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An Analytical Discourse in the Construction of Text in the Choral Works of Sam Asare-Bediako

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Abstract



This paper presents an analytical work that gives a panoramic view of textual analysis in the choral writings of Sam Kwaku Asare-Bediako; His journey as a free-lance composer enables him to construct text in various traditions and beliefs. In addition to the description given to some of his works as loquacious in this paper, the study provides an insight into the thought processes of the composer, such as the adoption of colloquialism in his music, his controversial system in both spelling and construction of text in the Asante Twi language spoken by the people of Ashanti region of Ghana and lastly, his system of classification in text. The compositions are sampled randomly. The examination of the works involved in this paper was done by observing the scores, listening to both audio and videos online, as well as live performances, and few

interviews regarding response to his music by song teachers, performers (choristers) and listeners. Lastly, the perspectives highlight all the social, moral, and educational relevance of the work.

Keywords: Asare-Bediako, choral music, lyrics, music analysis

1. Introduction

The focus of this paper is to examine the structure of text in the music compositions of a composer who is popularly known for his enormous compositions in Ghanaian choral music. Though Sam Asare-Bediako is used as a case study, his method of construction in text is not a practice established by him, but several composers (Art, Popular, etc.) that desire to create works in the Akan group of languages (which would be addressed in due course) in Ghana. Amuah (2012, 2021) has described and positioned him amongst the third generation of Ghanaian composers. Over and above that, Agawu (1984) refers to his style of writing as Ghanaian “classical” composition. Certainly, the inducement of this examination is based on the thoughts of Sam Asare-Bediako’s Choral music writings by Addaquay (2022). The enthusiasm is aroused as Addaquay concludes that it would be inappropriate to claim confidently that the only phenomenal practices that makes Bediako a good composer is the analytical work he conducted. This statement is not to be held in contempt and consequently, reviewing the works of this composer, there are several practices that one could consider as far as an analytical work in music composition is concerned.

It could be apparent for one to contemplate or deem this paper as one which is outside of the scope in music as the attention on the textual analysis is considered as the focal point, rather than the music. However, it is worth bearing in mind that in vocal music, text is as crucial as the music. That being the case, the connection of text to a tune as described by Nketia (2002) is highly commendable for a discourse in this perspective. Relatedly, Euba (2001) mentioned that text in African music is so significant that it could still find its way in all types of music including instrumental in some countries of Africa. Agawu (2001) observes that ‘although music and language are finally independent semiotic systems, they are bound together by several ties.’ Nevertheless, it should be noted that this paper does not discuss the text only, but it’s connection to the music and the result it produces in the cognizance of performers and listeners since this is a critical examination that requires a diagnostic consideration as a thought-provoking model for younger generation of composers in Ghana and the world at large.

Furthermore, regardless of the composer's consciousness or unconsciousness of the outcomes in this analytical work, it must be pointed out that an investigative work may not always pay full attention to what creators consider or say about their work; However, the analyst may also present practices that creators might have recognized or not in their craft. Identically, performers and observers may have a mind of their own on this matter. The variety or uniqueness of every analytical work from either the composer, analyst, performer, or an observer is essential for further argument and research for posterity

For this reason, questions such as 'Yes, everything you say is all very well and good, but did *the composer himself know all this* – was the composer *conscious* of all these things?' stress Adorno and Paddison (1982). The argument here is that this question is very irrelevant to Adorno and Paddison because they believe that there must be differentiation between the object itself, and the way in which it may have arisen in the consciousness or unconsciousness of the artist. According to Agawu (2004), it's in this regard that they stress that 'the analyst must not be distracted by questions of intentionality, as when sceptics wonder whether the composer was conscious of relationships unearthed by the analyst.' And they go again that 'Analysis is not mere description, nor is it bound by considerations of wholes or of totality.... each analysis must produce a result unique to the work.'

However, in this examination, few questions present themselves; Must a composer always adopt the practice of constructing text for vocal music in colloquialism, metaphorical language or synthesis of these two devices? Moreover, must a music composition in the Asante Twi language (spoken amongst the people of Ashanti region of Ghana) adhere to the system of phonetic phonology or orthography as far as spelling of text, the application of punctuations and construction of sentences are concerned? Lastly, must a composition be loquacious or laconic? To put it in another way, must text of a vocal piece cover almost all ideas in the story of an entire work, or it could simply be summarized?

Nevertheless, one of the foremost challenges facing this paper interrelates with my interaction with few acquaintances, being a couple of researchers and individuals that have been devoted to the systematic study of the Asante Twi language. These personalities grumble concerning the inability of most composers (and even seasoned ones) to employ the precise system of construction in the language. Few of these complaints that have been consistent each time I encounter these persons when such arguments arise, are as follows.

1. Composers of recent years neglect matured systems that are interpretations of traditional wisdom such as proverbs or metaphor in the choice of text, as compared to pioneers or fathers of Ghanaian art music like Amu and Nketia.
2. Most composers forsake the appropriate methodological construction of text in the Asante Twi language which includes imprecise spelling of text, application of apostrophe and the structure of sentences.
3. Over the last few years, a couple of composers tend to talk a great deal in their music alongside preventable emphasis and recurrence of text.

The argument this paper intends to raise is that it can never be overlooked or ignored that vocal music is one of the models of communication in society; Consequently, the choice of text by a composer is customarily based on the demands of performers and listeners in his/her era, the environment in which he/she resides, and his target audience. Undoubtedly, the music of a composer could influence the society as well; To rephrase this statement, it is a submission to composers that as much as expectations of a particular group of people has the tendency to influence the craft of compositions, composers could also think of influencing these societies positively with their music for the majority may not always be right.

