Music, language, and meaning in Nigerian highlife: a communicative analysis of "So Ala Temem"

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Abstract

This study examines Cardinal Rex Lawson's (1969) "So Ala Temem" as a multidimensional communicative event in which language, music, and sociocultural meaning intersect. Highlife music provides a lens to analyze how melodic, rhythmic, and performative elements convey both referential and affective content. The study draws on a high-fidelity recording, researcher-generated transcription, and consultations with native Kalabari, Ibani, Izon, and Okrika speakers. An interdisciplinary approach combines ethnographic linguistics, musicological analysis, and sociocultural interpretation, guided by Highlife scholarship, musilanguage theory, and Hymes' (1974) SPEAKING model. Findings show that "So Ala Temem" goes beyond entertainment, integrating multilingual elements and playful vocalisations (ludic or vocable-based sound) with instrumental and vocal techniques to create a musilinguistic synthesis. The interplay of language and music reinforces social cohesion, moral guidance, and communal identity. Melodic phrasing, rhythmic patterns, and expressive vocalizations encode cultural knowledge and affective meaning, while repetition, interjections, and chorused refrains structure the song and enhance audience engagement. Lawson's performance exemplifies the communicative and cultural significance of Nigerian Highlife, demonstrating how musical and linguistic strategies convey ethical instruction, social norms, and collective memory.

1 Introduction

Linguistic choices are tightly coordinated with melodic contour, rhythmic grouping, and vocal delivery to frame a moral discourse on wealth, poverty, and socially sanctioned conduct. Meaning thus emerges through the interaction of propositional language, sound symbolism, and performative affect, underscoring the need for an analytical approach that treats music as a structured communicative medium rather than a mere backdrop to verbal text. Highlife music, as exemplified by the work of Cardinal Jim-Rex Lawson, constitutes a performative domain in which linguistic form, musical structure, and sociocultural meaning are mutually constituted. Far from functioning merely as entertainment, Lawson's songs operate as socially situated discourse events language strategically deployed to comment on morality, social relations, and communal values. Long after Lawson's untimely death at the age of thirty-three on 16 January 1971, "So Ala Temem", one of his most enduring compositions, continues to circulate widely across the Niger Delta at funerals, weddings, communal ceremonies, and sporting events. This

sustained circulation suggests that the song's communicative efficacy lies not only in its musical appeal but also in its linguistic and pragmatic resonance within shared cultural contexts.

Released in 1969 on the album *Rex Lawson's Victories*, "So Ala Temem" exemplifies Kalabari Highlife through its dense layering of linguistic resources, including indigenous Kalabari lexemes alongside Igbo-like playful vocalisations, interjections, and expressive cries. These elements are not ornamental but integral to meaning-making.

This study brings into dialogue three complementary frameworks: Highlife scholarship, musiclanguage theory, and Dell Hymes' ethnography of communication, operationalized through the SPEAKING model. Together, these frameworks enable a sociolinguistically grounded interpretation of "So Ala Temem" as situated discourse, allowing the analysis to move beyond descriptive commentary toward an integrated account of language, music, and social meaning.

2 Literature review and theoretical perspective

Research on Highlife provides the historical and sociocultural grounding for the present analysis. The genre is widely described as a pan-West African musical form shaped by colonial encounter, urban cosmopolitanism, and aesthetic hybridity (cf. Collins 1989; Waterman 1990). Subsequent scholarship emphasizes Highlife's role as a vehicle for social commentary, moral negotiation, and identity construction (cf. Agawu 2003).

Within the Niger Delta region of southern Nigeria – a riverine, oil-producing zone marked by dense ethnolinguistic diversity and long history of trade, migration, and intercultural contact – Highlife performance assumes distinctive multilingual and sociocommunicative dimensions. The region's port cities and waterways historically facilitated the circulation of musicians, instruments, and performance styles, enabling Highlife to develop as a contact-driven music tradition embedded in everyday social life.

In this performance space, multilingual expression constitutes a defining aesthetic and communicative resource. Languages such as Kalabari (Glottolog: kala1393; ISO 639-3: kba), Ikwere (Glottolog: ikwe1238; ISO 639-3: ikv), Igbo (Glottolog: igbo1257; ISO 639-3: ibo), Nigerian Pidgin (Glottolog: nige1254; ISO 639-3: pcm), and English (Glottolog: stan1293; ISO 639-3: eng) circulate fluidly within individual songs and across performance contexts. This patterned linguistic plurality reflects both audience design and regional sociolinguistic realities, allowing performers to index ethnic affiliation, urban modernity, and intercommunal solidarity simultaneously.

