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Syllable Isochrony in Selected Nigerian Hip-Hops: Implication for Nigerian English Pedagogy

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Keywords

Divergence or convergence in rhyme patterns; Metrical grid; Nigerian Hip-Hop; Nigerien English rhythm; Syllable Isochrony.

Abstract

Scholarly attention, especially in the context of rhythmic patterns of Nigerian Hip-hop and implication for Nigerian English pedagogy has been very rare. Hence, the study inquires into whether or not Nigeria Hip-Hop could be an alternative medium to teaching English rhythm in Nigerian schools, especially due to its influx on Nigerian youths, and thereby improve on the pronunciation of L2 learners/speakers. The study sampled four songs from two artists' rhythmic patterns - Temilade Openiyi (TEMS) and Adedamola Adefolahan (Fireboy DML). The lyrical lines of the selected songs were analysed using metrical grid; an aspect of metrical phonology) to establish the isochronic patterns in the sampled Nigerian Hip-hop songs through segmentation of selected lines of the lyrics in order to establish whether or not divergence or convergence exist in the rhythm patterns of selected Nigerian Hip-hop as noticed in Standard English songs. Boersma and Weenink (2010), software tool for speech signal editing and labeling, this was evident in the following instances://aɪ////keɪm// //ˈsɔːdɪnlɪ:// realised at equal timing of 0.2886 milliseconds (ms). //aɪ həv bɪn kɪlɪŋ// //ˈɛvriˌθɪŋ// at 0.1904ms. //aɪ/ //əm// //ə////kɪŋ// at 0.2251ms; //juː// //dəʊnt// //fiːl// at 0.2901ms; //aɪ// //wɪʃ// //aɪ// //kʊd// //fiːl// //jɔː// //peɪn// at 0.210ms; //aɪ// //traɪd// //tu// //tiːtʃ// //ˈjuː// at 0.3071ms; //aɪ// //wɪl/ /maɪnd/ //maɪ// //mænəs// at 0.310ms; //fiə// //ɪn// // mai// //maɪnd// /ɪz/ //ə// //ˈwɔːnɪŋ// at 0.215ms; //aɪ// //sɛd// //fɑɪv// //ɪn ðiː// //ˈmɔrnɪŋ// at 0.234ms; //fiə// //ɪn// // mai// //maɪnd// /ɪz/ //ə// //ˈwɔːnɪŋ// at 0.3092ms; //aɪ ˈtraɪ tu// //ˈgɛt baɪ// //bʌt aɪm ˈbɜːnɪŋ// at 0.2967ms; //sɛnd// //miː// //ɑ// //lʌv// //ðæt// //juː// //kænɒt// //mɪz// at 0.214ms; //aɪ// //wɪl/ /maɪnd/ //maɪ// //mænəs// realised at 0.221ms; //wəʊnt// //teɪk// //ədˈvaːntɪdʒ// at 0.318; and //nəʊ// //mɔ// //dæmeidʒɪs// //naʊ// realised at 0.2011ms. This means the syllables were realised at relatively equal timing. The study concludes that there is a divergence in the rhythm patterns of Nigerian Hip-hop which makes it significantly different from Standard British English rhythm structure. This implies that the Nigerian Hip-hop rhythm tilts more towards syllable-timing than stress-timing as earlier posited by Nigerian linguists hence may not be appropriate to teach rhythm in Nigerian schools due to its inability to meet national, international and social acceptability standard.

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Mots clés

Divergence ou convergence des schémas rythmiques, Grille métrique, hip-hop nigérian ; rythme anglais nigérian, isochronie syllabique

Résumé

*L'attention des chercheurs, en particulier dans le contexte des schémas rythmiques du hip-hop nigérian et de l'implication pour la pédagogie de l'anglais nigérian a été très rare. Par conséquent, l'étude cherche à savoir si le hip-hop nigérian pourrait être un moyen alternatif d'enseigner le rythme anglais dans les écoles nigérianes, en particulier en raison de son afflux de jeunes nigérians, et ainsi améliorer la prononciation des apprenants/locuteurs de la L2. L'étude a échantillonné quatre chansons des motifs rythmiques de deux artistes - Temilade Openiyi (TEMS) et Adedamola Adefolahan (*Fireboy DML). Les lignes lyriques des chansons sélectionnées ont été analysées à l'aide d'une grille métrique ; *un aspect de la phonologie métrique)* pour établir les schémas isochrones dans les chansons hip-hop nigérianes échantillonnées à travers *segmentation de lignes sélectionnées des lyriques afin d'établir s'il existe ou non une divergence ou une convergence dans les motifs rythmiques du hip-hop nigérian sélectionné, comme remarqué dans les chansons en Anglais Standard. Boersma et Weenink (2010), outil logiciel pour l'édition et l'étiquetage du signal vocal, cela était évident dans les instances suivantes : //aɪ////keɪm// //ˈs ɔ: dɪnlɪ:// réalisé à un rythme égal de 0,2886 millisecondes (ms). //aɪ həv bɪn kɪlɪŋ// //ˈɛvriˌ θ ɪŋ//* à 0,1904 ms. *//aɪ/ //əm// //ə// //kɪŋ// à 0,2251 ms ; //juː// //dəʊnt// //fiːl// à 0,2901 ms ; //aɪ// //wɪʃ// //aɪ// //kʊd// //fiːl// //jɔː// //peɪn// à 0,210 ms ; //aɪ// //traɪd// //tu// //tiːtʃ// //ˈjuː// à 0,3071 ms ; //aɪ// //wɪl/ /maɪnd/ //maɪ// //mænəs// à 0,310 ms ; //fɪə// //ɪn// // mai // //maɪnd// /ɪz/ //ə// / /ˈwɔːnɪŋ// à 0,215 ms ; //aɪ// //sɛd// //faɪv// //ɪn ðiː// /ˈmɔrnɪŋ// à 0,234 ms ; //fɪə// //ɪn// // mai // //maɪnd// /ɪz/ //ə// / /ˈwɔːnɪŋ// à 0,3092 ms ; //aɪ ˈtraɪ tu// //ˈgɛt baɪ// //bʌt aɪm ˈbɜːnɪŋ// à 0,2967 ms ; //sɛnd// //miː// //a// //lʌv// //ðæt// //juː// //kænɒt// //mɪz// à 0,214 ms ; //aɪ// //wɪl/ /maɪnd/ //maɪ// //mænəs// réalisé à 0,221 ms ; //wəʊnt// //teɪk// //ədˈvaːntɪdʒ// à 0,318 ; et //nəʊ// //mɔ// //dæmeidʒɪs// //naʊ// réalisé à 0.2011ms. Cela signifie que les syllabes ont été réalisées à un moment relativement égal. L'étude conclut qu'il existe une divergence dans les schémas rythmiques du hip-hop nigérian, ce qui le rend significativement différent de la structure rythmique standard de l'anglais britannique. Cela implique que le rythme du hip-hop nigérian s'oriente davantage vers la synchronisation des syllabes que vers la synchronisation de l'accent, comme l'ont précédemment postulé les linguistes nigérians, et qu'il peut donc ne pas être approprié d'enseigner le rythme dans les écoles nigérianes en raison de son incapacité à répondre aux normes d'acceptabilité nationales, internationales et sociales.*

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1. Introduction

Rhythm is the pattern of sound, silence and emphasis in a song. In music theory, rhythm refers to the recurrence of notes and rests (silences) in time. When a series of notes and rests repeats, it forms a rhythmic pattern. In addition to indicating *when* notes are played, musical rhythm also stipulates *how long* they are played and with what intensity. This creates different note durations and different types of accents. Rhythm is important to music because it functions as the propulsive engine of a piece of music and gives a composition structure. Most musical ensembles contain a rhythm section that provides the entire group's rhythmic backbone. Pitch, loudness and tempo combine to make up a language expression of rhythm**.** Languages vary greatly in the way in which they make rhythmical contrasts. English use stressed syllables produced at roughly regular intervals of time in fluent speech and separated by unstressed syllables.

