way women are viewed in the society. This has been reinforced by the influence of American popular music on Nigerian music scene. Generic masculine words are the most commonly used forms of stereotypical misogynistic expressions in Nigerian hip-hop sector. Even though women have historically been marginalised, the contemporary popular music scene presents a new dimension to this. It encourages sexual conquest, sexual objectification, sexual assault and negative impression and these should be strongly discouraged.
7. References


