

Code-Switching in Contemporary Ghanaian Hip-hop Lyrics

Franka Smet, 5916267

BA Thesis English Language and Culture Utrecht University

Supervisor: Dr. Koen Sebregts

Second Reader: Dr. Nynke de Haas

June 30, 2019

5391 words

Abstract

This paper explores the function of code-switching between English and Twi in contemporary Ghanaian hip-hop music. Previous research has shown that code-switching is common in daily discourse in Ghana, where this paper explores whether code-switching occurs regularly in Ghanaian hip-hop music as well. It was found that it occurs most frequently to express emotions and represent Ghanaian culture, such as street culture and religion. The connection to this subculture is proven to be important for globalisation of the music as hip-hop artists use their indigenous language to represent the streets, but accompany it with English lyrics to make the topics globally acknowledged. Although the function of code-switching does not seem to follow a specific pattern, it most likely functions as a way of self-expression, allowing the artists to include themselves in the American hip-hop culture. Researching code-switching in Ghanaian hip-hop music will add to previous knowledge about English in African hip-hop and give insight into current language attitudes towards English in Ghana.

Table of Contents

I.	Introduction	4
II.	Methodology	7
III.	Becca's "Nana" and "Gina"	9
IV.	R2Bees' "Supa" and "Life (Walaahi)"	11
V.	Kwesi Arthur's "Woara" and "Don't Keep Me Waiting"	13
VI.	Nigerian Pidgin in Ghanaian Hip-Hop	15
VII.	Conclusion	16
VII.	Discussion.....	17
	References.....	20
	Appendices.....	23
	Appendix A.....	23
	Appendix B.....	25
	Appendix C.....	27
	Appendix D.....	29
	Appendix E.....	30
	Appendix F.....	32

Code-Switching in Contemporary Ghanaian Hip-hop Lyrics

I. INTRODUCTION

Ghana is a multilingual country in which about 60 distinct languages are spoken. Among the most widely-spoken of these indigenous languages are Akan, Twi and Ewe. English is also one of the official languages and functions as a lingua franca as a result of the colonial era. Throughout history English gained the image of a unifying language that brought ethnic, as well as linguistic, groups together (Albakry and Ofori, 2011). As stated by Bobda (2000) Ghanaian English is different from the English of other West African countries with the same colonial background, as it has developed distinctively. Due to the close and intimate language contact with the English language, Ghanaians in general have a positive attitude towards English and a negative attitude towards Pidgin English. Subsequently Bobda (2000) claims that “[t]he popular prejudice against Pidgin has led to the belief that it was brought to Ghana by other West African countries, namely Nigeria”, which is also why, unlike in Nigeria, Pidgin English is not popular to use in informal inter-group communication in Ghana (pp. 186-187). The Ghana institute of Languages confirms, on the basis of a self-evaluation survey, that Ghanaians are very proud of their proficiency in English and are sensitive to stigmatised forms, which is why Ghanaian English closely resembles Received Pronunciation (RP) (cf. Bobda, 2000, p. 187).

According to previous research, code-switching between English and an indigenous language is common in both spoken and written speech as well as in multiple domains. As discussed by Gordon (2012) “The Ghana Living Standard Report” from 2008 shows that about 51 percent of the adults in Ghana are literate in English or a local language, and of this 51 percent, 34 percent are proficient in both English and a Ghanaian language (p. 152). In order to improve proficiency and make citizens benefit from the global economy, the Ghanaian government implemented a new policy in 2002. From that year on, all educational

instruction would be given and examinations held in English, and indigenous languages would only be spoken in homogenous classrooms. This caused a large amount of protest and thus resulted in a negative attitude towards English in the educational domain (Gordon, 2012). Albakry and Ofori (2011), on the other hand, state that most Ghanaians prefer to use English in formal settings such as business meetings and the classroom. They further argue that the popular use of English and an indigenous language alongside one another in Ghanaian churches, for example, mirrors the population's engagement with the languages in their social lives, as the people in Ghana are "nonchalant about what specific language to employ in informal contexts" (p. 517). Due to the use of so many languages alongside one another in informal settings, Ghanaianisms have emerged in Ghanaian English. Dako (2002) defines this term as "an English item that has undergone a local semantic shift, an item of local origin used consistently in English, or a hybrid of the two" (p.48). He further states that Ghanaianisms can either involve code-switching or lexical borrowing. As stated before, code-switching is very common in Ghana and therefore also extensively researched (Albakry & Ofori, 2011; Dako, 2002; Gordon, 2012; Nartey, 1982).

An aspect that has not been widely researched is code-switching in Ghanaian music, in particular hip-hop music, whereas there are several analyses of code-switching in hip-hop in other African countries such as Nigeria (Taiwo Babalola & Taiwo, 2009) and Tanzania (Fenn and Perullo, 2000). In her study on the emergence of hip-hop in both Tanzania and Ghana, Clark (2012) explains how the countries' histories influenced the hip-hop culture and the language. At first the only hip-hop that was present in Ghana was in English, and therefore only the highly educated youths who were proficient enough in English listened to it and started writing their own lyrics in English as well. Clark, however, also states that, "hip-hop's origins lie in its use as a tool of self-expression and self-definition", and within a decade the Ghanaian hip-hop artists of the Accra ghetto often used hip-hop as a platform to

talk about political issues in their local languages (p. 24). This is common in more African countries such as Tanzania and Malawi, where English-language hip-hop songs were found to be mostly about pleasures like parties, drugs and love, while the songs in the indigenous languages were used to express feelings about government corruption, police violence and health issues like HIV (Perullo & Fenn, 2003). In the 1980s Ghana suffered an economic downturn, which gave the hip-hop artists new inspiration for their lyrics. To this day, economic problems are still a relevant topic in Ghanaian hip-hop music. In general, artists use code-switching or English lyrics because they want their music to reach a broader and more international audience. According to Sert (2005) code-switching in general is used to create unity between speakers of the same indigenous language. In a multilingual setting, two speakers with the same first language often code-switch to show solidarity towards one another. She further states that teachers, for example, often use code-switching to their students' mother tongue in order to build a better relationship with them (Sert, 2005). The same can be argued for music artists as well. When they sing or rap in their indigenous language, they show affection for their culture and with that show solidarity towards listeners, who have the same mother tongue as the artists. According to Quarcoo, Amuzu and Owusu (2014) code-switching in Ghanaian hip-hop music only started occurring recently. Code-switching has always been present in Ghana, but most hip-hop lyrics were solely in English since hip-hop artists started off imitating American hip-hop songs. A variety of English that is generally used by African American rappers is African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and thus Ghanaian rappers imitated this accent. Rickford (1997) explores a common theory on the emergence of AAVE, namely the Afrocentric view. He presents evidence for three theories: the Afrocentric view, the Eurocentric view and the Creolist view. Rickford (1997) argues that most features come from West-African languages, but also that there is a wide diversity in African languages and that most features also occur in other English