In language study, rhythm is a suprasegmental feature germane in speech production as it affects meaning in spoken discourse. Atolagbe (2018, p. 98) defines rhythm as "that regularity of beat achieved through the alternation of stressed and unstressed syllable in utterances; it gives English its characteristic accent, it is also used for aesthetic purpose, creating poetic effect in poems or dramatic effect in drama or plays". Also, the rhythm of a language is the recurrence of prominent elements of speech perceived to be relatively regular intervals of time, depending on the particular language.

The prominent elements are usually either stresses or syllables (Akindele, 2015). Akinjobi (2012), Akindele (2015, 2020), Atolagbe (2018) among others in the field of phonology have described English language rhythm as a stress-timed language. This is as a result of the rhythmic pattern of the language which is determined by stress. So, the stress timed rhythm hypothesis posits that speech can be divided into equal intervals of time known as feet; this is also known as isochrony. Thus, the English rhythm is isochronous rhythmically. This means it tends to follow a pattern of timing. It follows the order of stressed-unstressed or unstressed-stressed in roughly equal proportion of time (Akinjobi, 2012).

A unit that has many unstressed syllables within it is expected to be pronounced with almost the same amount of time as that which is stressed. Hence, it is believed that the English rhythm pattern is formed by an equal or equivalent interval of time between stressed syllables, irrespective of the number of intervening unstressed syllables i.e., moving from one stressed point to another requires the same amount of time (Daniel, 2005 p. 54). The three English supra-segmental of pitch (stress, intonation and rhythm) are interrelated. While syllable is central to them, they (stress, intonation and rhythm) are features that are common to language. Although the language is studied in portions for ease of learning, it does not mean that when stress is applied, intonation is not, or rhythm is ignored. They all function together.

Rhythm has received some scholarly attention, especially in the context of Nigerian English. Notable studies in this regard (Eka, 1993; Udofot, 1997; Akinjobi, 2004; Ilolo, 2011; Adesanya, 2014; Akindele, 2015, 2017; Melefa, 2018; Ukam and Uwem,

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2019 & Amoo, 2021) have established that Nigerian English rhythm differs 'markedly' from Standard British English (SBE). Significantly, it is however noted that none of these earlier studies has worked on the rhythmic patterns of Nigerian Hip-hop. Therefore, this study intends to examine whether or not Nigerian Hip-hop can be model for teaching and learning English Rhythm in the classroom and thereby improve on the pronunciation of L2 learners/speakers.

The reseach objectives include :

- To ascertain the isochronic patterns in the selected Hip-hops of Adedamola Adefolahan and Temilade Openiyi; and also establish whether or not areas of divergence or convergence exist between isochronic patterns of the selected music and Standard English rhythm form;
- To determine whether or not selected Nigerian Hip-hops could be the alternative medium to teaching of English rhythm in Nigerian Secondary Schools.

2. Literature Review

2.1Musical Rhythm

Rhythm can be defined as the seeming re-occurrence of any stimulus which produces a conscious or subconscious feeling of organisation and progression. The stimulus Realisedly may recur with regularity, or it may be a purely subjective patterning of the stimuli in more or less regular form by the receiver. Rhythm can be produced by the recurrence of a single stimulus like a phoneme, a vocal emphasis, a color, or a line; or it may be a tremendous pattern like the parallelism in the double plot of King Lear, or the return to the nursery setting in the next-to-the-last scene of peter pan (Albright, Halstead & Mitchell; 1968).

In music, the rhythm is usually produced by making certain notes in a sequence stand out from others by being louder or longer, or higher while in speech, we find that syllables take the place of musical notes or beats, and in many languages, the stressed syllables determine the rhythm. What does seem to be clear is that rhythm is useful to us in communicating: it helps us to find our way through the confusing stream of continuous speech, enabling us to divide speech into words or other units, to signal changes between topic or speaker, and to spot which items in the message are the most important" (Roach & Widdowson, 2001).

More so, in music, the measure, with its fixed pattern of accentualisation, supplies the basic rhythm. Increasingly largely rhythmic patterns include the musical phrase; the verses of a song with its repetition of both melody and words; the movements of a long musical composition; the repetition of themes either exactly or in the form of variations; or any other internal repetition, near repetition, or progression. A symphony balances many musical factors uses some for rhythmic repetition, but usually employs volume crescendo and progressive rhythm for its conclusion.

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The most familiar feature of rhythm in language is the accentualisaton of the foot pattern of verse. A larger pattern of rhythm is the line, which tends to produce a rhythmic beat of its own despite caesura and run-on lines. An iambic pentameter is a verse form that has been most successful in English. Alliteration which is the repetition of consonant sounds or accented vowels, particularly of initial sounds is another device for producing rhythm. Rhythm is appreciated by the sense of vision as well as the sense of hearing. We recognised rhythm in the rhythm in the systemic arrangement of a row of trees, bushes, or flowers, and in the more elaborate pattern of an orchard where the trees are lined up in three or more directions. Visual artists use rhythm as one of the pleasure-giving qualities of their compositions. As an utilitarian example, wallpaper and printed dress and drapery material have a regular rhythm in their all-over design, superimposing patterns, or obtaining still greater and greater variety within repetitive patterns, by increasing the number of individual elements which are applied in alternation (Patterson, 1917).

Voice patterns also contribute to the rhythm. An individual artiste may use repetition of one or more vocal factors to establish his rhythm. The speech of the artiste may be planned for its rhythmic effects either as uniform pattern to create an overall atmosphere, or distinctly contrasting rhythms to produce tension and excitement. Attention to any phase of rhythm gives it emphasis. Auditory rhythm can be easily studied in a musical composition than in a play because the score records more directions for its performance (Albright et.al, 1968).

In music, rhythm refers to how sounds of varying length and accentuation are grouped into patterns. Five elements of rhythm are examined to determine the flow of rhythm in the selected musical lyrics. These elements will help to establish facts that back up the musical rhythm and relate appropriately to what is derived from the phonological analysis to establish a nexus that exists between the two fields of knowledge. The elements include ;

- Time signature
- Syncopation
- Accentualisation/ Setting word rhythms to music
- Tempo

2.2. The English Rhythm

Rhythm refers to the way events are distributed in time and space. It has to do with a strong and repeated pattern of movement or sound (Roach, 2009). Abercrombie (1967) explains that ‘rhythm in speech as in other human activities arises out of the periodic occurrence of some sort of movement, producing an expectation that the regularity of succession will continue. The term ‘rhythm’ is viewed in phonetics as the perceived regularity of prominent units in speech, it reflects in the pattern formed by ‘stressed and unstressed syllables ‘syllable length’ (long/short) or pitch (high/low) or a combination of some of these variables (Crystal et.al, 1987; Wales 1989; Crystal 1991 and Roach 2010). Rhythm is widely defined as the alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables in a

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language (Roach, 1991; Ladefoged & Johnson, 2011; Akinjobi, 2004; Akindele & Akinjobi, 2018). In connected speech, utterances are believed to be said with a form of rhythmic pattern.

