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SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF THE SONG TITLED"LAST LAST" BY BURNA BOY

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ABSTRACT

This journal article conducts a semantic analysis of Burna Boy's Hip-Hop track "Last Last" using Leech's seven types of meaning as a framework. The study explores code-mixed lexical items, identifies stylistic features, and uncovers implied meanings within the lyrics. Employing a descriptive approach and content analysis method, the research reveals that Burna Boy utilizes composite sentence structures, figurative language, repetition, and cultural references to create a unique musical style. The findings emphasize the artistic and cultural value of Nigerian hip-hop, showcasing its role in reflecting socio-political and economic conditions while offering diverse thematic meanings. The article contributes to a deeper understanding of Burna Boy's artistic expression and highlights the cultural significance embedded in his music.

Keywords: Burna Boy, Semantic Analysis, Last Last, Implied Meaning, Nigerian Hip-Hop.

1. Introduction

Music, as a form of communication, holds profound significance in human interaction, serving as a powerful conduit for expression and the exchange of ideas. In the rich tapestry of musical genres, hip-hop stands out as a vibrant cultural phenomenon, renowned for its ability to capture the essence of societal narratives and individual experiences. Within the realm of hip-hop, Nigerian artists have carved a unique space, blending indigenous sounds with global influences to create a distinct musical landscape that reflects the country's rich cultural heritage and dynamic social landscape. This study embarks on a journey into the semantic analysis of Burna Boy's Hip-Hop song, "Last Last", a captivating composition that explores themes of love and relationships within the context of contemporary Nigerian society. By dissecting the linguistic elements and cultural references embedded within the song's lyrics, this analysis seeks to unravel the deeper meanings and underlying messages conveyed by the artist.

Language, being intrinsic to human existence, plays a pivotal role in facilitating social connections and effective communication. Ugoala (2022) submits that ''language is vital in maintaining cordial relationships between individuals, groups and countries'' (p, 171).Semantics, the study of meaning in language, serves as a vital framework for understanding the depth and nuances of linguistic expressions. In the realm of music, semantics takes on a unique dimension, as songs serve as vessels for conveying emotions, experiences, and social commentary.

Drawing from Geoffrey Leech's comprehensive framework of seven types of meaning—denotative, connotative, collocative, affective, thematic, stylistic, and reflected meaning—this study endeavours to conduct a semantic analysis of Burna Boy's "Last Last". By examining

each facet of meaning in the song's lyrics, from the literal to the metaphorical, the analysis aims to unveil the layers of complexity inherent in the artist's expression.

Moreover, this study seeks to illuminate the disparities between the artiste's intentions and the interpretations of listeners, shedding light on the intricate interplay of language within Nigerian Hip-Hop. Through an exploration of code-mixed lexical items, sentence structures, repetition patterns, and stylistic features, the analysis aims to decipher the cultural and linguistic nuances that shape the lyrical landscape of Nigerian hip-hop.

The study aims to not only unravel the linguistic intricacies of "Last Last" but also to contextualize its significance within the broader discourse of Nigerian music and culture. The specific objectives of the study are: to find out the purpose of the code-switching and code-mixing in Burna Boy's ''Last Last'', to find out the stylistic features in Burna Boy's "Last Last'' and to examine the implied meanings in Burna Boy's ''Last Last''. By delving into the implied meanings and socio-cultural commentary embedded within the song, the analysis endeavours to offer valuable insights into the artiste's perspective and the societal themes addressed in his work.

In essence, this study seeks to contribute a multifaceted understanding of Nigerian hip-hop music, exploring its linguistic, cultural, and socio-political dimensions through a comprehensive semantic analysis of Burna Boy's "Last Last". By uncovering the layers of meaning and expression woven into the fabric of the song, the analysis aims to enrich our appreciation of the genre's artistic depth and cultural significance.

2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is anchored in Leech's (1981) seven categories of meaning, providing a comprehensive lens for analysing semantic elements within the Nigerian hip-hop song selected. These categories offer a nuanced understanding of the layers of meaning embedded in language and contribute to the exploration of emotional, and linguistic dimensions within the genre. Leech's framework encompasses:

Denotative Meaning: This represents the literal or dictionary definition of a word or phrase, serving as a universal, factual representation. Denotative meaning is crucial in linguistic communication, with conceptual organization comparable to syntactic and phonological structures.