However, it must be critically pointed out with evidence that composers may not completely be mistaken to implement the practice of colloquialism in music composition. This does not imply or recommend to composers to disregard metaphoric passages in composition; The central principle here is that maturity in the creation of text in music or speech might not constantly rely on symbolic language as a model, even though symbolic language has been overrated as words of wisdom (my opinion). Also, this paper advocates that orthography may not permanently be identified as the accurate system for the composition of vocal music in the Asante Twi due to reasons such as syllabic considerations, choice of melodic and harmonic progression, and the target set of individuals such as performers, observers and listeners. Finally, wordy compositions are idiosyncratic and could be judged rightly or wrongly dependent on the circumstance around the performance of the music. In other words, loquacious compositions are subjective. For instance, in the composition *Na aden?* (But why?), whiles I may refer to the translation of various languages as loquacious, Amuah and Wuaku (2021) describe that act as 'languages representatively to unite diverse ethnic groups.'

In the entire paper, the compositions of Sam Asare-Bediako's choral writings are sampled randomly for a specific purpose, owing to the detail that every music of Asare-Bediako has components of the arguments this paper intends to raise. Reviewing his music analytically, he is certainly not compelled to compose an entire piece in proverbs or metaphoric language, although he would like to apply this system interchangeably (i.e., Colloquialism and metaphor). While Agyekum, Amuah and Arhine (2020) are worried about the current generation of Akan highlife musicians's reluctance to employ proverbs comparatively to the lyrics of Ampofo Agyei and his compatriots, choral music is of no exception to this claim. Metaphoric languages that were crafted in the works of Amu, Nketia, and his compatriots are scarcely found in current compositions. In as much as metaphoric languages reveal the quality of the Asante Twi language, the melodic, harmonic, orchestrated sonorities (if any) to mention a few, in the music of the younger generation does not always permit speech to be executed in this system. Moreover, it is so unfortunate for the older generation to recognize that the present generation is not persuaded to access the competency of a composer by his ability to employ the use of proverbs in music. Indeed, this is a generational hazard that we may have to go through for a purpose that is not very easy to apprehend.

Again, one of the principal reasons why the compositions were chosen randomly is the scarcity to find Asare-Bediako's music-text in orthography. Asare-Bediako's communicative skill in text is the reason for displaying words in phonetic phonology, and it is obvious that inaccuracy in the spelling of text and partly, construction of sentence is very present in his music. The reason being that he believes that the text of music must be understood by a larger audience if music must travel far. These constructions would be discussed in the breakdown. Lastly, he is being described by a couple of composers and song teachers as a loquacious composer and the reason for this is also deliberated in the study.

The examination of the works involved in this paper was done by observing the scores, listening to both audios and videos of online and live performances, and few interviews regarding response to his music by song teachers, performers (choristers) and listeners. The final point that must be understood here is that the interpretation of text from the Asante Twi to the English language in this paper is connotative, and not denotative.

2. Brief Biography of Sam Asare-Bediako



Sam Asare-Bediako affectionately called Kwaku Sam by loved ones is the first of a family of five. Born in the 1960's, hails from Asante Mampong from the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Indeed, his religious background as a Christian was very strong since his dad, a devotee and lover of music, was also a pastor in the Seventh day Adventist, bearing the name Christian Asare Bediako, and the mother, Rose Asare Bediako. His grandparent, (mother's dad, who also happened to be pastor in S.D.A.) was once the head of the Seventh day Adventist church in Ghana for some number of years. He was named after a man of God bearing the name Pastor Sam Kwaku Appiah Danquah Asare-Bediako who was a bosom friend of his grandparents, and therefore the full name of the composer discussed in this paper is Sam Kwaku Appiah Danquah Asare-Bediako.

He received his first music instruction from his parents. Also, the keyboard skill of A.E. Amankwah (a composer and teacher of music) raised the musical ambitions of Asare-Bediako and motivated him to learn the keyboard regardless of any cost or effort involved. He began learning this instrument at the age of 11 years. He

commenced as self-taught and later instructed by J.K. Amoako. There were lot of impediments in his music career such as parents not agreeing to the fact that their son must become a musician (as usual in Ghana) and also his head-master C.Y. Kyeremeh who disgracefully mentioned at a morning assembly in senior high school (Bekwai Adventist Senior High School) that Sam Asare-Bediako will definitely be a useless being in future because of his single interest which is music. Yet Bediako was never discouraged.

In the heyday of Asare-Bediako (from late 1980s to early 2000s), he spent the larger portion of his music life in the Ashanti region of Ghana. His hometown is in Asante Mampong. He lived there momentarily, and stayed in Bekwai, Ofinso and Kumasi, (all in the Ashanti region). This is not to mention that he never moved to other parts of the nation. He studied in the Academy of Music which is now the department of music education at the University of Education, Winneba (1986), and pursued his education in Bachelor of Arts (Music) at the University of Cape Coast (1997) all in the central region of Ghana. He moved from Ghana to Canada, and located in the same country up to the present moment.