Such polyglossic practice produces what Agawu (2003) characterises as discourse that is at once linguistic, musical, and social, rendering Highlife a particularly fertile site for sociolinguistic inquiry.

The musilanguage model provides a theoretical account of the structural affinities between language and music evident in Lawson's performance practice (cf. Brown 2000). As a conceptual construct, "musilanguage" refers to a hypothesized ancestral communicative system in which features now distributed across speech and music – including pitch modulation, rhythmic patterning, vocal timbre, and affective prosody – functioned within a unified expressive medium. Within this framework, the language-music interface denotes the zone of cognitive, structural,

and performative overlap where linguistic and musical resources interact to produce meaning that exceeds the semantic content of words alone. Both terms are therefore pivotal not merely as descriptive labels but as explanatory tools for understanding how vocal communication can operate simultaneously as speech, song, and sociocultural signification.

The model posits that language and music derive from an ancestral capacity for intonationally modulated, combinatorial vocalization, leaving observable homologies in hierarchical organization, melodic-intonational mapping, and affective signaling. These homologies are especially salient in tone languages such as Kalabari, where lexical tone interacts directly with melodic contour, rendering musical pitch not simply ornamental but semantically consequential.

In "So Ala Temem", pitch movement, rhythmic emphasis, vocables, and emotive cries work in tandem to extend meaning beyond propositional semantics. Here, vocalization operates across multiple semiotic registers: lexical, paralinguistic, and musical. Expressive elongations, tonal heightening, and rhythmically synchronized interjections function as affective intensifiers and discourse organizers, shaping audience interpretation even where lexical content is minimal or indeterminate.

Findings from cognitive musicology and neurolinguistics further support this perspective, demonstrating that prosody, rhythm, grouping, and affective expression draw on overlapping cognitive resources (cf. Patel 2008; Cross 2014). Such evidence reinforces the view that the communicative force of Highlife performance resides not solely in verbal text but in the integrated musilinguistic orchestration of sound, voice, and socially encoded feeling.

While musilanguage theory accounts for structural and expressive convergence, Dell Hymes' ethnography of communication situates these convergences within socially regulated communicative contexts (cf. Hymes 1972, 1974). African performance scholarship has consistently shown that song is embedded in norms governing respect, hierarchy, moral instruction, and emotional display (cf. Yankah 1995; Finnegan 1970/2012). Through the components of the SPEAKING model – Setting, Participants, Ends, Act sequence, Key, Instrumentalities, Norms, and Genre – musical performances can be analyzed as socially accountable speech events. In the case of "So Ala Temem", these encompass communal settings in which wealth and poverty undergo public evaluation, the singer's positioning as moral commentator and social mediator, alongside culturally salient vocal styles and interjections that index emotional stance and pragmatic force.

Taken together, Highlife scholarship, musilanguage theory, and the ethnography of communication provide a balanced analytical framework that captures historical grounding, structural organization, and social meaning. Viewed through this lens, "So Ala Temem" emerges not simply as a musical composition but as a linguistically mediated social practice in which language, music, and culture are inseparable.

3 Methods

This study adopts a qualitative, interdisciplinary methodology integrating ethnographic linguistics, musilinguistics, and analytical approaches drawn from African musicology to examine "So Ala Temem" as a multimodal communicative event. Rather than treating language and music as analytically separable domains, the study approaches the song as a unified semiotic system

in which verbal expression, melodic organization, rhythmic patterning, and performative vocalization jointly produce meaning.

3.1 Data sources

The primary dataset consists of a high-fidelity audio recording of "So Ala Temem" from Cardinal Rex Lawson's (1969) album *Rex Lawson's Victories*. This recording serves as the empirical basis for both linguistic and musilinguistic analysis.

A researcher-generated transcription of the Kalabari lyrics was produced through repeated close listening, involving iterative segmentation of vocal lines, tonal contour tracking, and rhythmic alignment with instrumental phrasing. The provisional transcript was subsequently subjected to expert validation through structured consultation with carefully selected language specialists.

The Kalabari consultant is a native first-language male speaker from Buguma, a core Kalabari speech community in the Niger Delta, possessing demonstrable fluency across both everyday and performative registers of the language, including established competence in song discourse, praise poetry, and proverbial expression. He is also a linguistics trainee with prior research experience on the structure of the Kalabari, a background that proved valuable in resolving morphosyntactic segmentation, lexical boundary identification, and idiomatic compression within the song text.