Connotative Meaning: Beyond denotative meaning, connotative meaning involves emotional, social, cultural, and personal associations triggered by a word. It goes beyond the literal definition, offering an ambiguous layer of meaning that is culturally and socially determined. Collocative Meaning: Arising from the typical patterns of word co-occurrence in natural language, **collocative meaning** provides nuanced interpretations beyond individual definitions. Firth's notion that "you shall know a word by the company it keeps" emphasizes the importance of word co-occurrence patterns.

Affective Meaning: Affective meaning encompasses the emotional or subjective associations a word carries, influencing interpretation and understanding. Originating from its impact on

human emotion in the communicative process, affective meaning reflects the speaker's attitudes and feelings.

Reflexive Meaning: Reflexive meaning pertains to the relationship between a word or phrase and the context in which it is used. Language mirrors or reflects social and cultural contexts, incorporating elements such as attitudes, assumptions, and beliefs. It involves language reflecting on itself, including metalinguistic expressions.

Stylistic Meaning: Stylistic meaning, as posited by Leech (1974), is the non-referential, non-conceptual aspect resulting from the selection and combination of language forms. Influenced by context and social relationships, it conveys patterns perceived as stylistic features, contributing to the overall meaning.

Thematic meaning is determined by the arrangement, concentration, and emphasis of a message. It is conveyed through structuring a message to organize attention and focus, providing insights into the central idea intended by the encoder.

This framework guides the analysis of semantic elements within the selected Nigerian hip-hop song. The synthesis of Leech's categories of meaning offers a comprehensive approach to understanding the multifaceted layers of meaning embedded in the lyrics, contributing to a nuanced exploration of the linguistic richness of Nigerian hip-hop music. The study employs qualitative research and content analysis methodologies to ensure an in-depth and systematic examination of the semantic dimensions present in the hip-hop song under study.

3. Literature Review

This literature review aims at providing a comprehensive understanding of the semantic analysis of Burna Boy's song "Last Last", thereby establishing a theoretical foundation for current research endeavours. By critically examining previous studies, theories, methodologies, and findings, this review identifies key concepts, gaps, and limitations in the existing literature while shedding light on the evolution and significance of hip-hop music in Nigeria. The semantic analysis yields a tapestry of themes within "Last Last." Burna Boy intricately employs metaphors and expressive language to convey messages of resilience, love, and societal reflection. The synthesis of personal experiences with broader societal issues produces a multilayered narrative that resonates across diverse audiences.

Hip-Hop Music: An Evolutionary Journey

Originating in the Bronx, New York City, during the 1970s, hip-hop emerged as a cultural movement addressing social issues and urban life. Initially rooted in DJ turntablism, hip-hop evolved into a diverse genre encompassing subgenres like gangsta rap and Southern rap. Notably, the 1990s witnessed the rise of gangsta rap, while the 2000s brought further diversification with the emergence of Southern rap and crunk music. Today, hip-hop stands as a global phenomenon, influencing popular culture and providing a platform for self-expression.

Hip-Hop Music in Nigeria: A Cultural Fusion

Nigerian hip-hop, commonly referred to as Afro hip-hop, has experienced significant growth and recognition in recent decades. Although its roots can be traced back to the late 1970s and early 1980s, it wasn't until the 2000s that Nigerian hip-hop gained widespread popularity. Pioneering groups like "The Remedies" played a pivotal role in this emergence, notably with their 1998 hit "Sakamo," which propelled hip-hop into the mainstream Nigerian music scene. Nigerian hip-hop artists have embraced a fusion of native languages such as Yoruba, Igbo, and Pidgin with English, reflecting the country's rich cultural diversity. This blending of linguistic and cultural influences has contributed to hip-hop's profound impact on Nigerian youth, addressing a myriad of societal issues ranging from love and politics to violence and peace.

In recent years, Nigerian hip-hop has continued to evolve and adapt to new trends, incorporating elements of trap, rhythm and blues, and electronic music. The accessibility of digital technology and the internet has facilitated the rise of independent artistes, allowing them to reach global audiences and reshape the hip-hop landscape.

Notable figures in contemporary Nigerian hip-hop, such as Jude Abaga (MI), Olamide Adedeji, Chibuzor Nelson Azubuike (Phyno), and Folarin Falana (Falz), have achieved significant commercial success and international recognition. Their contributions to the genre have further solidified Nigeria's position on the global hip-hop map, underscoring the enduring relevance and impact of Nigerian hip-hop in the music industry.

Nigerian hip-hop remains a vibrant and dynamic musical genre, continually evolving and adapting to cultural, technological, and societal changes. From its humble beginnings to its current global prominence, Nigerian hip-hop has traversed a remarkable journey, driven by the creativity and resilience of its artistes. As the genre continues to evolve, it will undoubtedly remain a powerful medium for self-expression and cultural reflection, shaping the musical landscape of Nigeria and beyond.

