

1 Drumcommunication The Trado-Indigenous Art of Communicating 2 with Talking Drums in Yorubaland

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6

7 **Abstract**

8 The talking drums of the Yoruba people of the South West of Nigeria are like many other
9 types of drums found in other parts of the world in that they are melody producing/enhancing
10 musical instruments accompanying song and dance performances made of hollow round frame
11 with tightly fixed plastic or skin membrane on the surface(s) beaten with the hand(s), stick(s)
12 or other materials. However, the Yoruba talking drums of the South West people of Nigeria
13 are unlike the many other types of drums found in other parts of the world in that they are
14 not just mere melody producing/enhancing musical instruments. This is basically because
15 they can be used to disseminate vital messages and to respond to disseminated information.
16 This paper introduces the term drumcommunication to explain the use of Yoruba talking drums
17 to send and receive messages or information. The paper attempts a taxonomy of the Yoruba
18 drums to establish the real talking drums. It explicates the functions of effective
19 drumcommunication and barriers to effective drumcommunication. Most importantly, it suggests steps
20 that can be taken to enhance the effectiveness of drumcommunication.

21

22 **Index terms**— Drumcommunication, Communication, Talking Drums, Trado-Indigenous Art, Yorubaland.
23 The term drumcommunication as can be seen is newly coined or derived from two existing words namely "drum" and
24 "communication". It is therefore a product of linguistic fabrication. Specifically, the word has been manufactured
25 through a morphological process called blending. Morphology is a branch or an aspect of linguistics (the science
26 or study of language or languages) that has to do with the formation or derivation of words from words. ??enham
27 & Lobeck (2010: 517) defines it as "the study of the system of rules underlying our knowledge of the structure of
28 words". To ??ianico & Altarriba (2008:77) it is "the system of word -forming elements and processes in language".
29 Blending simply has to do with mixing, merging or mingling two words harmoniously to realise another word
30 hence, the New Lexicon Encyclopedic Dictionary of English Language simply describes it as telescoping of two
31 words into one. The derivation of the new term is therefore in accordance with that of words like "televangelism",
32 "docudrama", "infomercial" etc, which are relatively new words that have become part of English lexicon or
33 vocabulary via the same morphological blending.

34 However, the semantic interpretation of this new term or concept drumcommunication will be based on the meaning
35 of each of the two component words i.e. "drum" and "communication" which represent the linguistic source of
36 the term or concept.

37 The word "drum" according to the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English refers to a musical
38 instrument made of a hollow round frame with plastic or skin stretched tightly across one end or both ends, which
39 is played by hitting it with stick(s) called drumstick(s) or simply with the hands. The New Lexicon Webster
40 Encyclopedic Dictionary of English Language similarly describes a drum as any of the various types of percussive
41 musical instruments consisting of a hollow cylinder or hemisphere of wood, metal etc usually with a skin stretched
42 tightly over the end or ends struck to produce a sound. ??kpabio (2003) points out that drums made of skin
43 are common all over the continent of Africa where they are used as musical instruments accompanying song and
44 dance performances but also confirms that some are capable of "talking". Various types of drums with various

1 CLASSIFICATION:

45 types of names can be identified in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular (Carrington 1949 and Raffray,
46 1992). We have pot drums which have the shapes of pots beaten with foam-like objects peculiar to those in the
47 Eastern part of Nigeria which Doob (1996:100) describes as "drums like water pots made of baked clay". We
48 have other drums of various shapes and sizes like the dundun and bata of South West Yoruba people of Nigeria.
49 We have the jebi, kalangu and kanzangi of the Hausas in the Northern part of Nigeria. We also have the eka ibit
50 and etok ibit of the South-South people of Nigeria to mention just a few.

51 The word communication has attracted myriad of definitions and/or interpretations, which is evident in the
52 one hundred and twenty six (126) published definitions of communication listed by Dance and Larson (1976). It
53 is against this background that Little (1983) has described Communication as a chameleon of a word that changes
54 the colour of its meaning with a change of speaker or listener. He however, defines communication as the process
55 by which information is passed between individuals and/or organisations by means of previously agreed symbols.
56 Communication according to Wood (2009) is the systemic process that facilitates human/people's interaction with
57 the aid of interpretable and meaningful symbols. Devito (2012) identifies some basic communication elements in
58 his definition. He defines communication as a situation where one person (or more) sends and receives messages (or
59 information) that can be distorted by noise (physical, linguistic, or psychological) which occurs within a context
60 (physical, socio-psychological, temporal or cultural) with some possible effect and opportunity for feedback.