varieties like British Englishes. However, as was stated above Ghanaian English closely resembles RP and speakers are very determined to use Standard English (Bobda, 2000). Furthermore, Rickford (1997) discusses the Creolist view, which suggest that AAVE derived from Pidgin English. However, Bobda (2000) argued that Pidgin English is unpopular in Ghana and not many Ghanaians use it. It can therefore be assumed that any AAVE features occurring in Ghanaian hip-hop are not present in the artists' daily speech and serve as a way to include the rapper in the American hip-hop community.

The indigenous languages of Ghana have only recently found a way into the lyrics of Ghanaian hip-hop artists. Omoniyi (2006) states that hip-hop artists use their indigenous language to represent the streets in order to “connect with the streets as a space of culture, creativity, cognition, and consciousness” but accompany it with English lyrics to make the topics globally acknowledged (cf. Omoniyi, p. 197). Researching code-switching in Ghanaian hip-hop music will add to previous knowledge about English in African hip-hop and give insight into current language attitudes towards English in Ghanaian music. This paper will focus on how often code-switching is used, when it occurs and what the function of code-switching with English is in Ghanaian hip-hop lyrics by the artists Becca, R2Bees and Kwesi Arthur.

II. METHODOLOGY

In this paper code-switching will be defined as in Dako (2002), where it is argued that when foreign words are added to an existing phrase structure, it should be labelled as code-switching. He recognises that there is a difference between Ghana's situation, where bilinguals almost always engage with both languages simultaneously in their communication and for example Britain, where bilinguals commonly communicate with one language at the time (Dako, 2002, p. 49). Code-switching, therefore, happens when a speaker uses two languages within one utterance. Other terminologies that will be used in this paper are intra-

sentential and inter-sentential. Taiwo Babalola and Taiwo (2009) define the terms as switching between languages within a sentence (intra-sentential) and switching languages between sentences (inter-sentential).

Three artists were selected to analyse the lyrics of to determine the function of code-switching. They were chosen because they are popular in Ghana and have received multiple musical awards, at the national as well as the international level, showing how they managed to globalise their music, which as stated before, is one of the reasons why artists use English in their lyrics. Becca is a popular female hip-hop artist who has won multiple awards in Ghana. R2Bees is a hip-hop duo that was raised in Ghana's capital Accra, known for its hip-hop ghetto. They too won multiple musical awards in Ghana and were nominated for an international award, the American BET Awards of 2013. Kwesi Arthur, whose work is influenced by American rapper Drake, was also nominated for a BET Award in 2018. Becca, R2Bees and Kwesi Arthur all rap in Twi accompanied by English lyrics. Twi is a dialect of the Akan language commonly spoken in Ghana. About 18 million Ghanaians speak Twi as their first or second language. Another reason for choosing these three artists is that all of them have released songs in the past year, making their lyrics contemporary and reflective of the current position of English in Ghanaian hip-hop music. It is also important that there is a significant use of English present in the lyrics. The indigenous language will be analysed using translations of the lyrics. Emma Owusu Darkwa and Caleb Meyer, both speakers of the Twi language and proficient in English, provided translations of the songs by R2bees and Kwesi Arthur. Furthermore the website MusicMatch.com was used, where fans can translate song lyrics into different languages and by that, according to MusicMatch, break down language barriers and make music accessible to multilingual listeners.

III. BECCA'S "NANA" AND "GINA"

Becca's song "Nana" is a love song of which the lyrics are half in English and half in Twi. Becca has always incorporated her indigenous language in her lyrics, unlike, as discussed before, the common practice of exclusively rapping in English at the start of a hip-hop career. In her first album "Sugar" Twi was present in many songs. However, her recent song "Nana" contains noticeably more Twi than her song "Gina" that was released in the same year and contains no Twi at all. Both songs discuss the topic of love, so there seems to be no difference in choice of language depending on the topic that is sung about. In "Nana", forty out of eighty-eight lines are in English, although some English lines also contain one or two words in Twi. Most of the lines in Twi occur consecutively in two whole verses and the rest are present between the English in the chorus. Only a few lines were selected to represent the English in "Nana", as most structures illustrated below occur frequently. What is interesting about the English Becca uses in her lyrics is that there often are English words that have a different meaning within the context of the song. As stated before, this phenomenon can be referred to as Dako's (2002) term *ghanaianisms*. In the first verse of "Nana" Becca uses *ghanaianisms* by inter-sentential code-switching, in sentences such as, "be my king all of my all", that consists of all English words but is a non-standard English construction. A fan on MusicMatch translated the sentence as "be my king all of my life" ("Nana", 1.9). This suggests that the combination of the English words may gain an alternative meaning to Ghanaian listeners of the song. Dako (2002) illustrates this phenomenon as, "Ghanaians ... decorat[ing] their discourse with English interjections or intensifiers, such as: 'Me kɔfie, now now' ('I am going home immediately') and 'I[n] fa[c]t, nipa yɔbone' ('In fact, people are bad')" (p. 50). In his first example the repetition of the English word 'now' is equivalent to the word 'immediately' in Ghanaian context. This is a similar occurrence as Becca's sentence "all of my all" ("Nana", 1.9). These types of phrases emerge from coinages by Ghanaian

speakers of English, which means that words or word compounds are Standard English in structure, but not in meaning. This also results in English words gaining a new meaning to convey local ideas (cf. Gordon, 2012, p. 157). Furthermore in “Nana” lines 11-12, she uses the phrase “you dey read my head” that translates to “you read my mind”. In Standard English it is not semantically correct to say you can read someone’s head, however it works as a Ghanaianism. Likewise, the sentence “last year se¹ nea mo delay me time no / anye me de”, translates to “last year you wasted my time / I was not happy about that” (“Nana”, l. 35). Here Becca uses the English word “delay” to actually mean “waste”. According to Gordon (2012), “people are unafraid to ‘bend’ the English language in a socio-culturally relevant way,” making the function of Ghanaianisms “to facilitate communication” (p. 163). It is unclear whether ‘delay’ is commonly used to mean ‘waste’ in Ghanaian context, but even if she’s the only one using ‘delay’ in this manner, it still shows she makes the English language her own.

