
Fighting HIV/AIDS through popular Zambian Music

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Abstract

This paper explores how HIV/AIDS education messages are transmitted through popular Zambian music lyrics. The focus is on the recontextualisation of lived experiences and Zambian cultural practices in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Using multimodal discourse analysis, the paper uses Zambian popular music lyrics to show how Zambian musicians deliberately blend languages, socio-cultural artefacts and knowledge into a hybrid of 'infotainment' in the fight against HIV/AIDS. The paper concludes that although male dominance is still prevalent, choices regarding sex and discussions on sexual matters are no longer a preserve for the men, and that musicians are able to use language to reframe dominant cultural practices and taboos in the process of disseminating HIV/AIDS messages. This has produced altered social conditions, which sometimes distort the intended messages, but allow musicians to operate without fear of government censorship boards or running foul of cultural taboos.

Introduction

There have been no studies designed to particularly analyse HIV/AIDS discourses in popular Zambian music. However, there have been some works that address discourse practices on HIV/AIDS in general. Nkolola-Wakumelo's (2009) book chapter on discourses associated with stigmatisation against people living with HIV/AIDS is one example. She argues that negative discourse practices associated with the HIV/AIDS pandemic hinder progress in the fight against it. Other studies such as Bond, Chase and Aggleton (2002) have also looked at some HIV/AIDS discourse practices as part of their overall studies on *Stigma, HIV prevention of mother to child transmission*. They report that the commonest forms of stigma included gossip, verbal abuse and name calling, which are all embedded in discourse practices of the communities. However, the studies highlighted above have not considered how language and other social semiotics are multimodally used in popular Zambian music in the transmission of HIV/AIDS education messages. Multimodality or multimodal discourse analysis is defined as the blending of verbal, visual and sound as social semiotics in a communicative event (see Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006). The verbal, visual and sound semiotics that constitute the blend are then read and analysed as 'text'. We shall elaborate on this. Therefore, the paper primarily aims to show how lyrics and social-cultural artefacts in Zambian music are blended into a hybrid of HIV/AIDS 'edutainment'.

Context: Gender inequality and male dominance in Zambian music

In Zambia, like many other African nations, culture is generally male dominated, with women given a lower status than men are (Banda 2005). In this culture, on one hand, men are socialized to believe that women are inferior and should be submissive to them; on the other hand, women are socialized to over-respect men and always submit to them (see Longwe and Clarke 1998). The resulting unequal power relation between the sexes, particularly when negotiating sexual encounters, increases women's vulnerability to HIV infection and accelerates the epidemic. In this vein, UNAIDS (2008) acknowledges that although the HIV epidemic has spread throughout Zambia and to all parts of its society, some groups are especially vulnerable, most notably young women and girls. In this regard, HIV prevalence among women aged 15–24 is said to be nearly four times that of men of the same age category (UNAIDS 2010). The Zambia Ministry of Health/National AIDS Council report (2008) attributes this prevalence to a number of factors resulting from gender inequality in which women have little say in matters relating to sex. Therefore, women's inferior status affords them little or no power to protect themselves by insisting on condom use or refusing sex (UNAIDS 2008). Many women also lack economic power and feel they cannot risk losing their partners, and thus their source of financial support, by denying them sex or deciding to leave an abusive relationship. Furthermore, entrenched ideas about suitably 'masculine' or 'feminine' behaviour enforce gender inequality and sexual double standards, and lead to unsafe sexual practices.

It is noteworthy that traditionally society generally assumes that it is men who desire sex more than women, but the reality, and as will be shown in this study, is that women are equally capable not only to talk about sex but also solicit for it (Banda 2005). However, due to cultural taboos, exhibiting too much knowledge about sex in women is seen as a sign of immorality (Banda 2005); thus insisting on condom use may make women appear distastefully well informed and hence culturally bankrupted. Hence, married women who request safer sex may be suspected of having extra-marital affairs. The same is not usually the case when a man decides to use condoms. This is indicative of the gender inequality between sexes, apparently sanctioned by society, which, in turn, perpetuates male dominance. However, the notion of masculinity in Africa cannot only be associated with manhood as 'female masculinity' also exists in which women take positions that are usually regarded as the preserve of the men. For example, in some African societies, there are female chiefs, female fathers and female husbands (Lindsay and Miescher 2003). In this regard, these positions give such women the power to make decisions, including sexually related ones that best suit them.