61 In a similar vein Oluga, Adewusi and Babalola (2001) point out that effective communication is that which
62 does not fail neither to pass meaningful information nor to attract a desired response.

63 The term drummunication going by the semantic interpretations of its constituent parts will then refer to the
64 process which involves the use of drums or drumbeats to disseminate properly conceived ideas, appropriately coded
65 or articulated via meaningful and comprehensible drumbeats that can be decoded or understood or interpreted by
66 the target listeners or intended audience who respond to the message of the drumbeat with the aid of appropriate,
67 desired or expected feedback. It is important to point out at the juncture that while most African/Yoruba drums
68 can be used to say one thing or the other, the "speech ability or competence" of the drums are not the same.
69 While some have limited speech ability or competence some have unlimited speech competence. The dundun can
70 be regarded as the straightforward Yoruba talking drum that uses a kind of surrogate language while the bata is
71 a stammering talking drum that uses more or less a dialect of the language it imitates. So these are the drums
72 that come to mind when the phrase or expression "talking drum" is mentioned.

73 Various types of drums/drumsets can be identified among the Yoruba people of South Western part of Nigeria
74 used for various purposes. We have the straight forward real talking drumset called the dundun set or dundun
75 talking drum family. We have the dialect speaking stammering talking drum called bata. We have other Yoruba
76 talking drums like sakara, apinti, batakoto, ipese, agere, gbedu, igbin etc which are discussed below in line with
77 ??aoye's (2005)

78 1 classification:

79 This according to Laoye (2005) is the real talking drum of the Yoruba people with very high "speech competence
80 or capability". It is made of a piece of carefully carved "apa" wood to form a hourglass-like frame with two ends
81 covered with membranes of kid's skin which are also carefully joined by some strings made of goat skin. It is
82 usually beaten with a curved stick called drum stick.

83 The dundun drums according to Omo (1978) para-phrasing the idea of Laoye (1954 and 1959) can possibly
84 imitate the tones and gibes in the Yoruba speech hence, apart from being able to produce music for dancing can
85 be used to communicate insults, praises, admonition and even proverbs. Ngozi (2001) also states that the dundun
86 in addition to its ability to produce music for dancing can also announce the arrival and departure of eminent
87 personalities at a social gathering, can be used to recite peoples' praise names, can be used to rain abuses when
88 the need arises to the extent that it can be said that the dundun drums among all others enjoy some "freedom
89 of drummunication". Daramola and Jeje (1995) state that the dundun drumset consists of six slightly different
90 types of beautiful looking talking drums which are discussed below: This is mother dundun drum and the first
91 among the dundun talking drumset. The Iya-ilu dundun is also the longest in size compared to all other members
92 of this family. It is usually beaten with the curved stick, in one hand while the second hand is used to grip its
93 leather strings so that by tightening or loosening the grip the pitch tone of the drumbeat can be heightened or
94 lowered respectively. This will then produce different tones by which various messages can be communicated just
95 as in Yoruba, which is a tonal language. The Iya-ilu dundun is the only dundun drum that has small bells fixed
96 round its surface, which jingle as the drum is beaten thereby adding to the melody of the Iya-ilu dundun drum
97 beats. This is the dundun drum that is next in size to the already discussed Iya-ilu dundun. Its shape is also
98 similar to that of the Tya-ilu dundun but it does not have the jingling small bells fixed round the surface of the
99 Iyailu dundun. This is the dundun that is next in size to the above discussed kerikeri and both are similar in
100 shape hence, it has virtually everything that the above discussed kerikeri dundun drum has. It does not have the
101 jingling bells as well. This is the dundun drum whose wooden frame is smaller than that of the above discussed
102 gangan and which can guide or lead other drums in terms of whether the Isaaju the beat will be fast or slow
103 hence, its name meaning "the lead". This is another drum in the dundun family whose wooden frame is still
104 smaller than that of the above discussed Isaaju but which still has everything that the Isaaju dundun drum has
105 hence, when beaten sounds also like Isaaju.