Akinjobi (2012, p. 13) states that when a language is syllable-timed, the syllables tend to recur at isochronous intervals. For stress-timed languages, the intervals between stressed syllables tend to be isochronous. Standard British English is generally described as a stress-timed language. The rhythm of SBE is achieved through an alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables in speech, in connected speech. Content words are stressed while grammatical words are unstressed. Akinjobi (2009) explains that when English is spoken, native speakers do not utter the dictionary word but the rhythm word. The dictionary word is an individual word in isolation, while the rhythm word is a stressed syllable and all the unstressed syllables after it.

In addition, English rhythm is achieved through the alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables in an utterance. The stressed syllables are believed to be the prominent syllables in an utterance, thus, vowels in the stressed syllables are realised strong. The vowels in the unstressed syllables, on the other hand, are mostly realised weak because the vowels in such syllables are often reduced. However, whether a syllable is assigned the primary or secondary stress, the vowels that occur within the syllable as its nucleus retains strong quality consequently making the syllable strong. When the syllable is unstressed, the vowel quality is usually affected and the vowel gets reduced to /Ə/ or /i/ and sometimes /u/ (Roach, 2009)

2.3. Second language teaching and learning

Language is the vehicle required for effective human-to-human interactions. Studying a language provides the learner with the opportunity to gain linguistic and social knowledge and to know when, how and why to say what to whom. (NSFLEP, 2014). In research, the term second language acquisition (SLA) is a general term used to embrace foreign language learning and investigate the human capacity to learn languages other than the first language.

Scholarly inquiry into the acquisition of a non-native language includes the disciplines of psychology, linguistics, language pedagogy, education, neurobiology, sociology, and anthropology. Inquiries into learning and teaching innovations have provided insights into successful language learning strategies and environments designed to increase language achievement and proficiency.Language scholars such as VanPatten, and Williams (2008) distinguished between the terms acquisition and learning: ‘acquisition’ refers to the process of learning first and second languages naturally, without formal instruction, whereas ‘learning’ is reserved for the formal study of second or foreign languages in classroom settings.

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3. Methodology

3.1. Method of data collection and Analysis

In gathering the data for analysis, a total of eight (8) songs of Temilade Openiyi (TEMS) and Adedamola Adefolahan (Fireboy DML) were selected in which four (4) songs were sampled from each of the artist's albums. The musical lyrics of the songs were collated and transcribed for analysis. These songs are; Free Mind, Found, Essence, Damages, Champion, Remember Me, Dreamer and God only knows. Data for this study were analysed acoustically, perceptually and metrically. This comprises musical lyrics of the songs of Temilade Openiyi (TEMS*)* and Adedamola Adefolahan (Fireboy DML). The lyrics were analysed using metrical grids, acoustically using Praat and through Isochronic segmentation of selected lines of lyrics in the sampled songs which was done in order to provide a scientific platform for studying rhythm and peculiar pattern in the selected Nigerian Hip-hops to establish whether or not divergence exist between the rhythmic patterns of Standard English and Nigerian Hip-hops as well attempt to establish whether Nigerian Hi-pops czn be ued to teach rhythm in Nigerian schools since many youths tend towards this genre of music, and in general improve L2 pronunciation.

3.1 Research Design

This investigation is qualitative. The research samples musical lyrics of Nigerian Hip-hop artists. A collection of 8 songs were analysed; this means four (4) songs were sampled for analysis from each of the artist's songs. The song lyrics of Adedamola Adefolahan, known as Fireboy DML and Temilade Openiyi popularly called Tems were used for inquiry respectively. The study examines rhythm in the music of the selected artists. Hence, lines in the music lyrics of the selected hip-hop songs were sampled. The selected artists were chosen based on their level of exposure. Interestingly, Adedamola Adefolahan is a graduate of English from Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile- Ife, Osun State while Temilade Openiyi studied Economics from Monash South Africa, South Africa and her father is of British background. This makes the two artists a proper model to investigate for this study. The artists predominantly use the English language as the language of expression while singing. More so, the lyrics' thematic structure center's on social issues and aesthetic elements that communicate culturally significant messages. Therefore, the lyrics carry messages that address fundamental social issues, which are presented in musical form.

The data were subjected to perceptual, metrical and acoustic analysis. The acoustic analysis was conducted using Praat. Also, the modeling theory emphasises the relevance and importance of observation and imitation that takes place from an individual's perspective through the characters portrayed through media and how it brings a change when it comes to their behaviour, knowledge, attitudes and values adopted for this study. The imitation happens if the model holds an admired status and the activity that they do are of great value (Holland & Kobasigawa, 1980). Praat is an open-software tool for speech signal editing and labelling, as well as for various acoustic analyses (spectral,

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formant, pitch, intensity) and prosodic manipulation. The results were used to explain if Nigerian Hip-Hop music can serve as a model in the teaching of English Rhythm in Nigerian Schools as Second Language (L2) learners. Also, the study conceptually examines time signature and tempo in the sampled songs to see how the artists manipulate their songs to generate rhythm.

3.2 Research Instrument(s)

The instrument used for the investigation includes lyrical items. These are words of songs or vocal music. Lyrics are words that make up a song, usually consisting of verses and choruses. The song lyrics of Temilade Openiyi (TEMS) and Adedamola Adefolahan (Fireboy DML) were purposively sampled. Four (4) songs were sampled from the album of each of the artist's music, then collated and transcribed to get the lyrics of the songs for analysis in this study.

The selected songs of Adedamola Adefolahan include; Champion, Remember Me, Dreamer and God only knows while Temilade Openiyi's songs examined include; Free Mind, Found, Essence and Damages. The data were anlysised isochronically, metrically using the metrical grid and acoustically using Praat to establish the purpose of the research.

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Metrical grid analysis of the patterns of stress alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables to realise rhythm in the sampled songs

The metrical grid is a tenet of metrical phonology. The theory is employed in this study to show the prominence of stressed and unstressed syllables alternation of English rhythm in the selected songs because of its advantages over the metrical tree (Kager, 1995, p. 369 and Sunday, 2005). However metrical grid accounts for rhythmic alternation between strong and weak syllables; instances below demonstrate the grids of songs and the native baselines i.e. expected outcome, which was used to confirm the phenomena under investigation.

Champion

I'm the best my ge-ne-ra-tion ever seen

a. Expected Output (Native Baseline)

		X								
X		X				X				X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
I'm	The	best	my	Ge	ne	ra	tion	e	ver	Seen

b. Realised Output

		X							X	X

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X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
I'm	The	best	my	ge	ne	ra	tion	e	ver	Seen

The pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables alternation in each rhythm unit represented above differs from that of the native baseline. There seems to be proliferation of strong syllables as revealed by the X, showing unresolved clashes for both the supposedly stressed and unstressed syllables in the rhythm units of the lyric as opposed to the native baselines metrical grid where alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables was observed. This clearly shows that the song does not appropriately alternate stressed and unstressed syllables in the English rhythm units, thereby resulting in two sevral syllables occurring simultaneously, which eventually distorts the Standard British English rhythm.

2. Remember me

Of the moun-tains I have climbed

a. Expected Output

							X	
		X		X			X	
X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Of	The	moun	tain’	s	I	have	climb	Ed

b. Realised Output

X		X					X	
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Of	The	moun	tain’	s	I	have	climb	ed

The metrical grid analysis above shows the proliferation of strong syllables as indicated by X, showing unresolved clashes for both the supposedly stressed and unstressed syllables in the rhythm units of the sampled song. This clearly shows that the production of the song does not oberve the alternatation rule of stressed and unstressed syllables in an English rhythm unit which negate the Standard British English rhythm pattern.

