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Citation: Okedairo, O. O, Ogunyemi,`B; *Training of Gangan Drummers in Nigerian Polytechnics: A Case Study of Federal Polytechnic Ilaro.*

TRAINING OF GANGAN DRUMMERS IN NIGERIAN POLYTECHNICS: A CASE STUDY OF FEDERAL POLYTECHNIC ILARO

Abstract

Focusing on Music education in our schools, the traditional practice of restricting Dùndún musicianship to specific families in Yoruba land, where apprenticeship often required initiation or affiliation, risk of involving in ritual making before you can study the art can now go to an extinction. Empirical approach was adopted and tutorial class was organized to carry out the field research made by the researcher in his studies to transfer knowledge gained from his consultant. A course outline was designed to study Gángan drum within a semester which was tested and yielded good result. A curriculum can be developed to capture the art of Dùndún musicianship in our schools to prevent cultural extinction and enhance cultural preservation.

Keywords: Curriculum, Musicianship, Music Education, Tutorial,

Background of the study

Close observation of various types of music practice in Yoruba land reveals the feature of Dùndún drum. From Juju music mostly practice by the Christian to Fuji music that has its source from Islamic trait. The traditional Yoruba music like *Àpàlà*, *Ògódó*, *Bòlòjò* and others features Dùndún drum in their making. In various occasions like naming ceremony, burial, marriages, chieftaincy, house-warming to mention a few is Dùndún drum employed by musicians. At the beer-parlor, churches, traditional festivals and so on. Dùndún drum has its popularity and plays the social roles among the Yoruba people of the southwest zone of Nigeria (Adegbite, 1988; Durojaiye, 2019).

Dùndún drum among the drums in Yoruba land is said not to attach to any deity (Adegbite, 1988; Durojaiye, 2019), though some scholars claim *Àyàngalú* as the deity of drum (Ibisanakale, 2007; Euba, 1990). Various types of drum among Yoruba are *Bàtá*, *Àgèrè*, *Ìpèsè*, *Dùndún*, *Gbèdu*, and so on. There are five pieces of drum in the family of dùndún ensemble. *Iya-ilu* serves as the lead drum as it dictates the pace and improvises. *Àgùdà/Kéríkerì* is another big size that is next in size to *Ìyá-ilù*. *Gáangan* drum is smaller to *Iya-ilu* and *Kéríkerì*, next to *gáangan* is *Àpàlà* and *àdámò* (Durojaiye, 2019; Euba, 1988; Olusoji, 2005). The art of drumming is exemplified by the fact that certain families are associated with the art (Euba, 1990; Vidal, 2012). Dùndún being a family tradition is passed on from one generation to another (Euba, 1990; Idamoyibo, 2002). The Ayan-agalu family believes that a child born to their family need not to learn the art of drumming because they felt it is genetically transferred (Durojaiye, 2019). Bankole et.al (1975) discusses the qualities and the requirements for becoming a Yoruba master musician. Teaching and learning of dùndún drum in Africa have been noted to include observation, imitation and apprenticeship (Durojaiye, 2019).

Focusing on theory and practice of African music, some scholars have propounded that African music are characterized with responsorial art, poly-rhythm, persistence use of ostinato, dominance of percussion, tense vocal techniques, chanting, and so on (Agawu, 1987; Ekwueme, 1974). Learning the art of dùndún drumming cannot be effective without the consideration of some theories ascertained by some scholars about the practice of African music. The most important feature of the propounded theories is the rhythm. A learner must study and understand

the practice of rhythm to acquire the skill needed for the art of drumming. The traditional method of learning the art of dùndún musicianship can involve a longer duration compared to a formal setting. Some churches that organized yearly workshop couldn't extend the tutorial to the general public and therefore creating a challenge for schools to find a solution to the matter.

Many churches today are in need of Dùndún musicians. It has become a great challenge to the churches when they struggle to train instrumentalists and the so trained member disappeared from the church and become useful elsewhere. Request are being made to the department of music to supply them with the skilled persons that are capable in the art of Dùndún drumming to make the church service lively. In the past, the church had been the influencer of music education in the history western education, and it is the duty of the higher institution of learning to pay back to the society. If Nigerian tertiary institutions can produce skilled practitioners in the art of Dùndún musicianship, it will be an advantage to the nation's socio-economy system. It will help in preserving Yoruba cultural heritage and traditional music. It can facilitate the production of more jobs and reduces unemployment. It can attract cultural tourists, promoting cross-cultural exchange. Training of Dùndún musicianship can promote social cohesion through music workshops and performances. Churches seeking to incorporate traditional Dùndún music into their worship services can access trained musicians, promoting cultural fusion and diversity.

