



Ìgunnukó Music in Àwórì Land: An Ethnographic Study of Indigenous Compositional Techniques

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Abstract

This study investigated the compositional techniques in *Ìgunnukó* music, an indigenous genre in Àwórì land, Lagos, Nigeria, amidst concerns of cultural erosion and modernisation. Despite the prominence of *Ìgunnukó* music in Àwórì ritual life, its compositional logic remains under-documented in Yorùbá music scholarship. The study identified the compositional techniques utilised in *Ìgunnukó* music with a view to examining their cultural significance and documenting the genre's musical characteristics for preservation and future consultation. The study contributes a structured and analytical account of *Ìgunnukó* musical creativity, offering new insight into how Yorùbá linguistic and rhythmic systems shape indigenous composition. The study employed an ethnographic qualitative design, combining participant observation, semi-structured interviews with 20 purposively selected *Ìgunnukó* practitioners, and a targeted literature review. Findings show that *Ìgunnukó* musicians draw on Yorùbá speech-based rhythmic and melodic systems, responsorial structures, and improvisatory practices to generate distinctive melo-rhythmic patterns rooted in communal performance aesthetics. The study demonstrates that *Ìgunnukó* music embodies a coherent indigenous compositional system that remains central to Àwórì cultural identity. It underscores the need for sustained documentation and further analytical research on Yorùbá traditional genres.

Keywords: Àwórì Land, Compositional Techniques, Ethnographic Study, *Ìgunnukó* Music, Indigenous



Introduction

Music, a creative medium of organisation of sounds, is a natural phenomenon found in every human society (Slobin & Titon, 2005, p. 2). In Africa, music portrays the totality of its cultural product. This justifies the assertion that music, which is part and parcel of African culture, is regarded as being functional because no event passes by in African societies without profuse music-making. As Achike (2011, pp. 75–92) argues, musical participation is deeply embedded in everyday social life, shaping communal identity and emotional expression. Also, Ndubisi and Kanu (2021, p. 90) quote Plato as saying that “music is a moral law that gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, a charm to sadness, gaiety and life to everything.” This presupposes that in Africa, people have their lives fused with music and cannot do without it in their day-to-day activities.

For instance, in Nigeria, where there are over 250 ethnic groups and three major linguistic groups (Igbo, Hausa/Fulani, and Yorùbá), it is believed that each of these ethnic groups has its own indigenous (traditional) songs that are peculiar to them. The resultant musical and cultural pluralism in this case, according to Vidal (2012, p. 56) is that each ethnic region possesses and practices its own music based on language, ideas, and stylistic forms in the country. Olúdare (2014, p. 1) explains that traditional music in Nigeria, however, created entirely from traditional elements and existing in several idioms before the European and Arabic influences, functioned in the context of the religious and secular aspects of the people’s indigenous music, as such, representing a viable means of understanding their ethos. In this study, compositional techniques refer to the structural, linguistic, and performative devices through which *ìgunnukó* musicians generate, organise, and transmit musical ideas. For instance, in Yorùbá land, as the case with other ethnic groups in Nigeria, Idamoyibo (2008, p. 17) notes that compositional techniques are based on the general conditions in which the music is performed, as well as the principles, philosophies, and events that inform the compositions, with *ìgunnukó* music in Àwòrì land as one of such traditional typologies.

Despite the rich scholarship on Yorùbá musical traditions, *ìgunnukó* music remains underdocumented, particularly regarding its compositional logic, performance structure, and creative processes within Àwòrì communities. This paper examines the creative processes and compositional techniques employed by *ìgunnukó* musicians in Àwòrì land, offering the first systematic analysis of how linguistic, rhythmic, and performative resources shape the genre’s musical identity. By documenting these practices, the study contributes to Yorùbá musicology, cultural preservation, and the broader discourse on indigenous creativity.

