PIMPINAA: AN ANALYSIS OF GHANAIAN CHILDREN'S PLAY-SONGS AS A
GENRE OF AFRICAN ORAL LITERATURE

by

ERNEST NKRUMAH ADDO

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements for the
Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In the subject of

LANGUAGES, LINGUISTICS AND LITERATURE (ENGLISH)

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR ZODWA T. MOTSA

FEBRUARY 2022

DECLARATION

Name: ERNEST NKRUMAH ADDO

Student number: 55746403

Degree: DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN LANGUAGES, LINGUISTICS AND

                  LITERATURE (ENGLISH)

PIMPINAA: AN ANALYSIS OF GHANAIAN CHILDREN'S PLAY-SONGS AS A GENRE
OF AFRICAN ORAL LITERATURE

I declare that the above thesis is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted
have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the thesis to originality checking software and that it falls within
the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at
Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

_____   _____February 17, 2022_____

            SIGNATURE   DATE

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to:

My children: Nana Kojo Addo, Papa Yaw Nkrumah Addo, Kweku Danquah Addo, Adjoa Kwatemaa Addo and Adjoa Ansomaa Addo. Thank you for your prayers and for enduring long periods of time when daddy was busy and not in a fun mood.

My wife: Evelyn Ampomah Addo. For your love, forbearance and encouragement.

My late father: John Asare Addo. Thank you for the parental guidance and for going with me to the research site to collect data. Unfortunately, you did not live to see the end of this great work. I am grateful for the motivation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH OVERVIEW

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH

METHODOLOGY

SUMMARY

Children's play-songs are one of the many ways that children employ their creative abilities to express their views about the world. The study analyses a selection of children's play-songs with a view to unravelling the indigenous knowledge systems and philosophies encapsulated in the songs, as well as investigating the stylistic resources, including multimodal elements that make up the oral performances of the children. Though the research is interdisciplinary in nature, its focus is primarily a literary investigation with specific interest in the themes and the oral poetic aesthetics in the play-songs. Adopting Goldstein's "induced natural" context enables the creation of an oral performance that is the closest scenario to a natural performance which was subsequently recorded. The primary data constitutes live video-recorded performances of children's play-songs in their school setting. These songs, collected in direct contact with the children, have been analysed for their thematic and stylistic contents. Other data sources comprise references to play-songs in books, theses, newspapers, the internet, archived audio, and video clips of children's play-songs, which have provided contextual background for the historical evolution of Ghanaian children's play-songs. Employing the decolonial lens which privileges the views of the children as frame, the study affirms the children's contribution towards preserving the African epistemology by exploring a plethora of themes reflecting African indigenous knowledge systems and philosophies. In exploring the oral aesthetics that complements the themes, elements of multimodality and all the stylistic features of orality as maintained by Okpewho, as being key features of African orature, are found to be present in their songs. This validates the thesis hypothesis that the children's lore deserves to be repositioned as a key aspect of the genre of oral literature and therefore a window into the indigenous knowledges of the African hitherto lesser discussed in mainstream epistemology in education.

LIST OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH OVERVIEW

"Knowledge of other cultures and eras depends on the cultures and eras doing the knowing."

~James Boon

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Oral lore, with respect to children, is not just games of play and children's pastimes; it can embody a people's way of life and their worldview. This is primarily the reason why scholars and researchers on children's play, including Bill (1990), Vygotsky (2004), and Lew and Campbell (2005), hold the view that children's play represents an avenue for children's creative expression. During play, children may engage in a number of activities such as song compositions, story-telling, role playing, dancing and singing. Lew and Campbell (2005: 57-58), poignantly observe that children are able to "develop their own repertoires of songs that are influenced by, but separate from, the surrounding adult world."

We may recall that children's own worlds are filled with the narratives they hear and those they tell; narratives that represent experience as they know it to be, and those that represent experience as they would like it to be (Ahn & Filipenko, 2007). For instance, in Ghana, children's experiences and the understanding of their world can be observed during the performances of these children-centred play-songs. One of these is the popular call and response

play-song, '*Pimpinaa*'[1], a word which is borne by the title of the research. *Pimpinaa* is a Ghanaian popular children's play-song that is accompanied by rhythmic hand clapping and leg movement. *Pimpinaa*, also usually acts as the stock opening to children's play-songs, after which other songs are sung. One of the children leading the song begins with the call "*Pimpinaa*" which is followed by the rest of the group responding, "*Nanaa*" after which the leader will take his or her turn to sing the rest of the song. Semantically, the term "Pimpinaa" appears to be a meaningless childish creation – a 'nonsense word' as defined by Isidore Okpewho (1992). However, in the context of children's imitation and make-believe scenarios, it seems a corrupt re-enactment of children imitating their grandmother or grandfather as she or he calls them: *Minanaa* (my grandchildren) to which they respond, *Nanaa* (yes, grandmother or yes, grandfather). It should be noted that in African societies, grandparents are not just important caregivers in the extended family system, but also a source of knowledge and history, and the designated storytellers within the family setting (Parenting in Africa Network, 2014; Mtshali, 2015; Schrijner & Smits, 2018). It is therefore fitting that the children would find the likely imitation of a grandparent figure as important to their creative impulse.

These songs can be appreciated through many modes, such as the psychological, theoretical, sociological, pedagogical, ethnological, and literary. The literary approach is best suited to this research because it supports the focus of the current study which is to explore the aesthetic and thematic aspects of the children's oral play-songs, enabling us to better understand their worldview as well as that of the rest of the people they are part of.

---

[1] The detailed explanation of *Pimpinaa* is premised on the fact that the word carries the thematic pillar of the research while it is also necessitated by the popularity of the game that has become common even as far afield as China.

Even though the research is interdisciplinary in nature – merging aspects of music, poetry, drama, anthropology, history, sociology, psychology, linguistics, cultural studies and philosophy – its focus is primarily a literary investigation with specific interest in the themes and the oral poetic aesthetics in the play-songs. Further, in line with Isidore Okpewho's (1992) conception that African orature contains elements such as repetition, imagery, allusion among other structures; the research investigates the application of these oral poetic elements in the transmission of children's play-songs with the ultimate aim to establish whether this genre is, indeed, equal to other genres in function and impact on society.

Finally, children's oral play-songs, like other forms of African folk orature are communally owned with the song authorship usually located beyond any single individual. It is therefore believed that a successful analysis of this genre of children's lore would facilitate the preservation of the African indigenous epistemological systems.

1.2   PROBLEM STATEMENT

Concerning children's literature in Ghana, major academic conversations led by scholars such as Schmidt (1989), Anyidoho (1992), deGraft Hanson (1993) and Komasi (2005), do show some work done on children's written and oral literature, even though in a limited capacity. Where the non-written aspect of children's literature has been examined, a general survey reveals that the focus of their research has been on other aspects of orature and not play-songs in particular. For example, Komasi (2005) partially addresses the gap in studies on children's literature in her work titled, "Oral Tradition and Written Children's Literature in Ghana." However, due to the rather expansive scope of oral literature, Komasi largely focuses on Ewe oral stories and

narratives as a core aspect of oral literature, with only a minimal interest on children's songs which serve as interludes to the tales.

Where conversations have been extended to songs in particular, focus has been on the pedagogical importance of children's play-songs, as evidenced by Addo (1995) in her cultural study, which seeks to prescribe how music ought to be taught in schools. However, there is also the need to consider the more aesthetic aspects of children's oral play-songs and how they inform the indigenous epistemology therein – aspects which have so far not been given the needed attention, thereby creating a lacuna in research.

Considering this gap, this research, therefore, sought to address the paucity of studies on children's oral play-songs by exploring the multimodal elements – aural, tactile, gestures, movement, among others – that are integral to the performance of the songs, and how they contribute to literacy, and particularly, indigenous knowledge systems, which got marginalised by coloniality. Ultimately, the research seeks to make a case that children's play-songs should be recognised as a veritable genre of African oral literature. Furthermore, the current study, offers an opportunity through which Africans can reclaim, appreciate and preserve their indigenous epistemology and poetry presented through the medium of children's play-songs.

To better explore and access the fundamental constitution of the oral play-songs, a multipronged tool of analysis is essential. Hence, multimodality, as a fitting tool for interpreting the data of the research, suggests a variety of modes through which these oral performances are to be analysed to unearth the African philosophies in the themes, as well as the stylistic elements employed in the performance of the songs. This multimodal lens constitutes an important aspect of the study and will subsequently be discussed in some detail under the study's methodology.

1.3   RATIONALE

Debates, on which is more valuable, between the spoken and the written word are as old as the advent of writing. In spite of recent increased attention to the study of oral literature, scholarly interest in the written aspect of literature far supersedes the oral. Indeed, Finnegan (2005a) observes that for many scholars, "the implicit starting point still seems to be that the defining heart of 'literature' lies in 'texts,' prototypically texts in writing; and that this is how and where literature exists" (164). Beyond contesting the view about writing occupying a central spot in literature, this study also demonstrates the importance of the oral, specifically, children's oral performances by focusing on the stylistic elements and thematic issues raised in the play-songs of children. In this light, emphasis is placed on how the study contributes to literacy, with respect to the repositioning of indigenous knowledges, particularly, those erased over time by colonisation. Expanding on the impact of coloniality on the epistemology of the colonised, Finnegan (2003) explains how coloniality delimits a full appreciation of the oral. She concedes that, "the 'oral' expression is multimodal - it may be verbal but is emphatically not *just* verbal; and [the] one reason this has so often been overlooked is the potent western ideology privileging linguistic expression" (*ibid*:10). This study therefore finds it important to analyse other para-linguistic and histrionic modes such as clapping and gestures in oral performances. Thus, this study provides an opportunity to inquire into the nature of children's oral play-songs to unravel not only the African epistemology carried through the vehicle of the themes, but also the stylistic resources, including semiotic modes, used in the realisation of the songs. Extricating and analysing those aesthetic and thematic features that make up their oral performances, the research advances the argument that the children's lore should be recognised as a genre of oral literature.

1.4   HYPOTHESIS

Despite the pervasiveness of play among children in all cultures, not much scholarly attention has been given to the art of the children with regard to their play-songs (Finnegan, 1970; Marsh and Young, 2006; Whitebread, 2012; Duhoe & Otibua, 2020). In view of this, the hypothesis for the research is that children's play-songs are neglected and not taken as a serious, formal genre and yet they carry a philosophy that the adult world can learn from.

As sub-elements under the hypothesis, the research aims to establish how the oral performances relate to indigenous knowledge philosophies and world view, establish the symbiotic power of the child and adult world in Africa and analyse the style and themes of children's play songs to show how they constitute a distinct genre of African oral literature. Additionally, it seeks to unravel the natal forms of knowledge and philosophies in the play songs, identify features typifying the performances as a genre of African oral literature, investigate the play songs as tools in learning tasks and education stylistic features, and finally investigate the efficacy of the genre as a tool of decolonization.

To investigate the hypothesis, the assumption is further parsed in the ensuing research questions.

1.4   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research question of the study is "how does the nature of oral play-songs make it an authentic genre of African oral literature?" The specific research questions are:

1. What traditional knowledge systems and philosophies are in children's oral play-songs?

2. What oral stylistic features are employed in the transmission of these songs?

3. How can children's play-songs be re-positioned as a fully-fledged genre?

4. To what extent can children's oral lore reclaim African indigenous knowledge systems affected by coloniality?

1.5 AIMS

The prime concern of this study is to unravel natal forms of knowledge and philosophies embedded in the play songs of Ghanaian children. Second, the study seeks to analyse which stylistic qualities make up the children's play-song compositions with a view to assessing those aspects of style as typifying Ghanaian and African oral poetry. Third, it aims at finding out how these stylistic elements are used in successfully delivering the themes in the songs. Finally, the study aims to demonstrate how the oral play-songs can be used as tool for repositioning indigenous knowledge that has been eroded by colonial education.

1.6 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

The general corpus of research in African Orature is on adults. To my knowledge very little has been done toward exploring children orature as part of the gamut of this genre in Ghana, this as if to indicate, albeit mutely, that the voice of the child does not quite matter. It is our pivotal belief that the children have a specific position and can contribute substantially to human life in

general. In the proverb, *lati ọdọ ọmọde ni ọkunrin kan ti ndagba* - which means, 'it is from a child that a man grows', the Yoruba of Nigeria echo the world view that supports this research's hypothesis about the symbiotic power of the child and the adult in Africa. This view is uncommon in research, which seems to always adopt a linear stance that places the child below the adult in the value-chain of knowledge production. Focusing on Ghana therefore, this study seeks to fill this lacuna in African Literature, since it centres on the analysis of style and how such complements themes encapsulating indigenous knowledges that are found in children's play-songs. This study therefore contributes to research in ways such as outlined below.

First, the study serves as a unique contribution to research on African children's oral literature, thus adding to the body of knowledge in African indigenous and primordial knowledge systems. Studies on children's oral art-forms are scanty but a study of the stylistic features of Ghanaian children play-songs as constituting oral literature is certainly a first.

Second, the themes uncovered in the children's songs were studied for their representation of children's voices that mirror various aspects of Ghanaian life such as the family, economic, religious, political, cultural and educational domains. The snapshots of aspects of life captured in the play-songs served not only as a measure of children's views of happenings around them, but also affirmed their human role in the contribution to the epistemological rebuilding of Africa's social identity post the colonial era.

The third contribution of this research is the explicit demonstration of children's knowledge and use of oral structures including imagery and repetition – structures that Okpewho (1992) identified – as some of the paramount features of oral literature. It is possible that other stylistic features not documented or analysed by scholars as a characteristic of oral literature could

altogether emerge from the study. Finally, it is hoped that the study shall contribute toward orature analysis theory, by demonstrating how the resources used in the realisation of the children's oral play-songs performances promotes literacy with respect to African indigenous knowledges.

1.7   SCOPE AND DELIMITATION

This study analyses the stylistic devices and thematic issues found in the oral play-songs of children with the aim to establish the worldview (seen through the eyes of children) embedded in these songs. It is therefore necessarily limited to songs that are oral, communally-owned and therefore belonging to no single child. Formal, written songs for children, such as western influenced nursery rhymes, were not considered for analysis.

The songs were collected at school; even though it is also a fact that children sing at other places such as on the school bus, at the playgrounds, during sports festivities or any location where they feel comfortable to engage in such an activity. The reason for the choice of school as the location where the songs were collected is that, it is where one can find the majority of Ghanaian children aged between 6 and 12 for the most part of the day, studying.

Belonging to the Kwa branch of the Niger-Congo language family, Akan, which is also the largest ethnic group comprising 47.5% of Ghana's population (Ghana Statistical Service, 2013), is the local language widely spoken by people in Ghana. English remains the official language and medium of instruction used in schools, a legacy of colonial Ghana. Thus, in post-colonial Ghana, English and Akan are languages understood and shared by most school children, serving

as media of communication for them, as well as the languages in which their songs which carry indigenous knowledges and philosophies, are sung.

Using the literary lens, the study subsequently collected songs in these two languages they were sung namely, English and Akan. The Akan songs, which were the main interest of the study, were also translated into English for the analysis.

1.8 DEFINITION OF TERMS

It is important to provide a definition of the following terms that are used in this research: creative expression, cultural technologies, decoloniality, domestication of the English language, epistemicide, Pimpinaa, oral performance, orature, kinesics and language-in-education policy.

1.8.1 *Creative expression*

As used in the research, it refers to the various ways the children utilize their creativity to (re)create artforms that speak to their experiences and imagination.

1.8.2 *Cultural technologies*

First defined by Kress (2015), cultural technologies in the context of the research constitute all the tools and material resources available to the children which they appropriate for their play-performances. These include musical instruments and all the resources such as sticks, personal effects like footwear or any item the children can appropriate as a tool that aid the children to realise their play.

1.8.3 *Decoloniality*

Decoloniality operates on the premise that there are vestiges of colonization that have remained after colonization, that continue to subsume indigenous culture and epistemology, while shaping the thoughts and actions of the former colonial subjects. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) states that the effect of this (coloniality) on the colonial subjects makes them admire that which is of and from Europe while looking down on anything African. Decoloniality in the context of the current research refers to the notion of unveiling and undoing all such matrices and influences and ultimately returning the indigenous to the centre.

1.8.4 *Epistemicide*

Patin et al. define epistemicide as "the killing, silencing, annihilation, or devaluing of a knowledge system (Patin et al., 2021). In the context of the research, epistemicide refers to the extinction of indigenous forms of knowledge due to these forms of knowledge being subsumed by western knowledge systems.

1.8.5 *Domestication of English language*

This refers to appropriating the English language by infusing elements of African language and culture with the aim of making the language product relevant to the local context.

1.8.6 *Pimpinaa*

A popular Ghanaian "call and response" play-song. It is a child-like creation, an incoherent term that appears to imitate a call by a grandparent, followed by a response by grandchildren.

1.8.7 *Oral performance*

For the purpose of the current research, this refers to the presentation or the enactment of the children's songs. The realization of the performance of the oral song include singing, audience participation and reactions and all the resources at the disposal of the children to enable the performance.

1.8.8. *Orature*

The term was first coined in the 1970s by the Ugandan linguist Pio Zirimu (Kabore, 2014) to imply oral texts. As used in the thesis, it refers to all texts that are spoken to the exclusion of the written.

1.8.9 *Kinesics*:

Relating to movement of the body and its function as a carrier of meaning in the communication of a message.

1.8.10 *Language-in-education policy*

Ghana's education policy that designates English as the language of instruction at the lower primary school level. Owu-Ewie (2006) in his "The language policy of education in Ghana: a critical look at the English-only language policy of education" explores the impact of the policy on education. This has implications for the children's play-songs.

1.9   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In a research like this, especially one involving children as participants, ethical considerations are crucial. Proper steps and procedures of ethical clearance were undertaken with the permission of the institutional review board acting in accordance with the university's research policy before the research was conducted.

Informed Consent

In accordance with the University of South Africa's research ethics' protocols[2], the children, class teachers and heads of their schools were informed about the research, so they had a clear understanding of the research to be conducted. The consent of the heads of schools was sought as well as the consent of the children themselves. The children's own consent was important so that they could be willing participants in the research.

Confidentiality

The identities of the children involved in the study was kept confidential so that they were not identifiable in the publication and dissemination of the findings. Much of the information were public material or songs shared by the community.

---

[2] The University of South Africa has a Research Ethics Committee that requires research that involves human subjects to first pass the ethics clearance process prior to such research being done. See Appendices B and C.

Compensation

Since the research involved minors who were already in school, they were not paid for their involvement. They were however acknowledged as a group at the end of the research.

Possibility of Harm

I did not expect any harm or injuries to the children. The actual play situations were not rigorous or stringent to the point of injury. However, I had available a first-aid kit and had the school authorities on stand-by to support the children in the event that there was any unforeseen injury.

1.10   CHAPTER OUTLINE

This research is presented in five chapters in the following format. Titled, **Introduction and Research Overview**, Chapter One presents an introduction to the study, the background and problem statement, rationale, hypothesis, research questions, aims of the study, contribution of the study, scope and delimitation, ethical considerations, and the organisation of the study. This chapter contextualises the thesis by providing a clear foundation and structure upon which the research is conducted.

The second chapter provides the details of the **Theoretical Framework** and the **Research Methodology**. The chapter discusses the theory and the research approach underpinning the study. For the theoretical framework, it considers multimodality as a useful approach to advance the study. The research method used in this study is participant observation and, as informed by

the conceptual model, we especially consider the method of analysis suggested by Finnegan (1970; 2005b), Okpewho (1992) and others which adequately analyses the data, bringing out all stylistic features that make up oral literature, as well as the thematic concerns embodied in the play-songs.

Chapter Three is the **Review of Literature**. This chapter discusses the existing body of literature on social organisation of children, theories on literary analysis and creativity, and play. Due to the cross-disciplinary nature of this research, it reviews literature on folkloric music, specifically, the poetics in the oral songs to extract the literary quality of the songs as poems, and the psychoanalytical approach to shed light on the concept of children's play and creativity in order to provide background for the study. It also dwells on a sustained discussion of the characteristics of oral poetry (literature) and examines and links the presence of those characteristics in the play-songs which are analysed from a literary point of view. Furthermore, the chapter reviews literature on decoloniality and situates the children's experiences, including their musical cultures, within this concept. Above all, these reviews establish the gap for which this study is conducted.

The **Analysis of Data** is done in Chapter Four. This section comprises the presentation of the characteristics of the location, including the subjects and their schools, and an analysis of the songs. The analysis involves an extraction of the literary quality of the songs to be appreciated as poems. The thematic and stylistic analysis of the songs is done by identifying, interpreting and synthesising the stylistic features of the songs as well as the thematic issues, and highlighting indigenous knowledge systems and philosophies. The study adopts Multimodality Theory and finds appropriate Isidore Okpewho's recommendation that the analysis of the stylistic qualities of

African oral literature is best attained through an analysis of repetition, tonality, ideophones, imagery, allusion, and symbolism. It also adopts decoloniality as a lens to unravel the indigenous knowledge systems summed up in the children's play-songs. The chapter ends with a reflection on African lore and the global community.

Chapter Five is the **Conclusion** of the research. As it is the last chapter, it presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations. The study broke new grounds concerning filling the research gap in terms of recognising children as accomplished oral poets and categorising Ghanaian children's play-songs as being a significant part of the corpus of African oral literature.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

"If a child can't learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn."

~ Ignacio Estrada

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This section examines the foundational theoretical orientation that underpins the study. A theory is a "generalised statement of abstractions or ideas that asserts, explains or predicts relationships or connections between or among phenomena, within the limits of critical bounding assumptions…" (Gabriel, 2008, cited in Kivunja, 2018: 45). It explains concepts based on principles that are outside of what is being explained. Thus, a theoretical model, a framework that can support the research's theory (Swanson, 2013: 122) is required to situate and guide the study.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The current research investigates a product of children's musical cultures – the oral play-songs. Unlike literacy that predominantly dwells on the linguistic mode of communication, orality embodies complex, multiple modes of meaning-making. Hence, the choice of multimodality which the thesis embraces as the theoretical framework, was warranted.

2.2.1 *The Multimodality Theory*

Kress & Van Leeuwen (2001) define multimodality as "the use of several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event, in addition to the particular way in which these modes are combined" (20). This reflects the view that in the meaning-making process, there is an active interaction between and among different modes of communication. To be clear, inherent in any text are the presence of other modes that contribute to making meaning in communication. Indeed, the New London Group (1996) whose ground-breaking studies on "multiliteracies" which was based on the application of multimodality, emphasise that "all meaning-making is multimodal" (80). This view is supported by Gualberto *et al.* (2020) who contend that there is no such thing as "monomodal texts". This is because a text that appears to be only verbal presents other modes of writing such as font type and colour, the organisation or layout of the text, which all contribute to the particular intended meaning (Gualberto *et al.*, 2020). Broadly categorised, five modes of meaning making: textual, linguistic, visual, gestural, aural and spatial are outlined (New London Group, 1996; Iyer, 2007; Rowsell & Walsh, 2011; Gualberto, 2020). Multimodality emerged out of the desire to study communication in its integrated form and not by any single mode or representation such as auditory, verbal or visual (Fedorenko *et al.*, 2021).

Fedorenko *et al.* (2021) summarise the two principles of multimodality as follows: that first, "multimodality assumes that the representation and content of an utterance is always based on the interaction of modes, which, in turn, is a set of resources from several sign systems, and not limited to purely linguistic signs." The second principle they state is that "multimodality implies the existence of certain extralinguistic resources to achieve the communication goal." In the children's artform, we encounter the ways in which various communicative modes interact with

one another leading to the full realisation of the oral performance. Agreeing with Fedorenko and others, the research, thus, adopted multimodality as frame, founded on the assumption that these myriad of modes of communication find expression in the African children's oral play-song performances which constituted the text.

According to the linguist Marcuschi, the concept of text goes beyond just language (Marcushi, 2008). He insists that it includes interconnected elements of culture and mental processing, a view subscribed to by the current research. Affirming Marcushi's position, Haliday and Hasan (2002) contend that outside the domain of language, one can still make meaning through the exploration of texts – any form from which meaning can be adduced; it is not limited to language. They stress the multimodal characteristic of texts in communication and define texts as "language that is functional." They state: "by functional, we simply mean that is doing some job in some context." (Halliday & Hassan, 2002). In other words, any idea, object or material that is appropriated for the function of communication can be classified as text. Likewise, in the presentation of play-songs, we find that, aside from language, there are other resources that add to the realisation of the oral performance, and these, in performing a language function, constitute the text or data for the research. Some of these resources are non-verbal cues that add to the communication. Others are materials that the children rely on for their performances, what Kress (2015) describes as "cultural technologies." Thus, the totality and complexity of the children's art make multimodality, which assumes the distribution of a message through different modes of communication (Fedorenko, 2021), appropriate as a frame providing the theoretical underpinning for the research. Conversely, this means that an exploration of a single mode of communication constitutes only a partial aspect of the global meaning of a message (Jewitt and Kress, 2003). While the multimodal approach explores many other modes of meaning making

and not just language, it does not rule out the fact that language often plays a dominant role in communication.

In respect of orality, some studies have been conducted to ascertain how multimodality manifest in academic conference proceedings. They showed that speakers often employ a combination of paralinguistic, kinesic and linguistic modes to achieve their communication objective (Ruiz-Madrid and Valeiras-Jurado, 2020). Rendle-Short identifies gestures and intonation among others as some of the means by which presenters connect with their audiences (Rendle-Short, 2006). Similarly, Tapio (2019) reports that gestures and sign are integral to fulfilling communication objectives among sign language community. These elements work in combination with each other to effectively communicate the meaning intended by the speaker in the presentation. Accordingly, the approach is found to be meaningful when applied to the oral play-songs of children by exploring the various modes inherent in the compositions and how such complement the oral performances.

Multimodality as both theoretical framework and methodology has been explored across several other disciplines. Fedorenko *et al.* (2021) in a study observed that linguists and sociolinguists (Bateman (2018), Dressman (2019), Fulwiler, and Middleton (2012), Kasch (2018), Kress (2003), Labov, and Waletzky (1966), and others have explored the use of multimodality in their field. Similarly, Philosophers (like Keeley (2002), Matthen (2005), Prior (2009), and others), psychologists (Gibson and Larson (2007), and others), and sociologists (Bergmann and Luckmann (1995), Hoffman (2010), Hall (2003), and others) have assessed multimodality and offered a theoretical and methodological basis for studies on the approach. In light of the foregoing, the research accordingly focuses on multimodality as a theoretical framework. In

considering the approach's constitutive make-up and its function of similarly straddling the interdisciplinary nature of research on children's oral play-songs, its application in the context of the current research is deemed appropriate.

2.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section presents the techniques and research strategies employed in data gathering and analysis. This follows the satisfaction of the requirements of the institutional review for ethical clearance to embark on the research. The chapter defines the nature, scope and delimitations of the research design. It therefore examines the methods and procedures used to collect and analyse the data.

In line with the purpose of the current research, the primary data constitutes live video-recorded performances of children's play-songs in their school setting. Collected in direct contact with the children, these songs, have been analysed for their thematic and stylistic contents. Other data sources comprise references to play-songs in books, theses, newspapers, the internet, archived audio and video clips of children's play-songs, which have provided contextual background for the historical evolution of Ghanaian children's play-songs.

Assuming a primarily qualitative approach, this research focuses on oral poetic elements of play-songs sung mainly in the Akan language and translated in English for the analysis. This method is particularly appropriate here and was subsequently adopted because a thorough understanding of the children's emotive and psycho-social experience being investigated were required. The

qualitative method also gives room for the discovery of emerging themes and patterns of knowledge.

It must be emphasised that in the qualitative approach, participant meanings are collected, there is a focus on a single concept or phenomenon, personal values are imbibed, context and setting of participants are studied, accuracy of findings are validated, data is interpreted, and there is collaboration with the participants (Creswell, 2013). The current research adopted these practices as postulated by Creswell.

2.3.1   *Case Study as a Research Method*

The design for the research is a case study. This choice was due to the fact that it allows for the identification of the appropriate research participants with the characteristics sought for the research, such as prevalence of play-song and game activities, age and the Akan language. As correctly observed by Abarry (1989), the idea of "child" in Ghana is conterminous with a school population. In order to provide a comparative empirical analysis, the research population was therefore drawn from two primary schools with pupils of mixed gender (a lower primary with ages averagely ranging from 6-9 years, and an upper primary with ages averagely ranging from 10-12 years) situated in two different towns located in the Central Region of Ghana, and it is these schools that were selected as case study sites, and engaged over a period of four months (September to December 2020) for the collection of the data. The two selected towns, Ajumako-Bisease and Komenda, from which the schools are situated, were chosen to be representative of the hinterlands of Ghana and the coastal settlements, the aim of which was to help the study to achieve a generalising conclusion. Subsequently, the purposive sampling method is favoured to

choose the schools for the study, because the method's non-probability effect allows for emphasis to be placed on selecting only the schools that have the characteristics most suited to this type of study.

Additionally, the choice of the Central Region for this research is informed by the fact that this is where I have had a first-hand encounter and appreciation of authentic indigenous children's play-songs in the region's predominantly spoken language, Fante. In addition to Ashanti Twi and Akuapem Twi being the two other formal dialects, Fante is the third of the three major dialects of the Akan language (Agyekum, 2006), and it is one that I as an indigene can read and write with competence, as well as translate into English. Notwithstanding one's own proficiency in the indigenous language, the English translations, as well as renderings of the songs in Akan, will still be validated by the appropriate language experts in Ghana.

Regarding the choice of Akan as source language for analysis, Fromkin & Rodman (1983) and Motsa (2017), insist that there are no 'primitive' languages, that any human language is equally complex and is proficient in conveying any concept or idea. Motsa contends that the notion that "only English is capable of expressing thought and theory is false [and]… is a calculated agenda towards the execution of linguicide in the colonial spaces…" (Motsa, 2017: 31). The argument that Motsa makes for African languages can be applied to other African knowledges in post-colonial Africa. Indeed, Chawane agrees with Motsa's position and confirms the colonial agenda in the advancement of the epistemicide of African language. He asserts:

> Colonisation of the mind could not succeed without taking away the language and names of the ruled and replacing them with those of the ruler. Among the conditions of colonialism and slavery was that the colonised was to speak, if they were allowed to do so publicly, in the language and through the theoretical agenda of the

coloniser and thereby validating the coloniser's intellectual conception of the world. In this process of speaking publicly, the colonised were expected to flatter their masters and simultaneously denigrate their African cultural traditions (Chawane, 2016: 89).

In like manner, the current research aims to reverse the systematic eroding of the indigenous epistemologies of Africa by exploring and repositioning Akan as a carrier of meritorious thought and concept just as does the English. Indeed, whilst arguing for the revival of the indigenous languages, this thesis is not calling for the linguicide of the colonial language, nor epistemicide of the knowledge system of the global north, but rather the repositioning of Africa's own elided knowledge systems for equity and parity of esteem for all valid knowledges. As we are reminded by Dei "assertions of African indigeneity are not about creating binaries of knowledge: Indigenous knowledge as good and Western knowledge as bad" (Dei, 2018: 132). It should be kept in mind that African indigeneity does not mean that there "exists an exclusive and distinctive African traditional culture or a homogenous African cultural universe" (Zeleza, 2006: 19; cited in Dei, 2018:132).

It is therefore the contention of the researcher that side by side, the two languages are of equal merit and are both capable of conceptualising and expressing the worldviews of the people who use them. Building on Motsa and Chawane's views, this study goes a step further and engages children's play-songs, a lesser studied field, as a source of African ancient wisdom and knowledge base.

The play-songs for analysis are drawn from Ghana's Central Region. The Central Region of Ghana is one of the country's 16 administrative regions. It is bordered by the Western region to the west, Greater Accra region to the East, Ashanti and Eastern regions to the north, and the

Atlantic Ocean to the south. According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, it has a population of about 2,201,863 (Ghana Statistical Service, 2013) and is the third smallest region with an area of 9,826 square kilometres – larger than Greater Accra and Upper West regions as the map reflects below.

[3] Fig. 1: Sixteen (16) Administrative Regions of Ghana

---

[3] Source: GhanaWeb.com/Ghana Map

According to Zaidah Zainal (2007), the case study approach helps us to understand the behavioural conditions through the actor's perspective. In agreement, the current study situated itself within the parameters of the definition of the case study research method by Yin (1984:23), as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and contest are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used."

In terms of category, the study also adopted McDonough and McDonough's interpretive case study, which enables the researcher, "to interpret the data by developing conceptual categories, supporting or challenging the assumptions made regarding them." (1997). In this mode therefore, the current study has purposefully employed the interpretative case study method to unravel the various themes as well the style in the children's play-songs.

2.3.2 Categories of 'Natural', 'Artificial', and 'Induced Natural' Contexts

For a research of this nature, it was important to assess the kind of setting in which the research data would be collected and to ground it within a theoretical orientation. In his *Guide for Field Workers in Folklore*, Kenneth Goldstein (1964) proposed three categories, which can be examined.

According to Goldstein, there is low research occurrence conducted in the 'natural' context – a setting in which the participants are unaware that a researcher is present (cited in Finnegan, 2005b: 72). This is a view that resonates with this research because mainly due to ethical

considerations, participants were informed about plans to record their play performance. Unfortunately, due to this fore-knowledge, it proved impossible for the performers not to betray an awareness that they are being watched or recorded. Consequently, the research could not adopt Goldstein's 'natural' context. Goldstein's 'artificial' category involves a simulation or re-enactment of a performance outside of its 'natural' setting or context. While the advantage of the 'artificial' context is the fact that the performers can be commissioned to simulate the play-songs, there are many elements involved in the play situation, including the environment, that are missing should this method be adopted for the current research. Consequently, the research, again, did not adopt this context.

Goldstein's third category, the "induced natural" context, is more suitable for the study, hence the choice to use it more fully in the research. This combines elements of both the 'artificial' and the 'natural', that are very important to the current research. It enabled the performance to be created when needed in a 'natural' setting, albeit one that was induced. This was the closest scenario to a natural performance that could be recorded; this category was therefore considered. Consequently, the data collection instrument of participant-observer was employed for this study. Being a participant-observer enabled the commissioning of the research subjects (children) to perform the oral play-songs which were then recorded with the aid of a video recorder and analysed.

Given Ghana's official primary school going age of six years, the participants under study, as earlier indicated, fall between the ages of six and twelve years (covering a period within which pupils complete the 6-year primary school cycle). According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census (Ghana Statistical Service, 2013), Akans are the largest ethnic group, making up about

47.5 percent of Ghana's population. In addition to English, which is the official language of Ghana, Akan (comprising the main dialects of Fante, Akuapem Twi and Asanti Twi) is widely spoken in the south of the country, where the Central Region is located. Because the play-songs are usually sung in English and Akan, songs in English and Akan (specifically in the Fante dialect) were therefore considered for analysis in the study. Please consider the map below.

[4] Fig. 2: Ethnographic map of the Akan language (Fante, Asante Twi and Akuapem Twi) spread.

---

[4] Source: ModernGhana.com/Akan the language of ancients

Seeking to analyse African knowledge in a text, parts of which are cast in English, may cause a sense of wonder and doubt in some critics, as to the authenticity of the said African lore embodied in a non-African language. However, as much as the vehicle of the communication may be English, the content of the play-song is Ghanaian. It was therefore this crafted play-songs content that the research focused on.

Since children played on their own, and in some cases as a group, the project considered for analysis the number of "play situations" that involved children's singing in the field. The research was therefore not concerned about the actual number of children at play, even though the number of children involved in each play situation that the children were commissioned to enact was noted, in each play situation between five (5) and twenty (20) eager participants. According to the children, they composed some of the songs, and also learnt some from the older children at home and in school, confirming the role of oral tradition in passing the oral songs down from one generation to another (Ntšihlele, 2003). It was noticed that as the performance took place some of the children quickly overcame their initial shyness and participated freely despite the gaze of the researcher's camera. Presenting myself as a learner, the children were happy, upon asking, to enunciate words that initially appeared to be unintelligible and explain dramatic situations. Agreeing with Nketia (1974) who affirms the view that the children as creators of "song texts" internalise the values of the culture in which they live and reproduce them in their songs, the research unearthed a number of themes that reflected the worldview of the society.

The oral performances and recordings lasted between one hour, thirty minutes and two hours each session. This took place once in September, twice in October and once in November of

2019. The four (4) play situations or 'meetings', two for each school, provided fifty-nine (59) songs which constituted the data for the study. There was however no opportunity for follow-up personal meetings with the participants due to the closure[5] of schools in March 2020, a situation occasioned by the coronavirus pandemic. Telephone conversations with the teachers who also lived in the communities as the children, and contacted the participants when required, provided useful explanations to questions arising from the data.

2.3.3   *Conceptual Model for the Analysis*

Poetry is one of the oldest genres of literature and has, over time, landed itself to a myriad of analysis ways. What is common in many of these approaches of analysis is that analysts tend to seek to appreciate the poem for its meaning, imagery, the special use of language or word-choice, its voice and tone, its rhyme scheme if it exists and its general structure. These are generally taken as some of the salient features of poetry (McMahan, Day & Funk, 2006; Dressman & Faust, 2014). It is these universal elements of poetry, in addition to others suggested by theorists such as Finnegan and Okpewho, that this study shall examine in the oral poetry of the children's play-song to bring out the embedded meaning that is to be recognised as the indigenous knowledge systems of Africa. The approach in analysis may differ from other analysts' but the focus is generally to establish the generally accepted features of poetry in these play-songs.

Like other forms of oral poetry, play-songs in general are universal art-forms and can therefore be appreciated using universal tools of analysis modelled on a combination of constructs and

---

[5] See: "Covid-19 and school closure: Examining the impact on private mid-range and low-fee private basic schools in Ghana" https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11125-021-09579-1

concepts because an analysis cannot always be confined to a definite Afrocentric tool. A conceptual model regards the researcher's notion of how the research problem should be explored. It is "the total, logical orientation and associations of anything and everything that forms the underlying thinking, structures, plans and practices and implementation" (Kivunja, 2018: 47) of the research. Maxwell adds that it concerns bringing together the research pieces designed into a coherent structure to aid an analysis (Maxwell, 2012:41). Consequently, the conceptual framework, as an analysis tool, embraced an in-depth review of related literature and applied Ruth Finnegan's proposed method of analysis, the multimodality theory and close reading for the study. This was especially important given that the study is interdisciplinary in nature, thus requiring a multipronged tool that supports the multimodality of the theoretical framework. After the data was collected by means of a video recorder, it was then transcribed for onward analysis of its embodied themes and style as purposed by the aim of the study.

2.3.3.1   Finnegan on Oral Analysis

This study primarily took into consideration and adopted Ruth Finnegan's proposed mode of analysis of the text of oral literature. For a poetic analysis of oral play-songs, we found this proposed universal approach appropriate for this research context. Finnegan (1970) outlines the conceptual framework thus:

> [A] full appreciation must depend on an analysis not only of the verbal interplay and overtones in the piece, its stylistic structure and content, but also of the various detailed devices which the performer has at his disposal to convey his product to the audience, and the varying ways these are used by different individuals (Finnegan, 1970: 13).

This method of analysis is comprehensive and appropriate in how it embraced all the features and content that constitute oral literature. The oral elements identified in the play-songs lent themselves to literary analysis. Applying Finnegan's model, the prime actants in the performances, namely performer, audience, stylistic structure and content, and all the devices the performers had at their disposal to successfully deliver their message, were analysed in the light of children's oral play-songs.

2.3.3.2 Multimodality as Tools of Analysis

The analysis of the literary art evinces more of the object of analysis through an employment of more than one tool of examination. It is in for this reason that in this research, Finnegan's earlier analysis model is complemented by an application of an akin theory, the multimodality theory. Kress & Van Leeuwen (2001) define multimodality as "the use of several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event, in addition to the particular way in which these modes are combined" (20).

First intimated by Finnegan in the 1970s and succinctly articulated by Jewitt (1998), Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) and Gualberto *et al*. (2020) decades later, multimodality proffers the ideal tool with which to explore the play-songs for meaning. The study therefore adopts multimodality as a method to analyse the resources with which these songs performances were achieved.

This multipronged approach, which was used to analyse the children's song performances, emphasises the interdisciplinary nature of the study, and it points out definitively that understanding a phenomenon cannot be attained through a singular linear vantage point, like only through language, but via a multitude of modes. Ruth Finnegan affirms the viewpoint of

the New London Group and specifically situates her argument within the context of oral communication, noting that, "oral communication is not just verbal, but multiplex-multimodal, multimedia" (Finnegan, 2002: 11). She makes a case about the multimodal dimension of oral performances, an approach this study adopts.

Finnegan advances the notion that there is a multiplex range of verbal and other auditory features of performance on the one hand, and also non-auditory resources such as visual, material props, touch, spatial and temporal dimensions, and the proxemics on the other hand (Finnegan, 2005a: 170-171). All these resources constituted the oral play-songs and were appreciated as core aspects that led to the realisation of the oral performance. The study considers the auditory and non-auditory devices that make up oral performances as being in tandem with Finnegan's call that all detailed devices be analysed in order to realise a full appreciation of the oral production.

2.3.3.3 Elements of African Orality

Confirming Finnegan's point on approaching oral lore, Okpewho (1992) recommends that the analysis of the stylistic qualities of African oral literature can be best attained through: repetition, tonality, ideophones, imagery, allusion, and symbolism. At a technical level of analysis, Okpewho's advice has been fitting and useful in this research. These features outlined above are explored with the goal of determining how they help to bring out the themes, such as love: family, education, and relationships, which are concerns in the play-songs of children.

2.3.3.4 A Decolonial Reading

What Finnegan and Okpewho assist us to do is that they severally provide the tools with which to explore the literature at our disposal. They offer the basic instruments for conducting a study such as we have at hand. The decolonial ideological framework lays the overall perspective or lens that envelopes the practical strategies of analysis given by Finnegan *et al*. The dominance of the western knowledge system through formal colonialism and informal coloniality resulted in the debasement and threat of epistemicide of the African indigenous knowledge systems. In this vein, the African epistemologies were relegated to the background, while privileging western posturing of epistemic diversity and the claim on its knowledge system as being scientific, universal and monolithic (Musila 2017). As defined by Nabudere, African decolonisation consists of the reclamation of African voices through recognition of heritage and knowledge systems brought about by oral tradition (cited in Dastile, 2013: 94) of which play-songs belong. Decoloniality is, in essence, the ideological outlook which unmasks the over-privileging of western theories and makes central African views and theories. It is in this context that the research is positioned in the decoloniality perspective within which the various affirmations from the mentioned theorists are located.

The research data subsequently is thus analysed through the decolonial perspective as an overarching frame. Specifically, the approach was to use the theory as a filter in order to bring out the songs authored by children themselves, as opposed to play-songs that were composed by adults for children. Through the decolonial lens, children's voices that had traditionally been de-emphasised, are emphasised and made central to the discourse of serious scholarship because they are believed to embody valuable knowledge. Mignolo (2009) identifies knowledge as the point of origin of the decolonial process, stating: "we know that we have to decolonize being,

and to do so we have to start by decolonizing knowledge" (13). The present study therefore espouses Mignolo's recommendation and applies it on the context of children's play-songs with a focus on the nature and the manner in which these children's 'epistemic awakening' is gleaned from their songs. The act of placing children's own compositions in the centre of scholarly epistemology derives from the intent to negate the colonial packing order of the powers of social structures entrenched in such ideologies as "the great chain of being", within which children are subaltern to the older human beings; the women and the men. Echoing Mignolo and other decolonial proponents, Foucault (1980) prescribes speaking to the exigency of the ignored subaltern – as is the case of the silenced children's indigenous knowledges – thus: "to make visible the unseen [means] a change of level, addressing oneself to a layer of material which had hitherto had no pertinence for history and which had not been recognized as having any moral, aesthetic or historical value."

Therefore, abrogating this colonial construct and centralising the children's voice as a worthy carrier of human knowledge is typically the key argument of this research and which will be investigated for such. More so, expected to emerge from the analysis is a validation of the theoretical assumption that the children's oral play-songs encompass all the ingredients of African orature and thus can be marked as a veritable starting point in the production of oral literature and the musical cultures of a society.

2.4 SUMMARY

Before delving into the analysis of the songs which constitute the data, it is important to recap, briefly, the key points discussed thus far and how they propel the forthcoming analyses. The foregoing chapter examined the methods and procedures used in the collection of the play-songs. Using a video recorder, 59 songs were recorded from the oral performances that the researcher had commissioned among primary school children from two selected schools in Ghana's Central Region. These songs will be investigated in the analysis chapter.

The thesis proposes to assess the indigenous philosophies and knowledge systems distilled in the themes through the decolonial lens. To achieve this, the decolonial approach is favoured because it allows for the centralising of the children's view that had hitherto been marginalised and not given equal attention as those by the adult counterparts. The multimodal elements and Okpewho's (1992) prescription of the constitution of African orature will also be analysed to examine the style employed by the children. The analysis of the thematic concerns and semiotic resources makes a case about Ghanaian children's play-songs belonging to the corpus of African oral literature. Preceding the analysis, however, is a review of relevant multifarious literature drawn from diverse disciplines – emphasising the interdisciplinary nature of the thesis, albeit one that is literary in focus. The objective of the review is to establish the foundation upon which the research is conducted and to determine the gap for the study.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

''It is possible to get the past right.''

~ Paul Landau.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

A review of the relevant literature is important in research such as the current one. It shows what works other scholars have done in relation to the research area. According to Fink (2014), the literature review fosters the evaluation, description, and summary of all literature, including books, articles and other texts related to the study. In like manner, the current study analyses extant literature for the purpose of establishing the foundation for the research, as well as ascertaining the lacuna in the research.