3. Asare-Bediako the Free-lance Composer

Sam Asare-Bediako flourished as a great composer and became one of the nation's favorites amongst the choral fraternity with the result that a lot of churches, music groups, and institutions had to engage him as a contract composer and a choral director. As a free-lance composer, he held positions such as the first music director of Ghana National Cultural center, Kumasi (now Center for National Culture), founder of Amamereso Choral group (inter denominational/ demonstration choir, Kumasi), music Teacher, the Ridge school, producer, live choral music, Otec Fm, Assistant Producer Music, GBC TV/Radio, Ashanti Region, Music Director, ACTS 2000 choir. World live Satellite Evangelism, Music Director, Central Ghana Conference of SDA, Music Director, Ghana Adventist choir union, Kumasi Zone, Organist, Ghana Calvary Methodist United church, Toronto, Music Director, St. Andrews Catholic Church Ghanaian Community, Toronto Music Director, Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Toronto, Music Director, European Ghana Adventist Camp Meeting, Hamburg, and currently the music director of North America Ghanaian S.D.A., U.S.A. and Canada

Therefore, it is predictable to see works from the composer in assorted traditions, including masses for the catholic church such as Mass of Corpus Christi, Mass of St. Michael, Gregory, Mass of St. Dominic, etc. And Patriotic songs such as *Na adɛn?*, *Fa w'akoma nyinaa dɔwo man*, *Ghana man*, *ɔman Ghana bɛyɛyie*,

etc. Institutional compositions such as Kumasi City sanitation song which was composed purposely for the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly, Ghana, Asante Kotoko football club song, a song for the Electricity Company of Ghana (E.C.G.), song for the National drug awareness, song for Opoku Ware Secondary School, and so on and so forth.

He would never mind even if his church neglects some of his compositions because of the doctrine in his text. Unlike few composers such as Bilson who composed for the Methodist church, Amissah for the Catholic church, and so forth, Bediako was never convinced to compose for one group of people. This belief created challenges between himself and his church at some point. The works of these composers mentioned (Bilson and Amissah) were also performed by other denominations once it suits their doctrine, yet their attention was based on their churches. Though I am very much aware that Amissah also arranged few circular compositions. Without being bias, Bediako believes strongly and respects all doctrines and composes accordingly for all churches and the public at large. Also, His work titled *Na adɛn?* which has already been mentioned, demonstrates that he is very much concerned that all tribes in Ghana must be respected. As a free-lance composer, he has always been persistent in his messages (directly or indirectly) that every belief and tradition in this world must be respected.

4. Colloquialism in the Music of Asare-Bediako

Unlike couple of composers who may not automatically write music in their native language because of few reasons such as migration, other cultural influences, etc., this composer decides to write in his mother tongue, which is the Asante Twi (from the Ashanti region of Ghana) and once in a while, other languages upon commission and requirement. This language is believed to be in the category of the Akan group of languages. (Boaduo 2012) describes the Akan group as one which is made up of multiplicity of ethnicities which includes the Asante, Asante Twifo, Mfantse, Nzema, Akyem, Akuapem and Ahanta. In Agreement with Paster (2010), the Asante Twi is the most well-known of the Akan dialects. Yevudey and Agbozo (2019) also classify languages in Ghana into dominant and minority languages. They also argue in agreement with Yevuday and Agbozo that the Asante Twi language of Ghana spoken by the people of the Ashanti region, which belongs to the Kwa branch of the Niger-Congo language family, is the most dominant Ghanaian local language. However, Lewis (2009) also believe that the Asante Twi is a member of the Akan group of languages/dialects spoken in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, which belongs to the Nyo subgroup of the Kwa language family.

In the Circle's functional linguistics, the following styles are differentiated according to the established principal communicative functions or spheres:

1. Colloquial (the spheres of everyday communication)
2. Practical technical (practicky odborný) (the sphere of practical specialized communication; for example, administrative, jurisdictional, commercial, etc.);
3. Scientific (theoretical) (the sphere of theoretical communication);
4. Poetic (the sphere of aesthetic communication).

(B. Havranek, 1932; 1940)

Altogether, Bediako may be certain of the first category. Reference must be made to Morand (1995) who pronounces colloquial system or style as an adoption in more spontaneous, casual, and interpersonal contexts' while formal language styles are adopted in rigid, deliberate, and impersonal contexts, while more. Though, majority of people accept as true that casual communication in language is not very official, Emil Volek (1980-1981) expresses a different interpretation to this claim. He deliberates that, the colloquial and the frequently vulgar expressions facilitate the "digestion" of the overdose didactic messages, therefore colloquial language is really, then, formal. As much as I may disagree partly with Volek because circumstances around a composer or a speaker such as the kind of gathering, the age of people one may be addressing, the kind of message whether advertisement, formal speech, etc., all play role in judging colloquial language as formal or vice-versa, Bediako will not be completely wrong if he adopts the expression of text in everyday language or what some may refer to as ordinary conversational language that everyone speaks at any point in time.

In contemporary times, the new generation may not access the proficiency of a composer because of his ability to write music in metaphoric language. Since technology has been involved in diverse ways, attention to the text as the major component in vocal music in Ghana has been eccentric. To give an idea, the components of music composition and its performance such as the melodic and harmonic quality, instrumentation, personality of a singer(s) and few other factors have a very great impact on listening of music in recent years. It is for this reason that Urbaniak and Mitchell (2022) believes that listeners and viewers are influenced by stage demeanor, audience engagement, attractiveness, and choice of attire during performances. Reinforcing the point made, the concentration on text only may not be a major potential sonority in proclaiming a piece of music as a

good one. This is also because, in recent times, listeners have equal opportunities to watch music than listening for technology has made watching music very easy and accessible at any point in time. In the process of watching and listening, text may be of influence regarding the content and not the construction being colloquial or metaphoric. Notwithstanding, few observers may review or evaluate the construction of text, and this cannot be taken for granted.