Methodology

The study adopted an ethnographic ethnomusicological design appropriate for examining musical practices within their social and ritual contexts. Both primary and secondary sources were used in



collecting data. The primary source included semi-structured interviews with 20 purposively selected *ìgunnukó* practitioners. Participants were selected based on their active membership in *ìgunnukó* ensembles for a period of twenty-four years and recognised roles within festival contexts. The semi-structured interviews lasted 50 minutes and were conducted in Yorùbá, the spoken language of the people. Interview transcripts and field notes were coded thematically, while music examples were transcribed and analysed for rhythmic, melodic, and structural features. The secondary source is a consultation of relevant books, journal articles, and the Internet. Findings were interpreted through an ethnomusicological lens, emphasising the relationship between musical structure and cultural context, while ethical approval was obtained, and all participants provided informed consent.

Theoretical Framework

This study draws on Merriam's (1964) anthropological model of ethnomusicology, which conceptualises music as human behaviour embedded in cultural systems. The framework guides the analysis of compositional techniques by situating rhythmic and melodic structures within the ritual, linguistic, and social practices of the Àwòrì community. Discussing this framework, scholars such as Blacking (1974) emphasised music as "humanly organised sound"; Nketia's (1984) analysis of African rhythmic and tonal systems further supports the study's focus on the cultural logic underpinning *ìgunnukó* compositional practices. The study, however, applies Merriam's tripartite model of concept, behaviour, and sound to interpret how *ìgunnukó* musicians conceptualise, perform, and structure their music. This framework, therefore, provides the analytical basis for interpreting *ìgunnukó* compositional techniques as culturally situated practices shaped by language, ritual performance, and communal aesthetics.

ìgunnukó Music in Àwòrì Land

ìgunnukó music is a socio-cultural and religious music of the Àwòrì people of Lagos State. The music is used during the festival and ritual performance in *ìgunnukó* society, and it is believed that the history of *ìgunnukó* music is as old as the history of the Àwòrì people, that has been practicing it for centuries (Adébólá, 2019, p. 55). In the words of Chief Lateef Isau, the *Shíàbàkokò* of *ìgunnukó* society in an oral interview (2019), *ìgunnukó* is one of the festivals observed in Àwòrì land for years, and the role of music during the festival is indispensable. Unlike other indigenous music in Àwòrì land, *ìgunnukó* music is restricted in terms of its performance to *ìgunnukó* festival; hence, it is referred to as *ìgunnukó* festival music. The music is patterned by the use of the songs that are orally passed on from one generation to another, and in the process modified by succeeding generations.

As observed in the study, *ìgunnukó* songs are mostly poetic and humorous in nature, often used in correcting immorality and social vices in the society. It is to be noted that *ìgunnukó* musicians apply imagery to critique social/ill vices and expose deviant members of the society, especially within the Àwòrì communities and its environs (Adébólá, *op. cit*).



Compositional Techniques in *Ìgunnukó* Music

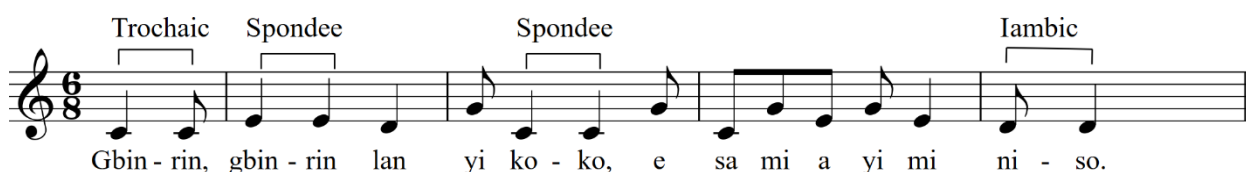
Discussing the compositional techniques employed in *Ìgunnukó* songs is to talk of the musical condiments that give flavours in their music. As observed, there is no specific rule guiding the compositional techniques of *Ìgunnukó* songs. However, such compositional techniques, which includes musical elements (speech rhythm and speech melody), musical forms (call and response, themes and variation, motif and development), and *melo*-rhythmic patterns (*hocket*, *ostinato*, and timeline), and other techniques such as repetition of the melodic phrases, sequential movement, overlapping, interjection, recitative, pickup measure/anacrusis, syncopation and improvisation are in common place. These techniques, as used in *Ìgunnukó* music composition in Àwòrì land, are discussed below.