3. Dreamer

You left my mess-ages un-read, too busy lo-ving some-one else

a. Expected Output

															X
	X		X			X				X			X		X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

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You	left	my	mess	age	S	un	Read	too	bu	sy	lo	ving	some	one	else

b. Realised Output

	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X		X		X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
You	left	my	mess	age	s	un	Read	too	bu	sy	lo	ving	some	one	else

The grids above present the expected output which differ completely from the realised output. The realised grid is characterised with strong syllables as there are cases of unresolved stress clashes.

4. God only knows

For a while I've been thin-king

a. Expected Output

					X	
X			X		X	
X	X	X	X	X	X	X
For	a	While	I've	been	think	Ing

b. Realised Output

	X		X		X	
X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X
For	a	While	I've	been	think	ing

From the grids above, the realised grids present cases of unresolved stress clashes where the syllables are stressed contrary to what is obtainable from the expected grids. There is proliferation of strong syllables showing cases of unresolved clashes for stressed and unstressed syllables.

5. Freee Mind

I wake up to fight for my earning

a. Expected Output

							X	
X				X			X	
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
I	Wake	Up	to	fight	for	my	earn	ing

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b. Realised Output

		X				X		X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
I	Wake	up	to	fight	for	my	earn	ing

The pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables alternation in each rhythm units represented above differs from that of the nativised baseline. There is proliferation of strong syllables which shows unresolved clashes for both the supposedly stressed and unstressed syllables in the rhythm units of the lyric as opposed to the Standard British English rhythm. This clearly shows that the song does not appropriately alternate stressed and unstressed syllables in the English rhythm units, resulting to strong syllables occurring simultaneously, which is not the expected Standard in English rhythm.

6. Damages

Back then when I was a new young-in

a. Expected Output

							X	
X		X					X	
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Back	Then	when	I	was	a	New	young-	in

b. Realised Output

X			X				X	
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Back	then	when	I	was	a	New	young-	in

The grid pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables obtainable from the representation above shows improper alternation and distribution of stress across syllables. There are instances of stress clash in the syllable alternation showing unresolved clashes for both the supposedly stressed and unstressed syllables in the rhythm units of the lyric as opposed to the Standard British English (SBE) rhythm pattern.

7. Essence

But I need you now, yeah, yeah

a. Expected Output

			X					
			X	X			X	

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X	X	X	X	X	X	X
But	I	need	you	now	yeah	yea

b. Realised Output

	X	X	X	X	X	
X	X	X	X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X
But	I	need	you	now	yeah	yeah

The expected grid differs from that which is realised. All the syllables of the rhythm group were made prominent which means there is no alternation of srtong and weak syllables which help to account for stressing timing-rhythm.

8. Found

Peo-ple al-ways try to get in-volved

a. Expected Output

									X	
X		X			X				X	
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Peo	Ple	al	Way	s	try	to	get	in	volv	ed

b. Realised Output

	X		X	X			X	X		X
X										
	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Peo	Ple	al	way	s	try	to	get	in	volv	ed

The derived metrical grid differs from what is expected at the native baseline. Proliferation of strong syllables is observed as realised in the syllables of the rhythm group with unresolved clashes for stressed and unstressed syllable alternation in the rhythm units as compared to Standard British English rhythm metrical grid, where alternation of stressed and unstressed syllable was observed.

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Table 1.

Isochronic Analysis of the sampled lyrics Phonological Representation of Isochrony pattern in the selected lyrics of Adedamola Adefolahan

S/N	Selected lyrics from Adedamola Adefolahan's songs	Expected Output	Realised Output
1.	I came suddenly	//aɪ keɪm// //ˈsʌdənlɪ//	//aɪ// //keɪm// //ˈsɔːdɪnlɪː//
2.	I have been killing everything	//aɪ həv bɪn kɪlɪŋ// //ˈɛvriˌθɪŋ//	//aɪ həv bɪn kɪlɪŋ// //ˈɛvriˌθɪŋ//
3.	Remember this	//rɪˈmɛmbɚ ðɪs//	//rɪˈmɛmbɚ ðɪs//
4.	I am a King	//aɪ əm ə kɪŋ//	//aɪ/ //əm// //ə////kɪŋ//
5.	Am I only a dreamer	//əm aɪ// //əʊnli əˈdriːmə//	//əm// //aɪ// //only// //aˈdriːmə//
6.	You left my messages unread	//juː left// //maɪ ˈmes.ɪdʒɪs ʌnred//	//juː// //left// //maɪ// //ˈmes.ɪdʒɪs// //ʌnred//
7.	too busy loving someone else	// tuː ˈbɪz.i// //ˈlʌv.ɪŋ ˈsʌm.wʌn els//	// tuː// //ˈbɪz.i// //ˈlʌv.ɪŋ// //ˈsʌm.wʌn// //els//
8.	You left so many words unsaid	//juː left// //səʊ ˈmen.i wɜːd ʌnˈsed//	//juː// left// //səʊ// //ˈmen.i// //wɜːd// //ʌnˈsed//
9.	For a while I have been thinking	//fɔ : ə waɪl// //aɪ həv bɪnˈθɪŋkɪŋ//	//fɔː// //ə// //waɪl// //aɪ// //həv// //bɪn// //ˈθɪŋkɪŋ//
10.	What the hell was I thinking	//wɒt ðə ˈhɛl// //wɒz aɪ ˈθɪŋkɪŋ//	//wɒt// //ˈðɪ// //hɛl// //wɒz aɪ θɪŋkɪŋ//
11.	God only knows	//Gɒd ˈəʊn.li nəʊs//	//Gɒd// //ˈəʊn.li// //nəʊs//
12.	Heaven only knows	// ˈhev.ən ˈəʊn.li nəʊs//	//ˈhev.ən// //ˈəʊn.li// //nəʊs//
13.	You don't feel alive	//juː dəʊnt ˈfiːl// //əˈlaɪv//	//juː// //dəʊnt// //fiːl// //əˈlaɪv//
14.	I wish I could feel your pain	/aɪ wɪʃ aɪ ˈkʊd// //fiːl jɔːˈpeɪn//	//aɪ// //wɪʃ// //aɪ// //kʊd// //fiːl// //jɔː// //peɪn//

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15.	Memories never die	//ˈmeməris ˈnev.ə daɪ//	//Memories// //never// //die//
16.	The damage has been done	//ðə dæmɪdʒ// //hæz bɪn ˈdʌn//	//ðiː// //dæmɪdʒ// //hæz// //bɪn// //dʌn//

Table 1 above presents the analysis of selected lines in the lyrics of Adedamola Adefolahan to determine the isochronic pattern that exist in Nigerian Hip-hop. Segmentation of selected lines of lyrics in the sampled song was done in order to provide platform for studying rhythm and peculiar pattern in the Nigerian Hip-hop thereby establishing the iscochronic pattern in the Nigerian Hip-hop. From the isochronic distribution of the data as observed in the following instances: //aɪ////keɪm// //ˈsɔːdɪnlɪː//; //ð iː// //dæmɪdʒ// //hæz// //bɪn// //dʌn//; //aɪ// //wɪʃ// //aɪ// //kʊd// //fiːl// //jɔː// //peɪn//; //juː// //dəʊnt// //fiːl// //əˈlaɪv//; //wɒt// //ˈðɪ// //hɛl// //wɒz aɪ θɪŋkɪŋ//; //fɔː// //ə// //waɪl// //aɪ// //həv// //bɪn// //ˈθɪŋkɪŋ//; //fɔː// //ə// //waɪl// //aɪ// //həv// //bɪn// //ˈθɪŋkɪŋ//; //juː// left// //səʊ// //ˈmen.i// //wɜːd// //ʌnˈsed//; //juː// left// //səʊ// //ˈmen.i// //wɜːd// //ʌnˈsed//; //ˈhev.ən// //ˈəʊn.li//; // tuː// //ˈbɪz.i// //ˈlʌv.ɪŋ// //ˈsʌm.wʌn// //els//; //Gɒd// //ˈəʊn.li// //nəʊs//;//əm// //aɪ// //only// //a ˈdriːmə//; //aɪ/ //əm// //ə////kɪŋ// ; //Memories// //never// //die//; //rɪˈmɛmbə-ðɪs// and //aɪ həv bɪn kɪlɪŋ// //ˈɛvriˌθɪŋ//. It is can be observed that the isochronic pattern in the song is syllable-timed, the artist makes every syllable prominent in every utterance made. This means the syllables were realised at equal timing.

