Understanding the Generative Features of the Kónkóló Timeline in Yoruba Music: Rhythm, Movement, Language, and Culture

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1. Background

• There is increasing interest in the connections between formal and traditional semantic approaches in analysing and communicating such musical meanings (Katz and Pesetsky 2011, Nevada and Leman 2011, Agawu 2016).

• In recent research on Yoruba traditional music and dance, there is increasing interest in not only how the kónkóló timeline serve as the background metric/rhythmic organization and time marker in Yoruba music, but also how it generates extra-musical (rhythm, movement, language, and cultural events) meanings (Omojola 2012, Vidal 2012, Oludare 2015). However, information on how the kónkóló timeline is linked to generating these musical semantics are insufficient in literature.

• Previous and separate bodies of work have investigated the nature of rhythm in terms of its cultural functions, cognitive and neural links with language and movement, as well as the potential pedagogical and therapeutic benefits of such links (Chernoff 1979, Nketia 1982, Agawu 2006, Clayton et al 2005, Overy & Turner 2009, Schaefer 2014), but it is still unclear the semantic analytical approach to communicate how the kónkóló timeline (auditory rhythmic input) generate various cognitive layers (performatve output) displayed in Yoruba musical culture.

2. Aim

To understand how the kónkóló timeline generate musical and cultural meanings and communicated.

Our main research questions:

(1) What kinds of socio-cultural cognitive complexity does the generative features of the kónkóló timeline exhibit?
(2) What musical meanings does the kónkóló rhythm portend in its function and association with movement, language, and culture?

3. Methods

• Empirical studies: 6 performances (each) of 3 traditional drum music and 3 dance song repertoires
• Participants Interview: Each drum and dance ensemble leaders were interviewed

4. Analyses


• We adopted a semantic approach to investigate how the kónkóló timeline generates movement, language, and their functional meanings during cultural events.

• We examined the implied affective aspects and therapeutic benefits of the auditory (kónkóló) rhythm input in the performances using the shared affective motion experience (SAME) model (Molnar-Szakacs et al 2012).

5. Results and Discussions

6. Conclusion

The kónkóló timeline function not only as a hierarchical system of metric/rhythmic organization, it also generates a form of socio-cultural cognitive layers, which serve as the connection between formal and traditional semantic approaches of analysing:

• The generative features of the kónkóló timeline in Yoruba music is sacrosanct, towards its musical and cultural meanings.