The Method

Empirical approach was adopted and group discussion was carried out at department of Music Technology, Federal polytechnic Ilaro, Ogun state, Nigeria. The Higher National Diploma (HND1) students comprising of 22 respondents were made used to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum. Data obtained through participant observation from consultants and archive were made used to design the scheme of work for the duration of a semester. The use of rhythmic structure was made used. African drum's communication was referred to as a surrogate of human speech tone (Vidal, 2012).

The Dùndún drum typically uses pentatonic scale (field observation). Its pitch range is determined by the drum's size, allowing it to produce clear pitches like doh, ray, me, sol, lah, and span about an octave. However, it may struggle to accurately play western music scale. The Dùndún drum can mimic human voice tones by adjusting the tension strings, which are

manipulated by squeezing them between the armpits or applying pressure. It doesn't have a fixed key, but can produce a scale-like pattern with pitch intervals of:

- major 2nd, minor 3rd, major 2nd, major 2nd and minor 3rd (soh, lah, doh, ray, me, soh) or
- Minor 3rd, major 2nd, major 2nd, minor 3rd, major 2nd (lah, doh, ray, me, soh, lah).
- Major 2nd, major 2nd, major 2nd, minor 3rd, major 2nd, and minor 3rd (doh, ray, me, soh, lah, doh).

The tonic is determined by the spoken phrase the Dùndún musician aims to mimic. Depending on the syllables of words that made up the phrase, the tonic may be centered to the middle or the beginning of the intending scale. Words like *Ọlógèdè, Ọgèdè àgbagbà gba re gbare tòdò mi bọ*, can be mimicked by locating the tonic at the first pitch, such that second and third pitches sounds doh, ray, me respectively as shown in figure 13, 14 and 15.

Rhythm, meter and pitch was discovered as the elements of dùndún drum communication. Rhythmic pattern were drafted in correlation with meter to exercise the muscles of the learners. This prepare the learners the opportunity to build their muscles against the future challenges. As in figure one to four below.

Figure 1.

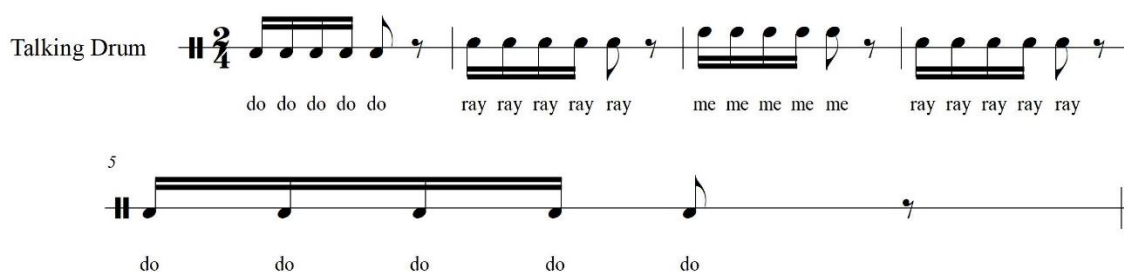


Figure 2.

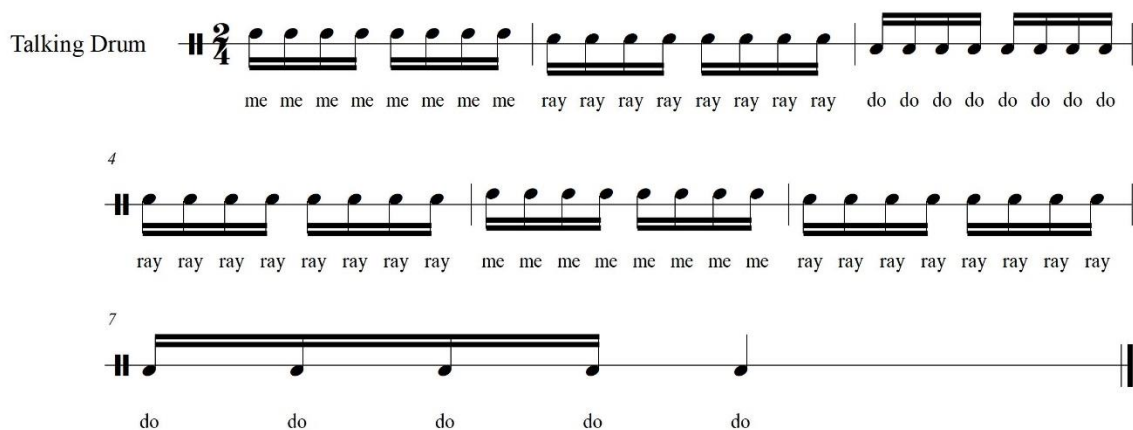


Figure 3.