106 This is otherwise called emele dundun and it is the last and probably the least of the dundun talking drumset.

107 One wonders why it is included in this category or family considering its round shape that is different from others,
108 its single face beaten with a pair of leather straps and not curved stick like others, its being hung on the neck
109 with a long leather strap and not on the shoulder and most importantly its very limited "speech competence".
110 This originally, is the drum of the Sango worshipers and eleegun traditional masqueraders hence, the worshipers
111 of Sango, the god of thunder and the traditional masquerades people/adherents were those who usually danced
112 to the drum beats of date especially during their annual worships/ritual festivals and burial ceremonies of aged
113 ones among them. But with modernization and the need for cultural promotion, development and preservation
114 we now have culture promoting musical groups and other traditional performing artistes using the bata drums.
115 The shape of the wooden frame with which the bata drum is made is usually conical unlike the hourglass-like
116 shape of the dundun with the exception of gudugudu. The wooden frame of bata is also made from the apa wood
117 just like the dundun. However, about four main types of drum that make the bata set can be identified:

118 The bata drums, whether the long conical ones or the three round ones tied together, are usually hung on the
119 neck of the bata drummers (alubata) when beaten and they are usually played with a stiff leather strap on hand
120 and the palm of the second hand of the alubata simultaneously. But in the case of the round face three in one
121 bata, two leather straps are usually used just like that of gudugudu. There are four types of drums that make the
122 bata drumset namely: Iya-ilu bata, emele-abo bata, omele-ako bata and kudi, which are briefly discussed below:
123 This is the biggest of all the bata drumset hence, its name which literally means or can be directly translated
124 as the "mother bata"drum". This drum just like the mother dundun drum usually has jingling small bells fixed
125 round its surface. This is the bata drum that is next in size to the above discussed Iya-ilu bata but which does
126 not have small jingling bells fixed to its round surface. Its name can literally mean the female emele bata. This
127 is the third in the bata drum family and this drum whose name literally means the male emele bata is smaller
128 in size to the female emele bata. It has no small bells fixed to its round face but has a tone higher than those of
129 the iya-ilu bata and emele abo bata. This is the fourth type of the bata drum which is very short and which is
130 not thin below like the emele ako bata and does not have a high sounding tone of the emele ako bata.

131 Different tones can be realized by beating the different part of the skin membrane on the surface of the bata
132 drum separated by a dark substance stuck on the face of the drum to produce varying sounds. The language
133 of the bata drum is not as easily comprehensible as that of the dundun drum hence, some believe the bata
134 drum speaks a dialect of the general language, which the dundun speaks. Some believe the bata drum is just
135 a stammerer hence, it is regarded as a stammering talking drum. However, the bata drum is also capable of
136 communicating proverbs and praise names or chants or poems of people and places.

137 Apart from above discussed drums in the dundun and bata talking drum families, we still have some other
138 traditional Yoruba drums which though may not be as "linguistically competent" but which have recognized
139 indigenous values and cultural uses. Some of such drums as identified by ??latunji (1984:5) are apinti, batakoto,
140 ipese, afere, gbedu and igbin discussed below: This is used at major ceremonies. It has Iya ilu with a hollow in
141 the wood with which it is made and with just one face. Its hollow opens to the other side not covered by any
142 membrane. It also has omele, which is similar in shape to the Iya ilu apinti. Both the Iya-ilu apinti (mother
143 apinti) and the Omele apinti are hung on the shoulder, usually the left, with a rope when beaten.