Besides using English vocabulary, the syntactic structures of the sentences Becca uses sometimes reflect that of the English variety AAVE. For example, the feature habitual be in “Nana” line 15, “this one no be wash oh” and copula deletion in the future tense as seen, among others, in line 70 “and I go be your queen”.

It is also present in Becca’s song “Gina”, which is entirely in English with the exception of six words in Nigerian Pidgin. This is interesting as, like discussed above, Nigerian Pidgin English is stigmatised by a large part of the Ghanaian population. The Pidgin words used in “Gina” are “yenkwe” (l. 3), “omotena” (l. 11), “kpai” (l. 19), “wey” (l. 24), “dey” (l. 24), and “fashi” (l. 40). The translators were unfamiliar with these words, but an online Nigerian Pidgin dictionary (2002) defines “kpai” (“Gina, l.19), for example as “to tire to the point of death” (Naijalango: Nigerian Pidgin English Dictionary). It can be assumed that the reason to switch to Nigerian Pidgin English in this context is because the English

¹ Additional Twi vowel sounding like the RP English dress vowel, /e/.

equivalent is wordy and would disturb the rhythm or flow of the song. Furthermore, the word “fashi” (“Gina”, l. 40) is defined as a combination of ignoring and forgetting someone or something (Naijalingo: Nigerian Pidgin English Dictionary, 2002), which again is a concept without a direct translation in English. The word “omotena” (“Gina”, l. 11) was not found in the dictionary, but from the context of the word in different Nigerian hip-hop songs, such as the song “Omotena” by Solid Star for example, it can be assumed it is used as a pet name for someone you have feelings for (“Omotena”, 2012). Code-switching is therefore used in order to convey local and untranslatable ideas.

As mentioned before, AAVE is a variety of English often associated with rap and hip-hop culture, and by using it in her lyrics Becca is able to include herself in the community. For example, there is copula deletion present in the line, “you suppose to be my baby” (“Gina”, l.27) and “you no go go nowhere” (“Gina”, l.37). The English present in “Gina” appears to function as a way of identity formation within the subculture, where in “Nana” Becca makes the English words her own and by that represents the language culture of Ghana.

IV. R2BEES’ “SUPA” AND “LIFE (WALAAHI)”

The songs “Supa” and “Life (Walaahi)” by R2bees contain mostly only English, with only a few lines in Twi. “Supa” only contains seven lines fully in Twi, while the whole song consists of eighty lines in total. However, there are some Twi words present in the English lines as well. “Life (Walaahi)” also contains seven lines in Twi, but is also a shorter song than “Supa”. All lines in Twi in “Life (Walaahi)” were analysed to be able to show the meaning and function of the code-switching. What is interesting is that “Supa” is mostly about love, and “Life (Walaahi)” is about their personal life in Ghana. As stated before Perullo & Fenn (2003) mention that local issues in African hip-hop are often rapped about in indigenous languages, but unlike this common trend, “Life (Walaahi)” does not contain more Twi than “Supa”.

Just as in the Becca songs, the English used in “Supa” contains features of AAVE, such as copula deletion, for example. This is seen in the reoccurring sentence “your body so nice (supa)”, first occurring in line 5. The title of the song itself also contains a phonological feature present in AAVE, namely non-rhoticity, as it is pronounced as /'su:pə/, without the final /r/. In general this is uncommon in Ghanaian English as GhEn often uses /a/ for /ə/ in words like ‘administrator’ which in Ghanaian English is pronounced as /əd'ministreita/ (Bobda, 2000). This is why /'su:pə/ can be assigned specifically as an AAVE feature.

Furthermore, invariant *be* as a habitual aspect is used frequently throughout the song. Some examples of this are “oh my baby you be” (“Supa”, l. 19), “this love no be give and take” (“Supa”, l. 52), and “we were meant to be no be mistake” (“Supa”, l. 53). Just as in Becca’s song “Nana” the use of English here functions as a way for R2Bees to associate themselves with the subculture of the hip-hop society. The Twi used in the song occurs when the loved one in the song is addressed. For example in the line, “eye me de se wo ye me girl” (“Supa”, l. 61) which translates to “I am happy you’re my girl”. Strikingly, R2Bees switches back to English just for the word “girl”, since it conveys the concept of being someone’s girlfriend. This usage of the word “girl” is often used in English discourse and may not have the same connotations as “obaa” the Twi word for girl might have. The word “obaa” was searched for on MusicMatch.com and all of the lyrics, with English translations available, that contained “obaa” referred to girl as gender. The word “omoge” (“Supa”, l. 12), according to our translators, is Nigerian slang for pretty or cute girl. This word resembles “omotena” (“Gina”, l. 11) and it is assumed it can be used in the same manner. Another Twi line, occurring twice, is “mame kawo asembi” (“Supa”, ll. 34-35), which translates to “let me tell you something”. It could be that R2Bees switches to Twi because it is not an important line with much content. English listeners of the song would not miss a crucial message when they do not understand what this means. R2Bees still use their indigenous language, showing solidarity to their

culture and at the same time make sure that the song can be listened to and understood by an international audience.