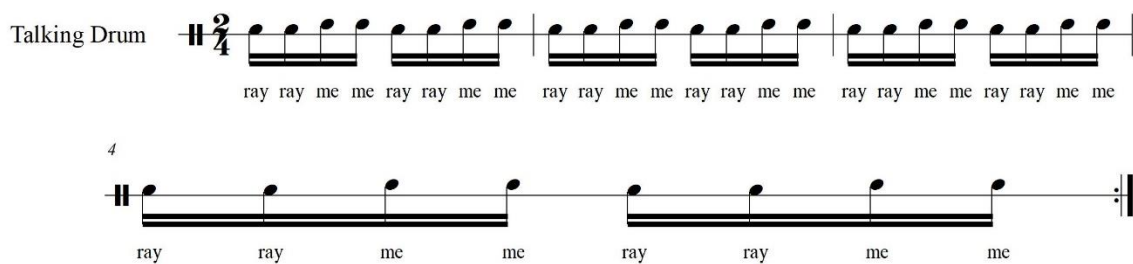
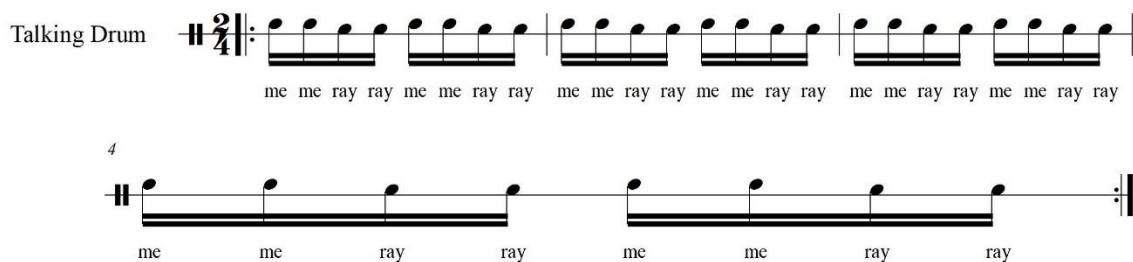


Figure 4.



Note: the tonic is determined by the drummer after studying the pentatonic scale carefully. The second stage of the exercise is the imitation of some words as in the following scores below.