144 2 Year

145 This is a form of bata with members of its family smaller than the real bata drums but made of calabash and soft
146 skin. It has an Iya-ilu that is not quite big, an omele ako made of a smaller calabash and with a high sounding
147 tone like its name and an emele abo also made of a calabash that is not smaller than the emele ako but with a
148 wider breath. This is the drum of the Ifa Priests/worshipers beaten during their festival or during the burial of
149 an Ifa Priest or leader. It has various types like those already discussed. We, Ipese proper that is six feet tall
150 beaten with stick. We have "afere" that is next in size to ipese which is not as tall but with a wider breath and
151 three stands. We have aran that is not as big or tall as the afere and also with three stands. The surface of
152 the drum can be stiffened by pressing down the wood on the edge of the drum. This is the drum of the hunters
153 beaten during their festival and also beaten when leading hunters or other members die. We have three drums
154 making this set namely, the agere proper, feere and afere. The agere is the biggest, made of a wooden frame with
155 two equal faces. The feere is smaller in size to the agere while the afere is the smallest of the three drums. This
156 is a traditional Yoruba drum otherwise called agba-iyangede. The set has afere a four foot drum that is long,
157 big and heavy. It also has apere that is next in size to afere hence, it is not as tall and with a surface that is not
158 as wide. This is the drum of the Obatala worshipers hence, it is not meant for everyday drumming/use. It has
159 Iya-ilu, Iyadun, that is next to the Iya-ilu, keke that is next in size to Iya-dun and the afere which is the smallest
160 of them all.

161 There are five basic elements of the process of drumcommunication just as five good stages of the process of
162 effective drumcommunication can also be identified. The elements are more or less the bedrock of the stages and
163 these five elements are the drumcommunicator, the drumbeat message, thee drunibeat channel, drumbeat audience
164 and the drumbeat feedback. The five stages are the conception/initiation of ideas by the message, decoding
165 of the coded drumbeat message by the audience and sending of appropriate feed back. These are discussed
166 stage by stage below: This is the first stage of drumcommunication which involves the initiation of an idea by the
167 drumcommunicator aludundun, or alubata (dundun or bata drummer) as the case may be hence, the equivalent of
168 this stage in general communication is called the ideation stage by experts. The drumcommunicator who uses the

169 dundun drum to communicate or the one who uses the bata to communicate i.e. the aludundun or alubata can
170 initiate the idea of welcoming some people to a given occasion or ceremony, passing vital messages to those in the
171 neighbourhood, greeting the king who is just coming from his bedroom, reciting the oriki of important people
172 or places or reminding subjects of the supremacy of the monarch within a kingdom. Whichever be the case, the
173 conception of a good idea makes/marks the beginning of effective drummunication. The Drummunicator Selects
174 Appropriate Channel.

175 This second stage of drummunication has to do with the choice of ideal means of disseminating the
176 drummunicator's message, that is, the specific talking drum that will be used to pass the intended message.

177 The drummunicator can choose the use of the very eloquent dundun talking drum, which is believed to be
178 more comprehensible than others especially when he does not want the listener to have too much difficulties
179 in interpreting his message. The drummunicator can use the bata talking drum if his intended audience or
180 listeners are also experts in bata drummunication or if he wants them to rack their brains a little before grasping
181 his intended message. This third stage of drummunication process has to do with the choice of appropriate
182 language or style of drumbeats with which the intended message will be coded. For example, straightforward
183 drum language can be used which virtually everybody who understands the tonal language imitated by the
184 talking drum can easily comprehend. Similar expressions that listeners or audience are already familiar with can
185 also be used to achieve the same easy-to-comprehend drummunication. However, the use of proverbs, historical
186 allusion or esoteric language can be adopted or employed when the intended audience of the drummunicator's
187 message as versatile in indigenous communication like elders with rich knowledge of culture and tradition.

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190 Year drummunicator, selection of appropriate channel, encoding of the ideas into meaningful drumbeat This
191 fourth stage of communication has to do with the interpretation of the drummunicator's coded drumbeat message
192 by his/her audience or listeners. The audience expected to decipher the drumbeat message may be a single person
193 like the king welcomed back to his palace from a trip by palace talking drummers. The audience can be important
194 dignitaries or eminent personalities at an important occasion. The audience can even be supernatural beings like
195 the masquerades or spirit being appeased by spiritual drumbeat message. The audience can also be a group of
196 listeners like members of a family whose family praise song/poem is played by the drummunicator. Whichever
197 be the case, there will be effective drummunication if both the drummunicator and the audience understand the
198 code of the drumbeat so that the latter easily decipher and understand and the message. This is the final stage
199 of the process of drummunication, which is basically about the response of the listener to the drummunicator's
200 message sent via the talking drum. Such a response according Ngozi (2001:2) "can be positive, negative, limited,
201 zero, verbal or non verbal". This means response to the drummunicator's message can be the positive that is
202 expected or the negative that is not expected. The response can be partial which represents the limited feed
203 back or there may be no response at all which is the zero feed back. Also, the response can be verbal if it is via
204 the use of words or speech sounds and may be non-verbal if it does not use words or speech at all. For example,
205 a man whose oriki (praise poem) is played by a drummunicator may just smile, wave, stand and dance or send
206 money to the drummunicator. It is also possible to respond to the drumbeat message with a drumbeat message
207 as done by those from the families of drummers. The late monarch (Timi) of Ede land Oba Adetoyese Laoye was
208 able to respond this way to the messages of his palace drummers about people's arrival and departure because
209 he was a very good drummer. The feedback therefore, can be a good parameter or yardstick for determining the
210 effectiveness of drummunication.