R2Bees' song "Life (Walaahi)" is about being judged by other people and personal struggles of life. The word Walaahi literally means "I swear to Allah", which according to translator Owusu Darkwa is used the same way as 'I swear to God' in English. Next to the AAVE features also mentioned for "Supa" such as copula deletion in "mankind go give you story" ("Life (Walaahi)", l.13) and habitual be in the line "after all we all be one oh ey" ("Life (Walaahi)", l. 9), noticeably all allusions to God or Allah are sung in Twi. Such as "e Baba God eyy", for example, which translates to "it is all because of Father God" ("Life (Walaahi)", l. 12), as well as "Ay, walaahi bebiaa meduru bankoma", which occurs multiple times and translates to "I swear to Allah that everywhere I go there is trouble" ("Life (Walaahi)", l.61). Since the only lines in Twi in the song all refer to religion, the function of code-switching in this setting is for R2Bees to express their religion.

V. KWESI ARTHUR'S "DON'T KEEP ME WAITING" AND "WOARA"

Just as in R2Bees' "Supa" both "Woara" and "Don't Keep Me Waiting" by Kwesi Arthur are songs in which code-switching is used to express feelings. Both songs are almost entirely sung in Twi, although "Don't Keep Me Waiting" contains more lines in English than "Woara" does. "Don't Keep Me Waiting" has 55 lines in Twi, out of 80 lines total, and even the English lines mostly contain one or two Twi words as well. For example in, "abi I tell you say you give me joy" ("Don't Keep Me Waiting", l. 6) and "anything I go talk ibe law" ("Don't Keep Me Waiting", l. 11), where Kwesi Arthur uses intra-sentential code-switching for just one Twi word. It could be, similarly to the explanation used before, that this is done to represent Twi in the lyrics but still make the song intelligible to a broader audience. In "Don't Keep Me Waiting" the Twi that is used occurs when the loved one in the song is addressed, in sentences like "enti odo yewu eh", which means "so my love" ("Don't Keep Me Waiting", l.

14) and “izzy my joley” which translates to “listen my love” (“Don’t Keep Me Waiting”, l. 21). It can be concluded that Kwesi Arthur uses his indigenous language to express his feelings of love, as he uses Twi in this context. Other examples of this include “mede m'akoma nyina bema wo”, which translates to “I will give you all my heart” (“Don’t Keep Me Waiting”, l. 23) and “odo yewu eh ma me se” which means “my love doesn’t make me suffer” (“Don’t Keep Me Waiting”, l. 32). Nonetheless, the English used in the song also evolves around love, which could be to connect to a broader audience, which, as mentioned above, is a common reason for singers to use code-switching to English. Only 30% of the song is in English, and the English lines always occur between Twi lines. It is known that Kwesi Arthur is inspired by American rapper Drake, which could also be why English is included to, in line with Sert’s (2005) argument, show solidarity to English speaking listeners.

In the song “Woara”, 64% of the lyrics are sung in Twi and most of those lines contain an expression of love as well. What is interesting is that, just as in “Life (Walaahi)” religion plays a role in the Twi lyrics too, as this song is about love for and faith in God. For example in the lines “m’anidasoa ne wo oo” (“Woara”, l.4), which translates to “you are my only hope”, and the line “na yehia wo papa”, which means, “because we really need you” (“Woara”, l.12). As discussed in Dawaele (2004), a speaker’s L1 is often linked to that person’s emotions from childhood onwards and speakers will often find themselves switching between languages when they need to express feelings. Since English is officially Ghana’s L2 language (Owu-Ewie, 2006), it can be assumed that both R2Bees and Kwesi Arthur’s first language is Twi and that they therefore use code-switching between English and Twi when they express emotions in their lyrics.

Furthermore all direct allusions to God are in Twi as well such as “okame ho firi anopa ko anadwofa”, for example, which means “He is with me from morning to evening” (“Woara”, l. 2). As claimed by Albakry (2011) “Twi, Ga, and Ewe, [are] found to be in use

especially in the middle and lower class churches” (p.530). In several interviews Kwesi Arthur has stated that he grew up poor, without a house to live in. He also publicly thanks God for his success in the music business, from which can be concluded that he grew up religious. Due to his deprived childhood it can be assumed that he did not attend a high-class Church when he was younger, explaining his choice of language in this context.

The little English that is used in the lyrics is of a non-standard variety. Most English lines are not even completely in English but still contain one to three words in Twi, which makes them examples of intra-sentential code-switching. An example of an English line in “Woara” is, “if you dey ma body man no get matter”, which in standard English would mean something like “if you’re with me, I don’t have any problems” (“Woara”, l. 2). Although they are not used frequently, there are also some features of AAVE present in the lyrics. For example, “my enemies You no be God oo” (“Woara”, l. 15), which is an example of habitual be.

VI. NIGERIAN PIDGIN IN GHANAIAN HIP-HOP

Something that was striking during the analyses of the songs was that the word “dey” was used frequently, as it occurs thirty-seven times in the six lyrics combined. First it was assumed it was meant to mean the same as “they”, but then spelled phonetically as all three artists pronounce “they” and “dey” similarly as /dei/. However, from context became clear that that was not the case as sometimes “dey” was used adjacent to another pronoun. For example in, “we dey wake” (“Supa”, l. 54), “them dey fly” (“Life (Walaahi)”, l. 6), and “me I dey do my thing” (“Life (Walaahi)”, l. 48). As explained in Mensah (2011), “dey” originates from Nigerian Pidgin English and is used as a progressive tense marker. As mentioned before, English Pidgin spoken in Ghana comes from Nigerian Pidgin English, which derived from Krio, an English-based creole language (Huber, 2008). This would explain why “dey” only occurs in the English lines and is not accompanied by Twi. As previously stated, Ghanaians in

general have a negative attitude towards Pidgin English. Pidgin English is hence not popular to use in informal inter-group communication in Ghana (Bobda, 2000, pp. 186-187). It is therefore surprising that it seems to be present in Ghanaian hip-hop lyrics. Becca's lyrics contain most Nigerian Pidgin, which can be explained by the fact that she is married to a Nigerian entrepreneur. In Nigerian hip-hop, however, Nigerian Pidgin English is used frequently. As stated by Babalola and Taiwo (2009), "hip-hop artists are particularly interested in using NPE because it is fast becoming the language of Nigerian youth, irrespective of their origin or educational background" (p. 11). Further research might provide a better explanation as to why Nigerian Pidgin English also occurs in Ghanaian hip-hop.