A literature review can be organised in terms of chronological, theoretical, methodological or thematic approaches. It can also be organised from Global Northern (western) to Global Southern (African); seminal works or pivotal publications to more generic scholarships. The style of a literature review often depends on the nature of the research as well as the objective of the researcher. Given that the current study is interdisciplinary – straddling multifarious disciplines – but with a literary focus, an eclectic theme-based approach is favoured in the organization of the review of the literature to establish a point of convergence of the various subjects and to serve as foundation for the study. In addition, while determining the gap, the

review will also uphold the argument that children's play-songs are worthy genres of their own. Specifically, the current research draws from orature, drama, history, psychology, anthropology, sociology, philosophy, music, linguistics, and cultural studies.

3.2 A REVIEW OF CROSS DISCIPLINARY LITERATURE

3.2.1 *The orality versus literacy debate*

In recent times, there has been a major drift in interest toward the written aspect of literature and subsequently, to the increasing neglect of its oral counterpart. Indeed, Finnegan (2005a) observes that for many scholars, "the implicit starting point still seems to be that the defining heart of "literature" lies in "texts," prototypically texts in writing; and that this is how and where literature exists (164)." This situation has contributed to many western scholars erroneously labelling literacy or the written form, as superior to the oral form. One of the leading African scholars of the 20th and 21st Century, Abiola Irele seeks to clear this misconception in his criticism of what he rightly considers a western agenda to:

> … reverse the Saussurian order of precedence in which writing serves as a secondary medium lending material support to oral speech and to affirm rather the effective primacy of writing for communicative and cognitive functions. Thus[,] the values of orality are being more and more discounted, when they are not being actively deprecated, in favour of what is held to be the superiority of literacy, its greater adequacy in organizing human experience (Irele, 2007: 75).

Fundamentally, Irele describes the coloniality agenda to inferiorise the colonised's oral epistemology. Relegated in this manner, it may seem as though oral literature has little or no importance.

Ursula Le Guin in a collection of essays and talks titled *Dancing at the Edge of the World* (1989) protests:

> Why have we replaced oral text with written? Isn't there room for both? Spoken text doesn't even take storage room, it's self-recycling and does not require wood pulp. Why have we abandoned and despised the interesting things that happen when the word behaves like music and the author is not just ''a writer'' but the player of the instrument of language …? (184).

On the contrary, orality has been important and even crucial in the past and relevant still in contemporary times. Liz Gunner, for example, explores the colonial inferiorisation schema and explains the significance – past and present – of orality thus:

> Orality needs to be seen in the African context as the means by which societies of varying complexity regulated themselves, organized their present and their pasts, made formal space for philosophical reflections, pronounced on power, questioned and in some cases contested power, and generally, paid homage to "the word," language, as a means by which Africa made its existence, its history long before the colonial and imperial presence of the west manifested itself (Gunner, 2007: 67).

The functions outlined above are indicative of the crucial nature of the use of spoken language, which is an essential aspect of orality. In fact, in this case the oral mode, rather than literacy or the written, is what is most effective at delivering the function needed by society. Orality

therefore remains the bedrock upon which modern literary creations are built. This is a fact supported by scholars, Nketia (1974), Iyasere (1975) and Motsa (2010), who maintain that the oral traditional base of Africa remains a constant source-pool for modern literary expression.

Therefore, despite the long-standing perception that written literature is superior to orality, I do not subscribe to that view. Indeed, I contend that oral literature which, in the words of Liz Gunner, is "self-constitutive, *sui generis*" (Gunner, *ibid*) has its own unique advantages over the written form, especially in the context of performance where we observe several ingredients such as tone, mood, creativity, spontaneity, audience participation among many others coming together to ensure the success of the oral performance.

Contesting why the literary canon favours literacy over orality, Mbwera perceives that "within this power matrix orality, (traditional modes such as short stories, folktales, songs and legends,) falls the marginalised victim of the canon's ideological practice mediated through the system of literacy…" (Mbwera, 2016). In offering some illumination, Irele explains that the debate on the relationship between orality and literacy is often skewed in favour of literacy because of the lack of proper understanding of the nature of orality. He observes this is "due to the simplifications that these discussions involve, especially the incomplete understanding of the true nature of orality" (Irele, 2007: 76). Finnegan, actually, agrees with Irele that oral literature holds its own when compared with the written:

> Oral forms are not only comparable to written literature in the minimum sense of being reproducible as written texts paralleling recognised written genres, but also have their own qualities in which performance and declamation *aloud* and to an audience are of the essence (Finnegan, 2005a: 169).

In fact, initially led by the colonial lenses herself, Ruth Finnegan confesses her shock at what she found when she attempted using the western approach to study the stories of the Limba. She explains that this was how she discovered her own 'myth':

> [The discovery was] how much about these stories lay *not* in the element capturable in written transcription but in their performance. This was emphatically a multimodal, multidimensional affair. It was not just spoken 'words' but performers' artful use of volume, intensity, repetition, pitch, timing, length, singing and acoustically resonant ideophones (mini-images in sound). The tellings were visual too as narrators dramatically deployed gesture, facial expression, bodily orientation, and movement. The audience was part of it, replying to the teller, singing the choruses, building the changing phases of excitement, humour, mystery, irony, or foreboding - co-creators of the tale. All those dimensions disappeared when I compressed them into the western conventions of single-line print. The story-telling, it turned out, was not just a matter of words or of cognitive information but a co-ordination of multiple modes and participants (Finnegan, 2003:10).

However, Irele himself admits, the written form has advantage over the oral form in some instances, such as the "positive science." Still, he insists that "writing remains a secondary form, a representation, [at a distance removed] from the vital immediacy of the spoken language itself [which is orality]" (Irele, *ibid*: 77). It becomes clear then that both oral and written forms have their own peculiar strengths and scholars therefore need not consider one as having a stronger claim over the other. Certainly, Jeff Guy (1994: 8) attempts to put the argument to rest, insisting that although not the same, "…orality and literacy are not isolated phenomena, they are relational, interacting with one another, co-existing.''

This thesis therefore does not take a stand of placing value judgement on either orality or literacy. Rather, it makes the strong case that oral literature is still very relevant and in fact, cannot be discounted in the analysis of language and society in any context. The thesis concurs with Irele's observation that "as far as the African situation is concerned, if it illustrates anything, it is the impossibility of isolating language from the total field of social and cultural experience that orality conditions" (Irele, *ibid*).

3.2.2 *Significance of orality – past and present*

Some of the research reflects on the symbiotic ties of the value of orality between the past and present societies. In traditional societies, orality was viewed as part of formal speech communication and in some cases, it coexisted with music in a variety of forms leading to "an almost unimaginable range of genres that enabled and empowered social, political and spiritual existence" (Gunner, 2007: 67).

Considered "a domain in which individuals in a variety of social roles articulate a commentary upon power relations in society and indeed create knowledge about society'' (Furniss & Gunner, 1995: 1), orality maintained a central position in traditional societies. Unfortunately, however, the power relations within the source-pool of indigenous knowledge have not always been balanced in traditional societies: the oral compositions of women and children have often been relegated behind that of their adult male counterparts. Uhuru Phalafala in making a case about decolonizing world literature through the medium of orality protested how women's oral artforms were pushed to the periphery noting that "the matriarchive, characterised by orality and

performance underpinned by exclusion from modernity's linear progress narrative was pushed to the periphery" (Phalafala, 2020:196).

Gunner asserts that there were other functions of orality which included the encoding of a state's history such as the case of *ubwwiiru*, the nineteenth-century Rwandan dynastic ritual code; similarly, in the west of Africa, the *oriki* (Yoruba praise poetry) made use of both personal and public history and provided a poetic vehicle for the powerful as well as the ordinary citizen in society (Gunner, 2007: 67, 68).

In today's globalised world, orality has also found remarkable significance. Indeed, it has, according to Gunner, "not disappeared but has often adapted itself in its many different forms to become a vehicle for the expression of the fears and hopes of new generations of Africans" (Gunner, *ibid*: 70). Orality found relevance in reflecting the social and economic pressures of the migrant labour system in *apartheid* South Africa, and in how a popular Somali oral poem, *Leexo* "sung over the airwaves while a key parliamentary debate was in progress in the capital, Mogadishu, toppled a government" (Gunner, *ibid*: 71). Similarly, it has, but in a much less dramatic yet important way, found relevance in not only carrying the hopes and fears of Ghanaian children, but also as reflective of their perception of reality, and their understanding of their community and culture, as captured in their play-songs – a vital gap the current study explores.

To John Blacking, music – a product of oral culture – finds its importance in how it reflects those individual experiences and human relationships. He points out that "…its structures are reflections of patterns of human relations, and the value of a piece of music as music is inseparable from its value as an expression of human experience" (1969: 31).

As it can be deduced, orality in Africa is the norm across all the cultures. Keeping the foregoing in mind, the current study therefore analyses Ghanaian children's oral play-songs to unearth the social, cultural and political constructs of realities and of history as perceived by children. It also appreciates the stylistic devices that are employed to reinforce the themes and issues raised in the children's songs.

It should be noted that music has prime significance in traditional African societies and Isidore Okpewho reminds us that almost every occasion or activity in traditional African life is accompanied by songs and chants (Okpewho, 1992: 137). Concomitantly, Okpewho echoes Nketia's (1974) observation that the African mother sings to her child right from the cradle, expounding further that songs accompany many occasions and activities such as the birth of a child, lulling a baby to sleep, initiation ceremonies for boys, puberty rites for girls, marriage ceremonies, firing the courage of hunters and warriors, and relaxing young men and women after a hard day's work (Okpewho, *ibid*: 137-138). Songs are therefore significant in African life as they transcend the period from life to death – they are sung not only at funerals, but years on, to mark the anniversary of the demise of an individual.

Songs are cultural tools that can facilitate the socialisation of children. Mathew Arnold, the English poet and literary critic, in a 400-page report spanning three decades of the English Elementary school system, titled 'Reports on Elementary Schools: 1852-1882', observes, under the chapter 'Students Want of Culture,' that it is much easier "to get entrance to the minds" of children and "to awaken them" by music than by literature (99). This thought is supported by Ganyata who states that to "music education is core to the development of the African child" (Ganyata, 2020). Agreeing with these views, and echoing Dzansi (2004) who highlights

children's abilities to imitate and recreate, the anthropologist and art critic, Ellen Dissanayake, asserts that even before their first year, children "precociously and pleasurably" appreciate music, and as they grow older, they sing with others or alone, mime, dance, make believe and experiment with sounds and words (Dissanayake, 2017: 94).

Yet, for all the significance of orality with its elements such as songs, within the African setting especially, Finnegan cautions against over-concentration of the 'oral' in the performance of oral art-forms. She contends that too much focus on the oral may lead to the erroneous assumption that the crucial feature of literature in performance is its orality (Finnegan, 2005a: 169). Additionally, a narrow focus on the oral may lead to the exclusion of other significant elements of performance. This is because a performance has a multiform mode of existence that may be independent even of words (Finnegan, *ibid*: 170).

3.2.3 *The oral in the Ghanaian context*

In the Ghanaian context, scholars like, Kwesi Yankah and Gloria Vondee, have both examined adult highlife songs as constituting oral poetry. Yankah (1997) analyses the poetic devices that highlife singer Nana Ampadu employs as a vehicle to carry his political messages. Yankah makes use of devices such as circumlocution, folktale, metaphor and proverb, and these devices serve as "verbal disguises" that provide political immunity for the musician (Yankah, 1997). Vondee (2000) on the other hand, embarks on a more general thematic and stylistic analysis of Bruce's songs. Based on the themes, her study categorizes Bruce's themes into three: love, philosophical and dialogic, and established that all the three categories emphasise harmonious

relationship among people. The investigation of the stylistic features reveals that Bruce draws images from his cultural environment as well as from close observation of life in general. In relation to form, Bruce exhibits a consistent use of antithesis, parallelism and refrain for structural unity. Altogether, Vondee's study demonstrates Bruce's craft and helps to establish him as a successful poet-musician (Vondee, *ibid*).

3.2.4 *Ghanaian oral literature on children – a vignette*

It must be noted however, that the foregoing studies, are focused on the songs of adults who were already established musicians. Very little sustained work has been done on children's songs. One of the few works that is of importance to this thesis is Akosua Addo's sociological research on Ghanaian children's play-songs which came out two decades ago. From her study, Addo establishes that:

> [D]uring play, the children were cultural interlocutors and recipients of adult cultural interlocution as they learned about accepted and shared social behavioural patterns, recreated their culture, and demonstrated the changing Ghanaian culture (Addo, 1995: iii).

Due to her purpose of influencing curriculum development for teaching children the performing-arts, Addo recommends a teaching style that encourages the expression of children's wide-ranging knowledge (Addo, *ibid*). In spite of the usefulness of Addo's research, it does not take into consideration, in the main, an analysis of the literary aspect; and while it explores aspects of

culture reflected in the children's song, it does not address the revival of the indigenous knowledge base, as the current study does.

Acclaimed Ghanaian playwright and dramatist, Efua Sutherland, is credited as being the first Ghanaian to take serious interest in writing for children. As a teacher herself, Sutherland recognised the role of 'play' in enhancing the learning process of children (Komasi, 2007). Sutherland in 1968 published two plays for children: *Vulture! Vulture!* and *Tahinta! A Rhythm Play for Children*. But her best known work for children was *Playtime for Africa*, her first publication for children in 1960, which according to Komasi ''has earned a more definite place in the history of Ghanaian children's written literature than any other children's book", not only because of it marks the beginning of the genre of written children's literature in Ghana but also because it makes use of poetry, a genre that is not extensively represented in Ghanaian children's literature (Komasi, 2007).

'Playtime for Africa' is a picture story depicting Ghanaian children's play activities. The book is of particular interest to this study because its commentary of the activities is captured in 'rhythmic speech' or poetry, which, albeit are not songs, are nonetheless key attributes of orality.

Also of importance to the current study is a research by Helen Yitah (2017) which demonstrates how Ghanaian children's play-songs have been adapted in some children and adult drama. Exploring Ama Ata Aidoo's *The Dilemma of a Ghost* (1965), Efua Sutherland's *Tahinta! A Rhythm Play for Children* (1968) and Martin Okyere Owusu's *The Story Ananse Told* (1971), Yitah shows how the playwrights skilfully adopted children's play-songs as thematic and structural frames for their plays.

For instance, in Ama Ata Aidoo's Dilemma of a Ghost, a popular Akan (Fante) children's play-song aptly mirrors the play's theme of alienation:

> *One early morning,*
> *When the moon was up,*
> *Shining as the sun*
> *I went to Elmina Junction*
> *And there and then*
> *I saw a wretched ghost*
> *Going up and down*
> *Singing to himself*
> *Shall I go to Cape Coast, or to Elmina?*
> *I don't know, I can't tell.*

The limitation with Yitah's work is that it is not a sustained discussion on play-songs in themselves but is essentially the exploration of such songs as a key plank in the make-up of some Ghanaian plays.

3.2.5 *Children's musical cultures on the African scene*

Notwithstanding the paucity of research on Ghanaian children's play-songs, there has been some literary interest by scholars on African children's songs and rhymes. For instance, Khasandi-Talewa, Liguyani & Wandera-Simwa (2002) conducted an ethnographic research into how indigenous knowledge and identity in Luhya children's play-songs can be revitalised by globalisation. They observed that as the children engaged in play-songs:

> [They] learned about their environment as well as getting grounded
> in the values of their societies which allowed for them to establish
> an identity, giving them a foundation to face future challenges with

experience, and the ability to appreciate themselves more and in turn, enable them to value others. (2002: 79).

In fact, the above importance of play-songs spelled out by Talewa, Liguyani & Wandera-Simwa's ethnographic research had been echoed by the Ghanaian playwright, Efua Sutherland decades earlier. To Sutherland, "Play is the child's natural means of exploring the human and natural environment of his or her existence, of learning how to exist with and within them and for resolving the problems he or she encounters in the process'' (cited in Sutherland-Addy, 2007: 81).

Furthermore, it is of interest that Finnegan (1970) has, in the African context, done some research into children's songs and rhymes; however, it is restricted to a discussion of context and local significance. She therefore explores a limited number of sound devices such as rhyme, onomatopoeia, repetition and verbal parallelism (302-307). Significantly, Finnegan herself acknowledges the need for further research into children's play-songs, noting that, "many such singing games and many other types of children's songs remain to be collected or analysed" (Finnegan, *ibid*: 313), a fact echoed by Abarry (1989) who decried that the "dismal situation described by Finnegan and others more than a decade ago is yet to see any significant improvement."

This call by Finnegan and others is what this thesis, years on, finds still relevant and seeks to answer. It will thus analyse children's songs with a view to assessing the oral stylistic and thematic elements bordering on the African indigenous epistemologies that make up the children's play-songs.

Apart from Finnegan, there are others who agree with her about the need for further studies into the musical cultures of children. Children's musical play, according to Whitebread, despite being "ubiquitous" has not been given much attention by scholars (Whitebread, 2012: 22). Similarly, Marsh and Young decry the paucity of interest by researchers in musical play (Marsh and Young, 2006: 291). The current study therefore contributes toward closing the knowledge gap with respect to research on children's oral literature, specifically the aspect of their play-songs.

Finnegan identifies the factor of occasion such as funerals, weddings, soothing a baby among others, as extremely important for the realisation of an oral performance. It is Finnegan's contention that, such occasions can "directly affect the detailed content and form of the piece being performed (Finnegan, 1970: 11). Similarly, play offers a context and occasion for children to have fun, express themselves creatively and ensure the realisation of the oral performance. And as pointed out by Finnegan, in the course of performing oral poetry, there is always "some opportunity for 'composition' [where we observe] … new twists to familiar plots or the introduction of completely new ones, improvisation or variation of solo lines even while the chorus remains the same" (Finnegan, 1970: 9).

3.2.6 *The role of creativity in children's play*

The quality of on-the-spot improvisation is a measure of the creativity of the performers, and this feature of creativity, among many others that characterize oral performances, can be seen in the play-songs of the children. To this end, the renowned Soviet psychologist, Lev Vygotsky in his seminal work, 'Imagination and Creativity in Childhood' argues that creativity is essential for

human survival. Man's quest to adapt to his environment demands the need to be creative in order to prepare toward the future. He posits:

> If human activity were limited to reproduction of the old, then the human being would be a creature oriented only to the past and would only be able to adapt to the future to the extent that it reproduced the past. It is precisely human creative activity that makes the human being a creature oriented toward the future, creating the future and thus altering his own present (Vygotsky, 2004: 9).

To Vygotsky, it is the creative activity of the brain to combine elements that is referred to as fantasy or imagination (*ibid*: 9). In fact, Vygotsky sees imagination as the fulcrum around which all human creation is accomplished, stating:

> Imagination, as the basis of all creative activity, is an important component of absolutely all aspects of cultural life, enabling artistic, scientific, and technical creation alike. In this sense, absolutely everything around us that was created by the hand of man, the entire world of human culture, as distinct from the world of nature, all this is the product of human imagination and of creation based on this imagination (*ibid*: 10).

Indeed, to him creativity is an essential function to life itself (*ibid*: 13).

Cultural critic, Egblewogbe agrees with Vygotsky that the imagination – what he calls fantasy – and creativity are important functions for children, especially in the contest of play, and that these qualities transcend early childhood.

> In the early stages the children imitate everyday activities of adults, clothing them in their own [f]antasy. In later childhood, when [f]antasy has sobered down into realism, and when more and more demand is being made on their time, they turn for recreation to formalized games, singing and dancing (Egblewogbe, 1975: 27).

Clearly, without creativity, humankind will find it impossible to adapt to the ever increasing and complex demands of our existence. We take particular interest in Vygotsky's declaration that it is in children that the first sightings or creativity is seen, especially, during their play. Of particular importance is his observation that:

> We can identify creative processes in children at the very earliest ages, especially in their play. A child's play very often is just an echo of what he saw and heard adults do; nevertheless, these elements of his previous experience are never merely reproduced in play in exactly the way they occurred. A child's play is not simply a reproduction of what he has experienced, but a creative reworking of the impressions he has acquired (Vygotsky, 2004: 11).

It becomes obvious then, that, children are not just passive receivers of information in their lived experiences; children actively process the experiences and recreate them during play based on their perceptions of those experiences.

In fact, Johan Huizinga shares Vygotsky's views about the role of creativity to life and argues that play, specifically, permeates all notable human activity. Huizinga asserts that:

The great archetypal activities of human society are all permeated with play from the start. Take language, for instance – that first and supreme instrument which man shapes in order to communicate, to teach to command. Language allows him to distinguish, to establish, to state things; in short, to name them and by naming them to raise them into the domain of the spirit. In the making of speech and language the spirit is continually "sparking" between matter and mind, as it were, playing with this wondrous nominative faculty. Behind every abstract expression there lies the boldest of metaphors, and every metaphor is a play upon words. Thus in giving expression to life man creates a second, poetic world alongside the world of nature (Huizinga, 2006: 119).

Similarly, and as noted earlier, Lew and Campbell, like Vygostky, consider play as an avenue for children's creative expression. Actually, Lew and Campbell note that during play, children "dance, create, and sing with their peers in everyday life. They develop their own repertoires of songs that are influenced by, but separate from, the surrounding adult world" (Lew & Campbell, 2005: 57-58).

Andrea Emberly (2013) corroborates this view, contending that:

When it came to the music that was spontaneously shared outside of the category of [adult] traditional music, the games, songs, and music that children create within the community of childhood, children themselves were the primary musical directors, the knowledge bearers of their own traditions (80).

Likewise, Ahn and Filipenko (2006) observe that children create narratives to reflect their world as they know it; "[that] young children represent themselves, their relationships, their experiences and their environment in the narratives they create; the themes, issues or concerns

that emerge from children's narratives; and [also] represent themselves and others in roles and scripts that they create in their … play and visual texts" (280).

This observation that children conceive and create narratives that reflect their world is also true of the children's oral play-songs including those under study. Children create play-songs that attempt to reflect the world as they know it and sometimes reconstruct their world as they wish it to be. Thus, just as examining children's narratives offers a means to assess how children construct an understanding of their world and their place in it (Ogede, 1994; Kyratzis, 2001; Addo, 2013), so do their play-songs provide a measure of understanding how children construct their own meanings about the world. This informs the purpose of the study: an examination of children's own play-song compositions with a view to unravelling the traditional African knowledge systems seen through the lenses of children.

3.2.7 *Children's musical play: a fusion of creativity, tradition and change*

Jewitt (2008) postulates that, it is not only the product of the literary expression but also the process of acquiring such knowledge that is important. Making a case for multimodality for the promotion of literacy in the classroom, she states:

> [H]ow knowledge is represented, as well as the mode and media chosen, is a crucial aspect of knowledge construction, making the form of representation integral to meaning and learning more generally. That is, the ways in which something is represented shape both *what* is to be learned, that is the curriculum content, and *how* it is to be learned (Jewitt, 2008:241).

To this end, Nicholas Kofie advocates a compromise based on a fusion of the creative impulse, tradition and colonial change: "Let us therefore, make our schools places for playing together our socio-cultural ideals" (Kofie, 1994: 10), he recommends.

Yet, creativity itself which is an essential tool for literary expression does not occur in a vacuum. There are some influences that shape the nature and direction of one's creative impulse. Indeed, Vygotsky would appear to agree with T.S. Eliot's view in his well-known essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" that creation invariably reflects and is influenced by one's own time as well as prevailing creative traditions. Eliot reminds us that, "no poet, no artist of any sort, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists" (Eliot, 1968: 1808). Undoubtedly, the creative artist needs to have a point of reference – specifically, the creative tradition drawn from the past – which will inform the nature of his creative product, a sentiment also echoed by Finnegan (1970: 89).

Similarly, Vygotsky suggests that the final creative product "depends on the individual's technical abilities and on traditions, that is, on those creative models that influence a person" (Vygotsky, 2004: 29). To him, the artist is wedged within a particular historical epoch having continued from previous traditions which he is building upon. He is therefore bound to reflect the traditions and times of the era he finds himself. This is because creation is "a historical, cumulative process where every succeeding manifestation was determined by the preceding one" (Vygotsky, *ibid*: 30). The artist therefore as part of the flowing stream could create his own unique rivulets; nevertheless, the stream continues to flow in the direction it had set its course to and would not change until a major event shapes or redirects its course. The artist's relationship

between his past and his creative ability is that, "his creations arise from needs that were created before him and rest on capacities that also exist outside of him" (Vygotsky, *ibid*). The relationship between the past and the creative ability of the artist is reflective in how the children make use of communal songs and also employ their creativity to incorporate contemporary realities by adopting an effective style that complements the themes in the songs.

For the African child in particular, his background has an enduring, ever-present influence on his creative impulse and production. Nicholas Kofie observes wryly:

> Although a literate African may up to a point be said to be bi-cultural, the African aspect of his education is the one which makes greater impact on him. It forms the background of his views and judgements, thus making him look very odd when he pretends to be anything but African (Kofie, 1994: 79).

Kofie's view about the struggle of the African to shun his background and recreate his identity is echoed by Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013) who prescribes a decoloniality response in dealing not only with what he identifies as the "colonial matrices of power but also by pedagogies and epistemologies of equilibrium that continue to produce [such] alienated Africans who are socialised into hating the Africa that produced them, and liking the Europe and America that rejects them" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013:11).

Campbell and Scott-Kassner (2010) maintain that as children play with other children and socialize with adults, they attain all kinds of cultural knowledge, including music. They contend that ''children's musical play consists of familiar and new songs that are transmitted intact by

adults (and other children) as well as spontaneously created new musical inventions'' (2010: 519).

Vygotsky's stance is therefore important in the understanding of the concept of creativity, its development and how it is demonstrated in children who are the key performers and participants of the play-songs. It should also help us to understand and appreciate the craft involved in how the stylistic tools are used to present the themes in the songs being analysed.

3.2.8 *Decolonisation and centring of children's voices*

Importantly, beyond an examination of the knowledge systems that children have learnt from, this study is about the knowledge children are teaching the world through their own play-song compositions, thus inversing the usual order of knowledge transmission patterns in the (adult) world.

Even after the end of colonialism, there remained potent western structures of colonisation privileging western epistemology and continuing to silence the previously colonised people and their epistemologies. Ramon Grosfoguel identifies the solution to be decoloniality which seeks to "epistemologically transcend, decolonise the Western canon and epistemology" (Grosfoguel, 2007:211). Situating this in the African context, Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni proclaims the need to tackle these "colonial matrices of power that continue to exist in the minds, lives, languages, dreams, imaginations, and epistemologies of modern subjects in Africa and the entire global South" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013: 11). Ndlovu-Gatsheni's view is supported by Afolabi (2020) who states that "decolonisation is needed to eradicate the effects of colonialization…" adding

that "decolonisation involves doing away with the structures, values, and vestiges of colonialization." According to Afolabi, decoloniality goes beyond decolonisation as it argues that coloniality still exists, must be understood in its modern form (coloniality) and must be dismantled for the global South to develop" (Afolabi, 2020: 96), a fact corroborated by Nketia who in exploring the impact of western civilisation and colonisation on the music of Africa noted that so extensive has the western culture pervaded the African way of life that it will require a cultural revolution to reset the clock (Nketia, 1974: 18).

It is such concerns by scholars for re-centring Africa's ontologies as reflected in Ndlovu-Gatsheni's statement that inform this research's exploration of the decolonial angle which this work finds essential to provide proper perspective, social function and appreciation of the children's songs under study. This approach is pinned on the belief that, children are sound carriers of knowledge. For instance, when they leave their homes and arrive at school, as argued by Julius Nyerere in his "Education for Self-Reliance" (1967)[6], they possess a full body of knowledge. It is Nyerere's contention that even before a child enters the western-school classroom to learn, the child would already have imbibed knowledge from the community; knowledge which although essential to the child's development is often overlooked in favour of the colonial-styled education received in the classroom. The decolonial approach therefore emphasises the recognition, centring and interrogation of the African body of knowledge which was absent or almost non-existent before due to an enamouring with the dominant coloniality perspective. It is primarily the western classification system which grouped humans much along

---

[6] This is President J Nyerere's policy document published one month after the 1967 Arusha Declaration in MYELIMU. (2014 "Nyerere on Education". https:www.myelimu.com).

the lines of 'the great chain of being.'[7] The notion of the Great Chain of Being became the basic assumption ordering life during the Elizabethan era. They believed that God had created a social order on Earth for everyone and one had to stay in one's place; disturbing the 'natural order' of things could result in dire consequences. However, within the human race, children occupied the lower rung in social importance and could thus be neither heard nor taken seriously in the affairs of knowledge production.

Shedding more light on this framework, Nassim Noroozi affirms that the purpose of the decolonial approach is to "…intervene, overturn and restructure the philosophical, political and social imaginations in favour of the silenced, the ignored, the colonised and the (epistemologically and physically) violated" (Noroozi, 2017:1). Keeping this in mind, the current research centralises the marginal by making the case for the voices of children who have borne the worst brunt of the western epistemological silences to be heard.

This view is supported by Walter Mignolo who avows that claims of Western epistemology to originality of thought be contested by the silenced colonised. To ensure epistemic justice, there is the need, according to Mignolo, for "the unveiling of epistemic silences of Western epistemology and affirming the epistemic rights of the racially devalued, and de-colonial options to allow the silences to build arguments to confront those who take 'originality' as the ultimate criterion for the final judgment" (Mignolo, 2009: 4). George Dei in furtherance of the call for epistemic justice considers it a duty for the colonised Black subject in particular to correct the Eurocentric narrative of history: "as colonized peoples we are continually impacted by ongoing

---

[7] The Great Chain of Being was a belief system first espoused by Greek philosophers Aristotle and Plato that God created an order for everything in the universe. There was a place for everything from God and the celestial angels at the top, to humans, to animals, to plants, to rocks and minerals at the bottom.

processes of colonization and racialization, and it is important to take into account that for the Black, Indigenous, and African scholar, there is a particular responsibility to write back to a false narrative" (Dei, 2018: 124). He describes this task as "a project of knowing, authenticating, and representing Black and African voices" (*ibid*).

3.2.9 *Decolonisation and Afrocentricity*

The decolonialist contentions are in many ways similar to Afrocentricity. According to Afrocentrists, the quest of Afrocentrism is to correct the view that rationality and civilisation were bequeathed to the world by white people and not the entirety of the human race. This quest of "correction" it does, by centralising Africa's experiences and contributions to human existence through the point of view of African's themselves (Chawane, 2016: 80).

Molefi Kete Asante, one of the Temple Circle progenitors of Afrocentricity, explains that the Afrocentrists argue for pluralism in philosophical views without hierarchy, adding that all cultural centers must be respected because this is the fundamental aim of Afrocentricity (cited in Mkabela, 2005: 180). Thus, Afrocentricity insists that no culture should presume superiority over the other. Indeed, Asante's position is corroborated by Midas Chawane who contends that, "unlike the Eurocentric view that tends to take an ethnocentric view posing as a universal view, Afrocentricity allows other cultures to view history from their own perspective" (Chawane, *op. cit.*: 85). The African has a duty to correct the epistemic injustice perpetrated by the Eurocentric canon which defines history, and to do this they must begin a process of collective self-introspection. George Dei explains that looking within suggests Blacks shaking off the shackles

of Eurocentric scholarship and validation, reconnecting to the African identity and defining the kind of education that needs to be given to the African child as a way of securing the future designed by Blacks for Blacks. Dwelling on the idea of Blackness, he states:

> Blackness should not just be a study about us; it must be a study for us! For the Black/African scholar working on Blackness or not, there is a need to continually challenge and resist the entrapments of academia (e.g., the ways Western (corporate) modernity interrogates, disciplines, and validates Blackness and the Black intellectuality. Upholding the saying that one must not wear Blackness if they do not know what it means is powerful. We need an effective Black education to cultivate in the minds of young learners the responsibility to uphold positive self and collective identifications and to resolve to design own futures, rather than have the future designed for us by others (Dei, 2018: 136).

Indeed, Dei's idea for a focused agency as a way of shaping the future is one that the thesis agrees with. While the research generally bestrides Afrocentricity, distilling further, however, the current study goes beyond African voices as promoted by Afrocentricism, and specifically highlights the voices of African children, which hitherto have been marginalized. The study subsequently favours the decolonial perspective in this regard.

This research contends that through the adoption of the decolonial approach of subverting the "norm" and recentering the marginal, minority voices like those of children will be repositioned in the centre of knowledge production. This view resonates with Archibald Mafeje's recommendation that in order to reclaim the lost identity, "Africa must be studied from within" (cited in Dastile, 2013: 97) and that "the subject is allowed to speak from his or her vantage point, to voice his or her feelings. In this way the formulation of epistemologies and paradigm

puts emphasis on the richness and primacy of the individual's experience in order to avoid 'epistemic othering'" (Adesina, 2008: 139 cited in Dastile, 2013: 98).

It is this concern about the need for the subject to be refocused at the centre that is of interest to the thesis. This is especially crucial given that in the past, not only have children's voices been given less attention, but the traditional culture itself within which the children function has also been subverted in favour of western epistemology. As reiterated by anthropologist James Boon who maintains that knowledge of other cultures and eras depends on the cultures and eras doing the knowing (Boon, 1984); perspective in this regard is imperative – seeing through the children's own musical cultural lens.

3.2.10 *Philosophical Symmetries: Northern and Southern*

It should be noted that in the tradition of many African societies, children play a role as 'messengers whose presence is a gift from the other world' – thus linking the past with the present, reversing the process of Western socialization, where children are universally depicted as in a state of ignorance (Martini, 2007: 95). Subscribing to the axiom "the child is the father of man[8]," the African philosophical worldview that gives a revered position to children is replete in the societies of the continent of Africa, appearing in folktales and idiomatic expressions. In fact, Soyinka makes this observation repeatedly in *The Invention* (1959), *The Detainee* (1965) and in *Death and the King's Horseman* (1975) that the child, who is often ignored, is the progenitor of

---

[8] This is a philosophy that is common in many societies denoting the symbiotic relationship of genesis between the young and the old. However, the phrase first appeared in the English poem, **"*My Heart Leaps Up*"** by **William Wordsworth** in 1802.

the adult, while at the same time depicting the conflicts the children confront occasioned by a lack of social protection from the adult. Indeed, Motsa, in her introduction to Soyinka's *The Detainee* (1965), summarises the disturbing theme of the unprotected child in the early works of the Soyinka thus:

> The theme of the unprotected child, common in Soyinka's work, resurfaces in this play [*The Detainee*]. It is found in the Westernised brat of *Childe Internationale*, the trapped and deflowered girl of *The Lion and the Jewel*, and the bribery token in *My Father's Burden*. The tone and treatment of this sub-theme are more sombre in The Detainee than in either *Childe Internationale* or *The Lion and the Jewel*. As in *The House of Banigeji* and *The Night of the Hunted*, in *The Detainee* the world of innocence is shattered by the unavailability of support from parental figures for a child. This is accompanied by threats of incarceration and execution of the minor. The overall impact on the child figure is displacement (Motsa, 2005).

Clearly the significance of children in society is an age-old subject in African communities. Within the context of the decolonial discourse, while Africans seek the centering of their civilisation and epistemology from the margins where they had been confined, ironically, children as members of the marginalized African group also seeking to have their voices heard, are further pushed to the fringes by the dominated African adults. In the process, the children suffer "double marginalisation" of sorts – their voices are muted and their (oral) cultures pushed even further to the fringes, thus making a case for children to be given greater scholarly attention.

Despite the displacement of the disregarded, particularly, children and the threats against them, the Soyinka plays portray the discounted as having the voice that contests the silences of western

epistemology. This, we find also in Soyinka's earliest play, *The Invention*. Here, in the face of the seemingly invincible Invention that overcomes all humans who come its way, is forewarned by the researcher of impending doom through his own progeny:

> BYTRON: "In all probability, it will be defeated by this Mutation itself… Just as certain microbes develop new strains which are resistant to drugs, your increasingly *unprepossessing grand children* may become immune to the x-rays of the Invention" (Motsa, 2005: 27-28; emphasis added).

Indeed, in the play, aside from being the ones primed to secure the future of mankind by their immunity, the children also possess the ability to determine the race of the mother. With the play's primary concern being the question of race, it is Bytron again who offers: "All we have to do is to wait until the baby is born, and that should establish the race of the mother" (*ibid*: 41). In other words, a matter as serious as establishing the race of an adult can only be determined by a child.

Again, it is the child-like Hardiburr, a character described as a 'slobbering idiot' who dares to challenge the silence of ignorance when he exclaims, "the Emperor is naked" – an allusion to the fabled child who spoke the truth no adult was prepared to speak against established authority, even though he is threatened back into silence: "somebody shut him up before he says something dangerous" (60). Similarly, in tune with Walter Mignolo's manifesto on 'epistemic disobedience' (Mignolo, 2009), we find in Wole Soyinka's play, *Death and the King's Horseman*, it is the Elesin's son, Olunde who confronts the colonialists: "I discovered that you have no respect for what you do not understand" (353), and went on to challenge the

misconception of western claim as the centre of all knowledge thus: "you believe that everything that appears to make sense was learnt from you" (356). The point is clear that wisdom lies in the mind and mouths of the child, the Hardiburrs and Olundes of the society.

Inferiorisation of others is the point at heart in this discussion where those who wield power tend to disregard and inferiorise those who do not; a foreign phenomenon within the African knowledge system. As well observed by anthropologists, John and Jean Comaroff, this recurrent haughty colonial attitude is again reflected in a conversation between a Motswana native doctor and the English explorer, Dr David Livingstone in which the Motswana doctor had rebuked Livingstone, and demanded reciprocity of respect for each other's culture even if they did not understand one another (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2002: 500).

It is important to observe that in Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman*, after hope is seemingly lost, the survival of an entire Yoruba community is found to rest solely on the child and not the vaunted King's horseman who tells the colonialists that: "[my son] will avenge my shame, white one. His spirit will destroy you and yours." (367). To demonstrate that this is a community that prizes the child, the King's horseman himself still professes ardent faith in the power of the child, after he is gone.

This is a prediction that comes to pass: Olunde is successful in 'committing death' as required by his community, and at the same time 'destroys' the hopes of the colonialists of severing the tie between Olunde and his traditional roots, turning him into an Englishman. The act of the son taking the place of his failed father is both literal and metaphorical: "… it is the father of your prisoner [Elesin Oba] you want, Olunde, he who until this night we knew as Elesin's son…" (377), Iyaloja exclaims, "the son has proved the father, Elesin…." (380).

Remaining rooted in the traditions of his people despite his western training, the previously overlooked child of Elesin, Olunde, becomes a powerful symbol of redemption and rescues his community from ancestral calamity. This affirms Soyinka's African philosophy of the symbiotic relationship between the different stages (and classes) of humans that:

> The past is the ancestors', the present belongs to the living, and the future to the unborn. The deities stand in the same situation to the living as do the ancestors and the unborn, obeying the same laws, suffering the same agonies and uncertainties, employing the same masonic intelligence of rituals for the perilous plunge into the fourth area of experience, the immeasurable gulf of transition (Soyinka, 148-149: *The Fourth Stage*).

Indeed, unlike the western 'Great Chain of Being,' the African cosmology places equal premium on the world of the unborn children, in relation to the other worlds of the ancestors and of the living. There is harmony in the universe as no world dislodges the other or is considered more essential.

The African philosophy of the child being the progenitor of the adult also finds expression in the isiZulu proverb which states that: "*Inkunzi isematholeni*" which literally translates as "the bull is among the calves", meaning, from a child later emerges an adult. Similarly, a siSwati[9] proverb asserts: "*budvodza abukhukelwa*" which means, "a child does not have to be marked as a man to be manly." All these African idioms distinctly recognise the child as a critical centre in the indigenous African worldview, with an active role to perform in society.

---

[9] The amaZulu and emaSwati people are part of the Nguni (Ngoni) group which comprises isiXhosa, isiZulu, siSwati and isiNdebele languages in Southern Africa in countries like South Africa, eSwatini, Mozambique, Zambia, and Zimbabwe among others.

The case may be made that the African drama, proverbs and idioms present a world view that is asymmetrical to that of the West. We observe Soyinka's caution on child displacement and advocacy against the he danger of suppressing and erasing the voice of the child which often carries wisdom. Further we see the interrelationship between the generations and between the living and the living-dead, but this is not packed in a linear system of hierarchies as in the British Darwinist Great Chain of Being; rather it is in a cyclic mode where one generation is linked and dependent on the other. This nullifies any room for inferiorisation. Wisdom exists among the young.

The question may be asked as to why the children's play-song has not been treated the same way as adult oral lore. One supposition is the intrusion of the west in Africa and the subsequent disruption of educational patterns and societal programmes. Africa's contact with western education and civilisation has greatly impacted Africa's way of life, gradually eroding its culture and world view. As observed by Emberly (2013) in his study of Venda children's play-songs, "children are the ambassadors of a culture that is threatened by globalised forces that detract from the traditional contextual meaning of these children's songs" (83-84).

This western threat on the culture is not unique to Venda children of South Africa but permeates Africa, including Ghana. In Ghana, ever since the government introduced a programme for education called the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (F-CUBE), which covers Primary School (usually from age 6-12) and Junior High School (usually age from 12-14), most children at the basic school levels (primary and junior secondary) can be found in schools, rather than at home. According to 2018 official statistics by UNESCO, 84% of children[10] in Ghana are

---

[10] Source: www.uis.unesco.org/country/GH

in primary school. This level of admission is expected to remain at a constant high not only at the basic level but also the second cycle level of education, especially with the Ghanaian government's introduction of the 'Progressively Free Secondary School Education Policy' in 2015 and the 'Free Secondary School Education Policy' in 2017.

Western education in itself is not so much a threat as the fact that the educational curriculum tends to relegate aspects of the study of indigenous culture in favour of the more western recognised subjects of the Reading, Writing, Arithmetic – the three Rs – and the Sciences. Cultural Studies occupies a small space within the Religious and Moral Education curriculum and is not given much attention as the more acclaimed other subjects that are western-oriented.

Trevor Wiggins (2013) makes a compelling case for decolonisation of the Ghanaian context with his observation of the poor treatment of music and dance in the designated Cultural Studies Textbook:

> In the whole book, other than within the description of traditional religion (always third after Christianity and Islam), there is little evidence of Ghana's rich cultural heritage of music and dance and no mention of the moral and social significance often attached to such activities (Wiggins, 2013: 594).

Wiggins' observation establishes the lacuna in the research and emphasises the critical importance of the current research in addressing the problem. Unfortunately, the drawback is compounded by the practice of penalising school children who speak the "vernacular", other than the official colonial language, English, in schools, a situation that prompted the Dean of

Languages of the University of Education Winneba, Professor Owu-Ewie[11], at a symposium to commemorate the 2021 Mother Language Day, to appeal for the practice to be stopped, warning that failure to do so could lead to the eroding of African heritage. The replacement of the local language with English as the medium of instruction can be identified as a reason for the poor reception of the local language.

> In May 2002, Ghana promulgated a law, which mandates the use of English language (hereafter L2) as the medium of instruction from primary one (grade one) to replace the use of a Ghanaian language as the medium of instruction for the first three years of schooling, and English as the medium of instruction from primary four (grade four) (Owu-Ewie, 2006: 76).

English has therefore continued to be the undisputable language of choice for instruction, with the local language hardly featuring except as a peripheral subject studied once a week. Anyidoho believes that this "general lack of continuity and consistency, [is] a major problem that has dogged language-in-education policy since the inception of formal education in Ghana" (Anyidoho, 2018). Increasingly, however, there have been calls led by academia, for the local language to be given more attention and utilised as a language of instruction, especially from kindergarten through the lower primary level (Owu-Ewie, 2006; Anyidoho, 2018; Amfo & Anderson, 2019).

Therefore, the dangers of the African culture experiencing epistemicide and linguicide, and therefore, needing redress is reason the current research is vital. Thus, having situated the gap,

---

[11] Source: https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Stop-punishing-children-for-speaking-vernacular-in-school-1198786

the upcoming analyses shall seek to investigate the African philosophies as well as the oral poetic aesthetics that constitute the children's play-songs, and aid the realisation of the performance. Importantly, it will seek to unravel ways by which all such native wisdom, thoughts and experiences can be preserved using the medium of children's play-songs.

3.3 SUMMARY

The assessment of all the literature thus far points to the fact that children's musical cultures, specifically, the genre of children's play-songs as constitutive of orality, have not received the same attention as its counterpart of the adult genre. This study thus posits the notion that children's play-songs ought to be given more scholarly attention than they have previously received to accord all knowledges parity of esteem as advocated by the decoloniality school of thought. The current study therefore analyses play-songs with a view to unravelling the traditional knowledge systems through a multimodal lens.

To do this, the study adopts an eclectic approach in reviewing literature from multifarious disciplines including drama, anthropology, history, psychology, sociology, philosophy, music, linguistics, oral and cultural studies – thus situating the study on an interdisciplinary base. From the foregoing, it can be deduced that this calls for changes in the nature of the knowledge(s) taught as well as the manner they are packaged in the school curricula to allow for the hitherto marginalised knowledge systems to be centralised.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF THEME AND STYLE IN THE PLAY-SONGS

"A whole set of knowledges … have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated"

~Foucault

4.1 INTRODUCTION

As hinted in Chapter Three, children's literature bears the same complexity as adult literature. The object of this chapter is to examine this assertion through the analysis of the collected play-songs as products of the oral tradition. This chapter concerns the analysis of the literary elements found in the performance of the play-songs. Specifically, it examines the themes encapsulating the indigenous epistemology and the style they employ that together constitute the oral performance of the selected songs.

4.2 LOCATION OF THE RESEARCH

Indicated under Scope and Limitation in Chapter One and under Methodology in Chapter Two, the data was collected in two schools in Komenda and Ajumako-Bisease, both in the Central Region. On the one hand, Komenda is a coastal settlement made up of two towns – British Komenda and Dutch Komenda. The names of the towns reflect the impact of the colonial powers that settled in these two parts of the town about the same time, only separated by River

Komenda. Eventually, when the Dutch traders left, followed much later by the British colonists, the epithets have remained to this day. The town is one of nineteen (19) settlements that form part of the Komenda/Edina/Eguafo/Abirem (KEEA) municipality. According to the 2010 [12]Population and Housing Census report, the Municipality has a population of 144,705, which is about 6.6% of the population of the Central Region. Komenda is estimated as having a population of about 15,000 people. Although the main economic activity in the town is fishing, the community also engage in farming and artisanal trade. These activities among others find creative expression in the play-songs of the children.