Case in point, studying the circle of fifths interspersed with chromaticism which has been circled in the next excerpt, followed by the sequential passage executed by the alto, tenor and bass from bars 141 to 145 in *dede 2* respectively, it is recognizable that these passages are purely western practices that are seen in the works of Handel, Bach, etc. Excerpt two which is in the work *Hyira me* is no exception to the arrangement of harmonic system as a pure western practice. This is not to dispute the fact that Ghanaian art music has always been a synthesis of other cultures and continents and African idioms from history; Yet chromaticism and practices such as the ones that have been employed here approach music in a manner that is very challenging for such a composition to apply deep metaphoric grammar in the structure of text. In other words, Bediako's approach to writing suggests everyday language because of the creation of melodic and harmonic sonorities in his choral writings. Also, this proclamation cannot be classified as the sole reason for crafting works in everyday language but one of the many reasons. Some of these causes would be shown as the breakdown continues.

Excerpt 1. (Musical passages in connection with the text)



Excerpt 2 (Musical passages in connection with the text)

However, acknowledgement must be effected that there are few disadvantages in the presentation of colloquialism. By way of explanation, a set of words that may be termed as offensive could have adopted metaphoric language in addressing such issues. For instance, I am tempted to describe works of Sam Asare-Bediako such as *W'ano pɛ aɛm* (referring to a person who talks unnecessarily about issues that are not supposed to be addressed), *Nipa nnye* (humans are dangerous or very bad), *Gyae nsabrɔ na si wo dan* (advising drunkards to stop drinking and build their homes), *Abrɔ nnye* (avoid selfishness in character), *Fa yonko papa* (an advise to one another to befriend good companions) as **cacophemism/dysphemism** in vocal music; This will be defined as the text of a vocal composition which may be perceived as harsh, impolite or offensive as the original definition suggests. However, Cacophemism or dysphemism here may be subjective. Nevertheless, the detriment discussed here is still idiosyncratic if reality is the topic of discussion. What may be offensive to an observer may be fascinating and acceptable to another; For Bediako believes in straightforwardness in speech, rather than the so-called 'beating around the bush' as commonly expressed.

Though Volek and few other scholars believe in casual language as official further to the preceding dialogue, in music composition, Boykan (2000, p 135) has his view to the assertion, which is the employment of colloquialism in vocal music. Absolutely, Boykan contests the advice given to composers to avoid complicated syntax or intellectual frameworks, but to provide simple text to music; One of the examples he raises so far as his opinion is concerned is that, supposing a composer is moved by a poem or even a complicated one, and does a good job by fixing the appropriate melody to the text, there is a price to pay, which is, it will be

Occasionally, his phraseology in the metaphoric language is cautiously selected (as done in excerpt 3) for a purpose. In such instances, the grammatical organization is quite transparent and self-explanatory; With the slightest knowledge in proverbs, listeners could just capture the thematic conception of the entire text in the music. Barely may one find Asare-Bediako craft the text in deep symbolic language like some works of Amu and Nketia. Perhaps, being raised in the house of ministers of the gospel, tells it all, that he writes music as he preaches and that contributes to his belief for everyday language in compositions.

4.1 The use of Apostrophe

In the context of the language (Asante Twi) and its spelling, Asare-Bediako would like to spell words in phonology rather than orthography which is supposed to be the precise method of spelling in the Asante Twi. A couple of disputes that one may like to raise to this claim is that, perhaps Asare-Bediako is not so much conscious of the inaccuracies or oversights in the construction of text in his music composition since he is not known to be a linguist or a composer that has critically studied orthography in the Asante Twi language as Amu and Nketia did. In the perspective of this dialogue, it might not be crucial to debate on the composer's cognizance or vice-versa in the text of his music, since his principal focus in his music is to interconnect effectively with his audience for understanding and acceptance of his text in music, which is not completely erroneous from his observation. Although, I may want to believe that if Asare-Bediako had studied the language formally, he could have been quite conscious of some constructions and spelling text in his music. Yet, this paper argues that most of the inaccuracies in these constructions of the works of Bediako are not entirely illogical as could be expressed by individuals that have studied the Asante Twi in detail.

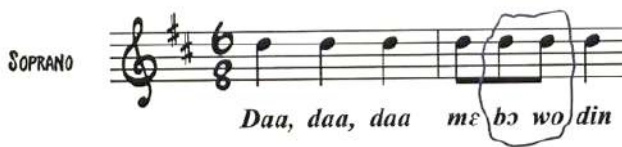
Indeed, it is the truth in all instances that in the Asante Twi language, the spoken is different from the written in the spelling of words, as well as phraseology. As declared, Asare-Bediako's confidence in spelling text in the exact approach in which it is spoken baffles my imagination; As one is discerning on correctness of spelling and construction of sentences or phrases, Bediako is thinking about the ordinary performer and listener's ability to understand the music. However, this paper does not tend to neglect precise orthography in music composition, but to point out what goes into the mind of the composer, and contend that even in Bediako's inaccuracy, there is an intelligence in his procedure of creation, which some may oppose. Further explanation to this point is deliberated below.