211 There are various reasons why people in traditional Yoruba setting especially the Yoruba people in the South
212 West of Nigeria something opt for drummunication. Some of these reasons tally with some basic purposes of
213 general communication while some don't. We can classify the functions of drummunication under informational
214 functions, social function, cultural function, religious function, extra-mundane function, commercial function and
215 creative function. These are all discussed below: A most fundamental function of any means of communication,
216 whether traditional or modern, exogenous or endogenous, verbal or non-verbal, interpersonal or group, is to
217 ensure the dissemination of vital messages or the transmission of important information. Gerson & Gerson (2012)
218 therefore point out that informing the target audience of known facts is one of the basic goals of communication.
219 The talking drum communication is not an exception because it is primarily used to pass meaningful messages or
220 information that is also comprehensible to those who understand the language of the talking drum in question.
221 For example, "Kaabo se daa daa lo de" meaning "You are welcome, hope you have arrived safely" can be played
222 to inform people of the arrival of somebody being expected. Also "ki le n f'Oba pe Oba o Oba alase Oba"
223 can be beaten to remind people of the authority of the king especially in a traditional setting. This function
224 is necessitated by the fact that human beings have been identified as social animals, right from the time of
225 Aristotle the ancient Greek philosopher till the present time of contemporary modern social psychologists like
226 Aronson (2007). This is because human beings are fond of relating or interacting with one another, doing things
227 in collaboration and participating in social functions like naming ceremony, wedding/marriage ceremony, house
228 warming ceremony and burial ceremony. The social function of drummunication can therefore, be regarded as
229 the entertainment function. This is because the use of the talking drum has become a common phenomenon
230 at such social gathering. During the introduction ceremony that usually precedes a marriage ceremony proper

231 you will see a talking drummer by the side of the presenter or programme coordinator helping to complement or
232 drive home the message of the presenter. He/she can use the drum to say expressions like "Iya ni wura iyekiye
233 tia ko le fi owo ra" or "Baba o! Baba o!! Baba o!!! Olorun da Baba si fun wa" meaning "The mother is previous
234 gold that can be bought with money" and "Father! Father!! Father!!! God preserve the life of the Father for us"
235 respectively in honour of the Baumeister & Bushman (2011) equally see culture as everything that a group of
236 people share or have in common like food, language, government as well as artistic and historical achievements.
237 They further point out that human beings are not just social animals but are also cultural animals. It is therefore
238 not surprising that there is an increasing use of the various talking drums to communicate in various areas of
239 human endeavours. Those who advertise various products and services on the bill boards, those who do advert
240 jingles on the radio and television etc now make use of the talking drum more than before. Many enlightened
241 people now show interest in study or art of the talking drum just as in many traditional festivals where talking
242 drummers display dexterity in the art of talking drumming. This is just to ensure the promotion, development
243 and preservation of the indigenous cultural belief or art. It is therefore not surprising that even foreigners from
244 Europe and the Americas now show interest in Yoruba culture of talking with drums. It is in the light of this
245 that one can say promoting the art of drummunication is tantamount to promoting the people's culture.