4. Research Methodology

The methodology employed in this study combines qualitative research and content analysis, offering a robust approach to thoroughly explore the semantic elements within the selected Nigerian hip-hop song titled "Last Last" by Burna Boy. Qualitative content analysis is employed as the method of data analysis. This systematic approach involves the careful examination of textual data to identify patterns, themes, and meanings within the content. Content analysis encompasses a range of analytical methods, from strict, systematic textual analysis to impressionistic, intuitive, and interpretive methods (Rosengren, 1981). According to Wahyuni (2012), content analysis is a research technique for subjectively interpreting textual data through a methodical coding and pattern-finding procedure, aiming to impart knowledge and comprehension of the occurrences.

The lyrics were sourced online, downloaded, and served as the foundational textual content for uncovering the semantic elements and meanings embedded within the song. The analysis encompasses Leech's (1981) seven types of meaning: Denotative (conceptual), Connotative, Collocative, Affective, Thematic, Stylistic, and Reflected meaning. The analysis involves categorizing identified meanings and establishing connections between different parts of the

lyrics. This comprehensive approach allows for a nuanced exploration of the semantic richness and complexity within the selected Nigerian hip-hop song.

5. Data Analysis

Datum: "Last Last" by Burna Boy (BB)

Denotative Meaning: This is the common or daily dictionary meaning of a term or expression.
Excerpt 1 BB:
"E don cast"
In excerpt 1BB, Burna Boy infused a colloquial phrase in Nigerian Pidgin English that means "it has happened" or "it is over". This indicates the use of code-mixing as the infusion of pidgin and English language is seen in excerpt 1. In this context, it may indicate that the narrator has come to terms that his relationship is truly over.
Excerpt 2 BB:
"*Last Last"*
Excerpt 2 BB is a phrase that is often used to express finality or emphasis. In this context, it could be used to emphasize that the end of the relationship is final and cannot be changed. The use of repetition and parallelism contributes to the overall style and impact of the song.
Excerpt 3 BB:
"*Na everybody go chop breakfast"*
In excerpt 3 BB, an idiomatic phrase is evident which is written in Nigerian Pidgin English with the meaning"everyone will eventually move on". In excerpts 1 BB, 2 BBand 3 BB, the composite sentence structure consists mainly of simple sentences that express concise thoughts and ideas.
Excerpt 4 BB:
"you go bow for the result o"
The code-mixed phrase in excerpt 4 BB implies that the other person or party involved in the situation will accept or acknowledge the speaker's victory. This conveys the idea that the speaker is confident in his abilities and believes that he has won a situation or competition by default, without any doubt or discussion. Excerpt 4 BBis in the future tense, indicating a prediction or expectation that the listener will eventually acknowledge or recognize the outcomebeing discussed.
Excerpt 5 BB:
"I no go fit take your, I no go fit take your insult o, Omo mind as you dey talk o"
Excerpt 5 BB expresses the idea that the speaker will not tolerate any insult or disrespect from others. The"*I no go fit take"* is a colloquial phrase in Nigerian Pidgin English which means "I will not accept" or "I cannot tolerate". The "*Omo mind as you dey talk o*"in excerpt 5 BBis an idiomatic phrase in Nigerian Pidgin English which means "watch what you say." It is used to convey a warning to the person who may be insulting or disrespecting the speaker.
Excerpt 6 BB:*"My feelings been dey swing like Jangolova"*
The phrase in excerpt 6 BB is an idiomatic expression that is used to convey the idea that the speaker's emotions are fluctuating, and are swinging back and forth. In standardEnglish *"Jangolova"* is called "Seesaw" (a swing for children). The implied meaning in excerpt 6 conveys that "*Jangolova"*is a Nigerian Pidgin for a state of confusion or chaos. It conveys that the speaker's emotions are unstable and constantly changing due to the end of his relationship. The repetition of excerpt 6 BB emphasizes the intensity and frequency of these emotional

fluctuations. Excerpt 6 BB also shows the theme of emotionalinstability that comes with heartbreak and disappointment.
Using a simile inexcerpt 6 BB, Burna Boy compares his unstable emotional state after the break up to "*jangolova"* achildren's playing machine that swings back and forth. Thisparticular line is repeated four times in the song to emphasise the high intensity of the emotional instability he suffered after the heartbreak. Next, the Connotative meaning in Burna Boy's song is analysed.