When a possessed item begins with the vowel 'a', and the possessor is singular, like the case of *me* (mine), *wo* (yours) and *ne* (his or her), then we can have phrases like *m'adanfo* (my friend), *w'adanfo* (your friend), and *n'adanfo* (his or her friend). It is alleged that the moment the vowel is not an 'a', an apostrophe may be needless. The technical name given to an apostrophe in the language is *ogya nsenkyerene*, which simply means replacement of an omission. Consequently, some may disagree with Bediako for crafting the title *Daa, Daa, Daa mε bow' din* (I'll forever hail your name). The discrepancy in the apostrophe between the last two words is for the reason that, the possessed item doesn't begin with an A. However, some may also prefer *mε bɔ w' din* because the omitted vowel is an O (ie., the word is supposed to be *wo*), therefore, there may be a demand for an isolation if he insists to apply the use of the apostrophe. On the contrary, the composer is not convinced to structure the text in its accurate system which is *Mε bowo din*; It is rare to hear the native speaker express the phrase in its complete structure. If not for emphasis, an Ashanti will always say *mε bow din*. Again, the middle syllable (*bow*) is considered as one in the mind of the speaker. Hence, the composer is not to be blamed for constructing the phrase in the method in which he organizes the speech for he speaks in his music. Similarly, he introduces the apostrophe to indicate the omission of the letter 'o.' Nonetheless, in the craft of the music, the letter 'w' was a capital as shown in the excerpt below. The composer's preference to apply the use of this mistaken apostrophe is also because he would love to use one note to a syllable as scored below.



Excerpt 4. (Controversial use of apostrophe)

Though, the composer had a space to craft this in its full structure as done in the next excerpt, he decides to shorten the note to one syllable for the effectiveness of phonology as previously discussed.



Excerpt 5. (The spelling of the phrase in its full structure)

Another example is Asare-Bediako's use of the apostrophe in the title *Aw'rade* which means Lord in the Asante Twi language, which could have been correctly spelt as *Awurade*. He introduces the apostrophe to indicate the omission of the letter 'u.' This word has been spelt in the same manner in compositions such as *Aseda nko'aa* (thanks), *Hyira me* (bless me), and many other works he composed. Also, in the work titled *Aw'rade Nyame ye ɔɔɔ*, he decides to spell the same title in full. In other instances, such as bar 90 of the work *Bɛ sɔ hwe* (come and taste), he starts the spelling of this same title discussed here with an 'e' (*Ewurade*) just because of the way it is pronounced in speech. One may detect this as inconsistency in Bediako's presentation of spelling in his music, which I may agree to a point. However, it is apparent that the Ashanti people of Ghana would only like to pronounce the word in full, when exaggeration or emphasis takes place in communication. Linguists will never encourage the use of the apostrophe of the title for the reason being that, in the language, some spellings have the structure of C. V. R. V. (Consonant. Vowel. Consonant. Vowel); If the second consonant happens to be an R, we can have words like,

C.V.R.V
kuro
owura
yere
pira

Since the second consonants are in intervocalic positions (i.e. coming in between two vowels), the first vowels are usually silent in pronunciation. Therefore in speech, *kuro* becomes *kro*, *owura* becomes *owra*, *yere* becomes *yre*, *pira* becomes *pra*, and so forth. It is for this reason why *Awurade* becomes *Aw'rade* (in spoken) because of the silent 'u'. In this regard, one may advise the composer to spell the word in its precise structure (*Awurade*), and the pronunciation could be automatically effected by the performers; This could be quite debatable, because performers that do not speak the language may pronounce the word as written. Therefore, Bediako factors this theory in both written and spoken, with the introduction of an

apostrophe which some scholars may want to prevent in the spelling of *Awurade*. As scholars of the language believe in distinguishing the orthography from the phonology, Bediako partly disagrees with that assertion.

Nevertheless, other times Bediako would like to spell the word as it is in the C.V.R.C. structure, such as *Hyeren* (brighten) which he could have made *Hy'ren* as he does most of the times. Here he spells this word in full, just because he settles on two syllables and notes for his own reasons. This is scored below.

DEDICATED TO
COLLINS NYANTAKYI
ACCRA NEWTOWN SDA CHOIR

HYEREN

SAM ASARE-BEDIAKO
Accra, 1983

Hyeren o o kris to ni hyeren o O-nya me ba hyeren o

Hyeren hyeren hyeren hyeren hyeren hyeren hyeren o

Wone wia se haano 1. han wo ne wia se han han o 2. O-nya me ba

hyeren o mawo han nna a- dia sa sei so

Excerpt 6. (Spelling of the word in its full C.V.R.V. structure)

It is the same case with *Aseda nko ara*, which the composer changes to *Aseda nko'aa*, just because of the way the native speaks. Though Bediako had the liberty to structure the text in its proper edifice as much as the orthography is concerned as scored in excerpt 6, he decides to restructure in the way the speaker would want to execute in excerpt 7.



Excerpt 7. (The full structure of the construction of the text)



Excerpt 8. (Phonological expression in Bediako's music)

4.2 Construction of Phrases

Buttressing on the points already made, it could be argued that Sam Asare-Bediako is not convinced that the written must be different from the spoken in the Asante Twi. From my perspective, he is not entirely wrong, as much as he's not right. The title of the work *Agorɔ yɛdɛ* (playing of game(s) is/are enjoyable) is another controversial method of spelling. Because, linguists will state or refer to *yɛ* as a copula verb (i.e., verb to be). So, the meaning of the word *yɛ* can be termed as *am*, *are* or *is* (dependent on the structure of sentence). Consequently, the word is expected to be in isolation (*Agorɔ yɛ dɛ*). An example is *Agorɔ yɛ ɛ*, or *Agorɔ yɛ ahomka*, which all literary mean the playing of game(s) is eye-catching or beautiful.