Speech Rhythm

The rhythm of the song closely follows the speech rhythm of the words, and as such indicated by a suitable tying of notes to connect syllables or words in which the musical phrasing aligns with the spoken phrasing. This technique in music composition is used in vocal music, particularly in art songs and choral music, to create a musical setting of the text (Jones, 1954, p. 27). Scholars such as Nketia (1984); Agawu (1987); Akpabot (1998); Vidal (2012); Olúdare (2014), Oláléye and Adéyeyè (2020), Adébólá (2025), and Olúṣolá (2026), among others, explain the concept of speech rhythm within the context of African music. For instance, Olúdare (2014, p. 7) explains that speech rhythm in Yorùbá traditional music is derivative of the natural rhythmic pattern of the language (Yorùbá), with emphasis on some words, resulting in the *iambic* (short–long), *trochaic* (long–short), and *spondee* (long–long) rhythmic modes, with the *iambic* mostly in consonant with Yorùbá speech tone. This means that if a word has two syllables, one long and one short, the musical setting might use a tied note to connect two notes, where the first note is longer and the second is shorter and/or *vice versa*, to match the syllable emphasis.

Akpabot (1998, p. 49), on the other hand, posits that “the rhythm of a song, which was determined by its poetic context, was divided into long and short corresponding to the six generally accepted rhythmic modes of the period; *trochaic*, *iambic*, *dactylic*, *anapest*, *spondee* and *tribrach*.” Although in African music, there are rules applicable to rhythmic modes, which serve as direction for the creative use of speech rhythm in Yorùbá and other Nigerian songs, as noted in *Ìgunnukó* song seen in Example 1 below, where the speech rhythm is mostly *iambic*, *trochaic*, and *spondee* rhythmic modes.

Example 1: Speech rhythm in one of *Ìgunnukó* Songs.





It is to be noted that Yorùbá songs make use of free, regular, and/or even both rhythms together, and that with the tones in consonance with the words, it makes each musical phrase lead to one another, creating a natural sense of steady progression. As observed in *ìgunnukó* songs collected for this study, the above rhythms mentioned are used by the *ìgunnukó* musicians as creative resources of musical expression and unambiguousness of the language (Yorùbá in Àwòrì dialect) in use. It is also worth to note that in *ìgunnukó* music, the most prevalent time signatures used are simple duple (2_4) and quadruple (4_4), and compound duple (6_8) with over dependent on compound duple time. The use of 2 notes against 3 notes known as 'hemiola' rhythm is also common in *ìgunnukó* music as one of such compositional techniques in their music, as shown in Song 1, bars 2 and 6 below.

Song 1

Gbere Gbere La NYi Koko

Call

Gbe-re gbe-re lan yi ko-ko, e sa mi a yi mi ni so o,

Response

O-gin-rin gbin-rin lan yi ko-ko.

Text in Yorùbá (Àwòrì dialect)

Translation in English

Call: *Gbèrè gbèrè là n yí kòkò,*
Esá mi a yí mi nì so,

We gradually roll the mortar on the ground,
Please gently roll me,

Response: *Ògbìnri gbìnri là n yí kòkò.* Gradually we roll the mortar on the ground.

Speech Melody

In African music, especially in regions where the languages are tonal, melodies are tied closely to speech patterns, with the rise and fall of pitches in speech which influence the melodic contours of songs as in Example 2 below. This means that the close relationship of the melodies often mirror the tonal inflections and rhythms of the spoken language.

Example 2: The rise and fall of pitches in speech and melodic contour in *ìgunnukó* Songs.

