

BOOK REVIEW

Title: *Let's Teach You to Sing*
Author: Albert O. Oikelome
Publisher: Babcock University Press, Lishan-Remo
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Reviewer: Oluwaseyi Kehinde, Department of Creative Arts,
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The book *Lets Teach You to Sing* by Albert Oikelome is a detailed discourse on the nature and function of the singing voice. It presents in both simple and practical terms a dialectic discourse on the function and nature of the singing voice as distinct from the speaking voice. Furthermore, it provides a greater understanding of how the voice works and the many factors involved in singing as well as an objective discussion of singing with reference to specific techniques. In an attempt to make the ability to sing a lot easy for the reader, the author presents a step by step process of sharpening vocal skills, gaining confidence and building vocal vocabularies in the field of singing. It does not only show the what, but also the how of good, quality singing. The book, *Let's Teach You to Sing*, presents both the choir trainers and vocal enthusiasts the safe and efficient methods of singing. Full of both music notations and instructive diagrams, the book thoroughly describes the structure and functions of the vocal organs in singing, from the aerodynamics of respiration through the dynamics of articulation.

Summary of Contents

Albert Oikelome's book addresses a wide range of topics pertaining to the singing voice. The first three chapters discuss the nature of the

singing voice with specific reference to the anatomy and mechanics of human sound production. The next three chapters address the vocal register, development of vocal qualities and vocal resonance. Chapter seven presents series of vocal exercises that can assist in the development of vocal skills. The next two chapters (8-10) is a concise treatment of the history of music, form and music theory. Chapter 11 to 13 discusses some controversial issues of singing, including vibrato, the voice classification belting and the personal voice training programme. Finally, a lengthy and informative glossary of terms, signs and abbreviation are discussed exhaustively.

Review

Oikelome believes that it is important to establish importance of the singing voice and the anatomy and mechanics involved in the production. That is why a whole chapter was devoted to the physiology of the voice. Interestingly, Oikelome ranges easily across domains, from the medical to the musicological aspects of the voice. He establishes the definitions of the singing voice, the characteristics of the singing voice and the physiology of the singing voice. He describes the voice not just as a singing tool, but also a delicate organ of the body that needs care. Oikelome's general aim in this section is to show how the voice organ is built and how it works to produce good musical sound. Hence, in this section, *Let's Teach You to Sing* deals with the physiological aspect of the voice with apt illustrations to drive home salient points. Much of the quotations in this section come from pedagogues and physicist which the writer was able to relate to the reader in simple form. The book is easy to comprehend, and is enhanced with clear, simple diagram. The discussion on the anatomy of the voice is easy to understand and digest by all.

The next three chapters provide the musicological background for the book. Here, Oikelome navigates between the qualifications and expectations of 'would be' vocal enthusiasts. The ranges of the voices and vocal qualities were discussed in details. Perhaps, a unique feature in this section is the discussion on vowels and consonants. The elaborate discussion of the phonetics involved with the use of language in music is revealing, describing music and the lyrics as a function of good singing. However, the vowels and consonants can only work for songs in the English language, as no section was

devoted to that of our mother tongue. Furthermore, the music notation used in the sections as exercises can only be understood by music scholars. The book could be beneficial to everyone if attempt is made to record all the exercises on CD for more clarity to the reader.

The eighth chapter addresses the issue of vocal exercises. The chapter provides the reader numerous choices with vocal exercises that cover virtually all aspects of singing. Most of the exercises are presented on the music score. This sets a limitation to those that cannot read the score. The author presents this chapter with the assumption that all readers should know how to read music. Since this is a vital aspect of the book, it is suggested that the author should provide a CD demonstration of all the exercises written in the book. This will go a long way in giving credibility to the sections that are full of music notation.

Even though the book is purely on vocal development, Oikelome discussed briefly the history of western music, music form and theory of music respectively in chapters 7, 8 and 9. Even though one may question the relevance of these chapters in a book that is devoted to the singing voice, the book linked the three issues and their relevance to the singer and the song. According to Oikelome, the knowledge of music history is very vital to the understanding of classical vocal music. This is because composers of the various songs slated for studies lived in dispensations that helped in the shaping of the songs they composed. He submitted that the knowledge of music history will also broaden the scope of a voice student in music literature. Even though the three issues raised were not discussed in details, they are, however, useful and informative.

In chapter 11 and 12, Oikelome addresses more personal issues relating to the singing voice. These issues range from the personal singing programme to tips on how to sing on stage. This section provides a detailed viewpoint of the author based on his personal experiences as a singer and voice coach. Some of the issues raised in the section also include the misconceptions a lot of people have been having about the singing voice.

In chapter 13, attempts were made to answer some questions bothering singers. It discussed things that affect the singing voice, both positively and negatively. It also provided some tips on how to preserve our voices in good health. Most of Oikelome assertions are grounded in basic science and thus mostly reliable. Still, we should keep in mind that he speaks as a voice teacher, not as a medical doctor. However, this chapter seems to be brief and inconclusive as many issues that affect the singing voice within our cultural context were not discussed.