The Ibani consultant, a trained female linguist and native speaker of Ibani from Bonny in the Niger Delta, was incorporated into the validation process in recognition of the historically attested linguistic proximity, sustained contact interaction, and graded mutual intelligibility between Kalabari and Ibani within regional performance circuits.

This dual-consultant framework facilitated cross-varietal semantic triangulation, particularly in the interpretation of archaic lexical items, idiomatically compressed constructions, and phonological reductions conditioned by musical phrasing.

Additional qualitative data were obtained through two focused group discussions (FGDs). The first FGD involved two native Kalabari speakers and focused on linguistic form, expressive nuance, and culturally salient meanings embedded in the lyrics and vocal delivery. The second FGD included native speakers of Izon and Okrika languages and addressed the song's broader circulation, interpretive reception, and ongoing relevance across the multilingual sociocultural landscape of the Niger Delta.

Supplementary materials included existing scholarship on Highlife music and Niger Delta performance culture, providing historical and genre-based contextualization for analysis.

3.2 Analytical framework and procedures

Dell Hymes' SPEAKING model serves as the primary heuristic for analyzing the sociolinguistic dimensions of "So Ala Temem". Analysis begins with Setting and Scene, distinguishing between textual references in the lyrics and the ritualized, dance-oriented contexts in which Highlife circulates. Participants are identified across multiple layers: Lawson as performer, the implied addressee within the lyrical narrative, and the broader listening public. Ends encompass moral reflection, entertainment, affective expression, and reinforcement of shared social norms.

The Act Sequence maps the internal communicative structure, highlighting the interplay of lyrical clauses, instrumental breaks, interjections, and refrains. Key is analyzed through vocal intensity, melodic contour, and rhythmic emphasis. Instrumentalities include both linguistic codes – Kalabari and Igbo-like vocables – and musical resources characteristic of Highlife performance. Norms concern culturally specific expectations for emotional expressivity and public performance, while Genre is treated as a composite speech genre integrating storytelling, moral commentary, and aesthetic performance.

Musilanguage theory complements this sociolinguistic analysis by elucidating structural and functional intersections between linguistic and musical expression. The study examines the combinatorial organization of lyrics, patterns of repetition and intensification, and the alignment of verbal sequences with melodic phrasing. Intonational modulation and non-lexical vocalizations are analyzed as carriers of affective and pragmatic meaning rather than as decorative elements.

An ethnomusicological procedure was adopted in three stages: (i) transcription and pragmatic coding of the Kalabari text, (ii) segmentation of musical structure and alignment with linguistic acts, and (iii) synthesis of findings from the SPEAKING model and musilanguage theory to produce a holistic interpretation of the song.

3.3 Analytic rigor and transparency

Analytic credibility was ensured through methodological triangulation, combining linguistic transcription, musical analysis, and ethnographic consultation. Native-speaker collaboration enhanced semantic precision, while engagement with established scholarship anchored the study within recognized theoretical and historical frameworks. Reflexivity was maintained throughout, with attention to researcher positionality and potential interpretive bias.

Grammatical notation follows the Leipzig Glossing Rules (cf. Comrie/Haspelmath/Bickel 2015), ensuring transparency and reproducibility in linguistic representation. All data analysis, interpretation, and theoretical application remain the original work of the authors.

4 Integrated musilinguistic and sociolinguistic analysis of “So Ala Temem”

“So Ala Temem” exemplifies Kalabari Highlife, demonstrating the interplay of language, music, and culture. Its enduring circulation across Niger Delta contexts – weddings, burials, festivals, and sporting events – reflects both aesthetic appeal and social instruction. Lawson employs a variety of linguistic resources, including Kalabari lexical items, expressive interjections, and playful vocalizations, which encode moral, cosmological, and cultural meanings within a rhythmically and melodically rich framework.

This section treats the song as a multimodal communicative event. Drawing on Hymes’ SPEAKING model (1974) and musilanguage theory (cf. Brown 2000), the analysis shows how language and music interact to produce a multidimensional performance encompassing cognitive, affective, and social registers.

4.1 Sequential analysis of the performance

The performance follows a structured progression, integrating instrumental cues, vocal expressions, and moral content. Table 1 presents a transcription of selected lyrical and musical elements alongside SPEAKING + musilanguage coding and their sociocultural functions.