Table 2.

Phonological Representation of Isochrony patterns in the selected lyrics of Temilade Openiyi

S/N	Selected items from Temilade Openiyi'songs	Expected Output	Realised Output
1.	Can you be wise	//kæn juː biːˈwaɪz//	//kæn// //juː// //biː// //ˈwaɪz//
2.	Leave me alone	//liːv miː əˈləʊn//	//liːv// //miː// //ˈaləʊn//
3.	No more damages now	//nəʊ mɔːˈdæmɪdʒɪz naʊ//	//nəʊ// //mɔ// //dæmeidʒɪs// //naʊ//
4.	Taking my way	// teɪkɪŋ maɪ weɪ//	// teɪkɪŋ// //maɪ// //weɪ//
5.	I tried to teach you	//aɪ traɪd tu// //tiːtʃ juː//	//aɪ// //traɪd// //tu// //tiːtʃ// //ˈjuː//
6.	So crazy	//səʊ ˈkreɪ.zi//	//səʊ// //ˈkreɪ.zi//

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7.	So set me free	//səʊ set miː friː//	//səʊ// //set// //miː// //friː//
8.	Set me to the open sky	//set miː tuː ðiː ˈəʊ.pən skaɪ//	//set// //miː// //tuː// //ðiː// //ˈəʊ.pən// //skaɪ//
9.	Won't take advantage	//wəʊnt teɪk ədˈvɑːntɪdʒ//	//wəʊnt// //teɪk// //ədˈvɑːntɪdʒ//
10.	I will mind my manners	//aɪ wɪl maɪnd maɪ ˈmænəz//	//aɪ// //wɪl/ /maɪnd/ //maɪ// //mænəs//
11.	Love is a difficult life	// lʌv ɪs eɪ ˈdɪf.ɪ.kəlt laɪf//	// lʌv// //ɪs// //eɪ// //ˈdɪf.ɪ.kəlt// //laɪf//
12.	Trust I can manage that	//trʌst aɪ kən ˈmæn.ɪdʒ ðæt//	//trʌst// //aɪ// //kən// //ˈmæn.ɪdʒ// //ðæt//
13.	Send me a love that you cannot mix	//sɛnd miː ə lʌv// //ðæt juː kænɒt mɪks//	//sɛnd// //miː// //a// //lʌv// //ðæt// //juː// //kænɒt// //mɪz//
14.	I try to get by but I'm burning	//aɪ traɪ tu gɛt baɪ bʌt aɪ æm ˈbɜːnɪŋ//	//aɪ ˈtraɪ tu// //ˈgɛt baɪ// //bʌt aɪm ˈbɜːnɪŋ//
15.	Fear in my mind is a warning	//fɪə ɪn mə ˈmaɪnd// //ˈɪz ə wɔːnɪŋ//	//fɪə// //ɪn// // mai// //maɪnd// /ɪz/ //ə// //ˈwɔːnɪŋ//
16.	I said five in the morning	//aɪ sɛd ˈfaɪv// //ɪn ðiːˈmɔrnɪŋ//	//aɪ// //sɛd// //faɪv// //ɪn ðiː// //ˈmɔrnɪŋ//

The isochronic representation above accounts for the distribution of stress across syllables in the selected lines of the Temilade Openiyi's sampled songs. The table presents the analysis of the segmentation of selected lines of lyrics in the sampled songs and this was done in order to provide scientific platform for studying rhythm and peculiar pattern in the Nigerian Hip-hop and establishing the iscochronic pattern in the Nigerian Hip-hop. Cases of clashes in the distribution of stress were seen in the analysed data. Instances include: //aɪ// //sɛd// //faɪv// //ɪn ðiː// //ˈmɔrnɪŋ//; //səʊ// //ˈkreɪ.zi//; //fɪə// //ɪn// // mai// //maɪnd// /ɪz/ //ə// //ˈwɔːnɪŋ//; // teɪkɪŋ// //maɪ// //weɪ//; //səʊ// //set// //miː// //friː//; //aɪ ˈtraɪ tu// //ˈgɛt baɪ// //bʌt aɪm ˈbɜːnɪŋ//; //set// //miː// //tuː// //ðiː// //ˈəʊ.pən// //skaɪ//; //sɛnd// //miː// //a// //lʌv// //ðæt// //juː// //kænɒt// //mɪz//; //aɪ// //wɪl/ /maɪnd/ //maɪ// //mænəs//; //wəʊnt// //teɪk// //ədˈvɑːntɪdʒ//; //aɪ// //traɪd// //tu// //tiːtʃ// //ˈjuː//; //trʌst// //aɪ// //kən// //ˈmæn.ɪdʒ// //ðæt//; // lʌv// //ɪs// //eɪ// //ˈdɪf.ɪ.kəlt// //laɪf//; //nəʊ// //mɔ// //dæmeidʒɪs// //naʊ//; //liːv// //miː// //ˈaləʊn// and //kæn// //juː// //biː// //ˈwaɪz//. The result from the analysis shows that the sampled Nigerian artist made every syllables in her utterance prominent and realized at equal timing. This makes the isochronic pattern to be syllable-timed.

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Acoustic Analysis

Lines were randomly selected from each of the selected song lyrics to represent the acoustic analysis of the utterances. The results are presented below.