The final chapter discussed extensively the terms, signs and abbreviations used in art music. This is equally useful to singers in all fields as we live in a society that projects more of noise in place of good singing.

Overall, the book provides an excellent overview of pedagogical issues as it relates to the singing voice of the 21st Century. It provides the reader with the established concepts in combination with the latest knowledge about modern approaches to the singing voice. The writing is clear and easy to read, and the information is useful and applicable to modern singers of many styles of music. Ultimately, the book indeed would serve as a reference text for voice teachers, singers, choral conductors, and voice therapists.

BOOK REVIEW

- Title:** *Essays on Language in Societal Transformation: A Festschrift in Honour of Segun Awonusi, Research in English and Applied Linguistics REAL* (vol. 9).
- Editors:** Tunde Opeibi, Josef Schmied, Tope Omoniyi and Kofo Adedeji
- Publisher:** Cuvillier Verlag, Gottingen Germany
- Year:** 2015
- No. of Pages:** 300+
- Price:** Not Stated
- ISBN:** 978-3-95404-921-9; **eISBN:** 978-3-7369-4921-8
- Reviewer:** Charles Ogbulogo,
Covenant University, Ota.

The Festschrift, also known as **liber amicorum** celebrates the accomplishments of a successful academic who has served for an appreciable length of time. It is usually composed of original contributions by close associates, friends and former students of the celebrant. The quality of engagement of the celebrant with his subject and the impact he has had on his professional colleagues and protégés determine the profundity of the publication. There is evidence that the volume we have come to present today carries the highest stamp of quality based on the spread, the central controlling theme and the finesse of production.

Exploring the Book

In the first instance, this publication has provided a link across generations of linguists and language teachers. There are articles from very senior professors and contemporaries of the celebrant. There are submissions by students and admirers of the erudite professor. There are also contributions from technocrats and policy makers in language and communication as well as leadership and administration.

The over twenty- three entries are drawn from the United Kingdom, Germany and Nigeria. These entries have come from, Roehampton University, Chemnitz University, Babcock University, Redeemers' University, Bayero University, Lagos State University, Elizade University, the Universities of Benin, Ilorin, Jos, Lagos, Uyo and the pioneer university of Education in Nigeria, Tai Solarin University of Education.

The articles are organized into four major sections, in line with the major areas of the academic interests of the distinguished professor. Section A presents five essays in phonetics and phonology. Section B focuses on the English language in Nigeria while Section C captures articles in sociolinguistics and the new media. In Section D, it treats articles in applied linguistics and general education. These sections reflect the central themes of the book. We could glean from the bio-data and the interview given by the professor that he has had a very robust intellectual and public service life. The essays here presented touch on the different areas of his life and career.

Incidentally, these areas anchor on theoretical and practical, as well as the social dimensions of language. There has been, for instance, the definite search for the Nigerian identity via the instrumentality of sociolinguistics, and more specifically socio-phonology. There is a progressive search for the transformational dynamics of the society. In section A, and specifically from the paper by David Jowitt, we encounter the representation of the proposals by leading Nigerian Sociolinguists including Awonusi (1989,1990 and 2004) for an endonormative benchmark for English pronunciation in Nigeria. This proposal has to be based on an acrolectal variety of the national repertoire.

In another related paper, and in support of an endonormative variety of Nigerian English, Adedeji identifies a number of strategies within the Received Pronunciation accent of English that impedes maximum intelligibility for Nigerian speakers. These strategies include – smoothing, schwa suppression, schwa absorption, and nasal relocation. Interestingly, there have been reports of phonological processes adopted by Nigerian speakers to cope with these realities. The coping processes have been captured in earlier publications by leading scholars in Nigeria English,

including Jibril (1986), Adetugbo (1987), Bamgbose (1995), Banjo (1995), Udofot (2003) and Awonusi (2004).

Other papers in this sections are:

‘Anatomoacoustic Evidence for Obstruents and Sonorants: An Illustration with English Segmental Phonemes’ – *Jolayemi, ‘Demola*

‘Word Stress in Nigerian English’ – *Anyagwa, Carol*

‘The English Language and Spelling Pronunciation: A Case Study of the Phenomenon in Esan’ – *Okunsebor, F.O.*

In section B, *Sociolinguistics and the New Media*, we have the following papers:

‘The English Language in Global and Nigerian Settings’ – *Eka, David*

‘The Linguistic Hegemony of the English Language in Nigeria’ – *Mustapha, Abolaji S.*

‘English in Nigerian Settings: Recent Lexicoining in Nigerian English’ – *Bamiro, Edmund*

‘Illocutionary Acts in Antenatal Health Talks: A Case Study of a Hospital in Southwestern Nigeria’ – *nuabonah, F. and Rotimi Taiwo*

‘A Construction of Social Reality in Systemic Functional Theory’ – *Daramola, Adeyemi*

David Eka reinvents the status of English as a global language with emphases on the Nigerian variety. The heart of the paper is that our efforts to retain the common core features of English are a prerequisite to our claims to a heritage of an international language. In exploring further the global nature of English, Edmund Bamiro’s paper presents us with the dynamic nature of language in responding to the needs of time and space. The success of these Nigerian lexicoining tends to challenge the restricted territoriality of English. Indeed, the language has become an international heritage that must be deployed to serve the needs of the global community. Two dominant lexicoining strategies highlighted in the paper are analogical creation and coinage. This paper is a bold attempt at codifying the corpus of Nigerian English at least at the lexical level.