According to the headmaster of the school, GHASEL[13] M/A KG & Primary school, which is the first research site, was established on October 1, 1973. Previously known as Komenda Sugar Estate Nursery & Preparatory school, the school began with 36 boys and 17 girls under the tutelage of four female teachers, with Miss Gladys Amoah as the first headmistress. A year later, the school was renamed GHASEL Nursery & Preparatory school. Currently, with an increased town population, the school runs a double stream (A and B) of both kindergarten and primary levels with a school population of around 740 children. The children who offered to be part of the research were from the upper primary bracket with ages ranging from 10 to 12 years.

On the other hand, Ajumako-Bisease, where the community of Kumasi is located, is one of the 20 settlements that form part of the Ajumako/Enyan/Essiam district. The 2010 Population and Housing Census report states the district's population as 138,046. Unlike the first research site which is coastal, Ajumako-Bisease is found in the hinterlands in a district described by the

---

[12] The 2021 Population and Housing Census has been conducted but the results are yet to be published.
[13] GHASEL is an acronym for Ghana Sugar Estates Limited. The school was established by the factory to cater for the wards of the factory workers and the rest of the Komenda community.

Ministry [14]of Food and Agriculture as "forestry interlaced with farmlands." The main economic activity of the people of the district is farming and artisanal trade.

According to an elder[15] of the town, the settlement was named Kumasi in recognition of the work ethics and courage of the people of the community, traits which appeared to be similar to that of the warring Asante nation, whose capital was Kumasi. Kumasi D/A Basic School was thus established on April 29, 1963, with 2 teachers teaching class one (19 boys and 20 girls) and class two (9 boys and 7 girls) (or grade one and grade two). Currently the school has kindergarten, primary and Junior High School departments with a population is 251 children. The children who offered to be part of the research were from the lower primary bracket with ages ranging from 6 to 9 years.

The recordings of the sessions from both schools yielded 59 songs to accord us a fair sample for analysis. While seven of the songs were found as common between the two towns, there were 29 songs in Komenda and 23 in Ajumako-Bisease that we found to be distinct to these two locations.

From the literature, we understand that children possess the creative ability to represent the world as they know it to be. This ability, encapsulated especially in their play-songs, is the focus of the analysis of the current study.

---

[14] The Ministry of Food and Agriculture website under a section titled "investment opportunities" provide useful insight into the Ajumako-Enyan-Essiam district. See:

<https://www.mofa.gov.gh/site/directorates/district-directorates/central-region/196-ajumako-enyan-essiam#:~:text=There%20are%20stretches%20of%20secondary%20forest%20interlaced%20with,in%20valley%20bottoms%20where%20moisture%20trees%20are%20minimal>

[15]Opanyin Atta Baayin granted the research assistant (the school-teacher the head of school assigned to the researcher) an interview regarding the origin of the name of the town.

As style and theme are mutually dependent literary constructs – theme being informed by style and style reinforcing theme – this chapter therefore analyses the knowledge systems and other thematic, as well as the stylistic elements that make up the oral performance of the play-songs of the children of the towns of Ajumako-Bisease and Komenda in the Central Region of Ghana.
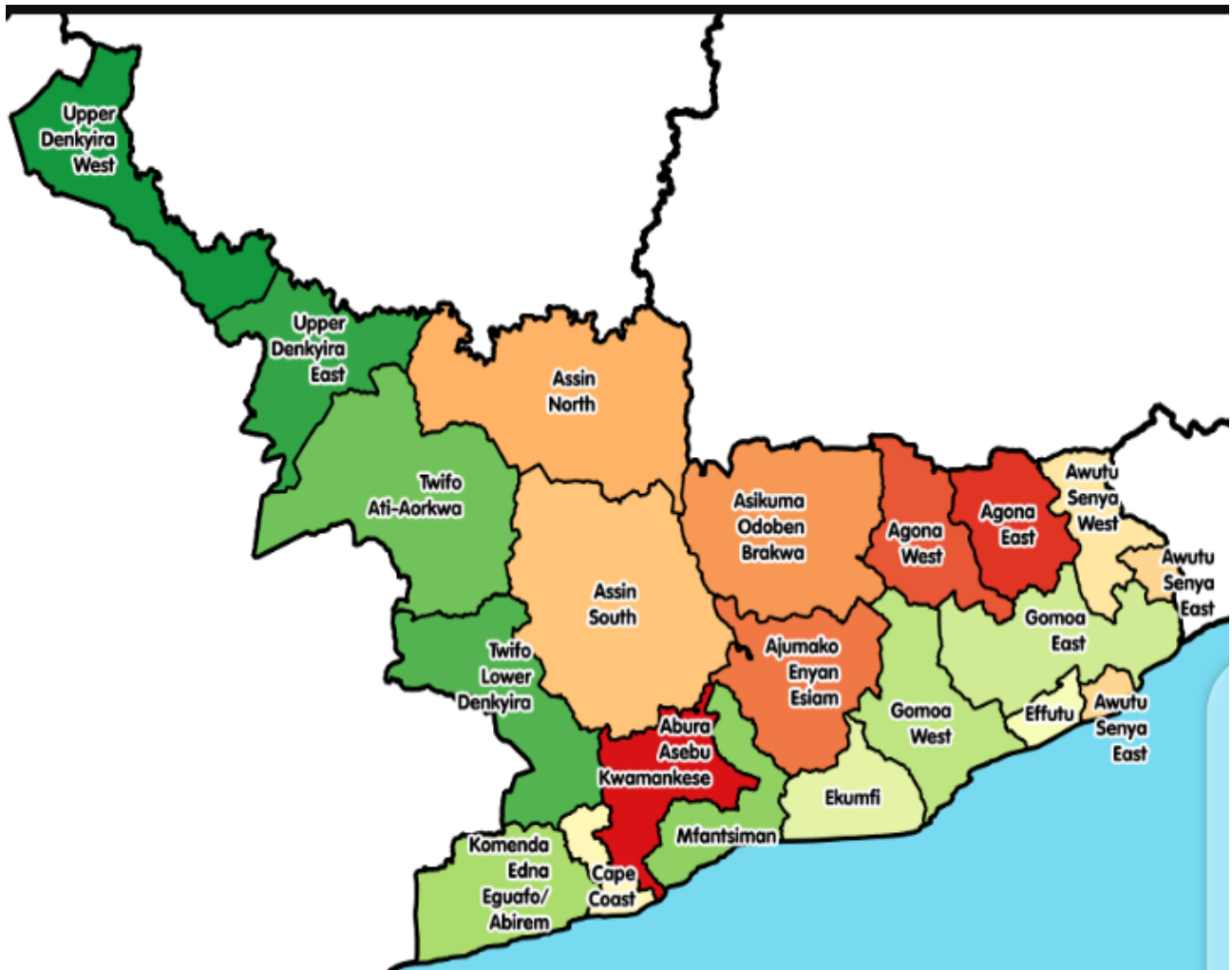
Fig. 3: Map of the Central Region [16] **showing Ajumako-Enyan-Essiam and Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abirem districts.**

---

[16] Source: Wikiwand.com

We begin with an investigation of the thematic concerns serving as windows into the African indigenous philosophies and knowledge systems through a decolonial lens repositioning children at the centre – thus privileging the children's viewpoint.

4.3 THEME IN THE PLAY-SONGS

As stated above, theme is one of the key elements of poetry. It is the main reason behind the oral composition and in this study, the resource that bears the wisdom of the community whose compositions we are studying. An overview of the themes that emerge in the songs under study reveals the following thematic concerns: appearances, reality and sharing; transgressions, obedience and socially appropriate behaviour; identity and belonging; role of family in socialisation; friendships and love relationships; literacy; family and ascribed roles; health, wellness and medicine; the power, facility and empowerment of the woman and girl; competition and the irrepressible spirit; depiction of religion and the supernatural; betrayal and the struggles of life; native knowledge on farming and fishing; and protection and self-defence. Let us now consider the songs more closely to explore the themes they carry.

4.3.1 *Transgressions, Obedience and Socially Appropriate Behaviour*

Traditional African societies place premium on the inculcation of moral values in the children as part of their socialisation. Some of the children's songs stress the importance of socially conforming behaviour and also, of rules and obedience to people in authority. An indication of the attribute of obedience required of children is frequently found in their 'call and response'

songs. Sometimes the authority figure is missing altogether, even though the command is unmistakeable. An example is the song "*Anhwɛ wakyire*" ("Don't look behind you") below.

Anhwɛ wakyire
[Don't look behind you]

yee
[yee yee]

obi ne ba
[someone's child]

yee
[yee yee]

se ehwɛ wa'kyire a
[if you look behind]

yee
[yee yee]

ade bɛ yɛ wo
[you're in trouble]

Yee
[yee yee]

kutuku!
[blows!]

gɔngɔngɔngɔngɔ!
[gongongongongo!] (Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 15-10-2020)

In the enactment of the song above, a group of players kneels in a circular formation, while one child stands outside the human circle, holding an object, a prop – what Kress (2015) categorises as "cultural technologies" – that they can hide at their backs, so none of the kneeling players can see it. This object is often a cloth material or footwear, indeed any item that the children can

easily get access to and appropriate as a prop to aid their play performance. Explaining the reason for the choice of stones, sticks, cloth and footwear as cultural technologies, the children pointed out that these are the materials readily available that can aid their oral production. The concept of "circle" in its many representations holds enormous significance in African traditional societies. Just as the circle holds substantial meaning and importance in African societies, so does it have prevalent use as trope in the play-songs of children, occurring in various forms in several of the songs to be analysed. According to Motsa, the reason the "circle" is so predominantly used in African societies is that Africans believe "life is a circular and never-ending entity" (Motsa: 2010: 295). Phalafala explains that "to symbolise communal unity everybody arranged themselves in a circle, including during the judicial meetings under the trees, to rites of passage ceremonies, and dance" (Phalafala, 2020: 202). According to her, vital objects such as shapes of compounds and huts were all round in imitation of the cosmos and the cycles of nature, with which people tried to have a symbiotic relationship. Importantly she explains the role of the circle in performances thus: "… the body, voice, movement, ritual and performance were also a site of expressing this principle, and in turn expressing solidarity with other humans. The circular figure is a central shape to an indigenous societal order" (*ibid*), and this fact permeates many of the songs analysed.

As the song is sung, the child carrying the object runs around the circle making sure that the object is out of the sight of the kneeling players. The objective is to slip the object behind one of kneeling players without them realising this. Anyone who flouts the rule cautioning them "not to

Fig. 4: Children [17]at play in a circular formation.

---

look back" receives a knock on the head. If the lead player successfully places the object behind an intended victim; goes around completing the full circle and back to the person without the kneeling would-be victim realising, he is given some blows to his body with the other players joining in until he escapes their attack. Noting that they are not supposed to look behind them, through this song, children learn to use their intuition to discern their environment. Thus, as much as possible, the children through their play demonstrate the importance of rules and endeavour to follow them.

Another example that shows the importance of rules is the song *mo esiesie won ho*? ("Are you ready?").

> *Mo esiesie won ho?*
> [Are you ready?]
>
> *εhε, masta*
> [yes, master]
>
> *mo esiesie won ho?*
> [are you ready?]
>
> *εhε, masta*
> [yes, master]
>
> *won numba no'ε?*
> [with your numbers?]
>
> *εhε, masta*
> [*y*es, master.] (Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 04-11-2020)

Here, children acknowledge formal authority and depict this in their role play. Just as it happens in their experiences, children recollect that they are sometimes required to listen and obey without question. Their lived experience becomes a source material that they use for composing

their songs. Here, in the example above, by the children monotonously responding *ɛhɛ, masta,* meaning "yes, master" – in acquiescence to an imaginary authority figure – to each enquiry, we realise that the song reflects what is familiar to them in power relations, especially in their relationship with their parents at home and with their teachers and headmaster at school.

Another song on the theme of obedience is *Nde dze maame eku me* ("Mother will kill me today"). Here, the child is aware of not just his committing of a transgression but also the punishment that comes with it.

> *Maame ama me dama*
> [mother gave me money]
>
> *Gongo gongo*[18]
> *[gongo gongo]*
>
> *ɔse me nkoto dokon*
> [asking that I buy kenkey[19]]
>
> *gongo gongo gongo*
> *gongo gongo gongo*
>
> *medzi akoto dondo*[20]
> [I went and bought a drum]
>
> *gongo gongo gongo*
> *gongo gongo gongo*
>
> *nde dze maame eku me*
> [mother will kill me today]
>
> *gongo gongo gongo*
> *[gongo gongo gongo]*

---

[18] *Gongo gongo gongo* is an onomatopoeic imitation of the sound made by the drum, referred also as "gongo". In the context of the song, the sound serves as refrain that is sung at the end of line or sequence of narration.
[19] *Kenkey* is a maize staple dish that is similar to pap. It is usually combined with pepper sauce, okro stew or soup.
[20] *Dondo* is a "talking drum" that is shaped in the form of an hourglass. Aside from making music, it can be regulated to imitate human speech. *Dondo* is widely used among different tribes in West Africa.

nde dze paapa eku me
[father will kill me today]

gongo gongo gongo
[*gongo gongo gongo*]

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 15-10-2020)

Fig. 5: Players "punishing[21]" a player for breaking a rule in the play-song.

---

[21] Picture and video taken on 29-09-2020 with the permission of the school; declared in the application for ethical clearance submitted before the study began.

Although the persona is being hyperbolic when he says he will be "killed" for the wrong he had committed, we are left in no doubt that the offense of buying a drum instead of the food he was asked to purchase is serious enough to receive some sanctions from his parents. Children are therefore cautioned not to get too carried away by their own desires to the point of being disobedient.

But there are also times when children even when they are being obedient are cognisant of the fact that adults are not always right. Clothed in humour, this portrayal of the theme of obedience is also present in the play-song, *Pimpinaa*. As earlier elaborated in the introduction, the song *Pimpinaa* which can be categorised under what Okpewho refers to as 'nonsense rhymes' is essentially a re-enactment of a dialogue between a grandparent figure (*Nanaa*) and the grandchildren (*Minanaa*). Semantically, the term 'Pimpinaa" does not have an actual linguistic denotation other than appearing to be a childlike corruption of the word *Minanaa* which means grandchildren). The song is structured in two parts: first, a brief call of "Pimpinaa" by the lead player imitating a grandparent, followed by the response "Nanaa," intoned by the children acting as "grandchildren"; and in the second part, there is a long, partly meaningless string of words whose purpose seem to be the achievement of musicality and rhyme rather than meaning.

Lead player imitating grandparent: *Pimpinaa…*

Children/players responding: *Nanaa*

Lead player: *See see see*
see nana koo
kataa bokuto
bonkuto oo bonkuto oo …

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 15-10-2020)

Notably, in the imitation of the dialogue between the grandparent and the grandchildren, we find that the children only respond to the 'call' after which they are duty bound to keep silent and obediently listen as the grandparent figure engages in an endless monologue that makes little meaning to the children. It should be noted that in this instance, the obedience is not in an obvious request for action but is found in the structure of the song itself – a reflection of the culture – in which the children are expected to listen.

While the children's depiction of the pointless tirade by the adult makes the song humorous, more importantly, it reflects the perception of the children that adults can and do engage in meaningless talk; but in order to keep the order, the children keep quiet and listen. It is therefore a criticism through song.

In the children's song *Araba Nsaba*, we encounter in a less nuanced fashion how sexual immorality – or any sexual act between two unmarried persons – is strongly frowned upon by the society.

> *Araba Nsaba nko po*
> [Araba Nsaba is no fisher]
>
> *nanso onya nam we*
> [yet she gets the choicest fish to eat]
>
> *Araba Nsaba*
> [Araba Nsaba]
>
> *basia edwaman onko po*
> [an immoral woman who is no fisher]
>
> *nanso onya nam we*
> [yet gets the choicest fish to eat]
>
> *Araba Nsaba*

What the song fails to do is that, while it criticises Araba Nsaba for her loose lifestyle, there is no admission that Araba must have had some relations with a willing fisherman with whom she traded sexual favours for fish. This observation notwithstanding, minors are generally kept away from the subject matter of sex in society.

Indeed, the Ghanaian society is very conservative on matters to pertaining to sex or even its introduction to minors that recently, there was a strong resistance led by some Christian, Islamic, African religious groups and Civil Society Organisations against the government's planned introduction in schools of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE[22]), which was viewed as a western agenda to inculcate the LGBTQ[23] way of life in the children.

A similar uproar over inappropriate exposure of minors to sexual content, again, engaged the public when an actress and celebrity, Rosemond Brown while in the nude took a picture with her son (who was clothed) and posted it on social media site Instagram to celebrate his seventh birthday. Following the public backlash over her action, Rosemond deleted the post, but it had already gone viral. The Ghana chapter of Child Rights International took the case to court where news outlet *The Cable Lifestyle* reported that Rosemond was convicted under Ghanaian law on three charges of "publication of obscene materials, engaging in domestic violence – conduct that in any way undermines another person's privacy or integrity, and engaging in domestic violence

---

[22] The public uproar against the introduction of CSE is well documented. Several news outlets including the Daily Graphic ("Expunge CSE from budget statement – Parliament urged", Graphic.com.gh) and Modern Ghana ("Understanding the outcry against Comprehensive Sexuality Education in Ghana", ModernGhana.com) carried the news.
[23] The abbreviation LGBTQ refers to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer.

– conduct that in any way detracts or is likely to detract from another person's dignity and worth as a human being" and sentenced to serve a prison term of 90 days.

It should be noted that this strong disapprobation of minors being exposed to inappropriate sexual content is common in African societies. And this societal taboo finds expression in the play-songs of children who knowing that sex is strongly discouraged from being practiced among them are subsequently careful not to be so forward on the subject matter.

4.3.2 *Appearances, Reality and Sharing*

Dedende Kwao o [24] is a children's song that highlights the differences between appearances and reality. Sung in the Akan language, the oral poetic piece has been translated into English for the thematic analysis as indicated below.

> *Dedende kwao o*
> [Dedende kwao o]
>
> *dedende kwao o*
> [Dedende kwao o]
>
> *egya bɔfo ne nkwaŋ yɛ me dɛ*
> [the old hunter's soup is tasty]
>
> *nanso n'atere yɛ me nkoŋ*
> [yet his clothes are repulsive.]
>
> (Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 05-11-2020)

---

[24] The phrase "*dedenda kwao o*" is nonsense rhyme; it has no semantic meaning other than its musical qualities.

One of literature's most recurrent themes is the conflict between perception and reality. We observe this as part of the worldview of children as reflected in their play-songs. With fishing, farming and hunting being some of the common occupations in traditional societies, including the two locations for the current research, in the song above, the children sing their confession that they find the hunter's work clothes which are often made from dirty, motley patches of cloth as unattractive and, in fact, repulsive. Ironically, the food prepared by the hunter is delicious. The repetition of the refrain "*dedende kwao o*" serves to signal the surprise at the end of the narration.

This kind of apparent cognitive dissonance enables children to understand the complexities of life as they learn that there is often more than meets the eye in situations one encounters. Implicit in the songs is the portrayal of strong connectedness of the people in the community where sharing is a fundamental communal value. For how could children who do not desire to get close to a hunter, an eccentric person they do not know by name, have an opportunity to taste food he had prepared from his hunt, if the hunter had not shared part of his food with older family members of the children, who in turn gave the children some to eat?

This irony of assumption further finds expression in the song "Robert Mensah", a children's play-song chronicling the tragic history of Robert Mensah[25], a former Ghana Black Star football player.

---

[25] After his death in 1971, Robert Mensah was recognized posthumously as the runner-up of the Confederation of African Football best player awards. The winner for that year was his club and national teammate Ibrahim Sunday. Sunday in an interview by *These Football Times* described Robert Mensah thus: "Although Robert was a great goalkeeper, he wasn't disciplined and was a bit of a troublemaker, and it was this lack of discipline that caused his death."

Robert Mensah, goalkeeper number one
[Robert Mensah, goalkeeper number one]

aka nansa na wakɔ abrokyire
[with three days to his trip abroad]

kwasia bi tse ho a ɔmpe ne ho asɛm
[an idiot who is otherwise calm]
afa pentua ɔdze awɔ ne'mfe
[stabbed him with a broken bottle.]

ade kye'a ne yere awo
[the next day his wife delivered]

ne yere awo'a wɔ fre nu Kofi
[she delivered a baby called Kofi]

Kofi Anto, w'anto ne papa
[Kofi Anto, did not meet his father]

Kofi Anto, w'anto ne mame
[Kofi Anto, did not meet his mother.[26]] (Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 16-10-2020)

According to the song, Robert Mensah, a one-time best goalkeeper in Africa, who with only three days to play a major international football match, got into a fight in a drinking bar and was stabbed with a broken bottle. The song recounts that shortly after the death of Robert Mensah, his wife delivered a baby boy. Identifying the child as an orphan, the song foretells a life of struggle awaiting this little baby who would not have the pleasure of the company of his father.

From the account, this tragedy was unexpected as it was committed by a "calm" and therefore presumably peaceful and non-violent person. The use of the word "idiot" or "fool" translated from the Akan suggests a strong anger by the children, which is essentially a protest against the crime and its perpetrator.

---

[26] Kofi Anto's father (Robert Mensah) died before the boy Kofi was born. Although stated in the song, it is not established as a historical fact that the child's mother also died at childbirth.

Through this children's oral poem, "Robert Mensah," not only are children taught history, but it also serves as a cautionary tale for them as they learn about the importance of giving one's best in any endeavour, or discipline, as well as the need to stay away from the vice of alcoholism.

Generally, however, in respect of the overarching themes of Appearances, Reality and Sharing, we realise from the songs analysed thus far that the African traditional knowledge system places premium on the need for an individual – in this case the children – not to jump to conclusion, especially based of appearances. Equally notable, the children learn about the importance of community and sharing.

4.3.3 *Depiction of Religion and the Supernatural*

Closely related to the themes of transgression and socially appropriate behaviour is the portrayal and role of religion which is a key aspect of the musical cultures of Ghanaian children. The play-songs of the children depict how religion, together with its attendant spiritual elements, is used as an instrument for achieving social control and conformity to social mores.

The song "*Dora Kyewpa*" ("Dora's plea") is a dialogue between a mother and her daughter, Dora. From the conversation, we learn that Dora is a disobedient girl who is begging her mother to open the locked door so she can escape from an imaginary demon pursuing her.

> *Me maame, e buei me*
> [Open the door for me, mother]
>
> *me maame, e buei me*
> [open the door for me, mother]

na Sugarett ɔbekye me ako
[for 'Sugarett' is trying to capture me]

ɔnkye wo o, Dora
[let it capture you, Dora]

ɔnkye wo o, Dora
[let it capture you, Dora]

na wo yɛ abɔfra bɔne
[because you are a stubborn girl]

eko a ɛya bra ntsem
[next time come home on time.]

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 15-10-2020)

It is common knowledge that many children have some heightened fear of darkness, which they associate with evil. As punishment for Dora's transgressions – coming home after darkness had fallen – the mother allows the imaginary demons pursuing her to exact a psychological retribution on Dora.

The pattern of failure to conform to traditional social expectations of acceptable behaviour leading to spiritual penalty, is a recurring feature in the children's play-songs, occurring again in the play-song, *Adow kyɛkyɛkyɛr* ("Stubborn Monkey.")

Adow kyɛkyɛkyɛr
[Stubborn monkey]

ɔse ɔrekɔ Esaaman
[insisted he was going to Esaaman]

ɔkɔr ya woanba biom
[he left but did not return]

ɔkor ya Sasabonsam gyamu

[he went into the Devil's fire.] (Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 16-10-2020)

Unlike the previous song that only made reference to a demonic entity without an ascription to any religion in particular, the song "Stubborn Monkey" alludes to a disobedient monkey who ended up in Hell fire – a clear reference to the Christian religion which in its teachings state that wrongdoers will be condemned along with the Devil and his angels (demons) in a place called hell. The point of convergence in the songs is that they all end up with psychological punitive measures for wrongs using religion as the retributive tool.

Quite apart from disobedience or stubbornness, there is also punishment for committing serious crimes, including immoral acts such as infanticide. In "Kyeiwaa, Kyeiwaa" we learn about a mother who commits such wrong and is duly punished for it.

Kyeiwaa Kyeiwaa	*Pam pam pam pam*
[Kyeiwaa Kyeiwaa	Pam pam pam pam]
wa'wu ne ba Maame	*Pam pam pam pam*
[gave birth to a child Maame	Pam pam pam pam]
ɔdze nu'a akoma Nsu Yaa	*Pam pam pam pam*
[sacrificed her to river goddess Yaa	Pam pam pam pam]
Nsu Yaa abo nu etsur	*Pam pam pam pam*
[The river goddess Yaa shot her	Pam pam pam pam]

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 16-10-2020).

It is ironic that the river goddess to whom the child was sacrificed is the same goddess that, apparently disapproves of the act and therefore "shot" Kyeiwaa for it. Thus, teaching about cosmic justice, the song makes children understand that not all good intentions are morally

acceptable. It therefore helps children to practice sound judgement and make morally and ethically sound choices.

Through these songs, the children reveal their awareness of socially acceptable behaviour and equally important, the penalty for transgression.

4.3.4 *Identity and Belonging*

The theme of identity and belonging features prominently in the songs of the children. In the context of traditional Akan society, premium is placed on childbearing within a family. It is usual for the names of children to be used to refer to the mother or father of a child or children, thereby giving the parents an ascribed identity emanating from their being the progenitors of an offspring. We see this phenomenon in the song, "*obi'ara ye wo no dwowda*" ("all who are born on Monday") which the children opened beginning with a request.

> *Twa wo ho hyia kakraka*
> [A big circle]
>
> *Tsedɛ wo maame ne kyensee*
> [like your mother's cooking pot]
>
> *obi'ara yɛ wo no Dwowda*
> [all who are born on Monday]
>
> *ɔnkotow*
> [crouch]
>
> *ɔnsɔre*
> [stand up]
>
> *lalala lala lalalaa lalala lala lalalaa lala la laa*
> [lalala lala lalalaa lalala lala lalalaa lala la laa]

obi'ara yɛ wo no Benada
[all who are born on Tuesday]

ɔnkotow
[crouch]

ɔnsɔre
[stand up]

lalala lala lalalaa lalala lala lalalaa lala la laa
[lalala lala lalalaa lalala lala lalalaa lala la laa].

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 05-11-2020)

The first two lines is a stock opening which has the function of directing the children on the kind of formation they should create; in this case it calls the children to line up in a circular formation – what the stock opening refers to as "a big circle // like your mother's cooking pot." After the children have been organised, the song itself thereafter proceeds. It should be noted that most of the songs actually begin with such as stock opening because it is often necessary for the children to come together in a circular formation.

To ensure inclusivity, a call is made for all children born on a particular day of the week – say Monday – to come into the human circle to dance and be celebrated by the audience-performers. Since all Akan children have day names (which are names given them according to the day [27]he or she was born as prescribed by the Akan traditional naming system), no child is left out as one after the other, each of the seven days of the week is called.

For instance, when the lead performer calls for all those born on *Dwowda* (meaning Monday) to enter the circle and dance, correspondingly, girls and boys named Adwoa and Kodwo

---

[27] Kofi Agyekum's "The Sociolinguistic of Akan Personal Names" published in Nordic Journal of African Studies provides a detailed explanation and significance of Akan names.

respectively, are the only ones who are permitted to enter the circle and dance, because they bear that particular day name. when there is a call for those born on *Benada* (Tuesday) to take their turn, then the girls who bear the name Abena and boys named Kwabena would enter the circle. This way, one after the other, each child is acknowledged.

Similarly, the concept of inclusivity and belonging is advanced in the song *"Afra Kakraba Kotoo Awiam"* ("small child squatting in the sun") which features a child squatting, while surrounded by playmates who had formed a human circle around him or her.

> *Afra kakraba kotoo awiam*
> [There is a small child *squatting* in the sun]
>
> *daadaa na oresu*
> [who *cries* everyday]
>
> *afra sor, sor, sor*
> [small child, *get up, get up, get up]*
>
> *afra prupru w'atare mu'ɛ*
> [small child *dust off* your clothes]
>
> *afra twa wo ho, twa wo ho, twa wo ho*
> [small child *turn round* and *round* and *round]*
>
> *afra kɔ fa wo dɔ fo'ɛ…*
> [small child go *embrace* your beloved.]
>
> (Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 5-11-2020)

A significant observation about the song is that in the beginning we encounter a weeping, forlorn child, but at the end of the song the child finds solace and belonging in the arms of another person. In the performance of the song, the child chosen to be in the centre of the human circle

acts out each of the action verbs beginning with *squatting*, *cry*ing, *stand*ing up, *dust*ing *off* clothes, *turn*ing around and finally choosing someone in the circle and *embrac*ing them.

It is instructive to note that each child is given an opportunity to choose a partner who is expected to yield to the embrace of the crying child. This emphasises the philosophy that there is someone for everyone. The African child therefore has a place among others and is never alone. By extension, the theme of this play-song accentuates the proverb that the African child is groomed and raised by the whole village, a philosophy we observe when a human being dies; the whole village mourns their death.

The analysis of the songs thus far, demonstrate that these oral performances serve as a means through which children, in enacting the play-songs, are reminded about their identity and their assured place within the family and community as a whole. As emphasised in the spirit of *ubuntu*, a Zulu and Xhosa term which loosely translates as "I am because we are" – emphasising the universal bond of togetherness that connects humanity – we similarly encounter in the children's play-songs that community and sharing are vital values. Loneliness is therefore seen as a misnomer in the worldview of Africans and the play-songs typifies this reality.

4.3.5 *Role of Family in Socialisation*

The family unit is one of the most critical social systems in Akan traditional societies. It is the first point of contact for every member of the family and is responsible for the socialisation – including the instilling of the values, norms and culture – of that member.

Broadly, there are two types of family namely, the nuclear family and the extended family. The nuclear family is made up of mother, father and children, and the extended family made up of additional members like cousins, uncles and aunts and grandmother and grandfather and their own network of familial relations.

A fundamental aspect of the children's reality, both the nuclear family and extended family feature in their play-songs.

Sansa Akroma, which means "lazy hawk," is a song about a hawk that preys on vulnerable chicks because it has lost its parents. The idea behind the song is that because the hawk has lost its parents, it no longer has someone who would guide it in life on how to live an honest life.

> *Sansa akroma*
> [Lazy hawk]
>
> *ne na ewu*
> [whose mother is dead]
>
> *ɔkyekye nkukɔ mba*
> [preys on chicks]
>
> *ɔse onkoye edwuma*
> [he says he won't work]
>
> *ne na ewu*
> [his mother is dead]
>
> *ɔkyekye nkukɔ mba*
> [he preys on chicks]
>
> *ne na ewu*
> [his mother is dead]
>
> *n'egya ewu*
> [his father is dead]. (Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 5-11-2020)

The absence of the parents or parent-figures and its subsequent consequence of delinquency by the hawk brings into sharp focus the role of parents in instilling a moral solid campus and sound social values in the young; these are values that are expected to stay with the child and prepare him or her for life. The song therefore cautions against dishonest living and emphasises the need for "work," hard work.

The song, *Me nana asɔ me sisi mu* ("My grandmother holds my waist"), also sheds light on the family, this time particularly emphasising, the role of the extended family. As earlier indicated, in African traditional societies, grandparents are integral in the raising and socialisation of the young. They can be a source of entertainment and fun such as when they tell stories to the children, and they can be a source of bother and discomfort for the young when they insist that the children follow strict directives. The song, *Me nana asɔ me sisi mu* ("My grandmother holds my waist") is a humorous reflection of the children's perception of their grandmother.

> *Me nana asɔ me sisi mu*
> [My grandmother holds my waist]
>
> *onnim ma yesi kyea*
> [She doesn't know how to salute]
>
> *Se ɛbɔ non ensia'a*
> [When the time is six o'clock]
>
> *Ye bɛ twetwe yɛn se*
> [We will brush our teeth]
>
> *Ye bɛ serɛw yɛn tsir*
> [We will comb our hair]
>
> *Ye bɛ kɔ sukul*
> [We are ready to go to school]
>
> (Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 15-10-2020)

Here, the children protest the actions of their grandmother who early in the morning, at six o'clock, wakes them up by yanking them up by the "waist." In the song, the children complain that their grandmother physically heckles them as they lay in bed, without bothering to first greet them: "she doesn't know how to salute," they cry. She simply ignores their objections and gets them prepared for school. Of course, the children clearly do not appreciate the utilitarian intent of their being sent to school as justification enough for the brute force their grandmother adopts to achieve this.

Undoubtedly, as shown in the foregoing songs, the family – both extended and nuclear – remains a vital social system in African traditional societies. Although modernity and urbanisation have reduced the core traditional function of uncles, aunts, grandparents and cousins, the extended family remains an ever-present essential unit in African societies, one that socialises and teaches the young members of society the values of hard work, kindness and respect.

4.3.6 *Friendships and Love Relationships*

Friendship and love relationships are fundamental aspects of the reality of children and thus feature prominently in their play-songs. As observed by the psychologist, Paul Schwartz, friendship at this early stage of a child's life influences the child's development in a markedly profound way. As a child moves out of the family circle, which is the foremost socialising setting, he ultimately makes friends with other children in the community. Unfortunately, there are times when conflicts arise, and the relationship becomes strained.

Aka ("Detachment") is a play-song about the process leading to the recognition and acceptance of breakdown in friendship among children. With the fore-fingers of the two feuding children inter-locked to symbolise the beginning of a situation of being on non-speaking terms, the children then sing:

> *Aka*
> [Detachment]
>
> *aka*
> [detachment]
>
> *aka*
> [detachment]
>
> *aka dompe*
> [bone-hard detachment]
>
> *sɛ me dzi m'agoro a*
> [when I am playing]
>
> *na wo ba menkyen a*
> [and you come to me]
>
> *Yesu, Yesu, Yesu*
> [Jesus, Jesus, Jesus]
>
> *Yesu, betwa wo tsi*
> [Jesus will behead you]
>
> *wo tsi wo tsi wo tsi*
> [your head, head, head.] (Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 06-11-2020)

With the rules of disengagement clearly spelled out, acknowledged by all involved and implemented, the children, after singing the song, then go their separate ways, bringing their friendship to an end over whatever issue had caused them consternation to this extent.

Perhaps, the most fascinating aspect of the song is the manner in which the song performs the linguistic function of a performative utterance. In other words, just like performatives, the words of the song suggest that the act – the aggrieved parties agreeing to sever their relationship – is in practice, binding from that moment the pronouncement is made. The song therefore serves as a kind of ritual to seal off the severance process of a relationship.

Whereas the song, *Aka* or "Detachment" is about relationship gone bad, the song "*Hwehwɛ wo dɔ fo wɔ ha*" ("Find your beloved here") recounts the process by which a strained friendship can be revived. In a circular formation, the children sing:

> *Hwehwɛ wo dɔ fo wɔ ha*
> [Find your beloved here]
>
> *hwehwɛ wo dɔ fo wɔ ha*
> [find your beloved here]
>
> *hwehwɛ wo dɔ fo wɔ ha*
> [find your beloved here]
>
> *na ma ɛnyɛ wo dɛ*
> [and be happy about it.]
>
> *hwehwɛ tokuro no mu*
> [look in the circle]
>
> *hwehwɛ tokuro no mu*
> [look in the circle]
>
> *hwehwɛ tokuro no mu*
> [look in the circle]
>
> *na ma ɛnyɛ wo dɛ*
> [and be happy about it.]
>
> *pa wo dɔfo ne kyɛw*

[apologise to your beloved]

pa wo dɔfo ne kyɛw
[apologise to your beloved]

pa wo dɔfo ne kyɛw
[apologise to your beloved]

na ma ɛnyɛ wo dɛ
[and be happy about it.]

kyea wo dɔfo ne nsamu
[shake your beloved's hands]

kyea wo dɔfo ne nsamu
[shake your beloved's hands]

kyea wo dɔfo ne nsamu
[shake your beloved's hands]

na ma ɛnyɛ wo dɛ
[and be happy about it.]

pepa wo dɔfo ne nim
[wipe the tears of your beloved]

pepa wo dɔfo ne nim
[wipe the tears of your beloved]

pepa wo dɔfo ne nim
[wipe the tears of your beloved]

na ma ɛnyɛ wo dɛ
[and be happy about it.]

ye wo dɔfo atu
[embrace your beloved]

ye wo dɔfo atu
[embrace your beloved]

ye wo dɔfo atu
[embrace your beloved]

na ma ɛnyɛ wo dɛ
[and be happy about it.]

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 15-10-2020)

We note how the song presented in typical oral poetry style employs skilful use of stylistic elements of rhyme, repetition and refrain which all come together to create the rhythm. (These stylistic elements and others will be discussed in detail under the heading "Stylistic Analysis").

The song serves a social function in terms of rekindling and strengthening relationships, as well as promoting bonding among children. As observed by scholars Piaget and Sullivan, social bonding is an integral aspect of the psychosocial development of children. Through the conflict resolution mechanism of this play-song, social cohesion is obtained.

We encounter love, however inadequately conceived, through eyes of children in the song *Biribi faa* ("something passed.") To the children, love is a feeling that is difficult to define and which, in their limited understanding, as a result, can only be referred to as "something".

Biribi faa
[Something passed]

biribi faa me honam nyinaa kɔ ma koma
[something passed through my body to my heart]

biribi faa
[something passed]

biribi faa me honam nyinaa kɔ ma koma
[something passed through my body to my heart]

oh oh oh oh
oh oh oh oh oh oh oh oh oh oh

la la la la
la la la la la la la la la la. (Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 15-10-2020)

With accompanying hand gestures and touch of different parts of the body where they imagine that "something passed", the children demonstrate what it means to love and to feel loved. The children's song suggest that love is akin to a rather pleasant electric current that surges through their bodies and coming to a rest at their hearts.

Beyond the expression of the pleasantness of love, we see a depiction of illicit love in the children's song *Dora krataa* ("Letter to Dora"). We recall from the song "in the golden treasure", that in traditional Ghanaian societies, children are generally discouraged from pursuing romantic relationships until they attain the age of the majority.

One of the tools used in keeping children on the narrow path of moral uprightness is religion. Children at an early age are taught about good and evil, socially acceptable behaviour and socially unacceptable behaviour. In the song *Dora krataa* ("Letter to Dora") we encounter how religion is used to enforce social control. In the song a young boy's attempt at writing a love letter to a girl (Dora) hits a snag.

Me hia krataa
[I want a paper]

Ede akyerew leta
[to write a letter]

Akoma Dora
[to go to Dora]

Dora n'kyir ba yɛ pasta

[But Dora's brother is a pastor.] (Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 16-10-2020)

It is interesting to note that the snag that obstructs the boy from going ahead with his love proposal is not physical but psychological. It is borne out of the realisation that his attempt is immoral. In other words, his own mind convicts him that his amorous intent is inappropriate.

Thus, in African traditional societies, inherent in the indigenous knowledge structure is a quite potent system that prescribes rules for engaging in all forms of relationships, including those involving children. In the case of children, they are expected to be guided by a moral compass instilled in them through their socialisation with their family and friends, as well as religion.

4.3.7 *Literacy*

As the literature has established, some of the songs, although oral in form, actually promote literacy. When the children step out of the classroom and enter the playgrounds, some of the songs they sing serve as mechanisms to reinforce their learning: it teaches the children about themselves and the world in which they live. By this means, children gain knowledge of various subjects.

One of the songs that fosters literacy by aiding children on how to spell is *obi awu ne ba* ("someone brought forth a child"). Like many of the play-songs, this is a song that involves turn-taking. We observe the significance of each performing member of the group giving their name and offering to spell it.

Leader: *Obi awu ne ba*
       [Someone brought forth a child]

       Dze no ko sukul
       [Took him to school]

       Oko sua 'dompe' supel
       [To learn how to spell 'bone']

Child 1:   D-o-m-p-e!

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 15-10-2020)

Since all the participants are to be given the opportunity to spell in the local language, different words are given to different children to spell. The structure of the song is however maintained.

Leader: *Obi awu ne ba*
       [Someone brought forth a child]

       De no ko sukul
       [Took him to school]

       Oko sua 'ɛtam' supel
       [To learn how to spell 'cloth']

Child 2:   Ɛ-t-a-m!

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 15-10-2020)

A highlight of the children's performance of this particular play-song which dwells on the theme of literacy, the children are asked to spell their own names. Here, part of the song's structure is only slightly amended.

Leader: *Obi awu ne ba*
           [Someone brought forth a child]

           De no kɔ sukuu
           [Took him to school]

           Oko sua ne din supel
           [To learn how to spell his name]

Child 3:   A-k-u-n-ɔ!

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 15-10-2020)

By spelling in the indigenous Fante language, the children amply demonstrate that the language is truly a carrier of indigenous knowledge and philosophies. The children get an opportunity to intimately interact with their local language, expand their vocabulary and learn how to spell in their African language. More so, as the children take turns to spell their names, they take ownership of their names and identity. We note also, that as the participant called upon to spell his or name does so, the rest of the group provide community support by echoing each letter being spelt. There is therefore a dual effect: the feeling of belonging by each member of the group on the one hand; and also, the ability to utilise their own African language writing system to spell one's name, the names of the other playmates who are participating in the performance, and also, the names of any object or entity that the group will require that the performer spells, on the other hand.

In furtherance of the children's promotion of indigenous epistemology, the research also produced another play-song titled "*Ahon*" (Skin), a song that tests participants' familiarity and knowledge of animals that have skin compared to those that do not.

Leader:	*Ahon o, ahon* [Skin o, skin]
Response:	*ahon!* [skin!]
Leader:	*adow ne ho ahon* [monkey's skin]
Response:	ahon! [skin!]
Leader:	*kitsew ne ho ahon* [lizard's skin]
Response:	ahon! [skin!]
Leader:	*nipa ne ho ahon* [human skin]
Response:	ahon!
/	[skin!]
Leader:	*koto ne ho ahon* [crab's skin]
Response:	[*no response; silence expected*]

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 06-11-2020)

Like the previous play-song, the song above serves as an educational tool for teaching children about the anatomy of animals, while also helping them to be mentally sharp and focused.

Aside from these, some of the play-songs unearthed by the study also teach about indigenous philosophy. The song *Ɛnan, nsa, etsir mo* ("praise to the leg, the hand and the head") depicts the interrelationship between the body parts. Centring on which of the human anatomy does the hardest work, the children praise the leg for walking to the farm, the hand for harvesting, and the head for carrying the harvest home. They however deride the stomach which they do not find as industrious.

Sɛ ɛnan wanko 'habem
[If the leg had not gone to farm]

na nsa entwa bankye a
[and the hand had not harvested cassava]

na etsir so asoa aba fie a
[and the head carry the harvest home]

anka yefun beye den?
[what would the stomach have done?]

ɛnan e, mo mo mo
[well done, leg]

nsa e, mom o mo
[well done, hand]

etsir e, mom o mo
[well done, head]

yefun kwadwo fo
[lazy stomach.]

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 15-10-2020)

Despite the humorous tone employed, the song also throws a spotlight on the nature of farming among the rural communities. Despite the absence of modern, sophisticated machines like tractors and harvesters, the people depend on their own physical to cultivate and harvest their farm produce. The song therefore praises hard work and criticises sloth, which is symbolised by the stomach.

A similar song about farm cultivation that also contributes to literacy is *Yɛre kɔ efuom mu* ("we are going to farm"). To attain the goal of aiding children to learn about the kind of produce on the farms and the different ways those produce are mentioned, the children adopted the use of

code-switching as they themselves translate the names of different farm produce in English and the local language. The example below demonstrates the point.

> *Yɛre kɔ efuom mu*
> [We are going to farm]
>
> *maame edzi kan*
> [mummy has gone ahead]
>
> *ye kɔ fa eduane*
> [we are going for food]
>
> *aba fie*
> [and bring them home]
>
> Plantain – *brɔdze*
> Cassava – *bankye*
> Okro – *nkruma*
> Garden eggs – *ndadowa*
> Pepper – *moko*
> Ginger – *akakaduro.*
>
> (Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 05-11-2020).

The purpose of code-switching in the song is to facilitate the translation of the words from one language to another. By so doing, the children demonstrate that there is equivalence in terms of the realities that either the local language or the colonised language can describe. The song does not only serve as a signifier of the indigenous culture demonstrating that there is an adequate knowledge base that describes the realities of the people, but also serves as a means of promoting the learning of the children who gain knowledge about the different names given to certain things.

Some of the songs also appeal to the children's appreciation of the scientific method as well as their sense of logic. *Bɔdambɔ ekur osi ɔpon do* ("One bottle on the table") is one such song that helps children to exhibit their mental arithmetic and reasoning abilities, which they had imbibed from their socialisation within the indigenous knowledge system of their community. Here, while applying the rules of Mathematics, the children also utilise song as a means to learn about addition, multiplication, division and subtraction. The example below shows how children learn about addition. It begins with the leader stating a particular mathematical principle followed by the children responding by singing an answer.

Leader: *Bɔdambɔ ɛkur osi ɔpon do*
[One bottle is on the table]

bɔdambɔ ɛkur osi ɔpon do
[one bottle is on the table]

sɛ bɔdambɔ ɛkur na ɛdzi ɛkur ka ho'a
[if you have one bottle and you add another one]

All: *ɔyɛ bɔdambɔ ebien, osi ɔpon do*
[it will be two bottles on the table.]

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 15-10-2020)

Aside from addition, children are able to learn other topics as well. By tweaking part of the song, the children while at play sometimes switch topic to multiplication. The example below makes the point.

Leader: *Bɔdambɔ ebaasa osi ɔpon do*
Three bottles are on the table]

bɔdambɔ ebaasa osi ɔpon do
[three bottles are on the table]

109

sɛ bɔdambɔ ebaasa na edzi bɔho ebien'a
[if you have three bottles and multiply by two]

All: *ɔyɛ bɔdambɔ ensia, osi ɔpon do*
[there will be six bottles on the table.]