VII. CONCLUSION

The results of the analyses for the six Ghanaian hip-hop songs do not follow the expected trend that is found in other African countries like Tanzania and Nigeria, and therefore Ghanaian hip-hop cannot be combined together with other African hip-hop patterns to draw a general conclusion. It is hard to draw conclusions based on these results, as there does not seem to be a pattern. Becca uses Twi more frequent in her lyrics than the other two artists, and what is interesting is that she is also less internationally known. R2Bees and Kwesi Arthur have won multiple international awards, but Becca has not. It could be that R2Bees and Kwesi Arthur, use more English and code-switching to make their songs more international. The code-switching to Twi in allusions to religion in Kwesi Arthur's lyrics can be explained from his background, but the same occurrence in R2Bees' song cannot be attributed to this. Becca frequently uses ghanaiansisms, which shows she has made the English language her own and thus uses it as a form of self-expression, but these ghanaiansisms are not found in the same way in the lyrics of the other two artists. Another unexpected result is that the topic of the songs does not seem to influence the preference for English or Twi consistently for all artists. Becca has two songs about love, one dominated with Twi lines and the other with a

high frequency of English phrases. R2Bees and Kwesi Arthur, however, do seem to have a preference for Twi when they express emotions like love for example. These limitations could be eliminated in further research on code-switching in Ghanaian hip-hop music if more artists were to be compared. This way more relevant and reliable generalisations can be made. Furthermore it would also be more reliable to choose more than two songs per artist to analyse. Nonetheless, the findings of this paper do provide more context to existing research and can be background to potential follow-up studies, as this is merely an exploratory study of code-switching in Ghanaian hip-hop music.

VIII. DISCUSSION

As mentioned before, Clark (2012) discusses how hip-hop music first came to Ghana from America with mostly only English lyrics. However, as seen in the songs that have been analysed, the Ghanaian language Twi is nowadays represented in the music genre. Code-switching between English and Twi in the lyrics has three main functions, namely: identifying with the African American hip-hop culture, expressing emotions and representing Ghanaian culture and religion. In line with that last function, Clark (2012) states that self-expression and self-definition play an important role in hip-hop's origins. Connecting this to identifying with the American hip-hop culture, Omoniyi (2006), as discussed before, argues that the connection to this subculture is important for globalisation of the music. Taiwo Babalola and Taiwo (2009) claim that, "the mixing of Nigerian languages with English in hip-hop music may also be a subtle way of resisting the overbearing influence of English in the Nigerian social setting, especially among the educated" (p. 21). This may also be true for Ghana as there has been a negative attitude towards English in education for some time in the past (Gordon, 2012).

Becca, as the only one of the three selected artists, makes frequent use of Ghanaianisms that Dako (2002) discusses. As seen above, she decorates her lyrics with

English intensifiers like “all of my all” (“Nana”, l. 9) meaning “all of my life” as well as using English words that mean something different in her lyrics like “read my head” (“Nana”, l. 12) to mean “read my mind”. Ghanaianisms emerge from coinages created by the Ghanaian population, which results in English words gaining a new meaning to convey local ideas (cf. Gordon, 2012, p. 157). As mentioned before the function of Ghanaianisms are to facilitate communication. She furthermore, like R2bees and Kwesi Arthur do with a similar function, uses AAVE features and with that is able to include herself in American hip-hop culture. The most common feature in the six songs is copula deletion, for example “this one no be wash oh” (“Nana”, l. 15), “you suppose to be my baby” (“Gina”, l.27) and “your body so nice (supa)” (“Supa”, l. 5).

R2Bees use significantly less Twi than Becca and Kwesi Arthur, even when they rap about local issues, which is uncommon in African hip-hop music (Perullo & Fenn, 2003). R2Bees use Twi with allusions to religion, such as “e Baba God eyy”, translating to “it is all because of Father God” (“Life (Walaahi)”, l. 12), as well as “Ay, walaahi bebiaa meduru bankoma”, which translates to “I swear to Allah that everywhere I go there is trouble” (“Life (Walaahi)”, l.61).

Kwesi Arthur does the same, however, his code-switching can be explained due to the fact that he grew up in a low socioeconomic class, which means he most likely went to a church where very little English was spoken (Albakry, 2011). It would make sense that he then would switch from English to Twi, because he would assumedly be better at expressing religion related thoughts in his first language. Dawaele (2004), claims that a speaker’s L1 is often linked to that person’s emotions and speakers will often find themselves switching between languages when they need to express feelings. This is present in Kwesi Arthur’s lyrics in sentences like “enti odo yewu eh”, which means “so my love” (“Don’t Keep Me

Waiting”, l. 14) and “izzy my joley” which translates to “listen my love” (“Don’t Keep Me Waiting”, l. 21).

To conclude, code-switching is very present in contemporary Ghanaian hip-hop music, and occurs most frequent to express emotions and represent Ghanaian culture.

Although the function of code-switching does not seem to follow a specific pattern it most likely functions as a way of self-expression, also allowing the artists to include themselves in the American hip-hop culture.

References

Primary Sources

- Becca. (2018). Nana. Zylofon Music.
- Becca. (2018). Gina. EMPIRE.
- Kpai. (2002) In *Naijalingo: the Nigerian Pidgin English Dictionary*. Retrieved June 28, 2019 from <https://naijalingo.com/words/kpai>
- Kwesi Arthur. (2018) Woara. TuneCore.
- Kwesi Arthur. (2018) Don't Keep Me Waiting. Ground Up Chale.
- Musixmatch - Song Lyrics and Translations*. (2010). Retrieved May 24, 2019 from <https://www.musixmatch.com/>
- R2Bees. (2018) Supa.
- R2bees. (2012) Life (Walaahi). TuneCore.
- Solid Star. (2012) Omotena. Tunecore.