Lyric	Translation	SPEAKING + Musilaguage	Sociocultural Function
(Brass, percussion)	Instrumental	Instrumentalities, Act Sequence; Combinatorial Syntax, Rhythm	Establishes rhythmic foundation; signals vocal entry; heightens anticipation
Wo-o!!!	Surprise	Key, Act Sequence; Intonational Phrasing	Captures attention; sets emotional tone
i-i i-i mma-mma-mma	Playful vocalisation (likely Igbo)	Instrumentalities; Combinatorial Syntax	Adds playful texture; cross-linguistic appeal
So me Ala teme ye	Heaven created the rich	Ends, Act Sequence; Referential Meaning	Conveys divine ordination; moral guidance
So me piki egoin teme ye	Heaven also created the poor	Ends, Act Sequence; Referential Meaning	Balances social hierarchy; promotes equality
Ala wolo ma-o	Don't insult the rich	Norms; Emotive Meaning	Reinforces etiquette and respect
Egoin dgeri ma-o	Don't laugh at the poor	Norms; Emotive Meaning	Advocates empathy; discourages mockery
Interjections (*ye-ye-ye; ha-ha-ha*)	Surprise/emphasis	Key; Intonational Phrasing	Heightens audience engagement; participatory cue
Chorus (*Ori Ala teme-mo / Ori Egoin teme-mo*)	He created the rich / He created the poor	Genre, Ends; Referential + Emotive Meaning	Repetition reinforces moral lessons and communal memory

Table 1: Transcription, Translation, and SPEAKING + Musilanguage Scoring

4.1.1 Instrumental prelude and rhythmic grounding

The brass- and percussion-driven prelude establishes the Highlife rhythmic foundation (Instrumentalities, Act Sequence), cues the vocal entry, and heightens anticipation. Combinatorial syntax and rhythmic alignment are evident in the coordination of instrumental motifs with the expected lyrical phrasing.

4.1.2 Playful vocalisation and expressive interjections

Initial exclamations (*Wo-o!!!* 'Hey!/Oh!') function as Key markers, capturing attention and establishing emotional registers. Playful (rhythmic) vocalizations (*i-i i-i mma-mma-mma*) introduce playful texture and cross-linguistic reference. Interjections (*ye-ye-ye* 'oh-oh-oh-oh!' and the laughter/playful exclamation *ha-ha-ha*) enhance participation and signal affective tone, reinforcing audience engagement.

4.1.3 Part one: divine creation and moral propositions

Lines such as *So me Ala teme ye* 'Heaven created the rich' and *So me piki egoin teme ye* ('Heaven also created the poor') encode cosmological and ethical meaning (Ends, Act Sequence, Referential). The contrast between the rich and the poor conveys divine ordination and social balance. Repetition strengthens memorability and embeds moral reflection within musical phrasing.

4.1.4 Part two: normative instruction and social guidance

Admonitions like *Ala wolo ma-o* 'Oh! Do not insult the rich' and *Egoin dgeri ma-o* ('Oh! Do not laugh at the poor') align with Norms in SPEAKING and emotive meaning in musilanguage analysis. Vocables and rhythmic repetition blur the line between speech and song, embedding ethical guidance in a participatory medium. This demonstrates how Highlife communicates social norms alongside affective experience.

4.1.5 Chorus and communal memory

The chorus (*Ori Ala teme-mo* ('He created the rich') / *Ori Egoin teme-mo* ('He created the poor')) serves as both a Genre marker and reinforcement of referential and emotive content. Repetition consolidates the thematic arcs of divine authorship, social balance, and humility, supporting communal memory and ethical pedagogy.

4.1.6 Temporal architecture and musical sequencing

The act sequence – instrumentation → ludic vocalisation → Part One → interjection → Part Two → interjection → instrumentation → Part Three → chorus – creates a temporal architecture that guides interpretation and enhances memorability. Clause repetition, rhythmic alignment, and melodic contour reinforce affective impact, demonstrating musilinguistic integration.

4.2 Musilinguistic synthesis

The coordination of linguistic and musical structures produces a referential-emotive continuum. Lawson's intonational modulation (pitch bends, elongation, register shifts) conveys affective meaning, while non-lexical vocalizations, interjections, and ludic vocalisation are integral to ethical communication. "So Ala Temem" exemplifies musilinguistic integration, where language, melody, rhythm, and sociocultural meaning converge into a cohesive communicative performance.

