

Influences of Texts/Speech Tones of Annang-Ibibio Indigenous Tunes

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Abstract: The primary motive for composing any vocal work is to convey a message to the listeners. The language employed could be intoned, atonal or tonal. In a tonal language, tones are phonemics; words inflexion of a passage intrinsically can proffer tunes which require the composers' consideration for intelligibility. Annang –Ibibio language is one of such languages; unfortunately, some indigenous composers of the language do neglect the inflexion proffer and so the messages they pass on be amiss. Other tonal language composers/researchers have noticed a similar problem and proffered solution. In Annang- Ibibio perspective, this paper has made an in-depth survey of Annang-Ibibio speech-tones and their influence on through interviews and thus explicates modalities and important paradigms for composing intelligible vocal work in Annang- Ibibio language.

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I. INTRODUCTION

History, from researcher's experience, has revealed that what triggers the emergence of art music composers in Nigeria was the need to create a musical identity, develop their musical tradition, and correct the error made by the westerners. Unpleasantly, some indigenous music composers have not fully awakened to ward off this gibberish. Some composers are still on the error side, sending unintelligible, erroneous and preposterous messages to people, which may be as a result of ignorance, apathy or unconsciousness. Nonetheless, Annang-Ibibio language system demands a conscious effort when setting texts to music.

Annang –Ibibio Language

The hyphenation of Annang –Ibibio in this context shows similarity in tonal system. Annang and Ibibio are two different tribes in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria, with similar speech setting. A linguist, Urua cited in Udoh (1996) classifies them "as dialect clusters among other varieties spoken in Akwa Ibom State" (p. 36). Besides, they have sonorous and meaningful tunes composed in this indigenous language.

Annang-Ibibio Indigenous songs

Indigenous songs are tunes originated from a particular ethnic group. It employs the language of the people (the mother tongue) like Annang-Ibibio language. Annang-Ibibio indigenous songs are performed on different occasions and for different reasons. Songs are used to eulogise, educate, publicise, amuse, or **protest**...In this article, the focus is on texts in a tune because "in African experience, the texts of a song are more important than the tune" (Akpabot, 1998, p.75). Akin to this above observation by Akpabot, the highest point to hit on Annang-Ibibio songs is on how words are arranged to apprehend the listeners as Annang-Ibibio words intrinsically contain pitches.

Influences of texts and speech tones on Annang-Ibibio tunes

Annang-Ibibio language is tonal resulting in proximity to music. Texts have a clear influence on tunes because of speech-tones which therefore call for inflectional consideration when setting texts to music to produce a welcome effect. Agu notes that "for melody to convey an intelligible message, it should, as much as possible correlate with the speech-tone of its text" (1999, p.42). Annang–Ibibio words have pitches known as tones which could resolve to melodic notes. These tones could be high (/), mid (-), low (\), rising (∨) or falling (∧). Some words have two to five meanings which could only be distinguished via these tones. For example, some words like the following have unrelated meanings.

- | | | |
|---|---|---------------|
| 1 (a) Obong (major 2 nd below) | - | Lord or chief |
| (b) Obong (unison: high) | - | Mosquito |

	(c) Obong (unison: low)	-	A name of a place. (Unison)
	(d) Obong (falling 4 th or 3 rd)	-	Cane or Used when one is shouting
	(e) Obong (rising to a 3 rd , 4 th or 5 th)	-	Used when one is shouting
2	(a) Ima (unison)	Love	
	(b) Ima (rising 3 rd)	-	Plural of “ma” A command or advice for people to love
	(c) Ima (a rising and falling 4 th)	-	And so, And then and so on
3	(a) Mbet (it falls to a 3 rd 4 th or 5 th)	-	A name of a person or I am waiting...
	(b) Mbet (rising to a 5 th)	-	commandment or wait for me
	(c) Mbet (unison: high)	-	Disciple
4	(a) Eka (prime)	-	Mother
	(b) Eka (unison rising to 3 rd)	-	Plural of ka- (go)
	(c) Eka (a 5 th below)	-	A name of a place
	(d) Eka (unison falling to 2 nd)	-	should they go?
	(e) Eka (a 3 rd falling to a 2 nd)	-	they have gone
5	(a) Obot (prime: high)	-	Hill
	(b) Obot (3 rd above)	-	Fate, creator (God)
	(c) Obot (2 nd below)	-	He has created
6	(ai) Okposong (a rising 3 rd to a falling 2 nd)	-	If it becomes tough
	(aai) Okposong (a rising 4 th , 5 th or 6 th to a falling 2 nd)	-	– if it becomes tough?
	(b) Okposong (monotone)	-	Mighty