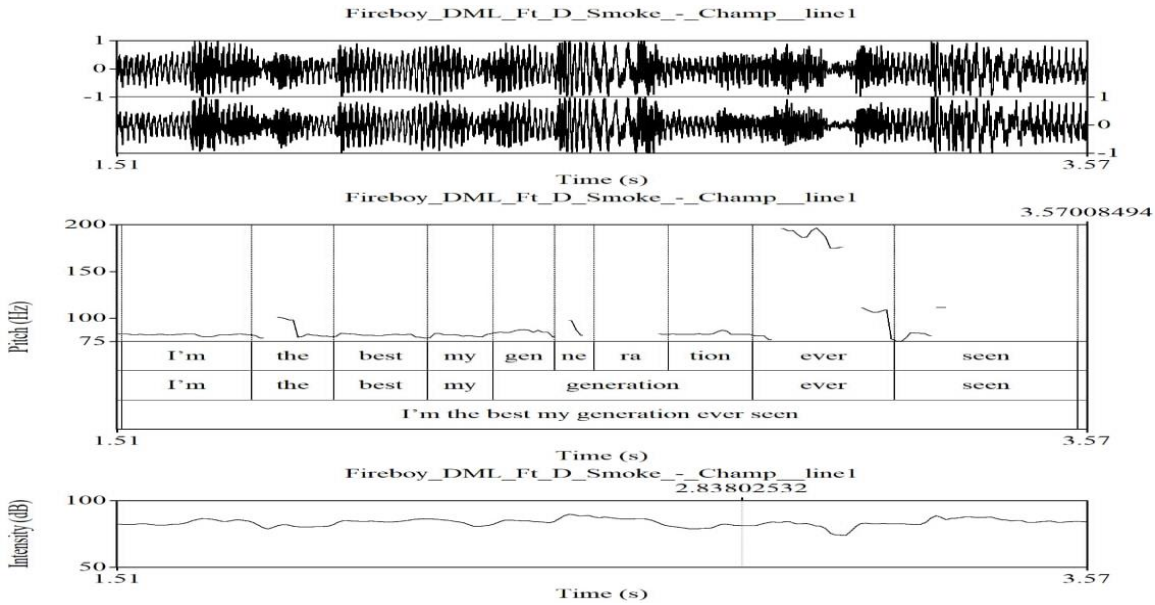

Figure 1. Champion

The diagram shows the acoustic correlate of stress in the line of the sampled song. From the analysis, the spectrogram at the pitch level is set between 75 Hartz (Hz) and 200 Hartz (Hz) while the intensity is between 50 Decibel (dB) and 100 Decibel (dB). The sampled lyric shows flat flow of rhythm in the songs and segmented syllables were realised at the timing of 0.206 milliseconds (ms) per syllable.

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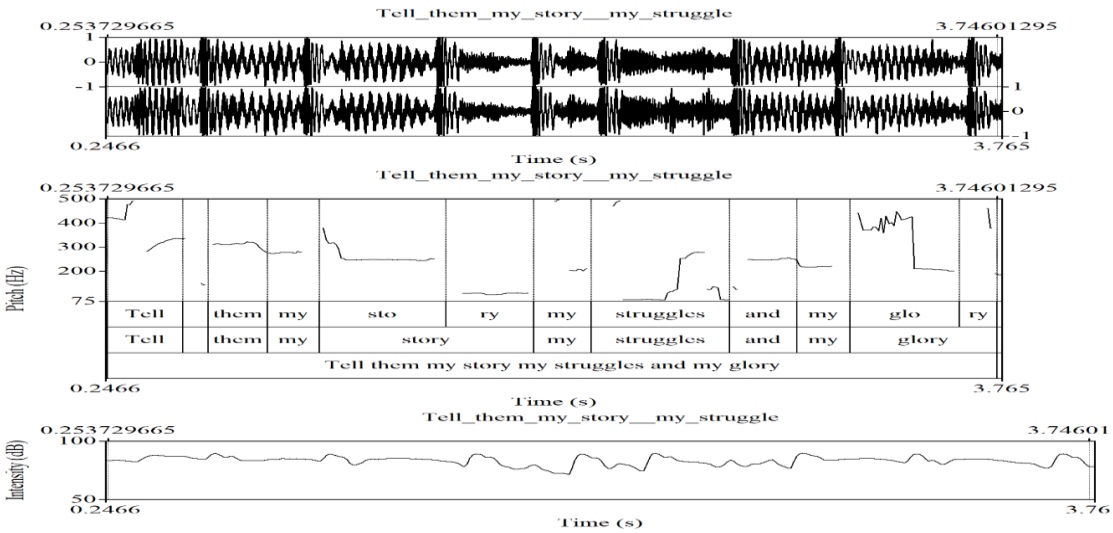

Figure 2. Remember Me

The diagram shows the acoustic correlate of stress in the sampled line. The spectrogram is set between 75 Hartz (Hz) and 500 Hartz (Hz) for pitch while intensity is between 50 Decibel (dB) and 100 Decibel (dB). The result shows a variation in pitch and intensity with timing of 0.3518 milliseconds (ms) per syllable.

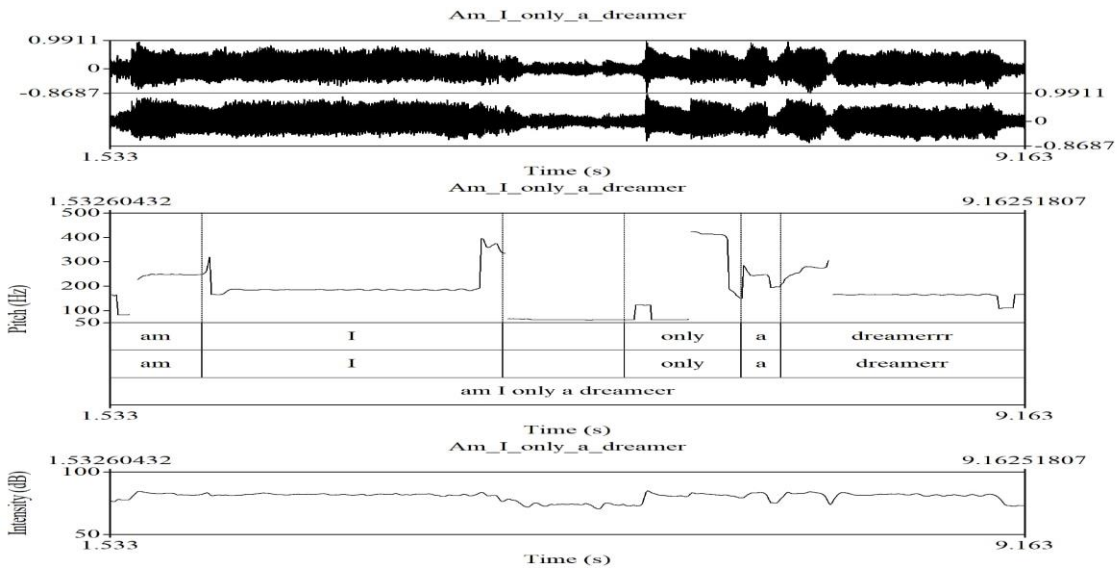

Figure 3. Dreamer

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Figure 3 shows the acoustic correlate of stress in the sampled line. The spectrogram is set between 50 Hartz (Hz) and 500 Hartz (Hz) for pitch while the intensity is between 50 Decibel (dB) and 100 Decibel (dB). Flow of rhythm in the sampled line is flat.

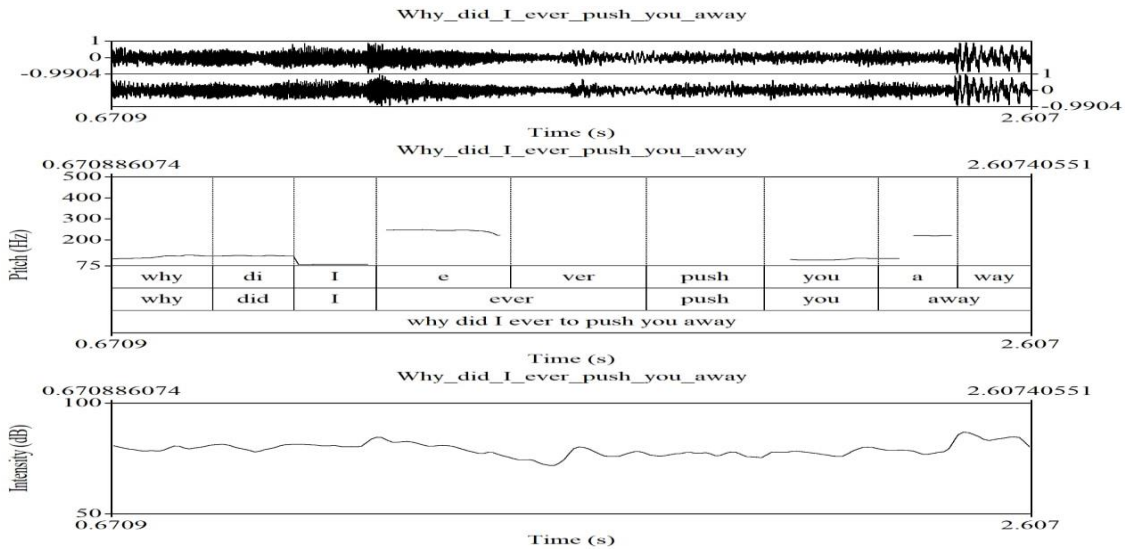

Figure 4. God Only knows

In Figure 4, the spectrogram is between 75 Hartz (Hz) and 500 Hartz (Hz) for pitch, while the intensity is between 50 Decibel (dB) and 100 Decibel (dB). Observation shows flow of rhythm in the sampled line to be flat. The timing was realised at 0.2151 milliseconds (ms) per syllable.