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 15-10-2020)

To test their knowledge of subtraction, the children again modify the song in order to accommodate a new topic. Let's The example below makes the point.

Leader*:*   *Bɔdambɔ ebien osi ɔpon do*
[Two bottles are on the table]

bɔdambɔ ebien osi ɔpon do
[two bottles are on the table]

sɛ bɔdambɔ ebien na eyi ɛkur efri mu'a
[if you have two bottles and take out one]

All*:*   *ɔyɛ bɔdambɔ ɛkur, osi ɔpon do*
[there will be one bottle on the table.]

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 15-10-2020)

To show their understanding of the mathematical principle of division, the song is once again slightly altered. Below is a good example of this.

Leader: *Bɔdambɔ anan osi ɔpon do*
[Four bottles are on the table]

bɔdambɔ anan osi ɔpon do
[Four bottles are on the table]

sɛ bɔdambɔ anan na ɛdzi ebien ekye mu'a
[If you have four bottles and divide by two]

All: *ɔyɛ bɔdambɔ ebien, osi ɔpon do*
[There will be two bottles on the table.]

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 15-10-2020)

Indeed, as a demonstration that they are knowledgeable about a particular topic, the children are required to sing the answers together, at the same time. This way, anyone who proffers a wrong answer is known, reproached, and corrected.

Being part of the indigenous knowledge system, developing mathematical acumen is seen as a vital tool that the child would need in order to function properly as a member of the society. Thus, through their oral play-songs, children can promote their own learning outside of the more formal classroom settings.

Aside from assessing the mathematical acumen and reasoning abilities of children, there are also songs that promote literacy by testing the knowledge of children on general subjects. One of such songs is *Dua o dua* ("Tail o tail").

Leader: *Dua o dua*
[Tail o tail]
Response: *dua!*
[tail!]

Leader: *dua o dua*
[tail o tail]
Response: *dua!*
[tail!]

Leader: *dua, akoko ne dua*
[tail, chicken's tail]
Response: *dua!*
[tail!]

Leader:	*dua, nantwi ne dua* [tail, cow's tail]
Response:	*dua!* [tail!]
Leader:	*dua, kitsew ne dua* [tail, lizard's tail]
Response:	*dua!* [tail!]
Leader:	*Dua, huansema ne dua –* [Tail, fly's tail]
Response:	[*no response; silence expected*].

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 06-11-2020)

The operational rule for participants in this play-song is that the respondents are required to confirm whether the animals or creatures mentioned possess tails. The participating children are however expected to be cautious and not get caught by the thrill of simply repeating "*dua*" ("tail") to every animal suggested. This is because not all animals or creatures have tails. As a result, the child who exclaims "*dua*" in response to a creature that does not have a tail is out of the performance. The children, through their play, thus learn about their environment.

It is particularly noteworthy, that through the medium of these play-songs, we are able to appreciate the manner children skilfully appropriate indigenous knowledge and traditional oral resources to promote their own learning. As oral poets, the children demonstrate the needed ability to observe phenomena and experiences around them and successfully utilize them in their songs.

4.3.8 *Family and Ascribed Roles*

As has already been alluded to, family is an important factor that form part of the indigenous knowledge systems of Africa. Subsequently, a mirror reflecting the society, some of the songs serve as a commentary on family and socially ascribed roles. One of such songs is *Maame hyɛ gyaadze* ("Mummy in the kitchen.")

Interestingly, while following the theme of family, a new phenomenon of the domestication of a foreign language in orature emerged in the course of this research. During the children's oral performance, it was discovered that the song appeared twice in the children's repertoire, sung in both the Akan language and in English. Indeed, there were a few of such songs in which this phenomenon occurred, where the children performed different language versions of the same song. By deliberately alternating the language in which the song was sung, the children demonstrated not only their facility with both English and Akan languages but also showed that it is possible to use a foreign language to express quintessential African thoughts and knowledge without sacrificing meaning. For the purpose of the analysis they have been combined below.

Maame wɔ gyaadze, orenua omu-nsu
[Mummy in the kitchen, cooking rice-water]

Paapa wɔ asado, orehwɛ tibi
[Father in the living room, watching TV]

Mmofra no wɔ paado, worebɔ ampe
[The children are outside, playing *ampe*]

Amina wo ture nu mu, ɔrewhɛ ntoso
[Amina in the garden, planting tomatoes.]

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 15-10-2020)

It can be inferred from the song that it is a weekend morning given that the entire family, including the children who ordinarily should be at school, are all at home. As it pertains in traditional African societies, the mother provides food – rice-water[28], as we are told in the song. The father however is in the hall watching television, while the children are outside playing a game of *Ampe*[29]. We note, though, that there is an activity in the garden involving 'Amina'. The name Amina is normally used by Muslims who usually come from the northern part of Ghana. They often come to the south of Ghana, especially the capital Accra, in search of work because the north of Ghana is generally not as developed as the south, which is more developed and has a lot more employment opportunities. In many Akan societies, however, most of these job seekers from the north end up being integrated into various Akan families and serve not only as lived-in servants but also act as older siblings to the younger children in the homes.

Children are not always direct in representing characters – which often is themselves – in their songs. Some of the play-songs collected make use of animals as characters. The song "*Dabodabo ne ne'mba*" ("duck with her ducklings") like the preceding song, throws the spotlight on family and the ascribed roles within it for its members.

> *Dabodabo ne ne'mba*
> [The duck with her ducklings]
>
> *wɔre kɔ sukul*
> [she is sending the ducklings to school]
>
> *na wo resu*
> [but they are crying]

---

[28] Rice-water is a kind of porridge made of rice. It is eaten warm or hot with sugar and milk added.

[29] *Ampe* is a kind of game which involves two players at a time. The players jump and shoot their legs with a handclap serving as a timing. One of the players wins a point if the same foot is shot, while the other player wins a point if the other foot is shot.

wo resu na wo tsie mu sɛ
[they are crying and shouting]

kwa kwa kwa
[kwa kwa kwa]

kwa kwa kwa
[kwa kwa kwa.]

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 06-11-2020)

The song echoes a universal experience in which children being taken out of their "comfort zone" into a new environment such as school, protest and like the ducklings, cry out. But this, often discomforting experience for children, is an essential stage of life that one needs to pass through in order to be equipped with the skills and knowledge that would serve the child as he or she grows up. William Shakespeare similarly and famously captured in Act II, Scene IV of "As You Like It", the seven ages of man, where we encounter "the whining school-boy, with his satchel /and shining morning face, creeping like snail /unwillingly to school" (line 145-147).

But the children's recreation of this scenario in their play-song represents a realisation of a departure from innocence to consciousness and maturation in their journey of socialisation. Importantly, the song throws the spotlight not only on the children as members of the family but on the role of the mother in traditional societies as the key caregiver of the children keeping them in both familiar and unfamiliar environment, as they grow.

This characteristic of giving care and nurturing is further emphasised in the song *Nantwi kor onyi ne mba* ("One cow and her calves").

Nantwi kor onyi ne mba
[One cow and her calves]

wore kɔ efu mu kɔ we afu
[went to the bushes to eat grass]

wo we wie na wore so de
[when they finished eating they cried]

moo moo moo moo moo moo moo
[moo moo moo moo moo moo moo]

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 06-11-2020).

The cow, as we learn from the children's song, has the responsibility of giving its young sustenance to aid the young calves' survival. Indeed, in traditional societies, the mother's influence in the lives of children is enduring and ever present, even when she is not physically available. The song *Tɛlɛfoon no rebo* ("the telephone is ringing") offers us a window through which we can appreciate the phenomenon of how a mother's presence seems to tarry in the consciousness of the children.

Tɛlɛfoon no rebɔ
[The telephone is ringing]

Tɛlɛfoon no rebɔ
[the telephone is ringing]

na oyɛ woana
[who can it be?]

na oyɛ woana
[who can it be?]

obɛ yɛ me maame
[I'm sure it's my mother]

obɛ yɛ me maame

[I'm sure it's my mother.]

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 05-11-2020)

From the song above we learn that a telephone at home is ringing. The child does not guess but rather states with certainty that it has to be their mother on the phone. In reality, however, it could be anyone at the other end of the telephone. But the child's fixated answer that it is her mother is more of a result of her consciousness of her mother's seeming eternal presence than any other consideration.

In Akan cosmology, the earth which provides sustenance to mankind is considered feminine, a goddess. Almost all members of the community work the earth, *Asaase Yaa* (Goddess Earth Yaa), to gain their livelihoods. In similar vein, mothers are heavily relied upon as they not only give life to their young through birth but also provide sustenance, protection and guidance for the young in society. From the serious to the mundane, the mother is seen as always availing herself to attend to the concerns of the younger members of the society and this is reflective in the children's play-songs which draws from the indigenous knowledge system and cultural practices of the community.

4.3.9 *Health, Wellness and Medicine*

Health, wellness and medicine are elements that are frequently referenced in the play-songs of children. Indeed, falling sick and being treated are part of the experience of children as they grow up. The use of the enema, a traditional method of treating various sicknesses, is a familiar treatment method. As this tool and process is a central concern, the children typically compose a

song about the experience. In *Ama yare fever* ("Ama has a fever") we get a better appreciation of this.

> *Ama yare fever*
> [Ama has a fever]
>
> *nyamu meko*
> [grind pepper]
>
> *and put in de bentua*
> [and put in the enema]
>
> *fee neto*
> [prise open her anus]
>
> *and jump jump jump*
> [and jump jump jump]
>
> *and poo*
> [and poo…]
>
> (Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 05-11-2020)

In the song above, the children's emphasis on the spice of pepper, is not to say that is the only ingredient used in the preparation of the herbal medicine, but rather to suggest that it is the most unpleasant one central in their recollection, hence the need to appropriate this in the song. The humorous depiction of the process – "prise open her anus / and jump jump jump / and poo…" – gives an indication of the shared experience which requires the recipient of the enema, as instructed, to jump so the medicine can clear any excreta clogged in the body, which is then excreted. We can also observe also in this song the linguistic phenomenon of code-switching from Akan to English which serves to give an indication of the children's capability of describing phenomena and communicating in either language with relative ease.

The song "*me sisiw, me dzonku"* ("my waist, my knee") is in two parts and performs a dual function of serving as commentary on the health condition of the aged, as well as promoting literacy among themselves as children. A known condition associated with old age is general body weakness, in particular waist and knee discomforts. In the first part of the song, children imitate the sounds of discomfort that the old usually make, while they clutch those body parts in demonstration.

Leader: *me sisiw*
                  [my waist]

Respondents: *mmmm…*
                  [mmmm…]

Leader: *me sisiw*
                  [my waist]
Respondents: *mmmm…*
                  [mmmm…]

Leader: *me dzonku*
                  [my knee]
Respondents: *dzonku dzonku dzonku*
                  [knee knee knee]

Leader: *me dzonku*
                  [my knee]
Respondents: *dzonku dzonku dzonku*
                  [knee knee knee.]

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 06-11-2020)

It should be noted that, as the lead singer utters "my waist" or "my knee," the rest of the group mimic the onomatopoeic groan of pain, in response. The performance highlights the difficulties associated with ageing. Although the children capture this condition in a humorous manner, the struggles that their grandparents and the aged in the community go through is not lost on them.

One interesting aspect about the song is that, the imitation does not end at the entertainment level. The children, in the second part of the song, proceed to utilise this rendering as an avenue to test their own knowledge regarding which animals can be said to have knees or waist, for instance.

Leader: *nantwi ne kotodwe*
               [cow's knee]
Respondents: *kotodwe kotodwe kotodwe*
               [knee knee knee]

Leader: *apɔnkye ne kotodwe*
               [goat's knee]
Respondents: *kotodwe kotodwe kotodwe*
               [knee knee knee]

Leader: *bɔdɔm ne kotodwe*
               [dog's knee]
Respondents: *kotodwe kotodwe kotodwe*
               [knee knee knee]

Leader: *ɔwɔ ne kotodwe*
               [snake's knee.]

Respondents: [silent].

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 06-11-2020)

The repetition of the *kotodwe* – knee – as a body part is an affirmation that those particular animals mentioned do have the *kotodwe* as a body feature. But where an animal that does not have the bodily feature of *kotodwe* is mentioned, the players are expected to be silent. For anyone who proffers an answer that is wrong is deemed to have failed the test and is subsequently taken out or is given a knock on the head, or any other punishment that the children agree is deserving.

This activity also has the didactic effect of teaching children to speak truthfully when they know something for sure and keep silent when they do not know the facts.

As we have seen, it is typical of children to, in the course of their role play, create imaginary dramatic situations involving themselves and adults. Far from being restricted to treating ordinary issues, children sing about serious topics, including death. One such illustration is the play-song, "*Mu mma yɛn kɔ hwɛ Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta*" ("Let's go check on Adjoa Atta.")

Stanza one

Children:
Mu mma yɛn kɔ hwɛ Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta
[Let's go check on Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta]

Mu mma yɛn kɔ hwe Adjoa Atta na ne ho tse sɛn ni
[Let's go check on Adjoa Atta and see how she is doing]

Mother of Adjoa:
Adjoa Atta ɔkɔ bɔrla, ɔkɔ borla, ɔkɔ bɔrla
[Adjoa Atta is disposing off the garbage, the garbage, the garbage]

Adjoa Atta oko borla na momfre me so nko
[Adjoa Atta is disposing off the garbage, so don't bother me]

Children:
Mu mma yenkɔ yɛn fie, yɛn fie, yɛn fie
[let's go home, go home, go home]

Mu mma yɛn kɔ yɛn fie, na ehɔ tse sen ni
[Let's go home and see what is happening.]

Stanza two

Children:
Mu mma yɛn kɔ hwɛ Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta
[Let's go check on Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta]

Mu mma yɛn ko hwɛ Adjoa Atta na ne ho tse sɛn ni
[Let's go check on Adjoa Atta and see how she is doing]

121

Mother of Adjoa:	*Adjoa Atta ɔyare, ɔyare, ɔyare* [Adjoa Atta is sick, is sick, is sick] *Adjoa Atta ɔyare na momfre me so nkɔ* [Adjoa Atta is sick, so don't bother me]
Children:	*Mu mma yɛn kɔ yɛn fie, yɛn fie, yɛn fie* [Let's go home, go home, go home] *Mu mma yɛn kɔ yɛn fie, na ɛhɔ tse sɛn ni* [Let's go home and see what is happening.]

Stanza three

Children:	*Mu mma yɛn kɔ hwɛ Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta* [Let's go check on Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta] *Mu mma yɛn kɔ hwɛ Adjoa Atta na ne ho tse sɛn ni* [Let's go check on Adjoa Atta and see how she is doing]
Mother of Adjoa:	*Adjoa Atta na we'wu, we'wu, we'wu* [Adjoa Atta is dead, is dead, is dead] *Adjoa Atta na we'wu, na mo mfre me so nko* [Adjoa Atta is dead, so don't bother me]
Children [while leaving]:	*lala lala la la, la la, la la,* *lala lala la la, la la, la la la.*

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 16-10-2020)

A striking quality in the song is the progressive ordering of thoughts in each stanza – a transition from health, to sickness, and finally, death. In the first stanza, we are introduced to a playmate of the children named Adjoa Atta whom the children decide to visit. Unfortunately, they did not get the opportunity to meet her because she was out of the house. The fact that Adjoa Atta had been sent to dispose of the garbage is an indication that she appeared to be healthy and was not ill. In

the second stanza, perhaps a few days later, we learn that Adjoa Atta had taken ill. And in the last stanza, Adjoa Atta's death is announced to the children.

Far from children being dismissed as not having knowledge about death and how to conduct themselves, the song depicts children's awareness of the stages of life with death being the final stage. We are also given an indication that children are capable of understanding loss and the need to behave appropriately to the grieving mother, as the now saddened children deliberately depart from their usual talkative posture because they literally have no words left to say following the tragic and unexpected loss of their friend. In African societies, grief is a shared phenomenon. It is therefore not surprising that the western consolation expression "sorry for your loss" is considered a misnomer in African traditional societies. This is because mourning is considered a communally shared experience and not an individual's burden to carry alone.

Importantly, these values that the children gain from their immersion into the indigenous knowledge system of their community prepare them for life. In particular, they teach them how they are to relate with others in society in different kinds of situations pertaining to the subject matter of health and wellness.

4.3.10 *The Power, Facility and Empowerment of the Woman and Girl*

From the songs collected, one of the dominant themes that emerged for analysis was the power of the female gender and her empowerment. As many as five songs captured this theme, albeit, with varying presentations.

In the song, "*Akodaa kiti kiti"* ("Little Child") we learn about a girl of incredible self-awareness who refuses to be cowered from speaking her mind. Beginning in the form of a dialogue, a conversation takes place between a male bully and a little girl.

Bully: *Akodaa kiti kiti*
[Little child]

w'ano wisi wisi
[with sharp mouth]

Obaa me si wo bewu o
[Lady, I say you will die]

Girl: *minwu!*
[I won't die!]

Bully: *ɛh?*
[really?]

Obaa, yɛfrɛ wo sɛn
[Lady, what is your name]

Girl: *obaa pa*
[virtuous lady]

Bully: *ɛh?*
[really?]

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 06-11-2020)

Fig. 6: Children clapping and skipping [30]to a rhythm of a play-song.

While our focus is on the thematic concerns, it does not escape us as we encounter at first-hand

the manner in which the children appropriate oral poetics, particularly, the deployment of

alliteration and repetition, to musical effect. Indeed, in the introductory lines, we find alliteration

and rhyme, a delightful combination entailed in the description of the little girl:

---

[30] Picture and video taken on 29-09-2020 with the permission of the school; declared in the application for ethical clearance submitted before the study began.

Akodaa kiti kiti
[Little child]

w'ano wisi wisi
[with sharp mouth.]

But quite aside from the poetry, the initial lines do not only give an indication of the character of the "little girl," but it also prepares us to appreciate her resistance to the threats made by her prevaricator, a resistance that causes him to respond in surprise: "*eh*?" meaning "really?"

Bully*:*   *Obaa me si wo bewu o*
                [Lady, I say you will die]

Girl: *minwu!*
                [I won't die!]

Bully: *ɛh?*
                [really?]

As indicated, we note from the scenario presented that when the girl's nemesis ironically states, "*eh*", it actually is an indication of his shock as though to say, "You dare talk back?" This is because, the little girl repels all the negative attempts at bullying her and reverses all the labelling.

Although the play-song recognises that there are attempts to suppress women's voices, it points to the fact that even at an early age, girls are encouraged to speak their minds and be independent. Their "sharp" mouths must not be blunted by anyone arrogating to themselves only, the right to have a voice.

The use of dialogue is again adopted in the song, *Dɔkɔdɔkɔ worekɔ hen* ("Duck where are you going?") The difference here is that unlike the previous song which involves human characters,

126

this play-song takes the form of a fable, using the duck as a symbol. Like, "*Akodaa kiti kiti*" ("Little Child"), the song "*Dɔkɔdɔkɔ worekɔ hen*" expresses female confidence and self-awareness.

> *Dɔkɔdɔkɔ worekɔ hen?*
> [Duck, where are you going?]
>
> *mere kɔ ahenfie*
> [I am going to the palace]
>
> *hwɛ ne sisi*
> [look at her waist]
>
> *hwɛ ne to*
> [look at her bottom]
>
> *daa, na wakyea ne to*
> [each day, she swings her bottom]
>
> *kyea ne to*
> [swings her bottom]
>
> *na wa kyea ne to*
> [she swings her bottom]
>
> *kyea ne to*
> [swings her bottom.]
>
> (Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 06-11-2020)

From the song, the duck is being used as a symbol to express sexuality as an instrument of power and confidence, given how the sensual body parts of waist and buttocks are stressed in the song. We are not told whether the duck is a royal going home to the palace or a visitor, but the assured, purposeful and sexy stride she takes to the palace, a place of power, is an indication of her own power and the awareness of this.

As we have observed, humour is sometimes employed in children's play-songs. We have seen already that children embrace the opportunity of making adults the subject of mockery and this can be seen in the song, "*Abrewa Sekina"* ("Old Lady Sekina").

> *Abrewa Sekina*
> [Old lady Sekina]
>
> *wa ye ne tsir dondo*
> [has made her hair glossy]
>
> *O lady mama*
> [O lady mama]
>
> *abrewa bɛko America*
> [the old lady is heading to America.]
>
> (Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 05-11-2020)

The children being aware of western ways and influences use the song to taunt an old woman who has dressed her hair in a modern fashion. As a result of her action of appropriating western beautification methods, the children tease her that she belongs to America and must therefore be headed there.

This observation by the children, through their play-song, feeds into current African decolonial conversations about Africans reviving and being proud of their culture and identity rather than trying to appropriate western values because of the misconception that western civilisation is better than that of Africans.

But older women whom the children sometimes make mockery of, do have other abilities to attract the persons they desire. In the eponymous titled song "Awagyirga", the old woman is not

the subject of mockery but rather her conquest, the younger Awagyirga whom she gets married to. We learn from the song why Awagyirga married the old woman.

> *Awagyirga*
> [Awagyirga]
>
> *gelengele*
> [gelengele]
>
> *wako'ware abrewa*
> [has married an old woman]
>
> gelengele
> *[gelengele]*
>
> *abrewa ne nkwan ye ne de*
> [the old woman's soup is tasty]
>
> *gelengele*
> [gelengele.] (Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 15-10-2020)

According to the children, the old woman used her cooking skills to enrapture Awagyirga. Importantly, the play-song also highlights the often-undermined facility of women to influence an intended course of action they need when they have an opportunity. The song suggests that the old lady was clever and not so brazen in her conquest of Awagyirga.

Sometimes, however, the female can employ her sexuality more brazenly to achieve what she wants. "Araba Nsaba" is a children's play-song that tells about a lady who uses her body to get by.

> *Araba Nsaba nko po*
> [Araba Nsaba is no fisher]

nanso onya nam we
[yet she gets the choicest fish to eat]

Araba Nsaba
[Araba Nsaba]

basia edwaman onko po
[an immoral woman who is no fisher]

nanso onya nam we
[yet gets the choicest fish to eat]

Araba Nsaba
[Araba Nsaba.]

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 15-10-2020)

It can be discerned that the tone of the song suggests strong disapproval of Araba Nsaba's actions. Indeed, the description of Araba Nsaba as "loose" or "whoring" calls her morality into question. But the reality is, although Araba's actions are deemed reprehensible, the situation is really a question of power and survival; it is about her ability to use her personal resource (her body), in a transactional arrangement with the fishermen, to attain what she wants.

Whether the song is about a little girl fighting back and denouncing a bully, or an old lady breaking convention and showing off her beauty, or a lady appropriating her body to survive, or a duck boldly displaying her sexuality, the children's songs capture all the female characters showing a remarkable awareness of their power and they are not afraid to show it. The fact that the children have not only observed experiences but also appropriated them into song is testament to their ability to make use of the inherent knowledge system of their community to which they are contributing their own oral artforms.

4.3.11 *Competition and the Irrepressible Spirit*

Competition and rivalry are familiar issues children experience as they grow up. While children see competition as important and necessary, they are also aware that competition needs to be realised within the context of rules and fairness to prevent any kind of conflict. In the play-song, "*Nnoma kakraba ebien*" ("Two little birds") the children use two birds to illustrate their point about how unhealthy competition can cause conflict, even among family.

> *Nnoma kakraba ebien*
> [Two little birds]
>
> *wɔ wɔn bow kese mu*
> [in one big nest]
>
> *aha yɛ shew*
> [one side is warm]
>
> *aha yɛ yuŋ*
> [the other side is cold]
>
> *panyin no kaakyirɛ kakaraba*
> [the older asked the younger]
>
> *dɛ pin ha*
> [to shift to this side]
>
> *kakraba no kaakyire panyin*
> [the younger also asked the older]
>
> *dɛ pin ho*
> [to shift to that side]
>
> *pin ha, pin ho*
> [shift here, shift there]
>
> *wo pin pin wɔn ho*
> [they began to push each other.]
>
> (Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 16-10-2020)

We can appreciate the remarkable knowledge the children have about the curious practices of birds in their habitat. Not only do the children demonstrate that they have the keen observing eyes of naturalists, they also creatively appropriate this knowledge in their play-song to drive home the theme unhealthy competition fuelled by selfishness.

However, structured competitions and contests with rules that ensures fairness see the children getting behind it and supporting their side, encouraging the contestant or contestants not to give up until they are victorious. In the play-song, "*Puteese*" ("Floats"), a song which is also sung during more formal children's games and competitions, the children use the metaphor of a fishing buoy to show how irrepressible the side they are rallying behind is.

> *Puteese o puteese*
> [Floats o floats]
>
> *yee puteese*
> [yee floats]
>
> *puteese o puteese*
> [floats o floats]
>
> *yee puteese*
> [yee floats]
>
> *ɛhom yɛn do o*
> [whether you push us down]
>
> *aŋhom yɛn do o*
> [or you don't push us down]
>
> *yɛ tɛw nsu n'enyiwa o*
> [we keep floating in water o…]
>
> (Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 15-10-2020)

Just as a buoy on water when put under pressure does not sink but rises to the surface, the song stresses this quality of resilience in their preferred side. The song rallies the team to keep fighting until victory is achieved.

The songs teach the children about challenges in life and encourage them to persevere. In our exploration of the theme, we are struck by the children's appreciation of the philosophical, as well as the skilful manner they tap into and make use of their observations and the experiences they have gained from their communities.

4.1.12 *Betrayal and the struggles of life*

As we have come to appreciate from the analysis of the songs thus far, children's play-songs cover an array of issues ranging from the mundane to the serious with some venturing into the philosophical. The children learn to appreciate that in the journey of life, hardly anything of worth is gained easily without one having to put in some effort to overcome some form of struggle or difficulty one may encounter.

One of the play-songs that highlight the philosophy that effort is central to success is the song, *Ekutu no abere* ("The orange is ripe"). It is presented in the form of a dialogue involving two people.

> *Ekutu no abere*
> [The orange is ripe]
> *huruw na tsew*
> [jump and pluck]
>
> *mango no abere*

[the mango is ripe]

huruw na tsew
[jump and pluck]

brɔferɛ no abere
[the pawpaw is ripe]

huruw na tsew
[jump and pluck]

atsew ato famu
[it has fallen on the ground]

kotow na fa
[bend down and pick]

atsew ato famu
[it has fallen on the ground]

kotow na fa.
[bend down and pick.]

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 16-10-2020).

The conversation depicts a scenario involving a child and an adult. The child observes that the fruit on a tree is ripe and presumably ready to eat. As the child makes this observation, the adult tells him to jump and pluck the fruit. In the process of plucking the fruit, it drops to the ground causing consternation to the child who confirms that because he could not hold on to the fruit, it had fallen. The adult in offering a solution tells the child to bend down and pick up the fruit.

In effect, what the children's song teaches is that whatever challenges or problems one may encounter in life, there are solutions. It cautions that unexpected complications could come out of seemingly simple situations but encourages that when that happens, one must not give up but

make an effort to achieve one's goal. Throwing one's hand in despair is not a quality expected of the African child.

Through their play-songs, the children are made aware of other serious situations that are not always easy to overcome but nonetheless are part of human existence. One of the songs that explores the theme of treachery as an unfortunate part of life is, "*Obra*" ("Life").

Obra o, obra
[life o, life]

mi si mi dua do
[I am perched on my tree]

mere hwɛ nsuroma
[looking at the stars]

ɔse meŋ suɛ nu
[he said help me put my load down]

makɔ akɔ suɛ nu
[I helped him do this]

abaa me tsi 'po!'
[a stick smashes my head 'po!']

ma wɔ ne'enyi 'so!'
[and I pecked at his eyes 'so!']

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 05-11-2020)

Using a bird as a central metaphor, the song talks about how a bird's trust was betrayed by someone the bird didn't expect to do that. The bird had been enjoying a quiet moment with nature when an unidentified person asked for its assistance. Without suspecting any foul play, the

bird offered to help but while its defences were down, the person, in an obviously premeditated action, attacked it, striking a blow on its head with a club.

The play-song teaches children to learn about the importance of caution in their relationship and dealings with others. There should always be a limit to the extent one can trust and this is a life lesson that is instilled in the children, one that is reflective in their song compositions.

4.3.13 *Native Knowledge on Farming and Fishing*

The study unearthed that within the communities from which the children come, there are traditional knowledges and practices some of which the children used as material for their play-song compositions. For instance, as already indicated in the description of the research sites, Ajumako-Bisease is a farming community. As a result, there are songs reflecting that economic activity in the rural community. Komenda on the other hand is a fishing community, therefore there are song compositions about fishing centering on that community.

The song, "*Bro Ato na akuko nu*" ("Brother Ato and the chicken") is a song that reveals a traditional practice that is frowned upon. In the song, Brother Ato engages in this act and as a result, there is an unhappy consequence.

> *Bro Ato*
> [Bro Ato]
>
> *akokɔ no reba abato*
> [the chicken wanted to lay an egg]
>
> *na wo de wo nsa ahyɛ ne to*
> [but you put your finger in its anus]

ama woan'ya anto
[and now it is no longer laying.]

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 05-11-2020)

The children sing about their disappointment in the conduct of a fictional Bro Ato who is said to have inserted his finger into the hen's anus. In traditional societies, the practice of inserting the smallest 'pinky' or 'baby' finger into the anus is a crude way of checking whether the hen was going to lay an egg imminently. A farmer could check to confirm the reason for which the hen was fretting and quickly get it to a comfortable place where it could lay its egg.

From the play-song, it is obvious that beyond this knowledge, the children are aware that interfering with nature's course could lead to unintended consequences – like disrupting the egg-laying process of the chicken, leading to the egg no longer being laid.

Aside from farming, the children also showcase to us their knowledge of fishing in the play-song, "*Koso boka*" ("Try East").

Kwesi
[Kwesi]

koso boka
[try east of the sea]

na we'wura
[there is plenty there]

okyena anopa
[tomorrow morning]

koso boka
[try east of the sea]

na we'wura
[there is plenty there.]

It is implied from the song that there had been previous fruitless attempts by Kwesi to catch fish whenever he had gone fishing. He is therefore being encouraged to change course and "try east" with a promise that he would find "plenty [of fish] there."

Through this song, children have a practical encounter with the clichéd saying that one cannot keep doing the same things and expect different results. In looking for a solution, one must be prepared to get out of one's comfort zone and look at several places and not dwell only on a singular choice out of many options.

In exploring the themes of native knowledge on farming and fishing, however, the analysis of the songs appears to give a paradoxical prescription to embrace both tradition and change – albeit with caution. For while it is acceptable to try new approaches such as in the case of fishing, it is improper to adopt the practice of the character who interfered with nature's own course.

4.3.14 *Protection and Self-defence*

Another theme that emerges from the analysis of the songs was protection of the little children. One song that brings out this theme is "*Woa na ɔkotow garden nu mu'ɛ*" ("who is in the garden?") a simple play-song in which a group of children form a human circle depicting a garden, with one crouching child as the "little baby."

Fig. 7: A child in the center of the human [31]circle as other children go round the circle

Just like the song *Maame hyɛ gyaadze* ("Mummy in the kitchen"), this song also had two different language renderings – Akan and English versions. The Akan and English versions as originally sung by the children have been depicted below, in an almost flawless translation.

Woa na ɔkotow garden nu mu'ɛ
[who is in the garden?]

afra kakraba'a
[my little baby]

me mbra mbɛ kyena'a
[should I come and catch him?]

---

[31] Picture and video taken on 05-11-2020 with the permission of the school; declared in the application for ethical clearance submitted before the study began.

oho
[no]

ta mu do ɛ
[then you, follow me!]

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 06-11-2020)

As seen from the song, the children believe the "little baby" has to be fiercely protected by adults hence the repetition of "no" for emphasis to stay off the pursuer who intends capturing the child.

The song represents an enactment of the children's appreciation of their own relationship with their parents or parent-figures who offer them protection. Just as the baby in being described as "little" depicts its vulnerability, the children, identifying with the baby, indirectly depict themselves as vulnerable in the eyes of the older chaperones. Given that African traditional societies place premium on children, the children's knowledge of this which they have represented in song is appropriate.

But the children also recognise that there are some situations where one must defend oneself and not just be defenceless. Even in the face of overwhelming odds, one is required to be brave and face adversity. Consider the oral song, *Dabi mekɔ nwura mu* ("one day I went to the forest") below.

Dabi mekɔ nwura mu – kayinka
[One day I went to the forest – kayinka]

me ko hu saman
[I saw a ghost]

saman nkiti nkiti
[tiny tiny ghost]

na mesero o
[I was scared]

na mesoro paa
[I was very scared]

ɔpuma ne tuo
[he cocked his gun]

menso me mepuma me tuo
[I also cocked my gun]

ɔde hwɛ me so
[he pointed it at me]

menso me de hwɛ ne so
[I also pointed mine at him]

ateka ateka
[deadlock, deadlock]

ate kpe'e!
[you hear it go off "kpe'e!"]

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 06-11-2020)

There are actually other versions of this play-song, the most popular of which is playwright Efua Sutherland's *Tahinta*, a play for children. The rendition used for the analysis, however, is the children's own creation, observed and recorded. Being imbibed with the native philosophy of their community, the children learn that even when they are afraid, they should not allow the fear to overcome them. This is why even when the persona in the song admits to being terrified – a condition he actually repeats and emphasises using the qualifier "very" – he nonetheless squares up to his bully, albeit a spiritual entity.

It is not clear who was victorious in the ensuing standoff. However, what clearly emerges from the encounter is the fact that children are aware they must demonstrate courage and defend

themselves and what they believe is right at all costs without backing down. As unearthed by the analysis, the play-songs indicate that protection and self-defence are also important values in African traditional societies.

4.4 SUMMARY ON THEMES

From the foregoing, it can be deduced that the oral song compositions by children cover a large spectrum of interests and themes in the communities in which they find themselves. This underlines the central function of literature – a mirror reflecting society.

Some of the themes analysed have included discussions on life and death; traditional knowledge systems and literacy; family and relationships; love and conflict; religion, health and medicine; gender and women's empowerment; identity; rules and transgressions among others. The themes cover traditional practices and philosophies among the rural communities but also reflects the changing times and their effect on the lives on the people.

Although most of the songs were composed in the indigenous language, there were a few songs sung in English, which is the country's official language and the designated language of instruction in schools. Interestingly, in the instances where the songs were cast in English, it emerged from the analysis that those songs were domesticated and given distinctly African characteristics: they contained elements of African orature and reflected African values.

The indigenous epistemological system, serving as agency within the community in which children reside, is thus a vital mechanism that is appropriated toward the socialisation and preparation of children for life. Crucially, the play-songs thus far analysed, determine beyond

doubt that they can be used as tools to help revive and reposition African indigenous knowledges as vital elements that need to take a central space in African oral literature and not remain at the margins as has been the case.

4.5 STYLE IN THE PLAY-SONGS

As its tool for stylistic analysis, this study adopted Finnegan's proposed model of analysis including, multimodality. It also adopted Okpewho's prescriptions about the features that constitute African oral literature. These served as guide allowing the mapping of the prescribed constituent elements against the children's oral compositions as a way of validating the children's art as being authentic African oral poetry.

There were, however, limitations in respect of the multimodal tools available to the children to make music. Given that, according to UNESCO 2019 official statistics, about 87% of Ghanaian primary school going children, who were the subjects of the study, are in school. This therefore had implications for the study because in the school setting, the children are strictly governed by school rules that prohibits them from bringing "playthings" to school, and this includes the traditional musical instruments like the castanets and the *dawuro,* an instrument made of metal which shaped in a form of a cone upon which a wooden or metal rod is hit to produce sound. These are often used in traditional music production.

As a result, Ghanaian school children are left constrained in play situations in the school environment in terms of the tools available to them to use in their often-spontaneous play sessions. Besides, the Ghanaian curricula, as indicated in the literature, unfortunately, does not

give much attention to cultural studies, a concern this research hopes to address. Consequently, this affected aspects of the research given the absence of some of the stylistic elements of orature and multimodality that, perhaps, may have been present in more traditional settings, other than the schools.

Nevertheless, the current study, as indicated in the Chapter 2 which discussed the methodology, found the schools the best setting to locate and engage the children in the oral performance of their play-songs.

In addition to elements of multimodality, Finnegan suggests that an effective analysis of an oral performance includes an assessment of ingredients such as the performers, the audience and "various detailed devices which the performer has at his disposal to convey his product to the audience," while Okpewho offers us his seminal discussion on oral stylistic elements, which include repetition, ideophones and parallelism.

Given the points of intersections between the ideas of Finnegan and Okpewho whose work appeared later, the research adopted an eclectic approach by centering on those elements that are mutually exclusive. Beginning with an exploration of multimodality, the research as well embraced and applied Finnegan's proposal of analysing performers, audience, and what she refers to as those "various detailed devices which the performer has at his disposal to convey his product to the audience," and also proceeds to equally employ Okpewho's much advocated features of African oral literature, namely: repetition, ideophones, parallelism, piling and association, tonality, imagery, allusion, and symbolism.

The study investigated and uncovered these elements in the children's play-songs; it analysed the function of these elements in the songs and further established how those choices contributed to our understanding of indigenous knowledge systems.

4.5.1 *Elements of Multimodality*

Flowing from Finnegan's contention that multimodality entails a multiplex range of verbal and auditory features of performances, as well as non-auditory resources, the current study unearths certain, albeit limited, kinds of multimodal elements in the children's play-songs.

Given that the verbal and auditory elements in African oral production such as repetition, tonalities and ideophones, are discussed under Okpewho's categorization of the features that he argues constitute African oral literature, this section of the analysis will focus on the non-auditory multimodal elements embedded in the play-songs of the children.

We have already indicated that, due to its rules that insist on pupils bringing only school approved items to school, the school environment inhibits the deployment of the full oral and multimodal resources that complement the oral play-songs performances of the children – resources that they may otherwise have had if they were in the more relaxed, less-restricted setting of their homes. Notwithstanding the limited material resources available to the children during play time in their school setting, the children make use of some non-auditory multimodal elements to aid the successful rendering of their oral performance. These include clapping, touching, embracing, body orientation, demeanour, changing phases of excitement, movements, spatial and temporal dimensions and cultural technologies which involved materials such as their footwear.

4.5.1.1 Clapping

Clapping is perhaps the most common music making activity, aside from singing. It is an integral aspect of the play-songs of children. More than just making music, it was discovered that the children sometimes clap to a set rhythm in order to reinforce the point of the song. For example, in the song *Obi awu ne ba* ("Someone brought forth a child"), song which promotes literacy, we encounter this phenomenon of a clap being made simultaneously as each letter is mentioned while spelling a word.

Variation 1

Leader: *Obi awu ne ba*
          [Someone brought forth a child]

          Dze no ko sukuu
          [Took him to school]

          Oko sua 'dompe' supel
          [To learn how to spell 'bone']

Child 1: D-o-m-p-e! *(a clap simultaneously as each letter is mentioned)*

Variation 2

Leader: *Obi awu ne ba*
          [Someone brought forth a child]

          De no ko sukuu
          [Took him to school]

          Oko sua 'ɛtam' supel
          [To learn how to spell 'cloth']

Child 2: Ɛ-t-a-m! *(a clap simultaneously as each letter is mentioned)*

Variation 3

Leader: *Obi awu ne ba*
                [Someone brought forth a child]

                De no kɔ sukuu
                [Took him to school]

                Oko sua ne din supel
                [To learn how to spell his name]
Child 3:   A-k-u-n-ɔ! *(a clap simultaneously as each letter is mentioned)*

                (Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 06-11-2020)

We find yet another example of the use of clapping in *Sukul rekyerew dzin* ("School Registration"), a song that the children, in demonstration of their linguistic abilities, rendered separately in the two versions of Akan and English: two claps of the hand match the repetition of each letter as a name is being spelled.

                Sukul rekyerew dzin
                [School registration]

                kyerew we dzin
                [spell your name]

                sukul rekyerew dzin
                [school registration]

                kyerew we dzin.
                [spell your name]

If the player, say singer 1, is known as 'Kwame' this is what ensues.

                Singer 1: 'K' –
                Group response: K-K *(two claps – simultaneously as letter is repeated)*
                Singer 1: 'w'

Group response: w-w *(two claps – simultaneously as letter is repeated)*
Singer 1: 'a'
Group response: a-a *(two claps – simultaneously as letter is repeated)*
Singer 1: 'm'
Group response: m-m *(two claps – simultaneously as letter is repeated)*
Singer 1: 'e'
Group response: e-e *(two claps – simultaneously as letter is repeated)*

ALL: *Kwame*[32]!

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 15-10-2020

Just like we encounter in the song *Obi awu ne ba* ("Someone brought forth a child"), the use of clapping in the above song, is to promote literacy, particularly, how to spell. Indeed, it is astounding that whereas psychologists have identified repetition as an effective learning strategy, the children not only apply this strategy of repetition but reinforce the strategy by adding clapping, and this has the effect of helping the children, not only those who are leading the spelling but the group or audience responding as well, to retain the knowledge of how to spell that particular word. Other styles of clapping may be used depending on the rhythm and tempo of the song.

4.5.1.2 Gestures and Touch

Gestures are another form of non-verbal resource employed by children to enhance their play activity. During the performance, the child leading the song may use an index finger to identify, by way of pointing, the next person who is in line to respond to a particular course of action required. For example, in the song, *Dua* ("Tail") the leader points out who is next in line to give an answer.

---

[32] Part of the Akan day name system, 'Kwame' is the name of a male child born on Saturday.

Leader:	*Dua o dua*
	[Tail o tail]
All respond:	*dua!*
	[tail!]
Leader:	*dua o dua*
	[tail o tail]
All respond:	*dua!*
	[tail!]
Leader:	*dua, akoko ne dua*
	[tail, chicken's tail]
Player 1:	*dua!*
	[tail!]
Leader:	*dua, nantwi ne dua*
	[tail, cow's tail]
Player 2:	*dua!*
	[tail!]
Leader:	*dua, kitsew ne dua*
	[tail, lizard's tail]
Player 3:	*dua!*
	[tail!]
Leader:	*Dua, huansema ne dua –*
	[Tail, fly's tail]
Player 4:	[*no response; silence expected*].

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 06-11-2020)

The child leading the singing keeps pointing from person to person to perform until everyone had taken their turn to provide or attempt to provide a word that ends in -tion. Sometimes, a player may give a wrong answer in which case there is a collective derisory laughter which serves only briefly as penance, as the child who had the answer wrong is offered another chance in the next round by the gesture of pointing.

Another gesture employed in the play-songs is where one hand is placed in the palm of another as a sign of pleading. In the play-song *Hwehwɛ wo dɔ fo wɔ ha* ("Find your beloved here"), we encounter such an example where a non-verbal plea gesture is made to reinforce the oral appeal of the singer.

> *Pa wo dɔfo ne kyɛw*
> [Apologise to your beloved]
>
> *pa wo dɔfo ne kyɛw*
> [apologise to your beloved]
>
> *pa wo dɔfo ne kyɛw*
> [apologise to your beloved]
>
> *na ma ɛnyɛ wo dɛ*
> [and be happy about it.]
>
> (Author unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 15-10-2020)

While the lines in the song above is being sung, the children, like actors, perform the act of apologising as suggested. Various other non-verbal multimodal elements are employed in the rest of the song. The notable contrast is that whereas in the previous lines there is space – social distance – between the performer and an identified "beloved," we observe in the subsequent lines the skillful manner both space and touch are utilised in the song.

> *Kyea wo dɔfo ne nsamu*
> [Shake your beloved's hands]
>
> *kyea wo dɔfo ne nsamu*
> [shake your beloved's hands]
>
> *kyea wo dɔfo ne nsamu*
> [shake your beloved's hands]

na ma ɛnyɛ wo dɛ
[and be happy about it.]

pepa wo dɔfo ne nim
[wipe the tears of your beloved]

pepa wo dɔfo ne nim
[wipe the tears of your beloved]

pepa wo dɔfo ne nim
[wipe the tears of your beloved]

na ma ɛnyɛ wo dɛ
[and be happy about it.]

ye wo dɔfo atu
[embrace your beloved]

ye wo dɔfo atu
[embrace your beloved]

ye wo dɔfo atu
[embrace your beloved]

na ma ɛnyɛ wo dɛ
[and be happy about it.]

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 15-10-2020)

Indeed, "space" and "touch" as multimodal elements are not arbitrarily constructed. We notice the deliberately created progression of human relationship from the phatic level, beginning with a child initially shaking the hand of an identified "beloved," – a code to seek permission and not just invade the personal space of a child. This is achieved before the lead player progresses on to the level of intimacy, as he wipes the tears of the sorrowful partner, and finally embraces the friend.

In fact, bonding and creating a feeling of acceptability for the vulnerable is a key aspect of African culture and this is viewed not only in the extended family systems but also the general communal living of African societies, unlike western societies that tend to focus more on the individual. It is this need for connection, particularly through touch, as observed in the above that keeps recurring in the children's play-songs, such as the song *Afra kakraba kotoo awiam* ("Small child squatting in the sun").

Afra kakraba kotoo awiam
[There is a small child *squatting* in the sun]

daadaa na oresu
[who *cries* everyday]

afra sor, sor, sor
[small child, *get up, get up, get up]*

afra prupru w'atare mu'ɛ
[small child *dust off* your clothes]

afra twa wo ho, twa wo ho, twa wo ho
[Small child *turn round* and *round* and *round]*

afra kɔ fa wo dɔ fo'ɛ…
[small child go *embrace* your beloved.]

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 05-11-2020)

The italicized English words are done for emphasis. As indicated in the song, the children duly perform the action suggested by each line. Like the previous example, we appreciate how space is negotiated. We observe that the song begins with a child initially squatting, then standing up, dusting off his clothes, turning around before finally choosing and embracing a beloved out of

152

the circle of other child performers who in African dramatic performances are also the same as the audience.