However, the preceding words with their tones can form "tonal materials" because of their intrinsic pitches. They have the capability of establishing a scale when combined with having a phrase or sentence. Annang-Ibibio speech-tones could be tritonic, tetratonic, pentatonic, hexatonic or heptatonic depending on the tonal materials embedded in a sentence or statement. They are also capable of determining thematic, melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic movement. Consequently, the influences of Annang-Ibibio speech-tones on tunes may perhaps be best explained through the following:

- (a) **Thematic motion and influences**
- (b) **Melodic motion and influences**
- (c) **Harmonic motion and influences**
- (d) **Rhythmic motion and influences**

(a) Thematic motion and influences

Annang-Ibibio words are monosyllabic, disyllabic, and polysyllabic. The examples shown in the preceding are disyllabic and polysyllabic words. Annang-Ibibio language has some similarities with music. Intrinsically, they contain tunes and simple intervals like unison, second, third, etcetera. A word like polysyllabic with its short intrinsic tones can suggest for itself a short compositional motive for intelligibility. Therefore, disyllabic and polysyllabic words can be viewed as short thematic materials, and they need suitable notes to introduce the communication.

For example, Eno- obong. (Give to God).

God's Gift

Eno - Obong Eno Obong Eno-Obong Eno Obong
Give to God Give to mosquito It is Eno that is shouting It is given to God

Also, Words that sound unison, if altered would entirely give a wrong meaning; therefore, the alteration should be avoided except in some monosyllabic to monosyllabic progression and tonal delinking whereby the word is naturally altered to have an exact meaning. For example,

- 1(a) Abasi God
- (b) k' basi, in God
- 2(a) Ima love
- (b) Obongima. Lord of love!



Gracefully, most words that intrinsically sound a 3rd can as well sound accurate in 4th, 5th, 6th and sometimes 7th with different qualities. For example, mbetanye



In some cases, some words that intrinsically sound a 2nd may seemingly sound correct in 3rd in such case the interval indicates the expected mood. For example,



Notably, disyllabic and polysyllabic word motion should never be inverted. Statements meanings depend on its utterance level. A statement may have one meaning when uttered on the main level and turn out to have other meanings when uttered at a relatively high pitch, or when uttered at a relatively low pitch. For example,

- 9 (a) obong nsoo - chief what?
- (b) obong nsoo -why are you shouting?
- (c) obong nsoo -why is he shouting?

The meaning of a word is solely dependent on its application and context in a phrase. For example,



Nevertheless, in composing a tune, monosyllabic words are not to be careless on mainly when they are two or more to form a phrase and when joined to other words. They still inflect and demand appropriate notes, and else the meaning becomes distorted. For example, Di bo ta,



(b) Melodic motion and influences

A sentence is a succession of different tones with melodic contour. With these already, the work of the composer is to maintain the contour as he/she assigns appropriate notes to the statement. Nwaneri views the way African composed music to make “meaning” and “convey a message” is “vividly demonstrated and made manifest in melodic contour” (2010, p.15). If the contour of the speech-tones is considered, an intended and a

meaningful message would be put across rather than ridiculed. Therefore, the shape and flow of the melody are determined by the rise and fall of a sentence. For example, the following is correct.

A - ba - si a-su-ho tim-me a- dio_ A -ba -si a-su-ho a-tim-me a-dio A -ba -si a-su-ho
(God is coming back)

tim-me a- dio - kop de o nam si fon
(hear it o, do what is good)

While this other one is wrong

A - ba - si a - su-ho tim-me a- dio_ A - ba - si a - su-ho a-tim-me a-dio
(God is coming back) (now mocking and doubting)

A - ba - si a - su-ho-tim-me a- dio - kop de o nam si fon
(God are you coming again? nonsense)

Unquestionably, from the preceding, Annang-Ibibio text and speech-tone have a considerable influence on melody (tunes). No wonder Merriam cited in Nwaneri, “reveal that speech–tone has a considerable influence on African melody” with Agu reaffirming the fact using another tonal language, “Igbo” as her “speech-tones not only has considerable influence on the melodic line but makes the melody more authentic and acceptable” (2012, p.15). Furthermore, In Annang-Ibibio tonal language a composer can embellish a melody with the consciousness of the speech-tone on a suitable scale. Whether tone bound system or well-tempered, his centre of attention should be on “proper placement of word to achieve to intelligibility, ensuring that the intervallic range of notes and the ambit of the melody agree with a speech-tones pattern of a chosen text” (Agu, 1999, p.33). Although sentences in Annang-Ibibio speech do not surpass an octave as Akpabot(1998) observed on African speech, although melodic skips occurrence depend on monosyllabic and disyllabic words intervals in Annang-Ibibio singing tunes, artistically, a trendy composer can still arrange meaningfully beyond an octave if guided the intervallic range of word to word progression and melodic contour.