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247 This has to do with the use of talking drums basically for religious purposes. It may be for the worship of the
248 traditional gods of the Yorubas like Sango (the god of thunder), Ogun (the god of iron) Obatala, (the god of
249 creation/creativity) Osun (a river goddess) etc. As earlier mentioned the bata talking drums are used basically by
250 the Sango worshipers especially during their festival or worship, but could be accompanied by other drums. Also
251 the igbin drum is used by the Obata\ worshippers, which could be accompanied by others too. For example, the
252 expression "Baa ba se yi tan a se mi si, a se se tun se" meaning "we will celebrate this year and many more years"
253 is a common expression usually beaten by, drummunicators during traditional worships/festivals as a form of
254 prayer to the admiration of all worshippers. It is important to point out the fact drummunication is not peculiar
255 to traditional worshippers only because nowadays we find talking drums among the musical instruments of the
256 Choir(s) of various Churches used to disseminate useful information especially during praise worships.

257 This is a kind of extra ordinary spiritual use of the talking drum to communicate extra ordinary or spiritual
258 information especially with/to supernatural beings like spirits, gods, goddesses, ancestors etc. This may sound
259 incredible to those who have not experienced such but believable to those from places where it happens. There
260 are some drumbeats that one will hear and take to his heel if he is not initiated because such drumbeats like
261 the one used to evoke certain spirits are not meant for the hearing of ordinary people. Such an extra mundane
262 communication is displayed in the Nigerian home video titled "Saworo Ide" where something was put on the
263 face of a given talking drum and its drumbeat was used to call another person, who is supernaturally connected
264 to the drum from a distant village, home to come and beat the drum to the hearing of an uninitiated ruler
265 who on hearing the drumbeats was immediately affected by the mysterious drumbeats. This is the use of the
266 talking drums to communicate so as to make money or as a means of livelihood. It is now common in traditional
267 Yoruba setting to see groups of talking drummers of different ages at various occasions like during weekly or
268 monthly market days, wedding/marriage ceremonies, burial ceremonies, house warming ceremonies or naming
269 ceremonies beating talking drums to praise people or to play the personal family or town's oriki (praise poem).
270 All they strive to get are the names and places of origin of such people having known the praise poems of as many
271 names and places, they just start to communicate with the talking drums to the amazement and amusement
272 of their target audience. They don't do this for nothing of course as they expect those people who enjoy their
273 drummunication to reciprocate. Really, some do respond by standing up, dancing and placing some money on
274 the forehead of the lead drummer. The leader in such a case would be expected to take care of others who in
275 most cases are his close associates or relations. This is the use of the talking drums to preserve and promote
276 the use of proverbs, which are wise or witty saying used in a special way. ??nibonjo (2002:53) describes a
277 proverb "as a phrase of sentence that expresses some recognized truth about life". Samovar, ??013) point out
278 that proverbs reflect "the wisdom, biases and even superstitions of a culture and are so important to culture
279 that there are even proverbs about proverbs." They equally point out the belief of the Yoruba people of Nigeria
280 that "A wise man who knows proverbs, reconciles difficulties". Proverbial communication of messages is very
281 common in drummunication which is not surprising because the Yoruba language which the various Yoruba
282 talking drums imitates its tones and jibes as put by late Timi of Edeland, Oba Adetoyese Laoye is also very rich
283 in proverbs. There is also a common saying that "Owe lesin Oro, Oro lesin Owe T"oro ba so nu owe la fi nwa"
284 meaning "A proverb is the horse (vehicle) of a word/an utterance just as a word or an utterance is the horse
285 (vehicle) of a proverb. When a word is missing, proverb will find it." So, drummunicators do use meaningful and
286 understandable proverbs to communicate intended ideas or messages.

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288 Talking drummers in Yoruba land in the course of drummunication often makes reference to or reminding the
289 listening audience" of some past events or happenings of historical relevance. This is because drummunication
290 makes such historical allusion possible as a way of buttressing or substantiating communicated information. For

example, if a seemingly wealthy man who expectant commercial talking drummers have been saying a lot of good things about with the aid of the talking drums with the hope of getting substantial amount of money just gives them the peanut in his pocket, they maybe annoyed or disappointed and forced to play "A lowo ma jaye eyin le mo, awon to j"aye lana da won ti ku won ti lo" meaning "Those who have money but cant spend should remember that even those who had and spent yesterday (in the past) have died and gone". They can also play "Bo se re (2ce) Ose fun ara re (2ce)" to warn evil doers. This is reminiscent of a madman who was given a poisoned food by some people who hated his critical and satirical utterances but who because of his benevolence and generosity gave some young kids who coincidentally were the kids of those who gave the mad man the poisoned food.