Words

Gun - nu IE - gun so - ko, e - so la - be 'gun - nu

M M M H L H L L H H M M



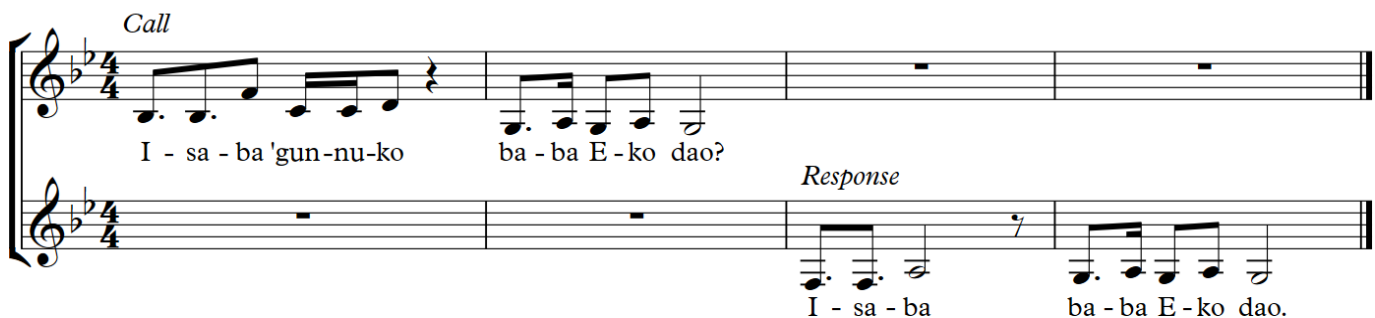
Music



In Yorùbá music for instance, melodies are subjected to the tonal inflection of the language. The language as such makes use of three phonemic tones that is, High (H: /), Low (L: \), and Middle (M: –), with a full tone (2nd) as the smallest intervallic distance in speech tones of words, and a range of a third (3rd) up to a fifth (5th) between the ‘low’ and ‘high’ speech tones (Vidal, 2012, pp. 72–73). A typical example below illustrates the intervallic distance between the three Yorùbá phonemic tones in a call and response form, as used by *ìgunnukó* musicians as seen in Song 2, bars 1–4 below, which also shows the textual, linear structure, and musical illustration of intervallic distance of Yorùbá phonemic tones in *ìgunnukó* music.

Song 2

Isaba 'Gunnuko



\ \ / \ - - / \ / \ / \

Lead Voice (Call): Isaba Igunnuko, Baba Eko da?

L L H L M M H L H L H L

\ \ / \ / \ / \

Chorus (Response): Isaba Baba Eko da?

L L H L H L H L

ìgunnukó music, like most of African traditional music, is knotted to the speech melody of the Yorùbá language, where the contour of the melodic movement is frequently controlled by the speech tone of the



language used. *ìgunnukó* melodies are born out of the text, emotion and through musical factors. Most of the songs which are composed by *ìgunnukó* devotees and singers/musicians have their sources from the above three factors. *ìgunnukó* melodies are short and often characterised by repetition, which is also one of the characteristics of African music.

Also, *ìgunnukó* songs make use of such compositional techniques known as parody technique. In parody technique, there is *logogenic* (word-born or speech melody), *pathogenic* (emotion-born or improvised melody), and *melogenic* (melody-born or theme melody) as extensively discussed by Adédèjì (2015) in his work. A critical analysis of *ìgunnukó* songs selected for this study have a descending melodic contour, pendulum as it fluctuates in each line, and occasionally ascending and quickly return back to the starting point; however, there are differences in the qualities of the melodies. It is also to be noted that *ìgunnukó* musicians create their melodic patterns using variants of the pentatonic (both forms of *hemitonic* and *anhemitonic*) scale in which the melodic contour evinces the artistic creativity of the singer(s)/composer(s).

Call and Response

The most common form of African songs is the call and response pattern. To Vidal (2012, p. 96), "The call and response pattern form involves a solo which alternates antiphonally with a chorus". In this style, Agu (1999, p. 1) notes that the soloist, who is the leader of a group, intones the song, and sings a phrase referred to as the Call, while the Choir or Chorus respond with another short phrase or musical sentence which differs in text and melody from the Call. It is to be mentioned that in many cases, both sections differ in terms of rhythmic structures.

From the Yorùbá Group Singing, Vidal (*op. cit.*, pp. 96–98) explains that call and response varies. In the first place, when the chorus (response) part is different from the solo (call) part but is also of equivalent musical length with it, it is referred to as A – B antiphonal form. Secondly, when the response (chorus) part is parallel to the call (solo) part either by direct, modified or sequential repetition, the call and response in this case is known as the A – A or A – A₁ antiphonal form. The third variety of the call and response is when the chorus part is different and shorter both in musical phrase and length from the solo part; it is thus referred to as A – B Short-response form. The last variety of the call and response occurs when the chorus part is different and longer both in musical phrase and length from the solo part, and this is known as A – B Long-response form.