The element of touch similarly is seen in the play-song *Pimpinaa* a song whose name serves as part of the title of the current thesis. During the rendering of the song, the lead player running towards a group of seating children utters the word "Pimpinaa" while simultaneously, akin to one running his fingers across the keys of a piano, runs his hands across the legs of the players that have been lined up. This technique is to get the players to be on the alert. Once this is done, the lead player proceeds with the singing and with every syllable, touch a leg of a participant. The loser is the one who is touched at the exact time that the last syllable is uttered.

But the idea of touch is not limited to doing so on others only. There are instances where a child in performance may touch parts of their own bodies to emphasise a particular point. We see an example of this in the song *Biribi faa* ("something passed").

> *Biribi faa*
> [Something passed]
>
> *biribi faa me honam nyinaa kɔ ma koma*
> [something passed through my body to my heart]
>
> *biribi faa*
> [something passed]
>
> *biribi faa me honam nyinaa kɔ ma koma*
> [something passed through my body to my heart]
>
> *oh oh oh oh*
> *oh oh oh oh oh oh oh oh oh oh*
>
> *la la la la*
> *la la la la la la la la la la.*

As explained when the same song was analysed under an exploration of themes, the children sing and at the same time apply hand gestures and touch of different parts of the body, eventually bringing their hand to rest on their heart. Through the element of touch, the children demonstrate what love means to them – a thing, a feeling they are unable to adequately describe but which, like electrical currents, they feel and experience.

4.5.1.3 Body Orientation and Demeanour

In addition to the foregoing non-verbal resources that have been discussed, another of the multiplex means by which the children bolster their performance is seen in the manner in which they orient their body, as well as the mood they create to communicate the song's message. This is demonstrated in the example below.

Leader: *me sisiw*
[my waist]

Respondents: *mmmm…*
[mmmm…]

Leader: *me sisiw*
[my waist]
Respondents: *mmmm…*
[mmmm…]

Leader: *me dzonku*
[my knee]
Respondents: *dzonku dzonku dzonku*
[knee knee knee]

<div style="text-align: center">

Leader: *me dzonku*
        [my knee]

Respondents: *dzonku dzonku dzonku*
        [knee knee knee.]

</div>

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 06-11-2020)

In the extract above, we find that that song stresses on two body parts – the waist and the knee. The children do not only sing but also dramatise their response by depicting the aches and discomforts that the elderly associate with those parts as they age. When the leader sings about the waist, just like the aged do, the children place their hands gingerly on their waist, contort their face into a grimace and mimic an intoned sound of pain – *mmmm* – just as they see the elderly do. As the song progresses and the leader sings about the knees, the players in response sing: "knees knees knees" while clutching their knees and, as though in pain, begin limping.

4.5.1.4 Changing Phases of Excitement

Another remarkable feature found in the play-songs of the children is the differing moods observed in different stages of the children's song as it is performed. This characteristic is found in the song "*Mu mma yɛn kɔ hwɛ Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta*" ("Let's go check on Adjoa Atta.") below.

Stanza one

Children: *Mu mma yɛn kɔ hwɛ Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta*
        [Let's go check on Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta]

        Mu mma yɛn kɔ hwe Adjoa Atta na ne ho tse sɛn ni
        [Let's go check on Adjoa Atta and see how she is doing]

<div style="text-align: center">155</div>

Mother of Adjoa: *Adjoa Atta ɔkɔ bɔrla, ɔkɔ borla, ɔkɔ bɔrla*
[Adjoa Atta is disposing off the garbage, the garbage, the garbage]

Adjoa Atta oko borla na momfre me so nko
[Adjoa Atta is disposing off the garbage, so don't bother me]

Children [**excited**]:   *Mu mma yenkɔ yɛn fie, yɛn fie, yɛn fie*
[let's go home, go home, go home]

Mu mma yɛn kɔ yɛn fie, na ehɔ tse sɛn ni
[Let's go home and see what is happening.]

Stanza two

Children: *Mu mma yɛn kɔ hwɛ Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta*
[Let's go check on Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta]

Mu mma yɛn ko hwɛ Adjoa Atta na ne ho tse sɛn ni
[Let's go check on Adjoa Atta and see how she is doing]

Mother of Adjoa: *Adjoa Atta ɔyare, ɔyare, ɔyare*
[Adjoa Atta is sick, is sick, is sick]

Adjoa Atta ɔyare na momfre me so nkɔ
[Adjoa Atta is sick, so don't bother me]

Children [**with concern**]:   *Mu mma yɛn kɔ yɛn fie, yɛn fie, yɛn fie*
[Let's go home, go home, go home]

Mu mma yɛn kɔ yɛn fie, na ɛhɔ tse sɛn ni
[Let's go home and see what is happening.]

Stanza three
Children: *Mu mma yɛn kɔ hwɛ Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta*
[Let's go check on Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta]

Mu mma yɛn kɔ hwɛ Adjoa Atta na ne ho tse sɛn ni
[Let's go check on Adjoa Atta and see how she is doing]

Mother of Adjoa: *Adjoa Atta na we'wu, we'wu, we'wu*
[Adjoa Atta is dead, is dead, is dead]

Adjoa Atta na we'wu, na mo mfre me so nko
[Adjoa Atta is dead, so don't bother me]

Children [**sombrely**]:   *lala lala la la, la la, la la,*
                                  lala lala la la, la la, la la la.

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 16-10-2020)

Each stanza depicts, progressively, a status of health in the first, sickness in the second and eventually, death in the third. Correspondingly, as the children perform each stanza, they variously portray a matching mood of excitement when they are told Adjoa is out doing chore; of concern when the children are told she is unwell; and eventually, of sadness as the children retreat, break away from their usual refrain and sombrely intone "la la la la…" when they are told their friend Adjoa had died. We can therefore appreciate that the children because they are imbued in the culture and philosophy of their community are able to appreciate life's situations, including death and know the appropriate responses to give.

4.5.1.5 Movements and Formation

Whether standing, crouching or kneeling, the children in almost all the play situations observed arrange themselves in a circular formation. This formation of a human circle allows for a fluidity of performance by ensuring the full participation, without a break, of all the players. In the example below, culled from the play-song "*obi'ara ye wo no dwowda*" ("all who are born on Monday") we get an insight into the kinesics, particularly, with regard to the kind of movement displayed by the children in their performance through the use of the action verbs.

obi'ara yɛ wo no Dwowda
[all who are born on Monday]

ɔnkotow
[crouch]

ɔnsɔre
[stand up]

lalala lala lalalaa lalala lala lalalaa lala la laa
[lalala lala lalalaa lalala lala lalalaa lala la laa]

obi'ara yɛ wo no Benada
[all who are born on Tuesday]

ɔnkotow
[crouch]

ɔnsɔre
[stand up]

lalala lala lalalaa lalala lala lalalaa lala la laa
[lalala lala lalalaa lalala lala lalalaa lala la laa].

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 05-11-2020)

It is important to note that, before the performance begin, the children are asked to form a human circular shape as big as a "mother's cooking pot." As we have already indicated, families in traditional African societies tend to be huge and comprises not only of children and parents but also grandparents, cousins and others, the cooking pot used to cook the family meals has to one of the biggest objects that could exist in a child's imagination. It is therefore a suitable extended metaphor used to capture the child's conception of size.

As previously explained, the Akans assign "day names" to children therefore every child who is part of the performance would belong to one of the days called. But when a child is called, say a Monday born, he or she enters and stands in the centre of the (human) circle and in conformity

158

with the directions of the song, crouches when asked to do so, and stands when similarly instructed in the song. Inviting the children to take turns to respond to their names emphasises their uniqueness and serves as a means of promoting identity and belonging. Aside from crouching or dancing, as directed, the player owns the space and can do any dance after having obeyed the initial instruction. The act of crouching, standing or dancing by the player in the centre go to accentuate the sense of belonging of the player who, at that moment, has been made the singular centre of attraction.

On the few occasions that the children did not make a human circle, they formed a line which also served the purpose of that particular oral performance. An example where the line formation is adopted is seen in the song, "Ebaloo" a popular song in Akan fishing communities. The child leading the performance adopts the role of a boatswain or bosun and the rest of the performers act as crew of a canoe. While repeating the chorus *ebaloo* in response to the calls by the leader, the children in a linear formation dramatise the manner in which the canoes that had returned from sea and have ropes tied to them, are pulled to shore by a group of fishermen. Although the children would not be holding any rope in actual sense, they nonetheless are able to swing their bodies forward as they tug at the imaginary rope and backwards as they pull in perfect synchronization with the song.

4.5.1.6 Cultural Technologies: Objects and Personal Effects

Finally, although it has been established that there was no traditional music making instrument normally used in oral performance available for use in the school environment where the children were, the children through their own resourcefulness made use of objects that were in

their immediate environment in the production of their musical play. These objects are part of what Kress (2015) referred to as "cultural technologies." As such, any movable object at school such as stones, flowers, or personal effects such as cloth material or footwear can be used as part of the oral production.

For instance, in the song *Sansa Akroma* ("lazy hawk") each of the children while squatting in a circular formation places a stone or any such accessible object in front of them. When the song begins, the players, in a synchronized fashion pass the stone on to the next person, usually the one to their right. As the song's tempo increases and the pace of the passing of the stone quickens, a player might miscalculate the rhythm by passing the stone too early or too late. If this occurs, they are considered to have lost and the player is subsequently taken out. The song is restarted, and the action continues until a winner is determined at the end. It should be noted that apart from serving as an object that is moved around, the stones as they are raised and, simultaneously with the other players, slammed on the ground produces a thumping sound which gives a dramatic musical and effect thereby causing the participants to concentrate more.

There are also times where an object such as footwear is used as part of the oral performance. As was observed, this occurs when the footwear is used to exact punishment for a perceived transgression committed by a player. For instance, in the play-song "tail" where a player who is required to provide the name of an animal that has a tail provides a wrong answer, the erring child, instead of being kicked out, remains but receives some knocks or blows in a playful manner from the sandals or slippers of the other players as punishment.

Fig. 5: Children [33]using their footwear as "cultural technologies."

These acts of punishment are considered part of the oral performance and have a corrective objective. The play-song fosters togetherness, but also contributes to the attainment of literacy in respect of the inculcation of knowledge about a varied number of topics.

_____

[33] Picture and video taken on 29-09-2020 with the permission of the school.

4.5.2   Elements of African Orality

As briefly outlined in the introduction to this section, there are elements of style that are popular and, thus, often found in most Ghanaian children's play-songs as well as other forms of oral art outside the children's genre. It is of critical interest to note that they are in tandem with the oral elements that Isidore Okpewho identifies as constitutive of African oral literature. Some of these are: the art of breaking the fourth wall and blending the actor and audience into a common entity, as well other stylistic elements. Significantly, they give an insight into the African traditional knowledge systems and practices that have remained. The analysis adopted the decolonial prism to enable a focus on children's epistemology through the medium of their play-songs.

4.5.2.1 Performer and Audience

In African oral performances, members of the audience are not passive onlookers but active participants in the acts, particularly, in their "call and response" songs. In the children's play-songs, as the leader starts the songs, the rest of the children join in by engaging in activity ranging from singing along, singing the chorus, clapping hands, dancing, or doing some activity requested by the leader or one that is pre-directed. The relationship between performers and the audience is fluid; the performers and audience are interchangeable in performance. Sometimes one person begins the song, while the rest of the participants sing the chorus thus:

> *Leader:*   *Ama Maame e, omu nsu*
> [Ama mother's rice water]
>
> *Group:*   *Yee yee omu nsu*

[Yee yee rice water.]

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 06-11-2020)

This approach also promotes community and sharing; values which are at the heart of the African traditional worldview. Each member of the group is offered an opportunity to participate and share in the experience as recounted by the leader, who mentions the name of each child and acknowledges that their mother has prepared breakfast.

At other times, however, the reverse happens wherein it is the group that sings, while a chosen individual who is the focal point of the group's attention, responds. This approach is reflective of the community's support and encouragement of a person to achieve a particular goal. For example.

All: *Sukul rekyerew dzin*
[School registration]

kyerew we dzin
[spell your name]

sukul rekyerew dzin
[school registration]

kyerew we dzin
[spell your name]

Presuming the child is known as *Ɛna Awo,* this ensues:

Child: Ɛ
All respond: Ɛ- Ɛ *(two claps – simultaneously as letter is repeated)*

Child: n
All respond: n-n *(two claps – simultaneously as letter is repeated)*

163

Child: a
All respond: a-a *(two claps – simultaneously as letter is repeated)*

Child: A
All respond: A-A *(two claps – simultaneously as letter is repeated)*

Child: w
All respond: w-w *(two claps – simultaneously as letter is repeated)*

Child: o
All respond: o-o *(two claps – simultaneously as letter is repeated)*

All mention: *Ɛna Awo!*

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 15-10-2020)

Beyond the attainment of community, the play activity is also very instrumental in promoting literacy, which is a key function of the traditional play-songs of Ghanaian children and of particular interest to the current study. Not only do the children share in the thrill of the activity, but they also exult in the success of the child whose turn it is to spell and gets it right.

4.5.2.1.1   Repetition

Repetition is one of the features commonly seen in the children play-songs. It appears in several linguistic structures such as words, phrases or sometimes whole sentences. Like true oral artistes, the children do not employ the use of repetition haphazardly but use repetition for specific purposes. In the example below, repetition is used in the organisation of the oral play-song performance.

dedende kwao   *dedende kwao*
dedende kwao   dedende kwao

Egya bɔfo nenkwan yɛ me dɛ

164

[the old hunter's soup is tasty]

Nanso na'tareɛ yɛ me nkoŋ
[yet his clothes are repulsive.]

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 05-11-2020)

As earlier indicated, the expression "*dedende kwao*" is a creation by children and does not have any semantic or linguistic meaning of its own. Through repetition, this phrase performs the function of what Okpewho describes as piling. Given that in African oral renditions, increase (in words) rather than economy, is considered one of the oral artiste's strongest qualities, piling is important. In this verse, it stands as a meaningless linguistic creation by children intended to fill the void in musical structure, as well as to achieve musicality. It also aids in the general organisation of the performance.

Additionally, repetition is used to elicit the involvement and response of the audience in the play situations. This breaks the barrier between actors and the audience and creates the oneness of performer-audience, which is a common theatrical feature in many African performances. Some of the songs begin with a narration by the leader, followed by a call to action involving all of the participants. The call to action, where the participants assume a particular body posture and remain in that posture like a statue, is in the form of specific repeated directions of which the failure to adhere would constitute a transgression. Here is an example.

sēsa wo hó
[chānge your śtyle]

sésa wo hō
[chánge your ŝtyle.]

After this initial set pattern of directions, the next set of instructions on whether to change posture or remain in that position, or the frequency of repetition, is unpredictable. It is a decision solely at the behest of the leader. The performers are required to be alert so that they do not fail the test. Although the consequence for transgression is being left out of the play activity, the play-song serves as a mechanism to reinforce the African traditional value of obedience and deeding to instructions.

Beyond these, repetition is also employed to reflect emotions or state of mind of the performers. A sense of urgency is captured in the following example.

Guan guan guan
[Run run run]

ogya bi wo bepo ne do
[there is fire on the mountain.]

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 16-10-2020)

The above shows the anxiety, as well as urgency caused by the threatening fire for which there is the command to run. The two lines are repeated for several times and only ended or changed with the introduction of another song based on the decision of the leader, or a proposal by one of the performers to sing a different song.

A similar urgency is found, we recall in the song where a lonely child slumped on the ground is encouraged to come out of his or her melancholy.

Afra sor, sor, sor
[Small child, get up, get up, get up]

afra pru pru wo'atari mu e
[small child, dust off your clothes]

afra twa wo ho, twa wo ho, twa wo ho
[small child, turn round and round and round]

afra ko fa wo do fo e
[small child, go embrace your beloved.]

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 05-11-2020)

The songs also employ repetition to emphasise emotion; this could be joy, fear or disappointment. In the example below, although the recounting of a cat stealing a child's fish may be humourous, we appreciate the skilful manner the child communicates his pain and disappointment using the oral resource of repetition:

Agyinamboa ne se eduasa nkroŋ.
[The cat with its thirty-nine teeth]

ɔde abɔ wi me nam, abɔ wi me nam, abɔ wi me nam
[has come to eat my fish, eat my fish, eat my fish.]

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 05-11-2020)

A striking detail that leaps at the audience of the oral play-song is the rather specific information given about the cat using thirty-eight of its teeth to steal the child's fish. Providing what may be considered "unwarranted" detail in oral performances is an African orality feature that Isidore Okpewho describes as piling, one of the characteristics that will be discussed under this chapter. The repetition of the expression "eat my fish" as many as three times, however, mirrors the shock of the child following the cat's unsanctioned act.

167

4.5.2.2 Parallelism

Another feature of orality as proposed by Okpewho, and maintained by Agyekum and others, is parallelism. Through parallelism, balance and musicality is ensured. Importantly, it should be noted that examples of parallelism were also found to be present in the current study of play-songs of children.

One of the songs in which we see this is the previously encountered song, "Robert Mensah."

> *Kofi Anto, wo'anto ne maame*
> [Kofi Anto, he did not meet his mother]
>
> *Kofi Anto, wo'anto ne papa*
> [Kofi Anto, he did not meet his father.] (Author Unknown)

Through the use of parallelism, emphasis is placed on the predicament of the child who having lost a father before he was born, also loses his mother soon after birth. The song points out that it is a tragedy that the child would grow up and not have either parent alive.

Another example is from the song "Pimpinaa."

> *Amane kakraka, bumu mmienu nafa yɛ abenkwan*
> [With big herrings, break them and prepare palm soup]
>
> *amane nkete nkete, kyerɛw kyerɛw hu fa ye nkrakra*
> [with small herrings, remove the scales and prepare pepper soup.]
>
> (Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 15-10-2020)

Again, we clearly see parallelism at play here. The song conveys this to us by positioning side by side, the big and small fish, and showing what soup they could best be used for. Although the

children's art is still rudimentary, the clear balance demonstrated here shows the children's awareness of when and how to create music using such a device.

Another example of parallelism in the children's play-songs occurs in the song, "Dog.' Here, a stray dog in search of food approaches the children but the children do not seem to have any interest in accommodating the dog.

> Ɔkraman, ɔkraman
> [Dog dog]
>
> dɛn na wo pɛ
> [what do you want?]
>
> gyama wo nim sɛ, dompe bi da hɔ?
> [or do you think there is a bone here?]
>
> gyama wo nim sɛ, aduane bi si hɔ?
> [or do you think there is food here?]
>
> kɔ o kɔ kɔ kɔ,
> [go go go away]
>
> na wo'ambɛyɛ me wo wo wo
> [and don't come bark at me "wo wo wo."]
>
> (Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 06-11-2020)

In the example above, the children use parallelism to rhetorical effect by querying the possible intent or expectation of the dog as it strays into their "space." The song however tells us that they are unwilling to give any attention to the dog because of the fear that the dog may be unfriendly and end up barking at them.

Apart from the purpose of interrogation as seen in the example above, the children also use parallelism to indicate syllepsis, a device in which a word usually a verb is used in two different

senses. We see this from the example below from the previously discussed *"Adow kyekyerkyer"* ("Stubborn Monkey").

> *Adow kyekyerkyer*
> [Stubborn monkey]
>
> *ɔse ɔrekɔ Esaaman*
> [insisted he was going to Esaaman]
>
> *ɔkɔr ya wo'amba biom*
> [he went but did not return]
>
> *okor ya, Sansambosam gyamu*
> [he went into the Devil's fire.] (Author Unknown)

We notice the skilful construction of parallelism in the presentation of how the monkey meets its untimely end. In the last two lines, we observe that the construction "he went" begins each line, indicating parallelism. However, the verb "went" is used in two different senses, which indicates the employment of syllepsis, a kind of literary device in which a word is used in two different senses often for satiric effect. Here, we see that, even though the monkey is expected to return, not only does the monkey not get back as it had hoped for, but as its punishment for stubbornness, goes to hell. In the African cosmological worldview, religion is a highly effective tool used in achieving social control and for ordering acceptable behaviour. Religion is often a central theme in African oral production, so it is therefore not surprising that it is a subject matter in the children's play-songs.

4.2.3.4 Piling and Association

There are times in African oral narratives and songs when fullness and not economy is an important quality of the oral artist. This technique finds expression in the play-songs of children. Piling and association is demonstrated in different ways, the commonest being the arrangement of words and expressions wherein the last detail in a line becomes the first detail in the next. For example:

> See see ***see***
> ***see*** nana koo
> kataa ***bonkuto***
> ***bonkuto*** oo bonkuto. (Author Unknown)

The emphasis in bold is to draw attention to where in the lines we would find the elements of piling. We can see from the above that the children's attempt at introducing piling is not seamless; nevertheless, owing to their use of piling, the rendering of the lines is quite fluid and sound musical. Their attempt here can only be described as indicating a rudimentary level of artistic abilities that is, perhaps, not yet fully developed.

We see a graduation in the development of the children's art in their presentation of piling in the next example.

> *Yesu, Yesu, Yesu*
> [Jesus Jesus Jesus]
>
> *Yesu betwa wo ti*
> [Jesus will cut off your head]
>
> *eti eti eti*
> [your head your head your head]

Here, the piling is made more effective by the use of repetition to emphasise a punishment which in this case is "beheading."

In addition to this, from the play-songs analysed, there is another example of piling that is remarkable in terms of structure and function.

> To mano zero
> zero, zero black
> black, black head
> head, head master
> master, master Poku
> Poku, Poku Ware… (Author Unknown)

The example above is a more fluid one showing the use of piling. The point of departure from Okpewho's observation that the African oral artist may use piling to achieve fullness and not necessarily efficiency, is not applicable in this instance. We observe that in the play-song above, there is, actually, a conscious attempt at affixation, the creation of new words or meaningful expressions based on the associated meanings generated by the base word or prefix.

Thus, beyond Okpewho's observation that the purpose of piling in African orature is often to achieve musical fulness and not necessarily efficiency, this is found not to be the case in the above play-song extract. As can be seen, there is a clear function, which is the achievement of the linguistic phenomenon of affixation, in their song.

4.2.3.5 Tonality

According to Okpewho, tonality are words and lines that are frequently stretched out to unusual lengths and forms by giving individual syllables a variety of tones to produce a lyrical effect. This is a phenomenon that we encounter in some of the play-songs analysed. In some instances, we find that the leader's tone is different from that of the audience.

For example, notice this from the song about the hunter that whereas the chorus is sung with a high tone by the leader, the response by the audience is in a low tone.

Leader: dédéndé kwáo
                                    dédéndé kwáo

Audience: dēdēndē kwāo
                                    dēdēndē kwāo. (Author Unknown)

We note from the example above that the leader begins the song in a rising tone, while the response is low in tone. This ensures that there is balance in the music, making the song arrangement whole.

Aside from the above illustration where the leader is found singing in one tone and the other participants singing in a different tone, we encounter, in a previously encountered song "Robert Mensah," a phenomenon wherein the final syllabi of the last word in each line alternates in tone with the subsequent line. Beginning with a falling tone or unstressed final syllable at the end of the first line, we observe in the second line that it ends this time with a rising tone or stressed syllable. Let us consider the example below.

173

Robert Mensah, goalkeeper number ōne
[Robert Mensah, goalkeeper number one]

aka nansa na wakɔ abrokyiŕe
[with three days to his trip abroad]

kwasia bi tse ho a ɔmpe ne ho asēm
[an idiot who is otherwise quiet]

afa pentua ɔdze awɔ ne'mfé
[stabbed him with a broken bottle.]

ade kye'a ne yere awō
[the next day his wife delivered]

ne yere awo'a wɔ fre nu Kofî
[she delivered a baby called Kofi]

Kofî Anto, w'anto ne papā
[Kofi Anto, did not meet his father]

Kofî Anto, w'anto ne mamé
[Kofi Anto, did not meet his mother.] (Author Unknown)

As observed, the sequentially alternating arrangement of each line is remarkably maintained throughout the rendition until the song ends – a veritable demonstration of the children's ability to imbibe and utilise the techniques of the African oral poetic artform.

There is yet another example showing the use of tonality. Here, the leader experiments by varying the tone of the key words. We come upon this occurrence in the play-song "Mummy in the kitchen" wherein the leader directs the audience on what to do:

Leader:　　*sēsa wo hó*
　　　　　　chānge your śtyle

　　　　　　sésa wo hō
　　　　　　chánge your ŝtyle. (Author Unknown)

In the above extract, we observe that the same command asking the participants to change their posture is done using two different tones. In the first line, the command begins in a low tone and ends on a high or stressed tone. In the second line however, the command begins in a high tone and ends in a low tone. Aside from this, another interesting observation is found when one analyses the presentation of the key words – *sesa* ("change") and *woho* ("style") – in the song. Whereas *sesa* or "change" in the first line is unstressed, the children in the subsequent line, alter the tonal form of *sesa* ("change") and make it unstressed or in a low tone. In the same way, whereas *woho* ("style") as encountered in the first line is stressed, it is altered to become unstressed or in a low tone in the next line.

These deliberate variations of tone add to the unpredictability of the request and as a result, only the smartest and most focused audience is able to follow the command and act as expected at all times. Above all, these varied renderings of the tonalities by the children give an insight into the knowledge and technical abilities that the children have about the craft as well as the tradition of African oral poetics.

4.2.3.6 Imagery

Imagery refers to the employment of words to paint mental pictures. Sensory experiences are the vehicles through which imagery is realised (Addo 2011). The play-songs use a combination of descriptive words and literary devices such as metaphors to achieve the painting of this mental picture. Okpewho (1992) identifies imagery as essential to African oral literature and this is found to be the case in the children's play-songs analysed. Among the elements of African orature that Okpewho prescribes as integral to the genre, there are some including allusion,

symbolism and repetition, that dovetails under the constitution of imagery. These elements will consequently be analysed as aspects of imagery in the thesis.

Amongst the commonest images employed by the children, in the songs, is visual. In the already encountered song, "detachment", below, for instance, we observe how the children cleverly evoke the visual image of a bone to describe how intense the voluntary severing of a friendship relationship is.

> *aka aka aka*
> [detachment detachment detachment]
>
> *aka dompe*
> [bone-hard detachment]
>
> *sɛ me de magoro*
> [if I am playing]
>
> *na wo ba menkyeŋ a*
> [and you come to me]
>
> *Yesu, Yesu, Yesu*
> [Jesus, Jesus, Jesus]
>
> *Yesu betwa wo ti*
> [Jesus will behead you.] (Author Unknown)

It should be noted that among the collection of songs analysed, while this song is a play-song that is sung when the children are at play, it is the only song that, ironically, does not create the mood of play, although in play context, nor evoke the response of playfulness. From the play scene captured above, we can determine that the friendship that existed between friends is coming to an end. We are introduced to a persona who is threatening severe punishment –

beheading at the hands of Christ – if the person being warned does not heed this warning to never attempt to be friends with him.

The seriousness of the persona is underlined in his splendid description of the extent of the estrangement which he describes using the metaphor of a bone to highlight the degree of the break-up. The choice of "bone," as metaphor, evokes a visual image of toughness and is thus most appropriate in helping us to appreciate the seriousness of the persona.

In some of the songs, however, we find that more than just the visual image is evoked as seen in the example below culled from the play-song, "*Dedende kwao o*."

> *egya bɔfo ne nkwaŋ yɛ me dɛ*
> [the old hunter's soup is tasty]
>
> *nanso n'atere yɛ me nkoŋ*
> [yet his clothes are repulsive.]
>
> (Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 05-11-2020)

In the above, we encounter images dwelling on the senses of both sight and taste. It is interesting observing the manner the two senses, in driving the message of how appearances can be deceptive, interact. While the persona concludes from the visual presentation of the hunter that he is repugnant, he however finds his food delicious.

Another example of imagery uncovered by the analysis is auditory, which has to do with experimenting with sound. This type of imagery finds expression through the employment of several devices, one of which is rhyme. Although an important aspect of children's musical cultures, rhyme, as an aspect of imagery, is not always present in the children's play-songs. We

therefore see them deploy this in varying degrees in their play-songs. It ranges from nonsense rhymes, eye or half rhymes to full rhymes. The example below, from *Pimpinaa* is of nonsense rhyme – containing rhythm but without any semantic value.

> *See see see*
> *See nana koo*
> *Kataa bonkuto*
> *Bonkuto bonkuto*
> *Ee maame ee*
> *Ee paapa ee*
> *Ee bombom fire.*
>
> (Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 15-10-2020)

Indeed, even though there are a few recognisable words that make meaning, the selection as a unit does not have any semantic significance as most of the words are not real words in any language.

But there are other attempts at rhyme that is more meaningful.

> *Me hia krataa*
> [I want a paper]
>
> *Ede akyerew leta*
> [to write a letter]
>
> *Akoma Dora*
> [to go to Dora]
>
> *Dora n'kyir ba yɛ pasta*
> [But Dora's brother is a pastor.]
>
> (Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 05-11-2020)

Here, we can clearly discern rhyme in the lines in Akan (and its English translation); we get an indication that that the children's artistic appreciation of rhyme is still developing. The children, in fact, demonstrate the capacity to compose properly arranged rhymes as seen in the example below. Although presented in the Akan, we can clearly see the repetition of "to" sounds at the end of each line – an obvious attempt at achieving rhyme, which the children accomplish.

Bro Ato
akɔkɔ no reba aba to
Wo de wo'nsa ahyɛ ne to
Ama woa'nya anto. (Author Unknown)

[Bro Ato]
[the chicken wanted to lay an egg]
[but you put your finger in its anus]
[and now it is no longer laying.]

As a matter of fact, the children's ability to create rhythm such as those above, and other instances of rhyme, portray that, children have, not only a musical impulse but also, a sound technical appreciation of musicality and how to achieve it.

Aside from rhyme, the sound device onomatopoeia is one that children readily employ in their oral production. Here, the word used in describing a particular phenomenon is associated with the sound it makes. For example, we see this in the use of "hmmm" which is to suggest pain. The example below is the case in point.

Leader: *me sisiw*
         [my waist]

Respondents: *hmmm…*

[hmmm…]

Leader: *me sisiw*
              [my waist]
Respondents: *hmmm…*
              [hmmm…]

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 15-10-2020)

In the above scenario, the word "hmmm" mimics the pain being expressed by an aged person. The reference to an aged person is because they tend to contract age related body frailties like waist and joint pains to which they may utter a cry of "hmmm" which actually signals the challenge the adult may be experiencing.

Other closely related set of elements appropriated by the children in the oral performances are assonance and alliteration. Assonance is defined as the repetition of identical vowel sounds in successive phrases, words or syllabi, while alliteration emphasises the close repetition of initial consonant sounds in phrases, words or syllabi within a line of poetry. The fascinating aspect of the children's appropriation of assonance and alliteration is that these devices are often combined in the same line in the songs of the children, amplifying the musicality of the oral poems concerned. An example is the line "Araba Nsaba" in the eponymous titled song, *Araba Nsaba*.

Ar<u>aba</u> Ns<u>aba</u> nk<u>o</u> p<u>o</u>
[Araba Nsaba is no fisher]

<u>nan</u>so o<u>nya</u> <u>nam</u> we
[yet she gets the choicest fish to eat]

Araba Nsaba
[Araba Nsaba]

In the lines "*Ar<u>aba</u> Ns<u>aba</u> nk<u>o</u> p<u>o</u> / nanso ony<u>a</u> n<u>a</u>m we,*" we find in the underlined, the combination of both assonance and alliteration. The two devices merging help in making the song easy to sing and thus a delightful experience for the children. The same situation is also presented in a previously discussed eponymous song "Awagyiga," where, as seen in the selection below, including the refrain *gelengele*, we find, also, the combination of both assonance and alliteration.

<u>*A*</u>*w<u>a</u>gyir<u>ga</u>*
[Awagyirga]

g<u>e</u>l<u>e</u>ng<u>e</u>le
[gelengele]

wako'<u>wa</u>re abre<u>wa</u>
[has married an old woman]

g<u>e</u>l<u>e</u>ng<u>e</u>le
*[*gelengele*]*

abrewa <u>ne</u> <u>n</u>kwa<u>n</u> <u>ye ne de</u>
[the old woman's soup is tasty]

Indeed, the examples of the use of alliteration and assonance abound in the children's songs. The example below demonstrates the point.

Akodaa <u>kiti kiti</u>
[Little child]

w'ano <u>wisi wisi</u>
[with sharp mouth]

Here, and similar to the previously discussed extracts, the renderings of alliteration and assonance are unmistakeable. Particularly, we observe their employment in "*kiti kiti / wisi wisi*" which smoothly combines both the similar sounding consonant sounds and similar sounding vowel sounds in close succession.

The effect of the application of both assonance and alliteration is that they make the songs aesthetically pleasing and easy to sing. It therefore shows the importance of these devices as aspects of auditory imagery.

Quite aside from alliteration and assonance, another sound device that is often employed by the children is onomatopoeia. The word "gongo" which is an onomatopoeic rendering of the sound that comes out of the *gongo*, a type of drum as depicted below.

Maame ama me dama
[mother gave me money]

Gongo gongo gongo
[gongo gongo gongo]

ɔse me nkoto dokon
[asking that I buy kenkey]

gongo gongo gongo
gongo gongo gongo

medzi akoto dondo
[I went and bought a drum]

gongo gongo gongo
gongo gongo gongo. (Author Unknown;)

We observe that the name of the drum is the same as the sound made. Indeed, the *dondo* and *gongo* are both Akan names given to drums. Hence, we notice that the children deliberately appropriate *gongo* as drum and also in onomatopoeic imitation of the sound the *gongo* makes which incidentally is "gongo gongo gongo."

Furthermore, we notice again, the playful yet skilful manner onomatopoeia is employed in the description of a child receiving an enema, a traditional purgative mechanism which causes the child to excrete as part of her healing.

> *Ama yare fever*
> [Ama has a fever]
>
> *nyamu meko*
> [grind pepper]
>
> *and put in de bentua*
> [and put in the enema]
>
> *fee neto*
> [prise open her anus]
>
> *and jump jump jump*
> [and jump jump jump]
>
> *and poo*
> [and poo…] (Author Unknown)

The employment of onomatopoeia here is clearly seen as the child's poo or excreta, and the ideophone, that is the sound it makes – "*poo*" – are the same.

The children's clever deployment of sound devices, as well as other stylistic features, gives further indication of their creative abilities. This is particularly remarkable given that although

the children don't have any formal training in oral arts, they are able, nonetheless, to observe, learn from their experiences and create their own repertoire of songs to reflect their own realities.

Another form of imagery that emerged from the analysis of the play-songs include motifs, which are aspects of the tropes that reflected the culture of the community. Motifs are recurring patterns or images in a literary work. From the analysis of the play-songs, the motifs that emerged included recurring patterns deliberately drawn from the elements namely, water, fire and earth. These have significance in the community in which the children live.

Among these elements, it is water that is repeatedly mentioned the most albeit in different contexts. Sometimes, water aside from its generic reference, is also presented in specific ways: a pool, for example as we see in the song, *Wɔ nsu taye ne mu* ("In the pool"):

Wɔ nsu taye ne mu
[In the pool]

fi nsu taye ne mu
[out the pool]

hye mu na fi nsu taye ne mu
[in and out the pool]

fi mu na hye nsu taye ne mu.
[out and in the pool.] (Author Unknown).

As previously recounted, the "pool" represented by a circle which the children draw on the ground, refers to security. It can be recalled that the shape 'circle' bears vital significance in the culture of African traditional societies. It is therefore a matter of course that the children being imbued in their culture would exploit the use of a circle to represent a pool in their play session.

184

Here, any child who fails to jump in the "pool" at the exact time required is deemed to have failed and is therefore out of the game.

Aside from representing a circle, water has other meanings, one of which occurs in the song *Puteese o puteese* ("Floats o floats"). Having its origins among the fishing community of Komenda, the children's song mentions "water" in reference to the river and sea in which the fishermen go fishing. When the children as actors identify themselves metaphorically as *Puteese or* "floats", the buoy that bobs back to the surface and stays afloat on water in spite of pressure to sink it, the children are invariably emphasising their own irrepressible quality.

> *εhom yεn do o*
> [whether you push us down]
>
> *aŋhom yεn do o*
> [or you don't push us down]
>
> *yε tεw nsu n'enyiwa o*
> [we keep floating in water o…]

Indeed, reference is made to water as a vital ingredient in making food – *omu-nsu* (rice-water porridge) – as we recollect in the song *Maame hyε gyaadze* ("Mummy in the kitchen."). Similarly, reference is also made to water in describing *Nsu Yaa* (the river goddess) in the song "Kyeiwaa, Kyeiwaa."

The other elements – fire and earth – are also presented in the songs in creative ways. We find an example of this casting of the element of fire is the song *ogya bi wɔ bepɔ ne do* ("Fire on the mountain").

Guan guan guan
ogya bi wɔ bepɔ ne do

[Run run run]
[there is fire on the mountain.]

Like the song "*Woa na ɔkotow garden nu mu'e*" ("who is in the garden?"), this song also had two language versions (Akan and English) which they were rendered, at separate times. These two versions were not sung together but one appeared much later after a series of songs had been sung, giving the impression that their occurrence (the same song sang in two different languages and forming part of their store of songs) was not deliberate. As already explained, this phenomenon of composing the same songs in Akan and English is a further manifestation of the children's linguistic facility and a reflection of their lived experience of using both the indigenous and foreign languages in their daily lives.

The phrase "Fire on the mountain" is also an idiomatic expression which cautions that there is impending trouble for which reason the persona is urged to escape, the urgency clearly stressed by the repetition: "run run run." Furthermore, fire is also presented as a metaphor for hell in the children's songs. In *Adow kyɛkyɛkyɛr* ("Stubborn Monkey") we learn about a monkey bent on exploring and which unfortunately loses its way and eventually finds itself in the devil's fire.

ɔse ɔrekɔ Esaaman
[insisted he was going to Esaaman]

ɔkɔr ya wo'amba biom
[he went but did not return]

okor ya, Sansambosam gyamu
[he went into the Devil's fire.] (Author Unknown)

186

The didactic element of obedience is not lost on the reader: we know the monkey would not have ended in this tragic manner if it had stayed by its parents or guardians, instead of venturing out.

Earth is also another of the elements that keep recurring in the children's play-songs. When the children are playing on the ground or drawing designs or circles to represent pools on the ground, it is the earth that is invariably referenced. For example, the song *Ekutu no abere* ("The orange is ripe") the persona is encouraged to pick up his orange that had fallen because the earth is safe and not harmful.

> *atsew ato famu*
> [it has fallen on the ground]
>
> *kotow na fa*
> [bend down and pick] (Author Unknown).

Indeed, the earth appears to be the African child's indispensable companion as it serves as the play-ground for children.

Aside from the literal meaning of earth, the children also reflect the religious worldview of the community which recognises the earth as a goddess known as "Asaase Yaa" (earth goddess). We encounter this phenomenon in the play-song "Kyeiwaa, Kyeiwaa." In fact, as referenced earlier, Akan cosmology places great significance on the earth portraying it as feminine, fecund, and able to provide sustenance to humankind. These motifs show that the elements are central in the lives of the children and their community, appearing even in nonsense rhymes.

Thus far, the discussion of imagery has centred mainly on the sensuous manifestations relating to sight, touch, smell, sound, onomatopoeia, alliteration, assonance, rhyme, as well as the trope of

motifs which discussed how meanings were assigned to certain images. As indicated earlier, the discussion will now dwell on three key aspects of African orature – symbolism, allusion and ideophone – as stated by Okpewho, and which the thesis now discusses under imagery, beginning with symbolism.

Fig. 9: A player wiping the tears [34]of another as directed in the play-song.

---

[34] Picture and video taken on 29-09-2020 with the permission of the school; declared in the application for ethical clearance submitted before the study began.

(i) Symbolism

Among the elements Okpewho identifies as integral to African oral literature is symbolism. A symbol is an object that is an embodiment of a concept, or something that is used to represent something else or a particular idea, and this we find present in the play-songs. From the analysis of the play-songs, one of the commonest symbols that the children use is the circle. The circle, however, has several meanings.

For example, albeit in the abstract sense, the circle is used to depict a pool because just like a circle, the edge of the water meets where it begins in a circle-like shape.

> *wɔ nsu taye ne mu*
> [In the pool]
>
> *fi nsu taye ne mu*
> [out the pool]
>
> *hye mu na fi nsu taye ne mu*
> [in and out the pool]
>
> *fi mu na hye nsu taye ne mu.*
> [out and in the pool.] (Author Unknown)

The children depict the above by drawing a circle on the ground, a representation of an imaginary pool. In a play situation, the song leader gives the directives, and the participants jump inside the circle – the well – as instructed. Here, the "pool" symbolises safety or security. Anyone who is too slow to jump as directed or goes contrary to the directives is out of the game.

Aside from this, the "circle" can also refer to a human circular formation. In this case, it represents togetherness or community among the children. The example below explains how this sense of community is achieved.

189

Stanza one

Hwehwɛ wo dɔ fo wɔ ha
[Find your beloved here]

hwehwɛ wo dɔ fo wɔ ha
[find your beloved here]

hwehwɛ wo dɔ fo wɔ ha
[find your beloved here]

na ma ɛnyɛ wo dɛ
[and be happy about it.]

Stanza two

hwehwɛ tokuro no mu
[look in the circle]

hwehwɛ tokuro no mu
[look in the circle]

hwehwɛ tokuro no mu
[look in the circle]

na ma ɛnyɛ wo dɛ
[and be happy about it.] (Author Unknown)

The song proceeds in other stanzas not captured above, to make further suggestions about what course of action the persona must take, aside from finding the beloved and looking in the circle as directed in the first and second stanzas. The important point to consider here, however, is that right from the onset, in the first two stanzas, the persona asks one of the players to select a partner, a "beloved," who forms part of the human circle. Indeed, as each child is given the opportunity to choose a beloved, no one is left behind. Thus, not only is a sense of community realised through the invitation for participation, but we also see demonstrated that there truly is someone for everyone.

190

In addition to the examples discussed thus far, the circle also refers to space, which also symbolises community. We see this in the illustration below. The call phrase, "a big circle" also serves as a stock opening which is used in many of the children's songs. Often, this is first recited after which an activity or another song is begun.

Twa wo ho hyia kakraka
[A big circle]

Tsedɛ wo maame ne kyensee
[like your mother's cooking pot]. (Author Unknown)

As has been previously discussed, the employment of the phrase "a big circle" holds great significance and takes its root from the traditional context. Families in traditional Ghanaian societies are often huge and often extend beyond parents and children to include cousins and other members of the extended family. When meals are cooked, there has to be enough for everyone to eat to their fill. As a result, the biggest cooking pots are used. In reference to the song, therefore, when the children talk about forming a circle as big as "mother's cooking pot" they are emphasising a huge circular expanse that their mind can conceive as being practically possible to create. To achieve this, every available child will be required to be part of the circle and to participate in the performance, thereby, just like in the previous example, creating a sense of community and belonging.

Another instance of the employment of a symbol occurs not in the words or lyrics of the song but in the action of the players. The children in the dying throes of a relationship, maintain a final physical contact by interlocking their fingers to indicate the current status is still friends – even if

barely. After the recital of the ritual, they pull their fingers apart symbolising the severing of the friendship.

aka aka aka
[detachment detachment detachment]

aka dompe
[bone-hard detachment]

sɛ me de magoro
[if I am playing]

na wo ba menkyeŋ a
[and you come to me]

Yesu, Yesu, Yesu
[Jesus, Jesus, Jesus]

Yesu betwa wo ti
[Jesus will behead you.] (Author Unknown)

Just as a priest may call for a kiss from a couple to symbolise the formality of a marriage, so does the act of interlocking fingers and breaking this hold formalise the end of the relationship.

From the songs examined, the children appeared to make limited use of symbolism. In the few instances where they were employed, however, the symbols were effectively employed to reflect ideas centering on community, sharing and perseverance, which are values upheld in traditional African societies.

(ii) Allusion

Allusion, another feature of African orality as identified by Okpewho, is when reference is made to something or a person of historical, cultural, religious, mythological or literary significance. Discussed under the realm of imagery, the children's oral play-songs contain a number of allusions.

One of the commonest kinds of allusion is religious. As discussed in the thematic analysis, religion serves as a tool for ensuring social control. It is mainly psychological. We encounter an example of this in a child's encounter with the mythical bogeyman called *Sugarette*.

> *Me maame e buei me*
> [Open the door for me, mother]
>
> *me maame e buei me*
> [open the door for me, mother]
>
> *na Sugarette ɔbekye me ako*
> [for 'Sugarette' is trying to capture me]
>
> *ɔnkye wo o, Dora*
> [let it capture you, Dora]
>
> *ɔnkye wo o, Dora*
> [let it capture you, Dora]
>
> *na wo yɛ abɔfra bɔne*
> [because you are a stubborn child]
>
> *ɛkɔ a ɛyɛ'a bra ntsɛm*
> [next time come home on time.] (Author Unknown)

We must note that the mythical character called *Sugarette*, as captured in the above, is a creation of the children, an equivalence to the western conception of the evil bogeyman. The point of the song is to drum home the lesson that disobedience can lead to dire consequences. Thus, the

employment of the allusion is to enforce social control by getting children to be obedient and note that there are consequences for their actions.

Added to the foregoing is an example of religious allusion whose purpose is to ensure conformity to the rules of appropriate behaviour in society. Unlike the previous song which concerns punishment for disobedience, in this song, also, the children sing about the tragic consequence of Kyeiwaa's wrongdoing, or to put it differently, making a wrong choice.

Kyeiwaa Kyeiwaa	*Pam pam pam pam*
[Kyeiwaa Kyeiwaa	Pam pam pam pam]
wa wo ne ba Maame	*Pam pam pam pam*
[gave birth to a child Maame	Pam pam pam pam]
ɔdze a koma nsu Yaa	*Pam pam pam pam*
[sacrificed her to river goddess Yaa	Pam pam pam pam]
Nsu Yaa abo ne tuo	*Pam pam pam pam*
[The river goddess Yaa shot her	Pam pam pam pam] (Author Unknown).