There is not much literature on the portrayal of women in Zambian music. The few, such as Mapoma (1988), Mensah (1970; 1971) and Davidson (1970), focused on ethnomusicology, especially the spiritual and cultural elements in traditional music and instrumentation. For instance, Mapoma (1988) is interested in the combination of music and healing among the Bemba speakers of northern Zambia. However, Longwe and Clarke's (1998) research, published as *Women know your place: the patriarchal message in Zambian popular songs: A research report from the women in music project*, looks at the gender biases in popular Zambian music from a feminist perspective. The report blames the gender-biased social structure for patriarchal messages in popular Zambian music.

In the past, popular Zambian music has in fact mostly portrayed urbanized Zambian women as *Bakapenta milomo* ('One who paints her lips'), a euphemism for a prostitute (Stephen Tsotsi Kasumali 1952) and in a subservient role as home and cultural keepers. The latter role is epitomized in *Mukamfwilwa (Waikala Lufyanya)* ('Widow (You Cultureless Woman)') (John Mwansa and The Five Revolutions 1980) in which a woman who refuses to follow traditional culture and rituals, which require that she is cleansed after losing a husband and allow for some unspecified period of time of mourning to pass before she engages herself into normal life, is accused of patronizing taverns and drinking beer with men. Ironically, whereas the man's drinking and hunting exploits are praised in *Lukombo* ('beer calabash'), the woman is chided for drinking at a beer hall in *Bana Mayo Banomba* ('Modern Women') (Both songs were done in 1960s by the Big Gold Six Band. In: *Zambush vol. 1: Zambian Hits from 60s and 70s, Various Artists* 2005). The hunting here refers to a man's 'womanising' while the woman who socialises in beer halls or who is a 'hunter' (of men) is demonized.

However, from the early 1970s some women started transgressing social roles and sang about being equal to men. From then on Zambian music has had a fair share of lyrics by women singers deploring 'bad' behaviour by men who spend their time beer drinking and neglecting their families. For instance, Violet Kafula's *Mwebalume Bandi* ('My husband' (The Crossbones Band featuring Violet Kafula, (Produced by DB studios in 1973)) has a female voice of a sex-starved woman who laments that the husband has abandoned her for younger women. Written at the time women's and men's social roles were definitive, the song was controversial because in the song, which was a duet with a male vocalist (Nicky Mwanza), Violet challenges and chides the man for abrogating his 'husbandry duties' towards her as a 'wife' and the children. Recently, female musicians have become even more direct about their sexuality and sexual desires, and openly challenge men and even sing about the power they have over men. For instance, some of the lyrics in Mampi's song titled *I am Portable* are as follows:

Ndine mphopo, ndine mphopo and I'm damn portable

I'm beautiful, I'm beautiful and I'm damn portable

Osazipanga monga siunifela

Don't pretend you are not dying for me

But why uthamangisa mtima wako

Tell me, why your heart is racing/beating so fast

...

Kukumyana naine cili unbelievable

Touch me, you will know what I mean

Milomo zeka zeka zili chewable

My lips [are] just as sweet and tender [chewable]

[Source: *I am Portable* by Mampi 2008]

Evidently, Mampi is not only flaunting her feminine sexuality and power, but also cajoling a man who pretends not to have (sexual) feelings for her. Hers is a chant of a strong and liberated African woman who does not need a man to tell her she is beautiful. She knows she is desirable, has power over men and she dares any man who thinks otherwise. She

semiotically remediates, that is, repurposes the term 'chewable' from an act of grinding teeth to being ready and willing to engage in a sexual act with a man. We elaborate on the notion of semiotic remediation below.

Theoretical issues

In analyzing the circulation of semiotic resources in HIV/AIDS messages in Zambian music, we use Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) framework of multimodal discourse analysis and related notions of re-semiotisation (Iedema 2003; 2010) and semiotic remediation (Prior and Hengst 2010). Whereas multimodality enables us to read verbal, visual and sound as a hybrid text, we use the notion of Semiotic Remediation (SRM), which refers to repurposing, to analyse the deployment of objects and ideas to represent meanings that they are not known for (Prior and Hengst 2010). Thus the objects and ideas are re-used because they are seen to have semantic value that is exploited to mean something new. We use a related notion of re-semiotisation to explain how the different semiotic resources change in meaning across contexts, chains of genres and modalities across which the HIV/AIDS messages are transported (Iedema 2003; 2010).