Secondary Sources

- Albakry, M. A., & Ofori, D. M. (2011). Ghanaian English and code-switching in Catholic churches. *World Englishes*, 30, 515-532. doi:10.1111/j.1467-971X.2011.01726.x.
- Babalola, E. T., & Taiwo, R. (2009). Code-switching in Contemporary Nigerian Hip-hop Music. *Itupale Online Journal of African Studies*, 1, 1-26. doi:10.1.1.452.1873.
- Bobda, S. A. (2000). The uniqueness of Ghanaian English Pronunciation in West Africa. *Studies in the Linguistic Sciences*, 30. Retrieved June 25, 2019 from <https://www.ideals.illinois.edu/bitstream/handle/2142/9659/SLS2000v30.2-12SimoBobda.pdf>.
- Clark, M. K. (2012). Hip Hop as Social Commentary in Accra and Dar es Salaam. *African Studies Quarterly*, 13, 23-45. Retrieved June 3, 2019 from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1312402178?pq-origsite=gscholar>.
- Dako, K. (2002). Code-switching and lexical borrowing: which is what in Ghanaian

- English?. *English Today*, 18, 48-54. doi:10.1017/S0266078402003073.
- Dewaele, J. M. (2004). Perceived Language Dominance and Language Preference for Emotional Speech. *First Language Attrition: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Methodological Issues*, 81-104. doi:10.1075/sibil.28.
- Fenn, J., & Perullo, A. (2000). Language choice and hip hop in Tanzania and Malawi. *Popular Music & Society*, 24(3), 73-93.
- Gordon, A. (2012). English in Ghana: Growth, Tensions, and Trends. *International Journal of Language, Translation and Intercultural Communication*, 1, 151-166. doi:10.12681/ijltic.17.
- Huber, M. (2008). Ghanaian Pidgin English: Morphology and Syntax. *Africa, South and Southeast Asia*, 381-394.
- Mensah, E. O. (2011). Lexicalization in Nigerian Pidgin. *Concentric: Studies in Linguistics*, 37(2), 209-240. doi:10.6241/concentric.ling.
- Nartey, J. N. (1982). Code-switching, Interference or Faddism? Language Use Among Educated Ghanians. *Anthropological Linguistics*. 183-192. Retrieved May 12, 2018 from <https://jstor.org/stable/30027835>.
- Omoniyi, T. (2006). Hip-hop Through the World Englishes Lens: a Response to Globalization. *World Englishes*, 25(2), 195-208. doi:10.1111/j.0083-2919.2006.00459.x.
- Owu-Ewie, C. (2006, April). The Language Policy of Education in Ghana: A Critical Look at the English-only Language Policy of Education. In *Selected Proceedings of the 35th Annual Conference on African Linguistics*, 76-85 doi:10.1.1.546.2160.
- Perullo, A., & Fenn, J. (2003). Language Ideologies, Choices, and Practices in Eastern African Hip Hop. *Global pop, local language*, 19-51.
- Quarcoo, M., Amuzu, E. K., & Owusu, A. P. (2014). Codeswitching as a Means and a

- Message in Hiplife Music in Ghana. *Contemporary Journal of African Studies*, 2(2), 1-32. Retrieved May 22, 2019 from <https://journals.co.za/content/inafstud1/2/2EJC162405>.
- Rickford, J. (1997). Suite for ebony and phonics (pp. 810-16). Retrieved June 25, 2019 from <http://semantics.uchicago.edu/kennedy/classes/s07/myths/rickford97b.pdf>
- Sert, O. (2005). The Functions of Code-Switching in ELT Classrooms. *Online Submission*, 11(8). Retrieved June 26, 2019 from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED496119>
- Yevudey, E. (2013). The Pedagogic Relevance of Codeswitching in the Classroom: Insights from Ewe-English codeswitching in Ghana. *Ghana Journal of linguistics*, 2(2), 1-22. Retrieved May 12, 2019 from <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/gjl/article/view/103237>.

Appendices

Appendix A

“Nana” by Becca

- Errh yeah
aha, aha
yenko err
5 now,tie
- Give me time to love you like that
You know I love you right back
I will go on extra mile oh
Be my king all of my all
10 I no fi shout, I no want shout oh
You dey run my mind
You dey read my head oh
Give me that sugar and spice
Give me too much joy in my life
15 This one no be wash oh
And I know i love you die oo
- Nana eei, Odo Yewu eei
I will do everything to make you
happy, my king
20 Nana eei, ma ma my own
If i ever break your heart, know
Sey na lie oh my king
- Okyeame ma neto nanahemaa se mate
Meté noso ah na masore
25 Me wiase nyinaa hye nase yebewo akonoba
ɔmbra na menfi nano wape
wonka dee wope
Wowie ah na monsore ahomakye na
mo nfa no nkosi trasacco na onko
30 Choose dee ope
Monfre Vesacce ma me
Ne mpoboa no eyaa okye
Monse gucci foɔ no se call ah menfa
no nye wɔhye
35 Last year se nea mo delay me time
anye me de
ɔbaa hema,mento Jet foforo anaase
Dada naa
Anaa wadwen mu ye wo nyaa
40 Nya abotere menim se eyaa waniso
yewo saa
Nye aduro bi na wayeme
Odo na me do wo naa nti na ayefro aa

yeba abeye made in heaven
 45 Ferarri 4, Kantanka ye 87 bisa dee
 wope wo wiase na sika no nye wo burden
 Nana na ekasa no mona mobu UK royal wedding

Nana eei, Odo Yewu eei
 I will do everything to make you
 50 happy, my king
 Nana eei, ma ma my own
 If i ever break your heart, know
 Sey na lie oh my king
 Nana eei,
 55 We go think together,
 We go talk together,
 Even sef we go breath together aahh
 Nana eei
 Odo yewu ee u know sey i go do
 60 everything just to make you happy, Ohene

Your love just dey make me dey kolo
 Love you now till tomorrow
 If i braise for your love no one go know, oh noo
 See love me Jejely ah
 65 You love me generally
 You love me endlessly
 Can't get enough of you boy
 You are Mr. Bombastic
 Original bad boy
 70 And i go be your queen
 Till the end boy
 You're Mr. Fantastic
 Original bad boy
 And I remain your queen
 75 Till the end boy