We discover that Kyeiwaa is shot by the goddess for giving away her own child. Similar to the previous example, wrongdoing leads to punishment at the hands of a spiritual entity. Thus, we find that by use of this allusion, children communicate their ideas in a more effective manner.

Again, as earlier mentioned in the thematic analysis, wrongdoing can result in the wrongdoer going to "hell," an obvious religious allusion concerning a place of punishment or retribution meant for people who do not conform to the traditional social expectations of acceptable behaviour. We find this instance of allusion occurring in the play-song, *Adow kyɛkyɛkyɛr* ("Stubborn Monkey").

Adow kyɛkyɛkyɛr
[Stubborn monkey]

ɔse ɔrekɔ Esaaman
[insisted he was going to Esaaman]

ɔkɔr ya woanba biom
[he left but did not return]

ɔkor ya Sasabonsam gyamu
[he went into the Devil's fire.] (Author Unknown)

The above song alludes to a disobedient monkey who ended up in Hell fire because of its stubbornness. By adopting the use of this allusion, the children's song carries a potent message that transgressions carry punitive consequences, and one is therefore advised to live in conformity with socially accepted behaviour.

Aside from allusion that dwells on religion, the analysis also unearthed allusion that dwells on the oral tradition such as folktales. We encounter the legendary folk-hero Kweku Ananse, the ambivalent Spider in the trickster tale in Ghanaian oral narratives. The children's songs present to us many sides of Ananse. Consider the following example which is the opening lines of a play-song, *Kweku Ananse ne nsemka* ("Kweku Ananse story").

Ahaban mono mono
Green green grasses

Kweku Ananse ne nsemka
Kweku Ananse story. (Author Unknown)

The above, literally alludes to Ananse as someone who tells stories or tales – specifically, one who lies. The children therefore make this reference when they want to remark that they do not believe in the information they are being given. The allusion therefore makes this clear.

195

Beyond lies, Ananse is sometimes clothed in more noble robes. An example is the below where Ananse is described as both a father and a prince.

> *Egya Ananse*
> [Father Ananse]
>
> *yi wo nan baako*
> [remove one leg (from the circle)]
>
> *na enka baako*
> [and keep the remaining leg]
>
> *meda woase, oheneba*
> [thank you, son of a king]
>
> *oheneba eŋsu*
> [the son of a king does not cry.] (Author Unknown)

From the above, we see Ananse portrayed as "father" which connotes wisdom, experience and responsibility. Depending on the story, Ananse is sometimes given this attribute. But in addition to this, Ananse is also portrayed as a prince, as royalty. It is significant to note that the use of allusion appropriately reflects the presentation and complex nature of Ananse in oral traditional narratives.

The ability of the children to conceptualise, appreciate and clothe the mythical Ananse in various epithets gives an indication of the extent to which they are knowledgeable in the oral traditions and the indigenous knowledges of their society.

(iii) Ideophones

Ideophones are words that evoke ideas in sound. As aspects of imagery, the ideas are experienced through sensory perceptions such as sight, touch, hearing and smell. In other words, one is able to grasp and conceive the mental image by the sound of the word.

As pointed out by Okpewho (1992), Mphande (1992), Bodomo (2006) and Akita and Dingemanse (2019), ideophones are central aspects of the features of African oral literature. The current study finds them present, as well, in the oral play-songs of the children and, thus, analysis their use in the oral performance. We encounter an example in the play-song, "*Ama yare fever*" ("Ama has a fever") where Ama is being given an enema. Code-switching between English and Akan, we observe how the song ends with an ideophone.

> *Ama yare fever*
> [Ama has a fever]
>
> *nyam mɛko*
> [grind pepper]
>
> *and put in the bentua*
> [and put it in the enema]
>
> *fee neto*
> [prise open her anus]
>
> *and jump jump jump*
> [and jump jump jump]
>
> *and poo…*
> [and poo…] (Author Unknown)

Here, we become aware of the children's skilful appropriation of indigenous knowledge which is inherent in their oral narration. It is also significant to note the children's achievement in successfully demonstrating, through the use of code-switching and code-mixing, that the African oral tradition and language, as well as the western culture and language as linguistic media, can relate side by side.   Indeed, this observation is consistent with Catherine Odora Hoppers' decolonial proposition of inclusion that posits that "what is needed is not so much to rewrite the Western script that African universities are using but to enlarge it so that Africa too has a voice… The Western package [alone]… is inadequate to the task of bringing up children who have other frames of reference." (SARCHI Chair, 2009 cited in Soudien, 2019).

The song literally captures the process in preparing an enema and applying it on the sick child. After an ailment is diagnosed, such as discomfort due to constipation, a mixture of ingredients including pepper is prepared. As is normal in traditional African society, after an enema is given, the receiver sometimes jumps so the mixture can "wash" the bowel and excrete all its content. The sound of the excreta being ejected puns with 'poo' – an ideophone which depicts both the name of the waste and the sound it makes while coming out.

Another example of ideophone is encountered in the song "*Okraman*" ("Dog"):

> *Kɔ'o kɔ kɔ kɔ,*
> [Go, go, go away]
>
> *na wo'ambɛyɛ me*
> [and don't come, bark at me]
>
> *wo wo wo!*
> [wo wo wo!] (Author Unknown)

In traditional African societies, the dog is ever present in the lives of the people as it is used for a number of activities, including hunting, guarding and providing companionship; it is therefore unsurprising that it would be the subject of interest in the play-songs of children. Like the preceding example discussed, we observe that the ideophone occurs at the end of the narration. The children's phonic depiction of the dog's act, at the same time, gives a mental indication of its bark, the effect of which is rather unpleasant to the persona who asks the dog to "go away."

Yet another example of ideophones as identified by Okpewho and others as a distinguishing element in African oral literature is found in the song, "*Obra*" (Life), in which the idea of an attack and a corresponding response is captured through sound.

> *Ose me nkɔ sua no*
> [He asked me to help put down his burden]
>
> *makɔ akɔ sua no*
> [I helped him do this]
>
> *abaa me ti 'po'*
> [a club smashes my head 'po']
>
> *ma wo n'eni sɔ*
> [and I pecked at his eyes "sɔ."] (Author Unknown)

We picture from the ideophone "po" that a blow from a club has connected to the head of the bird that had been deceived into thinking its help was needed. Additionally, another ideophone – "*sɔ*" – describes the action of the bird as it pecked, in vengeance, at the eyes of the prevaricator.

Given how intricate African oral traditions tend to be (Omolola, 2013), it is quite astounding that children also show a capacity to exhibit a more complex portrayal of the use of ideophones in

their play-songs. In some of the songs, the ideophone is presented in the form of a chorus. An example is below.

Anhyɛwakyire	*tinko*
[Don't look behind you	tinko]
yetu mankeni	*tinko*
[we harvest potatoes	tinko]
yedi ne kwa	*tinko*
[we eat them freely	tinko]
sɛ wohwɛ w'akyi a	*tinko*
[if you look behind you	tinko]
yɛbɛbo wo	*tinko*
[we shall beat you	tinko] (Author Unknown)

The *tinko* sound is a popular tune that is made from a traditional metallic musical instrument called the *dawuro*. In traditional Ghanaian societies, the *dawuro* is used by the town-crier to gather the community around and give them information from the chief. Quite aside from gathering the community, the *dawuro* is also used in music production.

In the oral performance above, as the children do not have the actual musical instrument, the *dawuro*, the children masterfully mimic the sound of the *dawuro* and sing *tinko* as the chorus. We get the clearest indication of the children's skill when we observe how they employ the ideophone in the final line creating the effect of a pun, a double meaning. Here the chorus *tinko* is not just sound for the purpose of achieving musicality but, additionally, imitates the sound of knocks to the head – recreating and bringing "the beating" into practical effect.

The same technique is adopted in the play-song "Kyeiwaa."

Kyeiwaa Kyeiwaa	*Pam pam pam pam*
[Kyeiwaa Kyeiwaa	pam pam pam pam]
wa wo ne ba Maame	*pam pam pam pam*
[gave birth to a child Maame	pam pam pam pam]
ɔdze a koma nsu Yaa	*pam pam pam pam*
[sacrificed her to river goddess Yaa	pam pam pam pam]
nsu Yaa abo ne tuo	*pam pam pam pam*
[the river goddess Yaa shot her	pam pam pam pam] (Author Unknown).

Like the previous song analysed, the ideophone is initially presented as chorus but melds in the final line to not only add to the musicality but also to dramatise the shooting of Kyeiwaa – the sound of the gun shots being "pam pam pam pam."

From the foregoing discussion, and in tandem with the decolonial focus thus far, we appreciate that children are able to not only appropriate elements from oral tradition as well as their own experiences to compose their play-songs; but they are also able to adopt African oral resources such as ideophones to create their own musical repertoire that are similar to the more specialised adult-based oral performances.

Altogether, imagery as used in the children's repertoire of songs contributes to the effectiveness of the oral performance by making the audience see, hear, taste or feel the experience being described. The children show remarkable ability in their deployment of this resource which successfully delivered their oral poetic compositions.

4.5.3 Aspects of Structure and Content

A poem can be appreciated based on "what it is" and "how it is." In the context of literary appreciation of poetry, what a poem is essentially calls for an examination of the constituent parts that make up the content, and how a poem is, regards an investigation of the various components that make up the form or structure of the poems. Aspects of both structure and content have been analysed in the foregoing discussion particularly under theme and style. However, given that the analysis was mainly done using the prism of specific suggestions by Okpewho and Finnegan, there are some overlapping ingredients bordering on structure and content found in the songs. The next section examines these components of the structure and content of the African oral poetics.

Fig. 10: Players passing on stones [35]to the next player according to the song's rhythm.

4.5.4.1 The Component of Structure

The form or structure of the songs entails how the oral songs are presented. Given that some key characteristics such as performers, audience and "call and response" have been discussed under this chapter as part of Finnegan and Okpewho's proposed models, it is necessary to now dwell next on how the songs are presented. This comprises of the degree of simplicity or complexity.

---

[35] Picture and video taken on 05-11-2020 with the permission of the school; declared in the application for ethical clearance submitted before the study began.

Like the adult genre, structure in children's play-songs similarly varies from simple to complex: the songs can range from one stanza to multiple stanza. It has emerged from the preceding analysis that the simple songs which mostly focused on rhyme and rhythm were often the favourite and sung by the children in the lower primary school level. The relatively complex forms that tended to focus more on the philosophical and less on rhyme, were sung by the children in the upper primary school level. One example is the popular nonsense rhyme, *Pimpinaa*, which was a favourite of children in the lower tier:

> *See see see*
> *See nana koo*
> *Kataa bonkuto*
> *Bonkuto bonkuto*
> *Ee maame ee*
> *Ee paapa ee*
> *Ee bombom fire*. (Author Unknown)

However, the relatively complex compositions involved children in the upper primary level. We observe the change in tone and mood in the song titled: "*Mu mma yɛn kɔ hwɛ Adjoa Atta*" ("Let's go check on Adjoa Atta"). Observe how the tone and mood changes in each stanza to reflect the narration from excitement, to concern and finally solemness following death.

Stanza one

Children:	*Mu mma yɛn kɔ hwɛ Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta* [Let's go check on Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta]
	Mu mma yɛn kɔ hwe Adjoa Atta na ne ho tse sɛn ni [Let's go check on Adjoa Atta and see how she is doing]
Mother of Adjoa:	*Adjoa Atta ɔkɔ bɔrla, ɔkɔ borla, ɔkɔ bɔrla* [Adjoa Atta is disposing off the garbage, the garbage, the garbage]

204

Adjoa Atta oko borla na momfre me so nko
[Adjoa Atta is disposing off the garbage, so don't bother me]

Children [**excited**]: *Mu mma yɛnkɔ yɛn fie, yɛn fie, yɛn fie*
[let's go home, go home, go home]

Mu mma yɛn kɔ yɛn fie, na ehɔ tse sɛn ni
[Let's go home and see what is happening.]

Stanza two

Children: *Mu mma yɛn kɔ hwɛ Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta*
[Let's go check on Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta]

Mu mma yɛn ko hwɛ Adjoa Atta na ne ho tse sɛn ni
[Let's go check on Adjoa Atta and see how she is doing]

Mother of Adjoa: *Adjoa Atta ɔyare, ɔyare, ɔyare*
[Adjoa Atta is sick, is sick, is sick]

Adjoa Atta ɔyare na momfre me so nkɔ
[Adjoa Atta is sick, so don't bother me]

Children [**with concern**]: *Mu mma yɛn kɔ yɛn fie, yɛn fie, yɛn fie*
[Let's go home, go home, go home]

Mu mma yɛn kɔ yɛn fie, na ɛhɔ tse sɛn ni
[Let's go home and see what is happening.]

Stanza three

Children: *Mu mma yɛn kɔ hwɛ Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta*

[Let's go check on Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta]

Mu mma yɛn kɔ hwɛ Adjoa Atta na ne ho tse sɛn ni
[Let's go check on Adjoa Atta and see how she is doing]

Mother of Adjoa: *Adjoa Atta na we'wu, we'wu, we'wu*
[Adjoa Atta is dead, is dead, is dead]

Adjoa Atta na we'wu, na mo mfre me so nko

[Adjoa Atta is dead, so don't bother me]

Children [**sombrely**]:   *lala lala la la, la la, la la,*
                            lala lala la la, la la, la la la. (Author Unknown)

The varying complexities of the composition of the songs, including the manoeuvrings of tone and mood, serves as validation not only the presence of the children's creativity but also of their technical abilities which are steeped in the oral traditions of their community. Indeed, the children demonstrate not only the knowledge of African oral resources for the realisation of their play-song compositions but in doing so, establish that their art is as good and worthy of study as that of the adult genre.

4.5.4.2 The Component of Content

Content in the songs largely centred on (spoken) language, the main medium by which the songs were sung. Although the language employed by the children was simple, they were able to employ it to communicate simple or complex ideas, as illustrated in the discussion on structure. Additionally, employing a combination of linguistic devices such as code-switching and code-mixing and figurative devices such as irony, hyperbole and synecdoche, the children succeeded in embellishing the language, and as a result, making their poetic compositions more appealing. Indeed, the manner of the children's appropriation of language, as illustrated below, gives an indication of not only their facility with language but also their understanding of phenomena in their culture.

To begin, one of the key features that emerged from the study included the linguistic phenomenon of code-switching and code-mixing. Code-switching refers to the alternating usage

of two languages or more in which the switch occurs in between sentences. Code-mixing involves the alternating usage of two or more languages in which the switch takes place within the structure of a sentence. It should be noted that the existence of these phenomena is indicative of the multilingual environment and culture within which the children live.

An example of code-switching is the song "Robert Mensah." Here, the opening line is rendered in English because this is how the late former best African goalkeeper player was referred to internationally. It therefore served as a stock reference. The rest of the song, however, is sung in Akan.

Robert Mensah, goalkeeper number one
[Robert Mensah, goalkeeper number one]

aka nansa na wakɔ abrokyire
[with three days to his trip abroad]

kwasia bi tse ho a ɔmpe ne ho asɛm
[an idiot who is otherwise calm]

afa pentua ɔdze awɔ ne'mfe
[stabbed him with a broken bottle.]

But there are also instances of code-mixing which is an intra-sentential level phenomenon, as well as code-switching in the selection below.

Ama yare fever
[Ama has a fever]

Nyam mɛko
[Grind pepper]

And put in the bentua
[And put it in the enema]

Fee neto
[Prise open her anus]

And jump jump jump
[And jump jump jump]

And poo…
[And poo…] (Author Unknown)

In the first line, while "Ama yare" is in Akan, the next word "fever" is in English, thereby signalling the mixing of code in the initial line. Additionally, in the third line, code-mixing occurs in the inverse form beginning this time in the English, "And put in the" and ending the thought with the Akan word "bentua." The children's decision of mixing code or switching from either English or the African language appears to be a conscious decision to achieve musicality given how we appreciate the deliberate eye rhyme between "fever" and "bentua."

It should be noted that the use of code-switching and code-mixing were limited. The dominant language in which the songs were cast was Akan. The children made limited use of English in their compositions in spite of the fact that they performed their songs in the more formal environment of their schools where English is the main language of expression. This outcome adds credence to the proposition of the thesis that the African language is capable of not only describing phenomena but also of preserving the indigenous epistemologies of Africa.

The children also employed the use of irony to paint contrasting situations. For example, the device of irony was employed to notable effect, once more, in the play-song "*Dedende kwao o*."

Dedende kwao o
[Dedende kwao o]

dedende kwao o
[Dedende kwao o]

egya bɔfo ne nkwaŋ yɛ me dɛ
[the old hunter's soup is tasty]

nanso n'atere yɛ me nkoŋ
[yet his clothes are repulsive.]

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 05-11-2020)

In employing the use of irony in the above, we are presented with mental picture of a hunter who looks tattered and repulsive and yet, unexpectedly, his soup is tasty. The use of irony thus successfully helped to drive the theme of appearances. Indeed, another quite similar example of the use of irony is presented in "Araba Nsaba."

Araba Nsaba nko po
[Araba Nsaba is no fisher]

nanso onya nam we
[yet she gets the choicest fish to eat]

Araba Nsaba
[Araba Nsaba]

basia edwaman onko po
[an immoral woman who is no fisher]

nanso onya nam we
[yet gets the choicest fish to eat]

Araba Nsaba
[Araba Nsaba.]

(Author Unknown; collected and transcribed by Addo: 15-10-2020).

Like the previous song, Araba Nsaba presents an unexpected outcome. It is ironic that the lady being referred to does not have any fishing accoutrements and yet goes home with fish. One wonders what bargaining power she has to have succeeded in getting fish. But as the song progresses, we are given a hint that she is an immoral woman, thus painting to us an image of a woman who displays her sexuality and trades sex for fish. The fact that the children choose to employ an implicit suggestion, rather than explicit description of the sexual signals the subject gives, or the sexual activity she engages in, is indicative of the conservative nature of the society that frowns on all presentations of sexual immorality.

Similarly, the children also enhanced the language by utilising the device of synecdoche in their oral performance. Synecdoche is a device in which a part is used to represent a whole, or a whole to represent a part. Notice how in the song, *Ɛnan, nsa, etsir mo* ("praise to the leg, the hand and the head"), the children focus on an aspect of the body and their associated actions as though those parts, rather than the human being, performs those acts.

> *Sɛ ɛnan wanko 'habem*
>
> [If the leg had not gone to farm]
>
> *na nsa entwa bankye a*
> [and the hand had not harvested cassava]
>
> *na etsir so asoa aba fie a*
> [and the head carry the harvest home]
>
> *anka yefun bɛyɛ den?*
> [what would the stomach have done?]
>
> *ɛnan e, mo mo mo*
> [well done, leg]
>
> *nsa e, mom o mo*

[well done, hand]

etsir e, mom o mo
[well done, head]

yefun kwadwo fo
[lazy stomach.] (Author Unknown).

The effect of the children employing synecdoche is that it throws the spotlight on the function of each body part. Humorously, the children in singling out the stomach for blame, suggest that while all the other parts engage in physical labour, the stomach only "eats" the food. The use of synecdoche is to emphasise the importance of labour, while condemning sloth, symbolised by the stomach. The children's adroit deployment of this feature in the language is reflective of the rich oral tradition source which is the society in which the children live.

As well, other devices contribute to imagery as a way of communicating the children's messages through the medium of their songs. As previously established by the literature and already demonstrated in the analysis thus far, we appreciate that children have a fertile imagination thus their resort to embellishments. This is shown in their use of the device of hyperbole, that is to say, an exaggeration. The encounter is vividly presented to us in the previously encountered *Nde dze maame eku me* ("Mother will kill me today").

Maame ama me dama
[mother gave me money]

Gongo gongo gongo
[gongo gongo gongo]

ɔse me nkoto dokon
[asking that I buy kenkey]

gongo gongo gongo
gongo gongo gongo

medzi akoto dondo
[I went and bought a drum]

gongo gongo gongo
gongo gongo gongo

nde dze maame eku me
[mother will kill me today]

gongo gongo gongo
[gongo gongo gongo]

nde dze paapa eku me
[father will kill me today]

gongo gongo gongo
[gongo gongo gongo] (Author Unknown).

In the above, the persona, a child, expresses fear that his mother would kill him for buying a drum instead of food. He also adds that his father would kill him for his transgressions. But we know that since both parents cannot kill him separately or twice, then the child is exaggerating the degree of punishment that awaits him. Nevertheless, the effect of the use of hyperbole in the song performance is that it gives a measure of the gravity of the wrongdoing by the child.

Another feature with respect to the content of the play-songs concerns the nature of the characters who are the subjects of the songs. While most of the children's songs adopt human characters, some others adopt the style of a fable – making use of animal characters who communicate the song's themes, particularly, the indigenous epistemologies that are summed up in the compositions. In other words, it is the thematic concerns that usually shapes the choice of characters and their motivations.

For example, in *Adow kyɛkyɛkyɛr* ("Stubborn Monkey"), the monkey's stubbornness lands it in hell fire; in *Sansa akroma* (Lazy hawk), we learn about the lazy hawk that preys on hapless chicks; by contrast in *Dabodabo ne ne'mba* ("duck with her ducklings") we learn about the duck teaching its young ones the importance of education; the duck is again present in *Dɔkɔdɔkɔ wɔrekɔ hen?* ("Duck, where are you going?") where it sashays and shows off her beauty as it headed to a palace; in *Nnoma kakraba ebien* ("Two little birds") we are told about conflict between two birds competing for the best spot to keep warm in their nest; while in "*Obra*" ("Life"), caution is given about watching out for treacherous people who repay good with evil; in *Okraman* ("Dog") a threatening stray dog is kept away; and finally, in *Kweku Ananse mpabowa* ("Kweku Ananse's new shoes") the legendary spider, the folkhero Kweku Ananse, is mocked for putting his right shoes on the left foot, and putting the left shoes on his right foot.

The children sometimes choose to use human characters. Depending on the kind of song and the themes they intend to communicate, they may use children as subjects or adults as they desire. These deliberate choices – deciding whether to employ animal or human characters; or whether children or adults – invariably demonstrate that the children are capable oral artists in their own rights.

4.6 SUMMARY

In spite of the constrained environment within which it was conducted, compounded by the outbreak of the novel coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) that disrupted group physical contact and interaction, the research successfully uncovered varied ingredients of multimodality such as clapping, gestures and touch, body orientation and demeanour, movements and formation as well

as the use of objects and personal effects – what Kress (2002) described as aspects of "cultural technologies. These non-verbal and material multimodal elements aided the successful enactment of the play compositions. Again, the key planks of oral literature such as breaking of the fourth wall and thus melding the roles of performers and audience which have been affirmed by scholars like Finnegan, Soyinka and Motsa, as being central in the analysis of oral literature, were found to be present in the Ghanaian children's play-songs, performing roles similar those in the adult genre.

Additionally, all eight (8) elements identified by Okpewho as constituting African oral literature namely, repetition, ideophones, parallelism, piling and association, tonality, imagery, allusion, and symbolism were also discovered in the children's oral play-songs performances examined. These elements which were analysed as components of style were remarkably congruent in the context of the play-songs and smoothly complemented the various themes espoused in the children's oral poetics.

In respect of themes, a plethora of ideas about indigenous philosophies, centring on the worldview of the community and viewed through the prism of the children's eyes, was examined. Some of the themes that came to the fore included, appearances, reality and sharing; transgressions, obedience and socially appropriate behaviour; identity and belonging; role of family in socialisation; friendships and love relationships; and literacy. Other themes raised in the play-songs concerned family and ascribed roles; health, wellness and medicine; the power, facility and empowerment of the woman and girl; competition and the irrepressible spirit; depiction of religion and the supernatural; betrayal as part of life; native knowledge on farming and fishing; and also, protection. To the children, these are important contemplations around

which they create songs as a way of expressing their views of the world as they know them to be and as they wish them to be.

Like accomplished oral poets, the children employed poetic language to excellent effect. They did this by intricately weaving together various elements of style at their disposal including literary devices such as synecdoche, metaphors, irony and hyperbole. As observed from the analysis, the complexity of the children's poetic artistry in many ways demonstrate a maturity that belies their age.

The presence of all the fundamental elements that are integral in the constitution of the more formal mainly adult-centred production of African orature being present and skilfully rendered in the children's oral compositions is a significant achievement and testament to the children's ability as authentic oral artistes. Importantly, children's play-songs are a unique genre that provides insights into human life the same way as does any other genre – they are not a subsidiary of adult orature, although they are closely related.

It should be noted however, that even though not all of the children's play-songs analysed contained all the elements espoused, there was significant evidence of children's oral art forms are not fully developed like those of adults, and this facet came through in the study. Nevertheless, the often-intricate crafting of the songs and the utilisation of the traditional oral resources as material for their songs, give an indication of an art form that is evolving progressively. This observation supports the argument of the study that African children's oral compositions, such as their play-songs, can and should be marked as a starting point in the production of oral literature and the musical cultures of a society. The study confirms Nketia's (1974) assertion that children as oral artists and products of their culture, have internalised, to

some appreciable extent, the methods and techniques used in more formalised African oral songs production. Above all, children show that they are not just passive carriers of indigenous epistemologies but are active constructors of knowledge based on their own experiences; knowledge steeped in and reflecting the tradition of their community.

4.7 REFLECTIONS ON AFRICAN LORE AND THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY

The observed intersection of African and European languages in the African orature enterprise is hard to ignore. In research which deals with linguistic powers and preservation of orature, one is led to briefly reflect on the phenomenon of English as a carrier of African lore. Cognizant of the fact that colonialism has impacted Africa for more than two centuries, it comes as no surprise to find some African cultural expressions reflecting the confluence of the two languages. This is a common sociolinguistic occurrence known as part of the World Englishes[36] idiolect, which is a variant found in communities that were colonised and thus heavily influenced by the Britain or the United States of America. With the advent of globalisation, almost every facet of human life has been impacted, in one way or the other. It is in this vein that African children's musical cultures, existing within the context of the globalised world compounded with a colonial history, even in rural settings, have not remained entirely insulated from external influence but evolved. Instead, there have been cross-cultural musical appropriations by one culture as it comes into contact with another, and vice versa – a situation in which is what Ogede (1994) described as a "harmonious meeting of African and Western ethical codes" found in the children's play-songs.

---

[36] See fuller explanation in Introduction // Purdue Writing Lab at:
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/english_as_a_second_language/world_englishes/index.html#:~:text=The%20term%20World%20Englishes%20refers%20to%20the%20differences,contexts%2C%20analyzing%20their%20history%2C%20background%2C%20function%2C%20and%20influence.

Recalling that the interest of the study was to collect and analyse play-songs composed by the children themselves or handed down to them through oral tradition; songs that reflected their African cultural values, aspirations and experiences and values, and not western composed songs and rhymes; there were nonetheless instances of borrowing from the west to Africa, as well as the other way around in the children's play-songs.

For instance, in the case of the African borrowing of originally western play-songs, the songs were modified to reflect African values and experiences. One such song that teaches about socially acceptable behaviour, is the song "In the golden treasure", a parody of the African-American play-song "I met my boyfriend at the candy store" (Schoolyardplay, 2010). The two songs, beginning with the Ghanaian adaptation sung in the original English, followed by the American version, are presented below for comparison.

Ghanaian version
In the golden treasure
Oh mama the *waakye*[37]
Sister and the boys
I saw my best friend in the wedding shop
He bought me ice cream in the wedding shop.
Mama, mama, I'm so sick
Call the doctor quick, quick, quick.
Doctor, doctor shall I die?
No, my baby, do not cry. (Author Unknown)

American version

I met my boyfriend at the candy store.
He bought me ice cream, he bought me cake.
He brought me home with a belly ache
Mama, mama, I feel sick
Call the doctor quick, quick, quick.

---

[37] Waakye is a Ghanaian dish of rice that is cooked together with beans, along with red dried sorghum leaf stalk.

Doctor,doctor will I die?
Count to five and you'll be alive.
1,2,3,4,5 I'm alive! (Author Unknown)

Comparing the two extracts, we observe that the children, in their attempt to present the song as an African play-song, have modified the original American version to suit their African experience and values by eliminating some expressions, while adding indigenous elements. We first encounter this indigenous colouration in the first two lines of the African version where, for instance, the children introduce us to *waakye*, a popular Ghanaian staple food.

But we also encounter a clear purpose of introducing African values centring on socially appropriate behaviour in the extract which is not present in the western version. We note in the excerpt that while the western version states "I met my *boyfriend* in the candy store," the modified version states: "I saw my *best friend* in the wedding shop" (emphasis mine).

This substitution of "boyfriend" with "best friend" is done because the children do not want to give any indication of their knowledge of the sexual nature of the relationship that exists between a "boyfriend" or "girlfriend." The reason for this occurrence is that erotic relationships involving children under eighteen years of age are strongly discouraged in traditional Ghanaian societies, a norm that prevails in many African societies. In this rendition of the song, the children however maintain "wedding shop" which has a taxonomic relationship with "boyfriend," inadvertently betraying the moral conundrum they face. The children being aware of the inordinate premium placed on chastity, as a result, even in song, and while playing in their own space independent of adult intrusion, are conscious of this social expectation and therefore strive to conform

accordingly. They therefore would prefer the choice of the safer, more neutral and socially acceptable word "best friend" rather than the deviant word "boyfriend."

Conversely, there have also been instances where African play-songs have been appropriated and sung in Europe and even the Orient. One of the play-songs, *Pimpinaa*[38], which the research discussed in the introductory chapter, and which is in part serving as the title of the current research, was recently seen being performed by children in China. Another Ghanaian play-song, *Kyekyekule*[39], appears to have an even wider global appeal; it has been performed by elementary and high school choirs in America and has been included as part of the world collection by the renowned cultural organisation, Smithsonian [40]Folkways, an institution that provides music resources, including lesson plans for music educators.

Kyekyekule may have gained global recognition because the play-song has a catchy rhythm that makes it easy to sing and its accompanying movements that teaches about the body parts, is easy to do. An internet blogspot, *Pancocojams*, that "showcases the music, dances, language practices, & customs of African Americans and of other people of Black descent throughout the world" provides some useful video links that sheds light on some of the earliest recorded

---

[38] A video recording of Chinese school children singing the Ghanaian play-song *Pimpinaa.*See: <https://web.facebook.com/ndamoah/videos/10154334473971202/?pnref=story>

[39] A video recording of the song *Kyekyekule* being sung by an American High School choir. The choir director is not Black/African but Caucasian.
See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=72WK_2ofeHw>

[40] See: Audio recording of *Kye Kye Kule*

From the collection Children's Songs for Games from Africa (1979) With Kojo Fosu and Edwina Hunter as part of the Smithsonian Folkway Recordings.

<https://folkways.si.edu/kojo-fosu-and-edwina-hunter/kye-kye-kule/childrens/music/track/smithsonian>

references to *Kyekyekule.* Discussing the earliest references to *Kyekyekule*, the blog offers two video links that show that the play-song had been appropriated for a salsa record by Willie Colon [41]in Latin America (1967) and for the Afro-Latin band *Osibisa* [42]in London (1972).

Fig. 11: A gramophone record of Osibisa's 1972 adaptation of the children's play-song "Che Che Kule".

---

[41] Hector Lavoe and Willie Colon- "Che Che Cole" and "Machito" See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-NSk7xvCXs>
[42] *Osibisa* - Che Che Kule (Heads Album). See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUTSg2S5WbA>

However, adopted for younger audiences outside Africa, these songs – *Pimpinaa* and *Kyekyekule* among others – appear to have been transported to the foreign destinations through Ghanaian educators who served as teachers in western schools, and also by foreigners, particularly tourists, who visited the country, learnt the songs following their immersion into the culture and in turn taught their foreign audiences, particularly children, how to sing the songs.

The distinguishing characteristics between the cross-fertilised musical renditions is that, whereas in the African setting, the borrowed western songs are modified to suit the African situation; in the case of the west or orient borrowing the African songs, the form and content of the songs including the original language they were sung in are largely maintained. Also, the foreign users in performing the songs, utilise the African rhythm to provide entertainment and promote literacy.

By some paradox, *Kyekyekule* which is known globally, did not feature as part of the songs sung by the children and is thus not among the repertoire used for the analysis. This was a puzzle the researcher determined to solve. Growing up in the 1990s, the researcher recalls that *Kyekyekule* was popular among children to the extent that there was even a children's show by the same title on Ghana Television (GTV) hosted by George Laing [43]known on the show as Uncle George. Consequently, due to corona virus pandemic with its attendant prevention restrictions that deterred physical contacts as much as possible, I telephoned the research facilitators (teachers) assigned to me by the schools to find out why the song (*Kyekyekule*) that was so popular with the researcher's generation as a child had now seemingly lost relevance among the children some three decades on. The research assistants after conferring with the school children who were the

---

[43] George Laing, the host of the children's show *Kyekyekule*. in an interview on Joy News available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eNteGyfspEg&t=18s>

participants in the research confirmed that the children had not heard the song *Kyekyekule* before. *Kyekyekule*, which used to be an everyday play-song for children decades ago has become displaced among the contemporary Ghanaian children repertoire of play-songs, a fact corroborated by Pancocojams editor Azizi Powell who shares his observation: "unfortunately, I have not yet found any videos of Ghanaian children singing or playing any "Kye Kye Kule" games" (Pancocojams, 2016). Today, while the song has become a global property, it is no longer a play-song of choice among contemporary Ghanaian children's musical culture – an ironic twist about the impact of globalisation.

This development has implications for national policy on education given that the research confirms Trevor Wiggins' call for a decolonisation of the basic school cultural studies curriculum following his observation that "there is little evidence of Ghana's rich cultural heritage of music and dance and no mention of the moral and social significance often attached to such activities" (Wiggins, 2013). The situation is compounded by what Afolabi correctly observes that "[a]t present, African languages are seen as vernacular and are taught as such to African students. Thus, African languages as mother-tongues are forbidden within many school premises, at the pain of punishment, especially in many primary and secondary schools across Africa" (Afolabi, 2020: 107). The concern of Afolabi (2020) about the peripheral placement of the indigenous language was echoed a year later during the commemoration of the 2021 Mother Language Day, as previously stated, where the Dean of the Faculty of Ghanaian Languages of the University of Education, Winneba, in a symposium lamented the practice of punishing students for speaking the local languages in school, cautioning that the practice could lead to the erosion of the nation's heritage.

In curing the double jeopardy of languages and knowledges that are being threatened with epistemicide by the western dominated system of education, the current study, therefore, like the case of South Africa which has taken the lead on the continent in decolonising of the academic curricula (d'Abdon, 2020), makes a similar case for inclusion of all such cultural material in the educational curriculum to teach children their history and cultural heritage and also to aid towards the preservation of the indigenous epistemologies of the African people.

Related to the issue of globalisation and the cross-borrowings of oral songs between the African and non-African cultures is "the language question" which has been a major preoccupation engaging decolonial conversations. Critics led by Ngugi wa Thiong'o have argued that African literature, particularly literature for Africans, needs to be expressed in the African language[44] and not the colonial languages. His position has however been challenged by other scholars including Chinua Achebe [45]who argued that the English language (in his case) was not an imposition but enables him to reach a much larger audience than the indigenous languages would.

The current research into the indigenous play-songs provides interesting practical responses to both views. In the case of employing a solely African language to express the African thought and experiences as espoused by Ngugi and other proponents, the research generally focused on songs sung in the indigenous African language and successfully demonstrated that African philosophies and indigenous knowledges are indeed capable of being carried by the African languages. In respect of the African ideas and experiences being expressed in the non-African language, the children in the tradition of authentic oral artists were able to manipulate

---

[44] See: Ngugi W. T., 1986. Decolonising the Mind: the Politics of Language in African Literature.
[45] See: Achebe, C. 1975. Morning Yet on Creation Day,

the language, include indigenous oral resources where necessary and successfully present the product as their own African songs.

From the foregoing, it is clear, therefore, that whereas children's play-songs offer us a means to enquire into children's musical cultures and serve as a carrier of indigenous epistemologies, the impact of globalisation on African orature cannot be discounted. Importantly, however, whereas the study posited that the advent of coloniality presented a certain doom to the existence of indigenous knowledges, the research has shown that this was not necessarily the case as some of the songs, even when they had been sung in English, have been infused with African values and oral elements thereby making them domesticated or Africanised songs.

It may seem ironic that as the study is staking a claim for greater recognition for this genre of literature among the more established adult-centred genres in the African oral tradition, at least one of the children's play-songs has transcended the stage of African literature to being recognised among the world literature canon. Significantly, as noted by Afolabi (2020) about the need for Africa to extricate itself from its dominated state to a state of equal prominence as the west in respect of knowledge production, this research builds upon other works that aim at decolonising knowledge production and centring African epistemology.

CHAPTER FIVE:

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

"Can the subaltern speak?"

~ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The research problem of the study was based on the fact that very minimal scholarly interest had been given to children's oral play-songs. Much of the studies on children literature had been on children's stories, and where it had focused on children's oral play-songs, the emphasis had been on how their play-songs can aid pedagogy in schools. There was therefore a need to address the aesthetic and thematic aspects of the children's play-song compositions that the literature showed had not been given the needed attention, and to demonstrate why the children's oral compositions deserve to be considered not as subsidiary but as a genre of equal worth as the adult.

Although the research drew from a plethora of disciplines such as sociology, music, drama, anthropology, psychology, history, linguistics, oral and cultural studies among others, the focus was essentially literary. Thus, the main aim of the study was to unravel the indigenous knowledge and philosophies encapsulated in the themes, as well as examine the aesthetic features that constituted and aided the children's oral play-song performances. It therefore adopted the decolonial perspective which privileges and centres voices from the margins such as

those of children. In the preceding chapters, the collected play-songs which constituted the primary data were presented and analysed.

This concluding chapter starts a summary of the preceding chapters, followed by a summary of the findings, the main contributions of the study, limitations and recommendations for further research.

5.2 SUMMATIVE REFLECTIONS ON CHAPTERS AND KEY FINDINGS

The summary is divided into two sections, namely: summary of chapters and summary of findings.

5.2.1 *Summative Reflections on Chapters*

Chapter One of the research contextualised the thesis by providing a clear foundation and structure upon which the research was conducted. It provided the background to the study, the aims and the rationale. It also explained the hypothesis and research questions driving the study, the scope as well as the limitation of the study. The literature established that play represents a route through which children are able to escape into their own world, express themselves and unleash their creativity. In this light, the research recognised play-songs as one of the common avenues through which the children exhibit their creativity. The study found the need to adopt the method of observation to record the children's oral performances with a view to unravelling the indigenous knowledge systems and philosophies summed up in the themes, as well as analysing the oral aesthetics employed in the delivery of the songs.

Chapter Two focused on the theoretical framework and the methodology. In respect of the theoretical framework that undergirded the study, it was deemed appropriate to adopt multimodality as a model to guide the research because it enabled a comprehensive examination of the verbal, non-verbal and oral resources deployed toward the realisation of the children's oral poetics. In terms of the methodology, a case study method was employed and a purposive sampling method favoured to select the participants whose songs, following observation, were recorded in performance. The conceptual model informed the use of the methods of Okpewho, Finnegan and others for the analysis of the songs.

In Chapter Three the review of related literature covered various thoughts drawn from multifarious disciplines including poetry, music, psychology, anthropology, cultural studies, among others, which affirmed the interdisciplinary nature of the study. The review revisited the debate over which is superior between the oral and the written with the researcher, supported by the literature, taking a position that it is inappropriate to raise one as having a better claim over the other, noting that they both have their unique functions. The chapter also reviewed literature on creativity and orature, which supported Research Question 2 which sought to identify the stylistic elements employed by the children in their play-songs. The literature review established the lacuna in the research about the limited scholarly attention hitherto given to children's orature. It also revealed that the children were not passive receivers of information; they applied their creative impulse and reproduced their experience of life in their play-songs productions.

Adopting Decoloniality as a lens to privilege the children's viewpoint, Chapter Four entailed a presentation and analysis of the children's songs to draw out the knowledge systems and philosophies encapsulated in the themes. It also investigated the presence of elements of African

orality and multimodality as the core constituents of the children's style and validated the children's poetic art as typifying African orature. The chapter concluded with a reflection on African lore and the global community by assessing the symbiotic relationship existing between them and observing language policy implications.

5.2.2 *Summative Reflections on Key Findings*

Several key findings emerged from the literary investigation of the form and content of the children's play-songs. Specifically, the interest of the research was to analyse the oral aesthetics and assess how such complemented the indigenous knowledges and philosophies encapsulated in the themes with the ultimate aim of establishing whether this genre is, indeed, equal to other genres in function and impact on society. The study was subsequently guided by and set out to find answers to five research questions.

The first question the research set out to investigate was: **"what traditional knowledge systems and philosophies are in children's oral play-songs?"** Following the analysis, what emerged as being encapsulated in the themes analysed were indigenous knowledges and philosophies that the children had gained from their communities. The themes unearthed from the play-songs, which constituted the data, covered a wide range of interests and included: appearances, reality and sharing; transgressions, obedience and socially appropriate behaviour; identity and belonging; role of family in socialisation; friendships and love relationships; literacy; family and ascribed roles; health, wellness and medicine; the power, facility and empowerment of the woman and girl; competition and the irrepressible spirit; depiction of religion and the

supernatural; betrayal as part of life; native knowledge on farming and fishing; and also, protection.

While focusing on tradition, some of the songs also reflected the impact that globalization has had on the communities in which the children live. As a result, even though most of the songs were in Akan, there were a few songs that, mainly through code-switching, borrowed words and phrases in English, as a medium through which traditional philosophies and ways of doing were communicated. By this feat, the children demonstrated that the African oral tradition and language, as well as the western culture and language as a linguistic medium can relate side by side in carrying indigenous epistemology, whilst repositioning them from the margins to the centre, as well.

As earlier discussed, Catherine Odora Hoppers' decolonial proposition of inclusion that posits that "what is needed is not so much to rewrite the Western script that African universities are using but to enlarge it so that Africa too has a voice… The Western package [alone]… is inadequate to the task of bringing up children who have other frames of reference." (SARCHI Chair, 2009 cited in Soudien 2019), is seen to be relevant in the context of the research. The effect of this enlargement to include other frames of reference is that African indigenous knowledges and philosophies can be preserved and saved from epistemicide. Notwithstanding the observation of linguistic borrowing, the bulk of the songs collected for the study were sung in the African language, Akan.

The knowledge systems and philosophies carried through the medium of the children's play-songs were successfully delivered by the employment of certain oral aesthetics. This brings into focus the second question that the research sought an answer: **"what oral stylistic features are**

employed in the transmission of these songs?" In adopting Multimodality Theory and Isidore Okpewho's recommendation about the stylistic elements that constitutes African oral literature as frames, the proposition that the children's oral play-songs qualified as authentic African orature was found to have been validated.

The school environment where the children's oral play-song performances were observed and recorded limited the appropriation of multimodal tools that would have been available to the children in a more traditional setting or the relaxed environment of their homes. The study nonetheless unearthed some multimodal elements that were employed by the children. These elements included gestures and touch, clapping, body orientation and demeanour, changing phases of excitement, movement and formation, and objects and personal effects, which were effectively utilized in the performances of the songs.

Additionally, the study set out to ascertain whether the elements of African orature that Okpewho maintained are characteristic of African oral compositions were present in the children's oral artform, and found that all eight features namely: repetition, symbolism, imagery, parallelism, ideophones, tonalities, allusion and piling were in the children's play-songs.

From the analysis, it was realised that the children demonstrated remarkable understanding in the appropriation of these stylistic elements in their oral poetic performances. However, the employment of each element ranged from limited to higher degrees of usage in the songs.

Furthermore, the literature established that play-songs despite being ubiquitous had not been given much attention by scholars. This leads to the next research question which was: **"how can children's play-songs be re-positioned as a fully-fledged genre?"** The discussions and the

analysis of the data affirmed that the children's play-songs represent an oral art form that is evolving progressively. As a result, the researcher's position is that the children's oral presentation can and should be marked and considered as a veritable starting point in the production of oral literature and the musical cultures of a society.

The research shows that, children have internalised, to some appreciable extent, the methods and techniques used in more formalised African oral songs production. They are able to combine this knowledge together with their creative impulses, as well as their understanding of the world to create their own oral lore that are independent of the adult forms and yet authentic in their own right. Significantly and as earlier indicated, the children's play-songs passes Okpewho's litmus test in having all eight constituent elements of formal African oral literature present in the children's play-songs.

It is in this context therefore that the research affirms the hypothesis that children's play-songs can be repositioned from the margins to the centre and recognized as a worthy genre. This is especially important because of the emphasis on children, as well as the role of the songs in serving as a marker for the evolution of a society's musical cultures beginning with children.

Regarding the ongoing decolonial conversations centring on how to not only preserve African indigenous knowledge but also revive them like Mafeje (cited in Dastile, 2013), Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013), Dei (2018) and others have postulated, the research question: **"to what extent can children's oral lore reclaim African indigenous knowledge systems affected by coloniality?"** was found to be at the centrality of this discourse. The research showed that the children's play-songs, despite not having been given as much attention as that of the adult-centred genres in African scholarship, can in many ways help redress the threat of epistemicide

and linguicide of Africa. The existential threat of epistemicide and linguicide of Africa's history and present reality remains a concern requiring redress. Trevor Wiggins interest about the lacuna in the education curricula is echoed thus: "In the whole book, other than within the description of traditional religion (always third after Christianity and Islam), there is little evidence of Ghana's rich cultural heritage of music and dance and no mention of the moral and social significance often attached to such activities" (Wiggins, *ibid*). This state of affairs is compounded by the practice of penalising school children who tend to speak the vernacular, other than the official colonial language English in schools.   As earlier indicated in the literature, the Dean of Languages of the University of Education Winneba, Professor Owu-Ewie, at a symposium to commemorate the 2021 Mother Language Day, cautioned against this, explaining that penalising children for speaking their indigenous language in school could lead to the eroding of African heritage. Children's play-songs, however, remain a practical option to address the threat of epistemicide and linguicide. Judging by the example of the play-song *Kyekyekule* [46]which has been documented and well-referenced globally, African play-songs can similarly be documented, preserved and kept safe from the reaches of coloniality. In the face of globalisation, the upcoming generation of children can also be re-introduced to the songs which will mark a starting point from which they will add their own creative oral compositions reflecting society as they see it.