Our interest therefore is in the remediation of semiotic material that constitutes HIV/AIDS messages, that is, how an activity is (re)-mediated in each act by using the resources at hand, putting them to present use and thereby producing transformed conditions (Prior and Hengst 2010). Thus SRM as a practice, draws attention to 'the diverse ways that humans' and non-humans' semiotic performances (historical or imagined) are represented and reused across modes, media, and chains of activity' (Prior, Hengst, Roozen and Shipka 2006: 734). In this regard, SRM foregrounds the recycling, repurposing and recontextualisation of semiotic resources by musicians to produce different HIV/AIDS messages.

The term multimodality addresses a wide range of communication forms that people engage in during their interaction, for example, gaze, posture, sound and their relatedness (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2006). In this vein, Iedema (2003) argues that the concept demonstrates the importance of taking into account semiotics other than language-in-use, such as image, music and gesture. He adds that technology-mediated communication in which sound, image, film through television, the computer and the internet have contributed immensely to the new emphasis on the multisemiotic complexity of representations that we produce and that we see around us. In fact all discourse is said to be multimodal in nature, that is to say language in use, whether it be in the form of spoken or text, is always constructed across multiple modes of communication that would include speech and gesture in spoken language and not only through spoken but also through contextual phenomena as in the use of physical spaces in which we carry out our discursive actions or the design, papers and typography of documents within which our texts are presented (Levine and Scollon 2004). We find this theoretical framework important in the analysis of data in this paper as it considers many aspects of communication in which language is just one of the many semiotics utilized in the process of meaning making.

Methodology and data collection

Our study is based on a corpus of 50 Zambian popular music lyrics and videos. The selection of the music samples was based on them having HIV/AIDS education messages and released between the year 2009 and 2011, and produced by popular musicians. However, for the purposes of analysis and illustration, we have used only five music lyrics. These include: Jordan Katembula's (JK) song titled *Poison* (2009), Dalisoul and Petersen's (2010) *Nalila condom*, Baska and Sunga's (2010) *Pembela nsokele*, General Kanene's *Fendela Kutali* (2009) and Danny Siulapwa's (2011) song *live*. We transcribed the lyrics of these songs and translated them into English for the purposes of the analysis.

Appropriation of lived socio-cultural experiences and beliefs

Oral communication is still the most widespread mode in Zambia. Music and dance have historically accompanied oral communication, and these have been used to rebuke and discipline the personal and social behaviour of citizens. This historical trend has been extended into the present where popular music is being used to address serious issues of life, including HIV/AIDS. Musicians have played an important social role in educating and capturing the present social realities and experiences of its people. Through the lyrics, musicians express lived experiences and social discourses. In JK's song *Poison*, the title itself alludes to the devastating effects of HIV/AIDS as 'poison' to humanity. The title fits well with the shared sad experiences of society, which include loss of loved ones and the social and economic difficulties that HIV/AIDS brings upon society. In the first verse of the lyrics, the singer alludes to the common myth that HIV was created by someone with a view to wipe out people.

Verse 1:

Why banafaka poison pacakudya?

'Why did they poison the 'food'?'

Ndaba cimanibaba vamene ni wona. Nimakangiwa kukamba ungalakwe weo.

'I am saddened by what I see. I'm lost for words; I fear I might say the wrong things'

In the above verse, he expresses his powerlessness over the devastation that the pandemic is causing, as well as the mystery behind the origins of HIV/AIDS. Although he sees the impact of the disease, there is nothing he can do about it as he does not even know its origins. For this reason he turns to the scriptures to try to find answers. In verse 2 he quotes the Christian teachings about the origin of evil by referring to the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, who 'spoiled' the special gift God gave them, that of enjoying the beauty of the garden, which has in turn affected humanity by causing death. He relates it to the harm that HIV has brought upon humanity. This intertextual referencing of an evangelical quotation is part of the belief system of many Zambians. The declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation in 1991 has not only led to unprecedented growth in evangelism and churches, but also quoting from scriptures in normal conversation has become a linguistic dispensation for many Zambians (Banda and Bellonjegele 2010).

In the second verse, the intertextual reference to Biblical scripture is not a coincidence. It is based on the belief by Christians about the inherent sinful nature of man, thus the reference to Adam and Eve, the first human beings to have eaten 'the forbidden fruit'. In this context, he repurposes the 'food' to imply sexual intercourse, a God-given gift for

procreation. This is qualified in the third line of verse 2 in which he alludes to the fact that God created people for procreation. However, because of man's evil deeds, he disturbed the order by poisoning his own 'food' in reference to the pleasures of sexual intercourse. The word poison has been repurposed for the HIV/AIDS virus given its devastating effects on humanity.