Figure 5. Àgbà le tù, Omodé lajé

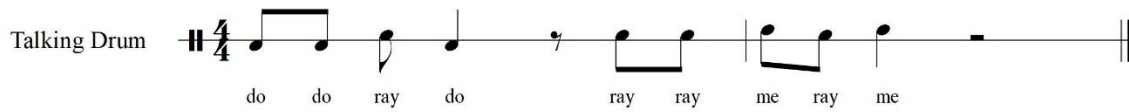


Figure 6. Ògèdè àgbagbà gba re gba re t'òdò mi bò

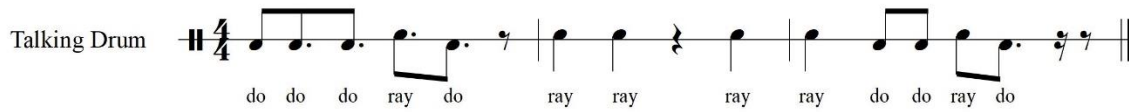


Figure 7. Dá n sàki Òbà Ojoojúmó lore Rẹ sími



Figure 8. Bàbá Oní Tòjú Èniyàn



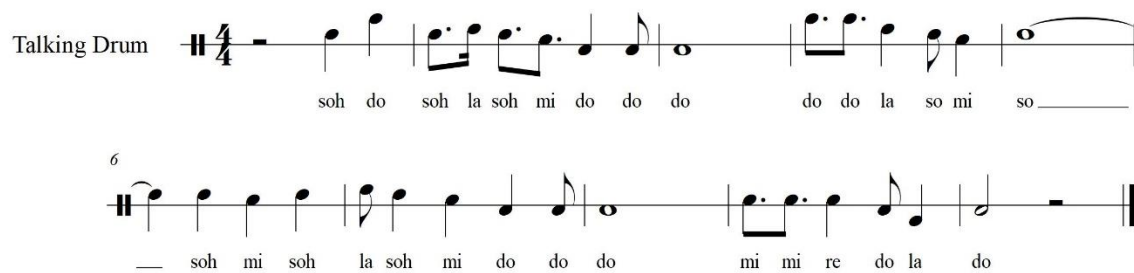


Figure 9. Bàtà míà dún ko ko kà

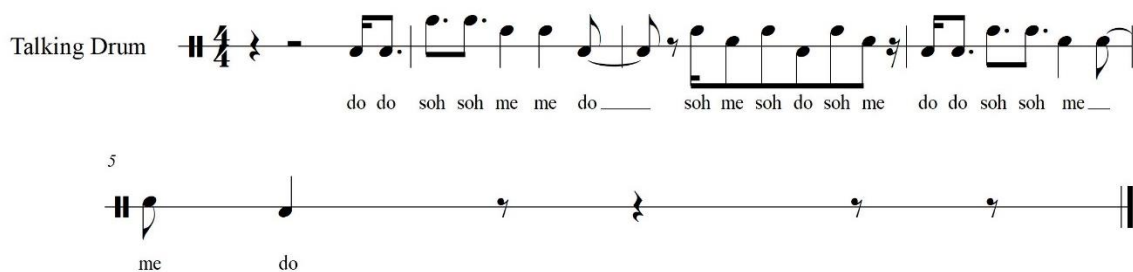


Figure 10. Àṣe òṣe tún ṣe

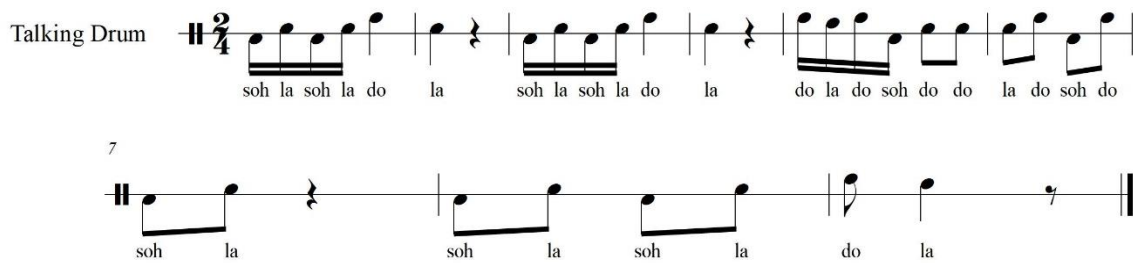
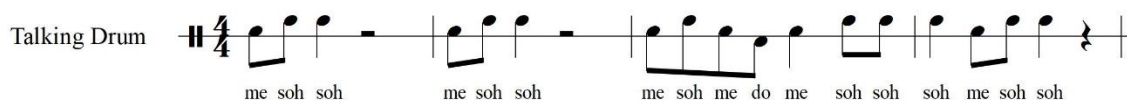


Figure 11. Modúpé Ọlórún Ọ pa mí l'ẹ̀kún



African Dundun drum does not only imitate sound from Yoruba phrases but can mimic sound from other vocal traditions. For example in figure 12 and 13 below.