4.3 Discussion: multidimensional communicative event

"So Ala Temem" functions simultaneously as a communicative event, musical composition, and vehicle for social instruction, exemplifying the interweaving of language, music, and sociocultural norms. Drawing on SPEAKING, musilanguage theory, and ethnomusicology, this section interprets the performance's multidimensional communicative force.

4.3.1 Social setting and scene

The music is performed at weddings, burials, festivals, and sporting events. Psychological ambience shifts between playful, reflective, and celebratory moods, adapting to audience composition and occasion. This situates the performance in communal experience, aligning aesthetic pleasure with moral reflection and social cohesion.

4.3.2 Participants and audience engagement

Participants include Lawson, the back-up chorus, and a heterogeneous audience. Audience members may be directly addressed or act as overhearers, contributing to a stratified participation structure. The back-up chorus reinforces lyrics, echoes key phrases, and amplifies affective expression. Call-and-response interactions and ludic vocalisation invite audience participation, producing a mutually reinforcing network of performers, chorus, and audience engagement.

4.3.3 Performance ends

Goals extend beyond entertainment to moral instruction, social guidance, and cultural affirmation. Lyrics such as *So me Ala teme ye* (‘Oh Heaven created the rich!’) and *Ala wolo ma-o* (‘Oh! Do not insult the rich’) convey ethical and cosmological guidance, aligning aesthetic enjoyment with reflection on social hierarchies, respect, and humility.

4.3.4 Key, instrumentalities, and expressive registers

Emotional tone is signaled through Key, vocal registers, and instrumental arrangements. Pitch modulation, melodic contour, and rhythmic emphasis reinforce meaning and guide listener experience. Musical and linguistic elements function integratively, illustrating musilinguistic communication.

4.3.5 Cultural norms and genre integration

Lyrics, interjections, and musical motifs encode culturally salient norms, including wealth, poverty, humility, and social respect. Kalabari Highlife merges aesthetic, linguistic, and social semiosis, functioning as both entertainment and moral pedagogy.

4.3.6 Musilinguistic integration and communicative power

The alignment of linguistic, musical, and sociocultural elements in “So Ala Temem” creates a unified referential-emotive continuum in which sound itself conveys meaning beyond lexical content. Intonation, combinatorial lyric syntax, melodic phrasing, and rhythm converge to amplify semantic and affective significance, while sound-symbolic features (including pitch contours, elongation of vowels, and onomatopoeic vocables) encode emotional stance, highlight ethical imperatives, and cue audience responses. Playful vocalisations, interjections, and chorused refrains leverage these sound-symbolic cues to embed moral instruction within a participatory performance framework, making the message both memorable and experientially salient.

The song’s continued performance decades after Lawson’s death attests to its cultural resilience, demonstrating how sonic form, lexical content, and symbolic vocalisation work together

to reinforce communal memory, ethical guidance, and social cohesion. By foregrounding the semiotic role of sound, "So Ala Temem" exemplifies how Highlife music mobilizes both language and musicality to create a musilinguistic synthesis with enduring sociocultural impact.

5 Conclusion

This study examined Cardinal Rex Lawson's "So Ala Temem" as a multidimensional communicative event in which language, music, and sociocultural meaning converge to produce enduring aesthetic, moral, and social impact. Using Hymes' SPEAKING framework alongside musilanguage theory, the analysis demonstrates that Lawson's performance operates on multiple, mutually reinforcing levels, integrating linguistic, musical, and ethical elements.

"So Ala Temem" reflects the hybridized, multilingual aesthetic of Niger Delta Highlife, combining Kalabari expressions with Igbo-like vocables to address communal concerns, moral guidance, and cosmological reflection. Musilinguistic analysis highlights the structural alignment of lyrics and melody, while intonational modulation, rhythmic repetition, interjections, and ludic vocalisations convey both referential and affective meaning. These features enhance audience engagement and underscore the cognitive and performative sophistication of Lawson's artistry.

Through SPEAKING analysis, the song is situated within its social and cultural context: setting, participants, ends, norms, and genre conventions shape reception and interpretation. The findings show that Highlife functions as more than entertainment; it is a medium for moral instruction, communal memory, and cultural reinforcement. The sustained popularity of "So Ala Temem" – performed across weddings, burials, festivals, and sporting events decades after Lawson's death – attests to its ongoing social and ethical resonance.