Nana eei, Odo Yewu eei
 I will do everything to make you
 happy, my king
 Nana eei, Ma ma my own
 80 If i ever break your heart, know
 Sey na lie oh my king
 Nana eei,
 We go think together,
 We go talk together,
 85 Even sef we go breath together aahh
 Nana eei
 Odo yewu ee u know sey i go do
 everything just to make you happy, Ohene

Appendix B

“Gina” by Becca

Hmm yummy
Gina
Yenkwe
Its Cliffedge the BeatChef

5 I respect you Gina
No need to take you Gina
You too much for me oh Gina
Like the way you do oh Gina
Gina

You are my Gina
10 Want to take you out on a dinner
I want to call you omotena
Make you love again

Take my hand and fly away with me
Am surely gonna miss you when you leave
15 Take my hand and fly away with me
Surely gonna miss you when you leave
Ah ah

I am dead for the matter
And I go soon kpai for the matter
20 I no go fit cool for the matter
Sit back
Relax for your ride oh
You know I pack and I better
Ask all of them wey dey social
25 Na only you for the matter
Say na only you for the matter oh

You suppose to be my baby
You suppose to give me baby one time
Gina
30 You suppose to be my baby
You suppose to give me baby one time
Gina
Oh oh oh
oh oh oh oh oh oh oh oh oh
35 It's Cliffedge the BeatChef

Pro promise me now ah
You no go go nowhere
(I no go go nowhere)
Baby ah ah ah
40 (I no go fashi you)
when

When am there
 You will be there with me
 When I'm far away
 45 Are you missing me
 Uh yea

Take my hand and fly away with me
 I'm surely gonna miss you when you leave
 Take my hand and fly away with me
 50 Surely gonna miss you when you leave
 Ah ah

I don't die for the matter
 And I go soon cry for the matter
 I no go fit cool for the matter
 55 Sit back
 Relax for your ride oh
 You know am bad and I better
 Ask all of them wey dey social
 Na only you for the matter
 60 Say na only you for the matter oh

You suppose to be my baby
 You suppose to give me baby one time
 Gina
 You suppose to be my baby
 65 You suppose to give me baby one time
 Gina
 Oh oh oh
 oh oh oh oh oh oh oh oh oh

Mixing Xenofoster
 70 Mark my word
 Oh oh oh
 You are my world
 rocking rocking rocking
 The love I got for you
 75 The love I got for you
 Oh
 Oh

Appendix C

"Supa" by R2bees

Yea
 Yea Yea
 R2bees

5 So Nice (Supa)
 So Nice (Supa)
 Your Body So Nice (Supa)
 So Nice (Supa)
 So Nice (Supa)
 So Nice (Supa)
 Your Body So Nice (Supa)

10 Yah

I Fit Do Anything For Your Love
 Omoge I Do Maraton
 Me Loving You Nice And Tall O
 Girl Say Na You I Want O
 15 Come To Me, Come Make Me Roll
 Don't You Leave Me On The Road O
 Baby Girl Na You I Want O
 When You No Dey, Na You I Need O

20 Oh My Baby You Be Evident Yea Eh Eh
 You No Dey Try To Be Relevant No Oh
 No Dey Give Your Body To Another Man No Oh
 Oh My Baby You Be Evident Yea Eh Eh
 You No Dey Try To Be Relevant No Oh
 No Dey Give Your Body To Another Man No Oh

25 So Nice (Supa)
 So Nice (Supa)
 Your Body So Nice (Supa)
 So Nice (Supa)
 So Nice (Supa)

30 So Nice (Supa)
 Your Body So Nice (Supa)
 Yah

Mame kawo asembi
 Me I Get Anybody, E Be You Be The Only One
 35 Oh My Baby, Mame kawo asembi
 And If You Show Me Body Me I Go Show You The Only One

Oh My Baby You Be Evident Yea Eh Eh
 You No Dey Try To Be Relevant No Oh
 No Dey Give Your Body To Another Man No Oh

40 Oh My Baby You Be Evident Yea Eh Eh
 You No Dey Try To Be Relevant No Oh
 No Dey Give Your Body To Another Man No Oh

So Nice (Supa)
 So Nice (Supa)
 45 Your Body So Nice (Supa)
 So Nice (Supa)
 So Nice (Supa)
 So Nice (Supa)
 Your Body So Nice (Supa)
 50 Yah

Whine oh, whine your body. oh yeah x 4

This Love No Be Give And Take
 We Were Meant To Be, No Be Mistake
 We Dey Wake, We Dey Bake, They Dey Hate We Dey Ditch
 55 You too sweet, you no be milkshake
 Makoma wobeku my chest
 Woye me Impress my Love I confess
 No One Can Test, Where My Baby Contest
 Last Year Miss Ghana My Baby Come First
 60 Ei wo body ye me fe se
 eye me de se wo ye me girl
 Madam Mu Emuye, Atu Su Su Two Years
 The New Vans Got You A Pair

So Nice (Supa)
 65 So Nice (Supa)
 Your Body So Nice (Supa)
 So Nice (Supa)
 So Nice (Supa)
 So Nice (Supa)
 70 Your Body So Nic'e (Supa)
 Yah.

Whine oh, whine your body. oh yeah x 4

So Nice (Supa)
 So Nice (Supa)
 75 Your Body So Nice (Supa)
 So Nice (Supa)
 So Nice (Supa)
 So Nice (Supa)
 Your Body So Nice (Supa)
 80 Yah

Appendix D

“Life (Walaahi)” by R2Bees

R2bees yeah

Them say life is sweeter than
 But you for take it easy and
 Make you no dey rush and blow your meter and
 5 Just get your hustle on
 Them dey fly you dey for land
 Use your head and use your hand
 Don't you envy brother man
 After all we all be one oh ey
 10 So keep doing what you doing and don't watch nobody
 Na who you for listen to?
 E Baba God eyy
 Mankind go give you story
 But in the end they go leave you lonely
 15 So make your own history eyy

Ay, walaahi bebiaa meduru bankoma
 I keep moving on I'm a soldier
 I no go lose the title I'm a holder
 Yeah, walaahi bebiaa meduru bankoma
 20 I keep moving on I'm a soldier
 I no go lose the title I'm a holder