Another example of a phrase which was constructed wrongly by Bediako but may make sense to the ordinary person is *mo myɔ no* (let us love) which was repeatedly executed in Bars 17 to 25 in the work *Awraade Nyame yɛ ɔɔɔ*. Linguists will prefer a double *N*, (which is a total assimilation) making the phrase *Mo m'yɛnno* (in full, supposed to be *mo ma yɛnno*).

In bar 66 of the work *Dede 2*, He constructs the phrase *Yɛɛbe tontom No*, whereas the correct construction in linguistics is *Yɛrebetontom no* (which means we are about to exalt him, or praise him); In the Ashanti language, *yɛbe* is a phrase for the future which simply refers to an act that one intends to execute in future, which may be done immediately after the utterance, after a moment, or may not come to pass. One may choose to call it a remote future. On the other hand, the moment it is stated in speech as *yɛrebe*, then, the execution of the plan becomes close to the point of utterance (i.e., futurity about to happen immediately). Nevertheless, *Yɛ* which happens to be in both phrases is a progressive future. Yet, in Asante Twi, the native speaker will never say *yɛrebetontom no*, but rather *yɛbetontom no* (as Bediako spells). Despite the fact that 're' is written, it is never pronounced

in spoken. Therefore an open space is created in between *Ye* and *bɛ* (*yɛ're'bɛ*), which is filled by prolonging or increasing the length of the previous vowel, making it sound *yɛɛb3* instead of *yɛreɛ*.

4.3 Classification in Construction of Text

'More frequently, musicians have composed music either to accompany verbal texts or to be performed more or less simultaneously with a verbal text while conveying some portion of its meaning.' (McClelland, 1990). This is to be specific that, Bediako is critical in arrangement of words as far as his music is concerned. Undeniably, he is a virtuous speaker in the Asante Twi language of Ghana. Despite the belief that extended pieces by some Ghanaian composers (to be precise) or even shorter ones contain lot of text because of the dramatic nature of the music (being a story or an expression), which becomes quite difficult to summarize, I would still like to refer to such works as **Loquacious compositions**. In this regard, loquacious composition is described as a composition that attempts to express all ideas of a textual theme in one music, which makes the text bulky in presentation. Nevertheless, depending on the demands of performers, target group, audience, listeners, environment, etc, a composition which may be described as loquacious, may be a good one for another; Yet it doesn't take away the fact that expressing almost every idea in a text of any music composition is loquacious (my opinion). This may be recognized or not. Indeed, it may even be enjoyed by both performers and listeners. Nevertheless, depending on the structure or the process in which the composition of text will be crafted, a loquacious work may sound detailed and significant or vice-versa.

Bediako would want to reason like that of the popular musician or Composer, who has bunch of words in a particular music. The modification here is that, the popular musician may choose to structure lot of words, backed by an ostinato (not in all cases though); Being an art musician (Bediako), he may desire changes in both melodic and harmonic progressions, as well as rhythmic patterns for variety. And this feature creates lot of materials in his music. Also, he would always wish to speak like a linguist in the Asante Twi language. For instance, in appellations or titles to God, Bediako's honorific expressions are exactly like the praises of a King or a deity in the culture of the Akan people of Ghana. In the work titled *Bɛsɔ hwɛ* (come and taste), appellations such as *Kamafo Ewurade*, *nyanka wura Nyame*, *onni bi'Agya dɛɛfo*, *ɔkyɛso Nyame nono*, *ɔbotantim*, *basa yiadɔm*, *Daasebrɛ*, *Totrobonsu boadeɛ Nyankopɔn nono*, *ɔsabarima*, *Odimafoɔ dɛɛfoɔ nono*, *yaresefoɔAgya*, *wɛrɛkyekyefo nono*, *Nyanka wura*, *kunafo kun nono* are all appellations heard in a king's palace when displaying culture in speech. These words describe the attributes of God and his greatness. In speech, these attributes

do not come to an end until the speaker is loss of words or satisfied. Asare-Bediako couldn't have done it better in anyway than to continue showering praises unto his God till he is satisfied. In this case he maintains the interest of the singers by applying exciting passageways in either fragmentations of notes or sequential passages that are very easy and interesting to sing along. To release the choir from the rest of the music, the soloist continues with the showering of praises as the choir does ostinato at the background. The ostinato of the choir could be translated as Our father, who is like unto thee? My brother/sister, come and taste. This is shown in the next excerpt below.

89 nt.

be so hwe ka-ma fo'E-wura-de, nyan-ka wura Nya-me, o-nni bi'A-bafupok dhoras so hwe.

6 94

gya dze fo - kyetso Nya-me no no, -bo-tan-tim, ba-sa.

99

yia-dm Daa se-bre Nya-me e hwan nao ne wo se? me-nua-e bra be so.

107

To-tro bon-su ba-a-dee Nyan-ko-p2n no no sa-ba.

hwe A-gyae hwan nao ne wo se.