In the first paper of Section C, Tunde Opeibi draws out the very close and positive connection between politics and the linguistic culture of a people in line with the long standing Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. The submission of this paper accords with Awonusi (1996) and Beard (2000). Here, deliberate discourse strategies by political actors have been found to play central roles in democratic principles. There is therefore the need to develop our language resources to enhance our democratic experience.

Josef Schmied's paper in this section is entitled, **Internet English in Nigeria: New Data- New Discourse?** In it, the author highlights the prime position of Nigeria within the African continent with regard to the use of the internet. However, this advantage has not been translated to an appropriate quality of representation in scholarly papers on the internet domain of Nigerian English. There appears to be a general apathy in very many aspects of computational linguistics in the country. For the on-going transformation of the academy in the service of humanity to achieve maximum results, trends in computational linguistics and language engineering must be followed.

Other papers in this section are:

'Sociolinguistic Variation in Bilingual Speech: Code-Switching and Code-Mixing in Central Lagos' – *Shodipe, Mojisola*

'A Morphological Study of the Use of Pidgin in Selected Nigerian Electronic Media Advertisements' – *Osisanwo, Ayo*

'Interactional Language in Business Correspondence in Nigeria' – *Osoba, Joseph*

'Gricean Pragmatics and Proverbs in Wole Soyinka's Death and the King's Horseman' – *Farinde, R.O.*

'New Media and the Transformation of Political Cultures in Nigeria: Exploring a Corpus-based Discourse Approach' – *Opeibi, Tunde*

The first paper in Section D is **'Developing Central and Functional Literacy through Literature as a Means of Enhancing Students' Communication Competence'** written by Nonye Ikonta and Israel Anemeje. The paper presents a strategic view of the teaching- learning interface in pursuit of the critical literacy agenda. It is exciting to note that

an integrated approach to language learning, in which literature is fully incorporated, enhances the communicative competence of learners. This result is at the heart of the transformation of the society through purposeful language education. The submissions and provisions of this paper are reinforced by the immediate succeeding essay by Anthonia Maduekwe entitled **‘The Sustainability Challenge: Taking the Nigerian Integrated English Studies Programme to the Next Level in the 21st Century.’** This paper is a timely call to ensure that the gains of the integrated English innovation are maximized for the desired national transformation.

The third paper in this section by Victoria Alabi deserves special mention. It is a very creative entry which discusses the implications of climate change for the vocabulary of English. Apart from providing baseline education for even the above-average scholar, the author goes deeper to highlight how climate change would challenge the established idioms and proverbs of English that are eco-dependent. This paper is a serious call for all to strive to preserve the earth, using language as the weapon and bargain. Other papers in this section are:

‘Evaluation of Learning Outcomes: Implications for School Teachers’ – *Ajayi, O. Abiodun*

‘Management and Leadership in the Contemporary University: Strategies for a Rescue Operation’ – *Ijaduola, K.O.*

‘Education and the Challenges of Poor Performance in Key Subjects of the Nigerian Curriculum’ – *Ogunsaju, Segun*

It is interesting to observe that three of these papers are from former colleagues of Professor Awonusi at the Tai Solarin University of Education, where he served as pioneer Vice – Chancellor. These papers discuss issues of leadership and quality assurance in the education sector.

Some Concluding Remarks

I see this publication as a deliberate attempt to complete a cycle of initiation, development and succession in an academic journey. The submissions done by the retired Professors provide the base. The contributions of contemporaries of the honoree emphasize the development while the privilege given some of us protégés signals the

succession. I represent the very first crop of postgraduate students imparted upon by Professor, then Dr. V.O. Awonusi when he returned with the doctorate from the University of London. I see this publication to be the first in the series of Festschriften in honour of a great achiever and an accomplished academic. I see our distinguished Professor contending with Jagdish Bhagwati over who would have the greatest number of Festschriften in their life time.

In line with the thesis statement of this review regarding the quality, I draw from the central conditions of adequacy for a credible Festschrift given by the great philosopher, Alan Soble of Drexel University. These conditions relate to spread, depth, finesse and editorial quantity. I would like to return a verdict of an excellent quality. The selection of articles is purposeful; the depth of analysis is adequate and the editorial packaging is of a very high standard. The choice of Professors Tope Omoniyi of the University of Roehampton and Munzali Jibril, former Executive Secretary of the National Universities Commission to respectively advise the editorial board and write the foreword is validating.

It is indeed to me a rare privilege and honour to be able to present you this Festschrift of Festschriften in honour of a leader, technocrat mentor, teacher, an administrator, and an accomplished academic, Professor Victor Olusegun Awonusi.

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