What this function tries to establish is the fact that drummunication is not just a medium or system of indigenous Yoruba communication or a branch of performing arts but also a creative traditional art. This is because of the fact that many wonderful ideas, philosophical sayings or expressions are often created by drummunicators consciously or unconsciously, when inspired, impressed or depressed. It has even been discovered that many of the Oriki (praise poem or names) of notable people like kings, warriors, chiefs, great men etc have been created by drummers who perform at different occasions and who would want to recognise the presence of such people by saying some good things about them. Some of these praise names, praise poem or praise chants as the case may be created by talking drummers often become permanent to the extent that lexical ones become the name by which such people are called or recognised and the surnames of the offspring e.g. "Arowomole" meaning one who has money to build houses. It is in the light of this that ??latunji (1984:71) declares in support of this function that "Drummers coin new orikis for important men in the society".

It is important to point out at the juncture that just as with some modern or other means of sending and receiving vital information, there are some factors that can constitute barrier to effective dissemination of comprehensible information via the Yoruba talking drums. Some of such barriers are susceptibility of drummunication to ambiguity, linguistic incompetence, faulty construction of talking drums, faulty drummunication process, possibility of noise, information overload, distortion or misrepresentation which are discussed below one after the other:

The message of the talking drums can be ambiguous when such a communicated message is capable of having double or multiple semantic interpretations especially where the available contextual information does not clarify or specify the intended meaning. Oluga (2010) attempts semantic interpretation of the term ambiguity and explicates form of ambiguity in human communication. The susceptibility of many drummunicated messages to ambiguity has made many people to give different interpretations to such messages, for example, the drumbeat of some broadcasting stations in Yoruba land.

The language background of the drummunicator and the listener/audience is very important. If they both speak/understand the Yoruba language for example, it will be easier to ensure the dissemination of comprehensible information because talking drums imitate the tones and jibes of the Yoruba language. If they are both good in the use of this same language and the audience could differentiate between direct and indirect or literal and implied language use as well as knowing the proverbs of the Yoruba language then the disseminated information will be meaningful not only to the drummunicator but also to the audience.

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The way the talking drum that is the instrument of drummunication has been constructed as well as the type of materials used can affect the tone of the drum and the kind of message that will be communicated. As earlier said, the "apa" is the wood that can be used for a good talking drum and a kid skin membrane used to cover the two faces with strings of goat skin. The design or construction of each of the various talking drums, because of their varying sizes, requires some artistic skills. This is the only way the string controlling the tone when pulled with the hand or pressed under the arm will bring the right to which can be articulated to pass meaningful and understandable messages.

A fault at any of the already discussed stages of the drummunication process can serve as a barrier to effective dissemination and/or comprehension of the message of the talking drum. For example, if the drummunicator does not initiate or encode the message very well like mistakenly beating the praise poem of one person for another person or using codes that intended listeners find difficult to decode or where due to distance, they cannot hear the drumbeats of the drummunicator intended to pass vital messages, very well.

This according to ??gozi (2002:22) refers to "obstacles that can reduce the amount, quality or fidelity of disseminated information" which can occur or be present at any stage. It can be physical if it is the loud sound of the instruments of a musician playing in the same gathering where drummunicators are also playing. It can be linguistic noise if the drummunicator uses esoteric language of drummers that the audience/listeners can't decipher.

It can be psychological if the intended listener already blocks his/her minds on seeing the drummers may be because of their look or because he/she has headache or because he hates noise at close range peculiar to commercial drummunicators. This has to do with saying too many things at a time or passing too many information in a moment possibly by different communicators. This can also occur in drummunication when the drummunicator assumes the intended audience can understand virtually everything said with the talking drum and at the pace of the drumbeat. It can also occur when two talking drum groups want to impress the same audience and messages start to flow from left and right. It will be difficult to ensure absolute comprehension in

353 such a situation hence, such information overload constitute a kind of barrier to effective drummunication. The
354 best that can be done by the drummunicator's audience is to filter or/and omit the message or information.