Verse 2:

Cinayambila kuli Adam na Eva banadya cisepo muja mu garden weo

'It all started with Adam and Eve in that garden (Eden) when they ate the forbidden fruit'

Mulungu mwine anatipanga ati endani pacalo mukapange anzanu

'God in his wisdom created us to inhabit the earth and reproduce (enjoy)'

Koma kuipa kwamuntu afaka poison pacakudya camene afunika adye why why why?

'But because of the evil nature of man, he poisoned the food he is supposed to eat'

JK's song further refers to the 'good old days' of the older generation who lived in a world free of HIV/AIDS. In the third verse below, he expresses admiration of the older generation as they enjoyed life, that is, sexual encounters with multiple partners without fear of contracting HIV.

Verse 3:

Nikumwila bakudala mwamene benzekunkhalila

'I admire the days of the older generation'

Benzekudya cinanazi ninshi mupapa bashuba, manje ise anzanga inazanda kudala

[Literally:] 'They enjoyed a peeled pineapple fruit (enjoyed sex without a condom on), but that is not the case for us today, things have been spoilt (referring to HIV).' [Actual meaning:] 'they enjoyed sex without having to worry about HIV/AIDS as the case is today'

Osaibala pokudya cinanazi nikudya namupapa

[Literally:] 'Do not forget to eat the pineapple with its peels on (do not forget to have a condom on before sex).' [Actual meaning:] 'never forget to protect yourself with a condom before sex'.

In this verse, he draws on the Zambian lived experiences, which in this case have placed cultural taboos on certain words and phrases related to sex and sexuality. He navigates around the taboo through re-semiotisation by using a metaphor of 'eating a pineapple with its peels'. Having done that, he is able to refer to the 'good old days' of free unencumbered sex without upsetting socio-cultural sanctions placed on the topic. In other words, the use of metaphorical (or euphemistic) languages enables him to transform the socially unpalatable word 'condom' and social taboos around the topic of sex into an enjoyable pineapple (sex). In this sense, he draws on the social experiences and realities of Zambia to create as well as to transmit HIV/AIDS messages in a nonthreatening manner.

On the other hand, JK contradicts himself at several points. Firstly, he reduces the HIV/AIDS problem to unmarried partners when in fact it affects everyone including children. Secondly, in verse 2, he contradicts the HIV/AIDS prevention message. He misdirects himself when he confuses procreation with having multiple sexual partners.

He assumes that if it was not for HIV/AIDS, it would be fine to have multiple sexual partners. He also misinterprets the Bible by appearing to condone what Adam and Eve did by defying God's command. In addition, his admiration for the older generation that had multiple sexual partners and did not use condoms contradicts the heart of the HIV/AIDS prevention message, which is having a single partner and using protective measures such as condoms.

Baska and Sunga's *Pembela nsokele* employs a similar re-semiotisation strategy to caution the targeted audience on the dangers of HIV/AIDS. They use *nsokele*, a Bemba war jargon meaning to 'gear up' against a firearm but in this case it is to 'gear up' against HIV/AIDS. In the first verse, they re-semiotise a condom as 'raincoat' and having sex while being protected by a condom as eating a sweet with a wrapper on. In particular, they caution against the misplaced views of those people who say having sex without a condom is like 'eating sweets' with its wrapper and those that say it is like having a bath with a 'raincoat on'. They contend that such casual attitudes to HIV have led to deaths of many people from HIV/AIDS. Through the phonologization and subsequent localization of the English phrase 'live wire' (live electric cable) into *walai*, they further warn that people should never at any given time think of unprotected sex. The word *walai* was coined by Danny [Kaya], another musician who is discussed below. Baska and Sunga give credit to him for the 'creation' of this word in the song. The message continues in the fourth line of verse 2 in which they implore the listeners to resist *walai*, but rather suggest *condomisation* to avoid regrets one would get after a one night's stand if he or she had not used condoms. They urge the youth that such experiences are not worth the risk. We would like to note that in some cases the literary translation is given in an attempt to preserve the meaning.

Verse 1:

Ifintu fyalichinja, not ilya iyakale iyakwingilamofye ukwabula nee coat

'The world has changed, it's not the same as it used to be in the past when one could go in without a raincoat (condom).'

Bambi batila teti ndye sweet muchipepa, elo bambi nabo ati teti nsambe nee coat

'Others say they cannot eat a sweet with its papers on, and others say they cannot bath with a raincoat on.'