Connotative Meaning: Connotative meaningis the type of meaning that a word or statement transmits in addition to its usual meaning.
Excerpt 7 BB - *"She manipulate my love oo","I no holy ooo andI no denge pose"*
Inexcerpt7 BB,there is a connotative meaning of betrayal, manipulation, and deception. The first four words in excerpt 7 BBis a Nigerian Pidgin word for pretending or being manipulative. The speaker is accusing his former partner of manipulating his love for her and not being honest with him. *"I no holy ooo andI no denge pose"*in excerpt 7 BB suggests that the speaker is aware of his flaws and imperfections, and he is not a holy or clean person either. Excerpt 7 BB illustrates his level of humility.*"Denge pose*" in Nigeria's local parlance means being ostentatious. That is one of the few ways Burna identifieswith all his audience irrespective of their social class.
Excerpt 8 BB:
Like e Baba Fryo", My eye o don cry o"
Excerpt 8 BB highlights the speaker's emotional state, and is an idiomatic phrase in Nigerian Pidgin English which means "I have cried a lot."*Baba Fryo"*is a Nigerian musician known for singing emotional and sorrowful songs. The phrase is used to emphasise the level of emotional pain and sadness the speaker is feeling. Overall, the connotative meaning and implied meaning of these lyrics is that the speaker has been betrayed, manipulated, and deceived by his former partner, and he is expressing his emotional pain and sadness.

Collocative Meaning: Collocative meaning refers to the associations and relationships that certain words have with other words in language.
Excerpt 9 BB - *"love of my life"*
In the context of expressing or discussing love and emotions, excerpt 9 BBcollocates and means the one you love with every breath of your life. Burna Boy uses collocation to tell us he could die for the woman he is talking about in the song.

Affective Meaning: Since the song "last last" was used to express Burna's emotional state after a breakup, the song is filled with lines conveying deep feelings.
Excerpt10 BB - *"I put my life into my job"*
In excerpt 10 BB, Burna Boy's unwavering commitment to his craft is seen but was affected by the manipulation he suffered in love (excerpt 7 BB). Burna Boy went further to talk about how he expressed his feelings after disappointment from his lover with heavy affection, meaning as this line *"My eye o don cry o*"was repeated so many times in the song to foreground his grief for his lover.

Stylistic Meaning: Stylistic meaning refers to the aspect of meaning in language that is associated with the stylistic choices made by a speaker or writer.
Excerpt 11 BB - *"I dey try to buy motor,one Toyota Corolla"*

Burna Boy used the reference'Toyota Corolla' in line excerpt 11 BB to indicate social class. Toyota Corolla is a brand of car mostly used by those in the middle class in Nigeria. This suggests that Burna Boy used to be in the middle class before becoming an established A-list artiste who uses Ferrari and stays in Lekki. Ferrari and Lekki are words with social meaning and representation of the high class in Nigeria. Ferrari is only driven by wealthy people globally, Lekki is in Lagos state of Nigeria and is one of the areas occupied by wealthy people in Nigeria.In the lyrics, we observed the use of repetition to show emphasis: *"Last Last", 'Igbo* and *Shayo"*, and *"bye-bye"*. Burna Boy's choice of words throughout the song depicts how elements of statistics are used to push a message to the audience. Burna Boy uses certain stylistic styles as observed in the switch from pure English to Pidgin English throughout the song as seen in excerpt 12 BB below:

Excerpt 12 BB - *"Why you say I did nothing for you?""I for do anything you want me to do"*

Along the line, Burna uses standard English and a fusion of Nigerian Pidgin English as seen in excerpt 13 BB*"Maybe another time, maybe another life, You will be my wife and we'll get it right. E don cast, last last, na everybody go chop breakfast"*

From standard English, Burna Boy makes use of a sudden switch to Pidgin. Burna Boy employed the stylistic device called code-switching. He uses this techniqueto reach out to both his learned and unlearned audience.

Reflexive Meaning: The reflexive meaning is used to indicate an action that the subject performs on itself. It often conveys a sense of self-action, self-reference, or self-involvement.Another unique way Burna Boy conveys the song's message is by using words with multiple conceptual meanings.

Excerpt 14 BB - *"I need Igbo and Shayo ooo, where "Igbo and Shayo ooo"*

Excerpt 14 BB provides the listeners with a reflected meaning. "*Igbo and Shayo"*loosely means marijuana and alcohol respectively in the Nigerian context. Not everyone turns to marijuana and alcohol to get over their grief. Hence, "*Igbo and Shayo"*are suggestive means one can use to get over letdown, disappointment, and heartbreak as implied by Burna Boy. The sentence structure of this excerpt is the compound sentences which combine multiple related ideas using coordinating conjunctions. For instance, in the chorus, the line "I *need Igbo and shayo (shayooo)"* is repeated, presenting the desire for two things connected by the conjunction "and".