Harmonic motion and influence

Annang- Ibibio songs are harmonised in two, three, four, or five parts. Similar to the melodic part, there are still some challenges in harmonising Annang-Ibibio tunes. A composer’s conscious effort is still needed to maintain the exact linguistic contour of the texts. According to Omojola:

The writing of part songs which make use of a text in a traditional language poses a considerable challenge to Nigerian composers especially when the pre-compositional demand of the text (that is, the need to maintain the exact contour of the text) is an important consideration (1995, p.109).

The harmonic arrangement must be guided by the rise and fall of the melodic notes. Akpabot notes that “African words are inflationary in character, and it is necessary for the second voice part to imitate exactly the rise and fall of the solo melodic to not to distort the meaning of a sentence” (1998, p.38). Consequently, intervals should not be used liberally in the inner and lower voices but as words inflect to avoid distortion and contextual derailment. Virtually, common and extended chords are combined with having a similar meaning to the upper voice. Using a tone bound system Mereni (2004), observed that, “the structures of tones system determine the structure of intervals combined as chords: this means that it is the structure of the tone system which determines whether the harmony is in chains of thirds, of fourths, of fifths etc” (p.3). Furthermore, Progressions could be in contrary motion, but the most commonly used is parallel sequences because of the need

to maintain the exact linguistic contour of the texts of the melodic part. Most time in parallel thirds and sometimes a combination of other intervals. For example,

SOPRANO
E-ka dio dio di se si nam e - yen E-ka dio dio di se si nam e-

ALTO
E-ka dio dio di se si nam e - yen E-ka dio dio di se si nam e-

TENOR
E-ka dio dio di se si nam e - yen E-ka dio dio di se si nam e-

BASS
E-ka dio dio di se si nam e - yen E-ka dio dio di se si nam e-

9
S. yen E-ka dio dio_ dio_ dio di se si nam e - yen fo m - ma di-o di se si nam e-

A. yen E-ka di di di se si nam e - yen fo - m - ma di-o di se si nam e-

T. yen E-ka di-o di-o di-o di-o di se si nam e - yen m - ma di-o di se si nam e-

B. yen E-ka dio dio dio di se si nam e - yen m - ma di-o di se si nam e-

Nevertheless, a composer can artistically use different motions in a piece without distorting the meaning by emancipating the parts at some points.

(c) Rhythm motion and influences

Comparatively, in music no motion exists without rhythm; it occurs in every note to note melodic progression, in Annang-Ibibio language, it occurs on every speech. Udofot notes that “human speech possesses rhythm” (1993, p.19). This rhythm according to Akpabot “is the regular or irregular recurrence of groups of motions concerning each other...in respect of pulse, metre, stress, duration, accent, pitch, contour and design” (1998, p.48). Looking critically at the above definition, it simply corroborates the rhythmic involvement from the thematic, melodic to harmonic motion of this article. Nwankpa speaking on rhythm in African music states that “rhythm articulates the speech”. Factually, in Annang-Ibibio tunes, if the rhythm is not properly articulated, it brings in bewilderment. Moreover, Nwaneri opines that “the rhythmic flow is always affected by the pronunciation of words (2012, p.41). Similarly, Annang-Ibibio tunes are influenced by the rhythm of the speech-tones. The number of syllables in an utterance determine the duration of a tune. A statement consists of short and long beats (Iambus), long and short beats (Trochee)



or same beats value or accentuation (Spondee). For example, (Iambic)



In general, Akpakpan urges “the Nigerian composer” to “aspire to reflect the tonal and rhythmic configurations of words used in the text for coherent and meaningful vocal work” (2011, p.205).

II. CONCLUSION

Indisputable, Annang-Ibibio tunes are affected by speech-tones. An effective composition of Annang-Ibibio singing tunes demands total concentration on texts as it influences the tunes. It involves being conversant with the words, usage, meaning and adhering to its chronologies to avoid passing ridiculous messages to the people.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

For composers who are not familiar with Annang-Ibibio language, the following suggestions are offered.

- Pay serious attention to speech tones and contour.
- Mark the tones or write its intrinsic intervals as it progresses.
- Assign appropriate notes on the intervals marked.
- Be mindful of the repetition technique used.
- Harmonise in unisons, thirds fourths and octaves ensuring that the texts are not distorted

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