This study also demonstrates the value of interdisciplinary approaches to African popular music. By integrating ethnographic, linguistic, and musicological perspectives, it highlights Highlife as a cognitively sophisticated, socially embedded performance that communicates, educates, and fosters communal cohesion. Future research could extend this framework to other Highlife compositions, examine cross-linguistic and musical interactions, or investigate audience reception through fieldwork. Comparative studies with other West African musical genres could further illuminate strategies of musilinguistic expression, while computational or cognitive analyses of melody-syntax alignment could reveal additional dimensions of performance.

Overall, "So Ala Temem" exemplifies the enduring power of Highlife as a culturally embedded, musico-linguistic phenomenon, showcasing Lawson's creative ingenuity and the genre's role in shaping communal identity, moral discourse, and cultural continuity. The study provides a robust model for analyzing African music as a multidimensional communicative system, bridging linguistic, musicological, and sociocultural inquiry.

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Appendix I: Interlinearised Transcription of "So Ala Temem" (with Instrumentation)

Prelude

Instrumentation (brass/percussion sequence)
INST
Instrumental rhythmic foundation; signals entry.

1. *wo-o*
   INTJ
   'Hey! / Oh!'

Instrumentation (rhythmic transition)
INST
Bridges vocal entry; builds anticipation.

2. *i-i i-i mma-mma-mma*
   LUDIC LUDIC LUDIC

   Rhythmic vocalization.

3. *m-m i-i mma-mma-mma*
   LUDIC LUDIC LUDIC

Rhythmic vocalization.

3. *m-m i-i mma-mma-mma*
   Playful rhythmic interjection.

Part One

4. *So me Ala temeye*
   heaven DEF rich create-thing
   'Heaven created the rich.'

5. *So me piki Egoin temeye*
   heaven DEF again poor create-thing
   'Heaven also created the poor.'

6. *ori ani Ala temeye*
   3MSG be rich create-thing
   'It is He who created the rich.'

7. *ye-ye-ye-ye*
   INTJ
   'Oh-oh-oh-oh!'

8. *ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha*
   INTJ
   Laughter / playful exclamation.

Part Two

9. *Ala wolo ma-o*
   rich insult NEG-oh
   'Oh! Do not insult the rich.'

10. *Egoin dgeri ma-o*
    poor laugh NEG-oh
    'Oh! Do not laugh at the poor.'

11. *Ala wolo ma Egoin dgeri ma Egoin dgeri ma*
    rich insult NEG poor laugh NEG poor laugh NEG
    'Don't insult the rich; don't laugh at the poor (repeated).'

12. *Ala wolo ma-e*
    rich insult NEG-oh
    'Oh do not insult the rich.'

13. *ee-e-e*
    INTJ
    'Oh-oh-oh!'

14. *Egoin dgeri ma-e*
    poor laugh NEG-oh
    'Oh do not laugh at the poor.'

15. *So* *me* *Ala* *temeye*
heaven DEF rich create-thing
'Heaven created the rich.'

Instrumentation (brass/percussion fill)
INST
Signals new section; prepares audience for part three.

Part Three

16. *So* *me* *Ala* *temeye*
heaven DEF rich create-thing
'Heaven created the rich.'

17. *ori* *ma* *piki* *Egoin* *temeye*
3MSG MASC again poor create-thing
'He again created the poor.'

18. *So* *me* *Ala* *temeye-ye*
heaven DEF rich create-thing-oh
'Oh Heaven created the rich!'

19. *ye-ye-ye*
INTJ
'Oh-oh-oh.'

20. *mnn-mnn-mnn* *mma-mma-mma* *mma-mma*
LUDIC LUDIC LUDIC
Rhythmic humming / ornamentation.

21. *mnn-mnn-mnn*
LUDIC
Humming.

Chorus

22. *ori* *Ala* *tememo*
3MSG rich create.FACT
'He created the rich.'

23. *ori* *Egoin* *tememo*
3MSG poor create.FACT
'He created the poor.'

24. *Ala* *tememo*
rich create.FACT
'He created the rich.'

25. *ori* *piki* *Egoin* *tememo*
3MSG again poor create.FACT
'He again created the poor.'

Appendix II: Abbreviations and Notations

DEF	Definite article/marker of definiteness.
FACT	factative
INTJ	Interjection; expressive vocal exclamation (e. g., greetings, laughter, emphasis).
INST	Instrumental section; rhythmic and/or harmonic foundation
LUDIC	Ludic element/playful vocalization or rhythmic interjection
NEG	Negation particle.
MASC	Masculine gender marker.
3MSG	Third person masculine singular pronoun.
-	word-to-word boundary
.	one-to-many metalanguage elements boundary