355 The message of drummunication is usually subject to distortion and misrepresentation just as it is common to
356 all forms of non-verbal communication. The talking drum beats of various broadcast stations in the South
357 West of Nigeria like the Lagos State Broadcasting Station and Oyo State Broadcasting Station have been
358 given various interpretations that suit different people. This must have informed the decision of some other
359 broadcasting stations like the Osun State Broadcasting station (OSBC) to tactically guide listeners/viewers in
360 the interpretation of some drummunicated messages that precede major news broadcast. This way distortion or
361 misrepresentation will be prevented or reduced.

362 The use of talking drums as means of communication is such that should not be seen as an archaic means or
363 local medium that should be neglected or jettisoned. Rather, it should be seen as part and parcel of the people's
364 cultural endowment, which should be developed, promoted and preserved in line with the global yearning for
365 cultural promotion and development. Some of the steps that can be taken to enhance the effectiveness of
366 drummunication are:

367 People should be exposed the more to an important traditional art or cultural practice like drummunication.
368 This way many more people from within and without the talking drum zones will be more versatile in art of
369 talking drum communication. Beier (1956), though a European, has contributed to the study of Yoruba talking
370 drums just like other African culture researchers because of his profound interest in cultural education especially
371 that of the Yorubas in Nigeria. Many more people will understand the mechanics of drummunication and how it
372 can supplement general communication if they care to learn more about the art.

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376 Linguistics according is the study of language(s) hence, by linguistic development we mean the development of
377 language skills especially that which serves as a means of communication. Since the language of the talking
378 drum is the indigenous tonal language of the people it will be good for people to be good in such a language of
379 immediate environment. Foreign languages which some enlightened people first expose their wards to should not
380 be allowed to relegate or bring the local language to the background. Effective drummunication will be enhanced
381 if people understand their local or native language, which the talking drums imitate very well.

382 The contextual information has been identified as a factor that can aid clarification of the meaning of an idea
383 and disambiguation. ??oulton and Robinson (1982) opine that disambiguation of communicated information
384 relies on context-dependent-pragmatic information given linguistically or non-linguistically. Also, the audience of
385 a drummunicator's message will comprehend communicated messages faster and better if enough comprehension-
386 aiding-contextual information is supplied or provided directly or indirectly.

387 It is important to point out the fact that the adage or expression "garbage in, garbage out" also applies to
388 the making of talking drums. This is because if bad materials are, what go into the construction of the talking
389 drums then bad production of tones and sounds will be the outcome or output of such talking drums. However,
390 the beauty of drummunication lies in the ability of the listener to decipher the communicated message(s) easily
391 which is possible when the tones comes out correctly as well as the intended message(s). This is also important
392 because the level or pace of comprehension of people differ. Just as an oral passage listeners may not comprehend
393 at the same level or pace so also is the message of drummunication.

394 So some listeners due to their background or experience may need to listen just once to understand or
395 comprehend, some may need to listen over and over or even rack their brain to understand or grasp communicated
396 information.

397 For effective drummunication therefore, drummunicators may need to repeat or reiterate drumbeats that
398 communicate vital messages or important information.

399 If the belief that a problem known or identified is half solved is anything to go by then some of the barriers
400 to effective drummunication not yet torched under this section could be addressed as steps towards effective
401 drummunication. For example, drummunication should avoid or prevent any fault at any of the stages of
402 drummunication. Drummmunication milieu or environment should be such that will not given room for information
403 overload or distortion. Noise of all kinds should be reduced to the barest minimum if not totally prevented or
404 avoided. These, other things being equal, will enhance effectiveness of drummunication.

405 The basic similarity between the Yoruba talking drums and other drums is that they are melody producing
406 musical instruments while their difference lies in the fact that the talking drums are also instruments of information
407 dissemination or media for transmission of vital messages. It is in the light of this that the term drummunication,
408 morphologically derived from the blending of the two words "drum" and "communication", has been introduced
409 to explain the process which involves the passing of vital messages or sending of important information via the
410 Yoruba talking drums. Talking drums in this context however, refers to the "linguistically competent" drums
411 that can display relatively high communicative competence "by imitating the tones and gibes of the Yoruba

412 language especially the dundun and bata drumsets. The various functions of effective drummunication show that
drummunication is ^{1 2 3}



Figure 1:

413

¹Drummunication: The Trado-Indigenous Art of Communicating with Talking Drums in Yorubaland
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