Bengi bafwilamo mumalyashi yama walai

Literary: 'Many have died because of such attitudes on *live issues* (unprotected sex).'

Actual meaning: 'many people have died due to unsafe sex practices'.

Verse 2:

Bashi Niza balimba ati tekvesha walai

Literary: 'Father to Niza (referring to another musician Danny whose child is called Niza) has sang never try live (unprotected sex)'. Actual meaning: 'Father to Niza has spoken out against unsafe sex'

Ukakamba walai, nizakuuza let's condomise, pantu kuseni uzacita realise efyo wacitile

Literary: 'When you say live (sex), I'll suggest condomisation to avoid regretting your actions in the morning'.

Actual meaning: ‘when you ask for unsafe sex, I will instead insist on condom use in order to avoid regrets after the act’

It is interesting that they do not talk about abstinence or being faithful to a single partner. Like in JK’s song, it is as if there was no HIV/AIDS, then it would be fine to have unprotected sex and to have multiple sexual partners.

In spite of the contradictions in the lyrics, it is clear that Zambian musicians see the condom as a very important line of defence against HIV/AIDS, and as a result the device has been reframed in different ways in popular Zambian music in order to make it culturally acceptable in the African public sphere. Thus other objects and ideas are deployed to replace the ‘condom’ leading to a multi-meaning indexical field, whose actual meaning is determined by shared knowledge of language as social semiotics in contexts. Evidently, the metaphors of ‘helmet’ and ‘live wire’ are among the most enduring in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Danny (2011) whose name came up in the lyrics of Baska and Sunga uses the metaphor *live* to imply unsafe sex or sex without protection. In his song titled *live*, Danny expresses concern about people who take a casual attitude towards HIV/AIDS. He contends that regardless of adequate information on HIV/AIDS today, people still disregard the known preventive measures such as the use of condoms against HIV infection. In this song he uses the phrase *kudya live* (literally: ‘eating live’ (having unprotected sex)) to mean having sex without a condom on. The metaphor *kudya* (‘to eat’) has also been used by JK to mean the act of sex. It could be argued that the verb phrase *to eat* has been used to suggest the pleasure one gets after a meal and so is sex. The word condom is implied from the context and from the use of the word *live*. Danny also uses the euphemism *kuja kunkani* (lit. ‘[those] issues of/relating to that story’) but in this case to mean the act of sexual intercourse. Here context becomes important to be able to decipher the meaning. Below is an extract of Danny’s song, *live*:

Verse 1:

*Why why why wayoo, but why nawina azadya live lelo, nawina anadya live mailo
nawina anadya live mazo mwebantu what’s going?*

Literary ‘Why is it that another one will have unprotected sex today, another one did the same thing yesterday and the day before and another one will do the same tomorrow. What is wrong with people?’ [Actual meaning:] ‘information about the dangers of HIV/AIDS is everywhere and yet people continue to get infected due to carelessness’

Verse 2:

*Muntu mwandi adabwisana pa TV lyonse bamatiuza osayesa kucita vopusa kupanda
condom.*

Man is so amazing, every day the TV is awash with HIV awareness information telling us not to try ‘foolish things’ (unsafe sex).

*Upeza weka wagula CD ati yo uzing’a kuja kunkani kufika kuli gelo kuja vintu vacinja
kuona cabe mwe yaswetela mafiga ...*

Literary: ‘You find that a person willingly buys CDs (condoms) for use “to those issues” (during sex), but upon seeing a woman’s nice legs, he changes his mind and forgets to use

the condom.’ [Actual meaning:] ‘people know about the need to use condoms to protect themselves against HIV but they still fail to use them’

Kulangana maziba mutima wayamba kucaya monga utaya nthawi cakuti utekenye.

Literary: ‘At the sight of a woman’s breasts, the heart begins palpitating as though it’s time wasting’. Actual meaning: ‘the sight of a woman’s beauty, one gets confused’

...upeza weka wayamba kusumbila kulibe nakuvala waicita overtake G-string ninshi waigwila namumanja condom big mistake. Wati society nacakuti olobakambe bwanji sitimamvela

Literary: ‘... you overtake the G-string whilst holding a CD (condom) in your hands, that is a big mistake’. [Actual meaning:] ‘at this point, what society says (about HIV) does not matter’.