In spite of the songs being a product of oral tradition spanning generations, and despite the advent of western civilisation and language, the songs served a cornucopia store of history and indigenous knowledge systems and philosophies that had largely remained unaffected. The study

---

[46] *Kyekyekule* is a children's play-song that did not feature among the songs sung and performed by the children. In fact the children confessed that they are unfamiliar with the song. Ironically, the play-song is known globally and is part of the folk-songs documented by the Smithsonian Folkways organisation. See discussion on "Peering into the future: A note on globalisation and cross-fertilisation in African orature" for more.

therefore shows that the songs can act as a potent storage reservoir for Africans to reclaim, appreciate and preserve the indigenous knowledge systems threatened by coloniality.

A point of interest which came through in the study was the fact that the Akan language and to a lesser extent the English language, both functioned as vehicles for carrying and preserving the thoughts, philosophies and epistemology of the indigenous people. Decolonial proponents like Catherine Odora Hoppers validate this finding, as they argue that the western language together with the indigenous language which constitute "other frames of reference" can be used in the education of children. Children's lore thus stands well-positioned to aid the preservation of African indigenous knowledges, as has been illustrated in the analysis, although there were also songs that reflected contemporary issues and thoughts, indicating the fact that children's play-songs have evolved. With language as a tool, the children demonstrated their creative ability to adopt the form of the African oral aesthetics to successfully communicate African-centred themes, worldviews and philosophies through their songs.

The documentation of these songs, a review of the language-in-education policy to make the indigenous language a language of instruction at the lower primary level, the inclusion of play-songs in the education curricula, as well as the revival of play-songs as activities of choice among children in an age of globalisation, are suggested ways of ensuring the preservation of this African indigenous epistemologies.

5.3 CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

Contribution to knowledge or scholarship is a vital part of a research like the current one. Among other reasons, it underscores the objective for the initiation of the thesis. There are a few important contributions to knowledge deriving from the research.

First, the study offers a unique opportunity to contribute to research on African children's oral literature, thus adding to the body of knowledge in African indigenous epistemology. The research addresses the lacuna of children's play-songs as a valid epistemic resource. It validates the stylistic features of children's play-songs as constitutive of African orature, just as the adult-centred oral genres. Further, the study investigates how these oral stylistic resources have been employed toward conveying themes which contain crucial knowledge for the guidance of society. The ultimate conclusion in this research is that children's orature is not a mere extension of adult literature but a genre worthy of scholarly attention. The study upholds the hypothesis that children's play-songs are a unique genre that provides insights into human life the same way as does any other genre.

The second observation is that the study revealed that children's play-songs can serve as a potent avenue for preserving African culture, knowledges and epistemology in the original African languages – thus saving them from epistemicide. Similarly, the study also contributed to the decolonial conversations on ways of preserving indigenous African languages that had become endangered due to colonialism: it established that the play-songs cast in African languages can serve as a means to help save the African languages from linguicide. The prospect of the accomplishment of the twin outcome of preservation of both African epistemologies and languages through the medium of the oral play-songs of children is one that the research found to

be cogent. Consequently, it is deemed to be a viable answer to debates concerning securing the future of African languages and epistemologies in decolonial circles.

It is of interest to note that there also emerged, instances of children's songs that were not cast in the indigenous languages, but in English, a colonial foreign language. In respect of songs that were wholly sung in English, or songs characterised by a mixture of English and the indigenous language through the linguistic phenomenon of code-switching and code-mixing, the analysis showed that, the songs were Africanised, carrying African thoughts and philosophies, and this was due to the oral culture's influence on the English language. This calls to mind the practice of domestication of the foreign to make relevant to the local context. In fact, the thesis documented an instance where the children opted to sing a particular song in two different languages without sacrificing the essence of the message they intended to communicate. In this regard, the domestication of English did not efface the African role of the songs.

The research therefore argues that the fact that the songs were not sung in the indigenous languages but rather in the foreign language, does not invalidate the African-centred wisdom and worldview therein. It maintains that one can still use the English language to communicate ideas about African indigenous philosophies, just as it can by using the African languages. In effect, the African children's play-songs sung in either the African languages or the colonial languages, successfully served as carriers of African thought and thus, also aided the preservation of African epistemologies. This finding has policy implications given that English remains the language of instruction in the lower primary. Given that the research has established that both the foreign language and local language carry African knowledges and philosophies, both languages can be adopted as languages of instruction at the foundation level of education.

Another contribution of the research was the validation of the fact that children are not just passive receivers of information in their lived experiences, but like artistes, actively process the experiences and recreate them during play to reflect their own worldview. The research therefore highlights the knowledge children are teaching the world through their own play-song compositions, thus inversing the usual order of knowledge transmission patterns in the (adult) world.

Further to these, we established from the literature that play represented an avenue for escape for the children to exercise their creative impulse freely. In the analysis, it emerged that the play-songs served as a window through which children could criticise through song. In the analysis, we found that children sometimes perceived adults, ironically, as behaving in child-like manner and this reflected in the manner they rendered their song. Through the songs of the children, we learn that children are not just carriers of knowledge, but creators whom society could learn from. The snapshots of aspects of life captured in the play-songs served not only as a measure of children's views of happenings around them, but also affirmed their often-overlooked human role in the contribution to the epistemological rebuilding of Africa's social and cultural identity post the colonial era.

Finally, the research established the position that the children's oral play-songs are as important as other oral genres. It positioned the children as accomplished oral artistes that had not only the knowledge of the constitution of African orature but also the ability to skilfully employ the use of the elements of African orature in their own poetic songs. In this light, the study contributes toward orature analysis theory, by demonstrating how the resources used in the realisation of the children's oral play-songs performances promotes African indigenous knowledges. In this

regard, the study broke new grounds concerning filling the research gap in terms of recognising children as accomplished oral poets and categorising children's play-songs as being a significant part of the corpus of African oral literature.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Given that scholarship is a continuum, the thesis proposes that future research can expand the frontier of children's oral literature and lead to findings that will endorse the genre even further. In addition, recommendations for policy are also expected to advance children's musical cultures. Several recommendations centring on further research and policy implications have subsequently been made.

Although the study did not set out to analyse the songs with a focus on the age groups of the primary school children who were the participants, during observation, it emerged that the songs sung by the children appeared to reflect the age groups of the children. Love songs were mostly sung by the older group in upper primary, while more rhyme inclined songs were sung by the younger lower primary group. This gave an indication that the older the participant, the more likely were they to sing songs considered "serious", while the younger participants were more interested in the mundane, rhyme-disposed songs. It is therefore recommended that future research investigates the kinds of songs that are composed and performed by the children with specific regards to the age groups.

Secondly, the current study collected and analysed songs involving both traditional genders – male and female children. It is recommended that further research into children's play-songs be conducted with an interest in only songs chosen by either the male or female gender.

Furthermore, it is recommended that traditional games and songs should be encouraged and incorporated in the curricula of the children. As many of children are found in schools, it imperative that play-songs as carriers of traditional epistemology be performed in the schools and the various traditional oral resources that the children need to complement their oral performances be provided to them, so that the children can be grounded in their culture.

Additionally, it is recommended that more African indigenous songs be incorporated into the curricula as a way facilitating literacy education. As we have discovered from the analysis, this will help promote the effective teaching and learning of language, mathematics, arts etc.

Whereas the children were able to explain in the field why they used certain resources, such as cultural technologies, in the realization of their performance, there was no opportunity to discuss the themes and philosophies that later emerged from the analysis with them to ascertain the extent of their awareness of these elements in their songs due to the almost year-long closure of schools following the onset of the coronavirus pandemic. It is therefore recommended that future studies address this aspect of research into the children's lore.

Aside from English and Akan which were the two languages the songs collected were sung in, there are many other indigenous languages in Ghana[47] that contain primordial and epistemologies, as well as oral stylistic elements. Further research into these would no doubt yield stimulating results. Given that the indigenous language is presently not the language of choice for instruction in schools, especially at the kindergarten to lower primary level, it is

---

[47] There are about 73 indigenous languages in Ghana out of which 13 are government sponsored and thus institutional see: *Ethnologue*: *Languages of the world, twenty-fourth Edition*. https://www.ethnologue.com/country/GH. The main languages are Akan (including the mutually intelligible formal dialects Fante, Asante Twi and Akuapem Twi), Ewe, Ga, Nzema, Dagbane, Dagaare, Dangme Gonja and Kasem. See: Bureau of Ghana Languages: https://bgl.gov.gh/languages-overview

important, as revealed in the research findings, that the language-in-education policy is reviewed and the required resources and training provided, so that children at the foundational level of the educational strata develop proficiency in speaking and writing in their mother tongue. In this way, they will learn about their African cultures, traditions and epistemology, while also serving as creators and carriers of a body of African knowledges, through the medium of their play-songs and other musical cultures. It is recommended that at the very least, the indigenous languages be used alongside the colonial language, as designated languages of instruction, particularly at the lower primary level.

Finally, the research discovered a play-song that was at least four decades old, one whose popularity had significantly diminished from when the researcher was young, appearing now to be no longer sung among contemporary Ghanaian children, even though it remained popular outside the continent, especially in the global north. Reference is made to the globally famed play-song *Kyekyekule,* which aside from being documented by the Smithsonian cultural organisation as an example of African folklore was also adopted as a song in 1972 by the Afro-pop band *Osibisa*. Indeed, *Osibisa* offers us another song named *Kokrookoo* – the title of one of their afro-pop songs, which was a play-song they performed as children. It is suggested that further research to investigate earlier generations of play-songs to ascertain evolution of play-songs will address the missing link in the development of play-songs and serve as bridge toward future Africa centred oral play-song creations.

5.5 CONCLUSION

Until now, and as has been established by the literature, play-songs as integral part of the African orature may have been pushed to the margins and not considered worthy of study, but the current research has demonstrated, that it commands a deserved space as a genre that is important, just as the other genres of African literature. It is this research's contention that play-songs can be repositioned as a key aspect of the genre of children's literature.

Passing the African orature litmus test with the affirmation of the presence, of symbolism, imagery, repetition, tonality, piling, parallelism, ideophones and allusion, in various degrees, denotes that there is a need for greater interest into this often-ignored oral poetic artform.

Beyond the preservation of the general African indigenous knowledge systems and philosophies, the children's own views and understanding of the world are also captured and preserved in their lore, making their songs a vital source and carrier of African epistemology. The study on play-songs therefore affirms the proposition that the adult world can (and ought to) learn from children.

The language-in-education policy privileges the colonial language, English, as the language for instruction in schools. The research argues that this state of affairs, where the indigenous language is relegated while the English is given prominence, is a misnomer. It is suggested that at the very least, the resources and training be provided so that the indigenous languages be used alongside the colonial language, as designated languages of instruction as they embody a knowledge system that the learners have and need.

6.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abarry, A., 1989. "The Role of Play Songs in the Moral, Social, and Emotional Development of African Children. Research" in *African Literatures*, 20 (2), 202-216

[Online]. Available at:

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/4618229> [Accessed: May 23, 2022]

Abend, G., 2008. "The meaning of theory" In *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 26 (2). pp. 173 – 199.

[Online]. Available at:

<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9558.2008.00324.x> [Accessed: December 2, 2020].

Abrams, M.H. 1999. *A glossary of literary terms*. (7th ed.). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Acquah, E. O. et al., 2015. ''Use of indigenous musical games and songs in developing the well-being of the child'' In *International journal of research in humanities and social studies*, Vol 2, Issue 12.

Addo, A. O., 1995. *Ghanaian children's music cultures: A video ethnography of selected singing games*. Doctoral dissertation, University of British Columbia, Canada. *Dissertation Abstracts International.*

Addo, A. O., 2013. "What's in a singing game?" *African Traditional And Oral Literature As Pedagogical Tools In Content Area Classrooms*: *K12*, 21-42.

[Online]. Available at:

<https://www.academia.edu/21431613/What_s_in_a_Singing_Game_Exploring_Childre
n_s_Oral_Literature> [Accessed: May 23, 2022]

Addo, E. N., 2011. *A study of sensuous and sensual imagery in Niyi Osundare's nature poems
from Songs of the Marketplace. The Eye of the Earth and Waiting Laughters.* MPhil Thesis,
Department of English, University of Ghana, Legon.

Adeeko, A., 1998. *Proverbs, Textuality, and Nativism in African Literature*. Florida: University
Press of Florida.

Adjei, E., 2014. *Gender role stereotypes in African children's literature*. University of Ghana,
Legon.

Adu-Gyamfi, Y., 1999. *Orality in writing: Its cultural and political Function in Anglophone
African, African-Caribbean and African-Canadian poetry.* Doctoral dissertation, University of
Sakatchewan, Saskatoon, Canada.

Afolabi, O. 2020. "Globalisation, Decoloniality and the Question of Knowledge Production in
Africa." In *Journal of Higher Education in Africa*, Vol. 18, No. 1, pp. 93-109.

Agyekum, K., 2006. "The Sociolinguistic of Akan Personal Names." *Nordic Journal of African
Studies* 15(2), pp. 206–235

Ahn, J. and Filipenko, M., 2007. "Narrative, imaginary play, art, and self: Intersecting worlds." *Early childhood education journal,* Vol. 34, No. 4, pp. 279 – 289.

Aidoo, A., 1965. *The dilemma of a ghost.* Accra: Longmans.

Akporobaro, F. and Emovon J., 1994. *Nigerian proverbs: Meanings and relevance today*. Abuja: Department of Culture, Federal Ministry of Information and Culture

Almusharraf, N. & Engemann, J., 2020. "Postsecondary Instructors' Perspectives on Teaching English as a Foreign Language by Means of a Multimodal Digital Literacy Approach" in *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning*. Vol. 15, No. 18.

Always Exuberant. (May 8, 2012) *Ghana children song game. Central Region, Ghana*
    [Video file]. Available at Youtube

    <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aajqVlaFSZc> [Accessed: January 9, 2017].

American Orff-Schulwerk Association. (March 7, 2016**.)** *Kubitsky, Idit: Ewe Childrens' Games from Ghana.*

    [Video file]. Available at Youtube

    <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQq3q3hUdFQ> [Accessed: January 9, 2017].

Amfo, N. & Anderson, J., 2019. "Multilingualism and language policies in the African context: lessons from Ghana" In *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 20 (4), pp. 333-337

Anglia Ruskin University, 2016. *Guide to Harvard style of referencing*. (6th ed.).
        [ebook]. Available at: Anglia Ruskin University Library
        <http://libweb.anglia.ac.uk/referencing/harvard.htm> [Accessed: January 11, 2017].

Anyidoho, A., 2018. "Shifting Sands: Language Policies In Education In Ghana And Implementation Challenges" In *Ghana Journal of Linguistics* 7 (2), pp. 225-243

Anyidoho, K., 1992. "The complex simplicity of children's literature: A reading of *Ghana Motion* and *the Brassman's secret*." *Legon journal of the humanities*, vol. 6.

Arnold, M., 1908. *Reports on elementary schools 1852-1882*. London: Wyman and Sons

Ausubel, D. P. et al., 1980. *Theory and Problems of Child Development.* (3rd ed.). New York: Grune and Stratton, Inc.

Bacon, B., 1988. *How Much Truth Do We Tell the Children? The Politics of Children's Literature*. Minneapolis: MEP Publications.

Barwasser, A. et al., 2021. "A Multimodal Storytelling Intervention for Improving the Reading and Vocabulary Skills of Struggling German-as-a-Second-Language Adolescents With Learning and Behavioral Problems" In *Insights into Learning Disabilities* 18(1), pp. 29-51

Bator, R., 1983. *Signposts to Criticism of Children's Literature*. Chicago: American Library Association.

Bearne, E. and Watson, V. eds., 2000. *Where Texts and Children Meet*. London: Routledge.

Berger, K., 2000. *The Developing Person Through Childhood*. New York: Worth.

Bial, H., 2006. *The Performance Studies Reader*. London: Routledge.

Bill, M. 1990. "The textual reflection of texture: The transcription of Tsonga children's oral poetic performance." *African Studies*, 49(1), 95-118.

[Online]. Available at:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00020189008707719> [Accessed: May 23, 2022]

Binder, M. J., 2003. *Reading the Pictorial World of the Child: Emerging Literacies in Child Art*. Ed. D. dissertation. University of Toronto.

Blacking, J., 1995. *Music, Culture, and Experience: Selected Papers of John Blacking*

(Chicago Studies in Ethnomusicology). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press

Boadi, L.K., 2013. ''Remarks on J. H. Nketsia's Funeral Dirges of the Akan People.'' In *Legon journal of the humanities*, Vol 24.

Boon, J., 1982. *Other tribes, other scribes: Symbolic anthropology in the comparative study of cultures, histories, religions, and texts*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Butts, D. ed., 1992. *Stories and Society. Children's Literature in its Social Context*. London: Macmillan.

Cadden M., 2010. *Telling Children's Stories. Narrative Theory and Children's Literature*. Lincoln NB and London: University of Nebraska Press.

Cai, M., 2002. *Multicultural Literature for Children and Young Adults: Reflections on Critical Issues*. Westport, CT: Greenwood.

Campbell, P. S., & Scott-Kassner, C., 2002. *Music in childhood: From preschool to the elementary grades* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Schirmer Books.

Carpenter, H. and Prichard, M., 1984. *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Carroll, J., 2014. *Landscape in Children's Literature*. New York and London: Routledge.

Chawane, M., 2016. "The development of Afrocentricity: a historical survey" In *Yesterday and Today*, (16), pp. 78-99.

[Online]. Available at:

<https://dx.doi.org/10.17159/2223-0386/2016/n16a5> [Accessed: February 11, 2020].

Chhibber, S.D.S., 1987. *Poetic Discourse: An Introduction to Stylistic Analysis.* New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited.

Christensen, J., 1998. "Folk Songs of Ghana: The Mosomagor Song Book" In *African Diaspora ISPs*. Paper 21.

Cliff, H. et al. eds., 2000. *Tales, Tellers and Texts*. New York: Cassell.

Cobb, N. J., 2001. *The Child: Infants, Children and Adolescents*. California: Mayfield Publishing Company.

Coghlan, V. and Thompson, M. eds., 2007. *Divided Worlds, Studies in Children's Literature*. Dublin: Four Courts Press.

Collins, F. and Ridgman, J. eds., 2006. *Turning the Page: Children's Literature in Performance and the Media*. Bern: Peter Lang.

Comaroff, J., and Comaroff J., 2002. "The colonisation of consciousness" in Michael Lambek (ed.) *A reader in the anthropology of religion.* Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.

Cone, T. P., 2002. *Off the page: children's creative dance as a response to children's literature*. Doctoral Dissertation. Temple University.

Cooper, S., 1996. *Dreams and Wishes. Essays on Writing for Children*. New York: Margaret K. McElderry.

Creswell, J.W., 2007. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J.W., 2013. *Research design: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches.* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Culler, J., 1997. *Literary Theory: A very short introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Cullinan, B. and Person, D. eds., 2001. *The Continuum Encyclopedia of Children's Literature*. New York and London: Continuum.

d'Abdon, R. et al., 2020. "Living Archives and the Project of Poetry Recurriculation in South Africa" In *Scrutiny2*, 25:3, pp. 65-82.

Dastile, N., 2013. "Beyond Euro-Western dominance: An African-centred decolonial paradigm" In *Africanus* 43 (2) 2 pp. 93-104

Davies, M, and Oittinen, R., 2008. *Whose Story? Translating the Verbal and the Visual in Literature for Young Readers*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press.

Degraft Hanson, J.O., 1993. *Children's literature: The Ghanaian experience*. Accra: Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Dei, G., 2018. "Black Like Me": Reframing Blackness for Decolonial Politics" In *Educational Studies*, 54:2, pp. 117-142

Dissanayake, E., 2018. "From play and ritualisation to ritual and its arts: Sources of upper pleistocene ritual practices in lower middle pleistocene ritualised and play behaviours in ancestral hominins." In Colin Renfrew (ed.) *Ritual, play and belief, in evolution and early human societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Dressman M., and Faust M., 2014. "On the Teaching of Poetry in English Journal, 1912 –2005: Does History Matter" in *Journal of Literacy Research*. Vol 46, Issue 1.

   [Online]. Available at:

   <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1086296X14521194> [Accessed: July 20, 2020].

Duhoe, A. A., & Otibua, F., 2020. "Aesthetics of Ghanaian indigenous children's play-songs." *Hybrid Journal of Literary and Cultural Studies*, 2(4), pp. 44-58

[Online]. Available at:

<https://royalliteglobal.com/hybrid-literary/article/view/399> [Accessed: May 23, 2022]

Dzansi, M., 2004. "Playground Music Pedagogy of Ghanaian Children" in *Research Studies in Music Education,* 22 (1), pp. 83-92

[Online]. Available at:

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1321103X040220011101> [Accessed May 23, 2022]

Egblewogbe, E., 1975. *Games and Songs as Education Media: A Case Study Among the Ewes of Ghana*. Accra: Ghana Publishing Corporation.

Eliot, T.S., 1968. "Tradition and the Individual Talent," in M.H. Abrams et al. eds. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature.* New York: W.W. Norton.

Emberly, A., 2013. "Venda children's musical culture in Limpopo, South Africa" in Patricia Shehan Campbell and Trevor Wiggins (eds.) *The Oxford handbook of children's musical cultures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

England, A., 1990. *Theatre for the Young*. London: Macmillan.

Ewers, H., 2012. *Fundamental Concepts of Children's Literature Research: Literary and Sociological Approaches*. London: Routledge.

Fayose, P., 1995. *Nigerian Children's Literature in English*. Ibadan: AENL Educational Publishers.

Fedorenko, S. et al., 2021. "Multimodality and Digital Narrative in Teaching a Foreign Language" *In Arab World English Journal (AWEJ)* Special Issue Number 7. (July 2021) pp.178 –189

Finazzo, D., 1997. *All for the Children: Multicultural Essentials of Literature*. Florence, KY: Delmar Learning.

Fink, A., 2014. *Conducting research literature reviews: From the Internet to paper*. (4th Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Finnegan, R., 1970. *Oral Literature in Africa*. London: Oxford University Press.

Finnegan, R., 1977. *Oral Poetry: Its nature, significance and social context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Finnegan, R., 2002. *Communicating: The Multiple Modes of Human Interconnection*. London: Routledge.

Finnegan, R., 2003. "*Orality and literacy: Epic heroes of human destiny?*" International journal of learning. (10).

Finnegan, R., 2005a. "*The How of Literature*" Oral Tradition. 20 (2), pp. 164-187.

Finnegan, R., 2005b. *Oral traditions and the verbal arts: a guide to research practices.* London. Taylor and Francis e-library.

Finnegan, R., 2011. "Creativity looks at language" in Ronald Carter and Joan Swann. Eds. *Creativity in language and literature: the state of the art*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Freeman, E. and Lehman, B., 2000. *Global Perspectives on Children's Literature*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Fromkin, V., and Rodman, R., 1983. *An introduction to language* (3rd ed.). New York: Randomhouse

Furniss, G. and Gunner L., 1995. *Power, Marginality and African Oral Literature*. London: Cambridge University Press

Ganyata, O., 2020. *Indigenous African music and multiculturalism in Zimbabwean primary schools: toward an experiential open class pedagogy.* Doctoral Dissertation. University of South Africa, Pretoria.

Gordon, L. R., 2010. "Labor, Migration, and Race: Toward a Secular Model of Citizenship" In *Journal of Contemporary Thought*, 32 (Winter 2010).

    [Online]. Available at:

    <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/311454771_Labor_Migration_and_Race_Toward_a_Secular_Model_of_Citizenship> [Accessed: March 25, 2020].

Gordon, L. R., 2017. "Thoughts on two recent decades of studying race and racism" In *Social Identities*: *Journal for the study of race, nation and culture.*

    [Online]. Available at:

    <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13504630.2017.1314924> [Accessed: November 11, 2020]

GHANA STATISTICAL SERVICE, 2013. *2010 Population and Housing Census: National Analytical Report*

    [Ebook] Available at

    <www.statsghana.gov.gh/docfiles/publications/2010_PHC_National_Analytical_Report.pdf> [Accessed: December 22, 2016].

Goldstein, A. B., 2002. *The effect of affect-laden reading passages on children's emotional expressivity in play*. Ph. D. Dissertation. Case Western Reserve University.

Goldstein, K., 1964. *A Guide for Field Workers in Folklore.* Hatboro: Folklore Associates

Goodwin, P. ed., 2008. *Understanding Children's Literature: a Guide for Education Professionals*. Los Angeles and London: SAGE.

Grosfoguel, R., 2008. "Latin@s and the decolonization of the US empire in the 21st century" In *Social Science Information*. Vol 47 (4).

[Online]. Available at:

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0539018408096449> [Accessed: January 7, 2019].

Grosfoguel, R., 2011. "Decolonizing Post-Colonial Studies and Paradigms of Political-Economy: Transmodernity, Decolonial Thinking, and Global Coloniality" In *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World,* 1 (1)

[Online]. Available at:

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/21k6t3fq> [Accessed: April 9, 2019]

Griswold, J., 2006. *Feeling Like a Kid: Childhood and Children's Literature*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Gualberto, C. et al., 2020. "Multimodal metaphors: from language as a condition to text to the notion of texture as a meaning-making semiotic resource" In *Rev. Estud. Ling*., Belo Horizonte, v. 28, n. 2, pp. 893-915

Gunner, L., 2007. "Africa and orality." Tejumola Olaniyan and Ato Quayson. Eds. *African literature: An anthology of criticism and theory*. Malden: Blackwell publishing.

Guy, J., 1994. 'Making Words Visible: Aspects of Orality, Literacy, Illiteracy and History in Southern Africa' in *South African Historical Journal*, 31, 1, pp. 3–27.

Halliday, M. and Hasan, R., 2002. *Language, Context and Text: Aspects of Language in a Social-Semiotic Perspective*. (2nd ed). Oxford: OUP.

Hollindale, P., 1997. *Signs of Childness in Children's Books*. South Woodchester: Thimble Press.

Hughes, F. P., 2000. *Children, Play and Development*. (4th ed.). California: Sage publications.

Huizinga, J., 2006. "The nature and significance of play as a cultural phenomenon." Henry Bial (ed.), *The Performance Studies Reader*. London: Routledge.

Hunt, P. ed., 2006. *Children's Literature: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies*, London: Routledge.

Ikonne, C. et al. eds., 1992. *Children and Literature in Africa*. Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books.

Irele, A., 2007. "Orality, Literacy and African Literature." Tejumola Olaniyan and Ato Quayson (eds.), *African Literature: An anthology of criticism and theory*. Malden: Blackwell publishing.

Iyasere, S., 1975. "Oral Tradition in the Criticism of African Literature" in *The Journal of Modern African Studies,* Vol. 13, No., pp. 107-119

Iyer, R., 2007. "Pedagogies of design and multiliterate learner identities." *The International Journal of Learning*. 13 (11), pp. 25-34.

Jewitt, C., 2005. *Technology, literacy and learning: a multimodal approach*. London: Routledge.

Jewitt, C., 2008. "Multimodality and literacy in school classrooms." In *Review of research in education*. Sage publications.

Jewitt, C. & Kress, G. eds., 2003. *Multimodal Literacy*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Kabore, A., 2014. "Orature as a Characteristic of the Literatures of Werewere-Liking and Pacér" In *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL)*. Vol 2, Issue 4, pp. 13-30

Khasandi-Telewa, V. Liguyani, R. I. and Wandera-Simwa, S., 2012. "Appropriating globalization to revitalize indigenous knowledge and identity through Luhya children's play songs." In *The journal of Pan-African studies*, Vol 5, No. 6, pp. 75-91.

Kim, L. S., 2002. *Staging childhood and youth in early modern drama*. Doctoral Dissertation. The University of Texas at Austin.

Kivunja, C., 2018. "Distinguishing between Theory, Theoretical Framework, and Conceptual Framework: A Systematic Review of Lessons from the Field" In *International Journal of Higher Education* Vol. 7, No. 6. pp. 44-53.

Komasi, M. M., 2005. *Oral tradition and written children's literature in Ghana.* Doctoral Dissertation. University of Ghana, Legon.

Komasi, M., 2007. "Efua Theodora Sutherland: Visionary pioneer of Ghanaian children's literature" In Adams, Anne V., and Esi Sutherland–Addy, (eds.) *The Legacy of Efua Sutherland*. Banbury, UK: Ayebia Clarke

Kravatz, J., 2020. "My Heart Leaps Up." LitCharts LLC,
    [Online]. Available at:
    <https://www.litcharts.com/poetry/william-wordsworth/william-wordsworth-my-heart-leaps-up> [Accessed: January 21, 2021.]

Kress, G. & Van Leeuwen, T., 2001. *Multimodal discourse: The modes and media of contemporary communication*. London: Arnold Publishers.

Kress, G. 2003., *Literacy in the New Media Age*. London: Routledge.

Kress, G., 2010. *Multimodality: A Social Semiotic Approach to Contemporary Communication*. London: Routledge.

Krysti Freespirit. (January 17, 2013). *Children from Ghana life, school, traditional dance.* [Video file]. Available at Youtube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PtDesnSBnjw>. [Accessed: December 20, 2016].

Kyratzis, A., 2001. ''Children's gender indexing in language: From the separate worlds hypothesis to considerations of culture context and power.'' *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 34, pp. 1-14.

Kyratzis, A., 2000. Tactical uses of narratives in nursery school in same sex groups. *Discourse Processes*, 29, pp. 269-299.

Le Guin, U., 1989. *Dancing at the edge of the world: thoughts on words, women, places*. New York: Grove Press.

Lefkowitz, M., 1996. *Not out of Africa: How "Afrocentricism" became an excuse to teach myth as history.* New York: Basic Books

Lehman, B., 2007. *Children's Literature and Learning*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Lew, J. and Campbell, P., 2005. "Children's Natural and Necessary Musical Play: Global Contexts, Local Applications." *Music Educators Journal*, Vol. 91, No. 5, pp. 57-62.

Marcushi, L., 2008. *Produção textual, análise de gênero e compreensão*. São Paulo: Parábola Editorial.

Marsh, K. and Young, S., 2006. "Musical play." In Gary E. Mcpherson. Eds. *The Child as Musician*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 289 – 310.

Martini, J., 2017. "Meshack Asare: transforming folklore into children's literature" in Anne Adams., and Esi Sutherland–Addy, (eds.) *The Legacy of Efua Sutherland.* Banbury, UK: Ayebia Clarke

Maxwell, J., 2012. *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. California: Sage.

Mbwera, S., 2016. *Short stories for life: implications of the canonisation of the Zimbabwean story-telling tradition, with special reference to selected Zimbabwean short stories.* Doctoral Dissertation. University of South Africa, Pretoria.

McAdams, D. P., 2008. "Personal narratives and the life story." In John, Robins & Pervin Eds. *Handbook of personality: Theory and research.* (3rd ed.). New York: Wiford Press, pp. 242 – 262.

McDonough, J., & McDonough, S., 1997. *Research Methods for English Language Teachers*. London: Arnold.

McMahan, E., Day, S., & Funk R., 2006. *Literature and the writing process*. New Jersey: Pearson/Prentice Hall.

Mertens, D.M., 2005. *Research methods in education and psychology: Integrating diversity with quantitative and qualitative approaches*. (2nd Ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Miami Country Day School. (November 3, 2014). *MCDS 5th Grade Students Perform "Obwisana," a Children's Song from Ghana.*

[Video file]. Available at Youtube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WEY0-So31Q0> [Accessed: January 9, 2017].

Mignolo, W., 2009. "Epistemic Disobedience, Independent Thought and De-Colonial Freedom"
Theory, Culture & Society, Vol. 26(7–8), pp. 1–23

Mitchell, C. and Reid-Walsh, J., 2002. *Researching Children's Popular Culture: the Cultural Spaces of Childhood.* London: Routledge.

Mkabela, Q., 2005. "Using the Afrocentric Method in Researching Indigenous African Culture" In *The Qualitative Report*, 10(1), pp. 178-189.

 [Online]. Available at:

 <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR10-1/mkabela.pdf> [Accessed November 29, 2021]

Mmofra Foundation. **(**May 25, 2012). *Playtime in Africa*.

 [Video file]. Available at Youtube

 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h15Wu0PVlpI&feature=youtu.be> [Accessed: January 9, 2017].

Motsa, Z., 2010. "Between tradition and transition: stylistic aspects of modern drama in post-independence Swaziland." In Makokha, J. K. S. *et al.* Eds. *Tales, Tellers and Tale-Making: Critical studies on literary stylistics and narrative styles in contemporary African literature.* Berlin: VDM Verlag Dr. Muller, pp. 285—313.

Motsa, Z., 2017. "When the lion tells the story: a response from South Africa" *Higher Education Research & Development*, 36:1, pp. 28-35.

Mtshali, M.N.G. 2015. "The relationship between grandparents and their grandchildren in the black families in South Africa". In *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 46(1), pp. 75–83.

Mugweni, R. M., Mutereri, J. and Ganga, E., 2012. "The impact of space on children's play: a case of four pre-schools in Masvingo City." *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*. Vol.1, No. 4, pp. 93-104.

Mushengyezi, A., 2012. *Oral Literature for Children. Rethinking Orality, Literacy, Performance, and Documentation Practices*. Amsterdam: Rodopi

Musila, G., 2017. "Navigating epistemic disarticulations" In *African Affairs*, Vol. 116, No. 465, pp. 629–704.

Nana Awere Damoah (July 7, 2016). [*Untitled video*]

    [Video file]. Available at Facebook

    <https://web.facebook.com/ndamoah/videos/10154334473971202/?pnref=story>

    [Accessed: January 11, 2017].

Natov, R., 2006. *The Poetics of Childhood.* London: Routledge.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S., 2013. "Why decoloniality in the 21st century?" *The thinker for thought leaders,*

    [Online]. Available at:

    <www.thethinker.co.za/resources/48%20Thinker%20full%20mag.pdf> [Accessed: April

    12, 2019].

New London Group, 1996. "A pedagogy of multiliteracies: designing social futures." *Harvard educational review* 66(1).

Ngara, E., 1990. *Ideology and form in African poetry: implications for communication*. Nairobi: Heinemann.

Ngugi W. T., 1986. *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*.UK: James Currie / Heinemann.

Nicolopoulou, A., 1997. "Children and narratives: Toward an interpretive and sociological approach." In Michael Bamberg, ed. *Narrative development: Six approaches.* New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, pp. 179 – 215.

Nketia, K., 1974. *The Music of Africa*. New York: WW Norton

Noroozi, N., 2017. "Decolonial Philosophy and Education",

[Online]. Available at:

<https://oxfordre.com/education/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.001.0001/acrefore-9780190264093-e-51> [Accessed: April 10, 2019]

Ntšihlele, F. M., 2003. *Games, gestures and learning in Basotho children's play songs* (Doctoral dissertation, University of South Africa).

Nyerere, J., 1967. "Education for Self-Reliance"

[Online]. Available at:

<https://www.myelimu.com> [Accessed: April 10, 2019]

Nyota, S. and Mapara, J., 2008. "Shona Traditional Children's Games and Play: Songs as Indigenous Ways of Knowing." *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, vol.2, no.4.

Ogede, O. S., 1994. "Oral Performance as Instruction: Aesthetic Strategies in Children's Play Songs from a Nigerian Community". *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, 19(3), 113-117.

[Online]. Available at:

<https://www.10.1353/chq.0.1071> [Accessed: May 23, 2022]

Okeke, A., 2002. *The representation of the cultural and social world in selected Nigerian children's literature.* Ed.D. dissertation. Columbia University Teachers College.

Okpewho, I., 1992. *African Oral Literature: Backgrounds, Character, and Continuity*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Olaliyan, T and Quayson, A., eds. 2007. *African literature: An anthology of criticism and theory.* Malden: Blackwell publishing.

Omolola, B., 2013. *The study of oral tradition in Yoruba movies*. Doctoral Dissertation. University of South Africa, Pretoria.

Owu-Ewie, C., 2006. "The language policy of education in Ghana: a critical look at the English-only language policy of education." In John Mugane, ed. *Selected Proceedings of the 35th Annual Conference on African Linguistics*. MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project. pp. 76-85.

Owusu, M., 1971. The story Ananse told. London: Heinemann Educational Books

Parenting in Africa Network, 2014. "Reflections on Africa's indigenous knowledge on parenting: Indigenous parenting practices of different communities in Africa,"

[online]. Available at

<https://bettercarenetwork.org/sites/default/files/attachments/reflections_on_africas_indigenous_knowledge_on_parenting-_indigenous_parenting_practices_of_different_communities_in_africa_-_2014_.pdf>

Patin, B., et al. 2021. "Interrupting epistemicide: A practical framework for naming, identifying, and ending epistemic injustice in the information professions" In *Journal for the Association for Information Science and Technology*. Vol. 72, Issue 10. pp. 1306 -1318

Rendle-Short, J., 2006. *The Academic Presentation: Situated Talk in Action*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Richards, W., 2013. *Jamaican children's literature: a critical multicultural analysis of text and illustration in Jamaican picturebooks for children*. PhD. Dissertation. University of Minnesota.

Rikoun, P., 2003. *The trickster's word: oral tradition in literary narrative*. Ph.D. Dissertation. Harvard University.

Rowsell, J. and Walsh, M., 2011. "Rethinking Literacy Education in New times: Multimodality, Multiliteracies and New Literacies." *Brock Education. Vol 21. No. 1*

Schmidt G. and Otten C., 1989. The voice of the narrator in children's literature: insights from writers and critics. New York: Greenwood Press.

Schoolyardplay. 2010. "I met my boyfriend at the candy store" in *Clapping Games*

[Online]. Available at:

<https://schoolyardplay.net/met-my-boyfriend-at-the-candy-store> (Accessed: February

12, 2021).

Schrijner, S and Smit, J., 2018. "Grandmothers and Children's Schooling in Sub-Saharan Africa"

In *Human Nature* 29 (3)

Seo, M., 2021. "Multimodally Enhanced Opportunities for Language Learning: Gestures Used in

Word Search Sequences in ESL Tutoring" In *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, Vol.

12, No. 1, pp. 44-56.

Shakespeare, W., 2000. *As You Like It.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Songs for Teaching: using music to promote learning, 2012. *Kye Kye Kule: Traditional West*

African Call and Response Song.

[Online]. Available at:

<https://www.songsforteaching.com/folk/kyekyekule.htm> [Accessed: February 4, 2020]

Soudien, C., 2019. "Making better lives for themselves? The stories of people on the ground" In

The International Journal of Community and Social Development. 1 (3), pp. 267 – 269.

Soyinka, W., 1990. "The Fourth Stage" in *Myth, Literature and the African World*. Cambridge:

Cambridge University Press.

Soyinka, W., 1999. "Death and the King's horseman" in Martin Banham and Jane Plastow (eds.), *Contemporary African plays*. London: Metheun.

Soyinka, W., 2005. "The Invention" in Zodwa Motsa (ed.), *The Invention and The Detainee*. Pretoria: Unisa Press.

Sutherland, E. 1960. *Playtime in Africa*. London: Brown, Knight and Truscott

Sutherland, E., 1968. *Tahinta! A rhythm play for children.* Accra: Afram

Sutherland-Addy, E., 2007. "Creating for and with children: Efua Sutherland's children's plays" In Anne Adams., and Esi Sutherland–Addy, (eds.) *The Legacy of Efua Sutherland*. Banbury, UK: Ayebia Clarke

Sutton-Smith, B., 1972. "The Games of New Zealand Children" in *The Folkgames of Children.* Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press.

Swanson, R., 2013. *Theory building in applied disciplines*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.

Tapio, E., 2019. "The patterned ways of interlinking linguistic and multimodal elements in visually oriented communities" In *Deafness & Education International*. Vol. 21, Nos. 2–3, pp. 133-150

Tetsublackstar. (January 8, 2010). *Ghana, Ayenyah, children's game after school*

[Video file]. Available at Youtube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VMM0W3myqUU>. [Accessed: January 9, 2017].

The Cable Lifestyle. 2021. "Ghanaian actress convicted — 9 months after she posted nude photo with son online"

[Online]. Available at:

<https://lifestyle.thecable.ng/ghanaian-actress-convicted-9-months-after-she-posted-nude-photo-with-son-online>[Accessed: April 14, 2021].

Thomas, J. J. T., 2003. *Refiguring the cultures of contemporary American children's poetry*. Ph.D. Dissertation. Illinois State University.

Turco, L., 1999. *The book of literary terms*. Hanover: University Press of New England.

UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018. *Education and Literacy*,

[Online]. Available at:

<http://uis.unesco.org/country/GH> [Accessed: April 20, 2019].

Vondee, G. A., 2000. *The highlife musician as an oral poet: A case study of King Bruce's lyrics*. MPhil Thesis. Department of English, University of Ghana, Legon.

Vygotsky, L., 2004. "Imagination and Creativity in Childhood." in *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology*, vol. 42, no. 1, pp. 7–97

Whitebread, D. et al**.,** 2012. *The Importance of Play: A Report on the Value of Children's Play with a Series of Policy Recommendations*. Brussels: Toys Industries for Europe.

Wiggins, T., 2013. "Whose songs in their heads?" in Patricia Shehan Campbell and Trevor Wiggins (eds.) *The Oxford handbook of children's musical cultures*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Wode Maya. (April 19, 2015). *Chinese kids singing Ghanaian song* [Pimpinaa].

[Video file]. Available at Youtube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KQH2NCNWCzA>. [Accessed: June 2, 2015].

UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018. *Education and Literacy*,

[Online]. Available at:

<http://uis.unesco.org/country/GH> [Accessed: April 20, 2019].

Yankah, K., 1997. Nana Ampadu the sung tale metaphor and protest discourse in contemporary Ghana" in *Black popular cultures into the twenty-first century: language, rhythm and sound*. Ed. Adjaye, K. K. et al. Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg Press.

Yin, R., 1984. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications

Yitah, H., 2017. "Adaptations of play-songs in Ghanaian children's and (young) adult drama," *Children's literature association quarterly*. Volume 42, Number 1. pp. 65-90

Zainal, Z., 2007. "Case study as a research method," *Jurnal Kemanusiaan.* Vol. 5, No. 1.

7.0 APPENDIX A: TRANSCRIPT OF CHILDREN'S PLAY-SONGS FROM KOMENDA AND BISEASE

I. Non-Action Verse Category of Songs

1. *Dedende kwao o*

     Dedende kwao o
     [Dedende kwao o]

     dedende kwao o
     [Dedende kwao o]

     egya bɔfo ne nkwaŋ yɛ me dɛ
     [the old hunter's soup is tasty]

     nanso n'atere yɛ me nkoŋ
     [yet his clothes are repulsive.]

2. *Mo esiesie won ho*? ("Are you ready?")

     Mo esiesie won ho?
     [Are you ready?]

     ɛhɛ, masta
     [yes, master]

     mo esiesie won ho?
     [are you ready?]

     ɛhɛ, masta
     [yes, master]

     won numba no'ɛ?
     [with your numbers?]

     ɛhɛ, masta
     [yes, master.]

3. *Nde dze maame eku me* (Mother will kill me today)

Maame ama me dama
[mother gave me money]

Gongo gongo gongo
[gongo gongo gongo]

ɔse me nkoto dokon
[asking that I buy kenkey]

gongo gongo gongo
gongo gongo gongo

medzi akoto dondo
[I went and bought a drum]

gongo gongo gongo
gongo gongo gongo

nde dze maame eku me
[mother will kill me today]

gongo gongo gongo
[gongo gongo gongo]

nde dze paapa eku me
[father will kill me today]

gongo gongo gongo
[gongo gongo gongo]

4. *Dora Kyɛwpa*" ("Dora's plea")

Me maame, e buei me
[Open the door for me, mother]

me maame, e buei me
[open the door for me, mother]

na Sugarett ɔbekye me ako
[for 'Sugarett' is trying to capture me]

ɔnkye wo o, Dora
[let it capture you, Dora]

ɔnkye wo o, Dora
[let it capture you, Dora]

na wo yɛ abɔfra bɔne
[because you are a stubborn girl]

eko a ɛya bra ntsem
[next time come home on time.]

5. *Kyeiwaa Kyeiwaa*

Kyeiwaa Kyeiwaa	*Pam pam pam pam*
[Kyeiwaa Kyeiwaa	Pam pam pam pam]
wa'wu ne ba Maame	*Pam pam pam pam*
[gave birth to a child Maame	Pam pam pam pam]
ɔdze nu'a akoma Nsu Yaa	*Pam pam pam pam*
[sacrificed her to river goddess Yaa	Pam pam pam pam]
Nsu Yaa abo nu etsur	*Pam pam pam pam*
[The river goddess Yaa shot her	Pam pam pam pam]

6. *Me nana asɔ me sisi mu ("My grandmother holds my waist")*

Me nana asɔ me sisi mu
[My grandmother holds my waist]

onnim ma yesi kyea
[She doesn't know how to salute]

Se ɛbɔ non ensia'a
[When the time is six o'clock]

Ye bɛ twetwe yɛn se
[We will brush our teeth]

Ye bɛ serɛw yɛn tsir
[We will comb our hair]

Ye bɛ kɔ sukuu

[We will go to school]

7. *Aka* ("Detachment")

    Aka
    [Detachment]

    aka
    [detachment]

    aka
    [detachment]

    aka dompe
    [bone-hard detachment]

    se me dzi m'agoro a
    [when I am playing]

    na wo ba menkyen a
    [and you come to me]

    Yesu, Yesu, Yesu
    [Jesus, Jesus, Jesus]

    Yesu, betwa wo tsi
    [Jesus will behead you]

    wo tsi wo tsi wo tsi
    [your head, head, head.]