The image displays a musical score for Excerpt 9, consisting of two systems of vocal and piano accompaniment. The first system begins at measure 107 and the second at measure 112. The vocal line is written in a single staff with lyrics in both Akan and English. The piano accompaniment is written in two staves (treble and bass clef). The lyrics are as follows:

System 1 (Measures 107-111):
 107 To-tro bon-su ba a - dee Nyan-ko-pōn no no sa-ba -
 hwe A - gyae hwan na3 ne wo se

System 2 (Measures 112-116):
 112 -ma O - di - ma - fōd dex - fōd no no ya - re - sa - fōdA
 me - nua - e bra be sō ewe
 116 Eya were - kye - kye - fō no no Nyan-ka wura ku-na-fōd
 A - gyae hwan na3 ne wo se
 kun' no no

The score is attributed to 'bafupok_chorals'.

Excerpt 9. (An example of Honorific expression in Bediako's music)

On the other hand, traditionally, Akans (restricting this statement to the Ashanti people of Ghana) believe that their God was born on a Saturday; Bediako applies that in his compositions by referring to the Christian God as Kwame (a name given to a male born on saturday). This is just to say that Asare-Bediako is also traditional in Christianity, which I may want to describe as Africanism in Christianity. His approach to text is always very traditional and for this reason, some churches may not agree with some of the doctrines in his music (as already pronounced) and may be reluctant to sing. The next except shows where he refers to the Christian God as Kwame.



Excerpt 10. (The concept of God in the Ashanti tradition of Ghana in Bediako's music)

Also, discussing Asare-Bediako as a loquacious composer, a couple of linguists may not approve or accept the statement *Twe ma mentwe ne manso twe* (bars 21 – 25 in the work *Na aden?* (But why?). One may prefer *Twe ma mentwe* or *manso twe* which all mean misunderstanding or disagreement between one another. It is the same situation for repeating words such as *Mpaepaemu* and *ntetemu* which have same meaning referring to separation. Unofficially, throughout a discussion or conversation in the Asante twi language, these recurrent phrases may not be completely erroneous, dependent on the circumstance. In communication, there may be repetition of words in diverse ways when emphasis takes place. The emphasis may also be of help for dramatic reasons or comprehensive report in speech. Since Bediako would always like to express his music as communication or speech, some of these recurrences that may be unnecessary to a couple of linguists may be necessary to others as much as speech is concerned. In the construction of the melodic pattern, Bediako presents the repetition in sequences. The attractiveness in the craft of the sequences may not make one recognize the reiteration of the text as described above. Despite the second repetition on the score below is not direct, it falls under a downward sequence of the entire unit.

Excerpt 11. (Repetition of text for emphasis)

Excerpt 11. (Repetition of text for emphasis)

To be conscientious, it may not be in the right direction to disagree entirely with this composer for being garrulous in almost all extended works of his. This is because Bediako's methodology in breaking declarations or enquiries in compositions is quite elaborate and makes his compositions (especially long works) bulky in the structure of text. From where I stand, communication (in text) is of essence to this composer so much that he has the impression that few statements in a music composition is inadequate for the usual or ordinary person to capture the thematic concept of a story in vocal music. In this respect, I agree with Agyekum (2004) if he states that 'Language is a vehicle of communication whereby one person conveys a message to another for the purpose of informing, ordering, persuading, reassuring, etc.' Therefore, in communication, the conveyer of the message has the liberty to explain messages in any detail he/she prefers.

Consequently, reviewing the works of Bediako critically, I grasped one substantial feature in his works that may have been unnoticed for some time. Bediako would like to structure the text of his music as a story. He organizes his text in three foremost components, which is believed to be the three main parts of an essay, being an introduction, followed by the body and then the conclusion. His

introduction may either be a command or an appeal, praise to God, or in a form of a question. The structure of the body, may either answer a question asked in the introduction, or may tempt to explain the need for the introduction. His conclusions are optional, that is, he may choose to end the music in the body, repeat the introduction (recapitulation), or conclude with different vocabularies or text. From my frame of reference and vantage, Bediako pictures the entire music by grouping them in headings and sub headings before execution

In the introduction of his anthem titled *Bɛsɔ hwɛ* which means come and taste (Bar 1 – 47), Bediako echoes the necessity for tasting the love, grace, blessings and mercy of God which has been there in the past years till now. The same introduction specifies the unchangeable God who does not slumber nor sleep; The end of the introduction mentions a hint of the summary in the body, and then starts the main body from bar 48 and ends at bar 125. The introduction reappears, and ends the music. In my assessment, the repetition of the introduction serves as the conclusion. One may also read it as recapitulation. To capture the structure of the work, I would like to spell the words in the same way Bediako did. The structure of the text is as follows and the translation is brackets on the right ;

Introduction

Bɛsɔ hwɛ, bra bɛsɔhwɛ; (Come and taste)

Wo behu sɛ Nyame yɛɔ dɔɔ, (You'll recognize the love of God)

Bɛsɔ hwɛ, bra bɛsɔhwɛ; (Come and taste)

Wo behu n'adom, ne nhyira, n'ahunumɔbrɔ fri tete. (You'll experience his love, blessing and mercy from)

Naɔnsesa da, nnɔntonko, otim hɔ daa; (He changes not, slumber nor sleep)

Bɛsɔ hwɛ, Bɛsɔ hwɛ; (Come and taste)

Tweaduampɔn Nyame tim hɔ daa; (God lives forever)

Bɛsɔ hwɛ, Bɛsɔ hwɛ; Nnɔnsesa dao, (Come and taste, he changes not)

Fa wo da dwen ne wo haw nyinaa to no so, (Cast your burden unto him, he lives forever)

Otim hɔ daa.