Following Vidal's call and response paradigm, *ìgunnukó* singers make use of A – A₁ antiphonal form as compositional technique in their songs, where the texts of the soloist (call) and chorus (response) are parallel through identical endings and similar phonological beginning of linear units as noted in Song 3 below.



Song 3

Saworo Ma Ro

Call

Sa-wo ra, sa-wo-ro ma ro e, sa-wo-ro ma ro a,

7

b'o se n s'o-wa -'wo naa re;

Response

e b'o se n s'o-ma-'wo naa re o.

Text in *Yorùbá (Àwòrí dialect)*

Call: *ṣaworo, ṣaworo mǎa ród e,*
ṣaworo mǎa ró o à,
B'ós'e ríṣ'ọma'wo náà re,

Translation in English

ṣaworo (rattles), *ṣaworo* make your sound,
ṣaworo do make your sound,
 This is how an initiate feels,

Response: *Eee b'ós'e ríṣ'ọma'wo náà re o.* This is just the way an initiate feels.

Overlapping

Overlapping in African music occurs in a song when the soloist's part overlaps the chorus section, and vice versa. In the words of Agu (1999, p. 27), overlapping occurs in two different ways. In the first place, it occurs when a chorus enters just before or on the last note of the solo section. In the second hand, if the soloist takes his/her cue while the chorus is still on, overlapping occurs. As observed in this study, overlapping of sound occurs in *ìgunnukó* music. This technique is common in *ìgunnukó* musical composition. This is caused primarily by a situation where the leader resumes singing before the chorus has been completed and vice versa. The effect is such that a part will incessantly blur into the other as seen between the call and response parts in bars 1–2 of Song 4 below.



Song 4

Omo Ekun Naa Da

Call

O - me'-kun naa da? e! e - re a - yo.

Response

O - me' - kun naa__ re, e! e - re a - yo.

Text in Yorùbá (Àwóri dialect)

Translation

Call: *Ọmọ ẹkùn nàà dà?*

Where is the tiger's baby?

Response: *Ọmọ ẹkùn nàà re,*

Here is the tiger's baby,

Eee, ere ayò!

Ehh, what a game!

Interjection

In *ìgunnukó* music, interjection occurs between the lead vocalist and the other members of the singing group, and most times between the performers themselves and the audience. As such, *ìgunnukó* musicians use verbal interjection such as spoken words or phrase during performance to comment on the song, engage with audience or add a kind of personal touch. This technique (interjection) can be spontaneous or planned, which often reflect the musician's personality and style. Also, the lead vocalist can use vocal interjection by shouting, screaming in other to add texture and emotion to the music. In addition, the singers may use musical interjection such as short musical phrases or gestures to punctuate the music, create transition, or add emphasis to certain words or as a means to draw attention to something. Various apparatuses have been explored for the delivery of interjection by the *ìgunnukó* musicians in this study. For instance, in a device, the design is positioned in between the solo (call) and the chorus (response) as seen in Song 1 below, which repeats such placement.



Gbinrin, gbinrin lan yi koko

Call (Solo)

Gbin - rin, gbin - rin lan yi ko - ko, e sa mi a yi mi ni so o,___

(interjection) (interjection)

Gi - di, gi - di;

Response (Chorus)

O - gbi - rin, gbin - rin lan yi ko - ko.

Improvisation

As Vidal (2012, p. 183) notes, “Improvisation is the hallmark of any good musicianship”. As conceived in the West, improvisation means the creation of music at the same time as it is performed (Adébólá, 2019, p. 114). As far as African music is concerned, improvisation is one of the terms that have been grossly misinterpreted within which is *ìgunnukó* music. For instance, no drummer or singer leaves his/her house unprepared only to extemporise before a large audience. Improvisation in African music in general and that of *ìgunnukó* music in particular is of a different dimension sharing this view. Observing this phenomenon, Kamien (1988) assert that

Improvisation is basic to many non-western cultures. Performers usually base their improvisations on traditional melodic phrases and rhythmic patterns. In some part of the world, including India and the Middle East, improvisation is a highly disciplined art that requires years of training (p. 591).