Figure 12. Amazing Grace



Figure 13. Mary Had a Little Lamb

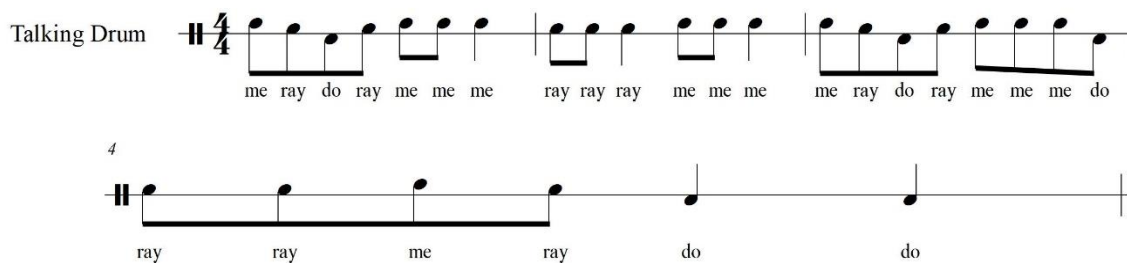
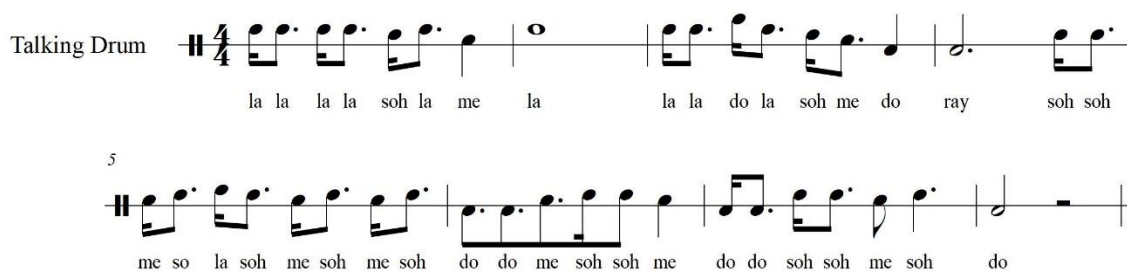


Figure 14. Olúwa kú Iṣé



The third stage of learning involves listening and imitate rhythms from works by popular musicians, sourced from the archives or You-tube. This to performance location as practiced by the ancient apprentice to imitate his mentor. The fourth stage is the performance workshop, where the students are grouped to perform African music in order to evaluate their studies.

Findings

African Dùndún drum typically uses a pentatonic scale (do, re, mi, soh, lah) and can struggle to play the full Western diatonic scale. The Pitches are manipulated by squeezing the tension strings between the armpits or pulling it with hand. The tonic center is determined by the drummer depending on the phrase of words to be mimicked. The scale can be made to start from the tonic (do) and be ran up to the octave or from the dominant (soh) to its octave. . It doesn't have a fixed key, but can produce a scale-like pattern with pitch intervals of:

- major 2nd, minor 3rd, major 2nd, major 2nd and minor 3rd (soh, lah, doh, ray, me, soh) or
- Minor 3rd, major 2nd, major 2nd, minor 3rd, major 2nd (lah, doh, ray, me, soh, lah).
- Major 2nd, major 2nd, major 2nd, minor 3rd, major 2nd, and minor 3rd (doh, ray, me, soh, lah, doh).

To run the pentatonic scale on Gangan, the drum is hung on the shoulder and squeezed between the armpits. The face of the drum is raced up to allow the drummer see the center of the drum so as not to hit the rod on fingers, as shown in figure 17 below. The rod must be used to strike the drum at the center, any attempt to strike the drum at the edge may tear the skin-surface of the drum. The lower pitch is produced by lifting the arm off the drum as in the figure 18 below. The second pitch is produced by relaxing the arm on the drum lightly as in figure 19. To pitch the third tone one has to press the drum between the armpits as in figure 20. The more pressure applied in squeezing the tension determined the fourth, fifth and octave pitch of the drum. Pictorial observation does not give a clear image of the difference between fifth, sixth and the octave pitch, but can be observed in the slight difference from figure 21, 22, 23 and 24 as the drummer adjusted the pitches with the pressure applied to the tension strings. A beginner may found it difficult to produce the middle pitches at the beginning but with many attempt it will be possible. One of the factors that attributed to the acquired of the skills of Yoruba Dùndún drum is determination. If you believe that you can do it, you are one step into success.



Figure 17. Positioning the drum

Figure 18.The lower pitch



Figure 19. Second pitch



Figure 20. Third pitch



Figure 21. fourth pitch



Figure 22. Fifth pitch

Summary and conclusion

Rhythm, meter and pitch are the major elements of Dùndún music. It has the ability of producing a pentatonic scale. The first step a beginner should take is to learn how to run the pentatonic scale. The next step is to learn how to sound some words and phrases with the knowledge of pitches acquired. One should not forget the importance of rhythm in African music

tradition. Exercises should be done to train the muscles of the body in preparation for future challenges. It should be noted that the concept of pitch in Africa is not the same with the western music (Vidal, 2018). It is therefore recommended to learn Dùndún drum following the four stages mentioned in this research work. A student may volunteer to play drum in a nearby church so as to make that church a training ground in order to develop himself. Skills are acquired by constant practice. It is therefore recommended to acquire the drumming skill by obtaining the guide and embark on constant practice. If the training of Dùndún musicianship is adopted in our Technical schools and polytechnic, it will influence the promotion of African cultural heritage and its sustainability.

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