In the lyrics of the song above, the word sex has not been explicitly mentioned. It is implied from the context through metaphor and euphemistic language. For example, the singer uses the phrase *vintu vopusa* (‘foolish things’) to mean casual sex among unmarried couples. He also uses the phrase *kuja kunkani* (‘[to] those issues’) to mean sex. However, this kind of language can mean different things in different contexts. Danny Kaya is deliberately using obscure language to avoid censorship and censure from authorities and the public, respectively. Danny manipulates language to leave an escape route through which he could always say that is not what he meant if confronted about using explicit language in describing sex and sexual acts. He further uses the phrase *waicita overtake G-string* (‘you over-take the G-string’), to mean the act of unsafe penetrative sex. In this way, the lyricist is imploring the listeners, especially the youth, to avoid casual approach to sex in the face of HIV/AIDS. Like most English words used in combination with the local languages, the word *live* and *over-take* have been appropriated for their local meanings that can only be understood by people with a shared experience. They may therefore be meaningless to other speakers of English (see Banda and Bellonjengele 2010).

Dalisoul and Petersen use the word *cimpompo* (‘helmet’) for a condom. The choice of *cimpompo*, like *mupapa* (‘pineapple peel’ and ‘raincoat’ or ‘wrapped sweet’ discussed above), is not random; these are steeped in Zambian experiences, but are being repurposed for the fight against HIV/AIDS. Dalisoul and Petersen draw on common knowledge based on Zambia being a copper mining giant in Africa; a *cimpompo* ‘helmet’ is closely associated with miners’ safety. It is known to be the only safety gear that is worn to protect the head from falling rocks in underground mines. The singers relate the purpose for which the helmet was meant to play to the purpose of a condom, that is, to offer protection against risk sexual behaviour. In this regard, the singers repurpose *cimpompo* (‘helmet’) to mean something for which it is not known for and, in the process, reframing the condom.

Another metaphor favoured by musicians is that of *kutoping’a*, that is, ‘topping up’. Baska and Dalisoul use this metaphor in the following line from their lyrics: *osadwala navima story vamum saloon nama barbershop ati cite a topi’ng cite atop’ing. Naimwe mutop’ing yakabisila. Nikutop’ing cabe palibe vuto* (‘never be troubled with gossip from the salons or barbershops about your “topping up” (act of taking antiAIDS drugs)’). The rumour monger might also be ‘topping up’. ‘Just top up, there is no problem with that’,

and General Kanene also uses the word in his lyrics: *pano pamene nikamba akumwa mankwala, atoping'a notoping'a* ('as I speak she is taking anti-AIDS drugs'). The phrase *atoping'a* ('topping up') as used in these lyrics, has been appropriated from the English phrase 'to top up', a phrase commonly associated with recharging a mobile phone with airtime. Thus the meaning of this phrase has been reconstituted to refer to the act of taking anti-HIV/AIDS drugs as akin to recharging one's life as happens to a mobile phone when recharged with airtime. It is also meant to encourage the affected to adhere to them if one has to have life. The moral of the message is to urge people living with HIV/AIDS to adhere to anti-AIDS drugs as well as to discourage others from stigmatising those taking them.

From the analysis of the objects used in the music by different singers, it is clear that musicians exploit the semantic values of the given objects to reframe the condom and other socio-cultural artefacts to make them more acceptable and less embarrassing to talk about to the audience. In this way, they are using the objects as social semiotics to recreate social meaning.

Conclusion

The study has revealed that with the advent of HIV/AIDS, choices regarding sex including discussions on sexual matters are no longer a preserve for the men. However, male dominance is still prevalent and this can be seen in the lyrics and videos in which females are still portrayed as objects of sex. There is nevertheless increasing evidence that the roles normally associated with men are being taken up by females so that it is not uncommon for female singers to talk about sexual matters and desires. This indicates that just as males, females are also able to express sexual desires and fantasies, and that both males and females are responsible for preventing the transmission of HIV/AIDS.

Furthermore, the study has revealed that musicians tend to place more emphasis on male condoms as the main weapon in the fight against HIV/AIDS than other prevention strategies such as abstinence and being faithful to one partner. In fact, for some musicians abstinence and being faithful are their least concern and yet these are also critical in the fight against the scourge. The emphasis on male rather than female condoms appear to suggest that males are the ones who should be protected from women who in turn incorrectly accuse the latter as being responsible for spreading the pandemic. Thus, it has emerged that musicians often contradict themselves in the process of transmitting HIV/AIDS education messages and thereby sending mixed information to targeted consumers. Such information is likely to be counterproductive in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

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