Thematic Meaning: Thematic meaning in linguistics refers to the aspect of meaning that pertains to the central theme or topic of a sentence or text. It encompasses the primary message or point that the speaker or writer is conveying through their choice of words, sentence structure, and overall composition. The vital messages in the song were passed through arrangements of the lines and repetition. The emphasis on "*Shayo o, Igbo o*" as previously exemplified in excerpt 14 BB accentuates the need to get over grief and disappointment. The use of parallelism is noticeable where the repetition of *"shayo"*creates a rhythmic pattern and emphasizes the desire for "*Igbo and shayo".*

Likewise, excerpt 15 BB "*Bye-bye" w*as repetitively used to foreground the theme of moving on from disappointment. Bye-bye is the Pidgin expression for Goodbye in Standard English. It was strategically used towards the end of the song to amplify the message.

6. Discussions

The discussion section provides a comprehensive analysis of Burna Boy's Nigerian hip-hop track, "Last Last." The study delves into denotative, connotative, collocative, affective, stylistic, reflexive, and thematic meanings, aiming to unravel the intricate layers of semantic elements within the lyrics. The exploration extends to code-mixed lexical items, sentence structure, and implied meanings, shedding light on the depth and complexity of Burna Boy's artistic expression. Additionally, the emotional resonance of the song is dissected, revealing how semantics contribute to its overall impact and connectivity with listeners.

In the examination of Burna Boy's "Last Last", the song emerges as a poignant exploration of post-breakup emotions, skillfully weaving linguistic nuances and cultural references to convey universal themes of resilience and growth. The careful analysis, drawing on Leech's seven types of meaning (1981), unveils the depth and complexity inherent in Nigerian hip-hop lyrics. This study significantly contributes to the broader understanding of the genre as a powerful platform for cultural expression and social commentary. The findings underscore the significance of linguistic and stylistic choices, emphasizing their role in effectively conveying nuanced emotions and themes within the realm of Nigerian hip-hop.

7. Findings

The analysis encompasses connotative and denotative meanings, code-switching, and code-mixing, examining the composite sentence structure, stylistic features, and implied meanings within the lyrics. In addressing the first objective, the study reveals that Burna Boy employed code-switching and code-mixing to broaden the appeal of the listeners. Code-mixed lexical items in "Last Last" contribute specific meanings, adding depth and cultural significance to the lyrics. The analysis also shows that Burna Boy uses repetition to reinforce central themes and encourage audience participation. Stylistic features, such as figurative language, rhetorical devices, and the mix of Pidgin and Standard English, contribute to the uniqueness of the music.This finding reinforces Ugoala's (2020) view that ''the various cultural and socio-linguistic thoughts of Nigerians cannot be adequately expressed using only the standard form of English language'' (p, 63). The study uncovers implied meanings in the selected hip-hop music, revealing more profound messages and emotions beyond literal interpretations. Burna Boy's "Last Last" conveys implied meanings related to love and heartbreak, adding layers of complexity and depth to the song.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, the specific analysis of Burna Boy's "Last Last" within the broader context of Nigerian hip-hop reinforces the genre's capacity to subtly portray societal occurrences. The research findings unveil both connotative and denotative meanings embedded in the song's lyrics. Through meticulous examination, the study underscores the adept use of code-switching and code-mixing by the artist, exemplified by Burna Boy's seamless blending of languages to appeal to a diverse audience. This linguistic diversity adds depth to the lyrics, facilitating the expression of intricate ideas and emotions.

Furthermore, the study delves into the composite sentence structures employed by Burna Boy, identifying distinct patterns that contribute to the song's engaging and dynamic musical experience. Stylistically, Burna Boy utilizes various elements, including figurative language, rhetorical devices, and repetition, enhancing the creativity and vividness of the lyrics. The

analysis extends to uncovering implied meanings, revealing deeper messages and emotions beyond the literal interpretations of Burna Boy's lyrics. Contextual clues, allusions, and metaphorical expressions contribute additional layers of complexity and depth to the song. The study highlights the influence of different languages, thematic meanings, and reflexive meanings, showcasing the versatility and multidimensionality of Burna Boy's contribution to Nigerian hip-hop.

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