8. *Dora krataa* (Letter to Dora)

    Me hia krataa
    [I want a paper]

    Ede akyerew leta
    [to write a letter]

    Akoma Dora
    [to go to Dora]

Dora n'kyir ba yɛ pasta
[But Dora's brother is a pastor.]

9. *Dabodabo ne ne'mba* ("duck with her ducklings")

   Dabodabo ne ne'mba
   [The duck with her ducklings]

   wɔre kɔ sukuul
   [she is sending the ducklings to school]

   na wo resu
   [but they are crying]

   wo resu na wo tsie mu sɛ
   [they are crying and shouting]

   kwa kwa kwa
   [kwa kwa kwa]

   kwa kwa kwa
   [kwa kwa kwa.]

10. *Tɛlɛfoon no rebɔ* ("The telephone is ringing")

   Tɛlɛfoon no rebɔ
   [The telephone is ringing]

   Tɛlɛfoon no rebɔ
   [the telephone is ringing]

   na oyɛ woana
   [who can it be?]

   na oyɛ woana
   [who can it be?]

   obɛ yɛ me maame
   [I'm sure it's my mother]

   obɛ yɛ me maame

276

[I'm sure it's my mother.]

11. *Ama yare fever* (Ama has a fever)

> *Ama yare fever*
> [Ama has a fever]
>
> *nyamu meko*
> [grind pepper]
>
> *and put in de bentua*
> [and put in the enema]
>
> *fee neto*
> [prise open her anus]
>
> *and jump jump jump*
> [and jump jump jump]
>
> *and poo*
> [and poo…]

12. "*Mu mma yɛn kɔ hwɛ Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta*" ("Let's go check on Adjoa Atta.")

Stanza one

Children: *Mu mma yɛn kɔ hwɛ Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta*
[Let's go check on Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta]

Mu mma yɛn kɔ hwe Adjoa Atta na ne ho tse sɛn ni
[Let's go check on Adjoa Atta and see how she is doing]

Mother of Adjoa: *Adjoa Atta ɔkɔ bɔrla, ɔkɔ borla, ɔkɔ bɔrla*
[Adjoa Atta is disposing off the garbage, the garbage, the garbage]

Adjoa Atta oko borla na momfre me so nko
[Adjoa Atta is disposing off the garbage, so don't bother me]

Children: *Mu mma yenkɔ yɛn fie, yɛn fie, yɛn fie*

277

[let's go home, go home, go home]

Mu mma yεn kɔ yεn fie, na ehɔ tse sen ni
[Let's go home and see what is happening.]

Stanza two

Children*:*   *Mu mma yεn kɔ hwε Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta*
[Let's go check on Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta]

Mu mma yεn ko hwε Adjoa Atta na ne ho tse sεn ni
[Let's go check on Adjoa Atta and see how she is doing]

Mother of Adjoa: *Adjoa Atta ɔyare, ɔyare, ɔyare*
[Adjoa Atta is sick, is sick, is sick]

Adjoa Atta ɔyare na momfre me so nkɔ
[Adjoa Atta is sick, so don't bother me]

Children: *Mu mma yεn kɔ yεn fie, yεn fie, yεn fie*
[Let's go home, go home, go home]

Mu mma yεn kɔ yεn fie, na εhɔ tse sεn ni
[Let's go home and see what is happening.]

Stanza three

Children*:*   *Mu mma yεn kɔ hwε Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta*

[Let's go check on Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta, Adjoa Atta]

Mu mma yεn kɔ hwε Adjoa Atta na ne ho tse sεn ni
[Let's go check on Adjoa Atta and see how she is doing]

Mother of Adjoa: *Adjoa Atta na we'wu, we'wu, we'wu*
[Adjoa Atta is dead, is dead, is dead]

Adjoa Atta na we'wu, na mo mfre me so nko
[Adjoa Atta is dead, so don't bother me]

Children [while leaving]:   *lala lala la la, la la, la la,*
lala lala la la, la la, la la la.

278

13. "*Akodaa kiti kiti"* ("Little Child")

Bully: *Akodaa kiti kiti*
     [Little child]

     w'ano wisi wisi
     [with sharp mouth]

     Obaa me si wo bewu o
     [Lady, I say you will die]

Girl: *minwu!*
     [I won't die!]

Bully: *εh?*
     [really?]

     Obaa, yεfrε wo sεn
     [Lady, what is your name]

Girl: *obaa pa*
     [virtuous lady]

Bully: *εh?*
     [really?]

14. *Abrewa Sekina* ("Old Lady Sekina")

Abrewa Sekina
[Old lady Sekina]

wa ye ne tsir dondo
[has made her hair glossy]

O lady mama
[O lady mama]

abrewa bεko America
[the old lady is heading to America.]

15. *Puteese o puteese* ("Floats o floats")

> *Puteese o puteese*
> [Floats o floats]
>
> *ɣee puteese*
> [yee floats]
>
> *puteese o puteese*
> [floats o floats]
>
> *ɣee puteese*
> [yee floats]
>
> *ɛhom yɛn do o*
> [whether you push us down]
>
> *aŋhom yɛn do o*
> [or you don't push us down]
>
> *yɛ tɛw nsu n'enyiwa o*
> [we keep floating in water o…]

16. "*Obra*" ("Life")

> *Obra o, obra*
> [life o, life]
>
> *mi si mi dua do*
> [I am perched on my tree]
>
> *mere hwɛ nsuroma*
> [looking at the stars]
>
> *ɔse meŋ suɛ nu*
> [he said help me put my load down]
>
> *makɔ akɔ suɛ nu*
> [I helped him do this]
>
> *abaa me tsi 'po!'*
> [a stick smashes my head 'po!']
>
> *ma wɔ ne'enyi 'so!'*

[and I pecked at his eyes 'so!']

17. "*Bro Ato na akuko nu*" ("Brother Ato and the chicken")

> *Bro Ato*
> [Bro Ato]
>
> *akokɔ no reba abato*
> [the chicken wanted to lay an egg]
>
> *na wo de wo nsa ahyɛ ne to*
> [but you put your finger in its anus]
>
> *ama woan'ya anto*
> [and now it is no longer laying.]

18. *Dabi mekɔ nwura mu* ("One day I went to the forest")

> *Dabi mekɔ nwura mu – kayinka*
> [One day I went to the forest – *kayinka*]
>
> *me ko hu saman – kayinka*
> [I saw a ghost – *kayinka*]
>
> *saman nkiti nkiti – kayinka*
> [tiny tiny ghost – *kayinka*]
>
> *na mesero o – kayinka*
> [I was scared – *kayinka*]
>
> *na mesoro paa – kayinka*
> [I was very scared – *kayinka*]
>
> *ɔpuma ne tuo – kayinka*
> [he cocked his gun – *kayinka*]
>
> *menso me mepuma me tuo – kayinka*
> [I also cocked my gun – *kayinka*]
>
> *ɔde hwɛ me so – kayinka*
> [he pointed it at me – *kayinka*]

281

menso me de hwɛ ne so – kayinka
[I also pointed mine at him – *kayinka*]

ateka ateka,
[deadlock, deadlock]

ate kpe'e!
[you hear it go off "kpe'e!"]

19. *Okraman* ("Dog")

Ɔkraman, ɔkraman
[Dog dog]

dɛn na wo pɛ
[what do you want?]

gyama wo nim sɛ, dompe bi da hɔ?
[or do you think there is a bone here?]

gyama wo nim sɛ, aduane bi si hɔ?
[or do you think there is food here?]

kɔ o kɔ kɔ kɔ,
[go go go away]

na wo'ambɛyɛ me
[and don't come, bark at me]

wo wo wo!
[wo wo wo!]

20. *Bankye bankye* ("Cassava cassava")

Leader:	*Bankye bankye*
	[cassava cassava]
All:	*bankye*
	[cassava]
Leader:	*bankye wo de ye gari*
	[cassava is used to make gari]
All:	*bankye*

	[cassava]
Leader:	*bankye wo de siw fufu*
	[cassava is used to pound fufu]
All:	*bankye*
	[cassava]
Leader:	*bankye wo de bo ampesi*
	[cassava is used for ampesi]
All:	*bankye*
	[cassava]
Leader:	*bankye wo de ye starch*
	[cassava is used to make starch]
All:	*bankye*
	[cassava]
Leader:	*bankye wo'amben*
	[if the cassava is uncooked]
All:	*konkonte wo'amben*
	[konkonte is uncooked]

21. *Maame bio* ("A certain woman")

Maame bioo
[a certain woman]

oka mpanpa hyewhew
[who makes hot porridge]

ade a esikyire nda mu
[a dish without sugar]

ade a paanoo nka ho

283

[a dish without bread]

Obumpa
[who break beds]

Maame obumpa
[woman who break beds]

22. *Kwaku Ananse mpabowa* ("Kwaku Ananse's new shoes")

Kwaku Ananse
[Kweku Ananse]

koto mpabwa
[bought a shoe]

aho popo nti
[but shaking from excitement]

woan'ho hy3
[could not wear it properly]

ode nifa
[he placed the right shoe]

kohye benkum
[on his left]

ode benkum so

[and put the right shoe]

kohye nifa

[on his left]

Kwaku Ananse

[Kweku Ananse]

koto mpabwa

bought a shoe

aho popo nti

[but shaking from excitement]

woan'ho hy3

[could not wear it properly.]

23. *Agyinamboa abo wi me nam* ("The cat has eaten my fish")

    Agyinamboa ne se eduasa nkroŋ.
    [The cat with its thirty-nine teeth]

    ɔde abɔ wi me nam, abɔ wi me nam, abɔ wi me nam
    [has come to eat my fish, eat my fish, eat my fish]

    Eeh agyinamboa
    [Hey, cat]

eye ewi papa,
[you are really a thief]

agyinamboa,
[cat]

eye ewi papa
[you are really a thief]

24. *Me nua be de Esther* ("I have a sister named Esther")

Me nua be de Esther
[I have a sister named Esther]

wa bɔ ne tsir rasta
[she has braids]

ɔde ko di Easter
[and will spend the Easter]

ɛwɔ Manchester
[In Manchester]

Enti shia no wɔ nkwanta
[So, meet her at the junction]

Na kɔ gye wo fanta
[For your fanta]

25. *Guan guan guan* ("Run run run")

>*Guan guan guan*
>[Run run run]
>
>*ogya wo bepɔ ne do*
>[there is fire on the mountain.]

26. The dilemma of a ghost[48]

>One early morning,
>
>When the moon was up,
>
>Shining as the sun
>
>I went to Elmina Junction
>
>And there and then
>
>I saw a wretched ghost
>
>Going up and down
>
>Singing to himself
>
>Shall I go to Cape Coast, or to Elmina?
>
>I don't know, I can't tell.

---

[48] The dilemma of a ghost is not part of the original songs recorded. Nonetheless, it is added to the list of songs because it was used as part of the thesis' discussion

II. Game and Dance Category of Songs

27. *Anhwɛ wakyire* ("Don't look behind you")

Version 1

Anhwɛ wakyire
[Don't look behind you]

yee yee
[yee yee]

obi ne ba
[someone's child]

yee yee
[yee yee]

se ehwɛ wa'kyire a
[if you look behind]

yee yee
[yee yee]

ade bɛ yɛ wo
[you're in trouble]

yee yee
[yee yee]

kutuku!
[blows!]

gɔngɔngɔngɔngɔ!
[gongongongongo!]

28. Araba Nsaba

Araba Nsaba nko po
[Araba Nsaba is no fisher]

nanso onya nam we

288

[yet she gets the choicest fish to eat]

Araba Nsaba
[Araba Nsaba]

basia edwaman onko po
[an immoral woman who is no fisher]

nanso onya nam we
[yet gets the choicest fish to eat]

Araba Nsaba
[Araba Nsaba.]

29. *Adow kyɛkyɛkyɛr* ("Stubborn Monkey.")

   Adow kyɛkyɛkyɛr
   [Stubborn monkey]

   ɔse ɔrekɔ Esaaman
   [insisted he was going to Esaaman]

   ɔkɔr ya woanba biom
   [he left but did not return]

   ɔkor ya Sasabonsam gyamu
   [he went into the Devil's fire.]

30. "*Obi'ara ye wo no dwowda*" ("All who are born on Monday")

   obi'ara yɛ wo no Dwowda
   [all who are born on Monday]

   ɔnkotow
   [crouch]

   ɔnsɔre
   [stand up]

   lalala lala lalalaa lalala lala lalalaa lala la laa
   [lalala lala lalalaa lalala lala lalalaa lala la laa]

289

obi'ara yɛ wo no Benada
[all who are born on Tuesday]

ɔnkotow
[crouch]

ɔnsɔre
[stand up]

lalala lala lalalaa lalala lala lalalaa lala la laa
[lalala lala lalalaa lalala lala lalalaa lala la laa].

31. *Afra kakraba kotoo awiam* ("small child crouching in the sun")

Afra kakraba kotoo awiam
[There is a small child *squatting* in the sun]

daadaa na oresu
[who *cries* everyday]

afra sor, sor, sor
[small child, *get up, get up*, *get up]*

afra prupru w'atare mu'ɛ
[small child *dust off* your clothes]

afra twa wo ho, twa wo ho, twa wo ho
[small child *turn round* and *round* and *round]*

afra kɔ fa wo dɔ fo'ɛ...
[small child go *embrace* your beloved.]

32. *Sansa akroma* (Lazy hawk)

Sansa akroma
[Lazy hawk]

ne na ewu
[whose mother is dead]

ɔkyekye nkukɔ mba
[preys on chicks]

ɔse onkoye edwuma
[he says he won't work]

ne na ewu
[his mother is dead]

ɔkyekye nkukɔ mba
[he preys on chicks]

ne na ewu
[his mother is dead]

n'egya ewu
[his father is dead].

33. *Hwehwɛ wo dɔ fo wɔ ha* (*"Find your beloved here"*)

Stanza One

Hwehwɛ wo dɔ fo wɔ ha
[Find your beloved here]

hwehwɛ wo dɔ fo wɔ ha
[find your beloved here]

hwehwɛ wo dɔ fo wɔ ha
[find your beloved here]

na ma ɛnyɛ wo dɛ
[and be happy about it.]

Stanza Two

hwehwɛ tokuro no mu
[look in the circle]

hwehwɛ tokuro no mu
[look in the circle]

hwehwɛ tokuro no mu
[look in the circle]

\

na ma ɛnyɛ wo dɛ

[and be happy about it.]

Stanza Three

pa wo dɔfo ne kyɛw
[apologise to your beloved]

pa wo dɔfo ne kyɛw
[apologise to your beloved]

pa wo dɔfo ne kyɛw
[apologise to your beloved]

na ma ɛnyɛ wo dɛ
[and be happy about it.]

Stanza Four

kyea wo dɔfo ne nsamu
[shake your beloved's hands]

kyea wo dɔfo ne nsamu
[shake your beloved's hands]

kyea wo dɔfo ne nsamu
[shake your beloved's hands]

na ma ɛnyɛ wo dɛ
[and be happy about it.]

Stanza Five

pepa wo dɔfo ne nim
[wipe the tears of your beloved]

pepa wo dɔfo ne nim
[wipe the tears of your beloved]

pepa wo dɔfo ne nim
[wipe the tears of your beloved]

na ma ɛnyɛ wo dɛ

[and be happy about it.]

Stanza Six

ye wo dɔfo atu
[embrace your beloved]

ye wo dɔfo atu
[embrace your beloved]

ye wo dɔfo atu
[embrace your beloved]

na ma ɛnyɛ wo dɛ
[and be happy about it.]

34. *Biribi faa* ("Something passed")

   Biribi faa
   [Something passed]

   biribi faa me honam nyinaa kɔ ma koma
   [something passed through my body to my heart]

   biribi faa
   [something passed]

   biribi faa me honam nyinaa kɔ ma koma
   [something passed through my body to my heart]

   oh oh oh oh
   oh oh oh oh oh oh oh oh oh oh

   la la la la
   la la la la la la la la la la.

35. *Obi awu ne ba* ("Someone brought forth a child")

                  Variation 1

   Leader: *Obi awu ne ba*
                 [Someone brought forth a child]

Dze no ko sukuu
[Took him to school]

Oko sua 'dompe' supel
[To learn how to spell 'bone']

Child 1:   D-o-m-p-e!

                  Variation 2

Leader: *Obi awu ne ba*
                  [Someone brought forth a child]

                  De no ko sukuu
                  [Took him to school]

                  Oko sua 'ɛtam' supel
                  [To learn how to spell 'cloth']

Child 2:   Ɛ-t-a-m!

                  Variation 3
Leader: *Obi awu ne ba*
                  [Someone brought forth a child]

                  De no kɔ sukuu
                  [Took him to school]

                  Oko sua ne din supel
                  [To learn how to spell his name]

Child 3:   A-k-u-n-ɔ!

36. *Ahon* ("Skin")
        Leader: *Ahon o, ahon*
                       [Skin o, skin]
        Response: *ahon!*
                       [skin!]

        Leader: *adow ne ho ahon*
                       [monkey's skin]
        Response: ahon!
                       [skin!]

Leader: *kitsew ne ho ahon*
            [lizard's skin]
Response: ahon!
            [skin!]

Leader: *nipa ne ho ahon*
            [human skin]
Response: ahon!
            [skin!]

Leader: *koto ne ho ahon*
            [crab's skin]

Response: [*no response; silence expected*]

37. *Ɛnan, nsa, etsir mo* ("praise to the leg, the hand and the head")

Sɛ ɛnan wanko 'habem
[If the leg had not gone to farm]

na nsa entwa bankye a
[and the hand had not harvested cassava]

na etsir so asoa aba fie a
[and the head carry the harvest home]

anka yefun bɛyɛ den?
[what would the stomach have done?]

ɛnan e, mo mo mo
[well done, leg]

nsa e, mom o mo
[well done, hand]

etsir e, mom o mo
[well done, head]

yefun kwadwo fo
[lazy stomach.]

295

38. *Yɛre kɔ efuom mu* (We are going to farm)

> *Yɛre kɔ efuom mu*
> [We are going to farm]
>
> *maame edzi kan*
> [mummy has gone ahead]
>
> *yɛ kɔ fa eduane*
> [we are going for food]
>
> *aba fie*
> [and bring them home]
>
> Plantain – *brɔdze*
> Cassava – *bankye*
> Okro – *nkruma*
> Garden eggs – *ndadowa*
> Pepper – *moko*
> Ginger – *akakaduro.*

39. *Bɔdambɔ ɛkur osi ɔpon do* (One bottle is on the table)

> Variation 1
>
> Leader: *Bɔdambɔ ɛkur osi ɔpon do*
>   [One bottle is on the table]
>
>   *bɔdambɔ ɛkur osi ɔpon do*
>   [one bottle is on the table]
>
>   *sɛ bɔdambɔ ɛkur na ɛdzi ɛkur ka ka ho'a*
>   [if you have one bottle and you add another one]
>
> All: *ɔyɛ bɔdambɔ ebien, osi ɔpon do*
>   [it will be two bottles on the table.]
>
> Variation 2
>
> Leader: *Bɔdambɔ ebaasa osi ɔpon do*
>   Three bottles are on the table]

bɔdambɔ ebaasa osi ɔpon do
[three bottles are on the table]

sɛ bɔdambɔ ebaasa na edzi bɔho ebien'a
[if you have three bottles and multiply by two]

All: *ɔyɛ bɔdambɔ ensia, osi ɔpon do*
[there will be six bottles on the table.]

Variation 3

Leader*:*   *Bɔdambɔ ebien osi ɔpon do*
[Two bottles are on the table]

bɔdambɔ ebien osi ɔpon do
[two bottles are on the table]

sɛ bɔdambɔ ebien na eyi ɛkur efri mu'a
[if you have two bottles and take out one]

All*:*   *ɔyɛ bɔdambɔ ɛkur, osi ɔpon do*
[there will be one bottle on the table.]

Variation 4

Leader: *Bɔdambɔ anan osi ɔpon do*
[Four bottles are on the table]

bɔdambɔ anan osi ɔpon do
[Four bottles are on the table]

sɛ bɔdambɔ anan na ɛdzi ebien ekye mu'a
[If you have four bottles and divide by two]

All: *ɔyɛ bɔdambɔ ebien, osi ɔpon do*
[There will be two bottles on the table.]

40. *Maame hyɛ gyaadze* ("Mummy in the kitchen.")

Maame wɔ gyaadze, orenua omu-nsu
[Mummy in the kitchen, cooking rice-water]

Paapa wɔ asado, orehwɛ teevi
[Father in the living room, watching TV]

Mmofra no wɔ paado, worebɔ ampe
[The children are outside, playing *ampe*]

Amina wo ture nu mu, ɔrewhɛ ntoso
[Amina in the garden, planting tomatoes.]

41. "*Me sisiw, me dzonku*" ("My waist, my knee")

Part 1

Leader:	*me sisiw* [my waist]
Respondents:	*mmmm…* [mmmm…]
Leader:	*me sisiw* [my waist]
Respondents:	*mmmm…* [mmmm…]
Leader:	*me dzonku* [my knee]
Respondents:	*dzonku dzonku dzonku* [knee knee knee]
Leader:	*me dzonku* [my knee]
Respondents:	*dzonku dzonku dzonku* [knee knee knee.]

Part 2

Leader:	*nantwi ne kotodwe* [cow's knee]

Respondents: *kotodwe kotodwe kotodwe*
[knee knee knee]

Leader: *apɔnkye ne kotodwe*
[goat's knee]
Respondents: *kotodwe kotodwe kotodwe*
[knee knee knee]

Leader: *bɔdɔm ne kotodwe*
[dog's knee]
Respondents: *kotodwe kotodwe kotodwe*
[knee knee knee]

Leader: *ɔwɔ ne kotodwe*
[snake's knee]

Respondents: [silent].

42. *Dɔkɔdɔkɔ wɔrekɔ hen?* ("Duck, where are you going?")

Dɔkɔdɔkɔ wɔrekɔ hen?
[Duck, where are you going?]

mere kɔ ahenfie
[I am going to the palace]

hwɛ ne sisi
[look at her waist]

hwɛ ne to
[look at her bottom]

daa, na wakyea ne to
[each day, she swings her bottom]

kyea ne to
[swings her bottom]

na wa kyea ne to
[she swings her bottom]

kyea ne to
[swings her bottom.]

43. *Awagyirga*

> *Awagyirga*
> [Awagyirga]
>
> *gelengele*
> [gelengele]
>
> *wako'ware abrewa*
> [has married an old woman]
>
> gelengele
> *[gelengele]*
>
> *abrewa ne nkwan ye ne de*
> [the old woman's soup is tasty]
>
> *gelengele*
> [gelengele.]

44. *Nnoma kakraba ebien* ("Two little birds")

> *Nnoma kakraba ebien*
> [Two little birds]
>
> *wɔ wɔn bow kese mu*
> [in one big nest]
>
> *aha yɛ shew*
> [one side is warm]
>
> *aha yɛ yuŋ*
> [the other side is cold]
>
> *panyin no kaakyirɛ kakaraba*
> [the older asked the younger]
>
> *dɛ pin ha*
> [to shift to this side]

kakraba no kaakyire panyin
[the younger also asked the older]

dɛ pin ho
[to shift to that side]

pin ha, pin ho
[shift here, shift there]

wo pin pin wɔn ho
[they began to push each other.]

45. "In the golden treasure"

In the golden treasure

Oh Mama the waakye

Sister and the boys

The boys are going

Burkina Faso

Through the East

The West

I met my best friend in the wedding shop

He bought me ice cream in the wedding shop

Mama mama, I'm so sick

Call the doctor, quick quick quick

Doctor doctor, shall I die

No, my darling, do not cry

But count the numbers of 'be like that'

I say 1, 2 be like that

3,4 be like that

5, 6 be like that

7, 8 be like that

9, 10 fire!

9, 10 fire!

46. *Ekutu no abere* ("The orange is ripe")

Ekutu no abere
[The orange is ripe]
huruw na tsew
[jump and pluck]

mango no abere
[the mango is ripe]

huruw na tsew
[jump and pluck]

brofere no abere
[the pawpaw is ripe]

huruw na tsew
[jump and pluck]

atsew ato famu
[it has fallen on the ground]

kotow na fa
[bend down and pick]

atsew ato famu
[it has fallen on the ground]

huruw na tsew.
[bend down and pick.]

47. *Koso boka* ("Try East")

Kwesi

[Kwesi]

koso boka
[try east of the sea]

na we'wura
[there is plenty there]

okyena anopa
[tomorrow morning]

koso boka
[try east of the sea]

na we'wura
[there is plenty there.]

48. "*Woa na ɔkotow garden nu mu'e*" ("Who is in the garden?")

    Woa na ɔkotow garden nu mu'e
    [who is in the garden?]

    afra kakraba'a
    [my little baby]

    me mbra mbɛ kyena'a
    [should I come and catch him?]

    oho
    [no]

    ta mu do e
    [then you, follow me!]

49. *Sukul rekyerew dzin* ("School Registration")

    Sukul rekyerew dzin
    [School registration]

    kyerew we dzin

[spell your name]

sukul rekyerew dzin
[school registration]

kyerew we dzin
[spell your name]

If the player, say singer 1, is known as 'Kwame' this is what ensues.

Singer 1: 'K' –
Group response: K-K *(two claps – simultaneously as letter is repeated)*
Singer 1: 'w'
Group response: w-w *(two claps – simultaneously as letter is repeated)*
Singer 1: 'a'
Group response: a-a *(two claps – simultaneously as letter is repeated)*
Singer 1: 'm'
Group response: m-m *(two claps – simultaneously as letter is repeated)*
Singer 1: 'e'
Group response: e-e *(two claps – simultaneously as letter is repeated)*

ALL: *Kwame*!

50. *Dua o dua* ("Tail o tail")

Leader:	*Dua o dua*
	[Tail o tail]
All respond:	*dua!*
	[tail!]
Leader:	*dua o dua*
	[tail o tail]
All respond:	*dua!*
	[tail!]
Leader:	*dua, akoko ne dua*
	[tail, chicken's tail]
Player 1:	*dua!*
	[tail!]
Leader:	*dua, nantwi ne dua*
	[tail, cow's tail]
Player 2:	*dua!*
	[tail!]

Leader:	*dua, kitsew ne dua*
	[tail, lizard's tail]
Player 3:	*dua!*
	[tail!]
Leader:	*Dua, huansema ne dua –*
	[Tail, fly's tail]
Player 4:	[*no response; silence expected*].

51. *Anhyɛwakyire* ("Don't look behind you")

[version 2]

Anhyɛwakyire   *tinko*
[Don't look behind you   *tinko*]

yetu mankeni   *tinko*
[we harvest potatoes   *tinko*]

yedi ne kwa   *tinko*
[we eat them freely   *tinko*]

sɛ wohwɛ w'akyi a   *tinko*
[if you look behind you   *tinko*]

yɛbɛbo wo   *tinko*
[we shall beat you   *tinko*]

52. *Wɔ nsu taye ne mu* ("In the pool")

Wɔ nsu taye ne mu
[In the pool]

fi nsu taye ne mu
[out the pool]

hye mu na fi nsu taye ne mu
[in and out the pool]

fi mu na hye nsu taye ne mu.

[out and in the pool.]

53. *-tion* words

> *Tion tion tion – tion*
>
> Correction - *tion*
>
> Direction - *tion*
>
> Attention *-tion*
>
> Abortion *-tion*
> collection *-tion*

54. *Womba, womba* ("Pestle, pestle")

> *Womba, womba, womba, womba*
>
> [Pestle, pestle, pestle, pestle]
>
> *Edua bi si kwaye muoo*
>
> [There is a tree in the forest]
>
> *yefre no womba*
>
> [And it is called the pestle.]

55. Robert Mensah

Part 1

> Leader: Ro-bert

Respondents: (clapping) pa pa pa

Leader: Ro-bert

Respondents: (clapping) pa pa pa

All: *Robert Mensah, goalkeeper number one*
               [Robert Mensah, goalkeeper number one]

               aka nansa na wakɔ abrokyire
               [with three days to his trip abroad]

               kwasia bi tse ho a ɔmpe ne ho asɛm
               [an idiot who is otherwise calm]

               afa pentua ɔdze awɔ ne'mfe
               [stabbed him with a broken bottle.]

               ade kye'a ne yere awo
               [the next day his wife delivered]

               ne yere awo'a wɔ fre nu Kofi
               [she delivered a baby called Kofi]

               Kofi Anto, w'anto ne papa
               [Kofi Anto, did not meet his father]

               Kofi Anto, w'anto ne mame
               [Kofi Anto, did not meet his mother.]

Part two: (exultant, mainly sound without meaning)

               Amani esikyire wom

               [herring with sugar]

               mate matinga

               to power

               to mano zero

               zero, zero black

               black, black head

               head, head master

307

master, master Poku

Poku, Poku ware

Ware, aware so,

so, so fo

fo, foriwaa

waa, waakye

kye, kyenam

nam, nampa

pa, paanoo

no, nooma

ma, mango

go, go way you

you, you foo

foo, foofoo

amane kakraka, bum mmienu nafa ye abenkwan

[big herrings, break them into two for palm nut soup

amane nkete nkete, kyerew kyerew hu fa ye nkrakra

[small herrings, remove scales for pepper soup]

ebe dzi aba dzi, me dzi sooo…

[what will you eat, I will eat that…]

56. *Pimpinaam*

Leader: Pimpinaa

Respondents: Nana

All (exultant, mainly sound without meaning):

see see see

see nana ko ooo

kaa kaa bonku

bonku too bonku too bonku to ara prede

mena mena abrewa

odze aba bo me soo

soo soo soo

adze akye

abo bonfire abo bonfire

O! maame ee o! paape ee

hee bon bonfire

Part2

Egya Ananse

Old Ananse

yi wo nan baako

Remove one leg (from the circle)

na'enka baako

And keep the remaining leg

me da wo'ase

thank you

Oheneba

son of a king

Oheneba nsu

The son of a king does not cry

57. *Pɛtɛ pɛtɛ* ("Vulture vulture")

Leader: *Pɛtɛ pɛtɛ*
            [vulture vulture]

Response: *senyiwa dedende senyiwa*
            [senyiwa dedende senyiwa]

Leader:	*wo maame rɛferɛ wo* [your mother is calling you]
Response:	*senyiwa dedende senyiwa* [senyiwa dedende senyiwa]
Leader:	*ɔse me nko yɛ dɛn?* [what does she want me to do?]
Response:	*senyiwa dedende senyiwa* [senyiwa dedende senyiwa]
Leader:	*ɔse ko dzidzi* [She says go eat?]
Response:	*senyiwa dedende senyiwa* [senyiwa dedende senyiwa]
Leader:	*Ɛbɛn edziban'a?* [What kind of food?]
Leader:	*Fufur na abɛnkwan* [Fufu and palm nut soup]
All:	*senyiwa dedende senyiwa* [senyiwa dedende senyiwa]

58. *Ahaban mono mono* ("Green green grasses")

Ahaban mono mono
[Green green grasses]

Kweku Ananse ne nsemka
[Kweku Ananse story]

Nsemka kor, nsemka ebien
[First story, second story]

Eyɛ banku, yɛ ka ne sei,

[It is banku, we prepare it like this]

banku yɛ ka ne sei,
[banku, we prepare it like this]

banku yɛ ka ne sei, sei, sei ni sei
[banku, we prepare it like this, like this, like this and this]

Eyɛ anikyi, yɛ bu ne sei,
[It is a smirk, we do it like this]

anikyi yɛbu ne sei,
[a smirk, we do it like this]

anikyi yɛ bu ne sei, sei, sei, and sei
[a smirk, we do it like this, like, like this and this]

59. Multiple 2

Multiple 2, you make a mistake

and the lower and the upper and the 2,4,6

If you say 1, you are out,

but if you say 2, you are in so…

2, 4.6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18 ….

60. *Mmɔfra mmɔfra* ("Children children")

Leader:	*Mmɔfra mmɔfra* [Children children]
Response:	*yee, maame* [yes, mother]
Leader:	*tea no wɔ hen?* [where is the tea?]
Response:	*yaa'nom* [we've drunk it]
Leader:	*cup no wɔ hen?* [where is the cup?]
Response:	*yaa'bɔn* [we've broken it]
Leader:	*paano no wɔ hen?* [where is the bread?]
Response:	*yee'dzi* [we've eaten it]
Leader:	*esikyire no wɔ hen* [where is the sugar]
Response:	*ya'sanu* [we used all]
Leader:	*eyi dze me'nko tsie* [this time I won't listen]
Response:	*yɛ pa wo kyew* [we beg you]

61. *Kyekyekule*[49]

Leader:	Kyekyekule
Response:	Kye-kule

---

[49] Kyekyekule (like "the dilemma of a ghost") is not part of the original songs recorded. Nonetheless, it is added to the list of songs because it was used as part of the thesis' discussion.

Leader:	Kyekye Kofisa
Response:	Kyekye Kofisa
Leader:	Kofi Salanga
Response:	Kofi Salanga
Leader:	Kaka shilanga
Response:	Kaka shilanga
Leader:	Kum adende kum adende
Response:	Kum adende kum adende

APPENDIX B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE FROM DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA (UNISA)

UNISA | university of south africa

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STUDIES RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

22 August 2019

Dear **ERNEST NKRUMAH ADDO**

Decision:
**Ethics Approval from 22 August
2019 to 01 August 2022**

Reference # : 2019-CHS-
Depart-. 55746403

Student # : 55746403

Supervisor# :

Researcher(s): Ernest Nkrumah Addo

P.O. BOX LG 914, Legon, Accra, Ghana
55746403@mylife.unisa.ac.za
+233-277-809840 / +233-277-821724

**'Pimpinaa: An analysis of Ghaniain children's play-songs as a window into the
African Indigenous Philosophies**

Qualifications Applied: PhD
Research Type: Postgraduate thesis

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa Department of
English Studies Ethics Research Committee. Ethics approval is granted for three years.

The *low risk application* was *reviewed and expedited* by Department of English Studies
Research Ethics Committee, on the 22 August 2019 in compliance with the Unisa Policy on
Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles
   expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant
   to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the Department of
   Psychology Ethics Review Committee.

University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
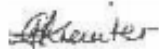Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

314

3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.

4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.

5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.

6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.

7. No fieldwork activities may continue after the expiry date (**01 August 2022**). Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number **2019-CHS--Depart-55746403 should** *be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Yours sincerely,

Signature :

Prof A. Kreutier
Depart Ethics Chair : English Studies
E-mail: kreuiad@ unisa.ac.za
Tel: (012) 429- 3968

UNISA | university of south africa

UNISA COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

11 November 2019

Dear Mr Ernest Nkrumah Addo

Decision: Ethics Approval from 08 November2019 to 31 October 2022

NHREC Registration # : REC-240816-052

CREC Reference # : 2017-CHS-026

Name : Mr Ernest Nkrumah Addo

Student #: Dept-Eng- student - 55746403

Researcher(s): Ernest Nkrumah Addo
P.O. Box LG 914
Legon, Accra
Ghana
233-(0)277-809840
ernest.addo@upsamail.edu.gh/

Supervisor (s): Zodwa Motsa
0124296015
motsazgt@unisa.ac.za

Working title of research:
'PIMPINAA': AN ANALYSIS OF GHANAIAN CHILDREN'S PLAY-SONGS AS A WINDOW INTO THE AFRICAN INDIGENOUS PHILOSOPHIES

Qualification: M. Phil. English

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for 5 years.

The **low risk application** was **reviewed** by the Chair of Department of English Research Ethics Committee on 8 November in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.
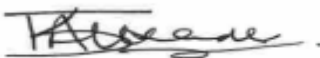The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

Open Rubric

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.

2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the CREC Committee.

3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.

4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.

5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.

6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.

7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date (31 October 2022). Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number Dept-Eng- student -55746403   should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Signature

Signature

Dr. J. O Alexander
Departmental Ethics Chair
E-mail: busarjo@unisa.ac.za
Tel: (012) 429-3904

Dr. E.E.Dube
CREC Chair: CHS
E-mail: dubeen@unisa.ac.za
Tel: (012) 429-3892

APPENDIX D: PERMISSION FROM KUMASI D/A BASIC SCHOOL

Kumasi D/A Basic School
P. O. Box 24
Ajumako - Kumasi
20th September, 2019.

Mr. Ernest Nkrumah Addo
P. O. Box LG 914
Legon - Accra

Dear Sir

ACCEPTANCE OF REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON
THE TOPIC "PIMPINAA: AN ANALYSIS OF GHANAIAN PLAYSONGS
AS A WINDOW INTO THE AFRICAN INDIGENOUS PHILOSOPHIES"

I write to inform you that your request to perform
research in our school has been accepted.

Kindly contact Miss Faustina Odei of Basic 3 for
further assistance.

Kind regards.

Johnson Budu-Hagan
0242529127

APPENDIX E: PERMISSION FROM GHASEL M/A PRIMARY SCHOOL

GHASEL M/A KG/PRIMARY SCHOOL,
P. O. BOX KM 13,
KOMENDA
11TH OCTOBER, 2019.

MR ERNEST NKRUMAH ADDO
P. O. BOX LG 914
LEGON - ACCRA

Dear Sir,

ACCEPTANCE LETTER TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON THE
TOPIC "PIMPINAA": AN ANALYSIS OF GHANAIAN
PLAYSONGS AS A WINDOW INTO THE AFRICAN INDIGE-
NOUS PHILOSOPHIES".

I write to inform you that you have been accep-
ted to conduct research in our school on the above
topic.

Kindly contact Mr. John Asamoah of Basic
Four 4B for further assistance.
Thanks,

Yours faithfully,

Ishmael Simpson.
(Headteacher)
Tel: 0248693193

APPENDIX F: REQUEST LETTER TO GHASEL PRIMARY SCHOOL

P.O. Box LG 914

Legon-Accra

September 10, 2019

The Headmaster

GHASEL D/A Primary School

Komenda, C/R

Dear Sir:

PERMISSION FOR AUTHORISATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN YOUR INSTITUTION

I write to seek permission to conduct a study in your institution on the topic: **Pimpinaa: An Analysis of Ghanaian Children's Play-songs as a Window into the African Indigenous Philosophies.**

This study is a requirement for the completion of a doctoral programme in English at the University of South Africa. The purpose of this study is to inquire into the nature of children's oral play-songs to unravel the indigenous African philosophies encapsulated in the themes and also examine the aesthetic features that make up their oral performances. It offers an opportunity through which Africans can reclaim, appreciate and preserve their indigenous knowledge and poetry presented through the medium of children's play-songs.

The data collected will contribute toward orature analysis theory, by demonstrating how the various resources used in the realisation of the children's oral play-songs performances promotes literacy with respect to African indigenous knowledges.

You are assured that information provided will be treated with complete confidentiality and findings will be readily shared with the institution upon request.

Kindly find attached an introductory letter and a photocopy of my student identification card from the University of South Africa.

I would be very grateful if the needed assistance is provided to carry out this academic exercise.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Ernest Nkrumah Addo

APPENDIX G: REQUEST LETTER TO KUMASI D/A BASIC SCHOOL

P.O. Box LG 914
Legon-Accra

September 10, 2019

The Headmaster

Kumasi D/A Primary School

Ajumako-Bisease C/R

Dear Sir:

PERMISSION FOR AUTHORISATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN YOUR INSTITUTION

I write to seek permission to conduct a study in your institution on the topic: Pimpinaa: An Analysis of Ghanaian Children's Play-songs as a Window into the African Indigenous Philosophies.

This study is a requirement for the completion of a doctoral programme in English at the University of South Africa. The purpose of this study is to inquire into the nature of children's oral play-songs to unravel the indigenous African philosophies encapsulated in the themes and also examine the aesthetic features that make up their oral performances. It offers an opportunity through which Africans can reclaim, appreciate and preserve their indigenous knowledge and poetry presented through the medium of children's play-songs.

The data collected will contribute toward orature analysis theory, by demonstrating how the various resources used in the realisation of the children's oral play-songs performances promotes literacy with respect to African indigenous knowledges.

You are assured that information provided will be treated with complete confidentiality and findings will be readily shared with the institution upon request.

Kindly find attached an introductory letter and a photocopy of my student identification card from the University of South Africa.

I would be very grateful if the needed assistance is provided to carry out this academic exercise.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Ernest Nkrumah Addo

APPENDIX H: INTRODUCTORY LETTER FROM SUPERVISOR

UNISA | university of south africa

September 4, 2019

Prof ZT Motsa
Department of English Studies
PO Box 392
UNISA

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN,

This letter serves to confirm that Mr. Ernest Nkrumah Addo (Student Number: 55746403) is currently pursuing a PhD degree in Language, Literature and Linguistics at the University of South Africa. This letter further affirms that I, Prof. ZT Motsa, am the supervisor of the above mentioned student. Kindly note that Mr. Addo has not been ethically cleared as yet and he needs to urgently submit some of the outstanding requirements toward ethical clearance.

The topic of his study is: **'Pimpinaa': An analysis of Ghanaian children's play-songs as a window into the African indigenous philosophies**. This study is a requirement for the completion of his doctoral programme at the University of South Africa. Briefly, it seeks to examine the indigenous knowledge systems that are encapsulated in the play-songs of children. It will specifically analyse the style and the themes in the play-songs with the objective of contributing to the African oral literature canon.

Your support of Mr Addo in his research activities will be highly appreciated. Should you require further information on this, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely,

Prof. ZT Motsa
Professor of English & Director of Transformation
University of South Africa.

APPENDIX I: PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMED CONSENT

PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMED CONSENT
Reference Number: 2019-CHS--Depart-55746403

General Information on Research

Your child is being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Ernest Nkrumah Addo from the University of South Africa on the topic: **"Pimpinaa: An Analysis of Ghanaian Children's Play-songs as A Window into the African Indigenous Philosophies."** The purpose of this study is to inquire into the nature of children's oral play-songs to unravel the indigenous African philosophies encapsulated in the themes and also examine the aesthetic features that make up their oral performances. It offers an opportunity through which Africans can reclaim, appreciate and preserve their indigenous knowledge and poetry presented through the medium of children's play-songs. The data collected will contribute toward orature analysis theory, by demonstrating how the various resources used in the realisation of the children's oral play-songs performances promotes literacy with respect to African indigenous knowledges. This study will contribute to the researcher's completion of his doctoral thesis.

Research Procedures

Should you decide to allow your child/ward to participate in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form once all your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. This study consists of an observation of the participants in the selected schools in Komenda and Ajumako-Bisease, performing their oral play-songs. This activity will be video recorded, strictly for research purposes. Your child/ward will be part of his or playmates who will be asked to enact the play-songs they normally sing during play.

Time Required

Participation in this study will require approximately thirty (30) minutes of your ward/child's time.

Risks

The investigator does not perceive any risks associated with the study.

Benefits

There are no direct benefits to the child/parent for participating in this study. However, your child/ward's participation in this study will go a long way to contribute to empirical knowledge.

Confidentiality

Your child will not be identified in the research. The results of this research may be presented at a conference. Copies of the thesis will be deposited with the University of South Africa. The researcher retains the right to use and publish non-identifiable data. When the results of this research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your child's identity. All data will be stored in a secure location accessible only to the researcher. Aside from the consent letters, the study will not require or make use of any individual information from the participants.

Participation & Withdrawal

Your ward/child's participation is entirely voluntary. He/she is free to choose not to participate. Should your child choose to participate, he/she can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind.

Questions about the Study

If you have questions or concerns during the time of your child's participation in this study, or after its completion or you would like to receive a copy of the final aggregate results of this study, please contact:

Ernest Nkrumah Addo

Cellphone No. 233-277-809840

E-mail: ernest.addo@gmail.com

Giving of Consent

I have read this consent form and I understand what is being requested of my child/ward as a participant in this study. I freely consent for my child/ward to participate. I have been given satisfactory answers to my questions. The investigator provided me with a copy of this form. I certify that I am, at least, 18 years of age.

_____

Name of Child

_____

Name of Parent/Guardian

_____

Signature of parent/guardian

_____

Date

APPENDIX J: CHILD ASSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA
COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES

CHILD ASSENT FORM

Reference: 2019-CHS-Depart—55746403

My name is Ernest Addo, a PhD student studying at the University of South Africa. I am asking you to be part of a study so that I can learn more about the songs you sing during playtime.

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you and your friends to sing some of the songs you sing when playing and I will record them.

There is no harm if you decide to join and your teachers will also be there to make sure you are safe and comfortable.

Please talk with your parents about this before you make up your mind whether to join or not. I will also ask your parents to give their permission for you to take part in this study. If you don't want to be in this study, you don't have to be. Being in this study is up to you and no one will be angry if you don't want to take part or even if you change your mind later and want to stop.

Feel free to ask any questions that you have about the study. If you have a question later that you didn't think about earlier, you can call me on 0277809840 or email me on ernest.addo@gmail.com.

Signing your name at the bottom means that you agree to be in this study. You and your parent will receive a copy of this form after you have signed it.

_____
Name of Child

_____
Signature of Child   Date

_____
Signature of Researcher   Date

APPENDIX K: AUTHENTICATION OF TRANSLATION

Evidence of authentication of translation

3rd August, 2021

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This is to certify that all elements of Akan language in the thesis 'PIMPINAA: ANALYSIS OF GHANAIAN CHILDREN PLAY-SONGS AS A WINDOW INTO THE AFRICAN INDIGENOUS PHILOSOPHIES' authored by Mr. Ernest Nkrumah Addo, have been thoroughly proofread. All identified errors have been corrected and effected. The thesis is, at present, devoid of mechanical and grammatical problems with regard to the usage and orthography of the Akan (Fante and Twi) language.

Mr. Raymond Amoakwah (College of Languages, University of Education, Winneba)
Lecturer: Department of Akan-Nzema
Post Office Box 72
Ajumako

(ramoakwah@uew.edu.gh/+233248819239)

B.A. Fante (Education) University of Education, Winneba
Master of Philosophy, Ghanaian Languages Studies, University of Education, Winneba