Supporting the above view, Hart (1990) submit that

Africans do not improvise, at least not the way we think of improvisation in the west. Most of the rhythms and songs are traditional allowing very little latitude for individual experimentation. The ideal, here as elsewhere African culture, is to fit one’s own personal rhythms into the flow of the whole. You might call this rhythm sharing. Musically the rhythm of each drum in an ensemble is comparatively simple consisting of endless variation on duple and triple time (p. 198).

Within the context of African music, talking about improvisation, Vidal (*op. cit.*, p. 183) explains that a good performer of music is expected to be skilful in both textual and melodic improvisation. Analysis of *ìgunnukó* songs collected for this study revealed that *ìgunnukó* musicians employed both textual and melodic improvisation as a compositional technique in their music. Apart from the use of musical instruments such as *bembé* (drum), *ikòkò* (pot drum), and *bàbò* or *şèkèrè* (shaking idiophone) in their music making, there are also non-musical instruments such as feet stamping in dance, hands clapping as well



as slapping various parts of the body etc. in the performance of music. The combination of these instruments creates a colourful blend of complex rhythms achieved through polyrhythmic, *hemiola* etc. that signal tension and repose in the music.

Repetition

As one of the fundamental and pervasive elements in African music, repetition is not merely a technique but a fundamental principle that shapes musical form, fosters engagement, and allows for the creative expression of diverse musical traditions (Agu, 1999 & Vidal, 2012). The use of repetition as a compositional technique in *ìgunnukó* music is very common. The reason is not far-fetched; this is because repetition is one of the major characteristics in African music. Both melodic and textual repetition occurs in *ìgunnukó* music as seen in Song 5 below.

Song 5

A Ja'we Akoko

A ja' we a - ko - ko o e a ja' we a - ko - ko k'a ba

5
r'e bo, e - yi t'a de ma ja o k'a ba r'e bo.

Text in Yorùbá (Àwòrì dialect)

A jáwé àkókò o e,

A jáwé àkókò kamú're bò o,

Èyí ta dẹ ma já o, ka bá're bò.

Translation

We pluck the first leaf,

We pluck the first leaf to bring good,

The next we are to pluck will bring us

Harmony

The concept of harmony in African music is meant for the general sound image emerging from the ongoing performance (Mereri, 2004, pp. 15–16). The sound image of a song performed by a group might consist of a “bass” (a lower line) and an “upper” (melodic line), as this is conceived to be two-part singing. The sound image might indicate even more than two parts, in which three or more parts are concurrently running vertical sounds. In the words of Nketia (1982, pp. 161–164), there are different types of harmony used in African music. These include occasional heterophony, polarity, homophonic parallelism, homophonic polyphony, and contrapuntal polyphony. In *ìgunnukó* songs, there are two types of harmonic structure employed in their music: polarity and homophonic parallelism, in which the latter dominates.



Polarity, which is a duplication of melodies in octaves as noted by Agu (1999, p. 46), is evident in *ìgunnukó* songs where male voices in the singing group duplicate the melodic lines by the female singers in an octave lower as a means of singing into parts. Also, homophonic parallelism as observed in African music by Nketia (1984), especially in fourths, fifths, and seventh, is very common in *ìgunnukó* songs, as some of their melodies are constructed on pentatonic and *hexatonic* scales. Song 6 below shows the three-part and two-part harmonic textures observed in *ìgunnukó* songs.

Song 6

Three Part Harmonic Texture in *ìgunnukó* Song;

Three Part Harmonic Texture in *ìgunnukó* Song;

Voice 1

I - ki - lo reo e - ni wu ko gba, i - ki - lo reo e - ni wu ko

Voice 2

I - ki - lo reo e - ni wu ko gba, i - ki - lo reo e - ni wu ko

Voice 3

I - ki - lo reo e - ni wu ko gba, i - ko - lo reo e - ni wu ko

5

gba, ma - to - ri o - wo y'a - sa s'o - re de.

gba, ma - to - ri o - wo y'a - sa s'o - re de.

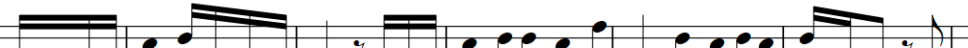
gba, ma - to - ri o - wo y'a - sa s'o - re de.