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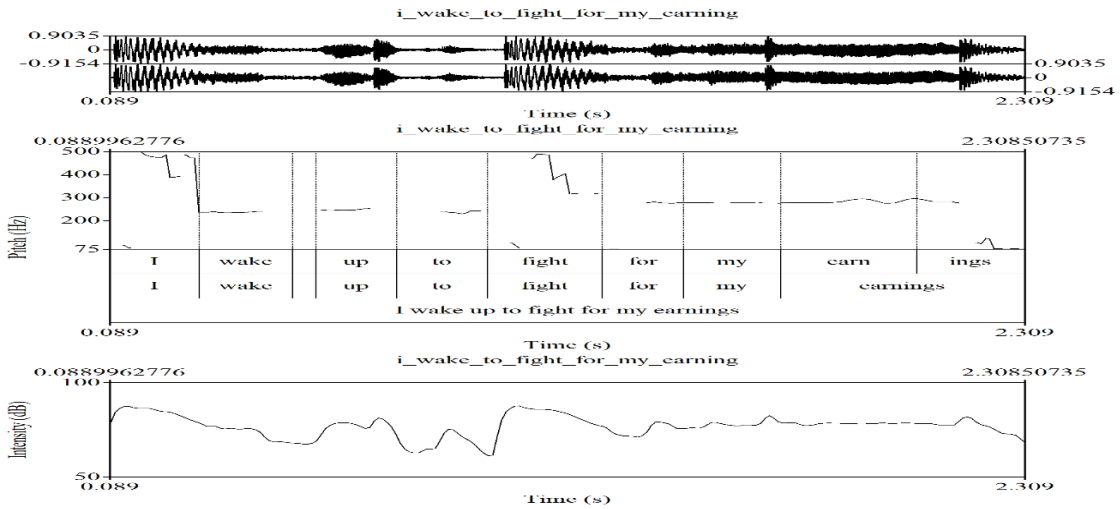

Figure 5. Free Mind

Figure 5 presents the pitch spectrogram between 75 Hartz (Hz) and 500 Hartz (Hz) while intensity is set between 50 Decibel (dB) and 100 Decibel (dB). The observable output shows wave in the flow of rhythm in the sampled line. Syllables were realised at timing of 0.2467 milliseconds (ms) per syllable.

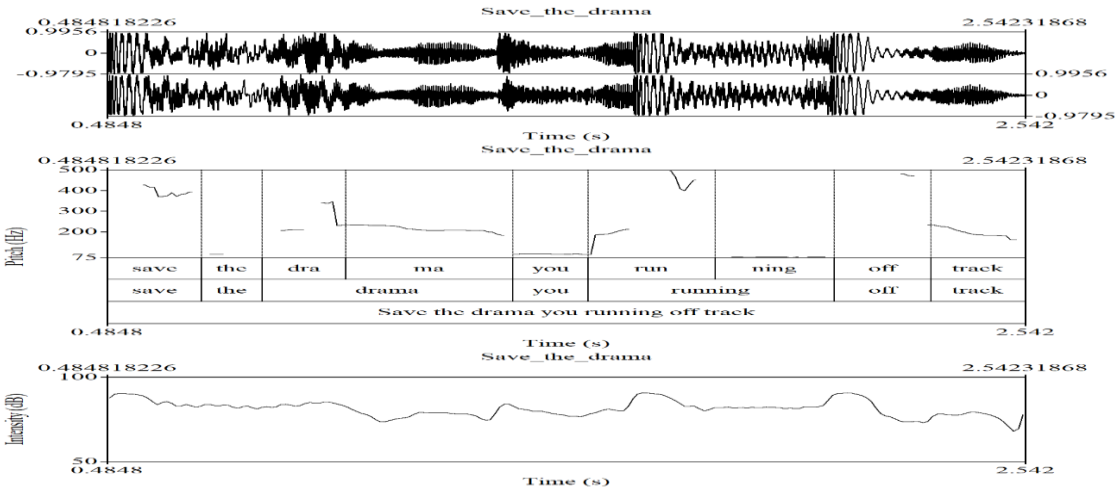

Figure 6. Damages

In Figure 6 the pitch spectrogram is between 75 Hartz (Hz) and 500 Hartz (Hz) and intensity is between 50 Decibel (dB) and 100 Decibel (dB). The output shows flow of

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rhythm in the sampled line. Syllables were realised at equal timing of 0.2286 milliseconds (ms).

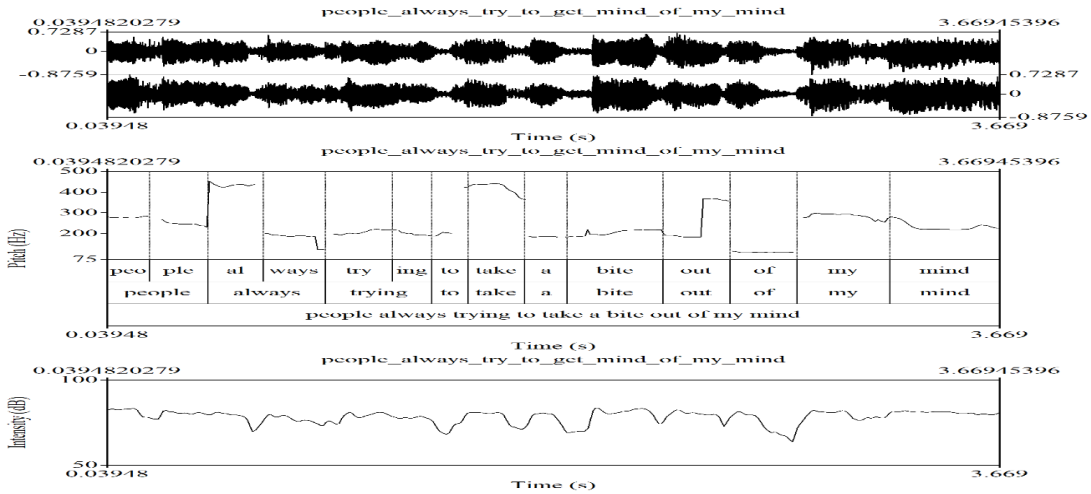

Figure 7. Found

Figure 7 shows the pitch spectrogram to be between 75 Hartz (Hz) and 500 Hartz (Hz) and intensity is between 50 Decibel (dB) and 100 Decibel (dB). The output shows flow of rhythm in the sampled line. Syllables were realised at timing of 0.2593 milliseconds (ms) per syllable.