Winners don't quit cause quitters don't win
 God forgive us, save us from sin
 Bless us with success and a couple of things
 25 And protect us we all know the trouble it brings
 Words won't break us, words will make us
 Words will take us where some fear, haters
 Yeah cause we got game like the Lakers
 I spit raw naked. I think life is like Davido and Wizkid
 30 One from the ghetto the other for the rich kid
 But they both running their game, artistic
 What you dream dream big like the Big Six
 M. O. B. money over b*tches
 M. O. B. Money over bridgid
 35 M. O. B. McDonald over Burger King
 And spend your life tryinna lose digits
 Ok ok bosses dey chill we dey drink ros
 Like play like play we dey drink dwetiri (meaning start-up capital)
 Life is short like may weather bring the storm with me weather
 40 Cus we got cheese more cheddar
 R2bees we on gedda, you dunno

Ay, walaahi bebiaa meduru bankoma
 I keep moving on I'm a soldier

I no go lose the title I'm a holder
 45 Yeah, walaahi bebiaa meduru bankoma
 I keep moving on I'm a soldier
 I no go lose the title I'm a holder

 Me I dey do my thing
 Me I no dey do like them
 50 Them dey rush wey I dey cool like wind
 Them dey cool Wey I dey hot like gin
 I go cross the line I go win
 I go burn bad man from winning
 Tell them say we just dey begin
 55 R2bees be the new religion woo yeah
 So keep doing what you doing and don't watch nobody
 Na who you for listen to? Be Baaba God hey
 Mankind go give you story
 But in the end they go leave you lonely
 60 So make your own e history hey

 Walaahi bebiaa meduru bankoma
 I keep moving on I'm a soldier
 I no go lose the title I'm a holder yeah
 Walaahi bebiaa meduru bankoma
 65 I keep moving on I'm a soldier
 I no go lose the title I'm a holder yeah

Appendix E

“Don’t Keep Me Waiting” by Kwesi Arthur

Oh Lord have mercy
 Let's go
 Oh yeah edadey
 I put my all into you enti no mente te me
 5 If your feelings saf have changed just let me know

 Abi I tell you say you give me joy
 Anything I go talk ibe law
 All the boys who move them be one
 For your love I go break every law
 10 Abi tell you say you give me joy
 Anything I go talk ibe law (eh)
 All the boys who move them be one
 For your love I go break every lane

 enti odo yewu eh
 15 emma meho enkyiri me oh
 eh
 Odo yewu eh
 Mese odo yewu eh
 You drive me crazy oh

- 20 Don't keep me waiting
Izzy my joley
Odo yewu (eh)
- Mede m'akoma nyina bema wo
Fa mbo chasqele
- 25 Oh bebe oh dede
Your love do me like juju
Mede m'akoma nyina bema wo
Fa mbo chasqele
Oh bebe oh dede
- 30 Your love do me like
Mesere woso ma me se
Odo yewu eh ma me se
Oh ma me se
Mesere woso ma me se
- 35 Odo yewu eh ma me se
Oh ma me se
enti odo yewu eh
emma meho enkyiri me oh
eh
- 40 Odo yewu eh
Mese odo yewu eh
You drive me crazy oh
Don't keep me waiting
Izzy my joley
- 45 Odo yewu eh
- Mede m'akoma nyina bema wo
Fa mbo chasqele
Oh bebe oh dede
Your love do me like juju
Mede m'akoma nyina bema wo
- 50 Kome boko boko boko baby eh
Ahh
Me sweetie pie kashe kpe emoko beni ose
Me sweetie pie kashe kpe ena mene obia nka woho ohh
Ehh
- 55 enti odo yewu eh
emma meho enkyiri me oh
eh
- Odo yewu eh
Mese odo yewu eh
- 60 You drive me crazy oh
Don't keep me waiting
Izzy my joley
Odo yewu eh
Odo yewu eh

65 Odo yewu eh
 Izzy my joley
 Odo yewu eh
 Odo yewu eh
 Don't keep my (joley)
 70 Odo yewu eh
 Odo yewu eh
 Odo yewu eh
 Odo yewu eh
 Izzy my joley
 75 Odo yewu eh
 Odo yewu eh
 Izzy my joley
 Odo yewu eh
 Odo yewu eh
 80 Ground up chale

Appendix F

“Woara” by Kwesi Arthur

Yieeeee Eeeiii Yieeeee oeah

Okame ho firi anopa ko anadwofa
 If you dey ma body man no get matter
 M'anidasoa ne wo oo
 5 Bie kwan ma me oo
 Mame nsa nka bi na menhye w'anionyam
 Eii firi se

Woara Woara Woara (8x)

Menhia obiaa, gye se wo oo
 10 My Lord
 Towani hwε wo mma oo
 Na yehia wo papa
 Susupon dem plenty
 Nti ye na ato me ne adwendwen
 15 My enemies You no be God oo
 Dem no know my story
 Oh naa dey dont care how i feel oo
 Enti na early mornings
 I go on my knees and I talk to you oo

20 Okame ho firi anopa ko anadwofa
 If you dey ma body man no get matter
 M'anidasoa ne wo oo
 Bie kwan ma me oo
 Mame nsa nka bi na menhye w'anionyam
 25 Eii firi se

Woara Woara Woara (8x)

- Too Speedy in a dream memi patience
 Everybody for they hoot kwesi take care
 Mesere wo paa wogye shun wow
 30 You no fi wait here
 Nipa tirimu yesum i no fi play fair
 Better use head, try believe too
 Emaa no dee omo beba but what dem things do
 I keep a diary for everything we've been through
 35 And popie in contract you go see in soon
 You go see the rain soon
 Ego fall, i've been trying to correct the wrongs
 We go win soon, You go ball
 Meho kyere me a, You go call
- 40 Okame ho firi anopa ko anadwofa
 If you dey ma body man no get matter
 M'anidasoa ne wo oo
 Bie kwan ma me oo
 Mame nsa nka bi na mmenhe w'anionyam
 45 Eii firi se