Two-Part Harmonic Texture in *Ìgunnukó* Song;

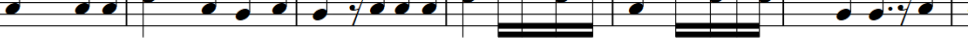
IKILO RE

Female Voices



I ki lo reo e ni wu ko gba, i ki lo reo e ni wu ko gba, ma to ri o wo y'a sa s'o re de.

Male Voices



I ki lo reo e ni wu ko gba, i ki lo reo e ni wu ko gba, ma to ri o wo y'a sa s'o re de.

Text in *Yorùbá* (Àwórì dialect)

*Ìkìlò ré o ẹnì wù kó gbà,
Ìkìlò re o ẹnì wù kó gbà,*

Má to rí owó y'asa s'oredè.

Translation

Here is warning for who will take it,
Here is warning for who will take it,

Don't become a mean fellow to the society.

Pickup Measure, Anacrusis and Syncopation

Idamoyibo (2005) explains that anacrusis and pickup measure are musical terms used interchangeably (p. 7). Within the context of this study, anacrusis refers to a melodic pickup from the upbeat at the beginning of a song, while pickup measure refers to beginning of any beat other than the down beat of the opening measure". A critical analysis of *ìgunnukó* songs collected for this study shows that almost if not all did not begin on beat one (strong beat). The songs begin with certain form of pickup from any beat of the first measure. Song 7, for instance, begins on the last quaver of the second (last) beat as seen below.

Song 7

Ma J'aye Alaye

Call



Ma j'a-ye a-la-ye me fe wa-ha - la,

Response



E-re 'gun-nu l'a wa se.

Text in *Yorùbá* (Àwórì dialect)

Call: *Má jayé aláyé mé fẹ wàhálà o,*
Response: *Eré 'gunnu lawá se.*

Translation

Let there be peace and tranquillity,
We are here for *ìgunnu* performance.



Syncopation on the other hand, which is referred to as displacement of accent in songs, according to Idamoyibo (*Ibid*), is also pertinent in *ìgunnukó* music as one of the compositional techniques. This is noticeable in the use of rest and tones sustained from one beat to the beginning of the succeeding beat, which creates effects of syncopation in *ìgunnukó* songs as seen in the preparatory bar that is, the zero bar before bar 1 of Song 3 above.

Aesthetics of *ìgunnukó* Music

Aesthetics, which is a branch of philosophy, is the study of beauty. As it relates to this study, aesthetics is the study of the beauty of music. Musical aesthetics has to do with the relationship of music to the human senses and intellect (Adébólá, 2019, p. 74). The aesthetics of *ìgunnukó* music in Àwòrì land is rooted in the cultural values and traditions of the Yorùbá people as such reflecting a complex interplay of sonic, social, and spiritual elements that define the magnitude of music within the community. At the heart of *ìgunnukó* music's aesthetic laze complex polyrhythmic structure, which is characterised by the concurrent interaction of multiple rhythmic patterns played on traditional musical instruments such as *bèmbé*, *ìkòkò*, and *bàbò*. Also, the use of repetitive mode with variation in alternation, call and responsorial form, bolstered by *hocket* technique add to the beauty of *ìgunnukó* music. Furthermore, the massive adoption of overlapping, interjection, slogans, pickup measure/anacrusis and intended use of syncopated beats, all evince the aesthetic nature of *ìgunnukó* songs in Àwòrì land, serving as condiments that add flavour to their music.

Conclusion

The study demonstrates that *ìgunnukó* musicians employ speech-based rhythmic and melodic systems, responsorial structures, overlapping, improvisation, and other melo-rhythmic devices to articulate a coherent indigenous compositional practice. By offering the first structured analysis of *ìgunnukó* compositional techniques, the study contributes to Yorùbá musicology, indigenous creativity studies, and the broader ethnomusicological discourse on music as culturally embedded practice. The study also addressed the fundamental issues on how *ìgunnukó* musicians create and structure their music, and the functionality of the genre (*ìgunnukó* music) among the Àwòrì people in particular and Yorùbá in general. The findings underscore the need for systemic preservation of *ìgunnukó* music knowledge, particularly as modernisation reshapes ritual performance context.

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