Body

Aset'nai' muadwen dwen yi, (The burdens of life,)

Wo haw nyinaa ono na' obeye, (and all your difficulties will be solved by him)

Fa to nose na' obeye, Bɛso hwɛ (Leave it to him, come and taste)

W'adwuma yi mu nsem yi, (Problems you're encountering at work,)

Wo dwadie mu nsem yi, (Your spendings,)

W'awareɛ mu nsem nyinaa, (Problems in your marriage,)

W'abusua mu nsem nyinaa, (Problems in your family)

Onim wo sinto nyinaa, (He is aware of your weaknesses)

Neahinta nyinaa da n'anim, bra bɛsohwɛ (All that is hidden is before him, so come and taste)

Bɛso hwɛ, Bɛso hwɛ; (Come and taste)

W'aye bi pen, adom ahyɛ ne nsa ma nti bra bɛso hwɛ, (he did it in the past, he is full of glory so come and taste)

Bɛso hwɛ, Bɛso hwɛ, Bra Bɛso hwɛ; (Come and taste)

ɔmaa Sarah ba, ɔde ne mma twaa 'pokokoo; (He gave a child to Sarah, his children crossed the red sea)

Na ɔsaa kwata foo yare, ɔmaa'sro kyempo yee din; (he healed lepers, he silences the sea)

Bɛso hwɛ, bra bɛso hwɛ, (Come and taste)

Kama fo'Ewurade, Nyanka wura Nyame, onni bi'Agya dɛɛfo, (an intercessor, father of orphans and the poor)

ɔky3so Nyame no no; ɔbotantim, basa yiadom

daasebre, (A generous God, solid rock, rescuer)

Nyamee Hwan naɔ ne wo sɛ? (O God, who is like unto thee?)

Me nuae bra bɛso hwɛ, (My brother/sister, come and taste)

Totrobonsu boadeɛ Nyankopon no no, (Giver of rain)

ɔsabarima, odimafo dɛɛfo no no, (a courageous leader and intercessor)

Yaresafoɔ Agya, werɛkyekyefo no no. (A healer, a comforter)

Nyanka wura, kunafoɔ kun' no no, (Father of orphans and widows)

Bɛsɔ hwɛ, bɛsɔ hwɛ. (Come and taste)

In the edifice of the work titled *Daa, Daa, Daa Mɛ bɔW' din* which has been discussed, the first section (Bar 1 to 9) serves as the introduction (i.e., the persona specifies that he will continue to testify the goodness of his God), and the reason for that acclamation which serves as the body is spelt out from bar 9 to 18 (for his kindness, protection, strength and long life), and concludes from 19 to 28 (by echoing the fact that he will forever thank, praise and worship his God).

Introduction

Daa, Daa, Daa mɛbɔW' din adiadansee daa, (I'll forever hail your name and testify)

Daa, Meyi W'ayɛ, adiadansee daa, (I'll forever praise you and testify)

Body (here he states the reason why there is a need to testify the goodness of God)

W'ayemuyɛ ne wo banbɔ nti mɛbɔw'abodin daa, (For your kindness and protection, I'll forever proclaim your goodness)

Ahɔɔden ne akwahosan nti meyi me Nyame ayɛɔ. (For strength and long-life, I'll praise my God)

Conclusion

Daa mɛda w'aseɔ, ampa daa mɛkoto wo, (Forever will I thank and bow before you)

Aseda w'ra Nyame, daa meyi me gyɛfoa yɛɔ. (Lord of thankfulness, I'll forever praise my saviour)

Another good example is the work *Atipa* (Bald) which is a story in the Bible, where kids hooted at an elderly man (Elisha) to climb the hill. Before telling the story (in the body), Bediako introduces the work by directing children to respect the elderly, in order to live long on earth. He completes the entire work with the introduction which serves as conclusion.

Nonetheless, some compositions of Bediako are laconic. Works such as *Hyerɛn* contains few words, compared to other works of his.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Considering the complete discussion in this paper, one may assume that the paper emboldens the flouting of rules and regulations in the construction of text and the use of metaphoric language in choral compositions. It must be established here that in spite of the defense that has been done in several ways, it is appropriate for a composer to study the rules of a specific language thoroughly before mediocrity takes place in the composition of text in music, for language is as crucial as the music. To be precise, before breaking the rule, you must know the rule and must have practiced the rule; This enables one to break rules artistically.

Again, it would be deceitful to describe the analytical dialogue as the only thematic materials that make the text of the composer significant for discussion, but to mention that the textual composition employed in the works can serve as an analytical discourse for composers, music scholars in both music and linguistics in and outside the academia. Observing the argument this paper intends to hold, it becomes clear to a great degree that the quality of text in a music composition cannot be judged based on metaphoric language only, but colloquialism also plays a magnitude role in the arrangement of text for a larger audience to capture the thematic concept of a story in music. It has also been observed that the approach towards melodic and harmonic structures may or not suggest a group of text to be colloquial or metaphoric. Also, as much as orthography is the accurate system in the construction of text, music composition as a medium of communication, depending on the target performers and listeners, may not always depend on orthography for the construction of text, for the ordinary performer and listener may find it quite challenging to relate and appreciate. Lastly, a composition may be loquacious or laconic, depending on the demands and appreciation of performers or listeners.

Sam Asare Bediako is indeed a great composer that has many components in his music and could always be discussed and studied everywhere on the continent. As a motivation of this diagnostic work, similar studies could be undertaken on the text in the music of other composers in the Ghanaian communities. This would assist art music composers and scholars to be well equipped with guidelines for use in some techniques of Ghanaian choral music.

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