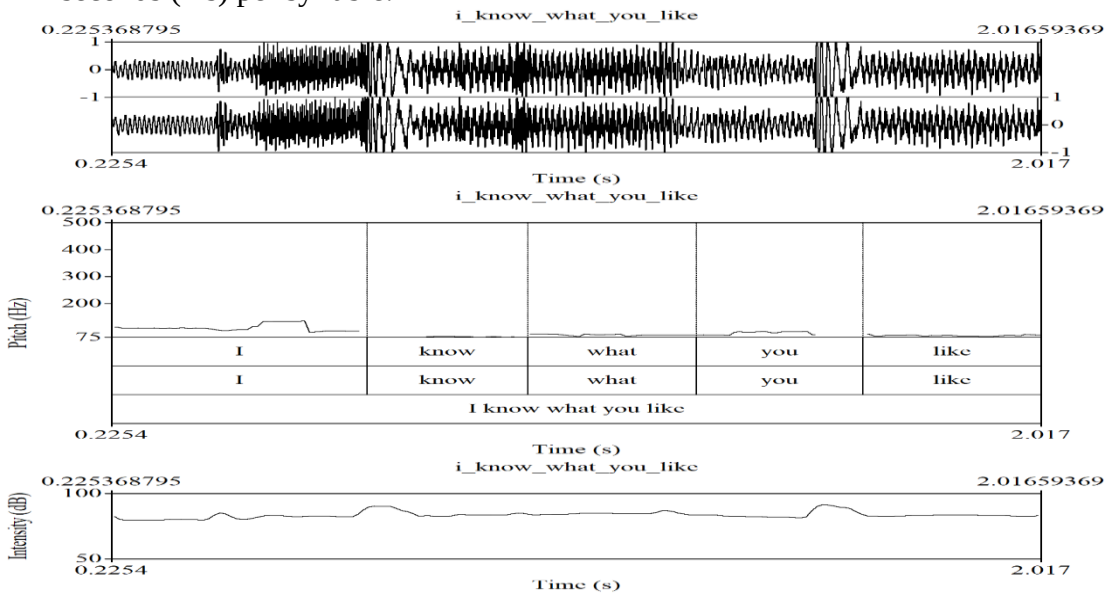

Figure 8. Essence

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In Figure 8 the pitch spectrogram is between 75 Hartz (Hz) and 500 Hartz (Hz) and intensity is between 50 Decibel (dB) and 100 Decibel (dB). Syllables were realised at timing of 0.3583 milliseconds (ms) per syllable.

4. Results and Discussion of findings

The objectives of the study are: to ascertain whether or not the isochronic patterns in the selected lyrics of Adedamola Adefolahan and Temilade Openiyi conform to Standard English (SE) rhythm pattern, and if Nigerian Hip-hop could be used as an alternative medium to teach English rhythm in Nigerian schools.

From the segmentation of the selected lines in the lyrics, the utterances are perceived to have preponderance of stressed syllables on relatively all the syllables that make up the songs and this describe the rhythm pattern in the sampled Nigerian Hip-Hop as syllable-timed. Instances include: //aɪ// //keɪm// //ˈsɔːdɪnlɪ:// realised at equal timing of 0.2886 milliseconds (ms). //aɪ həv bɪn kɪlɪŋ// //ˈɛvriˌθɪŋ// at 0.1904ms. //aɪ/ //əm// //ə// //kɪŋ// at 0.2251ms; //juː// //dəʊnt// //fiːl// at 0.2901ms; //aɪ// //wɪʃ// //aɪ// //kʊd// //fiːl// //jɔː// //peɪn// at 0.210ms; //aɪ// //traɪd// //tu// //tiːtʃ// //ˈjuː// at 0.3071ms; //aɪ// //wɪl/ /maɪnd/ //maɪ// //mænəs// at 0.310ms; //fɪə// //ɪn// // mai// //maɪnd// /ɪz/ //ə// //ˈwɔːnɪŋ// at 0.215ms; //aɪ// //sɛd// //faɪv// //ɪn ðiː// //ˈmɔrnɪŋ// at 0.234ms; //fɪə// //ɪn// // mai// //maɪnd// /ɪz/ //ə// //ˈwɔːnɪŋ// at 0.3092ms; //aɪ ˈtraɪ tu// //ˈgɛt baɪ// //bʌt aɪm ˈbɜːnɪŋ// at 0.2967ms; //sɛnd// //miː// //a// //lʌv// //ðæt// //juː// //kænɒt// //mɪz// at 0.214ms; //aɪ// //wɪl/ /maɪnd/ //maɪ// //mænəs// realised at 0.221ms; //wəʊnt// //teɪk// //ədˈvɑːntɪdʒ// at 0.318; and //nəʊ// //mə// //dæmeidʒɪs// //naʊ// realised at 0.2011ms. This implies that the syllables in the songs were realised at relatively equal timing.

Arisisg from the findings as noticed in the syllable isochrony of the lyrics of Adedamola Adefolahan and Temilade Openiyi, it implies that Nigerain Hip-pops, even though, it is an aspect of music genre that many Nigerian youths tilt towards, the findings reveal divergence in the rhythm patterns of the lyrics which is ‘markedly’ different from the rhythm of SE. The divergence in the rhythm patterns of Nigerian Hip-hop songs and in Standard English has implication for comprehension to L2 learners. Hence, Nigerian Hip – hop cannot not be used as an alternative medium to teach English rhythm in Nigerian schools.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

In summary, the study sampled Nigerian Hip-hop for its investigation as the songs of Adedamola Adefolahan, known as *Fireboy DML* and Temilade Openiyi popularly called *Tems* were used to test divergence between the rhythmic patterns of English and Nigerian Hip-hop and if Nigerian Hip-hop can be used as a model in teaching English rhythm in Nigerian Schools. The validation for the use of the two artists was informed by their educational background and origin. Hence, for a smooth inquiry into the phenomenon being studied, the study uses metrical grid which is a tenet of metrical theory

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to determine how stress is distributed across the lyrical lines, the study was analysed acoustically using Praat - a software that is used for speech analysis in phonetics to compliment the outcome of the metrical analysis and conceptual analysis of rhythm was done using time signature and tempo to explain the aesthetic effect of music on rhythm.

Therefore, the perceptual, metrical and acoustic analysis shows that Nigerian Hip-Hop do not appropriately alternate stress in their lyrics as their utterances are characterised by heavy weight of stressed syllables which make the isochrony pattern in the sampled lyrics to tune toward syllable-timed pattern. Hence, the study does not see Nigerian Hip-hop as an alternative to teach English rhythm in Nigerian schools as its structure does not conform to the expected Standard British English rhythmic pattern, just as the aesthetic features of music affect the articulation of speeches in songs.

From the findings above, it is believed that the recommendation presented below would help to improve language learners' understanding of English rhythm.

- School syllabus should emphasise the teaching of Oral English from Primary Education to the higher level. This will enhance the proper articulation of speech by the students and improve their spoken English performance in Nigeria.
- Schools should be mandated to have language laboratories. The language laboratories will serve as the place to teach practical aspects of language as we have it in other science courses like Physics, Biology, and Chemistry.
- Language teachers should be mandated to engage in regular training and workshop on Practical Spoken English. This will further help to make them function as a role model in language teaching.
- Only certificated Language teachers should be assigned to teach language courses in schools.
- Language teaching in Nigerian Secondary schools should be geared towards a spoken English class with not just a national intelligibility standard but also international intelligibly standard and social acceptability should be the watchword.

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